

**AGENDA**  
**STATE SOIL CONSERVATION BOARD MEETING**  
March 19, 2019  
NRCS State Office

**I. 9:30 am.: Call to Order**

**II. Approve Minutes of January 2019**

**III. Clean Water Indiana**

- a. Clean Water Indiana Grants –Leah Harmon
  - 1. Spencer SWCD-Leah Harmon
- b. Clean Water Indiana Grants Committee- Bob Eddleman

**IV. State Soil Conservation Board Business**

- a. Chairman’s Report

**V. Soil and Water Conservation Districts**

- a. Dearborn SWCD- Laura Fribley
- b. Henry SWCD- Laura Fribley
- c. Lawrence SWCD- Laura Fribley
- d. Ohio SWCD- Laura Fribley
- e. Knox SWCD- Nathan Stoelting
- f. Morgan SWCD- Leah Harmon
- g. Pulaski SWCD- Geneva Tyler

**VI. ISDA Updates**

- a. Director’s Report- Jordan Seger
- b. Technical Report- George Reger
- c. Soil Health- Meg Leader
- d. Accountability and Technology- Jordan Seger
- e. District Support- Laura Fribley
- f. Water Quality and CREP- Julie Harrold

**VII. Conservation Partner Reports**

- a. IASWCD Report
- b. IDEM Report
- c. DNR Report
- d. Purdue Report
- e. FSA Report
- f. NRCS Report
- g. CCSI Report
- h. IDEA Report
- i. IANA Report

**VIII. Public Comment**

**IX. Next Meeting:**

**2019 Meeting Dates**

May 21: Franklin County  
July 16: NRCS State Office

September 17: NRCS State Office  
October 29: TBD

**X. 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

Meeting Sign-In

Date 3/19/19

Location \_\_\_\_\_

Name/Agency

Sheryl Vaughn

George Reger

WATT SELF

Jordan Seger

Meg Leader

Joe Schmeas

Roger Wanning

LISA HOLSCHER

Julie Hank

Geneva Tyler

Jenny Kynor

Name/Agency

Beane County SWCD

ISDA

Purdue Extension

ISDA

ISDA

IASWCD

IASWCD

CCS

ISDA

ISDA

NRES



**State Soil Conservation Board**  
**March 19, 2019**  
**District Support Specialist (DSS) Report: 12/26/18 to 3/1/19**



**Preventing Workplace and Sexual Harassment Training**

ISDA District Support Specialist and Resource Specialist staff are in process of both scheduling and presenting this training to SWCD Boards. A map illustrating completion by county be provided in May. Districts are requested to complete this training by 4/30/19.

**New Supervisor Training**

DSSs are providing training to new supervisors around the state as newly appointed and elected individuals join SWCD Boards. Please contact your DSS to schedule.

**Leadership Institute & Leadership Institute Plus**

- Leadership in Change, February 22: cancelled due to lack of enough participants registering
- On March 1, Leadership Institute hosted a special spring workshop at Beck’s Hybrids in Atlanta, IN. Tisha Gierhart, with the Shafer Leadership Academy, led 12 SWCD staff and 1 supervisor through principles outlined by author Steven Covey in his book The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. Attendees also participated in exercises to create personal mission statements and activity calendars to maximize their personal effectiveness.

**SWCD Supervisor and Staff Trainings**

In February, DSSs and Joe Schmees, IASWCD, met to discuss the 2019 SWCD trainings that will be held in four areas of the state. Training topics for supervisors and staff, dates, and locations were brainstormed. Follow up is underway within the team.

**Upcoming Events:**

SWCD Staff Meetings (contact your DSS for more information)

- April 17, Petersburg
- April 24, Rensselaer
- April 24, Fowler
- May 1, Brookville
- May 2, Seymour

<b>DSS Activities Statewide For This Reporting Period</b>	<b>Total</b>
Assistance With SWCD Business Plans/Annual Plans of Work	3
Input, Assistance & Attendance At SWCD Board Meetings	30
Visits With SWCD Supervisors/Staff For Training, Assistance, Guidance, Input, etc.	42



# State Soil Conservation Board

March 19, 2019  
Clean Water Indiana Grants



## Program Updates

### **Clean Water Indiana Competitive Grants**

#### **2019**

- 2019 grants started on January 1<sup>st</sup>.
- I am working on processing claim right now and ensuring that these projects get off to a successful start.
- These grants have a first report due on July 31, 2019.
- Individual summaries have been posted on the website.

#### **2016**

- Projects Expired: 12/31/18
- I am currently processing a few final claims.

#### **2017**

- Projects Expire: 12/31/19
- These grants will be the focus of CWI reviews this year, since many of them were flagged by the CWI communications policy. These reviews will be conducted this spring, so that we can formulate strategies for any barriers these grants have to successful completion of the projects.

#### **2018**

- Projects Expire 12/31/20 (except Hamilton)
- I am processing 1<sup>st</sup> annual reports and answering questions about the process.

### **Non-SWCD Led Projects**

#### *IASWCD (CCSI)*

- Expires: 12/31/21
- All reimbursement so no claims yet.

#### *SICIM*

- Total Amount Claimed: \$30,000 of \$120,000
- Expires: 12/31/19
- We processed this as an amendment to their original agreement to get them on the same schedule as other CWI grants.

### **Grant Reviews**

- 10 grants were selected for review. These came from both SWCD-led and non-SWCD-led grants.
- Selections were made per the CWI communication policy for both marginal and routine grants.
- I updated the forms to increase transparency and to better communicate to both the SSCB and SWCD supervisors the status of any given grant.
- The first reviews will take place March 20<sup>th</sup> and I am working to schedule others this spring with a goal of completing all 10 before August 1<sup>st</sup>.

- Several grants were flagged for review by the CWI communications policy for having a substantial amount of funding remaining in their final year. I plan to conduct these reviews soon in order to address any issues the grantees may be experiencing.

### **Training Reimbursement/Sponsorship**

- Applications were due March 15.
- We received applications from 34 districts, representing 144 individual registrations and 17 training events.
- The grants committee will discuss applications by the end of the month.

### **AFR**

- These are due to me by March 31.
- The direct distribution process is same as last year and will include training funds.
- Once I get this information I will work with our accountants to process payment as quickly as possible.
- I will also use this information to update the ICP reports site on the ISDA webpage.



# State Soil Conservation Board

March 19, 2019  
Clean Water Indiana  
Grants Committee



## What's New in CWI 2020

### SWCD-Led Competitive Grants

- Guidance
  - Due date is now September 6<sup>th</sup>, rather than September 14<sup>th</sup>. This will provide a consistent timeline for all CWI applications.
  - Removed restrictions on limiting cost share to 3 years on the same field. Instead, we added language about prioritizing first-time users.
  - Clarified that only the lead district has to meet the deadlines listed in the guidance. If a district missed a deadline (e.g. a recommendation for appointment), they are still welcome to be a participating district on a CWI application.
- Application
  - Clarified partners question to ask details about each partners and their anticipated match.
  - Added clarification to the question involving how CWI will be utilized in order to get more detail.
  - Added Preventing Workplace Harassment Training to self-assessment.

### Non-SWCD Led Competitive Grants

- Guidance
  - Clarified that this is a competitive opportunity.
  - Application deadline is now September 6<sup>th</sup> for a consistent timeline with SWCD-led grants.
  - All applicants must present their project at the September 17<sup>th</sup> SSCB meeting.
  - At that meeting the SSCB will determine, which proposals they would like to move forward to be scored and ranked alongside the SWCD-led proposals for funding consideration. The CWI grants committee will present their recommendations for both SWCD-led and Non-SWCD led projects at the October SSCB meeting.
  - Clarified that applications must be submitted by natural resource related conservation groups.
  - Project dates are now standardized to begin on January 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Application
  - Clarified partners question to ask details about each partners and their anticipated match.
  - Added clarification to the question involving how CWI will be utilized in order to get more detail.



## Clean Water Indiana 2020 SWCD-Led 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 8.5x11 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 6, 2019, 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 2020 grant cycle. All districts must be current on SharePoint reporting for previous grants, including both financial and conservation practice tracking.

**Ineligible Projects:** The 2020 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 Logistics:** This grant opportunity is competitive. Proposals can be for any amount that would accomplish the project described. 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 2020 Clean Water Indiana Grant projects shall take no longer than three full years to complete. Projects will start on January 1, 2020 and must be finished and all funds spent by December 31, 2022.

**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. 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 **and prioritizing first-time users.**

**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% cash or in-kind 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 below to develop their project budget.

**Match Standards:** (all figures are per hour of project work)  
ICP Staff/SWCD supervisors (including associates) \$25\*  
Landowner Time: \$25  
Professional Services: \$25  
Student/Intern/Volunteer: \$10

\*ICP match rates were calculated from publicly available data in Gateway and public transparency portals.

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.

**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. The SSCB will utilize a scoring sheet to aid in ranking the proposals. The SSCB may use discretion when awarding grant funds.

**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 as reimbursement to the lead district. *Please note that reimbursement claims may be made no more frequently than quarterly and require updated SharePoint financial reporting, conservation project tracking (if applicable), a claim voucher and a Quickbooks or similar financial report showing that requested funds have been paid by the SWCD(s).*

**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 1<sup>st</sup> will have reports due January 31<sup>st</sup> and July 31<sup>st</sup>.* The first report will be due on July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020. 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:** For programmatic questions about the guidance and application, contact the Leah Harmon, Grants Program Manager at [lharmon2@isda.in.gov](mailto:lharmon2@isda.in.gov) or (317) 607-4127.

For assistance with proposal development, please contact your DSS.

*Central*

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*Northeast*

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*Southwest*

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**Deadlines that SWCDs must meet to be eligible to be lead on an application for CWI 2020:**

- Election Committee Report: November 1, 2018
- Recommendation for Supervisor Appointment: November 1, 2018
- Nominee for Election: December 1, 2018
- Annual Financial Report entered into Gateway: March 1, 2019
- Annual Meeting Held: March 31, 2019
- Election held at Annual Meeting: March 31, 2019
- Annual Financial Report and Audit Form/Page 2 of AFR: March 31, 2019
- 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 2020. These questions will appear as a self-assessment on the CWI application.*

- District Annual Meeting Information: January 1, 2019
- 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 current supervisor/staff/active associate attend a Leadership Institute workshop session since 2008. *\*Note that in order for an associate supervisor to count toward this item, they must be listed in the SharePoint directory.*
- The district has at least one current supervisor/staff/active associate graduate of the Leadership Institute program. *\*Note that in order for an associate supervisor to count toward this item, they must be listed in the SharePoint directory.*
- District Staff or supervisors participated in the 2019 spring tillage or fall 2018 cover crop transects.
- District has applied for a grant other than CWI in the last 3 years and how many.
- District has at least a quorum of supervisors view the Preventing Workplace and Sexual Harassment Training: April 30, 2019

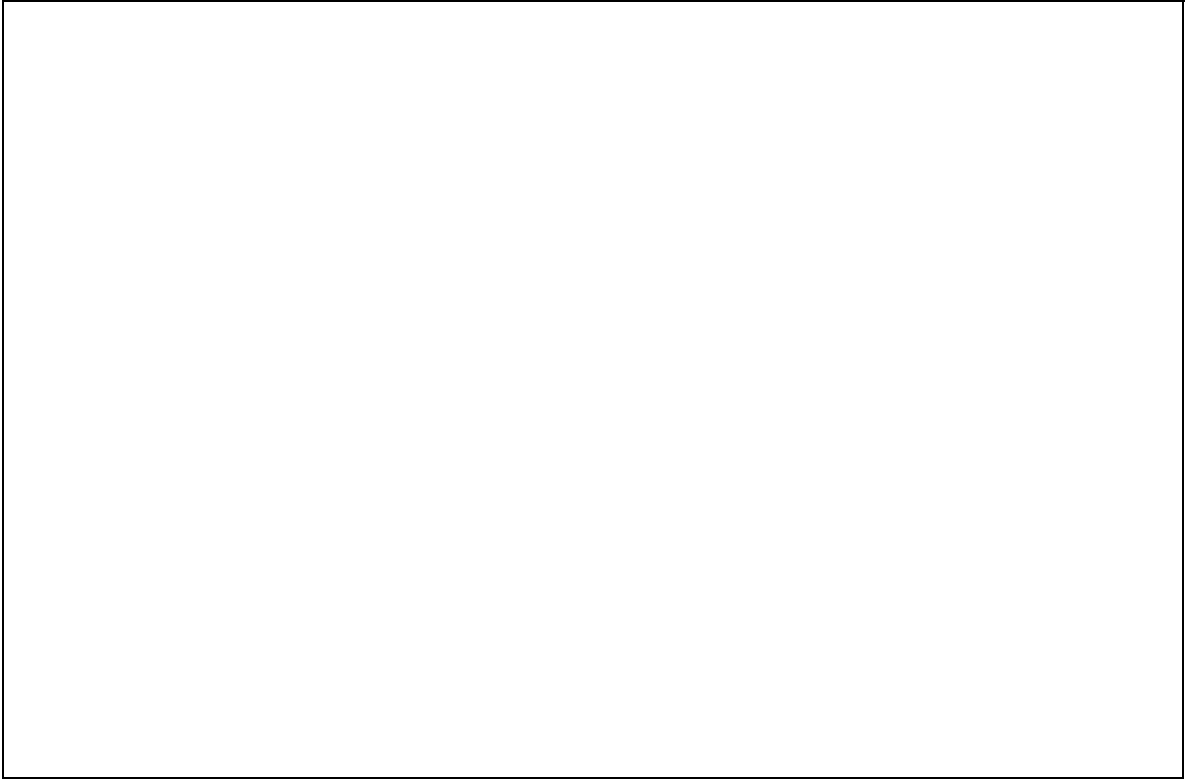


Please describe why this project is needed. (Maximum 2000 characters)

What are the goals of the project and how will you track progress toward these goals? This tracking should go beyond the required reporting in SharePoint.  
(Maximum 2000 characters)

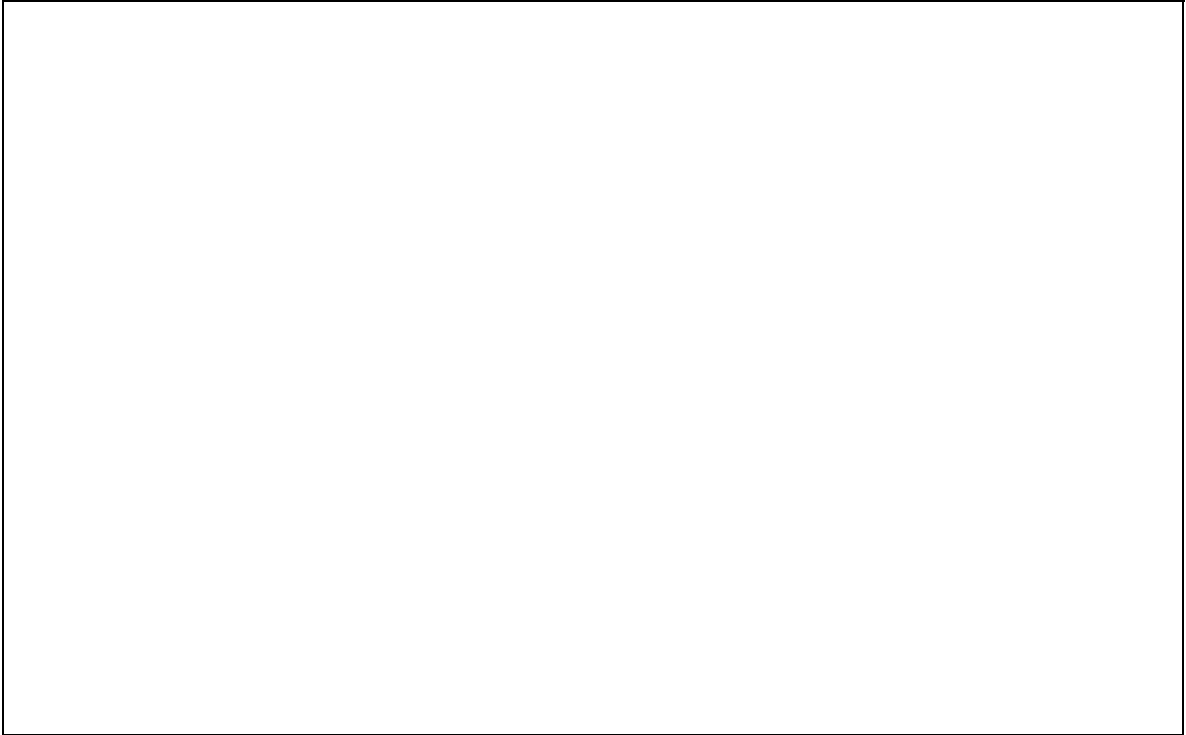
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Describe each partner and their specific contributions and anticipated match to the project.









## Self Assessment

*These items are not specified in district law but are considered essential for district operations and will be considered for CWI 2020.*

District Annual Meeting Information: January 1, 2019	Yes	No
Updated SharePoint Directories: Within 30 days of changes	Yes	No
District Success Story: Due date determined by ICP outreach committee	Yes	No
The district has a current business plan.	Yes	No
The district has had at least one current supervisor/staff/active associate attend a Leadership Institute workshop session since 2008. *Note that in order for an associate supervisor to count toward this item, they must be listed in the SharePoint directory.	Yes	No
The district has at least one current supervisor/staff/active associate graduate of the Leadership Institute program. *Note that in order for an associate supervisor to count toward this item, they must be listed in the SharePoint directory.	Yes	No
District Staff or supervisors participated in the 2019 spring tillage or fall 2018 cover crop transects.	Yes	No
District has applied for a grant other than CWI in the last 3 years.	Yes	No
If so, how many?		
District has at least a quorum of supervisors view the Preventing Workplace and Sexual Harassment Training: April 30, 2019	Yes	No

## Attachments

Please attach any documentation, up to 5 (8.5x11) 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.



**Clean Water Indiana**  
**2020 Non-SWCD Led**  
**Competitive Grant Guidance**

**Executive Summary:** The Clean Water Indiana (CWI) Grant Program (IC 14-32-8-5) utilizes the Clean Water Indiana Fund to Support Indiana conservation groups (nonprofits or units or subdivisions of government), in cooperation with local Soil and Water Conservation Districts, in efforts to address the priority concerns of the State Soil Conservation Board (SSCB) business plan. The SSCB is accepting competitive proposals for targeted projects up to three years in length. The Clean Water Indiana fund is administered by the Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) under the direction of the SSCB (IC 14-32-8-6).

**Application and Selection Process:** Applications are available from the Clean Water Indiana program manager ([cleanwaterindiana@isda.in.gov](mailto:cleanwaterindiana@isda.in.gov)). In addition to the application form, organizations must present their projects for up to 20 minutes at the SSCB meeting on September 17, 2019, in Indianapolis. At this meeting, the SSCB will decide what proposals will move on for further consideration for CWI funding. Those proposals selected to move on to the next phase will be scored and ranked alongside the SWCD led proposals for CWI funding consideration. The CWI grants committee's funding recommendations for both SWCD-led and Non-SWCD led projects will be presented to the full SSCB at the October SSCB meeting.

**Application Deadline:** The application must be submitted by **September 6, 2019, at 4 pm EDT**. At the time of submission the Clean Water Indiana will confirm the presentation time with the applicant organization.

**Eligible Applicants:** Applications can be submitted by **natural resource related** conservation groups in the State of Indiana. Preference may be given to projects tied to the Indiana Conservation Partnership and its shared goals.

**Proposal Logistics:** 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. The plan can be found at [http://in.gov/isda/files/SSCB\\_Business\\_Plan\\_2016\\_approved.pdf](http://in.gov/isda/files/SSCB_Business_Plan_2016_approved.pdf). Proposals can be for any amount that would accomplish the project described. The SSCB may use discretion when awarding grant funds. Proposals that outline how CWI funds will leverage additional funding from other sources as well as engage other partners are strongly encouraged.

**Project Dates:** All Clean Water Indiana Grant projects shall take no longer than three full years to complete. **Projects will start on January 1, 2020 and must be completed by December 31, 2022.**

**Project Description:** The proposal must identify the current natural resource concern(s) in the selected district(s). The proposal must also identify how addressing this resource concern pertains to both the organization's business plan and the SSCB business plan.

**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 self-promotional materials (i.e. mugs, t-shirts, pens, etc.)

**Match Requirements:** A 50 percent cash and/or in-kind match is required. 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.

**Process of Payments:** All funded entities are required to register as a bidder with the State of Indiana. Instructions for registration can be obtained from the CWI program manager. Once the proposal is approved by the SSCB, the Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) will issue an electronic contract to the grantee. Grantees must 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. Up to 50 percent of grant funding may be disbursed at the beginning of the grant, if justified by the applicant in their proposal and approved by the SSCB. All other payments will be made as reimbursement 45 days in arrears upon receipt of an updated report and claim voucher. *Please note that reimbursement claims may be made no more frequently than quarterly and require updated financial reporting, a claim voucher and a Quickbooks or similar financial report showing that requested funds have been paid by the lead entity.*

**Reporting Requirements:** Financial and project status reports are required for the duration of the grant and a final report will be due at the end of the grant. The report form will be provided by the CWI Program Manager and returned digitally to the Program Manager. 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 1<sup>st</sup> will have reports due July 31<sup>st</sup> and January 31<sup>st</sup> of the following year.*

**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 the organization involved in the project and their board (if applicable). Failure to make progress on the project or report progress as specified in the grant agreement, as observed in a formal review or routine reporting checks, will be noted in a project's file and may jeopardize an organization's ability to receive competitive grant funds in future cycles.

**Questions:** Please contact the Leah Harmon, Clean Water Indiana Program Manager at [lharm2@isda.in.gov](mailto:lharm2@isda.in.gov) or (317) 607-4127.



Please describe why this project is needed. (Maximum 2000 characters)

What are the goals of the project and how will you track progress toward these goals? (Maximum 2000 characters)

Describe each partner and their specific contributions and anticipated match to the project.





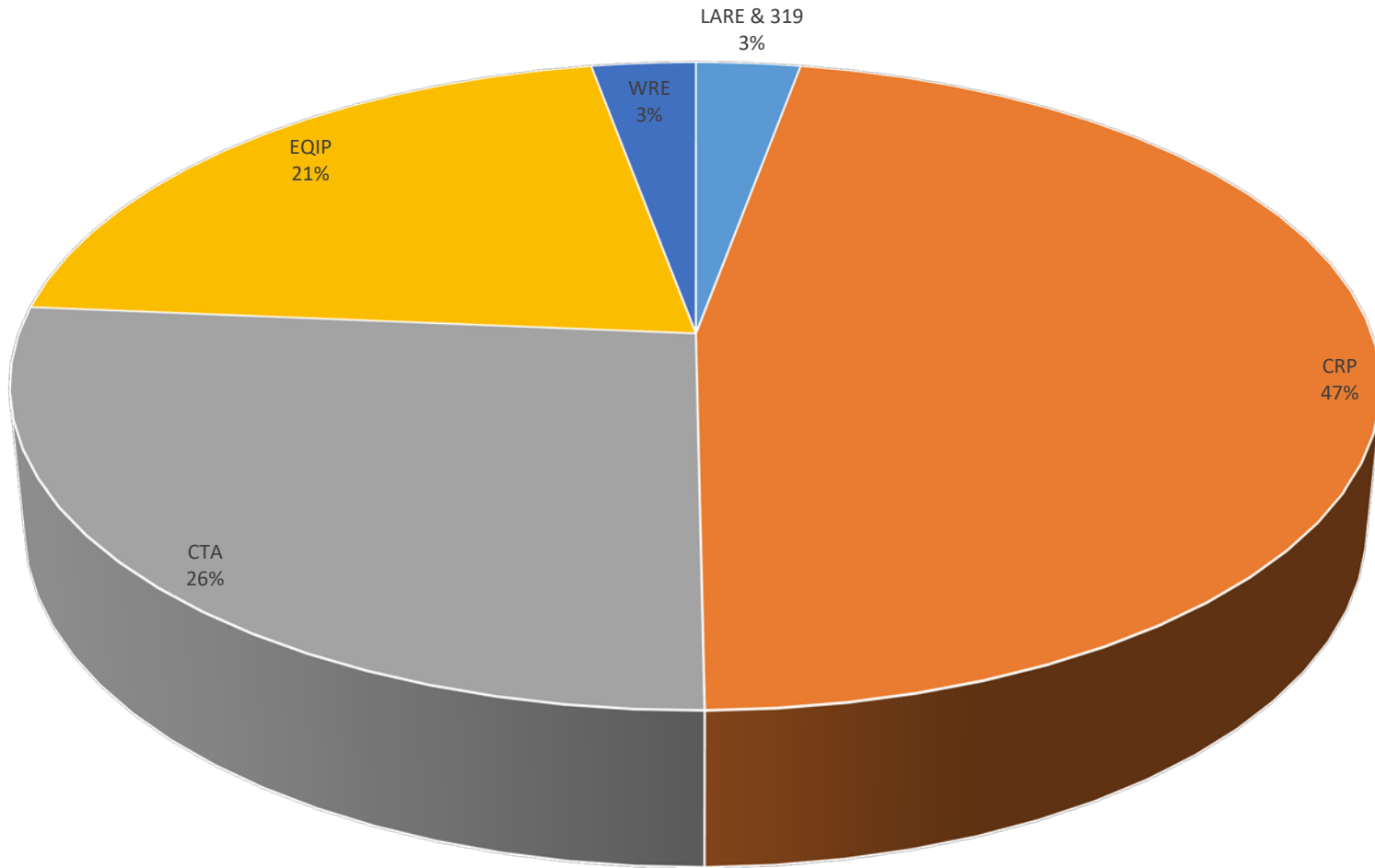
Describe how CWI funds will be utilized. (Maximum 2000 characters)

Please use this space to provide additional details about your project budget.

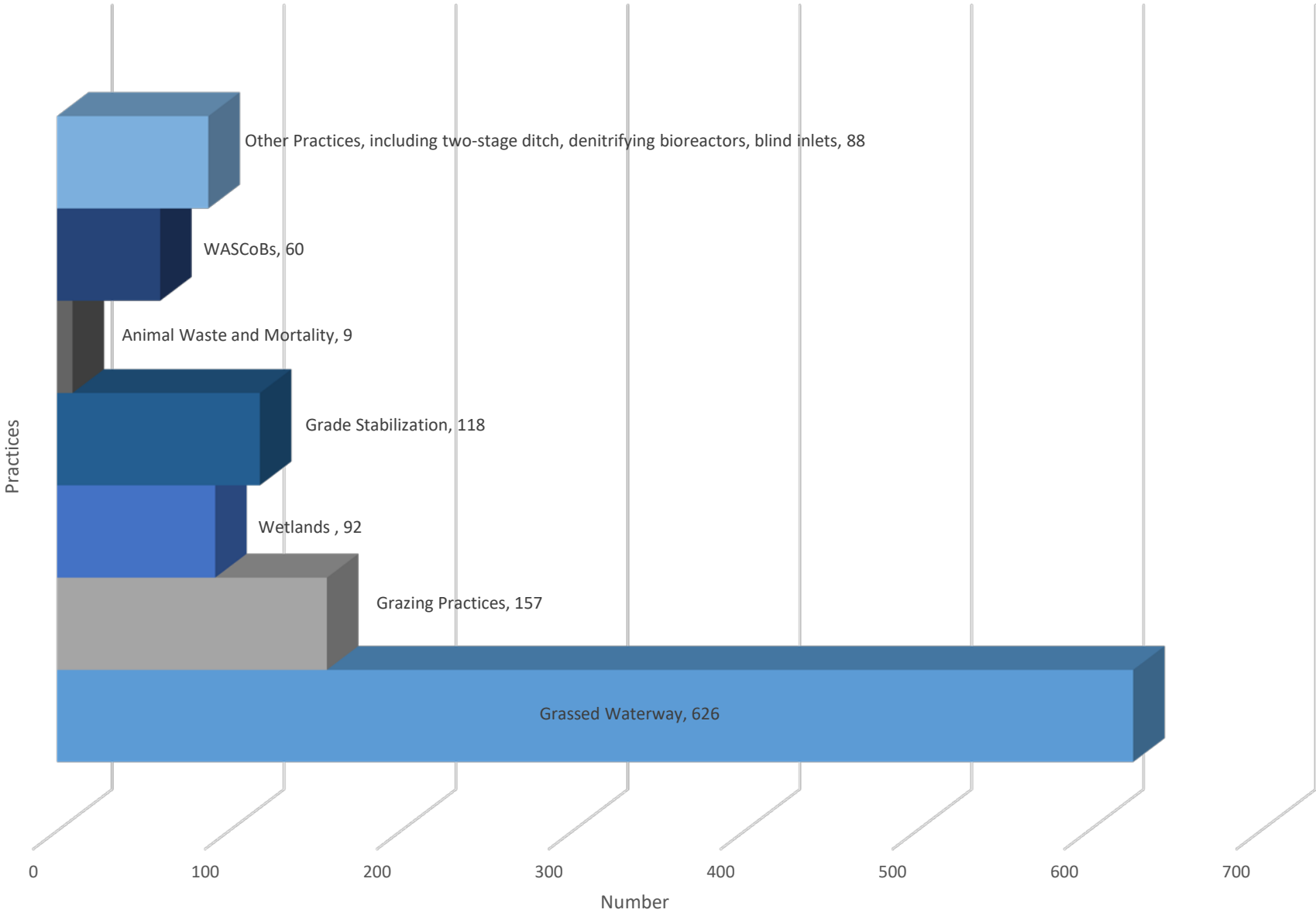
If requesting disbursement of up to 50% of funds at the beginning of the grant, please provide a justification. (Maximum 2000 characters)



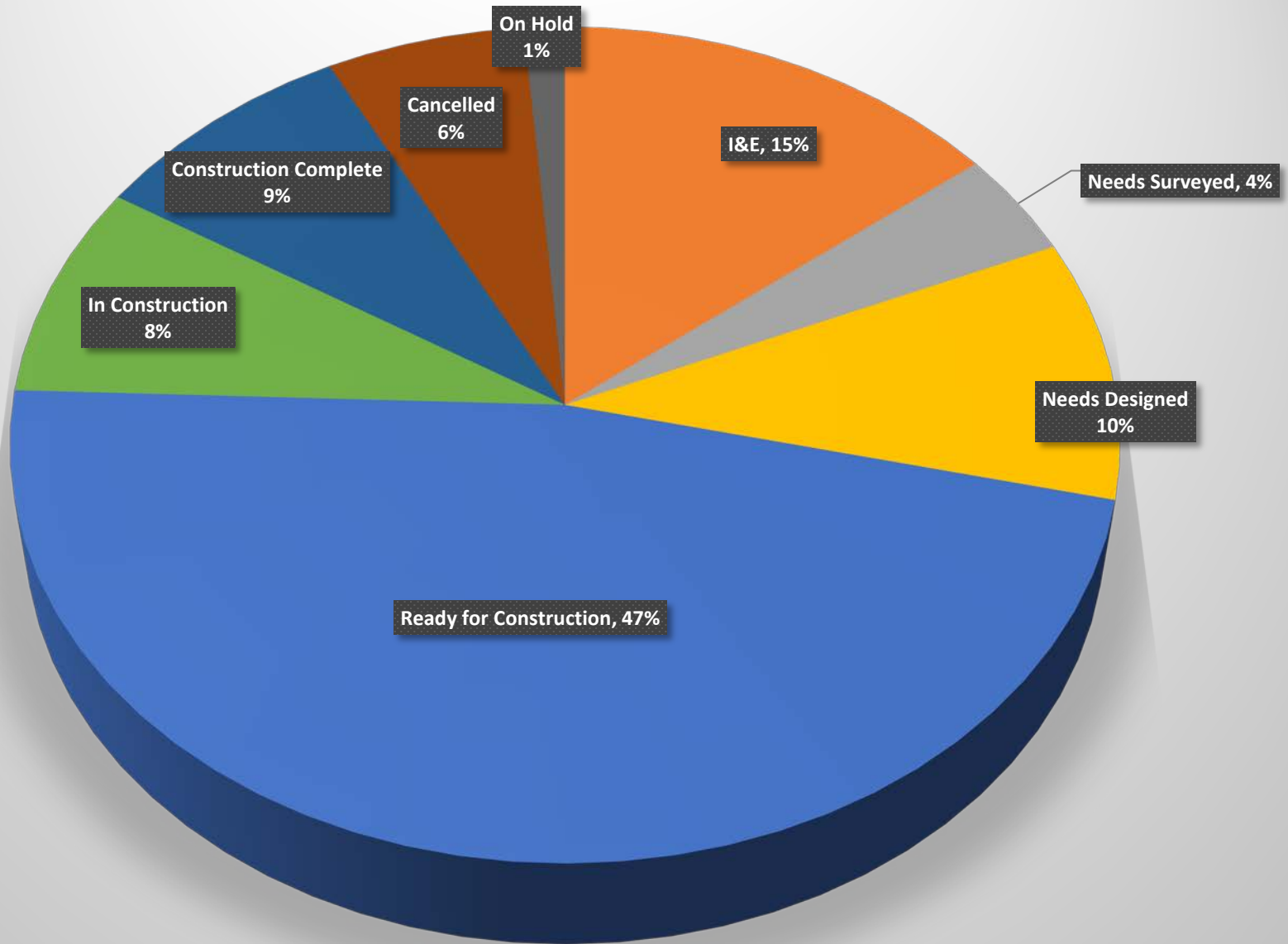
# Program Assistance in the Northwest



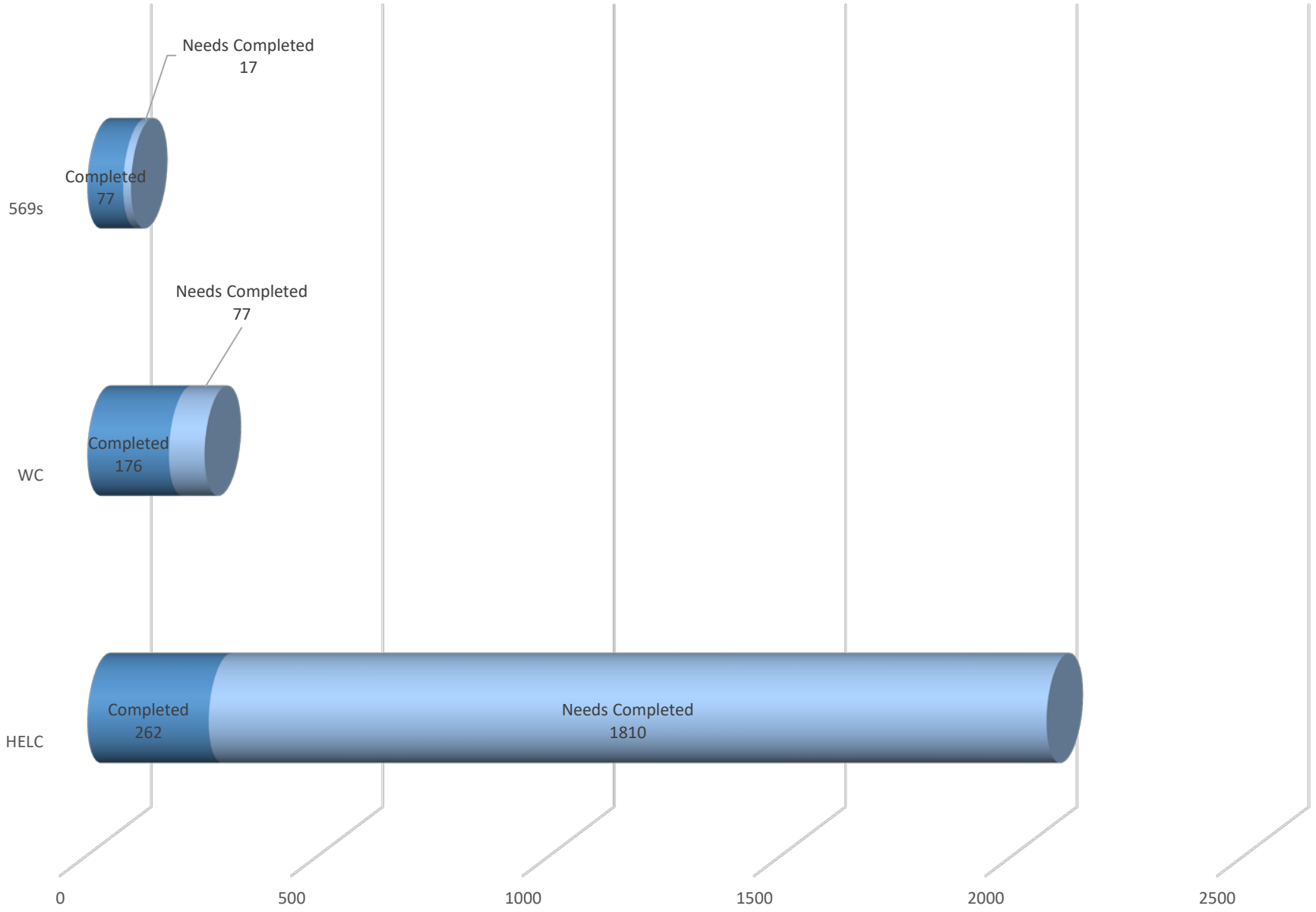
# Conservation Practices in Northwest



# NORTHWEST PROJECT STATUS



# Northwest HEL and Wetland Compliance





# State Soil Conservation Board

March 19, 2019  
Director of Soil Health



## Program Updates

### ➤ INfield Advantage

- The 2018 Winter Grower Meetings concluded February 28.
  - Nine groups held their meeting as part of the Regional Meetings. Regional Meeting speakers were Dr. Shaun Casteel, Dr. Jason Ackerson and Ben Wicker. Betsy Bower, Ceres, and Joe Rorick, CCSI, lead the additional field discussions.
  - 24 groups held a traditional Winter Meeting.
- On February 25, the INFA Operations Committee shared INFA 2.0 with the Group Leaders. This month we are working to explain the revised program and ensure that the Group Leaders can put it in place. (See attached 2019-2021 Strategic Plan)
  - Seeks to continue to provide service to growers by expanding offerings and engage with new partners.
  - Adds Tier 2 Management Trials between GSS and RST.
  - Adds Regional Contractors to assist Group Leaders with Tier 2 and Tier 3 (RST) logistics, in-field technical assistance and meeting facilitation.

### ➤ Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative

- Participated over 40 events, reaching approximately 1,100 attendees.
- Agronomist led the field discussion at two INfield Advantage grower meetings.
- Participated/supported multiple local outreach efforts.
  - Seven completed workshops
  - More than 10 in progress
- Coordinated 11 foundational and advanced 2019 soil health trainings, including specialty crops

### ➤ Red Gold Tomato Conservation Stewardship Award

- The 2019 Conservation Stewardship Award applications were released this week. They are due on April 17.

- Red Gold's Grower meetings will be March 21 and 25 and the speaker is Paul Sweeney, Agri-Drain Director of Conservation Planning. He'll be speaking about Water Management for Profit and Environmental Benefits.



# **INFIELD ADVANTAGE**

## **2019-2021 Strategic Plan**

INfield Advantage (INFA) is a proactive, collaborative opportunity for farmers to collect and understand personalized, on-farm data to optimize their management practices to, ultimately, improve their bottom line and benefit the environment.

INFA will prioritize providing high level services to farmers by expanding trial offerings and collaborating with new partners.

Program enhancements will be offered in the following key areas:

### **Program Tiers**

INFA will offer participants a clear path through the program with Tiered trial offerings:

Tier 1: Guided Stalk Sampling

Tier 2: Management Trials

Tier 3: Replicated Strip Trials

Tier 1 will be offered to new participants and current participants who have been enrolled for three years or less.

The near-term focus of the program will be to develop Tier 2 trial options and to enroll current INFA participants of more than three years into a new trial. Participants will be able to choose from three or four established trial options or propose an individualized trial that fits within certain criteria. Participation in Tier 2 will be capped at four years.

After four years in Tier 2, participants may enroll in Tier 3 or choose to graduate from the program. Graduates will become program ambassadors and will continue to be invited to local meetings.

### **Local Focus**

The state will be divided into six watershed-based regions (Figure A).

Regional Coordinators will be hired to assist group leaders with trial logistics, in-field technical assistance and meeting facilitation. These will be part-time, contract positions.

Regional Coordinators will work with the INFA Operations team, local agribusiness and extension partners to develop Tier 2 and Tier 3 trials based on input from farmers and local conservation districts regarding the types of trials that are most needed and best suited for that region/watershed.

Statewide coordination will be maintained by the Indiana State Department of Agriculture.

### **In-season Feedback**

Purdue UAVs will be utilized, as available, to offer in-season imagery to Tier 1 participants.

Regional Coordinators, group leaders and trial partners will provide regular in-season communication with Tier 2 and Tier 3 participants, as appropriate.

## Local and Regional Meetings

Small, peer-to-peer local group meetings will be maintained.

Regional Coordinators will be available to help facilitate or provide a facilitator for the small group meetings. Meetings may be held during summer, winter or in conjunction with a Regional Forum.

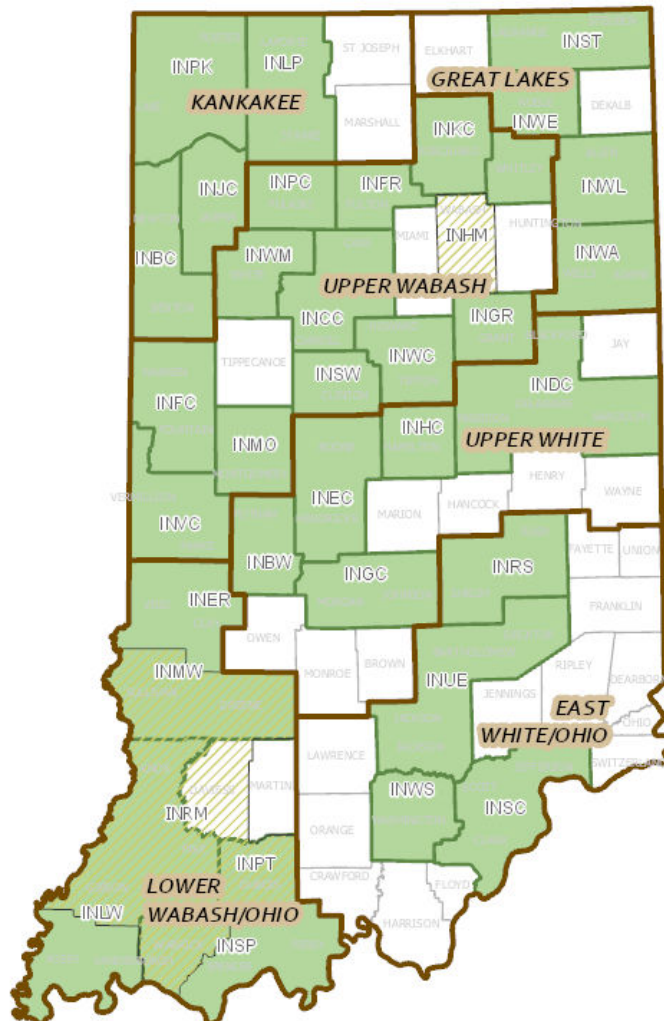
Regional Forums will be held annually in each of the six regions. The Forums will be open to all farmers in the region, both participants and non-participants. The event will be an opportunity to showcase aggregated results and will include a meal, a keynote speaker and concurrent breakout sessions focusing on data or research related to the regional trial offerings.

## Partnerships

New and expanded partnerships will be pursued with private agribusinesses, co-ops, county extensions and multi-state on-farm research programs to increase trial opportunities, available labor and funding cost-shares.

Current partnerships with ISA, ISDA, Purdue and local SWCDs will be maintained. Current partners' collective interest in furthering the goals set by the Indiana Agriculture Nutrient Alliance will help guide programming decisions.

*Figure A. Watershed-Based Regions*





## Request for Proposal

February 28, 2019

This Request for Proposal (RFP) is for Infield Advantage Regional Contractor services with the Indiana Soybean Alliance to support the INfield Advantage program in partnership with the Indiana State Department of Agriculture, Indiana Corn Marketing Council, Purdue University Extension, local Soil and Water Conservation Districts and the Indiana Conservation Partnership.

### Background

An INfield Advantage Regional Coordinator will provide technical and logistical support to local groups leaders, provide agronomy and program trial expertise and serve as a liaison to the State Coordinator of the Program. Contractor will need to understand agriculture technology and conservation needs of a specific region and display good judgment and diplomacy in working with diverse partners, farmers and stakeholders. Contractor will need an understanding of agriculture technology and have an aptitude for learning new technologies and databases. Contractor will need familiarity with local agricultural business and co-ops.

Further information about the Indiana Soybean Alliance (ISA) can be obtained at [www.indianasoybean.com](http://www.indianasoybean.com).

### Services to be Provided:

Contractor will work independently and need to meet deadlines and timelines as they work collaboratively with program partners. The services requested under this proposal are the following:

1. Provide agronomic in field support to local groups.
2. Provide technical and meeting support to group leaders which could include team building and training.
3. Coordinate administrative logistics between local groups and the State Coordinator.
4. Gain familiarity and expertise with trials offered in program.
5. Develop new partnerships and trial offerings to achieve the program's mission.
6. Develop and maintain effective communication and relationships with local conservation and industry partners including the Indiana Conservation Partnership.
7. Assist with coordination and implementation of an annual regional meeting.
8. Provide reports of work performed outlined in a clear and concise manner as requested.

Travel will be required with an assigned region and occasional statewide travel to provide these services. Contractor is expected to provide the technology needed to complete these services (i.e. cell phone and laptop). Contractor will be compensated an hourly rate for services plus be reimbursed mileage at the federal rate and will use their own transportation to fulfill contract obligations. ISA will not withhold any amounts from Contractor's fee for the payment of federal, state or local taxes or similar obligations. Invoices will be expected from the contractor on a monthly basis. Annual contracted hours could range from 500-800 hours with some seasonality based on growing season. Termination provisions of contract position will be outlined in an independent contractor and vendor agreement upon award.

### Submission Process

For additional information please contact Aly Wells at [awells@indianasoybean.com](mailto:awells@indianasoybean.com) or (317) 767-9044. She will accept credentials through March 15, 2019 or until the contract roles are filled at the above email address or via mail at 8425 Keystone Crossing, Suite 200, Indianapolis, IN 46240.



**State Soil Conservation Board**  
**March 19, 2019**  
**District Support Specialist (DSS) Report: 12/26/18 to 3/1/19**



**Preventing Workplace and Sexual Harassment Training**

ISDA District Support Specialist and Resource Specialist staff are in process of both scheduling and presenting this training to SWCD Boards. A map illustrating completion by county be provided in May. Districts are requested to complete this training by 4/30/19.

**New Supervisor Training**

DSSs are providing training to new supervisors around the state as newly appointed and elected individuals join SWCD Boards. Please contact your DSS to schedule.

**Leadership Institute & Leadership Institute Plus**

- Leadership in Change, February 22: cancelled due to lack of enough participants registering
- On March 1, Leadership Institute hosted a special spring workshop at Beck’s Hybrids in Atlanta, IN. Tisha Gierhart, with the Shafer Leadership Academy, led 12 SWCD staff and 1 supervisor through principles outlined by author Steven Covey in his book The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. Attendees also participated in exercises to create personal mission statements and activity calendars to maximize their personal effectiveness.

**SWCD Supervisor and Staff Trainings**

In February, DSSs and Joe Schmees, IASWCD, met to discuss the 2019 SWCD trainings that will be held in four areas of the state. Training topics for supervisors and staff, dates, and locations were brainstormed. Follow up is underway within the team.

**Upcoming Events:**

SWCD Staff Meetings (contact your DSS for more information)

- April 17, Petersburg
- April 24, Rensselaer
- April 24, Fowler
- May 1, Brookville
- May 2, Seymour

<b>DSS Activities Statewide For This Reporting Period</b>	<b>Total</b>
Assistance With SWCD Business Plans/Annual Plans of Work	3
Input, Assistance & Attendance At SWCD Board Meetings	30
Visits With SWCD Supervisors/Staff For Training, Assistance, Guidance, Input, etc.	42



# State Soil Conservation Board

March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019

ISDA – CREP & Water Quality Initiatives, Julie Harrold



## Program Updates

### Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

- CRP is still on hold so there have been no new sign-up yet this year, but some outstanding projects from last year are getting processed for payment.
- There is a CREP Leaders Meeting scheduled for March 20<sup>th</sup>, and a CREP Steering Committee meeting scheduled for March 26<sup>th</sup>.
- TNC continues to be a great partner with us in supporting the Indiana CREP.
- The 2018 CREP Annual Report can be found on the ISDA, Division of Soil Conservation website at <http://www.in.gov/isda/2837.htm>.
- Attached to this report is the report on the current status of acres and dollars in CREP including total completed acres and total enrolled acres since the beginning of the program, and total dollars paid out through the CREP program. To date, the state has paid out more than \$6.3 million. For every state dollar that is spent, the federal match is approximately \$4-\$13 for every state dollar, which is between \$23 million and \$76 million of federal dollars depending on the practice.

### IN State Nutrient Reduction Strategy (SNRS)

- Marylou Renshaw, from IDEM, and I continue to meet on a regular basis to continue progress and next steps on the strategy. We are currently working on a plan for further prioritization and characterization of the sub-watersheds within the major basins.
- Continuation from the October report: Work/planning is continuing on the development of an Indiana Science Assessment.
- The new version of the Strategy 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](mailto:ISDANutrientReduction@isda.in.gov).

### Gulf Hypoxia Task Force (HTF)

- On February 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> I attended the Great Lakes to Gulf Watershed Leadership Summit in Long Beach, MS. I did a presentation on "Indiana's Efforts to Quantify Nutrient Load Reductions from Conservation Practices" and got some good feedback. 49 people attended from 11 of the 12 states.
- The HTF face-to-face meeting that was scheduled for the end of January 2019 was cancelled due to the federal government shutdown, but has been rescheduled to May 15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> in Baton Rouge, LA. I will be doing a presentation on Indiana's involvement as a pilot state for the Walton Family Foundation Grant about creating a Non-Point Measurement Framework for the Basin states, and what we learned and gained from that involvement.

### Western Lake Erie Basin

- Purdue St. Marys project; the St. Marys Advisory Committee is meeting once a month to discuss educational needs and opportunities, and other pressing matters.
- DNR Conservation Conversation will be taking place Saturday, April 6<sup>th</sup> in Fort Wayne at PFW. ISDA will be having a booth, and doing a presentation at this meeting on happenings in the WLEB.
- The EPA-GLRI-DAP grant awarded to ISDA and IANA to continue and expand upon the current phosphorus soil sampling and manure sampling program in the WLEB, and bring in CCAs to help

with soil testing, technical assistance and plan development is moving along. The first kick-off meeting took place at the Fort Wayne Farm Show, and was used to introduce the project to local CCAs. It was well received and several CCAs expressed an interest in participating.

- The DAP Advisory Committee continues to meet periodically to work on the progress of the plan. To view the Indiana WLEB Domestic Action Plan (DAP) and other information, visit the following webpage, <http://www.in.gov/isda/3432.htm>.
- To view the National Lake Erie DAP, visit <https://www.epa.gov/glwqa/us-action-plan-lake-erie>

SSCB Meeting - March 19th, 2019 - 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	Total	Goal	Percentage of Goal
	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres		
Total Reported Completed on SharePoint as of 3/15/2019	214.58	14.00	4,723.21	34.43	614.46	6,265.79	1009.66	2,320.02	15,196.15	26,250.00	57.89%
Total CREP Enrollment	229.58	20.36	5,041.46	34.43	640.92	7,160.83	1440.55	3,256.57	17,824.70	26,250.00	67.90%
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	\$ 21,458.00	\$ 1,400.00	\$ 472,321.00	\$ 14,018.00	\$ 259,213.00	\$ 2,613,441.00	\$ 909,137.00	\$ 1,601,074.50	\$ 5,892,062.50	\$ 447,743.75	\$ 6,339,806.25

Federal Match of \$4-\$13 is between \$ 23,568,250.00  
 \$ 76,596,812.50

SSCB Meeting - March 19th, 2019 - 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	11.08	0.00	3.10	114.73	0.00	0.00	128.91
Lower Wabash	0.00	0.00	9.88	0.00	0.00	530.24	0.00	0.00	540.12
Lower East Fork White	38.50	7.00	45.37	13.10	41.10	664.44	0.00	0.00	809.51
Lower White	10.70	0.00	5.00	0.00	72.28	1528.21	31.00	0.00	1647.19
Middle Wabash-Busseron	0.00	0.00	0.80	0.00	13.50	1253.46	385.41	29.81	1682.98
Middle Wabash-Deer	6.60	0.00	51.39	0.00	0.00	67.89	24.60	14.62	165.10
Middle Wabash-Vermillion	4.50	0.00	41.98	6.97	19.60	503.42	291.06	143.95	1011.48
Tippecanoe River	93.84	0.00	335.73	0.00	3.41	21.40	73.30	1053.61	1581.29
Upper East Fork White	0.00	0.00	140.57	0.00	31.40	106.50	0.00	0.00	278.47
Upper Wabash	21.25	7.00	450.37	2.56	12.23	220.61	82.59	66.85	863.46
Upper White	35.09	0.00	86.54	0.00	277.14	196.99	0.00	71.18	666.94
<b>Reported Completed as of 3/15/2019</b>	<b>210.48</b>	<b>14.00</b>	<b>1178.71</b>	<b>22.63</b>	<b>473.76</b>	<b>5,207.89</b>	<b>887.96</b>	<b>1380.02</b>	<b>9,375.45</b>
<b>Enrolled as of 3/15/2019</b>	<b>225.48</b>	<b>20.36</b>	<b>1496.96</b>	<b>22.63</b>	<b>500.22</b>	<b>6,102.93</b>	<b>1318.85</b>	<b>2316.57</b>	<b>12,004.00</b>

**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
<b>Total Acres Prior to Expansion of CREP</b>	<b>4.10</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>3,544.50</b>	<b>11.80</b>	<b>140.70</b>	<b>1,057.90</b>	<b>121.70</b>	<b>940.00</b>	<b>5,820.70</b>

	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
<b>Total Extension Acres</b>		<b>1.00</b>	<b>53.70</b>	<b>428.50</b>	<b>121.70</b>	<b>610.90</b>



SSCB Meeting - March 19th, 2019 - 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	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,108.00	\$ -	\$ 1,240.00	\$ 45,892.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 48,240.00	\$ 4,824.00	\$ 53,064.00
Lower Wabash	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 988.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 212,096.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 213,084.00	\$ 21,308.40	\$ 234,392.40
Lower East Fork White	\$ 3,850.00	\$ 700.00	\$ 4,537.00	\$ 5,240.00	\$ 16,440.00	\$ 265,776.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 296,543.00	\$ 29,654.30	\$ 326,197.30
Lower White	\$ 1,070.00	\$ -	\$ 500.00	\$ -	\$ 28,912.00	\$ 611,284.00	\$ 29,450.00	\$ -	\$ 671,216.00	\$ 67,121.60	\$ 738,337.60
Middle Wabash-Busseron	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 80.00	\$ -	\$ 5,400.00	\$ 501,384.00	\$ 366,139.50	\$ 28,319.50	\$ 901,323.00	\$ 90,132.30	\$ 991,455.30
Middle Wabash-Deer	\$ 660.00	\$ -	\$ 5,139.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 27,156.00	\$ 9,840.00	\$ 5,848.00	\$ 48,643.00	\$ 4,864.30	\$ 53,507.30
Middle Wabash-Vermillion	\$ 450.00	\$ -	\$ 4,198.00	\$ 2,788.00	\$ 7,840.00	\$ 201,368.00	\$ 276,507.00	\$ 136,752.50	\$ 629,903.50	\$ 62,990.35	\$ 692,893.85
Tippecanoe River	\$ 9,384.00	\$ -	\$ 33,573.00	\$ -	\$ 1,364.00	\$ 8,560.00	\$ 69,635.00	\$ 929,803.50	\$ 1,052,319.50	\$ 105,231.95	\$ 1,157,551.45
Upper East Fork White	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 14,057.00	\$ -	\$ 12,560.00	\$ 42,600.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 69,217.00	\$ 6,921.70	\$ 76,138.70
Upper Wabash	\$ 2,125.00	\$ 700.00	\$ 45,037.00	\$ 1,024.00	\$ 4,892.00	\$ 88,244.00	\$ 78,460.50	\$ 55,230.00	\$ 275,712.50	\$ 27,571.25	\$ 303,283.75
Upper White	\$ 3,509.00	\$ -	\$ 8,654.00	\$ -	\$ 110,856.00	\$ 78,796.00	\$ -	\$ 67,621.00	\$ 269,436.00	\$ 26,943.60	\$ 296,379.60
Upper White Extensions	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,800.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,800.00	\$ 180.00	\$ 1,980.00
<b>Reported Paid as of 3/15/2019</b>	<b>\$ 21,048.00</b>	<b>\$ 1,400.00</b>	<b>\$ 117,871.00</b>	<b>\$ 9,052.00</b>	<b>\$ 191,304.00</b>	<b>\$ 2,083,156.00</b>	<b>\$ 830,032.00</b>	<b>\$ 1,223,574.50</b>	<b>\$ 4,477,437.50</b>	<b>\$ 447,743.75</b>	<b>\$ 4,925,181.25</b>

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
<b>Total Acres Prior to Expansion of CREP</b>	<b>\$ 410.00</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 354,450.00</b>	<b>\$ 4,966.00</b>	<b>\$ 67,909.00</b>	<b>\$ 530,285.00</b>	<b>\$ 79,105.00</b>	<b>\$ 377,500.00</b>	<b>\$ 1,414,625.00</b>



**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:** Roger Wenning, President, IASWCD  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 19, 2019

**Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative (CCSI)**

- Several soil health trainings are already scheduled for this upcoming year.

**Pathway to Water Quality**

- Sara Peel will continue to coordinate PWQ for 2019 thanks to funding from the ICP partners. This includes funding for five years to cover a Pathway Coordinator, with a 5-year Contribution Agreement with NRCS, a 4-year 319 Grant with IDEM, and funding match from IASWCD, Purdue Extension, IDNR, and the State Soil Board/Clean Water Indiana.

**Legislative Issues**

- Jamie Scott, Roger Wenning, Marc Roberts, Gene Schmidt, and Jerry Raynor visited with all 11 congressional offices in Washington, DC, last week to discuss the Farm Bill programs, Conservation Technical Assistance and support the 319 grant program.
- State Budget session – IASWCD and Districts are still pushing for a large CWI increase. The budget bill is now with the Senate Appropriations Committee. Joe Schmees and Jamie Scott testified in front of this committee earlier this month.

**Other**

- The IASWCD Board will be doing some strategic planning spread out over the next several board meetings. We may call upon partners for input at some point during this process.
- ISDA and IASWCD working together to plan region meetings in late summer.
- 2020 SWCD Conference Planning committee meeting is Monday, April 8, from 9:30 am to 3:30 pm at the IN Farm Bureau building. A call for abstracts is currently out, and due March 30.

**IASWCD**

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Web: [www.iaswcd.org](http://www.iaswcd.org)

**PRESIDENT:**

Roger Wenning  
Decatur County

**VICE PRESIDENT:**

Bobby Hettmansperger  
Wabash County

**TREASURER:**

Marc Roberts  
Montgomery County

**SECRETARY:**

Jeff Baker  
Warrick County

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:**

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

# Indiana State Conservationist's Report

## March 2019

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### CHIEF'S PRIORITIES

NRCS Chief Matt Lohr recently shared three priorities with employees that convey his vision for the agency – to make the agency as effective as possible for all those people we support in getting conservation on the ground and to hold them and their needs at the forefront of our work, day in and day out. To accomplish this, NRCS staff will work collaboratively to target these three priorities.

1. Implement and deliver the 2018 Farm Bill to our nation's farmers, ranchers, and private foresters.
  - Develop rules and regulations in a timely manner to efficiently and effectively deliver NRCS programs to our customers and carry out the will of Congress.
  - Solicit and respond to input from key stakeholders and tribal nations.
2. Streamline our processes and program delivery to best serve our customers.
  - Integrate conservation planning and program delivery into a seamless business process to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of field office operations.
  - Initiate IT deployment of a streamlined business practice to more efficiently develop conservation plans.
  - Continue to adjust our agency's annual program delivery cycle to mitigate the potential for carryover of national conservation investments.
  - Identify proper staffing levels, staffing locations, and staffing expectations through appropriate pre-determined metrics.
3. Better understand customer needs and improve overall customer service.
  - Clarify the expectations we have for serving our customers and build those into performance evaluations.
  - Consistently consider the individual needs of those we serve. Every action taken should be rooted in the goal of improved understanding and delivery.
  - Expand our strategic partnerships with both outside stakeholders and sister agencies within FPAC to maximize opportunities for our nation's farmers, ranchers, and private foresters.
  - Mindfully seek out opportunities to better serve young, beginning, small, minority, veteran, and other underserved producers.

### FARM BILL

#### What's New In 2018 Farm Bill

##### *Conservation Overview*

- Strengthens and expands support to producers who address significant natural resource concerns through adoption of conservation practices and activities.
- Ensures that voluntary conservation programs balance farm productivity with conservation benefits so the most fertile and productive lands remain in production while land retired for conservation purposes favors more environmentally sensitive acres.
- Supports conservation programs that ensure cost-effective financial assistance for improved soil health, water and air quality, and other natural resource benefits.
- Encourages entry into farming through increased access to land and capital for young, beginning, veteran, and underrepresented farmers.

##### *Agricultural Conservation Easement Program*

- Authorizes assistance to partners who pursue 'Buy-Protect-Sell' transactions.



- Requires a conservation plan for highly erodible land that will be protected by an agricultural land easement.
- Increases flexibility for partners to meet cost-share matching requirements.
- Identifies water quality as a program purpose for enrollment of wetland reserve easements.
- Expands wetland types eligible for restoration and management under wetland reserve easements.

#### *Conservation Stewardship Program*

- Increases payment rates for adoption of cover crop rotations and advanced grazing management activities.
- Authorizes contract extensions to facilitate renewal under new program authority.
- Transforms funding mechanism for program contracts, authorizing specified annual funding levels.
- Provides specific support for organic and transitioning to organic production activities.
- Includes special grassland conservation initiative for certain producers who have maintained cropland base acres.

#### *Environmental Quality Incentives Program*

- Adds potential resource concerns related to beneficial cost-effective operation changes.
- Raises cap for organic producers to \$140,000 over six years.
- New enrollment option through incentive contracts to address priority resource concerns.
- Requires advance payment option be offered to historically underserved producers.
- Authorizes direct program assistance to irrigation districts, including acequias and other entities, for purposes of improving water use efficiencies.

#### *Healthy Forests Reserve Program*

- Expands enrollment options for Indian tribes.

#### *Regional Conservation Partnership Program*

- Simplifies funding authorities for program implementation.
- Authorizes Regional Conservation Partnership Program contracts rather than requiring enrollment through other program authorities.
- Expands flexibility for alternative funding arrangements with partners.
- Expands availability of watershed program authorities to projects outside critical conservation areas.

### **Big Pine Watershed Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)**

Dollars are still available for farmers through the Big Pine Watershed RCPP. The watershed which includes portions of Benton, White, Warren, and Tippecanoe counties and the partnership is working with farmers in the area to increase the number of nutrient and sediment reducing practices on cropland. Applications are accepted year-round, but to be considered for this round of funding, applications must be received by **June 21, 2019**. RCPP is a partner-led program, with NRCS directing technical and financial assistance to priorities identified by partners.

### **Agricultural Conservation Easement Program Funding Application Deadline Announced (ACEP)**

Funding is available to help landowners protect and restore key farmlands, grasslands and wetlands across Indiana. The funding is provided through the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), created to protect critical water resources and wildlife habitat, and encourage private owners to maintain land for farming. Eligible entities must submit applications for the current funding pool on or before April 5, 2019.



Agricultural Land Easements (ALE) protect the long-term viability of the nation's food supply by preventing conversion of productive working lands to non-agricultural uses while supporting environmental quality, wildlife habitat, historic preservation and protection of open spaces. State and local governments, non-governmental organizations and Native American Tribes that have farmland or grassland protection programs are eligible to partner with NRCS to protect farmland through easements.

Wetland reserve easements (WRE) help landowners reduce damage from flooding, recharge groundwater, restore, enhance and protect habitat for wildlife, and provide outdoor recreational and educational opportunities. Eligible landowners can choose to enroll in a permanent or 30-year easement.

**Environmental Quality Incentive Program Application Deadline Announced for Western Lake Erie Basin (WLEB)**  
EQIP dollars will be made available to farmers who want to voluntarily invest in conservation practices to improve water quality in the WLEB. These additional dollars expand on the substantial conservation efforts already underway in the basin area. NRCS plans to work with farmers to install conservation practices such as no-till, cover crops, buffers, agricultural drainage water management systems, and nutrient and pesticide management. While applications are accepted on a continuous basis, **June 21** will be the cutoff date this year to be considered for funding for this program.

The eligible Indiana portion of the WLEB includes parts of Adams, Allen, DeKalb, Noble, Steuben and Wells counties. Landowners with acreage in the following watersheds may be eligible for funding: St. Joseph-Maumee, St. Mary's, Upper Maumee and Auglaize.

#### **STATE HOUSE BILL 1165 AND MORE**

State House Bill 1165 proposed by Pat Bauer would add a state farmland protection program with oversight by ISDA. The program would set up an avenue for state funding to be used alone or in conjunction with federal funding for farmland easements. If there are questions related to NRCS easement programs in relation to this Bill, please direct them to Jerry Roach or Beth Clarizia. The Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts is tracking other bills, including HB 1491 which revises the statement of the purposes of the Clean Water Indiana program. It provides that the purpose of the program is to provide financial assistance to implement conservation practices in accordance with the natural resource priorities of the state soil conservation board. Watch for additional information about state bills of interest to the conservation partnership in IASWCD's Conservation Insight Newsletter.

#### **VEHICLE MANAGEMENT TOOL (VMT)**

The VMT is a web-based tool is now in operation in Indiana (we are serving as a pilot state). This tool is used to reserve vehicles and helps track use, mileage and maintenance through the vehicle log process. All partnership staff and service center employees and volunteers are expected to use it for scheduling vehicle use. The tool is accessed using an e-auth account. Staff who missed the instructional webinar will be sent a link to view the recorded version as soon as it is available. Also, a VMT User Guide will also soon be available. The VMT is simply a reservation and tracking tool, it does not replace any established vehicle use policy.

#### **INDIANA CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP WORKING AGREEMENT**

The Indiana Conservation Partnership working agreement expired on December 31<sup>st</sup>. The new MOU has been distributed to all SWCDs for review and signature with a request to have them returned by March 15, 2019. A copy will be returned to each SWCD with a completed signature page from all ICP Leaders. In the meantime, the Indiana Conservation Partnership will continue working together at the field office level with no changes to how we operate.



## FARMERS.GOV

USDA's vision for farmers.gov is to provide farmers and foresters with online self-service applications, educational materials, engagement opportunities and business tools. USDA's Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service and Risk Management Agency are collaborating with partners in the government and private sector to build farmers.gov. Work to build the website began in fall 2017, and the site launched in 2018.

New additions to the site include a [farmers.gov portal](#) for secure business transactions and a [disaster assistance discovery tool](#). The discovery tool walks producers through five questions to help them identify personalized results of what USDA disaster assistance programs meet their needs. The farmers.gov portal is the first edition of a secure dashboard for producers to manage program applications and other USDA documents. These resources are in addition to other currently available through Farmers.gov, including:

- A mobile-friendly [Service center locator](#), connecting users with USDA assistance
- Routinely updated [farmers.gov blog](#) where producers can read stories about other farmers across the nation containing insight into how other producers address challenges in running successful agricultural operations,
- A [soil health webpage](#), where producers can read about the soil health management practices
- An [online playbook](#), where people can track the latest developments of the site.







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**Indiana NRCS Commits Dollars to Assist Farmers in Western Lake Erie Basin**  
*Targeted funding builds on substantial efforts on working lands*

INDIANAPOLIS, March 14, 2019—Today, Jerry Raynor, State Conservationist for Indiana's USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) dollars will be made available to farmers who want to voluntarily invest in conservation practices to improve water quality in the Western Lake Erie basin. While applications are accepted on a continuous basis, June 21 will be the cutoff date this year to be considered for funding for this program.

Lake Erie provides drinking water for 11 million people and has been designated a priority conservation area for NRCS because of increased algal blooms due to higher levels of phosphorus in the surface water. These algal blooms diminish water quality and are harmful to fish and other aquatic wildlife. Since 2008, Indiana NRCS has invested approximately \$11.6 million on more than 114,000 acres in the Western Lake Erie basin to help farmers reduce the amount of phosphorus, sediment and nutrients entering the watershed.

"Conservation applied on any acre delivers an environmental benefit, but when conservation efforts target at-risk watersheds and lands, the results are even greater," said Raynor. "In Indiana, we promote multiple conservation practices that work together as a system on the most vulnerable acres to provide the greatest benefit to water quality. This systems approach helps farmers improve their soil health and keep their nutrients and sediments on their fields instead of getting downstream."

The portion of the Western Lake Erie Basin in Indiana includes parts of Adams, Allen, DeKalb, Noble, Steuben and Wells counties. Landowners with acreage in the following watersheds may be eligible for funding: St. Joseph-Maumee, St. Mary's, Upper Maumee and Auglaize.

These additional dollars expand on the substantial conservation efforts already underway in the basin area. NRCS plans to work with farmers to install conservation practices such as no-till, buffers, cover crops, agricultural drainage water management systems, and nutrient and pesticide management.

"The algal blooms and water quality issues in the lake are serious and complicated," Raynor said. "We are committed to helping farmers do their part to protect and improve water quality in Lake Erie, and this targeted funding will allow for solutions to be expanded and delivered more quickly."

All applications for funding consideration must be received by June 21, 2019. To learn more about the Western Lake Erie Basin in Indiana, visit [https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/in/programs/landscape/nrcs144p2\\_031032/](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/in/programs/landscape/nrcs144p2_031032/).

For more information about NRCS and other technical and financial assistance available through conservation programs, visit [www.nrcs.usda.gov/GetStarted](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/GetStarted) or contact your District Conservationist <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/in/contact/local/>.

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Contacts:

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## General Report February 2019

### Highlights

- Participated in 22 events, 386 attendees; 14 Soil Health events in progress
- 11 CCSI-SARE Soil Health Trainings in progress, including a pair of Specialty Crops trainings focused on no-till/cover crop pumpkin production (likely the easiest entry into a soil health system)
- For the 28 days ending 3/5, Twitter outreach 52,700 impressions. 30-35K is more typical for a full month.
- Podcast with Rick Clark over 7000 Twitter impressions alone as of 3/5
- Phil Needham/Barry Fisher podcasts on equipment set-up in process of approval by NRCS for Barry's participation.

### G1. Farmer Engagement and Involvement

#### 1. Innovative and Visionary Farmers

*Quarterly Target: 3-6 farm visits and/or listening session to help develop outreach topics and tactics. Use input to help LLPs develop workshops and field days. Quarterly goal surpassed*

#### 2. Conservative and Pragmatic Farmers

*Quarterly Target: INFA winter meetings as listening sessions; farmer connections for shop visits. Use input to help LLPs develop workshops and field days.*

- INfield Advantage Winter Meetings – Technical / Discussion Support, Use as listening session. – 17 Group meetings

#### 3. Farmer Influencers

*Quarterly Targets: 2-4 LLPs develop their own list of influencers/influencer demographics, include influencer(s) as members. Continued work with W4tL, IANA and other influence groups.*

- 2/1 – Equipment Set-up for Soil Health, Phil Needham keynote; Directed outreach to area equipment dealerships.
- 2/18 – Land-o-Lakes – Truterra Engine Demo (A)
- 2/26 – Indiana University School of Public and Environmental Affairs – Guest Lecturer (A)

### G2. Local Level Partnership Support

#### 1. Facilitate and Support Local Level Partnership's efforts to deliver soil health messaging

*Quarterly Target: Materially participate in / support average of 15 LLP Outreach Efforts*

- Workshop Support (February Workshops)
  - i. 2/1 – Equipment Set-up for Soil Health, feat. Phil Needham, Frankfort. 32 attendees (NPM)
  - ii. 2/6 – Farming for the Future PARP workshop, feat. Melissa Widhalm (Purdue Climate), Dan Childs, Shaun Casteel, Bob Yoder. 53 attendees (NPM)
  - iii. 2/7 - TWF/Kosciusko Farmer Breakfast, feat. Rick Clark. 41 attendees (NPM)

- Workshops in Progress
  - i. 3/13 – Wabash SWCD Annual Meeting – secure speaker (NPM)
  - ii. 3/13 – Managing for Soil Health, Frankfort – promotional support, post-event survey support (NPM)
  - iii. 3/21 – Conservation Focus Workshop, Wayne Co – secured speaker (SPM)
  - iv. 4/5 – Illinois-Indiana Bison Assn Spring Conference – Promotional and logistical support (NPM)
  - v. 4/9 – Knox Co Pollinators & Soil Health in Melon Production – small group discussion, led by Knox SWCD – secure guest speaker (D)
  - vi. 4/9 – Roundtable, led by local farmer – secure guest speaker (D)
  - vii. 4/10 – Byron Seed Spring Meeting – secure speaker (D)
  - viii. 4/11-12 – Mid Southern Ag Summit – planning support (SPM)
  - ix. 5/18 Steve Groff Dearborn Co – materials support (SPM)
  - x. 8/6-7 – Tri-State Soil Health Training (University of Illinois Led), Vincennes – logistical support (A, SPM, D)
  - xi. 8/8 – Farmer-led / Small Group Soil Health Workshop, Vincennes – secure speakers, logistical support (A, SPM, D)
  - xii. 8/12 – Regional Ag Forum – Farmer-led, Big Creek Watershed – planning, secure speakers, logistical and promotional support (SPM)
  - xiii. August – cover crop field day, Scottsburg – planning support (SPM)

## 2. Consistent Soil Health Messaging

### *Foundational Soil Health Trainings*

- Complete:
  - i. 2/7 – Basics of Soil Health, West Lafayette, 9 attendees
- In Progress:
  - i. 4/3 – Core Cover Crops, Hamilton Co Fairgrounds
  - ii. 4/4 – Core Soil Health Systems, Hamilton Co Fairgrounds

## 3. Professional Development Opportunities

### *Advanced Soil Health Trainings*

- Trainings in Progress
  - i. 4/11 – Advanced Soil Health Systems – No-till/Cover Crop Pumpkin Production Focus, with Steve Groff
  - ii. 5/9 – Presentation and Media Skills with Fred Whitford and Ag Media
  - iii. 5/17 – Advanced Soil Health Systems – No-till/Cover Crop Pumpkin Production Focus, with Steve Groff
  - iv. June 3-5 – 3-Day Soil Health Training
  - v. June – Hoosier Chapter SWCS training, focus on planting green.
  - vi. July – Advanced Soil Health Systems, 4 events focused on equipment set-up and modifications.

## 4. Messaging to/from Local Level Partnership

*Monthly Target: 4-6 LLP visits (PMs); use INFA grower meetings, SWCD Annual Meetings, IASWCD Annual Conference, NRCS Area Meetings to connect and promote CCSI*

- District Technical Support / Visits
  - i. 2/13 SE NRCS Area Meeting (SPM)
  - ii. 2/27 SW NRCS Area Meeting (D, SPM)
  - iii. Continued participation in Purdue Agronomy Extension meetings (A)

- iv. See INFA meetings, above
- Survey deployed to identify best type and frequency of visits, information sharing.

### G3. General CCSI Outreach / Communication

#### 1. Marketing Campaign / Strategies

- 2/5 Survey deployed to ICP staff re communications types, understanding of CCSI services and tools, forms of support needed.
- 2/7 ICP Communications Planning w/ NRCS, IASWCD, ISDA, W4tL (D, Comm Contractor)

#### 2. Soil Health Messaging

- Press Release: 2/21 Perdue Farms Grant
- Soil Health Podcast with Hoosier Ag Today
  - i. Rick Clark – ASA Conservation Legacy Award winner – over 7000 Twitter impressions alone as of 3/5
  - ii. Equipment set-up and modifications with Phil Needham and Barry Fisher awaiting NRCS approval
- Soil Health Events Newsletters
  - i. 2/6 – Soil Health Events - 1038 delivered; 25.3% open rate (20.9% industry ave); 5.8% click rate (1.9% industry average)
  - ii. 2/21 – Soil Health Events - 1048 delivered; 18.1% open rate (20.9% industry ave); 4.5% click rate (1.9% industry average)
- Social Media
  - i. Twitter: 69 tweets; 38.4K impressions; 9 new followers
  - ii. Facebook: 6,308 reach; 12,271 impressions
  - iii. Instagram: 6 posts, 56 followers
- Draft Articles for Public Media
  - i. Conquest of the Land – elevated to National NRCS for review and potential “push”
  - ii. Olive Production and Cover Crops / Pollinator Protection (Hoosier Chapter SWCS)

### G4. Research

#### 1. Current Obligations

- Continued data management coordination (A)

### G5. Funding

### General Organization

- Staff Professional Development:
  - Draft Job Description for Purdue Conservation Agronomist completed
  - National Farm Machinery Show (D, SPM)