

**Maine Association of Wetland Scientists (MAWS) Certification Subcommittee  
October 14, 2005**

Meeting attended by Gary Emond, Mary Pierce, Ben McDougal, Don Phillips, Peter Tischbein, Lauren Stockwell, Eugenie Francine.

Upon beginning the meeting, Eugenie asked for a recap of what has been going on during previous meetings. Gary and Peter summarized what we've done; and how and why the paper evolved from a "white paper" to its current proposed format.

Gary reminded the attendees that we're behind schedule.

Gary distributed the (October 2005)-draft of the "Exploratory Paper on the Issue of Credentialing Wetland Scientists in Maine" for review. The paper is meant to be unbiased and informational highlighting the possible pros and cons of certification and the possible avenues for licensing, i.e. self certification through MAWS versus State certification process.

The intent is to provide the MAWS Executive Committee with the draft outlining 3 possible options for certification prior to the annual meeting so that the Executive Committee members could have a meaningful discussion and take apposition which could then be presented to the MAWS membership to vote on.

It is important to clearly outline to the membership all the issues involved with the certification process and the projected timeline; it is not a quick fix. At some point MAWS is going to have to demonstrate a public need for Wetland Delineator Certification should the State certification route be chosen, i.e. a Fiscal Impact Statement. This in turn will require identifying a sponsor to help draft and guide legislation. This will entail a cost. The process is too labor intensive for any one person within the current membership to take on. Even with Self-Certification an in-house committee-will be needed to oversee the process and maintain the records. Issues such as establishing the standards required for certification and establishing the protocol for infractions of the standards will take a lot of time and effort.

Although it is helpful to look at New Hampshire's certification program so as not to reinvent the wheel the impetus for New Hampshire's program was different from Maine. In Maine the push for certification stems from a number of incidences of incompetence by some out in the field due to the lack of standards that are applied uniformly across the profession. According to the Minutes of the NHAWS Board Of Directors 2/21/95, the push for certification resulted from opposition from septic system designers, engineers, and soil scientists (i.e., a turf war). During the Minutes of the BOD meeting of 4/4/95, the BOD met with these opposing groups to resolve differences, except that this time the House Resource, Recreation and Development Committee expressed reservation about certification. According to the 8/95 edition of Facts Wet regarding the current status of the bill, NH wetland scientists decided to go all out for it that year because of a perceived

lack of opposition in the House & Senate and because the primary opponent on another legislative committee was not returning to the legislature. However, “many people showed up to speak in opposition...[and that] ...more data justifying the need for certification ...” was required. Finally, according to the 12/96 edition of Facts Wet, the bill was passed. Suffice it to say that there was a long history of contention as to who is qualified to conduct wetland investigations. Thank you Don for this historic information.

A by-product of the certification program could be a list of wetland delineators and their qualification available on-line for the public to view.

Chris Dorion has alluded to a newly developed program in Minnesota that may be helpful. Hopefully Chris can track down this information.

Mary will attempt to outline what the certification process would look like should it be administered at the state level. There is a MDEP rule-making guide already available that can be used as the model (timeline & fee structure). Mary will speak to Dave Rocque to see how the Soil Scientists' Certification/Licensing program operates. In addition Mary will try to find out:

- How many licensing boards there are in the state,
- The average licensing fee,
- The average cost of certification,
- The salary of the licensing program administrator, and
- Average cost for a membership (active/professional).

How many states have wetland certifications? Researching this answer is up for grabs as I have no particular person assigned to it.

Don will outline the steps and issues involved with a Self-Certification program. Peter will share some of the notes he has written down on this topic. The information should be more in an outline/flow chart form rather than straight text.

Gary will contact Jim Boyle and tell him to hold off on pulling together the information he was looking into for the 4.0 section: Purpose and Need or to send in what he has gathered thus far. It was decided to reword the heading of section 4.0 to read, “Statement of Need” under which would include an overview of the history of what has occurred in Maine thus far, why the need for certification and the possible ramifications for not having the program (Fiscal Impact Statement?).

Other suggestions were made as to re-numbering certain topics of the forthcoming paper relative to still incomplete Draft 1 that Gary presented to the attendees for an initial review.

Any editorial comments on the draft and or suggestions need to be into Gary by November 15, 2005.

The next MAWS Certification Subcommittee meeting will be: November 22, 2005  
**Time/Place????**

Some members of the Subcommittee will meet with the MAWS Executive Committee in early December either the 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, or 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> to review the Document and go over the options presented in the document. Hopefully this will provide the Executive Committee with enough time to review the document and choose an option that will be voted on by the membership. Submissions to the Obligate need to be done around January 1<sup>st</sup>. Since the document will be large

the best way to present it to the membership is to have it available in PDF format on the MAWS web site.

Respectively submitted by Eugenie Francine