



State Soil Conservation Board Business Plan 2016-2020

The mission of the State Soil Conservation Board (SSCB) is to provide information, advice and consultation to Soil and Water Conservation District supervisors to assist them in carrying out their powers and programs.

Key Actions/Progress: The SSCB will also provide policy and funding direction to the Indiana State Department of Agriculture-Division of Soil Conservation (ISDA-DSC) on the administration of the Clean Water Indiana Program (CWI), to help address statewide natural resource concerns on rural, suburban, and urban lands as identified in local Soil and Water Conservation District business plans.

The SSCB has identified the following as statewide priority natural resource concerns to be addressed over the next five years:

- **Soil Health/Degradation** which includes but isn't limited to, soil biology impacts that degrade soil quality, the loss of top soil due to water and wind erosion, the depletion of organic matter, as well as soil compaction.
- **Water Quality and Quantity** including sediment, nutrients, pesticides, *E-coli* and other non-point sources of water pollution found in our streams, rivers and lakes as well as supply and flooding.
- **Invasive Species**, both flora and fauna
- **Other soil and water related natural resources concerns** including forest lands, wildlife habitat areas and protection, pasture and forage lands and air quality.

Watersheds:

There are geographical areas within all watersheds of Indiana that have critical natural resource concerns related to soil and water conservation. The SSCB will work with the ISDA-DSC, Districts and all partners to address these concerns and will support Federal initiatives.

In a strategic effort to address the top four resource concerns identified above, the SSCB developed the following goals and strategies. These goals and strategies are consistent with the Board's general authority and duties outlined in the District Law as well as its specific authority to provide direction to the Indiana State Department of Agriculture-Division of Soil Conservation on the administration of the Clean Water Indiana Program:

- ***By 2020, increase the reporting activity from the Districts to 100%.***
 - All Districts will submit a success story annually in order to stay in compliance.
 - Encourage Districts to communicate with elected officials.
 - The District Deadline Verification Tool form will be used annually when awarding grant funds.
 - Annually, the SSCB will communicate with any SWCD not meeting key deadlines as required in statute (e.g. Nominees for Election)

- **By 2020, the State Soil Conservation Board will see a 10% increase in no till implementation statewide based on tillage transect results.**
 - ISDA-DSC will provide training and support for tillage transects.
 - Annually, the SSCB will provide training dollars to SWCD Supervisors and Staff attending educational events that cover related topics, if funding is available.
 - Annually, the SSCB will support the ICP's Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative (CCSI). Financial contributions will be considered on a year by year basis if funds are available.
 - Annually, the SSCB will provide CWI competitive grant opportunities to SWCDs statewide that support conservation cropping systems, if funding is available.

- **Through 2020, the State Soil Conservation Board and ISDA-DSC staff will work with the Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (IASWCD) and other Indiana Conservation Partnership (ICP) partners in developing a reporting format and procedure for reporting income and expenses, accomplishments, federal, state and local dollars leveraged as well as state and District program needs for the coming year that is compatible with current technology available in District offices.**
 - SSCB will annually provide a consolidated report to the general assembly including program and funding needs.
 - ICP accomplishments report used annually to highlight District success stories along with state and federal funding received in each District.
 - All Districts entering annual financial report through State Board of Accounts Gateway web-based reporting system.

- **By 2017, the State Soil Conservation Board will explore the role of the conservation marketplace in Indiana in association with the ICP and others.**
- **By 2016, the State Soil Conservation Board will financially support District capacity programs such as Leadership Institute, Chair/Vice-Chair Workshop, and the ICP Certification for training.**
 - Explore new opportunities for funding training programs to expand on existing capacity.
 - Explore ways state funding can be used to create new capacity.
 - Provide annual training sponsorship and reimbursement options to SWCDs and SWCD related events as suggested by the CWI Grants Committee, if funding is available.
- **By 2017, the State Soil Conservation Board will explore the creation of SWCD/Cooperative Weed Management Areas.**
 - Invite one or more representatives from statewide CWMA's to present information to the SSCB or a SSCB Committee in 2016.
- **By 2020, 80% of District supervisors will be actively engaged in District program planning and development, community outreach, local, state and federal conservation policy and legislative affairs.**
 - Continue to support the Leadership Institute Four Corners of Leadership Workshops series. As funds are available, provide financial support annually to these events and SWCD attendees by means of CWI training dollars. In 2016, initiate discussions among ICP Leaders on any other key topics that could be added to the workshop series (e.g. Conflict) to meet needs of program "graduates".
 - Work with the Leadership Institute Program Committee and the ICP Leadership Development Workgroup to identify additional training needs and assist with implementing additional training based on needs identified and prioritized.
 - Annually, all SWCDs will have a current long range business plan or annual plan of work.
 - By 2018, 75% of SWCDs will have at least one "shovel ready project" waiting for various funding opportunities.

- **By 2020, 2/3 of Districts will be employing District staff with skills in program development and revenue enhancement (ie; grant writing and project management), adult education, technical assistance, marketing and public relations.**

 - Provide special training targeted to the training needs of District program managers.
 - Work with the ICP to continue to develop and implement the Training and Certification Program.
 - Pursue opportunities for joint training with partners, as well as opportunities to utilize trainers from other partners and states.
 - Investigate and evaluate training programs already in place in other states that could be modified for use in Indiana.
 - Provide CWI incentive grants to Districts for the purpose of developing or adding staff capacity for program development, revenue enhancement, etc., if funds are available.
 - Offer specific CWI incentive grants to limited Districts willing to share program development and/or technical staff if funds are available.
 - Skill Inventory and Training Needs Inventory requested of all Technical Staff in 2016.
 - Provide webinar options for training events, if feasible.
 - Approach IASWCD and ISDA in 2016 about developing a committee to ensure annual strategies are implemented each year that support topics regarding staff development.

- **By 2020, there will be an average of 25 joint sediment and nutrient reduction projects among Districts.**

 - Offer specific CWI grants for joint District projects targeted at sediment and nutrient reduction, if funds are available.
 - By 2020, all SWCDs will have applied for CWI competitive grants since 2011 and all will have received funding for quality local projects tying to sediment and nutrient reduction.

- **Work with ISDA-DSC, IASWCD, and 3 local Districts to increase the number of cooperative conservation projects with non-governmental organization and private industry. At least one organization or industry will be approached each year.**

 - Continue to support the Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative (CCSI).

- Compile a list of partners as listed in CWI grant applications since 2014
- **Explore opportunities to work with Certified Crop Advisors (CCAs) and private sector to help promote agronomic conservation practices and technologies.**
 - Provide opportunities for Division and SWCD employees to increase their proficiency and assistance in promoting agronomic conservation practices and technologies.
 - Continue to support the Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative (CCSI).
- **By 2020, see an increase by 3% federal leveraged funds for conservation implementation in the state**
 - Continue to commit state matching dollars for CREP from CWI funds.
 - Continue to work with the partners to leverage federal funding from all federal sources.
 - Work with our partners to develop a strategic plan to expand CREP to other areas of the state.
 - Work with the ICP and other traditional and non-traditional partners to enroll 26,250 acres into CREP.
 - Meet with NRCS, ISDA, and IASWCD in 2016 to develop specific strategies that could assist in getting more RCPP dollars into Indiana by 2020.

- **Key actions to make progress in implementing each the goals**
 - Continue to solidify ICP Partnership.
 - Meet with top leadership of ISDA and other state government officials as appropriate to discuss District needs and Clean Water Indiana funding.
 - Support the Division in maintaining staff to provide District assistance.
 - Continue to improve communication with Districts:
 - Occasionally hold board meetings in different regions of the state, utilize the ISDA-DSC website, partner newsletters, webinars, etc. ISDA and SSCB will utilize SharePoint to foster open communications.
 - Pursue opportunities to meet with other state and local government organizations and agencies and others dealing with soil and water issues.
 - Publish draft minutes on SSCB website in a timely manner after meetings.
 - Explore creation of Cooperative Weed Management Areas with local SWCDs.
 - In recognition of demonstrable benefits of CCSI we continue to support this initiative for the foreseeable future.
 - In recognition of demonstrable benefits of the tillage transect program we continue to support this initiative for the foreseeable future.

- **Desired Outcomes for the State Soil Conservation Board Business Plan**
 - Soil health
 - Clean drinking water
 - Clean rivers, lakes and streams
 - More productive soils
 - Enhanced quality of life
 - Increased cooperation with partnership
 - Improved soil and water quality
 - Districts have increased capacity to deliver conservation programs locally
 - Expanded partnerships and conservation partners
 - Resilience of soil
 - Early detection and control of invasive species
 - Sustainable resource base
 - Clean Water Indiana accountability and transparency
 - Continued support of the state's Nutrient Reduction Strategy

For questions, comments, or more information please email:
cleanwaterindiana@isda.in.gov

Clean Water Indiana funds are derived from a portion of cigarette tax revenue per Indiana Code 6-7-1. For more information about the Indiana Clean Water Indiana Program please visit:

<http://www.in.gov/isda/2374.htm>

For more information about the State Soil Conservation Board (SSCB) please visit:

<http://www.in.gov/isda/2361.htm>