



**St. Joseph County
Soil & Water Conservation District**

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MONTHLY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, July 21, 2015

- I. CALL TO ORDER - On Tuesday July 21, 2015, at 7:07 pm a regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors of the St Joseph County SWCD at the Centre Township Branch of the St. Joseph County Public Library was called to order by John Dooms, Chairman.**

PRESENT – SWCD/NRCS

John Dooms, Chair/Supervisor
Jeremy Cooper, Vice-Chair/Supervisor
Arlene Schuchman, Supervisor
Stacey Silvers, Supervisor
Sandra Hoffarth, SWCD Admin Assistant
Debbie Knepp, NRCS DC

PRESENT – SWCD

Dale Stoner
Dave Vandewalle
Carole Riewe

ABSENT – SWCD

Mike Burkholder, Supervisor
Rick Glassman, SWCD EEC
Sarah Harville, SWCD CC
James Rodriguez, NRCS
Richard Schmidt
Jim LaFree

ABSENT – SWCD

Randy Matthys
Dave Craft
Paul Williams, III
Joe Long
Dru Wrasse
Jan Ivkovich
Chuck Lehman

- II. ADDITIONS TO AGENDA - n/a**

III. REGULAR BUSINESS

- A. Legislative Updates – N/A**

B. Conservation Moment – Knepp explained a 5% status review which is one of the practices they have been working on in the field.

B. Indiana Conservation Partnership Updates –Hoffarth reminded the board that IASWCD is asking if any district has any resolutions they would like to submit for the 2016 Annual Business Meeting. Deadline for submission is Sept 10. Hoffarth has forms and previous resolutions for those who would like to know more.

C. Minutes: June 16, 2015 board meeting– The minutes were reviewed and approved as submitted.

D. Treasurer’s Report: (6/17/15-7/21/15) – The treasurer’s reports were both reviewed and approved as submitted.

E. Approval of Claims (6/17/15-7/21/15) A recommendation (Riewe, Vandewalle) & motion (Cooper, Schuchman) was made to approve Claim Nos. 11018-11023 for a total of \$794.82 as presented. Both carried.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. St. Joseph Co. Soil & Water Conservation Partnership Staff Written Reports – The field office report was presented to the board (attached) and reviewed. Deb Knepp went over the NRCS talking points (attached).

B. Committee Reports

a. **Education** – Riewe went over funding for school programs – currently \$0.50 per student, \$50 max charge for one program, \$250 max charge for one day of programs exceptions Swamp Stomps & Sense of Wonder are \$1.00 per student with no max, Nature Center field trip (Madison school, Prairie Vista, etc.) \$10. Grants go to any private school that has only one class per grade level receives free programs. It is the recommendation of the education committee to keep the fees the same for the 2015/2016 school year, motion (Cooper, Schuchman) was made. Both Carried. Also Cobus Creek Watershed group is having a fundraiser/education day on Aug 1st from 10-2 and Rick Glassman has been asked to attend and bring a display/program. This watershed does include part of St. Joseph County. Elkhart SWCD is also participating. The money raised will go to creating a watershed plan and Blanding Turtle restoration program. The education committee recommends that the SWCD participates in the Cobus Creek Watershed Day. Recommendation carried.

b. **Grants** – Cooper updated the board on some grants the committee is looking into. It is a recommendation by the committee to release up to \$100 for Grant classes that Hoffarth can attend to better prepare for writing grants in the future. Motion (Silvers, Cooper) was made. Both carried. During the supervisors meeting (July 13th) it was decided to use \$5,000 of the CWI 10K money towards a Prevented Planting Cover Crop Cost Share Program. It is the committee’s recommendation to release \$5,000 towards this program which will cover 200 acres at \$25/acre. A motion (Silvers, Schuchman) was made. Both carried.

c. **Awards** – As stated in the talking points several awards due dates are coming up. It was noticed that during the changing of committees the awards committee was accidentally left off the list. Looking for a couple volunteers to fill this committee, Dooms, Vandewalle & Cooper volunteered. If anyone has a recommendation for award recipients please let someone on the committee or staff know.

C. **Memorandum of Understanding** – Knepp reminded the board of the partnership working agreement. Most recent copy is from 2013. If anyone has questions or would like to see this copy please contact the staff.

V. **NEW BUSINESS**

A. **Schedules/ Upcoming Events / Any Related Claims** - calendars were handed out explaining upcoming special events & holiday schedules.

a. **Social Media Workshop July 28th** – a recommendation (Vandewalle, Riewe) and motion (Schuchman, Cooper) was made to release the \$30 registration fee for Hoffarth to attend this workshop.

b. **Leadership Institute – Impacting Communities Aug 28-29** – The state soils board is doing reimbursements for trainings again instead of scholarships which means a motion (Silvers, Cooper) was made to release the \$125 registration fee for Hoffarth to attend this workshop.

VI. **PRIVILEGE OF FLOOR**

VII. **ADJOURNMENT** – The board meeting adjourned at 7:56 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Hoffarth

Administrative Assistant

St. Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation District

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Approved by:

Supervisor

Supervisor

Supervisor

Field Office Report
June 15 – July 17, 2015

Environmental Quality Incentive Program

Develop changes to fence design
Inspect no-till/crimping of cover crops in organic farm (Shipshewana)
Develop conservation plans/ranking/soil loss calculations – 2 Seasonal High Tunnels, 1 cover crop application

Wetland Reserve Program

1 monitoring

Conservation Reserve Program

Field visit/develop conservation plans/develop contracting documents – 2 pollinator habitats, 1 Ring-neck Pheasant habitat
Deliver contracts for 1 Warm Season Grass contract
Field Inspection for Status Review (1); Re-enroll (2)

Regional Conservation Partner Program (RCPP)

Develop conservation plan/rank – 2 cover crop applications

Rule 5/13

4 plan reviews

Wetlands – 4 (Marshall); 9 (St Joseph)

Highly Erodible land – 3

5% status review – 1 – shoot slopes, send information letter

Unity Garden Camp – Sarah

NRCS Program presentation – James

2 school programs (Montessori)

9 Education programs (Harris Library, Camp Millhouse, St. Mary's and Notre Dames's early childhood school)

Fair judging – St. Joseph (wildlife, forestry, sport fishing, weather, Soil & Water; LaPorte (wildlife/forestry)

Information on Yellow River Wetland Grant

Northwest Indiana Conservation Camp

Meetings

Staff Meetings – 4

Limited English proficiency

MSP

NRCS Area Meeting

USDA County Emergency Board

Soil Health/Cover Crops with Ray Archuletta

Webinars – Tree ID

Rotational Grazing

Cover Crops

Supervisors meeting

NRCS Diversity Day

Office Closed – July 4

DC Talking Points

July 2015

- A. **Avian Bird Flu Update** (Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5 (HPAI). Twenty one states have reported incidences of HPAI which have resulted in the death of more than 50 million birds. To date, Indiana has reported one instance in Whitely County in late May.
- B. **Indiana Flooding** - Heavy rains and major flooding have been common throughout Indiana this planting season. The full impact to agriculture is not yet clear, but we know farmers will need manage and recover from the aftermaths of rains and floods now and in the future. Purdue Extension held a summit on Friday, June 26, 2015 to talk about current conditions, weather forecasts and resources available. Counties are currently collecting loss data for FSA to determine the need to file for disaster assistance.
- C. **Cover Crops As An Option For Prevented Planting Fields** - Farmers need to weigh not only their program and insurance options (prevented planting), but also consider the opportunities to increase long-term productivity from this difficult situation. As an alternative, NRCS recommends farmers consider planting cover crops to improve soil health. Cover crops not only will help keep growing roots in these fields, they will fix and/or hold onto unused nitrogen and other nutrients, build organic matter, control weeds, control erosion and/or improve soil health during the remainder of the season. Farmers are reminded to check with their Farm Service Agency office and insurance agent about prevented planting acres prior to any action.
- D. **Conservation Client Gateway (CCG) is Available!** CCG is a secure website that makes it easier than ever for farmers to access conservation information and assistance. No more trips to the field office just to sign a document. No waiting until office hours to check the status of applications or view conservation plans. Conservation Client Gateway is available 24/7, so producers can work with NRCS on their schedule. Detailed instructions for getting started are on the Conservation Client Gateway website. Note, this version of the program is only available to individual landowners but will be extended to business entities and available on mobile devices in the future. For more information, check out the website www.nrcs.usda.gov/clientgateway. CCG is completely voluntary and just another way to do business with NRCS. NRCS field staff will still be available in your local field office for face-to-face assistance.
- E. **Indiana Association of Soil and Water District Award Nominations** IASWCD is now accepting annual awards applications for the 2016 Annual Meeting. We encourage Districts to apply for these various awards, especially the District Showcase award. This is such a great opportunity for Districts to talk about the work they are doing and it's an easy application process. The guidelines and applications for the Annual Awards are now available on the IASWCD website. These include:
 - i. District Showcase
 - ii. Conservation Farmer of the Year
 - iii. Supervisor of the Year
 - iv. Friend of Conservation

District Showcase applications are due July 30 and the other three awards have a deadline of September-4. Please contact emily-neitzel@iaswcd.org with any questions about the application process.