

# ANNUAL REPORT

*Empowering Indiana's Soil and Water  
Conservation Districts*

# 2023



INDIANA ASSOCIATION OF  
**soil and water conservation**  
DISTRICTS

[www.iaswcd.org](http://www.iaswcd.org)

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## ABOUT

The **Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts** is a 501(c)(3) non-

profit membership organization that supports the efforts of the soil and water conservation districts' 460 supervisors and 200+ staff in 92 local offices through training, communications, contribution agreements, partnership building, and advocacy.



## MISSION



Empowering each Indiana Soil and Water Conservation District to lead local efforts to conserve natural resources.

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In 2023, we collectively secured **funding from the state legislature** for the Clean Water Indiana (CWI) program. This significant increase of funding will be provided in both 2023 and 2024 to support conservation efforts throughout the state. We look forward to hearing more

about how these funds are making a difference in your communities and the overall health of Indiana's waterways and soil health efforts.



Jeff Baker

The IASWCD board met in June to develop a **Strategic Plan** that will guide the organization over the next three years. This plan (see page 5) will provide a roadmap for IASWCD to be more intentional in our services to Districts and their needs. One immediate result from this plan was hiring a **Legislative Affairs Manager** that will provide a consistent presence at the statehouse and guide districts in connecting with legislators. We also hired a **Grants and Finance Manager** to help us responsibly manage \$1 M in grants annually for programs that benefit Indiana Soil & Water Conservation Districts, like the Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative (CCSI), the Urban Soil Program (USH) and the new Resilient Indiana Program.

We continued our work with our partners at ISDA to help develop the **Board Certification Program** (BCP) and supported IDEA in their development of their groundbreaking employee training program. These achievements would not be possible without the deep commitment of our state association board representing your interest



and the Board's Staff, State of Indiana Invasives Cooperative Management (SICIM) partner, and, of course, our 92 member Districts. Thank you for all you do each day for conservation.



# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECAP

The Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts is grateful for the ongoing support from Indiana's Soil and Water Conservation Districts.



Liz Rice

Serving and advocating for SWCDs brings us great satisfaction. Check out Executive Director Liz Rice's annual summary for insights into her 2023 highlights, our shared successes, and achievements.

# Thank You

Use the QR code or link below to view the  
**Executive Director 2023 Recap Video**



<https://bit.ly/iaswcd-recap-23>

# IASWCD BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**Jeff Baker**  
President  
Warrick County



**Marc Roberts**  
Vice President  
Montgomery County



**Sarah Delbecq**  
Secretary  
DeKalb County



**Mark Kingma**  
Treasurer  
Jasper County



**Bobby Hettmansperger**  
Past President  
Wabash County



## REGION DIRECTORS

**Kim Peterson**  
North-Northwest

**Ethan Truax**  
South-Northwest

**Steve Crowe**  
North-Southwest

**Tom Rudolph**  
South-Southwest

**Stan Moore**  
North-Northeast

**Troy Hattery**  
South-Northeast

**John Kruse**  
North-Southeast

**PJ Chumley**  
South-Southeast

# STRATEGIC PLAN (2023-2025)

In June 2023, the IASWCD Board, leadership staff, and representatives from the SSCB and IDEA gathered to develop a vision and roadmap for how IASWCD can best serve our 92 SWCD over the next three years. Spurred by our shared vision of “empowering each District to lead local efforts to conserve natural resources,” the IASWCD Board is excited to present these four strategic priorities.

## Marketing & Communications

*Develop a resource library and increase effective communication with districts and partners.*

Progress:

- New IASWCD website launch in 2024

## Legislative Advocacy

*Hire Legislative Affairs Manager and seek dedicated funding. Develop opportunities to improve relationships between districts and legislators. Create Guiding Principles handbook.*

Progress:

- Legislative Affairs Manager hired
- Inaugural CWI Breakfast at the Statehouse, Jan. 2024

## Development

*Assess staff and supervisors’ assets and needs and develop or secure resources to meet goals (e.g. funding, recruitment, leadership skills, etc.)*

Progress:

- Data and resource gathering ongoing

## Financial Stability

*Scale grants and finance management capacity and update dues structure.*

Progress:

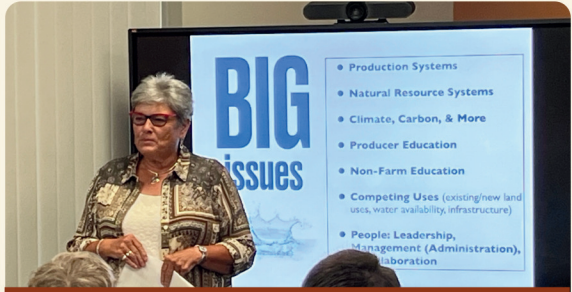
- Grants & Finance Manager hired
- Dues structure updated

# SUMMER SUMMIT REGION MEETINGS

In August, IASWCD and ISDA organized regional gatherings throughout Indiana for SWCDs, offering opportunities for districts to connect, network, and generate innovative ideas. Phil Anderson from ReThink! delivered a presentation, urging districts to explore unconventional solutions, aim high, and collaborate with additional partners. A dynamic 'Sticky Wall' activity encouraged districts to brainstorm fresh projects creatively and present them to the group.



Phil Anderson,  
Keynote Speaker



Jane Hardisty,  
State Soil Conservation Board



Tom Rudolph,  
S-SW IASWCD  
Region Director,  
Pike Co SWCD  
Supervisor





## NACD FLY-IN

The National Association of Conservation Districts organizes an annual Fly-In gathering in Washington DC every spring, offering states the chance to engage with U.S. Congress members regarding the Farm Bill and various natural resource concerns.



In 2023, attendees from IASWCD included Liz Rice, Executive Director, alongside both current and former board members Ethan Truax, Roger Wenning, and Gene Schmidt.

## ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF SWCDS

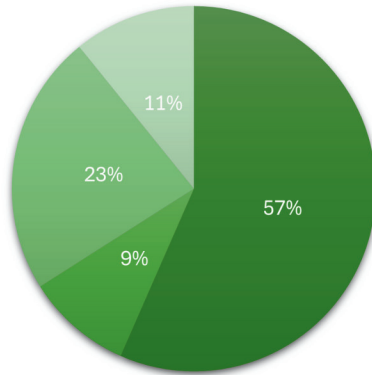
IASWCD hosted the 82nd Annual Conference of Indiana Soil and Water Conservation Districts in January at the Westin in downtown Indianapolis. Keynote, Michelle Miller, online influencer and modern day farm ag production myth buster, emphasized the importance of positive farm stories.





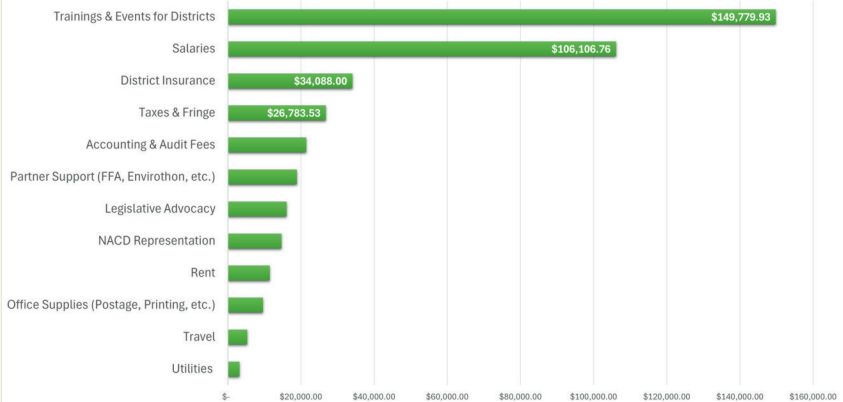
# FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

## IASWCD FY 2023 Income



- District Investment
- Annual Conference Sponsors & Exhibitors
- Event Registrations
- Other

## IASWCD FY2023 Operating Expenses



# FINANCIAL: STATEWIDE PROGRAMS

IASWCD Statewide Programs		
Program	Obligated Partner Contributions (Total for entirety of the grant)	Active Date
Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative	\$ 5,197,324.00	2020-2027
Urban Soil Health	\$ 2,047,464.00	2020-2025
Pathway to Water Quality	\$ 100,000.00	2019-2024
<b>Total Funds Invested in Indiana's Conservation</b>	<b>\$ 7,344,788.00</b>	

IASWCD is the financial administrator for conservation initiatives benefiting districts and natural resources across the state, including CCSI and USH. A new program titled Resilient Indiana (RITA), backed by NRCS and Clean Water Indiana (CWI) funding, will gradually expand its operations over the next five years, delivering technical support to districts.



IASWCD oversees the financing of the Pathway to Water Quality exhibit, an annual showcase at the Indiana State Fairgrounds focusing on watershed education. This exhibit receives funding from the Indiana Conservation Partners (ICP) and is staffed by volunteers from across the state.

# AWARD RECIPIENTS

## **SUPERVISOR OF THE YEAR**

### **MIKE NORMAN**

Mike Norman has been an exemplary supervisor at Fulton County SWCD since 1992. He actively advocates for conservation, participates in securing funding at the State House, attends various meetings, and participates in educational programs. We appreciate his dedication to conservation practices and the district.



*(LtoR) Tom Bechman, Indiana  
Prairie Farmer  
and Mike Norman*

## **FRIEND OF CONSERVATION**

### **HELP THE HELLBENDER**

The Help the Hellbender Project, led by Dr. Rod Williams and Nick Burgmeier (Purdue University) aims to conserve the declining hellbender salamander population in the Sinking Blue River Watershed. Through education, captive rearing, and habitat restoration, they've released 500 juveniles since 2017 and secured \$2.7 million for conservation projects.



*Eliza Hudson, Purdue Extension  
- Forestry & Natural Resources*

## **FRIEND OF CONSERVATION**

### **JOHNNY KLEMME**

*Land Values* directed by Johnny Klemme, is a compelling documentary highlighting the Big Pine Creek Watershed in Indiana. It showcases smart farming and environmental practices, and promotes stewardship. The film has been used for education and outreach by SWCDs, fostering conservation conversations statewide.



*Johnny Klemme*

# AWARD RECIPIENTS

## CONSERVATION FARMER OF THE YEAR

### CAIN'S HOMELIKE FARMS

The Cain family, including Kenny, Marlene, Terry, and Amy, have been integral to Montgomery County SWCD's conservation efforts. They've hosted the district's 4th Grade Field Days for 25 years, participated in Pheasants Forever, and supported global conservation initiatives, embodying a multi-generational commitment to conservation education and action.



*Cain's Homelike Farms*

## PRESIDENT'S AWARD

### LES ZIMMERMAN & RAY CHATTIN

The President's Award recipients, Les Zimmerman and Ray Chattin, are celebrated for their exceptional efforts in securing additional funding for Indiana Conservation Districts. Their organized campaign led to an extra \$6.8 million, demonstrating the power of collaboration in advancing soil and water conservation efforts statewide.



*(LtoR) Ray Chattin & Les Zimmerman*

## EARTH TEAM VOLUNTEER

### MARILYN ELLICOTT

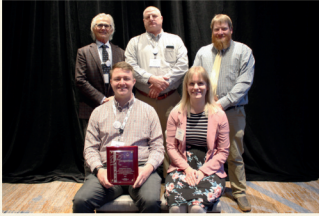
Marilyn Ellicott received the 2023 Indiana Earth Team Volunteer Award for her exceptional commitment to assisting the Newton County NRCS & SWCD Office. Her extensive contributions include organizing data, leading education events, mentoring interns, and promoting conservation practices within her community, totaling 130 invaluable volunteer hours.



*Marilyn Endicott (third from right) with Newton County Conservation staff*



# DISTRICT SHOWCASE AWARD



Montgomery County SWCD

## **MONTGOMERY COUNTY - BUILDING CAPACITY**

In response to community demands, Montgomery County SWCD expanded its services, requiring a new staff position. A Clean Water Indiana grant funded a Program Coordinator, facilitating enhanced outreach, organized events like 4th-grade field days, and increased conservation practices adoption. Partnerships bolstered their efforts, leading to permanent county funding for the position.



Newton County SWCD  
& Partners

## **NEWTON COUNTY - STUDENT INTERNS**

Various Newton County organizations, like the SWCD, Jasper Newton Foundation, IDNR, and TNC partnered to create a Student Conservation Internship Program. Aimed at high school students, it offers paid work experience in natural resources, fostering career exploration and workforce development while addressing local conservation needs.



Kosciusko County SWCD

## **KOSCIUSKO COUNTY - URBAN SOILS GROUP**

The Kosciusko County Urban Healthy Soils Working Group targets small urban, rural farmers, and home gardeners, providing educational resources and technical assistance. Through partnerships and outreach, the program engages with individuals, offering free soil samples, workshops, and seed. Community collaboration strengthens the district's conservation efforts, fostering growth and adoption.



Annual Report

# RIVER FRIENDLY FARMER AWARD

*Honoring farmers who employ best practices to safeguard Indiana's water bodies.*



## 2023 RECIPIENTS

Marty Aumann (Adams)  
William Hofmeyer (Benton )  
David Smith (Blackford)  
Vernon Zurcher (Clay)  
Mary & Wes Booker (Dearborn)  
Tom & Libby Klump (Dearborn)  
Matt Raver (Decatur)  
Robert Dawson (Decatur)  
Eric Scholer (Delaware)  
Jeff Stenftenagel (Dubois)  
Carl Stoltzfus (Elkhart)  
Bryan & Beth Sasser (Fayette)  
Shirley Needham (Fulton)  
Larry Pattison (Grant)  
Stephen Daily (Howard)  
Michael Schoeff (Huntington)  
Brian Thompson (Jackson)  
Gloria Green (Jay )  
Rex & Rob Marchino (Knox)  
Mark Montel (Kosciusko)  
Stan Miller (LaGrange)

Bernie Baltes (LaPorte)  
Cragen Farms, LLC. (Morgan)  
Otis and Dee Pugh (Morgan)  
Randy Prohosky (Newton)  
Mark Evers (Noble)  
Ed Ruge (Porter)  
Paul Kline (Pulaski)  
Darrell Goode (Putnam)  
John McNeely (Scott)  
Roger Hurm (Spencer)  
Kenneth Watts (St. Joseph)  
Larry Wappel Sr. (Starke)  
Timothy Groosbeck (Steuben)  
Dan Hart (Switzerland)  
George Seib (Vanderburgh)  
Robert Cottingham (Warren)  
Peter Rudolph (Warrick)  
Beach Farms (Washington)  
Mark Schlegel (Wayne)  
Randy McMillan (Wells)  
Josef Steinbacher (Whitley)

# STATEWIDE PROGRAMS

The Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (IASWCD) administers three programs which provide practical, technical, and supportive assistance to enhance soil and water conservation efforts statewide. Funding for these programs is provided by NRCS and the Clean Water Indiana program.



**Resilient Indiana: Technical Assistance (RITA) for SWCDs is an initiative by the Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, supported by USDA NRCS and Clean Water Indiana. Its aim is to enhance SWCDs' capacity in promoting climate change mitigation on agricultural lands.**



**Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative**

**The Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative (CCSI), in collaboration with the Indiana Conservation Partnership, offers science-based education and technical assistance on soil health farming practices to farmers and industry influencers.**



**The mission of the Urban Soil Health Program (USH) is to improve soil health in urban and small-scale farms and gardens across Indiana through education and advocacy. Collaborating with conservation partners, USH establishes local Soil Health Working Groups, tailoring education and assistance to small-scale vegetable growers.**

# ADVOCACY & REPRESENTATION OF INDIANA SWCDS

**Indiana Conservation Partnership  
(ICP) Technical Training  
Committee**



**Indiana Family of Farmers**

**Pathway to Water Quality  
Steering Committee**

**Rural Caucus**

**Sustainable Agriculture  
Research and Education  
(SARE) Advisory Committee**



**Sentinel Landscapes Advisory Committee**



**Women4theLand Steering Committee**

# MORE IN 2024

## River Friendly Farmer Award Ceremony, August 7

Indiana State Fairgrounds

## Summer Summits

Region Meetings for Indiana SWCDs (August/September)

## Pathway to Water Quality

Open August 2-18

The PWQ exhibit on the Indiana State Fairgrounds is a watershed demonstration site showing how conservation practices protect water resources.



## Award Nomination Deadlines

- River Friendly Farmer due June 7
- District Showcase due August 2
- Conservation Farmer of the Year due Sept 13
- Supervisor of the Year due Sept 13
- Friend of Conservation due Sept 13

# STRIVE IN 2025

## Annual Conference of Indiana Soil & Water Conservation Districts

January 26-28, Westin Indianapolis

## CWI Breakfast at the Statehouse

January 28

# THANK YOU SPONSORS!

## River Friendly Farmer Award Program



## Annual Conference - Top Sponsors





# CONTACT US



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**Les Zimmerman**

Legislative Affairs  
Manager

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