

MONTHLY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER - On Tuesday March 16, 2021, at 7:03 pm a zoom 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
Chris Matthys, Supervisor
Mike Burkholder, Supervisor
Sam James, Supervisor
David Straughn

PRESENT – SWCD/NRCS

Sarah Longenecker, SWCD CC
Sandra Hoffarth, SWCD AA
Sam Buchanan, SWCD EEC
Debbie Knepp, NRCS DC

Present - EX-OFFICIO

PRESENT – Public

ABSENT – SWCD

Chuck Lehman
Dru Wrasse
Richard Schmidt
Randy Matthys
Dave Craft

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** – Purdue Extension is hosting a Vehicle & Pesticide Equipment Safety and Dicamba Update on April 9th. Space is limited.
- c. **Minutes February 17, 2021 board meeting & Annual Meeting February 24, 2021** – Board Minutes were reviewed and approved as presented. Annual Meeting minutes were reviewed and approved with the correction of Mike Burkholder in attendance.
- d. **Treasurer’s Report: (2/11/2021-3/12/2021)** – A motion (Burkholder/Matthys) was made to approve the treasurer’s report as submitted.
- e. **Approval of Claims (2/11/2021-3/12/2021)** –A motion (Burkholder/Vandewalle) was made to approve Claim Nos. 11612-11620 for a total of \$4,741.19. 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. **Virtual Producers Workshop** – Longenecker informed the board that the workshop went smoothly. It was recorded and available to view through our website. 96 registered and 75 attended live. One participant was from Nigeria who works at soil erosion lab. Other participants were from the area and other states.

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. **CISMA (Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas)** – Longenecker invited the board to attend an informational zoom meeting on March 18 at noon. This meeting is planned to explain CISMA’s and how we can get involved.
- b. **Election of Officers** – election was held for Chairman and Vice-Chairman via a poll within Zoom. By majority vote, John Dooms will serve as chairman and Dave Vandewalle will serve as Vice-Chairman for 2021. Burkholder nominated Hoffarth as Secretary/Treasurer. No other nominations from the floor. A motion (Burkholder/Vandewalle) was made to approve Hoffarth as Secretary/Treasurer for 2021. Motion carried.

VI. PRIVILEGE OF FLOOR – Dooms read the resignation letter from Jeremy Cooper. A motion (Burkholder/Vandewalle) was made to approve Cooper’s resignation. Motion carried. The board thanks Cooper for the 10 years of service and dedication. Hoffarth read a thank you card from Marianne LaFree for the 30-year plate for her late husband Jim. Straughn asked about landfill inspections, Longenecker explained they are being held off until vaccinations and restrictions are lifted. Dooms asked to look into available dates for the 2022 annual meeting and report back to the board.

VII. ADJOURNMENT – The board meeting adjourned at 7:43 pm by motion (Vandewalle/Burkholder). Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Hoffarth

Administrative Assistant

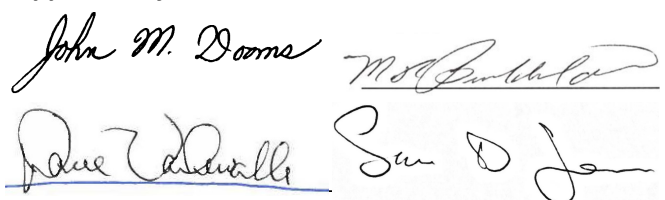
St. Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation District

2903 Gary Drive, Plymouth, IN 46563

Email: Sandra.hoffarth@in.nacdn.net

www.stjosephswcd.org

Approved by: 4/20/2021 via zoom mtg



Supervisor

Hoffarth, Sandra E. - NRCS, Plymouth, IN

From: Joe Schmees <joseph-schmees@iaswcd.org>
Sent: Friday, March 12, 2021 5:19 PM
To: supervisor@iaswcd.org; allswcd@iaswcd.org
Cc: 'IN Assoc SWCDs'; Holscher, Lisa - NRCS-CD, Petersburg, IN; 'Eliana Blaine'
Subject: [External Email]IASWCD Legislative Bill Tracker 3.12.21

[External Email]

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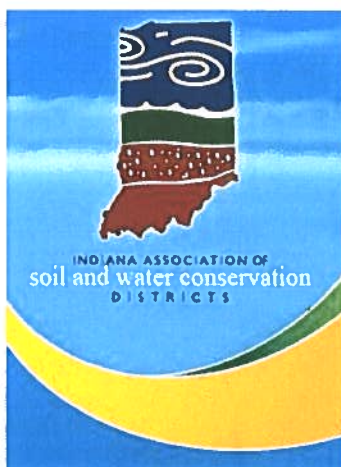
SWCD Supervisors and Staff,

Please see the IASWCD Legislative Bill Tracker below for this past week. We are still closely following bills, and expect to see an amendment to the wetlands repeal bill in the coming week or so. We continue to monitor the budget bill and reach out to legislators on the financial committees. As always, if you have questions about legislation, please reach out to Cress or myself. 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

March 12, 2021 Bill Tracker

First Session of the 122nd Indiana General Assembly

It was a quite week as the Indiana General Assembly was getting back up to speed to start the second half of the session. Indiana lawmakers on Thursday listened to over four hours of testimony on how the governor's public emergency powers should be restricted. This is all a result of Covid-19 as this week marks the one-year of the pandemic. Governor Holcomb did not appear but presented a parade of his administration officials to defend his actions. No vote was taken.

SB 227 Enforcement of pesticide violations passed out of the House Ag and Rural Development Committee on Tuesday with no opposition. I will be covering the House Environmental Committee scheduled for Monday. This committee did not meet in the first half of the session despite having 13 bills assigned to it. On their calendar is SB 271 IDEM Agency bill.

Note: Bills on our list scheduled for committee hearings next week are in red.

2021 Session Deadlines

- 4/13 last day for House Committees on Senate Bills
- 4/15 last day for Senate Committees on House 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 filings are complete, but I will continue to review House and Senate bills that may have impact on us. Below are bills currently of importance to IASWCD. *Please contact me at (317.753.9627) or chizer@inaq.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>

Contact Your Legislator

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 1055:** [Watershed development commissions.](#)
- **HB 1224:** [Craft hemp flower and hemp production.](#)
- **HB 1283:** [Urban agricultural zones.](#)

- [HB 1395](#): Various natural resources matters.
- [HB 1437](#): Electronic communication at public meetings.
- [HB 1496](#): Natural resource matters.

Senate

- [SB 68](#): Conservancy district board meetings.
- [SB 227](#): Enforcement of pesticide violations.
- [SB 271](#): The department of environmental management.
- [SB 329](#): Flood control district board of commissioners.
- [SB 348](#): Wastewater task force.
- [SB 373](#): Carbon credit programs.
- [SB 389](#): Repeals state regulated wetlands law.

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

317.753.9627

Indianapolis, IN 46220 chizer@inag.biz

Lobbying--Public Affairs--Associations--Risk

Field Office Report
February 15 – March 12, 2021

<u>General/Miscellaneous</u>	
Office Work	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Producers Workshop • Annual Meeting • March/April Newsletter • Legislative Notebook 	

<u>EQIP- Environmental Quality Incentive Program</u>	
Office Work	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess and rank 25 applications • Process payments for 3 producers – Pollinator Habitat 	

<u>WRE- Wetland Reserve Program</u>	
Office Work	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Resource Inventory for Enhancement contract 	

<u>CSP- Conservation Stewardship Program</u>	
Office Work	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop eligibility maps for 5 applications 	

<u>CRP-Conservation Reserve Program</u>	
Office Work	
Planning work on 8 new CRP applications	

<u>CWI- Clean Water Indiana</u>	
Office Work	
Meeting to review and revise application, completion certification form, and practice contracts	

<u>Wetland Determinations / Highly Erodible Land Determinations</u>	
Office Work	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wetland Determinations - 3 • HEL determinations - 3 	

<u>Rule 5/ Rule 13</u>	
Office/Field Work	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewed 4 SWPPPs 	

<u>Education</u>		
Age	Total # Programs/ Hours	Total # People
Youth Education	1 school program on wetland habitats/making a difference in the environment/ 1hr	13 youths, 2 adults
Adult Education		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created a wetlands information PowerPoint for the website • Outdoor lab school visit • Inventory and preparation of the Enviroscape model 		

Meetings & Trainings

Food and Ag Council NRCS Area Meeting Secretary of Ag Town Hall Producer's Workshop Run Through NRCS Program Updates Vehicle Management Tool Redesign Joint CRP – Forest Management Program Producer's Meeting St. Joseph River Basin Commission Quarterly meeting	Wetland Restoration Planning – 2 Tree Identification Shrub Identification IT Process Reasonable Accommodations Backyard Habitat Legislative Update CCSI monthly teleconference Annual Meeting
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Webinars

Dates

Decisions when changing farming operations Tribal Lands: Trust, Federal Treaties; Opportunities for Collaboration Purdue "Value of All Wetlands" CCSI "So You Want Me To Change How I Farm?"	Office Closed – February 15
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Comments from the Community

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DC Talking Points

March 2021

FARM BILL PROGRAMS

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

The final rule for ACEP was recently announced. NRCS received more than 570 comments on the ACEP interim rule. The final rule responds to these comments and adopts the interim rule with minor changes, including:

Updates to ACEP

- Revised the definitions for beginning farmer, eligible land, farm succession plan, future viability and maintenance to provide additional clarity, especially around succession planning.

Updates to ACEP Agricultural Land Easements (ALE)

- Incorporated priority into the ACEP-ALE ranking criteria for lands enrolled in the Transition Incentives Program under the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP-TIP).
- Clarified the non-federal match requirements and added new types of costs that may be used to satisfy the non-federal match requirements.
- Modified one of the regulatory deed requirements to clarify the types of changes to the easement deed or easement area that must be approved in advance by NRCS.
- Updated the regulatory language describing the United States' inspection authority to reflect the existing right of enforcement language used in ACEP-ALE conservation easements, in which NRCS provides the easement holder and the landowner notice and a reasonable opportunity to participate in an inspection of the easement area.
- Revised the regulatory language to specify the minimum and maximum durations for ACEP-ALE agreements based on an eligible entity's certification status under ACEP-ALE.

Updates to ACEP Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE)

- Incorporated priority consideration into the ACEP-WRE ranking criteria for lands enrolled in the CRP-TIP that are farmed wetland and adjoining land that has the highest wetland functions and values and is likely to return to production after the land leaves CRP.

View the ACEP final rule at: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/02/04/2021-02268/agricultural-conservation-easement-program>.

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

March 31 is the deadline for CSP 2022-1 renewal of 2017 contracts. *6 contracts*

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) – Big Pine Project

March 19 is the second-round application deadline for the Big Pine Project in northwestern Indiana.

INQUIRIES REGARDING SENATE BILL 389

Many of you may have heard of or received questions about Indiana Senate Bill 389 which would change Indiana's state wetland regulations.

As a reminder, federal employee lobbying regulations prohibit NRCS employees from commenting on proposed or pending legislation in their official capacity (as a representative of NRCS, on official time, using NRCS equipment – computers, printers, vehicles, buildings, etc.). Employees are also prohibited from

commenting on and reposting/retweeting proposed or pending legislation on social media accounts that are also used as work-related social media accounts. If you are contacted by media personnel or other representation about NRCS' stance on this bill, please have them contact our national office at: FPAC.BC.Press@usda.gov.

Related to the proposed change to Indiana's wetland laws, NRCS will continue to implement the requirements in the Food Security Act of 1985, as amended, and Executive Order 10999, and will continue to promote and administer our wetland restoration efforts as authorized through Farm Bill Programs. If the bill does pass, further guidance on how this will impact NRCS technical assistance and financial assistance activities will be issued.

If you have any questions regarding social media restrictions or media requests, please contact Kris Vance, State Public Affairs Specialist, at kris.vance@usda.gov or 317-295-5822. You can also find more information about lobbying regulations by visiting: [USDA | DM | Office of Ethics | Science Ethics Branch | Lobbying](#)

ACTING INDIANA FSA LEADERSHIP

Susan Houston has been appointed to acting State Executive Director (SED) and Brandon Maienbrook has been appointed as acting Administrative Officer (AO) effective Feb. 28.

NEW UNDER SECRETARY FOR FPAC

The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced the appointment of Gloria Montañó Greene as Deputy Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC). She started on Monday, Feb. 22.

Montañó Greene is a former State Executive Director for the Farm Service Agency in Arizona from 2014-2017, a position she was appointed to by President Obama. With FSA in Arizona, Montañó Greene led implementation of the 2013 Farm Bill programs across the state. Currently, she serves as Deputy Director for Chispa Arizona, a program of the League of Conservation Voters focused on the empowerment of Latino voices in Arizona on issues including energy, public lands and democracy access. She served as Deputy Chief of Staff and Chief of Staff to Congressman Raúl M. Grijalva of Arizona. She is a graduate of the University of Arizona.

USDA URBAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

USDA is seeking members for a new advisory committee on urban agriculture, part of a broader effort to focus on the needs of urban farmers. The 12-person committee will advise the Secretary of Agriculture on the development of policies and outreach relating to urban, indoor and other emerging agricultural production practices as well as identify any barriers to urban agriculture. USDA is seeking nominations for individuals representing a broad spectrum of expertise, including:

- Four agricultural producers (two agricultural producers in an urban area or urban cluster and two agricultural producers who use innovative technology).
- Two representatives from an institution of higher education or extension program.
- One representative of a nonprofit organization, which may include a public health, environmental or community organization.
- One representative of business and economic development, which may include a business development entity, a chamber of commerce, a city government or a planning organization.
- One individual with supply chain experience, which may include a food aggregator, wholesale food distributor, food hub or an individual who has direct-to-consumer market experience.
- One individual from a financing entity.

- Two individuals with related experience or expertise in urban, indoor and other emerging agriculture production practices, as determined by the Secretary.

Any interested person or organization may nominate qualified individuals for membership. Self-nominations are also welcome. Nominations should include a cover letter, resume and a [background form](#). Nomination packages must be submitted by mail or email by March 5, 2021. They should be addressed to Ronald Harris, Designated Federal Officer, Director of Outreach and Partnerships, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Room 6006-S, Washington, D.C. 20250, or emailed to Ronald.Harris@usda.gov.

TILLAGE TRANSECTS

The Indiana Conservation Partnership is committed to completing the annual Indiana Conservation Transect in 2021. Despite the challenges presented by COVID-19, we are confident that by following safety protocols, the value of the data and time spent observing local resource concerns can be met; however, if COVID-19 conditions dictate a change, employee safety will always be our first priority.

All ICP employees will adhere to the following safety protocols:

- If an employee exhibits any COVID-19 symptoms, they will not participate.
- No more than two employees in a vehicle.
- Only two-row vehicles will be used – a driver and the other employee in the second-row seat.
- Remote communications with other staff (in the office, in separate vehicles, etc.) are strongly encouraged for entering data into spreadsheets, navigating to transect points, etc.
- Masks are required and will be properly worn at all times.
- Windows will be cracked to maximize air flow.

To ensure Indiana's consistent set of tillage and cover crops adoption data continues, we are requesting that each county complete a transect in the late winter/early spring of 2021. If for any reason (such as COVID-19, workload, lack of staff or equipment, etc.), your county requires additional assistance to complete the required transects, please contact Shannon Zezula (shannon.zezula@in.usda.gov) or Trevor Laureys (TLaureys@isda.IN.gov) and the NRCS and ISDA State Offices will help in any way possible.