

BMCC receives environmental verification for farm

BRIMLEY, Mich. — On Sept. 10, 2013, the Waishtkey Bay Farm of Bay Mills Community College received Michigan Agriculture

Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) verification for their farmstead, livestock and cropping practices. Through this verification process, the farm implemented practices and precautionary steps that help farming operations protect the environment from pollution that may be produced by farming practices.

The Waishtkey Bay Farm was established in 2011 with a mission to create a teaching, research and incubator farm in Michigan's eastern Upper Peninsula that practices and promotes sustain-

able agricultural and respects traditional Anishnabe ways of life. Steve Yanni, who is the Bay Mills Community College land grant director, said the farm chose to become MAEAP verified because they wanted to "ensure the farm was not having negative effects on the environment or the quality of life for people living near the farm." Yanni also stated it is "important as an educational facility associated with a tribally controlled college that we promote sustainable values and practices, and to take all steps necessary to produce the highest quality food possible."



Photo by Mike McCarthy, CLMCD
Waishtkey Bay Farm of Bay Mills Community College recently received the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program verification for their farmstead, livestock and cropping practices.

MAEAP is a collaborative effort of farmers, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD), Michigan Farm Bureau, commodity organizations, universities, conservation districts, conservation and environmental groups, state and federal agencies. More than 100 local coordinators and technical service providers are available to assist farmers as they move through the MAEAP process toward verification. To date, statewide more than 1,500 MAEAP verifications have been issued. "We have been very impressed with the high level of organization associated with the MAEAP process, the quality of the professionals working with MAEAP and their high levels of practical intelligence regarding the farm operation and environmental impacts," said Monica Young, Waishtkey Bay Farm manager.

MAEAP is a multi-year program allowing producers to meet farm-specific goals. The program encompasses three systems designed to help producers evaluate the environmental risks of their operation. Each system – livestock, farmstead, and cropping – examines a different aspect of a farm, as each has a different environmental impact. The program is confidential and assists farmers to comply with state and federal environmental regulations and with right to farm practices.

"The Waishtkey Bay Farm is quite unique with a well thought out mission and vision for the future," said Mike McCarthy, MAEAP technician

for the Chippewa/Luce/Mackinac Conservation District. "The Waishtkey Bay Farm took about one year to complete their verification process. It was apparent very quickly that Monica Young and Steve Yanni's passion and dedication to the farm's future is why they achieved verification. As the 2012 recipient of the Districts Earth Steward Award, and now MAEAP verified status we look forward to a continued working relationship with the Waishtkey Bay Farm."

The farm currently comprises 40 acres and includes a community garden, seasonal high tunnel (hoop house), blueberries, and beef cattle. The farm also included honey bees in their operation this year. The public can buy chickens and turkeys while in season by contacting Monica Young at 437-1011, extension 217.

To learn more about MAEAP visit www.maeap.org, and for more information about the Chippewa Luce Mackinac Conservation District visit www.clmcd.org, or to have your farm become involved in MAEAP contact the Mike McCarthy at 632-9611, extension 101 or email at mike.mccarthy@macd.org.