

2025 CWI Grants Committee Recommendations for 2026 Guidance

- Anything over six pages will not be included in the grant committee's review. Only the first six pages will be available. The letters of commitment documents will not count against your six-page maximum.
- Cost share practices must have an application on file with the grantee before the practice is installed and funds are paid to the landowner.
- ISDA Resource Specialists are to review and sign off on all cost share applications.
- All cost share applications must use the ISDA approved cost share application, with the availability to add additional information.
- Grantee's may not count match that is already being counted in another grant.
- All state employee time and any staff paid by CWI funds may not be counted as match.
- Grantees are expected to meet all deadlines. If reporting deadlines are not met on the due date

For one deadline missed: a grant audit review is conducted and no claims can be made until the review is complete

For two or more deadlines missed: the grant audit review is conducted, no claims can be made until the review is complete, a full audit review report to the State Soil Conservation Board (SSCB) will be provided, and the grantee must appear in person at a designated SSCB meeting.

- If special circumstances prevent a deadline being met, communication before the deadline must be made by writing to the ISDA District Support Specialist or Grants and Training Coordinator.
- Any mention of grant reviews is now grant audits.

Grant application changes:

- Project summary is now: Project Overview (1250-character limit). Please provide a concise overview of the project that includes a clear statement of the problem or opportunity, key achievements, and scope of work.
- List each partner and their specific contributions is now: List each partner, their specific contributions, and match to the project. Make sure the match listed matches the budget ,and include a letter of support for each partner in the attachments. A letter of support is not needed from the lead applicant.
- Now the application asks for a budget narrative.



Clean Water Indiana 2026

Competitive Grants Guidance

Executive Summary

The Clean Water Indiana (CWI) Grant Program (IC 14-32-8-5) utilizes the Clean Water Indiana Fund to Support Indiana conservation groups (nonprofits or units or subdivisions of government), in cooperation with local Soil and Water Conservation Districts, in efforts to address the priority concerns of the State Soil Conservation Board (SSCB) business plan. The SSCB is accepting competitive proposals for targeted projects up to three years in length. The Clean Water Indiana fund is administered by the Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) under the direction of the SSCB (IC 14-32-8-6).

Application Process

Applications are submitted online through the Indiana Grant Management System (GMS). A request for a GMS account is required. Please visit:

<https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/898f6ffc7f794f80abda15c5b773ba93> to request a GMS account for a CWI grant access.

All applications will be scored and ranked for CWI funding consideration. The SSCB CWI grants committee's funding recommendations will be presented to the full SSCB at their October meeting.

Applicants who are not a local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) must be working with a SWCD as a partner.

Applicants should request the amount of funds that are needed for the project to the nearest whole dollar. It is not the goal of the SSCB to fund partial applications. Partially funded applications will be made only in special situations.

Attachments

No more than three attachments, with a total maximum of six pages, may be uploaded with the application. Anything over six pages will not be included in the grant committee's review. Only the first six pages will be available. The letters of commitment documents will not count against your six page maximum.

Applicants must provide a letter of commitment signed by each board/partners involved outlining financial or in-kind commitment and roles. The lead applicant does not need a letter of commitment.

Each applicant must have a letter of acknowledgement from an ISDA Resource Specialist.

Also, the attachments of the bids will not count against the number of attachments.

Examples of attachments: Cost share outreach and forms, job descriptions, justification of grant completion of active CWI grants, map of grant focus area.

Application Deadline: September 4, 2025 by 12p.m. EST

Late applications will not be accepted.

By submitting the application, the lead applicant certifies that each partner has agreed to the terms outlined in the application. The designated signatory of the lead applicant must have prior approval from their boards, managers, etc. Upon submission of the application, if a pdf copy is needed please request a copy here:

<https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/2a1a2557c61b4e688b028032c37697a4>

Project Dates

All 2025 Clean Water Indiana Grant projects shall take no longer than three full years to complete. Projects will start in 2026 after a fully executed contract between the lead applicant and the Indiana State Department of Agriculture is signed. Grant All funds must be spent by December 31, 2028.

Proposal Logistics

This grant opportunity is competitive. Proposals can be for any amount that would accomplish the project described. A lead district must be selected to serve as the grantee to receive and administer the grant. **However, grant funds can be shared between districts through cooperative agreements locally.** The grant proposal must document how the grant funds will address at least two of the State priority resource concerns referenced in the State Soil Conservation Board's (SSCB's) 2020-2024 Business Plan. Proposals that outline how CWI funds will leverage additional funding from other sources as well as engage other partners are strongly encouraged. CWI project proposals that will be in tandem with ongoing projects are encouraged. *Example: CWI funds might be used to add technical assistance to help implement sediment and nutrient reduction practices cost-shared through a LARE or 319 project.*

Eligible Applicants

- Any SWCD or natural resources related conservation groups in the State of Indiana.
- One application is permitted per project and must be submitted by a lead applicant.
- Lead applicants must be up to date on all awarded CWI grant reporting.
- Lead applicants may be lead on up to two active CWI contracts as of January 2026. The **SSCB has the authority to approve special circumstances.**
- Applicants are not limited to the number of applications they can be partners on.
- Projects relating to urban practices that will reduce sediment and nutrient are eligible.
- Conservation practices and lab analysis of soil and water that are components of research projects are eligible.
- Equipment purchases to own and make available to landowners is allowable.
- All large equipment purchases require multiple bids and must be cited in the grant application or as attachments. The attachments of bids will not count against the number of attachments.
- All grant deadlines and reporting requirements have been met. (if applicable)

Funding Restrictions

Proposals must fall within the funding context allowed under the Clean Water Indiana Law (IC 14-32-8).

- The law prohibits funds from being used for food, food related paper products, office equipment or district self-promotional materials (i.e. mugs, t-shirts, pens, etc.)
- CWI grant dollars shall not be utilized to pay directly for employee benefits, such as retirement, health insurance, paid time off, taxes, etc.
- Cannot be used to fund research equipment.
- Cost-sharing is also not allowed on specific practices that an entity is required to install to comply with a state or local rule or ordinance. *Example: CWI funds cannot be used to meet MS4 requirements unless the proposed use of funds goes above and beyond the requirement outlined in the MS4 permit's Storm Water Quality Management Plan.*
- Cost share programs for the modification or purchasing of equipment to enhance assets to a landowner is not allowable for a grant request.
- Recycling grants and collections are not eligible.
- River clean ups should be justified as part of a larger system of efforts.

Funding Staff

CWI grant dollars shall follow all funding restrictions listed under funding restrictions. If CWI competitive grant dollars are being utilized to fund a staff position, once the funds are disbursed to a staff person, they may utilize their stipend/wages as they see fit. This only pertains to CWI competitive grant dollars and not to the \$10,000 CWI statutory match that SWCD's are eligible.

The grant may ask for no more than 10% of the total grant funds for administrative support of the grant. Administrative support would include staff time implementing the grant.

Partnerships

Each application must

- Clearly state what each partner will be contributing to the proposed project (i.e. outreach, professional assistance, estimated funds, etc.)
- All partners must be identified with a point of contact for the project, their contact information, and an explanation of any anticipated cash or in-kind match from the partner.
- A letter of commitment is required to show each board or partner's approval for all match and project contributions listed in the grant application.

Conservation Practices

- Conservation planning and practices and structural measures shall follow NRCS Field Office Technical Guide, if practices installed are not applicable, please work with your DSS and RS. New technologies not currently in the technical guide may be implemented if reviewed and concurred in by a technical representative of the Conservation Implementation Teams (CIT) or their designee.
- Pollinator plantings must be free of species that are noxious, invasive, and/or all amaranth. To verify that seed mixes are free of these species, a district MUST request the seed lab card from the distributor.
- For all cost share programs, CWI funds may be used to pay up to a maximum of 75% of the total conservation final practice cost.
- For cover crop cost share programs, the maximum cost share is 75% of the total final cost of the practice, with 25% of the cost being the responsibility of the landowner, and a maximum dollar cap at \$30/ac.
- Any CWI funded applications that have cost share funds for livestock alternative watering systems, MUST fence out the existing watering sources that have a natural resource concern.
- If applying for cost share, please describe the process you will implement to select grant recipients. Priority will be given to projects who demonstrate a strategic process for managing cost share dollars and prioritizing first-time users and new acreage.
- Priority will be given to practices that are part of an on-the-ground systems approach.
- Cost share practices must have an application on file with the grantee before the practice is installed and funds are paid to the landowner.
- ISDA Resource Specialists are to review and sign off on all cost share applications.
- All cost share applications must use the ISDA approved cost share application, with the availability to add additional information.

Match Requirements

- A 50 percent cash and/or in-kind match is required. Match contributions can be federal, state, and/or local sources including such things as landowner costs, staff time, supervisor time, equipment use, purchase, rental, etc.
- Proposals that request funds for staffing require 25% cash or in-kind match for the staffing component. *Example: District A submits a \$10,000 for solely a staff position. District A's proposal requires a match of \$2,500. District B submits a \$10,000 proposal that includes \$5,000 for staff and \$5,000 for cost share. Proposal B is required to have \$3,750 match.*
- Each grantee must track in-kind/ cash match for all partners and be able to provide documentation. **Grantee's may not count match that is already being counted in another grant.**
- Grant proposals must use the match standards outlined below to develop their project budget. All state employee **time and any staff paid by CWI funds may not be counted as match.**
- The match is applicable only if directly related to the purpose of the proposed project. The grants committee may give preference to cash match rather than in kind during the scoring process.
- All in-kind must be reported in full for each grant update. In-kind cannot be accounted for in a later report.

Match Standards (all figures are per hour of project work)

ICP Staff/SWCD supervisors (including associates) \$35*

Landowner Time: \$35

Professional Services: \$35

Student/Intern/Volunteer: \$15

*ICP match rates were calculated from publicly available data in Gateway and public transparency portals.

Any landowner contribution toward the remaining portion of cost share practices should be counted as cash match.

In general, time spent working on the project should be considered in-kind match, whereas money would be considered cash match.

Match is not to be counted for anyone under 18, unless signed approval by a guardian.

Leveraging Funds

Applicants are encouraged to partner with traditional and non-traditional organizations/agencies at the local, state, and federal level to leverage additional funds for their project/initiative.

Projects which add to the percent cost-share/incentive rate offered through another program are prohibited. *Example: A project where CWI funds are used for cost share and 319 funds for technical assistance are acceptable. A project where CWI and 319 funds are both used to give producers a larger cost share amount is prohibited.*

All applicants are encouraged to work with county officials or other organizations to retain staff hired through staffing grants at the completion of any CWI grant funding. We recommend having discussions with your county board's or other potential funding sources while applying for the grant to make them aware of potential new employees and retention options once grant has ended.

CWI Promotion

Any CWI funded programs will be required to have a CWI logo for equipment, handouts, and presentations.

Process of Payments

All funded applicants are required to register as a bidder with the State of Indiana. Instructions for registration can be obtained from the Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA). Once the proposal is approved by the SSCB, ISDA will issue an electronic contract to the grantee.

Grantees must return their electronically signed contract to ISDA within 30 days of receipt to receive their funds. Funds must be utilized in a timely manner. Up to 50 percent of grant funding may be disbursed at the beginning of the grant. All other payments, after 50% is spent, will be made as reimbursement 45 days in arrears upon receipt of an updated report and claim that is submitted on GMS. *Please note that reimbursement claims require updated financial reporting, and proof of expenses showing that requested funds have been paid by the lead entity.*

10% of the total grant funds will be withheld until the final report is completed.

All funds must be spent at the end of the grant. Applicants need to make sure all cost share or incentive payments are made to the landowner by the December 31st deadline.

Reporting Requirements

- Financial and project status reports will be required for the duration of the grant and a cumulative final report will be due at the end of the grant. The grant updating form will be provided on GMS.
- The report must be completed semi-annually (every 6 months) and summarize the outcomes and achievements of the project for the 6 months. The total match and in-kind for each report are cumulative.
- Tracking of conservation practice implementation (following FOTG standards) must be reported through Conservation Link: conservation project tracking system (CPT) spreadsheet shall be completed by the 1st Friday of the quarter.
- The final report of the grant is a cumulative report; 10% of the total grant funds will be withheld in the state account before submitting the final report.
- All in-kind must be reported in full for each grant update. In-kind cannot be accounted for in a later report.
- Grantees are expected to meet all deadlines. If reporting deadlines are not met on the due date

For one deadline missed: a grant audit review is conducted and no claims can be made until the review is complete

For two or more deadlines missed: the grant audit review is conducted, no claims can be made until the review is complete, a full audit review report to the State Soil Conservation Board (SSCB) will be provided, and the grantee must appear in person at a designated SSCB meeting.

- If special circumstances prevent a deadline being met, communication before the deadline must be made by writing to the ISDA District Support Specialist or Grants and Training Coordinator.
- Photo(s) required for grant final report and saved to ISDA Conservation Link or emailed to ISDA staff.

Reporting Deadlines

Grant updates due in GMS annually: January 31st, July 31st

Conservation Project Tracking in Conservation Link: 1st Friday of January, April, July, and October

Grant Audits

ISDA and the LG Grant Services team routinely visit its grantees to ensure projects and grants are proceeding as intended and offer guidance and support if needed. Each year, ISDA will strategically select grants to review. These reviews can include open grants and grants that have been completed in the last three years. Upon completion of a review, ISDA will send a summary of results to all involved in the project and their board(s).

If found during audit, failure to make progress on the project or report progress as specified in the grant contract no grant payment will occur until the grantee corrects any grant failures upon approval of ISDA and LG Grant Services. Grant audits must take place or be scheduled within 90 days of being contacted by ISDA through email notification, or the lead applicant will be ineligible for future grants for two years. Exceptions may be made (e.g. FMLA).

Modifications

Modifications should not be made lightly. These grants were awarded based upon merit. Largely changing the program of a grant could be seen as favoring some applicants over others. Other applicants may have submitted similar applications to the proposed modification but were not funded. No modification requests will be accepted following the last SSCB meeting in the final year of the grant term. All modifications will be considered for an audit. Please contact the DSS team before submitting a modification.

Questions

For assistance for SWCDs please contact your ISDA District Support Specialist (DSS).

| | | | |
|-----------------|------------------|--|-----------------|
| <i>North</i> | Sandra Hoffarth | shoffarth@isda.in.gov | (317) 460--0428 |
| <i>Central:</i> | Geneva Tyler | gtyler@isda.in.gov | (317) 518-4036 |
| <i>South:</i> | Laura Fribley | lfribley@isda.in.gov | (812) 595-5641 |
| <i>West:</i> | Nathan Stoelting | nstoelting@isda.in.gov | (812) 320-9873 |
| <i>East:</i> | Kylie Wheeler | kywheeler@isda.in.gov | (765) 480-1713 |

For assistance for non-SWCDs please contact:

Tara Wesseler-Henry twesseler@isda.in.gov (765) 745-0306



Clean Water Indiana Report

April 2025

Annual Financial Report (AFR) (This is not the Gateway report for SBOA)-DUE MARCH 31st

- One not yet submitted
- Board Discussion & Action Needed: Proposed policy for late AFRs beginning January 2026:

Districts are highly encouraged to submit the Annual Financial Report (AFR) no later than March 15 to allow time for a District Support Specialist and/or ISDA staff to review and provide any final adjustments or corrections. All AFRs submitted after March 31st at 12 a.m. will be considered late and this will be determined from the time received in the Grant Management System (GMS). Submissions received on March 31st, but do not meet accuracy, will also be considered late. There will not be any exceptions.

Penalty for late AFR's: A SSCB decision

CWI SWCD Training Reimbursement Program

- Training reimbursements were due March 15th.
- 61 districts were reimbursed
- Total amount: \$49,073.79 (CWI had \$50,000 allocated)

Grants Committee

- Committee met April 3rd to finalize the recommendation for 2026 Grant Guidance
- Grant committee report submitted and presented by SSCB committee member
- The Draft 2026 CWI Grant Guidance was emailed to all SSCB board members and grants committee for email suggestions. Those were reviewed at the committee meeting on April 4th.
- Next step is for the grants committee to meet to review the CWI ranking process and scorecard.

A BIG Thank you for all the work of the Grants Committee!

2025 CWI Timeline:

May/June TBD- CWI Statewide Info and Networking Session (virtual)

September 4th- Applications Due by noon

September 12th- Applications Ready to rank by committee and all SSCB members

October 2nd- Applications ranked and comments due on GMS by committee and SSCB members

October TBD- Grants Committee meets to review applications for recommendations

October 21st- Recommendation and approval by SSCB

CWI GRANT HIGHLIGHT: Warrick CWI Grant 2024

Warrick County SWCD No Till drill purchase to facilitate conservation

CWI 2024 Completed

\$24,432 Awarded

\$52,296 Total Match

The first purchase made with the grant was the KUNZ 4" wheeled cultipacker on February 15, 2024 for a total cost of \$1299. Warrick staff and supervisors have developed a new system for renting both drills. It was decided each interested renter would be responsible for watching a video in the office before the equipment is released to them, so that they understand its content and will sign the district's newly designed rental equipment agreement to that effect. In addition to the video for the CWI-funded grant drill, the district also created a video for the proper operation of our Great Plains drill. Viewing the video in the office has streamlined the process and benefited the renter in numerous ways. The biggest skill renters must learn is the proper calibration of each of the drills. The videos the district created explain in detail how to achieve less seed waste when calibrating the drill. Peter Rudolph (supervisor) and Brad Speicher (supervisor) are each housing one of the drills, and are still available for questions renters may have, and to monitor pick-up and drop-off of the drills. The videos are also available on our website: warrickswcd.com.

The overall feedback the district has received has been nothing but positive. The Truax drill has been used to reseed CRP acres, seeding timothy/orchard grass acres, re-seeding fescue acres, re-seeding hay field acres, seeding grass waterways, additional pasture seedings and seeding alfalfa acres. The drill has 184 acres as of March 21, 2025, on the acre counter, and the district expects to double those acres for the year 2025. The value the SW Indiana area has received from this grant is not only measured in the seeded acres achieved, but also in the wildlife habitat those acres have created. The SWCD has been pleasantly surprised with this additional grant perk.

The low-cost rental fees for the drill are \$12 per acre, and while the district won't be creating much revenue with these rentals, the service we have been able to offer also won't be able to be measured in dollars or acres.



State Soil Conservation Board

ISDA – DSC Director's Report

April 8, 2025

Budget

54310: Clean Water Indiana:

See Separate spreadsheet

FY2026 Considerations

- New Business Plan – which could help drive CWI competitive grant focus
- Additional training for SWCD's – staff and supervisors
- DSS Team – gap analysis

State Fiscal Budget 2026 –

This will be for your approval at the June SSCB. Due to the State budget uncertainty, we do not have an idea on what this might look like.

Staffing

- Clean Water Indiana – Program Manager – priority
- Resource Specialist Manager – will discuss the other vacancies and evaluate budget

Strategic Planning for FY2026

- This has been moving along. I am thankful for everyone's support and motivation to get a fantastic new business plan and to create a parking lot of other ideas.

Partner Interactions:

- IDEM
- Corn/soybean alliance
- Dual Office Holding - letter
- Thank you cards – signatures
- Great Lakes Sustainable Agriculture

Division Programmatic Updates:

- 2025 Performance Reviews complete
 - 2026 Goals are submitted
- Clean Water Indiana (CWI) competitive grant process
- Training Program for staff
- Resource Specialist Quarterly meetings
 - Dates provided
- 2025 Session Update:
 - Online portal – like Farmer.gov
 - Clean Water Indiana

Thoughts – Board Guidance – Needed

- None at this time

June SSCB Meeting Preview:

- 2026 Budget Breakdown
- Presentation Nutrient Stewardship Program Manager
- Status of SSCB business plan update
- SSCB Training Plan –
- July mtg - JT on vacation. Breegan will lead the meeting 😊

| State Fiscal 2025 Budget | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| | | Actuals 4/7/2025 | Purchase Orders | Estimates | |
| Staff Salaries | \$1,840,000.00 | \$ 1,158,531.26 | | \$ 512,988.88 | |
| AFR District Match (10+10) | \$1,840,000.00 | \$ 740,000.00 | | \$ 1,100,000.00 | |
| CWI Competitive Grants | \$2,521,014.00 | \$ 1,382,571.00 | | \$ 2,281,571.00 | |
| Additional CREP | \$500,000.00 | | | \$ 500,000.00 | |
| CWI Program Director | \$149,000.00 | | | \$ 149,000.00 | |
| SWCD Board Development (contractor) | \$250,000.00 | | | \$ 250,000.00 | |
| Training Reimbursement | \$50,000.00 | \$ - | | \$ 50,000.00 | |
| CREP | \$1,700,000.00 | | | \$ 500,000.00 | |
| Resilient Indiana – IASWCD CWI Proposal | \$540,000.00 | \$ 540,000.00 | | \$ - | |
| New Harmony Super Gage | \$30,000.00 | | | \$ 30,000.00 | |
| Potential Financial/Technical Agreements (leverage)(no agreement with NRCS) | \$130,000.00 | \$ - | | \$ 120,000.00 | |
| Regional ICP | \$5,000.00 | \$ - | | \$ 5,000.00 | |
| I-Cover | \$60,000.00 | \$ - | | \$ 60,000.00 | |
| Surety Bond | \$2,000.00 | \$ 2,000.00 | | \$ - | |
| Staff Training (DSC) | \$35,000.00 | | | \$ 20,000.00 | |
| Regional Meetings (Bd. Leadership and summer staff mts.) | \$3,000.00 | \$ 3,000.00 | | \$ - | |
| NASCA Dues | \$3,000.00 | \$ 3,000.00 | | \$ - | |
| Subtotal | \$9,658,014.00 | \$ 3,829,102.26 | | \$ 5,578,559.88 | \$ 9,407,662.14 |



State Soil Conservation Board

April 8, 2025
Deputy Soils Director, Breegan Andersen



DISTRICT CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Accomplishments so far:

- The Letter of Intent has been submitted to the Indiana Department of Administration (DOA). The Letter of Intent captures high-level information about our request to initiate the Request for Proposal process.
- The following District Capacity Development Workgroup members have been identified in the table below.

| ORGANIZATION | MEMBER |
|--------------|------------------------------|
| SSCB | Jane Hardisty |
| IASWCD | Liz Rice and/or Board Member |
| IDEA | Brandi Frazier |
| NRCS | Jerod Chew |
| ISDA | TBD |

Note: Breegan Andersen will sit in this workgroup as project manager and not as the ISDA representative.

Priorities:

- Start conversation with DOA
- Finalize scope of work with input from the SSCB and the Workgroup.

Potential barriers to progress:

- There has been recent turnover within the LG's Contract and Procurement team which may delay the RFP process.



State Soil Conservation Board

April 8, 2025

Nutrient Stewardship Updates, Ophelia Norman



Mississippi River Basin Soil Sampling Program

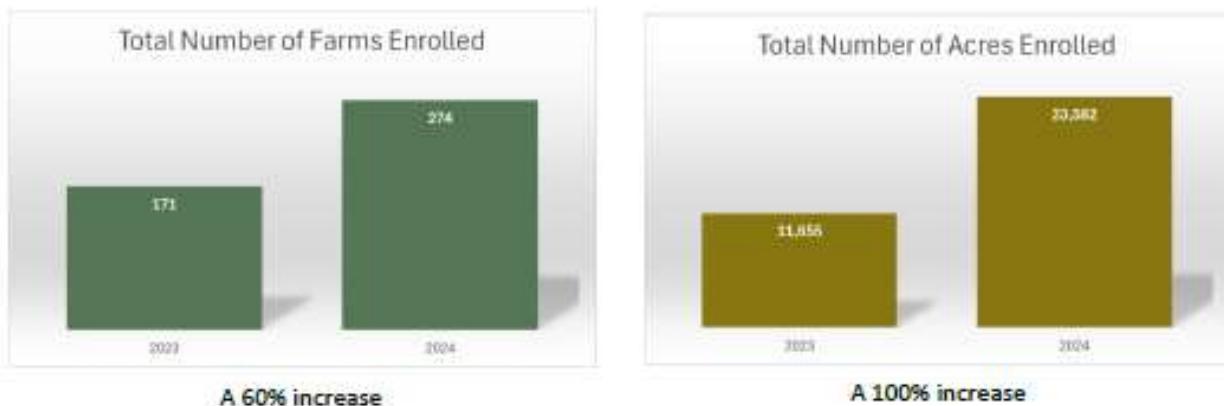
- Indiana's Mississippi River Basin (MRB) Soil Sampling Program registration reopened on February 24, 2025 and will close **THIS** Friday, April 4th, 2025, or once we reach workload capacity.
- The registration process went through a revamping process and now includes the capabilities for landowners to digitally identify the acreage they are requesting to be sampled so soil maps can be pulled directly from registration and sent to field staff to allow for more efficient use of field staff time and more precise field locating – these updates were a result of feedback from field staff.
- The program acreage enrollment threshold will continue to remain at 100 acres to ensure Resource Specialist are able to maintain workload capacity for other program contributions.
- The program webpage has been updated to reflect program information and can be found on the [ISDA website](#).
- This program includes Indiana watersheds within the MRB and excludes the WLEB and Lake Michigan Basins. This is due to federal statutory language associated with the funds.
- We are currently working with eight contracted Ag Retailers/CCAs from various locations across Indiana to assist with larger acreage (400+ acres).
- Currently, there are over 3,500 acres registered to be sampled from the Spring 2025 registration which represents over 100 different landowners and renters from across the Mississippi River Basin.

Gulf Hypoxia Program (GHP)

- Anticipated upcoming meetings for the GHP CC Taskforce in 2025: May/June.
- Work is set to begin soon on updating our next GHP workplan for submission later this spring.
- As a reminder, these are non-competitive funds established under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to allow Hypoxia Task Force Member states to further their nutrient reduction strategy efforts.

Indiana 2024 Mississippi River Soil Sampling Program

The Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) and partners throughout the state have worked with the Gulf Hypoxia Program to develop the Mississippi River Basin Soil Sampling Program. This program focuses on increasing the knowledge and use of soil sampling as a nutrient management practice, including the 4R nutrient management strategy, to benefit on-farm operations.



The Mississippi River Basin Soil Sampling Program Facilitated the collection of over **7,400 Soil Samples** on over **23,000 acres** in 2024!

Why Soil Sample?

- Soil sampling as part of comprehensive nutrient management plan can reduce fertilizer use by 10-20%, lowering costs and optimizing yield.
- Soil Sampling enhances nutrient use efficiency and reduces the ecological impact of excess nutrients in waterways.

Total cost savings to Indiana landowners and farmers participating in the Mississippi River Basin Soil Sampling program in 2024: Over **\$150,000!**



More information can be found using the above QR code or by visiting:

<https://www.in.gov/isda/divisions/soil-conservation/indiana-soil-sampling-program>





State Soil Conservation Board

April 8th, 2025
ISDA – CREP & Water Quality Initiatives, Julie Harrold



Program Updates

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

- There is still no CRP program and as a result there is no CREP either. We have not heard anything more from the feds on what will happen with the CRP and CREP program in Indiana. I will share details when I do know more.
- We do continue to pay out dollars for projects that were already signed up and as they get completed. To date, the state has paid out more than \$11.4 million. For every state dollar that is spent, the federal match is approximately \$4-\$13 for every state dollar, which is currently between \$41.9 million and \$136 million of federal dollars depending on the practice.

Water Quality Initiatives

- **IN State Nutrient Reduction Strategy (SNRS)**
 - The next revision of the SNRS is to be released in late calendar year 2025. I am working on getting the SNRS Workgroup meeting scheduled, and plans are for this workgroup to meet throughout the year as needed to work on updates.
 - Work under the Indiana Science Assessment and the IN Nutrient Research and Education Program (INREP) is continuing.
 - I attended the Conservation Drainage Network (CDN) Annual meeting in Champaign, IL from April 1st-3rd. This was a very good meeting discussing conservation drainage practices. I presented in a session about "Conservation Drainage Advancements through State Nutrient Reduction Strategies", presenting about the conservation drainage practices that are currently in the SNRS along with Jane Frankenberger and Chris Hay presenting about the work of these practices in the Indiana Science Assessment.
- **Gulf of Mexico Hypoxia Task Force (HTF)**
 - Work on the next workplan for using the Gulf Hypoxia Program dollars is continuing. Submittal deadline for this was extended to July 1, 2025. Reminder: the dollar amount to use is \$2,514,116.00 to be used over a 5-year period.



State Soil Conservation Board
April 8, 2025 District Support Specialist (DSS) Report:
3/1/25 to 3/28/25



Statewide or Regional Trainings for SWCD Supervisors and Staff

- **Completed since last report:**
 - On March 10, Laura gave updates at the SSE IDEA Region Meeting.
 - On March 20, Geneva hosted the Ducks Unlimited Information Session, giving a high overview of four of their staff, various initiatives and their soil health program. For anyone who would want to watch it, it's available on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MIU10o-Tvds>
- **New Supervisor and Staff Training:** available year-round via your ISDA DSS. Updated in January 2025, the training is available in-person, or virtually. As well, a recorded video is available for Supervisors. Please contact your DSS for more information.
- **Summer Summits:** on 3/18, representatives from IASWCD, ISDA, SSCB and IDEA met to flush out ideas about the potential 2025 SWCD trainings. Ultimately, we decided to put energy into relationship building within each region and focus on a larger event for 2026.
- **New Staff Training Checklist:** the DSS team is working on a new staff training checklist, that can be used when working with new administrative staff/directors, educators and technicians.

Clean Water Indiana

- DSSs assisted SWCDs with Training Reimbursement applications. These were due March 15. Up to \$1k was available to each SWCD, or until allocated funds were depleted.
- DSSs assisted SWCDs with the Annual Financial Report process in GMS. By law, this is due no later than March 31. Financial data reported qualifies SWCDs for up to \$10k legislative grant plus additional capacity funds. Up to \$20k per SWCD is available.
- DSSs are assisting current CWI competitive grantees as well with questions and processes tied to grant management.
- On 3/24, DSSs joined the CWI Grants Committee call and provided input.

DSS Committee Work and Other Key Accomplishments:

- DSSs engaged in regional and/or statewide committee work, or initiatives: Board Leadership Program, CWI, Envirothon, Indiana Grown Symposium, Pathway to Water Quality, SSCB

| DSS Activities Statewide for This Reporting Period of "Significance" | Total |
|---|--------------|
| Input, Assistance & Attendance at SWCD Board Meetings | 10 |
| Attendance at SWCD Annual Meetings | 10 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Assistance with SWCD or Partner Strategic Planning | 2 |
| Assistance with CWI Initiatives (Competitive Grants, Capacity Reports, etc.) as a “Key Focus” (doesn’t include assistance during other interactions such as Board Meetings) | 10 |
| Other Events with SWCDs For Training, Assistance, Guidance, etc. | 29 |
| Total Number of Counties Impacted by Activities of “Significance” | 53 |

Board Leadership Program

- BLP is now on the ISDA website [ISDA: Districts Tools](#) and [Conservation Link SWCD Training - Home!](#)
- Approximately 222 SWCD Supervisors and Associates have participated in an online module or approved in-person training as of mid-March 2025.
- Featured training: “Hiring and Interview Process”.
 - Description: This module will give you the tools necessary to effectively complete the hiring process.
 - Time to complete this module: 8 minutes



State Soil Conservation Board
April 8, 2025 District Support Specialist (DSS) Report:
3/1/25 to 3/28/25



Statewide or Regional Trainings for SWCD Supervisors and Staff

- **Completed since last report:**
 - On March 10, Laura gave updates at the SSE IDEA Region Meeting.
 - On March 20, Geneva hosted the Ducks Unlimited Information Session, giving a high overview of four of their staff, various initiatives and their soil health program. For anyone who would want to watch it, it's available on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MIU10o-Tvds>
- **New Supervisor and Staff Training:** available year-round via your ISDA DSS. Updated in January 2025, the training is available in-person, or virtually. As well, a recorded video is available for Supervisors. Please contact your DSS for more information.
- **Summer Summits:** on 3/18, representatives from IASWCD, ISDA, SSCB and IDEA met to flush out ideas about the potential 2025 SWCD trainings. Ultimately, we decided to put energy into relationship building within each region and focus on a larger event for 2026.
- **New Staff Training Checklist:** the DSS team is working on a new staff training checklist, that can be used when working with new administrative staff/directors, educators and technicians.

Clean Water Indiana

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|---|--------------|
| Input, Assistance & Attendance at SWCD Board Meetings | 10 |
| Attendance at SWCD Annual Meetings | 10 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Assistance with SWCD or Partner Strategic Planning | 2 |
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IASWCD UPDATES – April 2025



INDIANA ASSOCIATION OF
soil and water conservation
DISTRICTS

Statewide Program Staff Update

The staff of Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative (CCSI), Resilient Indiana (RITA) and the Urban Soil Health (USH) Program were reinstated on March 17. IASWCD has received reimbursements for most of the submitted grant invoices. These reimbursements enable IASWCD to keep the staff of CCSI and USH on through mid-May. Non-IRA funding has been approved and those grant programs will move forward at this time.

Legislative Bill Tracking & Updates

Updates are provided via email to district staff and supervisors and posted on the IASWCD website. <https://iaswcd.org/advocacy/policy-advocacy/>

New Training Session Recorded and Available: Water Management

The March 19 Lunch 'n Learn session "Understanding Water Management: DNR Division of Water, Resources, Rights, Floodplains, Permitting & Assessments" presented by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources - Division of Water is now posted on the Training page at iaswcd.org.

NACD Spring Fly-In to Washington D.C.

On March 25-27, Liz Rice (IASWCD Executive Director) accompanied by Chris Matthys (St. Joseph County Supervisor and N-NE IASWCD Assistant Region Director) and Eric Shideler (Conservation Director, Vermillion County SWCD and NCDEA Treasurer), traveled to Washington DC for NACD's annual spring fly-in. During the event, they engaged with 10 of our 11 members of congress as well as NACD Regional Conservationist Curtis Elke and Acting Chief Louis Aspey.

A **DC Fly-In Fireside Chat** will be held on Wednesday, April 9 at 3 pm (Eastern) via [Zoom](https://zoom.us) to share updates from the event.



River Friendly Farmer Award Now Accepting SWCD Nominations through June 6



Each year, Indiana's SWCDs can nominate up to two farmers or landowners for the River Friendly Farmer award. This award recognizes and celebrates individuals dedicated to protecting Indiana's water quality through the implementation of conservation management practices. More information on iaswcd.org.

Highlights

Back to Work

The CCSI Director and Program Managers were called back to work commencing March 17th after being furloughed at close of business February 28th. With payments processed for work completed through March 7th (the last invoice), staff will be at work through at least mid-May.

During the furlough, from funding to logistics, partners stepped in to help ensure events and trainings already planned went forward. *Thank you to all of those partners!!*

Grants

- Cargill Success from the Ground Up

CCSI received notification on March 3rd that the Cargill Success from the Ground Up program wished to award CCSI a \$50,000 grant for “farmer-facing” type event support. An award letter and grant agreement were executed by the IASWCD.

- Indiana Corn Marketing Council / Indiana Soybean Alliance

On April 2nd, CCSI received notice that a concept proposal for a \$50,000 grant to support training and outreach events was selected to move forward to the full proposal stage.

Trainings

- Fundamentals of Soil Health

The Fundamentals of Soil Health series kicked off on April 1st with 52 registrants, including a near-full in-person session. Registrants include SWCD, NRCS, Purdue Extension, ISDA, IDNR, and RITA staff as well as individuals from Missouri State University, Michigan State University, Ohio State University, ag retail, NGOs, and an individual from Argentina.

- Soil Health and Sustainability for Midwestern Field Staff

Formerly held over three days, the training will be spread over 3-1/2 days from June 9-12, allowing attendees more time for questions and to work on their projects. *Registration will open the week of April 7th – this is several weeks earlier than prior years to accommodate the time it currently takes for federal staff to be approved for travel.*

- Continuing Education: Machinery and Equipment Set-up

Watch for a pair of trainings – one North of Indianapolis and one South to be held in July. These trainings will focus on machinery / equipment set-up and adjustments. The type of equipment will be dependent on the location: planters, drills, sprayers, combines, fertilizer applicators, etc.

- Ag 101: Commodity Crop Production

Now led by Purdue On The Farm, the 2024 Ag 101 Pilot has been expanded to three trainings to be held the week of July 21st at SEPAC, NEPAC, and the Beck Ag Center. Watch for registrations through the CCSI website.

Report to the State Soil Conservation Board

April 8, 2025

Program Director Activities

FY25 GOAL: Recruit and hire the second cohort (7) Conservation Technicians.

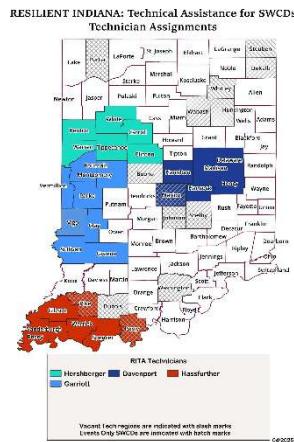
- Recruiting is on hold until Resilient Indiana's federal IRA grant funds are through review per the President's Executive Order. Expected completion is April 20.

ONGOING GOAL: Serve as a liaison for the agreement, and publicize opportunities related to the agreement to SWCDs statewide.

- Helped most of the RITA staff transition to an Independent Contractor.
- Working with those who opted to stay furloughed to ensure they stay engaged.

ONGOING GOAL: Identify relevant training opportunities to support Conservation Technicians in their pursuit to become Certified Conservation Planners.

- Encouraged all RITA Techs, both furloughed and contracted to attend CCSI's Fundamentals of Soil Health this month.



RITA Technicians Activities

The reporting metrics revision has been finalized and the technical assistance that was reported last year has been distributed by resource concern.

ONGOING GOAL: Support SWCD priorities and projects and track selected metrics in five categories:

➤ Outreach Activities

| Activities | Total |
|---|-------|
| Attend SWCD board meetings | 119 |
| Attend ICP Meetings, Conference Calls, Webinars | 127 |
| Attend Field Days and Trainings | 174 |
| Present objectives/accomplishments at SWCD board meetings | 57 |
| Presentations at Field Days and Trainings | 6 |
| Presentations to the general public | 75 |
| Educational interactions with producers/forest owners | 0 |
| One-on-One discussions with land users on the benefits of soil health and improving water quality | 28 |

➤ **Technical Assistance Activities – Resource Concerns**

| Activities | Total |
|---|-------|
| Soil Health Management | 45 |
| Commodity Crops/Cover Crops Management | 13 |
| Livestock/Pasture Management | 9 |
| Woodlands/Agroforestry Management | 14 |
| Drainage & Water Management | 20 |
| Invasives Management | 42 |
| Diversified/Orchard/Urban Gardens Management | 26 |
| TA to support Historically Underserved and Socially Disadvantaged Producers | 31 |

➤ **Planning and Engineering Activities**

| | |
|--|---|
| Completed conservation planning activities | 2 |
| Number of surveys | 2 |
| Number of designs/inspections completed | 2 |
| Number of construction checks completed | 1 |

➤ **Program Support (coming)**

| | |
|--|---|
| CWI Grants | 0 |
| LARE Grants | 0 |
| ISDA Soil Sampling | 0 |
| EPA 319 Grants | 0 |
| Regional Conservation Partnership Program Grants | 0 |
| Other Farm Bill Programs | 0 |
| NACD Grants (TA, Urban, Friends etc.) | 0 |
| Other Agency (Federal/State) and NGO Grants | 0 |

➤ **ICP Collaboration Activities**

| | |
|---|---|
| Meetings with ICP Staff (1:1, group etc.) | 3 |
| ICP Referrals | 0 |
| Field/Tillage Checks | 4 |
| Transect participation | 0 |

Indiana NRCS State Conservationist Report

April 2025 State Soil Conservation Board Meeting

NATIONAL WATER QUALITY INITIATIVE (NWQI) and MISSISSIPPI RIVER BASIN HEALTHY WATERSHEDS INITIATIVE (MRBI)

The [National NWQI bulletin](#) was released on February 25 and the [National MRBI bulletin](#) was issued on March 4. Indiana NRCS is accepting applications until April 18 to be considered for NWQI and MRBI planning or implementation projects.

Watershed projects must first complete a watershed assessment plan (planning phase) meeting NRCS guidance (funding is available for a one-year agreement to complete this work). This planning phase will provide time for watershed-level assessment, on-farm planning, and outreach to support development of the multi-year implementation plan that will assist states with their nutrient loss reduction strategies or source water protection.

Watersheds with an approved watershed assessment plan can apply for targeted Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) funding for implementation of conservation practices over the course of several years. The approved watershed assessment plan does not have to be a product of the planning phase but does need to meet the NRCS assessment plan criteria.

Partners who are interested in being a part of an NWQI or MRBI planning phase or implementation phase should contact Kim Lampert, Special Initiatives Coordinator for Partnerships (kim.lampert@usda.gov). Application materials will be due no later than April 18 for funding in Fiscal Year 2026.

PROBATIONARY EMPLOYEES

Probationary employees (employees having one year or less in federal government) at Indiana NRCS, who were terminated on February 13, will return to work on April 7.

REDUCTION IN FORCE (RIF)

The recent Executive Order *Implementing the President's "Department of Government Efficiency" Workforce Optimization Initiative* directed federal agencies to submit an Agency RIF and Reorganization Plan (ARRP). Each agency at the national level submitted a Phase 1 ARRP which focused on initial agency cuts and reductions to the Office of Management and Budget (OPM) for review and approval. National agencies then submitted a Phase 2 ARRP to OMB for review and approval outlining a positive vision for more productive, efficient agency operations going forward. We anticipate hearing details about the NRCS RIF plan on or around April 14.

PARTNER STAFF END FURLOUGH

IASWCD's Board of Directors has approved ending the furlough for Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative (CCSI), Urban Soil Health (USH) and Resilient Indiana (RITA) for at least 30 days starting March 17. IASWCD is proud to support the staff of these important, impactful programs that advance conservation for farmers, foresters, and landowners across the state. IASWCD will continue to monitor the federal funding space and the future of these programs.

AVIAN FLU UPDATE

NRCS has agreed to detail 200 employees (10 in Indiana) to assist Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) with the Avian Flu crisis. Currently the agency is working on an Interagency agreement

to provide this technical assistance to APHIS. Current HPAI cases can be found on the [BOAH website](#). Indiana NRCS specific guidelines can be found here: [AGN - Biosecurity Protocol – Avian Influenza – Employee Responsibilities](#).

NEW FPAC (FSA, NRCS, RMA) LEADERSHIP

Deputy Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC)

Brooke Shupe Appleton serves as the Deputy Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation. Most recently, Appleton served as Vice President of Public Policy for the National Corn Growers Association. In this role, Appleton led NCGA's Washington, D.C. office, overseeing advocacy for policy effecting corn farmers across the country. Previously, Appleton served as the Chief of Staff to the Deputy Secretary at USDA during the first Trump Administration. Prior to her time at USDA, Appleton worked at the National Association and Wheat Growers and started her career on Capitol Hill working for U.S. Representative Sam Graves of Missouri. Appleton holds a Bachelor of Science in Agribusiness Management from the University of Missouri-Columbia and was raised on her family's row crop and cattle farm in Stanberry, Missouri.

Chief of Staff for Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC)

Andrew Fisher serves as Chief of Staff for Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC). Most recently, Andrew served as a Legislative Assistant for U.S. Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY) and previously held the same position for U.S. Senator Roy Blunt (R-MO). He holds a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture Economics from the University of Missouri. Andrew grew up on a farrow to wean hog operation where he also assisted his grandfather with backgrounding cattle.

Chief of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Aubrey Bettencourt will serve as Chief of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Aubrey is a prominent leader in agriculture, water, and sustainability, most recently serving as the Global Director of Government Relations and External Affairs for Netafim, an Orbia Company. Her previous roles include serving as President and CEO of the Almond Alliance and **Deputy Assistant Secretary for the U.S. Department of the Interior in the first Trump Administration**. Her work reflects a strong commitment to water policy, agricultural support, and sustainable practices, supported by her family's farming roots in Kings County, California. Aubrey holds a degree in History from Westmont College.

Chief of Staff for Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Colton Buckley serves as the Chief of Staff for the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Most recently, Colton served as the **Chief Executive Officer of the National Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils (NARC&D)**. Previously, Colton was appointed to the Texas A&M University System Board of Regents by Governor Rick Perry, the Texas Commissioner of Agriculture's Advisory Council, and the Workforce Solutions of West Central Texas Board of Directors, representing rural economic development. He is a proud alumnus of Turning Point USA. Colton holds a Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Services and Development from Tarleton State University, a Master of Arts in Communication from Liberty University, and was raised on his grandparents' cattle ranch in Gatesville, Texas.

Administrator for the Farm Service Agency (FSA)

Bill Beam will serve as the Administrator for the Farm Service Agency (FSA) within Farm Production and Conservation. Bill is from Elverson, Pennsylvania where he owns and operates Beam Farms Inc. with his family. In addition to growing corn, soybeans, wheat and hay, Beam Farms has a sawdust and wood shavings business that serves the wood industry and agriculture throughout Pennsylvania

and surrounding states. Bill has served on various boards and committees including the Pennsylvania Soybean Board, United Soybean Board, United States Soybean Export Council, Rural Investment to Protect Our Environment and Tel Hai Board. Bill formerly served as Deputy Administrator of Farm Programs for FSA in the first Trump Administration.

Administrator for the Risk Management Agency (RMA)

Pat Swanson will serve as the Administrator for the Risk Management Agency (RMA) within Farm Production and Conservation. Most recently, Pat has served as a director for the American Soybean Association (ASA) and completed her term on the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation Board. Along with her husband, Don, Pat has experience running a crop insurance agency, helping farmers in southeastern Iowa manage risk through crop, forage, pasture and livestock insurance. Pat and her family run a seventh-generation farm near Ottumwa, Iowa. They raise soybeans, corn, and have a cow-calf operation. Pat is an alumna of Iowa State University and is passionate about advocating for farmers through her involvement with Iowa 4-H, CommonGround Iowa and her work with ASA.