

Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts 2017 Legislative Talking Points

Tell Your District Story

- Discuss top natural resource concerns in county/region
- Tell how your District is addressing those natural resource concerns
- Discuss your District Business Plan
- Showcase special projects, field days, etc.
- Showcase 319 grant, CWI, LARE, or other watershed projects

Clean Water Indiana (CWI) Program - 2017 Legislative Session (budget session)

- 1) Please request Legislators maintain their support of the cigarette tax dedicated funds plus \$2 million/year in general fund appropriation for CWI (this is an increase of \$1 million/year over last budget). These dollars support matching funding for SWCDs, training grants, and a competitive grant program. The grant program provides technical and cost-share assistance to put conservation on the ground.
- 2) Important to stress to Legislators that the dedicated Cigarette Tax for CWI and the Division of Soil Conservation (within IN State Dept. of Agriculture) is declining. Since 2005, the CWI dedicated fund has declined by over \$600,000. The Cigarette tax revenue for CWI and DSC is projected to continue to decline 4-5% each year. This is not a sustainable funding source for soil and water conservation in Indiana.
- 3) Continue discussions with Legislators on ways to fund conservation long-term.
- 4) Discuss how any cuts in CWI funding will impact your local district (i.e. staff reductions, cost-share programs, assistance to landowners, etc.)
- 5) Discuss the ability of the local district to leverage state funds. What is the potential loss of federal or other private grant dollars for local landowners? (i.e. On average, the Districts leverage over \$1.5 million in partner funds from the CWI grants)

Clean Water Indiana (CWI) Grants

2017 CWI Grants

- 16 grants totaling \$938,641
- Over \$2,529,142 was actually requested by Districts

2016 CWI Grants

- 14 multi-district grants totaling \$965,500
- Over \$1,778,700 was actually requested by Districts

2015 CWI Grants

- 14 multi-district watershed grants totaling \$1,022,900
- Over \$2 million was actually requested by Districts

2014 CWI Grants

- 12 multi-district watershed grants totaling \$759,250
- Over \$2.1 million was actually requested by Districts

Over \$12.7 million has been requested since 2011, but less than half has been awarded due to declining CWI funding.

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Indiana Conservation Partnership Leadership Institute

- 91 Supervisors and staff have graduated from the program since 2009

Accountability & Outcomes

- Visit <http://www.in.gov/isda/icpreports/> to search statewide and by county for information on conservation investments made with local, state and federal funding.
- Visit <http://www.in.gov/isda/2991.htm> to learn how Indiana Conservation Partnership programs are positively impacting reductions in soil erosion, phosphorus and nitrogen throughout the state.

USDA Programs

- Through the support and technical assistance provided by SWCDs, over \$32 million federal conservation dollars came to Indiana in FY 2016 (does not include Conservation Reserve Program dollars).
- Indiana led the nation once again in FY2016 in acres of cover crops with well over 1 million acres.
- CWI grants are able to provide cost-share programs for landowners that are not able to utilize the Farm Bill conservation programs, especially in urban areas.
- SWCDs continue to lead with the implementation of several special initiative projects including Mississippi River Basin Initiative, Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, Western Lake Erie Basin Initiative, National Water Quality Initiative, and Joint Chief's Landscape Restoration project.

Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative (www.ccsin.org)

- Promotes a systematic approach to production agriculture focusing on continuous no-till/strip-till, cover crops, precision farming, and nutrient and pest management. In 2016, the project accomplished:
 - CCSI partners include: Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program, Conservation Technology Information Center, Purdue Extension, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Indiana State Department of Agriculture, State Soil Conservation Board, Indiana Soybean Alliance, Indiana Corn Marketing Council, Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and the Wabash and Dubois County SWCDs along with other organizations and businesses.
 - Expanded to a full staff of a Director, Program Manager, Communications Manager, and Agronomist.
 - Eight CCSI case studies written and published, providing insight into top farmer's systems and soil health philosophies.
 - Finished the USDA CIG grant, releasing a public report.
 - 64 events attended by over 3,000 individuals.
 - Supporting developing of soil health curricula for vo-ag educators.
 - Twitter followers grew 30% and hail from 32+ countries.