

Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative (CCSI)
March Regional Teleconference Notes
March 29 (SE, SW) and March 31 (NE, NW) 2021

Participants

Sheila Schroeder, CCSI (all)
Lisa Holscher, CCSI (all)
Joe Rorick (all)
Melissa Ruschau, Dubois SWCD / VUJC LSI (SW)
Darrell Nicholson, NRCS SE Area Conservationist (SE)
Kristi Todd, IDEM (NE)
Curt Emmanuel, Purdue Extension Boone County (NW)
Marc Roberts, Montgomery County & IASWCD (NW)
Tim Schwipps, NRCS Jennings County (SE)
Lisa McFee, Morgan SWCD (SW)
Michelle Jones, Morgan Co Extension (SW)
Tom Held, NRCS Knox Co (SW)
Andrea Baker, Kosciusko SWCD (NE)
Brad Kohlhagen, Adams Co Extension (NE)
Michelle Benson, Porter Co SWCD (NW)
Austin Green, Clinton Co SWCD (NW)

- **Partner Updates**

- **IASWCD**

- Nominations are now open for the **River Friendly Farmer Award**. Link to the form can be found on the IASWCD website (iaswcd.org) on the [Districts/Annual Awards webpage](#). Indiana SWCDs can nominate up to two recipients. Watershed organizations may also nominate through their local district. Deadline is June 10.

- **Five trainings were held for Indiana Conservation Partnership** staff in February and March. Topics included: Wetland Restoration (Part I and Part II), Backyard Habitat, Tree ID and Shrub ID. Three of the five recordings have now been uploaded on the ICP site and can be viewed. (icp.iaswcd.org/resources/trainings page)

- **IDEM**

- 319 solicitation for applications beginning April 1. Can file Notice of Intent to develop WMP or implementation for BMPs; something new this year – accepting proposals for innovation projects; projects that don't fit into WMP or implementation for up to \$50,000; would not cover monitoring or water chemistry or macroinvertebrates; fairly open otherwise as long as it addresses reducing NPS pollution; if interested in this, contact your watershed specialist first to see if your proposal fits; website was updated today

- **NRCS**
 - Service centers are now at 50%. State Office at 25% (NRCS). Federal government may be slower to change than state. Will have to continue wearing masks in service centers after 4/6. Taking a cautious approach.
 - Adding 32 staff through direct hire so there is need for basic training for them. They will be arriving in different locations and positions from the end of April until the end of August. Also still have employees from last year that need pertinent training.

- **Other Partner Updates & Events**
 - Jennings County is holding a no-till conference meeting 4/1 with Purdue Extension for Ripley and surrounding counties; registration was required and PARP is available.
 - Porter County SWCD has a new website: <https://www.portercountyswcd.com/home>
 - Porter County put together 50 spring break boxes for area youth, included soil measurement kit, soil shake out, mini hydroponics, popsicle stick paddle boat and more; county wide scavenger hunt, went over very well.
 - Kosciusko SWCD is hiring a Conservation Program Technician. Andrea Baker is leaving the district 4/9 and will be the NRCS DC in Fulton County.
 - Morgan County is starting a CWI with Owen County – Soil Health Restore; Green Crop Consulting is working on it as well.
 - Morgan SWCD has been filming some tours and posting videos to YouTube so students and teachers can take a self-guided hike; over 1000 box kits with activities and experiments were delivered to children and teachers.
 - Tippecanoe County SWCD has organized a self-guided ag tour highlighting 12 different sites featuring conservation practices. They plan to do more including a wildlife planting tour when things are in bloom. More information is available on their website: <https://www.tippecanoe-county-swcd.org/home-featured-left/self-guided-agricultural-tour/>.
 - Huntington County SWCD/Upper Wabash Watershed is holding a Farm Drainage Virtual Workshop April 6. Eileen Klavivko, Frank Gibbs, Herb Manifold and Ed Farris will speak. More information: <https://www.ccsin.org/event-details/virtual-farm-drainage-workshop>
 - “Live from Avila” takes place virtually April 13. For people interested in learning more about going low-till or no-till; Derek Thompson will be the speaker. For more information: <https://allenswcd.org/event/live-from-avilla/>
 - Clinton County is putting together some events for 2021 and will partner with CCSI to determine speakers to fit their needs
 - Boone County held a hybrid cover crop workshop on March 24; 15 people attended in person and 3 were present on Zoom; worked fairly well even though equipment didn’t fully perform as expected; **REMINDER** that CCSI has virtual field day kits available for partners to use.
 - IASWCD participated in some legislator Zoom meetings last week; hope is to increase funding for districts.
 - SSW IDEA is holding a meeting April 16.

- Districts trying to plan a training for newly elected supervisors to become more familiar with districts and the role of supervisors.

- **Training Updates**

- Recently wrapped up a 5 week advanced training for ag retailers along with TNC and John Pike; more sessions will be held in the future
- Core Trainings were held virtually March 11, 18 & 25; over 80 people registered and more than 60 attended; this is 5 times the number who attended the in-person sessions in 2018

- **Webinars, Virtual Shop Visits**

- Most past recordings are already available on CCSI website–
<https://www.ccsin.org/tools>, scroll down to videos. Or, follow the YouTube link from ccsin.org and find videos there.
- Steve Groff virtual farm visit will be April 6:
https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_3t7Q-TAAR5eZE9a134gatg
- Steve Groff/David Brandt combination farm visit will be April 20:
https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_RSK83txPRmSR8df_Yd8bXQ
- Will be scheduling one with Mike Bredesen later this spring. This virtual visit will focus not only on beneficial insects, but the implications for higher food chain levels, especially songbirds and gamebirds. You can learn more about Mike and his work at <https://www.ecdysis.bio/our-team>

- **Other**

- CCSI has a variety of photographs on their website for partners to use for flyers or other purposes; many of them are dated; if you see something that make a good side-by-side comparison during your travels and field visits, please snap a photo and share with us.