

Grant County

Soil and Water Conservation District

Business Plan



2017 – 2022

Who We Are:

A district constitutes a governmental subdivision of the state and a public body corporate and politic exercising public powers (IC 14-32-5). The Grant County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) was officially organized on May 29, 1940. This organization occurred through the efforts of local landowners and upon completion of a successful referendum. The purpose of the district is to provide leadership in the conservation development of soil, water and related natural resources within Grant County. This leadership is provided through technical assistance, education, public information, and various programs.

The SWCD is governed by a board of five supervisors, all of whom are Grant County residents. Three supervisors are elected by landowners within the county and two are appointed by the State Soil Conservation Board, upon recommendation of the local SWCD. Soil and Water Conservation Districts in Indiana receive their statutory authority from Indiana District Law (Indiana Code IC 14-32-5-1).

What We Do:

The Grant County SWCD provides the public information about soil, water and related natural resource conservation; identify and prioritize local soil and water resource concerns; and connect land users to sources of education, technical and financial assistance to implement conservation practices and technologies.

Our Mission:

The mission of the Grant County Soil and Water Conservation District is to educate and assist the citizens of Grant County to efficiently and economically manage the soil and water resources of the county for present and future generations.

Core Values:

The Supervisors of the Grant County SWCD are committed towards offering the best assistance and programs available to meet the natural resource needs of the county.

Critical Natural Resource Issues:

- Invasive Species Reduction
- Soil Erosion
- Soil Quality Degradation
- Water Quality Impacts
- Fish and Wildlife

Specific Five Year Goals for addressing the Resource Concerns

- Degraded Plant Condition
 - Educate 35 landowners about invasive species per year.
- Soil Erosion
 - Reduce conventional tillage in Grant County by 15% (using 2016 Tillage Transect data) on corn and soybean acreage by 2020.
 - Increase acres of filter strips by 50 acres per year through 2020.
 - Increase cover crops by 2500 acres over 2016 tillage transect levels in an effort to improve soil health.)
- Soil Quality Degradation
 - Increase cover crops usage by 2,000 acres per year through 2020.
- Air Quality
 - Plant 15,000 feet of windbreaks per year through 2020.
- Fish & Wildlife
 - Plant 300 acres of native grass/pollinator friendly species by 2020.
 - Establish 100 acres of wetland restoration/development.

Key Strategies

- **Information/Education**
 - Host or partner with a neighboring SWCD to hold a cover crop field day for local producers once per year.
 - Partner with West Central Indiana Cooperative Weed Management Area to educate landowners about invasive species.
- **Marketing**
 - Utilize local media to advertise field days and other SWCD events.
 - Utilize website to promote SWCD activities and events.
- **Technical Assistance**
 - Partner with NRCS and other agencies to provide technical assistance to landowners.
- **Financial Assistance**
 - Utilize cost-share incentives to promote filterstrips, cover crops and other BMP practices.
 - Pursue Clean Water Indiana grants to provide cost-share to Grant County landowners.
- **Partnership Collaboration**
 - Partner with nearby counties to work on projects, grants and educational events and other areas where appropriate.
- **Volunteers**
 - Utilize volunteers to distribute information for education activities, cover crop education programs, school programs and other events.
- **Staffing Needs:**
 - In the next 5 years, continue to seek funding for staff and start rebuilding relationships with County.

Key Partners:

- Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (IASWCD) – IASWCD serves as the legislative mechanism to work with federal and state legislatures on funding and policies to support the SWCDs in Indiana. IASWCD coordinates assistance from available sources, including public and private, local, state and federal, in an effort to develop locally driven solutions to natural resource concerns. They coordinate conservation efforts with the SWCDs across the State of Indiana. IASWCD provides Districts with group insurance opportunities.
- State Soil Conservation Board (SSCB) – SSCB provides guidance and coordination to the SWCDs across the state. They administer the Clean Water Indiana Grant Program, a water quality related erosion and sediment reduction program. SSCB also approves board supervisor appointments.
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) – The District and NRCS share office space, communication equipment, and goals to address natural resources conservation issues. The NRCS District Conservationist and other technical staff implement Farm Bill programs in the county and advise the local SWCD Board as they seek to address conservation concerns on agricultural lands in the county.
- Indiana State Department of Agriculture, Division of Soil Conservation (ISDA-DSC) – ISDA – DSC, under guidance of the State Soil Conservation Board, provides direction, training, and funding opportunities to the SWCD, including Clean Water Indiana funding.
- Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) – The Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Fish and Wildlife, Division of Forestry and Division of Water provide guidelines and assistance to the SWCD in the management of the natural resources of the county.
- Purdue Cooperative Extension – Extension is the educational branch of the Conservation Partnership. The Grant County Cooperative Extension Office provides staff and university expertise to the District for workshops, field days, and other conservation education activities.
- USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) – The Farm Service Agency administers USDA farm assistance programs including the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). They also maintain pertinent farm records and aerial photography used by the SWCD and its other conservation partners.
- Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) – The Indiana Department of Environmental Management works with the Grant County SWCD providing grant funding through various sources. IDEM provides voluntary opportunities for conservation involvement and acts as the state regulatory agency for environmental concerns.