



## 2014 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2014

Kettunen Center – Tustin, MI

- I. MAA President Dan Vogler opened the meeting at 9:00 am welcoming all attendees to our 27<sup>th</sup> annual meeting (32 total; attendance down due to weather).
  - 1) Meeting sponsors were recognized and thanked for their contributions.
  - 2) Sponsors for this year included: Easy Pro Pond Products, Zeigler/Thornapple Feeds, Applied Biochemists, GreenStone Farm Credit Services, Pentair-Aquatic Ecosystems and Troutlodge.
  - 3) Total sponsor donations of \$1,200.
  
- II. Business Meeting.
  - 1) Proof of notice of the 2014 meeting and reading/disposal of the 2013 annual meeting minutes and 2013 Board meeting minutes.
    - i. Motion by Russ A., seconded by John N., motion carried.
  - 2) President's report
    - i. Strategic Plan For A Thriving and Sustainable Michigan Aquaculture Sector.
    - ii. Check-off program.
  - 3) Introduction of current MAA board members and officers.
  - 4) Treasurer's Report (Dave L.).
    - i. Current MAA treasury balance of \$ 4,619.52.
    - ii. Motion to accept by Bob B.; seconded by Tom W.; motion carried.
    - iii. Note: new total of \$ 5,464.52 when adding in additional membership dues collected during registration.
  - 5) MAA Board Elections:
    - i. Up for election were the positions of President (Dan Vogler incumb.) and 1 Board seat (Jerry Kahn incumb.).
    - ii. Motion made by Tom W. to dispense with the vote since the incumbents are running unopposed; seconded by Rick W.; motion carried.
  - 6) Individual introductions by all meeting attendees.
  - 7) Mention of the upcoming meeting in Toledo, OH February 22-23, 2014.
    - i. "2014 North Central Aquaculture Conference".
    - ii. MAA, IAA, OAA, NCRAC.
    - iii. Location: The University of Toledo Medical Center Hotel.
    - iv. Details at NCRAC [www.ncrac.org](http://www.ncrac.org) or MAA [www.michiganaquaculture.org](http://www.michiganaquaculture.org)
  
- III. Break.

#### IV. The State of Michigan Aquaculture (Dr. Steve Halstead – MDARD):

- 1) Avoiding inter-agency friction between the 3 QOL agencies (Quality Of Life)
  - i. MDARD, MDNR, MDEQ.
  - ii. Much improved over the past 2 years with the round table meetings.
  - iii. Checklist of regulatory steps by each agency:
    1. Before: no knowledge of the other agencies steps.
    2. Now: a clearer step-by-step process for the aquaculture industry.
  - iv. The MDARD is eager to see implementation of the Strategic Aquaculture Plan.
- 2) Steve fielded a variety of questions from attendees.
  - i. MI Right To Farm Act ... siting GAMMPs (zoning issues with urban aquaculture).
  - ii. Defining large vs small farms in relation to aquaculture.
  - iii. MAEAP
  - iv. Farmstead verification issues ... too many question marks when considering aquaculture (facility variety).
- 3) Joe Colyn (Originz)
  - i. Joe presented the executive summary of the Strategic Plan For A Thriving and Sustainable Michigan Aquaculture Sector.
  - ii. To be in the website soon ([www.michiganaquaculture.org](http://www.michiganaquaculture.org)).
  - iii. Potential of \$1 billion annually by the year 2025.
  - iv. The plan outlines 7 key objectives with 7 initial strategic actions to achieve the objectives; beginning this year.
  - v. The potential of Great Lakes net pen farming (cage culture) and recirculating system aquaculture (RAS).
    1. Cage culture will certainly face permitting and regulatory obstacles and meet resistance from public and environmental groups.
    2. Too many negatives still associated with “aquaculture” (bad press; misinformation, etc.).

#### V. Lunch

#### VI. Updates from the QOL agencies:

- 1) Dr. Nancy Frank (MDARD)
  - i. 63 registered fish facilities in 2013, up 5 from 2012.
  - ii. MDARD conducted 20+ site visits last year.
  - iii. 2014: continue with the MI-EDC and resume talks with an Aquaculture Advisory Group.
  - iv. Nancy asked the group: “How can we (the fish health and regulatory sides) do things differently ?
- 2) Ed Eisch (MDNR)
  - i. New hunting and fishing license fee structure in place to simplify the process and generate greater revenues for the DNR.
  - ii. New fisheries division strategic plan (5 goals; available at: [www.michigandnr.com/PUBLICATIONS/PDFS/Fishing/2013-17-FD-StrategicPlan-April22-WEB.pdf](http://www.michigandnr.com/PUBLICATIONS/PDFS/Fishing/2013-17-FD-StrategicPlan-April22-WEB.pdf))
  - iii. Updates on 2013 salmon and musky spawning programs.
  - iv. Chris W. asked about co-op stocking agreements between the state and private producers. Ed replied that, other than some work with Tribes, nothing is in place.

3) Dave Fiedler (MDEQ)

- i. Dave stated that the Director of the MDEQ wants a robust MI aquaculture sector, but risk must be managed (permitting).
- ii. Dave stressed the importance and value of a well-written permit, both to the state, the public, the environment, and the permittee.
- iii. The DEQ realizes: (1) the current permitting process needs streamlining and faster turn-around, (2) much of the rules and regs are difficult to interpret, and (3) compliance assistance needs to improve.
- iv. A general permit for aquaculture facilities is difficult because of the uniqueness of each facility ... but the possibility of a general permit will be investigated.

VII. A US Aquaculture Check Off Program (Dan Vogler)

- 1) The need is spurred by the increasing global demand for seafood.
- 2) 91% of seafood consumed in the US is imported; a \$12 billion deficit.
- 3) The US contribution to global aquaculture products is 1% (about \$1 billion).
- 4) Our future depends on the social acceptance of aquaculture and investments into aquaculture.
- 5) A check off program:
  - i. Would be mandatory once established.
  - ii. Would be used only for promotion and education
  - iii. Would have the funds directed by an elected board.
  - iv. Would be created by either the USDA or Congress.
  - v. The assessment would best be based on a % of gross revenue at the first point of sale.
  - vi. There will be exclusions to this assessment.
  - vii. Chris W questioned if aquaculture industry suppliers could be included in the assessment = unknown if “legal” to do so.
  - viii. Kent H. stated that a different objective or reason for a check off may be better.
    1. Such as promoting healthier nutrition by increasing the per capita consumption of seafood in the US (vs. using the increase of US farmed seafood products).
  - ix. Dan will be presenting this idea at a number of upcoming meetings, including the US-WAS meeting in Seattle.

VIII. Aquaculture Media Relations Primer (Chris Weeks and Dan Vogler)

- 1) The need for a unified media message from the MAA
- 2) The group was given a hand-out detailing Media Talking Points.
  - i. Current US and global seafood production statistics.
  - ii. Michigan’s unique potential and opportunities, etc.
  - iii. All members were urged to consistently use this information for promotion of the aquaculture plan in MI and the US.

IX. Building A Stronger Aquaculture Association (Chris Weeks and Kent Herrick).

- 1) The need for a stronger, larger, more active aquaculture trade association.
  - i. More participation from more members, not just the historic few.
  - ii. What’s happened to the MAA committees ?
    1. Discussion of the need for committees and that we did not follow through with what was discussed at last year’s meeting.
    2. Dan V mentioned that the 2 hour MAA session at the Toledo meeting in February would be an opportune time to address committee needs.

X. The meeting adjourned at 4:10 pm.

Current 2014 MAA Membership:      4 sustaining  
   23 active  
   12 associate  
   39 total paid members

32 persons attended the meeting.

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Respectfully submitted,

Dave LaBomascus  
MAA secretary-treasurer