



## State Soil Conservation Board Business Plan 2020-2024

**The mission of the State Soil Conservation Board (SSCB)** is to provide information, advice, consultation and resources to Soil and Water Conservation District supervisors to assist them in carrying out their powers and programs.

*Key Actions/Progress:* The SSCB will provide policy and funding direction to the Indiana State Department of Agriculture-Division of Soil Conservation (ISDA-DSC) on the administration of the Clean Water Indiana Program (CWI), to help address statewide natural resource concerns on rural, suburban, and urban lands as identified in local Soil and Water Conservation District business plans.

**The SSCB has identified the following as statewide priority natural resource concerns** to be addressed over the next five years:

- **Water Quality** including sediment, nutrients, pesticides, *E-coli* and other non-point sources of water pollution found in our streams, rivers and lakes.
- **Soil Health/Degradation** which includes but isn't limited to, soil biology impacts that degrade soil quality, the loss of top soil due to water and wind erosion, the depletion of organic matter, as well as soil compaction.
- **Invasive Species**, both flora and fauna, specifically in regards to developing an understanding with state organizations in regards to invasive species control
- **Erosion**
- **Streambank Erosion**

**Other statewide priority:**

- **District Capacity/Accountability** which empowers Soil and Water Conservation Districts to effectively address the prior mentioned resource concerns.

**Strategic Plan Vision:**

The SSCB identified the priority resource concerns above. We will prioritize our evaluations of the CWI grant program based on these resource concerns. In the next five years we will use these resource concerns to guide all decisions made by the SSCB. The SSCB has determined the following four areas in which we will focus our attention on to help advance conservation in Indiana. We have also identified priorities that will help guide our CWI grant program during the life strategic plan.

## **Proposed High Level Goals and Action Items**

### **▪ Engage supervisors to be effective leaders in their communities and at the state level.**

#### **Actions:**

- Support Leadership Institute for supervisors and employees by increase participation and access. Consider providing both in person training as well as on-line training opportunities.
- By 2023, 60% SWCD supervisors of the district will have attended training. (3/5?)
- Support new supervisor orientation
  - Each new supervisor will be required to participate
  - New supervisors shall be advised on the reporting requirements for SWCD's to remain eligible and within legal requirements of the state.

### **▪ Increase local SWCD capacity to be effective partners in the Indiana Conservation Partnership delivery of conservation across the state.**

#### **Actions:**

- The leveraging sheet will continue to be updated and available for SWCD use annually.
- Create a portfolio of example policies for SWCDs
  - County council representative as an SWCD Associate Supervisor
  - Supervisor attendance policy
- Work with ICP to find creative ways to increase capacity at local level
- Ensure all capacity funding through ICP is supported by local officials
- Encourage and facilitate when possible non-ICP (non-traditional) partnerships for new resources (i.e., food industry, fertilizer suppliers)>
- Encourage supporting tools for current SWCD staff by working closely with IDEA, ISDA and IASWCD.
  - Job description
  - Performance evaluations

### **▪ Keep elected officials, local to state, informed on conservation progress and needs to reach statewide goals.**

#### **Actions:**

- Produce a "State of the State" annual report targeted at decision makers.
- Ensure resources are available for outreach materials for counties to use to educate decision makers.
- Support the ICP to establish metrics for soil and nutrient loss for Indiana.
- Lead or facilitate opportunities for elected officials to learn about resource concerns.

- **Report to IN [larger public] progress and concerns for the priority natural resources concerns.**

**Actions:**

- Improve communication/coordination with IASWCD to make sure both successes and needs are being shared widely cross the state.
- Build a communication strategy by supporting existing ICP partnership, SSCB will help to ensure delivery of communications and resources needed to be effective.
- SSCB will take leadership role on reporting conservation status both successes and needs that will help advance conservation.

**Strategy Plans for CWI funding:**

**CWI Grants goals**

- SSCB would like to see specific outcomes on grant applications and impact on community defined in each application.
- Increased accountability across the state to ensure deliverables are being met and accountability requirements in compliance.
- Grants that are awarded that are intended to be long-term projects (greater than 3 years) become sustainable projects with a plan developed and implemented for funding from a different source (non-CWI).