

**Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts**  
**Education Focus Committee**  
**Monday, December 10, 2012**  
**Northfield Inn Conference Center – Springfield, IL**

**Members Present**

Jerry Snodgrass, FAC Chair  
Don Beisiegel  
Terry Bogner, Envirothon Chair  
Gerard Fabrizio  
Barb Klinger  
Randy Molitoris

**Advisors Present**

Dave Dornbusch, NRCS  
Joe Bybee, IDoA  
Valerie Keener, IDNR  
Debbie Ruff, EC

**#1 – Call to Order** - Chairman Jerry Snodgrass called the meeting to order at 1:08 pm on December 10, 2012.

**#2 – Roll Call** – The attendance sheet was passed around for all to sign.

**#3 – Approve Agenda** – Chairman Snodgrass requested that the item of Teacher of the Year sponsorship be added to the agenda under new business. A motion was made by Don Beisiegel, with second by Terry Bogner to amend the agenda. MCVV.

**#4- Approve Minutes** – Motion by Don Beisiegel. Second by Randy Molitoris. MCVV.

**#5 – IDNR Report** - Valerie Keener reported the following items:

- The new Director of the IDNR Office of Strategic Services is Marceo Haywood. He started on July 1, 2012.
- The IDNR Division of Education added two former employees of *OutdoorIllinois* magazine in June.
- The license plate renewal fee increase passed the legislature during the veto session and was signed into law by Governor Quinn. Funds will assist the state parks with maintenance and staff.
- The *Illinois Birds: Volume III, Species of Concern* poster was printed with the sponsorship of the Illinois Audubon Society.
- An application for a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Environmental Education Model Grant was submitted. If received, the funds will be offered as mini-grants to support implementation of the *Environmental Literacy for Illinois* strategic plan.
- Forty-nine *Schoolyard Habitat Action Grant* applications were received from the November 30, 2012, application deadline. Nearly \$42,000 in funds was requested.
- The *Illinois Biodiversity Field Trip Grant* application deadline is January 31, 2013. Teachers may apply for up to \$500 each to take students on a field trip to study Illinois' natural or cultural biodiversity.
- Funds from a canceled Illinois Rain Garden Initiative project were added to the initial award given to the AISWCD office for constructing a model rain garden.

**#6 – IDOA Report** - Joe Bybee reported the following items:

- Director Flider has been confirmed as the Director of Agriculture.
- The Department has a new Division Head. She Laura Sova. She will be housed at the Thompson Center in Chicago, rather than in Springfield. Joe encouraged the group to be sure to invite her to local field days and events as she has a very strong interest in what is going on at the local level.
- Joe reported that the Soil and Water Conservation Society is planning a Cover Crop Conference in Decatur on January 29 & 30, 2013. He believes that this will be a good conference to attend.
- The Northwest Tillage Seminar is scheduled for January 31, 2013 in Princeton. The agenda looks to be a good one. Joe encouraged attendance to this event.
- The Transect Survey is scheduled to be run in 2013. Joe offered his assistance to Districts that might need an extra hand in conducting this activity.
- 15 sites are being sought on major roadways for the new Cover Crop Project.
- 4 hours of CPESC training were offered during the recent employee Winter Training.

**#7 – NRCS Report** – Dave Dornbusch cited the following:

- Chief White has retired. Jason Weller is the Acting Chief.
- Eric Gerth is the new ASCT – Financial Assistance Programs.
- Conservation Planning and Application courses were held this fall.
- Soil Health is the new national initiative. Roger Windhorn and Paige Mitchell are the lead people for IL. NRCS.
- EQIP is rolled out. Sign-up is going on right now.
- CRP – No new contracts at this time. Everything hinges on what will be in the new Farm Bill.
- CSP – Payments are being made at this time. There is no new sign-up right now.
- WRP – Is on the sidelines. Staff can only work on existing contracts.

**#8 – Director Training Task Force** - Chairman Snodgrass reported that Illinois will be recognized at the upcoming NACD conference for organizing and implementing its own Director Training.

**#9 — Envirothon Task Force** – Chairman Snodgrass informed the group that there are still some concerns about the FFA teams being involved in the competition. Some FFA's have expressed frustration that they are not receiving information about the LUC competitions. These concerns will be brought forward to the IL. Envirothon coordinators.

Snodgrass also stated that the registration fees that have been established are \$150 for LUC teams and \$100 for the FFA teams that are only competing on the first day.

The group was also reminded that FFA teams are not eligible to compete at the IL. Envirothon if the SWCD is not in good standing. A school can request a variance to compete.

Dates to remember:

- April 10 – Last day that a LUC can hold a competition
- April 12 – Registration deadline
- May 1 & 2 – IL. Envirothon
- July 21-26 – North America Envirothon at Montana State University

**#10 – Old Business**

- Specialized License Plates – This initiative did not receive enough orders to go forward.

**#11 - New Business**

- Teacher of the Year – The group discussed methods to encourage participation in this contest. Chairman Snodgrass requested that the group look over the current application that is on the AISWCD website in the next 2 weeks. If there are any suggestions for change, please let him know ASAP. Valerie Keener, IDNR Education offered to put information about this contest on her various IDNR list-serves. Don Beisiegel made a motion to have Valerie place Conservation Teacher of the Year information on the IDNR list-serves. Barb Klinger seconded the motion. MCVV. The group thanked her for her offer.

A discussion also ensued on whether the Conservation Teacher of the Year would be a single award or would be divided into an Elementary and Secondary category. No motion was made at this time.

- Debbie Ruff informed the group that the Stewardship theme for this year is "Where Does Your Water Shed?" She also let the group know that the Indian Creek Watershed Project has been selected to be the tour site for the 2013 CTIC Conservation In Action Tour. The date of the tour is July 10, 2013.

**#12 - Adjournment** - A motion to adjourn was made by Terry Bogner. Second by Don Beisiegel. MCVV.  
Meeting adjourned at 2:55 p.m.