



Dubois County Soil and Water Conservation District Meeting  
1486 Executive Blvd., Suite A, Jasper, IN 47546  
812-482-1171, Ext 3, [www.duboisswcd.org](http://www.duboisswcd.org)  
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Thursday, March 7, 2024 @ 4:30 pm  
Jasper USDA Service Center: Conference Room

**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  
Justin Bary, SWCD Resource Specialist

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

Sermersheim asked if there were any changes to the agenda. There were no changes to the agenda.

**MINUTES**

Sermersheim asked for a motion to approve the Annual Meeting Minutes and Reorganizational Meeting minutes as presented. A motion was heard and seconded to approve both the minutes. *(Fleck/Welp)* The motion was carried unanimously.

**FINANCIAL REPORTS**

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

**SWCD Strategic Action Updates**

A. Operations

a. SWCD Depository

- i. Sermersheim stated we needed to decide if we want to keep our depository account with German American Bank. This was normally done at the Reorganizational Meeting after the Annual Meeting. A motion was heard and seconded to keep the depository account at German American Bank for the year 2024. *(Fleck/Eckerle)* The motion carried unanimously.

b. Work from Home Policy

- i. Pond talked to Markie Rhodes, Dubois County Human Resource about the possible government shutdown. During this time, SWCD staff cannot enter the USDA Service Center. With not having office space during this time, Pond asked if the staff could telework, since the timeframe of a government shutdown is unknown. For normal situations, the County's intent is for everyone to be in the office. If staff can physically not enter the office, teleworking is acceptable, in the case of Covid/medical, government shutdown, or inclement weather. Pond asked what the expectations for teleworking are. Eckerle expressed to communicate with customers when the office is closed. Make sure to have proper signage on the door and

voicemails are up to date. For the staff, it would be up to the Executive Director to decide how often and what to communicate while teleworking. Cox also stated on Monday, April 8<sup>th</sup> the USDA Service Center will be closed due to the eclipse. The Dubois County Emergency Management Agency suggested the County close the courthouse, but that has yet to be decided. The County is planning for many visitors that day. A decision was made for a more formal write up of the telework policy for the Board to approve at the next meeting.

c. SWCS Conference Request

- i. Pond gave a description of the Soil & Water Conservation Society Conference she wishes to attend. The conference is in Myrtle Beach, SC on the week of July 21-26. This year her registration would be free since she is a new member. Pond created a budget for the trip. The budget for the trip is estimated to be around \$1,650. This includes the round-trip flight, hotel, and food. Sermersheim asked for a background of the leadership program and what she has gained from the program so far. Pond described the program and said it would be nice to meet some of the individuals she has been working with. A motion was heard and seconded to send Pond to the SWCS Conference in July. (*Fleck/Goepner*) The motion carried unanimously.

d. Freedom Bank Sponsorship

- i. Sermersheim contacted all the Annual Report ad sponsors and thanked them for participating this year. Since Kiesel Enterprises' ad was not in the Annual Report, they would like their funds to be used within the year 2024 for another event. Freedom Bank had sent their check in the week before the Annual Meeting. Helming could not get their ad in the Annual Report due to it already going to print. Their ad was in the program for the meeting though. Sermersheim stated she wanted to see the letter that went out to Freedom about the sponsorship.

While Helming pulled it up on her computer, Pond went over the Annual Meeting Report showing the finances for the meeting. Many suggestions were made for next year to lower costs. These suggestions included: going another printing route for the Annual Report, longer window for advertising, and possibility of smaller venues. Pond assumed the Ferdinand News only went to residents in Ferdinand and that is not the case. In the past few years, the Ferdinand News has become more popular and reaches a majority of the county. She suggested possibly going with Branded by Woods like we do with our newsletters. Sermersheim stated we need to work on advertising sooner, starting in December. Helming stated she is going to work on moving the newsletters up a month from when they are currently going out. Helming also suggested picking smaller venues such as community clubs and conservation clubs in the county. We usually need a microphone and white screen and that is why we have picked larger venues in the past.

Back to the Freedom Bank sponsorship, Sermersheim read the last paragraph of the letter sent to Freedom Bank and it stated,

“If you would like to serve as an annual meeting sponsor, please make a check payable to the Dubois County SWCD. I can stop by to pick it up. For our promotional materials, we will need your advertising copy. It can be forwarded to me at [duboisswcd@gmail.com](mailto:duboisswcd@gmail.com). Our deadline with the Ferdinand News is January 23, so a response prior to then is appreciated! We will also need to know how many people to expect at our meeting, and if you’d like to set up a table of materials.”

Sermersheim felt that with the wording of this paragraph and them never sending in their advertisement, we do not need to proceed with a plan.

e. SWCD Resource Specialist Job Descriptions

- i. Pond had printed out the Resource Specialist Job Description. She added invasive management to the description. She added it because ISAC would like to see an SWCD employee devote one day per week to invasives, since our Invasive Species Specialist position no longer exists. Other items to discuss with the job description were the NRCS contribution agreement and the CSGP Program (Rule 5).

1. NRCS Contribution Agreement

- a. The NRCS contribution agreement brought in \$10,590 in 2023. It is a very high workload and Cox appreciated the help very much. The current CRP agreement ends in 2025. Pond wanted to know if we wanted to continue with the NRCS contribution agreement. A motion was heard and seconded to continue the NRCS contribution agreement. (*Eckerle/Welp*) The motion carried unanimously.

2. CSGP Program (Rule 5)

- a. For the CSGP program, the SWCD does not get compensation for completing the work. Bary would assist IDEM, by going out and checking projects in the county. Bary was grandfathered in with his training and did not have to go to the more extensive trainings. If we continue with the program the new hire would have to go through the extensive training. Currently, the CSGP program takes up 25% of Bary’s workload. The Board decided to not continue the CSGP program.

A motion was heard and seconded to update the job description to include invasive management and discontinuing the CSGP program. (*Eckerle/Fleck*) The motion carried unanimously.

f. Credit Card Policy

- i. Included in the packets was a recent copy of the Credit Card Policy. Helming had updated it to show the recent changes made in February. The policy was confusing and was organized backwards. What was on the front of the paper should have been on the back and vice versa. Sermersheim would like to see a reorganized policy and then it can be approved at the next board meeting.

g. Drill/Seeder Policy

- i. With planting season coming up, there is a need to discuss the Drill and Seeder contracts. The current contract is for \$12 per acre with a \$100 minimum. There is no limit on how many days it can be rented for. There

was a lot of discussion on how many total days they could rent or rent it out by how many acres they run per day. A motion was heard and seconded to charge \$25 per day after three days of renting, subject to Board approval. (*Fleck/Goepfner*) The motion carried unanimously.

B. Stormwater

a. Meeting with Chad Mundy Recap

i. Ad in Dubois County Free Press

1. Pond met with Chad Mundy from Stormwater. During the meeting they discussed this year's ads with the Dubois County Free Press. Mundy is required by the State to do advertising. In the past we have split the total amount with Stormwater. The ads will have links to the SWCD website or Stormwater's website. Pond provided a handout of the ads for the year. The total for all the ads is \$4,280. SWCD's total will be \$2,140. The ads run from April 1, 2024-April 1, 2025. A motion was heard and seconded to continue with the Dubois County Free Press ads for the year and to split the total amount with Stormwater. (*Eckerle/Fleck*) The motion carried unanimously.

Cox left at 6:00pm.

C. Soil Health

a. VUJC Land Stewardship Initiative Update

- i. Ruschau presented her budget for this coming planting season. She gave time for everyone to review it. The first topic discussed was what price to use to project the sale of soybeans. Ruschau had done research on Owensboro Grain and ADM websites, looking at the futures in December 2024. She also talked to Duane Hopf to get his input. The price she had come up with was \$11.25 per bushel. The Board stated they would like her to use the crop insurance prices that came out in March. This price was \$11.04 per bushel. Ruschau is unsure if we must pay for the seed or just the treatments. In the past it was donated. The field day budget is a little higher than last year because last year CCSI covered some expenses like speaker fees and hotels. Ruschau brought a document giving option for crop insurance. The Board discussed which one would be best. A motion was heard and seconded to approve the LSI budget and the crop insurance: 70% Fall Harvest option. (*Goepfner/Eckerle*) The motion carried unanimously.

b. Let's Dig

- i. Ruschau gave the update. We sent 15 soil samples off to Waters to be tested. We can still do 15 more test this year.

D. Invasive Species and Noxious Weeds

a. ISAC

- i. Pond gave the update for ISAC. Their last meeting was on Wednesday, February 7<sup>th</sup>. They discussed the Jasper Home Expo and their Spring speaker. The home expo went well, they just struggled getting enough volunteers for the two days. Their spring speaker will be Nathanael Pilla. The event includes a hike starting at 1:00pm and a book signing and presentation starting at 6:00pm at St. Benedicts Brew Works in Ferdinand. The SWCD is taking reservations for the hike.

- ii. Pond asked the process for the invasive letters to be put in with the property tax documents. Eckerle stated that Steve Berg received money from the Weed Board on invasives. He paid the treasurer extra to put the letters in the mailings for tax documents. Eckerle let her know she needed to contact Berg.

E. Livestock Production

a. Clean Water Indiana Projects

i. 2023-2025, Dubois, Orange, Washington

- 1. Bary gave the updated for the grant. Half of the funds have been paid out. Less than \$1000 of the total amount has been allocated. Andrea Gogel is taking over the engineering portion for Bary. Currently the grant states that 60% of the funds should go towards livestock and 40% towards invasives. There are two applications for invasives that plans need to be wrote for. We currently do not have anyone to write the plans. Emily Finch could not write them due to already being funded by a Clean Water Grant that ended in 2023. With Board approval we can move these numbers around due to interest in the program. A motion was heard and seconded to move the funds from invasives to livestock due to the increase in interest for livestock practices. *(Fleck/Welp)* The motion carried unanimously.

F. Forest Management: No Update

a. Four Rivers Forestry

- i. One event is planned: Breakfast with a Forester for Friday, March 22. The event will be held at Stoll's Lakeview Restaurant in Loogootee. This event is to welcome the new IDNR District Forester, Eric McDonald.

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

**Reports**


- A. Supervisor Reports: None
- B. Staff Monthly Activity Reports: Provided via email prior to meeting.
- C. Partner Reports: None

**Other Business**

The meeting adjourned at 6:54pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 4<sup>th</sup>, at 4:30pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Veronica Helming  
Administrative Assistant

Approved On: April 4, 2024

