

ISWCDEA Board Meeting Minutes

May 10th, 2023

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m. by Sarah Earles.

ATTENDANCE:

Attendance was taken by Angie Grapperhaus.

Region 1: Karla Smith, Lorraine Foelske, Joey Deloian (all present) Richard Stewart (absent)
Region 2: Sarah Earles, Becky Taylor, Jackie Kraft, Jeff Woodyatt (all present)
Region 3: Melissa Cauble, Rhonda Koehne, Ellie Crowe (all present)
Region 4: Mitchell Killough, Kathy Bircket, Kristie Cooley (present)
Region 5: Angie Grapperhaus, Nikki Isaacs, Jody Etheridge (all present) Bethany Ingram (absent)

Advisors:

BLWR – Marty McManus, Debbie Gray

AISWCD- Grant Hammer, Ashley Curran, Teri Fahey

NRCS – N/A

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA:

No additions to the agenda were made.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Melissas Cauble made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Karla Smith seconded the motion. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Lorraine Foelske made a motion to approve the minutes from February as printed. Rhonda Koehne seconded the motion. Motion carried.

PARTNER REPORTS:

BLWR:

- FY 22: There is 22M of FY 22 Cost Share funding that must be spent by December.
- SSRP- There were very limited funds available for FY22 and the same goes for FY23 funds. Statewide project applications must be submitted to Marty by August 1st in order to be ranked.
- There are 20 grant agreements that have still not been submitted to IDOA.

NRCS: NRCS was unable to attend the meeting. However, Becky Taylor and Sarah Earles met with Eric Gerth and Tammy Willis prior to the meeting and had the following to report: Tammy Willis is the current acting State Conservationist and Eric is now the Assistant State Conservationist – Partnerships. Becky and Sarah spoke about their concerns with Citrix with them and both seemed receptive. Tammy was taking notes and was open to the conversation regarding how they can help us with the issues. Becky and Sarah brought up that it is sometimes difficult to attend trainings when we are notified one or maybe two weeks prior to the event. However, the SWCD's need to make every attempt possible to attend these trainings or there might possibly be a fine imposed. This will be a case-by-case basis, but the ISWCDEA is trying to come up with solutions to get the SWCD's the trainings they need, and we are jeopardizing our chances of that when we do not attend trainings we are scheduled for. Grant Hammer asked if we knew who they certified planners were to provide the training required for NRCS certification because they could host the training at the new AISWCD building. The

ISWCDEA has looked into it in the past and it is about 20-30K to put on a single training. Lorraine mentioned that she did following up with Larry Glover Meade and mentioned how Area 1 SWCD's are never on any training lists. Sarah feels that Eric knows the value of the SWCDs because he was a District Conservationist. Questions arose about how the new IDOA conservation planners are getting their own seated computers and not Citrix. Eric said the reason being is because they are primarily NRCS funded and are working primarily on the NRCS workload. According to Rhonda, Eric said now is the time to have the conversation with Tammy about possibly getting waivers for additional NRCS seats. Lorraine recently discovered when her waiver was rejected that there are specific waiver requirements. She will send out those requirements to be passed out to employees.

NCDEA: No report

AISWCD: Grant Hammer provided update on pending bills. SB 1701 (Partners for Conservation Reauthorization Act) expects to pass. This bill expresses the importance of the SWCDs and their budgeting needs. It also will allow SWCDs to use their operations funds for professional membership fees. Additionally, AISWCD is requesting that IDOA pushes out their annual agreement rules by July 1st and to provide Districts their operations funds within the first two quarters after the start of the fiscal year (July 1st). Senate Bill 2325, which would create a standardized Illinois SWCD road sign, has officially passed both chambers and will be transmitted to the Governor for review and potentially signing. IDOT will create, install, and maintain District road signs. The estimated costs per sign for Districts is \$200. The Soil Health Week Bill is currently on-hold, which is the same for all submitted commemorative dates.

There will be level funding this year or a modest increase. The goal is to increase funding from \$85,000-\$100,000 per District. AISWCD will also encourage District Boards to pay employees more.

AISWCD will meet on June 14th in Springfield for the Board cycle.

There is a volunteer committee that has been established to update the by-laws and address the Annual Meeting quorum issue. They have met several times and they will be sending out a draft soon. Please send feedback to Teri or Grant.

Don't forget the deadline for the Annual Farm Family and Scholarship applications is May 15th.

Annual Conference information should be sent out within the next few weeks. The preconference social event on Sunday will be the Springfield Municipal Opera. In the event of inclement weather, a welcome reception will be hosted at the Crown Plaza Hotel. During the conference they will be screening the documentary, "Wings Over Water."

Farm Progress will be in Decatur this August 29th-31st. Teri is heading the Conservation tent and requested the Association to help handle the partner table as they usually do, which we agreed.

NRCS is looking for ideas for new programs to utilize the IRA funding. They are looking into a possible new partnership agreement between NRCS and SWCD. Please email Grant if you have any program ideas. Eric Gerth is interested in getting as many boots on the ground as possible.

Grant inquired about the images in E-News. Mitchell Killough recommended to try forwarding it to someone and view that way and Melissa Cauble said it works on her regular Federal computer but not Citrix.

IL SWCD Insurance: Melissa provided the attached Insurance Group Highlights.

TREASURER'S FINANCIAL REPORT: Karla Smith provided financials. See report. Angie Grapperhaus made a motion to accept the treasurer's report as presented. Mitchell Killough seconded the motion. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:

Citrix: Karla Smith passed along the findings from the Citrix survey and Lorraine has submitted issues as well. Neither have received a response.

NEW BUSINESS:

- 1) Summer Conference- Event will be held July 16th-18th at the Crowne Plaza. ISWDCEA members will assist with the registration table.

COMMITTEE REPORTS INTERNAL:

1. Annual Plan of Work/By-Laws/Policies and Procedures- No report; Angie Grapperhaus
2. State Envirothon: Sondra and Ashley did a great job. It was very well executed.
3. Employee Guidebook: No report; Sarah Earles
4. Farm Progress Show: Rhonda Koehne made a motion to purchase 1,000 pens at the max amount of \$500. Elise Crowe seconded the motion. Motion carried. These will be handed out at the show.
5. Fundraisers: Karla said that she needed to purchase a license in Sagamon County for the winter training raffle. Nikki Issacs made a motion to authorize the cost of \$25 to purchase the license. Angie Grapperhaus seconded the motion. Motion carried. The raffle last year cleared \$800. The cost of the pork for the raffle was \$100 and the lottery ticket raffle was the same. Rhonda Koehne made a motion to approve spending \$100 for the lottery ticket and up to \$150 for the pork basket. Angie Grapperhaus seconded the motion. Motion carried.
6. Legislative: No report; Sarah Earles & Becky Taylor
7. MOU: No report; Sarah Earles & Becky Taylor
8. Nominating: No report
9. Regional Training: Training will be held June 7th from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. for IDOA Region 4. John Pike will be speaking about cover crop and soil health, and Debbie Gray will be going over how to complete job sheets. The training will be held at the Henry White Experimental Farm and lunch will be provided.
10. Scholarship: Mitchell Killough will reach out to Sondra Baker or Ashley regarding ideas/suggestions for scholarship topics pertaining to the Envirothon current issues category. Deadline to apply is June 9th.
11. Summer Conference: Need volunteers to coordinate the auction and work the day of.
12. Website: Lorraine has made small updates, including the notes from winter training.

REGIONAL ISSUES/REQUESTS:

Region 1: Lorraine said her computer waiver request was rejected. She will send a template out to be used. Rhonda Koehne strongly feels like there are a lot of closed-door meetings with our Partners where decisions that affect us are made. It would be nice to offer the SWCD's a seat at the table to express concerns or potential issues in these meetings.

Region 2: Dean Johnson is the executive director.

Region 3: Conservation planners are causing distrust about partners of agriculture. There have been Cultural Resource Reviews from last fall that have requested field visits to areas that are not even in the project area. They are hoping that it is just a learning curve and hopefully this sort of thing will be resolved and not prevent projects from getting completed on time. Region 3 employees were also inquiring about grant funding from IDOA as well as Citrix issues not getting resolved. It was also recommended to have 2 meal options for Winter Training due to dietary restrictions.

Region 4: No report

Region 5: No report

CORRESPONDENCE: N/A

COMMITTEE REPORTS: – STATE:

Civil Rights: No report, Melissa Cauble

State Technical Committee: No report; Thad Eshleman

Training, Safety, and Health: No report; Spring Duffy

Meeting Dates for 2023

- Feb – 2nd Teleconference
- May – 10th In Person
- July – 6th Teleconference (usually related to ISWCDEA involvement in Summer Conference)
- August – 3rd In Person Plan Winter Training
- September – 7th Teleconference
- November – 2nd Teleconference to finish Winter Training Coordination
- December – 2023 Winter Training Dates (Dec. 5th & 6th)

Joey Deloian made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Jeff Woodyatt seconded the motion. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 12:04 p.m.

Minutes compiled by Angie Grapperhaus.