

## IASWCD Board Meeting – December 8, 2023

Attendance: Liz Rice, Amy Work, John Kruse, Steve Crowe, Roger Wenning, Troy Hattery, Jeff Baker, Sarah Delbecq, Stan Moore, Elli Blaine, Whitney McGrew, Les Zimmerman, Jared Chew, Mike Smith, Kris Gertz

Virtual Attendance: Mark Kingma, Kim Peterson, Ethan Truax, PJ Chumley, Lisa Holscher, Ray Chattin, Sharmin Syed

- Consent agenda, motion by Roger Wenning and second by Troy Hattery, motion passed
- Treasurer's Report, Mark Kingma, filed subject to audit
- Introduction of Whitney McGrew, new Grants and Finance Manager

### Partner Updates

- EPA, Sharmin Syed, Region 5 Ag Advisor
  - Introduction to get up to speed on SWCD work and be made aware of available federal funding
  - Discussion around available grants and expressed an interest in learning more about what is going on in Indiana
- NRCS, Jared Chew
  - Welcome and hello from new state conservationist, Damarys Mortenson. She is getting settled in Indiana and will be in attendance at Annual Conference
  - EQIP and CSP deadline today, another CSP deadline on March 15
    - ACT NOW being used for quicker approval and obligation
  - Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) deadline is January 17
  - Wetland Reserve Enhancement Partnership (WREP), 21 easements funded with \$7.7 million, an additional 10 funded for \$4.3 million through IRA funding
  - Sentinel Landscapes Program funded through RCCP in Southern Indiana for conservation around military installations
  - Working on filling positions, will be essential for all the contracts that will be coming with increased funding
  - Discussion
    - What is the future of contribution agreements with districts for work such as CRP checks? There is interest from the districts and these agreements have been very beneficial to the districts.
    - Planning to open a Notice of Funding/Request for Proposals for outreach and technical work, should offer additional opportunities for partnering with districts
- CCSI, Lisa Holscher
  - Additional Purdue on the Farm position is on board, meets all the match for NRCS agreements
  - Developing concise talking points for soil health demonstrations to be used during the legislative event, hope those materials can be utilized by districts back at home as well
- USH, Elli Blaine
  - Continued site visits and wrapping up the year
  - Reached 4500 people with 143 events and 346 site visits in 2023

- Working on establishing more working groups
- Continue to work on how to best enable local efforts
- Discussion
  - Will county support be needed going forward? These were pledges of support for the length of the NRCS agreement, but this will not be necessary given CWI funding.
- LEAP Project, Mike Smith and Kris Gertz, Tippecanoe County SWCD
  - <https://tippecanoecountyswcd.org/leap-lebanon>
  - Have a website and statement on the project making it clear that they are not a regulatory agency. Board wanted a more aggressive statement.
  - Looking for advice and input on how to proceed in the situation.
  - How much water is available? Where will discharge water go?
  - Is there a position to be taken?
    - Cautious about taking a specific position but should definitely serve as an information source that keeps agriculture at the forefront
    - Projects such as these will impact upstream and downstream districts so working with others for information sharing will be key

#### IASWCD Business

- Legislative Affairs, Les
  - Clean Water Indiana Breakfast at the Statehouse
    - Talking points in a booklet that will be distributed to districts prior to and during the statehouse event
    - Invitation template for districts and printed invitations
    - Displays are being printed now
    - Spreadsheet with legislators by district
    - Legislative briefing at Annual Conference the day before
  - CWI meeting with ISDA
- Annual Conference, Amy and Liz
  - Sponsorships currently at \$18,550
  - 12 exhibitors, usually have 25-30
  - Region meeting agendas have been shared with region directors, look very similar to previous years
    - Add something about district expectations of IASWCD
    - Make sure people sign in and have someone take notes
- NACD, Roger
  - Conservation dollars will not go down in the Farm Bill next year, expect it to be done by June
  - Discussion for the upcoming region meeting in Springfield, IL in January
    - How many states have policy books and how are they updated?
    - What's working and not working for state associations?
  - Annual meeting in San Diego, CA in February, received scholarship dollars for Ethan
  - Determine NACD delegate and alternate, Roger and Ethan since they are attending?
- Dues Discussion

- What have region directors been hearing from their districts?
  - Too big of an increase
  - Timing of request relative to district budgets
  - Size of increase relative to district salaries
  - Concern of the financial health of the state association
  - Concern about hiring new staff and their respective salaries
  - Some confusion on how the model was determined
  - Wide variety of sentiments within regions
  - Higher performing districts being penalized by having to pay the highest dues
  - Asking what happens if a district does not pay dues
- Next Steps
  - December 18<sup>th</sup> webinar
    - Allow questions to be submitted in advance and during the session
    - Send electronic documents for extra resources
  - Time for discussion at the annual meeting
  - Will not be a specific vote in the delegate meeting, will be part of the budget
    - Be able to articulate what would happen if the budget is voted down
  - What budget adjustments will need to be made if not all districts pay dues?
- 2024 Board Meeting Dates
- Wetland Letter from Indiana Conservation Voters
  - Not ready to sign on to this specific letter
  - Need to put some focus on our own specific policy positions

Adjourn, Stan and Steve, motion carried