

## MONTHLY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** - On Tuesday July 16, 2019, at 7:05pm 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, South Bend, IN 46614 was called to order by John Dooms, Chairman.

**PRESENT – SWCD**

John Dooms, Chair/Supervisor  
Dave Vandewalle, Supervisor  
Mike Burkholder, Supervisor  
Dave Craft, Supervisor  
David Straughn

**PRESENT – SWCD/NRCS**

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

**Present - EX-OFFICIO**

**PRESENT – Public**  
Frank Mattei  
Judith Rubleske  
Chris Cobb  
Theresa Serry

**ABSENT – SWCD**

Jeremy Cooper, Vice-Chair/Supervisor  
Sandra Hoffarth, SWCD AA  
Jim LaFree  
Dru Wrasse  
Richard Schmidt  
Randy Matthys  
Chuck Lehman

- II. **ADDITIONS TO AGENDA** – Old Business Item c, Clean Water Indiana Grant

III. **REGULAR BUSINESS**

- a. **Legislative Updates** – n/a
- b. **Indiana Conservation Partnership Updates** – John Dooms presented the IASWCD annual report (attached) for review
- c. **Minutes: May 21, 2019 board meeting** – Minutes were reviewed and approved as presented.
- d. **Treasurer's Report: (5/22/2019-7/16/2019)** – The treasurer's report was reviewed and approved as submitted by motion (Vandewalle/Craft). Motion carried.
- e. **Approval of Claims (4/17/2019-5/21/2019)** –A motion (Burkholder/Vandewalle) was made to approve Claim Nos. 11470-11481 for a total of \$4,086.18 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. A few questions were asked regarding Pokagon Wetland Video. Knepp gave some information about the video and let the board know that it would be on YouTube once it was complete. (Attached)
  - ii. **NRCS Talking Points** – Knepp presented the NRCS talking points to the board. (attached).
- b. **2019 Annual Report Style** – Dooms presented quotes for the two styles of annual report with postage estimates that the board had requested (attached) and passed around a sample of each type. After short discussion a motion (Craft/Vandewalle) was made and carried to use the newspaper style this year with ads.
- c. **2019 CWI Grant** – Longenecker informed the board that we have a couple more applications in. She requested that the board approve 2 applications for 314.4 acres of cover crop at \$6288 cost share as well as a .2 acre critical area seeding (\$200 max) through district funds for a total of \$6488. A motion (Burkholder/Vandewalle) was made to approve the applications for the CWI grant and district grant funds. Motion carried.

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. **Quarterly Supervisors Meeting** – The supervisors meeting was scheduled for August 7, 2019 at 9:00 am at the Plymouth Service Center.
- c. **Pokagon Wetland Video Taping** – covered in the Field Office Report
- d. **Education Supplies** – Tabled for more info.

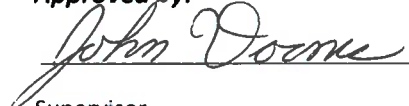
- VI. **PRIVILEGE OF FLOOR** – Dave Straughn updated the board on the Mishawaka greenhouse progress. There is still not an official opening date, but he will keep the board posted. Frank Mattei gave a bit of history on his property in St. Joseph County and explained that he has had some questions regarding his trees that were in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Knepp let him know that he needed to speak with FSA and/or the county committee with the questions that he had as they are the administrators of the program. Chris Cobb, along with Theresa Serry and Judith Rubleske spoke to the board for a bit regarding their concerns with the county's economic development plan in the New Carlisle area and the need for more education on natural resources to help ensure that the county officials make well informed decisions. After some discussion the SWCD will begin planning a legislative tour/ field day focused on our local legislators. It was also discussed that the SWCD could present at a council or commissioner's meeting if invited to

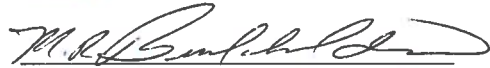
do so. Last, John Dooms read a thank you note (attached) from the Ag Team of St. Joseph County for sponsoring tables and chairs at the 2019 Ag Days.

**VII. ADJOURNMENT – The board meeting adjourned at 8:27 pm.**

*Respectfully submitted,*  
**Sarah Longenecker**  
**County Conservationist**  
**St. Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation District**  
2903 Gary Drive, Plymouth, IN 46563  
Email: Sarah.longnecker@in.nacdnet.net  
[www.stjosephswcd.org](http://www.stjosephswcd.org)

**Approved by:**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor

Supervisor

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor

Supervisor

**Field Office Report**  
**May 20 – July 12, 2019**

**General/Miscellaneous**

Office Work

- River Friendly farmer Applications
- Preparation, planning and facilitate LaPorte County Women's learning Circle
- Food plot information developed and provided to landowner
- Newsletter – articles, layout, distribution
- Conservation Planning on 1500 ac

Field Work

- Field visit potential River Friendly Farmer site
- Tillage Transect – 3 days
- Natural Resource Inventory on 1500 ac
- Walked field/ditch after the Drainage Board received a sedimentation complaint

**EQIP- Environmental Quality Incentive Program**

Office Work

- Process 11 contracts – develop contract documents, gather signatures, develop Job Sheets
- Modify contract/off schedule agreement with participant for Erosion Control Structures

Field Work

Field visit to discuss wildlife/pollinator plantings with landowner  
Inspection of newly planted pollinator habitat

**WRE- Wetland Reserve Program**

Office Work

- Develop cost estimate for 43 acre restoration
- Work with 4 landowners to get survey bids
- Worked on proposal maps for 2 new WRE applications
- Process 4 acre tree planting payment
- Film promotional video at the Pokagon WRP site
- Develop restoration contract for 12.8 acres of Invasive Species Control

Field Work

Inspect Invasive Species Control needed and develop contract  
Complete field monitoring on 3 sites including GPS points and photos

**CSP- Conservation Stewardship Program**

Office Work

Conduct 3 interviews, gather needed paperwork, process CAET questions, rank applications  
Sent maps to participant on where to plant the cover crops this fall

Field Work

Review Invasive Species removal in woods  
Complete Field verification on 1 applicant

**CRP-Conservation Reserve Program**

Office Work

Assist Farm Service Area with bills and seed tags for wildlife planting

Field Work

- Inspect re-enroll Grassed Waterway

## **CWI- Clean Water Indiana**

### Office Work

- Conservation planning on 225 acres of cover crops

### Field Work

- Gather conservation planning data on 2 farms for cover crops

## **Wetland Determinations / Highly Erodible Land Determinations**

### Office Work

- 2 Highly Erodible determinations were completed
- Collected information for possible wetland mitigation

### Field Work

- Met with producer and landowner to discuss options for getting residue on crop fields after a determination was made that they were not following a conservation system on a highly erodible field

## **Rule 5/ Rule 13**

### Office/Field Work

- 8 SWPPP Reviews

## **Education**

Age	Total # Programs/ Hours	Total # People
Youth Education	32	860
Adult Education	4	115

- Participated in Best Week Ever where we educated on soil health and pollinators. We distributed urban cover crop packets and solitary pollinator houses.
- Canceled the first Toddlers and Trails program.
- Judged at the fair.

## **Meetings & Trainings**

Staff Meetings – 8 FSA/NRCS Joint CRP Conference Call Michiana Conference on the Environment Pathway to Water Quality Meeting Conservation Happenings at IUSB Youth County Leadership Year wrap up meeting	PSS Teleconference Soil Health Team Field Trip AgLearn – FSA programs Natural Resource Teacher Institute St. Joseph River Basin Commission
<b>Webinars</b> Carbon, Crops and Cover Herbicide carryover and cover crops Planting in to Heavy Cover Crop Residue Delayed corn and bean planting Prevented Planting Arbuscular Mycorrhiza Fungi Monarch series: Project Implementation/Management Roadside Right of Ways Navigating Cover Crops and Crop Insurance Cover Crop Selection Chart	Aligning Soil health and Human Health Recarbonizing Row Crops on Ag Land Climate Change and Its Impact on Trees Cover Crops, Slugs and Naked Seed 5 Ideas for Making Cover Crops pay Biochar Amendments in Soil for Ag and Forestry Wrangler Jeans and Cover Crops Purdue Crop Outlook (2) Cover Crops & 2017 Ag Census

### **Dates**

May 27th – Office Closed

July 4 – Office Closed

# DC Talking Points

## July 2019

---

### CHIEF'S PRIORITY - CYCLE TIME STUDY

The field office level cycle time survey will run from April 29<sup>th</sup> to July 26<sup>th</sup>. While this takes staff time, this survey helps USDA measure the amount of work being done for customers across the nation. By doing so, NRCS is able to staff field offices more efficiently and continue to provide outstanding customer service.

### FARM BILL

#### Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

Indiana has made excellent progress on obligating our FY19 approved EQIP applications. To date we have obligated over 90% of our original allocation, totaling over 19 million dollars and impacting 126,299 acres. Indiana has requested additional dollars to help fund a portion of the remaining preapproved applications.

#### Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

CSP applications that met the application and eligibility deadlines will be preapproved on July 3<sup>rd</sup> based on ranking score. Two significant changes went into effect during the 2019-1 sign up with the implementation of the 2018 Farm Bill. The first being that CSP state allocations will be based on dollars instead of acres. The second is that all five years of the CSP contract will be obligated in FY19 for approved applications; previously CSP contract dollars were obligated annually. CSP contracts should be obligated by August 30<sup>th</sup>.

#### EQIP and CSP Local Working Groups

The Local Working Group bulletin and letter to SWCD's will be released soon to provide guidance on the roles and responsibilities of the Local Working Group. The Local Working Group is a subcommittee of the State Technical Committee and provides recommendations on the resource concern priorities for the local community. These priority resource concerns are used to prioritize rankings for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). The bulletin will have a due date of November 1, 2019 and will require counties to prioritize the highest 10 resource concerns in the county.

#### Conservation Stewardship Program – Grassland Conservation Initiative (CSP-GCI)

CSP-GCI is a new program authorized by the 2018 Farm Bill. CSP-GCI provides financial assistance to producers to protect grazing uses; conserve and improve soil, water, and wildlife resources on eligible land. Enrollment is limited to those producers who FSA has determined as having base acres that qualify as eligible land for the program. Eligible land consists of cropland for which base acres have been maintained and documented as grass, idle, or fallow from January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2017. The application deadline for the CSP-GCI 2019-1 signup has been updated to July 19th.

#### On-Farm Conservation Innovation Trials

On-Farm Trials were authorized in the 2018 Farm Bill to support more widespread adoption of innovative approaches, practices and systems on working lands. On-Farm Trial projects are a collaboration between NRCS and partners to implement on-the-ground conservation activities and then evaluate their impact. Incentive payments are provided to producers to offset the risk of implementing innovative approaches.

The Soil Health Demo Trial component of On-Farm Trials focuses exclusively on implementation of conservation practices and systems that improve soil health. Eligible entities receiving funding agree to

follow consistent soil health assessment protocols to evaluate the impacts of practice and system implementation. Eligible groups include agricultural businesses, non-governmental organizations with experience working with agricultural producers, and non-Federal government agencies.

Up to \$25 million annually is available in funding which goes directly to partners. In turn, they provide technical assistance and incentive payments to producers to implement conservation on their land. Producers receiving On-Farm Trials payments must be eligible to participate in EQIP.

Applications are due by July 15<sup>th</sup> through [Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov). A recorded webinar for interested applicants can be viewed here: <http://www.conservationswebinars.net/webinars/conservation-innovation-grants-on-farm-trials/?sr=wp~upcoming>. On Farm Trials webpage. <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/programs/financial/cig/?cid=nrcseprd1459039>. For more information about Conservation Innovation Grants, contact Jill Reinhart, ASTC Partnerships at [jill.reinhart@usda.gov](mailto:jill.reinhart@usda.gov).

### **PLANNING TEAM LEADER POSITION UPDATE**

The NRCS Planning Team Leader (PTL) positions are being advertised from June 25 – July 1. This is a multi-county supervisory District Conservationist responsible for conservation planning, conservation application, supervision, and partnership collaboration throughout the service area. There are 8 service areas in the state. The PTL will supervise 8-14 district conservationists and field office soil conservationists within the Conservation Delivery Team (CDT) service area. This position will work closely with the CDT Leader (CDTL) to coordinate workload. The PTL will be a member of the area staff supervised by the Area Conservationist. The State Conservationist sent a message to all employees on June 20 explaining in greater detail the position responsibilities and a comprehensive Question and Answer document addressing employee questions.

### **PLANTING GREEN GUIDELINES**

With Indiana's wet weather so far this year, some farmers will be faced with planting green decisions as a last resort. Others with more cover crop experience may choose to purposefully plant green. "Planting Green" is planting commodity crops directly into living cover crops (whether they are actively growing or in the early stages of termination). Research is underway on the best methods to minimize risks associated with planting green, and additional information has been learned directly from farmers' experiences.

NRCS has provided guidance to field staff (Indiana Bulletin 180-19-02) along with several publications to use when farmers are seeking technical assistance. The Indiana NRCS agronomy team has also put together a new Agronomy Crib Note Issue 18 "Dealing with Wet Spring Soils," which is available on our website at <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/in/technical/ecoscience/agronomy/>.

Plans are being made this spring for field visits with farmers and partnership employees across the state who are planting green to observe and learn. Prevented planting guidance will be shared as soon as it is available.

### **WET SPRING TREE PLANTING DATES VARIANCE**

With the excessive rainfall throughout Indiana in 2018 and 2019, it has been infeasible to plant tree seedlings on many sites within the typical tree planting dates. A variance to Indiana's Field Office Technical Guide standards has been authorized to enable trees that have been kept in cold storage up until planted, and the trees are planted as soon as site conditions are suitable, to be certified as meeting the standard.

### **CROP INSURANCE AND COVER CROPS UPDATES**

USDA Risk Management Agency recently authorized the grazing, haying, and silage harvest of cover crops (as identified by an ag expert) after September 1, 2019 for this crop year only. The State Office worked with Purdue (as a recognized ag expert) to acknowledge that corn, soybean, and grain sorghum (milo) are suitable

cover crop species. Therefore, a variance to the Indiana FOTG Cover Crop (340) standard is approved to enable USDA clients to plant corn, soybean, grain sorghum, and/or alfalfa as a monoculture (cover or grazing only) or in a mix (cover, grazing, haying, silage) and be considered to meet the Indiana standard. Additional technical guidance (rates, mixes, etc.) will be issued soon.

### **INDIANA CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP WEBINAR**

On July 9 from 9-10:30am the Indiana Conservation Partnership will be holding a live webinar to brief all employees on several hot topics including: ICP Accomplishments, NRCS Staffing, ICP Training Survey, IANA Update, CRP Update and Seed Vendor Guidance. Presentations will be short, and there will be some time for questions. The link for the livestream is: <http://www.kaltura.com/tiny/tt2p2>. If you have questions during the presentations, please email them to [wsell@purdue.edu](mailto:wsell@purdue.edu)

### **COMPLIANCE STATUS REVIEWS**

NRCS has received guidance (Indiana Bulletin 180-19-01) and the annual list of tracts to review for compliance with the Food Security Act of 1985, as amended, and will soon begin conducting our annual status reviews. Completing status reviews is required by law and Indiana USDA (NRCS and FSA) take compliance seriously, but we also use this opportunity to discuss conservation with all program participants. Although these reviews sometimes put USDA in the difficult position of “friend and judge,” it is more an opportunity to educate the landowner about why compliance is required and help them get back on the conservation track to keep them eligible for our programs. If a producer is unwilling to make the recommended changes, then USDA must take the harder road with them. In these situations, nobody wins – neither the producer nor the resource. We value our local partners’ support and promotion of the value of conservation, and the technical assistance that some of our producers will need as they continue their conservation journey.

### **SUDDEN OAK DEATH IN INDIANA**

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) confirmed more than 70 Walmart stores and 18 Rural King stores in the state have received rhododendron plants infected with sudden oak death (SOD), a fungal pathogen that kills oak trees. SOD travels in more than a hundred species of host plant material. It causes some browning of the leaves in the host but does not kill it. For a list of those plants see the following [https://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant\\_health/plant\\_pest\\_info/pram/downloads/pdf\\_files/usdaprlist.pdf](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/plant_pest_info/pram/downloads/pdf_files/usdaprlist.pdf)

If you purchased rhododendrons prior to June 1<sup>st</sup> from Walmart or Rural King call 1-866-NO-EXOTIC (663-9684) or the local extension office at 1-888-EXT-INFO (1-888-398-4636). To learn more about SOD, see: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/planthealth/plant-pest-and-disease-programs/pests-and-diseases/phytophthora-ramorum/sod>.

### **CHANGE IN USDA EMAIL ADDRESSES**

Indiana NRCS email addresses were recently changed as part of Secretary Sonny Perdue’s OneUSDA initiative. Each user’s primary email account for all USDA employees has been set to @usda.gov. Here is an example of the change:

Old: [johnny.soilsaver@in.usda.gov](mailto:johnny.soilsaver@in.usda.gov)

New: [johnny.soilsaver@usda.gov](mailto:johnny.soilsaver@usda.gov)

Because multiple users across the agencies may have the same name, they will continue to have a middle initial or number in the unique address, for example [steve.brown2@usda.gov](mailto:steve.brown2@usda.gov).

Emails with the old address will continue to forward for a while longer. Please update your contact information in your directories for those on your mailings lists.

2018 print quantity = 2,750

2018 print cost \$955.28, postage \$196.73

**2018 Total Cost = \$1,152.01**

---

**2019 Annual Report Newspaper Style Quote**

3,000 Printed, Print Quote \$1,400.00

12 pages, 8 full color/4 B&W

**2019 Annual Report Magazine Style Quote**

3,000 Printed, Print, stitch, trim Quote \$1,950.00

24 pages, 16 full color/8 B&W

1,364 are snail mailed, 1,150 inserted in the Farmers Exchange, 486 extras to take to local business

**Postage Quotes**

Postage Quote Non-Profit (no ads) \$539.26

Postage Quote (with ads) \$776.60

\$275 plus postage if Farmers Exchange mails for us.



# MARSHALL COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

2903 Gary Drive, Suite 1, Plymouth, IN 46563  
Phone 574-936-2024 ext. 3 Fax 855-496-7861



Marshall County SWCD is applying for a 319 implementation grant and is seeking the support of St. Joe county SWCD. The projects in this grant will be implemented in the critical area of the Yellow River Watershed they include: streambank stabilizations, livestock exclusion fencing and nutrient reduction in Lake of the woods.

We are requesting a letter of support from the St. Joe County SWCD along with the following in-kind donations:

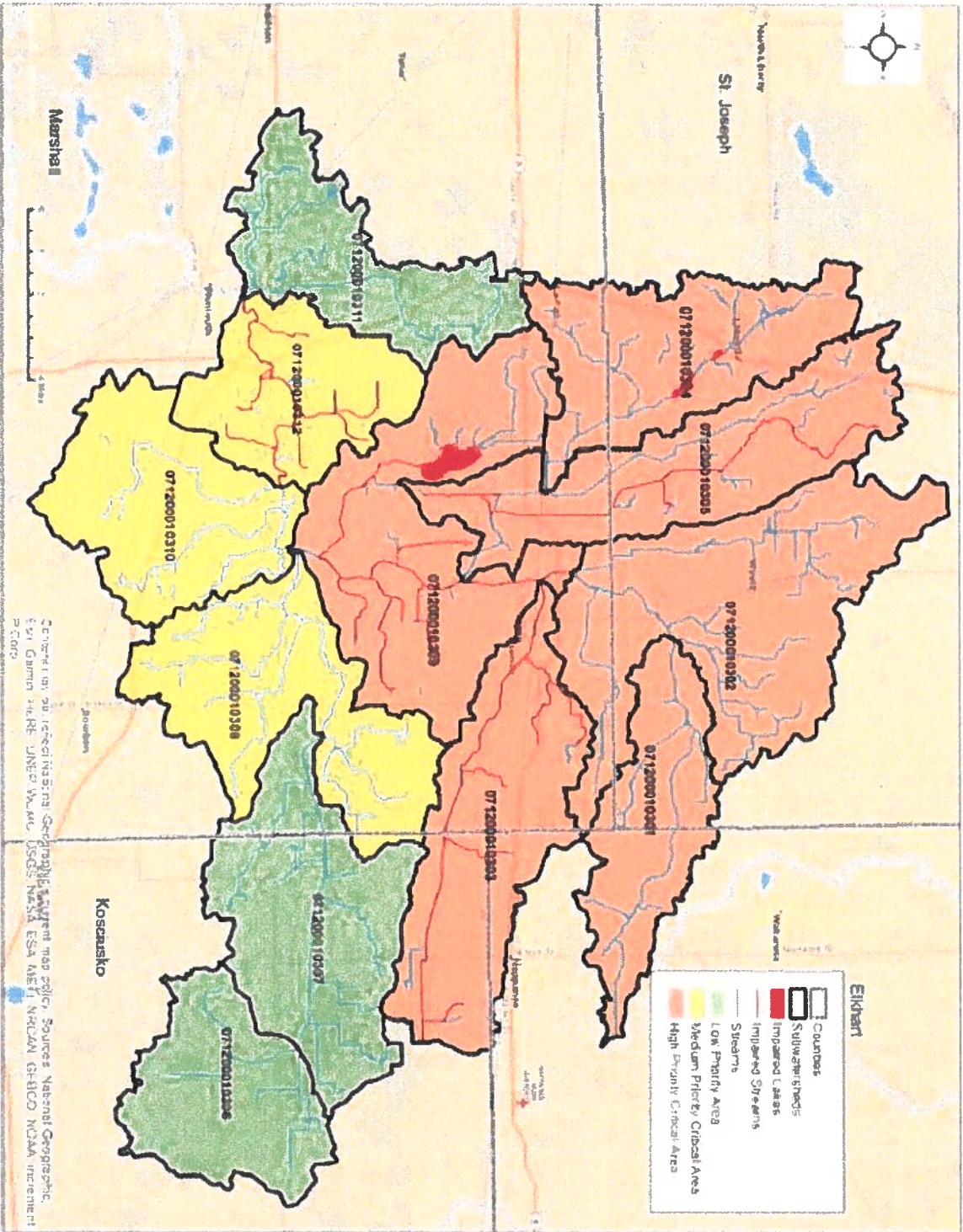
- Technical training assistance – 15 hours over 3 years
- Promoting relevant events, workshops, and field days – 10 hours over 2 years
- Promotion of cost share programs for BMP implementation within the critical areas of the Yellow River Watershed– 50 hours over 2 years

We appreciate any support that St. Joe is willing to provide, we welcome any questions that you may have. Thank You.

Best,

Erica Wyss

Marshall County SWCD



Copyright © 2010 by the City of Elkhart, Indiana. All rights reserved. Sources: National Geographic, Esri, Garmin, HERE, UNEP, NOAA, USGS, NASA, ESA, METI, NRC, IGN, DELTA, etc.

July 12, 2019

Re: Yellow River Headwaters 319 Grant Proposal  
Watershed Management Plan

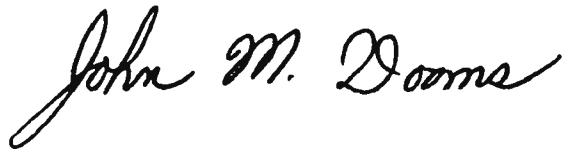
To Whom It May Concern,

I am pleased to inform you that at the August 21<sup>st</sup>, 2018 board meeting of the St Joseph County Soil and Water Conservation District, a motion was presented and passed to support the above-mentioned grant proposal from the Marshall County Soil and Water Conservation District. The motion provided that our district shall provide:

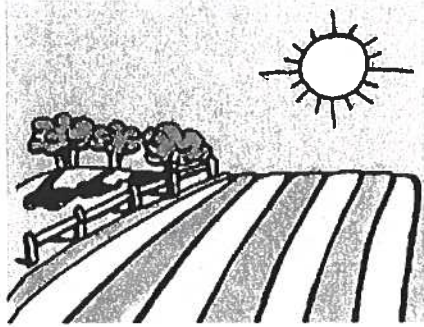
- In-Kind technical assistance – 15 hours over 3 years, valued at \$300
- In-kind support promoting relevant events, workshops, and field days – 10 hours over 2 years, valued at \$200
- In-kind support and cooperation from our staff to communicate and work with our local landowners to install BMP's within the critical areas of the Yellow River Watershed – 50 hours over 2 years, valued at \$1,000.

If you have any questions or need further information, please contact the office staff at the above phone number.

Sincerely,



John Dooms, Chairman  
St. Joseph County Soil and Water Conservation District



THE AG (AGRICULTURE) TEAM  
OF  
ST. JOSEPH COUNTY  
5032 S Miami St.  
South Bend, IN 46614

May 20, 2019

Soil & Water Conservation District  
2903 Gary Drive  
Suite 1  
Plymouth, IN 46563

Dear Soil & Water Conservation District:

On behalf of the Ag Team of St. Joseph County, I would like to thank you for sponsoring the tables and chairs that we used for Ag Days.

Ag Days was a huge success. We figured our attendance was approximately 7,500 people for the three days. Everyone enjoyed the hands-on approach that the kids experienced.

2020 Ag Days is set for April 3-4-5.

Thank you again for being a partner with us in our program.

Sincerely,

Ag Team of St. Joseph County  
Sandy Kleine, Secretary

# President's Message

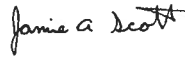
Every day we are creating a **Legacy**. We spend our time, our energy and our finances working to make a difference for future generations. We labor to make our soils healthier and protect our natural resources. Collaboratively, we plan field days, educate others through outreach in our communities, host workshops for local landowners, and attend workshops to learn more ourselves. We want to teach, model and assist with conservation best management practices.

The IASWCD Funding Task Force and the Staffing Task Force continue to work towards determining appropriate funding and capacity for districts and conservation efforts. Please keep updated on the legislator meetings via the IASWCD website over the next few months.

The Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative (CCSI) added one new position and two new staff in order to better serve the districts and landowners across the state.

In March, I had the privilege of representing the IASWCD and joining over 150 conservation leaders from across the nation for the National Association of Conservation District's (NACD) annual Spring Fly-In in Washington, D.C. Along with Indiana Assistant State Conservationist, Jill Reinhart, as well as Roger Wenning, Sarah Delbecq, and Gene Schmidt, we were able to meet with our representatives and senators to share the success of conservation and soil health in Indiana.

Please take the time to read this annual report and learn how the IASWCD is working to serve you, the Districts, and the state of Indiana. Take encouragement from the fact that you are part of something bigger, a **Legacy**, that is making a difference in soil health and water quality. I've appreciated the opportunity to serve you these past few years and look forward to many more.



Jamie Scott  
IASWCD Board President

Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts  
225 South East Street, Suite 740  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46202

## 2018 IASWCD Board of Directors & Staff

<b>Jamie Scott</b> President	<b>Roger Wenning</b> Vice President	<b>Kerry Ames</b> Secretary	<b>Jeff Baker</b> Treasurer	<b>Jeff Meinders</b> Past President
<b>Kim Peterson</b> N-NW Director	<b>Marc Roberts</b> S-NW Director	<b>Tom Crowe</b> N-NE Director	<b>Troy Hattery</b> S-NE Director	<b>Joe Schmees</b> Executive Director
<b>Sacha Gee-Burns</b> N-NW Asst. Director	<b>Mark Lawson</b> S-NW Asst. Director	<b>Sarah Delbecq</b> N-NE Asst. Director	<b>Andy Ambriole</b> S-NE Asst. Director	
<b>Josh Bishop</b> N-SW Director	<b>Ray Chattin</b> S-SW Director	<b>Cathy Becker</b> N-SE Director	<b>Brad Ponsler</b> S-SE Director	<b>Amy Work</b> Communications & Member Programs Manager
<b>Jame Krieger</b> N-SW Asst. Director	<b>Denny Simpson</b> S-SW Asst. Director	<b>Vacant</b> N-SE Asst. Director	<b>Pat Larr</b> S-SE Asst. Director	
<b>Lisa Holscher</b> Director, CCSI	<b>Trisha McClain</b> Northern Program Manager, CCSI		<b>Jessica Hoehn</b> Southern Program Manager, CCSI	

[www.iaswcd.org](http://www.iaswcd.org)



INDIANA ASSOCIATION OF  
soil and water conservation  
DISTRICTS

# 2018 Annual Report

The Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts is a 501(c)(3) non-profit membership organization that supports the efforts of the soil and water conservation districts 460 supervisors and more than 200 staff in 92 local offices through training, communications, contribution agreements, partnership building, and advocacy.

## IASWCD Accomplishments in 2018 *Working for our Members*

### Communications & Outreach

IASWCD used various communication tools to inform our members and the public about soil and water conservation issues. 2018 Accomplishments:

- Delivered 24 "Conservation Insight" eNewsletters with timely conservation information.
- Communicated District successes and accomplishments through media and news releases.
- Continued updates of the resource-packed association website at [www.iaswcd.org](http://www.iaswcd.org).
- Promoted District and partner job vacancies in the eNewsletter and on the website
- Promoted outstanding conservation efforts through various awards:
  - River Friendly Farmer - 49 recipients
  - Friend of Conservation Awards (3) –Vincennes Sun-Commercial (Knox County);The Center at Donaldson (Marshall County); Sharon Watson (White County)
  - Conservation Farmer of the Year – Mike and Susan Brocksmith (Knox County)
  - District Showcase Awards – Adams, Bartholomew, Marion and Porter County SWCDs
  - SWCD Supervisor of the Year – Announced at Awards Luncheon at Annual Conference
- Communicated news releases and other important natural resource information to a broader audience through posts on Twitter and over 250 Facebook posts. Increased Facebook following by 19% over past year.

- Provided registration and administrative support for all ICP training events in 2018.
- Contracted for a Coordinator for the ICP Pathway to Water Quality committee and successfully completed the 26th year of PWQ at the Indiana State Fair. Began discussions with ICP partners and State Fair to support a Coordinator for future years of PWQ.
- Conveyed important NRCS information to Districts through a contribution agreement for communication services.
- Participated in a water quality related podcast for Hoosier Ag Today's Soil Health podcast series, co-sponsored by CCSI.

### Policy & Advocacy

IASWCD works with legislators during session for SWCD conservation policy and funding. 2018 Accomplishments:

- Maintained the Clean Water Indiana general fund appropriation budget at \$1 million per year (although we advocated for an increase). Updated SWCDs on a weekly basis during the 2018 legislative session.
- Four SWCD supervisors advocated for Indiana's conservation issues with all Congressional members during a visit to Washington, DC in March.
- Actively participated on the Indiana Conservation Alliance as a steering committee member.
- Communicated with all Congressional offices on the importance and meaning of conservation technical assistance.
- Attended and participated in Water Infrastructure Taskforce Committee summer meetings, and testified on behalf of soil and water conservation.

### Capacity Building

IASWCD works with partners to build the capacity of soil and water conservation districts to carry out locally led conservation. 2018 Accomplishments:

- Continued the NRCS Program Support agreement for Districts to provide administrative and technical assistance with Farm Bill programs. Over \$800,000 total in payments were made to Districts under this agreement in 2018. Over 70 Districts have signed contracts to do this work.

- Successfully garnered \$30,750 in sponsorships for the 2019 SWCD Annual Conference. These sponsorships help offset the cost of conference.
- Provided a Supervisor Scholarship Program, worth over \$5,000, offering assistance to supervisors to attend the 2019 SWCD Annual Conference.
- Partnered with ISDA, IDEA and NRCS to provide information and training at regional meetings.
- Collaborated with NACD to implement technical assistance grant opportunities for Districts.
- Convened several meetings of the Natural Resources Policy committee to discuss possible coordination between Districts and Townships, specifically in the realm of local invasive species management.
- Convened several meetings of the Funding Task Force to determine District financial needs, and develop a long term plan to work toward sustainable funding for Districts.
- Collaborated with The Nature Conservancy and ISDA to hold a cross-state border meeting with Indiana and Illinois Districts in the Wabash River basin to determine barriers to soil health adoption.
- Supported Districts with the development of Clear Choices, Clean Water outreach resources.
- Provided liability insurance coverage for Districts.

### Leadership

The IASWCD Board of Directors and its staff strive to provide consistent and quality leadership for Districts. 2018 Accomplishments:

- The Board and staff led a thorough campaign to interview candidates for, and hire, a new Executive Director.
- Hosted the 75th Annual Conference of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, January 8-9, 2018. Over 375 conservationists were in attendance.
- Represented SWCDs on the State Technical Committee; in the Indiana Conservation Partnership Leaders meetings, State Soil Conservation Board meetings, Indiana Family of Farmers, and other state level committees.
- Represented the SWCDs on the newly formed Indiana Agriculture Nutrient Alliance (IANA), collaborating with

other agricultural partners on nutrient reduction.

- Represented SWCDs at the National level on various NACD committees.
- Worked with NRCS and other ICP partners on new Cooperative Agreement/MOU language, and collected and aggregated comments from SWCDs and provided to NRCS.

### Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative (CCSI)

The IASWCD helps to administer the Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative (CCSI). Highlights in 2018 include the beginning of a new contribution agreement, which now supports two newly hired Program Managers; funding from Purdue University and CWI to retain the CCSI Agronomist; securing a \$10,000 grant from the Perdue Foundation to support education and training events; and, receiving a SARE grant for \$75,000 to adapt the CCSI agency-focused curriculum to an ag retailer audience. For an update on CCSI, please view the 2018 Highlights report.

### IASWCD Fiscal Summary

