

## MONTHLY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

- I. CALL TO ORDER - On Tuesday September 19, 2017, at 7:02 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**

John Dooms, Chair/Supervisor  
Jeremy Cooper, Vice-Chair/Supervisor  
Mike Burkholder, Supervisor  
Stacey Silvers, Supervisor  
Dave Vandewalle, Supervisor  
Dave Craft

**PRESENT – SWCD/NRCS**

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

**Present - EX-OFFICIO**

Jacob Holloway – Purdue Extension  
**PRESENT – Public**  
David Straughn  
Scott Laidig  
Vince Gresham

**ABSENT – SWCD**

Jan Ivkovich  
Dru Wrasse  
Richard Schmidt  
Randy Matthys  
Dale Stoner  
Arlene Schuchman  
Chuck Lehman  
Jim LaFree  
Carole Riewe

**II. ADDITIONS TO AGENDA**

**III. REGULAR BUSINESS**

- a. **Legislative Updates** – n/a
- b. **Indiana Conservation Partnership Updates** – n/a
- c. **Minutes: August 15, 2017 board meeting** – Minutes were reviewed and approved as presented.
- d. **Treasurer’s Report: (8/16/2017-9/19/2017)** – The treasurer’s reports was reviewed and approved as submitted.
- e. **Approval of Claims (8/16/2017-9/19/2017)** –A motion (Cooper, Silvers) was made to approve Claim Nos. 11248-11254 for a total of \$967.13 as presented. Motion carried.

**IV. OLD BUSINESS**

- a. **St. Joseph Co. Soil & Water Conservation Partnership Staff Written 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 DC talking points (attached).
- b. **Committee Reports**
  - i. **Education** – Burkholder informed the board that we were contacted by the library to be an exhibitor at the 2018 Science Alive. After some discussion it was decided to go ahead and register, using the augmented reality sandbox as our theme. We will need volunteers to help on February 3 from 10am-4pm. Please check your calendars and we will have sign ups closer to time.
  - ii. **Election** – Burkholder informed the board that the election committee will consist of himself, Dave Vandewalle & Dave Craft. The nomination for elected supervisor is Jeremy Cooper. Voting for Cooper will occur at our annual meeting in January.
  - iii. **Grants (CWI grants update)** – Cooper went over the remaining CWI grant budget (attached). With the estimated bills for 2017 we will have \$1,271.36 left for cost share in 2018 which puts us ahead of schedule. Marshall County has used all of their funds and Starke County will still have \$18,625.83 for 2018 which includes \$1,000 for the producers workshop. Cooper then asked to release \$18,640 from CWI funds and \$1,000 from district funds to cover the 2017 applications. A motion (Silvers, Vandewalle) was made to release these funds. Motion passed. Hoffarth reminded the board that with this grant we have already received ½ of the grant funds which totals \$37,500. The second half will be reimbursed after the money is spent, which means the second ½ will come initially from our savings account but will then be reimbursed by the state.
- c. **Landfill Inspection** – Longenecker informed the board that it is almost time to conduct the bi-annual landfill inspection. Anyone who would like to go along please let her know. She needs at least 1 supervisors to attend. It was decided for her to set a date and she will see who can attend.
- d. **2018-2023 Business Plan Draft** – Dooms explained that the staff has been working along with the District Support Specialist Jennifer Thum to create the new business plan. Please take a look at this and send any questions or comments to the staff. We will vote for approval on the final draft at the December 2017 board meeting.
- e. **Indiana Woodland Steward** – Silvers explained that for 2017 we contributed \$100 towards the printing of the newsletter that goes to 271 landowners in St. Joseph County. A motion (Silvers, Cooper) was made to continue this contribution in the amount of \$100 for 2018. 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. **IASWCD Annual Conference** – Hoffarth let the board know that she has already reserved 6 rooms for the conference. There are several events going on at the same time and rooms will fill quickly. They can be canceled up to the day before. Cooper, Burkholder & Dooms would like to attend. Staff will decide and let the board know at the October board meeting where a motion will be made.
  - ii. **National Conference on Cover Crops & Soil Health** – Dooms informed the board that this year it will be held in Indianapolis on December 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup>. Early registration runs through 11/7/2017 at \$90 for farmers and \$150 for non-farmers. Cooper and Burkholder are interested in attending. The board will invite the new Education Conservation Coordinator once he or she is hired. A motion (Cooper, Burkholder) was made to release up to \$600 to cover registration and hotel accommodations. Motion passed.
  - iii. **Headwaters of the Yellow River Grant (Joint field day with Marshall Co.)** – Longenecker let the board know about the upcoming joint field day that will be held on October 25 from 9am-noon at 1400 Miami Trail, Bremen, IN. All expenses are being covered by the grant but supervisor attendance is encouraged to show support of this grant.
- b. **Office Lease** – Knepp informed the board that at the end of 2018 our current building lease will expire. It has been determined that the current building set up is not conducive for our needs and the landlord is unable to accommodate to our needs. Therefore we will be moving to a new location which will remain within the Plymouth zip code.
- c. **Conservation Fund** – Knepp was approached by the Conservation Fund which is a nonprofit group that does land acquisitions, green spaces and brings together the conservation needs of a community with the resources available. They were surprised to hear how diversified our conservation efforts are in St Joseph County. They met for a fact finding for a possible RCPP grant that would be in conjunction with LaPorte County. If the fund feels this is a need for our counties they will contact us to get more information.

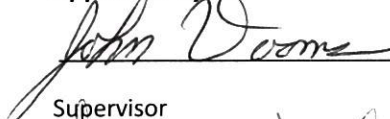
**VI. PRIVILEGE OF FLOOR** – Straughn asked Knepp if we know how many acres are currently productive farm ground. Knepp stated about 156,000 acres. Holloway introduced himself, specialty is in botany, soils, etc. He is hoping to have a Master Gardener’s series soon. He’s been in his position for just a few months and will bring more updates to the next meeting. He is looking forward to working with us on upcoming projects.

**VII. ADJOURNMENT** – The board meeting adjourned at 7:52 pm.

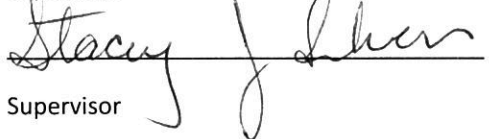
*Respectfully submitted,*

**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:**

  
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Supervisor

  
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Supervisor

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Supervisor

Field Office Report  
August 14 – September 15, 2017

Environmental Quality Incentive Program

Process payments – Animal Trails and Walkways, Portable Tank, Rotational Grazing, No-till, Irrigation management, Nutrient management

- 1 Contract Development/signatures – Invasive Species Control
- Assist landowner on forage mixes needed
- Review 3 structure sites

Wetland Reserve Enhancement Program

- Complete Environmental Evaluation for culvert placement
- Seeding information for macro work
- Monitoring – 2 properties

Conservation Stewardship program

- 1 Re-enroll – maps, interview, enhancements, eligibility
- Finalized/signed contracts for 6 landowners
- Request assistance from biologist and forester

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

- Installation of grassed waterway and structure
- Modify grassed waterway contract

Clean Water Indiana Grant

- Grant review
- Conservation planning field visit – 3
- Conservation plans developed - 2

Rule 5/Rule 13

- SWPP reviews - 2

Highly Erodible Determinations – 1

Wetlands –2 reports of potential violations

Assist producer with wetland information

Field visit with landowner to develop grazing plan

Success story photos

National Conservation planning webinar (Deb) – preparation, 2 Dry Runs, Indianapolis to present webinar

Presentations (Sarah) – Notre Dame, Master Gardner's, Pioneer seed meeting, Mishawaka Garden Club

SAARS/separation checklist completed for Rick's retirement

Lease information

**Meetings:**

Staff Meetings – 4

MSP meeting

Receipt for Service Training

N/NE IDEA regional meeting

The Conservation Fund

Grazing Training

PSS Training

Indiana Field Council meeting

Office Closed – September 4

# DC Talking Points

September, 2017

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## USDA TOP POSITION NOMINATIONS

**Deputy Secretary** - Stephen L. Censky has been nominated to serve as the new USDA Deputy Secretary of Agriculture. Mr. Censky is the American Soybean Association's (ASA) Chief Executive Officer. As ASA's top executive, Censky is in charge of managing ASA's legislative, trade policy, international market development, communications, and leadership development programs. Originally from Missouri, Censky was a corn/soybean farmer and worked with USDA on the 1990 Farm Bill.

**Undersecretary for Trade and Foreign Agriculture Affairs** - Indiana's State Department of Agriculture Director Ted McKinney has been selected as the new Undersecretary for Trade and Foreign Agriculture Affairs. The position that McKinney will assume is a newly created post as part of USDA's reorganization. McKinney has been director of the Indiana State Department of Agriculture since 2014. His international experience comes from serving with Elanco Animal Health and Dow AgroSciences as communications director. McKinney was raised on an Indiana farm and is a Purdue alumni. USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue said, "For our new undersecretary position emphasizing international trade, I have always said that I want someone who wakes up every morning asking how we can sell more American agricultural products in foreign markets. Ted McKinney is that person."

## EQIP SIGN-UP STATUS AND ADDITIONAL FUND REQUEST

Indiana NRCS staff are has processed for obligation 1,060 applications for the EQIP Program. The obligation of these contracts uses the original allocation of \$20 million dollars that Indiana received for EQIP. Indiana has requested an additional \$1.1 million dollars for the EQIP program. National Headquarters has approved this funding and Indiana will receive those dollars. The approximate distribution of the additional funds will be as follows: \$850,000 for EQIP General, \$150,000 for EQIP-WLEB and \$150,000 for EQIP-Joint Chief's Initiative (Forestry). Area Staff will be notified when the funds are available for use.

## NATIONAL CONSERVATION PLANNING PARTNERSHIP WEBINARS

The National Conservation Planning Partnership (NCP) has developed a strategy that ensures partnership field staff have the right expertise, are stationed in the right locations, and have enough time to work one-on-one with our diverse customer base. The NCP is introducing a new peer-to-peer web conference series to support conservation planning staff and partners. Each month, a new state will host a conversation focused on hot topics and creative solutions surrounding nationwide efforts to put conservation planning first. In this peer-to-peer series you will hear from those states, district conservationists, conservation districts, resource conservationists, and others in various geographical areas that are doing a good job or have wisdom to share.

This series of online workshops, along with an upcoming series of podcasts will be recorded for those that cannot attend the live workshop. Below is a tentative schedule for upcoming online interactive workshops – topics will be announced at a later date. All workshops will be held at 1:00 p.m. (eastern)

Sep 26 – South Dakota

Oct 24 – Oregon

Nov 28 – Maine

Dec 19 – New York



## **NATURAL RESOURCE INVENTORY DATA COLLECTION**

The latest NRI data collection cycle will begin on July 10th and will run through November. Field offices could receive questions from the NRI Data collectors during that time period. Any assistance the field office staffs can provide to the collectors would be greatly appreciated. Questions from the field should be directed to Rick Neilson, Assistant State Soil Scientist at [rick.neilson@in.usda.gov](mailto:rick.neilson@in.usda.gov) or at 317-295-5875.

## **PSS/CRP AGREEMENT UPDATE**

The PSS – CRP agreement has been amended to include training opportunities for the PSS. These opportunities have begun with a full day training session in each area (SW – 8/15; SE – 8/21; NE – 8/29; NW – 8/28). Whitney McGrew, Coordinator will be sending out a survey to the PSSs for additional training requests. Also in this agreement, there will now be a trainer available in each area for individual face to face sessions.

## **FFA VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

The FFA National Convention and Expo will be returning to Indianapolis this year and will run from October 25-28, 2017. As in years past, NRCS will be supporting the Natural Resources and Environment Judging events and is asking for volunteer assistance from partnership staff. Please see the volunteer opportunities below.

### **Natural Resources and Environment Judging Event Volunteer**

The purpose of the environmental and natural resource career development event is to foster student interest and promote environmental and natural resource instruction in the agricultural ed curriculum.

This event will take place on October 25<sup>th</sup> at the Indiana State Fairgrounds. Judges are separated into two categories: verbal and teamwork. All volunteers should report to the fairgrounds at 10:00 AM for orientation and will be released of their duties at approximately 3:00 PM. Lunch will be provided.

#### ***Verbal Judging:***

Students will be provided a scenario that addresses an environmental/natural resource problem from soils, water, ecosystems and waste management. Teams are required to develop a statement that addresses the questions in the scenario and give an oral presentation justifying the decisions made by the team. Each team will have eight minutes to make their presentation. There will be an additional five minutes given to each team to address questions from the judges. We need approximately 45 volunteers for verbal judging.

#### ***Teamwork Judging:***

While the students are preparing their oral presentations, a group of 12 judges will evaluate how well the team members work together to develop their statement and presentation. Judging will be based on the following areas:

- Managing team dynamics
- Awareness of personality styles of others
- Using positive and mature language and mannerisms
- Reacting to changes
- Handling tasks

If you would like to volunteer for one of these events, please contact Kris Vance at: [kris.vance@in.usda.gov](mailto:kris.vance@in.usda.gov).



CWI 2016-2019 Grant - St. Joseph County Lead

	Jan '16 - Dec 18	2017 Estimate	Budget	\$ Over Budget	remaining budget with 2017 estimate
Ordinary Income/Expense					
Income					
R134 Federal & State Grants	37,500.00		75,000.00	-37,500.00	
Total Income	37,500.00		75,000.00	-37,500.00	Total Income
Gross Profit	37,500.00		75,000.00	-37,500.00	\$19,897.19
Expense					Expenses
D201 Office Supplies	40.44		40.44	0.00	
D202 Operating Supplies					
Postage & Delivery Expenses	81.60		81.60	0.00	
Total D202 Operating Supplies	81.60		81.60	0.00	
D312 Other Services and Charges					
Producers Workshop Expenses					
Speakers	352.60		352.60	0.00	
Total Producers Workshop Expenses	352.60		352.60	0.00	
Total D312 Other Services and Charges	352.60		352.60	0.00	
D703 Distributions to other gov					
CWI 2016 to Marsall Co	13,575.66	17,240.51	25,000.00	-11,424.34	\$0.00
CWI 2016 to Starke County	929.30	-371.30	25,000.00	-24,070.70	\$18,625.83
Total D703 Distributions to other gov	14,504.96	16,869.21	50,000.00	-35,495.04	
D707 Other Disbursements					
Contractual & Cost Share Exp					
CWI 2016 St Joe Co Lead	4,614.00	18,640.00	24,525.36	-19,911.36	\$1,271.36
Total Contractual & Cost Share Exp	4,614.00	18,640.00	24,525.36	-19,911.36	
Total D707 Other Disbursements	4,614.00	18,640.00	24,525.36	-19,911.36	
Total Expense	19,593.60	35,509.21	75,000.00	-55,406.40	\$19,897.19
Net Income	17,906.40	-17,602.81	0.00	17,906.40	\$0.00

Notes:

1. Marshall County has spent all of their money. They have now used money that Starke County has not been able to spend. Next years funds for Marshall will have to wait to see if Starke County can spend their remaining money.
2. 2017 funds haven't been paid out which is why we are showing the estimates from the applications each county has so far. Funds could raise or lower depending on field verifications and additional applications.

### 2017 Applications as of 9-19-2017

	<u>Practice</u>	<u>Total Amount</u>	
Pollinator Habitat	5	\$8,400.00	* This is an estimate of the max we will pay. Actual cost could be less.
No Till	1	\$420.00	
Cover Crops	7	\$10,820.00	
	<b>13</b>	<b>\$19,640.00</b>	* \$1,000 will be paid from District Funds

## 2018-2023 Business Plan

### **ORGANIZATION:**

The **St. Joseph County SWCD** was organized by public referendum on April 9, 1959 as a legal subdivision of the state of Indiana. We receive our statutory authority from the Indiana Soil and Water Conservation District Law (Indiana Code I.C. 14-32-5-1). We are a public body which exercises public authority. We are governed by a Board of five Supervisors, each a resident of St. Joseph County, Indiana (three elected and two appointed). We also have a number of volunteer Associate Supervisors who assist the Board in carrying out our vision, mission and values.

### **VISION: The VISION of the St. Joseph County SWCD is to:**

- be viewed as a leader in soil and water conservation efforts
- be known in urban and rural areas
- demonstrate accountability with the funds it receives
- have an active and informed Board and a well-managed staff
- have a track record of measurable and demonstrated results

**MISSION:** Helping St Joseph county residents improve their natural resources through conservation and education.

### **In carrying out the SWCD's MISSION, we work, coordinate and cooperate with:**

- Property owners and operators
- Agricultural groups
- Public and private conservation organizations
- Citizens
- Public agencies
- Legislators
- Tribal Government

### **VALUES: The following VALUES will guide the daily activities and development of St. Joseph County SWCD:**

- We believe in a voluntary approach to addressing soil, water and related natural resource concerns rather than regulation whenever possible.
- We believe that education, outreach, and technical assistance are vital tools for addressing resource concerns.
- We will strive to provide high quality service and promote strong partnerships.
- We will embrace learning and change in order to meet the challenges of the future, and will develop a diverse, innovative, and well-trained Board and Staff Team to achieve our goals.
- We value our role in providing locally-led public outreach, education, and technical assistance to the community, focusing on environmental concerns in a manner that encourages appreciation and stewardship of natural resources for the benefit of future generations.



# Critical Natural Resource Issues

St. Joseph County SWCD's goals provide a long-term visioning platform which includes current and future-looking statements to develop our SWCD annual work plans and staff managed programs.

## Agricultural Natural Resource Issues

Agriculture is a significant land use in St. Joseph County. Our goals are to see an increase the number of farms implementing soil health practices by \_\_\_%, the number of conservation plans with practices addressing soil health and soil erosion by \_\_\_%, and the number of citizens informed about the importance of maintaining soil health and decreasing soil erosion. These goals will be based on the conservation needs of the producer to increase soil health and water quality which is created through the promotion of conservation planning. Areas of focus will be but not limited to:

- a. Excessive Sediment
  - i. Increase conservation tillage.
  - ii. Increase cover crop acres planted.
  
- b. Improper livestock management (e.g. pasturing)
  - i. Work with producers to implement livestock management practices at access sites.
  - ii. Work with producers to implement rotational grazing practices
  - iii. Work with producers to implement vegetative buffering practices and manure management planning and implementation.
  - iv. Increase more efficient storage and use of manure by promoting information about manure and soil sampling. Continue to promote Farm Bill programs for manure storage buildings.
  - v. Continue to identify sites where water quality is impacted by livestock and offer assistance by making direct contact.
  
- c. Improve nutrient and pesticide management
  - i. Continue to promote Nutrient Management Plans
  - ii. Explore the option of organizing an IN Field Advantage (INFA) group for our producers. Could partner with Marshall.
  - iii. Work with the non-traditional landowners in the North and South regions of county.
  
- d. Improve Irrigation Management
  - i. Encourage water conservation by emphasizing low volume emitter irrigation systems for our producers.
  - ii. Encourage producers to have a uniform test done on their irrigation system.
  - iii. Partner with our neighboring SWCD's on an irrigation workshop. Seek assistance from ISDA.

## Urban Natural Resource Issues

The need is growing for urban conservation education and technical assistance in St. Joseph County. The concentration of human population and the development that accompanies it have an impact on natural areas. This impact affects natural resources within the urban growth boundary just as other activities affect resource concerns in rural, agriculture and forested areas. Areas of focus will be but not limited to:

- a. Pollutants from hard surfaces (e.g. lawn fertilizer, pet waste, oil, grease, litter from parking lots, sidewalks, streets, etc.) running into local waterways
  - i. Develop and carry out strategies to minimize pollutants into surface and ground water. Work with our partners to develop education programs for our residents.
- b. Excessive stormwater runoff
  - i. Identify and develop and implement alternative stormwater management projects such as rain gardens and bio swales.
  - ii. Provide information and assistance to municipalities and local government concerning storm water runoff.
  - iii. Educate residents, homeowners, youth, business owners, and teachers about urban conservation practices.
  - iv. Promote landscaping with native plants and enhancing residential wildlife habitat.
  - v. Work with landowners to improve wetland habitat, upland habitat such as oak woodlands and forests, and pollinator habitat ~~on county land~~.
  - vi. Encourage the development of community gardens and/or urban agriculture in St. Joseph County.
- c. Continue to review of Rule 5 site plans and site inspections.
- d. Continue to review SWPP for MS4 municipalities
  - i. Work with County Planning and Building department to hold a contractor meeting to inform contractors of rules regarding pre-construction meeting, site inspections and follow-up.

## Land Use/Sustainability Resource Issue

The land farmers use to grow products is under constant pressure to be converted to residential or commercial uses. Once this land is converted to non-farm use, it will likely never return to farm production again. The loss of farmland is an extremely important issue globally, but at the local level as well. Our goal is below.

- a. The loss of Prime Farmland:
  - i. Continue to support the county with the prime farmland ordinance.

## Forestry and Wildlife Resource Issue

Forests contribute to recreational and aesthetic values, enhance the appearance of developed areas, provide shade and valuable wildlife habitat, reduce soil erosion, cleanse the air, and help preserve valuable watersheds.

a. The decrease in the number of wooded areas:

- i. Educate private woodland owners about the economic and environmental value of forests and promote the various incentive programs through NRCS and IDNR.
- ii. Continue to partner with neighboring SWCD's with forestry related education such as workshops, field days and/or breakfast with a forester.
- iii. Assist NRCS with implementation of EQIP funding pools available to private forestland owners, which may include developing conservation plans for individual forest properties

## Key Strategies:

### 1. Information and Outreach

- Customer Service – promoting various conservation programs.
- Newsletters and other publications
- Website/Social Media
- 1 on 1 office contact with public
- Annual Meeting
- Partnership Contacts
- Public Presentations
- News Releases to local Media
- Website
- Legislative Leveraging Bulletin
- Offsite displays

### 2. Education

- Workshops
- Field Days
- Youth Education Events
- Presentations / Displays
- Office contacts (providing soil surveys, planning specs, tree planting info, etc.)

### 3. Technical Assistance

- One on one conservation planning and application assistance by field office staff
- Biannual landfill inspections
- Survey, design and installation assistance by regional tech team
- Assistance to county & tribal government

### 4. Financial Assistance

- Federal Conservation Programs (Farm Bill)
- State Conservation cost share/incentive programs (IDNR Lake and River Enhancement)
- Partnership Programs
- State Grants (Clean Water IN)
- IDEM 319 grants
- Other grants, foundations, etc.
- Affiliate Memberships
- NRCS (PSS/CRP Contribution Agreement, phones, computer, copier, printers, and networking)

### 5. Accountability – Measuring success

- Tally Sheet – Customer Service
- Annual Report
- NRCS progress report
- Reports to County Officials
- Annual meeting questionnaire
- Spring and Fall Tillage Transect
- Evaluations – annual review of Staff and Supervisors

Note: A yearly Annual Plan of Work which further defines the Business Plan is developed each year and identifies key action items from the goals and key strategies listed in the Business Plan.