



2024 Summary of Activities:

WRRMA continued to move forward with the goal of increasing the quantity of high-quality recycling for WRRMA communities. Board members have agreed upon a regular education and outreach method and cycle. The focus of 2024 continues to be developing a collective service contract which is anticipated to be released in early 2025. Finally, WRRMA staff provided updates on the Countywide Materials Management Planning process and proposed state legislation.

WRRMA provides a recycling search engine for residents to help them understand what is recyclable in their community. The “Waste Wizard” is incorporated into the front page of the WRRMA website. Several member municipalities incorporate the website into their waste and recycling page as a resource for residents. As of October 21, 2024, the Waste Wizard had 8,528 searches from 4,660 residents.

The Board discussed options for how they’d like to pursue education and outreach and agreed upon a regular three-year cycle. In the first year, WRRMA will collect data. A contamination audit is scheduled for mid-November of 2024. The results of the audit will be used to create messaging in 2025. In the final year of the cycle, WRRMA will deliver educational messaging about the recycling process with an aim to provide clarity and reduce confusion about how the recycling process works.

The largest initiative of 2023-2024 has been pursuing a collective service contract for trash, recycling, and yard waste with the same or better service level at a lower price than what could be obtained by an individual municipality. With an increased number of households serviced, the authority can leverage increased negotiating power and take advantage of increased efficiencies. WRRMA would manage the contract, answer phone calls, and resolve service issues. WRRMA released a request for proposals in December 2023, received competitive pricing for services, and partially negotiated a contract at which point it had to discontinue as two municipalities pursued a 1-year contract extension with their existing provider. Now, four interested members’ contracts will expire in September 2025. WRRMA is collecting member input and anticipates releasing an RFP in January 2025. Interested members are asked to sign a contract between WRRMA and the municipality for WRRMA to handle their waste conditional upon certain terms such as realizing cost savings. Any expenditure of over \$5,000 per community would have to be authorized by the member’s legislative body.

The State of Michigan has amended Act 451 to require Counties to have a Materials Management Plan. County staff contracted by WRRMA provide regular updates on the initial stages of the planning process as it develops. County staff also provide occasional updates on legislative bills that can impact member municipalities such as waste tip fee surcharges, extended producer responsibility bills for packaging, and bills that would enable the County to regulate single use plastics commonly referred to as the “bag ban ban.”