

AGENDA
STATE SOIL CONSERVATION BOARD MEETING

October 26th, 2021

Decatur County REMC

1430 W Main Street, Greensburg, IN 47240

MS Teams

- I. 9:30 am.: Call to Order**
- II. Approve Minutes of September 2021**
- III. Clean Water Indiana**
 - a. Clean Water Indiana 2022 Grants recommendation- Kenny Cain
 - b. Clean Water Indiana Grants Committee appointment- Amy Burris
- IV. State Soil Conservation Board Business**
- V. Soil and Water Conservation Districts**
- IX. Public Comment**
- XI. Next Meeting:**
 - January 23rd @ The Westin Indianapolis, 3-5pm

2022 Meeting Dates

- January 23
- March 15
- May 17
- July 19
- September 20
- October 25

XII. Adjourn

*****PLEASE NOTE*****

This agenda is in DRAFT FORM. Open Door Law does not prohibit the public agency from changing or adding to its agenda during the meeting.

AGENDA
STATE SOIL CONSERVATION BOARD MEETING

September 21, 2021

Farm Bureau Building

225 S East St, Indianapolis, IN 46202

MS Teams Virtual Option

Present

Amy Burris (Board Member)
Kenny Cain (Board Member)
Larry Clemens (Board Member)
Brad Dawson (Board Member)
Trevor Laureys
Geneva Tyler
Laura Fribley
Joe Schmees
Mark Thomas

Present electronically (via phone)

Warren Baird (Board Member)
Bob Eddleman (Board Member)

Present Electronically (via MS Teams)

George Reger
Walt Sell
Julie Harrold
Nathan Stoelting
Tara Wesseler-Henry
Mark LeBlanc
Nathan Warenski
Laura Stearley
Jerry Raynor

- I. 9:31 am.:** Meeting called to order by Amy Burris, Chair
- II.** Larry made a motion to approve agenda. Seconded by Kenny. Motion carried. Amy asked that all votes are conducted with a roll call. Roll call vote was taken: all approved.
- III. Approve Minutes of July 2021.** Larry made a motion to approve previous minutes. Bob seconded. Roll call vote: all approved. Motion carried.
- IV. Clean Water Indiana**
 - a.** Clean Water Indiana 2022 Grants update- Tara Wesseler-Henry gave a verbal update. 18 grants were submitted, representing 30 SWCDs, for a total of \$1,664,222.85.
 - b.** Tara Wesseler-Henry presented a Clean Water Indiana Grant Modification request for Grant County SWCD. Brad made a motion to approve extension, second was made by Bob. Roll call vote: all approved. Motion carried.
- V. State Soil Conservation Board Business**
 - a.** Trevor gave an update for the Division of Soil Conservation. Details regarding filling staff vacancies was discussed. Trevor gave an update on Surety Bond as well.
 - b.** Amy discussed a virtual meeting attendance policy. Bob Eddelman shared his thoughts and asked a question regarding quorum. Amy and Geneva responded to the questions. Bob made a motion to approve electronic participation as presented. Kenny seconded. Roll call vote: all approved. Motion carried.
 - c.** Letter from governor regarding resources was discussed. Amy asked for everyone to provide any feedback on letter that had been voted on in July to be drafted. No additional changes were discussed. Letter will be mailed as presented.
- VI. Soil and Water Conservation Districts**
 - a.** Geneva gave an update on Porter County change in supervisor. Brad moved to accept nomination. Kenny seconded. Roll call vote: Motion passed unanimously.

- b. Tara gave updated on supervisor replacement in Union County. Bob made a motion to accept. Warren seconded. Roll call vote: Motion passed unanimously.

VII. Public Comment

- a. Amy asked for public comment. Julie gave a report on CREP. Amy thanked Julie for the update. Kenny asked a follow up question
- b. Joe Schmees gave an update for IASWCD.
- c. Walt Sell gave an update for Purdue.
- d. Jerry gave an update for the NRCS. He shared a written report and thanked partners for a successful year in conservation.
- e. George gave an update for Northwest work on the ground.
- f. Laura gave an update for the DSS team.

VIII. Next meeting will be October 26. Meeting went into a break before the State Soil Conservation Board began their training.

IX. Training was conducted.

- a. Laura Fribley led discussion and reviewed Purpose and Responsibilities of the SSCB, Roles of the Board and Individual Responsibilities
- b. Geneva Tyler reviewed and led discussion on Public Access Law.
- c. Nathan Stoelting and Mark Thomas led discussion on Parliamentary Procedure.

After additional discussion, Brad made a motion to submit the letter discussed earlier to Governor and Lieutenant Governor. Seconded by Kenny. Roll call vote: Warren voted no. Bob did not vote (he was no longer present). All others voted in favor. Motion carried.

X. Amy adjourned meeting at 11:57am.



State Soil Conservation Board

ISDA – DSC Director’s Report
October 21, 2021

Budget

- As of 9/30 our staffing holds as well as our staff reducing discretionary spending leaves us with an estimate ~\$50,000 in our division fund and ~60,000 in our Clean Water Indiana fund for FY22. Those numbers are subject to change, but as we’ve said in the past, we will continue to update.
- I just wanted to say thank you to our District Support Specialists and our Clean Water Indiana Grants Committee for their diligent efforts scoring, discussing, and providing recommendations for this last round of grants.
- By keeping your funding recommendations near our ask of **\$950,000**, we will have no issue maintaining our current staffing holds and providing quality service to landowners.

Division of Soil Conservation Staffing

- Maintain some vacancies, reduce discretionary spending, bring in additional funds through grant administration.
 - Filled positions, a CREP Leader in Scottsburg, and an RS in Bloomfield.
 - DSS will be posted Nov 1st on the state job bank, and we will hold a webinar regarding the position on Nov 4th for district and partner input.
 - Two resignations, one CREP Leader, and one RS.
 - This brings us to 5 vacancies starting Nov 5th (those individuals last day).
 - We will fill two and continue to hold 3 positions indefinitely.
 - **Will continue to update as we move through FY22.**

ISDA Led Grants

For the past few years, ISDA has had several grants that seek to utilize funding to increase conservation adoption by landowners in the Western Lake Erie Basin watershed by accelerating the use of phosphorus soil sampling and analysis, manure sampling and analysis, and assisting in the development of basic nutrient management plans based on the sampling and analysis conducted.

Great Lakes Commission Grant (Completed Oct. 2021)

This grant focused on implementing the 4R approach into the Basin. Our goal was to work at the field level to promote the 4R's with the farmers in the Great Lakes Basin.

GLRI EPA

This project seeks to utilize funding to increase conservation adoption by landowners in the Western Lake Erie Basin watershed in Indiana and sub-watersheds draining to Lake Michigan by accelerating the use of phosphorus soil sampling and analysis, manure sampling and analysis, and aiding in the development of basic nutrient management plans.

GLRI Technical Assistance

ISDA received a GLRI Technical Assistance agreement to help promote conservation adoption and reduce nutrient loading into the St. Marys River.

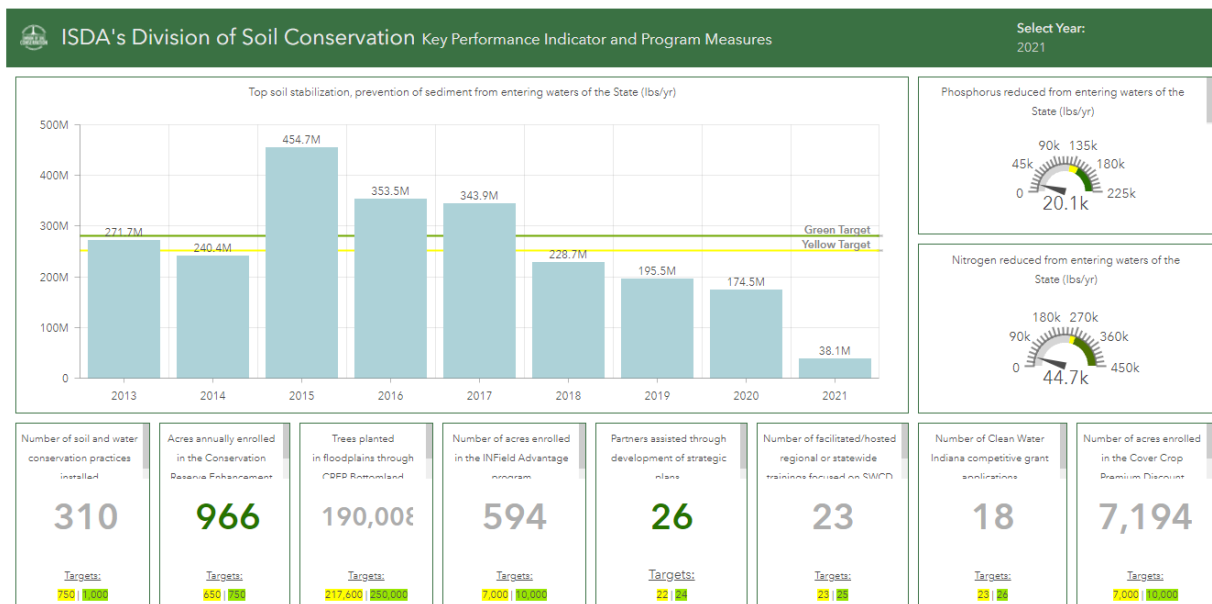
WLEB Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

Our proposal addresses the landowners in the Western Lake Erie Basin's western portion, stretching across Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio. This partnership project will address the priority resource concerns of water quality deprivation and inadequate habitat for fish, wildlife, and invertebrates. While our project area does not include all the Western Lake Erie Basin watersheds, it does have most Maumee headwaters.

Carbon

- ISDA & DNR have been exploring the state's role in voluntary carbon markets, and hearing from various stakeholders in the ag and forestry sectors.
- Additionally, we plan to submit comments on USDA's Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry Partnership.

Division of Soil Conservation Key Performance Indicator & Program Measures



SSCB Meeting - October 20, 2021 - CREP Summary

	Native Grasses	Permanent Wildlife Habitat	Filter Strip	Hardwood Tree Planting	Riparian Buffer	Bottomland Timber Establishment	Wetland Restoration	Wetland Restoration (non-floodplain)	Total		
	CP-2	CP-4D	CP-21	CP-3A	CP-22	CP-31	CP-23	CP-23A		Goal	Percentage of Goal
	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres		
Total Reported Completed on SharePoint as of 10/20/2021	233.48	52.20	6,482.05	51.63	821.36	8,032.42	1917.46	3,697.54	21,288.14	26,250.00	81.10%
Total CREP Enrollment	240.07	58.56	6,819.17	62.93	865.54	8,334.49	2136.41	3,977.46	22,494.63	26,250.00	85.69%
Total Acres in Extension				1.00	53.70	428.50	121.70	6.00	610.90		
								Difference =	1,206.49		

	Native Grasses	Permanent Wildlife Habitat	Filter Strip	Hardwood Tree Planting	Riparian Buffer	Bottomland Timber Establishment	Wetland Restoration	Wetland Restoration (non-floodplain)	Practice Total	SWCD Administrative Fee	Total
	CP-2	CP-4D	CP-21	CP-3A	CP-22	CP-31	CP-23	CP-23A			
	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars
Total CREP Dollars	\$ 23,158.00	\$ 5,220.00	\$ 630,199.00	\$ 21,530.00	\$ 336,121.00	\$ 3,276,313.00	\$ 1,720,875.50	\$ 2,787,829.50	\$ 8,801,246.00	\$ 738,662.10	\$ 9,539,908.10

Federal Match of \$4-\$13 is between \$ 35,204,984.00
\$ 114,416,198.00

	Native Grasses	Permanent Wildlife Habitat	Filter Strip	Hardwood Tree Planting	Riparian Buffer	Bottomland Timber Establishment	Wetland Restoration	Wetland Restoration (non-floodplain)	Total
	CP-2	CP-4D	CP-21	CP-3A	CP-22	CP-31	CP-23	CP-23A	
	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres
Total CREP to CREP Re-enrollment Reported on SharePoint as of 10/20/2021	0.00	0.00	355.78	1.58	2.90	34.56	0.00	211.02	605.84

Note: These acres are not re-counted in the total above, however they do receive incentive payments.

SSCB Meeting - October 20, 2021 - CREP Acres (broken down by watershed)

Post-Expansion Acres

CREP Watershed	Native Grasses	Permanent Wildlife Habitat	Filter Strip	Hardwood Tree Planting	Riparian Buffer	Bottomland Timber Establishment	Wetland Restoration	Wetland Restoration (non-floodplain)	Total
	CP-2	CP-4D	CP-21	CP-3A	CP-22	CP-31	CP-23	CP-23A	
	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres
Highland-Pigeon	0.00	0.00	11.98	0.00	3.10	134.60	0.00	0.00	149.68
Lower Wabash	0.00	0.00	21.51	0.00	0.00	644.70	0.00	0.00	666.21
Lower East Fork White	53.50	45.20	168.71	30.30	83.17	751.44	287.16	0.00	1419.48
Lower White	10.70	0.00	152.37	0.00	122.39	2,242.71	123.03	0.00	2,651.20
Middle Wabash-Busseron	2.00	0.00	9.02	0.00	17.40	1,550.69	672.62	91.60	2,343.33
Middle Wabash-Deer	6.60	0.00	108.63	0.00	0.00	73.10	37.17	59.42	284.92
Middle Wabash-Vermillion	4.50	0.00	165.34	6.97	61.80	746.29	505.89	177.70	1,668.49
Tippecanoe River	93.84	0.00	655.18	0.00	3.41	21.40	87.30	2,273.35	3,134.48
Upper East Fork White	0.00	0.00	419.65	0.00	38.40	201.92	0.00	0.00	659.97
Upper Wabash	23.15	7.00	999.57	2.56	64.19	282.43	82.59	84.29	1545.78
Upper White	35.09	0.00	225.59	0.00	286.80	325.24	0.00	71.18	943.90
Reported Completed as of 10/20/2021	229.38	52.20	2,937.55	39.83	680.66	6,974.52	1795.76	2,757.54	15,467.44
Enrolled as of 10/20/2021	235.97	58.56	3,274.67	51.13	724.84	7,276.59	2,014.71	3,037.46	16,673.93

Pre-Expansion Acres

CREP Watershed	Native Grasses	Permanent Wildlife Habitat	Filter Strip	Hardwood Tree Planting	Riparian Buffer	Bottomland Timber Establishment	Wetland Restoration	Wetland Restoration (non-floodplain)	Total
	CP-2	CP-4D	CP-21	CP-3A	CP-22	CP-31	CP-23	CP-23A	
	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres
Highland-Pigeon	2.50	0.00	215.00	10.80	16.40	109.20	0.00	0.00	353.90
Tippecanoe River	0.00	0.00	2,916.80	0.00	7.80	20.40	121.70	924.00	3,990.70
Upper White	1.60	0.00	412.70	1.00	116.50	928.30	0.00	16.00	1476.10
Total Acres Prior to Expansion of CREP	4.10	0.00	3,544.50	11.80	140.70	1,057.90	121.70	940.00	5,820.70

Extension Acres	CP-3A	CP-22	CP-31	CP-23	CP-23A	Total Extension Acres
Extension Acres -Tippecanoe			14.80	121.70		136.50
Extension Acres -Upper White		1.00	53.70	413.70	6.00	474.40
Total Extension Acres	1.00	53.70	428.50	121.70	6.00	610.90

CREP to CREP reenrollment

CREP Watershed	Native Grasses	Permanent Wildlife Habitat	Filter Strip	Hardwood Tree Planting	Riparian Buffer	Bottomland Timber Establishment	Wetland Restoration	Wetland Restoration (non-floodplain)	Total
	CP-2	CP-4D	CP-21	CP-3A	CP-22	CP-31	CP-23	CP-23A	Total
	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres
Highland Pigeon	0.0	0.0	25.53	1.58	2.90	0.0	0.0	0.0	30.01
Tippecanoe	0.0	0.0	290.36	0.00	0.00	14.1	0.0	193.82	498.24
Upper White	0.0	0.0	39.89	0.00	0.00	20.5	0.0	17.2	77.59
CREP to CREP Re-enrollment Reported on SharePoint as of 10/20/2021	0.0	0.0	355.78	1.58	2.90	34.56	0.0	211.02	605.84

SSCB Meeting - October 20, 2021 - CREP Dollars (broken down by watershed)

Post-Expansion Dollars

CREP Watershed	Native Grasses	Permanent Wildlife Habitat	Filter Strip	Hardwood Tree Planting	Riparian Buffer	Bottomland Timber Establishment	Wetland Restoration	Wetland Restoration (non-floodplain)	Practice Total	SWCD Administrative Fees	Total
	CP-2	CP-4D	CP-21	CP-3A	CP-22	CP-31	CP-23	CP-23A			
	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars
Highland-Pigeon	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,881.00	\$ 632.00	\$ 2,400.00	\$ 53,840.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 59,753.00	\$ 5,975.30	\$ 65,728.30
Lower Wabash	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,188.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 257,880.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 259,068.00	\$ 25,906.80	\$ 284,974.80
Lower East Fork White	\$ 5,350.00	\$ 4,520.00	\$ 14,789.00	\$ 12,120.00	\$ 33,268.00	\$ 287,140.00	\$ 272,802.00	\$ -	\$ 629,989.00	\$ 62,998.90	\$ 692,987.90
Lower White	\$ 1,070.00	\$ -	\$ 7,755.00	\$ -	\$ 47,996.00	\$ 895,484.00	\$ 98,107.00	\$ -	\$ 1,050,412.00	\$ 105,041.20	\$ 1,155,453.20
Middle Wabash-Busseron	\$ 200.00	\$ -	\$ 642.00	\$ -	\$ 5,400.00	\$ 620,276.00	\$ 614,789.00	\$ 87,020.00	\$ 1,328,327.00	\$ 132,832.70	\$ 1,461,159.70
Middle Wabash-Deer	\$ 660.00	\$ -	\$ 10,863.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 29,240.00	\$ 21,781.50	\$ 18,073.00	\$ 80,617.50	\$ 8,061.75	\$ 88,679.25
Middle Wabash-Vermillion	\$ 450.00	\$ -	\$ 8,232.00	\$ 2,788.00	\$ 24,720.00	\$ 298,516.00	\$ 480,595.50	\$ 159,315.00	\$ 974,616.50	\$ 97,461.65	\$ 1,072,078.15
Tippecanoe River	\$ 9,384.00	\$ -	\$ 87,595.00	\$ -	\$ 1,364.00	\$ 14,184.00	\$ 75,235.00	\$ 2,016,190.50	\$ 2,203,952.50	\$ 220,395.25	\$ 2,424,347.75
Upper East Fork White	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 39,465.00	\$ -	\$ 14,600.00	\$ 80,768.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 134,833.00	\$ 13,483.30	\$ 148,316.30
Upper Wabash	\$ 2,125.00	\$ 700.00	\$ 82,610.00	\$ 1,024.00	\$ 23,544.00	\$ 93,584.00	\$ 78,460.50	\$ 55,230.00	\$ 337,277.50	\$ 33,727.75	\$ 371,005.25
Upper White	\$ 3,509.00	\$ -	\$ 19,729.00	\$ -	\$ 113,120.00	\$ 115,116.00	\$ -	\$ 74,501.00	\$ 325,975.00	\$ 32,597.50	\$ 358,572.50
Upper White Extensions	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,800.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,800.00	\$ 180.00	\$ 1,980.00
Reported Paid as of 10/20/2021	\$ 22,748.00	\$ 5,220.00	\$ 275,749.00	\$ 16,564.00	\$ 268,212.00	\$ 2,746,028.00	\$ 1,641,770.50	\$ 2,410,329.50	\$ 7,386,621.00	\$ 738,662.10	\$ 8,125,283.10

Pre-Expansion Dollars

CREP Watershed	Native Grasses	Permanent Wildlife Habitat	Filter Strip	Hardwood Tree Planting	Riparian Buffer	Bottomland Timber Establishment	Wetland Restoration	Wetland Restoration (non-floodplain)	Practice Total
	CP-2	CP-4D	CP-21	CP-3A	CP-22	CP-31	CP-23	CP-23A	
	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars
Highland-Pigeon	\$ 250.00	\$ -	\$ 21,500.00	\$ 4,316.00	\$ 6,564.00	\$ 43,680.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 76,310.00
Tippecanoe River	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 291,680.00	\$ -	\$ 3,120.00	\$ 8,160.00	\$ 48,680.00	\$ 369,600.00	\$ 721,240.00
Tippecanoe River Extensions	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,700.00	\$ 30,425.00	\$ -	\$ 34,125.00
Upper White	\$ 160.00	\$ -	\$ 41,270.00	\$ 400.00	\$ 46,600.00	\$ 371,320.00	\$ -	\$ 6,400.00	\$ 466,150.00
Upper White Extensions	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 250.00	\$ 11,625.00	\$ 103,425.00	\$ -	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 116,800.00
Total Acres Prior to Expansion of CREP	\$ 410.00	\$ -	\$ 354,450.00	\$ 4,966.00	\$ 67,909.00	\$ 530,285.00	\$ 79,105.00	\$ 377,500.00	\$ 1,414,625.00

CREP to CREP reenrollment

CREP Watershed	Native Grasses	Permanent Wildlife Habitat	Filter Strip	Hardwood Tree Planting	Riparian Buffer	Bottomland Timber Establishment	Wetland Restoration	Wetland Restoration (non-floodplain)	Practice Total
	CP-2	CP-4D	CP-21	CP-3A	CP-22	CP-31	CP-23	CP-23A	Total
	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars
Highland Pigeon	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,683.00	\$ 632.00	\$ 1,160.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,475.00
Tippecanoe	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 14,560.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,624.00	\$ -	\$ 52,968.00	\$ 73,152.00
Upper White	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
CREP to CREP reenrollment reported paid as of 10/20/2021	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 16,243.00	\$ 632.00	\$ 1,160.00	\$ 5,624.00	\$ -	\$ 52,968.00	\$ 76,627.00

Note: These incentive dollars are figured in the total above. This table shows only the breakdown of what is paid for reenrolled CREP to CREP acres.



**Indiana Association of
Soil and Water
Conservation Districts**

Protecting and enhancing Indiana's soil
and water resources for all Hoosiers



IASWCD

225 S. East Street
Suite 142
Indianapolis, IN 46202

Phone: 317.692.7325

Web: www.iaswcd.org

PRESIDENT:

Bobby Hettmansperger
Wabash County

VICE PRESIDENT:

Jeff Baker
Warrick County

TREASURER:

Sarah Delbecq
DeKalb County

SECRETARY:

Marc Roberts
Montgomery County

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

Joe Schmees
joseph-schmees@iaswcd.org

To: State Soil Conservation Board
From: Bobby Hettmansperger, President, IASWCD
Date: Tuesday, October 26, 2021

Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative (CCSI)

- The CCSI Oversight Committee meeting was this morning, October 26. The next committee meeting is November 30. Refer to the separate CCSI report for more.

Urban Soil Health Program (USHP)

- Staff continue to collaborate with districts on developing working groups and holding events. We currently have a vacancy in the NE Urban Specialist, and are accepting applications. The current staff are reaching out to work with districts in the NE to cover the gap, and we hope to have someone hired in early November.

Legislative Issues

- One resolution was submitted to be considered at the IASWCD Business meeting in January, and the final resolution will be sent out to Districts at the beginning of November.
- IASWCD testified at the Interim Study Committee on Fiscal Policy this month, giving feedback on the proposed legislation to create a process for developing Watershed Development Commissions. This was the original HB 1055 from last session, and went to summer study committee. It will likely be reintroduced this session.
- Executive Director Joe Schmees will be representing SWCDs on the Wetlands Taskforce established by SEA 389 from last session. All Governor's appointments have been made and work should begin soon.

Other

- Districts Showcase award winners are Decatur, Blackford and Clay County SWCDs. The remaining district showcases with Blackford and Clay County SWCDs are November 8 and 10, respectively. We would like to have a representative from all of the ICP partners be able to attend each presentation, and invite all SSCB members.
- IASWCD Board meetings for the remainder of this year are November 19 and December 17.
- The theme for the SWCD Annual Conference is "The Power of Partnerships," and it will be held January 23-25, 2022, at the Westin in Indianapolis. Our Keynote speaker will be Max Armstrong, and we have another great set of breakout sessions for districts and partners. Registration is now live, with early bird rates available through November 15. More info is available on our conference webpage: <http://wordpress.iaswcd.org/events-2/2022-conference/>.

THE IASWCD MISSION *is to enable the conservation of natural resources of Indiana.*

Indiana NRCS State Conservationist Report

October 2021 State Soil Conservation Board Meeting

FARM BILL

Indiana has completed obligations for EQIP (99.4%) and CSP (97.3%) for FY 2021. Thank you for your input at the Indiana State Technical Committee Meeting on October 21, in which we discussed Farm Bill Program changes for FY22.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

Indiana's agricultural producers who want to improve natural resources and address concerns on their land are encouraged to sign up for the first round of funding by December 17. Applications are taken on a continuous basis. Any applications received after December 17 will be considered in future announced application rounds.

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

Funds are available to help landowners protect and restore key farmlands, grasslands and wetlands across Indiana. ACEP applications for the current funding round must be submitted on or before the closing dates:

Wetland Reserve Easements: November 15, 2021

Agricultural Land Easements: January 18, 2022

Applications are taken on a continuous basis. Any applications received after the current round of funding will be considered in future announced application rounds.

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) Payments

Most CSP contracts (CSP-Renewal, CSP-Classic, and CSP-GCI), must have the payments approved by November 5, 2021. For CSP active contracts obligated in FY 2019, 2018, and 2017, participants can elect to receive payment in calendar year 2022.

NEW COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS FOR RACIAL JUSTICE AND EQUITY

NRCS investing up to \$50 million nationally in cooperative agreements to support historically underserved farmers with climate-smart agriculture and forestry. The Racial Justice and Equity Conservation Cooperative Agreements are available to entities and individuals for two-year projects that expand the delivery of conservation assistance to farmers who are beginning, limited resource, socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers.

The projects should help historically underserved farmers in implementing natural resources conservation practices that:

- Improve soil health.
- Improve water quality.
- Provide habitat for local wildlife species of concern.
- Improve the environmental and economic performance of working agricultural lands.
- Build and strengthen local food projects that provide healthy food and economic opportunities.

Entities who provide outreach assistance to historically underserved groups are eligible, including Native American tribal governments and organizations, nonprofit organizations and private and public institutions of higher education.

Applications must be received by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on October 25. See the [grants.gov announcement](https://www.grants.gov) for details and application instructions. A webinar for potential applicants was held in late September. When available, instructions regarding how to access the webinar will be posted in the opportunity on Grants.gov in the Synopsis tab. Funding can be requested for between \$100,000 and \$1 million. There is no cost-share or match required for this opportunity.

NOTE: Purdue Extension is coordinating a statewide proposal, anyone interested in partnering should reach out to Tamara Benjamin at tamara17@purdue.edu. Questions can also be directed to Jill Reinhart, NRCS ASTC Partnerships, at jill.reinhart@usda.gov.

CLIMATE-SMART AGRICULTURE & FORESTRY PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE: REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Comments are requested on a new climate smart agriculture and forestry partnership initiative, that will inform a call for proposals later this fall. USDA will support a set of pilot projects that provide incentives to implement climate smart conservation practices on working lands and to quantify and monitor the carbon and greenhouse gas benefits associated with those practices.

Comments may be provided on or before 11:59 p.m. EST on November 1, via the Federal Register, Docket ID: USDA-2021-0010. Insights gained through this process will inform development of a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) soliciting Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry Partnership Initiative project proposals that encourage the adoption of climate-smart practices and promote markets for climate-smart commodities. USDA plans to announce the NOFA this fall, with project proposals accepted early next year.

OFFICE OPERATIONAL STATUS AND REENTRY

As of October 18, Knox County is the only USDA Service Center with restrictions of 25% capacity and no visitors. All other field offices are at 50% and visitors by appointment. The State Office and Area Offices continue at 25% capacity and no visitors. The county office list is updated every Monday by FPAC.

On December 1, 2021, USDA's senior leadership cadre will begin to return to the physical workplace. On January 3, 2022, USDA will begin our return to the workplace for all USDA employees. Returning to the workplace will be a process. Once the return to the workplace process begins, we expect it will be a phased approach. By March 14, 2022, we anticipate all USDA employees completing the phased return.

VACCINATION FOR PARTNERS AND CONTRACTORS

Many USDA agencies work alongside partners in USDA offices across the country. The Department continues to finalize guidance on impacts to partners working in USDA space. We anticipate all employees working in USDA space will be required to be vaccinated under the Presidential Executive Order or have an approved accommodation, but more information will be coming very soon.

NATURAL RESOURCE INVENTORY DATA COLLECTION

The National Resources Inventory (NRI) is a statistical survey of land use and natural resource conditions and trends on U.S. non-Federal lands. Indiana's NRI data collection will begin in early October and run through the end of January 2022. The NRCS soils staff at the state office will collect the data. Field office staff and FSA may be contacted to provide producer-specific information, such as, tillage practices, conservation plans, cropping history, etc. If you have any comments or questions, please contact John Allen, Assistant State Soil Scientist at john.allen@usda.gov.

SIGN UP FOR GOVDELIVERY FOR UPDATED USDA INFORMATION

You can now sign up to receive free email and/or text messages directly from your local or state USDA service center for information related to loans, farm disaster assistance, conservation programs, crop

insurance and other USDA programs. USDA will send news and updates through a single email or text message subscription through GovDelivery, a communication technology service for government agencies. The digital communications platform is secure and subscriber contact information will not be shared.

In addition to subscribing for emails and texts by location, you can also subscribe for lists by topics. Subscribe online by visiting farmers.gov/subscribe. From this link, choose to receive email communications, text message alerts or both. The first step is establishing subscriber preferences by choosing to receive program information by topic, state and/or local service center. You may select as many subscriber options as you want, which allows those who have agricultural interests in multiple counties or across state lines to receive updates from each county in which they have an interest.