



**St. Joseph County
Soil & Water Conservation District**

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MONTHLY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, August 18, 2015

- I. CALL TO ORDER - On Tuesday August 18, 2015, at 7:07 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/NRCS

John Dooms, Chair/Supervisor
Jeremy Cooper, Vice-Chair/Supervisor
Stacey Silvers, Supervisor
Sandra Hoffarth, SWCD Admin Assistant
Rick Glassman, SWCD EEC
Sarah Harville, SWCD CC

PRESENT – SWCD

Dale Stoner
Dave Vandewalle
Carole Riewe
Richard Schmidt
Jim LaFree

ABSENT – SWCD

Arlene Schuchman, Supervisor
Mike Burkholder, Supervisor
Debbie Knepp, NRCS DC
James Rodriguez, NRCS
Chuck Lehman

ABSENT – SWCD

Randy Matthys
Dave Craft
Paul Williams, III
Joe Long
Dru Wrasse
Jan Ivkovich

- II. ADDITIONS TO AGENDA - n/a**

III. REGULAR BUSINESS

- A. Legislative Updates – N/A**
- B. Conservation Moment –** Harville explained CRP and what all Harville & Hoffarth are doing for the NRCS agreement.
- B. Indiana Conservation Partnership Updates –**Hoffarth reminded the board that IASWCD is asking if any district has any resolutions they would like to submit for the 2016 Annual Business Meeting. Deadline for submission is Sept 10. Hoffarth has forms and previous resolutions for those who would like to know more.
- C. Minutes: July 21, 2015 board meeting–** The minutes were reviewed and approved as submitted.
- D. Treasurer's Report: (7/22/15-8/18/15) –** The treasurer's reports were both reviewed and approved as submitted.
- E. Approval of Claims (7/22/15-8/18/15) -** A recommendation (Silvers, Schmidt) & motion (Cooper, Silvers) was made to approve Claim Nos. 11024-11029 for a total of \$1638.34 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 (attached) and reviewed. Hoffarth went over the NRCS talking points (attached).
- B. Committee Reports**
 - a. Grants –**
 - i. CWI -** Cooper let the board know of 2 CWI grants that St. Joseph County would be participating in. The first one Marshall County will be taking the lead on is with rain gardens and the second St. Joseph will take the lead which is identical to one we applied for in 2013. Recommendation from the grant committee (seconded by Schmidt) is to move forward on both of these grants. Motion (Cooper, Silvers) was made. Both carried.
 - ii. Prevented Planting Cover Crops Cost Share Program –** Cooper let the board know we only had 1 application for this cost share program. The applicant is still in process since they were on vacation. Harville let the board know that there were 4 or 5 others who contacted the office but didn't have prevented planting needs and was transferred to NRCS to apply for cover crops through them.
 - b. Forestry**
 - i. Tree Sales –** After discussion on previous sales with declining sales and looking into other revenue options it is the recommendation of the Forestry Committee (seconded by Riewe) to not have a tree sale in 2016 and to revisit the idea of a sale next year. Motion (Cooper, Silvers) was made. Both carried.
 - ii. Forestry Field Day –** Harville informed the board that the Forestry Field Day will be on Saturday October 17, 2015 from 9am-Noon at Bob Feitz Farm located at 67998 Linden Rd, Lakeville, IN 46536. Topics to include: Invasive Species Identification, Forest Management/Tree Thinning, Pollinators/Pollinator Habitat, Responsible Lawn Care (Red Hen Turf Farm), Managing Forest for Profit, Wetland Management. More information to come next month.
 - c. Annual Meeting – Entertainment –** Dooms informed the board that after looking at several options it is the recommendation of the committee to hire Fascinating Rhythm for one hour at \$300.

- C. **Board Member Recruitment** – Glassman informed the board that we are in need of new board members and would like to do an official board recruitment meeting. This would include sending out personal invitations, more elaborate refreshments and discussions on what the SWCD is and what we do. Possible date would be our February board meeting. He is asking all board members to talk to friends, neighbors, vendors, etc. who would be good candidates for our board. Please start thinking of people and talking to them, then give their contact information to the staff.
- D. **Annual Report Style** – Hoffarth gave the board the option of either a calendar style like 2014 or to go to a newsletter style like in 2010. It was recommended (Vandewalle, Riewe) to go to a newsletter style that can be mailed/e-mailed this year. A motion (Cooper, Silvers) was made. Both carried.
- E. **Locally Lead Meeting** – Glassman informed the board the 2015 locally lead meeting will be on September 15th at 6pm (an hour before the board meeting). This meeting helps NRCS decide the local resource concerns/needs to help make the ranking system for programs such as EQIP.
- F. **Christmas Party** – Recommendation (LaFree, Vandewalle) was made to have a Christmas Party on December 11th.
- G. **Designation of Depositary** – Hoffarth let the board know that it has come to our attention we designate each year what bank/institute we want to use. This will be added to the January APW. A recommendation (Vandewalle, LaFree) and motion (Cooper, Silvers) was made to stay with PNC bank. Both carried.

V. **NEW BUSINESS**

- A. **Schedules/ Upcoming Events / Any Related Claims** - calendars were handed out explaining upcoming special events & holiday schedules.
 - a. **IDEA Fall Conference** – Hoffarth would like to attend this conference October 5-7 in Evansville, IN. Registration is \$125 which can later be added to the reimbursement form. A recommendation (Silvers, Vandewalle) and motion (Cooper, Silvers) was made to cover the cost of registration, hotel and per diem (if needed). Both carried.
- B. **NRCS Admin Services Contract Agreement** – Glassman informed the board of a new NRCS contract agreement for an administrative position that will elevate paperwork from NRCS and allow the DC's more time in the field putting conservation on the ground. This contract would be for Hoffarth and could include counties other than St. Joseph. Details on time and total costs will be covered later. A recommendation (Schmidt, LaFree) and motion (Cooper, Silvers) was made to move forward with a proposal for this agreement. Both carried.
- C. **State Board of Accounts – Audit Fee Increase** – Glassman let the board know that the fees for an audit have increased from \$45/day to \$175/day. Estimates for average audits run between \$1,200 and \$1,500. This will be added to the 2016 budget.
- D. **Website** – Hoffarth informed the board that our current website is outdated with no hope of updating. Most importantly our website doesn't have the ability to be mobile ready and the site builder has stated they will not ever be able to do this. This means when someone does an internet search our website will not appear in the search list. It was recommended by the board to get 3 quotes for updating our site. www.kosciuskoswcd.org has recently updated their website for about \$3,000. Hoffarth will work on getting quotes and report back.

VI. **PRIVILEGE OF FLOOR** – Hoffarth included a letter from the IASWCD President (see attached).

VII. **ADJOURNMENT** – The board meeting adjourned at 8:44 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Hoffarth

Administrative Assistant

St. Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation District

Plymouth USDA Service Center

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Approved by:

Supervisor

Supervisor

Supervisor

Field Office Report
July20 – August 14, 2015

Environmental Quality Incentive Program

Process ranking for 2 applications – cover crops; Invasive Species Control
Deliver 2015 contracts to Ft Wayne for state office quality review - 5

Wetland Reserve Program

2 monitoring
Letter delivered to landowner for engineering enhancements (1140 ac)
Funds approved for enhancements on 40 acre site

Wetland Reserve Easement Program

70 acre site approved for funding
Closing of easement purchase of 12.5 acre site

Conservation Reserve Program

Completed 5 status reviews
Completed the process for 10 re-enrolls
Completed planning process and contracting for 3 new enrollees
Revise filter strip contract

Agriculture Water Enhancement Program

Pre-construction meeting with landowners and contractors for an Ag Chemical Containment facility

Rule 5/13

Processed 1 Notice of Termination

Wetlands – 6 (Marshall); 4 (St Joseph)

Highly Erodible land – 20

Newsletter – write articles, layout

Water Quality Programs at The Res

ED2 summer camp – 52 educators, Hoosier Riverwatch and water quality program

Toolkit/seeding calculator Training

Project Wild Workshop for St. Mary's – 33 educators

Conservation Planning of cover crops – 7 farms

Meetings

Staff Meetings – 4

Social Media Workshop

Forestry Committee

Performance Management Training

Engineering Boot Camp – James, Sarah

Clean Water Indiana Grant meeting – 2

Webinars – RUSLE2 Implements

Managing Phosphorous in manure

NRCS and Urban Conservation

SWCD Regional meeting

State Fair – James

Filter Strip law Committee

DC Talking Points August 2015

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 easier than ever for farmers to access conservation information and assistance. Conservation Client Gateway is available 24/7, so producers can work with NRCS on their schedule.

Note, this version of the program is only available to individual landowners but will be extended to business entities and available on mobile devices in the future. For more information and instructions, check out the website www.nrcs.usda.gov/clientgateway. CCG is completely voluntary, NRCS field staff will still be available in your local field office for face-to-face assistance.

Farm Bill Program Updates

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP): CSP 16-1 renewal applications (38) in ProTracts will be the last applications using version 7.0 Conservation Measurement Tool (CMT) to evaluate the applications. District Conservationists will be working with applicants to complete the CMT by September 30, 2015. Obligations will take place in FY16 and as long as the renewal application meets the criteria for renewal it will be funded. These are noncompetitive applications. CSP 15-1 General sign-up applications will be obligated by August 20, 2015.

Special Initiatives and Partnership Project Updates

Resource Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP): Six pre-proposals for FY-16 round of funding were received that affect Indiana, three in the State category and three in the National/CCA categories. Pre-proposals selected for full proposal submission will be notified September 4 and final grant applications will be due November 10th.

Mississippi River Basin Initiative (MRBI): Eleven additional 12-digit watersheds were nominated for MRBI funding for FY16-18, in four target watershed areas. NHQ will make selections by August 14. Nominated watersheds include:

- Big Pine (Two 12-digit watersheds, adding to two watersheds selected earlier this year in the Big Pine, \$240,000 over three years)
- Plummer Creek (Two 12-digit watersheds, \$262,617 over three years)
- Busseron Creek (Three 12-digit watersheds, \$276,000 over three years)
- Fish creek (Four 12-digit watersheds, \$455,913 over three years)

National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI): The third NWQI sign up ended June 19. Dollars are all obligated, and there is a request to NHQ for additional funds to cover all applications. Watersheds include:

- Eagle Creek (Hendricks & Marion Counties)
- Ell Creek (Dubois County)
- Silver Creek (Kosciusko & Wabash Counties)
- Beargrass Creek (Wabash County)

Mandatory Use of LincPass on August 15th: Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD) 12 calls for a mandatory, government-wide standard for secure and reliable forms of ID issued to its employees and partners. USDA's HSPD-12 compliant ID is called the LincPass. LincPass usage to access USDA computer networks will become mandatory on August 15, 2015. Area conservationists will be working with individual employees to be sure they meet the deadline.

Employees and Partners may fall into one of the 3 following categories:

- Users that are not using their LincPass cards.
- Users that need to pick up their LincPass cards.
- Users that have not completed the LincPass process.

NASS Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP) Survey: The USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) is contacting farmers and ranchers from now through August as part of a national survey of conservation practices.

During the first phase of the National Resources Inventory (NRI) – Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP), NASS will contact approximately 24,000 farmers and ranchers nationwide to determine if their operations and properties meet eligibility criteria to participate in the survey. Farmers deemed eligible may be contacted from October 2015 through February 2016 and asked to participate in the survey, part of a two-year project. The same survey process and schedule will be followed later in 2016 with a different set of producers.

CEAP's purpose is to measure the environmental benefits associated with implementation and installation of conservation practices on cultivated and non-cultivated agricultural lands. NASS conducts the survey for CEAP under a cooperative agreement with NRCS.

Data obtained from the project may help NRCS conservationists and partners determine the efficiency and effectiveness of current conservation techniques and help identify best practices,

Avian Bird Flu Updates: (Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5 (HPAI): The U.S. has not had a new case of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) identified since June 17. The Indiana State Board of Animal Health (BOAH) encourages bird owners remain diligent in watching for signs of disease in all wild and domestic birds. As fall migration begins, experts say the disease could resurface again.

On July 10, BOAH eased the bird commingling ban to poultry species only. The temporary ban on bird movements has been limited to just poultry. Beginning Sept. 17, 2015, the ban on poultry movements will be lifted and poultry species will be subject to Indiana's traceability requirements. This requirement is a permanent requirement to Indiana law.

Indiana NRCS continues to work with our partners in the poultry industry to adequately address the HPAI threat. NRCS employees have been instructed to continue to adhere to previously issued protocols outlined in an all employee memo from the State Conservationist dated May 14, 2015 when working with poultry owners in their counties. However, the State Office is analyzing the potential to allow site visits where poultry litter has been applied – if it is determined to apply, additional guidance will be issued to identify specific site conditions and biosecurity protocols that must be followed.

For more information visit BOAH's website at: www.in.gov/boah/2390.htm.

Indiana Flooding: An average of nine inches, more than twice the normal level of 4.2 inches, was measured last month across Indiana. As much as 18 inches of rain has fallen in parts of northern Indiana or near 220% of normal. The excess rain has caused major flooding and saturated fields in many parts of the state and many crop fields have also been damaged by high winds and hail.

Indiana NRCS is recommending cover crops as key component to a complete system of practices that are critical to address water quality issues. Fields that were too wet to be planted or where the planted crop is damaged due to excessive rains present a unique opportunity to establish cover crops as soon as possible.

Cover crop establishment is typically limited by late harvest of the crop, which makes cover crop options limited due to seeding dates.

Prevented planting and damaged fields can be seeded with a more-diverse cover crop mix in August/September using better methods (such as drilling) and they will have a longer window with ideal growing conditions to achieve adequate growth to address resource concerns.

Promoting cover crops now will allow farmers to have success at their establishment, help them alleviate the damages to their fields caused by the excess rain, and will start them on the path to full implementation of a complete conservation system to address water quality issues later on.



**Indiana Association of
Soil and Water
Conservation Districts**

Protecting and enhancing Indiana's soil
and water resources for all Hoosiers



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August 10, 2015

To: All SWCD Supervisors and Staff

Greetings to all of my fellow conservationists:

It seems like yesterday that I updated you in April with all of the happenings with your state association. The intense rainfall events we have had in our state this year have flooded many fields. I am sure many of your districts along with my calendar have been flooded with so many exciting events since spring and what the rest of the summer brings to us.

Here are just a few of the highlights what we have done. The Long session at the Statehouse ended with a full \$1million general fund appropriation for the Clean Water Indiana program along with the dedicated funding from the Cigarette Tax. Thanks to all who personally contacted your Legislators in getting this hard earned effort through! It is our goal now to increase funding especially since the cigarette tax dollars are decreasing. Please keep in contact with your State Legislators and let them know the work and benefits that you are providing for your district.

IASWCD and our great partner, NRCS, have entered into a contribution agreement for CRP status review work. Contracts with over 40 Districts have been implemented to complete the work, providing over \$180,000 in funding to those Districts. In addition, IASWCD and NRCS have entered into a new contribution agreement for program support on agricultural programs. Information has been provided to all SWCD staff. Proposals to do the work are due to the IASWCD office by August 28th.

All District Staff and Supervisors received a letter this summer notifying them of the intention of the ICP leaders to visit with each District by the end of 2016. The first visit began in Hamilton County and others are now being scheduled. This is a major commitment by the ICP leaders and I want to personally commend them for their efforts.

Please mark your calendars for next year's 2016 Annual Conference while work is already well underway for the event. The conference will again be a two day event held on January 14th and 15th packed with many in depth sessions and best of all networking with your peers. Registration materials will be available by the end of September.

THE IASWCD MISSION *is to enable the conservation of natural resources of Indiana.*

Continued...

Ray McCormick, your NACD Delegate, attended the NACD Summer Board Meeting this summer that was held in Spokane, WA. It is always good to hear the report from our NACD Delegate how Indiana is looked upon as THE LEADER in Conservation in the nation! It's very important that we are leaders in conservation not only on a local level but on a national level. It just shows that the grassroots work that you all do is being recognized.

As a nationally recognized leader in conservation, Ray McCormick, who is also the IASWCD S-SW Region Director, hosted the unveiling of the NRCS new Client Gateway program. NRCS Chief, Jason Weller, was there to see sites in Knox County that promote soil health.

As I mentioned to you earlier, my August calendar is flooded with many events that we have. With all of the Conservation Cropping System Initiative (CCSI) workshops and other events that I will be at, the ones that I am looking forward to the most are at our Indiana State Fair. The excitement of the Year of the Farmer theme makes this year's fair even more special. I look forward to attending the River Friendly Farmer awards ceremony, but I am really looking forward to helping at the Pathway to Water Quality exhibit which has changes that will be fun and educating for attendees. Thanks to all who will be there to help out for the 17 day event. I am sure it is very rewarding to you as it is to me as we volunteer for something we have a passion for!

Thanks for all of your hard work and dedication in what you all do. I hope to see you sometime before I get the combine out this fall. And please call or write me or your Regional Director if you have any questions or issues (http://iaswcd.org/?page_id=72).

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Starkey", written in a cursive style.

Mike Starkey
President, IASWCD