

Minutes
STATE SOIL CONSERVATION BOARD MEETING

October 24, 2023

Hendricks County Fairgrounds
1900 E Main St, Danville, IN 46122

MS Teams

Present

Larry Clemens (board member)
Brad Dawson (board member)
Kenny Cain (board member)
Ray Chattin (board member)
Jane Hardisty (board member)
Trevor Laureys
Katelynn Smith
Geneva Tyler
George Reger
Lisa Holscher
Jennifer Thum
Katie Nelson
Julie Harrold
Laura Fribley
Amy Work
Nathan Stoelting
Brandi Frazier
Tracey Johnson
Sheila Schroeder
Less Zimmerman
Curt Knueven
Don Lamb
Liz Rice
Eliana Blaine
Kylie Wheeler

Blair Beavers
Lindsey Bluhm
Cora Brown
Jennifer Brown
Mark Cambron
Cameron Straw
Cress Hizer
Julie Clark
Zachariah Corrice
Angela Courtney
Darlene Fischer
Jessica Deller
Colson Doyle
Michelle Elgin
Emily Finch
Maria Fisher
Andrea Gogel
Leah Harmon
Jessica Hatt
Chris Havens
Crystal Heise
Veronica Helming
Sandra Hoffarth
Heath Hurst
Jamie Perry
Julie Knudson
John Hazlett
Lori Jordan
Kelly Kent
Susan King
Kris Gertz

Kristen Latzke
Pavan Kumar
Julia Loehr
Makayla Reel
Lois Mann
Rebecca McClellan
Holly McCutchan
Courtney McFall
Megan Frederick
Janel Meyer
Melinda Miller
Julie Morris
Virginia Morris
Nellie Peffley
Rhonda Hicks
Rob Kendall
Amanda Robbins
Jennifer Rowland
Emily Russell
Walt Sell
Tyler Shuman
Michael Smith
Ava Springstun
Brianna Styck
Terri Theisen
Dale Walker
Leah Walthery
William Ward
Mary Lou Watson
Tonya Williams

Present Via Teams

Amy Burris (board member)
Stephanie Baker
Lindsay Bishop

I. Call to Order

Ray called the meeting to order at 9:32.

Minutes were presented and reviewed. Brad moved to approve minutes. Jane seconded. Motion approved.

II. Clean Water Indiana Grants- Geneva Tyler

Geneva gave an update on a CWI Success Story. Details on a Wayne County project was shared. Ray shared that 37 districts did not submit a grant this past year. He challenged the District Support Specialist to try to find out why they didn't apply.

2024 Clean Water Indiana Grant award recommendations- Brad Dawson

Brad shared a grant report that included the total number of applications and the funds available to fund those grants. He thanked everyone for their time to score these grants and provide feedback. Scores were reviewed and Brad then read the list of grants to be funded and the amount. These documents were also shared with those in attendance. He then gave the recommendation to the board and asked for approval. Ray then thanked the committee and their time. He then asked for discussion. Ray then discussed the consequences of not funding the SICIM Application. Ray asked the board to consider a funding of \$125,000/year for 4 years. With the knowledge that they will apply for \$500,000 again next year in Clean Water Indiana funds, but this will ease the lack of funding in the meantime. Brad responded that the grants were scored based on the merit of the grants. Kenny asked that the SICIM application is reconsidered. Amy then made a comment on MS Teams that if they chose to fund the SICIM grant then we need to remove a lot of the invasive funding from individual districts. They chose to fund the individual districts as opposed to the larger organization. Brad mentioned that one obstacle for SICIM is the wording in Indiana Code that CWI is to fund projects that reduce sediment and nutrients. This can be challenged as to whether SICIM assists with that. Jane then asked what other funding SICIM is receiving. Ray then mentioned the other sources. Jane then discussed how many districts are running local programs now because of SICIM. Then it was discussed how many grants on invasive species were funded. Geneva reported 5 grants were funded. Brad then gave a breakdown of the funding recommendations. The breakdown was passed out and shared. Jane then asked about additional funding that might be made available later and how that would work. Trevor explained that process if funds do become available. Les Zimmerman then made a comment regarding the importance of SICIM and that if it wasn't for their efforts the funding increase would have likely not happened. He also shared though that while the large SICIM grant was not funded, several invasive projects did receive funding because of SICIM which would not have happened without SICIM's efforts throughout this process. Ray then shared his frustrations, but then asked for other comments before calling for a vote. Brad then commented that SICIM had an excellent application that was simply outscored by other excellent applications. Jane reminded Ray how important he is to the leadership efforts in conservation. Larry then announced that he needed to abstain from voting on this topic. Ray also announced that he will abstain from voting on this topic. Brad made a motion to fund the applications as recommended by the grants committee for the amount of \$2,313,285. Jane then asked for clarification regarding rather or not that includes the funding designated to the IASWCD. Confirmation was given that the motion only included the grants. Kenny seconded the motion. Roll call vote was then called for. Jane voted yes. Kenny voted yes. Larry and Ray abstained. Amy voted Yes.

Nathan then gave a summary of the grant audit reports from 2023. Jane then asked about whether the amount of grants we review will need to increase because we are funding more applications. Nathan said he would have to look at that and check with grant services. Jane also asked about what type of staffing grants were reviewed and if staffing was found for those grants. Nathan reported that staffing was found and is now on pace to finish on track.

III. State Soil Conservation Board Business

Ray then gave a chairman's reports. Ray discussed he recently completed a toolbox reading to improve leadership skills. He also mentioned that he spoke at the IDEA annual conference where he challenged them to work with local boards and partners to help motivate others.

Trevor then gave the directors report. Trevor summarized his provided report. First, he thanked Ray and his leadership. He also thanked the grants committee. He also discussed some upcoming dates of importance for CWI. Strategic planning was also discussed. He has a date that worked for most of the board, still looking for a location. He also mentioned the opportunity to attend the annual conference for this upcoming year.

IV. Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Temporary appointments

Brown Co SWCD- Laura Fribley gave a request for Brown County. After a resignation, they have found a replacement.

White Co SWCD- Geneva Tyler gave the update on White County. They need to replace a supervisor who moved out of the county and is no longer eligible to be a supervisor. They have a found a replacement that should be an excellent fit.

Larry made a motion to approve the temporary appointments. Kenny seconded the motion. Motion approved.

V. ICP Reports

- ISDA

Jennifer gave a report regarding WLEB funding. Hoping to submit at least 2 more grants next year. Julie Harrold gave a report regarding CREP. They have discussed the final recommendations regarding CREP Administrators. Those will be presented at the January meeting. She also reported on a new tool that is helping with the CREP Program. George gave an update on the Northwest technical work. CRP is still leading the way in work being completed. Assisting with some areas where they are short staffed. CRP re-ups have been taking up a lot of their time. Resource specialist also helped with CWI scoring to provide comments and answer questions. Larry asked about a cancellation that appeared on the chart George provided. George explained that several projects get cancelled for a number of reasons, usually it's the cost the landowners sees, once the design is completed. This led to a brief discussion on why projects get cancelled. It was discussed how important these conversations are with landowners even when projects get cancelled. Sometimes these projects get completed later or some changes are made to still make progress. Laura then gave the report for the DSS group. Summer Summitt has been wrapped up. There was some funding left to be spent yet which will be fulfilled with a training video from Phil Anderson. We are offering new supervisor training at annual conference, but that is also available year round upon request. Bregan then gave an update on the Gulf Hypoxia task force. The program has been able to offer soil testing in Mississippi River Basin area. The project was so successful that they are shutting the application process down soon because of the number of new applicants. Leah gave an update online. She wanted to remind the board that the AFR process was turned into GMS last year. She then announced that this project was nominated for a "best of Indiana" award. Don Lamb then took a few minutes to discuss the efforts of the Division of Soil Conservation. He complimented the ISDA staff and the SSCB and their efforts to improve agriculture and conservation in Indiana.

- IASWCD

Liz gave updates for the association. This included details on the upcoming District Showcase events. Dates and details were shared regarding the showcase winners this year and the State Soil Conservation Board was invited to attend. The next association board meeting is November 17 at the Farm Bureau Building. Amy also mentioned that the conference this year will host the SSCB Meeting. Les added that the Association is hosting a legislative breakfast on January 9.

Ellie gave an update for Urban Soil Health.

There has been a staffing change in the northeast. They were able to fill that position without any gap. There have been over 100 events this year led by their staff. 25 working groups were also held this past year.

- CCSI

Lisa gave an update for CCSI. She provided printed reports to those in person and a link to that report for online participants. There is a new soil health "PARP" topic that will be available soon, she asked that we keep an eye

out for that topic. There is also a regional ag forum coming up on the 29th of November. Finally, on the 30th there will be an event on the economics of soil health.

- **Purdue**

Walt gave an update for Purdue. He provided links in the chat. Purdue has received some grants to help provide high speed internet across the state. Purdue will be helping with this to provide better broadband services across the state. Also, Purdue is working on agriculture coupled with ecology while making farming more profitable and conservation minded.

- **NRCS**

Curt gave an update for NRCS. We have a new state conservationist. She officially begins in November. She should be a great fit to help train the new work force with NRCS as they have 1/3 of their staff as new employees right now. Hoping to have 86 million dollars for Indiana landowners next year.

- **FSA provided a written report, but no one was able to present in person.**

- **IDEA**

Brandi Frasier and Tracey Johnson from IDEA gave an update. They had a great fall conference where they set a new attendance record. They wanted to thank all their associate members and Leah Harmon for their support. They also thanked the board for the Clean Water Indiana grant that made the career development program possible. Brad asked about the numbers for the staff training. They reported full participation with two participants from each region for a total of 16. Brad asked how many counties are paid members. They reported that 88 of 92 counties have at least one paid staff person as a member of IDEA.

VI. Public Comment

Jane asked about the equipment we need to have a quality meeting. She is concerned that folks online can't participate as easily as they may with other equipment. Lisa explained that CCSI has equipment that might help. The addition of another owl might make it easier. Also having a place for speakers that is designated for each meeting will help the speakers know where to stand for best communication possible.

VII. Upcoming 2024 Meeting Dates

- January 7- The Westin, Indianapolis
- March 12- Indiana Farm Bureau, Indianapolis
- May 14- Indiana Farm Bureau, Indianapolis
- July 9- Indiana Farm Bureau, Indianapolis
- September 10- Indiana Farm Bureau, Indianapolis
- October 22- TBD

VIII. Adjourn

Larry made a motion to adjourn, Brad seconded. Motion approved.

Meeting adjourned at 11:54am