

WHAT'S NEW IN RECYCLING

The Michigan Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (PA 451 of 1994) went into effect on March 30, 1995. Among its many provisions were requirements for Solid Waste Management Plans which included information about local recycling and composting programs.

After years of stakeholder driven work, Michigan's solid waste management law (PA 451) was amended in December of 2022 with a new focus on sustainable materials management, such as recycling and composting, instead of just landfilling everything. The new name for this effort is Materials Management Planning (MMP) and has the ultimate goals of achieving a 45% residential recycling rate and cutting food waste levels in half by 2030. Michigan's current rate of recycling is around 21%, with the national average at 34%.

The MMP development is underway and Mecosta County has joined the multi-county Heartland MMP Group. It is an eight-county planning area including Mecosta, Osceola, Clare, Roscommon, Ogemaw, Gladwin, Midland and Isabella Counties. The MMP must be completed within three years and include measurable goals and objectives. The Designated Planning Agency (DPA) is Isabella County and the Materials Management Planning Committee (MMPC) has been established and appointments are being made. Each county can make three appointments. The committee membership is to include: a solid waste disposal facility operator; a composting facility operator; waste diversion, reuse or reduction [recycling] facility operator; an environmental interest group; an elected county official; an elected township official; an elected city/village official; a business that generates managed material; and, a regional planning agency. It is anticipated that Mecosta Recycles will be one of the Mecosta County appointments.

The new law makes available materials management planning grants of \$60,000 for each county in the planning area for the first three years. There are provisions for per capita grants of \$.50 for each resident, up to 600,000 residents. These grants can be used for administrative costs, MMP development, collecting and submitting data, and recycling education and outreach.

At the present time, Mecosta Recycles is not on the official statewide list of Registered Recyclers. The current Mecosta County Solid Waste

Management Plan, which will be replaced by the MMP, does identify Mecosta Recycles and the City of Big Rapids leaf composting site. However, the plan does not propose any additional recycling or composting programs. Mecosta Recycles is prepared to work with the MMPC to have the new MMP include expanded recycle options and substantial educational and outreach efforts for Mecosta County. Our efforts over the past 35 years indicate the interest and willingness of Mecosta County residents to recycle instead of landfill. We are extremely grateful for the financial support received from our many generous donors and the contributions from both residents and commercial users of our services. We are looking forward to a future with expanded recycling opportunities in Mecosta County.



November 23, 2024