

**STEUBEN COUNTY
SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

Peachtree Plaza 200 – 1220 N 200 W STE L – Angola, IN 46703

260-665-3211, Ext. 3 - www.steubenswcd.org

MINUTES

STEUBEN COUNTY SWCD BOARD MEETING

Steuben County Community Center • 317 South Wayne Street, Multi-Purpose Room, Angola, Indiana 46703

September 14, 2022

IN ATTENDANCE:

District Supervisors

Kayleen Hart, Chair
Chuck Howard, Vice Chair
David Perkins
Beth Williams
(Beth left meeting at 6:00 p.m.)

Natural Resource Conservation Service

Arthur Franke, District Conservationist

Indiana State Department of Agriculture

Sandra Hoffarth, District Support Specialist
Kate Sanders, Resource Specialist

Guests/Public Attendees

Jim Shiffler, Fremont, IN (Little Long Lake)
Therese Shiffler, Fremont, IN (Little Long Lake)
Reba Wicker, Ag & Natural Resources/Community
Development Extension Educator
(Purdue Extension – Steuben County)

Steuben County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD)

Janel Meyer, Administrative Coordinator
Aimee Wentworth, Resource Conservationist

Absent

Craig Holman, Board Supervisor

I. CALL TO ORDER

Steuben County SWCD Board Chair Kayleen Hart called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

II. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (8-10-22)

Board Chair Hart asked the Supervisors to consider the minutes of the August 10, 2022 meeting. There being no further additions or corrections, she requested a motion to approve.

Chuck Howard moved to approve the minutes of the August 10, 2022 Steuben County Soil & Water Conservation District Board meeting, as presented. Seconded by Beth Williams. Motion carried.

III. TREASURER'S REPORT

Administrative Coordinator Janel Meyer provided the financial report for August 1 – August 31, 2022. Financial reports were sent to the Board Supervisors for review in advance of the meeting. A hard copy was also provided in the Supervisors' folders.

Report for period ending August 31, 2022:

General Fund - All Accounts

Checking	\$ 64,415.40
Statement Savings	<u>41,882.28</u>
Total	\$106,297.68

Checking account

balance 7/31/22	\$ 70,435.78
Receipts	\$ 5,656.93
Disbursement	<u>(\$11,677.31)</u>
	\$64,415.40

Savings account

balance 7/31/22	\$ 41,881.93
Receipts	\$ 0.35
Disbursement	<u>(\$ 0.00)</u>
	\$41,882.28

Additional information provided with the monthly claims for Board review and verification included: 1. August 2022 checking & savings account bank statement and reconciliation; 2. August 2022 deposit/check detail and general ledger reports; 3. Staff payroll approval forms, time sheets, compensatory time logs; and 4. August 2022 vehicle log.

Janel shared checking account receipts totaled \$5,656.93 which included the refund from Indiana University Press for the Indiana Master Naturalist class guidebooks, savings account interest, and four Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) Watershed Land Treatment Project (WLTP) cost-share payments (1.4-acre Wildlife Habitat/Pollinator Planting in the Lake James-Crooked Creek sub-watershed of Fawn River; 0.5-acre Wildlife Habitat/Pollinator Planting and 1.7-acre Tree/Shrub Establishment in the Snow Lake sub-watershed of Fawn River; 1.5-acre Wildlife Habitat/Pollinator Planting in the Silver Lake sub-watershed of Pigeon Creek; 15.01-acre Pasture and Hay

(Forage/Biomass) Planting in the Hamilton Lake-Black Creek sub-watershed of the Upper St. Joseph River (OH). Disbursement was \$11,677.31; this included conservation education expenses [September 13, 2022 4th Grade Youth Conservation Field Day, 2022 Indiana Master Naturalist Program (Guides), 2022 Steuben County Self-Guided Conservation Tour (Grand Prize), and sponsorship of the July 27, 2022 Agronomy Field Day), office supplies, operating expenses, printing/mailling the Steuben SWCD Summer Newsletter, travel/registration fees for the 2022 Indiana District Employee Association Fall Conference, a LARE WLTP cost-share payment for a 2.9-acre Wildlife Habitat/Pollinator Planting in the Snow Lake sub-watershed of Fawn River, and the WLTP cost-share payments for the Wildlife Habitat/Pollinator Planting and Tree/Shrub Establishment projects listed above.

Board Chair Hart asked whether there were any questions or comments regarding the Treasurer's report. Hearing none, she called for a motion to approve.

Chuck Howard moved to approve the Treasurer's Report for the period ending August 31, 2022, as presented. Seconded by Beth Williams. Motion carried.

IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Natural Resources/Technical Assistance

Beth Williams, Chair

i. Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018 (Farm Bill) / NRCS / FSA

1. Talking points were provided in the Supervisors packets.
2. District Conservationist (DC) Arthur Franke advised he has 25 individuals who have expressed interested in the FY23 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). He will begin contacting them to advise of the pending sign-up. Art continues work on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) status reviews for contracts expiring in Fall of 2023 and on contracts that were planted this Spring. He reviewed his fall trainings and fall educational events he will be attending (e.g., LaGrange County SWCD Forestry Field Day on September 17; FFA National Convention judging on October 27). Art reviewed the new Ducks Unlimited Midwest Cover Crop Initiative Program and shared he is still assisting LaGrange County DC Jennifer Walker while she is the acting NRCS NE Indiana Planning Team Leader.

Kayleen Hart, Farm Service Agency (FSA) Program Technician, reported the FSA Angola office is working on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) applications, organic certification program sign-up ends October 31, and they will begin issuing CRP and Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC)/ Price Loss Coverage (PLC) subsidy payments on October 1 (beginning of the federal government 2023 FY).

ii. Watershed Projects and Organizations/SWCD

-Southeastern Lake Michigan Basin: St. Joe River West (HUC 8) (Lake Michigan)
Sub-watersheds:

1. Pigeon Creek Watershed
 - a. Janel advised DeKalb County SWCD, LaGrange County SWCD, and Art assisted the Steuben SWCD with plant removal from the NE Martha/Wall rain garden. Plant removal was more difficult than anticipated due to the dry, hard soil. Plants were re-purposed at the Steuben County Courthouse rain garden and at wildlife/pollinator plantings in DeKalb and LaGrange Counties. She shared The Herald Republican's August 19, 2022 article, "Judicial Center on Angola Plan Board Agenda" which erroneously reported the new judicial center rain garden needed approval by the Steuben County SWCD. Janel reported the only involvement the SWCD/NRCS had with the project was providing a review of the plant species selected as requested by Kris Thomas, City of Angola MS4/Engineering Assistant.
 - b. Janel provided 2020 Pigeon Creek WLTP grant updates:
 - Board Chair Hart approved a 10.0-acre Pasture & Hay planting in the Green Lake sub-watershed of Pigeon Creek. Janel advised a decision was necessary prior to the September 14, 2022 SWCD Board meeting due to NRCS pasture planting seeding deadlines (9/15). Janel requested an official Board motion supporting the planting which utilizes the remaining 2020 grant funding.
David Perkins moved to approve the 10.0-acre Pasture and Hay (Forage/Biomass) Planting in the Green Lake sub-watershed of Pigeon Creek using the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) 2020 Pigeon Creek Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) Watershed Land Treatment Project (WLTP) grant. Seconded by Kayleen Hart. Motion approved.
 - c. Janel informed the Board the Steuben County SWCD LARE WLTP application for the Pigeon Creek Watershed in Steuben County was selected for FY 2022-2023 funding. The application requested \$20,000; the grant was funded at \$20,000. Janel will complete the State contract as soon as it's received.

2. Fawn River Watershed
 - a. Janel provided 2020 Fawn River WLTP grant updates:
 - She finally spoke with the deceased contract holder's family regarding the 18.3-acre pasture planting in the Snow Lake sub-watershed. She advised them the contract was still valid since the farming operation was listed as the participant. Janel forwarded additional information to the operation representative, who stated they would like to proceed with the planting.
 - b. Janel informed the Board the Steuben County SWCD LARE WLTP application for the Fawn River Watershed in Steuben County was selected for FY 2022-2023 funding. The application requested \$20,000; the grant was funded at \$20,000. Janel will complete the State contract as soon as it's received.
3. Friends of the St. Joseph River (FotSJR)
 - a. Resource Conservationist Aimee Wentworth attended the FotSJR August 25, 2022 in-person Board meeting. She reported the meeting focused on a discussion regarding future FotSJR meeting formats (i.e., virtual, in-person or hybrid).
 - b. The next FotSJR meeting is scheduled for September 22, 2022. It will be a virtual format.
4. St. Joseph River Basin Commission (SJRBC)
 - a. Janel attended the SJRBC September 1, 2022 quarterly meeting. Highlights included:
 - 2022 biological water quality monitoring has been completed [twelve (12) total sites (5 in Michigan; 7 in Indiana)]. They found a Hellgrammite (aquatic macroinvertebrate) from the sample collected in Turkey Creek (LaGrange County). Hellgrammites can only survive in relatively clean and highly oxygenated waters.
 - The Wetland Task Force will have their final meeting in September. This Task Force resulted from the passage of Senate Bill 389. Their charge is to review state wetland regulations. The overall recommendation from the Task Force will focus on the importance of state/federal level regulation consistency. The federal level looks at a wetlands functional value whereas the state looks at wetland class (not necessarily the functional value, such as flood control). Matt Meersman, SJRBC Director, also discussed a contractor bonus incentive idea he recommended for keeping wetlands in developments. He advised the Wetland Task Force representative for the Builders Association has not attended any of the meetings. One of the authors of SB 389 was a legislator with ties to the Builders Association.
 - Matt Meersman discussed a bill regarding Watershed Development Commissions. A Watershed Development Commission (WDC) can levy taxes on taxpayers. The SJRBC could switch to a WDC; however, all counties represented in the Basin Commission would have to approve/opt-in. The only focus a WDC has is water quantity; it does not include water quality. It's not very likely the SJRBC would switch to a St. Joseph River WDC since the water quality component would no longer be a focus of the group.

-Western Lake Erie Basin (WLEB): St. Joe River East (HUC) (Lake Erie).

Sub-watersheds:

1. Upper St. Joe River – Includes Fish Creek, Nettle, and West Branch Sub-Watersheds
 - a. Janel shared there were 5 Steuben County residents that attended the August 11, 2022 Tri-State Soil Health Conference in Camden, MI, and Montpelier, OH. Jim and Therese Shiffler were two of those participants. Janel asked if they would like to share their experience with the SWCD Board. Both stated it was an event well worth their time and money, especially the principles of soil health presentation with Ray Archuleta where he demonstrated the rainfall simulator, slake test and infiltration test. Jim stated the conference was relevant to both agricultural producers and a non-agricultural audience.
 - b. The Steuben County SWCD partnered with the Paulding County Extension for a Northwest Ohio Soil Health Tour from September 19-28, 2022. This self-paced tour allows participants to explore practices in Northwest Ohio, Northeast Indiana, and Southeast Michigan. A Soil Health Event with a guest speaker will conclude the tour on September 29, 2022 at the Paulding County Extension office, which includes a meal. Aimee worked with the Paulding Extension Educator and two of the landowners that participated in the Steuben County SWCD Self-Guided Conservation Practice Tour to secure locations in Steuben.
 - c. Janel reported the SWCD was approached by the Maumee Watershed Alliance (MWA) to provide a letter of support for their Clean Water Indiana (CWI) grant application. The CWI grant application requested funds to hire a MWA Director for a minimum of two years and work with organizations/agencies to enhance partnerships, help develop marketing programs, and assist with grant opportunities. Janel advised she did not commit the SWCD to supporting/partnering on the grant application since the letter of support was due prior to the September SWCD Board meeting

which didn't allow time for Board input. She felt Board input was necessary to discuss since it involved funding a staff position for a non-profit organization. Although not on the agenda, Janel discussed an August 31, 2022 WLEB legislative tour that was cancelled due to last-minute scheduling conflicts with the invited legislators. She didn't believe the tour would be rescheduled. Janel also requested the approval to make the cost-share payment for the 15.01-acre Pasture and Hay (Forage/Biomass) Planting in the Hamilton Lake-Black Creek sub-watershed of the Upper St. Joseph River (OH). Field verification was completed, and the State deposited the payment after the claims were compiled for the September agenda. Total cost is \$2,251.50.

David Perkins moved to approve the \$2,251.50 cost-share payment for the completed 15.01-acre Hay and Pasture (Forage/Biomass) Planting in the Hamilton Lake-Black Creek sub-watershed using the 2021 Upper St. Joseph River (OH) Watershed Land Treatment Project (WLTP) grant. Seconded by Beth Williams. Motion approved.

iii. Entire County

1. The DeKalb, Steuben, and LaGrange County SWCDs submitted a CWI grant application for a three-year Tri-County Recycling Program. DeKalb County SWCD is the grant lead. The purpose of the project is to connect communities with educational and financial assistance to increase recycling and help reduce the municipal solid waste stream. The financial assistance will focus on tire-recycling by providing one collection event each year – two at the Ashley, IN Convenience Center and one at the LaGrange County Convenience Center.
2. Steuben County Lakes Council (SCLC)
 - a. Janel attended the August 13, 2022 SCLC Annual Business Meeting & 50th Anniversary Celebration. She reported the Business Meeting recognized former SCLC Presidents; Bill Schmidt also provided a water quality update from the SCLC's summer sampling. He told the meeting attendees the *E. coli* results were "scary". Janel reminded the SWCD Board and meeting participants that caution should be used when interpreting the results because the information is based on one grab sample, collected after a rain event. Water quality monitoring is complex; a more scientifically designed sampling survey/ regime is required to truly understand what is occurring within the watershed.
 - b. Janel attended the September 3, 2022 SCLC Monthly Board Meeting. She reported the eDNA results from the July 6, 2022 sampling were available. She just received a copy of the report prior to the Board meeting; however, she didn't have time to review. More information will be provided at the October SWCD Board meeting.
 - c. The next SCLC meeting is scheduled for October 1, 2022.

b. District Operations/Marketing

Chuck Howard, Chair

i. SWCD Training/Public Relations, etc.

1. Field Visits/Trainings
 - a. RCPP GGS Update Meeting • August 11, 2022. Janel and Art attended this meeting where the Indiana Dept. of Natural Resources (IDNR) provided information on their new Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Grasslands for Gamebirds & Songbirds (GGS) grant application (RCPP2; \$3.3M request) and a project summary of the first RCPP GGS. The RCPP2 GGS application is competing against two other Indiana applications (Kankakee River & a Hellbender project). Janel shared the RCPP2 GGS was not chosen for funding. Art advised the IDNR will now request a renewal of the current RCPP1 GGS, requesting \$1M. If funded, these monies would not be available until FY2024.
 - b. Allen Co. SWCD Coffee & Fall Cover Crops • August 17, 2022. Aimee participated in this virtual webinar which discussed the major cover crops utilized in our area. She reported the main takeaway was to experiment every year with different cover crops – keeping the main goal to mimic Mother Nature and have a constant ground cover year-round.
 - c. Legislative/CWI Funding Update • August 19, 2022. Aimee participated in this virtual meeting that focused on the basics of how a bill is approved by the Senate and House of Representatives. District Support Specialist Sandra Hoffarth provided additional information. The Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (IASWCD) will be requesting an additional \$8.6M annual investment in Clean Water Indiana (CWI) which will benefit conservationists, farmers, landowners, outdoor enthusiasts, and industry statewide. CWI is a success story with proven results in conservation, preservation, and natural resource management; however, demand for financial support to address these concerns is outpacing the program's funding. Currently, CWI is funded through the cigarette tax, which is experiencing decreased revenues. The goal is to make CWI a permanent part of the state's budget. The additional \$8.6M could increase SWCD

funding from the current \$10,000/year to \$60,000/year. A local match would still be required. A recording of this meeting is available.

d. Indiana Urban/Small Farm Conservation Planning 101 • August 22, 2022: Janel and Aimee participated in this virtual training that focused on an overview of NRCS resource concerns typical to urban/small farms, typical urban/small farm practices, NRCS payment scenarios and basic program eligibility. A recording of this training is available.

e. Trine University Campus Carnival (Local Water/Ways Display) • August 22, 2022. The SWCD partnered with Trine University's SPEAK student organization (Students Promoting Environmental Awareness and Knowledge) to present the Local Water/Ways Display.

f. Urban Soil Health (Working Group Discussion) Update • August 24, 2022. Aimee and Janel met with Purdue Extension Educator Reba Wicker and IASWCD Urban Soil Health Specialist Jamie Perry to further discuss the formation of a local working group for urban soil health education and landowner technical assistance. The group discussed potential volunteers to pull soil samples (e.g., Master Gardeners, IMN, etc.). This work would count towards their required volunteer hours. The group also discussed offering a cover crop or compost/soil health workshop this winter.

g. Wohlert Street Filter Strip Site Visit • August 30, 2022. Art and Aimee performed a site visit with City of Angola MS4/Engineering Assistant Kris Thomas to assess the planting and provide maintenance recommendations. Kris requested the site visit to help the City with budgeting funds for FY23 Wohlert Street maintenance.

h. 4th Grade Youth Conservation Field Day • September 13, 2022. Staff reported the event went well and the students had an enjoyable time.

i. Steuben County Life Program (Session 1) • September 13, 2022. Staff reported the first Steuben Life session at the Anthony Wayne Scout Reservation was well-received by the attendees.

2. August tally sheets will be provided at the October SWCD Board meeting.

ii. Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (IASWCD)

1. The 2023 Annual Conference has been scheduled for January 9 – 10, 2023. Janel inquired whether any Supervisor planned to attend the conference; each county typically sends a delegate. She will need a decision by December.

iii. State Department of Agriculture (ISDA)

1. Sandra Hoffarth provided a review of important deadlines for Election Committees (November 1) and Nominees for Election (December 1). She thanked the Board Supervisors and SWCD staff for completing the sexual harassment training.
2. Steuben SWCD Annual Meeting Planning: The Board set March 8, 2023 as the date for the SWCD Annual Meeting.
3. Election Committee: The Board will discuss who will serve on the Election Committee at the October SWCD meeting. Janel advised Chuck Howards' term expires in 2023.

c. Budget and Finance

Kayleen Hart, Chair

- i. Indiana Woodland Steward: Indiana Woodland Steward sent a request to support the printing of the Woodland Steward Newsletter for Steuben County landowners for FY22-23.
Chuck Howard made a motion to contribute \$300 toward FY22-23 printing costs for the Indiana Woodland Steward Newsletter. Seconded by David Perkins. Motion carried.
- ii. Oakley Studio/PageCrafter Web Host: Oakley Studio has been acquired by another managed hosting firm, PageCrafter of Minneapolis, MN. This means PageCrafter will be the new webmaster. Aimee advised the SWCD will need to be migrated to the new PageCrafter servers and hosting. She also advised PageCrafter charges more than Oakley Studio for its premium managed website hosting services. PageCrafter offers premium WordPress hosting for \$25/month. In addition, we may also opt for the monthly WordPress updates service for an additional \$15/month. Oakley Studio performed the monthly updates at no charge. The Board discussed the new fee structure and whether to investigate different webhosts. Staff strongly recommended staying with PageCrafter.
Chuck Howard motioned to approve transitioning the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) website hosting services to PageCrafter with a new monthly service charge of \$40/month for the premium WordPress hosting and monthly WordPress update fees. Seconded by David Perkins. Motion carried.

d. Information and Education

David Perkins, Chair

- i. Drainage Board
Staff are attending the twice-monthly county Drainage Board (DB) meetings as schedules allow. In the interest of time, no report was provided.

ii. 4-H/Purdue Extension/SWCD/Other Educational and SWCD Projects

Aimee Wentworth reported:

- There were five finishers of the Conservation Tour. The SWCD drew the winner of the gift card on August 25, 2022 – Jessica Behrman.
- The “Water Pollution” and “Invasive Species” videos are posted on the SWCD google video site. These can be accessed by visiting the Steuben SWCD website and selecting “Educational Programs” under the Conservation Resources tab. She will be meeting with Purdue Extension Educator Tami Mosier to discuss the next video topic.
- Aimee asked whether the Board would support the SWCD working with Pokagon State Park to host a Spring 2023 Indiana Master Naturalist class. She reported there are already six individuals on a waiting list. They would cap attendance at 16 participants. Cost of \$120/person.

David Perkins motioned to approve hosting an Indiana Master Naturalist (IMN) class with Pokagon State Park in 2023 (spring); seconded by Chuck Howard. Motion carried.

- Aimee requested approval to attend the Environmental Education Association of Indiana (EEAI) 2022 Fall Conference in Milford, Indiana on November 4 – 6. She provided a break-down of the conference fees (i.e., registration, lodging, food, etc.); \$244 total.

David Perkins moved to approve the \$244 registration expense for Resource Conservationist Aimee Wentworth to attend the November 4 – 6, 2022 Environmental Education Association of Indiana (EEAI) 2022 Fall Conference in Milford, Indiana. Seconded by Chuck Howard. Motion carried.

iii. Upcoming Regional / National Events

1. Steuben County Life Program • September 13 – October 18, 2022 (*Tuesday Evenings*)
2. LaGrange County SWCD Forestry Field Day • September 17, 2022 (*Rome City, IN*)
3. Urban/Small Farms Produce Growers Workshop • September 20, 2022 (*Monroe, IN*)
4. EPA Septic Smart Week • September 19 – 23, 2022
5. Allen County SWCD Coffee and Business Management • September 21, 2022 (*virtual*)
6. Septic Maintenance Workshop • September 22, 2022 (*Community Center; Angola, IN*)
7. Indiana DNR Free Fishing Day for Indiana Residents • September 24, 2022
8. **Columbus Day Holiday • October 10, 2022 (USDA Service Center Closed)**
9. Steuben County SWCD Monthly Board Meeting • October 12, 2022 (*Angola, IN*)
10. LaGrange County SWCD Pasture Walk • October 13, 2022 (*Tippecanoe, IN*)

V. **CLAIMS**

5922	Aimee Wentworth (IDEA 7/25/22 NNE Region Mtg. Travel Reimbursement)	\$	18.62
5923	Rural King (Steuben SWCD 2022 Conservation Self-Tour Grand Prize Gift Card)	\$	50.00
5924	Joseph Hoover (1.0-ac. Pasture/Hay + 1.0-ac. Tree/Shrub – LARE; Mud Creek)	\$	750.00
5925	Graphics 3, inc. (2022 Steuben SWCD Summer Newsletter Printing w/Mailing)	\$	904.35
5926	Staples (Office Supplies: Computer Monitors & Office Chairs for Staff)	\$	565.46
5927	JY Design & Print, Inc. (100 Steuben SWCD Thank You Cards)	\$	47.15
5928	Lakeside Meats (Supplies/Refreshments for 9/13/22 YCFD)	\$	48.93
5929	Meijer (Supplies/Refreshments for 9/13/22 YCFD)	\$	87.61
5930	Blackburn Mfg. Co. (2,000 Marking Flags for Over-the-Counter Sales)	\$	267.74
5931	Dumpster Drummers (9/13/22 YCFD Performance)	\$	600.00
5932	Ceres Solutions (Fuel for Expedition – September 2022 Statement)	\$	126.36
5933	Janel Meyer (Reimbursement per SWCD SOP–2022 Steuben Life/YCFD Supplies)	\$	249.33

Chuck Howard made a motion to pay the claims for the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District September 14, 2022 meeting. David Perkins seconded the motion. Motion passed.

VI. **NEXT BOARD MEETING**

Wednesday, October 12, – 5:00 p.m.

- Angola USDA Service Center, 1220 N 200 W, Suite L, Angola, IN

VII. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Steuben SWCD, Board Chair Hart called for a motion to adjourn.


Chuck Howard moved to adjourn the September 14, 2022 Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Board meeting. Seconded by David Perkins. Motion carried.


Meeting adjourned by Board Chair Hart at 6:42 p.m.


Minutes respectfully submitted by:


Janel S. Meyer, Administrative Coordinator

Minutes approved by Steuben County SWCD Board:









10/12/2022 (Date)