



State Soil Conservation Board

ISDA – DSC Director's Report – Jennifer Thum

July 8, 2025

Staffing

- Clean Water Indiana – Program Manager – This has been posted, and we are receiving applications. We received more than I had anticipated. Especially from other State Agencies.
- Resource Specialist – We did get permission to post the SE Resource Specialist, and this is in the system.

Partner Interactions:

- INDOT – I am super excited to share that INDOT will be the key speaker at our upcoming annual Division Summer Staff meeting.
- IN Corn Growers and Soybean Alliance – We continue to meet with them to discuss current projects and new ways on how to partner.

Division Programmatic Updates

- State Fair – We will be meeting with the IN Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts. We will need a representative from the SSCB to attend this meeting. At our meeting last year, funding and IASWCD's additional budget request were the main topics of interest. Vice Chairwoman Jane Hardisty was the one who attended to represent the SSCB.

Thoughts – Board Guidance – Needed

- None at this time

July SSCB Meeting Preview:

- Fairholme Farms
- July mtg - JT on vacation. Breegan will lead the meeting 😊

From: [Microsoft Power Apps and Power Automate](#)
To: [Harmon, Leah](#); [Tyler, Geneva \(ISDA\)](#)
Subject: Update: Porter Temp/Vacant Appt
Date: Monday, June 30, 2025 2:16:44 PM

EXTERNAL EMAIL: This email was sent from outside your organization. Exercise caution when clicking links, opening attachments or taking further action, before validating its authenticity.

PorterSWCD has submitted a Recommendation for Temporary or Vacant Appointment. Please add it to the next SSCB agenda.

If you want to unsubscribe from these emails, please use this [form](#).

SWCD
Porter
Appointment Type
Temporary_Elected_Position
Who is the Candidate Replacing?
Mike Kreiger
Term Expiration
3/4/2026
Reason for Vacancy
Resignation
Supervisor Candidate Name
Jim Kreiger
Address
294 South 200 West
City, State, ZIP
Valparaiso, IN 46385
Qualifications
Jim has been involved in farming his entire life. He has implemented a number of conservation practices to the ground he owns. He also promotes the use of conservation practices to others he meets.
Occupation
Jim is retired but assists others with farming and excavating.

Conservation Interests
Cover crops, Wildlife Habitat, Wetland Restoration, Pollinator Habitat
The candidate has been informed of the dual office holding policy and certifies that they do not hold a public office.
Yes
The candidate is of legal voting age.
Yes
The duties of the office of supervisor has been explained to the candidate.
Yes
Chairman Name
Connor Gustafson
Date of Submission
06/30/2025
Is a letter of resignation attached?
Yes



State Soil Conservation Board

July 8, 2025

Nutrient Stewardship Updates, Ophelia Norman



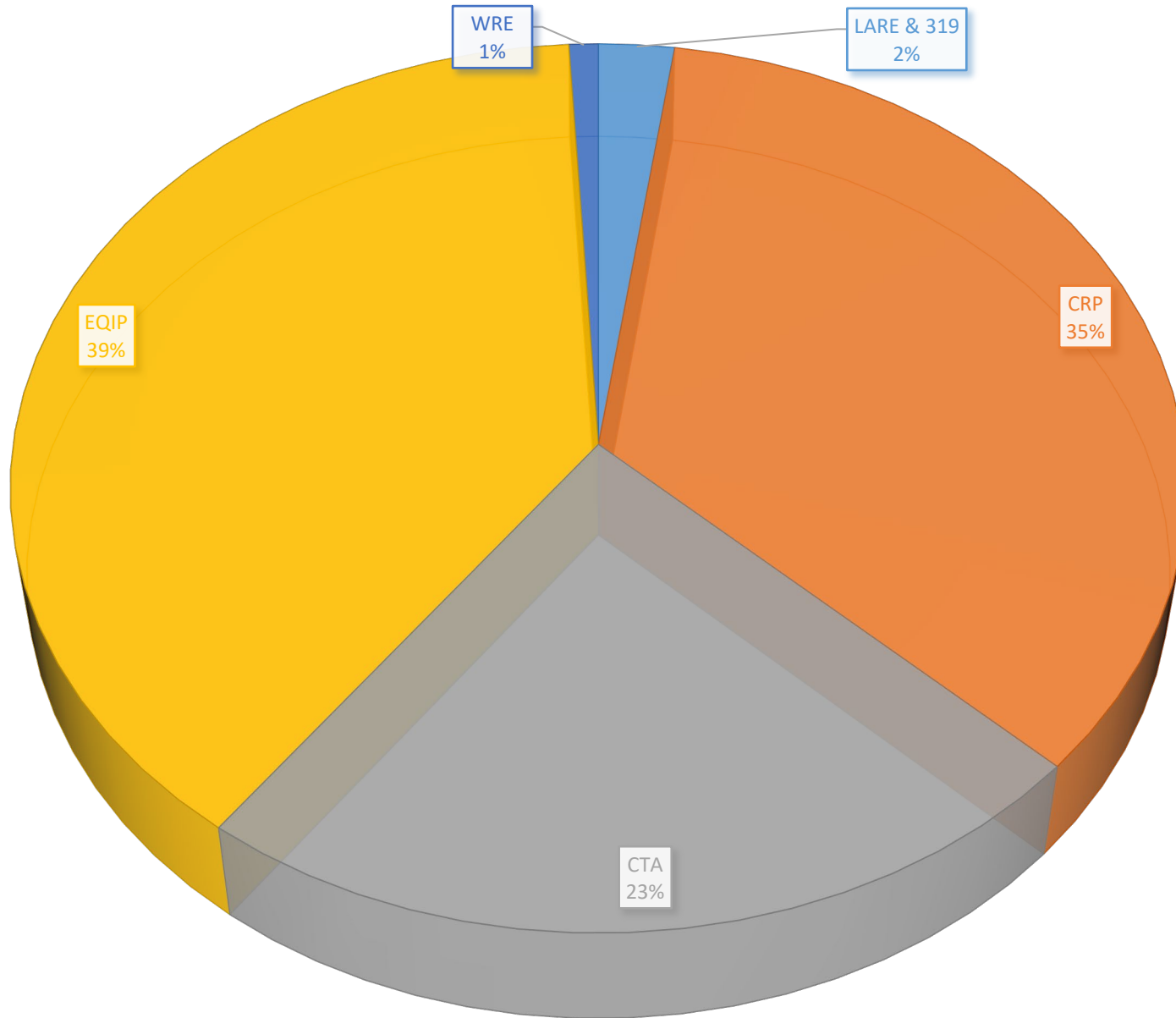
Mississippi River Basin Soil Sampling Program

- Registration for this fall will be open from Tuesday, September 2, 2025, through Friday, October 17, 2025.
 - Prep for the Fall 2025 round of sampling is currently happening to be ready for launch after Labor Day.
- SPRING 2025 Registration Recap:
 - Indiana's Mississippi River Basin (MRB) Soil Sampling Program registration ran open registration this spring from February 24, 2025, through Friday, April 4th, 2025.
 - Spring 2025 Soil Sampling Program Breakdown (these numbers reflect what ISDA staff has worked with, does not include info pertaining to CCA partner work):
 - 135 different landowners/renters registered within the MRB (around 100 registrations in early April).
 - 6,554 acres were registered to be sampled (3,500 acres in early April)
 - To date, over 750 samples pulled by ISDA staff – there are still a few yet to pull, these have been delayed because of either weather conditions and/or landowner preference in wanting to wait until fall.
- The registration process will be the same as it was this spring after some changes were made allowing landowners to digitally identify the acreage they are requesting to be sampled so soil maps can be pulled directly from registration and sent to field staff to allow for more efficient use of field staff time and more precise field locating which were made as a result of feedback from field staff.
- The program acreage enrollment threshold will continue to remain at 100 acres (crop, pasture, hay, specialty) to ensure Resource Specialists are able to maintain workload capacity for other program contributions.
- The program webpage has been updated to reflect program information and can be found on the [ISDA website](#).
- This program includes Indiana watersheds within the MRB and excludes the WLEB and Lake Michigan Basins. This is due to federal statutory language associated with the funds.

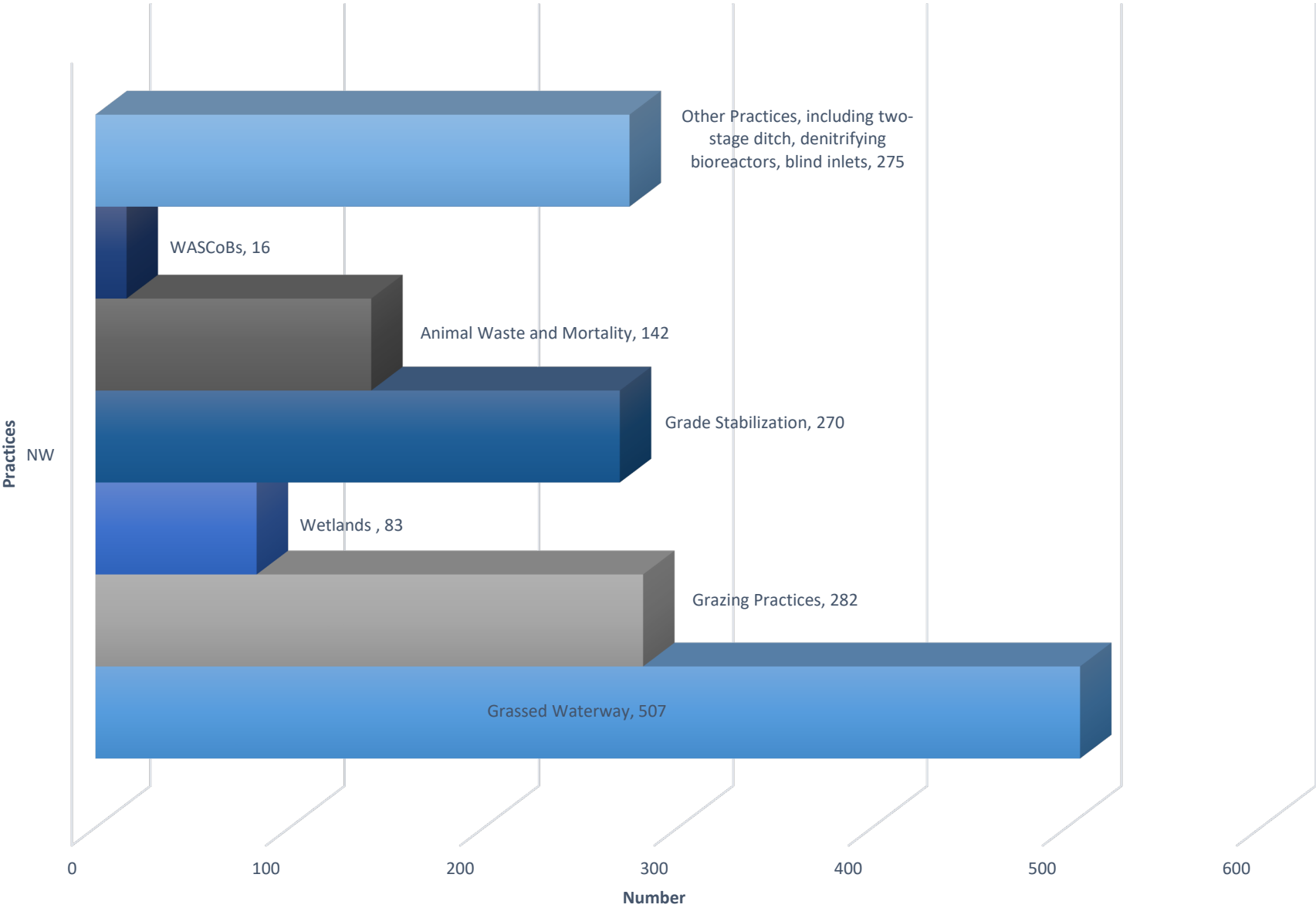
Gulf Hypoxia Program (GHP)

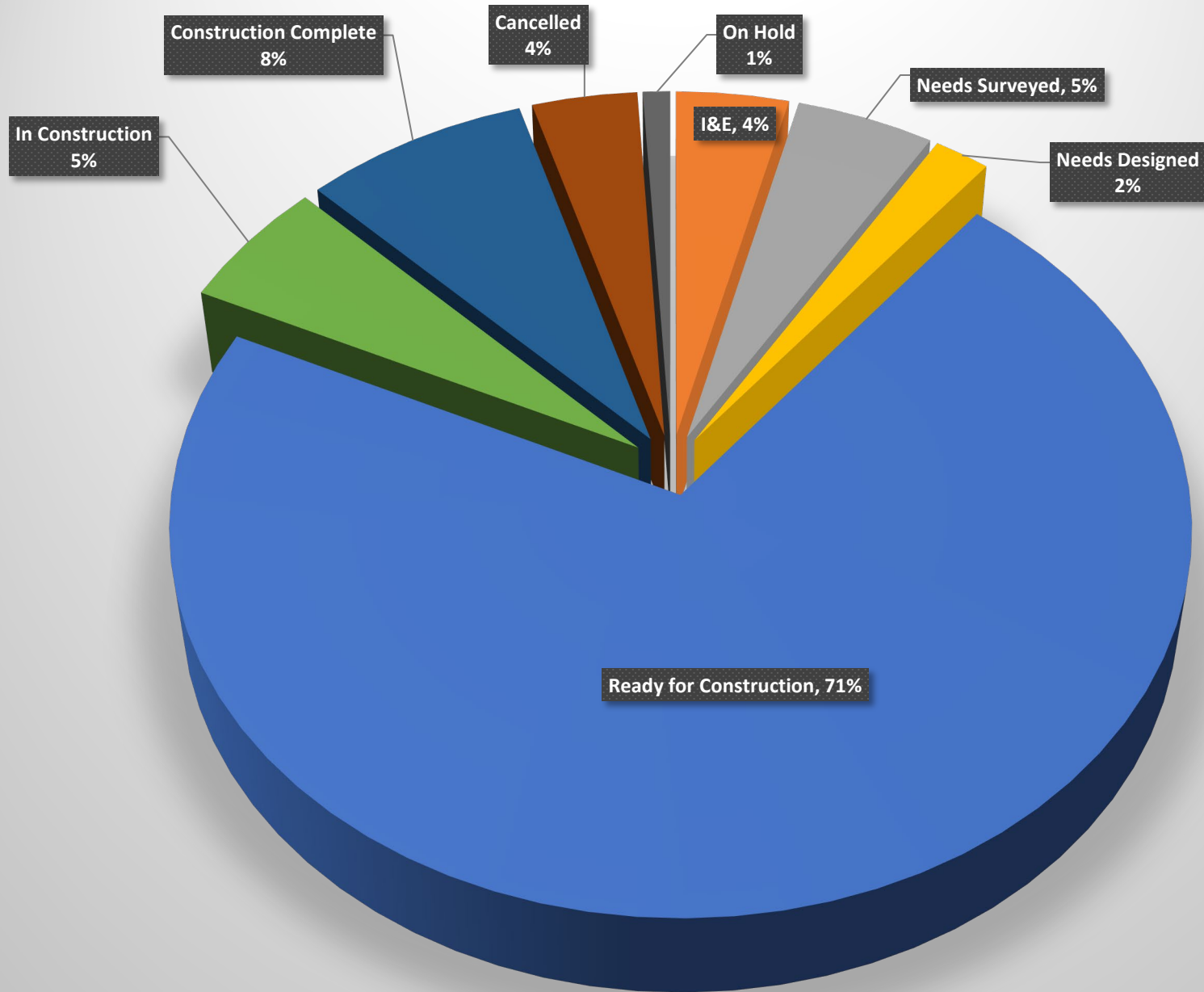
- Anticipated upcoming meetings for the GHP CC Taskforce in 2025: late September and early December.
- No-cost extension is being worked on and will be submitted later this year to extend current dollars into Fall of 2026.
- Work for second round of workplan documents was completed early last week as submission was due July 1.
- As a reminder, these are non-competitive funds established under the GHP to allow Hypoxia Task Force Member states to further their nutrient reduction strategy efforts.

PROGRAM ASSISTANCE IN THE NORTHWEST



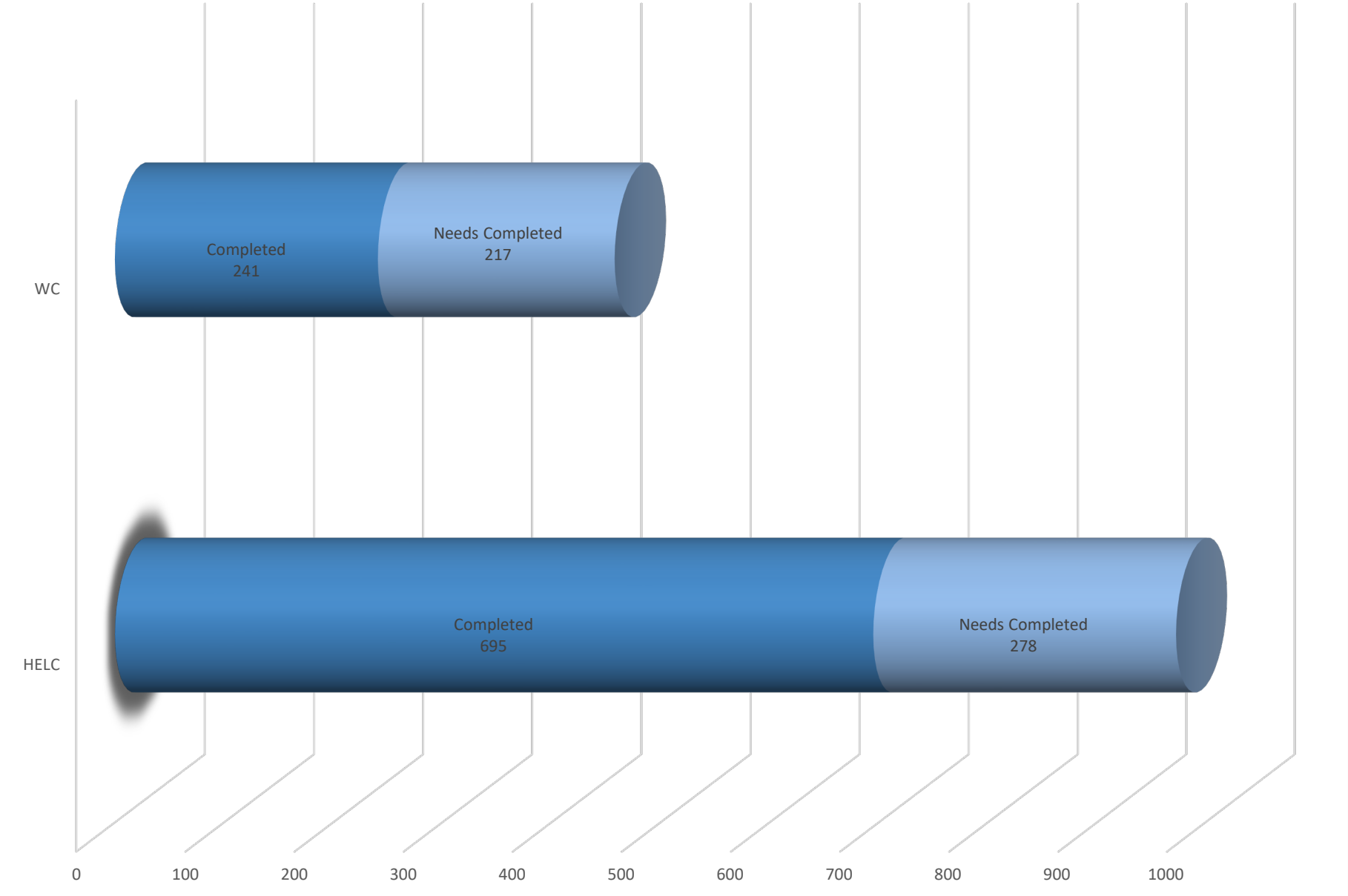
Conservation Practices in Northwest





NORTHWEST PROJECT STATUS

Northwest HEL and Wetland Compliance





State Soil Conservation Board
July 8, 2025 District Support Specialist (DSS) Report:
5/24/25 to 6/20/25



Statewide or Regional Trainings for SWCD Supervisors and Staff

- **Upcoming:**
 - 6/25/25, 1PM EST: Clean Water Indiana (CWI) Information and Networking Session. The session will be recorded.
 - DSSs are working with local partners in various areas as region meeting possibilities are discussed/implemented. These local meetings will replace the traditional Summer Summit meetings for 2025. For more information, please contact the local region. Upcoming tentative dates/events:
 - July 30, NNE (Kosciusko County)
 - August 18, SSW (Daviess County)
 - August 21, SNW (Montgomery County)
 - September 10, SSE (Washington County)
- **New Supervisor and Staff Training:** available year-round via your ISDA DSS. Updated in January 2025, the training is available in-person, or virtually. As well, a recorded video is available for Supervisors. Please contact your DSS for more information.

Clean Water Indiana

- DSSs are communicating with SWCDs with current grants (e.g., modifications, tasks tying to the upcoming July 31 grant update deadline responsibilities,
- DSSs are assisting groups with questions tying to the 2026 CWI Competitive Grant cycle. Applications are due in GMS no later than September 4, 2025 at 12PM EST.

DSS Committee Work and Other Key Accomplishments:

- The DSS team met to determine what materials/documents could be included in 2026 New Supervisor packets, to further training initiatives with board members. Next steps are updating selected documents, gathering others, and creating new items as needed.
- DSSs were involved with various committees or initiative work including: Board Leadership Program, Clean Water Indiana, FFA, Pathway to Water Quality, State Soil Conservation Board, & Women4theLand.

DSS Activities Statewide for This Reporting Period of "Significance"	Total
Input, Assistance & Attendance at SWCD Board Meetings	9
Assistance with SWCD or Partner Strategic Planning	0

Assistance with CWI Initiatives (Competitive Grants, Capacity Reports, etc.) as a “Key Focus” (doesn’t include assistance during other interactions such as Board Meetings)	12
Other Events with SWCDs For Training, Assistance, Guidance, etc.	17
Total Number of Counties Impacted by Activities of “Significance”	27

Board Leadership Program

- Featured module: “District Leveraging Sheet”. Description: learn what a leveraging sheet is and how your district can use it to demonstrate return on investments with elected officials locally, state, and federally. Time to complete module: 1 hour 3 minutes
- Trivia question: excluding the required trainings modules of internal controls, preventing workplace and sexual harassment, and new supervisor training, what are the three most popular videos completed so far by SWCD Supervisors?
 - Answer: Basic County Structure for Indiana, Recruitment Strategies, and Why Is Your Role Important?
- Access the BLP website: ISDA website [ISDA: Districts Tools](#) and [Conservation Link SWCD Training - Home](#)

IASWCD Update - July 2025



River Friendly Farmer Award Ceremony, August 6



August 6 at 1:00 pm (ET)

Indiana State Fairgrounds, 4-H Exhibit Hall, 2nd floor auditorium

Fifty-two Indiana farmers will be honored at the Indiana State Fair on August 6 during the 2025 River Friendly Farmer Award recognition ceremony. These outstanding producers are being recognized for implementing conservation practices that protect Indiana's waterways and improve water quality. The ceremony will include remarks from Indiana Lt. Governor

Micah Beckwith and other state leaders. Honorees will enjoy a well-deserved day at the fair celebrating their dedication to conservation and stewardship of our natural resources.

Pathway to Water Quality - Volunteers Still Needed



Pathway to Water Quality's success during the Indiana State Fair relies on its volunteer base of staff from the Indiana Conservation Partnership (ICP) and others. Thousands of fair visitors enjoy this watershed exhibit learning about conservation practices - how they work, why they are important and what they can do to make a difference! 2025 state fair dates: August 1-17, closed Mondays. To read more about volunteering and to sign-up, visit the [ICP website](#).

Conservation Farm Tour, September 18

Get ready for an inspiring day in Jackson County at Hackman Family Farms, home of the 2024 Conservation Farmer of the Year! This Conservation Farm Tour provides an opportunity to explore a working farm committed to conservation, see real-life practices in action, hear directly from the farmers about *why* they do what they do, and connect with colleagues, other SWCDs, and partners. Sept. 18, 10 am - 3 pm (ET).

IASWCD Annual Business Meeting, December 19

IASWCD's Annual Business Meeting will take place on December 19 at the Indiana Farm Bureau building in downtown Indianapolis. Resolutions will be presented and board officers will be elected. Regions will have an opportunity to elect their IASWCD representatives this day. Districts have been informed regarding the Resolution Process and the deadline for submission of resolutions is September 8.

Report to the State Soil Conservation Board

July 8, 2025

Program Director Activities

FY25 GOAL: Recruit and hire the second cohort (7) Conservation Technicians.

- Six new RITA Techs started last month

ONGOING GOAL: Serve as a liaison for the agreement, and publicize opportunities related to the agreement to SWCDs statewide.

- June and early July were spent coordinating with the SWCDs that are getting the new RITA Techs.

ONGOING GOAL: Facilitate and lead local SWCD Boards, SWCD staff and partners in each program region to ensure effective work assignments and outcomes for Conservation Technicians.

- The quarterly review of RITA Techs by SWCDs for the quarter ending June 30 is currently underway.
 - More than half of the SWCDs have completed the review.
 - The average score is 4.85 on a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 is the best possible score.
 - Comments include:
 - They are always willing to help with any project regardless of its difficulty or mundaneness. They schedule their time with our District around our needs and are always willing to work outside of normal business hours if necessary. They are hardworking, dependable, and excellent communicators. They are always responsive to emails, calls, and texts. They bring an innovative thought process and creative ideas to our District. They really goes the extra mile to help us out.
 - They have been great to work with and an invaluable asset to our small office.
 - So helpful and available when we need. Very knowledgeable.
 - We have been without a District Technician and then hired one and are in the onboarding/training phase. The RITA Tech was able to help familiarize our new District Technician-Technician to Technician instead of Coordinator to Technician regarding various things we do/how we do them/etc. I think this is another reason why this program is a great idea. You have consistent technicians and when other districts bring on a new technician, they are a great source of training/mentoring. I see this program as helpful on many levels. The RITA Techs are continually working to increase their skills then when a SWCD needs help or training or coverage you have someone who can step into that role.

RITA Technicians Activities

ONGOING GOAL: Support SWCD priorities and projects and track selected metrics in five categories:

➤ Outreach Activities

Activities	Total
Attend SWCD board meetings	134
Attend ICP Meetings, Conference Calls, Webinars	158
Attend Field Days and Trainings	217
Present objectives/accomplishments at SWCD board meetings	64
Presentations at Field Days and Trainings	8
Presentations to the general public	107
Educational interactions with producers/forest owners	5
One-on-One discussions with land users on the benefits of soil health and improving water quality	59

➤ Technical Assistance Activities – Resource Concerns

Soil Health Management	58	Drainage & Water Management	24
Commodity Crops/Cover Crops Management	32	Invasives Management	84
Livestock/Pasture Management	13	Diversified/Orchard/Urban Gardens Management	50
Woodlands/Agroforestry Management	17		
TA to support Historically Underserved and Socially Disadvantaged Producers			40

➤ Planning and Engineering Activities

Completed conservation planning activities	2	Number of designs/inspections completed	2
Number of surveys	5	Number of construction checks completed	1

➤ Program Support

CWI Grants	15	RCPP Grants	1
LARE Grants	0	Other Farm Bill Programs	0
ISDA Soil Sampling	0	NACD Grants	3
EPA 319 Grants	2	Other Agency and NGO Grants*	6

* LaGrange SWCD has WQ grants through the REMC and the Community Foundation

➤ ICP Collaboration Activities

Field/Tillage Checks	15	ICP Referrals	2
Transect Participation	14	Meetings with other ICP Staff	11

Indiana NRCS State Conservationist Report

July 2025 State Soil Conservation Board Meeting

INDIANA NRCS REORGANIZATION

No update as of July 1, 2025.

FUNDING

Indiana NRCS received an additional \$1.5M for EQIP with preapprovals going out the week of July 1. The priority will be those applications that were previously preapproved/approved in IRA but were not considered in EQIP Classic. Indiana NRCS received an additional \$6M for CSP with preapprovals going out the week of June 23.

FARM BILL PROGRAMS

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

Indiana State office obligated all EQIP-Inflation Reduction Act (EQIP-IRA) applications that had signature dates input in Protracts prior to January 27, 2025. Headquarters gave states instructions on which contracts could be obligated based on information in Protracts and a short timeline to get those contracts obligated.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

The Department announced signups for both Continuous Conservation Reserve Program – including CREP (statewide), SAFE, Highly Erodible Land and Wellhead initiatives – and a General Signup. The signup started on May 12 and runs through July 31.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

The Southern Indiana Sentinel Landscape's financial assistance has been approved to move forward. INNRCs staff are working with Conservation Law Center to advance current applications towards obligation while minimizing the local workloads.

FOOD SECURITY ACT OF 1985, AS AMENDED, COMPLIANCE REVIEWS

The Indiana NRCS State Office and Area Offices are completing all of the 2025 Food Security Act of 1985, as amended, compliance reviews. The State Office sent letters to the clients who were randomly selected from the national level and last year's variance tracts. Field visits will be completed soon and further data analyses completed from the State Office soon.

CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARDS PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

A Federal Register Notice for updates to the National Handbook of Conservation Practice Standards was published Monday June 30 and is now open for public comment. The comment period will close on July 30. Practices included are: Access Control (472), Controlled Traffic Farming (Code 334), Irrigation Canal or Lateral (320), Irrigation Ditch Lining (Code 428), Irrigation Field Ditch (388), Open Channel (Code 582), Pest Management Conservation System (595), Pumping Plant (533), Waste Treatment Lagoon (Code 359), Waste Recycling (633), Wildlife Habitat (645)

The notice can be found using the following link: [Federal Register NRCS-2025-0004](https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/06/30/2025-0004-conservation-practice-standards). Copies of the proposed conservation practice standards along with redline documents (showing changes from current to proposed) can be found on the Conservation Practice Standards Information webpage here <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/getting-assistance/conservation-practices> towards the middle of the page.

RESILIENT INDIANA AGREEMENT

Resilient Indiana (RITA) hired five new regional staff, bringing the total up to 12 technical staff. RITA Technicians are currently assisting field offices that have limited NRCS staff. The ASTC-Partnerships and State Resource Conservationist are developing additional opportunities for RITA technicians to assist at the field level.