

## MONTHLY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** - On Tuesday February 19, 2019, at 9:07 am a regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors of the St Joseph County SWCD at the Farm Credit Services, 5310 South Main Street, South Bend, IN 46614 was called to order by John Dooms, Chairman.

**PRESENT – SWCD**

John Dooms, Chair/Supervisor  
Jeremy Cooper, Vice-Chair/Supervisor  
Dave Vandewalle, Supervisor  
Dave Craft, Supervisor  
David Straughn

**PRESENT – SWCD/NRCS**

Debbie Knepp, NRCS DC  
Sarah Longenecker, SWCD CC  
Sandra Hoffarth, SWCD AA  
Jane Sablich, SWCD EEC

**Present - EX-OFFICIO**

Rick Kennedy – Purdue Ag  
Extension  
**PRESENT – Public**  
Randy Stoner

**ABSENT – SWCD**

Mike Burkholder, Supervisor  
Jim LaFree  
Dru Wrasse  
Richard Schmidt  
Randy Matthys  
Chuck Lehman

- II. **ADDITIONS TO AGENDA** – n/a

III. **REGULAR BUSINESS**

- a. **Legislative Updates** – Knepp met with Misty Cosgrove who is the Field Representative for Senator Mike Braun. Their office is still getting up and running but she is making her rounds to get to know key contacts. Senator Braun is serving on the Ag Committee. Misty along with Senator Braun would like a tour this summer. Knepp and Longenecker will work on scheduling this when Senator Braun is in Indiana.
- b. **Indiana Conservation Partnership Updates** – n/a
- c. **Minutes: January 29, 2019 board meeting** – Minutes were reviewed and approved as presented by motion (Cooper/Craft). **59<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting** - Minutes were reviewed and approved as presented by motion (Cooper/Vandewalle).
- d. **Treasurer’s Report: (1/29/2019-2/15/2019)** – The treasurer’s report was reviewed and approved as submitted by motion (Cooper/Vandewalle).
- e. **Approval of Claims (1/29/2019-2/15/2019)** –A motion (Cooper/Craft) was made to approve Claim Nos. 11437 - 11450 for a total of \$5,604.18 as presented. 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 went over the NRCS talking points (attached). Knepp has been approached by a master’s student who is conducting research at Purdue University on vole damage to cover crops. She is looking for farmers willing to share information about their 2016 and/or 2018 bean fields that were cover cropped the preceding fall (2015/2017). If anyone is interested in providing information should contact Knepp and she will get you in contact with her.
- b. **Committee Reports**
  - i. **Annual Meeting** – Discussion was held on the positives and negatives of the night. Consensus was the overall flow of the night and highlighting the district and our partners was a good change. Total income was \$2,241 and total expenses were \$2,245.89 for a net income of -\$4.89.
- c. **Producers Workshop** – Dooms held a discussion on the speakers and how well they did incorporating what our mission as a district is. We were able to get 4 sponsors bringing in \$1,300. Our expenses included postage, filler paper, speaker fees and catering/meal costs totaling \$1840.31. Taking out our postage, leaves a net income of \$-470.34. A motion (Cooper/Craft) was made to split this cost 50/50 with Marshall County SWCD. Motion passed.
- d. **Science Alive recap** – Straughn and Cooper reported that the day was a success and that the SK Worm was a huge hit with parents and kids alike. A steady stream throughout the day helped to reach parents, kids and some teachers. Overall a great way to showcase our district.
- e. **Contractors Breakfast** – Longenecker informed the board that the agenda is ironed out and that invitations will be going out shortly. It is already posted on social media and our website and we have already received over 20 registrants. We are still working on getting more sponsors and vendors which will help cover our expenses.
- f. **Kankakee River Basin Commission** – Dooms and Longenecker attended the February 14<sup>th</sup> meeting. Dooms let the board know that the commission after a long discussion was able to pass their budget of income \$171,000 and expenses \$143,000. Christopher Burke Engineering firm gave an update on the progress of their watershed report.
- g. **NRCS MOU 2019-2024** – Dooms presented the final draft of the MOU. A motion (Cooper/Craft) was made to approve the MOU as presented. Motion passed. A motion (Cooper/Vandewalle) was made to approve the delegation of authority allowing John Dooms to sign on behalf of the board. Motion passed.

**V. NEW BUSINESS**

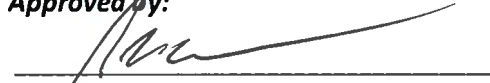
- a. **Schedules/ Upcoming Events / Any Related Claims** - calendars were handed out explaining upcoming special events & holiday schedules on the back of the agenda.
  - i. **National Cover Crop Summit March 20 & 21** – Longenecker informed the board that this is a free summit that will be held completely online. Those interested in listening in should contact her to get the link and more information.
- b. **Education Supplies** – Sablich asked for the release of \$35 for a Geobin compost bin for her upcoming composting workshop. This bin will be a door prize for those who attend the meeting. A motion (Cooper/Craft) was made to release \$35 for the Geobin. Motion passed.
- c. **Committee Sign Ups** – Cooper went over the list of committees and asked everyone to sign up for one or more. Contact the office if you have questions.
- d. **Wildlife Food Plot Seed** – Hoffarth informed the board that we are unable to secure bags of seed for free this year. Marshall County is working with one of their supervisors who can get the seed at cost for us. The suggestion for this year is to offer sunflower seeds, a food plot mix and a pollinator habitat mix. Marshall County gets more people in the door for this program and is willing to pay 75% of the cost. A motion (Cooper/Craft) was made pay 25% up to \$200 for this program. Motion passed.
- e. **Van Maintenance** – after some discussion about having the van detailed on a quarterly basis and the need for the alignment to be checked, the board asked for quotes on both to be brought to the supervisors via e-mail for approval.

**VI. PRIVILEGE OF FLOOR** – Cooper, Dooms, Burkholder, Straughn, Longenecker & Sablich will be going to Indianapolis to the Statehouse to visit with our representatives on March 14. A discussion was held if the district can pay for lunch. A motion (Cooper/Vandewalle) was made to cover up to \$60 for lunch. Motion passed.

**VII. ADJOURNMENT** – The board meeting adjourned at 10:11 am.

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](http://www.stjosephswcd.org)

**Approved by:**



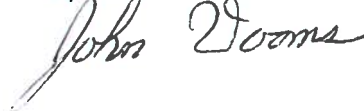
Supervisor



Supervisor



Supervisor



**Field Office Report**  
**January 28 through February 15, 2019**

**General/Miscellaneous**

Office Work

- Annual Meeting – award write-ups and script, slideshow, agenda booklet, displays, silent auction, set up, etc.
- Producers meeting preparation
- Office flood and all the fun that involves
- Information packet to transitioning organic producer
- Information to landowner who wants to plant trees (mainly Black Walnut)
- Information to producer who is interested in planting trees and food plots

Field Work

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**EQIP- Environmental Quality Incentive Program**

Office Work

- Process payment for 0.3 acre pollinator habitat
- Eligibility documents and conservation planning for 15 2019 applications

Field Work

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**WRE- Wetland Reserve Program**

Office Work

- Develop 43.8 ac restoration plan and contract documents
- Send information needed for WRE audit

Field Work

**CSP- Conservation Stewardship Program**

Office Work

Promote 10 contracts

Field Work

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**CRP-Conservation Reserve Program**

Office Work

- Work with Forester on inspection findings

Field Work

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**CWI- Clean Water Indiana**

Office Work

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Field Work

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**Wetland Determinations**

Office Work

- Process 3 wetland determination requests

Field Work

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**Rule 5/ Rule 13****Office Work**

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**Education**

Age	Total # Programs	Total # People
Youth Education	9	813
Adult Education	3	32

- Science Alive
- A few Programs were rescheduled due to the weather.
- Returned SK Worm to Erie Basin RC & D (Ohio)
- Helped with a Soil Teacher workshop hosted by NRCS and The Nature Conservancy at Indianapolis Zoo.

**Meetings & Trainings**

Staff Meetings – 3  
 MSP  
 NAI Region 4 Meeting  
 Kankakee River Basin Commission  
 Annual Meeting  
 Producers Workshop

**Webinars****Dates**

Office Closed – Jan 30<sup>th</sup> – weather  
 SWCD closed – Jan 31<sup>st</sup> - weather

**Comments from the Community**

# DC Talking Points

## February 2019

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### FARM BILL

The Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 is United States legislation reauthorized many expenditures in the prior United States farm bill: The Agricultural Act of 2014. The new farm bill was signed into law on December 20th, 2018 and is currently under review at national headquarters for policy development. In the meantime, states can continue to complete farm bill tasks associated with Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) contracts obligated before December 20th. The following work is authorized:

- Completing Status Reviews
- Processing all modification types (Partial Land Transfers may have an issue with eligibility until ProTracts builds are implemented)
- Completing engineering designs and layout
- Normal contract management such as terminations, cancellations, 153's, etc.
- Distribution of practice reminder letters
- Any needed technical assistance for conservation practice implementation
- Certification of the completion of installed conservation practices
- Processing of payments and/or update banking info
- Promoting and obligating prior year CSP contracts
- Developing Conservation Activity Plans through Technical Service Providers

No new EQIP applications will not be entered after February 1<sup>st</sup> until the new ProTracts updates are complete and the system is available.

### GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

We survived another government shutdown with very little impact on NRCS in Indiana. During the shutdown, agencies that received mandatory funding or had funds appropriated in prior years that were carried forward continued to serve customers using that money. NRCS was in this category and remained open for business. All federal workers returned to work on Monday, January 28<sup>th</sup> on a temporary funding bill. This bill is set to expire on February 15<sup>th</sup>. If a new spending bill is not passed, we will enter into another government shutdown. If this happens, NRCS will need to reduce some services funded mainly with Conservation Technical Assistance funding. All offices will remain open as we continue to service our customers and most field employees will not be impacted. Employee support will be impacted as many individuals at the state office and above would work intermittently on an as-needed basis.

### STATE HOUSE BILL 1165 AND MORE

State House Bill 1165 proposed by Pat Bauer would add a state farmland protection program with oversight by ISDA. The program would set up an avenue for state funding to be used alone or in conjunction with federal funding for farmland easements. If there are questions related to NRCS easement programs in relation to this Bill, please direct them to Jerry Roach or Beth Clarizia. The Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts is tracking other bills, including HB 1491 which revises the statement of the purposes of the Clean Water Indiana program. It provides that the purpose of the program is to provide financial assistance to implement conservation practices in accordance with the natural resources priorities of the soil conservation board. Watch for additional information about state bills of interest to the conservation partnership in IASWCD's Conservation Insight Newsletter.



## **VEHICLE MANAGEMENT TOOL (VMT)**

The VMT is a web-based tool is now in operation in Indiana (we are serving as a pilot state). This tool is used to reserve vehicles and helps track use, mileage and maintenance through the vehicle log process. All partnership staff and service center employees and volunteers are expected to use it for scheduling vehicle use. The tool is accessed using an e-auth account. Staff who missed the instructional webinar will be sent a link to view the recorded version as soon as it is available. Also, a VMT User Guide will also soon be available. The VMT is simply a reservation and tracking tool, it does not replace any established vehicle use policy.

## **INDIANA CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP WORKING AGREEMENT**

The Indiana Conservation Partnership working agreement expired on December 31<sup>st</sup>. The new agreement is currently under legal review and once all partners have obtained necessary clearance it will be distributed to all SWCDs with instructions for signing. In the meantime, **the Indiana Conservation Partnership will continue working together at the field office level with no changes to how we operate.**

