



Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts – DECEMBER – JANUARY REPORT

Prepared by Executive Director, Kelly Thompson

NRCS Contribution Agreements

CRP AGREEMENTS - AISWCD has reviewed and approved the CRP Proposed Plans of Work. Districts were instructed to reduce their plans of work to 16% of the requested grand total. A total of 70 SWCDs are participating in the agreement for the Feb.-June 2016 agreement. The agreement began on February 1, 2016 and will run through June 1, 2016 unless dates are changed by NRCS and FSA. If additional funds become available, AISWCD will send out notification via IL.ALL. Please note the dates for turning in reimbursement invoices are April 15 and June 15, 2016. Again, these dates are subject to change if program dates change.

CRP PAYMENTS - AISWCD has not yet received payment from NRCS for the December CRP workload. Gina is checking the AISWCD bank account daily and will notify Districts via IL.ALL as soon as the funding becomes available.

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANCE AGREEMENTS – Payments under the current agreement will continue to be made via check, even though some Districts now have a Direct Deposit Authorization form on file with AISWCD. In the next Admin. Agreement, beginning in June 2016, all payments to Districts will be made via Direct Deposit.

Gina is also working with Districts to make sure the proper paperwork is being received in a timely manner each month. Please direct any Admin. Assistance questions to Gina Bean.

Having issues accessing Protracts? Please contact Kelly Thompson so she can work with NRCS to help you obtain access to the proper programs.

Funding Update

IL Department of Agriculture is looking at a substantial cut in their FY17 budget, as are many other agencies and organizations. The cut, unknown at this time, will come in the form of a percentage for the entire Department. The Department will make the cut to programs, thus the requirement for SWCDs to develop a funding plan in order to obtain funding for FY17.

The Department has tasked AISWCD and the SWCD Advisory Board to develop a funding plan at four different levels: \$7.5 million, \$5 million, \$3 million and \$2 million. A similar structure was used by the Department to prepare their FY17 budget proposal. If the AISWCD and SWCD

Dec. 2015-Jan. 2016

AISWCD Report – prepared by Executive Director, Kelly Thompson

Advisory Board cannot develop a plan for each of the dollar amounts listed above, the Department has stated, very plainly, that the Department will implement their version of a funding plan on behalf of the SWCDs. AISWCD has not been informed of the Department's plan. *(Information obtained from the Jan. 28, 2016 SWCD Advisory Board meeting at IDOA in Springfield.)*

CHAIRMAN'S MEETING – President, Myron Kirby has called for a Chairman's meeting to take place on Monday, February 15 in Springfield. The meeting agenda will include a synopsis of events that have occurred over the past year to include the request made by IDOA for a funding plan for SWCDs. This is an informational meeting only.

Legislative Updates

AISWCD has already begun making legislative visits. Legislators are aware of the financial issues facing the SWCDs state-wide. They are also aware of the need to develop a funding plan in order to obtain funding for FY17.

LEGISLATIVE DAY - The office staff is working on a "Save the Date" flyer for the 2016 Legislative Day event. This event will be held on Wednesday, March 2, 2016 in Springfield. They will be delivering the flyer to the legislative staff this week. The Legislative Event will feature a pre-meeting at IL EPA, legislative visits at the Statehouse and a reception at Boone's Saloon. If you plan on attending, please register on the AISWCD Legislative webpage or click here: <http://www.aiswcd.org/legislative/legislative-day-2016/>. If you are attending the pre-meeting be sure to purchase lunch on the website link listed above.

LEGISLATIVE NEWSLETTER – Marquitta will be responsible for compiling information for the monthly Legislative Newsletter to be sent to legislators state-wide. If your District would like to have a project or program featured in this publication, please notify Maquitta Thomas via email at ga.aiswcd@gmail.com or by phone.

NLRS-Related Meetings

Thank you to Districts for submitting information to Marquitta regarding your NLRS-related meetings. The list has been compiled and has been shared with our partners. If your District needs additional resources for planning or developing their meeting, please visit this web link: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B1977NmPi0avMHU2YnlyRW10STA>. The link provides a template agenda, potential speakers, template flyer and NLRS topics to discuss.

Additional Topics of Interest

WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION PROGRAM – There has been great discussion regarding a “certainty” program that certifies a landowner is growing his or her product in a sustainable manner and is in compliance with water quality rules and regulations. More discussion and development needs to take place before moving forward; however, the program would work best if current SWCD Staff were involved in the process of both development and implementation. Please send your thoughts and program ideas to Kelly Thompson. More discuss on this topic will take place at upcoming AISWCD Board meetings.

WATERSHED PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION – AISWCD has a unique opportunity to offer assistance to any SWCD wanting to develop a watershed planning group, assist with updating an out-of-date watershed plan, or any step in between. Matt Hanauer is a full-time grant employee that has been with AISWCD since July 2014. If you District would like assistance or want to discuss watershed planning options, please contact Matt Hanauer. The grant allows for funds to travel for meetings and other job-related activities.

EMPLOYEE TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION PROGRAM – AISWCD and a representative from the ISWCDEA will be meeting in February to discuss developing a grant proposal to obtain funding for a SWCD Employee Training and Certification Program. More details to come.