



Dubois County Soil and Water Conservation District Meeting
1486 Executive Blvd., Suite A, Jasper, IN 47546
812-482-1171, Ext 3, www.duboisswcd.org
www.duboisswcd.org

Thursday, February 1, 2024 @ 4:30 pm
SWCD Office: Jasper USDA Service Center

Present:

Brenda Sermersheim, Chair
Glenn Goepfner, Vice Chair
Arlene Fleck, Supervisor, Treasurer
Pat Eckerle, Supervisor
Mark Welp, Supervisor

Clay Cox, NRCS District Conservationist
Aubree Pond, SWCD Executive Director
Veronica Helming, SWCD Administrative Assistant
Melissa Ruschau, SWCD Resource Specialist

SWCD Chair Brenda Sermersheim, opened the meeting at 4:30pm.

Sermersheim asked if there were any changes to the agenda. One topic was added: Professional Development.

MINUTES

Sermersheim asked for a motion to approve the January 5th, Board Meeting Minutes as presented. A motion was heard and seconded to approve the minutes. (*Fleck/Goepfner*) The motion was carried unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Helming reviewed the January 2024 Financial Report and Internal Control Form. A motion was heard and seconded to approve the Financial Report. (*Eckerle/Fleck*) The motion carried unanimously. Next, Helming reviewed the Register of Claims to be paid. A motion was heard and seconded to approve the claims. (*Welp/Fleck*) The motion carried unanimously.

Helming ordered the dessert for the Annual Meeting from Joyce Hopf of Pies Plus More. Joyce is going to send an invoice for the total. She would like a check the day of. Helming is asking for approval to cut the check on the Monday to give it to Joyce on Tuesday when she picks up the dessert. Helming included an estimated invoice for the desserts. Joyce did say there will be a slight upcharge on the strawberry delight since strawberries have been so high in the store. A motion was heard and seconded to approve the payment to Joyce Hopf for the desserts with an amount up to \$350. (*Fleck/Eckerle*) The motion carried unanimously.

SWCD Strategic Action Updates

A. Operations

a. Annual Meeting

i. Speaker Gift

1. Pond asked the Board what they would like to give as a speaker gift this year. There will be four individuals there with The Talon Trust. Helming stated in past years we have gone to Chocolate Bliss or Jasper Gift Basket Co. to purchase a gift. Pond stated we could go that route, or we could give them a donation for their cause. The Board liked the idea of a donation. Two possible amounts were

thrown out there, \$25 per person or \$50 per person. A motion was heard and seconded to approve the donation to The Talon Trust for \$25 per person totaling \$100 for the speaker gift. (*Eckerle/Welp*) The motion carried unanimously.

ii. Award/Script Order

1. Helming had printed out a draft of the Annual Meeting script. She asked the Board to look over it and see if there were any changes to be made. She did state that who is presenting what award can be changed. The one topic that needed to be discussed was who would be presenting the Ken McWilliams Memorial Award for Soil Judging Excellence. Helming's idea would be to have Associate Supervisors, Duane Hopf and Andy Helming present the award. Hopf hosted the event this past September and A. Helming has experience with the event as a past student of a winning team and a former couch/FFA advisor of soil judging. The Board thought this was a wonderful idea to get the Associate Supervisors involved with the meeting. There were no other changes to the script at this time.

b. Envirothon Registration for Dubois County Schools

i. Pond stated in the past we have covered the Envirothon registration for all four Dubois County High Schools. There are usually two teams per school. Registration is \$70 per team. There would be a possibility of eight teams going to the contest which would total \$560 for registration for all eight teams. A motion was heard and seconded to approve the registration for eight teams from the county high schools at \$70 per team with a total of \$560. (*Eckerle/Welp*) The motion carried unanimously.

c. SWCD Credit Card

i. Helming printed out the current SWCD Credit Card Policy. We are needing to update SWCD policies. Helming stated we needed a second credit card. There were some situations where it would have been beneficial to have two cards. At the No-Till Conference, Ruschau was unable to get the sales tax off her hotel room cost due to not having a business credit card. The reimbursement process takes a while, with happening to wait till the next board meeting for the payment to be approved. There was discussion on how to split the card limit between the two cards. Sermersheim was unsure if you could split the limit between the two cards or if the total limit could just be for both cards. Sermersheim was going to check with German American's credit card department to see if the total limit can be shared between the cards and if it matters who uses the card. A motion was heard and seconded to approve getting a second credit card for the SWCD office. (*Fleck/Welp*) The motion carried unanimously.

B. Stormwater: No Update

C. Soil Health

a. VUJC Land Stewardship Initiative Update

i. Ruschau started her update with some cover crops from LSI, demonstrating that even though there was not much plant growth above the surface of the ground the roots were still comparatively deep.

ii. The Ag Committee meeting was held on Wednesday, January 24th. Many topics were discussed: Rick Applegate was unable to use the harvest data to produce a yield map due to both equipment failure and miscalibration of the

sensor. Jason Lueken was there to give the soil report. He noted all nutrients were trending in the right direction, but he would like to keep an eye on the pH of the soil. There was a discussion on planting soybeans again this year versus corn. With the way the markets are soybeans are the best bet for not losing money. Crop insurance was also discussed. Ruschau asked if we wanted to get crop insurance with planting soybeans again. There were mixed feelings about the crop insurance since Indiana is projected to have a drought this year. Ruschau is going to get quotes for crop insurance for different coverage rates from Kurt Fleck. Also discussed at the Ag Committee meeting was cover crops for next year. They want to get the beans planted earlier this year so harvest will also be earlier. If harvest is early we can get cover crops in the ground sooner for maximum growth. Ruschau is currently working on a summary past cover crops species, planting dates, and termination dates from the LSI project 2012-current for the Ag Committee.

b. Let's Dig

- i. Ruschau gave the update for the Urban Soil Health: Let's Dig program. The invoice for 2023 has been sent and we are expecting to get \$3,800 back from last years soil sample testing and technical assistance visits.
- ii. The working group had their quarterly meeting on Monday, January 29th. At this meeting it was decided to invoice the landowners who did more than one soil sample for the extra samples. Helming has sent out those invoices.
 1. Also, they are planning to do a giveaway at the Jasper Home Expo on February 23 & 24 to raise awareness of the group and its' mission. For this year Sister Jean Marie Ballard has four visits planned and Kenny Eck has ten visits planned. We are allowed to bill USHER for up to 30 visits per year.
 2. Let's Dig is currently planning to host a fall workshop about winterizing your garden and season extension. We could get up to \$1000 reimbursement for hosting a workshop.
 3. There was also discussion on how the FFA students will get involved with the program. Currently the plan is for them to be involved with the education portion such as attending workshops.

D. Invasive Species and Noxious Weeds

a. Grant finished as of Jan. 31

- i. The grant has officially been wrapped up. The grant report was due January 31st. We should be expecting payment soon.

b. ISAC

- i. The next ISAC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 7th in the Hickory Room at the Jasper Public Library at 6:30pm. They are still interested in pursuing a full-time invasive species position for the SWCD.

E. Livestock Production

a. Clean Water Indiana Projects

- i. 2021-2023, Dubois, Warrick, Spencer
 1. This grant has been officially wrapped up. Pond had been working with Warrick and Spencer counties to finish up the grant report that was due January 31st. We should be expecting payment soon.
- ii. 2023-2025, Dubois, Orange, Washington

1. Bary had two producers turn in receipts in January for payment. The first one paid out was for Andrew Helming for HUAP and watering facilities. The second one to be paid out was for Kurt Weyer for animal trails. All the funds for this grant have been allocated. Bary is currently working on designs for producers.

F. Forest Management: No Update

G. Native Plant, Pollinator Habitat, Small Farms: No Update

Reports

A. Supervisor Reports

- a. Pond asked Eckerle when the next Weed Board meeting was. Currently one has not been scheduled. Kenny Eck is in charge of setting up meetings and he currently has a very busy workload.
- b. Sermersheim attended the Perry County SWCD Annual Meeting. Their speaker was about stress in agriculture. She said it was very informative and a tough subject to talk about. Also, the FFA chapters from Perry Central and Tell City were there to talk about their activities for the year. This is the first year Tell City has had an FFA chapter.

B. Staff Monthly Activity Reports: Provided via email prior to meeting.

C. Partner Reports

- a. NRCS
 - i. Cox gave his update. He is currently working on the first round of funding for EQIP. The IRA ranking deadline is Friday.

Other Business

A. Professional Development

- a. Pond had asked Markie Rhodes, Human Resources of Dubois County if there were any professional development opportunities for department heads. He sent her three options. She asked the Board if she could attend one of these workshops to help her increase her knowledge on supervising employees. She included a handout for the meeting with the three options and descriptions. The Board looked over the three options and quickly eliminated option three. She does not prefer which one she attended. She just wanted to know the opinion of everyone on the Board. It was decided for her to attend option two which is Leadership Coaching Bootcamp. This workshop will take place over four half days in March and April in Evansville. The description for the workshop is as follows: "Leadership coaching is an effective approach to develop employees through customized development plans, setting expectations, providing regular feedback, and having one on one conversations. The goal of this program is to apply a coaching approach to leadership that will build up the capacity of managers and supervisors to improve the performance of their direct reports." A motion was heard and seconded for Pond to attend the Leadership Coaching Bootcamp for a cost of \$395. (*Fleck/Eckerle*) The motion carried unanimously.

b. Supervisor Professional Development

- i. There is also an opportunity for Supervisors to have professional development. The ISDA and IASWCD announced a new program at the Annual Conference last month. This program is called "Board Certification Program". Supervisors will have access to a website that will have additional trainings and resources for them. Some of the trainings are short and some long. There was discussion of possibly watching one of the trainings during a board meeting. A handout was provided for the Supervisors to have information on the program.

The meeting adjourned at 5:42pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 7 at 4:30pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Veronica Helming
Administrative Assistant

Approved On: 2-13-2024

Fabrizio Corbale

Mark Welp

Glenn Goepfer

Dee Steck

Gerda Lammers