

**Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative (CCSI)**  
**June Regional Teleconference Notes**  
**June 27, 2022**

**Participants**

Lisa Holscher, CCSI Director (all)  
Sheila Schroeder, CCSI Northern Program Manager (all)  
Hans Schmitz, Purdue Extension/CCSI Agronomist (S)  
Tom Springston, Purdue Extension- Scott County (S)  
Robert Zupancic, SE NRCS Area Grazing Specialist (S)  
Don Donovan, NRCS, Parke-Vermillion (S)  
Jenny Rowland, ISDA (S)  
Lee Schnell, NRCS Orange County (S)  
Emily Russell, Orange County SWCD (S)  
Missy Elgin, Orange County SWCD (S)  
Leah Harmon, ISDA (S)  
Casey Kennett, Urban Soil Health (S)  
Walt Sell, Purdue Extension (N)  
Judi Brown, Dubois County SWCD (S)  
Stacy White, Randolph County SWCD (N)  
Kerry Nielsen, Pulaski Co NRCS (N)  
Lori Jordan, Fountain County SWCD (N)  
Michelle Benson, Porter County SWCD (N)  
Aletha Meyer, Albion Tech Team NRCS (N)  
Danielle Waldschmidt, NW Area Conservationist (N)  
Mark Thomas, Ripley Co ISDA (N)  
Jon Charlesworth, Purdue Extension Benton County (N)  
Bryan Overstreet, Purdue Extension Jasper County (N)  
Kristi Todd, IDEM (N)  
Jodie Overmyer, Marshall County SWCD (N)  
Sandra Hoffarth, ISDA (N)  
Melinda Miller, Kosciusko County SWCD (N)

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• **Partner Updates**

- **Purdue**
  - Steve Hawkins, Director of the Purdue Ag Centers, is retiring. He has served Purdue in variance roles for more than 30 years. A search for his replacement will be launched soon.
  - Purdue President Mitch Daniels has announced his retirement effective the end of the year. Dr Mung Chiang, Dean of Engineering and Executive Vice President for Strategic Initiatives will be the next Purdue President.

- **NRCS**
  - The NRCS soil health specialist and state agronomist positions have not been advertised yet – still with HR. If anyone is interested in either of these positions, please be sure to watch USAJOBS.gov.
  - The soil health trailer will be at the state fair again this year. The sign-up announcement went out to the NRCS Leadership Team on June 23.
  - NRCS soil health team members continue to write and submit articles (soil health, conservation, etc.) every month to Indiana Prairie Farmer. If you have a previously written article or idea for an article that you want to assist with or to pass along, please let Tony Bailey know.
  - AND just a BIG thank you / shout out to everyone who finds ways and makes and takes time to include soil health topics with your producers and partners every day across the state. It may not seem like it at times, however ALL of these efforts, do make a difference.
  - The first of 2 additional soil health trailers expected in state mid-July; 2<sup>nd</sup> one by end of July; current one is getting repair work done and expected to be finished in next couple of weeks; should be able to have one at state fair the whole time plus another one or 2 available for other events.
  - NW area Soil Health Team met recently; requests for help/presentations by SH team members has been increasing
  
- **ISDA**
  - Infield Advantage enrollment is on-going. If have ANY producers interested, sign-up on their website <https://infieldadvantage.org/>. Any help advertising as well as sampling in the fall will be greatly appreciated.
    - Split-field trial on 40-80 acre field
    - Enrollment form asks for tillage, fertilizer program
    - Participants get free seed from Becks. Will work out getting seed delivered to farm.
    - ISDA RS will conduct soil and biomass sampling.
    - Participants will get Truterra soil health tests
    - EQIP eligible \$200 bonus
  - Cover Crop insurance premium discount is in 3<sup>rd</sup> year and will continue. Looking at where covered. Traditionally Upper White, but looking at possibility of adding counties. \$5 crop insurance premium for producers that use cover crops, provided they aren't enrolled in state or federal programs.
  - Hiring freeze; currently no full-time RMS in the SE
  - Summer district meetings – registrations are open
  - Budget hearings in counties are happening now; if you need assistance or help with leveraging sheet, reach out to DSS
  - Virtual grant management workshop will be held July 12
  
- **IDEM**
  - Funding matrix on website has been updated <https://www.in.gov/idem/nps/watershed-toolkit/funding/>
  - NOIs for 319 applications closed; 21 were filed
  - SilverJackets <https://silverjackets.nfrmp.us/State-Teams/Indiana> will be holding workshops on wetlands education this summer. Four different workshops

- July 12 Muscatatuk, July 22 Prophets Town, August 10 Eagle Marsh, August 16 Goose Pond
- **Urban Soil Health**
  - Urban Soil Health Team has been working in conjunction with NRCS Urban Planning to come up with guidance. Will have a statewide training on planning and programs. Topics will include mulching, irrigation, micro irrigation, and cover crops. Could really use input from SE. Reach out to any of the team members.
- **Women4theLand**
  - Reach out to Heather Bacher for more information about becoming a Women4the Land discussion leader: [hbacher@women4theland.org](mailto:hbacher@women4theland.org)
- **IASWCD**
  - IDEM Storm Water webinar for districts about the changes in permitting will be held on June 29 at 12 PM. Many of the districts have had questions about this new permitting process. It will be recorded.
- **Other Partner Updates**
  - **Soil Health Nexus** is holding a Field School for Soil Health Educators in Waseca, MN, on August 9-10. More information at [soilhealthnexus.org](http://soilhealthnexus.org).
  - **North Central Climate Collaborative (NC3)** <https://northcentralclimate.org/> has webinars every other month. This month features Liam Bean of Montana State University discussing water monitoring networks. August will feature Ohio State University research into climate change adaptation.
  - **Climate Intersections Conference**, hosted in Duluth, MN, by the North Central Region Water Network on July 12-14, is coming up. Soil Health Nexus and NC3 members will be meeting at the conference to discuss future collaborations. Registration is still available at <https://northcentralwater.org/climate-intersections-conference/>.
  - **Warren Co.** fair has ended; **Benton Co.** fair coming soon; fair is a two-week period of hectic activity for Extension
  - **Big Pine Creek** historical tour will be 9/9
  - Smithsonian museum waterways exhibit will be at the Otterbein library October-December
  - **Scott County** is planning for Pasture Walk in Scott county. ISDA and NRCS are assisting. Getting PARP credits. 8/11 – 5:30 registration. 6:00 – 8. Will be at Dan Smith Farms 4364 Hwy 31 S in Scottsburg.
  - **Dubois SWCD** – LSI out of 40 acres, 17 acres were planted to corn. Move to just planting to productive acres makes better sense. Remaining 23 acres seeded to summer covers last week (Multi-species) to help build SOM and soil health. Part of SW Soil Health Expo on 8/16 with Russel Hedrick and Cameron Mills. Also helping w/ SIPAC Timber Sales 101 – workshop put on by Purdue and Indiana Hardwoods. Also, invasive species group will have prairie walk.
  - **Pulaski County** – NRCS will be at Newton Co Fair July 13 talking about soil health; will also be at Sunflower Festival in Lafayette in July; Hosting a Women’s Learning Circle July 12; Volunteers for State Fair. In NW, contact Kerry or Celia. In other areas contact NRCS leadership for your area.

- **Porter County** – 6/28 erosion control workshop in conjunction with Shirley Heinz Land Trust; 8/4 will be a women land owners workshop; 9/7 New Cover Crops & Old Equipment field day – using cocktail mixes without buying new equipment; Hans Kok will speak; event at Brad Hunter farm, will have a soil pit
- **Parke-Vermillion workshop** 7/7; Barry Fisher, STAR Program, Andrew Bernzott, Hans Schmitz. Not getting sign-ups would like. Indoor event at Vermillion County Fairgrounds. Registration: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/healthy-soil-healthy-bottom-line-tickets-325943394467>
- **Fountain/Warren Counties** – Women’s workshop in September and pond management workshop in October
- **Marshall County** – Will have a booth at county fair; 319 grant work ongoing
- **Jasper County** – Will have vegetable field day at Pinney Purdue on 8/9; August 17<sup>th</sup> – Pinney Purdue PAC Field Day both morning and evening session. September 8<sup>th</sup> working with WHIN on field day at ACRE. Working w/ IN/IL Seagrant group to pilot “Master Watershed” class – still working on details for this
- Flash drought covering most of the state – watch US drought monitor that comes out on Thursdays <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>

- **NE Conservation Event Form**

- .pdf fillable form (attached with these notes)
- Helps coordinate events, reduce duplicity and keep track of speakers
- SE Area isn’t using yet, but might be able to help NRCS side of things to simplify certain required documentation
- Probably won’t help with Earthteam Hour documentations. If not signed up as a full time Earthteam volunteer, probably won’t be worth it. May look at doing in-state recognition.

- **Special August Events**

- 8/16 - Russel Hedrick/Cameron Mills; southwest soil health expo; Ag soil Regen, vertical integration; document regenerative ag system; connect them with distillers/millers etc to get premium price for their product
- 8/17 Dave Brandt/Loran Steinlage/Roger Wenning, at Wenning’s
- 8/24 Keith Berns/Ray Ward at Rulon Farms

- **“Selling Conservation” Pilot**

- Working on a selling conservation training, in conjunction with SARE; working with Linda Prokopy and Adam Reiner with National Wildlife, initial meeting this Thursday to discuss what pilot will look like; September 8 will be the PILOT event – it will be limited who can go, this is a PILOT, 20-30 people representing various partners, then take steps back and see what worked well and what we might change so that in 2023 we can launch something fully ; add technical service advisors eventually; have some experienced staff be part of this; new could be overwhelmed