

MINUTES
STATE SOIL CONSERVATION BOARD MEETING
MADE@Plainfield 1610 Reeves Rd, Plainfield, IN
MS Teams

[*to view recording please refer to the Indiana State Department of Agriculture website*](#)

I. 9:41am: Call to Order

II. Approve Minutes of July 2024

- i. Motion to approve – Amy Burris and Second by Brad Dawson
- ii. Comments – Jane Hardisty requests further details taken down in minutes

III. Clean Water Indiana

- a. Clean Water Indiana Grants – Geneva Tyler
 - a. Explained quick facts handout and printed reports provided to the board
 - b. No comments or questions from board
- b. Clean Water Indiana Grants Committee report – Brad Dawson
 - a. Grants were due on September 5
 - i. New applications requesting around 2 million dollars
 - 1. 26 applications received
 - ii. Scoring from the SSCB, grants committee and the DSS team are due by October 3, 2024.
 - iii. Grants committee will be meeting on October 10. The committee will discuss the proposals and any comments that were noted by each reviewer.
 - iv. Recommendations will be presented at the October 22 SSCB Meeting.
 - v. Kenny Cain – Request Clarification on Board participation regarding scoring and participation
 - b. Grant modification – Wayne County SWCD – Kylie Wheeler
 - i. Kylie presented the proposed grant modification on behalf of Wayne County SWCD. They requested an adjustment on their current CWI grant.
 - 1. Pavement for Demonstration Garden at county fair
 - ii. Motion on acceptance of change for grant money
 - 1. Brad motioned, and Seconded by Kenny
 - 2. Motion Carried without additional discussion

IV. State Soil Conservation Board Business

- a. Chairman's report – Gene Schmidt
 - i. Gene deferred to the SSCB board members.
 - 1. Jewel Wise
 - a. Spoke about her attendance at the summer region meeting. Mrs. Wise enjoyed the speaker and presentation about the Watershed Development Commissions. She further commented on the meeting and the discussion revolving around the SWCD's use of the additional CWI funding.
 - 2. Brad Dawson
 - a. Had similar discussions / experience as Jewel.
 - 3. Ray Chattin
 - a. Attended Jasper summer region meeting.
 - b. Very information but was disappointed in lack of supervisor attendance
 - 4. Gene Schmidt - Chairman
 - a. Spoke about his experience at the summer region meetings. Mr. Schmidt commented about the Kankakee River Basin, and their success and funding.

b. Director's report – Jennifer Thum

1. Director Thum spoke about the Soils and CWI Budget and where it stands as of today. She gave an update on the current staffing of the Soils Division.
2. Director Thum gave an update on the items that the SSCB discussed last time, which were the potential changes to the Oath of Office.
 - a. The SSCB discussed the presented language, they provided feedback and discussed the next steps.
3. Fulton SWCD – CWI Audit
 - a. Director Thum provided an update to the SSCB regarding the status. She indicated that the notice of suspension was sent to the County and their Board and stated that they have 15 days to respond to the letter and findings. They are working with the LG office on this audit. She indicated that the CWI grant agreements are with the Department of Agriculture and each SWCD.
4. Election committee
 - a. Director Thum spoke about HEA 1338 and how it could impact the SWCDs. She discussed the concern from SWCDs regarding the election committee that each SWCD is required to have under the CWI code. Director Thum and the SSCB discussed the current code language, and the intent behind the code. The CWI code states that 1 SWCD supervisor will serve on the committee, and will be chair, but the two other members should be interested citizens. There has been some conflict over the word, “interested citizen”.
 - i. Kenny Cain – can an associate be a member
 1. JT – We did ask this of our legal counsel, and they stated that no, they can't serve.
 5. Update on Clean Water Indiana Report
 - ii. No questions from board

V. Public Comment

If you attend the meeting in-person and would like to speak under public comment, please use the sign-in sheet. If you are attending virtually, please turn your camera on and notify the Chairperson that would like to speak and state under which agenda topic. Each speaker will be limited to three minutes.

VI. Break – bypassed break to keep going

VII. Presentation – Clean Water Indiana (CWI) – History – J. Thum and Best Management Practices and Data – S. Strobel

- a. The presentation contained information on the CWI history, overview of additional Historical Moment, Highlighted moments from 2011 – Present, **and** CWI Competitive Grant Funding Breakdown Review.
- b. Sam Strobel then talked about the CWI – Best Management Practice Implementation
 - i. Mr. Strobel spoke about the CWI BMPs count, Acres and Sediment Load Reduction Numbers, CWI changes in distribution of BMP by county, overtime; 2019-2023
 - a. Jane Hardisty– asked for further explanation of the dip in 2021
 - i. Response – could be due to covid or a number of things in addition to pandemic
 - ii. Jane Hardisty – can a value be placed on the data? How far can we take this data (dollar value)
 1. We only track what and where
 2. We don't estimate the economic ramifications/ we do not do economic analysis
 - iii. Kenny Cain – the wildlife and invasive species component – where do we see the bang for our buck; the urban piece.
 - iv. Ray Chattin– this is a recurring theme; until we can put a dollar value on it.
 - v. Brad Dawson– we are limited by CWI code on what we can spend CWI funds on
 - vi. Ray Chattin– refocus on expanding CWI

- vii. Amy Burris – as a farmer the cover crop data was surprising / interesting. The data is showing there is benefit to cover crop practices.
- viii. Gene Schmidt– take away he is hearing – going forward if there is a way we can quantify the data economically to highlight how the general assembly spends dollars on conservation

VIII. BREAK 10:50

IX. RECONVENE 10:58

X. Soil and Water Conservation Districts

- a. Temporary appointments
 - i. Blackford County SWCD – Kylie Wheeler
 - 1. “Cameron Rinker” as a temporary appointment
 - ii. Vanderburgh County SWCD – Laura
 - 1. “Misty Minar” as a temporary appointment
- b. Kenny Cain moved and seconded by Ray Chattin; motion carried

XI. Business – Martha (Mediation Task Force for Indiana Soil and Water Conservation Districts at the local and State level for Supervisors and Staff)

- a. Mrs. Miller presented their white paper that outlined their goals and the why for the medication task force. They are asking for one member from SSCB and two from ISDA and two from association
- b. Purpose – to identify a strategic process for handling internal issues amongst SWCD’s. Mediation platform at the local level.
 - i. Ray Chattin – one reservation is whether federal partners are or are not included.
 - 1. Martha – Federal level input is valuable and will be utilized as a resource
 - ii. Brad Dawson– this task force is putting together the framework together to assist with future issues
 - 1. Martha Miller – Set for the individuals who might be involved
- c. Kenny Cain moved for board to move forward with appointing board member, Ray Chattin seconded motioned, Motioned Carried

XII. ICP Reports

- a. ISDA
 - i. CREP and Water Quality Initiatives – Julie
 - 1. 1600 acres so far for this year
 - 2. \$11.3 million (from beginning of program '05 to now)
 - 3. CREP event with FSA is 9.18
 - ii. Presentation on Hamilton County Wetland Restoration CREP Project by Matt Williams
 - 1. Top portion was 7.6 acres
 - 2. Lower portion was around 5 acres
 - 3. Total cost for lower was little over \$5,000
 - 4. Total cost for top was a little over \$20,000
 - 5. Incentive dollars are what really sold this project to one of the two landowners
 - 6. Amy – questioned who approached the landowner for this project?
 - a. Owner new of a project not far from home and learned about the program from that.
 - iii. Nutrient Stewardship
 - 1. Julie Harrold introduced the new nutrient stewardship manager, Ms. Ophelia Davis.
 - iv. Technical Report – George
 - 1. NW – CRP and equip are driving force
 - v. District Support – Laura
 - 1. Summer Summits
 - 2. Leadership Programs

XIII. Liz – State Association (IASWCD) (02:26)

- a. Legislation priority is more funding and adding invasive plants to the CWI statute
 - i. CCSI – professional ag training – very successful
 - ii. Urban Soil Health (USH) – Get the Dirt Event (Oct. 16)

- iii. RITA – review of written report (Meg)
 - 1. Budget amendment has been approved
 - 2. One of the techs was hired with NRCS but has received two new techs.
- b. NRCS
 - i. New RCPP coordinator
 - ii. Reviewed Reports
 - 1. Conservation stewardship program (deadline is 12.06)
- c. IDEA – Martha Miller
 - i. Confirmed membership has gone up 40% since 2016
 - ii. The conference is in Michigan City
 - iii. Next session will be in November

XIV. Public Comment

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- **Trevor Laureys (DNR)** – press release from august (next round of grants is January 15, 2025) & Regional Conservation Projects & aiming to expand team and add 4 more district biologists

XV. Ray Chattin – housekeeping items – stepping down from board at the end of his term.

XVI. Gene Schmidt – at Northwest Summit (02:43) noxious weeds – before we approach legislation, we need to be sure that the ask isn't already being asked.

XVII. 2024 Meeting Dates

October 22 – Indiana Soybean Alliance

IX. Adjourn

Amy Burriss moved to adjourn and seconded by Jewel Wise; motion carried.