

State Technical Committee Meeting Minutes
NRCS State Office
Indianapolis, Indiana
November 9, 2022

Welcome – Shannon Zezula, NRCS State Resource Conservationist

Shannon welcomed everyone to our first meeting in a couple of years. Those present at the meeting introduced themselves. He thanked everyone for attending in person.

Shannon provided an update on NRCS Staffing Changes/Details/Acting. Dan Hovland is acting State Conservationist, while Jerry Raynor is on detail at the Office of the Chief in Washington, D.C.

Dan Hovland, Acting NRCS State Conservationist's Update

Dan provided updates on Indiana NRCS activities. Indiana has 45 vacancies. Including State Soil Health Specialist, Area Conservationists, and State Conservationist's Executive Secretary. 25 have yet to be advertised. NRCS plans to hire 4000 employees across the nation. They are utilizing the Direct Hire Authority to hire engineers. Indiana has hired four additional Planning Team Leaders for a total of 12 across the state. We are looking to improve our recruitment efforts.

We are on a Continuing Resolution until December 16, 2022. That limits Indiana from entering into new agreements.

He highlighted the Chief's Priorities: (1) Recruitment, (2) Streamline programs and delivery (3) Partnerships and (4) Urban Ag.

He discussed IRA and the funding for \$20B to get conservation on the ground.

Indiana is updating our Training Plan for future.

AFA and program dollars,

The Leadership Team holding strategic planning session.

NRCS Partnership Technical Agreements – Kris Vance and Shannon Zezula

Shannon provided a summary on 2022 Indiana NRCS Partnership Technical Agreements. *(See attached presentation GET FROM SHANNON)*

Kris provided an update on the Pathway to Water Quality, WomenfortheLand and American Ag Food and Trust national agreement. Ben Wicker gave a brief update on the Indiana Ag Nutrient Alliance, Science Assessment and 4R Nutrient Stewardship agreements.

FY22 Program Accomplishments – Katie Fagan and Curtis Knueven

Katie gave a presentation on the FY 2022 CSP/EQIP Accomplishments and Financial Assistance Programs Allocations for FY2023. (Get from Katie)

Fiscal Year 2023 Programs – Beth Clarizia, Curtis Knueven and Shannon Zezula

Beth provided an update on WRE Easement Programs. (See attached presentation)

1. GARC rates for WRE were updated in FY23 according to new Area Wide Market Analysis. The rates went up significantly.
2. Ranking for ALE and WRE remain unchanged.
3. Eligible Practices remain unchanged.
4. Wetland Restoration Criteria and Guidance (WRCG) contains Indiana NRCS guidelines for restoration and history of state wetlands.
5. Compatible Use Authorization (CUA): Length of practice terms for practices were adjusted to match in for renewals in future approvals.

The Indiana State Technical Committee concurred with the above items.

Shannon and Curtis provided updates on EQIP and CSP. (Get presentation from Shannon)

Partner Updates – Partners

Josh Griffin, IDNR – Fish and Wildlife: Submitted last (ask Kris Vance). Volunteer Public Access Agreement is going very well. Approximately 121 Landowners participating in this program. Deer Firearms Season starts this weekend.

Jeff Kiefer, US Fish and Wildlife: Hiring biologists in the north. Ducks Unlimited is sponsoring a WRE Summit next week.

Joe Rorick, Corn and Soybean: Helping redefine ISA role in programs and where programs need to be. Farmers seem to be pleased with this year's crops/yields.

Betsy Smith Bower, Indiana CCA: The CCA Annual Conference is December 13 and 14, is the Annual Conference.

Mike Brocksmith, Producer: Don't forget about productions agriculture. Don't lose focus.

Mike Spalding:

Kristen : IDEM will be participating in ? program. Ended evaluation period for CIG. Most should be funded.

Kevin Allison, ISDA: There have been many new Urban and Small Farm Updates. Working with local growers.