

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting/Project Name:	Indiana State Technical Committee		
Date of Meeting:	November 9, 2023	Time:	1:00pm – 4:00pm
Minutes Prepared By:	Jeanne Jurkovich	Location:	Indiana USDA State Office (in-person) and Microsoft Teams (virtual)
1. Meeting Objective			
Meeting to discuss current events, projects, problematic areas, and to strategize future endeavors.			
2. Attendees			
In-Person:		Virtual:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Curtis Knueven, Acting STC ▪ Kristen Arnold ▪ Betsy Bower ▪ Mike Brocksmith ▪ Jerod Chew ▪ Katie Fagan ▪ Josh Griffin ▪ Jeanne Jurkovich, SOA ▪ Jeff Kiefer ▪ Xinyuan Shi (guest) ▪ Michael Spalding 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tom Crowe ▪ Michael Dunn ▪ Stacy Herr ▪ Mike Hughes ▪ Rebecca Eifert Joniskan ▪ Nathan Kachnavage ▪ Eileen Kladviko ▪ Brianne Lowe ▪ Erika Ochoa, SOA ▪ John Seifert 	
3. Agenda and Notes, Decisions, Issues			
Topic	Discussion		
Welcome/STC Comments Curtis Knueven	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expecting to see Farm Bill extensions but has no further information at this point. - Acting STC is finishing up his 120-day detail with 10 remaining days. - Shared initial allocations for FY24: EQIP down significantly (speculated that it has to do with the CR); IRA exceeds expectations; and CSP similar allocations. 		
EQIP Ranking Adjustments (Slides Attached) Katie Fagan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Went over EQIP Ranking, Ranking Questions and Ranking Pools. - Discussed using CART Assessment Results. - Discussed Local Working Groups results and how this impacts the ranking scores. - The ISTC recommends that the Indiana State Conservationist adopt the proposed ranking process and questions - Brianne Lowe answered question about how WHEG factors into the Cart by discussing how WHEGs are really an assessment tool and the ranking is looking at that assessment. - Shared how they are working on a 2025 plan to maximize how quickly they can get applications on board while still minimizing the amount of work the planners must do. 		
FY24 Funding Allocations (Slides Attached) Mike Hughes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Went over typical non-IRA funds for Indiana <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discretionary Programs (ie. CTA; Soil Survey; Benefits All) ▪ Mandatory Programs (ie. Easements; CSP; EQIP; RCPP). - Went over IRA funds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All is going toward mandatory programs. 		
RCPP Funding Announcements and Deadlines (Slides Attached) Jerod Chew	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gave brief description of the RCPP (partners have the opportunity to propose projects and ask for financial and technical assistance). - Shared that the Southern Indiana Sentinel Landscapes proposal was funded and Mike Spalding went over the project details. This is considered a Classic RCPP. - Went over Alternative Funding Agreements (where Indiana is involved, but not the lead state). - Went over existing Classic RCPP projects and their upcoming deadlines. 		
NWQI and MRBI Funding Announcements and Deadlines (Slides Attached) Jerod Chew	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gave brief description of NWQI (similar to RCPP – partner can ask for money for five years and a specific watershed area) and shared listing of sample projects and their application deadlines. - Gave brief description of MRBI (similar to NWQI) and shared listing of sample projects and their application deadlines. 		
Source Water Protection Areas Priority Watersheds (Slides Attached) Shannon Zezula (Mike Hughes presenting)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The sub-committee (Source Water Protection Areas) met on 7/5/23 to make the listed recommendations to the ISTC during the 8/24/23 meeting; and ISTC recommended them to the STC. - Shared the results of the recommendations that Indiana NRCS submitted to NRCS national headquarters as Indiana's priority Source Water Protection Area HUC 12 watersheds. - Curtis Knueven commented the importance of that the ISTC is here to help guide Indiana and NRCS programs; and any comments that one has, ISTC will take into consideration. - Chat Question from Becky Joniskan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “Question about the Source Water Protection Areas. I noted new areas have been added and some areas have gone from just surface to surface and groundwater. Would you please explain how these new and broadened areas affect landowners in those areas? What should they expect? Is there anything in particular they need to do? Thanks, Becky Joniska, IN State Poultry Association.” 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answer (from Shannon Zezula): “Great question, Becky – farmers in these NRCS Source Water Protection Area priority watersheds are eligible for our base Farm Bill programs, but they receive additional priority ranking if they are addressing a water quality resource concern. They are also eligible for higher payments for certain High Priority Practices that improve water quality. The only thing they need to do is visit their local USDA Service Center and get in touch with their local NRCS District Conservationist to get a conservation plan in place to identify opportunities to improve the water quality leaving their farms.”
IRA Climate Smart Ag and Forestry Practices/Activities (Slides Attached) Shannon Zezula (Mike Hughes presenting)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mentioned that Climate Smart Ag and Forestry Activities are a major component of IRA financial assistance. - National guidance and changes to the IRA, Climate Smart Ag and Forestry Activities and Practices is available by a web search “NRCS climate smart”. - Listed some of the most popular IRA practices and conditional criteria. - Any questions for Shannon Zezula – please let us know.
STC Comments (Slides Attached) Curtis Knueven	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shared and went over “Thinking about Working with NRCS” document that was put together. - Based on comments received, fact sheets (one for FA and another for applying to USDA programs) were created to help a person before entering into a contract and know what to expect.
Short Break	
Open Discussion Indiana State Technical Committee (ISTC)	Members of committee (and guests) provided brief area updates and follow-up questions regarding information presented.
Closing	Next meeting: TBD (try to conduct the meeting quarterly).