



2023 Summary of Activities:

WRRMA continued to move forward with the goal of increasing the quantity of high-quality recycling for WRRMA communities. The primary focus of 2023 has been pursuing jointly contracted curbside collection services. This year WRRMA pursued education internally for Board members and continued to provide external support through the Waste Wizard, a website plug in that residents can use to know what is and what is not recyclable.

WRRMA is making real progress towards jointly contracting for curbside services, including trash, recycling, and yard waste as a group of municipalities. Multiple interested WRRMA communities had Attorney Bob Davis at municipal meetings to present the concept and answer questions. The Cities of Ypsilanti and Saline and Townships of Pittsfield and Ypsilanti have agreed to be named in a request for proposal and have conveyed their feedback and specific considerations. The current draft aims to realize financial and additional goal-oriented benefits. To this end, the RFP includes a request for an alternate proposal that would result in an individual processor agreement with a Material Recovery Facility and a compost yard as well as a separate proposal for year-round compost collection. If the RFP is put out and favorable bids are received, the municipality would contract with WRRMA and WRRMA would contract with a service provider. Per WRRMA's Articles of Incorporation, consideration and approval from the respective municipal legislative body would be required prior to any contractual arrangement.

WRRMA learned about accepted materials at a local material recovery facility (MRF) and about an emerging technology that could replicate prior educational activities pursued through a grant. The Recycle Ann Arbor MRF Director of Operations provided a question-and-answer session and sorted through potentially recyclable materials the Board members brought. Later, the Board learned about an emerging technology that could advance the WRRMA goal of improving the quality of the recycling stream. The tech company Prairie Robotics has a digitized education and outreach process that can provide individualized direct feedback to residents. Furthermore, the Board stayed up to date on the progression of a proposed replacement Drop Off station owned by the City of Ann Arbor and anticipated to be operated by Recycle Ann Arbor. WRRMA had a preliminary conversation to determine if there was a desire to jointly contract for comprehensive drop off service entry for member communities.

An educational grant initiated in 2022 continued activities into 2023. A survey of residents who didn't put their recycling out to the curb or only did so infrequently found that: residents overwhelmingly agree that recycling has a positive impact and is worth the effort, residents would find it helpful to have more information about what is recyclable and information about what those materials are turned into, and that roughly 1/2 to 2/3 of respondents would take a brief educational class if there was a rebate. The survey results were not statistically significant.

A follow up sample audit of the recycling materials stream in February found that for WRRMA as a whole the overall contamination rate increased and reached close to 2021 results. In part due to a severe storm and resulting power outage, only 13 samples were able to be collected compared to 22 or more samples in prior audits. Unacceptable paper, including shredded, waxed, and soiled (such as dirty paper plates), and bagged waste and bagged recycling made up the highest percentage of contamination.