



Dubois County Soil and Water Conservation District Meeting
1486 Executive Blvd., Suite A, Jasper, IN 47546
812-482-1171, Ext 3, www.duboisswcd.org
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Thursday, May 2, 2024 @ 4:30 pm
Jasper USDA Service Center: Conference Room

Present:

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

Aubree Pond, SWCD Executive Director
Veronica Helming, SWCD Administrative Assistant
Melissa Ruschau, SWCD Resource Specialist
Bradley Hoffman, FSA Executive Director

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

A motion was heard and seconded to approve the April 4th, Board Meeting Minutes as presented. (*Fleck/Welp*) The motion was carried unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Helming reviewed the April 2024 Financial Report and Internal Control Form. A motion was heard and seconded to approve the Financial Report. (*Goepfner/Fleck*) The motion carried unanimously. Next, Helming reviewed the Register of Claims to be paid. She stated the annual auto insurance premium from Progressive came in the mail on the first of May. The due date for the bill is May 19th. She is needing approval to pay this bill as well. A motion was heard and seconded to approve the Register of Claims and the Progressive Auto Insurance bill. (*Fleck/Goepfner*) The motion carried unanimously.

Bradley Hoffman arrived at 4:35pm.

Partner Reports-FSA

Bradley Hoffman the FSA County Executive Director joined our meeting to give updates on programs FSA offers. He started with the Conservation Reserve Program, which is offered to conserve land, water quality, and wildlife. Contracts are 10 to 15 years long. With this program, the FSA works closely with SWCD and NRCS. The next program, Hoffman talked about was Emergency Relief Program (ERP). ERP covers crop production, including certain quality losses and losses of trees due to qualifying natural disaster events that occurred in calendar year 2022. Next, Hoffman discussed the County Committee. Every FSA office in the country is required by law to have an advisory board made up of local farmers and ranchers. Members of the board are elected by their peers (local farmers and landowners) in the fall of every year. On June 17th the nomination period opens. So, if anyone would like to nominate someone they can do so.

SWCD Strategic Action Updates

- A. Operations
 - a. Drill/Seeder Update

- i. Pond gave the update for the Drill. The last producer noticed when he picked up the drill the electrical cord that connects to the truck for break lights was pulled out. Goepner said he would look at it and see if he could possibly fix it. Also, we received a post card in the mail for a discount on the discs. Pond was bringing this up just in case the discs needed replacement. Helming included sales tables for both the drill and seeder at Eckerle's request. This shows who has rented them so far this year, the sales for the year so far, sales tax, and any notes. Sermersheim would like to know how interest in the drill and seeder vary throughout the years and if the interest is still there. Helming plans on making charts and bringing to the next board meeting.
- b. Policy Updates
 - i. Materiality Threshold Policy
 1. The Board took time to look over the policy. A motion was heard and seconded to approve the Materiality Threshold Policy. *(Welp/Fleck)* The motion carried unanimously.
 - ii. Petty Cash Policy
 1. Helming discussed the Petty Cash Policy and stated, her and Pond agreed the fund should be increased to \$100. We currently do not use it a lot for little purchases since we have a credit card. The Petty Cash fund would mostly be used for change at an event we are hosting or in the office when flags are purchased. We currently struggle to find enough change when someone comes into purchase flags. With this increase more smaller bills and coins will be kept on hand. Helming also stated a need to keep the Petty Cash in a cash box instead of the pencil box it is currently in. It would be better to keep the money organized and would be under lock and key for events. A motion was heard and seconded to approve increasing the Petty Cash to \$100 and to approve the Petty Cash Policy. *(Welp/Fleck)* The motion carried unanimously.
- c. 2024 Fair Display/Mailer
 - i. Fair Display
 1. Helming asked if there are any suggestions on the 4H Fair Display for this year. Some suggestions included carbon credits and possibly something with water. Everyone agreed there needs to be some interactive activity to draw people in. If anyone comes up with an idea, they are to contact Pond or Helming.
 - ii. Mailer
 1. Pond received an email about putting an ad in the 4H Fair mailer. We have done this in the past. It is currently \$750 for a half page. In previous years our ad was on the page with the schedule. Last year it was not. Pond is going to try and request we return to the page with the schedule. A motion was heard and seconded to approve the half page ad for \$750 for the 4H mailer. *(Fleck/Goepner)* The motion carried unanimously.
- d. River Friendly Farmer
 - i. River Friendly Farmer nominations are due on Friday, June 7th. We can nominate two local farmers for the award. There were a few names brought into the conversation. The selection pool is only getting smaller, and the

decision was made to only nominate one producer. Sermersheim suggested reaching out to former Resource Specialist, Justin Bary on his thoughts on who to nominate. Pond is planning on reaching out to him. Pond and the Board plan on emailing to discuss the nominees to meet the deadline.

Hoffman left at 5:16pm.

- e. IASWCD Dues/Gold Membership
 - i. Helming discussed the IASWCD annual dues. Our current dues are \$5,000 for the year. Included with the invoice was the opportunity to become a Gold Level Member. To become a Gold Level Member, we would have to contribute an addition 10% of our annual dues. Gold Level Members receive on complimentary annual conference registration. The Board respectfully declined to become a Gold Level Member.
 - f. CCSI Soil Health Training
 - i. CCSI is holding a soil health training on June 11th -13th, in West Lafayette at the Beck's Agricultural Center, for all partnership staff. The registration is free to attend and the only expenses we would have are hotel and meals. Helming looked up the hotel cost that is around the training. It would be around \$75 per night for each staff member attending. Pond is asking our current three staff members attend the training. Helming has been working on taking the prerequisite courses. A motion was heard and seconded to approve attending the training with a max amount of \$600 for hotels. (*Fleck/Welp*) The motion carried unanimously.
 - g. Office Job Organization
 - i. With the recent turnover in the office, Pond saw an opportunity to change some of the office responsibilities around. Pond started brainstorming ideas on ways to make the office more of team-oriented environment. She started discussing this with Helming to add another perspective. They started working on the board to organize the job duties. The two Resource Specialists will share CRP and LSI planting/harvesting and other field duties. Pond, as the Executive Director, will handle meetings and the budget of LSI. Helming, as the Administrative Assistant will handle the LSI finances. Everyone in the office will be contributing to LSI. There have been many discussions about LSI over the years and if we need to change how we are administering it or if we need to drop the project all together. Our current Memorandum of Understanding goes through 2025. A few new ideas Pond had in mind for LSI are cover crop trials and native plant plot.
- B. Stormwater: No Update
- C. Soil Health
- a. VUJC Land Stewardship Initiative Update
 - i. Ruschau gave the update for LSI. The ground is prepped for planting, and she is just waiting for Eckerle to say he is ready to start. Glen Uebelhor took care of tilling the areas that needed it. The SWCD office may also need to invest in getting a new ATV sprayer. We were using Justin Bary's at the time. Ruschau thanked the Board for the seven years with the District. She will be joining CCSI on Monday, May 6th as the Southwest Coordinator. She is working on two workshops that will be in the summer.

The first is Project WET & Project WILD Climate Change workshop at LSI and Ag in the Classroom. These workshops will happen sometime this summer.

- b. Let's Dig
 - i. Pond gave the update. The quarterly meeting was postponed due to few members being able to attend. She is going to reach out to the FFA teachers, Kenny Eck, and Sister Jean Marie Ballard to see when we can reschedule. During this meeting they are going to plan the Fall workshop. Possible topics include extending your growing season and overwintering your gardens.
- c. ATV
 - i. Pond stated the need for a new ATV battery. Ruschau was going to take it over to LSI to check the fields one day and she could not get it started. Back in the fall Justin Bary had charged the current battery and had got it working. With it now not working again the plan is to buy a new battery.
- D. Invasive Species and Noxious Weeds
 - a. ISAC Meeting
 - i. The Spring Speaker series went well. They had a good turnout for the hike with a home school group attending. They also had a good turnout for the presentation. ISAC also had their spring weed wrangle at the Ferdinand State Forest on Wednesday, April 24th. This event also had a good turnout.
- E. Livestock Production
 - a. Clean Water Indiana Projects
 - i. 2023-2025, Dubois, Orange, Washington: No Update
- F. Forest Management: No Update
- 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 6:00pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 5th, at 4:30pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Veronica Helming

Veronica Helming
Administrative Assistant

Approved On: June 5, 2024

Arlene W Fleck

Mark Welp

Patrick Eckerle

Glenn Doepgen

Heidi L Semmes

