

ELKHART COUNTY SWCD BOARD MEETING MINUTES

December 18, 2017

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Present: Supervisors: Tom Kercher, Alex Wait, Dean Rink, Darrell Shover; Staff: Jim Hess, Lora Callahan, Jordan Beehler, Deb Jimison; Associates: Gary Kauffman, Keith E. Miller; NRCS: Amanda Kautz; ISDA District Support Specialist: Heath Hurst, Elkhart County Surveyor: Phil Barker.

Absent: Supervisors: Dale Leer; Associates: David Bontrager, Joe Brown, Brian Campbell; Purdue Extension: Jeff Burbrink, Robert Kelly; ISDA: Jennifer Thum.

The board meeting was called to order by Tom Kercher at 5:35 pm.

The November 20, 2017 board meeting minutes were approved on a motion by Rink/Shover.

Agency Reports:

NRCS: Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP): The Application deadline is January 12, 2018. Conservation Reserve Program – New Enrollments: Until further notice, FSA is not able to accept any CRP offers submitted after October 1, 2017, except for Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) offer. Conservation Reserve Program – New Soil Rental Rates: This past summer, the FSA NHQ calculated soil rental rates for each county in the nation for FY18 by multiplying:

- County-average dryland rental rates (from the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service – NASS – 2016 data)
- By a set of soil-specific productivity factors for the county (based on the NRCS National Commodity Crop Productivity Index – NCCPI)

FY18 soil rental rates are posted on the local bulletin board in the local FSA office.

Fall Transect: The Indiana Conservation Partnership is gearing up for the fall/winter transect. The data collected from this effort is critical to being able to document that Indiana farmers planted over 1 million acres of true cover crops for the past two years in a row – no other state can make these valid claims! It also gives the local partnership the opportunity to see all of the great conservation, and areas of need, in the county and to collaborate on the upcoming year's need. **2017 Census of Agriculture:** The National Agriculture Statistics Service (NASS) is only a few weeks from mailing the 2017 Census of Agriculture to approximately 3 million U. S. producers. These mailings will run from mid-November through late December.

Extension: Not in attendance, since Jeff has a PARP meeting tonight in Ag Hall. Robert Kelly gave us the Soil Judging team winners today.

ISDA: The new Director of Indiana State Department of Agriculture was announced on December 1, 2017 as Bruce Kettler, he is looking forward to serving as director of ISDA, he is still serving as the director of public relations for Beck's Hybrids, and will assume his duties on January 8, 2018.

Annual Meeting Committee: Everything is looking good.

District Business:

*Clean Water Indiana: All paperwork has been submitted to ISDA to be reimbursed for money spent out of the SWCD pocket.

*Winter Cover Crop Meeting: Jim is going to investigate whether or not we can have CCU/CEU/CCH credits. We are planning on planting seeds in our soil samples after the first of the year.

* Field Trip Incentive Program: We are going to partner with Ethos/Elkhart County Parks/Elkhart Schools – ACCEL/Wellfield Botanic Garden, Jordan has contacted school transportation offices, who are in support of the program. They will take the idea to the Stormwater Board in January to be approved.

*Rain Barrel Trip to St. Joe, IN: Deb was looking for volunteers and a trailer to go pick up rain barrels in St. Joe, IN, both we accomplished.

*New Copy Machine: Has arrived and is now in working order.

*IDEA Mtg. Update: Jim & Jordan attended the meeting, there are other districts wondering why some charge for their Annual Meeting, some pay for their speakers.

*Tree Sale Forms: Early Bird Deadline is coming up **January 5th**

*Audit Committee: Tom Kercher, Dean Rink, and Alex Wait. Lora will call Penny to let her know of the dates we selected and let her choose the dates of January 12th or 15th at 9:00 am. The board agreed to pay her \$150, so Lora can have a check ready when the audit is complete. Rink/Shover

Financial Business:

The vehicle log was signed by Alex Wait

The rubber stamp was not used.

The monthly financial reports, claims and budgets were approved on a motion by Shover/Wait. Claims for the following were signed: Interra Credit Union (\$36.99 – IMN Prizes); CMC Global (\$945.00 – 2018 IASWCD Annual Conference); David Hess (\$1,673.15 – 2016 CWI Grant 26.5 ac. Pasture Renov.); Dean Rink (\$6,600.00 – 2016 CWI Grant 330 ac. Cover Crops); Roger Hibschan (\$3,180.00 – 2016 CWI Grant 159 ac. Cover Crops); Jonathan Zimmerman (\$2,000.00 – 2016 CWI Grant 100 ac. Cover Crops); Craig B. Blough (\$1,860.00 – 2016 CWI Grant 93 ac. Cover Crops); Jim Yoder (\$2,800.00 – 2016 CWI Grant 140 ac. Cover Crops); Dave Kulp (\$2,300.00 – 2016 CWI Grant 115 ac. Cover Crops); Ernie Miller (\$2,040.00 – 2016 CWI Grant 102 ac. Cover Crops).

The board meeting adjourned at 6:55 PM. Wait/Shover

Next Board Meeting: January 22, 5:30 pm in the SWCD Office.

**SWCD Board Chairman
Tom Kercher**

**SWCD Board Vice Chairman
Alex Wait**

**SWCD Board Member
Dale Leer**

**SWCD Board Member
Dean Rink**

**SWCD Board Member
Darrell Shover**

**Recording Secretary
Lora Callahan**