Dubois County Soil and Water Conservation District Meeting
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Dubois County SWCD Annual Meeting Minutes
February 3rd, 2026 6:30 PM
St. Mary's Church Ireland, IN
110 people

The Soil and Water Conservation District Board Chair, Brenda Sermersheim began the SWCD 80th Annual Meeting at 6:30pm by welcoming everyone in attendance. Sermersheim introduced the SWCD Board Members, Associate Members, SWCD staff members, County Commissioners and County Council, and Partnership Agencies. She also thanked the Annual Meeting Sponsors: German American Bank, Old National Bank, Farm Credit Mid-America and Freedom Bank. Sermersheim introduced Corbyn Schnell, who gave the invocation before the dinner. The dinner was prepared by Arnie's Catering and desserts by Veronica Helming. Drinks were served by members of the Forest Park High School, Northeast Dubois High School, and Jasper High School FFA teams.

After dinner, Sermersheim introduced the featured speaker, Greg Brann. His presentation included the use of virtual fences, grazing techniques and gear needed. He also talked about best grasses for high performance and the importance of stock piling year around. He informed everyone in attendance about his annual pasture walk. This year's walk will be held October 15th. Any information can be found on his website.

After Greg Brann's presentation, Sermersheim thanked them for their informative presentation. Next up is the awards section of the meeting. She introduced SWCD Board Supervisor, Glenn Goeppner.

SWCD Vice Chair, Glenn Goeppner presented Jasper FFA Seniors Soil Judging Team with the 2025 Ken McWilliams Memorial Award for Soil Judging Excellence. This past September, the contest was held on Steckler Farms on Mariah Hill Road in Ferdinand. Tonight, Jasper FFA Seniors Soil Judging Team was presented with the Ken McWilliams Memorial Award. Claire Linette, Levi Mehringer, Luke Popp and Jace Wagner.

SWCD Supervisor, Pate Eckerle presented the River Friendly Farmer Award to Grant Weyer of Infinity Cattle Company LLC. The Weyer Family was not in attendance tonight however, we wanted to recognize the practices they have voluntarily implemented include rotational grazing for cattle, updated water systems to improve herd movement across the farm, and installing several hay feeding pads. These practices increase fertility of the soil, decrease erosion, and help protect Indiana's waterways.

SWCD Supervisor, Mark Welp presented the SWCD Friend of Conservation Award to Ferdinand Parks And Recreation Department. Jill Schipp, is the representative accepting this award for the Ferdinand Park And Recreations Department. For three years they have shown strong commitment to conservation by hosting Weed Wrangle Events at Old Town Lake. Their hands-on efforts to remove invasives and support native habitats has had a lasting positive impact on the Town of Ferdinand.

SWCD Chair, Brenda Sermersheim, representing German American Bank, presented the Otto J. Bauer Memorial Outstanding Conservation Farmer of the Year award to Charles Ruetman. Charles is the 5th generation to produce corn and soybeans on this Dubois County Farm with Charles adopting 100% no-till planting practices. Charlie has adopted sustainable agricultural practices with the use of no-till farming, cover crops, and planting green. In addition, Charlie has implemented other practices including several water control sediment basins and grass waterways.

Arlene Fleck, Chair of the SWCD Election Committee which includes Kaleb Stenftenagel and Annette Applegate conducted the election of a SWCD Supervisor. Brenda Sermersheim's term as an elected supervisor had concluded. On the ballot is Tabitha Hurst. Fleck asked for any nominations for the position from the floor. No nominations were heard. Fleck then asked for a motion to close nominations. A motion was heard and seconded to close the nominations. (Glenn Goeppner/Mark Welp) Fleck asked for an "Aye" for all in favor and then a "No" for any opposed. There were no oppositions. Fleck asked Tabitha Hurst to come forward for the Oath of Office. Alex Hohl, president of the Dubois County Council also came forward to the podium to administer the oath of office.

Sermersheim then introduced our partners who would be giving reports. Bradley Hoffman, FSA County Executive Director gave updates on several programs.

Lastly, Sermersheim reminded the audience to fill out the surveys on the tables, to help the SWCD plan future events. She thanked the Annual Meeting sponsors and the Annual Report sponsors. She also thanked the FFA members and their advisors for assisting with tonight's meeting. She also announced there will be a SWCD reorganizational meeting following this meeting. The meeting adjourned at 8:45pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Approved On: _____

Kaylee Jacob
Administrative Assistant

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