

MINUTES
STATE SOIL CONSERVATION BOARD MEETING
9:00 a.m. Tuesday, February 10, 2009
Indiana State Library

Members in Attendance:

Nola Gentry
Jim Cherry
Bob Eddleman
Larry Clemens
Warren Baird
Bill Mann

Others in Attendance:

Gail Peas, FSA
Jane Hardisty, NRCS
Jennifer Boyle, IASWCD
Paula Baldwin, IASWCD
Gary Steinhart, Purdue University
Tammy Lawson, ISDA
Amy Eizinger-Ott, ISDA
Deb Fairhurst, ISDA
Dan Dunten, ISDA
Sara Slater-Atwater, ISDA

I. 9:17 AM: Call to Order

II. Draft Minutes of January 2009

Bob Eddleman moved to approve the minutes as presented. Warren Baird seconded and the motion carried.

III. Leadership Development

a. District Requests – Amy Eizinger-Ott

Adams County Vacant Appointment – See Attachment

Jim Cherry moved to approve the Adams County vacant appointment request. Bob Eddleman seconded and the motion carried.

Carroll County Vacant Appointment – See Attachment

Larry Clemens moved to approve the Crawford County vacant appointment request. Eddleman seconded and the motion carried.

Orange County Vacant Appointment – See Attachment

Eddleman moved to approve the Crawford County vacant appointment request. Warren Baird seconded and the motion carried.

Shelby County Vacant Appointment – See Attachment

Conclusion from the board was that the district will need to supply the address and qualifications of the proposed appointee before a decision can be made.

b. CWI Requests – Amy Eizinger-Ott

Dearborn County – See Attachment

Dearborn County is requesting a two month extension for completion of their SNRG. To date they have completed two of eight proposed raingardens and will need to wait until spring to plant the rest.

Eddleman moved to approve the extension request. Cherry seconded and the motion carried.

White County – See Attachment

White County would like to change their '09 CWI grant. A part time employee who was funded through the original grant has accepted a job with FSA. They want to do a cost share for cover crops. There was some discussion from the board over whether White County was proposing a cost share of \$200/acre, as it was not clear in the request. Dan Dunten called White County and confirmed that the cost share proposed is \$20/acre, and not \$200. The final request is to move \$1000 from the part-time employee to cover crops.

Clemens moved to approve the White County request. Cherry seconded and the motion carried.

*as Mr. Dunten called White County to confirm their request, Tammy Lawson announced that Kelly Gentry had her baby, Kaden Charles Gentry. Gentry announced the resignation of Gary Conant from the Board. He enjoyed his time on the board and his RC&D perspective was good to have.

IV. Division Report

a. CREP Update – Sara Slater-Atwater – See Attachment

Sara Slater-Atwater expects to have draft first few chapters of Geo-Marine's Environmental Impact Statement by the end of the week. The IUPUI contract is through; work will be starting shortly. Schneider and Purdue's contract should be signed any time. Tammy Lawson discussed the addition of constructed wetlands. Larry Clemens stated that Ohio just revised their CREP. Rental rates are 225% of CRP rates. FSA is paying this to try to stimulate this program.

b. Clean Water Indiana Grants – Amy Eizinger –Ott – See Attachment

CWI Grants – a few CMIG grants have closed.

A discussion of the Conservation Consulting Initiative (CCI) took place. Lawson pointed out the map that was brought to the meeting to show where the program is successful. She stated that the program needs someone to take the project from start to finish. We need to create more tools to make program work more consistently.

Deb Fairhurst reported that CCA's would like to see incentives better. Those in the Upper Wabash rivershed are excited and feel they could put another 40,000 acres into practices. They would like to expand into the Salamonie. They think we should incentivize larger farmers in watersheds to influence others. Participants in the Upper Wabash waterheds thought the process was easy, but others thought it was too complicated.

Lawson discussed a current CTIC/Purdue project that deals with a cover crop matrix. One can go on the web and it will tell one which cover crops to select based on where one lives and time of year. Dan Towery is working with Purdue. Some in the program felt like farmers should be incentivized for a 3 year program, and that farmers should get \$1,000/year; however, some felt that if you need to pay them, maybe the right farmer is not involved. Farmers should want this expertise. Gary Steinhart discussed a cover crop program with the Diagnostic Training Center. They will have demonstration plots for crop consultants.

c. Technical Support Update – Jerod Chew

No Report

d. District Support Update – Jerod Chew

No Report

V. SSCB Board Reports and Discussion

a. SSCB Chairman's Report – Nola Gentry

Gentry again discussed the resignation of Gary Conant.

Eddleman attended the subcommittee meeting on the conservation tillage employee. The next meeting is on the 17th and there is also a partnership leaders meeting that day. The group may need a second person from the board to serve on committee. Lawson said \$8,300 has been spent on meeting attendance to date. Gentry thinks one representative is fine. Other members were

fine with that. Gentry said the board could give Eddleman some direction if needed. Maybe there could just be one person and an alternate. Gentry and the board agreed they would have one committee person (Eddleman) and Clemens would be the alternate. Eddleman can always call or e-mail with concerns to other board members. Gentry stated that we have to give someone a career path to get an expert in regards to the new position. They will also need supervision. Clemens agreed – one of the deliverables has to be how we get this beyond a 3 year project. It was asked if ISDA was on the committee. Lawson said we are spread too thin to go to these meetings but will if needed. Partners have all the expertise needed.

b. SSCB Sub-Committee Reports and Recommendations

i. Executive Committee Report and Recommendations – Nola Gentry

1. Shareholder Input Gathering Update – Cris Goode – Gentry Reported

Gentry met with Alice Urban during annual conference. She has the first draft. Gentry reported that Cris Goode thinks the survey should be ready to go on the web in 10 days and to 2,000 stakeholders. Alice will be at SSCB meeting in April. Lawson said we will also put together an invitation to stakeholder groups to pass along. The survey is pretty simple.

ii. CWI Grants Committee Report and Recommendations – Warren Baird – see attachement

CWI ECAP Grants – Warren stated that the grants committee met regarding the second round of ECAP \$300,000. A spreadsheet was distributed (see attachment).

Baird reported that thirty-one districts applied for over \$2.3 million dollars in assistance. This amount of interest shows the board that there is still need for disaster assistance throughout the state. As a side note the sub-committee would like to recognize the 11 districts that sent letters of intent but did not go ahead and submit full applications as this demonstrates to the board their understanding of the limited amount of funding, and that other districts may be in need of more funding than they are. The sub-committee appreciated those 11 districts consideration in ensuring funds were utilized where they needed the most.

The CWI Grant Sub Committee meet and decided to award funds to 14 SWCD's in addition to the 3 awards already made to Elkhart, Porter and LaPorte counties. A total of 17 SWCD's will receive CWI-ECAP funds ranging from \$600-\$28,189.28 Decisions were made based on ISDA's internal assessment of damage and needs yet to be addressed and compared that information with what districts were proposing in their applications. In order to maximize the use of funding the CWI grant Sub-Committee did go through and make some line item decisions on applications. To be consistent the sub-committee is not allowing those districts awarded CWI-ECAP funds to use funds for Administrative purposes, Education/Outreach activities, new cover crops, and practices that would prevent future potential disasters. The sub-committee also determined that awarded districts should not offer cost shares or reimbursements over 50% and districts should ensure all eligible ECP landowners receive funds through ECP and not CWI-ECAP.

Contracts and memos regarding this information on the use of awarded funds will be sent out to the 17 CWI-ECAP awardees.

The 2009 CWI-ECAP grant awardees are: Elkhart, LaPorte, Porter, Hancock, Dubois, Daviess, Washington, Decatur, Owen, Wayne, Shelby, Clay, Bartholomew, Vigo, Greene, Sullivan, Ripley

This was presented as a motion. Baird made a motion to approve the ECAP decision and Clemens seconded. Motion was approved.

Clemens was a moderator at a session about CWI – his notes are attached.

Lawson said we are preparing for house committee for agriculture and natural resources on CWI. They want some testimony on CWI funds. It is difficult to show the money movement when grants go over several years. We almost have a complete document on CWI funds that is clear and concise over the last 3.5 years. We will have this by the next meeting. Basically money is spent on three items: staff salary and fringe, CREP, and grants. OMB will need to review the document.

iii. District Capacity Committee Report and Recommendations – Bob Eddleman – No report

(The following reports may be submitted in writing to accommodate meeting length)

VI. Delivery System Workgroup Update – Jerod Chew – No Report from Chew, Hardisty spoke instead – see attachment

Hardisty spoke about the need to take a look at workloads (see attachment). We are here for two things: 1. to make sure conservation gets on the land and, 2. that we provide customer service. We need awareness as far as workload for partners. Next Tuesday there is a leaders meeting with DNR, IDEM, FSA, and all key partners. What can we do to work together to make sure we can get the job done? We don't have enough engineers. We should see that property skilled staff are in the right locations. NRCS has brought training, etc to the partnership. We need to figure out what kind of skill sets we need. For example, DC's are spending too much time on administration. We need partners to understand the programs we have, and what we bring to the table. NRCS wants to help more with CREP. We want to make sure we've got the skills for CWI, 319, LARE. As we continue to work on programs we need to make sure we are not duplicating each other. RS's were technicians on the tech team, but are now being pulled off to work on other programs. We need to understand this so we know what voids are going to be. It's confusing in the partnership. Staff doesn't know who's doing what. We need to do a better job in helping districts understand what is out there for farmers. Hardisty discussed some of the programs and acronyms. This farm bill has more with forestry, specialty crops, organics, and energy. We need to convince the public and legislatures that we have a good handle on things and are not duplicating efforts. We owe it to producers to figure out how to keep them informed. There was a discussion about putting together a book with acronyms and a brief explanation of each practice. Hardisty stated that we are confusing people with state and federal programs. Incentives may be different. Clemens said he thought NRCS would provide training. Hardisty said we have staff confused about who's doing what, especially RSs.

Lawson presented staff time for CREP and showed that the workload for our staff and CREP seemed manageable.

Other workload includes: 1. CCI, 2. New/revised ISDA strategic plan, 3. red gold and other corporate projects, CLPP.

Boyle asked about technical assistance for CWI, Lare, and 319 projects. Districts are confused about who's available to help them with district projects. Lawson stated that if our staff is doing 319, they can be counted as match. Clemens stated that there's a phase where there is more money in programs than we have staff to effectively run. CWI has some flexibility to tailor to plug holes. Some discussion took place on the regional technician grants. Maybe the grants should not have been a declining amount. Clemens said we have a lot of people filling gaps on their own and not receiving proper training. Gentry

said that Jerod's workgroup was supposed to look at a technical training plan. Districts that did want to hire a technician would then know what they were getting. Eddleman stated that often we go with consultant or district employee – people don't have the background for conservation. We sometimes have to involve some private sector people and usually have to bring those folks up to standard. Gentry mentioned that Ivy tech is working with Benton County on an energy technical program. Ivy tech also has 2 year agricultural program. This could be a key on some of the basic technical skills. If there is a technical certification, Hardisty said Purdue be the keeper of certification and would be coming up with a program. Purdue would also take care of the administration. NRCS is working on a certified contractor program.

Peas stated that overall, CRP is decreasing, but is being targeted to production agricultural states. Lawson discussed that Jerod Chew went back to ISDA's tracking sheets that were submitted to the CIT. We've done 2,000 CIT practices. This ties back to a tract that has 2-3 practices. That's approximately 32 practices per RS, and 960 annually tied to workhours per year. This assumes 60 hours per practice. We need to incentivize programs that give us the biggest environmental bang for the least amount of technical assistance and make it simple. Gentry asked if land easements are still a problem. Lawson said it was a challenge. TNC stepped up, and if DNR needs to be the land acquisition group, we need to get away from this. Peas suggested that the SWCD is the best choice for easement holder. Lawson stated that DNR does 60 easements/year on their own and that we have given them another 60. The paperwork is figured out but we can't handle all the workload. None of the 8 new CREP watersheds will involve easements. Only the Tippecanoe and Upper White.

VII. Conservation Partner Reports

- a. **DNR Report – Gary Langell – No Report**
- b. **IDEM Report – Marylou Renshaw – No Report**
- c. **Purdue Report – Gary Steinhardt –**

4H FFA soil judging is the largest career event. New partners include the Indiana State Dept of Health.

- d. **IASWCD President's Report – Paula Baldwin – see attached**
- e. **Farm Services Agency Report – Gail Peas**

Peas stated that FSA is very busy doing new eligibilities and DCP. CRP is business as usual. They are waiting for an EIS. There is no general sign-up in 2009. Baird asked if CRP payments are still behind. Peas said annual payments have been issued, however, in October or November FSA couldn't issue costshare or incentive payment. These have since been made.

- f. **NRCS State Conservationist's Report – Jane Hardisty – see attached**

Hardisty reported that RC&D met Vilsack in Washington and that he is pushing energy, carbon sequestration, and exchange. She and Gail are working on farm bill items.

VIII. Public Comment – No Comment

- IX. Next meeting – April 14th. June 9 meeting in NE Indiana – Fort Wayne
- X. **Adjourn 12:00 PM**

Minutes Prepared By: Sara Slater-Atwater

Approved By:

