

## MONTHLY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, January 19, 2016

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** - On Tuesday January 19, 2016, at 7:04 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 Doods, Chairman.

**PRESENT – SWCD**

John Doods, Chair/Supervisor  
Stacey Silvers, Supervisor  
Mike Burkholder, Supervisor  
Jeremy Cooper, Vice-Chair/Supervisor  
Arlene Schuchman, Supervisor  
Jim LaFree

**PRESENT – SWCD/NRCS**

Debbie Knepp, NRCS DC  
James Rodriguez, NRCS SC  
Rick Glassman, SWCD EEC  
Sandra Hoffarth, SWCD AA  
Sarah Longenecker, SWCD CC  
Jan Ivkovich  
Richard Schmidt

**Present - EX-OFFICIO**

n/a  
**PRESENT – Public**  
David Straughn  
Donovan Wilczynsk –  
Dept of Transportation

**ABSENT – SWCD**

Dru Wrasse  
Dale Stoner  
Dave Vandewalle  
Chuck Lehman  
Randy Matthys  
Carole Riewe  
Dave Craft  
Joe Long

II. **ADDITIONS TO AGENDA -**

III. **REGULAR BUSINESS**

A. **Legislative Updates**

B. **Indiana Conservation Partnership Updates – N/A**

C. **Minutes: Dec. 15, 2015 board meeting**– The minutes were reviewed and approved as submitted.

D. **Treasurer's Report: (12/16/15-1/19/16)** – The treasurer's reports were both reviewed and approved as submitted.

E. **Approval of Claims (12/16/15-1/19/16)** - A recommendation (Silvers, LaFree) & motion (Schuchman, Burkholder) was made to approve Claim Nos. 11072-11092 for a total of \$3,769.86 as presented. Both carried.

IV. **OLD BUSINESS**

A. **St. Joseph Co. Soil & Water Conservation Partnership Staff Written Reports** – The field office report was presented to the board and reviewed. (Attached). Rodriguez went over the NRCS talking points (attached).

B. **Committee Reports**

a. **Annual Meeting** – Schuchman reminded the board that our annual meeting will be next week Friday. Please turn in money and extra tickets to Hoffarth as well as silent auction items. Doors will open at 5:45pm. Everyone is to be there ready to greet our guests at that time. Filled vacant volunteer positions, invocation will be given by Richard Schmidt and Jeremy Cooper will announce the silent auction winners.

b. **Rural Conservation** – Burkholder updated the board on the planning for our 2016 Producers Meeting. Planning is moving ahead. Longenecker is working on getting a second key note speaker since Hans Kok had another obligation come up the week of our workshop. A planning meeting will be soon with all three counties. Sponsor & Vendor requests have been sent out.

C. **Science Alive** – Date is Feb 6<sup>th</sup>. Glassman still needs volunteers to assist him. Ivkovich & Wrasse will be there in the morning and Cooper and 1 other person is needed for the afternoon. Contact the office if interested.

D. **Designation of Depository** – A motion (Cooper, Burkholder) was made to stay with PNC bank for the 2016 fiscal year. Motion carried.

E. **Ag Days** – April 8, 9, & 10 – discussion to decide if the SWCD wanted to have a presence at this year's Ag days. In years past this has conflicted with our tree sale week. It was decided to table to next month to give Glassman an opportunity to contact the Ag Team to see if someone needs to be there all three days.

F. **Internal Audit** – Hoffarth needs (2) supervisors to complete the 2015 internal audit. Doods & Burkholder volunteered. This will be completed before the next board meeting so we can approve the Annual Financial Report.

G. **Recruitment** – February was the initial month to hold our recruitment board meeting, it was decided since we will be in the butterfly room the next three months to post pone until June. Please keep thinking of potential people you'd like to invite to this board meeting.

H. **IASWCD Annual Conference** – Cooper updated the board on the resolutions. Only one resolution passed out of the Business Meeting on January 15, 2016 -the resolution from Daviess County SWCD in regards to allowing SWCDs to purchase food when events are being reimbursed by individuals or sponsors. **\*UPDATE from 2-5-2016\*** IASWCD is currently working with the State Board of Accounts to help make an administrative change to the "Special Districts" accounting manual, which is applicable to SWCDs. He also informed the board of the legislatures that they were able to see. He also had a great networking opportunity with Elkhart County NRCS/SWCD and looks hopeful to future collaborations with them.

- I. **CRP Contribution Agreement** – Longenecker informed the board that the 2016 contract will be coming soon. 2015 we were able to bring in \$3,024. We are hopeful we can bring in this much or more in 2016.
- J. **Cobus Creek Watershed** – Ivkovich gave an update that Wrasse and herself attended the steering committee meeting 1-6-16. During the meeting it was asked for volunteers to do water testing, a recommendation & motion (Silvers, Burkholder) was given to approve Wrasse & Ivkovich to do water testing near Granger, IN, both carried. **\*UPDATE from 2-5-2016\*** For more information you can visit <http://sjrbc.com/indexCobus.html>.

V. **NEW BUSINESS**

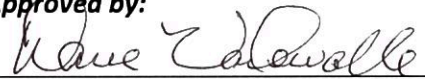
- A. **Schedules/ Upcoming Events / Any Related Claims** - calendars were handed out explaining upcoming special events & holiday schedules on the back of the agenda.
  - a. **Leadership Institute – Feb 5-6 Board Development** – this will be held in Wabash, IN! Cost is \$150/person. Let Hoffarth know if you'd like to attend so she can get you registered.
  - b. **Legislative Training** – Tuesday February 23 from 9:30 am – 3pm at the Indiana Farm Bureau Building in Indianapolis, the IASWCD is hosting a training to learn how to navigate the state house, how to make visits easier and how to communicate with legislators. Anyone interested in attending please let Hoffarth know so she can get you registered. Cost is \$15. Deadline is February 19<sup>th</sup>.
- B. **Letterhead** – Hoffarth is requesting a change to the letterhead. The current letterhead has an image of a hand holding a nature scene. Hoffarth is suggesting to change the image to match our logo. This will help unify our image. A recommendation (Ivkovich, Schuchman) was made to change to the logo for our letterhead. Recommendation carried.

VI. **PRIVILEGE OF FLOOR** – Longenecker informed the board that Gary Schmeltz (local farmer) passed away from a farming accident over the weekend. Our thoughts are with the family and friends of Gary.

VII. **ADJOURNMENT** – The board meeting adjourned at 8:16 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](mailto: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

  
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Field Office Report  
December 14, 2015 – January 15, 2016

Environmental Quality Incentive Program

Developed toolkit folders, conservation plans for 18 applications

Field Visit – pollinator habitat site

Modified contract

Created and mailed practice reminder letters (St Joseph, Miami and Wabash counties)

Processed payment for Animal Waste Storage facility in Elkhart County

Wetland Reserve Program/Wetland Reserve Easement program

Coordinate bids for boundary survey on 71 acre site

Seeding recommendations for compatible use request

RULE 5/13

4 SWPPP reviews

Wetlands – 18 wetland determinations

4 Highly Erodible Determinations

1-569 (potential wetland violation)

Annual Financial Report

Annual meeting preparations

Process W2's

4 in school program days (3 schools for a total of 15 presentations)

Meetings

Staff Meetings – 3

IASWCD Regional meeting

Toolkit Training (Sandra, Sarah)

Local Food and Ag Committee

The Res - field trip planning

Yellow River Watershed Committee

No Fear Training

4 webinars (Sarah)

Annual Conference (2 days)

Holidays – Dec 24, 25; Jan 1



## DC Talking Points January 2016

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### Farm Bill Program Updates

#### CRP 30 Year Celebration

- The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) was signed into law by President Ronald Reagan on December 23, 1985. The CRP is administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA) with technical assistance, including conservation planning provided by NRCS and our partners, such as the local Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Indiana Department of Natural Resources and Indiana State Department of Agriculture.
- A joint agency media event was held on December 23 to kick off the anniversary of the CRP with former Senator Richard G. Lugar who served as a member of the U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee throughout his 36-year tenure. He served as Chairperson from 1995-2001, and is known as the author of the CRP. The CRP program was announced nationally on Lugar's Farm in Marion County, Indiana. The media call was recorded and will be available to conservation staff and SWCD supervisors.
- Watch the 6 minute "CRP is 30" video - <https://youtube/CW6vWFtd2s>
- For more information about CRP go to NRCS website: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/programs/?cid=stelprdb1041269>; or the National Resource Inventory Website: [http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/NRCS\\_RCA/reports/fb08\\_cp\\_crp.html](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/NRCS_RCA/reports/fb08_cp_crp.html) or the FSA website: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/conservation-programs/reports-and-statistics/conservation-reserve-program-statistics/index>

#### Agriculture Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

- **January 15** is the cutoff for ACEP applications (including Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE and Ag Lands Easements (ALE). Rankings will be scheduled prior to March 1 for all FY 2016 applications making the cutoff date. There is a new ranking form for 2016 and it has been posted to the NRCS website. (<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/in/programs/easements/acep/?cid=stelprdb1248149>)
- Landowners with easements will be mailed their annual letters in early January which explain the monitoring process, compatible uses, etc.

#### Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

- A statewide review of all active EQIP and CSP contracts is underway that includes contracts obligated from 2011 to 2015 that were contracted under an entity participant Employer ID Number (EIN). Evaluations involve validation of contract DUNS numbers and SAM.gov registration and will involve field, area and state level coordination.

#### Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

The sign up deadline for EQIP applications has been extended to **January 22<sup>nd</sup>** to be considered for FY-16 funding. Funding is available to address cropland, grazing land, confined livestock, drainage water management, nutrient management plans and wildlife habitat concerns. In addition to EQIP General the deadline applies to the following initiatives:

- EQIP Conservation Activity Plans

- National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI)
- Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative (MRBI)
- National Organic Initiative
- National On-Farm Energy Initiative
- Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI)

**USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP) Survey**

As part of a national CEAP study, USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) is contacting farmers to provide input on conservation practices on cultivated and non-cultivated agricultural lands. Data obtained from the project will help NRCS and partners determine the efficiency and effectiveness of current conservation techniques and help identify best practices.

NASS has started the interview process with producers to conduct detail surveys to gather information on field level management on behalf of NRCS. This interview process will continue through February. Field offices may get calls from landowners expressing concern about legitimacy, confidentiality or use. NASS representatives visit selected farms to collect information, such as on-farm practices; chemical, fertilizer and manure applications; integrated pest management; and installed conservation practices. As with all NASS surveys, respondents are guaranteed by law (Title 7, U.S. Code, and CIPSEA, Public Law 107-347) that their individual information will be kept confidential. No one representing NASS will ask a producer for personal information, such as social security number.

NRCS' component of the survey, the Supplemental Survey, will be completed by the Field Office staff and will begin in January 2016 after the field staff is trained, NRCS should complete all of these surveys by April 13, 2016. If you have any questions, please contact Rick Neilson, NRCS Soil Scientist and State Resources Inventory Coordinator (SRIC) at 317-295-5875 or [rick.neilson@in.usda.gov](mailto:rick.neilson@in.usda.gov).

**Conservation Client Gateway (CCG) is Available for Individual Farmers.** Please help us continue to spread the word that Conservation Client Gateway is available to all individual farmers. CCG is a secure website that makes it easy for farmers to access conservation information and request assistance. Client Gateway will be extended to business entities and available on mobile devices in the future. For more information check out the website [www.nrcs.usda.gov/clientgateway](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/clientgateway). CCG is completely voluntary, NRCS field staff will still be available in for individual assistance.



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