

**State Soil Conservation Board meeting
Monday, August 20, 2012 1:00 p.m.
IMCPL Wayne Library
198 S. Girls School Road
Indianapolis, IN 46231**

Members in Attendance:

Larry Clemens	Warren Baird	Bill Mann
Scott Ham	Bob Eddleman	Brett Glick
Nola Gentry		

Others in Attendance:

Sarah Simpson, ISDA	Greg Lake, Allen SWCD
Jim Lake, ISDA	Ann Ice, Gibson SWCD
Jennifer Pinkston, ISDA	Jeri Ziliak, Posey SWCD
Nathan Stoelting, ISDA	Mike Starkey, Hendricks SWCD
Deb Fairhurst, ISDA	Gary Steinhardt, Purdue Extension
Jordan Seger, ISDA	Liz Rice, IASWCD
Logan Garner, ISDA	Ray Chattin, IASWCD
Jim Norris, ISDA	Jan Came, Vigo SWCD
Geneva Rawlins, ISDA	Ray McCormick, IASWCD
Laura Fribley, ISDA	Mike Schwab, IASWCD
Tara Henry, ISDA	Paul Cummings, IASWCD
Greg Biberdorf, DNR	Lou Renshaw, IDEM
Jennifer Boyle-Warner, IASWCD	Jim Spence, Sycamore Trails RC&D
Sharon Watson, IDEA	Julie Wickard, FSA
Roger Kult, NRCS	Susan Hoverdale, FSA
Sam Hagest, Clark SWCD	Anita Hiatt, Tipton SWCD
Myrna Harder, LaPorte SWCD	Gary Truitt, Hoosier Ag Today
Don Lode, LaPorte SWCD	Bruce Shepherd, Jasper SWCD
Janice Bullman, IASWCD	Jim Martin, Jasper SWCD
DeeDee Sigler, IASWCD	Ric Schlosser, Johnson SWCD
Paula Baldwin, Marion SWCD	Steve Howell, IDEM
Scheryl Vaughn, Boone SWCD	
Les Zimmerman, Vermillion SWCD	

I. 1:00 p.m. Call to Order: Larry Clemons

Thank you for everyone to making it back to Indianapolis.

II. Approve Minutes of July 2012.

Motion made to approve July 2012 minutes. Motion passed

III. Clean Water Indiana Budget-Sarah Simpson

Sarah Simpson introduced Logan Garner as the new Water Quality Initiatives/CREP Program Manager for ISDA. He was a 2009 graduate of Butler University. Logan has been with the division since December 2011 as a Resource Specialist under ISDA's 319 grant, but now is the program manager for the Water quality initiative.

ISDA has made \$50,000 available for cover crop cost-share assistance for D4 areas as of August 14. ISDA is looking for one SWCD to administer the grant in all eligible counties. Interested SWCDs must submit a letter from their chairperson to cleanwaterindiana@isda.in.gov by August 31, 2012. Grant will be awarded on September 4, 2012. These funds are coming from the 2007 CWI funds that were "swept" in June 2007, and then later returned to ISDA under the Disaster Assistance fund. Since these funds are no longer under the Clean Water Indiana heading, ISDA is requesting the SSCB's support of the project. Motion passed for SSCB to support ISDA's drought assistance efforts.

IV. Soil and Water Conservation Districts

a. Temporary Supervisor Appointment-Jennifer Pinkston

Noble County SWCD-Approved

b. Tipton/Howard 2011 Grant Modification Request-Anita Hyatt

Tipton and Howard counties are requesting modification of their 2011 CWI watershed grant. In the original application, CWI grant funds were to be used to pay for OFN activities. Since the CIG is covering these costs, the districts are requesting to use the funds for cover crop cost share in both counties, including non OFN participants. Motion passed.

V. State Soil Conservation Board

Conservation Beyond 2016 Task Force Report-Larry Clemens and members of the Conservation Beyond 2016 Task Force

*Note the full text of the report can be found at <http://www.in.gov/isda/2361.htm>

At the August 2011 SSCB meeting, we started looking into this issue. At the October 2011 board meeting the board approved the formation of a task force. The task force came together in December. The task force charter outlines the goals. With Indiana's bicentennial coming up in 2016, the task force was named Conservation Beyond and looked to answer "What will state soil and water conservation look like in the future?" The task force met monthly since December to gather data, review the current state of conservation effectiveness and delivery models, and develop options for the SSCB to consider moving forward. Ray Ledgerwood facilitated the process.

In addition to historical financial and staffing information, the task force sent out a survey in February to SWCD staff and supervisors. Representatives from the task force also held breakout sessions in the March training meetings to gather input. Using the comments from SWCDs and the data collected, the task force developed criteria for analyzing and recommending options for the board to consider. Ray also reached out to 15 states to learn from their experiences. Phone interviews were mostly the means of contact. April, May and June was spent with analysis and discussion. Communications strategies were also developed. The task force understands it's going to take the entire partnership, not just the state board, to look beyond

2016 and make changes to benefit the future. This was the appropriate thing to do seeing the changes that are happening.

An important item to consider when making these changes is measuring success. Key bullet points on Pg 26 of the report outline these measures.

Ray Ledgerwood (attending via conference call) reported on how other states are handling the same issue interviewed 15 different states to look at their funding systems and structure.

- To present just one recommendation wouldn't work. Hence 3 options
- Arkansas taught us that consolidation wasn't the key with a monetary incentive.
- Oklahoma offered incentive for consolidation too
- Ohio has conducted surveys
- Nebraska has 24 natural resource districts.
- Shared grants among districts

Ray also noted folks across the nation are excited about Indiana's report. They are interested in the diversity of members on the task force working together on this challenge.

Sharon Watson reported on the results of the survey. Many responses were positive towards the task force's efforts-many district supervisors and staff wanted to focus on building partnership, increased communication/presence of communication board, increase staffing levels and professional development.

Jennifer Boyle, Roger Kult and Greg Biberdorf presented the outline for the recommendations and the three options presented to the SSCB (A, B and C). Jennifer noted priorities for the recommendations where in bullet-form on pg 9. These recommendations need to be discussed and digested before taking quick action. The three options are summarized on pg 4&5 of the report.

A: Collaboration on sharing Resources-encourage shared staffing and resources between two or more districts. (Pg 17 of the report.) Advantage: locally driven, local control, increased effectiveness & efficiency, easily implemented. Issues: water sheds possibly separated, perceived as a threat to local positions, perceived as no real change.

B: Indiana Consideration Partnership (ICP) Collaboration on Watershed Basis-ICP members plan and operate on a watershed basis. Shift from county operation to a watershed structure. Advantages: It's new and fresh for partnership, similar resource concerns, aligns with national initiatives, better collaboration, opportunities consistency. Issues: doesn't follow county boundaries, resistance by county officials, adding more travel, affecting a few positions.

C: Indiana Conservation Partnership Consolidation on a "watershed basis". It requires the most legislative change. It consolidates multiple SWCD's and staff of ICP agencies on watershed or multi-county basis. This option is based on Nebraska's structure. Governance is one board of supervisors elected on a general ballot. Partnerships would include all the ICP members and possibly more on a watershed basis. Advantages: opportunity to start fresh, the original law started 1940, be consistent state-wide, more effective use of funding, less dilution of state funds, higher profile for the district, elevates the importance of the district supervisor, end uncertainty of funding, potential increase in salary and benefits, uniform accountability, more consideration for the natural resources condition. Issues: change is difficult, require major legislative change, more accountability, potential lost of positions, less flexible structure, less control, reduction of diversity of funding.

Questions

State Soil Conservation Board questions/comments.

On option B, have we looked at potential concerns of county connections. Some counties have three watersheds within them. We discussed this a lot. Multi-county and or watershed would be a big

discussion for the coming years. Lots of cases along the Ohio River where there are multiple watersheds that are smaller. The boundaries melt away when we look at the efficiency of the use of the resources.

In the state law were there some considerations then about consolidation and changes. It's been in district law, but no changes have been made. The process is burdensome.

For the states that have consolidated...were there any issues or backlash? It needs to be a local discussion otherwise there are challenges. Start the discussion with partnership, not consolidation. Consolidation needs to be discussed on a local level, not an outside source.

VI. Public Comment

Are we going to get input from our other partners? Yes. We did not want to share the report until it was shared with the state soil and conservation board. Tomorrow it will be shared with more partners.

I think these things need to arise from a local base. The presentation of the program needs to be focused on locally driven process. Good incentives for collaboration are very nice and is a good start even though it is gradual.

Given the three recommendations, its going to take leadership to make that hard decision. I encourage the state soil board to bring leaders forward.

We are looking at revising our business plan, but we need to communicate effectively and make the changes the right way.

These supervisors can't do it all. When we made staffing changes positive things happened.

How will personnel play out in option C? The districts I've seen have people already stretched thin. I know this is a question employees are going to bring up

How do districts account for employee time spent across county lines? Response: this falls to the accountability of the district boards and keeping track of the employees shared time. The right accountability will take care of criticisms.

Marion County owns our own employees. Our salary and pay for all the employees have to all be paid from the budget. Where would the pay be coming from in C? What about benefits, retirements, etc?

There are things that need to be learned and further researched. Educators are doing outreach in multiple counties and the program is working really well.

In regards to option C...seek out local support first and then have partnerships take action. My fear is the time frame without the push. It could take too long and districts may run out of funding before real change happens.

Should we test this and show positive examples? Through a process bring commissioners and other leaders on board with the program? Response: It is potentially an option.

Have local work groups work collaboratively on smaller projects and then build upon it.

The county extension service. The agent was one per county. There were several different sources of funds. I think they started grouping extension staff and travel over county lines. Can we look at the extension as an example? Response: We looked at this at length. Historically it was the Ag agent, Home, and then youth agent. It's changed dramatically over time. The focus and refocus is on the county budgets. The third option requires a large restructure. The county agencies aren't at that level yet. We're still very county centric. It was definitely discussed.

Thank you Ray for all your help and work benefitting Indiana. State and Soil Board will continue to discuss.

Is there a contact for questions?

Response: Please email all comments to: taskforceindiana@gmail.com

Top down vs Local...Please encourage others to read these reports and start thinking about it. People don't normally listen or respond until it's the last minute, but these issues will be making a big impact so we've got to get them involved.

When need to add local, state, and federal funds to the data collection process and review. We need to be serious about our future.

VII. Next Meeting TBA

VIII. Meeting Adjourned

Minutes Prepared by Jessica Thayer

Approved By:
