

MONTHLY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER – On Tuesday September 21, 2021, at 6:34 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
Sam James, Supervisor
Mike Burkholder, Supervisor

PRESENT – SWCD/NRCS

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

Present - EX-OFFICIO

PRESENT – Public

ABSENT – SWCD

Ally Pudlo, SWCD EEC
Dave Vandewalle, Supervisor
Chris Matthys, Supervisor
David Straughn
Dave Craft
Chuck Lehman
Dru Wrasse
Richard Schmidt
Randy Matthys

II. ADDITIONS TO AGENDA – Old business d. field to market update, new business c. supplies request

III. REGULAR BUSINESS

- a. **Legislative Updates – n/a**
- b. **Indiana Conservation Partnership Updates** – Rachel Rawls, Purdue Ag & Natural Resources Educator updated about their Pinney Purdue Field Day stating that they had 400 in attendance and went really well. FY22 Program planning has begun, more information to come.
- c. **Minutes August 17, 2021 board meeting** – Board Minutes were reviewed and approved as presented. (Burkholder/James)
- d. **Treasurer’s Report: (8/17/2021-9/20/2021)** – A motion (Burkholder/James) was made to approve the treasurer’s report as submitted. Motion carried.
- e. **Approval of Claims (8/17/2021-9/20/2021)** – A motion (Burkholder/James) was made to approve Claim Nos. 11635-11646 for a total of \$5,406.56. 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 & discussed. (Attached)
 - ii. **NRCS Talking Points** – Knepp presented the NRCS talking points (attached).
- b. **Clean Water Indiana** – Longenecker gave an updated report (attached). A motion (James/Burkholder) was made to approve the 2 pending applications for 200 acres of cover crops at a cost of \$4,000 and 4.8 acres of Pollinator Habitat at a cost of \$3,600. Motion carried.
- c. **Kankakee River Basin RCPP** – Longenecker received more clarification on what is expected from the districts. For our county we may be able to contract to get funds for the technical assistance we give towards this grant since we have a conservation planner. Option might be available to do work in multiple counties, depending on workload. The board approved moving forward with the letter of support for the grant. Motion carried.
- d. **Field to Market update** – Longenecker updated the board that she will need to get 10 producers’ information and get 10% representation of their crop fields entered into the system. They are offering \$5,333 to the SWCD to perform this task by the end of the year. A motion (James/Burkholder) was made to approve the contract. Motion carried.

V. NEW BUSINESS

- a. **Schedules/ Upcoming Events / Any Related Claims / Staff Comp Time Requests** - calendars explaining upcoming special events & holiday schedules on the back of the agenda. Pudlo requested comp time for educational program on October 27th & October 30th. All board approved.
 - i. **Upcoming board meeting locations** – date, location and times to be announced.
- b. **Indiana Woodland Steward** – After some discussion on past amounts, a motion (Burkholder/James) was made to approve \$250 to support the Indiana Woodland Steward newsletter for 2022. Motion carried.
- c. **Program supplies request** – A motion (Burkholder/James) was made to approve purchasing supplies to put together pollinator kits in the amount of \$375. Motion carried.

VI. PRIVILEGE OF FLOOR – none

VII. ADJOURNMENT – The board meeting adjourned at 7:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Hoffarth

Administrative Assistant

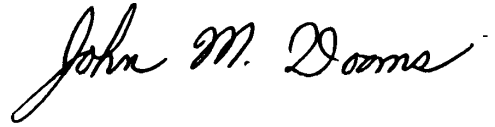
St. Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation District

2903 Gary Drive, Plymouth, IN 46563

Email: Sandra.hoffarth@in.nacdnet.net

www.stjosephswcd.org

Approved by:



Supervisor



Field Office Report
August 16 – September 17, 2021

General/Miscellaneous

Office Work

- Provide maps and information regarding wetlands to a landowner for use with the assessor
- Develop telework schedules due to addition of an additional employee
- Preparation for Natural Resource Specialist
- USDA Telework Survey
- COVID updates – making sure information is shared among all employees, meet with FAC (protocols)

Field Work

- Site visit with 2 landowners regarding programs and potential for property (wildlife habitats)
- Worked at Soil Health Trailer at the State Fair

EQIP- Environmental Quality Incentive Program

Office Work

- Processed payments for 3 producer/landowners – Prescribed grazing (1), Invasive Species Control (2), Tree Planting (1), Wildlife Habitat Monitoring (1)
- Contract Management – 3 landowners (1 received non-compliance letter)
- Native grass seed mix verification

WRE- Wetland Reserve Program

Office Work

Complete resource inventory, Threatened and Endangered species checks and contract for Invasive Species Control. Much time was spent on ownership and eligibility of entities.

CSP- Conservation Stewardship Program

Office Work

- Prepare payment letters for fall payment – 11
- Prepare cover crop maps for producer's enhancements

CRP-Conservation Reserve Program

Office Work

- Resource Inventories/Conservation planning/Contract Development/Job Sheets/signatures – 3
- Report completed conservation practices into system
- Deliver Forest Management Incentive Documents to the Farm Service Agency

Field Work

Inspect practices for status reviews - 6
Field visit to complete feasible and suitable determination for prairie strips

CWI- Clean Water Indiana

Office Work

- Developed plans and supporting documents for 3 CWI applications

Rule 5/ Rule 13

Office/Field Work

- Reviewed 5 SWPPPs

Education		
Age	Total # Programs/ Hours	Total # People
Youth Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrate the St. Joe. Event, 7 ¼ hours • Monarchs and Milkweeds: A Migration Celebration, 6 ¼ hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 adults, 2 children • 30 adults, 24 children
Adult Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St. Mary's College "Watershed" program, ~1 ¼ hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 adults
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toured The Mishawaka Res with Janet Hoke • Connected with Lauren Sox about Environmental Education programs in SBCSC • Filmed Outdoor Elements segment with Evie Kirkwood on AR Sandbox and watersheds • Prepping for upcoming programs • Networking 		
Meetings & Trainings		
Staff Meeting or TEAMS – 4 Indiana Conservation Partnership COVID Update USDA's Women's Equality Day Kankakee RCPP Vaccination Status NRCS Area Meeting St. Joseph River Basin Commission meeting	Environmental Evaluation (Certified Planner) – 3 Program/Technology Updates – 3 Civil Rights Review CISMA Urban Conservation Update Urban Small Farm Training Gov Delivery Texting State Soil Health Team meeting	
Webinars	Dates	
Designing and Conducting Bee Studies Urban and Small Farm Soil Health 101 VirTuesday: District Insurance Needs and Liability ISDA-IASWCD Indiana District Leveraging Sheet VirTuesday: Human Resource Management 101 - Contract vs. District Employee	September 3 – County Holiday September 6 – Office Closed – Labor Day	

DC Talking Points

September 2021

LOCAL WORK GROUPS

Local Work Groups focus on identifying agricultural and natural resource issues existing in their communities and provide information and feedback to direct NRCS farm bill programs, such as EQIP and CSP. Participants can be farmers; private woodland owners; representatives of agricultural and environmental organizations; and agencies carrying out environmental, agricultural, or conservation programs and activities. The LWG is a subcommittee of the State Technical Committee that meets annually to discuss their local natural resource issues and provide recommendations on their top priority concerns to the STC. Local Work Group meetings should be held by October 15.

NEW COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS FOR RACIAL JUSTICE AND EQUITY

NRCS investing up to \$50 million nationally in cooperative agreements to support historically underserved farmers with climate-smart agriculture and forestry. The Racial Justice and Equity Conservation Cooperative Agreements are available to entities and individuals for two-year projects that expand the delivery of conservation assistance to farmers who are beginning, limited resource, socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers.

The projects should help historically underserved farmers in implementing natural resources conservation practices that:

- Improve soil health.
- Improve water quality.
- Provide habitat for local wildlife species of concern.
- Improve the environmental and economic performance of working agricultural lands.
- Build and strengthen local food projects that provide healthy food and economic opportunities.

Entities who provide outreach assistance to historically underserved groups are eligible, including Native American tribal governments and organizations, nonprofit organizations and private and public institutions of higher education.

Applications must be received by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on October 25. See the [grants.gov announcement](#) for details and application instructions. A webinar for potential applicants will be scheduled for late September. When available, instructions regarding how to access the webinar will be posted in the opportunity on Grants.gov in the Synopsis tab. Funding can be requested for between \$100,000 and \$1 million. There is no cost-share or match required for this opportunity.

NEW FARMERS.GOV WEBPAGES FEATURE RESOURCES FOR LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

It is vital that all our producers have equal access to USDA's programs and services, including those with limited English proficiency. The FPAC team has been working hard to provide translations on our web pages, and we have several new pages and publications on farmers.gov that provide information in a variety of languages, including Arabic, Chinese, Punjabi, Spanish and Vietnamese. FPCA also provides free interpretation services for all of our USDA service centers. [To learn more about translations and interpretation services, visit myFPAC.](#)

UPDATED COVID REQUIREMENTS – CERTIFICATION OF VACCINATION

For NRCS Employees

- NRCS employees should have completed the verification form by August 31.
- Employees who do not attest that they are fully vaccinated or decline to submit the form will be treated as unvaccinated and are required to wear a mask, physically distance, comply with a weekly or twice-weekly screening test requirement if they work onsite, and are subject to government-wide restrictions on official travel.
- Employees may submit a new verification form should their vaccination status changes.
- Employees who are not vaccinated due to medical or religious reasons should indicate they have not been vaccinated and are required to follow the safety protocols in place for persons not fully vaccinated. After submitting the form, they may then use the agency's established reasonable or religious accommodation process to seek an accommodation, if necessary, related to agency safety protocols or procedures.
- Reasonable Accommodations should be requested via the Employee Care Center portal.

For Partner Employees in NRCS Space

- Use the paper verification form, not the electronic system established for federal employees.
- Partner employees will provide form to their supervisor.
- Supervisor monitors status of employees and ensures employees are meeting USDA guidance.

For Non-Employees

- Offices should make paper copies of the blank certification of vaccination form available at building entrances.
- Visitors should complete the verification form in advance of their visit or complete a paper copy upon arrival.
- Visitors who are not fully vaccinated or who decline to provide information about their vaccination status must provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test from no later than the previous three (3) days prior to entry to any Federal building and/or USDA facility for each visit. An example would be that visitors for an FSA COC meeting or SWCD Board meeting in USDA space would need to follow this protocol.
- Customers coming to do farm business at our offices do not need to complete the vaccination verification form. They do need to comply with masking and social distance protocols. The verification form comes into use for visitors within our offices that spend significant time in USDA space.
- Agencies should not collect or maintain visitors' certification of vaccination forms at this time.

To learn more about the new Certification of Vaccination form and related information, [see the latest information on myFPAC](#) and be sure to [check out the new Vaccination Verification FAQ](#).

GOVDELIVERY FIELD OFFICE ADMINISTRATORS

General NRCS articles can be found on SharePoint here: [Public Affairs - GovDelivery - All Documents \(sharepoint.com\)](#).

Clean Water Indiana 2019-2021

Applications needing official approval:

Pollinator Habitat	4.8	\$3,600	
Cover Crops	200	\$4,000	
Total:	204.8 Acres		<i>\$7,600</i> \$7,906

Total Paid out 1-1-2019 to present without the above:

St Joseph County	\$24,719.49
Marshall County	\$31,767.04
Total	\$56,486.53
Grant Total	\$65,000.00
Remaining Amount	\$8,513.47

St Joseph County Pending approved applications:

Cover Crops	16 acres	\$320
Cover Crops	6.2	\$124
Cover Crops	189.1	\$3,782
Cover Crops	200	\$4,000
Total		\$8,226

Marshall County Pending approved applications:

Pollinator Habitat	\$2,250	
Pollinator Habitat	\$1,500	
Pollinator Habitat	\$750	
Pollinator Habitat	\$375	
Cover Crops	\$1,894	
Pollinator Habitat	\$750	
Total		\$7,519