

Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts
Education Focus Committee
Tuesday, December 9, 2013
Northfield Inn Conference Center – Springfield, IL

Members Present

Jerry Snodgrass, FAC Chair (via cell)
Terry Bogner, Envirothon Chair
Gerard Fabrizius
Barb Klinger
Lee Bunting
Don Beisiegel

Advisors Present

Joe Bybee, IDoA
Dave Dornbusch, NRCS
Valerie Keener, IDNR
Debbie Ruff, EC
Gina Bean, AISWCD
Lonnie Wilson, AISWCD Officer
Sondra Baker, AISWCDEA

#1 – Call to Order – Due to the physical absence of Chairman Jerry Snodgrass, AISWCD President Lonnie Wilson called the meeting to order at 1:11 pm on December 9, 2013.

#2 – Roll Call – All in attendance were noted.

#3 – Approve Agenda – A motion was made by Don Beisiegel, with second by Barb Klinger to approve the agenda with the item of new bid for IL. Envirothon Coordinator position being added to #8 IL. Envirothon Update. MCVV.

#4 – Approve Minutes – A motion was made by Don Beisiegel, with second by Barb Klinger to approve the June '13 minutes and the July '13 FAC Meeting minutes. MCVV

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

- *Schoolyard Habitat Action Grant* – The application deadline was November 30, 2013. This year there were a record number of applicants.
- *Illinois Rain Garden Initiative* – The final project for this program is a demonstration rain garden at the AISWCD office. The site is excavated and plants will be put in this coming spring.
- *Illinois Biodiversity Field Trip Grants* – The application deadline is January 31, 2014. This is an on-line application and teachers can apply for up to \$500 to take natural resource field trips in Illinois. Please encourage teachers to apply.
- *Next Generation Science Standards* – IDNR resources are being correlated to this new initiative. IDNR Resource Trunks will be correlated first with all materials to be eventually done. To see lessons that are ready to go, visit: <http://dnr.state.il.us/education/standards.htm>
- *Website Update* – Visit the IDNR Education website as video podcasts are being added, as well as, lesson demonstrations, virtual tours, *What Am I ?*, resources trunks promotions, ENTICE workshop announcements
- *Earth Day in the Parks* – Applications will be accepted starting January 1, 2014. For information visit: <http://dnr.state.il.us/education/CLASSRM/EDITpinstruct.htm>
- *NSTA 2015* – The National Science Teachers Association will be holding their annual conference in Chicago on March 26-29, 2015. There may be opportunities for Illinois to have a presence with the IL. Envirothon and with IL. Ag In The Classroom activities.
- *Project Squirrel* - With the new *Project Squirrel* mobile phone app, students can easily become involved in citizen science activities that can be incorporated into lessons to support the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). The app is free, and both Apple and Android versions are available. Go to iTunes or the Google Play Store and download the app today. All citizens can take part in the data collection. Lessons to support squirrel observations will be posted soon at <http://lists.illinois.gov/t/589174/2912937/49/0/>
Learn more about Project Squirrel at <http://lists.illinois.gov/t/589174/2912937/109/0/>

- *US EPA* – An RFP for education grants was announced as of today. Valerie will be forwarding more information as it becomes available. Valerie suggested that this grant may be an avenue for future Envirothon funding.

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

- Illinois will be hosting the National No-till Conference on January 15-18, 2014 at the Springfield Hilton. It should be a great opportunity to hear some great presentations.
- Conservation Cropping Systems Workshops – Workshops are being planned for this winter 3 locations (Mendota, Mt. Vernon, and Normal). Information is on the IDoA website and registration materials will be coming out to all the SWCDs. Champaign SWCD is handling the registrations.
- Interstate Cover Crop signs are now all in place. There are 14 locations.
- The IDoA Annual Progress Report is going to be re-evaluated in January.

#7 – NRCS Report – Dave Dornbush reported the following items:

- Soil Health – NRCS continues to work with a number of partners to promote this initiative.
- Paul Youngstun in the Coordinator for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.
- Training opportunities continue to be held for new NRCS and SWCD employees. Plans are to continue these, but budgets may cause some cut backs. Time and the budget will tell us more.

#8 – Envirothon Task Force – The following items were discussed:

- **IL. Envirothon Coordinator Position** - Lonnie Wilson, AISWCD President, stated that Grundy County has decided that they are unable to take on the IL. Envirothon Coordinator position.
- A contract was signed by Rich Nichols and forward to Grundy County on November 5, 2013. A discussion followed on why the negotiations took so long.
- In response, a meeting with AISWCD staff and leadership was held to put together a request for proposals for the IL. Envirothon Coordinator.
- Gerard Fabrizio will take the lead, along with AISWCD staff members Kelly and Gina to help get the IL. Envirothon back on track. Plans are to visit Grundy County on December 11th for an exit interview.
- Gina will serve as the liaison between the Education FAC, Envirothon Task Force and the AISWCD to track status of project. Google calendar was mentioned as a possible tracking tool.
- The Missouri Envirothon Coordinator has been contacted to discuss the possibility of Illinois using their 5th category study materials for the upcoming competition.
- Lonnie Wilson requested that an Envirothon Task Force meeting be scheduled after the exit interview is completed.
- **FFA Participation in IL. Envirothon** – Correspondence that has taken place between Education FAC Chair Jerry Snodgrass and Missouri Envirothon Coordinator, Peggy Lemons was distributed. The correspondence detailed the issues that Missouri had with implementing an FFA portion in their competition. It was suggested that the AISWCD should open discussions with Illinois FFA to develop a MOU that will detail how the two organizations will work together on this event. This item will be put on the agenda for the March meeting.
- A motion was made by Gerard Fabrizio with a second by Don Beisiegel that is if a MOU is developed between the AISWCD and Illinois FFA, then the FFA should be a member of the Illinois Envirothon Task Force. MCVV

#9 – Old Business – Teacher of the Year Award - A discussion was held on how to get more press for this award. One suggestion was to present this award during the Illinois State Fair, as well as at Summer Conference. Valerie Keener researched this option and it is not possible to do at Conservation World. A discussion followed and the idea of recognizing the teacher(s) during Ag Day when the awards luncheon is held on the Director's Lawn may be a better option. Joe Bybee will look into this.

Also suggested was that the recognition of the teacher could take place as part of the Farm Family Banquet. This recommendation was sent to the Planning Committee for further consideration.

#10 –New Business – Envirothon Bridge Fund Account - Lonnie Wilson announced that \$1,515 was donated for the Envirothon Bridge Fund. AISWCD Vice-President, Tom Byers gave up his travel account so that it can be used as a partial match.

#11 - Adjournment - A motion to adjourn was made by Barb Klinger. Second by Don Beisiegel. MCVV.
Meeting adjourned at 2:16p.m.

Meeting Minutes taken by: Debbie Ruff, EC, Livingston County SWCD

Approved by:

Signature

Date