

Warren County
Soil & Water
Conservation District

705 B S.R. 28 East Williamsport IN 47993

765-764-8047

December 5th, 2025

To the State Soil Conservation Board,

This letter is to inform you the Warren County Soil & Water Conservation District Board requests to withdraw the nomination of reappointment supervisor for Marilyn McFatridge from being approved by the State Soil Conservation Board. We will submit a person for temporary appointment in January.

Sincerely,



David Taylor
Chairman

Ryan Bell
Board Member



Zach Dimmich
Board Member

2026 Recommendations for Supervisor Appointment

County	Supervisor Name	Submission Date	Aware of Dual Office Holding Policy	Voting Age	Occupation
Full-time farmer (August Rising Acres) and store owner at Wild Wisdom in Columbus - where farm goods are made into organic/health/beauty products. https://www.wildwisdomstore.com/					
Brown	Amanda Perkins	10/21/2025	Yes	Yes	
Carroll	Adam Shanks	08/28/2025	Yes	Yes	Grain and Livestock Farmer
Clark	Loren	10/29/2025	Yes	Yes	Retired from USACE.
Clay	Marshall Nuckolls	10/29/2025	Yes	Yes	Farmer Schoolbus Driver
Crawford	Richard Langdon	10/28/2025	Yes	Yes	Self-made business man.
Daviess	Marvin Holstine	10/27/2025	Yes	Yes	
Decatur	Fred Fry	10/31/2025	Yes	Yes	Farmer and truck driver
Elkhart	Dean Rink	10/21/2025	Yes	Yes	Farming
Fayette	Keith Hubble	10/31/2025	Yes	Yes	Farmer
Fountain	Bruce Sillery	09/15/2025	Yes	Yes	Bruce has been an ag educator since he graduated from Purdue. He has worked in FFA programs in high school settings. He was also employed as ag instructor at Ivy Tech on the Lafayette campus. Bruce is also a livestock and crop producer.
Grant	Robert Embree	10/24/2025	Yes	Yes	Retired from GM, farmer
Green	Steve Crowe	10/08/2025	Yes	Yes	Row crop/Cattle farmer
Hancock	Mike Conner	10/28/2025	Yes	Yes	Multi-generational farmer in Hancock County. Their family farm is run by Mike and Tara, their sons and Mike's Mother.

Harrison	Michael Wolfe	10/23/2025	Yes	Yes	Indiana Farm Bureau Insurance Agent since 1997, partner in the family farming operation, Wolfe Brothers INC
Huntington	Garrett Heaston	10/23/2025	Yes	Yes	Seed & Biology Fertilizer Dealership owner and farmer.
Jay	Betty Drinkut	10/24/2025	Yes	Yes	retired chemistry teacher
Jefferson	Mark Damold	10/22/2025	Yes	Yes	Self Employed
Knox	Eugene Flanigan	09/22/2025	Yes	Yes	Small Business Owner, Agronomy Service, Crop Insurance Sales, Grain Farm with 400 acres
Kosciusko	Roger Miller	10/28/2025	Yes	Yes	Semi Retired Farmer, still helping neighbors with crops.
LaGrange	Scott Beecher	10/29/2025	Yes	Yes	Full time Farmer
Lawrence	Chase Terry	10/28/2025	Yes	Yes	Duke Energy
Madison	Cody Hooker	10/30/2025	Yes	Yes	Financial Advisor at Edward Jones
Marion	Heather Buck	10/22/2025	Yes	Yes	Resource Planner
Marshall	Tim Gochenour	10/23/2025	Yes	Yes	Farms and supplies/distributes seeds in his business Gochenour Ag Services.
Miami	Jon Reese	10/23/2025	Yes	Yes	Farmer

Monroe	Dallas Conder	09/18/2025	Yes	Yes	Full time farmer
Morgan	Stanley Diamond	10/24/2025	Yes	Yes	Civil and Environmental Engineer
Ohio	Lori Turner	10/22/2025	Yes	Yes	Registered Nurse for Saint Elizabeth Emergency Room
Perry	Randall Rennie	09/12/2025	Yes	Yes	Retired Carpenter
Pike	Norman Dillon	10/30/2025	Yes	Yes	Norman has been an industrial mechanic at a power plant generating station for over 37 years and has been a hobby farmer most of his life.
Porter	Brent Jarnecke	09/22/2025	Yes	Yes	Utility company employee/ part-time farmer
Posey	Amelia Wilderman	10/29/2025	Yes	Yes	Interpretive Naturalist for the Indiana State Parks System through the Department of Natural Resources
Putaski	Kevin Podell	10/09/2025	Yes	Yes	Farmer. Currently I have cows, row crops and hay.
Putnam	Justin Berry	10/28/2025	Yes	Yes	Farm hand Side business: mulching and bushhogging

Randolph	Jordan Prescott	09/10/2025	Yes	Yes	farmer
Ripley	Levi Speer	10/23/2025	Yes	Yes	Farmer
Rush	Clifford Martatt	10/27/2025	Yes	Yes	HVAC Sales & Service & Grain Farmer
Shelby	Mike Mills	10/21/2025	Yes	Yes	Mike is an Energy Sales Specialist for Shelby County Co-op.
Sullivan	Jan page	11/03/2025	Yes	Yes	Farming
Switzerland	Ken Briggs	10/30/2025	Yes	Yes	Farmer
Tippecanoe	Deb Grady-Ruth	08/15/2025	Yes	Yes	Retired
Tippecanoe	Deb Grady-Ruth	11/24/2025	Yes	Yes	Retired
Union	Cindy Spoljaric	10/31/2025	Yes	Yes	Retired
Vanderburgh	Kevin Rexing	09/29/2025	Yes	Yes	Farmer
Vermillion	Connie Warner	10/20/2025	Yes	Yes	Retired
Warren	Marilyn McFatridge	10/30/2025	Yes	Yes	Retired Purdue employee and farmers wife
Warrick	Peter Rudolph	10/21/2025	Yes	Yes	corn, soybean, wheat and canola farmer

Washington	Rhonda Johnson	10/20/2025	Yes	Yes	Rhonda is a retired teacher and continues to raise crops and cattle on her family farm.
Washington	Rhonda Johnson	10/21/2025	Yes	Yes	Rhonda is a retired teacher and continues to raise crops and cattle on her family farm.
Wayne	Lisa Bihl	10/28/2025	Yes	Yes	Environmental Planner - Empower Results - an environmental consulting firm
Wells	Jonathan Patterson	10/21/2025	Yes	Yes	Business Owner
White	Phil Huber	10/28/2025	Yes	Yes	Farmer
Whitley	Gary Hoffman	09/10/2025	Yes	Yes	Live stock and grain farmer

Qualifications	Conservation Interests	Duties Explained
Owns 40 acres of woodland and organic vegetable farmland in Brown County.	Passionate about organic growing methods, organic pest control, cover crops and their use to break up compaction, farm to table initiatives, and sustainable living.	Yes
Conservation Minded, farming lineage Land owner, cattle and grain farmer.	Nutrient Mgmt, pest mgmt, cover crops, waterways Utilizes No-Till, associated with the Clark County Cattlemen Association.	Yes
Supervisor	No Till Farming, Soil & Water Conservation Districts, Indiana Farm Bureau	Yes
Planted a 175 acre tree farm, has 70 acres in Classified Forest, and 18 acres in the Conservation Reserve Program. He is active in State Forestry issues, including sitting on the State Forester's Forest Resources Coordinating Committee that established the Forest Legacy Program in Indiana. Langdon is concerned about the future of Crawford County's most abundant renewable resources, forests.	Very concerned about forest health	Yes
Current Chairman of the SWCD board, 4-H leader, 4+ year member of the Millhouse Volunteer Fire Department, Farm Bureau member	Long time 100% no-till operation, raised corn and soybeans, uses waterways and filterstrips on farm	Yes
He has been a Supervisor at the Elkhart County Soil & Water Conservation District for (3 Terms) 9 years total.	Filter strips, grass waterways, cover crops, nutrient & pest management planning.	Yes
Fayette county board would like him to renew his appointment. He has fulfilled is term and enjoyed being on the board. He also is a producer in Fayette County with strong interest in conservation.	Invasive removal, cover crops	Yes
Bruce has served on the board since 2011 and board chairman for several terms.		Yes
Current appointed supervisor, maintains conservation practices on his farm ground.	Water quality and soil health.	Yes
Steve has served as chairman of our board for multiple years. Steve farms row crop and cattle on his family farm. Steve is devoted to the SWCD and will serve well as appointed supervisor.	Cover crops and rotational grazing.	Yes
Mike has served on the Hancock County SWCD Board of Supervisors for several years. He has great skills in reaching our residents and working very well with the other Supervisors. He brings a balanced understanding of the dedication and duties as a Supervisor and the support of the District's staff member.	Mike uses no-till, waterways, cover crops, and rotational grain on their farm. He is an advocate of conservation practices in Hancock for rural farms and urban settings.	Yes

Harrison SWCD Supervisor since 2014. Honorary member of Lanesville High School FFA	Practices no-till, sows cover crops, installed grassed waterways & conservation livestock feeding pads	Yes
Garrett grew up on the farm and worked 2 years as a custom fertilizer & chemical applicator. He owns his own seed and biology fertilizer dealership and farms with his father in-law. He has served 3 years on the SWCD board as an elected supervisor.	Have waterways and filter strips on the family farm and implements conservation practices to protect our soils, improve soil health and uses variable rate system to prevent over spraying of fertilizer and chemicals that helps reduce excess nutrients from entering our rivers and streams.	Yes
Conservation minded has several conservation practices on her homeland	CRP CSP No-till pollinators-she raises bees	Yes
Been serving on board for several years, a huge asset	Farmer	Yes
Prior Board Member with Knox County SWCD	NoTill, Cover Crop and CRP	Yes
I have been all no-till since the mid 80s, now also use cover crops. I have 109 no-till acres	Want to keep getting more Conservation practices on more acres in the county.	Yes
Full time farmer dedicated to soil conservation through extensive use of cover crops, no-till practices and comprehensive nutrient management practices.	Farms several thousand acres of row crop including corn, beans, and wheat rotation. Becoming involved in confined poultry operation participates in an extensive test well study to monitor the effects of irrigation on water table levels and aquifer resources.	Yes
farmer, business owner,	Fencing, cattle	Yes
Cody owns 38 acres in the southern part of Madison Co. Cody has removal several acres of invasive and continues to maintain his property. He installed around an acre of pollinator habitat and planted over 150 trees for forest restoration.	Invasive removal, tree planting, pollinator habitat and native plantings	Yes
Heather works with the MS4 Coordinators from several NPDES Phase II communities in Indiana to develop and implement all components of their Stormwater Quality Management Programs (SWQMP). Heather also completes erosion and sediment control inspections on behalf of both public agencies and private development. In addition, Heather completes various water quality evaluations through chemical, physical, and biological data collection and analysis; including IDDE screening, QHEI, macroinvertebrate, and fish community sampling.	Erosion control, watershed planning, stormwater management	Yes
BS from Purdue in agriculture, farms acreage in Marshall County using conservation best management practices. Operates a business that supplies cover crop seed to other producers, encourages and mentors them how to use cover crops successfully.	Tim has been farming for many years. He assists and advises other producers and encourages landowners to utilize best management practices, such as no till and cover crops.	Yes
Miami County resident & landowner	Many conservation farming interests as well as natural resource passions including, but not limited to: invasive species removal/no till, cover crops, waterways, filter strips, wetlands, etc.	Yes

Dallas has been a board member on the SWCD Board since 2008 serving 5 full terms.	Soil Health	Yes
Stanley is a retired Civil and Environmental Engineer, has previously worked as a contractor for Indiana Department of Environmental Management reviewing permits for the Office of Water Quality, and has just finished his first three-year term on the Morgan Co. SWCD board. Stanley is passionate about conservation of our Natural Resources, volunteers in many capacities for the District, and has opened his own home up to host workshops during his first term. He speaks fluently with leaders at the state level and collaborates well with traditional and nontraditional conservation partners.	Stanley works hard to educate others about invasive species, water quality, and soil health,	Yes
Lori grew up on a dairy farm and was around farming all her life, with hay crops and tobacco.	Grows a raised bead garden at her home, participated in Ag Day and attends neighboring counties Annual Meeting and other events	Yes
She was a 10 year 4-H member and her father was a member of the Ohio County Soil and Water Conservation District also.	He has been SWCD supervisor from 1986 to present	Yes
Norman has been a farmer and an advocate for wildlife habitats most of his life. He has been involved in county and state governments for many years and has held the position of chairman at Pike County SWCD for several years.	Wildlife habitat conservation, clean water conservation, healthy soil practices	Yes
Brent is a well-read conservationist who keeps current with the latest research, which might be applied to the family farm. As an Associate Member he has contributed a number of valuable ideas to the conversation, when we are planning for an event or considering participation in a new program.	cover crops, no-till, pest management, windbreaks, habitat retention	Yes
A graduate of the University of Southern Indiana with a BS in Biology and an emphasis on wildlife.	whole ecosystem conservation	Yes
A Department of Natural Resources employee for 28 years, A lifelong resident of Posey County, Indiana.	We do no-till and strip till were the cows walk. We have very sandy soil with no till and vertical till we have less wind erosion , we are building organic matter and have increased earthworm population. We have decreased fertilizer rates and increased yields.	Yes
I have been a board member for more then 10 years.	Justin grew up on a farm, then went to Purdue and graduated with a degree in Wildlife. He has worked full time on the farm since 2017 and part time before that. Some conservation practices that are utilized on the farm include grass waterways and invasive species control. Justin also has a side business where he runs a bushhog and mulcher.	Yes
	Wildlife, Forest Health, Ag sustainability, Soil Health	Yes

current SWCD Supervisor		Yes
Farmer and has been on the board in a vacancy for a year Resident, voting age, farmer, business owner.	Soil health and water quality	Yes
	Cover Crops, No-Till, Composting	Yes
Shelby County resident. Lives and owns .5 acres where his residence is located. Graduated from Perry Meridian High School and has college credits from Ball State University.	Mike filled the vacant appointed Shelby Co. SWCD Supervisor position when Todd McDaniel, Shelby Co. Supervisor, passed away in 2020. He has enjoyed being on the Board and would like to continue being a Supervisor on the Shelby County SWCD Board as an appointed Supervisor for another three years.	Yes
Graduated from WKU and has been farming with her family since. Been practicing no till and cover cropping. Certified drone applicator for her family farm. And they have specialty crop. Long standing member of the SWCD board.	No till, specialty crops, cover crop, drones Rotational Grazing, hay and pasture health, watering systems.	Yes Yes
Deb was appointed to the SWCD Board in 2021. Deb chose teaching as a career and worked in the Tippecanoe School corporation as a 5th grade teacher and a sixth grade science teacher for 29 years. She and her husband, David, also a retired school teacher live in Battle Ground. Upon retirement, Former High School Agriculture educator 5 years as board supervisor	Deb completed her Indiana Master Naturalist certification at Fort Harrison State Park followed by Advanced IMN training at Mounds State Park. When she is not volunteering her time with the SWCD, Deb volunteers with the Tippecanoe County Parks and Propheftstown State Park. She enjoys all things in nature and counts reading and hiking as her main hobbies.	Yes
Cindy is finishing her first term as appointed supervisor. She has had several years on county boards and enjoys community action. This will be Kevin's fourth term to serve on the board, so he has 9 years of experience serving on the board. Kevin attends many soil health workshops in our area and helps promote our workshops to the farmers.	Invasives and funding	Yes
Former Purdue Extension Employee, Active Community volunteer, landowner who implements conservation practices Marilyn is interested in improving her lands and has great interest in conservation. She has participated in conservation events and programs. And she has passion to learn more about conservation programs to be able to leave the land better than she found it. served as elected member, 4H volunteer, farmer and conservationist in the county	Kevin is a farmer who believes in no-till and cover crops and sees the benefits of uses both of these practices on his fields. Kevin uses multiple species of cover crops on his fields to improve his soil health.	Yes
	pollinator habitat restoration, education, bees	Yes
	Marilyn has a desire to learn about conservation programs and events. She wants to leave a legacy for her grandchildren and leave the land better than she found it.	Yes
	cover crops, no-til 25 years, dry dams every year, reinforce water outlets out of our fields into county drains, WASCOBS,	Yes

<p>Rhonda and her husband, Gary reside in Salem. They have three children and eight grandchildren. Rhonda is a native to Washington County. She graduated from Salem High School and went on to attend and graduate from Indiana University Southeast with a teaching degree.</p> <p>Rhonda and her husband, Gary reside in Salem. They have three children and eight grandchildren. Rhonda is a native to Washington County. She graduated from Salem High School and went on to attend and graduate from Indiana University Southeast with a teaching degree.</p>	<p>Bachelor of Science - Landscape Horticulture & Design - Purdue University</p> <p>Bachelor of Science - Biochemistry - Purdue University</p> <p>Special Projects manager with White River Alliance</p> <p>Work experience in landscape design, plant research and environmental fieldwork</p> <p>Ag Retail business owner specializing in liquid fertilizer.</p> <p>White County resident, has farmed with his family for many years and has taken over the family farm.</p> <p>He is a River Friendly Farmer from past years, No-till farms does cover crops</p>	<p>Rhonda utilizes no till farming practices, as has been the case for many years.</p> <p>She is involved in Women in Ag workshops and events to continue to learn about current ag topics and ways to improve their operation through cover crops, invasive control and erosion control.</p> <p>Rhonda utilizes no till farming practices, as has been the case for many years.</p> <p>She is involved in Women in Ag workshops and events to continue to learn about current ag topics and ways to improve their operation through cover crops, invasive control and erosion control.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>
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Tyler, Geneva (ISDA)

From: Microsoft Power Apps and Power Automate <microsoft@powerapps.com>
Sent: Friday, January 2, 2026 11:07 AM
To: Harmon, Leah; Tyler, Geneva (ISDA)
Subject: Update: Carroll Temp/Vacant Appt

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.

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

SWCD
Carroll
Appointment Type
Vacant_Appointed_Position
Who is the Candidate Replacing?
Neil Mylet
Term Expiration
JANUARY 2027
Reason for Vacancy
Resignation
Supervisor Candidate Name
MICHAEL BURKE
Address
11737 W 1000 N
City, State, ZIP
MONTICELLO, IN 47960
Qualifications
ACTIVE FARMING INTEREST
Occupation
FARMER
Conservation Interests

LIVESTOCK; ROW CROPS

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

MICHAEL W BEALE

Date of Submission

01/02/2026

Is a letter of resignation attached?

Yes

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

RE: BOARD MEETING



Neil Mylet

swcdcc@ffni.com

5/10/2025 10:27 AM

From Neil Mylet Dr
neil@mylet.org
To swcdcc@ffni.com

Thanks Rhonda!

Sorry I haven't been able to make the meetings, this is very likely going to be the last year I can serve on the board - I just have way too much I'm juggling!

I'll make sure to stay on until the end of this year! But, maybe we can start trying to find a replacement for me, I'm just too maxed out of commitments :)

Neil
Sent from my iPhone

On May 9, 2025, at 8:54 PM, swcdcc@ffni.com wrote:

AGENDA
Regular Board Meeting
May 14th, 2025
7:30 p.m.

- I. Call to Order
- II. Minutes of the April 9th meeting
- III. Treasurer's Report –Bills & claims
- IV. Old Business –
 - a) NRCS Report (in absentee)
 - b) 319/RITA/RCPP/CREP
 - c) Office Move
 - d) Other – Office Equipment
- I. New Business
 - a) 2026 budget
 - b) Education Events
 - c) 4-H Fair
 - d) Staff Reports & IASWCD Region Updates provided
 - e) Other
- I. Adjourn



State Soil Conservation Board

January 13, 2026

Nutrient Stewardship Update, Ophelia Norman



Mississippi River Basin Soil Sampling Program

- HaPpY NeW YeAr!
- The registration process is currently being reviewed with considerations of making changes prior to Spring 2026 Open Registration – conversations are occurring now about this, will update when more is known.
 - Spring 2026 Open Registration looks to start mid-February and go through early April.
- The program acreage enrollment threshold is set to at 100 acres (crop, pasture, hay, specialty) for the Spring 2026 Open Registration 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.
- Spring 2026 registration season will be the last registration round under Workplan #1 which means that current program requirements and eligibility will still be in place.

Gulf Hypoxia Program (GHP)

- The GHP CC Taskforce Meeting that was set for the first week of December was postponed due to the federal government shutdown.
 - This meeting has been rescheduled to the first week in February.
- The GHP Annual Report that was due by December 31, 2025 was successfully completed and submitted to EPA on December 23, 2025.
- No-cost extension was approved which means current dollars are extended through spring/summer of 2026.
- Workplan #2 has been approved and is set to start Fall 2026.
 - 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.



State Soil Conservation Board
January 13, 2026 District Support Specialist (DSS) Report:
11/22/25 to 1/2/26

Statewide or Regional Trainings for SWCD Supervisors and Staff

- **Completed:**
 - December 1: SBOA Training for SWCDs was offered.
 - Recording:
 - Part 1 - <https://youtu.be/qPWXsMdAhXo>
 - Part 2 - https://youtu.be/LvcVsB_O23s
 - December 3: Geneva hosted a SNW Regional SWCD staff meeting (10 counties present).
 - December 4: Kylie held a Capacity Report Help session (4 counties present).
 - December 19: Kylie hosted a regional staff luncheon for networking (7 counties present).
- **New Supervisor and Staff Training:** available year-round via your ISDA DSS. 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 (CWI)

- Capacity Reports were due 12/15/25. DSSs assisted with questions and reviewed submissions. 92 of 93 SWCDs were submitted on time.
- DSSs joined the CWI Grants Committee meeting.
- Competitive grants: grant updates are due 1/31/26. DSSs are assisting grantees with these and other grant related questions.

DSS Committee Work and Other Key Accomplishments:

- DSSs participated in the following committees: BLP, CWI, SSCB
- DSSs assisted SWCDs with questions tying to the upcoming election/appointment related deadlines, and Annual Meetings: a) December 1: nominees for election due b) SWCD Annual Meetings must be held between January and March

DSS Activities Statewide for This Reporting Period of Significance	Total
Input, Assistance & Attendance at SWCD Board Meetings	5
Assistance with SWCD or Partner Strategic Planning	1

Assistance with CWI Initiatives (Competitive Grants, Capacity Reports, etc.) as a Key Focus (doesn't include assistance during other interactions such as Board Meetings)	6
Other Events with SWCDs For Training, Assistance, Guidance, etc.	20
Total Number of Counties Impacted by Activities of Significance	49

Board Leadership Program (BLP)

- The BLP recognition luncheon, recognizing top 2024 participants, was held December 9.
- Featured module: "State Board of Accounts (SBOA) and Gateway Requirements". This module will give you an overview of SBOA and the online reporting tool Gateway. (16 minutes).
- Access the BLP website: ISDA website [ISDA: Districts Tools](#) and [Conservation Link SWCD Training - Home](#)

DSS Trainings Attended in 2025 and Value in Attending:

The DSS team thanks the SSCB for funds to attend trainings in 2025. These trainings provided valuable skills and networking opportunities with SWCDs and partners. Trainings with a registration fee included: IASWCD Annual Conference, SWCD Annual Meetings, Building Stronger Boards, Critical Issues Summit, Women IN Agribusiness, and Small Farm Conference. (Note- DSSs also participated in trainings with no registration fees.)

Sample feedback from DSSs:

- Laura: "Building Stronger Boards" workshop. It was very helpful. I learned a lot from other attendees and got ideas for the DSS team. Most interesting was diving into governance vs. management. It has a lot of relevance for SWCDs.
- Kylie: I attended both days of the IDEA conference which provided knowledge on struggles of districts as well as assisted with continued network and relationship building. Thank you to the board for allowing us funding that helps continue building my knowledge for my districts.
- Nathan: IDEA Fall Conference- I do believe there is value in the "side conversations" and networking with various districts. Following the session in which I was a panel speaker, I had 2 districts come up to me and have private conversations regarding questions or concerns they had that was sparked because of something I said during the other session.

- Geneva: The “Critical Issues Summit” and “Women IN Agribusiness” events provided opportunities to stay up to date on current state, national and international topics relating to agriculture. I appreciate the broader perspective and learning how Indiana farmers are being impacted.
- Sandra: IDEA Career Development Program. This was a big learning experience. Being able to attend and see all the session firsthand, let me know what the trainings entailed and helped me to change my new staff training. (Note- DSS training funds were used for a hotel stay during the program.)



January 2026 IASWCD Update

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Soil & Water Advocacy Day

January 27, 2026

9:00 am - 3:00 pm (ET)

For Indiana's SWCDs! Don't miss this opportunity on January 27 as IASWCD hosts a Day at the Statehouse!

The day will begin at 9:00 am (ET) at the Indiana Farm Bureau building (225 S. East St., Indianapolis, IN 46202), where attendees will receive valuable insights from **IASWCD's new lobbyists, Trevor Vance and Chris Mitchem of [VanceMitchem](#)**. Following this briefing, participants will travel together to the statehouse and meet with legislators. Please [register](#) by January 19.



Call for Presentations for 2027 IASWCD Conference

2027 IASWCD Statewide Conference

January 24-26, 2027

The Westin Indianapolis, 241 W Washington St, Indianapolis, IN 46204

Presentation Submission for the 2027 SWCD Conference is **now open through February 27, 5:00 pm Eastern**.

We know incredible conservation work is happening across Indiana, and this is your opportunity to showcase projects, lessons learned, and innovative approaches with Soil and Water Conservation District staff and supervisors from around the state. Help shape an engaging, informative conference experience in downtown Indianapolis! [More information here.](#)

National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD)

NACD North Central Region Partners' Meeting

January 13-14, 2026

Carmel, IN

IASWCD will host a bowling and dinner social for attendees of the NACD Central Region Partners' Meeting on January 13–14. This informal evening event is designed to provide a fun atmosphere for fellowship, networking, and connecting with conservation colleagues from across the region.

NACD Annual Meeting

February 15-19, 2026

San Antonio, TX

On behalf of IASWCD and Indiana's SWCDs, Liz Rice, Marc Roberts and Ken Gunkel will be attending the [NACD Annual Meeting](#) in San Antonio in February. IASWCD's current NACD representatives include Ethan Truax (Primary Rep) and Ken Gunkel (Alternate Rep).

IASWCD Business Meeting Recap

IASWCD appreciates the districts and partners (like Jane Hardisty, SSCB) who were able to attend the IASWCD Business Meeting on December 19. A recap and photos can now be viewed on the [IASWCD website](#). If you would still like to give feedback on this meeting, the [survey](#) is still open at this time.



Left Photo (LtoR): Dan Boritt, Indiana Wildlife Federation, Desi Rybolt, Indiana Conservation Voters, Liz Rice, IASWCD, Senator Deery and Senator Qaddoura. **Middle Photo:** Service Award given to Cress Hlzer (L) by Marc Roberts (IASWCD President on right) for his many years of district advocacy at the statehouse. **Right photo:** President's Award given to Kenny Cain (L) by Marc Roberts (Rt).

[Read more...](#)



By the Numbers

Despite staff furlough resulting from delays in agreement payments and a 6-week federal government shut-down, in 2025, CCSI was materially involved in over 100 Soil Health events and trainings, reaching approximately 9100 individuals. Since 2011, CCSI has:

- Participated in nearly 1080 Soil Health events
- Reached approximately 76,650 attendees
- Provided Soil Health training to 1210 unique individuals, many of whom attended multiple trainings

Staffing

- *Soil Health Agronomist*

Sarah Brackney joined the CCSI team as a Soil Health Agronomist on February 3, 2025. Brackney had been serving as the Daviess County Ag and Natural Resources Extension Educator. Because of ongoing budget constraints within Purdue Extension, Brackney continued to provide services as Daviess County Extension Educator

- *Equipment and Machinery Specialist*

Purdue Ag and Biological Engineering posted a position as an Assistant Clinical Professor of Machine Systems for Climate Smart Crop Production. When the position is filled, this individual will be expected to teach and develop courses in the ABE department related to agricultural machinery and equipment for regenerative and climate smart agriculture cropping systems, precision agriculture, digital agriculture, and data science applications in agriculture. They will work closely with the CCSI team, providing outreach on similar topics to farmers and conservation partners. They will also work with the Purdue On The Farm (POTF) team with their on-farm trials and with Purdue Ag Center Superintendents on their equipment set-up.

- *Current Staff Members:*

- Lisa Holscher, Director
- Jessica Hoehn, Lead / S PErogram Manager
- Sheila Schroeder, NW Prog
- Lois Mann, NE Progra
- Melissa Ruschau, SW Program Manager
- Bryan Overstreet, CCSI-POTF Agronomist and Soil Health Speci
- Adam Shanks, CCSI-POTF Agronomist and Digital Ag Specialist
- Sarah Brackney, CCSI-POTF Soil Health Agronomist

Jimmy Emmons and Erin Martin “Road Trip”

Using CCSI contacts, Oklahoma Rancher Jimmy Emmons and Gerontologist Erin Martin made a trip to Indiana in January for the IASWCD Annual Conference to talk on Food as Medicine. Taking advantage of their presence, CCSI arranged events outside of the Annual Conference as well. During their short stay, Jimmy and Erin:

- Presented at the IASWCD General Session as well as a Break-out Session
- Met with representatives from Indiana Department of Health, ISDA, NACD, the SSCB, and farmers about an Indiana Food as Medicine program.
- Met with a group of farmers in a roundtable at Rulon Farms to discuss regenerative ag systems and their work in OK.

FFA Convention / Fair Oaks Farm

Jessica Hoehn, Program Manager (and former ag teacher), volunteered to serve as a judge during the convention as federal staff were not allowed to attend as representatives of their agencies.

Rather than step in as a judge Bryan Overstreet, CCSI-POTF Agronomist and Soil Health Specialist, conducted soil health demonstrations for FFA Convention Attendees – students and advisors. Final count has not been completed, but approximately 400-500 attendees interacted with the demonstrations each day. Advisors gathered information on conducting similar demonstrations in their home locations. In addition, Fair Oaks Farm staff were deeply engaged with demonstrations, gathering their own samples to “see how they would perform”. At least one 2026 event is being planned at Fair Oaks that will highlight impacts of soil health practices. Note the imagery is from all three days. Upon recommendations from a CCSI team chat to “see what it will do” the day 1 healthy soil slake demo was left for all three days. It was a sandy loam from Jasper County. Although some soil settled to the bottom of the tube, very little did – demonstrating how healthy soils maintain aggregation, are less susceptible to erosion, and have higher precipitation infiltration capabilities.



Bison-related Event

White Oaks Bison Farm in Fulton County hosted a grazing event for bison growers that focused on grazing pastures and soil health. Jason Tower, Southern Indiana Purdue Ag Center spoke on grazing management with cool season pastures and native grasses; Chris Gardener, ISDA spoke on soil health principles and testing; White Oaks Owner, Terry Engstrand helped attendees understand how to collect hay samples and interpret lab results.

Organic Events

As part of support for Yichao Rui, Purdue University's, Indiana Organic Network project, CCSI provided support for outreach events – one on grazing and one on crop production. Both events were heavily attended by those interested in farming organically in a way that promotes soil health.

Grazing Events

Of note in 2025, events that had a strong grazing component tended to be very well attended with highly engaged audiences. It is unknown whether this is an aberration due to beef pricing or a trend due to a desire to add livestock to soil health systems is unknown at this time.

Trainings

Travel restrictions for Indiana Conservation Partner staff, especially federal staff, significantly impacted their ability to attend in-person trainings. Where possible for single day events, agendas were tightened to help accommodate single day-of-work travel requirements.

- **Introduction to Soil Health**

Held the last Tuesday in February, the virtual Introduction to Soil Health had Fundamentals of Soil Health the 46 attendees included SWCD, NRCS, Purdue Extension, ISDA, Missouri State University, Ohio State University, ag retail, farmers, and one individual from South America

- **Fundamentals of Soil Health**

The Fundamentals of Soil Health series kicked off on April 1st with 52 registrants, including a near-full in-person session. Registrants include SWCD, NRCS, Purdue Extension, ISDA, IDNR, and RITA staff as well as individuals from Missouri State University, Michigan State University, Ohio State University, ag retail, NGOs, and an individual from Argentina.

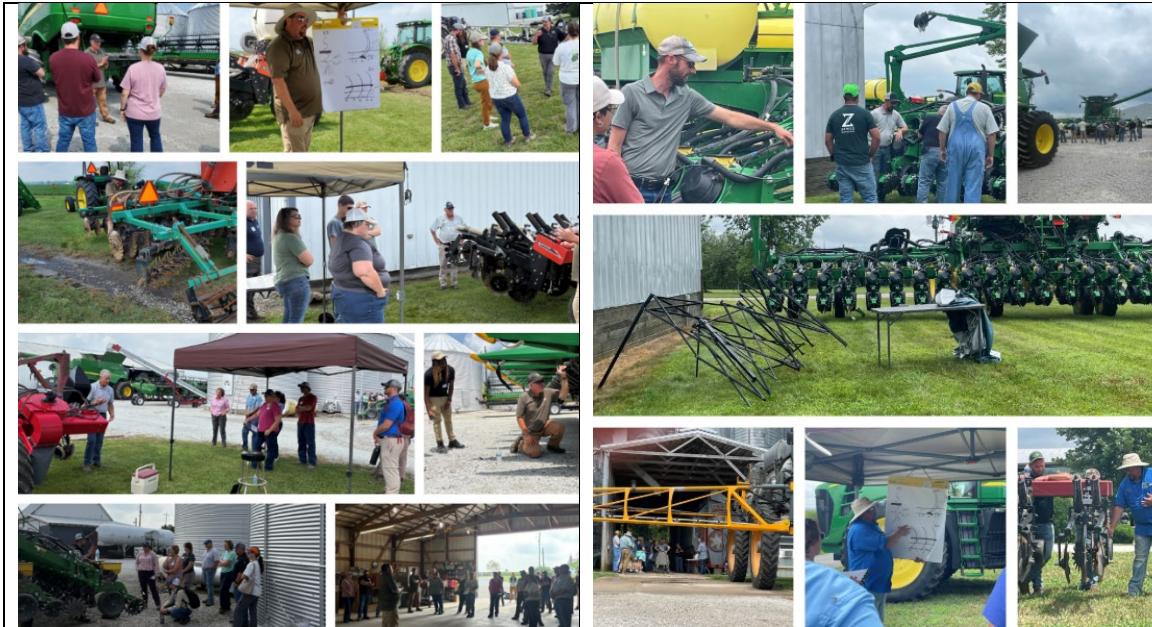
- **CCSI-SARE Soil Health and Sustainability for Field Staff**

This training that satisfies NRCS requirements for conservation planning certifications was the most impacted by travel restrictions. USDA staff were required to drive and return back to the office *each day* of training. The 22 attendees, included 4 NRCS staff, 7 SWCD, 6 RITA, 4 Purdue Extension, and 1 DNR

- **CCSI-SARE Continuing Education: Machinery and Equipment Set-up**

July 14th – Clint Orr Farms, Frankfort / July 16th – Brian and Ben Thompson Farm,

Seymour, The trainings were well sized for machinery demos (approx. 110 ttl), and both received very good feedback from attendees, including the 7/16 event that required adaptation to an intense storm in the morning. Due to the apparent need, these trainings will be repeated in 2026.



- **Purdue On The Farm-SARE Ag 101: Commodity Crop Production**

This training in particular was affected by travel restrictions – in 2024, FSA leadership indicated a desire to have all staff attend this type of training; in 2025 travel restrictions were tougher for FSA staff than NRCS staff.

Approximately 95 attendees over 3 separate trainings. All sessions received good feedback, especially growth staging of corn and soybeans, equipment, and basic in-field use of Corn/Soybean Field Guides in crop scouting.

An Ag 101: Livestock (probably beef) Production is being considered for 2026

- **Conservation Drainage Training**

Originally scheduled for 11/03/25, this training was postponed due to the federal government shutdown. An alternate date will be selected, most likely in March before planting.

Funding

- Cargill Success from the Ground Up
CCSI received notification in March that the Cargill Success from the Ground Up program wished to award CCSI a \$50,000 grant for “farmer-facing” type event support. An award letter and grant agreement were executed by the IASWCD.
- NRCS 2020-25 Agreement
A re-allocation of funds for the 2020-25 NRCS Agreement was approved. After

June invoicing, provided approximately \$60,000 for training and event support for CCSI.

- Indiana Corn Marketing Council / Indiana Soybean Alliance ICMC/ISA awarded CCSI \$50,000 for Soil Health Outreach and Education Support

FarmAdvisors Mentoring Program

- FarmAdvisors were notified that they were approved for a National Fish and Wildlife Federation grant of approximately \$500,000.
- The FarmAdvisors Board of Directors assigned board members Cameron Mills and Dan DeSutter to lead both the Mentor-Mentee Matching and Mentor Vetting committees. They are concentrating on surveying mentee needs and mentee interview questions to identify gaps in mentor specialties.
- Born out of November 2024 meeting - which Lisa Holscher, CCSI Director and Dan DeSutter, Farm Advisors Board Member participated – STEP up for Agriculture was officially launched in September. Leading food and retail companies, including PepsiCo, Unilever, General Mills, Starbucks and Nestle launched STEP-up to expand regenerative farming by strengthening farmer-facing organizations. The collaboration provides local groups with essential training tools and funding to help them guide farmers to regen ag practices. *Farm Advisors was selected as one of three key programs to receive initial funding from the group.*

Report to the State Soil Conservation Board

January 13, 2026

Program Director Activities

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

- The RITA in Action essays in IASWCD's Conservation INsight newsletter have continued.
 - The essays spotlight what the RITA Techs are doing.
 - Feedback from SWCD staff is that they appreciate the essays
 - The December 24, 2025, essay was a year-end report
- We are interviewing to fill the remaining Tech position.

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.

- We are currently collecting the quarterly review of RITA Techs by SWCDs for the quarter ending December 31. We ask all SWCDs to respond by January 16.
 - 65% of the 65 hosting SWCDs completed the review
 - 66% of the 12 Events Only SWCDs completed the review (optional)
 - The average score was 4.72 on a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 is the best possible score. This is an increase from last quarter.

ONGOING GOAL: Work with NRCS program contact and qualified professionals to ensure the work identified in this agreement progresses as planned and meets technical standards and requirements.

- Leader met with Jerod Chew and Shannon Zezula, NRCS, on January 5, 2026, to discuss training plans for 2026. We anticipate the first training to take place later this month, with more to follow.

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	266
Attend ICP Meetings, Conference Calls, Webinars	320
Attend Field Days and Trainings	438
Present objectives/accomplishments at SWCD board meetings	141
Presentations at Field Days and Trainings	29
Presentations to the general public	213
Educational interactions with producers/forest owners	32
One-on-One discussions with land users on the benefits of soil health and improving water quality	190

➤ **Technical Assistance Activities – Resource Concerns**

Soil Health Management	97	Drainage & Water Management	67
Commodity Crops/Cover Crops Management	53	Invasives Management	153
Livestock/Pasture Management	23	Diversified/Orchard/Urban Gardens Management	109
Woodlands/Agroforestry Management	34		
TA to support Historically Underserved and Socially Disadvantaged Producers			60

➤ **Planning and Engineering Activities**

Completed conservation planning activities	2	Number of designs/inspections completed	5
Number of surveys	7	Number of construction checks completed	1

➤ **Program Support**

CWI Grants	89	RCPP Grants	7
LARE Grants	7	Other Farm Bill Programs	3
ISDA Soil Sampling	2	NACD Grants	9
EPA 319 Grants	25	Other Agency and NGO Grants*	39

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

Adams SWCD's FFA Day at the Lake is supported by the Maumee Watershed Alliance

➤ **ICP Collaboration Activities**

Field/Tillage Checks	99	ICP Referrals	3
Transect Participation	14	Meetings with other ICP Staff	97

Camille Sczerbowicz, Resilient Indiana, and Martin Franke, LaGrange SWCD

Tuesday, January 13, 2026

