

**State Technical Committee Meeting  
October 21, 2021**

**Fiscal Year 2021 Program Accomplishments and NRCS Updates**

- Adam Heichelbech gave an update on accomplishments for ACEP-WRE and ALE, EQIP and CSP.

**Fiscal Year 2022 ACEP Changes**

- Restoration Criteria (WRCG)
- Restoration Practice Costs
- Minimum Acreage for Applications (15ac)
- Maximum Initial Restoration Cost (\$1,500/ac avg)
- Ranking Criteria
  - Trying to make sure we are focusing on the proper habitat types
- GARC Rates – Area Wide Market Analysis review at NHQ
  - We have seen a lot of increase in Ag land prices over the last year or two.
  - Note that there were easement reviews this year and although prices did increase the values of the marginal wet cropland areas and the increase was slightly less than 10% so this will allow us to move forward with review and not have to do a brand-new market analysis.
  - Likely going to see GARC Rates staying the same as FY21.
  - Likely to see GARC Rates increase in FY23

**Fiscal Year 2022 EQIP & CSP Information and Changes**

- Adopt a screening or workload prioritization tool to be used prior to application ranking.
  - This tool sorts out the applications into those that will be ranked and to those that will not be ranked.
  - The criteria we want to use to screen applications would be the planning and implementation guide that NRCS develops.
- EQIP On-Farm Energy Initiative
  - Focuses on helping mostly livestock operations with implementing energy conservation practices.
    - Adding insulation to livestock building
    - Changing to more efficient lighting system in livestock buildings
    - Making improvements to milking facilities
  - The change that is being proposed is to remove practice payment caps for all the practices offered through that initiative.
  - Include ranking criteria through this initiative that awards points for projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions as identified through an energy audit.
- New Practice in Fiscal Year 2022: 447 Irrigation System Tailwater Recovery
  - Another name for this practice is called “Drainage Water Recycling”.
    - System where the drainage water from a field is then pumped back in, either through irrigation or through drainage water management back onto the field.
- New Practice in Fiscal Year 2022: Phosphorous Removal System
  - End of a drainage system practice where some sort of media is installed in the ground where the drainage water filters through the media (metal or steel slag)

and the water flows through this and pulls the phosphorous out of the water before it goes into a stream and drinking water.

- Not a lot of decisions to make at State level for CSP since it is a Nationally determined program.

### **Special Projects for Fiscal Year 2022– Jill Reinhart**

- Two new National Water Quality Initiatives
  - Posey County – Targeted EQIP dollars in the Black River watershed, addressing nitrogen issues in the drinking water.
  - Kosciusko County – Working on assessment plan under the water quality initiative that will put them in line for implementation funding for next year
- Phase II of the Western Lake Erie Basin Regional Conservation Partnership Project
  - Completed a 5-year project and they were just funded for a new 5-year project.
    - Tri-State Project lead by State Department of Agriculture

### **Partnership Updates**

Josh Griffin – Division of Fish and Wildlife:

- Fish and Wildlife was able to pass their license fee package update – Will kick in in FY22.
- Fish and Wildlife completed the Got INput process – takes input on natural resource related laws and rules and staff is sifting through these to see which may be beneficial
- Fish and Wildlife is gearing up for CWD testing – this is important for the wildlife population and captive animal population around the state.

Jeff Kiefer – Fish and Wildlife Services:

- Jared O'Brien filled the Private Lands Biologist position in Northwest Indiana.
- Partners with fish and wildlife program is updating the 5-year strategic plan that will go from FY22-26 and they do not anticipate huge changes.

Ryan Owen – Pheasants Forever Quail Forever:

- Sina Parks filled a Precision Ag and Conservation Specialist position
- Bringing on 2 new positions
  - Coordinating Wildlife Biologist
  - New Farm Bill Biologist (NW) and re-filling the SW vacancy.

Jennifer Thumb – State Department of Ag:

- Clean Water Indiana Grants will be announced at the State Soil Board Meeting.

Cary McElhinney – EPA:

- This [link](#) includes information on a new report published by ASDWA and GWPC on state source water protection program progress and on coordinating with agriculture and forestry partners.

### **NRCS Application Deadlines:**

- ACEP-WRE: November 15, 2021
- EQIP: December 17, 2021
- Tri-State Western Lake Erie Basin Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP): December 17, 2021
- ACEP-ALE: January 18, 2022