

**STATE SOIL CONSERVATION BOARD MEETING
MINUTES**

January 13, 2026

Location: Hendricks County Fairgrounds
1900 E Main St, Danville, IN 46122
MS Teams

Board Members Present

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

Meg Leader
Martin Franke
Camille Sczerbowicz
Nathan Stoelting
Tara Wesseler-Henry
Breegan Anderson
Sandra Hoffarth
Geneva Tyler
Emma Bodnarick

Laura Fribley
Hanna Garriott
Andrea Gogel
Leah Harmon
Hayden Sater
Jamie Davenport
Cody Linville
Allison McKain
Julie Morris
Nellie Peffley
Chad Nixon
Megan Ritterskamp
Jenny Rowland
Don Ryan
Toby Days
Morgan County SWCD
Nathaniel Warenski
Mary Lou Watson
Grace Williams

Others Present

Jennifer Thum
Breegan Anderson
Claire Rekeweg
Jerod Chew
Matt Williams
Keegan Cougill
George Reger
Liz Rice
Amy Work
Ellie Blaire

Present Virtually

Holden Abrell
Annabelle
Lindsey Bluhm
Bonnie Brown
Brandi Frazier
Casey Venable
Leah Walthery
Cindy Spoljaric
Colson Doyle

- I. **Call to Order:** 9:05am by Gene Schmidt.
- II. **Approval of Minutes:** Minutes for December and October meetings were presented and reviewed. Jeff Healy moved to approve December minutes as presented and October minutes as revised and presented. Chris Lee seconded. Jennifer Thum clarified that all minutes must reflect those present including those who joined online. Motion carried.
- III. **Clean Water Indiana**
 - a. **Clean Water Indiana Budget:** Jennifer Thum presented details on CWI budget. Report was emailed. Jane Hardisty shared some comments on providing a breakdown of the CWI budget as it stands for 2025-2026 fiscal year. Board presented multiple questions regarding the budget which Jennifer Thum and Breegan Anderson answered. Jane Hardisty requested an update for the February meeting regarding training.

- b. Clean Water Indiana Grants:** Tara Wesseler-Henry provided a report and presented details regarding the Clean Water Indiana and Clean Water Indiana grants. Tara also provided a summary of 2026 grants. Tara provided details on assessment report and how that information will be gathered. Clean Water Indiana 2027 grant committee is in discussions regarding guidelines for the next round of funding. Tara requested feedback from the board regarding some questions that have come up.

The first concern discussed was on funding request regarding septic systems. These issues were discussed by the board. Matt Williams confirmed this is an issue that arises and how the technical staff currently addresses those issues. Jane Hardisty made a motion that they advise the grant committee that septic issues are not a priority for CWI grants. Chris Lee seconded. Motion carried.

Another issue was regarding easements. Tara Wesseler-Henry provided details on what these requests have looked like in the past. Brad Dawson shared further details regarding funding request we have seen in the past. The board discussed leaving this as an option and letting those applications rank as they might. Tara Wesseler-Henry reminded the board that a lot of time goes into assisting districts with applications for these projects, but they always rank low.

Gene Schmidt took a short break from the discussion to give Don Lamb an opportunity to address the board. Don gave a summary regarding the legislative session and updates on other ISDA happenings. Following Don's comments, the board jumped back into their conversation regarding easements. Tara Wesseler-Henry provided a timeline for needing responses. After further discussion, Jane Hardisty moved that easements are not considered for CWI grant funding. Brad Dawson seconded the motion. Gene Schmidt commented before the vote that he encourages districts to be the entity that people turn to for all of these conservation issues. Board then voted on motion on the table. Motion carried.

IV. Break: 10:30-10:38am

V. State Soil Conservation Board Business

a. Board Member Reports

- i. Kenny Cain shared a reminder that the IASWCD offers a zoom call on Fridays to provide updates on legislative issues. Liz Rice confirmed the details regarding these calls.

- ii. Gene used the time for the chairman's report to allow all members to provide updates on what they are currently working on or events they may have coming up. Each board member gave a short summary of their work. Board discussed the expectations of attending annual meetings.

b. Committee Appointments and Officer Elections.

- i. Brad Dawson moved that chair and vice-chair remain the same for 2026. Jewell Wise seconded. Motion carried. Gene Schmidt will remain board chairman and Jane Hardisty will remain as vice-chairman.
- ii. For committee appointments, the first committee discussed was CCSI. Kenny Cain reminded the board that he previously served on this, but he will be stepping down in March from the board. Therefore, he recommended that Chris Lee now serve on that committee. Gene Schmidt suggested they also have a proxy. Kenny Cain moved to nominate Chris Lee as the SSCB representative on the CCSI oversight committee. Brad Dawson seconded. Motion carried.
- iii. Budget committee was the next discussion. Chris Lee moved to have Jeff Healy serve on that committee. Jewell Wise seconded. Motion carried.
- iv. Jennifer Thum then clarified that CWI will now have two committees. Those will be appointed at the February meeting. There will be a SSCB member on the grant committee as well as the cost-share committee.

- c. Division of Soils Director's Report:** Jennifer Thum then provided her director's report. Written report was provided which Jennifer summarized to the board.

VI. Presentation: Martin Franke and Camille Sczerbowicz provided a presentation on the role of RITA techs and the value that role has with the districts.

VII. Soil and Water Conservation Districts

- a. Recommendations for Appointment:** Geneva Tyler provided recommendations of appointments from the districts. Chris Lee made a motion to approve all recommendations for appointments. Jewell Wise seconded. Motion carried.
- b. Temporary Appointments:** Geneva Tyler also presented a temporary appointment in Carroll County. Brad Lee moved to accept this nomination. Jeff Healy seconded. Motion carried.

VIII. ICP Reports

- a. **IASWCD:** Liz Rice provided a report from IASWCD. They will be hosting the first advocacy day later in January. Districts will have the opportunity to attend and meet with their legislators.
 - b. **NRCS:** Jerod Chew provided a NRCS report. He addressed the challenges of catching up from the shutdown. He also discussed some upcoming trainings and events. They will be getting a revised MOU out to help clarify roles among the partners.
- IX. **Other:** Gene Schmidt closed the meeting with some thoughts on regenerative agriculture. He also discussed the challenges of improving leadership across the country.
- X. **Adjourn:** Kenny Cain moved to adjourn. Jeff Healy seconded. Meeting adjourned at 11:57am.