

State Soil Conservation Board Meeting
July 14 2015
The Nature Conservancy
Indianapolis, IN

Members in Attendance:

Bob Eddleman
Nola Gentry
Ray Chattin
Robert Woodling
Warren Baird
Larry Clemens
Scott Ham (via phone)

Others in Attendance:

Jordan Seger, ISDA
Mike Johnson, ISDA,
Jill Krause, ISDA
Jordan Seger, ISDA
Jennifer Thum, ISDA
Tara Wesseler-Henry, ISDA
Trevor Laureys, ISDA
Roger Kult, NRCS
Sheryl Vaughn, Boone SWCD

Laura Fribley, ISDA
Nathan Stoelting, ISDA
Emily Neitzel, IASWCD
Leah Harmon, ISDA
Les Zimmerman, SWCD, IASWCD
Kevin Kreuzman, ISDA
Jason Kishton, FSA
Walt Sell, AG Purdue – Soil Health

I. Meeting Called to Order – 9:33am

II. Approve Minutes of May 2015

Mrs. Gentry moved to approve the minutes as read, Mr. Eddleman seconded the approval.
All in favor, motion carried.

Nola talked about posting draft minutes on the web. The board felt that the minutes should be posted as soon as they are done on the website as a draft copy.

III. Clean Water Indiana

a. Clean Water Indiana Grants – Leah Harmon

Leah went over the CWI application, memo and the district verification tool.

b. 2016 Clean Water Indiana Grants – Bob Eddleman

Bob stated that the changes were shown in red and he went through each one with the Board.

1. Changed the word from “must” to “should” so if one conservation district has a critical situation in a smaller watershed and needs attention this would allow the SSCB to accept a proposals sponsored by only one conservation district. This does not detract from the efforts that have been made to have the districts work together.
2. Is changing the terminally of OFN to IN Field Advantage, to keep in changes that have taken place.

3. On the second page, we have inserted “research projects, including water monitoring are not eligible under the 2016 CWI grant.”
4. On the second page, we clarified a requirement for the current district verification tool.
5. The application must be submitted by October 1, 2015.
6. The second pages, eligible applicants – the date for the reporting on the verification tool were changed from September 2013 – August 2014 **TO** September 2014 – August 2015.
7. On page 3, Partnership, the word “must” was changed to “should.”
8. On page 3, Funds Available, a sentence was added, “In addition, the SSCB may use some discretion when awarding grant funds by prioritizing newly applying districts as well as districts/areas statewide who have received less CWI funding since 2011.”
9. On page 3, the year was changed from 2015 to 2016.
10. On page 4, a statement was added to indicate that the SSCB will give preference to applicants new to cover crops.

Larry asked about the water monitoring if we would allow it to be counted as match. The consensus was that the water monitoring could be counted as match.

The Board discussed the research addition and wondered if they should mention something about the districts can work with Purdue.

Nola discussed why they only pad \$20.00 for cover crops, and not what other agencies are paying. She felt that our program was to catch those farmers that are not accepted into their programs and they would then get some assistance from CWI.

Nola moved to accept the changes, Larry seconded

All in favor, Motion carried

Bob – talked about the memo and the verification tool. Specifically, the removal of the requirement that two or more districts must partner on a CWI and the changes to the verification tool.

Bob moved, that the memo be approved, Nola Seconded,

All in favor, Motion carried.

Bob went into further detail with the verification tool. Bob and Leah explained that we added a few deadlines on items the districts are responsible for such as, sales tax, election of officers, and on the back added incentives to attending the Leadership Institute and the Supervisor Summit.

Bob moved that the verification tool be approved and Robert seconded

All in favor, Motion carried.

Bob discussed the CWI application with the SSCB.

Bob moved that the CWI application be approved and Robert seconded

All in Favor, Motion carried.

IV. State Soil Conservation Board Business

Business Plan – We only received seventeen survey responses back and they still need to go over them.

Scott (via phone) – likes the feedback. It became clear that we need to help the districts understand what the SSCB’s authority is as well as ISDA and the Division of Soil Conservation. Scott asked if a specific amount has been allocated for training dollars out of the CWI.

Jordan stated that will happen at the next board meeting, when we get approval from OMB.

Leah gave an update on the 2015 CWI grants – we are seeing practices implemented the second quarter and their reports are due. We have completed two more SWCD audits of their CWI grants, so our grant total of completed audit is six.

The 10,000 for the AFR, we are still waiting on six claim vouchers and we are following up with them.

Bob went over the letter that Scott provided for the reimbursements. The SSCB had further discussion on the process that was done in 2014 -2015 and now we are going back to reimbursements. This payment will be tied to the \$10,000 the districts receive from CWI, but the Districts don’t have to receive the \$10,000 from CWI to receive training reimbursement funds.

Bob moved to approve the application for the reimbursements for training dollars. Nola seconded it.

All in favor, Motion carried.

V. Soil and Water Conservation Districts

A. Howard County SWCD

Laura stated that Steve Byron left to become a member on the drainage board and Rob Ballinger was to replace his spot.

Bob made a motion to accept Rob Ballinger, Nola seconded it.

All in favor, Motion carried.

B. Clinton County SWCD

Leah stated that this is a temporary appointment. Charles Calvert indicated that he wanted to step off the SWCD board and that Devon Bell was willing to replace him as supervisors. He was ready to move on.

Bob made a motion to accept Devon Bell, Nola seconded it.

All in favor, Motion carried.

C. Huntington County SWCD

Jennifer stated that supervisor Gary Jones passed away. Ned Rubble offered to step in to fill the vacancy.

Nola made a motion to accept Ned Ruble and, Bob seconded it.

All in favor, Motion carried.

VI. ISDA Updates

a. Directors Report – Jordan

Crop Damage - Talked about crop damage and about 700 million in crop damage, could be close to a billion at the end of the year. About 70% of farmers have insurance. The State is looking at seeking disaster funding. FSA is out on the ground to see if there is a greater than 30% of one crop to an area can provide that disaster funding, but it's only for loans. The partnership is promoting cover crops to hold soil in place.

Lake Erie – With the amount of rain, record rainfall, that will leach the nutrients out, all agencies are preparing for a large algal bloom. ISDA is putting together a website about the WLEB and what projects have the projects are in place that will reduce the nutrients.

Larry Clemens – mentioned that we need to focus on the watershed projects.

Jordan discussed the agreement that was presented to our Lieutenant Governor to reduce the phosphorus loading into Lake Erie by 40%. Indiana did not sign the agreement.

Indiana Grown – Officially launched on July 7th. It has gotten interest from Kroger, Marsh and Meijer.

WOTUS – Final ruling. Jordan talked about that ISDA's legal council are working on this from the conservation end, and how it could make putting voluntarily practices more difficult to get in the ground because additional permits could be required. On August 28th, it goes into full affect.

CWI – non reverting funds. So the money can be accessed later. We now have in writing that the agreement says that the money can be rolled back and we can access it later.

2016 DSC Budget – looks similar to 2015. The board put out more CWI grants so we could have the same opportunities, as far as money spent within the same framework.

SWCD Meetings – ISDA, IASWCD, NRCS, are making rounds to the SWCD meetings, throwing out some challenges and show leadership in front of the board.

Nutrient Reduction Strategy – ISDA is not in the water monitoring business, it's not what we do. But we are focus on the modeling and that comes down we can do it with our resources and on an annual basis.

State Fair – Field staff signed up for at least one shift at Pathway to Water Quality and the Normandy Barn.

Fall Cover Crop and Tillage Transect – that is completed and we have over a million acres covered in covered crops, and we are working on a press release. We are looking good on the tillage front too. We are wrapping up the spring tillage transect too.

Roger Kult asked if the pork producers are going to highlight the nutrient reduction strategy. Jordan indicated that there will be a breakfast focusing on their strategy.

b. Technical Report – Mike Johnson

Mike talked about CWI projects in the southeast. In addition, Mike spoke about the work that the Resource Specialists (RS) do on top of the CWI projects. Mike went over the maps that he provided to the board. The southeast have around fourteen counties with CWI grants, and/or IDEM 319 watershed and implementation grants. In addition, the RSs are doing LARE, NRCS CRP work as well.

c. Agricultural Affairs – Jordan Seger spoke on behalf of Meg Leader

Infield Adv. – They currently have about 800 fields enrolled in the program. The flooding has impacted the program in portions of the State.

Red Gold Environmental Program

They have about 95% of their growers involved in this program; they have more cover crops and less tillage. The fields look awful and uneven.

Roadside Pollinators Program

Working with INDOT on the adoption of ROW that could be offered to the districts to plan and plant pollinator habitats, but they are running into people that like the manicure look that INDOT provides when they mow the land.

d. Accountability and Technology – Jordan Seger spoke on behalf of Deb Fairhurst

ICP Conservation Accomplishments and Nutrient Load Reduction Report

The 2013 and 2014 cumulative maps were updated to include graphics representing the amount of sediment, nitrogen and phosphorus kept from Indiana's waterways. Based upon feedback from ICP leadership, a few revisions were made to the report. Jordan talked about how Indiana is the only state that is doing this. We have looked at all the practices installed by our partners and putting that data on one spot and then running the model to see what the water quality data was and to see how many tons of sediment was reduced by the voluntary practices that were installed.

Larry – we need to get other states to work like IN does in tallying the data. Larry mentioned the hypoxia task force.

Bob – we talk about reduction, can we figure out how to talk to the public, land users that make the behavioral changes, can we benefit more and do more work by saying something about the financial assistance by the government, districts etc?

Jordan -We are being transparent with the funding and the partnerships that are happening to make these reductions. We will continue to explore the communications, and it has the administrative attention.

e. District Support – Laura Fribley

Upcoming Events.

Laura went over upcoming events that will be taking place throughout Indiana. The Supervisor Summit is scheduled for August 25th in Danville. This year we will be trying to offer a link for the Districts that are further than 75 miles to videoconference into the workshop.

The Leadership Institute will have several workshops taking place this year, the next event is August 28th at Fair Oaks Dairy.

Clean Water Indiana

The DSSs will be holding around eleven workshops throughout the state to allow the districts to get together to talk about projects and allow them to ask questions about the changes to the grants.

Indiana Training Certification Program

The books that SSCB purchased for the Districts will be utilized for the training workshop on weed and plant identification.

Districts Self Assessment – Common Themes

Laura gave the history behind the SWCD self-assessments and what the overall common themes of them were. The highest seemed to be that the office was an inviting environment for both staff employees and the public. The lowest assessment had to do with the recruitment plan for the Districts.

Robert asked that the DSS talk about the legal requirements of the SSCB, Districts, ISDA and the Division and how they blend together. Laura indicated that we can do this.

f. Water Quality and CREP – Jordan Seger on behalf of Julie Harrold

CREP – A lot of actions in the Northern portion of the State. We are trying to allocate funds, and the State wants to write a check for the districts and they keep that amount and it's more of an on-demand funds.

VII. Conservation Partner Reports

a. IASWCD – Emily gave her time to Les.

i. CCSI – Ashley is fully on board and working as their Agronomist for CCSI.

Les talked about the great partnerships that are going on. CCSI has pre-proposal for the CIG grant that would allow for the continuation of the soil sampling at the HUB farms. They submitted a final proposal and they are optimistic that they can continue the program. They are in the third year of data.

Regarding the financial, at the oversight committee we have defined the goals and updated the business plan and guided the progress of CCSI. With the contractors and the committee working well and as they continuing to grow, they are seeing limitations by management of committee, so they need a program director and a communications director.

The Association board has been generous with Jennifer's role in CCSI and its taking away from her duties as the Associations director. Recently, they became aware of a funding opportunity from NRCS, and the funds would be a contribution agreement with them, which would allow for flexibility, discretionary funds. That being said, they require a 20% cash match. CCSI prepared a draft job description, and budget for three years. They want the SSCB to commit an additional \$40,000 for three years to match the NRCS funding stream to provide for the two jobs they want. That \$40,000 would be on top of the \$89,000 each year they already receive from the SSCB, and those funds have already been allocated in the form of a three-year commitment, if the funding is available for 2016, but it would still go to a vote.

Warren- where would you take this from

Les- CWI grants funds

Warren – Then that would take money away from the Districts.

Nola – What’s the breakdown between those two positions as far as the \$40,000?

Les referenced the funding sheets; this is a preliminary synopsis of where they want to go. They are looking at the high side; Year 1, \$13,725 – communication and \$24,450 – for the director.

Les rounded that number. CCSI is housed with IASWCD and they are there because they can use their non- profit status. It takes the form of a special program with the IASWCD and why we are referring them as a program director, but the position would answer to Jennifer Boyle Warner and the CCSI oversight committee. The position description – tells how the person will report. The agreement would be 75% NRCS and 25% IASWCD, and the 25% would be Clean Water Indiana funding.

Bob – we can say the 25% is SSCB, but in the management of the contribution agreement the 25% of the funding would have to come from the IASWCD, but the IASWCD would get their funding from the SSCB funding to meet their 25% match requirement.

Larry asked if they have explored other funding opportunities, and maybe non-traditional ones.

Les – A number of grants that are ongoing require match and we are about tapped on the match. Cash and in-kind matching and so with this new CIG grant if we get approved for sampling, they will need funds for matching dollars. Les stated that he is hoping the new director would be able to tap into the private and corporate groups for money and foundations. We do want to raise outside funds and we have done some and been successful to a point.

Ray – Jennifer Boyle Warner will be the day to day supervisor, are they going to be housed in the Farm Bureau Buildings or where?

Les – the communication person would be housed in the Farm Bureau Building, but the program manager would not necessarily be. The position would have some flexibility of where they work from.

Roger – spoke about the NRCS funding and how it works. The contribution agreement is in place and some conversations have taken place, a three year agreement in place, and there is current language that would allow for the hiring to happen and we could modify the language and the dollars. Roger talked further on the agreement.

Jordan – we cannot immediately modify the current CWI contract, and that could take up to 40 days..

Les – ASAP, but we can be flexible, late August, early September.

Scott – when is the next meeting – September – We need to have the grants committee meeting first and make the recommendation. We need to review this today, and talk about it through the CWI grants committee and then bring back a vote to the September meeting.

Ray – why does this have to go to the grants committee?

Jordan – this is a decision that the three grants committee members need to talk about.

Ray – but they are here.

Jordan – if they want to meet to the side.

Robert – dealing with a dwindling pool of funds and it is our duty to go through this in a deliberate manor. What is the critically of these two positions and if you only get one, can you combine the work?

Les – I have struggled with the oversight committee with this management of committee, and the concern that we have about missing opportunities and missing to pursue outside

funding and interagency communication chances. If I was going to ask for one, it would be the program manager position. If we got the right person they could do the public relations, maybe not the graphic design, but we have someone at the IASWCD that can do that.

Bob E.—assuming that the contribution agreement funds has committed to both positions, would there have to be adjustment on the agreement, if we were to only fund one position.

Les – the amount of money depends on the match that they can get from the SSCB/CWI funds.

Roger- we would not have to modify the current language or add deliverable to the agreement, but it's in the current agreement; it's easier to add funding to the existing agreement.

Larry – any time we are taking money from the districts, this is going to raise pressure, wondering to get district support, was there any consideration to match with CWI 20,000 but then districts chip in some of the funds and be invested and partnership with it to show support and have skin in the game.

Les – that would take a person to sell the idea to the districts, but in reality we don't have the resources to do that without the person.

Robert – Getting SWCD in the game, the IASWCD purpose is this type of communications and would not fall to the program manager, that should come from the them, talking with their members about getting things done, getting them realized what the hierarchy is.

Could we fund the director position and maybe the second position as things start moving along, and the whole media, maybe you don't need both.

Nola – We have apples and oranges, we already support the CCSI program and now they are asking for additional funds. However, the program manager is a CCSI piece of the pie, the communication person is not, looking at the job description, there is whole lot of association, annual conference in there and very little CCSI in the job description. If we are going to look at additional funding for one year, would only be for the program manager position. It's taking CWI funding from the districts and we will hear about it. Maybe we could have the districts evaluate the program.

Les – great discussion and no stranger to the incremental approach. Ask for \$40,000 and other things to consider if you take \$10,000 you would lose a potential of \$30,000 funding from NRCS. You are on to some good points.

Ray – Need to wrap it up. Most important part of the partnership and where we need to go in the future and time to bring it to the next level and there will be fallout if we go through with the \$40,000. I did not take this job to make everyone happy and I want to move the partnership forward.

Robert- Let the grant committee meet aside and then make a recommendation. .

Recess at 11:30am

Meeting called back to order at 11:37am 10 minute break.

Ray – thanked Les for his work.

Robert – we decided as a grant committee recommendation on the issue of additional CWI funding for CCSI – the grants committee propose to fund \$25,000 a year for three years to hire a program manager.

Ray – we are going to be \$15,000 short of their request and we would be leaving \$45,000 per year on the table as match.

Warren – we are taking money away from the districts

Robert – you are working on the assumption that CCSI won't get money from another source.

Ray – needs to get seek additional funding.

Warren – when these requests come to the board, it's what they want, its our duty to trim them down and look for something else and don't think that it's right to look at some things and to chew on and after we vote and it's up to CCSI to accept what we did and come back with another proposal.

Nola – the association and the committee can look for another \$15,000 match or within the association budget for this position. This gives us a chance to see how the program manager will work and function.

Scott – believes in CCSI and he sees the big picture. A lot of districts don't support it and believe that it takes away from them. However, it t helps them in the big picture; it has done so much for the state.

Roger – this work has been going on and that communication piece could have told our story as what the group is doing and we think that this link is critical. If the SSCB does not like the job description then maybe that's what the oversight committee can come back and ask for that communication.

Nola – the contract, what's the amendment/timing if this is approved...and the program manager gets on board and at a meeting at the end of the year. Can the SSCB amend their funding? Does it work with the contract?

Roger – does not see their fiscal year as a problem.

Ray – call for motion

Bob moved that the SSCB approve \$25,000 per year for the next three years for the additional funding for the CCSI program. Warren seconded.

All in favor

Larry, Warren, Bob, Robert and Nola voted in favor of it.

Ray voted against it.

Scott Ham was on the phone and he could not vote.

Motion carried

National Annual Conference – NACD supervisors and maybe staff member that they want to go. It's in Reno Jan 30 – Feb. 3rd.

IDEM –No report

IDEA – Sheryl – update on the newsletter, it's been revamped. Cheryl mentioned that they have four director positions open and if no one applies then the current directors have the option of staying on.

Boone County – were able to get 9.5 acres in land near fairgrounds and it's a demo plot where local business have bought into it to get it running. There will be a few demonstrations on invasive species; they have a farmer tech committee.

DNR – No report

Purdue – They are moving forward with on-site wastewater training with individuals to look at on-site systems and if they meet the current rules and regulations. They are revising the conservation practices for FFA judging to reflect the modern program and have a better experience and improve the home site of the evaluation for the contest.

The AG leaders are working with FSA directors to assess the damage of the crops and Purdue has launched a website that could help folks deal with the flood water of Indiana.

The Midwest cover crop council with be moving to Purdue from MI.

Nola – mentioned the sewer overflows are a problem too.

FSA –CRP program out SAFE acres for particular species, they asked for 22,000 acres and all states will be granted their 2015 request and should be getting 22,000 acres that they can sign up for.

NRCS

Cover Crops

To help the implementation of cover crops, they have current EQIP contracts for cover crop they can plant those acres early and in the WLEB applying for RCPP and cover crops; they can request a waiver to plant cover crops early.

Avian Bird Flu

Don't relax on this, no new cases, but summer and the heat is no conducive for this disease to spread, because this fall can be worst. ISDA will do the same, we will keep status quo.

Contribution agreements

We should be able to move forward with this next week, we got the official notice that we needed.

New Employees

Roger listed several people that have retired and he went over the new hires.

Public Comment – None

Warren made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Larry seconded it.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:13pm.