



*Pulaski County Soil & Water Conservation District
USDA Office Break Room
Winamac, Indiana
Tuesday, April 11th, 2017 – 7:00 PM*

Supervisors Present: Steve Cotner, Kevin Podell, Paul Kline, Larry Grieger

Staff Present: Vera Gillum, Education Coordinator/Treasurer; Quentin Blount, District Support Coordinator

Area Partners Present: Kerry Nielsen, NRCS District Conservationist; Julie Morris, ISDA Resource Specialist; Phil Woolery, Purdue Extension Ag Educator

Absent: Barb Rausch

Visitors: None

Call to Order: Steve Cotner, Board Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Approval of Minutes: Upon a **motion** by Mr. Podell, with a second from Mr. Grieger, board members voted 4-0 to approve the March 2017 Minutes.

Old Business:

Mileage Report: Mileage was reported.

Financial Report: Vera reported on financial claims. After reviewing the claims, and upon a **motion** by Mr. Grieger, with a second from Mr. Podell, board members voted 4-0 to approve claims 2925 – 2945.

Area Partner Reports:

NRCS – Kerry informed board members that he has received seven applications in Pulaski County for the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), and that they are ranking the applications now. Kerry also pointed out that the applications in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) are being ranked too.

Kerry brought up another topic. AgSolver, a field data company, is looking for people to trial-run their software. They provide the tools to analyze not just a fields' agronomic performance, but its economic performance as well. It's a great way to see where fields are making and losing money and it allows users to compare potential management scenarios.

ISDA – Julie reported on In-Field Advantage. She is still accepting Grower Enrollment Forms, but registration forms should be coming out within the next month or so.

Julie mentioned that 40 Hoosier families were awarded the Hoosier Homestead Award. This award recognizes families with farms that have been owned by the same family for 100 years or more. The program was instituted in 1976 and recognizes the contributions these family farms have made to the economic, cultural, and social advancements of Indiana. In the past 30 years, more than 5,000 farms have received the honor.

Julie also reported on behalf of Geneva Tyler, ISDA District Support Specialist, who requested that SWCD staff and supervisors fill out a survey regarding the Leadership Institute.

Purdue Extension – Phil stated that Purdue Extension is proposing growers consider the “Hide the Strip” trial in at least one of their fields. Given the tight margins in corn and soybean production, many producers are looking for ways to reduce input costs without negative impacts to yield. “Hide the Strip Challenge,” is a test with 3 strips scattered across a field where the grower reduces the seeding rate. Each strip needs to be wider than the combine head, in order to find a full swath when harvesting. Once harvest is complete, the grower’s challenge is to find the reduced population strip on the field’s yield map. Studies have shown that we can reduce seeding rates below the typical planting rates in corn and soybeans across Indiana without hurting yield.

Phil also encouraged board members to participate in a statewide survey for a research project funded by the North Central Soybean Research Program and conducted by Purdue University. The goal of the project is to understand the “Yield Gap” – the difference between what yield is possible on farms and what yield is actually achieved.

Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) – Update: Quentin updated the board regarding the district’s LARE (Lake and River Enhancement) Project. At the moment, additional funders are still being researched. Quentin mentioned that the NIPSCO Environmental Action Grant should be awarded in late April.

2017 Annual Meeting: Board members and staff reviewed the 2017 Pulaski SWCD – Purdue Extension Annual Meeting. Although board members thought the meeting went well, they did express concern about the overall attendance. In collaboration with Purdue Extension, board members and staff will review the date, time, location, and meal plans for next year’s meeting, with the goal of improving attendance in mind.

Re-Organization: With the conclusion of the 2017 Annual Meeting, an election of officers was held. Mr. Greiger made a **motion** to keep the current officers in place. With no other nominations being made, and with a second from Mr. Podell, board members voted 4-0 to nominate Steve Cotner as Board Chairman, Kevin Podell as Vice Chairman, and Barb Rausch as Secretary, and to close the floor for nominations.

Website Update: Quentin informed board members about the possibility of updating the district’s website. After discussions with CDC Executive Director, Nathan Origer, the possibility was presented to the district to merge with the county’s website. The same team that built the county’s website would be used. They estimate the cost of building a new site would be around \$1,500.00 – \$2,000.00. Board members asked staff to contact Mr. Origer, and ask him to attend the May board meeting to better discuss this process.

New Business:

Senior Conservation Award: Vera informed the board that she has only received one application for the Senior Conservation Award. The award ceremony will take place on Monday, May 15th, at 7:00 PM EST.

Employee Evaluations: SWCD staff presented the employee evaluation form used by the district in the past. Board members agreed to continue using this form, and will meet with staff individually following the June board meeting.

Urban Conservation Workshop: Staff requested permission to attend an Urban Conservation Workshop at the Fulton County Library, in Rochester, on April 25th. Presentations will be given on high tunnels, native landscaping, urban conservation, and how to engage stakeholders. Upon a **motion** by Mr. Podell, with a second from Mr. Grieger, board members voted 4-0 to approve this request.

Grant Writing Workshop: Quentin informed the board that he has registered for a two-day Grant Writing Workshop being put on by Purdue Extension, on April 20th, and May 18th, at the Tippecanoe County Purdue Extension Office in Lafayette.

Education Report:

Vera reported on education. The Water Riches program has finished. Eastern Pulaski Elementary School students Morgan Benninghoff, Olivia Link, and Karsten Sandberg were the top three winners of the recent conservation essay contest.

Vera also recently completed a Soils and Earthworms lesson with 1st Graders at West Central. In addition to that, and in collaboration with Sam Williams, Purdue Extension Director, “Who Grew My Soup,” a Kindergarten Program, was taught at Eastern Pulaski.

Adjournment:

Upon a **motion** by Mr. Podell, with a second from Mr. Grieger, board members voted 4-0 to adjourn at 8:30 PM.

Steven Cotner, Chairman

Kevin Podell, Vice Chairman

Barbara S. Rausch, Secretary

Paul Kline, Supervisor

Larry Grieger, Supervisor

Submitted by Quentin Blount