

MINUTES
STATE SOIL CONSERVATION BOARD MEETING
September 23, 2014
The Nature Conservancy
620 E Ohio St
Indianapolis, IN

Members in Attendance:

Scott Ham
Nola Gentry
Bob Eddleman
Warren Baird

Jane Hardisty, NRCS
Scheryl Vaughn, Boone SWCD
Meg Leader, ISDA
Deb Fairhurst, ISDA
Nathan Stoelting, ISDA
Laura Fribley, ISDA
Ray Chattin, Knox County SWCD
Jennifer Thum, ISDA
Cress Hizer, IASWCD

Others in Attendance:

Jordan Seger, ISDA
Geneva Tyler, ISDA
Emily Neitzel, IASWCD

I. 9:39AM Call to Order

II. Draft minutes of July 2014

Nola moved; Warren second. Motion passed.

III. Clean Water Indiana

- a. 2015 Clean Water Indiana Grants
Scott opened up grants for discussion. Applications due Oct 1. Grants committee meeting set for Oct. Timeline will be similar to last year.
- b. Clean Water Indiana Budget Update
Jordan discussed that the 2015 CWI grant funding process and budget will be similar to last year.

IV. State Soil Conservation Board Reports

- a. SSCB Chairman's Report
Scott discussed that he is happy with the way deadlines are being set and working with Districts to get practices on the ground. He commended SWCD staff, District Support Specialists and Resource Specialists from around the state for getting conservation on the ground. On Sept 16, the Indiana Conservation Partners met in the Western Lake Erie Basin. The conversation included representatives from NRCS, ISDA, TNC ARS, IASWCD, SSCB, as well as Steuben, Dekalb, Adams, and Wells Soil and Water Conservation Districts. They discussed courses of action to help with future issues regarding WLEB.

Scott spent 3 days in NNE, meeting with various districts to address concerns. Concerns from Noble County SWCD staff Stacey McGinnis were discussed for 27 minutes. Scott read a letter from Stacey to the board regarding concerns about cover crop cost-share rates and other topics. Board discussed her concerns regarding cover crop cost share and the general consensus by the board was that that the current \$20/ac rate makes the dollars go farther, and is a fair rate across the state. Other points of discussion surrounding the letter were as follows:

- Cover crop cost share is specifically capped due to the high demand for cost share dollars, while other practices are capped to not exceed NRCS or other federal programs.

- NRCS Quality Assurance spot checks NRCS, CRP and CWI projects about every 4-5 years to help ensure that installed practices are meeting FOTG specifications. Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG) standards were adopted by SWCDs some time ago, and agreed upon again within the Partnership Agreement, making FOTG standards not just “NRCS” standards, but “ICP” standards. MOU’s with CWI Grant contracts specify that FOTG standards will be used and DSS audits will help with quality assurance as well.
- Multi-district grants will most likely continue for future competitive grant rounds. However the SSCB does not want to see anyone penalized due to a true lack of partnering districts. For the future, the SSCB will discuss examples where a district may not have opportunities to partner and what qualifications may need to be set to consider case by case scenarios. This needs to be in the form of a written exception policy.
- Regarding CWI eligibility, communication with District Support Specialists and accountability with other districts are avenues for maintaining knowledge regarding grant eligibility.
- Historically, Technical Assistance is needed across the state, and can be captured by workload and staffing maps.
- Regarding concerns that boards and districts are being included and signed for grants without knowledge: boards and districts absolutely need to have their permission to use their signatures. Original signatures could be submitted between the districts if that is desired among the districts. Deb suggested that in future years, a possibility to increase communication would be for board members to attend each other’s meetings. Regardless, the board decision to participate in a CWI competitive grant should be reflected in board meeting minutes. Application requirements got away from original signatures due to SWCDs were being hindered.
- The State Soil Conservation Board website is currently being worked on by Deb, Geneva and Jordan to get it updated.
- Finally, the letter commended the current DSS (Jennifer Thum) for her work.

Additional SSCB discussion included the consensus to look at technology for State Soil Conservation Board meetings in order to allow SWCDs or others to call in when unable to attend in person.

Jordan commended Scott Ham for outreach to the SWCDs around the state.

V. ISDA Updates

- a. Director’s Report- Jordan Seger: see report
- b. Technical Report- Jordan Seger
Team Leaders are stalk sampling. Resource Specialists are very involved with stalk sampling and construction season is underway to install practices. Information is pulled from Sharepoint data tracking. Performance measures are based on parameters reflected in the report, and numbers are automatically updated for the public website.
- c. Accountability and Technology- Deb Fairhurst
Deb is working with DSS’s and CWI program and SSCB grants committee. She will be creating blind link so SSCB members can view all the applications, titled by lead county, and no Sharepoint login will be necessary. In addition, she will be creating maps for grants committee and DSS’s.

In addition, she will begin breaking down ICP 2013 workload for RS’s to apply Region 5. 2014 data will be immediately following. This will provide data to create reduction maps reflecting the ICP workload.

- d. Agricultural Affairs- Meg Leader
OFN sampling is about 28% complete. Winter meetings may be opened to SSCB members. Owen County SWCD is interested in starting group, so for 2015, she is looking at starting about 8 total new groups
- e. District Support- Laura Fribley- see report
Regarding the ICP Training and Certificate Program, the question was posed: would Purdue's DTC weed center be beneficial for ICP workshops?
- f. Water Quality and CREP- Jordan Seger
Logan is working with EPA to get a better handle of how we might measure water quantity benefits of conservation. There is becoming more demand for information regarding ground water recharge. A method to calculating that is being explored. Logan and Julie Harrold is working with a Watershed Leadership webinar series highlighting the load reduction calculations that we do. CREP is more or less maintaining.

VI. Conservation Partner Reports

- a. IASWCD Report- Emily Neitzel- see report.
Scott Ham pointed out the SSCB's round table at the 2015 IASWCD annual conference, which will be Tuesday, Jan 13th, 11am-Noon.
- b. IDEM- No Report
- c. DNR- No Report
- d. Purdue- No Report
- e. FSA- No Report
- f. NRCS Report- Jane Hardisty
RCPP applicants will be notified in November. There was \$100 million appropriated for State Projects nationwide. IN NRCS will wait to see who gets funded and then utilize IN EQIP dollars to look at other non-funded proposals. The question was posed, could CWI funds be used to incorporate some RCPP non-funded projects?
Civil Rights review- Indiana only had 3 minor dings.
NRCS is working with Marion County with a CTA grant to address more urban conservation. DNR is identifying and restructuring their Biologists- will have 8 in field, 2 urban and 2 others. Some counties will not have available ANY services from field biologists but requests will be sent to online resources. Will create some hardship for wildlife habitat, EQIP and the overall partnership.

There will be a meeting at Farm Bureau on Sept 30 from 9am-3pm regarding water resource management, soil health, extreme weather events, etc. Some invitations come from the Farm Foundation and sets the nation's focus for Congress.

Personnel: NRCS has hired a full-time State Forester from MO. Vacancy in Mt. Vernon DC is filled as well as the Carroll Co DC vacancy. Matt Jarvis is moving to Aurora. The new State Compliance Specialist is Al Tinsley.

Vacancies: Valparaiso & Greencastle DC's and Greencastle CIT leader. NRCS is filling vacant slots, but not adding.

Jane proposing to make plaques for legislative offices, Corn/Soy, State offices, State Fair and other offices that could promote the ICP.

VII. Public Comment

IDEA conference will be Oct 6-8. There are 71 registered and IDEA has a record memberships. Scheryl Vaughn will be attending NACD as representative for IDEA.

Nola commented in regards to urban conservation that pervious concrete would be beneficial to storm water runoff. However, there are questions about durability. Resources for INDOT and concrete workers should be made available regarding durability for parking lots.

VIII. Next Meeting

October 28, 2014
9:30 AM
New Castle-Henry County Library
376 S. 15th St
New Castle, IN 47362
Tour of Caprini Creamery/Redbud Farm
to follow

2015 Meeting Dates

January 13, IASWCD Annual Conference
roundtable discussion
February 10, The Nature Conservancy,
Indianapolis
March 10, The Nature Conservancy,
Indianapolis
May 12, Culver, Indiana
July 14, The Nature Conservancy, Indianapolis
September 15, The Nature Conservancy,
Indianapolis
October 27, TBA

IX. Adjourn 12:105pm

Minutes Prepared by: Geneva Tyler

Approved by:
