

State Soil Conservation Board

July 25, 2017

Indiana Natural Resources Conservation Service - Indianapolis

Members in Attendance:

Bob Eddleman
Nola Gentry
Robert Woodling
Warren Baird
Ray Chattin
Rex Blanton

Members Absent:

Larry Clemens

Others in Attendance:

Jordan Seger	Leah Harmon	Jennifer Thum	Laura Fribley
Jane Hardisty	Walt Sell	Deb Fairhurst	Lisa Holscher
Troy Hinkle	Mike Johnson	Tara Wesseler-Henry	Jennifer Boyle-Warner
Sheryl Vaughn	Geneva Tyler	Cresswell Hitzer	Susan Hovermale
Julia Wickard	Julie Wilder	Wes Hauser	

I. 9:30AM Call to order by Robert Woodling.

II. Draft Minutes of May 2017

Gentry moved; Eddleman seconded to approve the minutes.
All in favor, motion passed

III. State Soil Conservation Board Business

a. SSCB Chairman's Report – Robert Woodling

This past few months have been busy. Woodling spoke about his visits to Dubois and Warrick Counties.

1. The executive committee was able to get together, where they had good discussion focusing on funding. They questioned it if someone were to donate money to CWI, would it be tax deductible? This is something that Jordan is looking into for the board.

b. Business Plan Discussion

Robert presented the SSCB business plan to the ICP leaders and asked the leaders to review it to ensure that it is aligned with the ICP mission and goals.

IV Clean Water Indiana

a. Clean Water Indiana Grants – Leah Harmon, ISDA

The 2017 CWI Road Show has been completed. Leah completed ten outreach events and was able to meet with thirty-seven districts. There were three formal events and several other independent visits. Leah stated that she would be available at the State Fair for districts to meet with her as she did last year. Leah went over the CWI reporting guidelines,

and the status of her grant reviews. All AFR grant agreements are executed, but she is waiting on two claim vouchers.

b. **CWI Grant Modifications – Leah Harmon**

1. **St. Joseph SWCD – 2016** – These modifications are coming to the full board because under the CWI communications policy, any grant modification request that could impact the grant budget by 7% or more needs to come to the board. This grant modification request has the potential to. The St. Joseph SWCD is requesting an increase on the number of acres eligible per producer, and to add pollinator plantings to their approved practice list. The number of acres per producer is an internal issue, but you will need to determine if they can add pollinator plantings. Their grant was approved as a conservation-cropping grant for items such as cover crops, and no till. This grant will be reviewed in August.

Discussion was help by the board.

Ray moved to approve and seconded by Rex.

All in favor – motion carried

2. **Marshall SWCD 2016** – grant for rain gardens

Marshall SWCD wants to change the dollar amount allowed for demonstration gardens. Currently, they have \$5,000 each allotted for three demonstration sites, and they are requesting eliminate that cap. The SWCD is not having as much demand for cost share funds as they anticipated. The grant originally included \$15,000 for demos and \$60,000 for cost share funds.

Nola- between demo and cost share funds, they are looking at 75,000 for rain gardens, Nola suggested to do half and half, \$37,500 in each category.

Nola moved to allow up to 50% of the total \$75,000 on the rain garden demonstration sites, seconded by Warren.

All in favor, motion carried.

3. **CWI Grants Committee – Nola Gentry**

The grants committee met yesterday to discuss a grants program for non-SWCD led proposals and had some discussion on 2018 competitive grants cycle too. While they are looking at a formal application process for organizations other than SWCDs, the committee wants to ensure everyone that the focus of CWI will still be the SWCDs. SWCDs will have majority of the funding, but the committee recognizes that CCSI or another state or regional effort could come into play, and the board needed to have a formal process. Leah and the committee developed an application and guidelines, which is included in your packet. The non-district led proposals need to match the SSCB business plan, and the nearby districts' plan too.

Robert – Reading the intent – Is it that these proposals would flow through a SWCD?

Nola - not necessarily.

Bob – the statute does not limit the CWI funds to be used for only SWCDs. For those that are concerned about that money is being taken away from districts. An example would be 50% match could not come from general funds of that organization; it has to come from funds that they had set aside for that purpose.

Example: Park district – erosion problem and they want funds to fix erosion, if they do not have money in their budget for erosion, but they say they have money set aside for lifeguard, that won't work the money needs to be set aside for the actual erosion fund.

Robert – What constitutes majority for these votes, a majority of a quorum or a majority of the board?

Ray – It would be the majority of the board present and not the full board.

Warren – Districts should come first, and then we should look at other applications after the money has been spent. Not sure what we are trying to formalize.

Nola – These guidelines and the process formalizes what we did previously with CCSI –

Jennifer (IASWCD) – Not really. It changes the timeframe of everything. They will not know until September that they will get funds. In the past, we have come to SSCB for matching funds in January or other times of the year. This will limit the IASWCD in terms of timing of what they can take advantage of.

Robert – By the end of October, we have spent all the funds. If you were to come with match request after that, we would have to have something available to grant that request, so the dynamic really has not changed.

Jennifer (IASWCD) – We have made decisions early in the year. The IASWCD's other concern that the guidelines have to follow a calendar year, and the IASWCD follows other calendars as well, so a January 1st start date could mess up some timing.

Robert – We always reserve the right to fund a match if it came unexpectedly. If a group wanted money for a routine project, this would be the timeline. With CCSI, we made it up as we went along and have had good discussions along the way.

Jordan – Under the application deadline piece, the second decision will be made at the September SSCB meeting. Maybe we should look at the language of all funding decisions and tweak it to give them some more discretion to state the majority of, or something similar.

Robert – Good thought. We should be able to say something like generally made at the September meeting.

Jordan – It gives some flexibility to CCSI and some guidelines for groups that may come forward.

Wording Modification to Guidelines

Ray – With the exception of special circumstances, the SSCB will make all funding decisions at their September meeting.

Application Deadline: Applications are accepted on a continuous basis. All funding decisions will be made at the September SSCB meeting, **INSERT - “the SSCB may approve funding at other times due to special conditions.” (First Page) Applications are due at the time of presentation. It is recommend that applications be submitted before the July SSCB meeting.**

Ray – proposed to make the following changes Reporting Requirements;

Reporting Requirements: Example: grants that begin on January 1st will have reports due July 31st and January 31st insert – of the following year.

Ray moved that we approve the revision to non-SWCD led guidelines and applications, seconded by Bob.

All in favor, motion carried.

4. Southern Indiana Cooperative Invasive Management (SICIM) – Troy Hinkle.

Troy wanted to present an exciting opportunity to address invasive species. Troy spoke about SICIM. They have had training opportunities and see that invasives is not a resource concern that we can address on national level. It needs to be addressed at the local level. Jane challenges them to think statewide, and they aspire to develop a CWMA in every county. NRCS has entered into a contribution agreement with SICIM to do just that as well as provide training to ICP members. SICIM will provide leadership on the project. Troy extended an invitation to SSCB to partner in the project. In the SSCB business plan priorities include invasive species and other SWCD concerns like wildlife and forestry. SICIM is asking for about \$300,000 for over three years from the SSCB, and NRCS is providing funds for about five years. Jane has put resources on the table to take this statewide. It is about developing local leadership through the districts. The money SICIM is seeking will go to match a larger pot of money. It is not going to a large organization. It will build capacity at a local level.

Ray Chattin spoke as a SICIM board member

He has been part of SICIM for two years and will abstain from any decisions that the SSCB makes on this issue. He will not be present for the September board meeting. This grant request and contribution agreement has SICIM’s name on it. It was born at a local district. There is not a district that does not have the opportunity to benefit from this agreement in a number ways. Ray spoke about the 21st century leadership model - about the willingness to share the power and to trust within the partners, empower them. As he looks at the agreement, it reflects the kind of leadership that will take us into the 21st century and make it viable to local communities. He knows we might get blow back, and he will turn them to the State Legislature. To him, this is an opportunity to let districts determine their own destiny. They will answer the call because it is a serious issue.

Bob- Will there be cost-share?

Troy – No Funds will be used for CWMA’s with the Districts.

Robert- Regarding the match requirement- Do you have other organizations or other commitments?

Troy - We hope that we have other partners to do that. Right now, we are talking with community foundations, TNC, and the Lilly Foundation. He wants to come back to the September board meeting and present again. SICIM will want some of the money upfront. The NCRS agreement works in reimbursement which can be claimed monthly or quarterly. SICIM needs startup capital.

Robert –What tools do you envision for training ICP partners?

Troy - Under the agreement, they have to do training and they will do invasive control and identification trainings. At the end of three years, SICIM would ask for a continuation. We would hope that we would get funds from the board for a second round.

Rex – Anything will help you get through three years. CWI funding could be the thing that gets the ball rolling.

Bob – It is a major problem, and we have been talking about it for many years. There has been little action as a statewide effort.

Robert – Would this proposal be a duplication of efforts? Is it your belief that the districts are not doing enough to help?

Troy – The districts are going a long way to help address it. We are training the trainers. Five districts plan to apply for CWI to get CWMA's in their counties as well.

Robert - What about Purdue extension?

Bob- He is active with a CWMA in the west central part of the state, and when this grant proposal comes up for a vote, he will abstain as well. We have had a lot of discussion, and it is hard to get people active and concerned with invasive species. If this moves forward then it should become a sub-committee of the SSCB and/or districts. We need to do something.

V. Soil and Water Conservation Districts

a. Approval of Recommendations for Appointment –

a. Monroe SWCD – Tara Wessler-Henry

Tara stated that Jeff Bailey resigned from Monroe SWCD and the board would recommend Shelby Hovious replace his position as a temporary appointment.

Nola moved to accept the resignation and approve the appointment of Shelby Hovious for the Monroe board of supervisors, Seconded by Rex

All in favor, motion carried

b. Shelby SWCD – Tara Wessler-Henry

Tara stated that Jeremy Weaver had resigned from the Shelby SWCD, and the board recommends to have Todd McDaniel replace his position as a temporary appointment.

Bob moved to accept the resignation of Jeremy Weaver and approve the appointment of Todd McDaniel for the Shelby board of SWCD supervisor, seconded by Rex.

All in favor, motion carried.

c. Tippecanoe SWCD – Geneva Tyler

Geneva stated that Krista Zeller had resigned from the Tippecanoe SWCD, and the board recommends Melody Clouser replace her position as a vacant appointment.

Warren moved to accept the resignation of Melody Clouser and approve the appointment of Krista Zeller for the Tippecanoe board of SWCD supervisor, seconded by Rex.

All in favor, motion carried.

d. Wells SWCD – Jennifer Thum

Jennifer stated that Chad Fiechter had resigned from the Wells SWCD, and the board would like to have Jarrod Kunkel replace his position as a vacant appointment.

Nola moved to accept the resignation of Chad Fiechter and approve the appointment of Jarrod Kunkel for the Wells SWCD board of supervisors, seconded by Bob.

All in favor, motion carried.

VI. ISDA Updates

a. Director's Report – Jordan Seger

General update – Jordan wanted to thank Robert for traveling all over the state to attend meetings and represent the SSCB. Jordan spoke about Indiana's agriculture strategic plan. This will cover agriculture for the next ten years. We had buy in from all sectors, private and public, and NGOs. It had seven top priorities.

Jordan wanted to give a heads up on a new national effort regarding conservation planning. The USDA is looking to try to standardize conservation planning. This effort would have an impact on ISDA, NRCS and IDEM employees. There will be more to come.

Trainings – It was asked if SWCD staff and supervisors would be able to access trainings through the state on items such as sexual harassment. Jordan is working with ISDA human resources on how to get access to those training modules and will report back as information is available.

What is the tax status of the CWI account? if you donate to nonprofit, it is tax deductible. How does that work if someone donated to CWI? Jordan is looking into this.

Jordan mentioned that in the SSCB board packets they should have found the new SWCD business plan toolkit. He asked the board members to go through the document and provide any comments to ISDA. This toolkit is a shift from thinking about resource concerns to thinking more toward leadership and partners. ISDA hired a consultant to develop this document. Please go through it, and send comments back to us.

Jordan then asked Wes Hauser to come up to talk about a map that he created. This map came about after Roger Wenning talked about how many acres of cover crops were installed without financial assistance from the ICP. Wes went over the maps, and stated that he still needs to tease some additional data out.

Jordan then stated that Jane Hardisty was named the Purdue's Women in Agriculture Leadership award recipient. This was a joint effort of SSCB, ISDA and TNC. The award will be presented at the State Fair on August 17th.

b. Technical Report – Mike Johnson

Mike stated that he provided a written report and would just speak about his region. He covers the Southeast, and the region is grant driven. Currently, they have six active 319 grants and eleven CWI projects. Those programs are unique and helpful to the southeast, because they attract farmers who might be timid of the federal programs and the paperwork.

c. Soil Health – Jordan Seger

INFA registration is complete. We are over 1,000 fields and around 450 growers. We met our KPI numbers and have been working with Corn and Soy to develop a protocol for soybeans. Red Gold growers have been doing more and more conservation.

d. Accountability and Technology – Deb

Over the last 6 months, Trevor and Deb have seen problems with the nutrient load reduction numbers. Trevor built a model that could run the numbers efficiently to determine if there were any discrepancies. The load reductions were found to be overstated by 10% for sediment, 11% for phosphorus, and 11% for nitrogen. The error was not with the model, just human error.

Transects – Two are left to be completed. Crawford and Jefferson need to be done.

Basin Story Maps – We have talked about this in the past. These will be similar to what we did in the WLEB, featuring soil health, monitoring, and full picture of what is going on in each basin. We are in the process of updating the WLEB. We hope to have all basins completed by the end of August and would like to present them at a future SSCB meeting.

e. District Support Specialist – Laura Fribley

Nathan has been busy with Pathway. In May, Laura and Nathan did a staff training, with Whitley about PSS agreements. Then in June, the DSSs hosted a LI event. They had 17 new people and one county that had never participated before. It was a one-day workshop.

Supervisor Summit – This will be offered two locations. The topic will be effective board meetings. Please attend if interested.

a. Leadership Institute – Geneva Tyler

LI Steering Committee – Geneva reviewed the survey results. According to the survey, a one-day event is the preferred setup. The topics do continue to be relevant. The barriers, based upon the survey for districts, were time, time of year, and some awareness about the program. We need to do the better job of advertising the program.

Moving forward – we are looking at marketing efforts and moving workshops around the state.

f. Water Quality/CREP – Jordan Seger

Julie provided a written report and a few handouts. Jordan went over CREP. We continue to see large boom with CREP. As of July 21, there are over 1,621 acres enrolled and have doubled KPI numbers. We have \$1.6 million worth of projects signed up for installation, with many of these to be completed later this year and next spring. CREP enrollment is not affected at this time by the CRP cap.

VII. Conservation Partner Updates

*Please note partner reports were cut short due to a fire alarm.

a. IASWCD – Jennifer Boyle-Warner

Reminders- 25th celebration of Pathway to Water Quality. August 4th The Lieutenant Governor and ICP partners will be there. Almost 100% of volunteer slots are filled. They are working hard to get things ready.

At the State Fair, IASWCD will have the annual River Friendly Farmer event on August 16th at the 4-H building. This year there were over 45 winners. IASWCD will be doing fall region meetings. Topics of discussion will include an update on CCSI strategic planning and contribution agreements. We are looking at doing eight region meetings. To see if we can get better attendance. IASWCD wants to get the supervisors there.

- i. CCSI – We did have strategic plan session this past Friday. CCSI will have by-laws, an executive committee, and will redo the MOU. Lisa can present what CCSI should look like in the next three to five years.

Jane has given give CCSI additional funds to go towards the director and communications manager, which extends that agreement until 2020. CCSI might come back to SSCB in 2018 for a request of \$10,000 to \$15,000. We are hoping that we might not need to come back to SSCB.

b. IDEM Report – Julia Wickard

Julia provided a written report and a brief verbal update.

c. DNR Report

No report

d. Purdue Report

Walt provided a written report. If there are questions, please let him know.

e. FSA Report

FSA provided verbal feedback during SICIM presentation.

f. NRCS Report

Jane provided a written report

g. CCSI Report

Report was given under IASWCD

h. IDEA Report

No report

Warren moved to adjourn the meeting and Nola seconded at 11:50am.