

**MICHIGAN AGRICULTURE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSURANCE PROGRAM  
(MAEAP) ADVISORY COUNCIL (AC)**

**OCTOBER 16, 2017**

**1:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.**

Jennifer Silveri, MIFFS  
MSUFCU Community Room  
4825 Mt. Hope Road  
East Lansing, MI 48823

**ATTENDEES**

Laura Campbell (Co-Chair), Dr. Ronald Bates (Co-Chair), Warren Suchovsky, Tom Zimnicki, Dean Letter, Lori Phalen, Rich Bowman, Emily Helsen, Scott Lonier, Jennifer Silveri, Betsy Dierberger, Jason Darling, Dale A. Allen, Christine Alexander, Dean Rob Hendrick, Mary Kelpinski

**RESOURCE**

Joe Kelpinski, Josh Appleby, John Switzer, Laura Doud, Emily Reinart, Ben Schram, Heather Casteel (Scribe), Shelby Burlew

**PARTNER/GUESTS**

Mark Seamon

**WELCOME, APPROVAL OF PAST MEETING MINUTES AND ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS**

Ron Bates started the meeting at 1:01 p.m. and thanked MIFFS and Jen Silveri for hosting this meeting.

Meeting began with a round of introductions around the room.

No additional agenda items.

**MOTION: WARREN SUCHOVSKY MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MEETING MINUTES FROM JUNE 11, 2017. SECONDED BY DEAN LETTER. ALL IN FAVOR SAY AYE, UNANIMOUS AYES, HEARING NO NAYS, MEETING NOTES WERE APPROVED.**

**AROUND THE HORN**

Everyone around the room shared their recent activities and events from their organization.

**SYSTEM COMMITTEE REPORTS**  
**FOREST, WETLANDS AND HABITAT**

Ben Schram reported that the FWH Sub-committee has appointed two new co-chairs: Jason Darling, with Darling Forestry, LLC and Gib King, with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

There have been significant changes to the FWH\*A\*Syst this year, now the focus will be on getting the FWH\*A\*Syst tool easier to use for the landowners, verifiers, technicians, and foresters.

The goal setting process for MAEAP techs and foresters is underway. The foresters are reporting some big goals toward MAEAP verifications.

Jason Darling said he has learned a lot and now writes land management plans for the producer. As a consultant and serving on this committee, the experience has helped him in this capacity.

## **FARMSTEAD**

Laura Doud reported that the Farmstead System Sub-committee has not met since the last AC meeting. There will be minimal changes to the Farm\*A\*Syst.

They will be reviewing the fuel section for tanks larger than 10,000 gallons on secondary containment. They will be sending out meeting notices in December for the 2018 schedule. Plans to combine the Cropping sub-committee and Farmstead sub-committee meetings.

## **CROPPING**

Josh Appleby reported that there are not a lot of anticipated changes this next year. Plans are to add bee pollinator habitat educational questions.

## **LIVESTOCK**

Dean Letter reported that the Livestock System Sub-committee hasn't met since the last AC meeting. Manure application certification program should roll out in 2018. Charles Gould has been working on this for over a decade.

Sub-committee has had some discussion regarding Siting and livestock stakeholders that need to go through that process.

## **COMMUNICATIONS WORKGROUP**

Emily Reinart reported that the Communications workgroup has sent out letters asking for the MAEAP Resource Contribution Agreement to be renewed.

The workgroup has goals: increase funds, and with those funds: increase partner use and provide more resources.

The goal of the committee was to start the newsletter again. The first edition was mailed out on October 9<sup>th</sup>. The next edition will be sometime in January of 2018.

The committee will be working on redeveloping the new displays for verifiers and technicians to share.

Focus will be on the W.L.E.B. with promotional postcards that will be sent out to citizens.

## **PROACTIVE VOLUNTARY STEWARDSHIP DISCUSSION**

The question was asked by the AC co-chairs, "Where does MAEAP go next?" (See Attachment) Discussion around the table.

The group should consider what is the purpose of MAEAP? Should we stay focused on the nutrients or energy?

It was asked if the next step should be to see if our view through the lens is the same view as the producers, consumers, etc.

It was asked if an energy audit, (using LED lighting, conserving energy, etc.), would be appropriate? Would that fit into the Farmstead System components?

Is there an opportunity to make MAEAP more compatible with these other efforts toward sustainability?

It was suggested that the partners and commodity groups help get the word out.

We should find a better way to explain what MAEAP does, before we add more complexity to our program.

Proper management improves the condition of the resource; trying to identify which practices would impact that, and where they should be located, for contribution.

The challenge is that we struggle with someone who is verified, isn't necessarily doing anything better than the person that is not having an audit done.

Consistency with the data is important and asked how can we be sure that we are capturing the right things with our verified sites.

Heidelberg University has a Tributary Loading Program, that now has monitoring stations in Michigan. Michigan has three main areas of focus for phosphorus

reductions – the Detroit River, The Raisin River, and the state’s portion of the Maumee River basin.

For expansion, we need to take a look at legacy build-up. If we stopped applying today, we would still see algal blooms continue just from what has been built up. We need to expand MAEAP to include that.

It was suggested that we probably do not ask enough questions about wind energy. It is a big factor and survey work is being done in the WLEB area. When the results are revealed, we should know where our starting point begins.

It is vital to keep the diversity and application overall to all types of farms. We should keep that, and still focus toward the farmers.

Perhaps a Farm Bill enhancement to encourage that? To provide the credit to the person that is ahead of the game and already has these practices in place.

It was suggested that some of our partners could provide a price incentive to MAEAP verified farms.

The unique way we offer the program to producers is to put the boots on the ground to engage the producers.

All agreed that the end goal is that we can demonstrate that we moved the needle, or at least have done all we can do to move the needle, in the right direction.

Partner organizations can help create awareness in smaller water sheds throughout Michigan.

### **DATABASE UPDATE**

Joe reported that the fixes in the database need to happen quickly. The technicians now input the data.

Joe informed the group that there may be changes from Water Words that Work and will provide those changes to the AC for approval. Joe described a few of the recommended changes.

### **MAEAP VERIFICATION REPORT**

Joe read the MAEAP Verifications Over Time spreadsheet.

Joe also reported that 534 need to be reverified, plus those reverifications that should have happened this year. The new Right to Farm staff will help complete the reverifications.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Warren Suchovsky said that “certified” and “verified” are two distinctly different things. A verifier is to collect the data and ensure these requirements are met. A certification usually requires a third party for certification.

**MOTION: DEAN LETTER MOVED THAT THE MEETING BE  
ADJOURNED. SECONDED BY SCOTT LONIER. ALL IN FAVOR SAY  
AYE, UNANIMOUS AYES, HEARING NO NAYS, MEETING ADJOURNED.**

Meeting adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

### **NEXT MAEAP AC MEETING**

**Host:** Laura Campbell, MFB

**Location:** TBD

**Date:** Monday, April 9, 2018

**Time:** Noon – 3:30 p.m. (Lunch Provided)

Respectfully submitted,  
Heather Casteel