

AGENDA
STATE SOIL CONSERVATION BOARD MEETING
March 21, 2017
NRCS State Office

- I. 1:30: Call to Order**
- II. Approve Minutes of January 2017**
- III. Clean Water Indiana**
 - a. Clean Water Indiana Grants –Leah Harmon
 - b. Clean Water Indiana Grants Committee- Bob Eddleman
- IV. State Soil Conservation Board Business**
 - a. SSCB Chairman’s Report-Robert Woodling
 - b. MOU with Purdue
- V. Soil and Water Conservation Districts**
 - a. Carroll County- Geneva Tyler
 - b. Starke County- Geneva Tyler
 - c. Gibson County- Nathan Stoelting
- VI. 10 Minute Break**
- VII. ISDA Updates**
 - a. Director’s Report- Jordan Seger
 - b. Technical Report- George Reger
 - c. Soil Health-Meg Leader
 - d. Accountability and Technology- Deb Fairhurst
 - e. District Support-Laura Fribley
 - 1. Leadership Institute- Geneva Tyler
 - f. Water Quality and CREP- Julie Harrold
- VIII. Conservation Partner Reports**
 - a. IASWCD Report
 - b. IDEM Report
 - c. DNR Report
 - d. Purdue Report
 - e. FSA Report
 - f. NRCS Report
 - g. IDEA Report
- IX. Public Comment**
- X. Next Meeting:**
2017 Meeting Dates
May 22- Prophetstown
July 25- NRCS State Office
September 19- NRCS State Office
October 31- TBD
- XI. Adjourn**

*****PLEASE NOTE*****

This agenda is in DRAFT FORM. Open Door Law does not prohibit the public agency from changing or adding to its agenda during the meeting.



State Soil Conservation Board

March 21, 2017
Clean Water Indiana Grants



Program Updates

Clean Water Indiana Competitive Grants

2017

- I have created an overall summary of the 2017 grants. It is posted on the CWI website. Individual summaries are also posted.

2018

- I have been working to develop the 2018 guidance and application based upon SWCD feedback from 2017.
- The grants committee and DSS team met on March 10th to discuss the guidance document, application, and application process.
- Bob Eddleman will present the committee's recommendation in the committee report, but I am happy to answer any questions that you have.

Annual Financial Report Grants

- The AFR is due to ISDA on March 31st.
- New this year, all SWCDs will be required to register as a bidder to receive state funding. Some SWCDs may have already completed this registration for 319 or LARE grants. It is a one-time registration. As on 3/20, almost all SWCDs have registered and I am working with SWCDs to ensure that registrations are linking to their vendor profiles.
- ISDA also has a new online contract submittal process. All contracts are to be electronically signed by the SWCD chair. Instructions will be sent with the grant agreement. These agreements should be sent to districts shortly after April 1st.

Training Reimbursement/Sponsorship

- Training applications were due on March 15th. They were reviewed before this meeting.
- Total training reimbursement requested: \$35,528.87
 - 35 SWCDs: 84 Staff, 74 supervisors
- Grant Writing Training: \$1844 requested
 - 7 districts
- These payments will be made with the AFR payment next month.

Grant Reviews

- 10 grants have been selected to review in 2017.
- Selections will be made per the CWI communication policy with grants committee input for both marginal and routine grants.
- Grant reviews will be completed this summer.



INDIANA STATE SOIL CONSERVATION BOARD

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Chair
Robert Woodling

Vice Chair
Rex Blanton

Members
Warren Baird
Ray Chattin
Larry Clemens
Bob Eddleman
Nola Gentry

March 21, 2017

On behalf of the State Soil Conservation Board (SSCB), I'm pleased to inform you we are launching our 2018 CWI Grant Program today. The State Soil Conservation Board has voted to utilize Clean Water Indiana Grant Program funds to support competitive proposals for multi-year projects which address the state priorities in the State Soil Conservation Board's Business Plan adopted in 2016.

Eligible Applicants: Applications can be submitted by any SWCD in the State of Indiana. However, only one application is permitted per project and must be submitted by the lead SWCD. SWCDs may be lead on only one application in the 2018 grant cycle. All districts must be current on SharePoint reporting for previous grants, including both financial and conservation practice tracking.

Please note: Clean Water Indiana funding to expand or extend CWI projects/initiatives is available to current grantees, provided the funding is at least 66% spent (meaning checks written and/or projects completed and checked but waiting on producer receipts) and reporting is up to date. Extension applications may include minor changes, but must stay within the scope of the original approved grant. All changes requested must be explained on the application. Lead Districts on an active CWI project may apply as the lead district in a new project; however, new lead districts are encouraged.

Application Process: The link to the online application is available on the Clean Water Indiana Page of the ISDA website. (<http://www.in.gov/isda/3441.htm>) Applications are completely online and can be updated in your browser. Applications will be submitted via a web portal. Districts should complete the online application and may attach zero (0) to five (5) additional pages if desired. Attachments will be accepted in word document or pdf format and are limited to 5 pages total. For example a district could submit 1 document of no more than 5 pages or up to 5 single page documents. Attachments should provide material support and clarity for the application narrative for the proposal but will not be scored on their own.

Application Deadline: The application must be submitted by **September 15, 2017 at 4 pm EDT**. By submitting the application, the lead SWCD certifies that each partnering district has agreed to the terms outlined in the application. **Please carefully review the 2018 CWI Grant Guidance with your board(s) before completing the grant application.**

We look forward to receiving your grant application.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Robert Woodling".

Robert Woodling
Chairman, State Soil Conservation Board



Clean Water Indiana 2018 Competitive Grants Guidance

Executive Summary: The Clean Water Indiana (CWI) Grant Program (IC 14-32-8-5) utilizes the Clean Water Indiana Fund to Support Indiana Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) in efforts to improve water quality by reducing sediment and nutrients from nonpoint sources. The State Soil Conservation Board (SSCB) is accepting competitive proposals for targeted projects up to three years in length.

Application Process: The link to the online application is available on the Clean Water Indiana Page of the ISDA website. (<http://www.in.gov/isda/3441.htm>) Applications are completely online and can be updated in your browser. Applications will be submitted via a web portal. Districts should complete the online application and may attach zero (0) to five (5) additional pages if desired. Attachments will be accepted in word document or pdf format and are limited to 5 pages total. For example a district could submit 1 document of no more than 5 pages or up to 5 single page documents. Attachments should provide material support and clarity for the application narrative for the proposal but will not be scored on their own.

Application Deadline: The application must be submitted by **September 15, 2017 at 4 pm EDT**. By submitting the application, the lead SWCD certifies that each partnering district has agreed to the terms outlined in the application.

Eligible Applicants: Applications can be submitted by any SWCD in the State of Indiana. However, only one application is permitted per project and must be submitted by the lead SWCD. SWCDs may be lead on only one application in the 2018 grant cycle. All districts must be current on SharePoint reporting for previous grants, including both financial and conservation practice tracking.

Please note: Clean Water Indiana funding to expand or extend CWI projects/initiatives is available to current grantees, provided the funding is at least 66% spent (meaning checks written and/or projects completed and checked but waiting on producer receipts) and reporting is up to date. Extension applications may include minor changes, but must stay within the scope of the original approved grant. All changes requested must be explained on the application. Lead Districts on an active CWI project may apply as the lead district in a new project; however, new lead districts are encouraged.

Ineligible Projects: The 2018 CWI grant program cannot be used to fund research equipment. Conservation practices and lab analysis of soil and water that are components of research projects are eligible. Projects relating to urban practices that will reduce sediment and nutrient are eligible; however, no funding will be awarded for cost-share on rain barrels. Cost-

sharing is also not allowed on specific practices that an entity is required to install to comply with a state or local rule or ordinance. *Example: CWI funds cannot be used to meet MS4 requirements unless the proposed use of funds goes above and beyond the requirement outlined in the MS4 permit's Storm Water Quality Management Plan.*

Proposal Guidance: A lead district must be selected to serve as the grantee to receive and administer the grant. However grant funds can be shared between districts through cooperative agreements locally. The grant proposal must document how the grant funds will address at least two of the State priority resource concerns referenced in the State Soil Conservation Board's (SSCB's) Business Plan adopted in 2016. Proposals that outline how CWI funds will leverage additional funding from other sources as well as engage other partners are strongly encouraged. CWI project proposals that will be in tandem with ongoing projects are encouraged. *Example: CWI funds might be used to add technical assistance to help implement sediment and nutrient reduction practices cost-shared through a LARE or 319 project.*

Project Dates: All 2018 Clean Water Indiana Grant projects shall take no longer than three full years to complete. Projects will start on January 1, 2018 and must be finished and all funds spent by December 31, 2020.

Project Description: The proposal must identify the current nonpoint source water quality concern(s) in the selected district(s). The proposal must also identify how addressing this resource concern pertains to both the SWCD business plan(s) and the SSCB business plan.

Partnerships: Each application must state clearly what each partner and participating district will be contributing to the proposed project (i.e. outreach, professional assistance, estimated funds, etc.) Partnering districts and organizations must be identified with a point of contact for the project, their contact information, **and an explanation of any anticipated cash or in kind match from the partner.**

Conservation Practices: Conservation practices and structural measures shall follow NRCS Field Office Technical Guide where applicable. New technologies not currently in the technical guide may be implemented if reviewed and concurred in by a technical representative of the Conservation Implementation Teams (CIT) or their designee. ***Please note that pollinator plantings must be free of species that are noxious, invasive, and/or pigweed. To verify that seed mixes are free of these species, a district can request the seed lab card from the distributor. For more information, please contact your DSS.*** For cost-share practices, CWI funds may be used to pay up to a maximum of 75% of the total conservation practice cost. At least 25% of the cost must be provided by the **landowner/producer as match**. However, cover crop cost share is limited to a maximum of \$20/acre. Cost share funding for cover crops shall be limited to three years per field for any CWI grants. *Example: A producer who has received cover crop cost share on a previous CWI grant for two years is only eligible to receive cost share for that field for one year on a new grant.* If applying for cost share, please describe the

process you will implement to select grant recipients. Priority will be given to SWCDs who demonstrate a strategic process for managing cost share dollars.

Funds Available: This grant opportunity is competitive. The SSCB is looking for targeted proposals of up to 3 years in length. Proposals can be for any amount that would accomplish the project described. The SSCB will utilize a scoring sheet to aid in ranking the proposals. The SSCB may use discretion when awarding grant funds.

Funding Restrictions: Proposals must fall within the funding context allowed under the Clean Water Indiana Law (IC 14-32-8). The law prohibits funds to be used for food, food related paper products, office equipment or district self-promotional materials (i.e. mugs, t-shirts, pens, etc.)

Match Requirements: A 50 percent cash and/or in-kind match is required. Match contributions can be federal, state, and/or local sources including such things as landowner costs, staff time, supervisor time, equipment use, purchase, rental, etc. **Proposals that request funds for staffing require a 25% match for the staffing component. Example: District A submits a \$10,000 for solely a staff position. District A's proposal requires a match of \$2,500. District B submits a \$10,000 proposal that includes \$5,000 for staff and \$5,000 for cost share. Proposal B is required to have \$3,750 match.** The match is applicable only if directly related to the purpose of the proposed project. **The grants committee may give preference to cash match rather than in kind during the scoring process.** Grant proposals must use the match standards outlined at the end of this document to develop their project budget.

Leveraging Funds: SWCDs are encouraged to partner with traditional and non-traditional organizations/agencies at the local, state, and federal level to leverage additional funds for their project/initiative. However, the SSCB will show preference to projects which do not add to the percent cost-share/incentive rate offered through another program. *Example: A project where CWI funds are used for cost share and 319 funds for technical assistance would be preferred over a project where CWI and 319 funds are both used to give producers a larger cost share amount.*

Scoring Procedures: All applications will be scored blindly by the scoring committee to reduce bias. This process includes removal of all identifying details. These identifying details include but are not limited to county name, watershed name, names of water bodies, and regions of the state. SWCDs should consider this scoring process when developing proposal narratives and should not use these identifying details in their proposal narrative beyond the initial contact section.

Process of Payments: Once the proposal is approved by the SSCB, the Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) will issue **an electronic** contract to the designated lead SWCD. SWCDs should return their **electronically** signed contract to ISDA within 30 days of receipt in order to receive their funds. Funds must be utilized in a timely manner. Districts will receive 50

percent of their grant funding up front and the remaining 50 percent at the end of the project upon receipt of the final report and claim voucher. *Please note that after the initial 50 percent of funds, all payments will be made as reimbursement to the lead district and require proof of payment by the lead district and a claim voucher.*

Reporting Requirements: Financial and project status reports through SharePoint will be required for the duration of the grant and a final report will be due at the end of the grant. This report must be completed semi-annually (every 6 months) and summarize the outcomes and achievements of the project. These reports will be due 30 days following the anniversary date of the grant and are cumulative. *Example: grants that begin on January 1st will have reports due January 31st and July 31st.* The first report will be due on July 31st, 2018. Tracking of conservation practice implementation (following FOTG standards) must be reported through SharePoint's conservation tracking system on a (minimum) quarterly basis.

Grant Reviews: ISDA routinely visits with its grantees to ensure projects and grants are proceeding as intended and offer guidance and support if needed. Each year, ISDA will strategically select grants to review. These reviews can include open grants and grants that have been completed in the last three years. Upon completion of a review, ISDA will send a summary of results to all districts involved in the project and their board(s). If found during formal review or routine reporting checks, failure to make progress on the project or report progress as specified in the grant agreement will be noted in a project's file and may jeopardize a district's ability to receive competitive grant funds in future cycles.

Questions: Please contact the Leah Harmon, Grants Program Manager at lharm2@isda.in.gov or (317) 607-4127.

Match Standards: (all figures are per hour of project work)

SWCD Supervisors and Staff: \$20

ISDA/NRCS Technical Staff: \$25

Landowner Time: \$20

Professional Services: \$25

Student/Intern/Volunteer: \$10

Any landowner contribution toward the remaining portion of cost share practices should be counted as cash match.

In general, time spent working on the project should be considered in-kind match; whereas money would be considered cash match.

Deadlines that SWCDs must meet to be eligible for CWI 2018:

- Election Committee Report: November 1, 2016
- Recommendation for Supervisor Appointment: November 1, 2016
- **Nominee for Election: December 1, 2016**
- Annual Financial Report entered into Gateway: March 1, 2017
- Annual Meeting Held: March 31, 2017
- Election held at Annual Meeting: March 31, 2017
- Annual Financial Report and Audit Form/Page 2 of AFR: March 31, 2017
- Certification of Election of Supervisors: Within 7 days of election
- CWI Grant Reports and Conservation Project Tracking: Due dates established in grant agreements)
- Recommendation for Temporary or Vacant Appointment: Within 30 days of vacancy

The items are not specified in district law but are considered essential for district operations and will be considered for CWI 2018. These questions will appear as a self-assessment on the CWI application.

- District Annual Meeting Information: January 1, 2017
- Updated SharePoint Directories: Within 30 days of changes
- District Success Story: Due date determined by ICP outreach committee
- The district has a current business plan.
- The district has had at least one supervisor attend the Supervisor Summit hosted by ISDA and IASWCD since 2013.
- The district has had at least one current supervisor/staff/active associate attend a Leadership Institute workshop session since 2008.
- **The district has at least one current supervisor/staff/active associate graduate of the Leadership Institute program.**
- District Staff or supervisors participated in the 2017 spring tillage or fall 2016 cover crop transects.
- **District has applied for a grant other than CWI in the last 3 years and how many.**

Who is the target audience for the project, and what efforts will be made to reach them? (Maximum 1500 characters)

What are the measurable goals of the project and how do these goals relate to your district's business plan and the SSCB business plan? (Maximum 1500 characters)

Please provide information describing all project partners. The information must include partnering districts and their board of supervisors (if applicable). Also, please provide a point of contact for each partner and briefly describe their role in the project and any anticipated cash or in kind match contributions.

Budget Information

Please fill out the following table with your project budget:

Entity/Line Item	CWI Funds Requested	Cash Match	In Kind Match
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District has applied for a grant other than CWI in the last 3 years.	Yes	No
If so, how many?		

Attachments

Please attach any documentation, up to 5 pages total, that you feel will help the grants committee. This documentation may include, but not limited to, letters of support from project partners, example cost share ranking systems, etc....

Attachments should provide material support and clarity for the application narrative for the proposal but will not be scored on their own.

Attachments are limited to 5 pages total. For example a district could submit 1 document containing no more than 5 pages or up to 5 single page documents. Attachments must be submitted in word or pdf format. Other file types will not be considered.

**Memorandum of Understanding
between
Purdue University College of Agriculture
and
Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts**
Effective March 31, 2017 to January 31, 2022

1. Purpose

In Indiana, there has been a longstanding tradition of cooperation between Purdue University's College of Agriculture and the 92 Soil and Water Conservation Districts in Indiana, most of which are members of the Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Importantly, both organizations are members of the Indiana Conservation Partnership, whose efforts have been recognized nationally as a model of collaboration.

Recognizing the unique roles of Purdue, the state's Land Grant University, in agricultural research and Extension and of the Soil and Water Conservation Districts in providing technical assistance, Indiana, like many other states, adopted the following code:

IC 14-32-5-5

Prohibited actions

Sec. 5 A district may not do any of the following:

(1-5) ...

(6) Engage in agricultural research or agricultural Extension teaching except in cooperation with Purdue University.

(7-8) ...

At the time this code was adopted, the vast majority of agricultural research was directly funded by USDA and conducted by Land Grant Universities. Over time, research needs have become more multidisciplinary with solutions demanding broader approaches. Simultaneously, more research funding in areas of water quality, soil health, and conservation has become competitive; and more opportunities for non-land grant research institutions to obtain grants from USDA and other funding agencies have evolved. More and more, Soil and Water Conservation Districts are asked to participate and support projects led by other institutions and communicate results to audiences in those districts. Both parties recognize and embrace these changes but also acknowledge the importance of continued cooperation in agricultural research and Extension at Purdue. Therefore, the purpose of this memorandum of understanding is to clarify "agricultural research or agricultural Extension teaching" and to define "cooperation" between Purdue University's College of Agriculture and Indiana's Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Because of its direct role in funding of Soil and Water Conservation District projects through its Clean Water Indiana Grants Committee, the Indiana State Soil Conservation Board, within the Indiana State Department of Agriculture, is included as a signatory to this memorandum of understanding.

2. Definition of Agricultural Research and Extension

The definition of agricultural research and Extension is not all-encompassing. Monitoring or enhancing soil health and conservation and water quality in rivers, streams, or other *waters of the state* is not necessarily agricultural or exclusively agricultural. We recognize that many water quality and conservation projects proposed to SWCDs may involve monitoring of water quality, impact of conservation areas, discovery of management practices, and other topics not directly pertaining to

agriculture. However, Purdue's expertise in planning research specifically related to cropping and farming practices, forestry, and natural resources can be beneficial in proper experimental design. Similarly, Purdue University's statewide Extension network and expertise in educational program planning, delivery, and evaluation can lead to heightened program success.

3. Cooperation

Definition

Merriam-Webster simply defines *cooperation* as "associations of persons for common benefit." Associations of persons can take many forms. Purdue University's College of Agriculture does not interpret "cooperation" to require that SWCDs must include Purdue University personnel in order to engage in research or Extension teaching activities with other institutions or agencies.

Purdue University College of Agriculture respects the right of Soil and Water Conservation Districts to work with other institutions and organizations. Under IC 14-32-5-5, we hold that "Cooperation" is not interpreted to mean that Soil and Water Conservation Districts must work exclusively with Purdue University on agricultural research or Extension teaching. However, we do recognize the importance of communication between Soil and Water Conservation Districts and Purdue University. Key reasons for the importance of communication are to prevent alternative interpretations of research results and misalignment of the educational message, eliminate unnecessary duplication of efforts, and avoid time conflicts in scheduling educational programs. Fostering communication is the role of Soil and Water Conservation Districts and the Purdue University College of Agriculture.

Actions

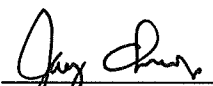
Soil and Water Conservation Districts and county Extension personnel shall communicate regularly and keep one another informed of completed, ongoing, and planned projects and educational events.

- Recognizing recent turnovers in staffing, the Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts and Purdue Extension shall renew efforts to encourage improved local interaction and partnering.
- The Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts and Purdue Extension shall cooperate in tracking ongoing research projects in soil health, conservation, and water quality.
- The Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts and Purdue Extension shall encourage working together to facilitate workshops and training.
- The Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts and Purdue University Extension shall work together to share and discuss results of funded research from our organizations and other universities, organizations, and agencies.

**For the Purdue University
College of Agriculture**

Name: Dr. Jay Akridge

Title: Dean of Agriculture

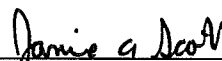
Signature: 

Date: 2/1/17

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

Name: Jamie Scott

Title: President

Signature: 

Date: 3/17/17

**For Indiana State Soil
Conservation Board:**

Name: Robert Woodling

Title: Chairman

Signature: 

Date: 3/21/17



State Soil Conservation Board

March 21, 2017

ISDA – DSC Director's Report

Jordan Seger



IN Conservation Partnership Leaders Webinar 3/7

- Recording: <http://www.kaltura.com/tiny/nji13>, approx. one hour, provides general ICP updates

Legislative Session

- Aiming to convene 4/21 (statute says they must convene 4/29)
- House bills now at Senate and vice versa
- The DSC has no sponsored Bills this session (CWI cleanup bill in 2016/last session)
- Increases to cigarette tax being discussed
- MAY be an increase to the DSC budget to absorb two Western Lake Erie Basin Resource Specialists coming off an EPA grant

SWCD Business Planning

- Phil Anderson contracted (with ISDA funds) to develop tools to improve SWCD planning - testing completed in six SWCD pilot sessions
- DSS Team working with Phil to refine tools, possible presentation to SSCB, IASWCD?

DSC Staffing

- 33 of 34 positions filled, Seeking candidates for SE Resource Specialist based in Bartholomew or Decatur county (negotiable)
- Apply here before 3/31: <http://www.in.gov/spd/careers/> **Keyword search: Resource Specialist**

2016 ICP Accomplishments (see map on back page) – full report published to ICP website end of March

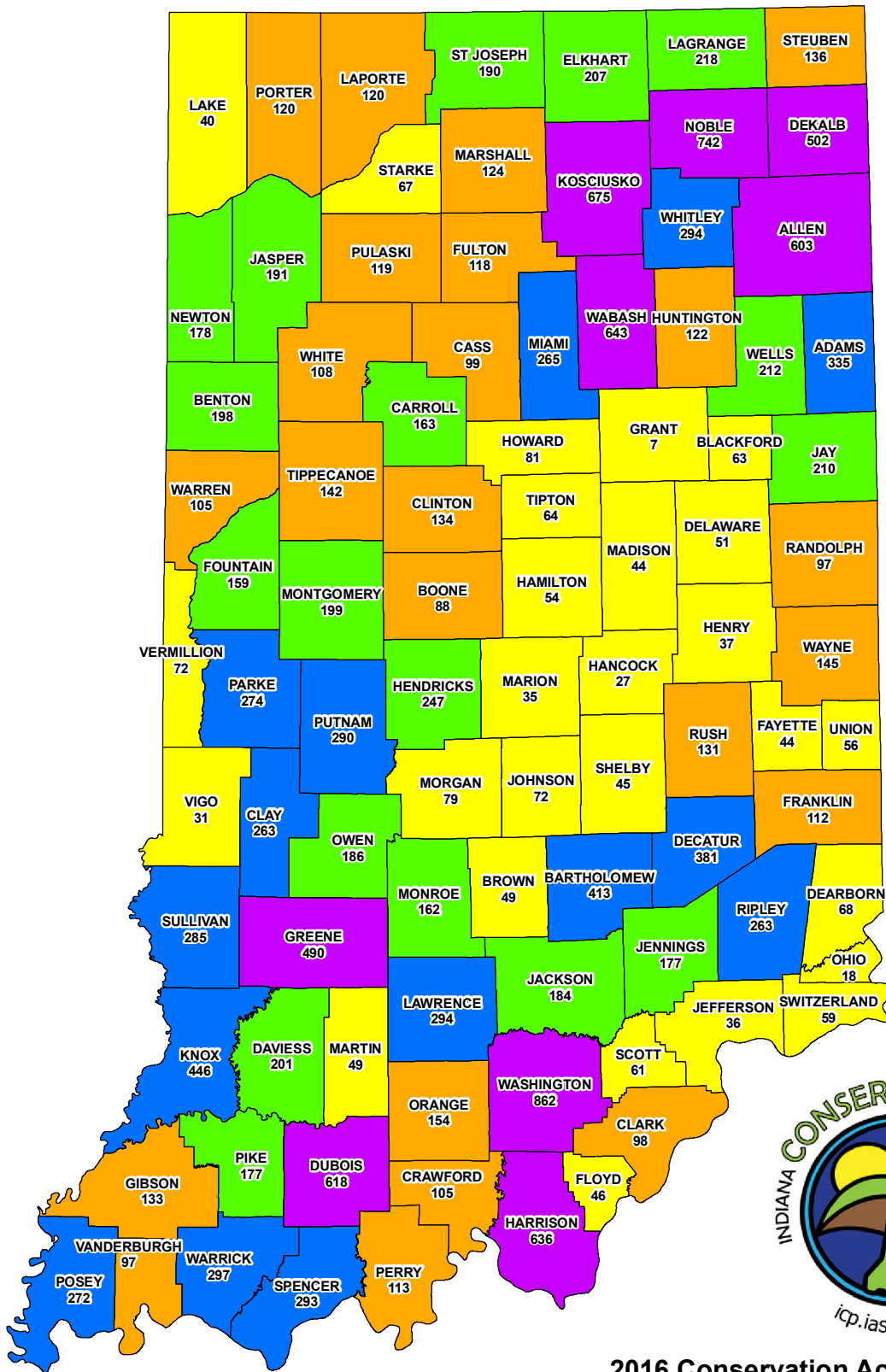
- Top 10 Counties *Completed Practices in 2016*: Washington, Noble, Kosciusko, Wabash, Harrison, Dubois, Allen, DeKalb, Greene, Knox

2016 ISDA – Division of Soil Conservation Annual Report: <http://arcg.is/2j1Wwj0>

in.gov/isda

2016 Indiana Conservation Accomplishments

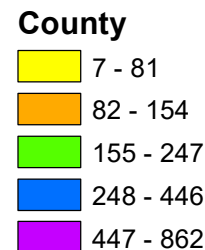
Implemented by Indiana Conservation Partnership



2016 Conservation Accomplishments

January 1 thru December 31, 2016
 Conservation Practices Completed - 17,970
 Conservation Practices Underway - 3,882

Data: Provided by Indiana State Department of Agriculture, Indiana Department of Environmental Management, Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Indiana's Soil and Water Conservations Districts and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.





State Soil Conservation Board

March 21, 2017

DSC Technical Assistance Report



Field Staff Activities

January 1, 2017 – March 13, 2017

Resource Specialist Activities	Total
SWCD Board and Annual Meetings	94
ICP Meetings, Conference Calls, Webinars, etc.	75
Field Days	14
Trainings	59
Conservation Planning	87
Survey, Design and Inspections	177
Construction	38
CREP – Met with Landowners	28
CCSI Activities	6
INFA Activities	53
Tillage Transect Activities	13
Water Quality Trading Certification	1

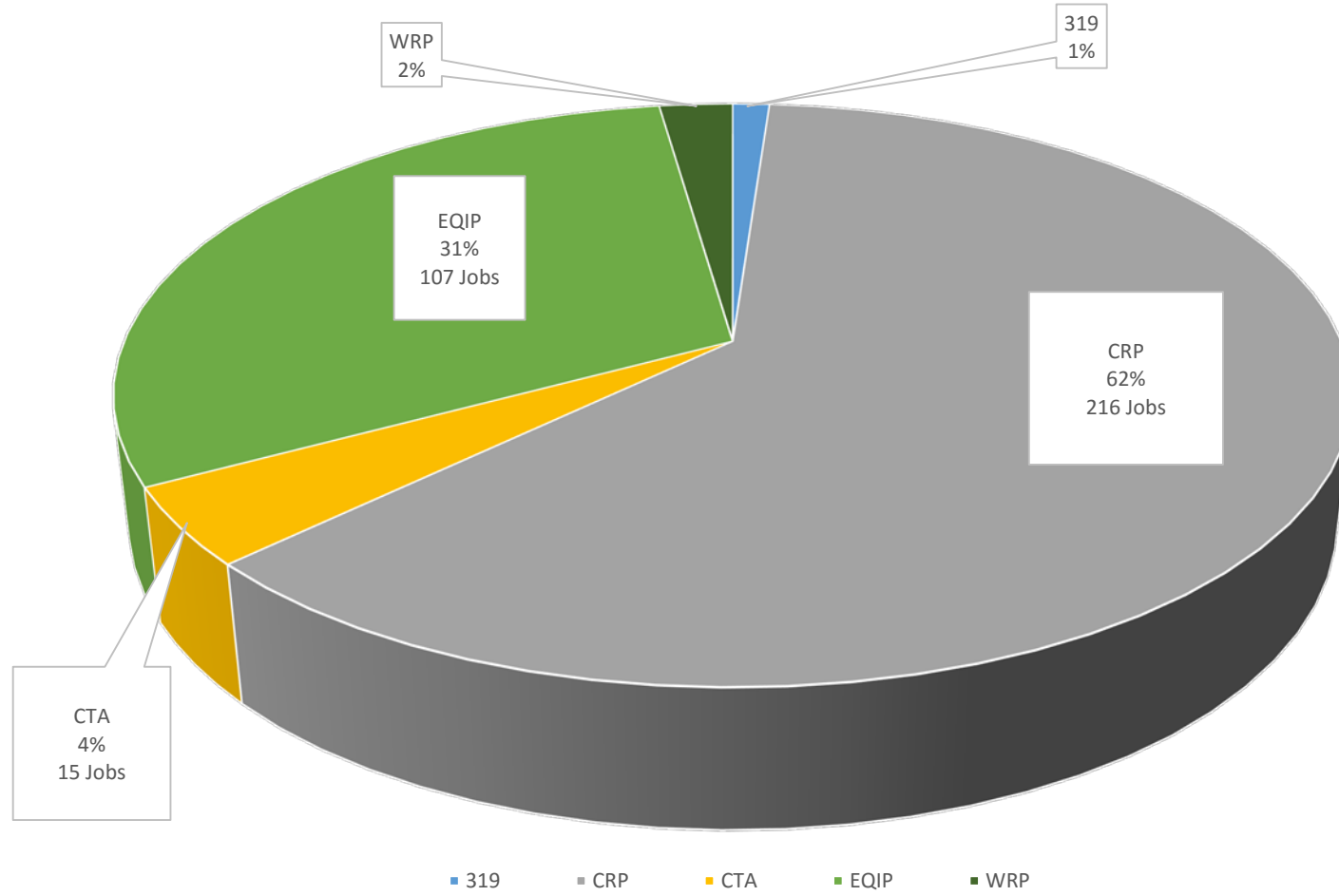
DSC Conservation Workload

January 1, 2017 – March 13, 2017

Action	Currently Reported
Technical Assistance	495
Practices Underway	1,175
Completed Practices	54
Costshare Acres	564
Landowner Acres	11
Practice Feet	9,826
Field Acres	1,553
Nitrogen Reduction	4,756 lbs.
Phosphorus Reduction	2,451 lbs.
Sediment Reduction	4,352,000 lbs.

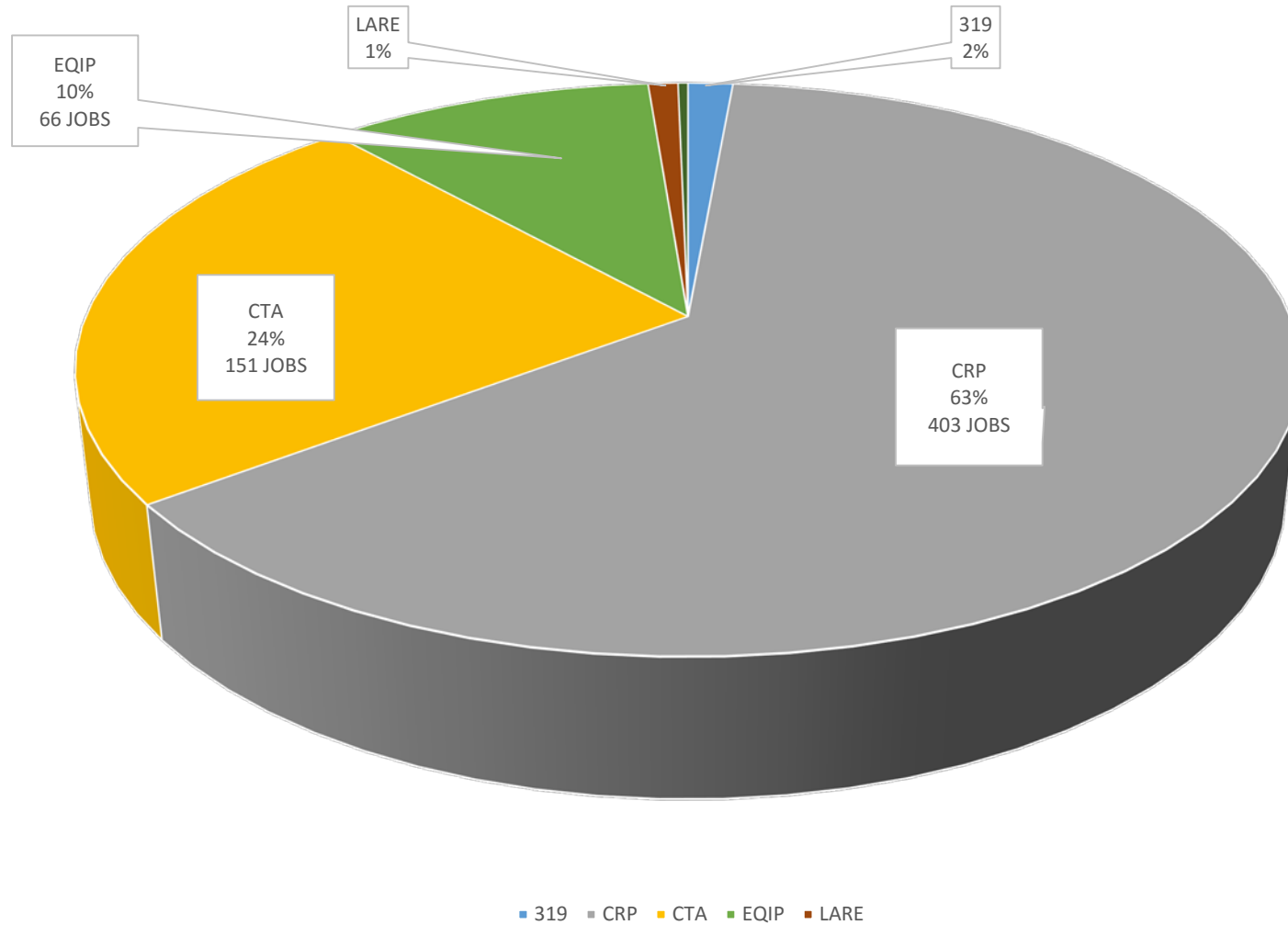
RENSSELAER CONSERVATION DELIVERY TEAM

Total Amount of Jobs Per Program



LEBANON CONSERVATION DELIVERY TEAM

Total Amount of Jobs Per Program





State Soil Conservation Board

March 21, 2017

Director of Soil Health



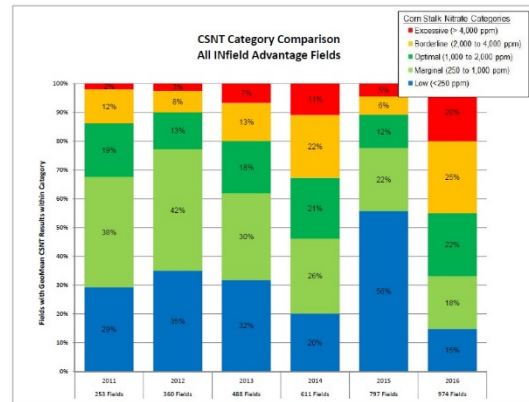
Program Updates

➤ INfield Advantage

- In March, 2017, Indiana Corn and Soy awarded Jim Camberato and Bob Nielsen, PU, a grant to analyze the data collected through this project.
- In early September of 2016 A&L Labs informed Hans Kok and myself that our corn stalk samples had extremely high nitrate levels. Hans and I contacted Jim Camberato and Bob Nielsen, as well as others, to try to understand what was causing 45% of our fields to have nitrate levels over 2,000 ppm. These high levels were seen all over the state except the Northeast region.

We considered a few possible causes, but after discussing the situation at the different grower meetings it appears to have been caused primarily by the presence of fungi (particularly Southern Rust) in the crop.

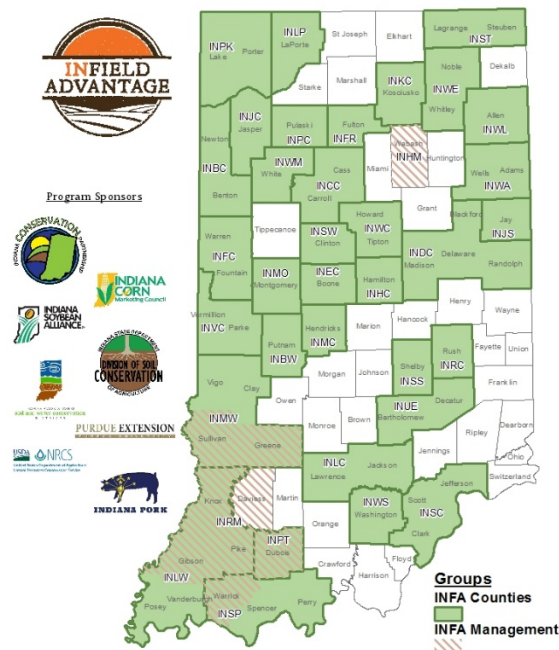
At Jim's request, we have asked the group leaders to contact all 2016 participants to see if they had fungus problems that impacted their yield, and if they applied a fungicide. We will be including this information with the historic data Jim and Bob will analyzing for their research.



- The 2016 Winter Grower Meetings concluded on March 14.
 - We held 33 meetings and had a total of 350 to 400 people attend the meetings.
 - Visitors to the meetings included:
 - PU – Jim Camberato, Bob Nielsen, Walt Sell and Greg Bossaer
 - ISDA – Jordan Seger, Ben Gavelek and Ian Conner
 - NRCS – Barry Fisher
 - Also, Jim Moseley and Dave Swaim
 - The basic meeting agenda included about 40 minutes of us talking and the remaining time for the growers to discuss their fields. Justin Orme, Indiana Corn and Soy, presented information about the Nutrient Management/Soil Health plan as part of the meeting.
- I request that attendees complete a meeting feedback survey at the end of each meeting. 323 surveys were returned. Many agency staff didn't complete a form. A few growers forgot or declined to complete it.

- 244 (75%) of the attendees were participants
- 21 (7%) of the attendees identified themselves as guests
- 109 (34%) of the attendees were at their first INFA Winter Meeting
- 273 (92%) of the attendees were very satisfied with the field discussion
- New this year, I asked the attendees to categorize the size of their operation to be able to estimate the larger impact of INfield Advantage beyond the acres we fly each year. Based on their responses, I estimate that the people that attended the meetings work 366,000 acres. Since roughly a third of the participants didn't attend a meeting, I expect the total number to be over 500,000 acres.
 - Less than 250 acres – 9%
 - Between 250 and 750 acres – 23%
 - Between 750 and 1,500 acres – 29%
 - Between 1,500 and 3,000 acres – 21%
 - Over 3,000 acres – 18%
- In 2017 we are adding two groups. One in Rush County and a joint Steuben/LaGrange Counties group. All of the 2016 groups have indicated they wish to continue.

INfield Advantage 2017



- For 2017 we are changing registration to avoid having to collect detailed management information in June. The groups are enrolling growers for 2017 right now and will be collecting management information (field registration) in early July.

➤ **Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative**

- \$7,000 received from SWCDs in support of the IASWCD 2014 initiative supporting CCSI research.
- Participation in nearly a dozen Women for the Land Learning Circles
- Development of articles for publishing in SWCD and Extension newsletters.
- Over 40 people attended the Basic of Soil Health training on February 8. This was much more than expected. This training will be repeated in 2018.
- There were over 60 attendees at the CCSI Annual Meeting on February 27. Meeting was used as a strategic planning session for CCSI collaborators from field staff to state offices to provide input on Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results. The information collected will be used as part of a major strategic planning process for CCSI.
- CCSI Sampling Training and supply distribution held in the SE and SW. Sessions in the NE and NW are being organized.
- Over two dozen attended CCSI organized soil health trainings for LaCrosse dealers on in early March.
- Adding outreach to Farmer Veteran Coalition and Purdue SWCS Student Chapter.
- Lisa Holscher and Jamie Scott presented at the MCCC conference in Grand Rapids on March 15.
- Interim soil health analysis released to cooperating farmers, oversight committee, and sampling leads. The report showed some emerging trends only but cannot be considered a complete analysis. This preliminary report was released for internal review and comment only and will not be distributed widely or publicly.
- Working with PU Wildlife Biologists to develop research plans to investigate
 - Vole damage in cover crops:
 - Deer herd health and cover crops

➤ **Red Gold Tomato Conservation Stewardship Award**

- The 2017 Conservation Stewardship Award applications were released on March 10. Nearly a quarter of them have been returned. They are due on April 24.
- Anna Morrow, MCCC Program Manager, will be presenting at the Red Gold Grower Meetings on March 24 and 27 at our request. She will be showcasing the MCCC Cover Crop Tool.
- Julie Harrold has assisted with this program since it began in 2009. This year Dave Lefforge will be taking her place.



State Soil Conservation Board

March 21, 2017

Accountability and Technology



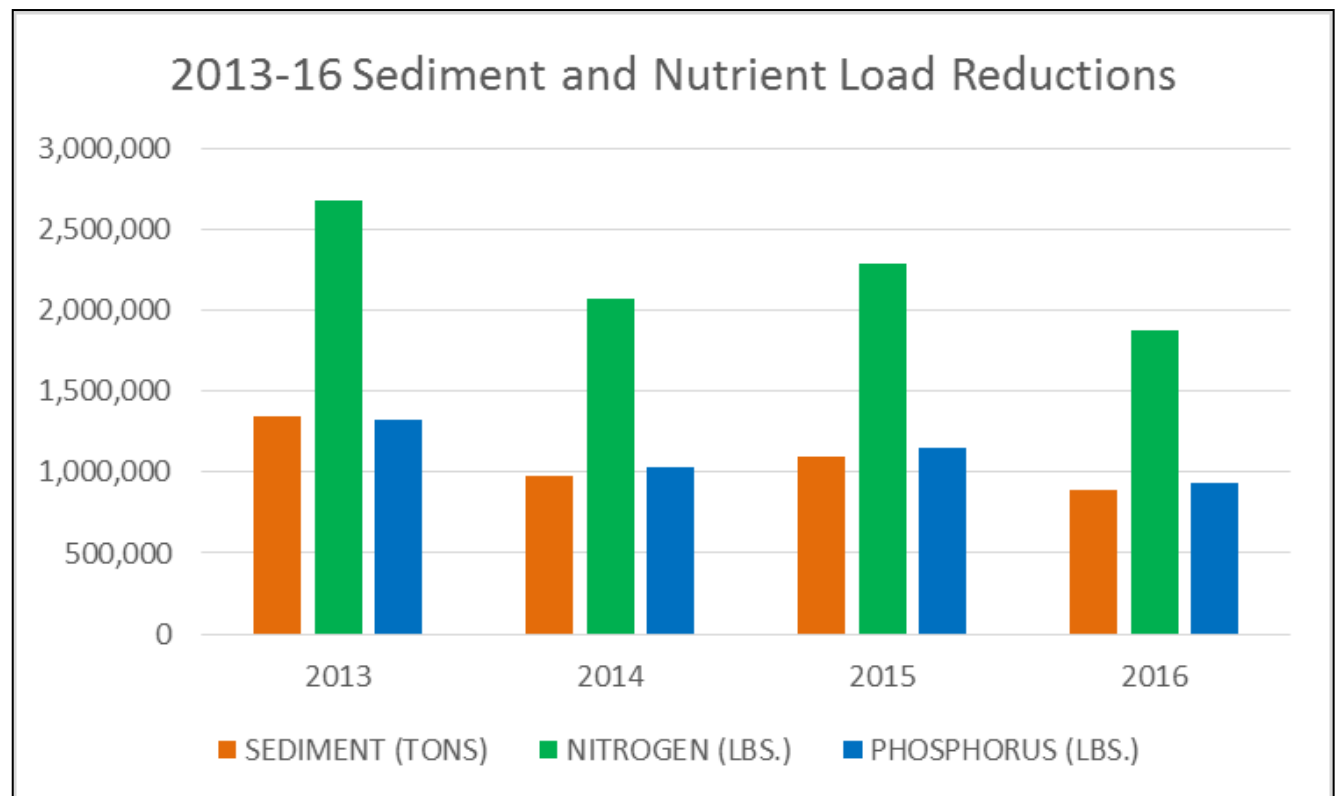
Program Updates

2016 ICP Conservation Accomplishments

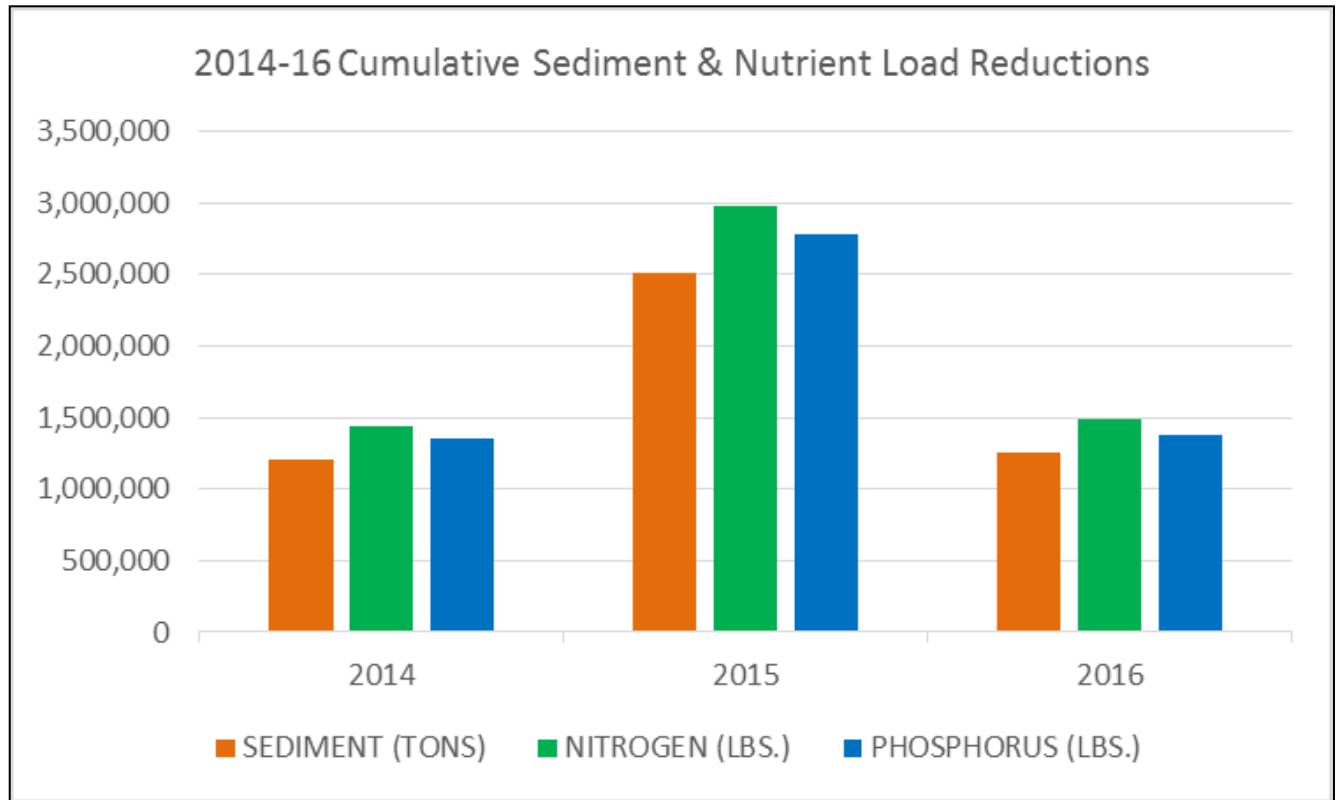
The 2016 ICP Accomplishments Report will be available to the ICP partners and the public this week via the ISDA website at <http://www.in.gov/isda/2991.htm>.

Final outcomes include the following:

2013-16 Sediment and Nutrient Load Reductions				
YEAR	PRACTICES	SEDIMENT (TONS)	NITROGEN (LBS.)	PHOSPHORUS (LBS.)
2013	13,693	1,348,018	2,681,784	1,327,775
2014	11,204	981,366	2,066,081	1,031,547
2015	12,015	1,093,763	2,284,033	1,144,892
2016	10,788	891,461	1,880,754	937,186



2014-16 Cumulative Sediment and Nutrient Load Reductions				
YEAR	PRACTICES	SEDIMENT (TONS)	NITROGEN (LBS.)	PHOSPHORUS (LBS.)
2014	14,562	1,209,756	2,513,693	1,250,593
2015	17,338	1,444,098	2,984,179	1,487,431
2016	18,483	1,348,138	2,786,953	1,380,202



2013-16 ICP Conservation Investment								
	Total Practices Installed	Total Public Conservation Investment	Total Private Landowner Conservation Investment	Total Investment	NLR Practices Installed	NLR Public Conservation Investment	NLR Private Landowner Conservation Investment	Total NLR Investment
CY2013	30,502	\$61,683,920	\$17,549,581	\$79,233,500	13,693	\$43,023,440	\$12,828,633	\$55,852,073
CY2014	21,012	\$31,969,729	\$9,302,894	\$41,272,623	11,204	\$20,075,018	\$6,308,348	\$26,383,366
CY2015	20,898	\$38,227,000	\$12,356,126	\$50,583,126	12,015	\$26,063,036	\$9,246,079	\$35,309,115
CY2016	17,970	\$40,694,894	\$13,328,869	\$54,023,763	10,788	\$26,112,548	\$9,588,988	\$35,701,536

- Total practices installed – Includes all calendar year installed/completed conservation practices.
- NLR practices installed – Includes all calendar year installed/completed nutrient load reduction practices.
- Public Conservation Investment– Value reflects total cost of practices. Investment only includes incentive payments and actual practice construction/implementation costs (earth moving, rock, erosion control blanket, grade stabilization structures, cover crop seed and planting costs, grass seed, tree seedlings, exclusion fencing, planter equipment modification costs, private construction contractor costs including fuel and labor, etc). Costs do not include administration and public labor (NRCS, FSA, ISDA, IDEM, SWCD, DNR employee salaries, survey/planning/design costs, etc).
- Private Landowner Conservation Investment – Value reflects total cost of practices. Investment only includes actual practice construction/implementation costs.
- 2013-14 DNR Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) and 2013 Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) public or private conservation investments were not available.
- Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) wetland or midland contract management practices were not included in the public or private conservation investments

2016 Cover Crop and Fall Tillage Transect Survey

All transects were completed by mid-March. Currently, Shannon Zezula and Trevor Laureys are conducting the statewide survey analyses. Once complete, the maps will be completed and posted to the website at <http://www.in.gov/isda/2383.htm>. ISDA and NRCS communication personnel will collaborate on a press release with an anticipated launch in early April.

SharePoint Migration

The SharePoint migration from SharePoint 2010 to SharePoint Online has been delayed due in part to personnel changes within IOT and an issue with the forms used within the SWCD SharePoint site not migrating properly. IOT could not correct the forms issue and is currently collaborating with Microsoft to resolve the problem. The Division is hoping the migration will occur sometime in April.

ICP Reports Web Application

Currently, ICP Partner personnel are compiling their 2016 program funding data and are required to submit their data by March 31. The Division is coordinating with IN.gov to update the web application to include the 2016 funding data and SWCD success stories. The ICP Reports web application can be viewed at <http://www.in.gov/isda/icpreports/>.



State Soil Conservation Board

March 21, 2017

District Support Specialist (DSS) Report: 1/23/17 to 3/10/17



DSS Regional Updates: *this report focuses on highlights from two DSSs. Other regions and DSSs will be featured in upcoming reports on a rotating basis.*

- **Geneva Tyler:** Geneva now serves as lead for Leadership Institute and is heading up efforts to evaluate and update the program. On March 2, members of the ICP participated in a meeting/conference call to kick things off. From that meeting it was decided to collect feedback from SWCD staff and supervisors via a survey. These will be distributed and collected as District Support Specialists attend district board meetings. In addition, other next steps are 1. To increase LI marketing efforts and 2. Geneva will be meeting with Kris Parker and Cara Salazar, both with Purdue Extension, to compare the LI program with Extension's community leadership programs and discuss how these programs might serve as a resource.
- **Tara Wesseler-Henry:** DSSs Work to Bring a New Way for SWCDs to Develop and Implement New Strategic Plans. Recently Indiana State Department of Agriculture and the District Support Specialists contracted with Phil Anderson of ReThink Consulting Group to develop a model for doing business plans and plans of work for SWCDs. During the month of February the DSSs and Phil Anderson coordinated six pilot meetings with the SWCD in Rush, Floyd, Benton, Hendricks, LaGrange, and Knox. The six sessions changed between meetings to refine the process to lead to a workbook planning facilitated module that encompasses all the different levels that the districts are at in all 92 counties. "I have been on the (SWCD) board longer than I can think of. At some point I know we have talked about these ideas but never discussed in a formal, facilitated way, and be able to define the steps to get it done," said one Rush Co. SWCD supervisor. "The meeting, the discussion, and the message was inspiring. Everything is broken down into manageable accomplishments," replied Rush Co. staff when asked about the first meeting. The DSSs recognize the new process is in the draft stages but are already recognizing the value and the possibilities to change how many of the districts use their plans. Tara Wesseler-Henry, DSS, says, "What we have been doing for many years now for district business plans and plan of works has not been working for a majority of districts. The plans have just been a formality and just taking up room on the computer or the shelf. It is time for a change, and this new process fits right into an easy, manageable plan that can challenge districts to take step by steps to reach an outcome that includes building relationships. It's a fresh look, please stay tuned."

Key DSS Statewide Activity Updates

- March Training Meetings: four meetings were scheduled statewide on March 2nd, 9th, 16th, and 22nd. A keynote presentation highlights the "Conservation on Rivers and Roadways Intended to Develop Opportunities for Resources and Species" (CORRIDORS) and "Grasslands For Gamebirds and Songbirds" (GGS) initiatives. Breakout sessions also include New Supervisor and Staff

Training. Approximately 53 people attended the session in the southwest, and 51 in the southeast.

DSS Activities Statewide	Total
Assistance With SWCD Business Plans/Annual Plans of Work	7
Input, Assistance & Attendance At SWCD Board Meetings	10
Presenting, Assistance & Attendance at SWCD Annual Meetings	20
New SWCD Supervisor & Staff Training (includes March trainings)	18
Visits With SWCD Supervisors/Staff For Training, Assistance, Guidance, Input, etc.	13
Presentations At Events, Workshops, Trainings, etc.	14

Upcoming Events:

- March 16: March Training Meeting, Delphi
- March 22: March Training Meeting, Columbia City
- June 9: "Leadership in Change" Leadership Institute, location TBD



State Soil Conservation Board

March 21st, 2017

ISDA – CREP & Water Quality Initiatives, Julie Harrold



Program Updates

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

- I'm working through issues with the CREP Conservation Easements in the Tippecanoe River WS.
- There have been 391.82 acres enrolled already this year in filter strips, riparian buffers, bottomland timber establishment, and wetland restorations.
- Attached to this report is a report on the current status of acres and dollars in CREP.

IN State Nutrient Reduction Strategy (SNRS)

- Received comments from EPA in February on current version of strategy.
- This version can be found on the ISDA webpage at <http://www.in.gov/isda/2991.htm>.
- Comments on the SNRS can be sent to ISDANutrientReduction@isda.in.gov.
- The SNRS Workgroup met on Friday, March 17th and discussion focused on reviewing comments and providing feedback as a group, and on reviewing the Milestones and Action Items table within the strategy.
- Work is being done within the Division on quality assurance/control on the nutrient load reductions done by staff.

Gulf Hypoxia Task Force (HTF)

- ISDA will be working with the LGU's SERA-46 group this year through a Walton Family Foundation grant to look at sharing of conservation on a state level. Indiana and Arkansas are the pilot states.
- Indiana is working with USGS on discussions of how to use Indiana's conservation data and incorporate it into the SPARROW model.

Western Lake Erie Basin

- The draft Annex 4 Domestic Action Plan (DAP) for Lake Erie will be completed soon and will go out for public comment following completion of the draft plan.

SSCB Meeting - March 21st, 2017 - CREP Summary

	Native Grasses	Permanent Wildlife Habitat	Filter Strip	Hardwood Tree Planting	Riparian Buffer	Bottomland Timber Establishment	Wetland Restoration	Wetland Restoration (non-floodplain)	Total		
	CP-2	CP-4D	CP-21	CP-3A	CP-22	CP-31	CP-23	CP-23A			
	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Goal	Percentage of Goal
Total Reported Completed on SharePoint as of 1/19/2017	182.23	14.00	3,824.21	17.20	536.09	3,946.89	394.70	1,589.39	10,504.71	26,250.00	40.02%
Total CREP Enrollment	209.92	14.00	4,089.67	33.04	688.49	5,631.14	827.85	2,063.86	13,557.97	26,250.00	51.65%
Total Acres in Extension				1.00	53.70	428.50	121.70	6.00	610.90		

	Native Grasses	Permanent Wildlife Habitat	Filter Strip	Hardwood Tree Planting	Riparian Buffer	Bottomland Timber Establishment	Wetland Restoration	Wetland Restoration (non-floodplain)	Practice Total	SWCD Administrative Fee	Total
	CP-2	CP-4D	CP-21	CP-3A	CP-22	CP-31	CP-23	CP-23A			
	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars
Total CREP Dollars	\$ 18,223.00	\$ 1,400.00	\$ 382,421.00	\$ 7,126.00	\$ 227,865.00	\$ 1,685,881.00	\$ 338,455.00	\$ 921,912.00	\$ 3,583,283.00	\$ 216,865.80	\$ 3,800,148.80

SSCB Meeting - March 21st, 2017 - CREP Acres (broken down by watershed)

Post-Expansion Acres

CREP Watershed	Native Grasses	Permanent Wildlife Habitat	Filter Strip	Hardwood Tree Planting	Riparian Buffer	Bottomland Timber Establishment	Wetland Restoration	Wetland Restoration (non-floodplain)	Total
	CP-2	CP-4D	CP-21	CP-3A	CP-22	CP-31	CP-23	CP-23A	
	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres
Highland-Pigeon	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.10	99.90	0.00	0.00	103.00
Lower Wabash	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	454.69	0.00	0.00	454.69
Lower East Fork White	33.50	7.00	0.00	5.40	41.10	567.80	0.00	0.00	654.80
Lower White	10.70	0.00	0.00	0.00	58.86	465.48	0.00	0.00	535.04
Middle Wabash-Busseron	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	700.49	0.00	0.00	700.49
Middle Wabash-Deer	6.60	0.00	5.80	0.00	0.00	52.49	0.00	0.00	64.89
Middle Wabash-Vermillion	4.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	145.71	171.90	36.80	358.91
Tippecanoe River	89.50	0.00	79.99	0.00	3.41	21.40	73.30	539.57	807.17
Upper East Fork White	0.00	0.00	38.54	0.00	24.70	74.16	0.00	0.00	137.40
Upper Wabash	12.53	7.00	93.59	0.00	0.00	162.96	27.80	43.32	347.20
Upper White	20.80	0.00	61.79	0.00	264.22	143.91	0.00	29.70	520.42
Reported Completed as of 1/19/2017	178.13	14.00	279.71	5.40	395.39	2,888.99	273.00	649.39	4,684.01
Enrolled as of 1/19/2017	205.82	14.00	545.17	21.24	547.79	4,573.24	706.15	1123.86	7,737.27

Pre-Expansion Acres

CREP Watershed	Native Grasses	Permanent Wildlife Habitat	Filter Strip	Hardwood Tree Planting	Riparian Buffer	Bottomland Timber Establishment	Wetland Restoration	Wetland Restoration (non-floodplain)	Total
	CP-2	CP-4D	CP-21	CP-3A	CP-22	CP-31	CP-23	CP-23A	
	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres
Highland-Pigeon	2.50	0.00	215.00	10.80	16.40	109.20	0.00	0.00	353.90
Tippecanoe River	0.00	0.00	2916.80	0.00	7.80	20.40	121.70	924.00	3990.70
Upper White	1.60	0.00	412.70	1.00	116.50	928.30	0.00	16.00	1476.10
Total Acres Prior to Expansion of CREP	4.10	0.00	3,544.50	11.80	140.70	1,057.90	121.70	940.00	5,820.70

	CP-3A	CP-22	CP-31	CP-23	CP-23A	Total Extension Acres
Extension Acres -Tippecanoe			14.80	121.70		136.50
Extension Acres -Upper White		1.00	53.70	413.70	6.00	474.40
Total Extension Acres		1.00	53.70	428.50	121.70	610.90

SSCB Meeting - March 21st, 2017 - CREP Dollars (broken down by watershed)

Post-Expansion Dollars

CREP Watershed	Native Grasses	Permanent Wildlife Habitat	Filter Strip	Hardwood Tree Planting	Riparian Buffer	Bottomland Timber Establishment	Wetland Restoration	Wetland Restoration (non-floodplain)	Practice Total	SWCD Administrative Fees	Total
	CP-2	CP-4D	CP-21	CP-3A	CP-22	CP-31	CP-23	CP-23A			
	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars
Highland-Pigeon	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,240.00	\$ 39,960.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 41,200.00	\$ 4,120.00	\$ 45,320.00
Lower Wabash	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 181,876.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 181,876.00	\$ 18,187.60	\$ 200,063.60
Lower East Fork White	\$ 3,350.00	\$ 700.00	\$ -	\$ 2,160.00	\$ 16,440.00	\$ 227,120.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 249,770.00	\$ 24,977.00	\$ 274,747.00
Lower White	\$ 1,070.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 23,544.00	\$ 186,192.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 210,806.00	\$ 21,080.60	\$ 231,886.60
Middle Wabash-Busseron	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 280,196.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 280,196.00	\$ 28,019.60	\$ 308,215.60
Middle Wabash-Deer	\$ 660.00	\$ -	\$ 580.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 20,996.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 22,236.00	\$ 2,223.60	\$ 24,459.60
Middle Wabash-Vermillion	\$ 450.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 58,284.00	\$ 163,305.00	\$ 34,960.00	\$ 256,999.00	\$ 25,699.90	\$ 282,698.90
Tippecanoe River	\$ 8,950.00	\$ -	\$ 7,999.00	\$ -	\$ 1,364.00	\$ 8,560.00	\$ 69,635.00	\$ 444,180.50	\$ 540,688.50	\$ 54,068.85	\$ 594,757.35
Upper East Fork White	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,854.00	\$ -	\$ 9,880.00	\$ 29,664.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 43,398.00	\$ 4,339.80	\$ 47,737.80
Upper Wabash	\$ 1,253.00	\$ 700.00	\$ 9,359.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 65,184.00	\$ 26,410.00	\$ 37,056.50	\$ 139,962.50	\$ 13,996.25	\$ 153,958.75
Upper White	\$ 2,080.00	\$ -	\$ 6,179.00	\$ -	\$ 105,688.00	\$ 57,564.00	\$ -	\$ 28,215.00	\$ 199,726.00	\$ 19,972.60	\$ 219,698.60
Upper White Extensions	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,800.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,800.00	\$ 180.00	\$ 1,980.00
Reported Paid as of 1/19/2017	\$ 17,813.00	\$ 1,400.00	\$ 27,971.00	\$ 2,160.00	\$ 159,956.00	\$ 1,155,596.00	\$ 259,350.00	\$ 544,412.00	\$ 2,168,658.00	\$ 216,865.80	\$ 2,385,523.80

Pre-Expansion Dollars

CREP Watershed	Native Grasses	Permanent Wildlife Habitat	Filter Strip	Hardwood Tree Planting	Riparian Buffer	Bottomland Timber Establishment	Wetland Restoration	Wetland Restoration (non-floodplain)	Practice Total
	CP-2	CP-4D	CP-21	CP-3A	CP-22	CP-31	CP-23	CP-23A	
	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars
Highland-Pigeon	\$ 250.00	\$ -	\$ 21,500.00	\$ 4,316.00	\$ 6,564.00	\$ 43,680.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 76,310.00
Tippecanoe River	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 291,680.00	\$ -	\$ 3,120.00	\$ 8,160.00	\$ 48,680.00	\$ 369,600.00	\$ 721,240.00
Tippecanoe River Extensions	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,700.00	\$ 30,425.00	\$ -	\$ 34,125.00
Upper White	\$ 160.00	\$ -	\$ 41,270.00	\$ 400.00	\$ 46,600.00	\$ 371,320.00	\$ -	\$ 6,400.00	\$ 466,150.00
Upper White Extensions	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 250.00	\$ 11,625.00	\$ 103,425.00	\$ -	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 116,800.00
Total Acres Prior to Expansion of CREP	\$ 410.00	\$ -	\$ 354,450.00	\$ 4,966.00	\$ 67,909.00	\$ 530,285.00	\$ 79,105.00	\$ 377,500.00	\$ 1,414,625.00



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

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

To: State Soil Conservation Board
From: Jamie Scott, President, IASWCD
Date: Tuesday, March 21, 2017

Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative (CCSI)

- Annual meeting held in February
- Business planning strategic session will be held in the spring.
- Letter to all SWCDs has been sent regarding resolution that requested \$500 donation from Districts to support CCSI efforts - \$6,500 collected to date.

Pathway to Water Quality

- 25th anniversary celebration in 2017; look for more details this spring.
- Volunteer slots will open June 1.
- Work days coming up: March 29, 31 and April 6

Other

- IASWCD has signed a contribution agreement with NRCS for Districts to provide administrative and technical services for Farm Bill programs. This is a three-year agreement worth up to \$900,000 per year if fully utilized by Districts. Update – almost 100% coverage for core deliverables and significant coverage for other deliverables.
- IASWCD is advocating for a \$1 million INCREASE in general fund appropriation for the Clean Water Indiana program this legislative session. Was not successful in getting included in House budget, working with Senate now. Weekly emails sent to Districts with updates.
- Nine Districts have come to the Statehouse and lobbied for CWI funding. Cress Hizer, IASWCD lobbyist, spent the day with them. Other Districts have been meeting with key legislators.
- Jamie Scott, Marc Roberts, Ray McCormick, Gene Schmidt, and Jane Hardisty are in Washington, DC March 20-21 meeting with all 11 congressional offices to talk about the Farm Bill and other conservation issues.
- ICP webinar conducted on March 7. Recorded and link sent to all Districts.
- MOU with Purdue finalized.

IASWCD

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

NRCS State Conservationist's Report

March, 2017

NEW ADMINISTRATION TRANSITION

There has been a successful transition to the new administration. Over the next few months we can expect to see new priorities and direction coming from national headquarters as we work to ensure that we're aligning ourselves with the new administration. In the meantime, we have received initial guidance from the Department and headquarters staff on several operating procedures that affect us here in the state. These procedures pertain to communications, agreements, and hiring.

Hiring and Personnel Actions - NRCS is under a hiring freeze as of noon January 22, 2017. Until further guidance is received, NRCS is placing in suspense all job offers and other related hiring activities as of January 22.

Agreements –All proposed inter-agency agreements with other federal agencies and non-federal cooperators will need advanced review from the Department before moving forward. Current active agreements can continue to be implemented. Until further notice, NRCS has suspended any new contracts or agreements that would provide additional staff capacity and circumvent the intent of the hiring freeze. However, agreements can be sent to the department for special approval.

FARM BILL UPDATES

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) –The evaluation process for CSP applications has begun and will continue over the next few months. The new CSP helps producers better evaluate their conservation options and the benefits to their operations and natural resources.

- 504 CSP applications received
- Farmers will be contacted after April 24, 2017 for a meeting with their District Conservationist

Information about CSP, including national and state ranking questions and enhancement descriptions, is available at www.nrcs.usda.gov/csp.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) - EQIP Conservation Activity Plan applications are accepted and funded on an ongoing basis pending available funding and program eligibility.

- 1,678 EQIP applications received
- Ranking will be completed by April 21, 2017
- Farmers whose applications are selected for funding will be notified in May, 2017.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) - USDA is now accepting proposals for new Fiscal Year 2018 RCPP projects. Pre-proposals are due April 21. For more information on applying, visit: www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/programs/farmbill/rcpp/?cid=nrcseprd1309629 and contact Jill Reinhart, ASTC Partnerships, at jill.reinhart@in.usda.gov

St. Joseph Watershed

- EQIP funds were exhausted for this project in Indiana last year.
- There is a second WRE sign up deadline of March 17.



Tri-State Western Lake Erie Basin

- EQIP sign up deadline was March 20.
- Partners continue to work together to reduce nutrient inputs.

Indiana Watershed Initiative/University of Notre Dame

- EQIP second sign up deadline of April 21.
- Seeing strong adoption of cover crops in the Shatto Ditch watershed in Kosciusko County, and looking to increase adoption in Kirkpatrick Ditch in Jasper County.
- Looking to increase two stage ditch adoption in both watersheds. Tracking water quality changes in both watersheds as practice adoption increases.

Big Pine Watershed Project

- EQIP second sign up announced with applications due March 17.
- In partnership with The Nature Conservancy and private ag companies, producers in the watershed are eligible to have the Fieldprint Calculator run on their operations.

The Improving Working Lands for Monarch Butterflies Partnership

- Project is being led by State of Texas
- EQIP sign up announced with applications due March 17.

Soil Health on Reclaimed Mine Lands

- This project in southern Indiana is making EQIP available on lands rented from mine companies by allowing the ability to show control of the land year by year.
- EQIP deadline was January 20th.
- We are currently assessing if a second sign up is needed.

The Southern Indiana Young Forest Initiative

- Addresses a lack of early successional habitat and corresponding declines in at-risk wildlife species in 43 counties in southern Indiana that contain the majority of forested land.
- Partnership agreement between Department of Natural Resources and NRCS is being drafted - Hope to have a late spring sign up.

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program – Wetland Reserve Easements (ACEP-WRE)

The evaluation process for WRE applications has begun and continue over the next few months.

- 60 applications received
- \$13.2 million dollars available
- Landowners will be notified by May, 2017

PROGRAM SUPPORT SERVICES AND CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM AGREEMENTS

The Program Support Specialist (PSS)-CRP agreement is in place. IASWCD is currently sending out contracts to the participating SWCDs. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are being developed along with recorded training webinars. As they are completed they can be found on the IN NRCS SharePoint site under the Programs tab in the PSS folder. Whiney McGrew, IASWCD agreement coordinator, has gathered access needs from the district staff is working with Susan Meadows, NRCS CTA Specialist to gain computer access. State Conservationist Jane Hardisty has sent letters to the SWCD supervisors explaining NRCS needs and asking them to come along side us and assist



through the PSS-CRP agreement. Hardisty has also sent letters to the NRCS field staff asking for their support in making this agreement successful. District Conservationists are expected to continue to communicate with SWCD employees to discuss concerns, needs, and how to implement this partnership agreement in the county. NRCS issues or concerns should be brought to susan.meadows@in.usda.gov and SWCD employees should work with whitney.mcgregor@in.nacdnet.net.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS FLY-IN

Every spring, the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) invites its members to join NACD staff in Washington, D.C., to promote the interests of conservation districts on Capitol Hill. The 2017 Fly-In will take place on Monday, March 20 and Tuesday, March 21. Jane Hardisty, Indiana NRCS State Conservationist, will, again, be accompanying the Indiana delegation at this year's fly-in.

LIVESTOCK SAFETY ISSUES

On January 9th, USDA issued a statement that the presence of Eurasian/North American reassortant H5N2 avian influenza had been detected in a wild mallard duck in Fergus County, Montana. No illness or mortalities in domestic poultry in the U.S. have been reported. It appears to be one of the strains seen during the outbreak in 2014 and 2015 and serves as a reminder that there is still HPAI circulating in wild birds, and producers need to continue to be vigilant about biosecurity to protect domestic poultry. NRCS employees have been reminded of the need to continue to follow biosecurity protocols regarding visits to livestock farms.

- Until further notice, Level 2 Biosecurity measures must be implemented on all poultry production facilities and fields where litter has been applied within the last six months. NRCS employees will call ahead to confirm if there are any specific biosecurity instructions at that farm, wear boots, and disinfect equipment after field visits to sites associated with poultry.
- NRCS employees will call and ask producers prior to field visits if they have poultry, litter onsite, or if litter applications have been made if not readily known (e.g., backyard flock or poultry litter spread or stored on-site), and adhere to the producer's decision of whether or not to allow access to NRCS employees.
- The Indiana Board of Animal Health recently announced that a case of Bovine Tuberculosis has been linked to an Indiana farm. Policy requires NRCS employees to implement Level 1 Biosecurity measures during all livestock farm visits – it is anticipated that adhering to this policy will suffice to limit the potential spread of this recent threat.

