

MONTHLY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER - On Tuesday January 19, 2021, at 11:00 am a zoom meeting was started and at 11:05 am a regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors of the St Joseph County SWCD was called to order by John Dooms, Chairman.

PRESENT – SWCD

John Dooms, Chair/Supervisor
Dave Vandewalle, Supervisor
Dave Craft, Supervisor
Mike Burkholder, Supervisor
Chuck Lehman

PRESENT – SWCD/NRCS

Sarah Longenecker, SWCD CC
Sandra Hoffarth, SWCD AA
Sam Buchanan, SWCD EEC
Debbie Knepp, NRCS DC
Erica Wyss, SWCD Marshall Co.

Present - EX-OFFICIO

Rachel Rawls, Extension
ANR Educator
PRESENT – Public
Sam James

ABSENT – SWCD

Jeremy Cooper, Vice-Chair/Supervisor
David Straughn
Dru Wrasse
Richard Schmidt
Randy Matthys

II. ADDITIONS TO AGENDA – n/a

III. REGULAR BUSINESS

- a. **Legislative Updates** – (attached) bill tracker is available through email from the IASWCD.
- b. **Indiana Conservation Partnership Updates n/a**
- c. **319 Grant** – Wyss updated the board that the 319 grant has been approved for \$293,000 but the contract paperwork won't be ready until January 2022. Wyss would like to get a steering committee together and meet later in 2021 so that when the contract is set, we can hit the ground running. She also informed the board that rules have been changed and we can use cash match for septic repairs & maintenance.
- d. **Minutes: December 8, 2020 board meeting** – Minutes were reviewed and approved as presented.
- e. **Treasurer's Report: (12/3/2020-1/15/2021)** – The treasurer's report was reviewed and approved as submitted.
- f. **Approval of Claims (12/3/2020-1/15/2021)** –A motion (Burkholder/Craft) was made to approve Claim Nos. 11594-11606 for a total of \$2,556.41. Motion carried.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

- a. **St. Joseph Co. Soil & Water Conservation Partnership Staff Reports**
 - i. **Field Office Report** – The field office report was presented to the board & reviewed. (Attached)
 - ii. **NRCS Talking Points** – Knepp presented the NRCS talking points (attached).
- b. **Committee Reports**
 - i. **Audit** – Cooper and Dooms have reviewed the annual financials and approved as presented. A motion (Burkholder/Craft) was made to approve the 2020 financials. Motion carried. 2020 financial report will be posted on the website as well as presented in the 2020 Annual Report.
- c. **Designation of Depository** – Hoffarth informed the board that the PNC branch in Plymouth is closing in April 2021. Buchanan has agreed to drop off deposits when needed on her way home. If issues arise down the road the board will discuss other options. A motion (Burkholder, Vandewalle) was made keep our banking at PNC for 2021. Motion carried.
- d. **2021 Food Policy** - (attached) the policy was originally adopted on April 19, 2016 and was reviewed today.
- e. **IASWCD Annual Conference** – Dooms informed the board that 65 of the 92 counties were represented at the business meeting via zoom. Election of officers was held naming Bobby Hettmansperger from Wabash County as the President, Jeff Baker from Warrick County as Vice-President, Marc Roberts from Montgomery County for Secretary and Sarah Delbecq from DeKalb County as Treasurer for 2021 IASWCD board. Both resolutions (attached) presented were adopted. Longenecker, Hoffarth and Buchanan attended virtually and enjoyed the ease of attending multiple sessions and will be able to watch other sessions as time allows in the next 6 months.

V. NEW BUSINESS

- a. **Schedules/ Upcoming Events / Any Related Claims** - calendars were handed out explaining upcoming special events & holiday schedules on the back of the agenda.
- b. **2021-2023 CWI Grant** – Dooms informed the board that he has signed the contract documents for our grant.
- c. **Virtual Producers Workshop** – Longenecker informed the board that she is working with Erica Wyss from Marshall County SWCD and the Izaak Walton League national chapter to put on a virtual webinar utilizing Understanding Ag who uses nationally and internationally known speakers. They have \$1,500 to help sponsor workshops and because of Covid we were asked if we wanted to do a webinar. February 23, 2021 from noon to 2pm or 3 pm, Ray Archuleta is confirmed. Working with Marshall County Extension to add PARP credits. It will be recorded so we can post it on our website for people to watch later.

d. **Void of Outdated Check per IC 5-11-10.5** – Check 11308 written 2/17/2018 to Dru Wrasse for associate supervisor mileage reimbursement for 2017 was never cashed and per Indiana code enough time has passed to void this check. A motion (Craft/Burkholder) was made to void this check. Motion carried.

VI. **PRIVILEGE OF FLOOR** – Thank you cards were read from the LaFree and Matthys families.

VII. **ADJOURNMENT** – The board meeting adjourned at 12:09 pm by motion (Craft/Burkholder). Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Hoffarth

Administrative Assistant

St. Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation District

2903 Gary Drive, Plymouth, IN 46563

Email: Sandra.hoffarth@in.nacdnet.net


www.stjosephswcd.org

Approved during Zoom Board
meeting 2/17/2021


Approved by:

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Supervisor

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Supervisor

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Supervisor

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Hoffarth, Sandra E. - NRCS, Plymouth, IN

From: Joe Schmees <joseph-schmees@iaswcd.org>
Sent: Saturday, January 16, 2021 11:35 AM
To: allswcd@iaswcd.org; supervisor@iaswcd.org
Cc: 'Eliana Blaine'
Subject: IASWCD Legislative Bill Tracker 1.15.21

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

District Supervisors and Staff –

Out of the frying pan and into the fire! With our Annual SWCD Conference just wrapped, **we are headlong into a long, budget session in the Indiana General Assembly.** If you saw my legislative briefing this past Tuesday, you know some of our priorities. I will share more about priorities and outreach materials with you all next week. Keep in mind that **we have a Zoom license that can be used for legislative meetings,** and we can make it available to you. I am working with our conference planner to get a download of the legislative briefing and we will make it available on our website and help you share it with legislators. **There are already some bills getting action,** although it looks like business will not be held the next week with concerns over planned protests at the capitol. Please see the full bill tracker below my email, put together by our lobbyist Cress Hizer. **A few bills to highlight that are of importance in the near term** are listed immediately following (SB 373 and SB 389 were scheduled for hearings next week until state business was put on hold):

- **HB 1001: State budget.**
 - The draft budget as proposed by the governor was released this week, and as expected, the CWI General Fund line item was reduced like so many budget items by 15%, starting us at \$824,500. **Our major priority this budget session is to get this line item restored to \$1 million.** During my briefing I provided several talking points, including that return on investment (ROI) on state conservation funding in 2019 was \$29 of federal funds per \$1 of state funding and almost \$2.50 of local funds per \$1 of state funding. Begin reaching out to your legislators now to explain this ROI for the state investment in conservation. The reduction of CWI by \$175,500 could potentially mean the loss of \$5,089,500 in federal funds and \$438,750 in local funds. If you are unsure who your legislators are, they are listed in our delegate notebook posted on our website, or you can find them using this application on the IGA website (<http://iga.in.gov/legislative/find-legislators/>).
- **SB 373: Carbon credit programs.**
 - This bill looks to establish an Indiana specific carbon market for sequestering carbon and other greenhouse gases, through the sale of carbon credits to likely buyers, and invest that money in either the President Benjamin Harrison Trust (IDNR) or Clean Water Indiana (CWI). These investments will be made into new, individual accounts under these existing programs, to invest in land practices to sequester carbon in forestry and ag settings, respectively. I have been participating on a work group supporting the bill, and we have had conversations with the sponsor and other interested organizations, including our ISDA and IDNR agency partners that would be required to implement the program.
- **SB 389: Repeal of State Wetland Laws**
 - This bill looks to repeal Indiana state level wetland laws that provide protection to significant wetlands that are not tied directly to streams, which typically are covered under federal jurisdiction. Often times called "isolated wetlands," this would remove state level authority to regulate wetlands. The unintended consequence of removing state level jurisdiction may be more federal level regulation. These laws have been in place for over 20 years, and our ICP partners at IDEM and IDNR have worked hard over the past year to make the permitting process smoother. See the webinar they completed for us in October (<https://ccsin.app.box.com/s/5w8qcwu6k69t1espm1kxdbjwnig0l0cf>).

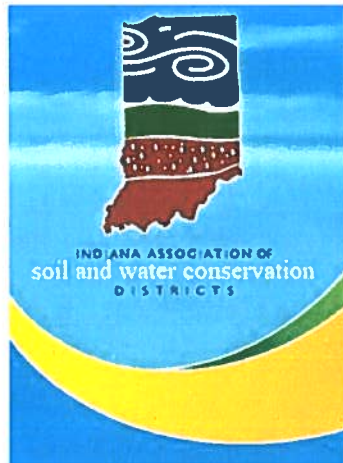
If you have any questions about any of these bills, or this session, please reach out directly to me. If there are any bills that we are not tracking in the list below that you feel like we should be, please let me know, and Cress and I will add it

to our tracking. Thank you to everybody that braved the technology to join us at the virtual conference, and I hope you all have a great weekend!

Joe Schmees

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

225 S East St., Ste. 740 / Indianapolis, IN 46202 / 317.692.7519 / www.iaswcd.org



2021 Session IN General Assembly

January 15, 2021 Bill Tracker

Welcome to the First Session of the 122th Indiana General Assembly

Despite the pandemic, the 2021 Indiana General Assembly Biennium Session banged the gavel on Monday, January 4, starting their constitutional duty to pass a new two-year budget. House Ways and Means Committee Chair Rep. Dr. Tim Brown dropped HB 1001 Budget Bill into the hopper late this week and will begin hearings next week as a starting point to this long process. Bill lists are still being heard on first reading for committee assignments and over 1000 bills total are expected for this session.

Operations this session have been severely modified in response to Covid 19. Access to the Statehouse and other government buildings will be restricted and controlled. The Senate will conduct its business in the Senate Chamber taking over the viewing gallery for addition member seating while the House will operate in the Government Center South, all due to the need for social distancing. Committee Testimony will only take place remotely via technology. Actual session days will be limited in the early weeks to one or two days per week. Committee Schedules will be published each Thursday for the following week.

Governor Eric Holcomb and his administration were sworn in for his second term in a very quiet ceremony due to Covid restrictions. He presented his "Next Level" policy goals in his budget ideas to the State Budget Committee on Weds. that reflected the hopefulness that the states economy is snapping back faster than expected thus meeting revenue targets

allowing him to increase education and transportation funding goals. He hinted also that agency funding levels could be restored from the earlier ordered 15% reversion he had invoked as a result of the current health emergency.

Despite the very cautious start due to the need for health and safety in the Statehouse, Committee work has voted out a few bills and they are moving to the floors for next action. This session will be like no other so please be patient and flexible!

2021 Session Deadlines

- 2/22 last day for 3rd readings of House Bills
- 2/23 last day for 3rd readings of Senate Bills
- 4/19 last day for 3rd readings of Senate Bills in House
- 4/20 last day for 3rd readings of House Bills in Senate
- 4/29 last day for adjournment of both houses

Bill filing lists are near complete and I will review House and Senate bills that may have impact on us. Below are bills of importance to IASWCD. *Please contact me at (317.753.9627) or chizer@inag.biz with any concerns or needs. Thank you, Cress*

Useful Links

House Committee Schedules <http://iga.in.gov/documents/d818d017>

Senate Committee Schedules <http://iga.in.gov/documents/85381d73>

TRACKING LIST

The State of Indiana has made changes to its website, including the website for the Indiana General Assembly. To view any bill in its entirety, click here: <http://iga.in.gov/legislative/2021/bills/> Once there, scroll through the list of Senate and House bills filed and click on the bill you want to view. Once you are on the main page for a particular bill, you will need to click on the following options in the upper left side, which are self-explanatory:

Latest Version

Latest Fiscal Note

Bill Actions

Bill Versions

Committee Reports

Conference Committee Reports

If you need any assistance please contact me.

House

- **HB 1001:** [State budget.](#)
- **HB 1046:** [Hemp flower.](#)
- **HB 1055:** [Watershed development commissions.](#)
- **HB 1076:** [Ban on sale of flavored tobacco and e-liquids.](#)
- **HB 1162:** [Fertilizer runoff and Lake Michigan discharges.](#)
- **HB 1215:** [Enforcement of pesticide violations.](#)
- **HB 1222:** [Old forest areas in state forests.](#)
- **HB 1224:** [Craft hemp flower and hemp production.](#)
- **HB 1233:** [Regulation of hemp production.](#)
- **HB 1274:** [Trails funding.](#)

- [HB 1283: Urban agricultural zones.](#)
- [HB 1292: Wildlife corridors.](#)
- [HB 1315: Electronic meetings.](#)
- [HB 1395: Various natural resources matters.](#)
- [HB 1434: Cigarette tax and e-liquids tax.](#)
- [HB 1463: Flood control measures.](#)
- [HB 1496: Natural resource matters.](#)
- [HB 1521: Agricultural conservation easements.](#)
- [HB 1573: Agricultural and forestry activity.](#)

Senate

- [SB 68: Conservancy district board meetings.](#)
- [SB 121: Study of low-carbon and green industries.](#)
- [SB 227: Enforcement of pesticide violations.](#)
- [SB 277: Conservancy district board membership.](#)
- [SB 329: Flood control district board of commissioners.](#)
- [SB 373: Carbon credit programs.](#)
- [SB 389: Repeal of State Wetland Laws](#)
- [SB 419: Septic systems, wells, and regulated drains.](#)

Other Issues Watch

Resolutions are still being filed and as ones of interest are researched, they will be listed here.

INDIANA GENERAL ASSEMBLY, STATE HOUSE

HOUSE TELEPHONE CENTER

SENATE TELEPHONE CENTER

317/232-9600

317/232-9400

800/382-9842

800/382-9467

Formula for e-mailing = S or H (for House or Senate) District [number@in.gov](#). For example, Sen. Vaneta Becker may be contacted using the following e-mail address: [S50@in.gov](#).

ADDRESSES

The Honorable "First..Last"
Indiana House of Representatives
State House, Third Floor
Indianapolis, IN 46204

OR

The Honorable "First..Last"
Indiana State Senate
State House, Third Floor
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Thank you for your help! INAg/Cress Hizer appreciates your willingness to contact legislators when called upon during the session. Without the assistance of the client/association, it would be difficult to pass proactive legislation or thwart detrimental language. Thanks for your support.

INAg

Farm Food Fuel Biotech

Cresswell A. Hizer, CAE

Principal

5246 N. Delaware

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Indianapolis, IN 46220 chizer@inag.biz

Lobbying--Public Affairs--Associations--Risk

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Field Office Report
December 7, 2020 - January 15, 2021

General/Miscellaneous

Office Work

- Election ballot & press releases
- 2021 budget
- Annual Financial Review
- Annual Report
- Check floodplain maps for landowner
- Jan/Feb Newsletter
- NRCS Annual Practice Reminder Letters

Field Work

- NRCS public relations and Deb interviewed Green Bridge Growers and Unity Gardens for NRCS Success Stories.

EQIP- Environmental Quality Incentive Program

Office Work

- 28 Applications received by the Dec 18th deadline
- Resource Concerns inventory/ assessment of applications
- Ranking of 1 application
- Contact DNR to discuss the applications they will be involved in
- Contacted many producers who had expressed interest and had not yet turned in the applications
- Process payments – 7 producers/landowners - Cover crops, Forest Stand Improvement, Pollinator Habitat, Wildlife Habitat Monitoring
- Status reviews – 17
- Conservation Fund TEAMS meeting to explain available EQIP practices

Field Work

- Meet with producer to discuss EQIP and retrieve the application
- Field visit to shoot slopes and check adjacent ditch

WRE- Wetland Reserve Program

Office Work

- Easement monitoring – 6
- Restoration contract developed
- Discuss additional restoration funds for easement with landowners

CSP- Conservation Stewardship Program

Office Work

- 5 applications were received by the Jan 8th deadline

CRP-Conservation Reserve Program

Office Work

- Completed status review documents for renewed contract

Field Work

Check Suitability and Feasibility for Prairie Strips for 7 farms
Field verification of planted Prairie Strips
Field visit to conduct status review for renewed contract

CWI- Clean Water Indiana

Field Work

- Assisted Darden Primary with their pollinator habitat dormant seeding

day period and after consideration of all comments. NRCS invites input on this technical guidance through January 19, 2021. Electronic comments must be submitted through [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov) under Docket ID NRCS-2020-0009 (<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/12/17/2020-27703/guidance-for-identification-of-nonindustrial-private-forest-land-nipf>). All written comments received will be publicly available on <http://www.regulations.gov>.

NATURAL RESOURCE INVENTORY DATA COLLECTION

The National Resources Inventory (NRI) is a statistical survey of land use and natural resource conditions and trends on U.S. non-Federal lands. Indiana's NRI data collection began in early September and runs through the end of January 2021. The soils staff at the state office will collect data. Field office staff and FSA may be contacted to provide producer-specific information, such as, tillage practices, conservation plan, cropping history, etc. If you have any comments or questions, please contact John Allen, Assistant State Soil Scientist at john.allen@usda.gov.

*** DIRECT HIRE AUTHORITY**

Direct-Hire Authority (DHA) allows USDA-NRCS to fill vacancies for specific occupations, grade levels and locations when it can be proven that there is a critical hiring need or a severe shortage of candidates. Direct hire authorities expedite the hiring process by eliminating veterans' preference, rating and ranking, as well as the typical selection procedures. Public notice is required, meaning to use a DHA, a vacancy announcement must be posted on USAJOBS listing board and open to the public. All applicants who meet the basic qualification requirements of the position will be referred to the hiring manager for consideration and may be selected.

NRCS has received approval for Direct Hire Authority in FY21 for 1,525 positions throughout the country including: soil conservationist, rangeland management specialist, soil conservation technician, soil scientist, engineering technician, engineer, archaeologist, biologist, economist, forester and agronomist. Some positions have already been announced and other positions will be posted throughout the fiscal year.

*** USDA SERVICE CENTER STATUS**

Based on the rise in COVID cases both nationally and within the USDA-Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC) workforce, effective December 1, all FPAC offices located in counties with significant COVID-19 infection rates stepped back to either Phase 0 or Phase 1 of USDA's phased reopening process.

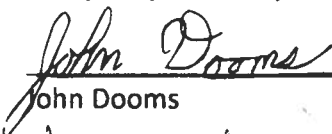
By stepping back to either Phase 0 or Phase 1, these offices will be restricting their in-person appointments. All USDA Service Centers are for open for business, and service center staff members from FSA and NRCS will continue to work with producers by phone, email and digital tools.

Producers wishing to conduct business with the FSA, NRCS or any other service center agency should call ahead to confirm and schedule appointments. More information on service center status can be found at <https://www.farmers.gov/coronavirus/service-center-status>, and contact information for local Service Centers is available at <https://www.farmers.gov/service-center-locator>.

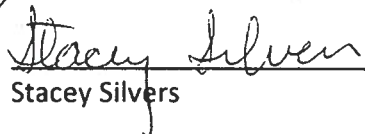
St. Joseph County SWCD District Policy: Purchasing Meals for Activities

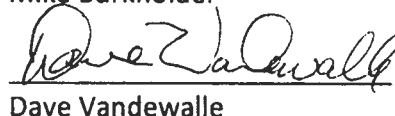
1. The District has the discretion to purchase meals for activities ONLY in instances where the activity/activities further the mission of the SWCD.
2. The District will adhere to statutory and prescribed procedures for the receipt and disbursement of funds.
3. District funds cannot be used for personal expenditures. So, for example, two employees cannot use District funds to pay for their personal lunches using the explanation of "discussing district business."
4. Meal costs, and what activities are eligible for the SWCD to purchase meals, will be approved in advance. Eligible activities might include the District's Annual Meeting, field days, workshops and other similar events geared to the general public. When approved, the District will clearly state in the minutes that the activity furthers the mission of the District, and state how it does so.
5. If feasible, the District may charge a registration fee to events, and/or utilize sponsors/donations (obtained without exactions or persuasions) to help defray meal costs.
6. Expenditures will be reasonable.
7. If the District provides meals at no cost to certain participants, or if different rates are charged to different classes of participants, the District will develop a written policy that includes the methodology used to determine which participants are provided meals at no cost, or are charged different rates for meals.
8. This policy will be reviewed annually during the January SWCD board meeting.

This policy was adopted on April 19th, 2016 by the St. Joseph County SWCD.


John Dooms


Mike Burkholder


Stacey Silvers


Dave Vandewalle

It was reviewed in subsequent years on the following dates:

January 19, 2021 via Zoom meeting

2:29 PM

01/15/21

St. Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation District
Report 10: Check Detail - Uncleared Checks
January 1, 2010 through January 4, 2019

Type	Num	Date	Name	Item	Account	Paid Amount	Clr	Original Amount
Bill Pmt -Check	11308	02/17/2018	Wrasse, Dru (v)		Checking - PNC			-16.92
Bill	2017 mileage	02/02/2018			Mileage - Sup&Assoc	-16.92		16.92
TOTAL						-16.92		16.92