



AISWCD

CLEAN WATER.
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ASSOCIATION OF ILLINOIS SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

MEETING MINUTES

AISWCD Quarterly Meeting of the Board of Directors

Thursday, September 17 | 9:00am

Via Zoom Video Conference

Call to Order

President Tom Byers called the meeting to order at 9:01am.

Roll Call

Maggie Soliz conducted the roll call, and it was determined that a quorum was present.

Present: Tom Beyers, Dale Shumaker, Dan Duval, Maggie Soliz, Kenny Hawthorne, Thomas Konen, Randy Molitoris, Jerry Snodgrass, Barb Klinger, and Rich Stewart

Guests: Kim Martin (FSA), Sondra Baker (Envirothon Coordinator), Michelle Bloomquist (DNR), Trevor Clatfelter (Lobbyist), Justin Ramey (DNR), Jamie Deibel (FSA), Chris Davis (IEPA), Ben Schmidt (NRCS)

Staff: Grant Hammer, Rebecca Osland, Steve Chard, Alan Howard

Approval of Agenda & Minutes

Jerry Snodgrass made a motion to approve the minutes of the previous Board Meeting and to approve the agenda for this meeting. Dan Duval made a second to the motion. President Byers then called for a vote on the motion and it passed.

Legislative Update

Contractual Lobbyist Trevor Clatfelter provided a legislative update. He indicated that Grant Hammer and he hope to meet with Senate President Don Harmon shortly to discuss issues

affecting SWCDs. Also, there is some question as to whether the Fall Veto Session will actually be held due to the lingering COVID-19 Pandemic. Trevor's advice in terms of gaining increased funding is to be deliberate and keep pushing. Additionally, Trevor is collaborating with environmental partners for support relative to our resource conservation agenda, particularly with funding.

Staff Report

Executive Director Grant Hammer reported that the Board of Directors has previously authorized staff to join the National Sustainable Ag Coalition (NSAC) to help stay current on ag related issues at the federal level. While NACD has typically played this role, NSAC will be another valuable ag partner to help keep Illinois abreast of new conservation developments/opportunities. Staff participated in their first NSAC Conservation and Environment Committee meeting recently.

He added that the IDOA has issued a press release encouraging producers to participate in the Fall Covers/Spring Savings (FCSS) Program. He stated that NRCS has invited the AISWCD to participate in the Training, Safety and Health Committee. Steve Chard will represent the AISWCD on the Committee.

The AISWCD met with the IEC Conservation Caucus in July and August. They are polling nonagricultural citizens on conservation topics in support of SWCD conservation programs. Things are moving at a good pace regarding our annual audits. Further, SWCDs must complete sexual harassment training.

Hammer also touched on the forestry surveys and the virtual training conducted on August 12 regarding S.T.A.R. and the FCSS Program. A strong candidate has emerged to fill the S.T.A.R. Coordinator Position. Also, a large, fallen tree has been removed from our grounds and the new AISWCD sign has been erected along Route 29.

Grants Manager Rebecca Osland discussed several items related to the NRCS Cooperative Agreement on CRP, including a substantial interest on the part of SWCDs to receive higher payment for work performed, the current NRCS guidelines (including October 1, 2020 deadline for completing coursework to be designated as a Certified Conservation Planner), the slow pace of bill payments to SWCDs and the NRCS Training Needs Inventory will soon be made available to Districts for completion. The inventory will be coordinated with IDOA.

Special Projects Manager Steve Chard talked about an effort to do a detailed review of the 2017 Strategic Plan to determine the implementation status of the designated goals. Prior to the Board Meeting, Grant issued a document that details the goals that have been accomplished to date and the ones where work remains. This document was produced for the Board's information and possible action. Chard also reported that he had been serving on a subcommittee under the Illinois Invasive Species Council to help amend the Council's By-Laws to improve their mission.

Financial Manager Alan Howard presented the proposed 2021 AISWCD Budget for review by the Board. He added that the Foundation Annual Audit is completed and the AISWCD Audit will be carried out this fall as usual.

Area Vice Presidents

Jerry Snodgrass reported that Land Use Councils are doing well in his region.

Kenny Hawthorne indicated that the slowness of IT service regarding CRP is a concern and the LUCs prefer face to face meetings so more can be accomplished.

David McCormick said that the LUCs in his region prefer person to person meetings as well.

Committee Reports

Education Committee – Envirothon Coordinator Sondra Baker gave an update on Envirothon activities. LUC representatives are meeting to develop virtual regional and state events due to the Pandemic.

Forestry Committee – Forestry Chair Dale Shumaker discussed the status of the recent Forestry Survey and the outdoor classroom project. The Forestry Committee will meet in 3 weeks for possible further action on the Survey/other. The Forestry Committee is also slated to meet on September 17 in the afternoon.

Partner Reports

Ben Schmidt of NRCS announced that 9 Survey Aides have been awarded to 9 SWCDs. Those Aides will be very helpful with EQIP and CSP. From a programmatic standpoint, EQIP and CSP are 90 percent and 70 percent finished, respectively. Further, CSP and CRP have received extra funding of \$2.0M, \$2.5M and \$1.0M, respectively. Regarding the CRP Certified Conservation Planner topic, 1 out of 62 earned certification and the clock is running out (October 1 deadline). Ivan will review this matter and has expressed disappointment that some SWCD staff have not made the effort to achieve certification/have been difficult to work with. NRCS plans to offer on-line training or other options to help. A waiver may be issued to those individuals that are approved for training beyond October 1. Schmidt added that SWCD Boards need to encourage employees to take the training. Also, from a staffing aspect, NRCS is trying to maximize FTEs. 60 new staff have come on board.

Kim Martin and Jamie Diebal of FSA reported that FSA has received 12,000 offers for CRP through 3 signups and the workload will be heavy. Also, regarding the Clear 30 Pilot Program (CRP water quality practices), FSA has received 150 offers in total. Further, FSA is expecting a large number of enrollments in CRP for 2021. FSA really appreciates the SWCDs' hard work on CRP contracts.

Justin Ramsey of IDNR reported that there is good progress on the administrative rules for CREP and submittal to the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules (JCAR) will occur shortly. New contracts with SWCDs should be done soon. CREP capital funds have been released to

IDNR and will be obligated once rules and contracts are in place. Also, the 6 CREP Specialists are currently being hired and trained.

Chris Davis of IEPA reported that most work is being done remotely. Signups for 319 funds ended in August with 30 applications received. The next signup for 319 funding will take place August 1, 2021. Next year's NLRS conference will be held November 6, 2021. The non-point source unit will be hiring staff to support outreach and education. Also, a document entitled, "Shoreline Living" is available in hard copy form.

Rich Stewart, Co-Chair of the ISWCDEA reported that Winter Training is planned as an in-person event on December 1 and 2 at the Northfield Inn. More planning for the event will occur via conference call during the week of September 21. The ISWCDEA is also encouraging timely payments for work performed on CRP.

Tom Beyers, reporting on behalf of the Auxiliary, thanked the AISWCD for their efforts on the poster and photo contests.

Old Business

Tom Byers and Dale Shumaker are working on the Area 4 VP vacancy. May have a couple of names for consideration soon.

New Business

The proposed organizational support letter approval process was discussed. Maggie Soliz made a motion to approve the process, Barb Klinger seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Discussion took place concerning the extension of the contract for the AISWCD's lobbyist, Trevor Clatfelter through Fall Veto Session. Dale Shumaker made the motion to extend the contract, Barb Klinger seconded the motion. Motion passed.

There was also discussion regarding the 2021 Summer Training Conference and Annual Meeting. It was suggested that the Planning Committee meet and provide recommendations to



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the Executive Committee and Board of Directors. Maggie Soliz and Grant Hammer will collaborate.

There was no action taken on a possible donation to the NACD rancher impacted by the recent wildfires. A comment was made that perhaps Board Members could donate individually. There was no need for an Executive Session.

Adjournment

Motion was made by Kenny Hawthorne to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Maggie Soliz. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 11:25am.



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FOUNDATION MEETING MINUTES

AISWCD Foundation Meeting of the Board of Directors

Thursday, September 17 | 11:30am

Via Zoom Video Conference

Call to Order

President Tom Byers called the Foundation Meeting to order at 11:26am.

Roll Call

Maggie Soliz performed the rollcall and a quorum was achieved.

Present: Tom Byers, Dale Shumaker, Kenny Hawthorne, Maggie Soliz, and Steve Stierwalt. Staff and guests present included Grant Hammer, Rebecca Osland, and Steve Chard.

Approval of Minutes & Agenda

Dale Shumaker made a motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting and to approve the agenda for this meeting. Steve Stierwalt seconded the motion. President Byers then called for a vote. Motion passed.

Staff Report

Executive Director Grant Hammer reported that many SWCDs elected to give an extra \$100 over and above their AISWCD regular membership dues to the Foundation. The result has raised more than \$1,000 for the Foundation.

Old Business

Executive Director Hammer indicated that the AISWCD has not been notified as to whether the grant application previously submitted to USDA-NRCS for a Conservation Innovation Grant

entitled, “Stacking best-bet conservation practices on-farm for profitable nutrient loss reduction in Illinois” has been approved. The AISWCD is collaborating with Dr. Andrew Margenot of the University of Illinois on this initiative. There is also consideration being given to placing the CIG under the Foundation’s purview if and when approved by USDA-NRCS. Regarding the Foundation’s Bond Investment, there was discussion about how to handle the interest generated by the account.

Kenny Hawthorne made a motion for the accrued interest to be reinvested into the account. Maggie Soliz seconded the motion. A vote was called and the respective motion passed.

New Business

Executive Director Hammer reported AISWCD has been awarded a \$1,200 mini grant from American Rivers Network to participate in a series of watershed case studies.

Executive Session

There was no need for an Executive Session.

Adjournment

President Byers called for a motion to adjourn. Kenny Hawthorne made the motion for adjournment and Maggie Soliz seconded the motion. A vote was taken, and the motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 11:38am.