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Developing social license for trout aquaculture in the North Central region

Amy te Plate-Church
February 15, 2023





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Center for Food Integrity

*Our Mission
To Help Today's Food System Earn
Consumer Trust*



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CFI Members



LOCAL NEWS

Environmentalists concerned about proposed salmon farm

by: Jamie Duffy, Ethan Dahlen
Posted: Jun 22, 2022 / 10:59 AM EDT
Updated: Jun 23, 2022 / 06:53 AM EDT

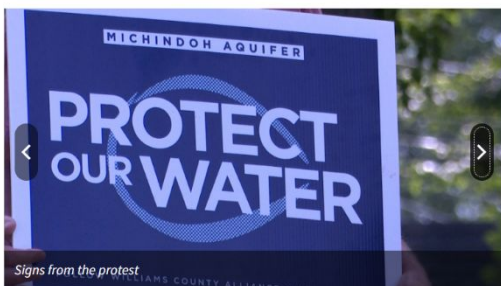
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PIONEER, Ohio (WANE) – Protestors showed up to a town hall meeting Wednesday night in Pioneer, Ohio, voicing concerns about a salmon farm under construction.

About a dozen protestors were talking amongst themselves about Pioneer Ohio's water system, and beyond.

"Well, it's your drinking water and so I'm kind of concerned about the fact that it's going to be going down the river to you guys in Fort Wayne"

- SUSAN CATTERALL







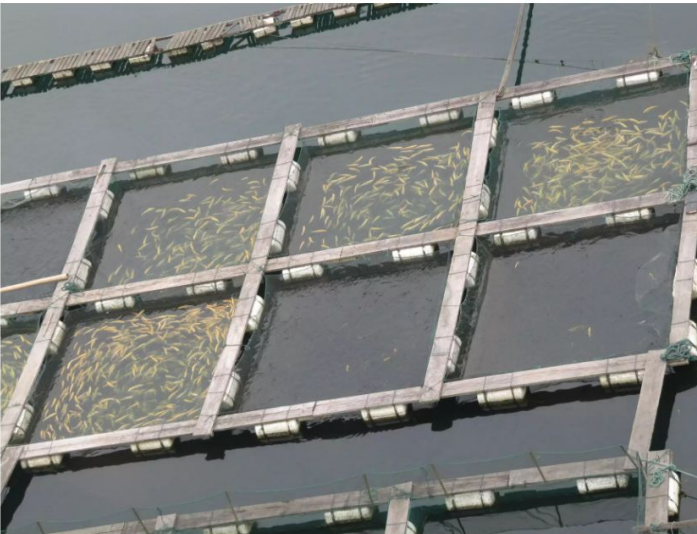
MICHIGAN RADIO  n p r

Michigan Radio
All Things Considered

Fish farming in Great Lakes subject of hearings in Lansing this week

Michigan Radio | By Virginia Gordan
Published February 2, 2016 at 6:15 PM EST



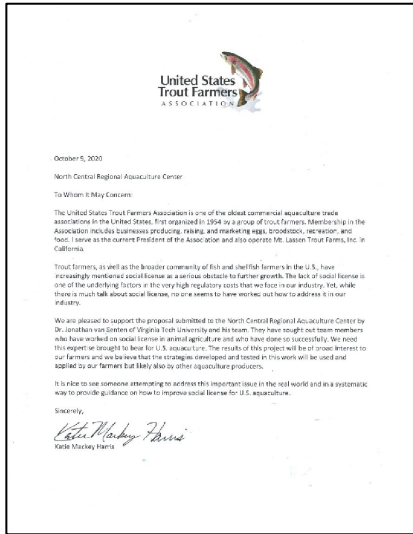
ivanWalsh.com / Flickr Creative Commons <http://MichRad.io/1LKrUJh>

Hearings are underway in the State House this week on two opposing bills about fish farming in the Great Lakes.



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Call to Address Social License



October 2020

“Trout farmers, as well as the broader community of fish and shellfish farmers in the U.S., have increasingly mentioned social license as a serious obstacle to further growth. The lack of social license is one of the underlying factors in the very high regulatory costs that we face in our industry. Yet, while there is much talk about social license, no one seems to have worked out how to address it in our industry.”



Farmers Call to Address Social

License

Indiana Farmer, October 2020

“As a fish farmer who works hard to raise a high-quality sustainable project, I do not want to lose customers because of misperceptions, no perception, or undeserving negative beliefs of our industry.”

Wisconsin Farmer, June 2020

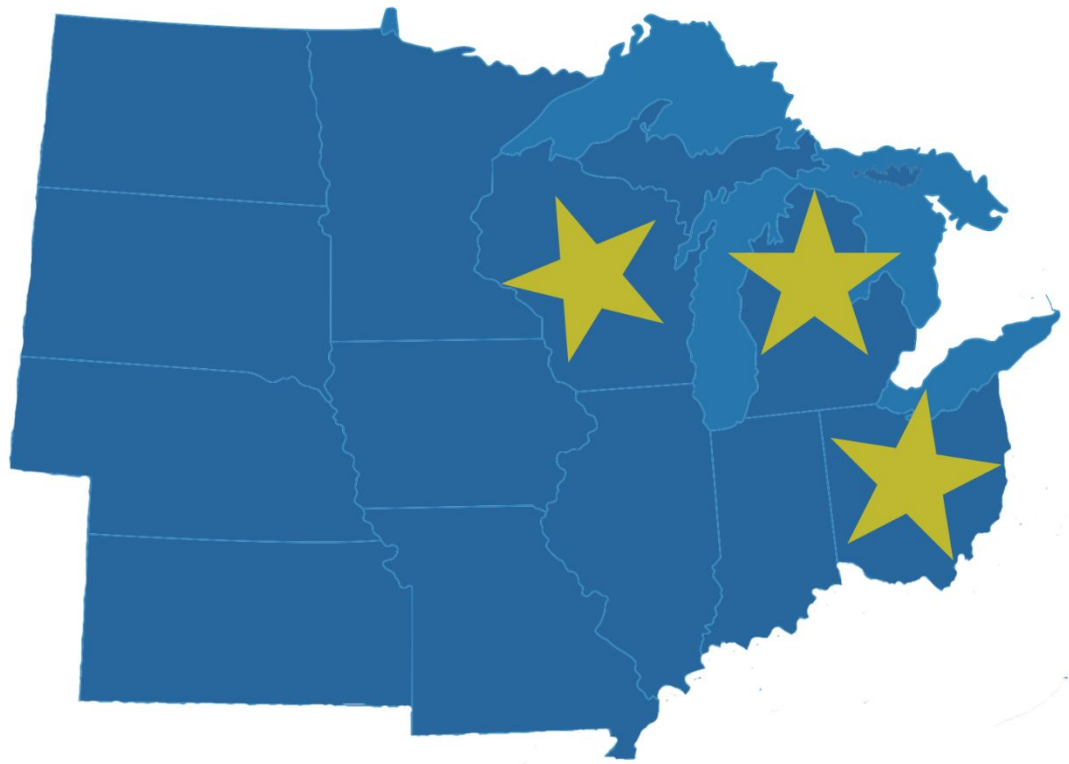
“We in the trout industry seem to be nearly always under attack from mis-communications and even our regulatory agencies.”

Michigan Farmer, October 2020

“Without the development of broad social license in the U.S., aquaculture will struggle to develop to its potential and to succeed in the production of fresh, local seafood products that are in demand. This is the great irony of the current situation: the public says that they want fresh, local, sustainable products on their dinner plates, but they don’t seem to be able to envision how aquaculture can be a part of that.”



Developing Social License for Trout Aquaculture in the North Central Region



Project Objectives

- To **map social license in selected locations** in Michigan, Wisconsin and Ohio
- To **design and implement specific intervention strategies** for each location.
- To **evaluate the degree of change in social license** before and after intervention.
- To **disseminate project results** to aquaculture producers, Extension specialists, and the broader aquaculture producer and scientific community.



Building Trust in Food and Farming



Freedom to Operate Depends on Trust

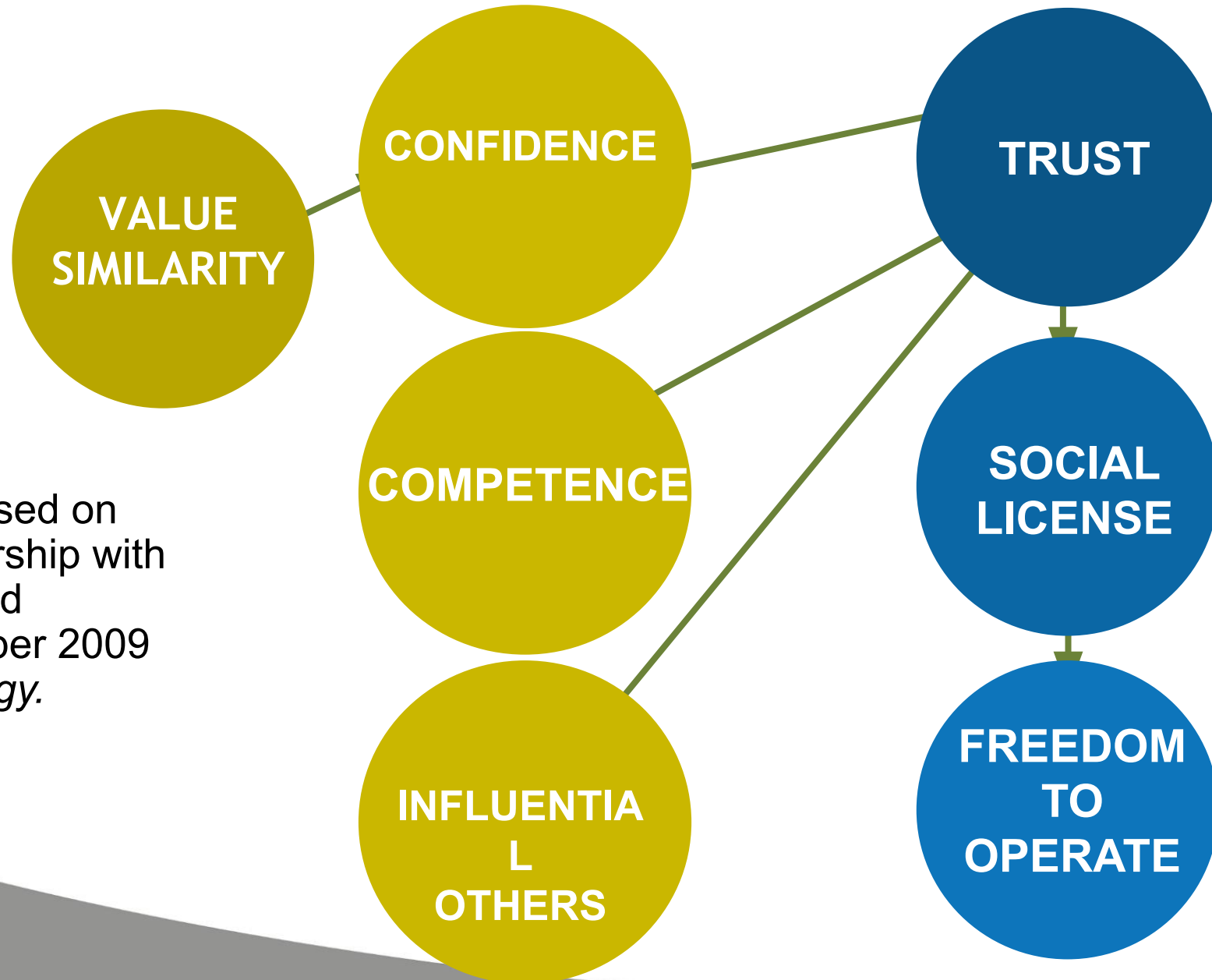
Public Trust: A belief that activities are consistent with social expectations and the **values** of the community. “Doing what is right.”

Social License: The privilege to operate with minimal formalized restrictions (legislation, regulation, market-driven).

Freedom to operate your business in the way you feel is best, because you have earned public trust



Key Factors of Trust in Food

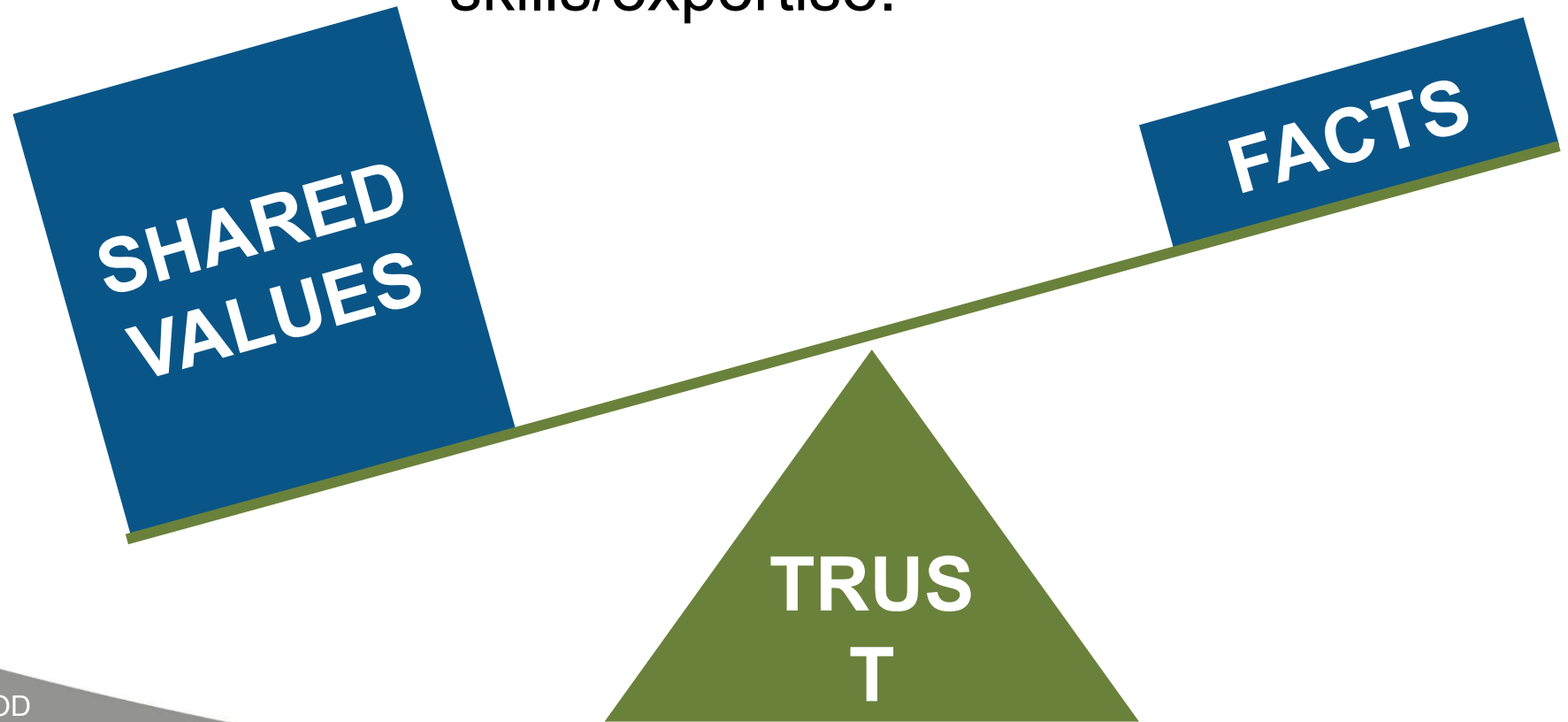


The Trust ModelSM is based on research done in partnership with Iowa State University and published in the December 2009 *Journal of Rural Sociology*.



Shared Values Versus Facts

Shared values are 3-5x more important to build trust than sharing facts or demonstrating technical skills/expertise.



Leading with Shared Values

“I understand you care about water quality, our rivers and streams. As a fish farmer, it’s important to us also. Having clean, fresh water is essential for healthy fish and for my family. We live here, too, drinking the water and eating fish we raise.

“I hear you’re concerned about possible contaminants in our waters. I’ve seen the headlines also. Producing safe, nutritious fish is important to me. That’s why on our farm, we (test the water, monitor,)”





Transparency Builds Trust



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Historical Defensive Issues Management

1. **Delay** and hope it goes away
 2. **Rely on science.**
If that doesn't work, get more science
And if that doesn't work, repeat again
 3. **Talk about economic impact**, primarily for our sector
 4. **Attack** those who attack us
 5. If not your issue, **keep your head down** and offer quiet moral support to those under attack
- ... but don't get involved for fear of being next!

What's Missing

? Shared Values



Common Ground

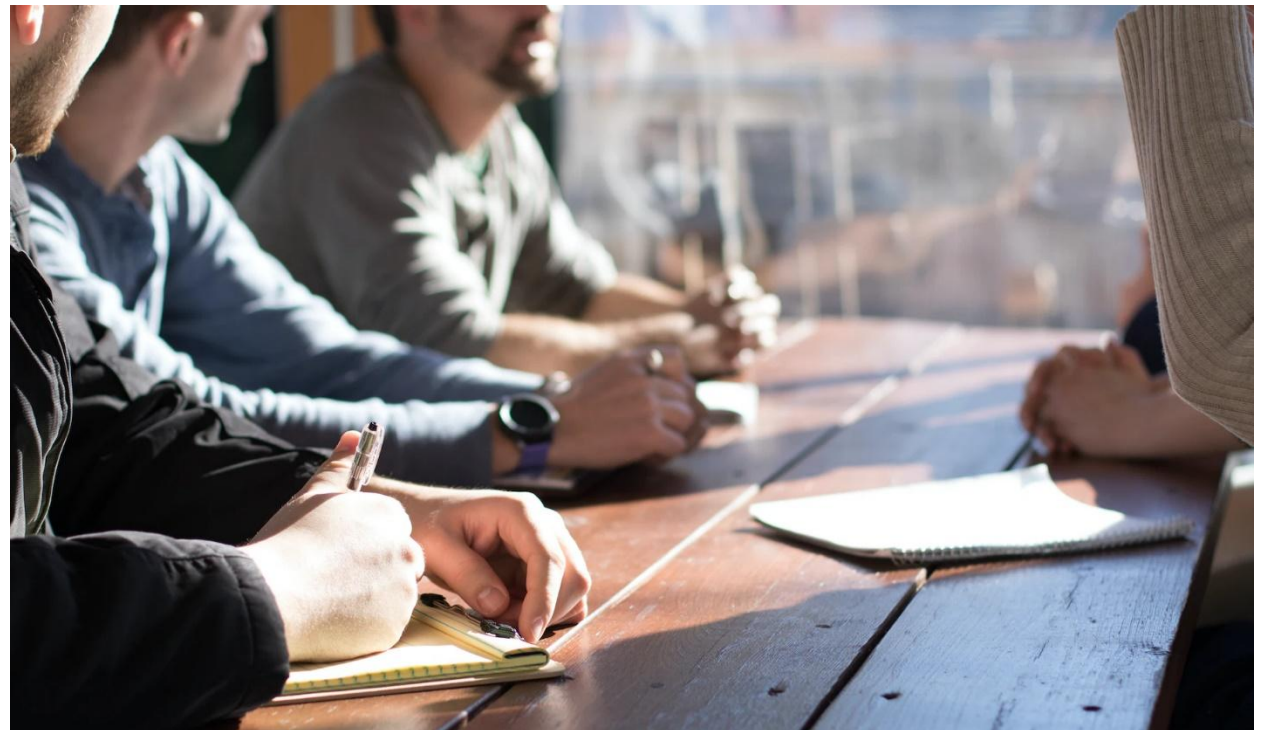


Another Approach to Build Trust



Community Advisory Panels (CAP)

A structured process for **building relationships**, **sharing information** and **resolving concerns** that help align community expectations with performance of the farm or company.



Community Advisory Panels: Successful Model



Pork



Dairy farm expansion



Beef plants



RAS Salmonid Production, Pioneer, Ohio



- “Typical” Community Advisory Panel
 - Local concern around an actively-growing operation
 - Concern localized within a specific community, well-defined geography

- Approach / Status
 - June 2022: Community town hall
 - Established CAP with 9 local residents
 - November 2022 – identified concerns
 - February 2023
 - March 2023
 - April 2023



Michigan and Wisconsin: Broad State Issues



- Generally, farms do not experience pushback from local residents
- Social license issues exist at state levels
 - Increasingly stringent permitting requirements and high costs of compliance limit expansion
 - Environmental organizations and NGOs are driving negative, anti-growth messaging
 - Competition with state hatchery system
- Producers have worked to build bridges with some success



Redefined “Community”

- Relevant stakeholders from across each state
 - Commercial trout producers
 - State personnel
 - Tribal nations
 - Skeptical NGOs
 - Environmental concerns
 - Army Corps of Engineers
 - Anglers and sport fishing
 - Pro aquaculture
- 1 meeting in-person, follow-ups remote



1st meeting
February
20
Madison

1st
meeting
March 9
Lansing



Developing Social License for Trout Aquaculture in the North Central Region

Participating Institutions and Co-Principal Investigators



Jonathan van
Senten



Carole Engle



Kwamena
Quagrainie



Matthew Smith



Amy Shambach



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Complementary Project Underway



Building Trust

Is not a sprint.

**It's a
marathon.**



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QUESTIONS?

*Thank
you!*

Amy te Plate-Church
amy.teplatechurch@foodintegrity.org
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