



MAINE  
ASSOCIATION OF  
WETLAND  
SCIENTISTS

P.O. Box 202  
Yarmouth, Maine 04096

3 August 1995

Steve Howell, President  
Maine Association of Professional Soil Scientists  
c/c RR 2, Box 285E  
Orrington, ME 04474

Dear Steve,

Regrettably, last minute personal obligations prevented me from attending the July 12th meeting summarized in your 25 July 1995 letter. My first opportunity to read the letter was 30 August 1995 which I FAXed to the MAWS Executive Committee two days later. Since then I have contacted Executive Committee and MAWS members for reaction and input summarized below.

The tentative "Minimum Qualifications..." are consistent with a summary of the meeting attended by Betsey Day with the exception of some clarification referred to later. Based on the few MAWS members I have had the opportunity to hear from, in concept, the qualifications listed are examples of some of the appropriate credentials that are necessary for delineation of wetland boundaries in accordance with the criteria of the 1987 *Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual*. However, as also discussed below, numerous mechanical/logistical elements as well as independent developments in the larger picture have been identified which calls into question the feasibility of the not, "fast-", but "on screech-track" 30 September 1995 final decision schedule suggested.

First, the listed "Minimum Qualifications..." and/or others that may be a result, must be presented to the MAWS membership before any thought of a final decision. This will be initiated in the next issue of MAWS' newsletter. Presumably members of MAPSS would also benefit by this same opportunity. Being able to recount evidence of such a dialogue with MAWS/MAPSS members in subsequent steps before the Board of Certification and/or Legislature would seem prudent in effecting changes before or by them.

Second, while the "Joint Review Panel" is an excellent example of MAPSS/MAWS collaborative review of "Minimum Qualifications...", the process by which this would be conducted needs to be explored as part of a final decision. Would this be undertaken for all MAWS members that are not Certified Soil Scientists? only MAWS members that delineate wetlands? or only wetland delineators where there has been some alleged impropriety in delineating a wetland (how ever that is identified or documented)? As has been said by a MAWS member, while well intended, the "clout" of such a Review Panel may be of question.

Third, a documentation of qualifications comparable to existing membership applications would appear to be necessary. In the bigger picture, substitution of applications from other wetland scientist certification programs might be evaluated. For example, where designated minimum guidelines have been addressed, it would be possible to utilize responses to the recent 7/5/95 deadline for submittal of the rigorous Society of Wetland Scientists (SWS) application. Alternatively, based on Betsey Day's recent monitoring of the status of the Corps of Engineer's WDCP (Wetland Delineator Certification Program) suggestions are that the Program may be implemented as early as the Spring of '96. Such a time frame would seem to address the urgency assigned to the issue by MAPSS so that WDCP applications or certification could also be considered as a substitute.

Finally, as Dave Rocque and other members of MAWS Executive Committee can attest from our workshop with the Board of Certification, "wetland science" and certification of "wetland delineators" is not a simple matter to present to the Board. As was suggested during MAWS last informal appearance before the Board, a "report of progress" by MAPSS and MAWS relative to any minimum guidelines would seem more appropriate before initiating written inquiry.

It is clear efforts at the 12 July 1995 meeting were very productive. However, for the reasons sketched out above as well as the frequent suggestion to me by MAWS members of a possible joint MAWS/MAPSS meeting over the matter, it is apparent more needs to be done before finalization of "Minimum Qualifications...". The fall workshop on the new *Field Indicators for Identifying Hydric Soils* is of great interest to all MAWS members I have talked with and 27 September 1995 sounds good. A limited time (over lunch or 1 hour, etc) of the day may be a very convenient time to get diverse input from what is anticipated to be a well attended workshop. I am scheduled to be out in the field all next week but will try to call you some evening.

Very truly,



Colen R. Peters  
1995 President-MAWS

cc: MAWS Executive Committee  
David Rocque