

Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative (CCSI)
April Regional Teleconference Notes
May 24 (SE, SW) and May 26 (NE, NW) 2021

Participants

Robert Zupancic, NRCS SE Area NRCS Grazing Specialist (SE)
Mark Thomas, ISDA (SE)
Heather Bacher, Women4theLand (SE)
Tara Wessler-Henry, ISDA (SE)
Laura Fribley, ISDA District Support Specialist (SE)
Hans Schmitz Purdue Extension ANR Educator, Posey County (SW)
Brad Smith, Pike County SWCD & TNC (SW)
Melissa Ruschau, Dubois County SWCD (SW)
Walt Sell, Purdue Extension Asst. Program Leader for Soil Health (all)
Jon Charlesworth, Benton County Purdue Extension (NE)
Darrell Nicholson, SE NRCS Area Conservationist (NE)
Stephanie Wulpenry, Urban Soil Health Program (NE)
Erica Wyss, Marshall County SWCD (NE)
Nellie Peffley, DeKalb County SWCD (NE)
Rick Nielson, NRCS Soil Scientist (NE)
Andrea Baker, NRCS District Conservationist, Fulton County (NE)
Tony Bailey, NRCS (NW)
Amanda Studor-Bond, IDEM (NW)
Stephanie McLain, NRCS State Soil Health Specialist (NW)
Marian Rodriguez, Urban Soil Health Program (NW)
Jessica Hoehn, CCSI Southern Program Manager (all)
Lisa Holscher, CCSI Director (all)
Joe Rorick, CCSI (all)
Sheila Schroeder, CCSI Northern Program Manager (all)

• Partner Updates

- **IDEM**
 - Notice of Intent for 319 and 205j grants due June 1
- **ISDA**
 - Hiring freeze; down 3 resource specialists
 - Trevor Laurys is the new division Director
 - CWI grants launched for districts and non-districts; concept paper due July 15 for NON-districts; all applications due September 9
 - Collaborating on trainings with IASWCD for both region meetings and VirTuesdays; Region meetings as follows: NW 6/8 at Noon, SW 6/15 at Noon, SE 6/10 at 7:00 pm, NE 6/17 at 7:00 pm
 - CWI networking sessions being hosted in the 4 quadrants; SW was 5/25; NW is 6/2, SE 6/16 and NE 6/22; all virtual except NE
- **NRCS**

- National Civil Rights Review going on this week, virtually
- Have vacancy announcements. Process of filling those across state
- Have some summer pathway interns
- Awaiting changes as far as workplace safety plans—hopefully fewer restrictions coming soon
- CAMP (Conservation Ag Mentor Program) to roll out in August; newer staff or non-ag background staff will pair with a farmer for mentoring. Program intended to assist all Indiana Conservation Partnership staff. Please be thinking of ICP staff who would benefit from this program.
- Conservation Cropping Systems website has been updated:

https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/in/technical/ecoscience/agronomy/nrcs144p2_031044

- **Purdue**

- Jason Ackerson is leaving Purdue and going to Soil Health Institute
- Marion Welsh is moving to Animal Science department as lead administrative assistant
- Dan Quinn is the new Corn specialist; working with Bob Nielsen as he gets set to retire
- PAC holding trainings this summer and field days around the state
- Organic Specialist Position – Purdue searching similar position to Michael O’Donnell’s old position; Master’s degree plus 4 years experience
- Benton County Extension working on some youth trainings; collaborating with Montgomery County; Sustainable Ag Day June 4, registration is through 4H online, contact Jon Charlesworth with questions or help registering, <mailto:charles6@purdue.edu>; also ag as part of 4-H road show; 10 locations around state and kids will get part of programming via Zoom and the other half will be hands on soil health related experiments; would like to do slake test at each of the locations if logistics of soil samples can be worked out

- **Women 4 the Land**

- Virtual offerings have been well received; many of the attendees have asked us to continue to offer virtual options
- Will be doing a staff survey soon to determine how W4L can best support staff in connecting to women
- A “peer-to-peer” outreach meeting* for current and potential circle hosts is planned for later in the summer

- **Urban Soil Health**

- Developing working groups; lots of interest from partners

- **Other Partner Updates & Events**

- TNC doing a lot of SW IN work on land protection. Operating under a new strategic plan. Working on fee-acquisition projects, also furthering partnerships w/ WRP and CREP to achieve acreage goals. Wrapping up Advanced Soil Health Trainings with sessions later this summer and then early winter. Mike Dunn has been working on project w/ IANA on mailings in SW IN mirroring work they’d been doing in upper white to help raise awareness of IANA goals towards soil health and nutrient reduction.

- Indiana Climate Services summit is June 2-3. The week after is NC Climate Collaborative / SARE PDP conference June 8-10; <https://northcentralclimate.org/>
- Dubois County SWCD Just planted green into 4ft cereal rye, 3 ft tall rape + oats and barley. Looking forward to W4tL in September. Big push w/ Emily's Project to chart populations of poison hemlock in Martin, Daviess, Dubois and provide outreach to landowners on how to eradicate/manage. Taylor Gundlach is no longer in Indiana. Dubois seeking a DC.
- Stephanie McLain, Rick Neilson and members of field mapping staff are working on a SE area-field sampling project. Submitted soil health samples as part of a larger national program
- Getting ready for state fair—pathway to water quality expanded to Boy Scout area. Soil Health Trailer will be there. Running couple demos a day. Contact Rick Neilson if interested in volunteering, <mailto:rick.neilson@usda.gov>
- National FFA Convention will be held in October, a hybrid version. Trying to have virtual soil pit
- July 15- Cover Crop Cookout at Vanderburgh County Fairgrounds: panel with experience cover crop/soil health farmers and a speaker on carbon credits.
- Perry/Spencer Soil Health Workshop will take place in November 2021
- Rush/Shelby and possibly other adjacent counties are planning a cover crop field day to be held in August 2021
- Shalamar Armstrong is searching for a Lab Tech; if you know anyone in the area who would be a good fit contact Joe Rorick or Shalamar; need Bachelor's degree and interest in cover crops/soil health
- SWCS holding workshop July 8, "Culture of Adoption" will feature Linda Prokopy, Carter Morgan and more; will be held in the SW area of the state or nearby

- **CCSI Funding**

- Purdue Ag Centers
 - Reaching out to PAC superintendents asking what kind of things they could use to enhance educational programming and outreach at the Purdue Ag Centers if they had funds; in discussions; bucket of funding will be directed to PACs
- PARP/Office of State Chemist
 - Bucket of funding for PARP events with caveat that a local partner must be able to do a soil health demo at the event
- Request for CCSI Funding
 - Recording from statewide webinar and related documents can be found here: <https://ccsin.box.com/s/4ptwlro32lcgehswnxiw61zeg1zjip>
 - Partners encouraged to submit an application for funding
 - Grants are NOT competitive
 - Must have a soil health component
 - CCSI oversight subcommittee meets on Fridays to review applications
 - Great to see the creativity of the projects and increased partnerships