

Jennings County Soil & Water Conservation District
December 10, 2015
Board Minutes

The regular meeting of the Jennings County Soil & Water Conservation District was held at the USDA Service Center in North Vernon, Indiana. Brad Ponsler called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

Board Members

Brad Ponsler
Dan Megel
Tom Schneider
Jerry St. John
Matt Branham
Bob Steiner

Staff

Kelly Kent
Andy Ertel
NRCS
Jenny Vogel

Contracted Technician

Denise Dailey
ISDA
Tara Wesseler

Reading of the Minutes

Matt Branham made a motion to accept the October 2015 minutes as submitted, with a second from Jerry St. John.

Financial Report

Dan Megel made a motion to accept the October 28, 2015 – December 10, 2015 financial reports as submitted, with a second from Matt Branham.

Correspondence

Supervisor Scholarship

The staff submitted an application to IASWCD on behalf of Jerry St. John to attend the IASWCD State Conference in January. The district was awarded one of the Scholarships available. This scholarship will cover the registration cost and hotel stay for Jerry in January 2016.

Agency & Committee Reports

Due to a day time meeting and the need to keep it to 1 hour long there were no staff reports.

Committee Reports:

Pollinator Committee – Dan gave an update on the activities of this committee – last meeting had 17-18 in attendance. He advised the SWCD board that seed was purchased with the funds given to the committee to plant up to 40 1/8 acre plots throughout Jennings Co. There will be no charge for the seeds given to those wanting to plant these plots but a donation will be welcomed. The city park has an area they are interested in planting along with the county park and since these are public lands the committee would like to put up educational signs at these areas to show the public what is planted and the benefits it offers. Andy added later in the

meeting that the committee was trying to figure out how to do a plant (potter) sale with a bee/butterfly diagram for that weekend gardener.

Old Business

Annual Meeting – Decorations, Sign Election Form

Kelly asked the board to authorize funds to purchase decorations and table centerpieces for the SWCD Annual Meeting to be held on March 15, 2016. The theme will be Pollinators/Share Some Space. Jerry St. John made a motion for expenditures up to \$250 for these items with a second from Dan Megel. The electronic election form was signed.

IASWCD Conference/Delegate

It was decided that Dan, Brad, Jerry, Matt, Andy & Kelly would attend the Annual Conference in Indianapolis at the Marriott Downtown January 2016. At this time

NACD Conference

Brad asked if anyone was interested in attending. Jerry said he would go if the board wanted to send him. Dan Megel made a motion to send Jerry St. John with a second from Tom Schneider. After the board meeting Jerry discovered he will not be able to attend due to personal reasons but Dan Megel will go instead. An email was sent out to confirm this was okay with the other board members. And they approved it.

PSS Agreement

This agreement between IASWCD and the Jennings Co. SWCD is in effect June 1, 2015 to December 31, 2016. The agreement will be for contract management and clerical administration on 8 contracts in Jennings Co. under the EQIP and CSP programs. Matt Branham made a motion that the money for this additional work be paid as a Contract PSS with Andy Ertel and Kelly Kent with the funds being disbursed between the two along with the workload of their county duties. This task will be performed on their own time. Federal program administration is not part of the regular county employment duties. If more than \$599.99 is earned the district will give each employee a 1099-Misc form for their taxes. The motion was seconded by Jerry St. John with all in agreement.

New Business

Fairgrounds

Pollinator Pathway

The Pollinator Committee has been working on a plan for improvements at the fairgrounds to include a Pollinator Pathway. A digital print out of the proposed project was passed out to the supervisors and information was shared on the approximate cost. After much discussion the board asked the staff and committee to come up with a proposed detailed plan on cost, donations, other funding and any other information pertinent to this project. This item was tabled until the January board meeting.

The board gave its permission for the committee to go to the Jennings County Commissioners and ask permission for this project to be implemented on the fairgrounds.

Snake Display

Andy ask the supervisors to consider doing away with the snake display at the fairgrounds due to the difficulty in getting native snakes for the display. One idea would be to purchase realistic artificial snakes to display and provide educational information about each one. It was decided to keep contacting the person who supplies the snakes until any issues arise.

Filtration System

During the fair last year there was some filtering issues with the large fish tanks in the Conservation Building at the fairgrounds. Matt Branham was able to rig up a temporary fix and presented the board with his suggestions on how to create a system that would work starting with next year's fair. The cost of 2 pumps, 2 filters, some pvc pipe and fittings should be no more than \$250. Dan Megel made a motion for the district to purchase the supplies for this project up to \$250 with a second from Jerry St. John. All approved.

Field Days

Pollinators – Fred Whitford

Andy asked the board to consider utilizing the projected Pollinator Pathway to host a field day sometime in July after the fair with various stations to educate on Pollinator Habitats. Fred Whitford is an Economist with Purdue University and would bring a wealth of information to share. The board approved this field day and instructed Andy to begin making plans for this event.

Wildlife Food Plot/Pond Clinic

Tom Schneider presented the board with his idea of hosting a food plot/pond clinic at his farm sometime in late August or early September. The board was given an aerial map of his farm and Tom explained what his idea was for creating multiple plots for wildlife along with pollinator habitat along with natural predator control. The board approved this field day and committed to helping in anyway needed. Tom and Andy will look at the site within 2-3 weeks and make some preliminary drawings.

Signage – Pollinator Field Days

The staff and pollinator committee are re-searching the cost of signs to place in public areas that have been planted as Pollinator Habitat. More information about the cost and information will be given at a future board meeting.

Shop Meetings

Brad asked the board to take a look at the numbers over the past several years of Shop Meetings and to consider if this is a viable educational opportunity or if they would like to consider going in a different direction. This item was tabled so the board has ample time to formulate their ideas.

Soil Sample Proposal

The district has been providing soil sampling at cost to the public and then paying for the postage. The staff presented to the board the idea to increase the cost of the soil sample from the \$9.75 fee to a \$12 flat fee which should defray some of the postage cost. Jerry St. John made a motion to make the fee schedule change with a second from Tom Schneider. All approved.

Conservation Plans

Andy signed plans as needed.

Claims

Claims were submitted to the board and signed.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Jerry St. John with a second by Dan Megel at 1:15 pm

Minutes submitted by Kelly Kent, Administrative Assistant

Minutes approved by:

Chairman

Vice-Chairman

Member

Member

Member