

## MONTHLY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

- I. **CALL TO ORDER - On Tuesday August 20, 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**

**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 – n/a**

III. **REGULAR BUSINESS**

- a. **Legislative Updates – n/a**
- b. **Indiana Conservation Partnership Updates –** Longenecker mentioned that Rick Kennedy, the Purdue Extension Ag and Natural Resources Educator has resigned from the position
- c. **Minutes: 7/16/2019 board meeting –** Minutes were reviewed and approved as presented.
- d. **Treasurer’s Report: (7/17/2019-8/20/2019) –** The treasurer’s report was reviewed and approved as submitted by motion (Vandewalle/Burkholder). Motion carried.
- e. **Approval of Claims (7/17/2019-8/20/2019) –**A motion (Craft/Burkholder) was made to approve Claim Nos. 11482-11485 for a total of \$692.95. 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 to the board. (attached).

b. **Committee Reports**

- i. **Annual Meeting –** Vandewalle reported that the annual meeting will be held on January 31, 2020 at St. Hedwig. The committee requested approval for charging \$15 per ticket again. Motion was made and seconded (Vandewalle/Craft) and passed. Discussion was held regarding the speaker for the 60<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting. A motion was made and seconded (Craft/Vandewalle) to continue to pursue possible financial sponsorships to help pay for speaker Chad Pregracke. Motion passed
- c. **2019 Annual Report –** Dooms went over the brief outline provided by staff of topics and ideas for this year’s 60<sup>th</sup> annual report and said if anyone has additional ideas to please let the staff know. (attached)
- d. **NRCS MOU –** Knepp did a quick review of the MOU between the Indiana Conservation Partnership (on file).
- e. **CWI –** Longenecker did a quick overview of the 12 applications totaling 1479.2 acres of cover crops with a potential cost share of \$29,228 that were approved via phone calls to board members. The board decided after some discussion that they would allow a variance to a producer who planted his cover crops (200 acres) prior to application approval due to confusion between different agency programs (Burkholder/Vandewalle). They also approved a new application for 51.55 acres of cover crops (\$1031.00). (Burkholder/Craft)
- f. **Department Head Meeting Update –** Longenecker reported that the last meeting covered brief department updates and an in-depth coverage of the available GIS resources available to all county departments.
- g. **Indiana Woodland Steward –** After some discussion the board decided to sponsor the newsletter at the amount of \$100 again. They would like follow up to get the names of the 19 St. Joseph county recipients. (Vandewalle/Burkholder)

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. Longenecker added the Ceres Knowledge event on August 29<sup>th</sup> in Mentone and said she would email the details.
- b. **Quarterly Supervisors Meeting –** The supervisors meeting was scheduled for September 4, 2019 at 9:00 am at the Plymouth Service Center.

- c. **Women's Learning Circle** – Knepp informed the board that the learning circle is scheduled for September 19<sup>th</sup> and will be held at the Mishawaka Res. Lunch and any other expenses will be brought to the board as we get the information.
- d. **Locally Led Meeting** – Set for September 16<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm prior to the board meeting at the Centre Township Branch Library.
- e. **Pasture Walk** – Details were given about Marshall County SWCD hosted grazing field day to be held in Nappanee on August 29<sup>th</sup>. Postcards were provided for board members to post or hand out.
- f. **Cover Crop Workshop** – Meeting in partnership with Marshall County SWCD, Farm Bureau, and Extension to be held on September 5<sup>th</sup> at the Conservation Clubhouse in Plymouth. Postcards for this event were also provided to post or hand out.
- g. **Fire Proof File Cabinet** – Longenecker read the estimates that Hoffarth provided for a two drawer and a four-drawer cabinet. We are still waiting on the insurance adjuster, but the board stated that they would like to go with the four-drawer unit. Tabled until more insurance info.

**VI. PRIVILEGE OF FLOOR** – Dave Straughn let the board know that next year is the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Res and he has given Mishawaka Libraries Jane's contact info to hopefully partner on some education events. John Dooms let the board know about the passing of honorary board member Bernie Byrd and gave some details of his upcoming service. Sablich told the board about a potential partnership with Marshall County SWCD for a grant to get forestry classroom supplies to share between counties and wanted their go ahead before she moved ahead with her assistance. They were fine with her helping.

**VII. ADJOURNMENT** – The board meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
**Sarah Longenecker**  
**County Conservationist**  
**St. Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation District**  
 2903 Gary Drive, Plymouth, IN 46563  
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**Approved by**



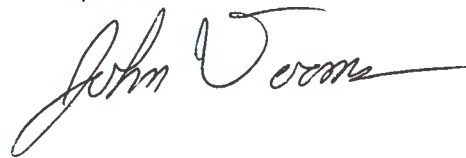
Supervisor



Supervisor



Supervisor



# DC Talking Points

## July 2019

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### FARM BILL

#### Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

Indiana has made excellent progress on obligating FY19 funds for approved EQIP applications. To date we have obligated over 99% of our original allocation of \$20.5 million dollars. Indiana has requested additional dollars to help fund a portion of the remaining preapproved applications.

Indiana has recently received an additional \$900,000.00 to assist landowners on cover crop plantings for prevented planting/flooded fields. These funds were provided as a special funding request due to the wetness and flooding that has occurred in Indiana in 2019.

#### EQIP - Great Lake Restoration Initiative (GLRI)

Indiana NRCS has received funding for prevented planting/flooded fields in the Western Lake Erie Basin to plant cover crops. The deadline is August 9<sup>th</sup>. This sign up is through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and is for farmers who could not plant crops in portions of Adams, Allen, DeKalb, Wells, Noble and Steuben counties because of flooded or wet fields.

#### Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

CSP contracts continue to be reviewed for obligation. Indiana has requested additional funds for CSP to try and fund as many of the applications as possible. We are still awaiting notification on the additional CSP funds.

A sign-up for Grassland Conservation Initiative-a component of CSP is currently on going. This program involves lands with a crop base that are currently in grass and allows the participant to receive a payment to have it remain in grass. Eligible participants were identified by working with FSA and eligible participants have been notified.

#### MRBI/NWQI Priority Watersheds

NRCS is seeking new priority watersheds for the Mississippi River Basin Initiative and National Water Quality Initiative. MRBI has a primary focus of improving water quality while also restoring wetlands, enhancing wildlife habitat, and sustaining agricultural viability in small watersheds of the Mississippi River Basin. Projects should align with state nutrient loss reduction strategies. NWQI is a joint initiative between NRCS and EPA to address agricultural sources of water pollution, specifically nutrients, sediment and pathogens in priority watersheds. Implementation projects for both MRBI and NWQI must have a watershed assessment that meets NRCS guidelines and targets efforts at the 12-digit HUC level. Applicants can apply for funding to complete a watershed assessment before applying for implementation funding. Proposals are due to Indiana NRCS by September 20. Interested partners should contact Jill Reinhart for proposal guidelines and watershed assessment criteria.

#### Big Pine Watershed Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

A sign up for Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) dollars has been announced for farmers in the Big Pine Watershed Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) to improve water quality by installing conservation practices. The Big Pine watershed covers almost 210,000 acres in western Indiana which includes portions of Benton, White, Warren, and Tippecanoe counties. The partnership is working with farmers in the area to increase the number of nutrient and sediment reducing practices on cropland. August 9 is the cutoff date this year to be considered for funding for this partnership project.

## **Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Sign up for Monarch and Pollinator Habitat**

Pheasants and Quail Forever and NRCS are encouraging farmers to submit CSP applications by August 9 to establish habitat for monarch butterflies and other wildlife on private property. Indiana is part of the multi-state RCPP project which directs additional funds to these habitat efforts, including the states of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Texas. This project focuses on encouraging landowners to establish monarch-friendly plantings as well as completing enhancements that help manage beneficial areas by controlling brush and weeds, protecting them from pesticides, and improving grazing systems. Also, conservation enhancements that provide benefits for pollinators also help reduce erosion, increase soil health, control invasive species, provide quality forage for livestock and make agricultural operations more resilient and productive.

## **EQIP and CSP Local Working Groups**

The Local Working Group bulletin and letter to SWCD's was released July 31 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.

## **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.

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

With the excessive rainfall throughout Indiana and delayed/prevented planting, NRCS has made the following variances available for conservation practices:

### **Tree and Shrub Planting Standard (612) Variance**

A variance to the Indiana Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG) Tree/Shrub Establishment Standard (612) has been granted for fiscal year 2019 only. All Indiana FOTG standards that involve tree/shrub planting refer to the (612) Tree/Shrub Establishment criteria; therefore, this variance applies to all other standards involving tree/shrub establishment.

All state level partners have concurred that survival and growth of bareroot seedlings after July 1<sup>st</sup> can be successful if seedlings have been properly stored in cold storage until they are planted, and they are planted as soon as site conditions are suitable.

This variance pertains to tree plantings under USDA Indiana technical responsibility. USDA or authorized Technical Service Providers will certify tree plantings as complete for reporting, financial assistance payments, etc., once trees have been planted and to the specifications in the Tree Planting Plan and Forestry Technical Note #2 (*Tree and Shrub Establishment*), if the following criteria are followed:

## Variance Criteria

- Trees must be planted as soon as site conditions are suitable.
- Follow the seedling care and handling guidance in Purdue's publication *FNR-210 Planting and Care of Fine Hardwood Seedlings*.
  - Bare-root seedlings are stored in controlled environments at tree nurseries until shipped or picked up.
  - Seedlings should be planted as soon as possible (within a few days of delivery). If they are not planted immediately, they need to be placed in cold storage and protected.
  - Seedling roots need to be kept moist, but not wet, by periodic watering.
  - Arrangements may need to be made with tree nurseries for longer storage.

## **Cover Crop Standard (340) Variance**

A variance to the IN FOTG Cover Crop (340) Standard has been granted for fiscal year 2019 due to excessive wet weather. The cover crop **cannot be harvested for seed/grain under any circumstances**. Recent designations from RMA and guidance from Purdue University recognizes annual cash crops such as corn, soybeans and grain sorghum (milo), and alfalfa as cover crops for the fiscal year 2019 growing season only.

## RMA Key Points

- From [farmers.gov/prevented-planting](http://farmers.gov/prevented-planting): "An acceptable cover crop must be generally recognized by agricultural experts as agronomically sound for the area for erosion control or other purposes related to conservation or soil improvement is planted at the recommended seeding rate, etc. The cover crop may be the same crop prevented from planting and may still retain eligibility for a prevented planting payment. The cover crop planted cannot be used for harvest as seed or grain."
- From MyFPAC blog [Getting Questions about Prevented Plant and Cover Crops?](#): "It (corn) cannot be harvested as grain or seed and should be managed like a cover crop and not a corn silage crop."
- Farmers and USDA customers are not required to meet the Indiana Cover Crop (340) Standard on their prevented plant acres to remain eligible for crop insurance benefits, however, see other key points and criteria for Farm Bill program participants and those seeking NRCS technical assistance.
- Purdue's recognition of grain crops as cover crops meets the RMA requirements.
- RMA rule changes enable producers to hay, graze, or cut cover crops for silage, haylage, or baling on prevented plant acres after September 1, 2019 for this cropping season only.

## National NRCS FOTG Standard (340) Cover Crop Key Points

- The national standard does not include "*LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION LIMITATION – Inadequate feed and forage*" as a purpose.
- The national standard states "*Do not harvest cover crops for seed.*"
- The national standard allows that "*When a cover crop will be grazed or hayed ensure the planned management will not compromise the selected conservation purpose(s).*"

## Indiana FOTG Standard (340) Cover Crop Key Points

- Waivers to the national FOTG Cover Crop (340) Standard are not authorized for fiscal year 2019.
- All technical advice from NRCS to customers will adhere to the Indiana Cover Crop (340) Standard.

- All Farm Bill program implementation requirements will meet the Indiana Cover Crop (340) Standard.
- Following NRCS standards does not guarantee compliance with crop insurance or other legal requirements - customers must communicate their cover crop plans with their specific crop insurance agent, seed supplier, and others to ensure compliance with specific rules.
- A grazing and or harvest plan is required for all cover crops being harvested.

#### Criteria Applicable to Cover Crops

- Integrated Pest Management strategies (scouting, economic thresholds, etc.) will be followed for all applications of herbicides (especially residuals), insecticides (including seed treatments), rodenticides, fungicides, etc.:
- Cover crop species should be selected applicable to the appropriate seeding window. NOTE: oats and radish can be seeded starting July 1, 2019.
- Due to the short growing season, consult Purdue Extension guidance pertaining to potential risks associated with late planted grains and cover crops for silage.

#### **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. These reviews are an opportunity to educate the landowner about why compliance is required and help them get back on the conservation track, if needed, to keep them eligible for our programs. If a producer is unwilling to make the recommended changes, then they will lose USDA benefits.