

SW MI Materials Management Planning Committee Agenda

June 16, 2025

1:00 p.m.

Location: ***Pokagon Band Tribal Police Department's Emergency Operations Center,
58620 Sink Rd, Dowagiac, MI 49047***

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

Kalli Marshall, VBCD, Chair

2. Approval of Agenda

3. Approval of April 21, 2025 Minutes

4. Approval of May 19, 2025 Minutes

5. Communications

6. Old Business

Grant Update

7. Hearings

Food Waste Program Best Practices

Bekah Schrag, DPA

8. New Business

Solutions Activity

Bekah Schrag, DPA

Goal Review

Bekah Schrag, DPA

8. Public Comment

9. Miscellaneous

MRC Conference Takeaways

Subcommittees

10. Adjournment

*Next meeting will be held July 21 at 1:00 p.m. at Pokagon Band Community Center,
27043 Potawatomi Trail Dowagiac, MI 49047*

For questions about accessibility or to request accommodations, please contact Bekah Schrag at (574) 312-9148 or by email at schragb@swmpc.org



Minutes

SW MI Materials Management Planning Committee (MMPC)

Monday, April 21, 2025, at 1:00 p.m.

LOCATION: Pokagon Band Community Center
27043 Potawatomi Trail Dowagiac, MI 49047

Role	Member	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Nov	Dec
Solid Waste Facility Operator	Bob Kras	IP	A	IP	IP							
Hauler	Christopher Phillips (Vice-Chair)	IP	E	IP	IP							
Materials Recovery Facility Operator	Donovan Kelley		IP	E	IP							
Composting Facility Operator	Kim Haneberg		IP	IP								
Waste Diversion, Reuse, Reduction Facility Operator	Sheila Bergen				IP							
Environmental Interest Group	Kalli Marshall (Chair)	IP	IP	IP	IP							
Elected Township Official	David Kuhn	IP	IP	IP	IP							
Elected City/Village Official	Deah Muth	IP	IP	V	IP							
Business that generates Managed Materials	Al Pscholka	IP	IP	E	E							
Regional Planning Agency	John Egelhaaf	IP	IP	IP	IP							
Sovereign Nation	Jennifer Kanine	IP	IP	IP	V							
Berrien County												
Elected County or Municipal Official	Dave Vollrath	IP	IP	IP	IP							
Business that Generates Managed Materials	Jeff Doroh	IP	IP	IP	E							
Cass County												
Elected County or Municipal Official	Roseann Marchetti (Secretary)	IP	IP	E	IP							
Business that Generates Managed Materials	Amy Huser	IP	IP	IP	IP							
Van Buren County												
Elected County or Municipal Official	Paul Schincariol	IP	A	A	A							
Business that Generates Managed Materials	Robert Baran	IP	IP	A	IP							
IP - Present in Person; V - Participating remotely; E - Excused absence; A - Unexcused absence; A blank spot means the position is vacant												

PUBLIC PRESENT:

Adams, Jill
Graves, Genevieve
Field, Jaysen
Krcmarik, Jeff
Marchetti, Jerry
Poole, Grant

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

Chair Kalli Marshall called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm. She took roll call, and a quorum was present.

2. Approval of Agenda

Roseann Marchetti moved to **“ACCEPT THE AGENDA.”** Christopher Phillips seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

3. Approval of Minutes

Roseann Marchetti moved to **“APPROVE MARCH 17, 2025 MINUTES.”** Deah Muth seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

4. Communications

Bekah Schrag informed the committee that the Materials Management Grant has been approved by the EGLE planning staff, and a draft grant agreement has been written that will need to be approved by their finance department.

5. Old Business

ChewMax Pet Products

Bob shares challenges his business faces with recycling, including cost-effectiveness and uncertainty about proper recycling practices.

Lake Michigan College

Al Pscholka was not present at the meeting.

6. Hearings

MRF – RecycleWorks

The committee discussed tabling the MRF hearing to later in the meeting to accommodate shift breaks.

John Egelhaaf moved to **“TABLE THE MRF HEARING.”** Roseann Marchetti seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Hauler - Best Way

Christopher Phillips discussed the challenges and considerations in the management of recycling collection systems. He emphasized the importance of consumer education and willingness to pay for recycling services. The cost-

effectiveness of collection varies between urban and rural areas due to differences in population density and fixed costs for staffing and equipment. Phillips explained that recycling is a commodity with fluctuating values, and processing fees have increased. He also mentioned that Michigan's recycling policy aims for a 45% residential recycling rate, and describes different collection methods like subscription-based and contracted services. Contamination, particularly from plastic bags, was highlighted as a major issue in recycling streams.

7. New Business

Facility Capacity

Bekah Schrag discussed the current capacity of waste management facilities in the region. This included landfill capacity if waste is disposed of at the same rate, Recycling Works MRF, and compost facilities in the region. It was mentioned that The City of Dowagiac Compost Facility will no longer be considered a compost facility under the new state statute, and no facilities in the region accept food waste.

Schrag outlined state-mandated goals for recycling and waste reduction, including the benchmark recycling standards and the food waste reduction goal. She introduced the SMART method for goal-setting and presented various aspects of the recycling process, including collection methods and material flow.

Diversion Requirements Goal Exploration

The group conducted an activity to brainstorm ideas and goals for recycling management. A major theme was the need to boost public trust and participation through education, transparency, and consistent communication—such as standardized signage and better outreach to assure residents that recyclables are actually being processed. Infrastructure improvements were also a top priority, with strong support for county-wide recycling access, manned and rural drop-off sites, curbside services, and local recycling offices. Members emphasized the need for sustained funding, both from state and local sources, and proposed data-driven strategies like hiring consultants, using GIS mapping, and requiring haulers to report tonnage. Reducing plastic waste, limiting contamination, and creating business opportunities through community-level recycling efforts were also noted. School involvement, tech integration (like AI messaging and battery drop-offs), and legislative changes—such as requiring haulers to offer recycling—rounded out a comprehensive set of goals to support a more effective, accessible, and circular recycling system.

The group conducted an activity to brainstorm ideas and goals for organics management, focusing on food waste reduction and composting. A major theme was expanding composting access through curbside pickup, rural drop-off sites, neighborhood programs, and regional facilities. Many responses emphasized the need for public education on food waste, composting practices, and promoting awareness through social media, schools, and community events. There was also strong support for engaging youth through school programs and partnerships with groups like FFA and 4H. Several members advocated for funding new or existing composting businesses, providing compost for public use, and integrating food recovery initiatives like redirecting edible food from restaurants and stores to pantries. Suggestions included baseline data collection, consultant support, and pilot programs to guide future strategies.

The group conducted an activity to brainstorm ideas and goals for other diversion methods. Including electronics, textiles, and hazardous materials. Committee members emphasized the importance of expanding waste diversion through better infrastructure, education, and access. Key ideas included establishing full-time or regularly scheduled drop-off sites for hazardous household waste (HHW), electronics, tires, mattresses, textiles, batteries, and medications—ideally with at least one comprehensive site per county quadrant. Education was a recurring theme, with members calling for campaigns to raise awareness about safe disposal, the environmental impacts of improper waste handling, and benefits of reducing electronics consumption. Suggestions also included partnering with or promoting businesses that handle difficult-to-recycle items, supporting textile and thrift donation programs, and capturing diversion data for state reporting. Some proposed financial incentives or penalties, such as fines for hazardous items in trash or rewards for community cleanups. There was also support for regional materials management offices to coordinate efforts across counties.

Roseann Marchetti moved to **“UNTABLE THE MRF HEARING.”** Deah Muth seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

MRF Hearing

Donovan Kelley provided a virtual tour of the recycling facility, explaining that they process about 500 tons of recyclable material daily from Northern Indiana and Southwest Michigan. He highlighted the commodity nature of recycling, emphasizing that it shouldn't be free and needs to be paid for. The facility operates two plants: one for direct bale operations and another for single-stream recycling. Kelley provided a

detailed tour of a recycling facility, explaining the process of sorting and baling various materials.

He described the machinery used, including optical sorters, magnets, eddy currents, and balers, and highlighted challenges such as lithium-ion batteries and plastic bags. The facility is undergoing upgrades to improve efficiency, particularly for aluminum can sorting. Kelley emphasized that recycling is often an expensive operation for waste management companies, with low profit margins and high overhead costs. He also mentioned the importance of human workers for accuracy in sorting, especially compared the facility's robot.

Current market prices and the negative impacts of tariffs on recyclable materials were also discussed.

8. Public Comment

None.

9. Miscellaneous

None.

10. Adjournment

Christopher Phillips moved to adjourn the meeting. Deah Muth supported the motion. Chair Marshall declared the meeting adjourned at 3:07 pm.

Submitted by:
Bekah Schrag

Date:
April 25, 2025



Minutes

SW MI Materials Management Planning Committee (MMPC)

Monday, May 19, 2025, at 1:00 p.m.

Location: Pokagon Band Community Center
27043 Potawatomi Trail Dowagiac, MI 49047

Role	Member	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Nov	Dec
Solid Waste Facility Operator	Bob Kras	IP	A	IP	IP	E						
Hauler	Christopher Phillips (Vice-Chair)	IP	E	IP	IP	A						
Materials Recovery Facility Operator	Donovan Kelley		IP	E	IP	A						
Composting Facility Operator												
Waste Diversion, Reuse, Reduction Facility Operator	Sheila Bergen				IP	IP						
Environmental Interest Group	Kalli Marshall (Chair)	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP						
Elected Township Official	David Kuhn	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP						
Elected City/Village Official	Deah Muth	IP	IP	V	IP	V						
Business that generates Managed Materials	Al Pscholka	IP	IP	E	E	A						
Regional Planning Agency	John Egelhaaf	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP						
Sovereign Nation	Jennifer Kanine	IP	IP	IP	V	A						
Berrien County												
Elected County or Municipal Official	Dave Vollrath	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP						
Business that Generates Managed Materials	Jeff Doroh	IP	IP	IP	E	A						
Cass County												
Elected County or Municipal Official	Roseann Marchetti (Secretary)	IP	IP	E	IP	IP						
Business that Generates Managed Materials	Amy Huser	IP	IP	IP	IP	E						
Van Buren County												
Elected County or Municipal Official	Paul Schincariol	IP	A	A	A	A						
Business that Generates Managed Materials	Robert Baran	IP	IP	A	IP	IP						
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Public Present

Tietema, Dan
Palthe, Justin
Bodtke, Jeff
Adams, Jill

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

Chair Kalli Marshall called the meeting to order at 1:05. Role call was taken, and it was established that NO quorum was present.

2. Approval of Agenda

Approval of the agenda was unable to be conducted due to a lack of quorum.

3. Approval of Minutes

Approval of the minutes was unable to be conducted due to a lack of quorum.

4. Communications

None.

5. Old Business

Lake Michigan College

Al Pscholka was not present at the meeting.

6. Hearings

Compost Facility – Organicycle

Dan Tietema, owner of Organicycle, presented on curbside composting and landfill waste reduction. He shared his experience in the waste management industry, highlighting composting as a key strategy for addressing landfill capacity challenges. Organicycle has expanded services from Kent County to Holland, Muskegon, and Kalamazoo, with potential growth into South Bend.

Tietema described the composting process, which involves mixing carbon and nitrogen sources and maintaining specific conditions over 4–6 months. While commercial accounts are prioritized for efficiency, residential participation remains vital. Strategies for residential programs in East Grand Rapids, Holland, and Kalamazoo include education, incentives, and monitoring. Facility tours are also used to promote public understanding. Tietema noted the need for residential customer commitment and proper cart sizes, and the importance of communication with commercial clients to reduce contamination. Organicycle partners with farmers to maintain compost quality and manage land use impacts.

Tietema emphasized the importance of transparency and reducing contamination to maintain credibility. Trash in compost increases operational costs, and rising landfill tip fees are anticipated. Expansion into southwest Michigan is being explored, with a site ideally located 45–60 miles from major population centers. Organicycle aims to divert 12 million pounds of waste annually, with a goal to double that in two years. The use of compostable products was discussed, along with benefits and challenges.

Hydro Aluminum

Sheil Bergen described Hydro's aluminum recycling process, which involves collecting scrap aluminum from various sources, melting it down, and refining it to meet customer specifications. 25% of the recycled aluminum comes from construction and demolition of windowpanes and door frames, and another large percentage of material comes from their client manufacturing process. Before processing the aluminum, they have to ensure it is completely dry to avoid a large explosion incident. Once the aluminum is dried, it is melted down, refined to the alloy desired by their client, and formed into large cylinders to be sold to their client. Hydro is able to add different metals and alloys to fit the needs of their clients.

Hydro can recycle aluminum multiple times without losing quality, unlike some plastics. The facility processes around 18 to 19 million pounds of aluminum per month and is expanding to meet increasing demand from manufacturers, particularly in the construction industry. Bergen mentioned that Hydro plans to eventually enter the automotive market.

Green Earth Electronics

Jeff Bodtke provided an overview of how Green Earth Electronics Recycling was founded and discussed the company's current operations and challenges. The business, based in St. Joseph, primarily serves commercial clients by focusing on reuse, resale, and recycling of electronic equipment to maximize value.

A significant portion of the discussion centered on the growing complexity of handling batteries, particularly lithium-ion batteries, due to associated fire risks and safety concerns. While the company also facilitates residential recycling through one-day events, these are less financially viable compared to their commercial services. Bodtke suggested that permanent drop-off locations may offer a more efficient and sustainable solution for residential recycling. However, Green Earth Electronics is grateful to the community that they operate in, and provide residential recycling as a service to give back to their community.

The presentation concluded with an introduction to their sister company, Maverick Industrial Sales, which specializes in recycling industrial assets and automation equipment from manufacturing facilities.

7. New Business

Solutions Activity

This item was not discussed due to lack of a quorum.

Goal Review

This item was not discussed due to lack of a quorum.

8. Public Comment

None.

9. Miscellaneous

MRC Conference Takeaways

This item was not discussed due to lack of a quorum.

Subcommittees

This item was not discussed due to lack of a quorum.

10. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Next steps

- Becca to send out a reminder about the next meeting location at the Pokagon Band Tribal Police Department's Emergency Operations Center.
 - Jill to send the attorney's presentation on the tax elimination proposal to Becca for distribution to interested committee members.
 - Committee members to consider composting options and potential public-private partnerships for the region.
 - John to assist in identifying potential locations for composting facilities in the area.
 - Committee members to explore the possibility of establishing permanent drop-off sites for electronic waste in their respective counties.
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Composting Initiatives and Waste Reduction

The discussion focused on composting initiatives and food scrap programs, with SWMPC sharing their experience in Van Buren County and emphasizing the importance of education to increase community acceptance. They highlighted that composting works effectively when combined with the right materials and conditions, aiming to divert 12 million pounds of waste annually and potentially double that in the next two years. The conversation also touched on the use of compostable products, their benefits, and challenges, while Sheila Berkin introduced her company's recycling efforts, including electronic waste collection for employees.

Recycling Facility Global Operations Overview

The discussion focused on the geographical scope and operational logistics of recycling facilities, particularly for aluminum and electronics. Sheena explained that their Minneapolis facility processes aluminum waste from a large geographical area, including Texas and the West, and collaborates with nearby facilities like postal operations for material exchange. Jeff elaborated on the international nature of precious metal recovery, noting that different processes and grades of metals require specialized facilities in various global locations, including Japan, Europe, and potential sites in Texas and Chicago, to optimize efficiency and reduce shipping costs.

Recycling Operations and Safety Challenges

The meeting focused on discussing the operations and challenges of a recycling company, particularly in handling electronics and batteries. The company, based in Saint Joe, primarily serves commercial entities, focusing on reusing equipment and maximizing value through resale and recycling. They highlighted the increasing complexity of managing batteries, especially lithium-ion batteries, due to fire risks and safety concerns. The company also operates residential recycling events, though these are less profitable than commercial services. They suggested that permanent drop-off sites could be more effective than one-day events for residential recycling. The discussion concluded with an overview of their sister company, Maverick Industrial Sales, which focuses on recycling industrial assets and automation equipment from manufacturing companies.

Composting and Partnership Updates

The conversation ended with discussions about composting initiatives and public-private partnerships, with John offering to help find locations. The group was informed about upcoming changes to their meeting location in June, which will be held at the Pokagon Band Tribal Police Department's Emergency Operations Center. Two members, including Kelly Marshall from the conservation district, were recognized at the Michigan Great Southwest Sustainable Business Forum Green Gala.