

2019 Saginaw Bay Agricultural Conservation Awards Selection Committee



Tim Boring
Michigan Agri-Business Association

Tim Boring is Vice President of the Michigan Agri-Business Association. MABA represents more than 400 agri-business members, providing leadership on the direction of agriculture in the state and around the world. Tim works primarily on agronomic issues, including crop management, crop quality standards, new market potentials and water quality challenges. He also operates his family's six generation farm in Stockbridge, where he's worked to rethink his cropping system with the goal of significantly increasing long-term profitability. Tim received his MS and PhD in Crop and Soil Sciences from Michigan State University.



Terry Stiles
The CISCO Companies

Terry is a Territory Manager for The CISCO Companies, covering the northern half of Michigan, the Upper Peninsula and the Thumb. She grew up on a family dairy farm in Frankenmuth, MI and now lives in Gaylord with her husband, Bill. Her primary role is selling cover crops and small seeds, but she also assists dealers and growers with seed recommendations and seed selection. Prior to joining The CISCO Companies, she was a Product Coordinator in seed for American Feed and Farm Supply.



Laura Campbell
Michigan Farm Bureau

Laura Campbell manages the Agricultural Ecology Department at the Michigan Farm Bureau. She and her team assist farmers, government agencies, and legislators with developing and improving environmental practices and regulations important to agriculture. Laura co-chairs the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program ([MAEAP](#)) Advisory Council, which reviews and develops standards for the Program's nationally recognized environmental stewardship program. She also serves on the state's Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices ([GAAMP](#)) review teams, which establish practice criteria for farms under Michigan's *Right to Farm* law. Laura works with statewide coalitions on farm bill conservation programs, water use and quality, and nutrient management practices. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Policy from Michigan State University and previously served with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources in its Minerals Office, which manages mining and oil and gas development on state lands. Laura, her husband Ben, and their son live near East Lansing.



Ryan Smith
Delta Institute

Ryan leads Delta Institute's Land Stewardship Initiative, including the areas of climate, agriculture, water, and forestry. He is instrumental in fostering new projects and partnerships, particularly around green infrastructure, agriculture, conservation finance, watershed prioritization and environmental markets. Prior to joining Delta Institute, he served as the Operations Manager for Cardno, managing the environmental and ecological restoration division for the Illinois office. Prior to Cardno, he worked 12+ years for the Butler Soil and Water Conservation District in Hamilton, Ohio implementing conservation best management practices in the agriculture and urban arena. He is a

Certified Conservation Planner and holds a Bachelors in Earth and Environmental Sciences from Wright State University.



Michael Daskam
Natural Resources Conservation Services

With 15 years of service at the NRCS I have had the opportunity to serve in multiple regions and work to conserve a variety of resources. I began my career in Montrose, CO working to conserve water quality and quantity in the Colorado River Basin. Moving across the mountains to the southeast corner of the state I later worked in Holly, CO where we addressed water quantity, soil erosion and rangeland management. 2013 brought the exciting opportunity to move my family to Michigan to work in Huron County with the great folks at the Bad Axe Field Office. My appreciation for the tremendous resources we have in our area continues to grow. Whether building soil health on cropland, managing forest land for health and

sustainability, or applying practices that improve water quality in our streams and lakes, I enjoy working with landowners and partners to accomplish these important tasks so that simultaneously, our production systems and environment can thrive.



Tom Young
Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Tom Young is a Resource Analyst for the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. Tom received his BS degree from MSU in Resource Development. For 15 years, he worked on nonpoint source watershed projects in the Saginaw Bay Basin for the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality. For the last 15 years, Tom has served as a verifier for Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program. He works with farmers to promote environmental stewardship and agricultural sustainability in the Saginaw Bay Watershed.



Joel Leland
Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program

Joel Leland works as a Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) Technician with the Saginaw Conservation District. This is an innovative, proactive program that helps farms of all sizes and all commodities voluntarily prevent or minimize agricultural pollution risks. Working with many producers throughout these two counties for the last three years has given him an understanding of the agriculture of the region, ranging from apples to sugar beets and everything in between. Joel has a bachelor's degree in Business Administration along with an associate degree in Agricultural Technology. He has worked to become a Certified Nutrient Management Specialist through the Natural Resource

Conservation Service, allowing him to write and certify nutrient management plans for producers throughout both counties. Prior to his work with the Saginaw Conservation District, Joel worked as an environmental consultant for eight years. He sits on the Farm Bureau Board of Directors for Shiawassee county where he lives. Joel manages the family farm and raises small batches of hogs every year.



Steve Tait
Tait Farms

Steve Tait farms ~1,000 acres near Caseville, MI in Huron County. His rotation is primarily corn-soybeans-wheat, but occasionally he'll do sugar beets or dry beans as well. His conservation practices include continuous no-till, multi-species cover crops and nutrient management. Since adopting his conservation practices eight years ago, Steve has been able to increase his overall organic matter from 1.5% up to 2.5% and has also been able to reduce his fertilizer inputs. Steve is a user of, and rep for, the farm

monitoring program *AgSpectrum*. Steve rents some farmland and owns the rest, but All his fields are within six miles of the farm headquarters. Tait Farms is a multi-generational farm, but Steve says he tries to treat his rented ground as his own too. In addition to himself and his wife Cynthia, the Tait's also employ his teenage children who help on the farm. In 2016, Steve enrolled his farm into the Saginaw Bay RCPP program to expand his use of cover crops. Through this program, Steve was able to save 242 tons of sediment from local waterways. Not only was this one of the largest RCPP projects (1,696 acres treated), it also had a very high per-acre sediment reduction potential. Steve's project saved an average of 286 pounds of sediment per acre, which was the second highest of any project in 2016. This project was also ranked as "High priority" because of situation within a "Severely Impacted" sub watershed of the Pigeog/Pinnebog Watershed. In 2018, Steve was recognized for these achievements and received TNC's first ever Conservation Excellence "Impact Award". Steve now serves on TNC's Farmer Advisory Group, where he provides guidance and feedback on conservation practices and programs.



Lori Phalen
Michigan Association of Conservation Districts