

**Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative (CCSI)**  
**November Regional Teleconference Notes**  
**November 28, 2022**

## Participants

Lisa Holscher, CCSI Director (all)  
Jessica Hoehn, CCSI Southern Program Manager (all)  
Sheila Schroeder, CCSI Northern Program Manager (all)  
Walt Sell, Purdue Extension (S)  
Hans Schmitz, CCSI Agronomist (all)  
Ashley Adair, Purdue Organic Grains (all)  
Robert Zupancic, SE NRCS Area Grazing Specialist (S)  
Judi Brown, Dubois County SWCD (S)  
Mark Thomas, Ripley Co ISDA (S)  
Carrie Parmenter, TNC (S)  
Laura Fribley, ISDA (S)  
Melissa Ruschau, Dubois Co SWCD (S)  
Mark Thomas, ISDA (S)  
Laura Fribley, ISDA (S)  
Missy Elgin, Orange County SWCD (S)  
Lais McCartney, Purdue Extension and SARE (S)  
Leah Harmon, ISDA (S)  
Bryan Overstreet, Purdue Extension Jasper County (N)  
Jodie Overmyer, Marshall County SWCD (N)  
Kristi Todd, IDEM (N)  
Michelle Benson, Porter County SWCD (N)  
Andrea Baker, Fulton County NRCS (N)  
Adam Shanks, Purdue Extension Clinton County (N)  
Marc Roberts, Montgomery Co SWCD & IASWCD (N)  
Bri Styck, Newton County SWCD (N)

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## • CCSI Updates

- **Updates on new program manager positions**
  - NE and SW positions are open for applications; some have been received. Will continue to accept applications until the positions are filled.
  - Interviewing team is in place and will begin that process soon
- **Next steps for new agronomist position**
  - Lisa recently met with Henry Quesada, head of Purdue ANR extension to discuss the new agronomist position. He is working on finalizing agreement between Purdue and IASWCD (CCSI) so that position can be listed.
  - Position is officially a Purdue Extension position

- **Strategic Planning**
  - Thank you to all who completed the e-survey or telephone survey
  - In-person session will take place 11/29 in West Lafayette
  - New strategic plan will be finalized in the coming months
  
- **Root project updates**
  - Graphics company is working on downsizing the banners; hope to have a set ready by IASWCD Annual Conference
  - Each program manager and each agronomist will have a set; will be available for partner in-person events
  - Banner graphics, as well as slide graphics, available on [CCSI website](#) for free download
  
- **Trainings**
  - 2/28 Intro to Soil Health will be virtual. Reviewing content as part of process to update all of the trainings
  - 4/4, 11, 18, 25 – Fundamentals of Soil Health (formerly Core Soil Health & Core Cover Crops). 4, 18, 25 virtual. 11 in-person, hands-on at Beck Center in West Lafayette
  - 6/27-29 – Soil Health and Sustainability for Midwestern Field Staff (3-Day). As with prior years, we will set up “seats” for our partner organizations – NRCS, Extension, SWCDs / ISDA / IDEM, and a few open seats. This ensures that *all* partner organizations have the opportunity to enroll and attend.
  - Grow-More Training – pilot was held through National Wildlife Federation recently; hoping to expand and offer in all 4 quadrants of the state in 2023; helps address a need identified in ISDA training surveys about how to talk to producers/how to sell conservation. The training focuses upon the social science of messaging as well as designing outreach events that target a specific audience and ways to help ensure events are impactful. Meeting with Adam Reimer from NWF early December to discuss expanding this training to ICP staff

- **Partner Updates**

- **Purdue**
  - Steve Hawkins, director of PACs retired this summer, hiring process complete, Jon Leuck is the new director, has been with Purdue Ag for many years, will be a great hire and a great ICP partner
  - ANR retreat was Nov 15/16 – Adam Shanks, Hans Schmitz and Joe Rorick took one of the soil health demo kits that are available in each county and went through everything in it with everybody and showed them how to use it all
  - Just wrapped up the last virtual manure workshop – did 5 this year, 170/180 people online for each, all over the world
  - Manure expo will be in Arlington, WI in August
  - Purdue on the Farm program is winding down for the year; Extension initiative that started this year allows county educators to work with individual farmers discovering what is prevalent in their area – weeds, diseases, etc. Next year will

- ramp it up to include more replicated research trials and continuing survey work; direct any questions to [Hans Schmitz](#).
  - Registration for the Indiana Organic Grain farmer meeting opens in mid-December; Erin Silva will be the keynote speaker discussing no-till opportunities in organic agriculture; Andrew Westfall in White County has been a big help planning; more help is needed, contact [Ashley Adair](#) if interested
- **NRCS**
  - IRA (inflation reduction act) money – still don't know how exactly how much they are getting or when or what it will go toward; more info when available
  - Last week, Jennifer Chen, Tony Bailey, and Shannon Zezula held interviews for the State Soil Health Specialist - A Temporary Job Offer will hopefully be issued shortly
  - The panel was received for the State Urban/Small Farm Specialist. Interviews will be held soon
  - Have not received word from HR regarding posting the State Agronomist position. This will be advertised internally – if you know of candidates, please encourage them to apply when it is posted. If any questions, please contact [Shannon Zezula](#) or [Tony Bailey](#)
  - State Office Programs and Technology staffs have been busy preparing and rolling out FY23 Programs at Area NRCS meetings. The NW Area will be held on November 29 and the NE Area on December 9<sup>th</sup>. The SW and SE Areas already held their meetings
- **IASWCD Director**
  - Joe Schmees has accepted a position with TNC beginning December 1. Joe will continue with some of the IASWCD Director duties until a new hire is made and transitioned. Interviewing process for the position has begun.
- **ISDA**
  - ISDA's Cover Crop Insurance Premium Discount Program launches December 1. The program has expanded to an additional 23 counties for a total of 35. Eligible counties include: Bartholomew, Boone, Brown, Clark, Crawford, Daviess, Dearborn, Decatur, Delaware, Floyd, Greene, Hamilton, Hancock, Harrison, Hendricks, Henry, Jackson, Jefferson, Jennings, Johnson, Lawrence, Madison, Marion, Martin, Monroe, Morgan, Ohio, Orange, Randolph, Ripley, Scott, Shelby, Switzerland, Tipton and Washington. A \$5 per acre premium discount on crop insurance is available on up to 750 acres per producer on land that is not enrolled in any other state or federal programs. Anyone with questions may contact [Leah Harmon](#).
  - SWCD supervisors and staff can receive training dollars, for events; can be soil health related or other; encourage new staff to attend and carpool so they get that networking time with seasoned staff too; up to \$1000, first come first serve; it's in the grants management system; attach memo to the notes
- **Urban Soil Health**
  - IASWCD is hiring to fill the position in the SE by beginning of new year at the latest. Interviews this week, will let partners know outcome soon. Background: Casey Kennett transitioning to SW. With the overlap of agreements from the SW urban agreement, Holly McCutchan decided to continue working full time with Warrick and not take the SW Position

- December 13<sup>th</sup> = Monthly Urban Updates call 9-10:30, [register here](#)
- Special highlight = IASWCD Urban Soil Health team went to Louisiana via generous support from SARE for a no-till on farm intensive training with nationally / internationally respected soil health vegetable crop farmer Jesse Frost (no till growers YouTube, podcast, Living Soil Handbook book); hear new techniques and take aways we learned from the training during the monthly update. The team will also host an event to share take-aways -Facebook link to event is [here](#)
- NRCS & Partner urban / small farm training = All resources (slides, handouts) found on BOX [here](#)
- Outreach / education = over 4,000 people reached in 2022 (not including Working Groups' own events)
- 2023 Programming = starting to schedule. Please let the Urban Team know what you want to partner on / what support looking for.
  
- **IDEM**
  - Upper Wabash, Treaty Creek, Walnut Creek – still have a decent amount of cost-share available. Can contact [Kristi Todd](#) for more info, especially producers
  - Auglaize WMP will be last watershed in Lake Erie Basin without a WMP – finishing that up and hope to have it approved
  - Cedar Creek – WMP re-write. Lower Elkhart River WMP re-write. Also going to have implementation project starting up in Salamonie. Clean Lakes continuing with grant to continue water quality monitoring. Monroe Reservoir area hoping to get approved for revolving loan program for septic
  - Silver Jackets group – did wetland education; want to continue this in the future; Army Corps/wetland permitting; any interest in a workshop like this let [Kristi](#) know – a Collection of stakeholders focused on flood plain mgmt. and flood plain safety throughout IN; wetlands education fits into this mission
  
- **SARE**
  - Farmer Rancher grants are due December 1
  - Next spring, professional development grants will be available to help ag professionals in the realm of sustainable ag, including Extension and SWCDs
  - Contact [Lais McCartney](#) with any questions
  
- **Other Partner Updates**
  - **Orange County SWCD** is partnering with the Orange County Cattleman's Association for this year's annual meeting
  - **Hendricks County SWCD** is holding their PARP meeting this Friday; Hans will speak
  - **Land Stewardship Initiative Workshop**, Dubois Co SWCD, was held recently, 10 years after the program started; Hans spoke about changes they've seen over the 10 years on fields with different management practices
  - Terry Ault has retired from **Jackson County SWCD**. Replacement is Maria Fisher
  - **Porter County SWCD** is partnering with Purdue Extension 12/13 workshop, on planting green; they CC cost share available; \$500 bonus if you plant cover crops and then plant green in the spring; 3/28 Army Corps out of Chicago doing a permitting workshop
  - **Marshall County SWCD** distributed CWI funds for cover crops this fall; promoting 319 grant

- **Newton County SWCD** finished 5 year business plan re-write; making some final edits to it; partnering with Extension for a workshop with PARP on 12/8; working with TNC, Newton Co park board, CISMA, public library, extension and DNR on a 2023 work plan and trying to schedule some events together to go over it all and what can be done together; also finalizing grant details to try out an internship program
- **Montgomery County SWCD** currently has the youngest board they have ever had
- Winter PARP meeting in **Clinton County** will be 12/12 – talking about maximizing cover crop mixture

- **Winter Meeting Season Updates**

- Heart of America Grazing Conference will be end of February
- Salem soil health workshop February 7
- Organic Grain meeting at Beck Center is February 22
- Ohio State also doing an organic grain conference in NW Ohio, Jan 4-5, 2023, transition to organic partnership program through USDA – don't know what that looks like yet or how it will function; USDA has released a news release to explain some of it
- [Acres Eco-Ag Conference & Trade Show](#) December 5-8, Covington KY, featuring John Kempf, Rick Clark, Jimmy Emmons, David Montgomery, Anne Bikle and more,
- [Virtual Webinar](#) re solar farms – Jack's solar garden, co-locating ag in solar; December 7
- [Indiana CCA Conference](#), December 13-14, Indianapolis
- [Indiana Farm Equipment & Tech Expo](#), December 13-15, Westfield
- IN Small farm conference will be the first weekend in March. In person. Registration not open yet. Geared toward small and diversified farmers.