

**STATE SOIL CONSERVATION BOARD MEETING
MINUTES**

March 23, 2026

Location: Indiana Soybean Alliance
8425 Keystone Crossing #200
Indianapolis, IN 46240
MS Teams

Board Members Present

Kenny Cain
Chris Lee
Jeff Healy
Gene Schmidt
Jane Hardisty
Jewel Wise

Liz Rice
Amy Work
Meg Leader
Nathan Stoelting
Tara Wesseler-Henry
Ray Chattin
Quinton Hayes

Laura Fribley
Allison McKain
Jerod Chew
Damarys Mortenson

Julie Harrold
Kylie Wagoner
Chris Mitchem

Trevor Vance

Present Virtually

Holden Abrell
David Bausman
Elli Blaine
Lindsey Bluhm
Leah Harmon
Sandra Hoffarth
Lisa Holscher
Leah Walthery
ML
Nelli Peffley
Tara Wesseler

Board Member Not Present

Brad Dawson

Others Present

Jennifer Thum
Breegan Andersen

- I. **Call to Order:** Gene Schmidt called the meeting to order at 9:01am ET.
 - a. Board reviewed meeting protocols. Gene Schmidt asked partners to submit reports a little earlier than they have in the past in order to strengthen dialogue. Meetings will be scheduled for a little longer also going forward.
- II. **Approval of Minutes:** Minutes of January and February meetings were reviewed. Chris Lee made motion to approve January and February minutes. Kenny Cain seconded. Motion carried.
- III. **Partner Reports**
 - a. IASWCD
 - i. Lisa Holcher gave summary of CCSI report provided. Jane Hardisty applauded Lisa and CCSI's efforts. Kenny Cain asked about farm advisors and changes in steering committee. Jessica Hatt will be replacing Jennifer Thum on steering committee. Farm advisors had a chance to meet at a great meeting in January with some other key individuals.
 - ii. Liz Rice introduced Trevor and Chris Mitchum. Jane Hardisty asked about next year's budget process with Clean Water Indiana. Liz

responded with a breakdown of the process and the timing for legislative session. Trevor and Chris elaborated on this process. Jane Hardisty shared her appreciation of the Association's efforts in the process. Liz also gave a summary of IASWCD report and additional activities.

- iii. RITA report was provided. There was a conversation regarding the meeting about the RITA tech program, which is upcoming.
- iv. Small Farms Conservation: Elli Blaine joined online to answer any questions on the report.
- b. Jerod Chew gave an update on NRCS. A report was provided, but Jerod mentioned that the MOU is close to being ready to go out with additional instructions for getting those signed. He also shared information on their annual report and hit on some of the highlights of that report.
- c. FSA, Purdue, and IDEA could not make the meeting, but provided written reports.

The board asked additional questions from Jerod Chew and was able to have a conversation with some of the partners on various topics.

IV. The board took a short break.

V. ISDA Reports

- a. Julie Harrold provided an update on CREP and other Water Quality Initiatives. Written report was also provided.
- b. Quinton Hayes gave an update regarding legislative affairs. He provided details on the SEA 230. Changes in House Bill regarding elections, landfill inspections, and annual financial statements were discussed.
- c. Laura Fribley provided a written report on district support activities. She did highlight one upcoming training in June. There was some discussion regarding the online training available for supervisors.
- d. Allison McKain provided an update on technical assistance. A written report was provided on the cover crop premium discount program. She gave details on the program and highlighted some of the finer points of the program.

VI. Lunch break: Following a short break for lunch Gene Schmidt called the meeting back to order at 12:48pm.

VII. Old Business

- a. The board then reviewed their strategic plan. The board discussed having both a strategic plan and work plan that they work from for future use. The board would like to have a facilitator lead a discussion for a new strategic plan in 2027. The current work plan was reviewed line by line and status was updated as needed.

- b. Breegan Andersen thanked the IASWCD for getting updates in the Association of Indiana Counties newsletter.
- c. Jennifer Thum provided updates to the board.

VIII. Clean Water Indiana

Tara Wesseler provided updates on Clean Water Indiana. A written report was provided. She highlighted some of the items on the report. All 2026 grants have been fully executed. Some districts are beginning to submit claims for their first 50%. The board was provided with summaries of capacity reports for their review. Tara thanked the districts, the District Support Specialists, and Leah Harmon for compiling this information.

IX. Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD)

- a. Temporary Appointments: Laura Fribley presented information on temporary appointments. She gave the details for the temporary appointments in Boone, Cass, Harrison, Wabash, and Warrick counties. Boone County recommendation was Brian Daggy. In Cass County, Ryan Kunkle was recommended for temporary appointment. Harrison recommended Spencer Fulkerson for appointment. In Wabash, they recommend a temporary appointment for Dillon Gable. Finally, in Warrick County, Mellisa Minton was recommended for appointment.

Jeff Healy made a motion to approve all appointments. Jewel Wise seconded. Motion carried.

- X. **Motion to Adjourn:** Chris Lee made a motion to adjourn. Jewel Wise seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 2:05pm ET.