

State Soil Conservation Board
July 24th, 2018

Members in Attendance:

Ray Chattin
Bob Eddleman
Robert Woodling
Warren Baird
Larry Clemons
Kenny Cain

Members Not in Attendance:

Brad Dawson

Others in Attendance:

| | | | |
|---------------|----------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Jordan Seger | Jamie Scott | Joe Schmees | Amy Work |
| Leah Harmon | Tara Wesseler- Henry | Lisa Holscher | Les Zimmerman |
| Jennifer Thum | Laura Fribley | Meg Leader | Mike Johnson |
| Walt Sell | Julie Harrold | Kent Yeager | Ben Shorlosky |
| Troy Hinkle | Scheryl Vaughn | Cress Hizer | Ben Wicker |
| Jerry Raynor | Nathan DeYoung | Allison Kent | Michael Cuss |

I. 9:30 AM: Call to Order

Robert Woodling called to order the meeting at 9:30 am.

II. Approve Minutes of April 2018

Warren moved, Bob seconded,
All in favor, motion carried.

III. Clean Water Indiana

a. Clean Water Indiana Grants –Leah Harmon

- a. Leah Harmon gave an overview of the process for non-SWCD led grants
- b. Non-SWCD Led Proposal

- i. IASWCD – Joe Schmees presented the association's proposal for CCSI. Joe gave a history of the presentation. Requesting \$113,950 which includes funding for the director position and agronomist. Part of this money will match NRCS funds that were extended. This is a similar request to funding in years past. CCSI has worked with Purdue to have the agronomist position funded by bridge funding for the next year. They are trying to work more with the Ag retailers and have a few events with Ag retailers coming up. They just received money to modify agency curriculum to meet the needs of Ag retailers. This would be a two-year project, and CCSI would absorb the administrative costs.

- Jaime Scott spoke about the benefits of CCSI and the need for the agronomist position. The consistent message that the positions give is ideal to give out a consistent message.

- Ray Chatten asked questions about the bridge funding with the agronomist position.
- Lisa Holscher clarified that the agronomist position is 100% with CCSI and the majority of his time will be to develop educational training for CCSI.
- Ray asked about funding and is the program is sustainable.
- Lisa has a spreadsheet with different grants, and where they might develop partnerships to bring in funds. She is seeking \$500,000 total from all sources.
- Robert – we can vote today or save it for the next meeting.
- Larry – what’s our total that we can allocate to non-SWCD?
- Jordan – we have about \$900,000 to give out to SWCD applications and non-SWCD led projects.
- The SSCB agreed to table their approval of the non-SWCD applications until later.

ii. Michigan City Sanitary Districts – Michael Cuss, Ben Shorlasky with Delta Institute

Proposal for the Cheney Run Stormwater Treatment Project. The application was developed with the Alliance of the Great Lakes. They are also partnering with LaPorte SWCD. They are seeking \$100,000 for planning and engineering funds. The entire project cost is \$2 million. The Trail Creek Watershed is 14.5 linear miles though LaPorte County. They had a 2003 TMDL report concluded that urban stormwater was one of the significant sources of pollution and watershed contaminants. Michael showed the SSCB their concept for the wetland design.

Ben gave an overview of the wetland treatment area. They have made a few design modifications to the feasibility study that was done a few years ago. They are working on the access agreements to maintain this project long-term. The money the project is seeking would close the current gap to meet the necessary funding levels for the project to move forward.

Robert asked a question about how the district is set up. Do you have taxing authority?

Michael – they have levied taxes and user based fees.

iii. SICIM- Troy Hinkle

Troy Hinkle gave background on SICIM to the SSCB. They help the local counties in the State on invasive species efforts. Their primary target is to develop local organizations. They have two full-time staff and a part-time coordinator. They have helped people on the ground. The SSCB granted \$60,000 in 2017, and the current agreement with NRCS pays in arrears. They have not had enough money on hand to have all of the intended employees. NRCS granted \$917,000. \$800,000 will be for personnel, and the SSCB and IASWCD match that. They are looking into other grants also. Troy showed the board employee reports that showed what meetings

SICIM employees had attended. They are requesting just \$60,000 for this year.

Larry and Ray will abstain from voting due to their commitment to SICIM.

IV. State Soil Conservation Board Business

a. **Open Door Law Presentation – Indiana Public Access Counselor - Luke Britt**

Luke Britt gave background into his job and that his primary responsibility is to educate public officials on the open door law, and what the media's rights are under the law. Luke wants to make sure that we are accountable to our positions, and we are stewards of the public's trust. Luke gave an overview of the law. When a government body needs to meet, they have to give 48 hours notice and post that the meeting is going to be held. He also spoke about public records. The agenda and board packet are public records. Luke talked about the different types of files that need to be stored and what can be shown to the public.

b. **Chairman's Report – Robert Woodling**

Voting on Non-SWCD that will occur at our next meeting in September. The entire board will vote on those projects. We need to speak to our legislators to raise the priority of soil health, air, water, etc. We have, but we are looking to make things happen. Robert will be leaving the board at the end of his term, and Amy Burris has been nominated to fill his position. The appointment should come through so she can be at the January board meeting.

c. **ICP MOU**

Jordan commented that it was the new title for the cooperative working agreement which was written for five years. The current one expires at the calendar end of the year. It's going to be an MOU now and will affect the staff at USDA Service Centers. This draft agreement has been sent out to the districts. The ICP leaders are circulating it for comments which are due by the end of this month. The agreement could be tweaked, and we will likely see the final version at the September SSCB meeting. Bob wants something in there for SWCDs to consider adopting the FOTG as their technical guide, and not just mention that the districts cost-share programs would be in accordance with the FOTG. He would like to see the districts have the guide adopted as their technical guide.

d. **Overhead Considerations in Grant Requests**

Jordan brought this to the board because of a recent request by CCSI. The board does not currently have a written overhead costs policy. The board asked Leah and Jordan whether this has been a consideration in previous grants. Leah stated that it has been considered on a case by case basis, but has been supported by need when approved. Robert asked Leah to research overhead/indirect cost policies for other grant programs within the state and report back to the board.

e. **Soil Health Stamp Letter of Support**

Larry moved to support and Ray seconded the motion.

All in favor, motion approved.

f. **SWCD Regional Meetings Representation**

Robert asked for someone to represent at each of the regions. If you can make the meetings, please volunteer. Larry will cover the NE meeting. Bob will cover the Central meeting. Ray will attend the SW. Kenny will attend the NW and Robert will follow up with Brad to see if he can attend the SE.

V. Soil and Water Conservation Districts

a. **Franklin SWCD – Tara Wessler-Henry**

The Franklin SWCD board recommended that Michael Louis Schwegman be temporarily appointed to the board due to the death of Louis Schwegman. Michael is a farmer, who implements no-till, waterways and watering systems. Ray moved approve the appointment, Kenny seconded the motion.

All in favor, motion passed.

b. **Switzerland SWCD – Tara Wessler –Henry**

The Switzerland SWCD board recommended that Shawna Andrew be given a temporary appointment, due to the resignation of Jeanette Andrew. Shawna is a Veterinarian Technician.

Ray moved to accept the resignation and approve the appointment, Kenny seconded the motion.

All in favor, motion passed.

V. ISDA Updates

a. **Director’s Report (includes CWI budget update)- Jordan Seger**

Jordan gave an overview of the budget. We will be back at full staff on Monday when the new RS in Huntington starts. We moved \$100,000 into CWI budget for 2019, which is from salaries of positions that were vacant for some time in the previous year. This will be a one-time deal. State Fair is coming up. ISDA is preparing for the 2019 legislative session, and submitted proposals for bills that we are suggesting to carry and bring up during the next session. One could be the industrial hemp. There has been movement on the Farm Bill regarding hemp too. There will be two water pieces in summer study sessions.

b. **Technical Report – Mike Johnson**

Mike concentrated on the SE. They are working on 2 LARE grants in the SE, seven 319 grants, 10 active CWI grants which include 14 counties. We have 70 practice for 2017 installed. Some are whole field practices. SE staff are working with NRCS on a heavy CRP workload and will be doing the INFA stalk sampling soon.

c. **Soil Health – Jordan Seger**

Planes are flying imagery currently.

Thank for the your support with the Soil Health Stamp

d. **Accountability and Technology – Jordan Seger**

See map in Deb’s report.

e. **District Support Specialist – Laura Fribley**

Laura invited the members to August LI. It will be mainly for graduates.

Laura provided a written report.

f. **Water Quality and CREP – Julie Harrold**

Julie gave an update on where they are with the funding of CREP. Julie asked the board for continuation of funds for CREP

The SSCB agreed to continue to fund the CREP program at \$660,000.

VIII. Conservation Partner Reports

a. **IASWCD Report - Joe Schmees**

CCSI is interviewing for a second program manager. CCSI is partnering with IANA on the retailer roundtable meetings. Joe mentioned other upcoming events.

b. **IDEM Report – No report**

c. **DNR Report - No report**

d. **Purdue Report – Walt Sell**

Walt passed out information about a soil health website to promote education materials for teachers and others. There is not a lot of information for teachers to talk about soil health. Another example is how to understand and interpret soil health test. They are discussing how soil health and water interact. The North America Manure Expo will be at Fair Oaks next year.

e. **FSA Report – No report**

f. **NRCS Report - Jerry Raynor - New State Conservationist for Indiana.** Jerry gave an overview of his background. He worked at NRCS starting as a soil conservationist and has worked with the North Carolina State Department of Agriculture.

g. **CCSI Report –**

CCSI put together a lessons learned report for NRCS. Lisa mentioned the Big Pine event. They heard reports that it was an excellent workshop.

h. **IDEA Report – No report**

i. **IANA Report – Ben Wicker – Ben** gave an overview of IANA, and their mission and goals. He gave an update on the Indiana's Water Summit.

IX. Public Comment –

Les Zimmerman – Supported funding for CCSI.

Kent Yeager – Senator Donnelly's office

Kent gave an update on the trade issues and the current package that is on the table.

He spoke about the crop insurance portion of the Farm Bill that Senator Donnelly worked on.

Motion to adjourn made by Kenny Cain.

X. Next Meeting: September 18, 2018 NRCS State Office