



Indiana Conservation Partnership Training and Certification Program

September 2016

Updates and Key Accomplishments

ICP Training Needs Survey Results

In late 2015, employees of the Indiana Conservation Partnership (ICP) marked and submitted their individual training needs via the “Individual Development Inventory” spreadsheet. Results were used to plan 2016 trainings by multiple groups, and were sent to individual agencies with a summary of their employees’ requests. As well, results were summarized on a statewide level (see grid to right) and by state quadrant. General summaries (without names) are available upon request to groups planning upcoming trainings. Please contact Laura Fribley for specifics: lfribley@isda.in.gov. Thank you to the 157 individuals who participated in the survey!

RANK	SUBJECT
1	Wetland Plant ID
2	Tree & Shrub ID
3	Weed ID
4 (tie)	Prescribed Grazing, Conservation Planning
5	Forest Stand Improvement
6 (tie)	Cover Crop, Wetland Restoration
7 (tie)	Wetland Creation, Forestland Management
8 (tie)	Nutrient Management, GIS- ArcView, Forest Health Assessment
9	Pasture & Range Forage ID
10	How to talk to producers- “selling conservation”



Participants view common pasture weeds atop the rolling hills of Bedford. Photo by Vickie Smith.

Successful Pasture Workshop

In June, 54 participants attended the ICP Pasture Plant ID and Prescribed Grazing Workshop at the Feldun Purdue Agricultural Center. Attendees represented IDNR, ISDA, NRCS, Purdue, SWCDs, and a few members of the public. In addition to learning about the subject matter, participants were given a tour of the grounds.



Jen Filipiak, Associate Midwest Director for American Farmland Trust discusses soil health principles with participants at the Vigo County "Women4theLand" Learning Circle. Photo taken by USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Forestry Trainings

- Need training on tree and shrub ID? View the ICP Webinars: <http://icp.iaswcd.org/resources/webinars/>
- In 2014, a grant from the SSCB purchased each county a copy of Sally Weeks' Native Trees, and Shrubs & Woody Vines books. She will be presenting at a forestry training on October 26th in Boonville. Contact Warrick Co. SWCD susan.king@in.nacdnet.net for more information. ICP employees are invited.

Women4theLand

A new effort to engaged women land owners in conservation also hopes to build communication skills for partnership staff to better serve all our clients. The ICP created our own version of the "Women's Learning Circle" and named it Women4theLand (W4L). This builds on a pilot program that was brought here by NRCS, American Farmland Trust with funding from the Pullium Trust. Over half of our farmland is owned and/or managed by women, many of whom have inherited a farm with little or no experience in managing the business. These lands are vulnerable to lost profits, weak conservation, and eventual sales that might be the end of farming on that land. A steering committee made up of representatives of the conservation agencies works to train facilitators on the learning circle methodology as created in Iowa by The Women Food and Agriculture Network. It also works to support SWCDs in organizing and hosting their own local circles.

The opportunity to get conservation on the land is outstanding. These women often look at their land with a more holistic view than traditional land owners. The idea of creating conservation plans and working to implement them seems to fit well with the thinking of both young and older women land owners. Along with a lack of experience managing their farm business comes a lack of awareness of practices and the agencies available for technical assistance and cost share. This is the goal of the circles - to help them gain an understanding of what conservation means to their land and their business, and to match them up with local agency staff. The real challenge, though, is teaching staff how to talk with these women - the right way to fit the message into their learning style and viewpoint.

The W4L facilitator training has built a core of around 50 women who have learned the unique methodology that is backed by scientific research. These ladies lead the learning circles and work through the methods of the day long workshop. Even as women, they had much to learn about the right way to engage this underserved client base. But each facilitator has seen how these women change through the course of the day's activities and the excitement they show as they begin to understand the power they have to maintain their livelihood and their land.

The steering committee's coordinator, Heather Bacher, helps to move the group forward to accomplish their plan of work. Heather's interest in farmland preservation and community empowerment makes her a great asset. With her leadership, funds are being sought to support the program's facilitator training. Funds will also be used to support training our technical field staff - male and female. The need for better communications skills to serve all our diverse clients is vital. Teaching staff to understand the unique needs of women land owners will add to those communication skills. If funding comes through, the committee hopes to hold its first field staff training for all agencies in the first half of next year, so watch for announcements. Additionally, if you are a women and interested in becoming a facilitator, please contact Heather at hbacher@women4theland.org or by calling 317-514-4634. Submitted by Paula Baldwin.