

MINUTES
STATE SOIL CONSERVATION BOARD MEETING
July 31, 2014
The Nature Conservancy
620 E Ohio St
Indianapolis, IN

Members in Attendance:

Scott Ham
Nola Gentry
Bob Eddleman
Warren Baird
Larry Clemens

Chris Morse, NRCS
Cindy Johnston, NRCS
Randy Dickson NRCS
Harold Thompson, ICP
Jason Kishton, FSA
Mike Johnson, ISDA
Meg Leader, ISDA
Deb Fairhurst, ISDA
Logan Garner, ISDA
Nathan Stoelting, ISDA
Laura Fribley, ISDA
Steve Howell, IDEM
Tara Wesseler-Henry, ISDA

Others in Attendance:

Jordan Seger, ISDA
Geneva Tyler, ISDA
Emily Neitzel, IASWCD
Jennifer Boyle Warner, IASWCD
Jane Hardisty, NRCS
Scheryl Vaughn, Boone SWCD

I. 9:32am: Call to Order

II. Invocation

III. Draft minutes of June 2014

Nola moved to approve; Bob second. Motion passed.

IV. Clean Water Indiana

- a. Nola outlined a proposal of the CWI Training Program. It was discussed that \$30,000 is available for trainings, which is the same amount as last year. However, instead of reimbursements, scholarships and sponsorships will be offered to districts. The scholarship program can be applied for various conferences, workshops and Leadership Institute. Funds go directly to organization and saves accounting time for both the SWCDs and ISDA. Priority will go to supervisors, but staff can apply as well. The cap is set at \$1000 per district. The application process includes questions regarding demonstration of financial need and will be reviewed at the beginning of each month.

Scott mentioned there is an "other" training category to make way for trainings the SSCB is unaware of. Also, the SSCB is working with IASWCD to reduce confusion on similar grants, ie IASWCD Annual Conference scholarships.

SSCB is going to do a better job of communicating out to SWCDs.

Nola moved to approve the Scholarship and Sponsorship Training Program; Bob second. Motion carried.

- b. 2015 Clean Water Indiana Grants

Nola reviewed the 2015 Clean Water Indiana Grant guidelines and reported no major change in grant program from 2014. Application due dates and budget are dependent on the State. One change was noted, that cover crop cost-share has been decreased from \$30 to \$20/ac. Following the 2014 CWI Grant cycle, those that reviewed the CWI Grant program recommended maintaining the status quo to minimize changes. With new Farm Bill, new opportunities will be available to leverage federal dollars with CWI multi-district grants based on a county level.

Warren moved to approve; Larry second. Motion carried to approve CWI grant guidelines. Budget and dates are still tentative.

- c. Clean Water Indiana Budget Update-

Jordan reported that Jen is no longer with ISDA. Her position will likely be filled but with some tweaking of the job description. It is likely there will be a new process for administering

CWI grants and the Lt Governor's office will have a larger role in the grant program's administration. We want to maintain relationships with grantees, but more administration will shift to Lt Gov office as a long term solution. Deadlines need to be put before Kyleen Welling and Mitzi Moss to ensure CWI deadlines work with their schedules.

An additional meeting will be added prior to the October 28th meeting. Oct 1st deadline is the current tentative due date for CWI date.

Jordan recommended 2 rounds of grants. Tentative budget has been submitted to the State. 4.5% reserve is being requested by the State vs a 3% reserve.

V. Soil and Water Conservation Districts

- a. Grant County SWCD- Tara Wesseler-Henry. Bob moved to approve. Warren second. Motion approved.
- b. Fayette County SWCD- Tara Wesseler-Henry. Nola moved to approve, Bob second. Motion approved.
- c. Marion County SWCD- Nathan Stoelting. Nola moved to approve. Larry second. Motion approved.
- d. White County SWCD-Geneva Tyler. Warren moved to approve. Larry second. Motion approved.

VI. State Soil Conservation Board Report

Scott discussed that the Indiana Conservation Partnership and IASWCD did a phenomenal job with the NACD conference. Indiana set the bar high for these meetings. Also, it was discussed that:

- Communication will increase to bimonthly memos.
- Scott is hopeful to hear about appointments to the State Soil Conservation Board member vacancies soon.
- A meeting is scheduled Aug 8, 11:30-12 regarding the CTA agreement.

Board compliments partnership participation, particularly Jennifer Boyle-Warner in the success of the NACD conference.

VII. ISDA Updates

- a. Director's Report- Jordan Seger
Jordan reported that 31 ISDA staff attended the NACD forum.
ISDA is gearing up for State Fair, starting Friday, August 1. ISDA will be meeting with approx 23 commodity groups throughout the fair doing outreach and discussing how we can collaborate more. ISDA general funds awarded funds to State Fair to revamp Normandy Barn. Most updates will be noticeable for 2014's fair. Jordan thanked field staff who organized those tours. See Attachments for additional details.
- b. Technical Report- Mike Johnson
Mike reported that they have had requests for RCPP support. See Attachment for additional details.
- c. Agricultural Affairs- Meg Leader
Meg reported that Corn and Soy have been sending out surveys to SWCDS regarding OFN. SWCDs are incentivized to get 50% or greater return with \$100 or \$250 for 75% or more. Julie Harrold is helping with Red Gold Environmental Stewardship Program. Approximately 80-90% growers are filling out the application and site visits will follow.
- d. Accountability and Technology- Deb Fairhurst
Rule 5 is considered Technical Assistance and is not Conservation on the land, captured in the Conservation Tracking spreadsheet.
Reduction numbers are perhaps more important than the conservation practice numbers. It is being worked on to get the entire ICP reflected in Region 5 modeling to get a total picture of

reduction loads, however this model currently only looks at water quality. That being said, water quantity modeling is being discussed, ie, how much water are we storing and holding back.

e. District Support- Laura Fribley

Laura discussed District Support activities and in addition to her report reviewed that Jennifer Thum is back on staff. A one day additional workshop about conflict has been added to Leadership Institute. That workshop will take place in November. Leadership Institute still has openings for the September workshop. Todd Austin, who we work closely with inside SBOA, is retiring.

ICP Training/Certification Program

Harold Thompson thanked the board for setting aside \$25,000 towards the program to be able to give ICP employees needed trainings. Also thanked IASWCD for their role in administering the program and Jane and NRCS for the Earth Team Volunteer Program which he is currently utilizing to continue being involved the Program.

Conservation Selling Skills Workshop- Nola will serve to review participant applications.

Laura thanked all employees who participated in the IDI updates.

f. Water Quality and CREP- Logan Garner

CRP practices are expiring and there is potential for re-enrollment of Wetlands into CREP.

Region 5 will soon have some additional components to account for water quantity, stormwater and some others. He is working on modeling various levels of adoption of cover crops (50% adoption vs 75% adoption, etc).

VIII. Conservation Partner Reports

a. IASWCD Report- Jennifer Boyle-Warner: Introduced Emily Neitzel as new Assistant Director who has been with IASWCD since early June. Regarding CWI funding, the funding task force has been meeting. Some members met on July 30 with Rep. Brown with Weighs and Means to discuss funding ideas.

The task force is moving forward with Jack Gillespie's idea that local townships may be able to partner with Districts and is working with Rep. Lucas to add into code that townships could provide funding for conservation projects. Jackson County has put together a resolution to move forward with this idea.

CCSI: Bob Eddleman and Les Zimmerman went to SWCS where CCSI won a merit award. Representatives went to IL to discuss IN's conservation partnership and soil health initiative with IL leaders.

Big thank you to all involved and accomplished what NACD was hoping for.

IASWCD is requesting a review of CREP program in regards to the return on what is being invested through the program. Logan clarified that CREP enrollment has increased over the last few years and the funding that is set aside has already been designated for unfinished practices.

b. IDEM- Steve Howell

Stever reviewed that regarding agriculture, fewer and fewer livestock issues being seen.

Farmers are doing a good job. Additional information can be found in the Attachments.

c. DNR- No Report

d. Purdue- No Report

e. FSA- Jason Kishton

Jason reviewed that with CRP acres being reduced, SAFE program requests are up. FSA may push CREP harder due to limitations on SAFE and CRP acres. Regarding the BICAP (Biomass Crop Assistance Program), 3 facilities applied, 1 approved named Waste No Energy and is accepting biomass products (corn stover). They have a 10 yr energy contract with NIPSCO. FSA does \$20 match per dry ton on farmers who take their product up there. As producers apply, a plan from NRCS will be requested.

- f. NRCS- Jane Hardisty
Introduced participants in Leadership Development program, which is an 18 month program for employees interested in developing leadership skills.
 - Kris Morse- GIS Coordinator for NRCS, and Fed representative on the IN GIS Council.
 - Cindy Johnston- Soil Conservationist in Lebanon, covers 11 counties.
 - Randy Dickson- SC in Rensselaer in Rensselaer.

FY ends Sept 31.

New Farm Bill- Congress's intent for RCPP has been successful. \$400 million were allocated for the program and there was \$2.7 billion requested. Partners had offered to put \$2.9 billion dollars partners on the table. For the State pool- 9 preproposals were submitted for the State pool, 2 were sent on to national headquarters. NRCS can only fund 20 state projects nationwide.

The intent of what IN wanted to showcase at the NACD summer meeting succeeded. The partnership and soil health were highlighted and generated discussion.

APHIS has received a grant to address feral swine issues. If ICP field staff sees wild pigs, please report it.

Congressman Lucas obtained dollars for dam rehabilitation in partnership with conservancy districts. 7 dams were submitted for rehabilitation in IN. Over 20 were submitted for assessment and 17 were approved.

IN NRCS obtained \$362,500 over 3 years for contribution agreements. \$362,500 will need to be matched but not necessarily in dollars. Not all dollars are for CCSI, but details remain to be worked out.

NRCS has 4 vacancies to be filled: Aurora, Delphi, LaGrange, Mt. Vernon. The Greencastle Tech Team leader position will be opened as well as a full time NRCS State Forester and Compliance Specialist.

Barry Fisher is in South Africa as Key Note Speaker for their equivalent of the IASWCD annual conference.

IX. Public Comment

X. Next Meeting:

September 2014

Location/Date: TBD.

October 28, 2014

9:30 AM Location: TBD

SSCB will not meet formally at the 2015 IASWCD annual meeting but have a roundtable conversation for Districts to attend.

XI. Adjourn: 12:05pm.

Minutes Prepared by: Geneva Tyler

Approved by:
