

President's Message

As I reflect on 2016, I am reminded of the various activities hosted by SWCDs, IASWCD, and ICP and the many accomplishments achieved in Indiana this year on behalf of conservation and protection of the natural resources of Indiana. Our great state continues to be a model of vision, innovation, successful partnerships, and a leader in cover crops nationwide.

A special congratulations to the 34 districts who were awarded Clean Water Indiana Grants for their upcoming projects and programs. These grants are able to be awarded because of the \$1 million general appropriation for the Clean Water Indiana program (in addition to dedicated funding from the cigarette tax) that IASWCD advocates for each budget session. As we look to 2017, we hope to be able to add more funding to help the Districts get conservation on the ground.

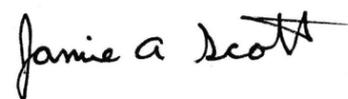
This past spring, a delegation of five IASWCD board members and the NRCS State Conservationist went to Washington, DC for the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) fly-in. They were able to meet with all of our representatives and senators and discuss soil and water conservation issues and the 2014 Farm Bill.

2016 was an exciting year for the Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative (CCSI). We now have a full staff including Taylor Lord, Communications Manager; Ashley Brucker, Program Manager; and Agronomist, Joe Rorick, along with Director, Lisa Holscher. CCSI continues to find ways to serve landowners in both rural and urban areas and to help them improve their soil health. Numerous plot tours, field tours, and workshops were organized and attended with emphasis on cover crops, manure management, soil health and other useful topics. The three-day soil health workshop near Lafayette in August was presented by six expert partners focusing on Midwestern agricultural cropland and featured local farmers who have applied practical conservation cropping systems to achieve high levels of soil health. The four year USDA Conservation Innovation Grant came to a close with a final report being made available in early 2017.

Productive partnerships continue to be an important cornerstone of IASWCD. In 2016, with NRCS, IASWCD successfully secured a contribution agreement which provided over \$200,000 to SWCDs for technical assistance with CRP. An additional \$300,000 was provided to SWCDs for administrative assistance on Farm Bill programs. This agreement will continue until 2019 providing over \$900,000 per year to Indiana districts when fully utilized.

State Conservationist Jane Hardisty; Director of the ISDA Division of Soil Conservation, Jordan Seger; and IASWCD Executive Director, Jennifer Boyle Warner, have now met with 30 districts to further discuss how ICP can best support the districts in their local conservation work. They will continue these personal visits into 2017.

We look forward to another great year in supporting the Districts and working with our partners as we educate, encourage and help expand conservation and improve the quality of life in Indiana and our country.



IASWCD Interim President



2016 Annual Report



INDIANA ASSOCIATION OF
soil and water conservation
DISTRICTS

Indiana Association of Soil and Water
Conservation Districts
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The Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts is a 501(c)(3) non-profit membership organization that supports the efforts of the soil and water conservation districts 460 supervisors and 170+ staff in 92 local offices through training, communications, contribution agreements, partnership building, and advocacy.

IASWCD Accomplishments in 2016: Working for our Members Communications & Outreach

IASWCD used various communication tools to inform our members and the public about soil and water conservation issues. 2016 Accomplishments:

- Delivered 24 "Conservation Update" eNewsletters with timely conservation information.
- Communicated District successes and accomplishments through media and news releases.
- Continuous update of the resource-packed association website at www.iaswcd.org.



- Promoted outstanding conservation efforts through various awards:
 - River-Friendly Farmer - 54 recipients
 - Friend of Conservation – Ball Brothers Foundation - Delaware County SWCD; Saddle Butte Ag - IASWCD Board; Tom Bechman - Decatur County SWCD
 - Conservation Farmer of the Year – Bill & Mary Beth Comer - Scott County SWCD
 - District Showcase Awards – Hamilton, Huntington (along with Wells, Wabash, Grant and Blackford), Jennings, and Washington County SWCDs
 - SWCD Supervisor of the Year – Announced at Awards Luncheon

- Communicated news releases and other important natural resource information to a broader audience through Twitter and Facebook. Increased Facebook reach by 42.5%.
- Contracted for a Coordinator for the ICP Pathway to Water Quality committee and successfully completed the 24th season of PWQ at the State Fair; a 319 grant helped fund the new green roof gazebo, septic display and other upgrades.
- Conveyed important NRCS information to Districts through a contribution agreement for communication services.
- Worked with Farm Credit Services to provide "Conservation Farmer of the Year" signs for local award programs.



Policy & Advocacy

IASWCD works with legislators during session for SWCD conservation policy and funding. 2016 Accomplishments:

- District Code was successfully amended to include language from a member voted resolution to allow Districts to match the CWI \$10,000 grant they receive with funds from any source (not restricted to just municipality).
- Held a Legislative training day for supervisors and staff in February 2016. This included educational sessions plus a tour of the Statehouse and discussion with legislators.
- A forum was provided by IASWCD which allowed for SWCDs to present policy initiatives. Four resolutions were submitted and voted on by the membership in 2016, with one passing. The IASWCD worked with the State Board of Accounts to clarify language specifying District use of funds for food, workshops and field days.
- SWCDs were updated on a weekly basis during the 2016 legislative session.
- Five IASWCD Board members advocated for Indiana's conservation issues with all Indiana Congressional members during a visit to Washington, DC in March.
- Active participation on the Indiana Conservation Alliance and represented Soil and Water Conservation Districts at the 2016 first ever held Conservation Congress event.

- Active participation in NACD's Natural Resources Policy Committee on national issues.

Capacity Building

IASWCD works with partners to build the capacity of soil and water conservation districts to carry out locally led conservation. 2016 Accomplishments:

- Secured an NRCS contribution agreement which provided over \$200,000 to SWCDs for technical assistance with CRP.
- Secured an NRCS contribution agreement which will be providing over \$300,000 to SWCDs for administrative assistance on Farm Bill programs. A three-year extension of this agreement will be signed by the end of 2016.
- Garnered \$44,250 in sponsorships for the 2016 SWCD Annual Conference. These sponsorships help offset the cost of conference.
- Provided a Supervisor Scholarship Program, worth over \$7,000, offering assistance to supervisors to attend the 2016 SWCD Annual Conference.
- Partnered with ISDA and NRCS to provide information and training at regional meetings.
- Assisted in setting up technical training opportunities for field staff. Three SWCD staff attended the national NRCS Boot Camp.
- Provided liability insurance coverage for Districts.

Leadership

The IASWCD Board of Directors and its staff strive to provide consistent and quality leadership for Districts. 2016 Accomplishments:

- Committed to visit every SWCD Board meeting with NRCS and ISDA leadership. Thirty (30) visits were completed by the end of 2016.
- Hosted the 73rd Annual Conference of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, January 14-15, 2016. Over 375 conservationists were in attendance.
- Represented SWCDs on the State Technical Committee, the Indiana Conservation Partnership Leaders meetings; State Soil Conservation Board meetings, Indiana Family of Farmers, and other state level committees.

- Represented SWCDs at the National level on various NACD committees.

Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative

The IASWCD helps to administer the Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative (CCSI). 2016 marked the 7th year of this program and partners include the Indiana Conservation Partnership, Conservation Technology Information Center, the Indiana Soybean Alliance, the Indiana Corn Marketing Council, and others. The overall project's focus continues to be on providing technical excellence via trainings for ICP field staff, education and outreach to implement conservation cropping systems, quantifying soil health benefits, and building partnerships. 2016 highlights include the close out and final report of the Conservation Innovation Grant and the addition of four staff to the CCSI team: Director, Lisa Holscher, Program Manager, Ashley Brucker, Communications Manager, Taylor Lord, and Agronomist, Joe Rorick. For an update on the CCSI please see the separate publication.

IASWCD Fiscal Summary

