

2014

Division of Soil Conservation Annual Report



MISSION: Increase agricultural economic benefits by assisting Indiana's farmers in the application of advanced agronomic technologies while improving upon Indiana's soil health and water quality.

INDIANA
STATE DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE

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Division of Soil Conservation



The [Indiana State Department of Agriculture, Division of Soil Conservation](#) is committed to provide the information and assistance needed to enhance environmental stewardship. To support this commitment, the Division of Soil Conservation employs field technical staff, Resource Specialists, located throughout Indiana to directly help land users identify and resolve soil and water resource problems and/or capitalize on opportunities. Services available to land users and managers include: up-to-date information to create or revise conservation management plans, evaluate on-site erosion and water quality concerns, help land owners identify specific conservation practice needs, and survey, design, and supervise the installation and maintenance of conservation practices. Resource Specialists work with local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) alongside other conservation partners in regionally-based Conservation Implementation Teams.

In addition, the Division of Soil Conservation employs District Support Specialists who work cooperatively with Soil and Water Conservation Districts and other conservations partners in the design of programs that reach land users, the general public, government officials, and primary and secondary educational institutions on the husbandry and management of soil and water resources. Services provided to SWCDs by District Support Specialists include information, guidance and direct on-site assistance to SWCDs in carrying out their legal and operational responsibilities, assist SWCDs in expanding their capacity to fulfill their role in their respective communities, and prepare and conduct training for SWCD supervisors and staff.

In 2014, the ISDA Division of Soil Conservation worked with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to establish a Key Performance Indicator and other Performance Measures to achieve further accountability and accurately measure progress towards Division goals. Working with the OMB, the ISDA DSC will refine these metrics over time to ensure accountability with taxpayers while successfully conserving Indiana's natural resources.

Key Performance Indicator

Top soil stabilization, prevention of sediment from entering waters of the State

ISDA will work with landowners and SWCDs to voluntarily improve water quality and save valuable topsoil by preventing 280 million lbs of sediment from entering Indiana waterways.

Performance Measures

Number of acres in On Farm Network

Number of soil and water conservation practices installed

Number of newly enrolled acres in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

Nitrogen reduced from entering waters of the State

Phosphorus reduced from entering waters of the State

State Soil Conservation Board

The ISDA - Division of Soil Conservation works along with the [State Soil Conservation Board](#) (SSBC) to enhance the stewardship of Indiana's soil and water resources. This is done by providing face-to-face, on-the-land technical and financial assistance for implementing conservation practices, supporting Indiana's 92 Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and promoting the opportunities and benefits associated with caring for our soil and water resources.

In 2014, the SSCB continued implementing eligibility requirements for Soil and Water Conservation Districts and Clean Water Indiana competitive grants. Recipients of future funding must continue to adhere to minimum laws and deadlines as established in Indiana Code and through grant agreements.



State Soil Conservation Board (back row-left to right) Larry Clemens, Ray Chattin, Scott Ham, Bob Eddleman, (middle row) Warren Baird, Robert Woodling (front) Nola Gentry

Clean Water Indiana

The [Clean Water Indiana](#) (CWI) Grant Program (IC 14-32-8-5) utilizes the Clean Water Indiana Fund to support Indiana Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) in efforts to reduce sediment and nutrients from nonpoint sources to help improve water quality. The State Soil Conservation Board (SSCB) accepts competitive proposals for multi-district, multi-year watershed projects. Project proposals can be for up to three years in length and up to \$75,000. Grant funding can be used to help support one or more of the funding categories listed below:

1. Cost Share Incentives/On Farm Demonstrations
2. Increase Direct Technical/Professional Assistance to Land users
3. Adult Education

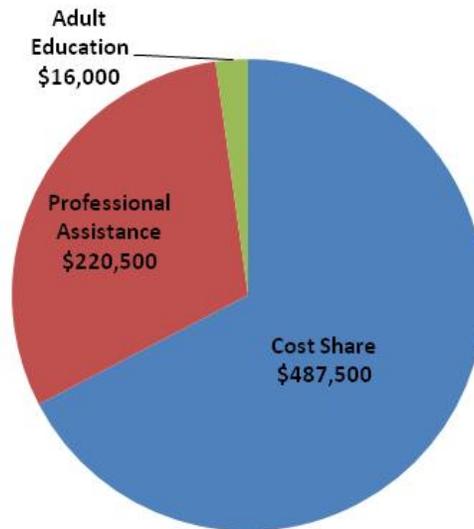


Pulaski County SWCD supervisors work with Julie Morris, DSC resource specialist to seed a cover crop demo plot.

2014 Clean Water Indiana Grants

In 2013, 33 applications, representing 68 districts, were submitted for the 2014 Clean Water Indiana Grants round totaling \$2,142,550. The SSCB awarded ten CWI grants totaling \$579,000. The grants began on January 1, 2014 and will be up to three years in length.

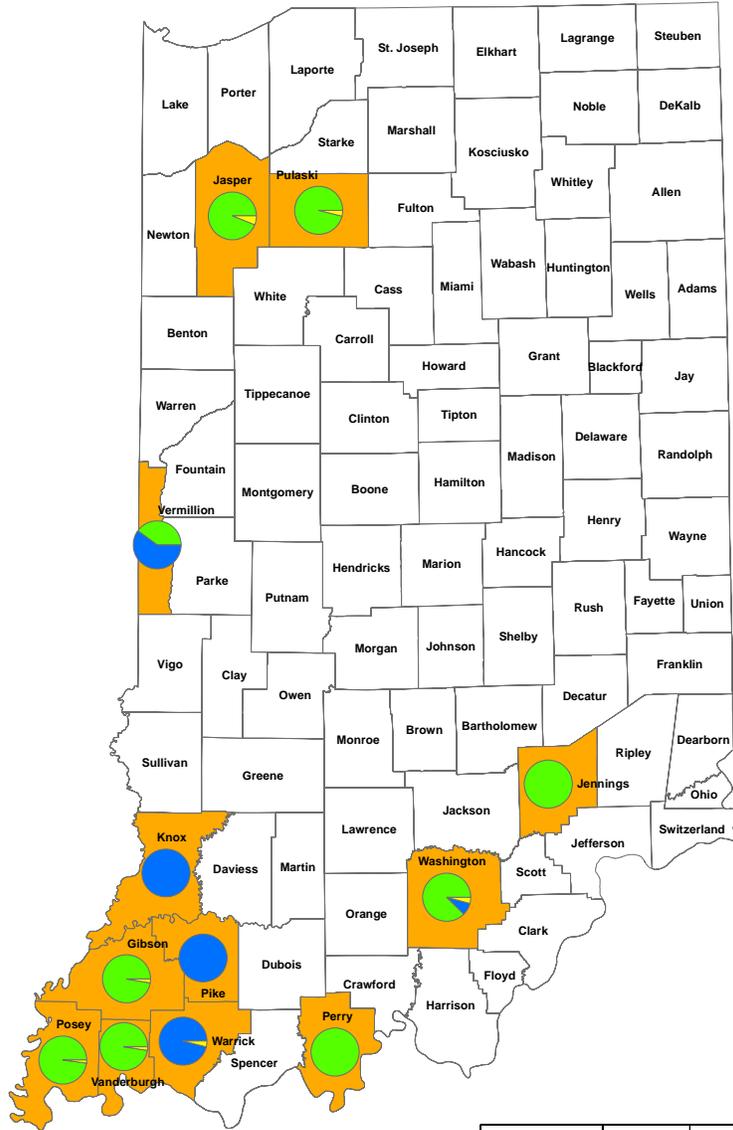
In March 2014, the SSCB funded two additional grants and increased the scope of an existing grant totaling 145,000. This second round of funding brought the 2014 CWI competitive grant total to \$724,000. The two new grants began on April 1st, 2014, and will be up to three years in length.



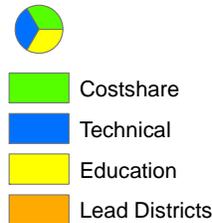
Lead District	Funding	Project Title
Gibson	\$75,000	Gibson and Pike Continuous Cooperative Partnership
Jasper	\$49,200	Facilitating High Clearance Seeding of Cover Crop in NW Indiana
Jennings	\$75,000	Muscatatuck Watershed Incentive Program
Knox	\$22,500	Tri County Conservation Initiative
Pike	\$75,000	Pike-Gibson Conservation Initiative
Perry	\$39,750	Sustainable Livestock Systems Initiative
Posey	\$51,000	Southwest Indiana Cover Crop Program
Pulaski	\$75,000	Cover Crops-Above and Beyond
Vanderburgh	\$39,250	Two Stage Ditch
Vermillion	\$75,000	West Central Improvement Project
Warrick	\$75,000	Warrick/Pike Joint County Conservation Technician/Education Cooperative
Washington	\$72,300	United for Cleaner Water

2014 Clean Water Indiana Grants

2014 CWI Multi-District Grants
Lead Districts and Breakdown of Funds Requested



Funding Breakdown



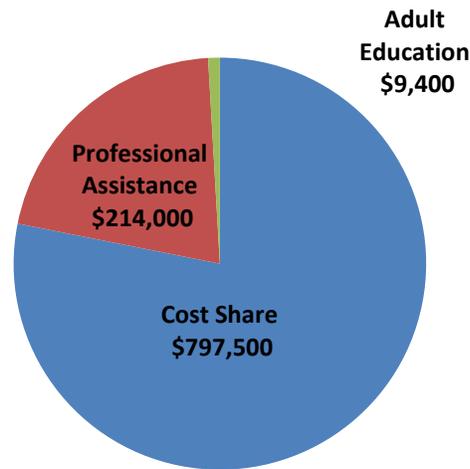
County	Costshare	Technical	Education	Total
Gibson	73,000	0	2,000	75,000
Jasper	46,200	0	3,000	49,200
Jennings	75,000	0	0	75,000
Knox	0	22,500	0	22,500
Perry	39,750	0	0	75,000
Pike	0	75,000	0	75,000
Posey	50,000	0	1,000	51,000
Pulaski	72,000	0	3,000	75,000
Vanderburgh	38,250	0	1,000	39,250
Vermillion	30,000	45,000	0	75,000
Warrick	0	72,000	3,000	75,000
Washington	63,300	6,000	3,000	72,300
Total	487,500	220,500	16,000	759,250

October 24, 2013
Deb Fairhurst, ISDA Program Manager

2015 Clean Water Indiana Grants

Twenty-nine applications, representing 57 districts, were submitted for the 2015 Clean Water Indiana Grants round for a total of \$2,006,800. Applicants could apply for up to \$25,000 a year for up to three years in the following categories: Cost Share, Professional Assistance, and Adult Education (limit \$1,000 per year). Applications totaled \$1,618,600 in Cost Share, \$360,400 in Professional Assistance and \$27,800 in Adult Education.

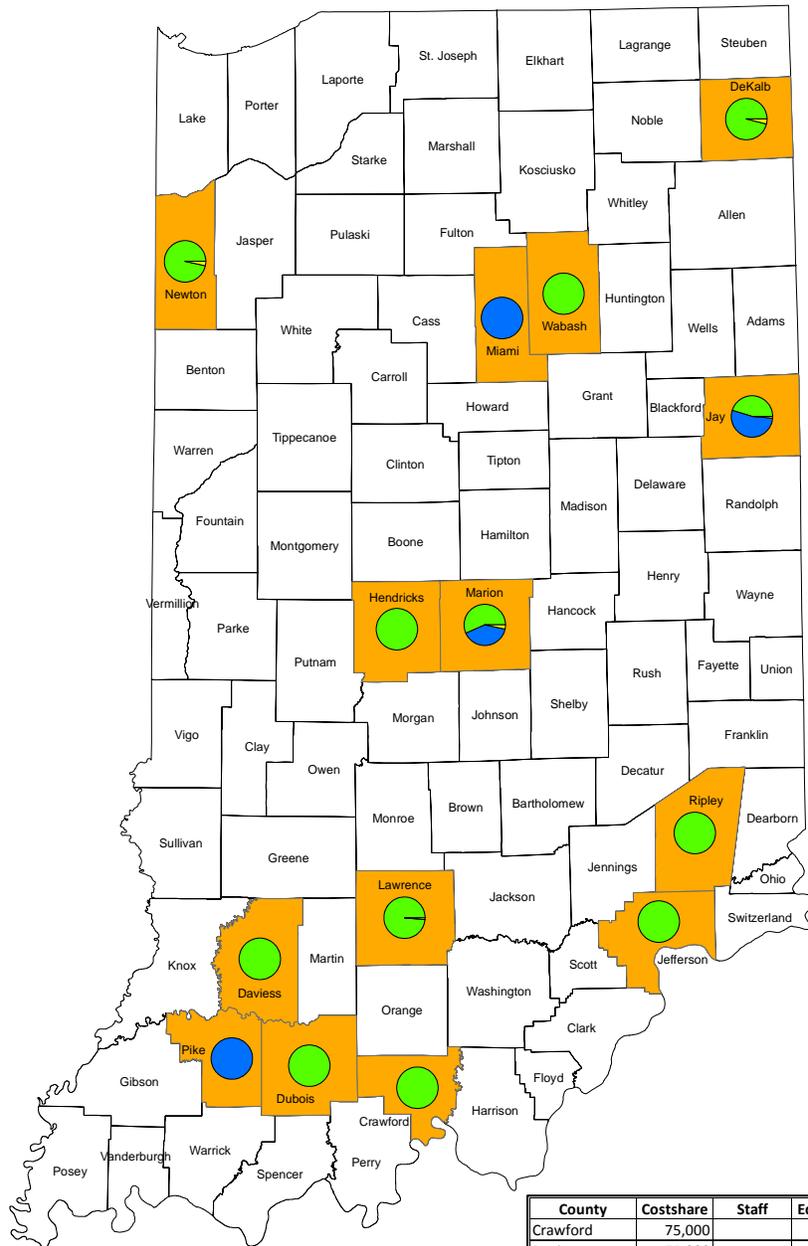
The SSCB awarded 14 CWI grants totaling \$1,020,900. The grants begin on January 1, 2015 and will be up to three years in length. Each project focuses on sediment and nutrient reduction within a multidistrict area (35 counties total). Grant funding levels ranged from \$60,000 to \$75,000 per project.



Lead District	Funding	Project Title
Crawford	\$75,000	Enhancement of Soil Health through Livestock & Agronomic Conservation Practices
Daviess	\$75,000	Grazing for Soil Health!
DeKalb	\$75,000	Innovative Conservation: Education, Implementation, and Research
Dubois	\$75,000	Cover Crop and Grid Sampling to Address Nutrient Overapplication
Hendricks	\$75,000	Upper Mill Creek Watershed Initiative
Jay	\$75,000	Upper Salamonie River Watershed Implementation Project
Jefferson	\$75,000	Better Soil. Cleaner Water. More Profit.
Lawrence	\$60,900	United for Clean Soil & Water
Marion	\$60,000	The Urban Conservation Program
Miami	\$75,000	Technical Assistance in the Middle Eel Watershed
Newton	\$75,000	Cover Crop Cost Share and Data Collection: Improving and Protecting Water Quality in NW Indiana
Pike	\$75,000	Southwestern SWCD Problem Solving Initiative
Ripley	\$75,000	Innovative Strategies for Sediment and Nutrient Savings through Cover Crops and Progressive Crop Scouting
Wabash	\$75,000	Cover Crop Cost-Share Program in the Miami and Wabash County Soil & Water Conservation Districts

2015 Clean Water Indiana Grants

2015 CWI Multi-District Grants



Funding Breakdown



- Costshare
- Staff
- Education
- Lead Districts

County	Costshare	Staff	Education	Total
Crawford	75,000			75,000
Daviess	75,000			75,000
Dekalb	72,000		3,000	75,000
Dubois	75,000			75,000
Hendricks	75,000			75,000
Jay	34,000	40,000	1,000	75,000
Jefferson	75,000			75,000
Lawrence	60,000		900	60,900
Marion	34,000	24,000	2,000	60,000
Miami		75,000		75,000
Newton	72,500		2,500	75,000
Pike		75,000		75,000
Ripley	75,000			75,000
Wabash	75,000			75,000
Total	797,500	214,000	9,400	1,020,900

October 22, 2014
 Deb Fairhurst, ISDA Program Manager

Local Conservation Delivery

The State Soil Conservation Board (SSCB) and the Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (IASWCD) jointly established the membership of the SSCB Sub-Committee in 2013. The Sub-Committee was charged with reviewing the three options presented in the [“Conservation Beyond 2016” SSCB Task Force Report](#) for improving the capacity, efficiency, and effectiveness of our partnerships’ local conservation delivery system. As part of its review, the sub-committee was asked to develop draft guidance for the SSCB to consider for conducting pilot projects to test any or all of the three options presented in the report. In February 2014, two districts applied in partnership for direct “hands on” program capacity building assistance. In response to their request for assistance, a Resource Specialist has been relocated to the area in order to provide both more direct capacity building and technical assistance.

On December 3, 2014, the State Soil Conservation Board members were reappointed by Governor Pence. In addition, Ray Chattin and Robert Woodling were appointed to the State Soil Conservation Board to fill the vacant two seats, creating a full board.

SWCD Staff and Supervisor Training 2014

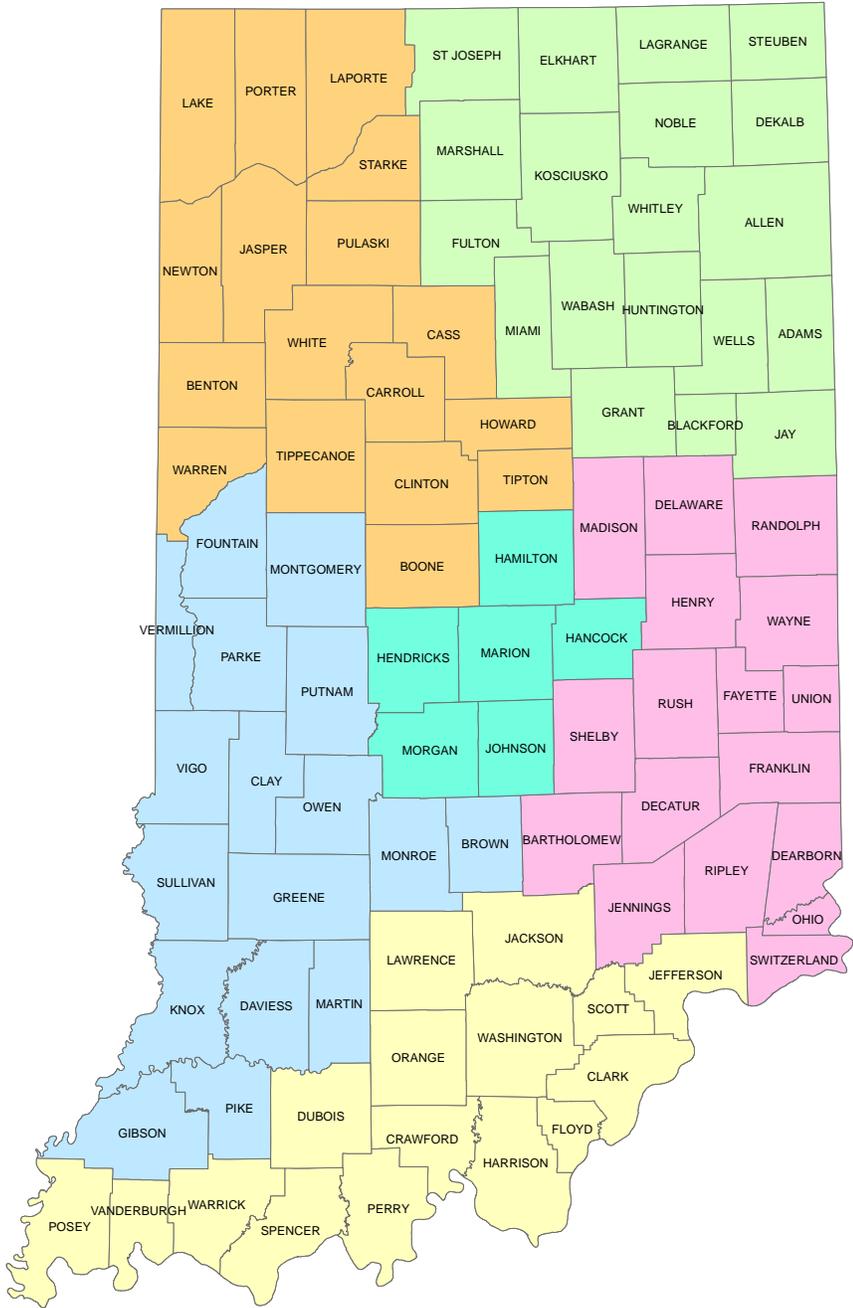
In 2014, the State Soil Conservation Board (SSCB) tweaked the procedure that provides training dollars to county Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) supervisors and staff. This year, the board developed a \$30k training cost-share program. Under the new guidelines, the SSCB would provide support to key existing programs and also welcomed the SWCDs to apply for cost share for attending trainings that built district capacity. Trainings in 2014 included the SWCD Chair/Vice-Chair Workshop, the Indiana District Employees Association’s Fall Conference, Conservation Selling Skills, and the Conflict Leadership Institute. Upcoming trainings include the Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts Annual Conference and the National Association of Conservation Districts Annual Meeting. So far, approximately 67 counties and 155 SWCD Supervisors/Staff have benefited from this program.

District Support

The Division of Soil Conservation employs [District Support Specialists](#), through the Clean Water Indiana Fund, to work directly with the local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) to develop conservation priorities, goals, and plans for their respective territories. (See map for more details) Each District Support Specialist assists 6 - 19 Soil and Water Conservation Districts in his/her respective area of the state in developing their respective SWCD Business Plan and Annual Plan of Work. The District Support Specialists provide guidance and assistance to the districts in applying for competitive Clean Water Indiana Grants for implementing multi-district sediment and nutrient reduction projects. This year, the team expanded to include Leah Harmon, whose duties include both working with districts in the Marion County area, as well as the Clean Water Indiana grants program.

District Support Specialists	Jan 1-Dec 31, 2014
Activities	Total
Business Plan/Plan of Work updates	19
Meetings to provide guidance for CWI grant applications	20
SWCD Board Meetings attended	163
Planning Assistance for Educational Programs and Field Days	25
SWCD Annual Meetings attended	41
Individual Supervisor/Staff visits	11/102
Assistance with key IASWCD, ICP and IDEA committees, task forces and meetings	25

District Support Specialist Regions



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October 2014
Deb Faihurst, ISDA Program Manager

District Support Workshops

Leadership Institute

Two Leadership Institute sessions were held in 2014. A third session was planned in December, but was canceled due to late harvest season and limited participation from supervisors. Between the February and September meetings, 49 supervisors and staff participated this year, and two individuals who have completed all four sessions will graduate. In November, a one day follow up session on Leadership during Conflict was held with 33 participants, including past graduates and some new attendees. Since 2006, 87 participants have completed the entire Cornerstone training series and 76 SWCDs have participated.

March Trainings

In March 2014, four regional training workshops were held statewide for Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisors and Staff. Key topics included “Technology and Tools: Sharing Your Districts Story”, “Rule 5 Updates with IDEM Storm Water Specialists” and Partnership Updates. Each region had a main speaker: the SW and NW regions hosted Donya Lester, Executive Director of the Purdue Alumni Foundation, the SE region had Scott Ham, Chairman of the State Soil Conservation Board, and the NE featured Bill Horan, Extension Educator in Wells Co. The District Support Specialists assisted in program planning, local arrangements, and workshop facilitation. Total attendance for these four meetings was approximately 232 staff and supervisors.

August Supervisor Summit

On August 26, the Indiana State Department of Agriculture and the Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts hosted the Supervisor Summit. The Summit was held at Fort Harrison in Indianapolis. The workshop offered participants a variety of topics including “A Vision of Conservation in Indiana” from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, “Effective Staff Management” from Tippecanoe County Supervisor Kris Ziller, and case studies on Effectively Managing Staff. The training concluded with a talk from State Soil Conservation Board President Scott Ham who addressed the group on the importance of their role as supervisors and leaders in their counties. Forty-two supervisors registered for the event.

IASWCD Fall Region Meetings

During the months of November and December, the Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation District (IASWCD) Region Directors and the District Support Specialists coordinated and held five regional meetings. The agenda included updates from several agencies, including ISDA and IASWCD. The feature presentation was on the Indiana On-Farm Network® (OFN) program conducted by Meg Leader, Program Manager Agriculture and Environmental Affairs with ISDA. The presentation gave the districts the purpose and the current status of the program as well as a question and answer period. ISDA is looking to sign-up new districts to OFN, and we are hoping that her presentation will encourage them to do that. In addition, there was discussion on the proposed resolutions, which will be voted on January 2015 at the IASWCD annual conference.

Technical Assistance

The cornerstone to the Division of Soil Conservation’s technical assistance is centered on the service provided by our field staff located across Indiana in various locations. The Division of Soil Conservation employs [Resource Specialists](#) to directly assist landowners with the planning and implementation of conservation practices addressing specific soil and water resource concerns. Resource Specialists work in regional Conservation Implementation Teams (CIT) alongside staff from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs). They assist with planning, surveying, designing, supervising installation, and maintaining conservation practices. The common practices these professionals install include, but are not limited to - filter strips, grassed waterways, forested and grassed buffers, water and sediment control basins, wetland restorations, and livestock watering systems.

**ISDA Division of Soil Conservation
Resource Specialists**



Technical Assistance Accomplishments

Action	Completed in 2014
Technical Assistance	
Landowners Assisted	2,227
Conservation Workload	
Conservation Practices Underway	303
Conservation Practices Installed	571
Total Acres Installed	23,700 acres
Total Feet Installed	217,877 feet
Field Acres Impacted	25,396 acres
HUC8 Watersheds Impacted (38 Total)	29
Nutrient Load Reductions Resulting From Installed Conservation Practices	
Nitrogen Reduction	219,803 lbs./yr.
Phosphorus Reduction	108,995 lbs./yr.
Sediment Reduction	198,808,000 lbs./yr.

Load Reduction Modeling of Installed Conservation Practices

The technical assistance and practice designs of Division Resource Specialists not only translate into conservation on the ground, but also to nutrient and sediment reduction across the state. We are unique here in Indiana in that we utilize a mathematical model to estimate reductions of nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P) and sediment to water ways from the installation of best management practices. This model, called the Region 5 model, was co-developed by the Indiana Department of Environmental Management and the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and is recognized by the EPA as a reliable indicator of the environmental benefits of these conservation practices.

In 2013, members of the Indiana Conservation Partnership (ICP) began using the EPA's Region 5 Nutrient Load Reduction model to determine the impact of installed conservation practices implemented by the ICP Conservation Implementation Teams on Indiana's water quality. The ICP adopted the Region 5 Nutrient Load Reduction model to analyze conservation practices funded by state programs such as the Indiana State Department of Agriculture's Clean Water Indiana Program and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources' Lake and River Enhancement Program, as well as federally funded programs including EPA's Section-319 Program and USDA's Farm Bill Program.

For calendar year 2013, the ICP Conservation Implementation Teams installed 30,775 conservation practices. A total of 15,322 of those practices could be analyzed using the Region 5 Nutrient Load Reduction Model, which estimated annual reductions of sediment, as well as nitrogen and phosphorus tied to sediment erosion. These reductions continue for the life of the practices modeled (e.g., grassed waterways are designed to be 10-year practices, while cover crops are 1-year practices, established annually). Reductions in dissolved nutrients, such as dissolved reactive phosphorus (DRP) and nitrate (NO₃), are not accounted for by the Region 5 model. The remaining ICP practices were not modeled because they were not associated with sediment loss or were not covered by the EPA Region 5 model.

This effort represents ICP-assisted conservation in Indiana. Indiana is the only state in the country to adopt a model among so many partners to estimate conservation impact on a statewide scale. As part of Indiana's Nutrient Reduction Strategy, this modeling effort illustrates the continued success and challenges of conservation and serves as a tool to help set watershed priority and reduction targets, to manage conservation resources, and to further stakeholder involvement at all levels of government within and across Indiana.

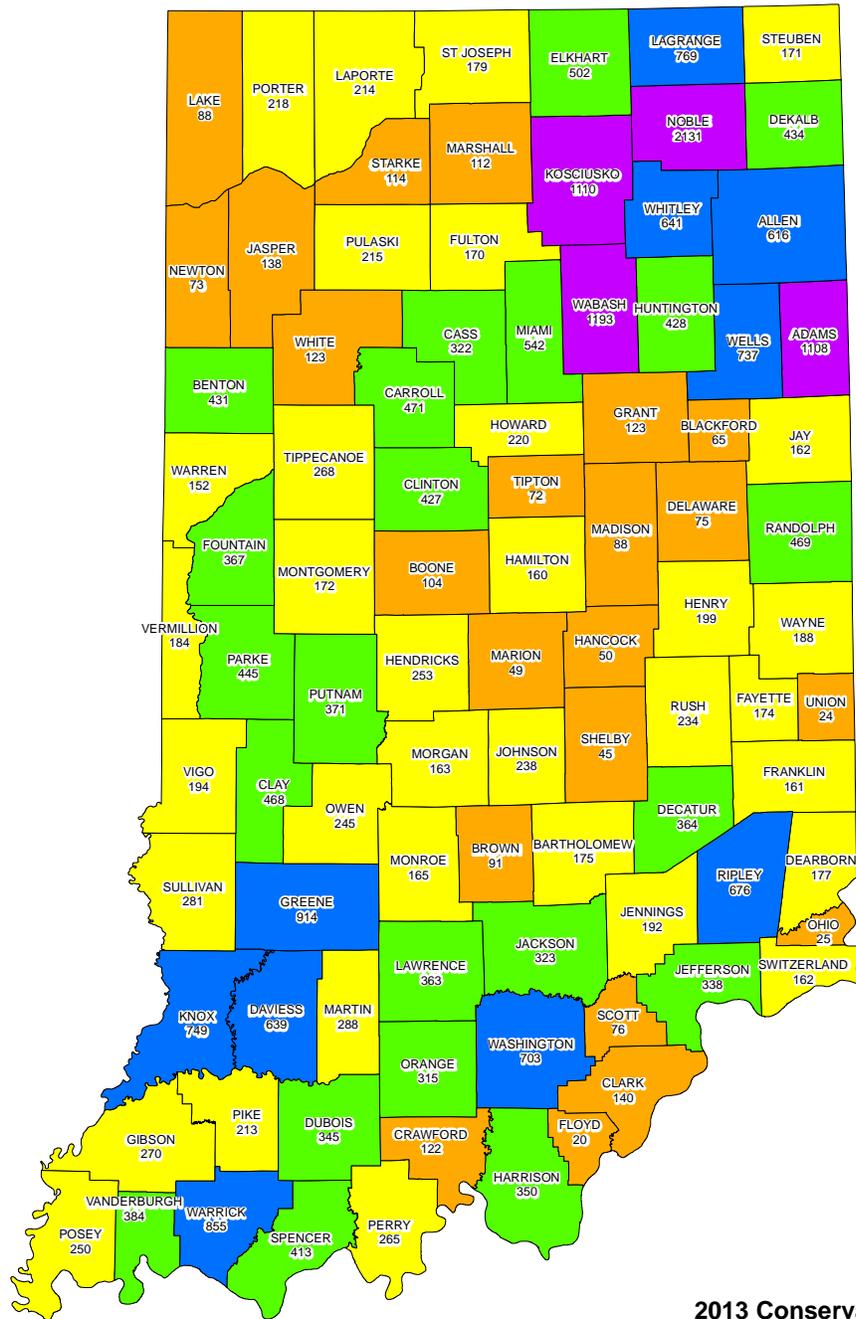
As an additional result, the Indiana State Department of Agriculture has tied Key Performance Indicators and conservation goals to the Indiana State Office of Management and Budget. While this measure adds further accountability and transparency to Hoosier taxpayers, it also houses potential in slowing and even reversing some downward trends in budget for the Indiana State Department of Agriculture, as has already been achieved to a modest degree thus far. Use of the model for tracking impacts and goals has also had an internal benefit for ISDA; an atmosphere of healthy competition has arisen amongst field staff, who are eager to show positive water quality and sedimentation impacts in their respective watersheds.

The flow chart below shows the methodology for this partnership effort.



The following maps show 2013 conservation practices installed by the entire Indiana Conservation Partnership, as well as their associated nutrient load reductions for sediment, nitrogen and phosphorus. Further analysis for the entire 2014 calendar year will occur in March 2015.

2013 Indiana Conservation Workload
Implemented by Indiana Conservation Partnership



2013 Conservation Workload

January 1 thru December 31, 2013
 Conservation Practices Completed - 30,502
 Conservation Practices Underway - 2,393

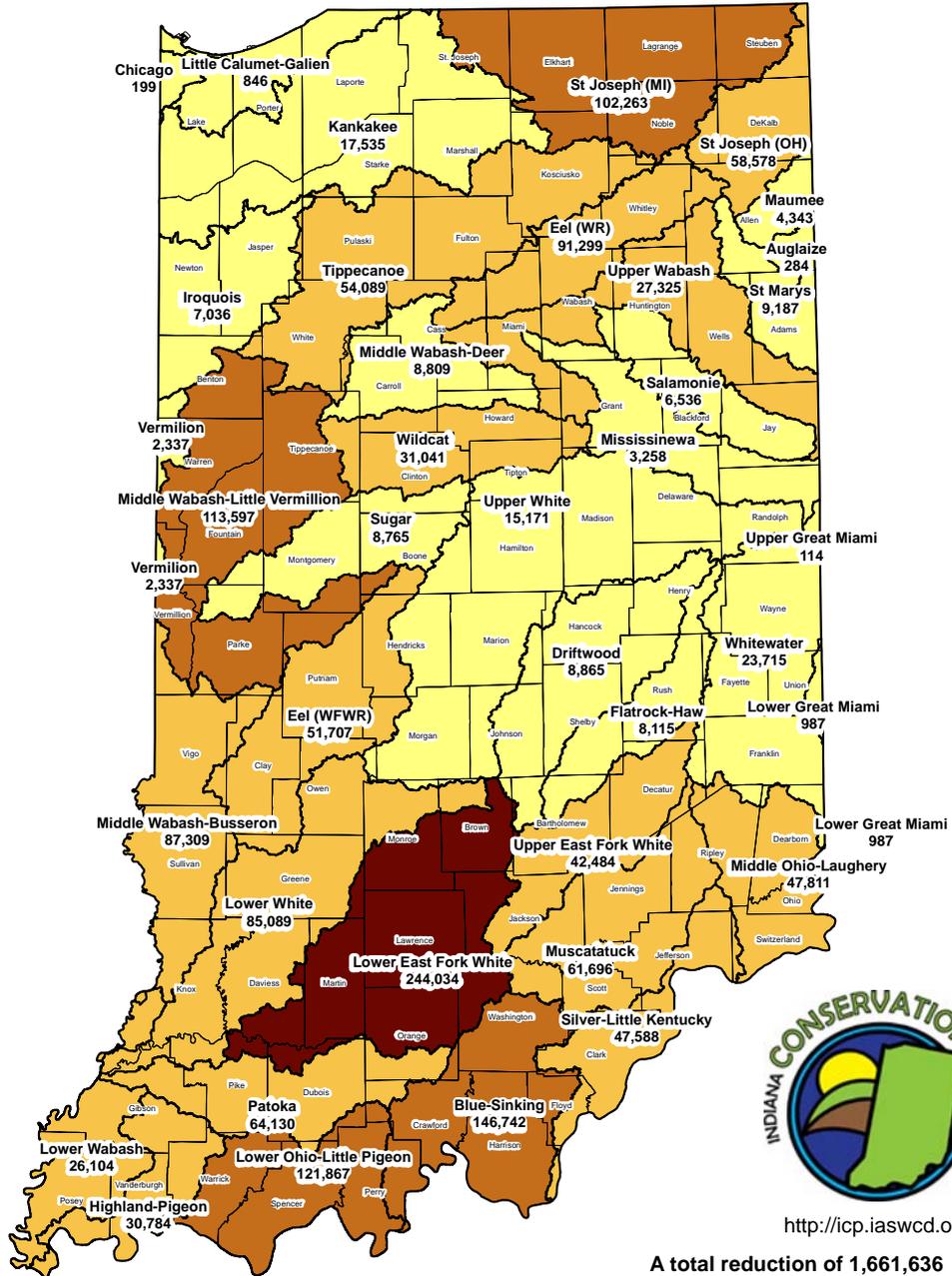
Disclaimer: Programs with less than 5 practices installed were not included in the data.

July 17, 2014
 Deb Fairhurst, ISDA Program Manager

Total Practices

- 20 - 140
- 152 - 288
- 315 - 542
- 616 - 914
- 1,108 - 2,131

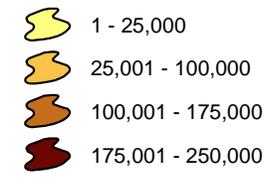
2013 Nutrient Load Reductions
Sediment



<http://icp.iaswcd.org/>

A total reduction of 1,661,636 tons of sediment statewide.

Sediment Reduction (tons/year)

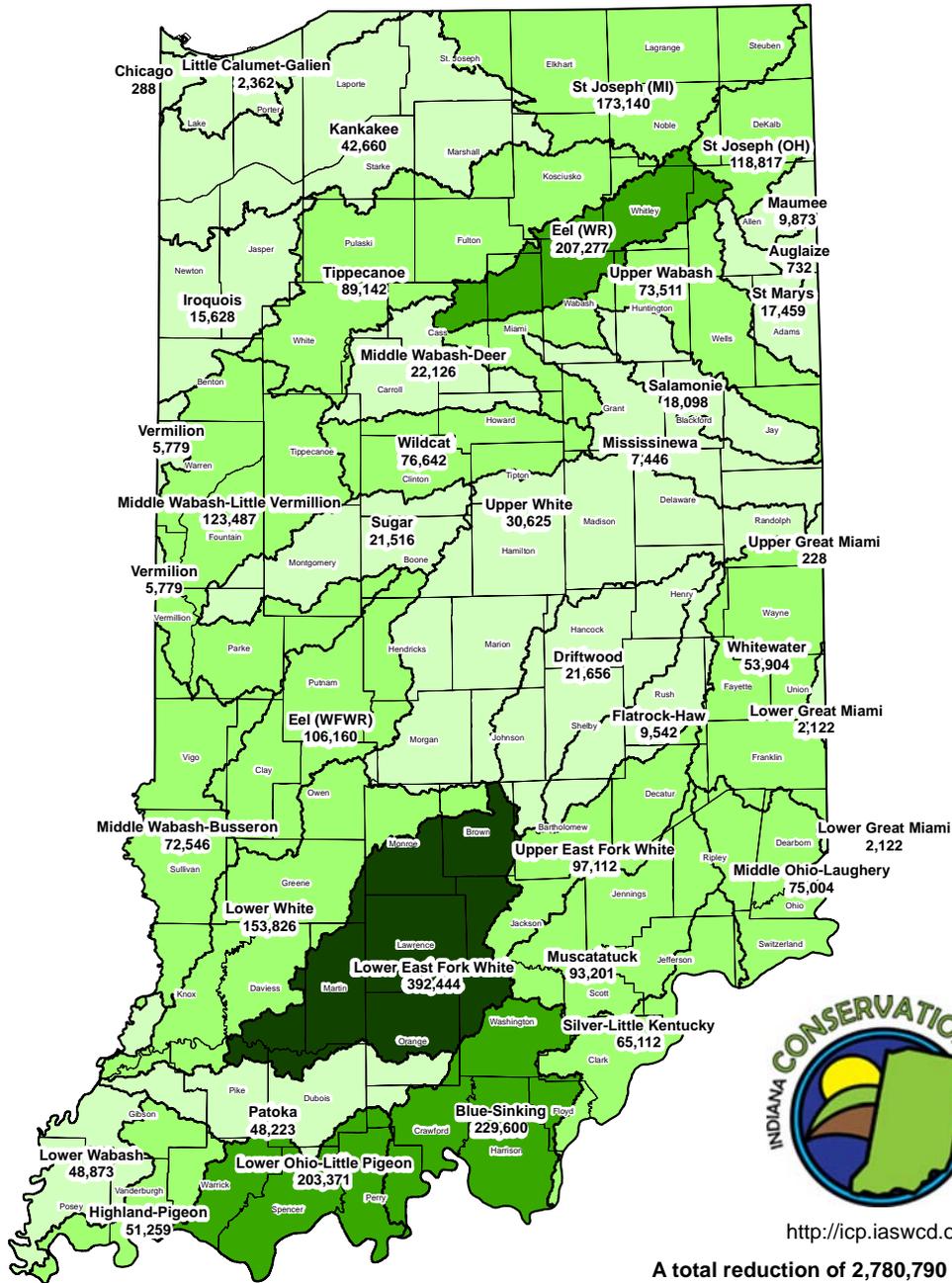


Based on Region 5 Model analyses conducted on 15,332 conservation practices installed by the Indiana Conservation Partnership January 2013 thru December 2013.

Reductions in dissolved nutrients, such as dissolved reactive phosphorus (DRP) and nitrate (NO3), are not accounted for by the Region 5 Model.

December 8, 2014
Deb Fairhurst, ISDA Program Manager

2013 Nutrient Load Reductions
Nitrogen



<http://icp.iaswcd.org/>

A total reduction of 2,780,790 pounds of nitrogen statewide.

Nitrogen Reduction (lbs./year)

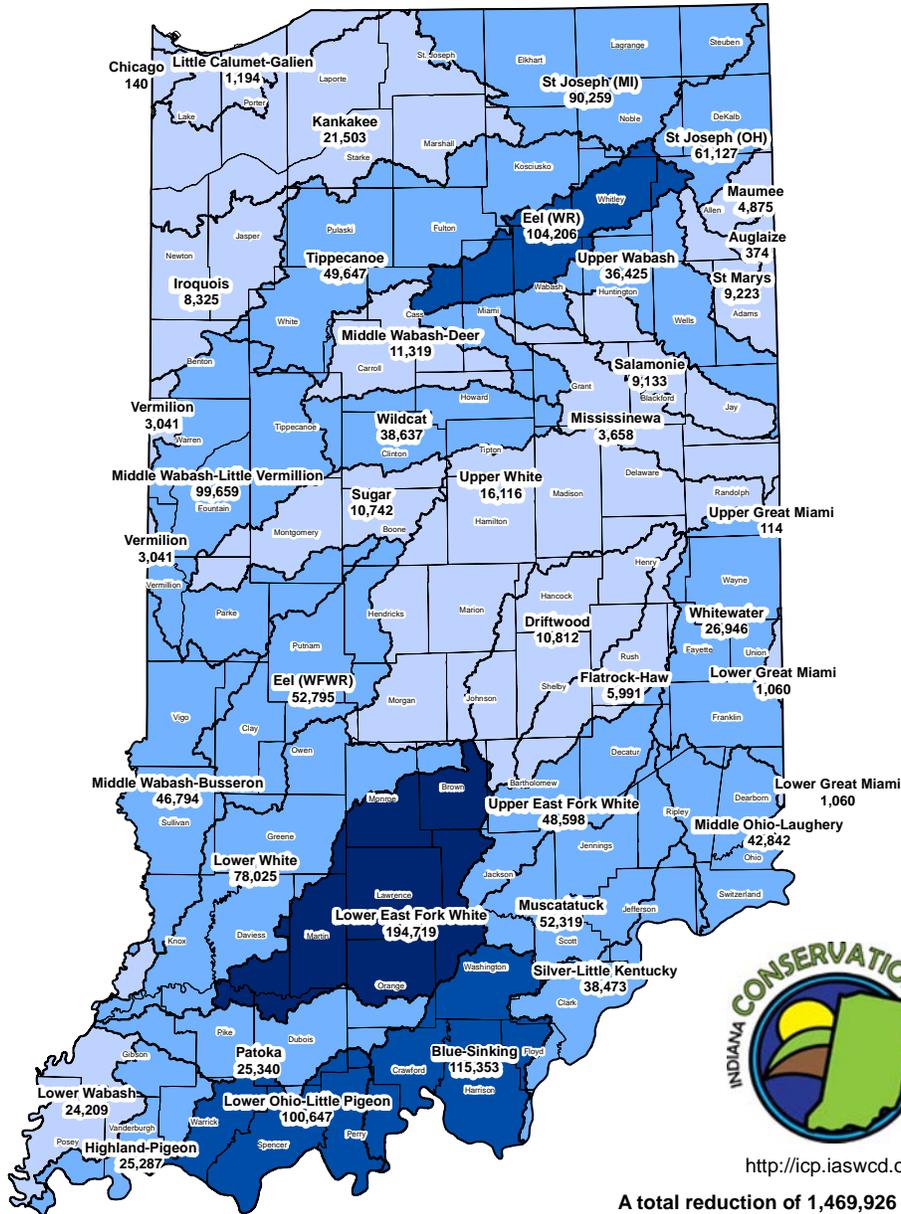
-  1 - 50,000
-  50,001 - 200,000
-  200,001 - 300,000
-  300,001 - 400,000

Based on Region 5 Model analyses conducted on 15,332 conservation practices installed by the Indiana Conservation Partnership January 2013 thru December 2013.

Reductions in dissolved nutrients, such as dissolved reactive phosphorus (DRP) and nitrate (NO₃), are not accounted for by the Region 5 Model.

December 8, 2014
Deb Fairhurst, ISDA Program Manager

2013 Nutrient Load Reductions
Phosphorus



<http://icp.iaswcd.org/>

A total reduction of 1,469,926 pounds of phosphorus statewide.

Phosphorus Reduction (lbs./year)

- 1 - 25,000
- 25,001 - 100,000
- 100,001 - 175,000
- 175,001 - 250,000

Based on Region 5 Model analyses conducted on 15,332 conservation practices installed by the Indiana Conservation Partnership January 2013 thru December 2013.

Reductions in dissolved nutrients, such as dissolved reactive phosphorus (DRP) and nitrate (NO3), are not accounted for by the Region 5 Model.

December 8, 2014
Deb Fairhurst, ISDA Program Manager

Conservation Programs

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

The [Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program](#) (CREP) provides both state and federal incentives to landowners who are willing to install practices directly adjacent to eligible surface waters. This program is possible through an agreement between the State of Indiana and the United States Department of Agriculture. The program expanded in August 2010 from the original three watersheds--Pigeon-Highland, Tippecanoe, and Upper White River—to 11 watersheds. The expanded CREP area now includes Lower Wabash, Lower White, Lower East Fork White, Upper East Fork White, Middle Wabash-Busseron, Middle Wabash-Little Vermillion, Middle Wabash-Deer, and Upper Wabash Watersheds. The eleven targeted watersheds include 26,250 eligible acres.

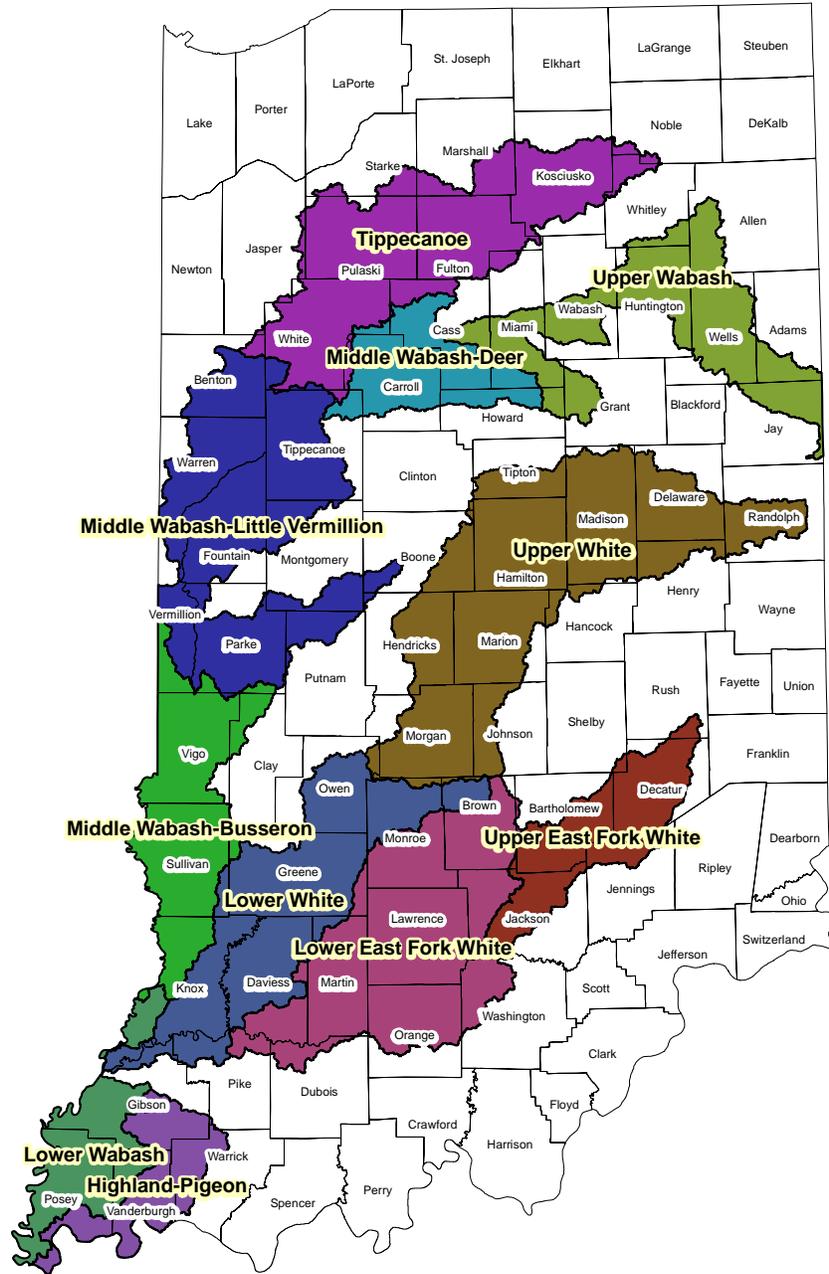


As of close of CY 2014, over \$660,000 in Clean Water Indiana funds dedicated to CREP for the year had been obligated or spent on current or completed contracts, marking the first time in the program’s history that all annual funds were utilized for conservation implementation or contract renewal. To date, over 9,617 acres have been enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program since its initiation in 2005. 2014 was a particularly successful year for CREP in that annual enrollment increased by approximately 18% from 2013.

The table below shows new program acres enrolled in CREP by quarter. It does not account for existing practices re-enrolled in the program.

QUARTER	QUARTERLY TOTAL	OVERALL TOTAL
Q2 2013	56.8	7849.5
Q3 2013	133.3	7982.8
Q4 2013	152.4	8135.2
Q1 2014	48.2	8183.4
Q2 2014	59	8242.4
Q3 2014	446	8688.4
Q4 2014	173.8	8862.2

**Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program
Eligible Watersheds**



May 1, 2012
Deb Fairhurst, ISDA Program Manager

Indiana On-Farm Network

In 2014, ISDA's Division of Soil Conservation successfully closed a \$450,000 competitive USDA Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) to establish the [Indiana On Farm Network](#)[®] (IN OFN). The three year grant started in 2010 and was extended through the 2014 crop year because of the extent it exceeded the original goals of the grant and our ability to build upon the project's success. This grant was matched with check-off funds and support from the IN Corn Marketing Council and IN Soybean Alliance (ICMC/ISA)

In 2014, IN OFN continued to be one of the largest adaptive nutrient management farmer networks in the country after Iowa. In addition, IN OFN supplied aerial imagery of research plots to Purdue Ag research and the Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative (CCSI) project. IN OFN growers participated in a Purdue University, College of Agriculture, grower survey to develop a baseline to understand how participation in IN OFN is



increasing adoption of nitrogen management practices. At the end of the year, ISDA DSC participated in an extensive OFN rebranding with the Indiana Corn Marketing Council and the Indiana Soybean Association to give the project a stronger Indiana-only presence. As part of the rebranding effort, the groundwork was laid to form an IN OFN advisory council with representatives from Purdue University as well as ICMC/ISA and other Indiana Conservation Partnership members to keep IN OFN relevant to Indiana growers.

2014 Indiana On Farm Network[®] statistics at a glance

- Over 260 participating growers
- 24 Groups
- Over 700 fields totaling over 50,000 direct acres

IN OFN expects to expand even more in 2015.

USDA CIG Goals and Accomplishments

CIG Year 1 (9/21/10-9/20/11) 2011 OFN Year

Goal was to engage 25 growers and 75 fields
Accomplishments were 132 growers and 322 fields*

CIG Year 2 (9/21/11-9/20/12) 2012 OFN Year

Goal was to engage 35 growers and 105 fields
Accomplishments were 162 growers and 419 fields*

CIG Year 3 (9/21/12-9/20/13) 2013 OFN Year

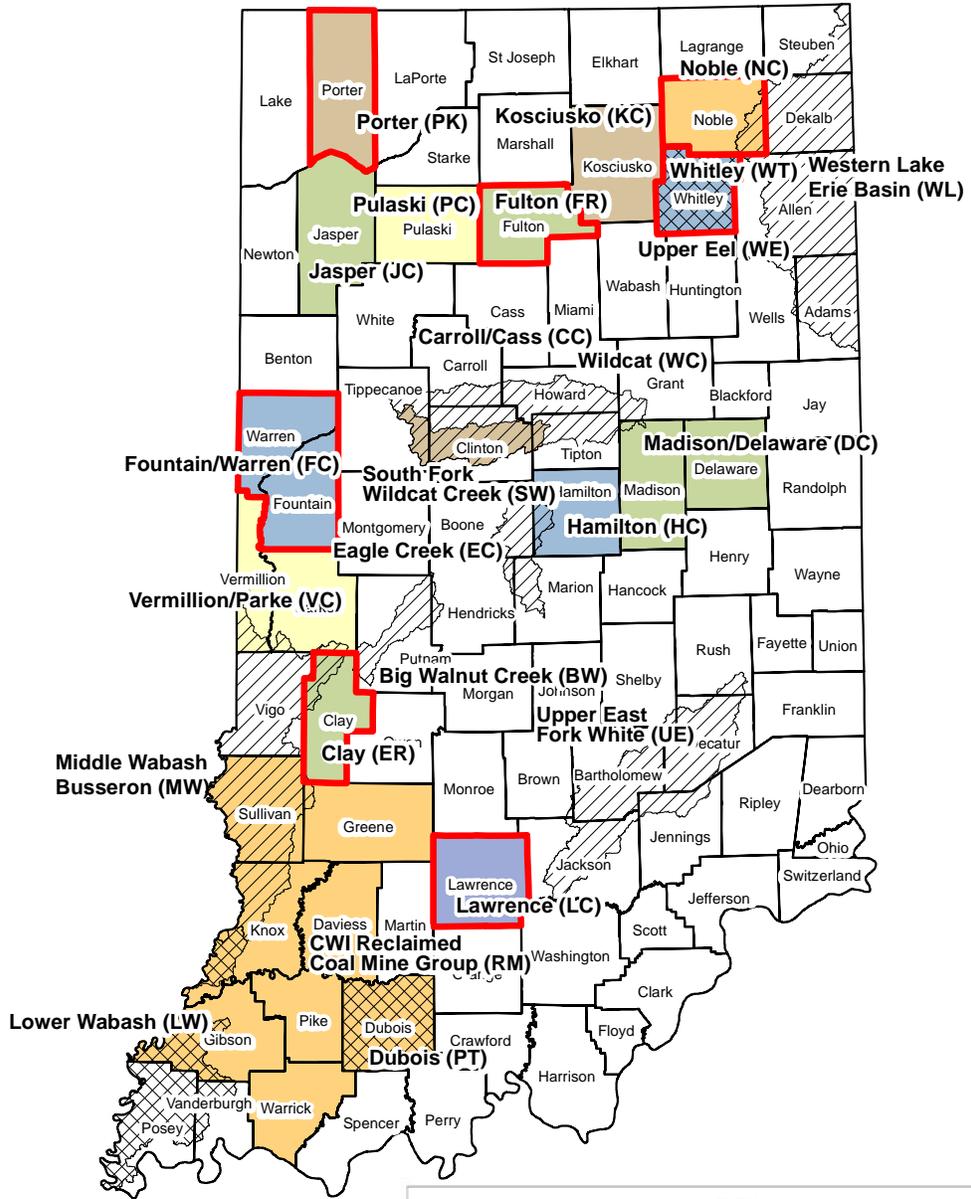
Goal is to engage 50 growers and 150 fields
Accomplishments were 241 growers and 584 fields*

CIG Extension Year 4 (9/21/13-9/20/14) 2014 OFN Year

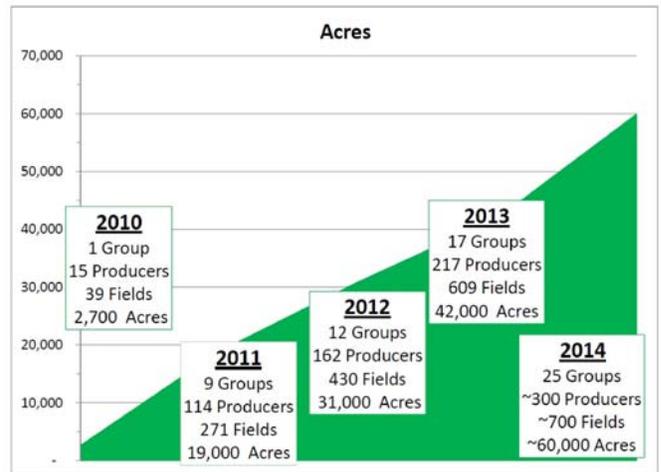
Accomplishments were 244 growers and 670 fields*

*Additional growers and fields in IN OFN funded by other means (EQIP, 100% Corn Check-off, Purdue, etc.)

2014 On-Farm Network Groups



 2014 New OFN Groups



April 28, 2014
 Deb Fairhurst, ISDA Program Manager

Red Gold Tomato Stewardship Award Program

In 2014, ISDA continued their innovative, public/private partnership with the Red Gold Company overseeing the Red Gold Environmental Stewardship Award Program. The award program was established in 2009 in collaboration with the Division of Soil Conservation to showcase the conservation efforts employed by Red Gold Tomato Growers. The goal of this award program is to highlight the practices already undertaken by conservation-minded growers and stimulate a proactive approach among all of Red Gold growers to evaluate their farm management practices and make improvements when necessary.



This program is driven by Red Gold's desire to demonstrate their companywide commitment to good stewardship practices. Red Gold asks their tomato producers to adopt good conservation practices and has instilled an atmosphere of continuous improvement. This award program provides both recognition of stewardship happening on growers' operations and provides monetary awards to those top stewardship minded growers who continually raise the bar. As independent judges, ISDA-DSC staff examines an applicant's whole farm and systems approach to conservation. As a result, there is a strong emphasis on complete integration of stewardship of natural resources.

In 2014, 36 Red Gold Environmental Stewardship Award applications were received. This was nearly twice as many applications received as any prior year of the program and represents approximately three quarters of all of Red Gold's growers. Applications were ranked with the top five farms receiving site visits by ISDA Resource Specialist Team Leader Julie Harrold. Since the projects inception in 2009 there has been a significant increase in cover crop use and other conservation practices amongst all of Red Gold's growers.



Meg Leader, ISDA-DSC Agricultural and Environmental Affairs Program Manager, presenting the first place award to Mike Schutle and Schutle's Produce, LLC, of Pandora, OH. Schutle's Produce received a \$1,000 scholarship and an extra full truck load of tomatoes per day during harvest. Mike uses a four-year crop rotation which includes no-till every year on acres that are not planted in tomatoes. He is the second generation of his family to use cover crops, and uses them with every year of his rotation.

Indiana Conservation Partnership Efforts

The [Indiana Conservation Partnership](#) is comprised of eight Indiana agencies and organizations who share a common goal of promoting conservation. To that end, the mission of the Indiana Conservation Partnership is to provide technical, financial and educational assistance needed to implement economically and environmentally compatible land and water stewardship decisions, practices and technologies.



More information about the ICP can be found at <http://icp.iaswcd.org>.

The Partnership agencies are:

- Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts and our 92 SWCDs
- Indiana Department of Environmental Management
- Indiana Department of Natural Resources
- ISDA Division of Soil Conservation
- Purdue Cooperative Extension Service
- State Soil Conservation Board
- USDA Farm Service Agency
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Indiana Nutrient Reduction Strategy

ISDA is continuing in the role of leading and developing the [State of Indiana Nutrient Reduction Strategy](#) in partnership with IDEM. In 2014, two comment/revision cycles were completed with the EPA in updating the strategy. Updates include a new proposal for prioritizing watersheds, reformatting certain sections of the document and accounting for nutrient reductions under a wider adoption by the ICP of the EPA Region 5 nutrient and sediment reduction model.

The state nutrient reduction strategy was completed in 2013, but is a living document representing an inclusive effort under the leadership of the Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) and the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) to capture present and future endeavors in Indiana which positively impact the state's waters. The nutrient reduction strategy was authored with input from the Indiana Conservation Partnership as well as members of the agricultural community, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and Indiana Farm Bureau. This is a living document and as such is under continuous update and revision.

The document serves several functions. These are:

- To recognize water quality trends and concerns within the state of Indiana.
- To prioritize watersheds and coordinate implementation of current local, state and federal cost-share programs and grants which positively impact water quality in the state.
- To provide a summary of current water monitoring and permitting efforts in Indiana as well as significant changes and/or timelines therein regarding goals, targets or protocols for improved or increased monitoring and permitting.
- To illustrate the significance and achievements of the Indiana Conservation Partnership and its member entities as an invaluable resource in addressing Hoosiers' water quality challenges and concerns.

- To serve as a strategic document for seeking continued funding sources for current and future efforts concerning water quality in Indiana.
- To illustrate the means by which the state of Indiana will provide reports and accountability in these functions to federal agencies, to conservation partners within the state and to the public.

ISDA also continues to play a consulting and supporting role in the development of the Soil Health and Nutrient Management Strategy, an effort of agricultural commodities groups in Indiana to proactively address soil health, water quality and nutrient loading issues.

Conservation Cropping System Initiative

The Division of Soil Conservation and SSCB continued to provide field staff technical support and financial support to the [Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative](#) (CCSI) in 2014. CCSI is a nationally recognized Indiana Conservation Partnership (ICP) project which promotes a systematic approach to production agriculture focusing on continuous no-till/strip-till, cover crops, precision farming, nutrient and pest management, and conservation buffers resulting in improved soil health and quality, water quality and profitability on Indiana cropland.

During 2014, CCSI supplied outreach and education opportunities to growers, Certified Crop Advisors (CCA) and ICP staff. The CCSI Hub farms shared information and the use of their facilities for in depth soil health research and the technical Hub Team support staff improved their performance and coordination with regular networking opportunities. ISDA-DSC worked within the CCSI Oversight Committee to shift conservation technical work load between ICP members in order for USDA NRCS to be able to provide \$294,500 funding for the project.

CCSI activities to date include:

- Over 330 field days/workshops reached over 16,000 people
- More than 275 producers provided assistance through phone calls, emails and site visits
- 33 producers provided with high level technical one-on-one assistance through mentors
- More than 350 ICP staff received high level technical training
- Over 120 private providers (i.e. CCA's) received high level technical training
- Conducted replicated strip trials on 17 sites totaling 148 strips
- Over 1,500 aggregated samples pulled (approx. 18,000 individual cores; measurements by 60-70 people)
- Workshop attendees from as far away as Ontario, MI, KS, MN, WI, OH, IL and KY
- Significant public outreach through website, Facebook, and Twitter
- Significant media coverage through various state outlets (i.e. Indiana Prairie Farmer, AgriNews, Brownfield, etc.)
- Promoted the 12 top farmers in Indiana
- Part of the reason Indiana is nationally recognized as a leader in soil health
- Hosted the National Association of Conservation District's Summer Meeting in Indianapolis, July 2014
- Participated in the 2015 CCA Conference

Western Lake Erie Basin

Technical Support:

ISDA continues to provide technical assistance and district support to the Western Lake Erie Basin (WLEB) watersheds. 2013's annual nutrient load reductions in the WLEB from ISDA workload totaled 23,147 lbs of nitrogen, 11,528 lbs of phosphorus and 13,785 tons of sediment.

EPA/ISDA Partnership:

As of 2014, ISDA has entered a partnership with the USEPA for two EPA-funded, 3-year positions to work in the WLEB watersheds in Indiana. These two Resource Specialists will focus technical assistance efforts in the WLEB while also working to specifically assist the Amish population in the basin, as well as bolster assistance for the Indiana On-Farm Network (OFN). OFN assistance will also include soil sampling in the basin for phosphorus measurements as part of the program's adaptive nutrient management objectives.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program:

The Western Lake Erie Basin Partnership was awarded a Regional Conservation Partnership Project (RCPP) grant, a new initiative under the Farm Bill. The RCPP encourages coordination between NRCS and its partners to continue to put conservation on the ground. The RCPP grant, "Tri-State Western Lake Erie Basin Phosphorus Reduction Initiative," is a multi-state project to protect the western basin of Lake Erie by reducing phosphorus (P) and sediment loading, and harmful algal blooms (HAB). This will be achieved by working with partners and farmers to identify priority sources of nutrients and sediments and implementing conservation practices and technology to address them. Project partners have identified NRCS conservation practices and innovative demonstration practices that farmers can implement using EQIP and ACEP cost share funds to protect soil health, water quality and quantity, and prevent fish and wildlife degradation. The RCPP grant will leverage \$20 million in NRCS cost-share dollars with nearly \$36 million in partner contributions to impact the Western Lake Erie Basin (WLEB).

Ohio River Basin Water Quality Trading Program

Indiana is among few states which are truly seeking an innovative approach to addressing nutrient loading challenges. The [Ohio River Basin Water Quality Trading Pilot Project](#) is a market-based, inter-state trading program aimed at achieving water quality standards in watersheds along the Ohio River by allowing dischargers to purchase pollution reductions from other sources. This partnership between the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI), Indiana, Ohio and Kentucky was initially funded by a Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) to the Electric Power Research Institute and is now privately funded or supported by over a dozen organizations with technical support from local, state and federal agencies. The pilot is taking place in Wayne County, Dearborn County, Ripley County, Ohio County, and Switzerland County. The Electric Power Research Institute's Ohio River Basin Trading Pilot Project is a first-of-its-kind inter-state trading program with participation from Indiana, Ohio and Kentucky. Indiana alone has been contracted to remove 22,000 pounds of total nitrogen and 11,000 pounds of total phosphorus over the five-year period of the pilot. A total of \$100,000 in cost-share monies for each of the three partner states were distributed to farmers for implementation of approved water quality Best Management Practices. In Indiana practices for cover crops, heavy use protection areas for livestock, and cropland to hay Conversion were approved. All practices have been installed for two years and continue to be inspected and verified by DSC staff. This project has not only gained regional interest, but also international attention, and is the largest water quality trading project program in the world. In 2014, the project was featured in many newsletters and articles, including the Wall Street Journal.

Pathway to Water Quality

For the past 21 years, the Indiana Conservation Partnership has teamed up to create a conservation exhibit at the Indiana State Fair. The exhibit is called the [Pathway to Water Quality](#). It highlights best management practices on the vast diversity of land types in Indiana. This includes a “home area” which contains the practices average homeowners can do to conserve and protect our water resource including rain gardens, cover crops for gardens, and rain barrels. It also shows the conservation practices being done on large scale agriculture areas such as cover crops and no-till. There are also displays for the benefits of well protection and the removal of invasive species. Fairgoers who take part in the exhibit are offered a free cold drink of well water before they exit the path. Volunteers from all of the organizations within the partnership give up their time to make the exhibit a success during the fair. District Support Specialists acted as both Day Coordinators and individual station volunteers.

Tillage Transect Survey

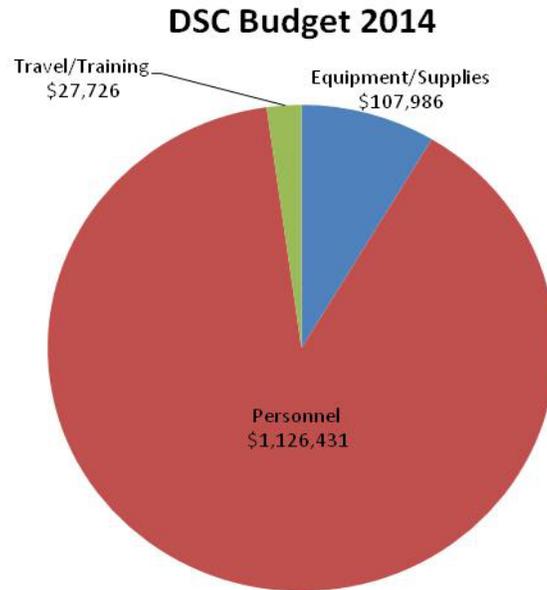
In September 2014, the USDA NRCS awarded a three year continued funding mechanism for the Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative (CCSI) with a 50% match (cash and/or in kind) required. One of the deliverables of this agreement is a fall/winter cover crop and tillage transect. ISDA staff, with the support of the SWCDs, has taken the lead on this deliverable, utilizing ISDA, SWCD, and other non-federal partner staff time as in kind match, and “free up” funds to be utilized elsewhere in the CCSI project. NRCS staff will assist but their time cannot be used as in kind. The increase in demand for Indiana’s row crop production, coupled with the ICP’s focus on conservation cropping systems that lead to improved soil health, makes tracking trends in conservation tillage, energy consumption and cropping systems an important and valuable activity, especially in the face of reports on agriculture’s role in the Gulf Hypoxia and Great Lakes issues. The [Tillage Transect](#) also allows the partnership to track adoption trends by state, county or watershed.

ICP Training and Certification

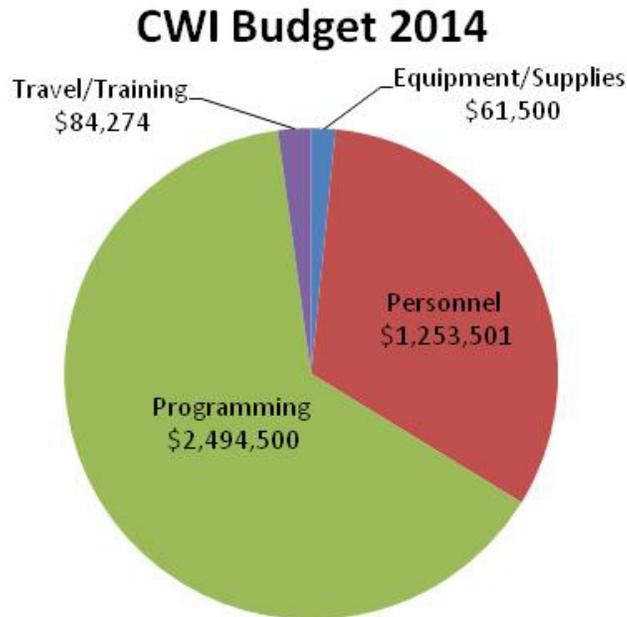
The Indiana Conservation Partnership (ICP) Training and Certification Program strives to improve efficiency in training amongst all ICP technical employees, resulting in a more highly skilled workforce and seamless delivery to customers. Two ISDA employees (one Resource Specialist and one District Support Specialist) serve on the team that helps steer the initiative. Trainings offered this year to ICP employees statewide included Certified Professional in Erosion and Sediment Control, Certified Erosion, Sediment and Storm Water Inspector, Beginner and Advanced Rain garden workshops, Region 5, Conservation Selling Skills, and Advanced Nutrient Management. They also supported other statewide trainings tying to the Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative and the Hoosier Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society. These trainings were made possible in part by a grant from the State Soil Conservation Board. In addition, ICP employees were surveyed (245 employees responded) for training needs so that adequate training could be planned for the future.

Financials

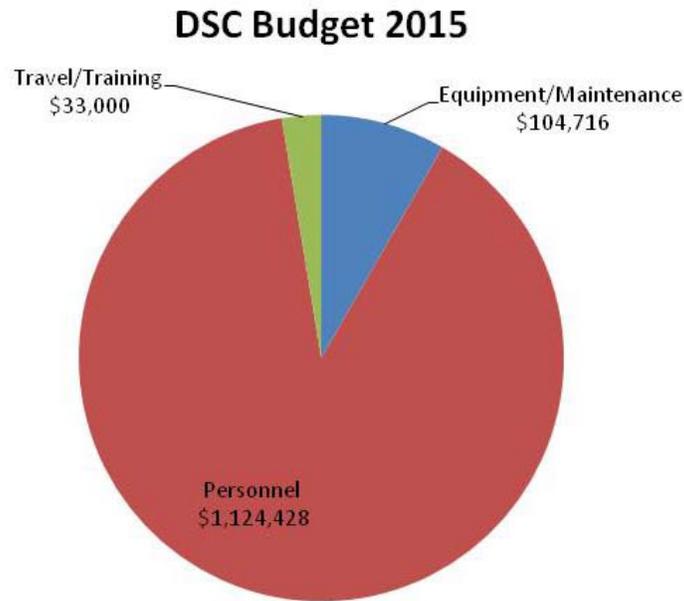
Division of Soil Conservation Budget FY2014 July 1, 2013 thru June 30, 2014



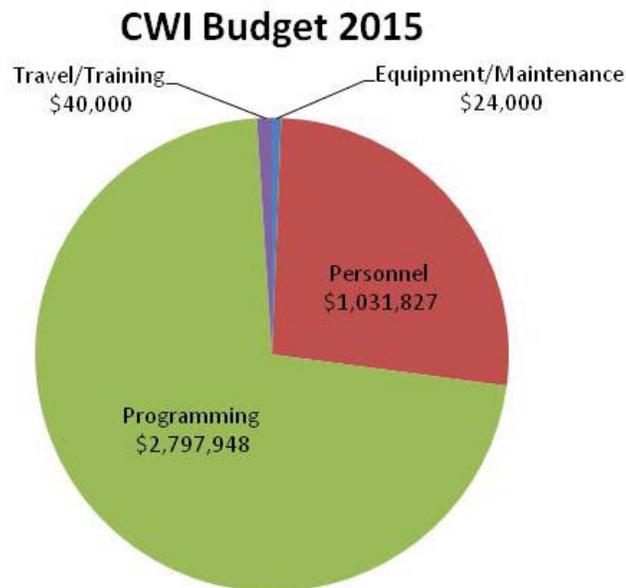
Clean Water Indiana Budget FY2014 July 1, 2013 thru June 30, 2014



Division of Soil Conservation Budget FY2015 July 1, 2014 thru June 30, 2015



Clean Water Indiana Budget FY2015 July 1, 2014 thru June 30, 2015



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The 2014 Division of Soil Conservation Annual Report can be viewed on-line at:
<http://www.in.gov/isda/2342.htm>