

## Highlights

### **New Program Manager Positions**

Telephone interviews were held, and five candidates were selected for in-person interviews to be held on Monday, December 19<sup>th</sup>. An offer was extended to and accepted by Julie Loehr for the SW Program Manager position. The NE Program Manager position was relisted and interviews will be conducted in Jan/Feb.

### **New Agronomist Position**

As with the current CCSI Agronomist, the additional CCSI Agronomist will officially be a Purdue Extension position. In addition to soil health outreach and education, the Agronomist will be associated with Extension's Purdue-On-the-Farm program. Purdue On the Farm was launched over the past year and aims to connect its clients and partners through survey, field monitoring, demonstration, and on-farm research.

A draft agreement running from January 3, 2023, to September 30, 2027 was submitted for review with the Agronomy Business Department on December 13<sup>th</sup> and executed on December 21<sup>st</sup>. The position is expected to be listed in January.

### **Strategic Planning**

An in-person Strategic Planning session was held on November 29<sup>th</sup>. A strong mix of partners attended the meeting (including Marc Roberts, Montgomery SWCD / IASWCD). An outline of program goals, strategic priorities, and measurements were developed. Finalization of the updated strategic plan will occur over the coming winter.

### **TNC "Mini-Grants"**

An agreement is being developed with TNC to launch a mini grant program in partnership with CCSI. A total of \$40,000 will be made available to SWCDs and other Indiana Conservation Partners for soil health education/outreach projects, especially those that target Certified Crop Advisors and farmers who have not adopted soil health systems or are beginning soil health practitioners. More information will be made available at the IASWCD Annual Conference and a webinar scheduled for February 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **The Root Project**

All current graphic slides will have been made available for download from the CCSI website. Full-scale banners have been ordered and the first four have been received. Each CCSI Program Manager and Agronomist will have a full set. Partners may borrow the banners outreach and education events. A set is already scheduled to be on display at the Indiana Hort Conference. In addition, the South Dakota Soil Health Coalition asked if they could borrow a set for display at their Annual Conference to be held in conjunction with the Midwest Cover Crops Council Annual Meeting. A set will be on display at the IASWCD Annual Conference.

*We have plans to develop a graphic featuring a ripper shank at full scale. Any source material – front and side view line drawings – would be GREATLY appreciated.*

### **IASWCD Annual Conference Breakout Session**

This session will focus on event planning, especially for those designed to educate community leaders: drainage boards, school boards, planning boards, local-state-federal elected officials. The CCSI Team will review event planning tips, tools, and survey templates. Led by Eric Shideler, Vermillion Co SWCD and with Dan Hovland + Kris Vance, NRCS – along with other SWCDs and ICP partners, much of the session will focus upon connecting with and providing education to community leaders.

### **2023 Indiana CCA Conference**

CCSI Agronomist Hans Schmitz and Indiana Soybean Alliance Conservation Agronomist (both Purdue On the Farm),

approached the Indiana CCA Conference planning committee to invite CCSI to participate in planning the 2023 event. That offer was accepted and members of the CCSI team will join in spring planning meetings.

## **G1. Farmer Engagement and Involvement**

### **1. Innovative and Visionary Farmers**

*Quarterly Target: 1 ride-a-long, shop visit, or other (Each - A, NPM, SPM)*

*Listening sessions with Innovative and Visionary Farmers. Use to help identify needed field day and training topics.*

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### **Conservative and Pragmatic Farmers**

*Meetings and other opportunities for listening sessions to gain perspective on adoption issues/concerns of soil health practices. Use to help develop outreach topics and tactics.*

*Quarterly Targets: 1 ride-a-long, shop visit, or other (Each - A, NPM, SPM)*

- 12/09-10 Mark Seib, Seib Brothers (A)

### **1. Farmer Influencers**

*Quarterly Targets: 1 LLP per region adding an influencer to their outreach planning team or board. (Each - NPM, SPM)*

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### **2. Presentations**

*Quarterly Targets: Average of 3 soil health presentations or demonstrations. (A)*

- 12/01 – Parke/Vermillion Soil Health Day, Covington, IN, “Using Soil Health for Resiliency against Extreme Weather Events” (60 attendees)
- 12/02 – Hancock County PARP, Greenfield, IN “Terminating Cover Crops Successfully” (45 attendees)
- 12/06 – Professional Development Conference, Virtual “Bingo! A New Trend in Facilitated Morale Boosting” (35 attendees)
- 12/08 – Newton County Soil Health PARP, Morocco, IN “Soil Health Basics and More” (33 attendees)
- 12/15 – Environmental Education Series – Climate Change, Virtual + Muncie, IN “Climate Change and the Green Industry” (2 attendees)
- 12/16 – Gibson County Nutrien PARP, Princeton, IN, “Using Smartphone Apps for Predicting Inversions” (80 attendees)

## **G2. Local Level Partnership Support**

### **1. Facilitate and Support Local Level Partnership’s Outreach and Education**

*Quarterly Target: CCSI as a group materially participate in / support average of 15 LLP Outreach Efforts groups (CCSI Team Goal)*

Workshops Completed

- Bi-state Crops Conference, Covington, 75 attendees
- 12/02 Hancock County PARP, Greenfield, 45 attendees
- 12/08 Newton County PARP, Morocco, 30 attendees
- 12/15 Environmental Education Series Event, Muncie, 2 attendees

- 12/16 Posey/Gibson PARP, Cynthiana and Princeton, 110 attendees

Workshops in Progress:

- 02/07, 21, 28 German American Bank Lunch-n-Learn for Ag Lenders
- 02/07 Regional Soil Health Workshop, Salem
- 02/09 Hoosier Chapter Winter Meeting, Odon
- 02/09 Harrison County SWCD Annual Meeting
- 02/15 White/Carroll Bi-County Soil Health Meeting
- 02/15 Kosciusko Farmer Breakfast
- 02/21 Warrick County Cover Crop Breakfast, Booneville
- 02/22 Midwest Women in Ag Conference
- 02/23 Franklin County PARP
- 02/23 Knox County Master Gardener Class
- 02/24 Union County SWCD Annual Meeting
- 03/01 Marshall / St Joe Workshop
- 03/02 Ripley County Extension PARP
- 03/07 Orange County/Lost River Watershed Field Day, Paoli
- 03/09 Hancock County SWCD Annual Meeting
- 02/07 Regional Soil Health Workshop, Salem
- 03/29 Southern Indiana Grazing Conference, Odon
- Late spring 2023 Brown County/Lake Monroe Watershed Field Day/Workshop
- Late summer/early fall Lawrence County Soil Health Field Day
- Lawrence County Soil Health event (before 2025)
- DeKalb County SWCD Workshop – Date TBD
- March – Miami County Winter PARP meeting
- 2021 – 23 – Kankakee Basin and WLEB series of events to support existing RCPP (WLEB) and proposed RCPP (Kankakee) (NPM)

**2. Consistent Soil Health Messaging**

*Annual Target: Outlined in fall with training team.*

*Foundational Soil Health Trainings / Awareness, Knowledge and Understanding of Soil Health*

Completed Trainings

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Trainings in Progress:

- 02/28/23 CCSI-SARE Intro to Soil Health
- 04/04, 18, 25 (virtual) 04/11 (in-person) CCSI-SARE Foundational Soil Health Series
- 06/24-29 Soil Health and Sustainability for Midwestern Field Staff (3-Day Soil Health)
- Soil Health Signature Program Curriculum Development
- Soil Health PARP Regulatory Topic Development

**Professional Development Opportunities**

*Annual Target: Outlined in fall with training team.*

*Advanced Soil Health Trainings / Applied Soil Health Knowledge and Skills*

Completed Trainings:

## Trainings in Progress

- 09/5, 7, 19, 21 Grow More – Engaging New Audiences

### **4. Messaging to/from Local Level Partnerships**

*Monthly Targets: 2-3 LLP visits. 1 Teleconference / Region (Each - NPM, SPM)*

- 12/01 Sand County Foundation (D)
- 12/6 – 12/8 Purdue Extension Professional Development Conference (A)
- 12/07 – Field Crops Focus Group Winter Meeting, Virtual (A)
- 12/07 RC&D Education Committee Meeting – CCSI Update (NPM)
- 12/08 Solutions from the Land (D)
- 12/08 NWF All Champions call (all)
- 12/09 – Indiana State Climate Office Team Update, Virtual (A)
- 12/09 – Purdue on the Farm Operations Leadership Team, Virtual (A)
- 12/13 NW NRCS Area Meeting (NPM)
- 12/14 White Co Extension, SWCD, NRCS + Carroll Co NRCS, SWCD (NPM)
- 12/15 NNE IDEA Meeting (NPM)
- 12/19 – Purdue on the Farm Website Team, Virtual (A)

## **G3. General CCSI Outreach / Communication**

### **1. Marketing**

*Quarterly Targets: 3-4 “formal” CCSI Updates (CCSI Team Goal)*

*Annual Target: 1-2 New External Partners*

*Ensure LLPs understand CCSI resources available to them; Ensure external partners are aware of CCSI strengths, tools, and opportunities.*

- December 1 – Events Newsletter; 2251 delivered; 30% open rate; 5% click rate
- December 15 – Events Newsletter; 2240 delivered; 34% open rate; 5% click rate

### **2. Soil Health Messaging**

*Quarterly Targets: 3 Podcasts; 3-6 Blog Posts; 6 Newsletters;*

*Use social networks and other media tools to deliver soil health messaging and information.*

*Completed Materials:*

- Podcasts
  - Hans Schmitz, CCSI/Purdue Extension, and Austin Pearson, Midwest Regional Climate Center/Purdue Extension – Climate, Weather, and Soil Health
  - (Upcoming) Hans Schmitz, CCSI / Purdue Extension, and Michael Morrow, Indiana Farmers Union
- Social Media
  - Twitter
    - Minimal twitter posts as new Twitter management is settling in.
  - Facebook :
    - 3379 reach.
- Website
  - 12/13 blog post: Indiana NRCS announces FY23 sign-up
  - 12/23 Funding available to Western Lake Erie Basin farmers and landowners

- 445 Users / 4.2K sessions
- All Root Project slides now available for download

Materials in Progress:

- Regulatory Pesticide Considerations for Soil Health Systems, by Hans Schmitz and Matt Pearson, OISC
- CCSI and Partnerships, ISA and Purdue Extension (interview for Purdue Extension Impact report)
- Full scale Root Project banners ordered – 7 sets total: one for each Program Manager, one for each Agronomist, one spare. These will be available for partners to borrow for their events.

#### **G4. Research**

Quarterly Targets: None

*CCSI no longer leads research projects; CCSI provides connectivity between researchers and cooperators; potential research needs.*

- Support - Indiana University SARE - Participatory Farmer Monitoring on Nitrate Loss (Yoder)
- Support – Purdue University SARE - Precision Winter Hardy Cover Cropping for Improving Farm Profitability and Environmental Stewardship (Armstrong)
- Notre Dame – Indiana University – Purdue University collaboration
- Grant proposals for Midwest Climate Hub Partnership and Midwest Climate Hub CAP submitted. (A)

#### **OTHER**

- Jessica Hoehn, SE Program Manager, has been accepted into the 2023 Emerging Professionals Leadership Program (Agribusiness Council of Indiana)
- CCSI / IASWCD / Purdue offices closed from 12/23 – 01/02/23