

CONSERVATION BEYOND 2016 TASK FORCE REPORT



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Executive Summary

In recent years, several issues have converged that affect the operations and effectiveness of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs). These issues include tighter county budgets that often reduce county funding for SWCD staffing and operations, declining state cigarette tax revenues which fund Clean Water Indiana grants to SWCDs, and rising costs for districts to function.

The State Soil Conservation Board (SSCB), in its August 2011 meeting, discussed these trends and in an effort to be proactive in addressing them, established a task force to look into these challenges and recommend conservation delivery options. In October 2011, a draft charter tasked the group with summarizing the experiences of other Midwestern States regarding SWCD consolidation/cooperation/delivery models. The group also was to develop a set of recommendations for the SSCB to consider for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of conservation districts and the ICP in delivering conservation programs locally.

With the Bicentennial of Indiana Statehood approaching in 2016, the task force took seriously the forward-looking aspect of its assignment and came together as the “Conservation Beyond 2016 Task Force” on December 11, 2011. The group’s members are listed on page 7 of this report and include representatives of every member of the Indiana Conservation Partnership (ICP). The task force also met on January 23, February 27, March 26, April 30, May 29, and June 25, 2012. It concluded with a meeting by conference call on July 23 to finalize discussion of the report, prior to presenting it to the SSCB in August. Ray Ledgerwood, of Board Works by Ledgerwood, helped plan and facilitate the working sessions of the task force.

The task force understands that any recommendations that could affect the traditional operation of SWCDs will engender great feelings of uncertainty from SWCD supervisors and staff, and will require much analysis before changes are considered. The task force also understands that doing nothing to address the on-going trends and concerns is not in the best interest of districts and their future.

The task force worked to garner input from SWCD supervisors and employees through a statewide survey asking for specific suggestions on what the SWCD, the SSCB and the ICP could do to increase SWCD operating efficiency, as well as its impact on conserving soil, water and related natural resources. Additionally, face-to-face input was gathered at five regional training meetings in March 2012 from SWCD supervisors and employees. The results of the survey and the face-to-face input were utilized by the task force along with a large amount of background data on local, state, and federal funding levels, workload, staffing and technical capacity for program delivery, and leadership training participation. These datasets are represented in the form of maps, which are included in the Appendix of this report. The datasets presented on the state maps are further defined and discussed in the report.

Ray Ledgerwood, the facilitator for the task force, obtained a wealth of information from the experiences of other states in terms of conservation district structure, impact on service delivery, effectiveness, and efficiencies in conservation program delivery. The summaries of the information gathered from these other states start on page 14 of this report.

The task force developed a set of draft criteria for analyzing recommendations or options. The group attempted to look at options and how they accomplished the following:

1. Maximize local delivery of conservation implementation
2. Address natural resource priorities
3. Create opportunity for every district to have access to proven conservation leadership and managerial/ capacity building staff
4. Utilize/optimize staff skills and talents
5. Be flexible/adaptable to meet future needs
6. Done by choice or need without losing county identification
7. Meet land user needs
8. Will not hinder effective districts
9. Optimize cost effectiveness
10. Expand support for conservation by extending support beyond perceived customer base
11. Be realistic and financially feasible into the future
12. Create the right enabling conditions for effective conservation program implementation

The difficulty in crafting options that would fully meet all criteria and/or satisfy all parties became evident early in the process. None the less, the option of doing nothing does not fulfill the SSCB's statutory responsibility to provide advice and counsel to SWCDs or its desire to be proactive in developing options for the future of SWCDs in Indiana.

The task force proposes three potential options for consideration by the SSCB, soil and water conservation districts, and ultimately, the Indiana Conservation Partnership (ICP) membership. Each option poses both advantages and disadvantages, and some may involve legislative changes in the enabling laws to bring about any change.

The three options are presented in the report in greater detail; this summary notes what they are:

A. Collaboration and Sharing of Resources.

This option could include the sharing of staff between two or more districts to better utilize the skills of existing staff as well as broaden the expertise available to the collaborating districts. It likely would include increased use of Cooperative Agreements among districts, partner organizations and agencies. Some Clean Water Indiana (CWI) funding would likely be used as an incentive for collaboration and sharing of resources. This option could include matching state and federal funding and staffing resources based on resource concerns. Workload, workforce and budget meetings at the district level could be followed up by wider (multi-district), collaborative area meetings. This option could include the SSCB rewarding districts' performance, efficiencies, and collaboration strategies. Legislation changes could be introduced to streamline the process to allow for locally-driven consolidation and joint operating options.

B. Indiana Conservation Partnership Planning and Collaboration on a Watershed Basis

This option would organize many aspects of partnership planning on a watershed basis and could include some state and federal funding driven by watershed plans. It could include development of an ideal model for how SWCDs could voluntarily work together and include incentives to move to that model. Planning on a watershed level would provide a framework for districts to work together, provide opportunities for sharing staff among districts based on prioritized resource concerns and garner strong partnership support. Participation by districts in this model for planning and implementation of conservation programs would be voluntary and would not eliminate district boundaries and their identity with respective counties.

C. Conservation Districts and Indiana Conservation Partnership Consolidated on a Watershed or Multi-County Basis

This option would consolidate multiple SWCDs and ICP members into single natural resource districts, similar to the concept used in Nebraska, based on watersheds or geographic areas with some exemptions. This option would likely allow state and federal agency partners to place multiple staff in each natural resource district to assist with the implementation of conservation programs. It would also require legislation and would only be feasible if a funding mechanism for staffing and operations was established by the legislation.

In all likelihood, the natural resource concerns and funding issues facing Soil and Water Conservation Districts and the citizens of the state as a whole will continue to grow in complexity and cost. In addition, the public’s expectations for performance by the agencies charged with conserving our natural resources will continue to grow. To meet these demands beyond 2016, the task force thinks that change is inevitable in the conservation delivery system

The task force presents these three options in no order of priority and with no recommendation on which should be pursued. They are presented in order of the increasing amount of legislation to enact. They are presented as options to provoke discussion by the SSCB and SWCDs to help facilitate changes as needed, desired or requested. The examination of what has occurred in other states may help provide the impetus in Indiana for those in the Indiana Conservation Partnership to debate, adapt, amend, and perhaps to adopt by the year 2016.

“Continuity gives us roots; change gives us branches, letting us stretch and grow and reach new heights.”

-Pauline R. Kezer

Task Force Charter

October 6, 2011

Background: The State Soil Conservation Board, at the August Board meeting, discussed the current economic situation Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) are facing due to local and state budget cuts. The board discussed several factors that are impacting local SWCDs at this time including: technical capacity for program delivery, budget impacts at federal, state and local levels, USDA rental costs, CWI grant program focused on multi county projects, CWI funding remaining relatively flat while operational costs go up for SWCDs, and overall delivery of high quality conservation in a changing world. The SSCB, in an effort to be proactive, has determined a task force should be formed to look into these challenges and recommend conservation delivery options that the SSCB along with the Indiana Conservation Partnership could consider as we move into the future. In addition The State Soil Conservation Board's Business Plan has a goal of:

By 2015 SWCDs with limited resources are actively pursuing the benefits of and opportunities to consolidate.

Provide education to districts regarding benefits and opportunities of merging.

Provide special CWI incentive grants to limited resource districts that are willing to merge to increase program capacity and effectiveness. Consider offering an incentive of two times the current state match for each of the merged districts for first year and then 1 ½ times the combined matching grant each year thereafter if funds are available.

Note to the reader: The SSCB is not endorsing SWCD consolidation at this time but we do believe it is important to investigate and have good information that can help guide the board and SWCDs if this becomes an issue in Indiana.

Task Force Chartered Purpose:

The purpose of the task force will be to develop a report that 1) summarizes the experiences of other Midwestern States regarding SWCD consolidation/cooperation/delivery models and 2) develop a set of recommendations for Indiana to follow if consolidation is needed within Indiana. In addition we are interested in investigating new approaches to conservation delivery that might improve our overall effectiveness.

Task force members will include: State Soil Conservation Board (2), IASWCD (2), IDEA (2), NRCS (2), ISDA (2), Purdue Extension (2), SWCD-LI Graduates (2), IDEM (1), FSA (1), DNR (1)

Questions to be answered: (Task Force will finalize)

What other states have consolidated SWCD offices/functions? Share examples/case studies etc....such as shared Multi-County District Manager

What was the impact to delivery of conservation pros/cons?

Were cost savings realized along with improved conservation delivery?

How were local units of government involved in multi county SWCD functions including funding?

How were the other key conservation partners involved?

How did consolidation impact other partners and their programs?

What types of support would the SSCB need to provide to districts? As determined recommend a pilot test of the concept and how SSCB would support it.

Recommend next steps as appropriate to improve overall conservation delivery within Indiana.

Conservation Beyond 2016 Task Force Members

As identified in the task force charter, members of the task force are representative of the Indiana Conservation Partnership and are as follows:

Larry Clemens-State Soil Conservation Board (SSCB)
Bob Eddleman- State Soil Conservation Board (SSCB)
Jerod Chew-Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA)
Jim Lake- Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA)
Jeff Meinders-Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (IASWCD)
Jennifer Boyle-Warner- Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (IASWCD)
Greg Biberdorf-Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)
Darci Zolman-Indiana District Employees Association (IDEA)
Sharon Watson- Indiana District Employees Association (IDEA)
Jane Hardisty-Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)
Roger Kult- Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)
Julia Wickard-Farm Service Agency (FSA)
Sam Hagest-Clark County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)
Jim Martin-Jasper County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)
Scott Gabbard-Purdue Extension
Jim Mintert-Purdue Extension
Marylou Renshaw-Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM)

Facilitated by Ray Ledgerwood-Boardworks by Ledgerwood (See Appendix for background and biography)

Process and Criteria of the Task Force

The task force utilized face to face meetings planned and facilitated by Ray Ledgerwood of Board Works by Ledgerwood as their primary method for discussions, analysis of data and selection of options to present to the SSCB. Elements of the process and selection of criteria follow:

Task Force Formation:

The detail of task force formation, charter, purpose, and membership is included in an earlier section of this report. The task force, at its February meeting, developed milestones, timelines, and actions for the work to be completed for the development of the report to SSCB.

Survey of Conservation Districts & Partners:

The task force placed emphasis on involving conservation districts and partner organizations in early idea generation and input into the work of the task force. An on-line survey was distributed to every district supervisor and employee that had an email address and the lead district staff person was asked to make sure each of their respective supervisors had access to the survey and to encourage them to completed it. The survey questions were:

Q1: What are three things your district could do to increase its operating efficiency as well as its impact on conserving soil, water and related natural resources?

Q2: What are three things the State Soil Conservation Board could do to help increase your district's operating efficiency as well as its impact on conserving soil, water and related natural resources?

Q3: What are three things the Indiana Conservation Partnership could do to help increase your district's operating efficiency as well as its impact on conserving soil, water and related natural resources?

Regional training meetings at five locations around the state in March were also utilized to provide input in a face-to-face format to members of the task force. These short work sessions were planned by the task force and facilitated by task force members. Information from the completed surveys and area meeting input sessions was summarized, reviewed, discussed and used by the task force in the development of this report. The completed surveys and work session notes provide an extensive amount of information for the implementation phase of this project. A detailed listing of the responses is included in the Appendix.

Background Research & Collection of Data:

ISDA and NRCS staff collected data on local, state and federal funding levels, workload, staffing and capacity for program delivery, leadership training participation and other topics related to the capacity of conservation program delivery throughout the state. The data was converted to map format for comparison and contrast of datasets. The task force utilized the datasets in their discussion of current trends and the implications of those trends on future capacity to deliver conservation programs locally. Multiple sets of data were combined on some of the maps to help the task force with their assessments and ultimately with the development of the recommended options and supporting elements for each option.

Examples from Other States

Fifteen states were selected for telephone interviews by Ray Ledgerwood based on their completed and/or planned activities in conservation district structure, effectiveness, or efficiencies in conservation program delivery. The state conservation agency executive was interviewed on: the activities completed, the results of the activities and lessons learned and the materials available for the task force to examine. A summary of report of the interviews with each state is included later in this report.

Criteria for Analyzing Recommendation/Option:

The task force at its February meeting identified the following criteria for analyzing a recommendation/option for presentation to the SSCB:

The recommendation/option should...

- Maximize local delivery of conservation implementation
- Address natural resource priorities
- Create opportunity for every district to have access to proven conservation leadership and managerial/ capacity building staff
- Utilize/optimize staff skills and talents
- Be flexible/adaptable to meet future needs
- Be something done by choice or need without losing county identification
- Meet land user needs
- Not hinder effective districts
- Optimize cost effectiveness
- Expand support for conservation by extending support beyond perceived customer base
- Be realistic and financially feasible into the future
- Create the right enabling conditions for effective conservation program implementation

The task force utilized these criteria when considering the options and specific recommendations to include in the report to SSCB.

Analysis & Discussion

The task force met and discussed the district and partner survey results including input received at the regional training sessions. They reviewed and discussed the reports and maps generated from data sets and the information collected from other states to form options to present to the SSCB for consideration. The task force also considered the pros and cons of presenting a few optional options to SSCB for consideration instead of one option, thereby allowing the SSCB to receive additional input and feedback from conservation districts and partners after the report was presented.

Communication:

Communication strategies were discussed at each work session including audience to be reached, change in behavior desired by the audience, talking points and the best media to use to reach the intended audience.

Progress Tracking and Task Force Member Accountability

The task force utilized an early portion of each work session to review the work completed since past meeting by each member and support staff. This provided an on-going accountability to the task force work, as well as an opportunity for staff to provide valuable information from questions and discussions that arose during work sessions. The task force at the conclusion of each work session reviewed actions needing completion before the next work session and review of overall milestones and timeline for the project

Strategic Priorities for Conservation Program Delivery & Measures of Success

At their March meeting, the task force identified strategic priorities for conservation program delivery and measures of success for each. The strategic priorities identified were: resource concerns, structure, governance, financial resources, managerial, technical assistance, partnerships, communications, public outreach, outcome based performance, and legislative. The measures of success for each strategic priority are included in the Appendix portion of the report.

Options and Implementation Elements Identified

Three options are included in this report for consideration by the SSCB. The task force at each of their meetings discussed various concepts including early options for consideration, greatest idea for beyond 2016, and other early options and/or recommendations and included the results in their work session notes for further reference. Drafting of recommendations that include three options supported by key implementation elements began at the March meeting by using small group discussion and presentation to see if there was concert of thought among the task force members. A mind-map exercise and display of options was utilized at the April work session for discussion and analysis of optional options.

Presentation to SSCB

A presentation to SSCB by the task force is scheduled for August 20, 2012 during a special meeting upon completion of this report. Sections of the report were developed by task force members, support staff and contractor.

Feedback System from Conservation Districts & Partners

The task force desires that the report be vetted with conservation districts and partners for feedback regarding the three options presented. This feedback would be utilized for the development of the action steps related to any selected option the SSCB acts upon.

Next Steps

Next steps will be determined by the SSCB after presentation and feedback described above.

A Snapshot Look at District Funding Trends and Capacity to Deliver Conservation Programs Locally

Two key duties of the State Soil Conservation Board (SSCB) as spelled out in the Indiana State Soil Conservation Board Law (IC 14-32-2-12) are to:

- “... (4) Keep the supervisors of districts informed of the activities and experience of all other districts*
- (5) Facilitate cooperation and an interchange of advice and experience among districts and to coordinate the programs of the districts as far as this may be done by advice and consultation...”*

In the spirit helping the SSCB carry out these responsibilities, the task force looked at a number of sources of information to evaluate the current conditions and trends relative to the financial stability, program capacity and leadership of soil and water conservation districts across the state.

Financial Stability

County Funding to Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Indiana’s soil and water conservation districts rely heavily upon county funding for staff and operating funds. Of the two, staffing is the most significant expense. In nearly all districts, the core district staff positions are funded through the county, and these staff positions are considered to be county employees for the purpose of salary and benefits. In addition to core staffing most counties provide some level of operating funds to their respective districts.

To get an accurate assessment of county funding trends for districts, the task force looked at the amount of county funding provided to each district during calendar years 2008 versus 2011. The funding amount for each district was taken directly from their Annual Financial Report as submitted to the SSCB (2008) and from the State Board of Accounts’ Gateway Annual Financial Report for 2011. The two reporting lines on these reports that equal the amount of county funding support are (1) County funds for district operations and (2) other county funding including salary, fringe benefits, etc. Analysis of the financial information indicated that 39 districts experienced either no increase or worse yet, reduced funding from their county during this period. Twenty-nine districts had a reduction in county funding of 5% or more during this period. The full financial table containing this information can be found in the Appendix under “SWCD Funding Changes Calendar Year 2008 to 2011”.

State Funding to Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Currently, the primary source of state revenue to support the operation of the ISDA-Division of Soil Conservation, as well as provide state funding to soil and water conservation districts, is the State’s cigarette tax revenue. With the exception of state fiscal year 2012 (July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012) when \$500,000 was allotted to the Clean Water Indiana Program from the general fund as directed by the state legislature, funding for districts from the Clean Water Indiana Program for the last five years has been solely from cigarette tax revenue. The Clean Water Indiana program receives 1/6 of 4.62% of the total cigarette tax stamp collections each year. The ISDA-Division of Soil Conservation operating fund receives 52% of 1/6 of 4.62% of the total cigarette tax stamp collections each year.

As per IC 14-32-8-8, districts receive up to \$10,000 each year as a match grant for district operations as long as their respective county is providing at least \$10,000 to the district either as funding for operations or staff funding. In addition to

the \$10,000 state matching grant, roughly \$600,000 has been available for competitive Clean Water Indiana Grants to districts for sediment and nutrient reduction projects or activities. State funding to districts is substantially lower in Indiana than any of our surrounding Midwestern states. Alarming, the State revenue forecasts for cigarette tax collection shows declining revenue in future years due to the fact that fewer packs of cigarettes are being sold today. This trend is expected to continue. The projected reduction in state revenue from reduced collections of cigarette tax stamps and the corresponding reduction in cigarette tax revenue provided for the operation of the ISDA-Division of Soil Conservation (Soils Revenue) and the Clean Water Indiana Program (CWI) can be found in the appendix under Cigarette Tax Funding Model. The projected reductions are illustrated using three options—a yearly 4.3% reduction in cigarette sales, a yearly 3% reduction in sales and with no change in sales revenue, which is very unlikely. Assuming a 4.3% reduction in tax collections would reduce the amount of funding provided to the Division of Soil Conservation operating fund and Clean Water Indiana Program from the 2011 level of 4.81 million to 3.16 million by 2016. If this forecast is accurate, as time passes it will significantly reduce the amount of money the state could provide to soil and water conservation districts.

District and Conservation Partnership Staffing

Another element the task force looked at to help assess the current capacity of districts to serve as the local hub for delivering conservation information and assistance to their respective communities was the number of district staff in each district across the state. Nearly every district has at least one core staff person and number have two staff core positions funded by their respective county. Districts that have the supervisor leadership, staff skills and the desire to pursue funding from sources beyond their county funding to carry out their business plans often have additional staff beyond those funded by their county. The additional staff positions are funded through grants, contracts, partnership agreements, etc. A summary of the number district staff by county is illustrated on the table titled Indiana Conservation Partnership Staffing, found in the appendix. The task force was also interested in looking at the number of positions employed by Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the ISDA-Division of Soil Conservation staff to work with districts to delivery conservation programs and technical assistance locally. The same table, titled Indiana Conservation Partnership Staffing, found in the appendix provides this information by county for both agencies. This information was developed by the District Support Specialists and NRCS. They/we acknowledge that the information for each district has not been verified by each district and the staff changes occur regularly. We do, however, believe that the information is accurate enough to give us a very good sense of current district, ISDA and NRCS staff capacity for each county across the state.

Leadership Development

In an effort to look broadly at the current conditions relative to district program capacity, the task force also thought it important to look at supervisor and key staff participation in the Leadership Development Programs offered through Leadership Institute. The task force felt the number of district supervisors and key district staff participating in this training in an effort to improve their leadership skills was another good indicator of current district program capacity and their commitment to continued improvement. The total number of district supervisors and district staff from each district in the state that have participated in Cornerstones of Leadership Development Training Workshops offered through the ICP Leadership Institute is illustrated on a state map titled “Leadership Institute Attendance” found in the Maps section of the Appendix.

Other Federal, State and Local Funding for Conservation Programs and Staffing

The task force also looked at the amount of federal, state and local funding that was spent on conservation programs (not including funding from the state or county for district staffing and operations) in a given year. This data was analyzed for 2010. The state map titled “2010 ICP Funding” illustrates the amount of federal, state and local dollars including federal dollars provided through farm bill conservation programs that were spent in each county as tracked by the Indiana Conservation Partnership. The second state map illustrates the same data with the exception that federal dollars provided through farm bill conservation programs were not included on this illustration. This map illustrates the variation by district in the of the amount of federal, state and local funding coming into each county as a result of respective districts pursuing additional opportunities to expand their programs to fulfill their mission. These funds often come to districts through grants, contacts, contribution agreements and other service/performance agreements between districts and other entities and organizations. .

General conclusions from data analyzed

As a result of an in depth review of all data discussed in this section of the report, the task force felt some general trends could be drawn from the datasets. For example districts (with few exceptions) that had a positive trend in county funding also had high or at least relatively high participation in leadership training offered, a high or relatively high number of district and partnership staff, and a high or relatively high amount of federal, state and local conservation program both when federal farm bill conservation program dollars were included and when they were not.

One assumption that the task force made (which we believe strongly can be supported by detailed data) is that those districts that had high or relatively high level of federal, state and local funding excluding federal farm bill conservation program dollars also had someone on staff or available to them to pursue and manage additional funding opportunities available through grants, contracts, formal agreements, etc to help the respective districts fulfill its mission. **Therefore, as the task force developed the recommendations, the group felt that one important product of any recommendation was for every district to have someone on staff, or directly available, with the skills to help the district pursue opportunities for funding, beyond traditional county and state funding for district operations, in order to expand their capacity to deliver conservation programs locally.**

Examples of Other State’s Conservation Program Capacity & Structure

Ray Ledgerwood of Board Works by Ledgerwood searched nationwide for examples of different state conservation program capacity and structure. The summary of the information collected and presented to the task force follows:

Arkansas state conservation agency offered an incentive payment for conservation districts to merge, and formed committees on state legislation for merging districts, what is defining stress in the conservation districts; and what funding agencies can do. Draft legislation for district mergers was taken to the governor this past year that proposes voluntary mergers, and then mandatory if needed. Districts also were invited to submit a plan for how to get out of a distressed state with help from commission staff. Lessons learned included the need for involvement of districts in developing the concepts and the need for a “carrot” regarding helping distressed districts. Materials available include a slide presentation on consolidation concepts, and the draft legislation for consolidation of districts.

Oklahoma state conservation agency offered a cash incentive for districts in multi-district counties to consolidate to county lines. In Oklahoma there are 87 districts in 77 counties. An incentive amount up to \$100,000 was offered to districts willing to consolidate, based on savings over three years that would be paid over time. There are some districts sharing staff currently. Recently the state conservation agency did implement a requirement to do district employee evaluations before receiving state allocations. Lessons learned include: there were no district consolidations to date, even with the cash incentives, and that it is not just about the money; they needed to somehow figure out how to include districts at the beginning of discussions and that consolidation of districts must be local idea and not top down driven. Materials available include correspondence to districts regarding incentive payments for consolidation.

Ohio state conservation agency formed an SWCD Conservation Program Delivery Task Force and contracted for a Battelle study of current structure. The study and task force work concluded with legislative recommendations on proposed aligned delivery process, Commission reconfiguration, joint board powers authorities, district boundaries, policy and administrative rule changes, local SWCD policy and operational changes. Ohio also conducted a land manager survey on SWCDs programs. Current activities include working on authority for joint powers, joint boards and training, a nutrient trading program and a ‘Tool box’ grants for incentives toward new ways of working together and sharing resources. Lessons learned include: redrawing of district boundaries should be initiated by local boards, conservation districts thought there was a pre-determined outcome to the study and work of the task force; had district ‘advisors’ to the task force, should not tell people what to do, but give districts authority to merge, not require or threaten. Materials available include land manager survey, Ohio Soil & Water Conservation Program Delivery Task Force Report with legislative recommendations and the current district shared services summary by conservation district (matrix).

Nebraska Legislature enacted Legislative Bill (LB) 1357 in 1969 to combine Nebraska's 154 special purpose entities into 24 Natural Resources Districts by July, 1972. The original 24 NRDs' boundaries are organized based on Nebraska's major watersheds which allows for better management practices to be applied to similar topography. There are 23 NRDs currently in Nebraska with each NRD selection from twelve functional areas prioritized by the district with coordination with the state. NRCS Programs – NRD staff are doing a lot of work on Farm Bill Programs under Technical Service Provider agreements. The State Association has self-insured program for NRD employees (350) medical, dental, life as well as a retirement program. Several lessons were learned including: the combination of several natural resource districts (irrigation, ground water, parks, conservation) into NRDs is going fairly well, pleased with what structure we have. The NRDs have some on-going issues with funding for expanding taxing authority for more responsibilities. They have good board member governance including urban members. The NRDs can get funding if they are willing to take on responsibilities as a local unit of government. Materials available include legislation for current structure and program summaries.

Washington State Office of Financial Management, Governor, and State Legislature called for administrative efficiencies with a \$400,000 reduction in budget. A Conservation Commission work group was formed to identify potential district efficiencies. Lessons learned include: the need for involvement of districts in discussions of district administrative efficiencies

led to shared staffing and services and more effective program delivery. Early conversations about consolidation started the work on a negative tone. Materials available include District Administrative Efficiencies report and summary documents.

Oregon has an Eight Basin 'roundtable' structure for conservation districts, NRCS, FSA, OACD, watershed councils, and state board discussions of workload, resource priorities, work force needs, development of action plans, input into programs – leadership by state association board member and area conservationist. The leaders are in the process of renewing with leadership by state association basin representatives. They will be sending information through OACD, and it will be a source of information and host of teleconferences. Lessons learned include: good concept that initially worked well; takes leadership in basin groups especially when people change position. The structure faced difficulties in 2009 and 2010, but having significant influence on decisions keeps energy in groups.

Utah, Kansas, Colorado, North Carolina, Georgia, Maine, Illinois, West Virginia all were contacted regarding their district structure and capacity building activities. Each state is planning and/or beginning activities to improve conservation program delivery.

Analysis of Survey Results

As part of the information gathering stage, the task force sent out a survey to SWCD supervisors and staff posing three questions:

- ❖ **What are three things your district could do to increase its operating efficiency as well as its impact on conserving soil, water and related natural resources?**
- ❖ **What are three things the State Soil Conservation Board could do to help increase your district's operating efficiency as well as its impact on conserving soil, water and related natural resources?**
- ❖ **What are three things the Indiana Conservation Partnership could do to help increase your district's operating efficiency as well as its impact on conserving soil, water and related natural resources?**

In addition to the online survey, task force members held sessions at the supervisor and staff trainings in March 2012. Through the survey responses and session discussions, the task force was able to identify common concepts and ideas from SWCD staff and supervisors. Approximately 90 responses (15% of Indiana's SWCD supervisors and staff) were received through the combination of the survey and the face to face meetings. Nearly two-thirds of the responses were from SWCD supervisors and the remainder was from staff.

Q1. What are three things your district could do to increase its operating efficiency as well as its impact on conserving soil, water and related natural resources?

87 responses focused on increasing partnerships and building new partnerships. Thirteen of those specifically mentioned sharing resources.

26 responses were related to increasing funding, continuing current grants and seeking new grant opportunities.

22 responses pertained to increasing staffing levels. Of those, six specifically mentioned needing more manager type staff and five mentioned needing more technical staff.

14 responses stated that districts needed to have the capacity to pursue government and foundation grants, as well as other (private) funding opportunities.

Q2. What are three things the State Soil Conservation Board could do to help increase your district's operating efficiency as well as its impact on conserving soil, water, and related natural resources?

51 responses focused on increased presence, promotion, and communication from the State Soil Conservation Board.

44 responses related to funding.

11 responses specifically mentioned supervisor training, including Leadership Institute.

Q3. What are three things the Indiana Conservation Partnership could do to help increase your district's operating efficiency as well as its impact on conserving soil, water and related natural resources?

26 responses centered on increased communications, both within the partnership and to the general public, with uniform messaging.

26 responses related to increasing staffing levels and/or skills.

19 responses specifically mentioned needing more staff training.

See Appendix for full survey responses

Recommended Options & Key Implementation Elements Summary

Options

Three options are presented to the State Soil Conservation Board (SSCB) in this report. Each option highlights the key implementation elements, advantages, and items to consider. The recommended options for SSCB consideration are:

- Option A-Collaboration on sharing resources among conservation districts and partners
- Option B-Watershed collaboration
- Option C-SWCDs consolidation on a watershed or multi-district basis

Collaboration on Sharing Resources (Option A)

Summary:

This option would encourage the sharing of staff between two or more districts to better utilize the skills of existing staff, as well as broaden the expertise available to the collaborating districts. It likely would include increased use of Cooperative Agreements among districts, partnering organizations, and state and federal agencies. Workload, workforce and budget meetings, on county basis, would be followed up on a wider geographic area. Consider rewarding performance, efficiencies, and collaboration strategies. Legislation changes introduced to streamline the process to allow for locally-driven consolidation and joint operations options.

Key Elements:

Resource Concerns

Conservation Districts will be utilizing resource and monitoring data, reporting, planning, workload analysis, stakeholder input, and program delivery evaluation in the development of their business plans (single or joint).

Structure

Model agreements could be developed and distributed for sharing staff and other resources including reporting and accountability systems for assuring work is being completed in each district as a result of shared resources. An important element is to build the local partnerships, including county officials, regarding resource needs, workload, and mass outreach in each county.

Governance

Joint district supervisor interaction would be encouraged. Districts that agree to share resources, such as staff, would be encouraged to hold joint board meetings several times per year. One example for doing this could be for the individual boards to meet monthly and the collaborating boards to meet quarterly. Locally-driven joint powers agreements could be part of this option. Leadership development activities will continue including the work to improve district supervisor knowledge and use of the supervisor expertise.

Financial Resources

A Cooperative Agreement among the partnering districts and agency partners would be developed for getting conservation on the land, including the sharing and accounting for resources. Funding, including Clean Water Indiana (CWI), would be utilized to help support shared staffing positions that add to the collaborating districts' capacity to deliver conservation programs locally to address locally identified resource concerns. The SSCB could evaluate CWI funded financial incentives for sharing resources based on a collaborative district business plan. An important element is to recognize the conservation work done over county lines and still have County Commissioners support the work of each conservation district.

Managerial

Districts will be encouraged to consider a shared management scheme to provide the staff skills needed to pursue and manage additional funding opportunities which help efficiently implement conservation practices and technologies. This would also allow for less overall management/administrative costs and more funds toward local technical assistance to help landusers implement conservation on the land. Under this scenario, the ISDA/SSCB could provide more multi-district managerial assistance, if requested, in a more consistent manner through its field staff.

Technical Assistance

A component of this option is the realignment of ICP staff positions to meet workload needs, including flexibility within the partners (five year plan). The work force will be reflective of resource needs, including what exists, what is needed, staffing plans and have flexibility for staff to address all resource concerns identified by the cooperating districts and their respective partners.

Partnerships

It is envisioned that increased collaboration including sharing of resources when appropriate for strengthening district capacity will result in closer partnerships all levels to leverage the strengths of each ICP partner. This option would also include the expansion of the role of local work group beyond Farm Bill programs and the alignment of local and state priorities among partners throughout the state.

Communications

There will be clear, concise, consistent communication throughout the partnership brought about by a communication system developed and utilized throughout the state. We will have an ICP state level team working together on communication systems for entire state on joint messages and media outreach showing a unified conservation program referencing the partnership work, and will be tailored to various audiences.

Public Outreach

This option includes direct public outreach to key decision makers on accomplishments and needs based on an overall statewide public outreach plan and system that will include web-based, smart phone applications, social media and a way to reach people that do not use modern communication media. An important component will be Districts developing public outreach plans.

Outcome Based Performance

An ICP outcome based management and accountability system based on business plan (single or multiple districts) could be developed for incentivized performance for conservation work completed.

Legislative

A system could be established to bring district budget requests and business plans together that are based on the local resource conservation needs on a state level to develop a state budget. Legislation will be developed and passed to streamline the process of requesting and completing locally-driven joint powers agreements and/or consolidation.

Advantages

- Follows county boundaries
- Flexibility to collaborate
- Local control on decisions about sharing resources
- More easily understood by local politicians
- Increased effectiveness and efficiency
- Strengthened staff capacity and better use of staff skills
- Could coincide with regional development
- More targeted state funding
- Opportunity for more partnerships
- Increased exposure
- Most easily implemented in current structure
- Travel efficiency

Potential Issues to Consider

- Funding opportunities could be impacted if watersheds are separated
- Could be perceived as a threat to positions
- Possible resistance by county officials
- Possible resistance by existing staff – district and partners
- Perceived as no real change
- Some districts would not benefit

ICP Collaboration on Watershed Basis (Option B)

Summary:

This option would organize many aspects of partnership planning on a watershed basis and could include some state and federal funding driven by watershed plans. This option could include development of an ideal model for how SWCDs could voluntarily work together and include incentives to move to that model. Planning on a watershed basis would provide a foundation for districts to work together and provide opportunities for sharing staff among districts in their respective watershed, based on prioritized resource concerns. ICP membership representatives at the regional, area and state level will actively support efforts to prioritize resource concerns as determined by the watershed and by determining program funding and technical assistance needs based on the watershed. Participation by districts in this model for planning and implementation of conservation programs would be voluntary and would not eliminate district boundaries and their county identity.

Key Elements:

Resource Concerns

Local watershed based work groups will utilize resource information including but not limited to existing district business plans, approved watershed management plans and assessments, and monitoring data, along with local knowledge and expertise to identify watershed based resource concerns. Consideration for all lands and land uses (e.g. animal waste, water quality, and invasives) will be included.

Structure

This option would maintain districts as currently established along county boundaries with the only change being that planning (including identifying resource needs, workload assessments and prioritization of conservation program funding) would be on a watershed basis. ICP membership representatives at the regional, area and state level would actively support efforts to prioritize resource concerns on a watershed basis and determine program funding and technical assistance needs based on the watershed programs and practice needs. Current district structure could be maintained, however, at least one supervisor in each county should participate in watershed discussion groups on delivering conservation programs, staffing, workload, funding and priority conservation issues to be addressed.

Governance

In this option, Supervisor governance would remain the same at district level, but with a watershed system for planning and coordination. With this watershed wide concept, an advisory board would be established and include broad representation of people with varying backgrounds, geography, age, and interests. It could include county, state, federal, private organization representation. Operating procedures and membership would be determined at watershed level. Continued work to improve district supervisor knowledge and use of the supervisor expertise would be included in this option and the Leadership development activities will continue.

Financial Resources

Funding resources in this option would also utilize many of the components included in Option A with emphasis on watershed planning and collaboration. Financial resources items would include: ICP programs and priority funding linked to watershed based resource concerns, partners utilizing contribution agreements in conjunction with CWI funding and developing Cooperative Working Agreements. State budget requests would be built district by district and aggregated by watershed. The State Board would provide financial incentives for models on sharing resources based on estimated conservation program delivery benefits and cost savings. An important element of this option is that districts as currently established would remain, however, resource needs workload assessments and state and federal conservation program funding would be prioritized based on the watershed assessments and planning.

Managerial

Districts will be encouraged to consider a shared management scheme that allows for less overall management/administrative costs, effective and efficient use existing staff skills, and directs more funding toward local technical assistance with clear roles and responsibilities. Under this option, the ISDA/SSCB could provide (if requested) watershed-based managerial assistance and/or resources in a consistent manner through field staff. Under this option, staffing (NRCS, State, and SWCD) would be aligned to match and support the watershed concept.

Technical Assistance

Local input on resource needs would come from watershed based local work groups, including technical workload and technical staffing needs to address the watershed's resource concerns would be developed. Alignment of ICP technical positions would need to be flexible to meet watershed workload needs. Well trained district technical positions would be critical to the local technical assistance delivery.

Partnerships

It is envisioned that increased collaboration will result in closer partnerships built at all levels to leverage strengths of each ICP member. This option would also include the expansion of the role of local work group beyond Farm Bill programs and the alignment of local and state priorities among partners throughout the state.

Communications

There will be clear, concise, consistent communication throughout the partnership brought about by a watershed group communication system developed and utilized throughout the state. We will have an ICP state level team working together on communication systems for entire state on joint messages and media outreach showing a unified conservation program, referencing the partnership work, and be tailored to various audiences at the local, watershed and state levels.

Public Outreach

This option includes an even more structured state level, watershed, district levels of public outreach, planned and coordinated on state-wide scale including watershed level plans and implementation for public outreach and success stories. There will be direct public outreach to key decision makers on accomplishments and needs based on watershed and overall statewide public outreach plan and system that will include web-based, smart phone applications, social media

and a way to reach people that do not use modern communication media. An important component will be Districts developing public outreach input into the watershed and state public outreach plans.

Outcome Based Performance

An ICP outcome based management and accountability system based on business plan (single or multiple districts) could be developed for incentivized performance for conservation work completed.

Legislative

A system could be established to bring district budget requests that are based on resource conservation needs developed on a watershed level to develop a state budget. Legislation could be developed and passed to make locally-driven joint powers agreements and/or consolidation for districts to request and complete more streamlined on a watershed basis.

Advantages

- New, fresh concepts
- Follows natural watershed boundaries
- Pulls together traditional and non-traditional partners
- Has potential to reduce administrative overhead
- Increase public exposure
- Statewide consistency
- Builds off water quality concerns as quantified
- Better alignment with national initiatives
- Creates networking between districts and partners
- Connects land managers with resource concerns
- Collaboration on staffing, programs, research

Potential Issues to Consider

- Does not follow county boundaries
- Resistance by county officials
- Resistance by staff – district and partners
- Separation from local governance and identity
- Travel & meeting expenses
- Could affect positions
- Perceived inequality or underrepresentation
- Potential concern of county connection; watershed boundaries may need adjusted to reflect county lines

Conservation Districts and ICP Consolidated on a Watershed or Multi-County Basis (Option C)

Summary

This option would consolidate multiple SWCDs and ICP members into single natural resource districts, similar to the concept used in Nebraska, based on watersheds with some exemptions. This option would likely allow state and federal agency partners to place multiple staff in each natural resource district to assist with the implementation of conservation programs. It would also require legislation and would only be feasible if a funding mechanism for staffing and operations was established by the legislation.

Key Elements:

Resource Concerns

Newly formed districts would establish local work groups for input on resource concerns, and will utilize resource information including but not limited to existing district business plans, approved watershed management plans and assessments, monitoring data, etc along with local knowledge and expertise to identify watershed based resource concerns. Consideration for all lands and land uses (e.g. animal waste, water quality, and invasives) will be included.

Structure

There would be one structure, staffing, plan, and reporting per new SWCD. It would be imperative to build local partnerships, including county officials, to prioritize resource needs, workload, and mass outreach to all counties in the new district.

Governance

There would be one SWCD board, plan, and report per newly formed district with supervisors elected on the general ballot.

Financial Resources

Under this option funding would be directly related to watershed based priority resource concerns and would include a special funding authority or natural resource fee based revenue source (e.g. licenses, stewardship fees, or acreage assessments with the funding going back to conservation). See financial resources in Option B.

Managerial

There would be well trained and compensated managers and other staff positions and consistency in position descriptions. The newly formed watershed based SWCD would provide for managerial oversight in a consistent manner.

Technical Assistance

This option would include realigning all ICP positions to match up with the new natural resource districts to meet workload needs, including flexibility within the partners. It would have flexible staff to address all resource concern requests in the new district, and would have a work force that would be reflective of resource needs, including what exists, what is needed, and staffing plan.

Partnerships

The new structure would include all current ICP partners plus more on a watershed or multi-district structure (e.g. Local Work Group or RC&D).

Communications

There will be clear, concise, consistent communication systems and messaging throughout the partnership and utilized throughout the state. We will have an ICP state level team working together on communication systems for the entire state on joint messages and media outreach showing a unified conservation program, referencing the partnership work, and be tailored to various audiences at the local, watershed and state levels.

Public Outreach

This option includes an even more structured state, watershed, and district level plan for public outreach, designed and coordinated on state-wide scale. The communication plan will include newly formed districts outreach plans and messaging techniques for public messaging efforts and success stories. There will be targeted outreach efforts to key decision makers on accomplishments and needs based on the watershed, and an overall statewide public outreach plan and system that will include web-based communications, smart phone applications, use of social media and a way to reach people that do not use modern communications. An important component will be the newly formed districts developing public outreach plans to be incorporated into the state public outreach plans.

Outcome Based Performance

An ICP outcome based management and accountability system based on business plan (single or multiple districts) could be developed for incentivized performance for conservation work completed.

Legislative

District law would be rewritten for structure, elections, funding, and authorities. District budget requests would be brought together on a state level to develop a state budget for conservation districts.

Advantages

- Start new
- Statewide consistency
- Potential for effective use of funding
- State funds less diluted
- Higher profile
- Elevate supervisor governance position
- More consistent, reliable funding authorities
- End the uncertainty of funding and consolidations
- Potential increase salary and benefits for district employees
- More in line with other cost share programs in state, such as 319 or LARE
- State and federal agency staffing could align with new districts more efficiently
- Easier for state legislature to understand
- Smaller government
- Uniform accountability
- More consideration for resource condition
- Consistent job descriptions and titles
- Increased public awareness of districts

Potential Issues to Consider

- Change is difficult
- Legislative change
- More spotlight – higher accountability
- Potential loss of positions (state and other)
- Not as flexible structure
- Less local control of process
- Potential reduction in the diversity of funding

Appendix

Strategic Priorities & Envisioning Success:

Strategic Priority	Measure of Success
Resource Concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Water quality improvement ▪ Resource conservation success stories ▪ Indiana’s recognition as having the healthiest soil in the nation ▪ No more blooms on reservoirs
Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Plans, staffing and conservation implementation
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of supervisors attending leadership training ▪ Number of active board members ▪ Stakeholder involvement ▪ Increased district capacity
Financial Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use of available funding ▪ Amount of funding available
Managerial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Amount of funding for conservation work ▪ Leadership in the watershed areas ▪ Benchmarks ▪ Increased employee pool
Technical Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of land managers served ▪ Number of technical staff and related qualifications ▪ Training activities
Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Shared funding & contributions ▪ Conservation accomplishments ▪ Increase in programming
Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Shared communication activities (web, blog, other media) ▪ Feedback from targeted audiences ▪ Participation of districts and partners
Public Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of people reached ▪ Public awareness
Legislative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of legislative proposals enacted ▪ Amount of State funding ▪ Number of state legislators that know the district and SSCB & ICP

Indiana Administrative Code-State Soil Conservation Board

IC 14-32-2

Chapter 2. Soil Conservation Board

IC 14-32-2-1

Establishment

Sec. 1. The soil conservation board is established within the Indiana state department of agriculture established by IC 15-11-2-1 as the policy making body for soil and water conservation.

As added by P.L.1-1995, SEC.25. Amended by P.L.1-2006, SEC.218; P.L.175-2006, SEC.4; P.L.2-2008, SEC.33; P.L.120-2008, SEC.11.

IC 14-32-2-2

Members

Sec. 2. The board consists of the following seven (7) members:

(1) Four (4) members who must be land occupiers with farming interests, appointed by the governor.

(2) Three (3) members who must be land occupiers with nonfarming interests, appointed by the governor.

As added by P.L.1-1995, SEC.25. Amended by P.L.136-1997, SEC.9; P.L.1-2006, SEC.219; P.L.175-2006, SEC.5.

IC 14-32-2-3

Qualifications of members

Sec. 3. (a) A majority of the seven (7) appointed members of the board must have experience as district supervisors.

(b) In making appointments to the board, the governor may invite and consider the recommendations of the following:

(1) The Purdue University cooperative extension service.

(2) The Indiana state department of agriculture.

(3) The Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

(c) All appointments to the board shall be made without regard to political affiliation.

(d) The members appointed to the board under section 2(1) and 2(2) of this chapter must be residents of at least four (4) different geographic regions of Indiana.

As added by P.L.1-1995, SEC.25. Amended by P.L.136-1997, SEC.10; P.L.1-2006, SEC.220; P.L.175-2006, SEC.6; P.L.120-2008, SEC.12.

IC 14-32-2-4

Term for members

Sec. 4. The term of an appointed member of the board is four (4) years. An appointed member shall serve until a successor is appointed and has qualified. The terms shall be staggered so that at least three (3) members are appointed every two (2) years.

As added by P.L.1-1995, SEC.25. Amended by P.L.136-1997, SEC.11; P.L.175-2006, SEC.7.

IC 14-32-2-5

Travel expenses and per diem salary

Sec. 5. The appointed members of the board are entitled to the following:

(1) Reimbursement for travel, lodging, meals, and other expenses as provided in the state travel policies and procedures established by the Indiana department of administration and approved by the budget agency.

(2) The minimum salary per diem as provided in IC 4-10-11-2.1(b) for each day that the members are engaged in the official business of the board.

As added by P.L.1-1995, SEC.25.

IC 14-32-2-6

Repealed

(Repealed by P.L.136-1997, SEC.43.)

IC 14-32-2-7

Appointment of advisory members

Sec. 7. (a) The governor may appoint advisory members from other organizations that promote conservation, including local, state, and federal agencies upon the recommendation of the board.

(b) The governor shall appoint members to the advisory board that represent the following:

- (1) The Indiana state department of agriculture.
- (2) The department of natural resources.
- (3) The department of environmental management.
- (4) The Purdue University cooperative extension service.
- (5) The Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts.
- (6) The Farm Service Agency of the United States Department of Agriculture.
- (7) The Natural Resources Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture.

As added by P.L.1-1995, SEC.25. Amended by P.L.175-2006, SEC.8; P.L.120-2008, SEC.13.

IC 14-32-2-8

Election of chairman of the board

Sec. 8. (a) The members of the board shall elect a member as the chairman of the board.

(b) The director of the division of soil conservation established within the Indiana state department of agriculture by IC 15-11-4-1 is the secretary of the board.

As added by P.L.1-1995, SEC.25. Amended by P.L.136-1997, SEC.12; P.L.1-2006, SEC.221; P.L.2-2008, SEC.34; P.L.120-2008, SEC.14.

IC 14-32-2-9

Quorum

Sec. 9. A majority of the members of the board constitutes a quorum. The concurrence of a majority of the members is required for the board to take any action.

As added by P.L.1-1995, SEC.25.

IC 14-32-2-10

Delegation of powers and duties

Sec. 10. The board may delegate the powers and duties that the board considers proper to:

- (1) the chairman of the board;
- (2) any of the members of the board; or
- (3) the division of soil conservation.

As added by P.L.1-1995, SEC.25.

IC 14-32-2-11

Attorney general providing legal services

Sec. 11. (a) The board may call upon the attorney general for the legal services that the board requires.

(b) For the purpose of carrying out any of the board's functions, the supervising officers of a state agency or of a state educational institution shall, upon request of the board, do the following:

(1) Assign or detail to the board any personnel of the agency or educational institution, taking into account available appropriations and the needs of the entity to which the request is directed.

(2) Make the special reports, surveys, or studies that the board requests.

As added by P.L.1-1995, SEC.25. Amended by P.L.136-1997, SEC.13.

IC 14-32-2-12

Duties of board

Sec. 12. The board shall do the following:

- (1) Provide for the execution of surety bonds for all board employees and officers who are entrusted with money or property.
- (2) Provide for the keeping of a full and accurate record of all board proceedings and of all resolutions and rules the board issues or adopts. The accounts of receipts and disbursements are subject to examination by the state board of accounts.
- (3) Offer appropriate assistance to the supervisors of soil and water conservation districts to carry out district powers and programs.
- (4) Keep the supervisors of districts informed of the activities and experience of all other districts and facilitate cooperation and an interchange of advice and experience among districts.
- (5) Coordinate the programs of the districts as far as this may be done by advice and consultation.
- (6) Secure the cooperation and assistance of the United States and state agencies in the work of the districts. However, this subdivision does not authorize either of the following:
 - (A) The transfer or control of authority over districts to a federal agency.
 - (B) The transfer of title of land or control to the United States.
- (7) Disseminate information throughout Indiana concerning the activities and programs of the districts and encourage the formation of districts in areas where organization is desirable.
- (8) Coordinate the erosion and sediment part of 33 U.S.C. 1288 (Public Law 92-500, Section 208) and other erosion and sediment reduction programs that affect water quality, in cooperation with state and federal agencies and through districts as provided under IC 14-32-5-1.
- (9) Develop a statewide regulatory program to be initiated after all reasonable voluntary approaches to erosion and sediment reduction have been exhausted.
- (10) Conduct an inventory of conservation needs for planning purposes and to inform the general assembly.
- (11) Hold meetings in locations throughout Indiana.
- (12) Adopt rules under IC 4-22-2 to implement this article.

As added by P.L.1-1995, SEC.25. Amended by P.L.136-1997, SEC.14; P.L.175-2006, SEC.9.

IC 14-32-2-13

Public hearings

Sec. 13. The board may perform the acts and hold the public hearings that are necessary for the execution of the board's functions under this article.

As added by P.L.1-1995, SEC.25.

Indiana Code-District Boundaries

IC 14-32-6.5

Chapter 6.5. Changing the Boundaries of a District or Dissolving a District

IC 14-32-6.5-1

Petitions to change boundaries or dissolve districts

Sec. 1. (a) Land occupiers of a district may file a petition with the board requesting either of the following:

- (1) That the boundaries of the district be changed to encompass territory described in the petition.
- (2) That the district cease to operate and be dissolved.

(b) A petition filed under this section must be signed by at least twenty-five (25) land occupiers whose tracts of land are located within the boundaries of the district referred to in the petition.

As added by P.L.136-1997, SEC.35.

IC 14-32-6.5-2

Petition to change boundaries; conditions

Sec. 2. In the case of a petition filed under section 1(a)(1) of this chapter to change the boundaries of a district, the following conditions apply:

(1) The territory proposed for inclusion in the reconfigured district may consist of two (2) or more separate tracts, and the tracts need not be contiguous.

(2) The petition must include a generally accurate description of the territory proposed for inclusion in the reconfigured district, but the territory need not be defined by metes and bounds or by legal subdivisions.

As added by P.L.136-1997, SEC.35.

IC 14-32-6.5-3

Petition to change boundaries; requirements of territory proposed for inclusion

Sec. 3. (a) If:

(1) a petition is filed under section 1(a)(1) of this chapter to change the boundaries of a district; and

(2) the territory proposed for inclusion in the reconfigured district includes all or part of the territory of one (1) or more existing districts; the petition must meet the requirement set forth in subsection (b), subsection (c), or subsection (d).

(b) If the territory proposed for inclusion includes only a portion of the existing district, a petition described in subsection (a) must be signed by at least twenty-five (25) land occupiers whose tracts of land are located within the territory, except as provided in subsection (d).

(c) If the territory proposed for inclusion includes all or part of two (2) or more existing districts, the petition must be signed by at least twenty-five (25) land occupiers whose tracts of land are located within the part of each existing district that is proposed for inclusion, except as provided in subsection (d).

(d) If there are fewer than fifty (50) land occupiers whose tracts of land are located in:

- (1) a territory referred to in subsection (b); or
- (2) a part of a district referred to in subsection (c);

the petition must be signed by a majority of the land occupiers whose tracts of land are located within the territory or part of a district.

(e) The signature requirements of this section are in addition to the signature requirement imposed by section 1(b) of this

chapter.

As added by P.L.136-1997, SEC.35.

IC 14-32-6.5-4

Petition to change boundaries; joint resolution of districts required

Sec. 4. (a) If:

(1) a petition is filed under section 1(a)(1) of this chapter to change the boundaries of a district; and

(2) the territory proposed for inclusion in the reconfigured district includes all or part of the territory of one (1) or more other existing districts;

the petition must be accompanied by a copy of a joint resolution described in subsection (b).

(b) The resolution required by this section must be adopted by the supervisors and certified by the secretary of:

(1) the district into which the territory proposed for inclusion would be incorporated; and

(2) each district whose territory would be incorporated into the district referred to in subdivision (1).

(c) The resolution required by this section must set forth:

(1) the amount of the assets and obligations that would be transferred to the district referred to in subsection (b)(1) by each district referred to in subsection (b)(2) as part of the incorporation of territory; and

(2) the amount of the assets and obligations of the district referred to in subsection (b)(1) that would be retained by the district after the incorporation of territory.

As added by P.L.136-1997, SEC.35.

IC 14-32-6.5-5

Petitions to change boundaries or dissolve districts; invalidity

Sec. 5. If a petition filed under section 1 of this chapter does not meet the requirements set forth in sections 1 through 4 of this chapter, the board shall:

(1) declare the petition invalid;

(2) in writing, inform the person who filed the petition that the petition is invalid, specifying the reason or reasons for the invalidity of the petition; and

(3) return the petition to the person who filed it for the incorporation of corrections to remedy the invalidity.

As added by P.L.136-1997, SEC.35.

IC 14-32-6.5-6

Petitions to change boundaries or dissolve districts; hearing

Sec. 6. (a) If a petition filed under section 1 of this chapter meets the requirements set forth in sections 1 through 4 of this chapter, the board shall do the following:

(1) Not more than sixty (60) days after the filing of the petition, give due notice that a hearing will be held concerning the petition.

(2) Pay all expenses arising from the issuance of the notice and the holding of the hearing.

(3) Conduct the hearing.

(b) The hearing held on the petition shall be open to the public. The following may testify at the hearing:

(1) A land occupier whose tract of land is located within the district or territory referred to in the petition.

(2) An individual of voting age who resides within the district or territory referred to in the petition.

(c) Testimony may be presented at the hearing concerning:

(1) the desirability and necessity, in the interest of the public welfare, of granting the petition;

(2) the validity of:

- (A) the petition; and
- (B) proceedings conducted on the petition under this chapter; and
- (3) all questions relevant to the petition.

As added by P.L.136-1997, SEC.35.

IC 14-32-6.5-7

Petitions to change boundaries or dissolve districts; considerations

Sec. 7. (a) When considering a petition to change the boundaries of a district, the board shall consider and give due weight to the following:

- (1) The information presented at the hearing held under section 6 of this chapter.
- (2) The attitudes toward the change in district boundaries expressed by land occupiers whose tracts of land are located within the territory proposed for inclusion within the district.
- (3) The desirability and necessity of including the territory within the district, including the benefits that the land occupiers whose tracts of land are located within the territory may receive from the inclusion.
- (4) The relation of the territory to:
 - (A) watersheds;
 - (B) agricultural regions; and
 - (C) other districts.
- (5) The physical, geographical, and economic factors that are relevant, having regard to the legislative determination set forth in IC 14-32-1.

(b) When considering a petition to dissolve a district, the board shall consider and give due weight to the following:

- (1) The information presented at the hearing held under section 6 of this chapter.
- (2) The attitudes toward dissolution of the district expressed by land occupiers whose tracts of land are located within the district.
- (3) The approximate wealth and income of the residents of the district.
- (4) The probable expense of carrying on soil and water resource protection activities within the district.
- (5) Other economic and social factors that are relevant, having regard to the legislative determination set forth in IC 14-32-1.

As added by P.L.136-1997, SEC.35.

IC 14-32-6.5-8

Denial of petition

Sec. 8. Not more than sixty (60) days after a public hearing on a petition is held under section 6 of this chapter, the board shall determine whether the petition should be denied.

As added by P.L.136-1997, SEC.35.

IC 14-32-6.5-9

Denial of petition; record of determination; notice

Sec. 9. If, after the hearing and consideration of the factors set forth in section 7 of this chapter, the board determines that a petition should be denied, the board shall, when appropriate, do the following:

- (1) Record the determination.

(2) Deny the petition.

(3) Notify a representative of the petitioners in writing that the petition is denied.

As added by P.L.136-1997, SEC.35.

IC 14-32-6.5-10

Petitions to change boundaries or dissolve districts; procedures if not denied

Sec. 10. (a) If, after the hearing and consideration of the factors set forth in section 7(a) of this chapter, the board determines that a petition to change the boundaries of a district should not be denied, the board shall, when appropriate, do the following:

(1) Record the determination.

(2) Define, by metes and bounds or by legal subdivisions, the territory to be included in the proposed reconfigured district.

(3) In consultation with the petitioners, establish a name for the proposed reconfigured district.

(4) Not more than sixty (60) days after recording the determination, give due notice that an election, by secret ballot, will be held on the local public question set forth in the petition.

(5) Prescribe appropriate procedures for the conduct of the election and the determination of the eligibility of voters.

(6) Supervise the conduct of the election.

(7) Publish the results of the election.

(8) Pay all expenses arising from the issuance of notices and the holding of the election.

(b) If, after the hearing and consideration of the factors set forth in section 7(b) of this chapter, the board determines that a petition to dissolve a district should not be denied, the board shall, when appropriate, do the following:

(1) Record the determination.

(2) Not more than sixty (60) days after recording the determination, give due notice that an election, by secret ballot, will be held on the local public question set forth in the petition.

(3) Prescribe appropriate procedures for the conduct of the election and the determination of the eligibility of voters.

(4) Supervise the conduct of the election.

(5) Publish the results of the election.

(6) Pay all expenses arising from the issuance of notices and the holding of the election.

As added by P.L.136-1997, SEC.35.

IC 14-32-6.5-11

Elections to change boundaries or dissolve districts; contents of ballots

Sec. 11. (a) The ballot provided for an election on whether to change the boundaries of a district must contain the following:

(1) A definition, by metes and bounds or by legal subdivisions, of the territory within the proposed reconfigured district.

(2) Two (2) propositions, one (1) of which reads "For creation of the (insert name) soil and water conservation district comprising the territory defined here" and the other of which reads "Against creation of the (insert name) soil and water conservation district comprising the territory defined here".

(3) A square in front of each proposition.

(4) Instruction to insert an X mark in the square before only one (1) of the propositions to indicate that the voter favors or opposes the inclusion of the described territory within the district.

(b) The ballot provided for an election on whether to dissolve a district must contain the following:

(1) Two (2) propositions, one (1) of which reads "For terminating the existence of the (insert name) soil and water conservation district" and the other of which reads "Against terminating the existence of the (insert name) soil and water conservation district".

(2) A square in front of each proposition.

(3) Instruction to insert an X mark in the square before only one (1) of the propositions to indicate that the voter favors or opposes the dissolution of the district.

As added by P.L.136-1997, SEC.35.

IC 14-32-6.5-12

Elections to change boundaries or dissolve districts; voting

Sec. 12. (a) All land occupiers whose tracts of land are located within:

(1) the boundaries of the district as they would be changed to encompass the territory proposed for inclusion; or

(2) the district proposed for dissolution;

are eligible to vote in the election on the local public question held under section 10(a) or 10(b) of this chapter.

(b) A voting place used in the election must be arranged so that the voter can mark a ballot without disclosing to any person how the ballot was marked.

(c) An informality in the conduct of the election on the local public question or in a matter relating to the election does not invalidate the election or the result of the election if:

(1) due notice of the election was given substantially as required by section 10 of this chapter and IC 14-8-2-80; and

(2) the election was conducted fairly.

As added by P.L.136-1997, SEC.35.

IC 14-32-6.5-13

Elections to change boundaries or dissolve districts; simple majority required to deny

Sec. 13. If at least a simple majority of the votes cast on the local public question are against the request set forth in the petition, the board shall, when appropriate, do the following:

(1) Certify the results of the election in the records of the board.

(2) Declare the request set forth in the petition denied.

As added by P.L.136-1997, SEC.35.

IC 14-32-6.5-14

Elections to change boundaries or dissolve districts; simple majority required to implement request

Sec. 14. (a) In an election on the local public question of whether to change the boundaries of a district, the board shall proceed under subsection (c) if at least a simple majority:

(1) of all the votes cast; and

(2) of the votes cast in each:

(A) district; or

(B) portion of a district;

that would be included within the proposed reconfigured district;

are in favor of the inclusion of the described territory within the district.

(b) In an election on the local public question of whether to dissolve a district, the board shall proceed under subsection (c) if at least a simple majority of the votes cast on the local public question are in favor of the dissolution of the district.

(c) Under the circumstances set forth in subsection (a) or (b), the board shall do the following:

(1) Certify the results of the election in the records of the board.

(2) Implement the request set forth in the petition under:

(A) sections 15 through 21 of this chapter, if changing the boundaries of a district; or

(B) sections 22 through 23 of this chapter, if dissolving a district.

As added by P.L.136-1997, SEC.35.

IC 14-32-6.5-15

Appointed supervisors; terms

Sec. 15. (a) To incorporate the described territory within the district, the board shall do the following not more than thirty (30) days after certifying the election:

(1) Appoint two (2) individuals who meet the qualifications set forth in IC 14-32-4-1(c) as supervisors of the district.

(2) Establish the length of the terms of the appointed supervisors within the limits set forth in subsection (b).

(b) The term of one (1) supervisor appointed under subsection (a) may not be more than three (3) years. The term of the other supervisor appointed under subsection (a) may not be more than two (2) years.

As added by P.L.136-1997, SEC.35.

IC 14-32-6.5-16

Letter of application; presentation to secretary of state; contents

Sec. 16. (a) Not more than thirty (30) days after being appointed under section 15(a) of this chapter, the two (2) appointed supervisors shall present to the secretary of state the following:

(1) A notarized letter of application, signed by the two (2) appointed supervisors, for reorganization of the district as a governmental subdivision and a public body corporate and politic under this article.

(2) A copy of the original petition filed with the board.

(3) A copy of the certification by the board of the results of the election held on the local public question.

(4) A copy of the records of appointment by the board of the two (2) supervisors who signed the letter of application.

(b) The letter of application presented under subsection (a) must include the following:

(1) The name proposed for the district.

(2) A definition, by metes and bounds or by legal subdivisions, of the reconfigured boundaries of the district.

(3) A statement certifying that, upon notification by the secretary of state of the approval of the application, an existing district lying entirely within the boundaries of the newly reorganized district will terminate operation and cease to exist.

As added by P.L.136-1997, SEC.35.

IC 14-32-6.5-17

Certificate of organization

Sec. 17. (a) After receiving, examining, and approving a letter of

application and the accompanying documents that are presented under section 16 of this chapter, the secretary of state shall do the following:

(1) Issue to the appointed supervisors a certificate of organization indicating that the district is reestablished with boundaries incorporating the territory defined in the notarized letter of application presented under section 16 of this chapter.

(2) Record the certificate of organization with the letter of application and accompanying documents in an appropriate

record.

(3) Issue to the supervisors of any existing district lying entirely within the boundaries of the newly reestablished district a certificate of dissolution of the existing district.

(4) Record the certificate of dissolution in an appropriate record.

(b) On the date the secretary of state issues the certificates required by subsection (a):

(1) all property and responsibilities of any existing district lying entirely within the boundaries of the newly reestablished district are assumed by the reestablished district; and

(2) any existing district lying entirely within the boundaries of the newly reestablished district ceases to exist.

As added by P.L.136-1997, SEC.35.

IC 14-32-6.5-18

Elected supervisors; petitions for nomination

Sec. 18. (a) After the secretary of state issues a certificate of organization to the supervisors of a newly reestablished district under section 17 of this chapter, the board shall, when appropriate, circulate petitions for the nomination of candidates for the three (3) elected supervisor positions of the reestablished district. The petitions must be filed with the board not more than sixty (60) days after the secretary of state issues the certificate of organization. However, the board may extend the time within which the petitions may be filed.

(b) To be valid, a nominating petition must meet the following conditions:

(1) The candidate named on the petition must meet the qualifications for elected supervisors set forth in IC 14-32-4-1(b).

(2) The petition must be signed by at least twenty-five (25) land occupiers whose tracts of land are located within the district.

(c) A land occupier may sign more than one (1) petition to nominate more than one (1) candidate.

(d) Not more than thirty (30) days after receiving at least four (4) valid nominating petitions, the board shall do the following:

(1) Give due notice that an election, by secret ballot, will be held to elect the three (3) supervisors of the newly reestablished district.

(2) Prescribe appropriate procedures for the conduct of the

election and the determination of the eligibility of voters.

(3) Supervise the conduct of the election.

(4) Publish the results of the election.

(5) Pay all expenses arising from the issuance of notices and the holding of the election.

As added by P.L.136-1997, SEC.35.

IC 14-32-6.5-19

Election of supervisors; contents of ballots

Sec. 19. (a) The ballot provided for the initial election of supervisors of a newly reestablished district must contain the following:

(1) The names, in alphabetical order of the surnames, of all the nominees on behalf of whom valid nominating petitions have been filed.

(2) A square in front of each name.

(3) Instruction to insert an X mark in the square before any three (3) of the names to indicate the voter's preference.

(b) A land occupier whose tract of land is located within the newly reestablished district is eligible to vote in the election.

As added by P.L.136-1997, SEC.35.

IC 14-32-6.5-20

Elected supervisors; terms

Sec. 20. (a) The three (3) candidates who receive the largest number of votes cast in the initial election of supervisors of a newly reestablished district are elected.

(b) The terms of office of the elected supervisors are as follows:

- (1) The individual receiving the highest number of votes has a three (3) year term of office.
- (2) The individual receiving the second highest number of votes has a two (2) year term of office.
- (3) The individual receiving the third highest number of votes has a (1) year term of office.

(c) If a tie vote occurs among the three individuals elected as supervisors, the terms of office for those receiving the same number of votes shall be decided by lot.

As added by P.L.136-1997, SEC.35.

IC 14-32-6.5-21

Elected supervisors; oath of office; commencement of term

Sec. 21. (a) The five (5) initial supervisors of a newly reestablished district shall assume the duties of office upon taking and signing an oath of office. The oath shall be administered:

- (1) to the two (2) appointed supervisors at the date of their appointment by the board; and
- (2) to the three (3) elected supervisors within one (1) week after publication by the board of the results of the election.

(b) An appointed supervisor holding office when a district is reestablished under sections 15 through 21 of this chapter is

discharged from office when the initial appointed supervisors of the reestablished district assume the duties of office under subsection (a). An elected supervisor holding office when a district is reestablished under sections 15 through 21 of this chapter is discharged from office when the initial elected supervisors of the reestablished district assume the duties of office under subsection (a).

(c) Although an initial supervisor assumes the duties of office at the time set forth in subsection (a), the term of office of the supervisor does not begin until the conclusion of the first annual meeting of the newly reestablished district for purposes of determining the expiration of the supervisor's term of office.

As added by P.L.136-1997, SEC.35.

IC 14-32-6.5-22

Dissolution; procedures; certificate

Sec. 22. (a) To proceed with the dissolution of a district under section 14(b) of this chapter in accordance with the results of an election, the supervisors of the district, upon notification of the results of the election, shall do the following:

- (1) Begin immediately to terminate the affairs of the district.
- (2) Dispose of all property belonging to the district at public auction and pay over the proceeds of the sale into the state treasury.
- (3) File with the secretary of state a notarized letter of application for dissolution of the district that:
 - (A) recites that the property of the district has been disposed of and the proceeds of the sale paid over as required by this section; and
 - (B) sets forth a full accounting of the property and proceeds of the sale.

(4) Transmit with the letter of application a copy of the certification by the board of the results of the election on the local public question of whether to dissolve the district.

(b) Upon receipt, examination, and approval of the letter of application and accompanying required document, the secretary of state shall do the following:

(1) Issue to the supervisors a certificate of dissolution.

(2) Record the certificate with the letter of application and accompanying required document in an appropriate record.

As added by P.L.136-1997, SEC.35.

IC 14-32-6.5-23

Dissolution; contracts remain in force

Sec. 23. (a) Despite the issuance of a certificate of dissolution of a district under section 22 of this chapter, all contracts to which the district is a party remain in force and effect for the period provided in the contracts.

(b) The board:

(1) is substituted for the district as party to the contracts;

(2) is entitled to all benefits and subject to all liabilities under the contracts; and

(3) has the same right and obligation under the contracts as the district would have had to:

(A) perform;

(B) require performance;

(C) sue and be sued; and

(D) modify or terminate the contracts by mutual consent or otherwise.

As added by P.L.136-1997, SEC.35.

IC 14-32-6.5-24

Denial of petition for change in boundaries; delay before similar request considered

Sec. 24. If a valid petition requesting a change in the boundaries of a district or the dissolution of a district has been denied due to:

(1) the determination of the board after a public hearing; or

(2) the results of an election held on the local public question;

the board may not consider a later petition containing the same request or a similar request until two (2) years after the denial of the original petition.

As added by P.L.136-1997, SEC.35.

IC 14-32-6.5-25

Procedures for organization of new district in same territory as dissolved district

Sec. 25. If a district is dissolved under this chapter, the board may prescribe the procedure under which a new district may be organized within the territory encompassed by the dissolved district.

As added by P.L.136-1997, SEC.35.

Indiana Administrative Code-Clean Water Indiana Program

IC 14-32-8

Chapter 8. Clean Water Indiana Program

IC 14-32-8-1

"Fund" defined

Sec. 1. As used in this chapter, "fund" means the clean water Indiana fund established by this chapter.

As added by P.L.160-1999, SEC.4.

IC 14-32-8-2

"Political subdivision" defined

Sec. 2. As used in this chapter, "political subdivision" means a county, township, city, or town.

As added by P.L.160-1999, SEC.4.

IC 14-32-8-3

"Program" defined

Sec. 3. As used in this chapter, "program" means the clean water Indiana program established by this chapter.

As added by P.L.160-1999, SEC.4.

IC 14-32-8-4

Program established

Sec. 4. The clean water Indiana program is established. The division of soil conservation established within the department of agriculture by IC 15-11-4-1 shall administer the program subject to the direction of the board.

As added by P.L.160-1999, SEC.4. Amended by P.L.1-2006, SEC.231; P.L.2-2008, SEC.36.

IC 14-32-8-5

Purpose of program

Sec. 5. The purpose of the program is to provide financial assistance to:

- (1) soil and water conservation districts;
- (2) land occupiers; and
- (3) conservation groups;

to implement conservation practices to reduce nonpoint sources of water pollution through education, technical assistance, training, and cost sharing programs.

As added by P.L.160-1999, SEC.4. Amended by P.L.175-2006, SEC.18.

IC 14-32-8-6

Clean water Indiana fund

Sec. 6. (a) The clean water Indiana fund is established to carry out the purposes of this chapter. The fund shall be administered by the division of soil conservation subject to the direction of the board.

(b) The fund consists of:

- (1) amounts deposited in the fund under IC 6-7-1-29.3;
- (2) amounts appropriated by the general assembly; and
- (3) donations, grants, and money received from any other source.

(c) The expenses of administering the fund shall be paid from money in the fund.

(d) Money in the fund at the end of a state fiscal year does not revert to the state general fund or any other fund but remains in the fund to be used for the purposes of the fund.

As added by P.L.160-1999, SEC.4. Amended by P.L.241-2005, SEC.5; P.L.24-2009, SEC.1.

IC 14-32-8-7

Expenditures from fund

Sec. 7. Money in the fund may be spent in the following ways:

- (1) To increase district technical assistance in local conservation efforts.
- (2) To develop an environmental stewardship program to assist land occupiers in complying with environmental regulations voluntarily.
- (3) To qualify for federal matching funds.
- (4) To provide for the following cost sharing programs:
 - (A) A program to encourage land occupiers to implement conservation practices to reduce nutrient, pesticide, and sediment runoff.
 - (B) Programs that encourage land occupiers to implement nutrient management programs by sharing the cost of any of the following:
 - (i) Fencing for intensive grazing systems.
 - (ii) Purchasing nutrient management equipment.
 - (iii) Voluntary environmental audits.
 - (iv) Other similar expenditures related to nutrient management.
- (5) To provide matching grants to districts for the following:
 - (A) Professional watershed coordinators to facilitate and administer local watershed protection projects.
 - (B) District managers to administer district conservation policies and programs.
- (6) To increase state technical and capacity building assistance to districts and local conservation efforts by providing for the following:
 - (A) Capacity building specialists to train district personnel in grant writing, grant administration, and leadership development.
 - (B) Conservation education specialists to help implement district conservation education efforts.
 - (C) Urban storm water specialists to provide technical assistance to developers to contain soil erosion on construction sites.
- (7) To make distributions as provided under section 8 of this chapter.
- (8) Implementation of geographic information systems (GIS) or similar technology.

As added by P.L.160-1999, SEC.4. Amended by P.L.175-2006, SEC.19; P.L.129-2011, SEC.6.

IC 14-32-8-8

Additional funds from division of soil conservation

Sec. 8. (a) In addition to funds provided to a district under section 7 of this chapter or from any other source, the division of soil conservation shall pay to the district one dollar (\$1) for every one dollar (\$1) the district receives from a political subdivision.

(b) The state is not obligated to match more than ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) under this section.

(c) In order to receive funding under this section each year, a district must certify to the division of soil conservation the amount of money the district received from all political subdivisions during the one (1) year period beginning January 1 of the previous year. The information prepared under this subsection must be part of the annual financial statement prepared and provided to the board under IC 14-32-4-22. The division of soil conservation shall make distributions under this section not later than July 15 of each year.

(d) Before making distributions under this section, the division of soil conservation shall determine the total amount of money that has been certified by all districts as having been provided by political subdivisions. If the cumulative amount to be distributed to all districts exceeds the amount appropriated to the fund, the division of soil conservation shall reduce the

distribution to each district proportionately.

(e) A district must spend money received under this section for the purposes of the district.

As added by P.L.160-1999, SEC.4. Amended by P.L.155-2002, SEC.9 and P.L.158-2002, SEC.8; P.L.175-2006, SEC.20; P.L.1-2007, SEC.129.

IC 14-32-8-9

Report

Sec. 9. The districts shall coordinate with the division of soil conservation to compile and provide a report to the executive director of the legislative services agency each year. The report must be in an electronic format under IC 5-14-6 and must describe:

(1) the expenditures of the clean water Indiana fund; and

(2) the number, type, status, and effectiveness of conservation efforts funded by the clean water Indiana program.

As added by P.L.160-1999, SEC.4. Amended by P.L.28-2004, SEC.133.

SWCD Funding Changes Calendar Year 2008 and 2011

District	2008	2011	Change	% +/-
Adams	\$ 68,641.00	\$ 65,420.66	\$ (3,220.34)	-5%
Allen	\$ 138,641.00	\$ 144,268.00	\$ 5,627.00	4%
Bartholomew	\$ 58,216.80	\$ 51,432.28	\$ (6,784.52)	-12%
Benton	\$ 71,801.00	\$ 73,955.00	\$ 2,154.00	3%
Blackford	\$ 12,907.56	\$ 16,966.00	\$ 4,058.44	31%
Boone	\$ 84,118.00	\$ 84,117.44	\$ (0.56)	0%
Brown	\$ 42,600.00	\$ 47,586.71	\$ 4,986.71	12%
Carroll	\$ 28,578.00	\$ 48,989.10	\$ 20,411.10	71%
Cass	\$ 41,316.69	\$ 57,112.00	\$ 15,795.31	38%
Clark	\$ 59,056.90	\$ 56,787.00	\$ (2,269.90)	-4%
Clay	\$ 51,250.00	\$ 55,744.98	\$ 4,494.98	9%
Clinton	\$ 91,206.81	\$ 78,374.43	\$ (12,832.38)	-14%
Crawford	\$ 33,602.12	\$ 31,086.16	\$ (2,515.96)	-7%
Daviess	\$ 97,918.17	\$ 109,660.00	\$ 11,741.83	12%
Dearborn	\$ 188,410.00	\$ 152,204.00	\$ (36,206.00)	-19%
Decatur	\$ 86,642.36	\$ 108,950.00	\$ 22,307.64	26%
DeKalb	\$ 141,620.79	\$ 146,645.00	\$ 5,024.21	4%
Delaware	\$ 41,879.85	\$ 36,250.24	\$ (5,629.61)	-13%
Dubois	\$ 71,641.00	\$ 83,284.00	\$ 11,643.00	16%
Elkhart	\$ 292,121.86	\$ 321,687.00	\$ 29,565.14	10%
Fayette	\$ 41,895.06	\$ 45,904.74	\$ 4,009.68	10%
Floyd	\$ 116,019.26	\$ 84,682.21	\$ (31,337.05)	-27%
Fountain	\$ 24,969.00	\$ 25,585.96	\$ 616.96	2%
Franklin	\$ 34,176.79	\$ 35,746.61	\$ 1,569.82	5%
Fulton	\$ 22,463.00	\$ 22,870.68	\$ 407.68	2%
Gibson	\$ 96,584.34	\$ 102,665.02	\$ 6,080.68	6%
Grant	\$ 9,999.96	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 0.04	0%
Greene	\$ 20,183.26	\$ 28,455.34	\$ 8,272.08	41%
Hamilton	\$ 272,536.00	\$ 181,722.00	\$ (90,814.00)	-33%
Hancock	\$ 40,176.22	\$ 33,437.00	\$ (6,739.22)	-17%
Harrison	\$ 43,164.06	\$ 67,916.58	\$ 24,752.52	57%
Hendricks	\$ 83,075.00	\$ 81,460.00	\$ (1,615.00)	-2%
Henry	\$ 36,699.84	\$ 31,308.00	\$ (5,391.84)	-15%
Howard	\$ 100,903.88	\$ 102,502.00	\$ 1,598.12	2%
Huntington	\$ 39,366.11	\$ 36,975.53	\$ (2,390.58)	-6%
Jackson	\$ 47,063.97	\$ 52,849.00	\$ 5,785.03	12%
Jasper	\$ 50,407.55	\$ 114,044.18	\$ 63,636.63	126%
Jay	\$ 22,000.00	\$ 12,231.68	\$ (9,768.32)	-44%
Jefferson	\$ 52,584.00	\$ 55,234.36	\$ 2,650.36	5%
Jennings	\$ 64,359.00	\$ 74,597.50	\$ 10,238.50	16%
Johnson	\$ 114,197.00	\$ 122,397.00	\$ 8,200.00	7%
Knox	\$ 111,188.00	\$ 124,124.77	\$ 12,936.77	12%

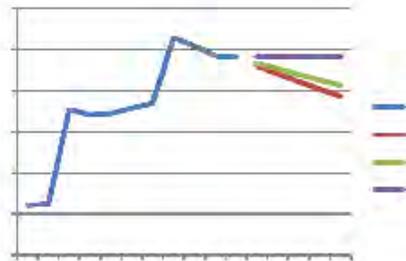
Kosciusko	\$ 121,303.00	\$ 128,312.00	\$ 7,009.00	6%
LaGrange	\$ 155,799.36	\$ 160,000.00	\$ 4,200.64	3%
Lake	\$ 157,365.00	\$ 117,238.00	\$ (40,127.00)	-25%
LaPorte	\$ 114,449.00	\$ 121,375.65	\$ 6,926.65	6%
Lawrence	\$ 71,162.10	\$ 66,630.56	\$ (4,531.54)	-6%
Madison	\$ 79,678.22	\$ 66,230.13	\$ (13,448.09)	-17%
Marion	\$ 146,700.00	\$ 146,700.00	\$ -	0%
Marshall	\$ 50,524.00	\$ 48,181.54	\$ (2,342.46)	-5%
Martin	\$ 18,939.00	\$ 17,652.96	\$ (1,286.04)	-7%
Miami	\$ 52,911.00	\$ 45,992.11	\$ (6,918.89)	-13%
Monroe	\$ 27,926.73	\$ 31,500.81	\$ 3,574.08	13%
Montgomery	\$ 27,628.70	\$ 25,486.49	\$ (2,142.21)	-8%
Morgan	\$ 65,885.00	\$ 102,032.40	\$ 36,147.40	55%
Newton	\$ 47,494.38	\$ 51,140.68	\$ 3,646.30	8%
Noble	\$ 40,174.00	\$ 43,608.00	\$ 3,434.00	9%
Ohio	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 2,625.00	\$ (875.00)	-25%
Orange	\$ 47,175.00	\$ 50,056.00	\$ 2,881.00	6%
Owen	\$ 31,466.00	\$ 39,788.30	\$ 8,322.30	26%
Parke	\$ 31,466.00	\$ 35,949.83	\$ 4,483.83	14%
Perry	\$ 36,674.61	\$ 22,371.51	\$ (14,303.10)	-39%
Pike	\$ 28,778.00	\$ 26,500.00	\$ (2,278.00)	-8%
Porter	\$ 102,160.48	\$ 104,018.48	\$ 1,858.00	2%
Posey	\$ 84,233.00	\$ 88,663.86	\$ 4,430.86	5%
Pulaski	\$ 49,719.00	\$ 44,789.00	\$ (4,930.00)	-10%
Putnam	\$ 65,144.10	\$ 57,334.47	\$ (7,809.63)	-12%
Randolph	\$ 38,736.40	\$ 38,637.28	\$ (99.12)	0%
Ripley	\$ 69,471.01	\$ 102,487.00	\$ 33,015.99	48%
Rush	\$ 52,054.82	\$ 52,114.05	\$ 59.23	0%
Scott	\$ 29,605.00	\$ 28,203.19	\$ (1,401.81)	-5%
Shelby	\$ 63,287.00	\$ 71,469.72	\$ 8,182.72	13%
Spencer	\$ 46,009.72	\$ 61,317.26	\$ 15,307.54	33%
St. Joseph	\$ 84,993.00	\$ 84,993.00	\$ -	0%
Starke	\$ 28,737.00	\$ 28,332.02	\$ (404.98)	-1%
Steuben	\$ 87,710.22	\$ 86,134.71	\$ (1,575.51)	-2%
Sullivan	\$ 38,322.00	\$ 38,825.00	\$ 503.00	1%
Switzerland	\$ 80,302.65	\$ 84,288.32	\$ 3,985.67	5%
Tippecanoe	\$ 157,969.57	\$ 149,721.22	\$ (8,248.35)	-5%
Tipton	\$ 37,675.00	\$ 42,005.00	\$ 4,330.00	11%
Union	\$ 10,400.00	\$ 11,130.40	\$ 730.40	7%
Vanderburgh	\$ 93,214.00	\$ 123,359.64	\$ 30,145.64	32%
Vermillion	\$ 70,230.00	\$ 58,959.05	\$ (11,270.95)	-16%
Vigo	\$ 94,215.60	\$ 101,391.84	\$ 7,176.24	8%
Wabash	\$ 27,520.00	\$ 35,512.33	\$ 7,992.33	29%
Warren	\$ 12,469.00	\$ 26,258.00	\$ 13,789.00	111%
Warrick	\$ 40,742.00	\$ 57,742.00	\$ 17,000.00	42%

Washington	\$ 28,628.05	\$ 26,213.00	\$ (2,415.05)	-8%
Wayne	\$ 137,622.40	\$ 74,594.00	\$ (63,028.40)	-46%
Wells	\$ 34,533.20	\$ 34,832.95	\$ 299.75	1%
White	\$ 32,968.26	\$ 38,263.32	\$ 5,295.06	16%
Whitley	\$ 77,270.00	\$ 78,025.00	\$ 755.00	1%

Cigarette Tax Funding Model

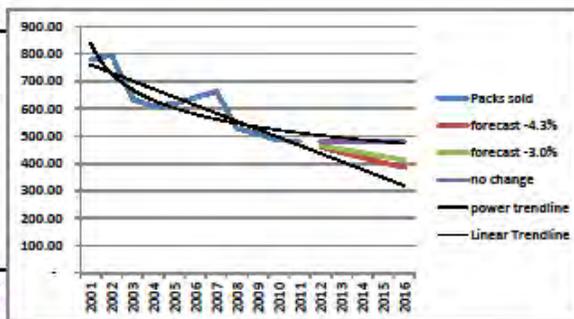
In Million \$, using current equations for revenue all years

	CWI/Soils Revenue	forecast -4.3%	forecast -3.0%	no change
2001	1.22			
2002	1.24			
2003	3.54			
2004	3.41			
2005	3.45			
2006	3.58			
2007	3.70			
2008	5.28			
2009	5.09			
2010	4.85			
2011	4.81			
2012		4.61	4.67	4.81
2013		4.41	4.53	4.81
2014		4.22	4.39	4.81
2015		4.04	4.26	4.81
2016		3.86	4.13	4.81
		1.15	22%	



In Millions, using historical taxes as an estimate of packs sold

	Packs sold	forecast -4.3%	forecast -3.0%	no change
2001	779.53			
2002	794.93			
2003	634.91			
2004	610.30			
2005	618.16			
2006	640.59			
2007	662.40			
2008	527.92			
2009	508.27			
2010	484.46			
2011	481.02			
2012		460.33	466.59	481.02
2013		440.54	452.59	481.02
2014		421.60	439.01	481.02
2015		403.47	425.84	481.02
2016		386.12	413.07	481.02



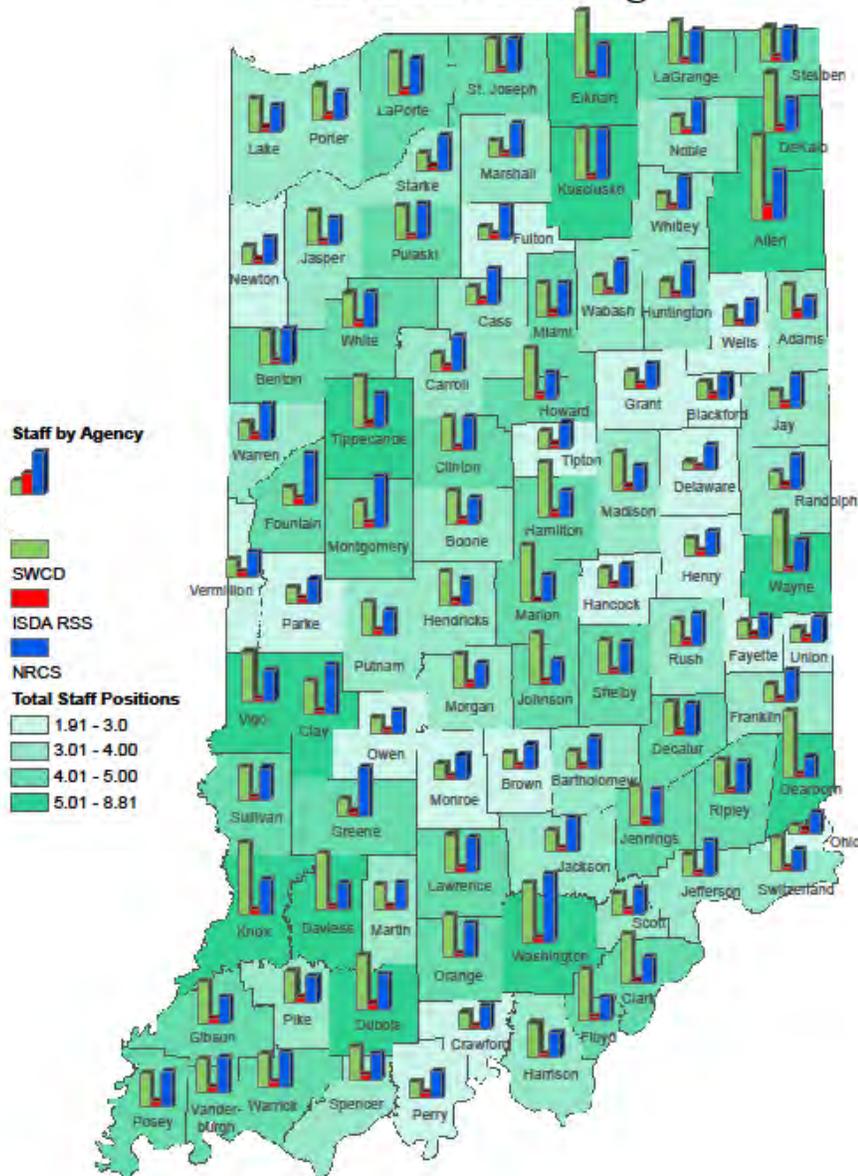
Indiana Conservation Partnership Staffing

County	SWCD Employee Staffing	ISDA DSS and RS Coverage	Staff	NRCS Staff Coverage	Total
Adams	2	0.56		1.28	3.84
Allen	5	0.39		2.98	8.37
Bartholomew	2	0.3		1.88	4.18
Benton	2	0.3		2.09	4.39
Blackford	0.5	0.38		1.48	2.36
Boone	2	0.38		1.5	3.88
Brown	1	0.3		1.43	2.73
Carroll	1	0.3		2.09	3.39
Cass	1	0.3		2.09	3.39
Clark	4	0.26		1.56	5.82
Clay	2	0.3		2.93	5.23
Clinton	2	0.3		2	4.3
Crawford	1	0.26		1.39	2.65
Daviess	3.33	0.3		1.58	5.21
Dearborn	4	0.25		1.21	5.46
Decatur	2	0.38		1.88	4.26
De Kalb	3.5	0.39		1.98	5.48
Delaware	0	0.3		1.48	1.78
Dubois	3.5	0.39		2.08	5.97
Elkhart	4	0.32		1.98	6.3
Fayette	1	0.3		1.38	2.68
Floyd	3	0.26		1.39	4.65
Fountain	1	0.38		3	4.38
Franklin	1	0.25		1.88	3.13
Fulton	0.75	0.32		1.98	3.05
Gibson	2.5	0.38		1.58	4.46
Grant	0.5	0.38		1.48	2.36
Greene	1	0.3		2.93	4.23
Hamilton	3.25	0.3		1.5	5.05
Hancock	1	0.3		1.38	2.68
Harrison	2	0.26		1.39	3.65
Hendricks	2	0.3		1.5	3.8
Henry	1	0.3		1.38	2.68
Howard	3	0.25		1.5	4.75
Huntington	1	0.32		1.98	3.3
Jackson	1.25	0.31		2.06	3.62
Jasper	2	0.3		1.59	3.89
Jay	1	0.38		1.98	3.36
Jefferson	1.25	0.26		2.06	3.57
Jennings	2.25	0.39		2.06	4.7
Johnson	3	0.3		1.43	4.73
Knox	4.33	0.38		2.08	6.79
Kosciusko	3	0.32		2.98	6.3

LaGrange	2.6	0.32	1.98	4.9
Lake	2.5	0.3	1.59	4.39
La Porte	2.5	0.3	2.09	4.89
Lawrence	2.2	0.31	2.06	4.57
Madison	2	0.3	1.48	3.78
Marion	3.25	0.3	1.5	5.05
Marshall	1	0.32	1.98	3.3
Martin	1.53	0.3	1.58	3.41
Miami	2	0.32	1.98	4.3
Monroe	1	0.3	1.43	2.73
Montgomery	1.5	0.38	3	4.88
Morgan	2	0.3	1.43	3.73
Newton	1	0.3	1.59	2.89
Noble	1	0.32	1.98	3.3
Ohio	0	0.25	1.21	1.46
Orange	2.53	0.31	2.06	4.9
Owen	1	0.3	1.43	2.73
Parke	1	0.38	1.43	2.81
Perry	1	0.39	1.58	2.97
Pike	1.83	0.39	1.58	3.8
Porter	2	0.3	1.59	3.89
Posey	2	0.39	2.08	4.47
Pulaski	1.67	0.3	2.09	4.06
Putnam	2	0.38	1.43	3.81
Randolph	1	0.3	1.98	3.28
Ripley	2	0.25	1.88	4.13
Rush	1	0.3	1.88	3.18
Scott	1.25	0.39	1.56	3.2
Shelby	2	0.3	1.88	4.18
Spencer	2	0.39	1.58	3.97
St Joseph	3	0.32	1.98	5.3
Starke	1	0.3	2.09	3.39
Steuben	2	0.39	1.98	4.37
Sullivan	2	0.3	1.93	4.23
Switzerland	2	0.25	1.21	3.46
Tippecanoe	3	0.3	2	5.3
Tipton	1	0.3	1.5	2.8
Union	0.5	0.3	1.38	2.18
Vanderburgh	2	0.39	2.08	4.47
Vermillion	1	0.38	1.43	2.81
Vigo	3	0.3	1.93	5.23
Wabash	1	0.32	1.98	3.3
Warren	1	0.3	2	3.3
Warrick	2	0.39	2.08	4.47
Washington	3.53	0.31	4.06	7.9
Wayne	2.5	0.3	1.88	4.68
Wells	1	0.56	1.48	3.04

White	2	0.3	2.09	4.39
Whitley	1	0.32	1.98	3.3
	172.8	29.53	169.35	

2012 ICP Staffing



Survey Responses

Note: Items in *italics* represent discussions from sessions in the supervisor and staff trainings held in March 2012. All other items were submitted via electronic survey.

Some comments were edited for ease of reading

Q1: What are three things your district could do to increase its operating efficiency as well as its impact on conserving soil, water and related natural resources?

Outreach/Partnerships:

- 1) Increase public awareness of our mission and goals, what programs are available and our involvement in our communities.
- 2) Educating commissioners and councils on the benefits of SWCDs. Our budget has only decreased since I have been employed and we are down to bare bones
- 3) More community education
- 4) A better relationship with county officials
- 5) Build stronger partnership (leading to more local funding)
- 6) Share in appropriate initiatives activities across local organizations to broaden impact.
- 7) Unify message and collaborate on outreach opportunities of local organizations.
- 8) Combine talent across local organizations to increase efficiency.
- 9) Improve outreach to county - education on programs and practices.
- 10) Improve relationships with elected officials.
- 11) Coordinate with the many other entities that affect soil and water conservation. There are a lot of wasted and duplicate efforts from many different organizations.
- 12) Communicate better with the farmers/public
- 13) Hold more farmer meetings.
- 14) Advertise in local papers to get the word out about the local SWCD.
- 15) Get more affiliate members to spread the word on conservation.
- 16) Attend more county government meetings
- 17) Write monthly guest column in local newspaper
- 18) Provide more workshops (if we had more staff)
- 19) Continue to partner with other agencies (Without doing this already we would not be where we are today.)
- 20) If possible, I would encourage districts to develop an "e-mail" directory of participating farmers and (on a monthly basis) send out a newsletter keeping local farmers updated on local, state, and national activities and opportunities for participation.
- 21) We need to do a better job promoting our mission and ability to accomplish things to our mostly urban county council and commissioners.
- 22) Closer working relationship with county surveyor.
- 23) More cooperation/sharing with surrounding counties. Multi-county workshops would be a good example.
- 24) I think that it would be so helpful if all districts were branded the same...used the same logos, had standard menus of programs, etc. I recognize that not all counties are the same, but I think that it would be helpful for our constituents to understand what an SWCD does across the board.
- 25) We could work more closely with NRCS and other partnering organizations, work harder at getting community involvement and education on our resources, and take a look at what skills we need to update or receive training on for the staff in our office.
- 26) Work more with surrounding Districts on cooperative projects, grants etc.
- 27) Work closely with neighboring counties to hold events and promote programs.
- 28) Better relationship with county council and commissioners. They do not seem to understand or care what we do.

- 29) news letter
- 30) articles in newspapers
- 31) update with links our website
- 32) maintain our contact with schools and programs and materials
- 33) maintain good contact with county officials
- 34) vote out some of our state reps. and promote and support some more inclined reps.
- 35) Truly be the first line people contact, and then set up meetings with NRCS and FSA as we were meant to be.
(Old habits die hard)
- 36) Work with other districts to partner more on projects
- 37) Provide better marketing of the District so people know who we are and what we do.
- 38) Continue to partner with local government for both funding and implementation conservation related work.
- 39) Become more aware of issues affecting local decision makers related to conservation and define our role and ability to assist in addressing those issues as they relate to our identified resource concerns.
- 40) Seek out non-traditional partners, especially for out-reach and education of conservation and local resource concerns
- 41) My district could improve by increasing efforts to encourage community involvement in our missions and awareness of the services that we provide. We are currently working to improve our target audience for mailing lists and advertisements so that these efforts are better focused.
- 42) Improve one-on-one contact / promotion (sales) of conservation programs and practices.
- 43) more advertising
- 44) We partner with other groups for workshops and field days, especially using 319 funds to help with materials, advertising, and speakers.
- 45) Continuing education in the way of background articles. Onsite education but not in the middle of the day or overnight trips during the work week because our supervisors work a job and they cannot take off work to attend.
- 46) Improve web site with reference materials and communication about key activities on conservation.
- 47) Promote existing programs. This is difficult to answer since all we hear about is cutting of funds.
- 48) Focus more on education and marketing of our programs.
- 49) We need a better way to market what we have to offer to clients.
- 50) Promote more cover crops and no till, education
- 51) Less youth education and more adult workshops.
- 52) Better relationship with County Council-Awards and Field Days
- 53) Get local media involved and develop personal relationships with media
- 54) Engage the editors of local print media
- 55) Professional events to attract sponsors
- 56) Working with other districts (share office space, joint programs, mailings, etc)
- 57) Public education
- 58) Expand programs to urban/suburban audience (rain gardens, rain barrels, etc)
- 59) Affiliate memberships
- 60) Higher visibility through education programs
- 61) Meet one on one with legislators and other officials with small tours (no press)
- 62) Form new partnerships with lake associations, universities, solid waste, landfills, storm water departments, etc
- 63) Continue talking with both the urban and agriculture communities to see what they need/want.
- 64) Continuing to provide educational resources to those who request presentations, information, or resources.
- 65) *Build partnerships with local businesses and community organizations to do joint conservation projects and improve awareness in community.*
- 66) *Sponsor workshops to provide information about programs available for farm, rural and urban areas and increase involvement in those programs.*
- 67) *Educate local farmers about cover crops*

Grants/Funding:

- 1) Multi County Grants. We have had good success when doing multi county grants.
- 2) Find more funding for Urban Conservation
- 3) Receive more county and state funding that is not tied to a watershed
- 4) Most districts already do what they can to use funding efficiently - always underfunded. Partnering for actual dollars or in-kind support on projects.
- 5) Have a consistent flow of funds to work with. Do not know what funds or employees will be available year to year. Funds come from several different sources and are not coordinated.
- 6) increased permanent funding from state for cost share/expenses
- 7) Develop a budget. Live within it
- 8) Continue to apply for and hopefully receive grant funds to promote conservation practices in our community.
- 9) Increased monetary support from the state for operating.
- 10) Grant money from 319, etc.
- 11) Apply for grants to implement more conservation.
- 12) 1. Our district is doing all we can to operate efficiently. Increasing our impact in our county's resource conservation efforts depends on restoring our funding support and knowing that this support will be reliable. We cannot innovate without a solid funding base.
- 13) 1. Have more funding for extra office help so our dc can get in the field more
- 14) If additional funding were available: Add staffing, Increase education programs, Provide cost-share funds
- 15) 1. We have received decreased funding from the county for the past several years; we lost funding for conservation programs, so the SWCD has decided to use some of their reserve fund to continue cost share programs like lime cost share and soil testing. We are doing more email rather than mailings.
- 16) Obtain additional funding to fund a FT employee
- 17) Funding opportunities more easily accessible on local level
- 18) Increase in State funding allotment
- 19) Taking advantage of other opportunities (CREP admin, LARE)
- 20) See out more/new grants
- 21) Money from other sources-grants, rain barrels, etc
- 22) Keep applying for local grant money
- 23) Charge fees for Rule 5 reviews
- 24) Charge for renting conservation tillage equipment
- 25) Work on putting the most effort into the projects/programs that will have the biggest benefit for the community and on our natural resources
- 26) *Seek additional funding through non-traditional type grants.*

Hire New Employee's:

- 1) Be able to hire more technical help
- 2) Make the District Employees State Employees with State Benefits who are not under the mercy of the county
- 3) Eliminate time wasted on IRS Supervisor 'Employee' payroll
- 4) increase staffing
- 5) Increase staff
- 6) We are very streamlined and accomplish a lot. More staff would help.
- 7) Have an additional employee dedicated to the numerous administrative duties associated with our SWCD (by far #1 in priority and greatest positive effect)
- 8) Hire a Technical, in the Field, working with farmers employee
- 9) Hire another person or two!

- 10) We need to be able to retain two employees at minimum: One technical person and one part-time office manager
- 11) The main issue I believe for our district among others are having is the ability to expand our workforce. If we were able to have the funds to hire more full time employees we would be able to have a bigger impact on our objectives. I think that this issue is the main issue that affects us.
- 12) Increase personnel. Currently we have one full time technician and one full time office manager/secretary and one part-time who works on MS4 site reviews and assist with activities that the district is involved with. We could use an education coordinator and a grant coordinator. They could be one in the same.
- 13) Additional staff – technical
- 14) Money to hire at least one more office person
- 15) Increase staff to include technical assistance for clients.
- 16) Need more professional staff-grant writers
- 17) Share grant writing services
- 18) Partner with a city/county grant writer

Employee Improvement:

- 1) Improve employee's accountability, perform employee evaluations regularly.
- 2) Make sure the entire office knows the reasons for our existence and what programs we are really promoting.
- 3) Tie staff with workload and using contractors for short-term projects.
- 4) Improve supervisor knowledge of business, leadership skills, technical needs to improve conservation program
- 5) manage staff priorities better
- 6) Cross-train all employees. It's frustrating that only the educator can educate and only the office manager can handle financials.
- 7) Increase technical capability of all staff
- 8) Conduct employee evaluations with input from other office members.
- 9) Review/update plan of work and job descriptions.
- 10) More focused employee training - both on programs and procedures.
- 11) Have supervisors who are truly into conserving soil, water, etc.
- 12) Have more input on conservation practices to target in the district.
- 13) Participation in Leadership Institute
- 14) Update job descriptions-current ones do not account for all the work being done
- 15) Find resources in nearby counties and be more efficient by sharing those resources

Office Space/Supplies:

- 1) Carry out current or increased levels of activity with reduced travel/overhead input costs.
- 2) Increase efficiency in office operations, reduce use of paper and postage by using electronic media, email, website, and fill able forms where possible.
- 3) Spend less \$ on rent. Salaries for staff are paid by the county as well as rent, but the rent amount charged for sharing space in the FSA and NRCS government building is extremely high. County officials notice that. We could spent less on rent by moving to an empty county office - but it would be detrimental being separated from FSA & NRCS.
- 4) Properly maintain an equipment rental program with the proceeds of the program being used to not only maintain the equipment, but also for office use - as deemed necessary.
- 5) Need a better office location. We are packed into to small of space.
- 6) Faster computers
- 7) We need to at least double the size of our office space.
- 8) Will local officials support multi-county office space?
- 9) Need to consolidate resources due to decreased funding

Board/Board Members:

- 1) Stronger focus/vision for board members
- 2) Have a more active Board
- 3) Require board members to spend an entire day every 6 months involved in office activities working alongside employees.
- 4) Research topics ahead of board meeting
- 5) We need to be able to replace our board chairman with someone who cares about more than getting his name in the paper.
- 6) Get 2 FFA students to attend monthly board meetings
- 7) Invite commissioners to annual meetings
- 8) Recruit county council members as associates
- 9) Need more associate supervisors with diverse backgrounds and professions
- 10) Joint board meetings to discuss watershed issues

Remove Red Tape:

- 1) As far as SWCD, we are about as efficient as we can get with the limited budget we are on. It's a little frustrating having to deal with all of the NRCS red tape it takes to get a farmer signed up for some of their cost share programs. Some of the grant money that the SWCD is involved in managing is much easier for the farmer to participate in.
- 2) Cut out some of the Bureaucracy and focus on impact
- 3) Cut the paperwork requirements in half
- 4) Eliminate time wasted on an SBOA AFR form that does not align with Districts.

Brain Trust:

- 1) Have longer range plans.
- 2) Too many things change to have longer range plans.
- 3) Too many reactionary and go with the flow plans.
- 4) Hold brainstorming board meetings or sessions where no regular business or normal activities may be discussed. Where only new ideas, reasons for conservation, concerns in very general terms on the direction of the SWCD may be discussed.
- 5) Decide if it's in our best interest to continue to partner with and do more with ISDA or continue to play w/NRCS doing their work while the DCs are playing around in and (mostly) out of the office.
- 6) Spend more time on strategic planning.
- 7) Don't be afraid to do something outside of your comfort zone; be prepared, flexible and diverse

Opinions:

- 1) By necessity, we must operate more efficiently with staff time and input, since our resources in that direction are going backwards due to money pinch at county level. I am not willing to curtail the current level of district activity to remedy this situation.
- 2) Deleting all acronyms from information released to the public by our District, so time is not wasted explaining what the programs are, and what we can do to help landowners and residents. One acronym appeared in a District letter seeking Public support of a watershed project, its meaning was very well described, and I felt we had a great response, because no one felt intimidated that those speaking would use terms they wouldn't understand. And the speakers didn't, it was a great meeting! Keep it simple.
- 3) Spend less time at board meetings endlessly debating trivial things and spend more time actually supporting district events.
- 4) Look beyond AG projects to fulfill our mission.

- 5) Some SWCDs benefit from smaller, single SWCD grants. Others benefit from larger projects. Need alternatives so we're not stuck with one or the other.

Success:

- 1) I have no suggestions. I think we have a lot on our plate and doing a good job.

Q2: What are three things the State Soil Conservation Board could do to help increase your district's operating efficiency as well as its impact on conserving soil, water and related natural resources?

Funding:

- 1) Funding, as we are looking for grants to keep our Watershed Coordinator, whose position has always been paid for by grants.
- 2) Help find non-traditional sources of funding/grant opportunities
- 3) Secure larger amount of funding
- 4) Give more money to each District for their county needs
- 5) Advocate, where appropriate, for creative funding opportunities as they arise.
- 6) Be more willing to stand up to administration when cutting funding.
- 7) Most everything takes money. Provide sufficient funds to make an impact in Indiana.
- 8) Work with SWCDs more on funding needs, priorities
- 9) Decrease paperwork for grants, reporting, etc.
- 10) Create large budget fund for improving district's infrastructural capital. An example might be federal agencies that generally have certain budget line items for office building, etc.; with these funds being requested if a need arises in a specific location. Receipt of funds may not be immediate but the chances of receiving NEEDED funding are much higher. This allows these agencies to save time, effort, and headache of search for resources for these purposes. All employees will require offices, etc. and employers of choice will provide high quality facilities. A fund of this type could enable improved conditions for SWCD employees and could play a critical role in employee retention (a major need for SWCDs).
- 11) Greater consistency year-to-year in grant application process
- 12) Concentrate CWI funding towards things that actually empower districts, such as professional staff.
- 13) Reinstate the individual district CWI yearly grants. Working with other counties is difficult - especially when soil types and farmers are so different. Even if the amount of CWI is less than the \$10,000, there is an advantage to serving your own district.
- 14) Support local SWCD efforts to obtain outside funding through support letters or other means.
- 15) Continue to help fund technicians since county budgets are getting cut.
- 16) Work at getting the increased monetary support from the state.
- 17) Make us a line item in state budget so we aren't always handed the programs no funding is available for to implement on begged, borrowed or stolen shoe string budgets from county government.
- 18) Keep the CWI grants coming;
- 19) I like the multi-district grants and fewer, but larger approach to grants. Smaller grants of up to \$7,500 are helpful to get some things going, but the impact for us has been generally modest.
- 20) Funding
- 21) Dedicated funding stream so that cost share programs are available for people who are not eligible for federal funding.
- 22) I am trying to think of something more important than adequate and reliable funding. My district has partnered as best we can. It keeps coming back to funding. Tweaking programs and learning and applying new practices takes "boots on the ground."
- 23) Easier access to CWI funds, not on a multi-county basis
- 24) Simpler cost share programs from NRCS that the DCs can understand and implement fairly across the board.

- 25) Push for a larger base funding from legislature by helping establish a new funding stream that gets away from Cigarette tax and ties to more nat. res. related funding
- 26) Seek additional funding by changing legislation to allow the creation of a Soil & Water tax similar to the tax created for Solid Waste Districts.
- 27) Maintain support for CCSI
- 28) Don't do for districts what they can do for themselves
- 29) CWI funds-Which is more impactful for districts? Money for staffing vs. cost share to landowners
- 30) More Money!
- 31) Support CCSI
- 32) Working with nearby districts can often be a struggle. Don't penalize us when another district in our watershed will not cooperate!
- 33) Allow each District to decide on how they spend the money that is given to them each year. Currently the requirements for the money are somewhat restrictive and sometimes require that a District come up with additional projects that fit the requirements instead of allowing us to put that money towards the existing projects/programs they are already working on. This creates an atmosphere where minimal effort is put into these projects/programs and existing projects/programs. Sometimes the requirements for the money are such that they do not fit the current needs of the community surrounding the District and then the money is unusable and the District may appear in a negative light because they are not applying for the money offered.
- 34) Focus on agricultural needs but also focus on urban soil/natural resource needs. Soil health is important for both ag and urban areas and urban soils are greatly altered and Districts and the citizens they serve would benefit if resources were available for urban areas.
- 35) Do not require extra or unnecessary reporting by way of paper or the Internet.
- 36) *Work with federal agencies to expand critical areas for programs such as CREP*
- 37) *Additional funding for programs*
- 38) *keep programs focusing on local level issues along with the broader watershed issues*
- 39) *develop cost share programs to encourage first time users of cover crops*
- 40) *Help provide support for the local projects with education, manpower (when/if needed) and funding*
- 41) *More funding*
- 42) *Funding based on county contributions to SWCD (leverage to get more county funding).*
- 43) *Make CWI grants easy and flexible*
- 44) *Let the Districts decide how to spend state grant money*

What SSCB Should Do:

- 1) Push for law that makes it mandatory that all counties have at least 1.5 employees for the district (remove the option)
- 2) Provide assistance in facilitating policy changes, if needed, to allow the above suggestions to occur.
- 3) Run interference between outside agencies and the Districts. You should be our biggest advocate and sometimes it does not seem that way.
- 4) Provide direction on key issues within the district.
- 5) Continue to explore ways, along with ISDA and NRCS, of empowering Districts to concentrate on critical field operations-put conservation on the land-rather than wasting effort on detail work such as bookkeeping of \$35 per diem for supervisors.
- 6) Provide consistency and stability. Longer range help.
- 7) Share successful strategies districts (within the state) are implementing
- 8) Share successful strategies other states have implemented and are implementing.
- 9) Encourage the State of Indiana to match County appropriations for Soil & Water districts.
- 10) Encourage consolidation of smaller or less active Soil & Water districts with larger or more active adjoining districts.

- 11) Increase the emphasis on protecting the drinking water supply.
- 12) Increase state allotment to SWCDs
- 13) Provide support to ensure SWCDs are housed WITHIN NRCS offices
- 14) Find as many ways as possible for our district (and others) to utilize the quality, longevity, publicity and economy of performing fewer larger scale projects versus many small scales.
- 15) Acknowledge the diversity of Districts
- 16) Acknowledge the importance and impact of conservation implementation on small tracts of land created by developing lands; both commercial and residential
- 17) Provide on-going support to promote Districts' Return on Investment to County- and State- level officials (not just during budget hearings and IASWCD Annual Conference)
- 18) Incentivize SSCB / ICP goals: Provide a list of goals you would like each SWCD to achieve - tie the normal CWI assistance to each District to reaching individual goals. i.e. In order to receive \$X.XX, District Staff must complete XXXXX training modules. In order to receive \$X.XX each District Supervisor must attend XX Soil Health Field Days / Workshops. ... etc.

Communications:

- 1) Help districts better advertise our programs to the public
- 2) Streamline communication, information, programs
- 3) A PR campaign supporting Districts aimed at local governments and urbanites would probably help them understand that we are actually a useful and cost-effective investment of taxpayer dollars.
- 4) Find ways to facilitate cooperation and communication between Districts.
- 5) Public Relations
- 6) Provide a website template that districts could personalize to respective needs.
- 7) Offer assistance in getting word out to the public about who we are and what types of programs we have, continue to work with NRCS in partnership efforts for grants, etc., and continue to offer the CWI grant programs; they are much appreciated.
- 8) More direct contact with supervisors with emails
- 9) Public meeting seem to have the most impact for us. How about more GOOD speakers that can be available for local meetings on conservation issues.
- 10) More field days and fliers and education
- 11) Keep talking up best practices and innovative things districts are doing. DSS's and IASWCD communications are good channels for these. Region meetings are opportunities to showcase as well.
- 12) I think that it would be so helpful if all districts were branded the same...used the same logos, had standard menus of programs, etc. I recognize that not all counties are the same, but I think that it would be helpful for our constituents to understand what an SWCD does across the board.
- 13) Offer a library of videos (soil health, grants, trainings, etc) for districts to use
- 14) Keep us informed!
- 15) Educate state reps about SWCDs
- 16) Do the county councils/commissioners know anything about SSCB?
- 17) Do supervisors know anything about SSCB?
- 18) Obtain a higher profile status; state meetings for commissioners, etc. Reach out en masse
- 19) Shameless promotion; work together to raise awareness in language the general public will understand
- 20) Legislators are not all aware of what SWCDs are about

How to Improve SSCB:

- 1) Make the SSCB more visible to the public. Only SWCD people know the Board exists.
- 2) More statewide education - improve and promote SWCDs image (TV spots - Billboards - with contact your County's SWCD)
- 3) Make yourselves more known to each county commissioner and council member

- 4) Quit being so secretive about what you do and decisions you have made
- 5) Support us as individual counties. Learn from the lessons of NRCS District Conservationists. Splitting personnel between counties causes stress on the staff and poor customer service
- 6) Audit and provide SPECIFIC recommendations for districts to improve their outreach to communities, including performance of supervisors.
- 7) Lobby state government for increased funding
- 8) Send minutes of SSCB meetings to district coordinators for inclusion in minutes of board meeting
- 9) Make State Annual Conference more affordable
- 10) Do you have any way of leaning on local officials?
- 11) Stop cutting
- 12) Continue to lobby for grant funding opportunities.
- 13) Help districts redefine conservation into the future; advocate for WQ to the public

Staffing:

- 1) more guidance from the state level for administrative needs
- 2) centralized staff; enough people to go to for assistance
- 3) Provide better communication/guidance when it comes to "new" duties/programs (such as the new requirements for SBOA and IRS).
- 4) Provide each district with a technician to help with NRCS workload (contribution agreements, etc.) and get programs on the ground.
- 5) Higher standards in general: (a) for supervisor appointment / reappointment and (b) for \$10,000 state matching funds.
- 6) Additional funds to fund a FT employee
- 7) The DSS people are spread way too thin. * is probably the minimum number for them to be effective.
- 8) How much time do SWCD personnel need to be assisting NRCS? Could \$'s be saved if NRCS had their own secretary or could NRCS have a cost-share agreement and pay part of the salary of the SWCD secretary?
- 9) Work with ISDA in hiring district support specialist so the individuals we currently have do not have such large areas to cover.
- 10) The tech team sometimes does not get plans done in time. I guess more people on the tech team.
- 11) Push to have District Coordinators who are qualified and educated in each county. The job is so much more than just a secretary. Recognize the necessary skills and require a college education or equivalent experience. Raise the level of expectation.
- 12) Provide a state level person available to come and talk to local county councils, commissions, etc. Help them get engaged

Training:

- 1) Become more involved in training programs like the LI, for staff and Supervisors.
- 2) Help supervisors better develop district business plans
- 3) Facilitate networking/share strengths of staff, knowledge, experience
- 4) Make capacity building a very high priority - we can get cost-share money elsewhere; salary money is HARD to come by.
- 5) Put a premium on capacity building kinds of activities for supervisors and staff such as Leadership Inst.
- 6) Reward innovation and leadership.
- 7) More training for employees. There are plenty of trainings that are offered but very few are geared towards the technical side of the job. To be efficient on the ground districts need to be capable of the technical aspects of "HOW" to conserve soil. What practices can be implemented? What is that structure?
- 8) Continued support through counseling and education on conservation.
- 9) Provide information and/or technical assistance to local SWCD offices for programs.

- 10) Leverage more with districts to raise expectations (i.e. Leadership Institute)
- 11) Need employees to become more like managers. Need skill development (marketing, relationship building, etc)
- 12) Develop a mentor program
- 13) Help districts learn new roles

Partnerships:

- 1) Encourage new communications with urban centers to unify efforts needed by both rural and urban stakeholders in conserving soil, water and related natural resources.
- 2) Coordinate with FSA and Purdue on maintaining offices together to maximize service to county residents.
- 3) Help focus District's on state-wide initiatives
- 4) work on partnerships and breaking down barriers

Success:

- 1) Last state meeting was excellent with good topics and presenters
- 2) The funding for supervisor and staff training has allowed us to use our more limited funds for other things.
- 3) The CWI grants allowed to us to do demonstration projects to show landowners the proper installation of fence and HUAPs and geo textile fabric.
- 4) Doing a good job now. Excellent programs and direction
- 5) Existing position being used efficiently
- 6) Keep up good relationships/connections

Opinions:

- 1) I typed in SSCB in the computers search engine.605 results, none of which were correct for this use.
- 2) A new supervisor, or an old one, might have to scramble to know or remember what SSCB is?
- 3) Let's not be lazy, or in such a hurry that we can't spell out words. How many times will a friend, "Robert" respond to "hey R "?
- 4) An overall synopsis or theme of these three ideas is the increase of sophistication for SWCDs in order to keep up with modern times as well as maintains the relevance and effectiveness of local level conservation. There is a significant case to be made for local, representative, government conservation but it can only be made if the tools used by local actors are on par with the rest of the conservation arena.

Brain Trust:

- 1) Proactive rather than reactive....new ideas and practices should be piloted here and measured for success here rather than status quo.
- 2) Create expert youth educators, similar to teachers in major metropolis's, which are dedicated to the in-depth teaching of environmental science. Even if this means they must cover large areas. This would allow for increased on the ground technical specialization within district offices. Should be joint partnership with school systems (SSCB capacity may only be as proponent or funding body, with the teacher being included in the school systems for greatest integration possible).

Q3: What are three things the Indiana Conservation Partnership could do to help increase your district's operating efficiency as well as its impact on conserving soil, water and related natural resources?

Communications:

- 1) Help districts better advertise our programs to the public
- 2) Help public better understand what our mission is and problems we're facing
- 3) Go back to three times a year Area Meetings to explain various programs and requirements
- 4) Assist in providing educational outreach to the districts.

- 5) Provide priority, focused information showing which conservation practices have the most impact. We seem to be trying to do everything at once with very limited resources.
- 6) clear communication of decisions made
- 7) Regularly provide short articles on programs and trends in conservation for use in newspapers, websites, and newsletters.
- 8) Write a guest column for regional publications
- 9) Provide educational media to k-12
- 10) How about hold a no-till conference/soil health seminar in each of the 4 quadrants of the state for our producers/landowners?
- 11) target state reps with information
- 12) I believe the SWCDs in Indiana need publicity. An effort on the state level to showcase some of the successes throughout the state could build lots of local enthusiasm in areas where successes are occurring, and where they're needed. Television, State Fair, Farm Bureau Convention, etc.
- 13) Provide seamless operations to local producers.
- 14) Continue to improve communications from ICP leaders down to local field offices.
- 15) public relations
- 16) Better communication between the partners at the local level.
- 17) field days and fliers
- 18) Base information sharing of FSA, NRCS & SWCD
- 19) Get behind Soil Health vision and support on hands demonstrations.
- 20) Provide training that parallels other agencies' training requirements.
- 21) Provide information and/or technical assistance for programs.
- 22) Continue to publically support SWCD offices and programming throughout the state.
- 23) Work together better to cross-promote programs.
- 24) Increase authority in practice sign-up, implementation and approvals of federal programs.
- 25) More coordinated efforts in how we deliver information (amongst agencies)
- 26) *sponsor informational workshops/field days for districts as well as the public*

Improvements for ICP:

- 1) Encourage the district as a hub for resources
- 2) Make the Districts feel like they are welcome at the various meetings held
- 3) Give credit where credit is due and quit being so critical
- 4) NRCS understands the value of local support for programs - rest of ICP needs to make this a priority for staff. With technology available, regional or multi-county staff should cross pollinate better on targeted needs in each county, know the staff, share workload info, etc.
- 5) more SWCD reps in decision making process
- 6) Continue to make effort toward reducing necessary travel time and expenses by disseminating information through webinars, conference calls, etc rather than by hosting a lot of regional meetings.
- 7) When regional meetings are held, make sure content presented is pertinent and important enough to warrant having the meeting in the first place.
- 8) Have policies requiring ICP agencies to include a SWCD representative during visits to landowners whenever possible (and vice-versa). This could increase the speed of social capital building by the ICP.
- 9) Strengthen cooperative agreement program.
- 10) Continue making CCSI a priority.
- 11) Work together and work efficiently to sell conservation. It seems like there are times when new programs are introduced with deadlines and the staff lacks sufficient information because it is not available at the time of introduction or things change in mid-stream and you have to call clients back in to sign more paperwork. I don't know about our clients, but this is frustrating to me and makes us look like we don't know how to do our job efficiently.

12) If we are truly partners other than when extra work is needed: treat us as equals, not someone just to get the work done....rent issues should be combined as one agency, workloads shared as possible--erase agency lines in the best interest of helping the client....all for one and one for all attitude...not that is not my program, or you need to pay for that service...how does that help get conservation on the ground? Ensuring more time out in the field so clientele know who we are and what we stand for.

Staffing:

- 1) Support us as individual counties. Learn from the lessons of NRCS District Conservationists. Splitting personnel between counties causes stress on the staff and poor customer service.
- 2) Continue and increase technical support from ISDA and NRCS.
- 3) Continue and improve training opportunities.
- 4) Help provide more training to district employees. Especially technical.
- 5) enough computers for ALL staff
- 6) Implement the ICP joint certification and training that is currently under development.
- 7) Focus resources on District Support people.
- 8) How much time do SWCD personnel need to be assisting NRCS? Could \$'s be saved if NRCS had their own secretary or could NRCS have a cost-share agreement and pay part of the salary of the SWCD secretary when some do so much to help their district conservationist?
- 9) cross training, increased technical training
- 10) Education - staff and supervisor development would be my first pick. I appreciate the Leadership Institute, region meetings, and annual conference. Districts not taking advantage of these are missing the boat.
- 11) Offer webinars training staff on various BMPs and technical skills, meet with District and NRCS staff to help staff from each organization understand each other's programs better, and possibly a multi-county education person hired to host educational sessions in various counties.
- 12) More District Support Staff
- 13) NRCS employee in each office.
- 14) Dismount tech teams and get folks back in the office
- 15) Presence at board meetings by both ISDA and NRCS
- 16) As district technicians increase, partners need to help with training and respect
- 17) Not everyone knows who is on the tech teams and what their skills are. Districts need to know this information.
- 18) Better mentoring of staff
- 19) Employees need to be cross trained
- 20) Basic "101" classes are needed
- 21) Increase local knowledge
- 22) Train the trainer
- 23) *provide training to employees to increase/expand services at local level*
- 24) *additional technical assistance*
- 25) *Training for consistency of supervisors and staff (I know the partnership is working on this, and applaud the efforts)*
- 26) *Fund more regional technicians (watershed-based?)*

Partnerships:

- 1) Strongly encourage and promote support from the local agencies through their upper management down
- 2) Encourage strong local partnering
- 3) Provide programs that engage schools and organizations in improving the water quality and soil health of the district.
- 4) Continue to expand and improve the outreach portion of share point
- 5) Maybe further developing the relationship of all entities involved. I do like the targeted approach to watershed management. Prioritize, mobilize, implement, and then move on.

- 6) Help us get the message to our county governments that we are a good investment!
- 7) Likewise the Partnership should become involved in the training for Districts. We are all supposed to work as a team but frankly on the front lines this is not happening. Partnerships have no idea what the other does or is responsible for.
- 8) Assist local SWCD offices by partnering with them to hold events and promote their programs.
- 9) Clearly there are times when one partner has opportunity to bring a bit more to the table - continue to keep us informed of these opportunities
- 10) Partnership staff participation at District Board meetings.
- 11) Help build more partnerships with universities, local colleges, etc
- 12) Partners need to be all in it together for success at local level
- 13) Support from partners for local staff and expectations and capabilities
- 14) Where are DNR and Purdue Extension? Why aren't they at our meetings and workshops?
- 15) Permitting issues with IDNR-Can SSCB help advocate?
- 16) Look for areas of overlap
- 17) **Quality** over quantity
- 18) Each district is unique. Working together in some areas may make sense

Funding:

- 1) Funding sources
- 2) Help find non-traditional sources of funding/grant opportunities
- 3) Provide ways to fund projects that do not qualify under State or Federal programs that help advance conservation practices.
- 4) Be willing to combine their dwindling dollars to fund the new training program.
- 5) Lobby for increased state funding
- 6) Federal dollars are so necessary to combat the negative impact on soil and water.
- 7) Help us find funding!
- 8) Encourage re-funding RC&D's.
- 9) Funding
- 10) More contribution agreements are needed
- 11) *Expanded tech and financial support for non-CREP counties*

Opinions:

- 1) There is lots of technology these days...good stuff; there is lots of conservation that has been passed-over because it is expensive, boring, and hard - let us not throw the baby out with the bath water as we continue this important work
- 2) Take care of the rent / contribution agreement fiasco. Keep it simple: SWCD staff will provide X number of hours in support to NRCS / FSA.... From answering phones to filing to ToolKit/Protracts support. Do away with all of the documentation because it is a time / efficiency waster. Let the DCs certify support.
- 3) Do away with the rent issues; we have partnered with equipment and help to NRCS for many years. The first computers, survey equipment and more were all purchased by the SWCD for years before NRCS started buying these things. Getting SWCD staff trained to do more of the tech assistance is very helpful, and getting the contribution agreements helps with supplementing SWCD employees salaries, since we make so much less than an NRCS employee does and in some cases does more than they do.
- 4) Help replicate the ICP at the local level. The ICP is working well at a state level, but we could use some help on building our local partnerships. Education is one component, but we could benefit from regional leaders helping to make things happen locally. How do we create more opportunities for local partnership? ICP leaders at the state level talk often, but it's not as good regular and consistent at the local level.
- 5) Help us find common ground in resource issues and concerns. I really like some of the consistency in focus I see at the state level where multiple partners are attacking the same issues in a coordinated way. I wish we could

do more of that locally and regionally. Watersheds are one way to bring people to the table. There have been some good workshops at annual conference. Could we appoint some regional watershed task forces around the state in places that don't currently have them and mentor them along for a bit? Even without a lot of additional funding, they could at least do some prioritization of issues and focus on common problems.

- 6) *I understand regional or watershed-based districts are being discussed... it will be a hard sell to get counties to fund this. Maybe this is a good idea for some counties, but not all.*

Capitol Assets

- 1) Modern offices are needed (NRCS needs to step up)

Cutting Red Tape:

- 1) Simplify the processes for inter agency management of conservation programs.
- 2) Simplify the programs.
- 3) There are many really good programs being offered to the public, but they have so many strings attached that many potential customers are unwilling to take part.

Programs

- 1) At a national policy level, can we make changes such as requiring cover crops in ACRES program

Training

- 1) Training on new equipment/technology needed
- 2) Continued supervisor training is needed. Advanced training in wanted
- 3) Need training on how to work together/collaborate

Q4: Do you have any comments for the task force?

Success:

- 1) Thanks for looking into these matters
- 2) Thank you for reaching out for input on addressing these critical funding and organizational needs.
- 3) They do well at speaking at events, etc., for us and have offered good ideas for the Districts to become "efficient" on their own as far as supplies/equipment to purchase.
- 4) Continue to offer and encourage attendance at trainings.
- 5) Thank you for your continued efforts to assist our SWCD offices!
- 6) Good luck and never, never give up supporting our issues.
- 7) Districts working together for common resource concerns are the future of conservation in Indiana.
- 8) Good luck

Improvements:

- 1) Listen to the district employee's as well as the supervisors. The employee's are the front line and do have a good sense of what is happening.
- 2) Do not tie us to a particular watershed because each county is unique and needs or be handled on a county basis
- 3) Where was the SSCB when the IRS started this business of making Supervisors employees? You should have protected us from this nonsense. This has the potential to result in long term problems. There are some Districts who have individuals in positions that are not qualified to handle this. There will be increased mistakes and IRS audits. Truly, this is something that appears to have come from one individual at the IRS. There was plenty of time from when this first started with just a couple of Districts several years ago until now, to have stopped it. 1099-MISC forms were capturing those per diems - the federal government was getting its money. For 50+

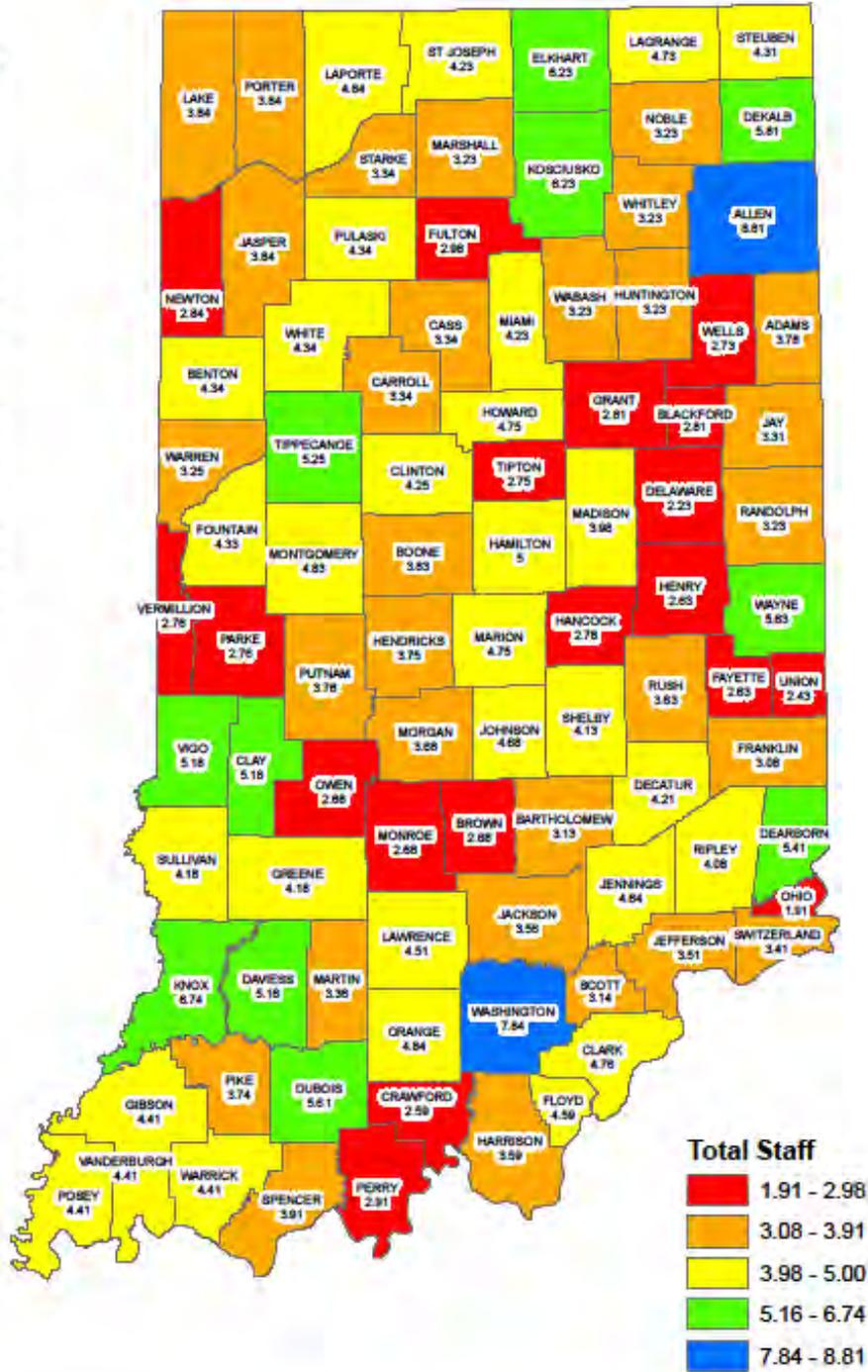
years in the state, common sense prevailed. Now, because our leadership did not make an effort to become involved at a time when they could have made an impact, we are locked in to a situation that wastes time and hurts morale.

- 4) Also, where was State involvement with the SBOA on the 'new' AFR reporting procedure? I do agree that reporting online is a good idea. However, the old form provided a way to check and balance and know that it was correct (i.e. the front balance had to match the back balance). If you have a District that now discards the old form, there will no longer be any way to make sure that the totals are correct. This is going to result in long term problems and increased audit issues. In addition, we are as Indiana Code specifies a 'Special District'. We have specific accounts that do not necessarily line up with County government. Once again, it is as if there was no input from State Soil Conservation Board to the State Board of Accounts.
- 5) We deserve better representation. The task force should seek ways that they can provide greater influence in matters with other agencies such as SBOA and the IRS.
- 6) I would like to see the process and the criteria that the task force is using to develop their recommendations.
- 7) Regular updates would be helpful.
- 8) People moan about the old days of service centers - we don't need these anymore, just as county districts are becoming needless. With technology such as iPads, blackberries, and connectivity through Google iCloud, etc. we have little use of a work station - we can tweet details of our day, have documents shared and edited in real time, and develop reports or check email from the field (literally!). Tools and programs that connect us can reverse the last decades of technology isolating our staff. Help the districts understand the possibilities of technology bringing us back together and sharing the workload like never before. Worried about too many county offices? Computers? Meeting locations? We don't need them. Consolidation isn't about co-locating offices; it should be about freeing all our staff from as many physical desks and files as we can!!!!
- 9) Money. Money. Money.
- 10) . As a new supervisor I find the number of different state, regional, and local conservation groups daunting and difficult to understand their role and how they integrate with each other. Also, trying to track and understand the hierarchy of the organizations is a problem to me. Maybe there is a single source where I can go to better understand each entity's role better, but if not, that is something the task force could consider providing. Also, everyone jokes about all the acronyms in this realm and what they mean and even in this survey you reference ICP and I can't tell you what that stands for! I am sure there are many that do not have the problems I have, but I am sure I am not alone.
- 11) Keep in mind some offices have small staffs and will continue to have since county budgets are very tight. They cannot compete with the larger staffed offices.
- 12) Not sure of the mission of this particular task force or exactly which task force this is.
- 13) You might want to do face to face visit where practical. That kind of attention sometimes creates those ah ha moments.
- 14) Be clear and concise with your questions.
- 15) Think outside the box. Identify your vision for the future of conservation and keep the road map in front of you.
- 16) Some districts are funded at the local level and there are no issues. They should be able to individually decide if there is a need to be "watershed based" or if they want to stand on their own.
- 17) I think that it would be so helpful if all districts were branded the same...used the same logos, had standard menus of programs, etc. I recognize that not all counties are the same, but I think that it would be helpful for our constituents to understand what an SWCD does across the board.
- 18) I would have to say the two biggest obstacles for SWCDs are funding and lack of personnel. With the current economic trends I realize that SWCDs are not the only agencies facing these difficulties. I am not sure that anyone has the answers to improve this situation.
- 19) We have always participated in most all things that have come along. Right now we are trying to stay as a partnership with the Federal and State Entity and not be cut all together. Our office has been in Boonville since August 13, 2010. The county officials are upset about it; have threatened to move us to the civic center and one

- commissioner has said to cut us off completely. We have a new employee that started January 23rd who thinks he can turn it around. If you want to know more call me. [contact information removed]
- 20) Partnering with other Districts is a good plan but the funding streams do not cross when they are county funds easily. When you are trying for a system less delivery system it doesn't happen...People "worry" about if they are getting their county's money's worth. It is an antiquated system that doesn't quite work as intended. Watershed boundary funding streams appears to be more beneficial to those of us out in the trenches. It appears you would get more measurable outcomes in this type of system as well as piece meal bandages. Timely delivery of services....too much time passes between request, plan, work and payments. Basically, trying to do more work with less people not in your county or neighboring county is truly hurting business.
 - 21) We are indeed in changing times and change is in order. I have experienced that change that looks good on the big scale is never easy to implement at the local level, it takes time and results are often slow.....just an observation, not a criticism. Also, in these days of technology, I have observed that nothing gets more conservation done then the building of relationship with stakeholders and perseverance.
 - 22) Conservation needs strong advocates to secure funding and public interest.
 - 23) Soil & Water Districts have always been accountable in carrying out local conservation as we progress further into the community's "do more with less" attitude. We've proven that we can "do more with less", but what might happen if we're given the opportunity to "do more with more"?!
 - 24) Send ISDA staff to SWCD meetings with the direct purpose of collecting responses to this survey. Many Supervisors are not going to take the time to complete this survey - so your answers will probably be biased to those who "Live and Breathe" the work of their Districts.
 - 25) I appreciate the opportunity to comment. The phrase "increase your district's operating efficiency" suggests that the problems are in poorly managed staff or unfocused leadership. I hope that there is a better way to write the questions. Reserve conservation is not a frill; it is an essential government service. It is about public safety. It is the basis for a sustainable economy.
 - 26) Don't spend a lot of money on this!
 - 27) Keep working on additional funding for SWCD
 - 28) more education and communication
 - 29) I really appreciate people thinking about the future of SWCDs and how local Districts can become better. I am seeing many Districts challenged and doing more. I would be very interested in hearing about some of the ways other states have built models that might benefit Indiana. I hear bits and pieces from time to time, but it would be nice to see the best that many states have to offer along with some of the areas where Indiana excels.
 - 30) . Beware of Districts where staff or supervisors fear looking beyond their county lines for partnerships and ideas. There are people that would like to see such efforts fail. I don't know why, but wish I did.
 - 31) Not enough staff time/expertise to go after grants and foundation funds
 - 32) Pilot sharing of resources in a smaller region
 - 33) *Important to stay at the local level focus so we keep from losing site of the importance of promoting conservation in all areas of our state and not only in specified critical areas*

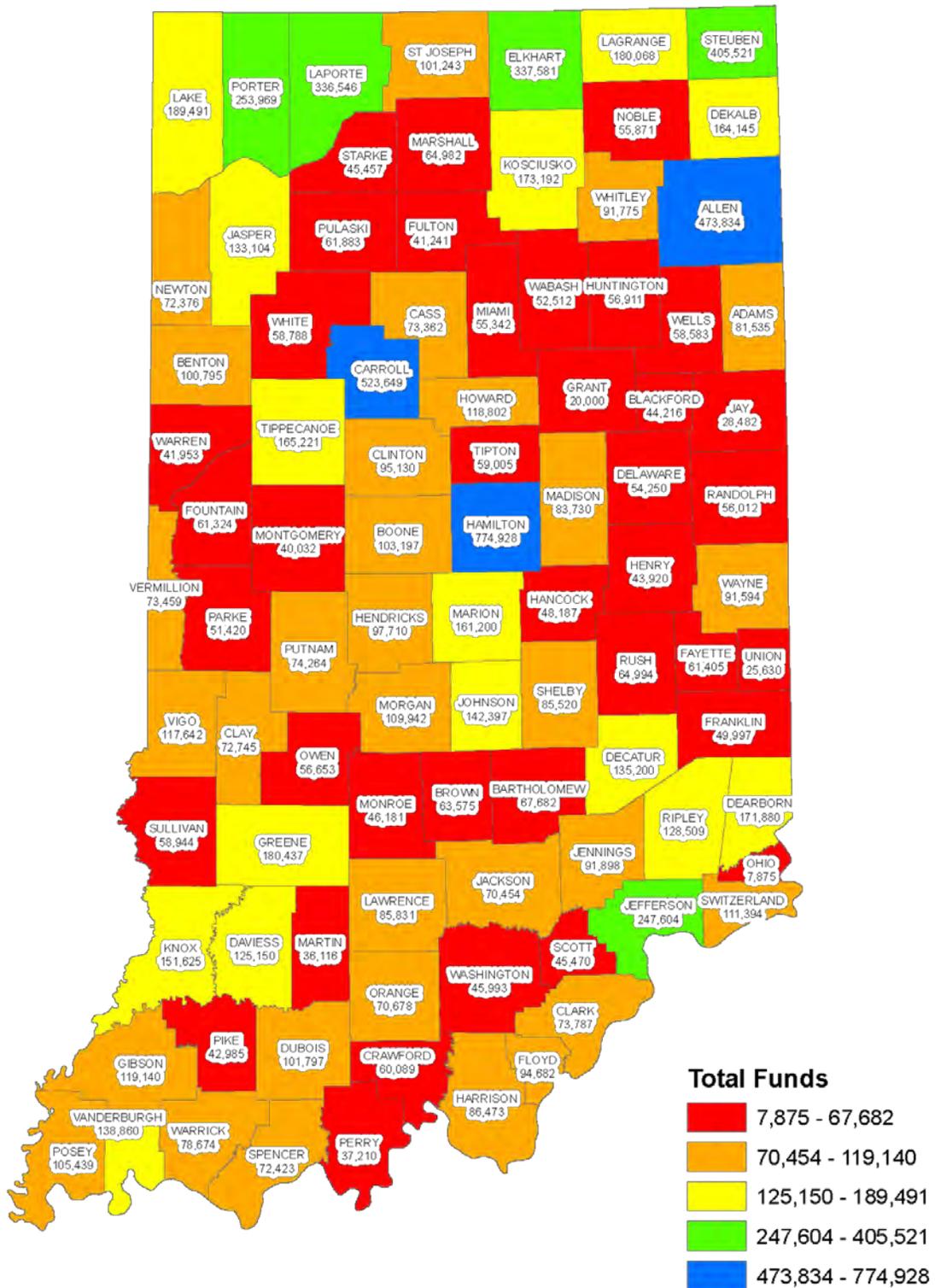
District Capacity Data Analysis

Local, State and Federal Staffing



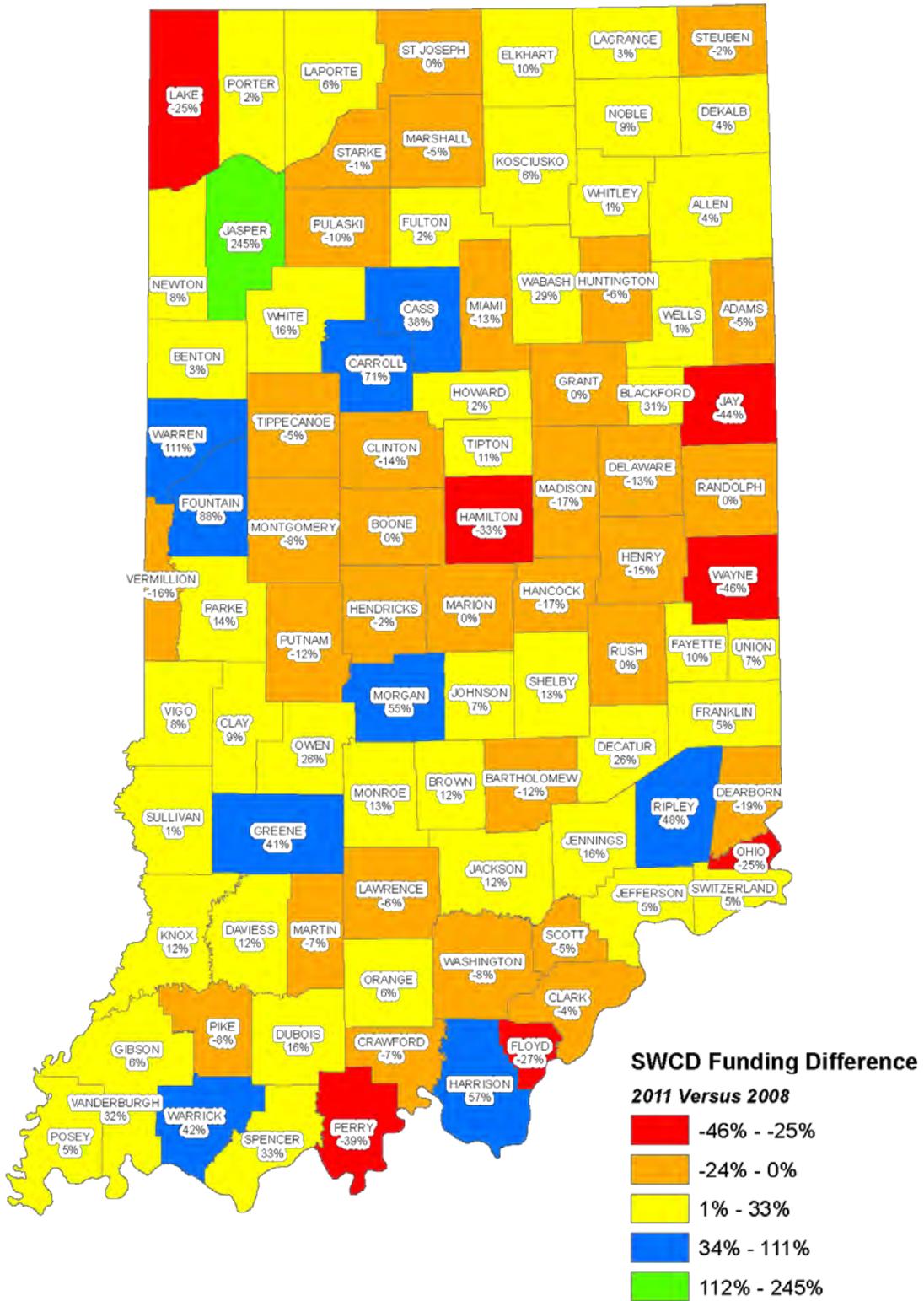
District Capacity Data Analysis

Local, State and Federal Funds Excluding Farm Bill Dollars

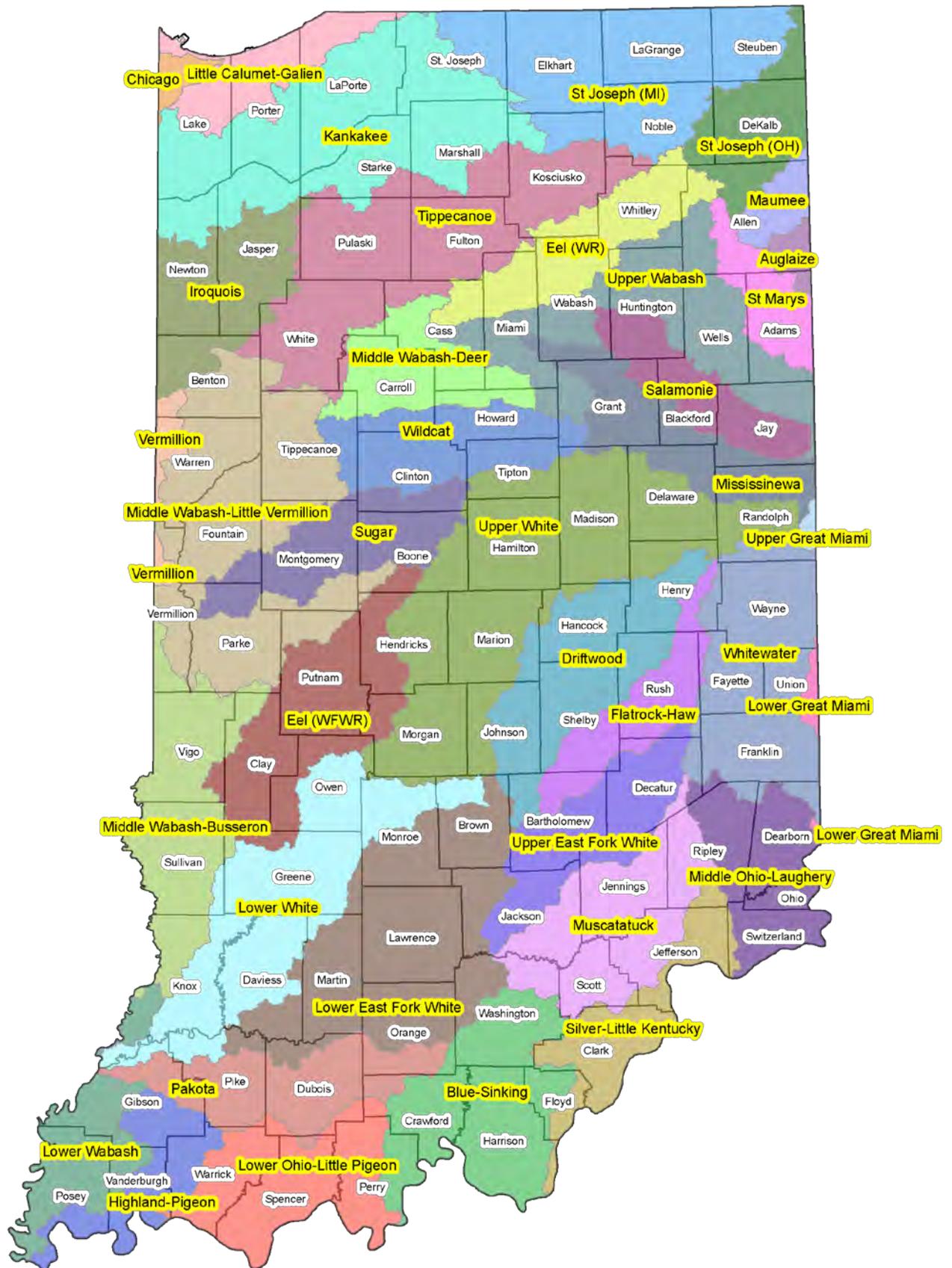


Based on 2011 Funding

County Funding for SWCDs - 2011 Versus 2008



Indiana HUC 8 Watersheds



Commonly Used Acronyms

CWI Clean Water Indiana

DSC Division of Soil Conservation (ISDA)

DSS District Support Specialist (ISDA)

FSA Farm Service Agency, USDA

IASWCD Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Incorporated

IC Indiana Code

ICP Indiana Conservation Partnership

IDEA Indiana District Employee Association

IDEM Indiana Department of Environmental Management

IDNR Indiana Department of Natural Resources

ISDA Indiana State Department of Agriculture

NRCS Natural Resources Conservation Service

SSCB State Soil Conservation Board

SWCD Soil and Water Conservation District

Ray Ledgerwood

Ray Ledgerwood is a native of eastern Washington where he worked on his family's wheat and cattle operation in Pomeroy, Washington. Ray graduated from Washington State University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Agricultural Mechanization and minor in Business Administration. He has seven years experience in farm supply cooperative management, six years experience working as the Eastern Field Representative for the Washington State Conservation Commission, six years working as the Pacific Region Representative for the National Association of Conservation, nine years experience in providing capacity building seminars, workshops, presentations and assistance to over 40 states and island territories as NACD's Director of Capacity Building Services and NACD's Director of Leadership Services, and for the past nine years, has been working part-time (70%) as Program Coordinator for the Washington State Conservation Commission. Ray currently owns Board Works by Ledgerwood, a sole proprietorship specializing in practical and effective workshops and presentations for improving your organization and realizing the potential of its leaders.