

Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative (CCSI)
February Regional Teleconference Notes
February 23 (SE, SW) and February 24 (NE, NW) 2021

Participants

Stephanie McLain, NRCS Soil Health Special (SW, NE)
Sheila Schroeder, CCSI (all)
Jessica Hoehn, CCSI (all)
Lisa Holscher, CCSI (all)
Laura Fribley, ISDA (SE)
Paul Pendergast, Vigo Co SWCD (SW)
Melissa Ruschau, Dubois SWCD / VUJC LSI (SW)
Mark Thomas, ISDA (SE)
Ben Zuercher, NRCS Greensburg Planning Team Leader (SE)
Joe Rorick, CCSI Agronomist (SE, SW)
Brad Smith, TNC and Pike Co SWCD Board (SW)
Walt Sell, Purdue Extension (all)
Darrell Nicholson, NRCS SE Area Conservationist (SE)
Doris Scully NRCS Greencastle Tech Team Lead and SW Soil Health Team (SW)
Hans Schmitz, Purdue Extension Posey Co (SW)
Jan Came Vigo Co SWCD (SW)
Erica Wyss – Marshall County SWCD (NE)
Nellie Peffley – DeKalb Co SWCD (NE)
Kristi Todd- IDEM (NE)
Stacy White – Randolph County SWCD (NE)
Sarah Longenecker – St. Joe County SWCD (NE)
Bobby Heppmansberger, Wabash County SWCD, IASWCD President (NE)
Dave Lefforge – ISDA (NE)
Frank Jones – PTL, NRCS (NE)
Kim Peterson – Lake County SWCD & IASWCD (NW)
Elli Blaine – IASWCD Urban Soil Health Program Director (NW)
Tony Bailey – NRCS State Conservation Agronomist (NW)
Danielle Walschmidt – NRCS NW Area Conservationist (NW)
Jon Charlesworth – Purdue Extension Benton County (NW)
Curt Emmanuel – Purdue Extension Boone County (NW)
Celia Tharpe – NRCS, Carroll County (NW)
Marc Roberts – Montgomery County & IASWCD (NW)

- **Core Training Updates**

- Held virtually this year in a series of 2 hr session over 3 weeks.
- March 11, 18 & 25 – all 3 sessions equal ONE complete training
- Had set cap at 60, may bump that up as registration is already higher than that
- Joe and Stephanie have learned how to make things more interactive and interesting over the past year of doing virtual events

- **Partner Updates**

- **Purdue**

- ANR Program Director Rick Foster retired. Hope to have replacement hired early spring. Jason Henderson is the interim with others helping as needed.
- Doing a combo of virtual and in person events. The way we do business now and in future may be forever changed.
- Working on a new publication – Cover Crops & The Home Garden

- **ISDA**

- A few job openings are currently frozen
- Many SWCD annual meetings are virtual this year; ISDA employees not attending as many as past years
- Tillage transect – transects won't start until 3 days after temperature reaches 40 degrees so cover crops can break dormancy. Only 2 ppl in vehicles. 1 in front and 1 in back. Fewer details are required on the form this year, but still have to cover the same ground.

- **NRCS**

- Has concerns about getting tillage transect done on time with new restrictions on temperature and date.
- Busy time. NRCS in midst of reviewing and ranking equip. 2300 apps statewide. Well over 200 for conservation security program. Early spring obligation of funds. Requesting additional funds.
- Moving forward on hiring new staff through Direct Hire – a method of bringing on larger number of entry level employees in a rapid manner. Approx 25 positions will be added in Indiana; 1500 nationwide. Moving toward staff cap of 236. Several summer interns will be hired - around 12 across state.
- No more than 25% of capacity at service center. Staff mostly teleworking.

- **IASWCD**

- IASWCD is planning a series of April Lunch 'n Learns for Indiana District Staff and Supervisors. ICP staff is also welcome to join. Watch for more details on the IASWCD website (iaswcd.org) and the IASWCD eNewsletter, Conservation INSight.
- IASWCD, in collaboration with ISDA, will be presenting 3-4 trainings for Districts beginning this summer. These will again be called VirTuesdays and will take place the 3rd Tuesday night of each month beginning in July. Topics and details being determined at this time. Watch for more details published in the IASWCD eNewsletter.
- If you do not receive the IASWCD eNewsletter in your inbox every other Wednesday and would like to get it, please sign up here: http://bit.ly/IASWCDnews_signup
- The ICP is offering several trainings for all ICP staff. All of these trainings are being recorded and will be posted on the ICP website/Resources/Trainings page. To get more details about each one and find the Zoom link for the upcoming trainings, visit the Conservation Events calendar on the IASWCD website, iaswcd.org. In this calendar you can search using "ICP" to find all upcoming ICP trainings.

- Wetland Restoration Planning and Design Part 1 and 2 were recorded and will be posted on the ICP website by the end of this week. (icp.iaswcd.org)
 - Identification of Trees in Indiana webinar is March 2 at 1:30 pm EST
 - Identification of Shrubs in Indiana webinar is March 4 at 1:30 pm EST
 - Backyard Habitat Planning and Technical Assistance training will take place March 5 at 9 am EST
- **Other Partner Updates & Events**
- Indian-Kentuck watershed held a cover crop workshop for 319 deliverables; 2 sessions; benefits and selection of cover crops with Doug Peterson; and Robert Z and Jason Ton grazing of cover crops – recordings are on CCSI website—<https://www.ccsin.org/tools>, scroll down to videos. Or, follow the YouTube link from ccsin.org and find videos there.
 - March 13 – Orange County is holding an event about working with your financial institution
 - March 18 – Wayne County holding an event at the Fairgrounds, PARP available; weeds and pest management, grazing
 - VUJC project – a 4 session Lunch ‘n learn series just wrapped up; You can find recordings on the Dubois SWCD YouTube
 - TNC currently holding Advanced Soil Health training for crop advisors virtually
 - TNC also partnered with Linda Prokopy’s lab to survey producers about adoption of cover crops. They are surveying those who tried them for 3 years with cost share dollars and then adopted them and those who tried them and then did not adopt them
 - Pike & Gibson County will be hiring a technician
 - New DC in Vigo County – Amanda Kautz
 - Lower Salamonie 319 project is closing; CCSI partnered with them on a virtual workshop in February, 50 participants; project resulted in 5,400 acres of cover crops, 144 acres of NMP and 105 of no-till; leading to 5,465 reduced tons of sediment and significant reductions in N and P; they utilized all of the available cost share funds for the project
 - Great Lakes Sediment & Nutrient Reduction Program is accepting proposals for GLRI grants for 2021; watersheds that drain to a great lake are eligible, deadline is April 16, Beth@glc.org is the contact
 - St. Joe & Marshall Counties partnered on a workshop with Ray Archuleta. Recording is available: <https://www.stjosephswcd.org/producers-workshop>
 - Jon Charlesworth is working on carbon market education to help people navigate through it
 - Upper Wabash Watershed/Huntington Co. will be hosting a drainage water management workshop in April
 - Boone County SWCD will be hosting an in-person and virtual cover crop workshop March 24
 - Urban Soil Health Director, Elli Blaine, began new position in January, currently hiring regional staff who will start March 1

- **Webinars, Virtual Shop Visits**

- These have been held every other Tuesday since January 5, 2021
- Different way to provide information; has been well received thus far
- Ken Rulon, Paul Jasa, AJ Adkins and Rodney Rulon have participated; Carter Morgan and John Pike are lined up for March
- Most recordings are already available on CCSI website—<https://www.ccsin.org/tools>, scroll down to videos. Or, follow the YouTube link from [ccsin.org](https://www.ccsin.org) and find videos there.

- **Brainstorming- upcoming shop visits**

- Cover crops and pesticides (PARP) Sheet and rill erosion vs no erosion
- Herbicide resistant weed - talked about forever but still issue. Plant nutrition-micro nutrients
- Specialty crops with cc and cc with seasonal high tunnels. Great thing for Ellie and her team to help with
- Helping employees understand what farmer goes through---as new hires don't have connection to farm. Walking in farmers shoes would be helpful. Employees don't have awareness of what farmer must consider when they walk through the door. How to talk to farmers; how to be a good listener
- Press release when recording done. ½ page in newsletter, etc. Create additional outreach opportunity with recordings
- Getting cover crops germinating early. Break out groups. Tendency to push right to no-till and not discuss other "in-betweens"
- ID young growing cover crops.
- Be mindful of Zoom fatigue and lack of bandwidth for some.
- Cycling of nutrients and how they affect one another
- Soil ID class. Different soils of IN.
- Cover Crop disease diagnostic—looking for disease present in CC. Is it common or uncommon? Can it infect cash crop—plan ahead with fungicide use, etc.
- Carbon Markets and Soil Health
- Soil Health Under Solar Panels
- Food chain information – soil to human food chain info; market foods produced sustainably better to consumers
- Biological termination processes, crimping, flail mowing
- Offer CCA credits for these events
- Specialty crops
- Precision technology
- Drainage
- Virtual field days surrounding high value tourist sites within the watershed
- Interseeding, custom seeding, early interseeding – Andy Ambriole mentioned
- Herbicide diagnostics and herbicide carry over; especially for the north because there is a small window for seeding cover crops
- 4 R program
- How to market cover crops to producers – training for ag retailers on how to sell them
- Cover crop information tied to any farming system – including tillage

