

**State Soil Conservation Board**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**NRCS State Office**  
**March 21, 2017**

**Members Present:**

Nola Gentry  
Ray Chattin  
Robert Woodling  
Larry Clemens  
Bob Eddleman

**Members Absent:**

Warren Baird  
Rex Blanton

**Others Present:**

Jordan Seger	Gary Struben
Laura Fribley	Walt Sell
Geneva Tyler	George Reger
Nathan Stoelting	Meg Leader
Leah Harmon	Julie Harrold
Jennifer Boyle Warner	Ted McKinney
Scheryl Vaughn	Russ Curry

**I. 1:30: Call to Order** Meeting was called to order at 1:30 by Robert Woodling.

**II. Approve Minutes of January 2017**

Minutes were reviewed. Ray Chattin moved to approve the minutes from January's meeting and seconded by Nola. Motion carried.

**III. Clean Water Indiana**

Leah reported on Clean Water Indiana Grants touching on the process of electronic comments, training reimbursements, and grant reviews. 10 grants will be reviewed later this summer. She then turned it over to Bob for his committee report on grants.

Bob thanked the chairman. He announced that the committee met a couple of weeks ago. The group reviewed survey information from districts and suggested possible changes for the 2018 funding cycle. Research eligibility was stricken from the application guidance. Clean Water Indiana Funding cannot be used for research equipment and monitoring supplies, but practices that support those projects are eligible.

The committee also recommended a change in match for staffing projects. Proposals to fund a staff person will require a 25% match rather 50% for that portion of the proposal. All other programs will remain a 50% match.

Because of the blind scoring process, districts are asked to not use identifying details such as district and/or watershed names in the application narrative.

The committee is asking for more concise applications. Character counts in the application have been reduced to help make these applications easier to read. Districts may still submit up to five pages of attachments.

Bob then turned the meeting back to Robert for the board to act on the committee's recommendations. moved to approve the board's recommendations for the competitive grants. Ray seconded. Motion carried.

Bob then reported on training request. Training grants will be capped at \$1,000 per district. Motion was made by Bob, seconded by Nola. Motion carried.

Finally Bob reported that the committee recommends that remaining FY 2017 funds be awarded to Jackson/Scott to fund their application to address invasive species. The funding will be used to hire a technician, not to address the cost share portion of the application. The amount funded will be between \$20,000-\$40,000. Bob made a motion to approve this recommendation. Second by Nola. Motion passed unanimously.

Ray then asked to make some comments regarding district law, and that he has been asked to review this and make recommendations of changes that he sees as vital for SWCDs. Larry asked if we are seeing changes in the amount of funding request for invasive species and other non-traditional resource concerns. Robert reported that he was asked to speak at the Owen County Annual Meeting regarding why invasive species projects were funded to address water quality. Robert gave some examples of how removing invasives can address water quality.

Bob then opened a discussion regarding CCSI and the potential of future funding through the competitive CWI process. There was a lot of discussion on whether or not this would be a good change going forward. Bob made a motion to table the discussion on this matter until later. Nola seconded. Motion carried.

Motion was made by Bob to have CCSI utilize more standardized reporting for its current grants. Ray seconded, motion carried.

#### **IV. State Soil Conservation Board Business**

Robert gave the chairman's report. He started by thanking Ray Chattin for his year of service and leadership. He has been attending the March Region meetings, attending 3 of the 4 so far and will be attending the final meeting tomorrow night. He has used these meetings to help explain to districts what the State Soil Board can do. He has also been thanking the districts for all of their hard work. He is thinking about funding for the future. The grant training this year helped districts learn how to write grants and find other funding sources. The State Soil Conservation Board could apply for funding themselves. He believes there are a lot of foundations that provide funding, and he would like to explore this option for future funding.

Robert would also like to have a few executive committee meetings this year consisting of himself, Ray Chattin, Rex Blanton, and Jordan Seger. The board discussed this and everyone thought it would be a good opportunity for brain storming and discussion. Finally, he thinks it might be a good time to review their business plan. Robert met with

Jordan recently and they reviewed the current plan. The plan is on track for the most part. The current plan will expire in 2020, and it is now time to start looking at changes. Jennifer was then given the floor to discuss the MOU between Purdue, IASWCD and the SSCB. This is in regards to the resolution that was approved in January. The new MOU will expire on January 31, 2022. Jordan reported that he checked with the ISDA legal counsel on the language in the MOU and they didn't see any issues with it. Ray moved to approve the MOU between Purdue, IASWCD and the SSCB. Larry seconded. Motion carried.

## **V. Soil and Water Conservation Districts**

### Carroll SWCD

Geneva reported on the resignation of Cale Rader from the Carroll SWCD board. The district is recommending the appointment of Neil Mylet. Nola moved to approve, Larry seconded. Motion carried.

### Starke SWCD

Geneva also reported on Starke County. They didn't have an election this year. Bob approved the temporary appointment of Joshua Lawrence, Ray seconded. Motion carried.

### Gibson SWCD

Nathan reported on a change in the Gibson County Board of Supervisors. Dave Weber has resigned, Dennis Simpson, a former SWCD supervisor has agreed to fill out the rest of his term. Nola moved to approve, Bob seconded. Motion carried.

## **VI. 10 Minute Break**

Robert then asked for a 10 minute break, which was observed.  
Meeting was called back to order at 2:34.

## **VII. ISDA Updates**

### Director's Report- Jordan Seger

Jordan then gave the ISDA Directors Report. The ICP leaders hosted a webinar on general updates. Legislative session should convene on April 21<sup>st</sup>. Bills are now changing sides. House Budget Bill: Currently a pack of 20 cigarettes is taxed at .995 cents. New bill will increase that by \$1.00. However, it is proposed that all departments that receive funds from the cigarette tax fund (except Medicare costs) will have the percentage they receive of the pot cut. Two resource specialists working in Lake Erie area are currently funded through a grant that will expire. They could be funded by an additional \$116,000 in the proposed budget.

Phil Anderson has been working on Business Planning process. After he recovers from knee surgery, he will begin working with the DSSs again on that process.

RS position in the Southeast is open and applications are coming in.

4,000 less practice were installed in 2017 vs. 2016, but cost of projects increased.

Nutrient management soil health strategy reported on their goals. Jordan shared what those goals were, and that the ICP Leaders were looking at them and discussing adoption

at least some of these goals as their own. There was a lot of discussion from several members of the board on these goals and their adoption.

Ted McKinney then gave some updates on his trip to Washington DC and the things he heard while he was there. Ted also suggested that some key folks from Farm Bureau and Corn and Soy to attend a couple of SSCB Meetings.

#### Technical Report- George Reger

George Reger gave the technical report. He pointed out the breakdown of workload around the state. Documents were available to allow everyone to see these details. George also pointed out the reports on all of the things the resource specialist have been doing.

#### Soil Health-Meg Leader

Meg provided a report. She pointed out that 2016 had high nitrate testing in stalk sampling. They started the winter meetings not knowing why those numbers were that high. Growers however, pointed out that the high amount of disease in corn plants late in the growing season may have led to these numbers. Starting two new groups in 2017. Rush County and the Educator in Steuben and LaGrange County. CCSI has collected \$7,000 from districts for research.

#### Accountability and Technology-Jordan Seger

Jordan gave Deb Fairhurst's report on Accountability and Technology. Been working on putting together data for fall 2016. Monroe County results were cut short because of I-69 construction. District Success Stories will be updated in the next couple of months so that success stories can be submitted for this past year.

#### District Support-Laura Fribley

Phil Anderson has been working closely with the DSS Staff to improve the way we facilitate business plans. There are also some upcoming events planned for later this year that they are working on including LI and Supervisor Summit. Geneva then gave an update on Leadership Institute. She has been working with Purdue Leadership Program to re-evaluate the current program and how we can re-energize it. Surveys are being handed out right now to learn more about what changes we could make to program. DSS Staff will report back to the SSCB around their June meeting on the results.

#### Water Quality and CREP- Julie Harrold

Julie Harrold gave a CREP Update. MOU with DNR expired in 2012. Julie has been working on CREP easements and updating this MOU. Already over 500 acres of sign up in the first quarter of 2017. CREP will not be affected by the cap with FSA at this time. Julie also reported that EPA has reviewed State Reduction Strategy. ISDA is looking over their comments now after getting them back in February.

### **VIII. Conservation Partner Reports**

#### IASWCD

Jennifer Boyle Warner gave updates for IASWCD. They had a successful meeting with congressman last week. There has been no success to date at securing additional funding from the general fund. They will learn more in April. 9 districts have taken advantage of

state house visits. Jennifer also noted what CCSI has been doing for the state and the amount of money they have been able to leverage from their partners.

#### Purdue Extension

Walt reported for Purdue. He provided handouts on upcoming programs that Purdue has developed. These include the new conservation through Community Leadership. Weed identification is a project Walt is working with Laura on developing after hearing from districts that there is a need for that with SWCD Staff. He also passed out a copy of the Purdue Extension Annual Report.

#### NRCS

Gary Steuben gave the NRCS Update while Jane is in Washington DC. He gave a handout of the NRCS updates. There is a hiring freeze currently for USDA Jobs. Farm Bill updates, include applications for several programs including CSP, EQIP, and CRP. Thanked the SWCDs for their support with the agreements.

### **IX. Public Comment**

Robert asked for public comment. None was given. Next meeting will be May 22 in Prophetstown. Nola is working with Leah and Geneva on activities while they are there. Motion was made by Bob to adjourn, seconded by Nola. Motion carried.