

# ICP 2016 Accomplishments

The Indiana Conservation Partnership (ICP) Training and Certification Program strives to improve efficiency in training amongst all ICP technical employees, resulting in a more highly skilled workforce and seamless delivery to customers. Employees from each agency have representation on the committee that leads the initiative. This year, ICP employees completed a training needs assessment and results were both compiled and distributed statewide. Various groups and regions utilized this data for additional trainings. For example, the ICP hosted a pasture plant identification and prescribed grazing workshop in Lawrence County. In addition, three employees were sent to NRCS Boot Camp through a cooperation with the National Association of Conservation Districts.



2016 was another successful year for the *Pathway to Water Quality* Exhibit at the Indiana State Fair. The PWQ Committee, consisting of representatives from the ICP tirelessly give countless hours to maintain and improve the exhibit. New this year included a green roof gazebo and a septic system demonstration. Along with added educational opportunities and soil health demonstrations, PWQ was a hit! A special thanks to all the volunteers who worked at the exhibit this August. Without your help, we could not make the PWQ a sought after exhibit at the fair.

2016 year marked the tenth year for the *Leadership Institute* for SWCD supervisors, employees, and ICP partner staff. There were three Leadership Institute trainings planned. Only one was held in December with 28 supervisors and staff participating. Since 2006, 91 participants have completed the entire Cornerstone training series and 78 SWCDs have participated. In 2017, the ICP partners will be working revamping the Leadership Institute.

## Focus Area: Soil Health

### Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative (CCSI)

Through the assembly of a network of conservation minded farmers and technical experts, CCSI is addressing the challenges facing widespread adoption of conservation agricultural practices. Since its inception, CCSI partners have taken over 6,400 samples in replicated strip trials with over 148 strips. Four area hub teams continue to work together to address their regional needs through workshops, field days and trainings. Since 2011, CCSI has partnered in over 375 events reaching over 19,000 individuals. Because of the teams' input, CCSI Training will be expanded in 2017 to include cover crops and soil health systems in specialty crop production. In 2016, CCSI became fully staffed: Lisa Holscher, Director; Ashely Brucker, Program Manager; Taylor Lord, Communications Manager; and Joe Rorick, Agronomist. The USDA CIG grant was completed and produced a final public report.

### Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

- The program includes eleven priority watersheds touching 65 counties with an acreage enrollment goal of 26,250 acres, and a goal to protect 3,000 linear miles of water bodies in the Wabash River System.
- 2016 saw a tremendous growth in enrollment in CREP acres with 2,834.80 acres enrolled.
- Other acres:
  - Total enrolled since beginning – 12,983.68 (49.46% of the goal)
  - Total completed acres since beginning – 10,434.14 (39.7% of the goal)
  - Completed acres in 2016 – 1,047.18
- Total buffer lengths completed – 600 miles (3,169,779 feet) (20% of the goal)
- Over \$3.78 million in state funds has been invested to implement these conservation practices, and for every state dollar that is invested, \$7-\$10 federal dollars are matched through the CRP incentives available through the FSA.
- The 2016 CREP Annual Report can be found on the ISDA website at <http://www.in.gov/isda/2837.htm>
- Nutrient Load Reductions for CREP practices completed in 2016:
  - Sediment – 6,418 tons
  - Phosphorus – 8,218 lbs.
  - Nitrogen – 16,289 lbs.

(This surpasses our NLRs goals in the CREP Agreement by 262%, 342%, and 346% respectively.)

## MISSION

The mission of the Indiana Conservation Partnership is to provide technical, financial and educational assistance needed to implement economically and environmentally compatible land and water stewardship decisions, practices and technologies.

## VISION

The ICP's land and water stewardship assistance will improve the quality of Indiana's streams, rivers and lakes; protect our drinking water; and increase soil quality to boost food and fiber production.

## MEMBERS

- Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts and our 92 SWCDs
- Indiana Department of Environmental Management
- Indiana Department of Natural Resources
- ISDA Division of Soil Conservation
- Purdue Cooperative Extension Service
- State Soil Conservation Board
- USDA Farm Service Agency
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

## ***INField Advantage***

- Continues to be one of the largest adaptive nutrient management farmer networks in the country after Iowa.
- Grew to over 400 participating growers in 2016. They are enrolled in 34 groups covering 60 Indiana counties. Local groups are led and supported by ICP partner staff.
- Growers enrolled approximately 1,000 fields, over 70,000 acres, in 2016.
- Over 43,000 corn stalks were collected for nitrate testing.
- Indiana Pork started a pilot project working with producers applying hog manure on their fields.
- With the continued support from Indiana Corn Marketing Council/Indiana Soybean Alliance (ICMC/ISA), INField Advantage is available to Indiana growers free of charge.
- Each local group received program support between ICMC/ISA and ISDA DSC Project Coordinator valued at approximately \$12,000.

## ***Purdue***

- Forum for partners highlighted Purdue's research on soil health, ag water management, nutrients and cropping systems.
- Partnering in the Western Lake Erie Basin to increase cover crop usage and reduce, measure and monitor nutrient loss.
- Development underway for Soil Health Education resources for Educators.
- New Purdue Extension publications focusing on reducing pesticide risks to pollinator species.
- Collaborating on a multistate Soil Health Nexus Initiative through the North Central Region Water Network.
- Purdue's Science of GMO's website provides research based answers to commonly voiced questions.
- Study underway to determine cover crop economics.

## ***Focus Area: Watershed Initiatives***

- Coordinated on submitting new proposals for watershed projects, including the Regional Conservation Partnership Program, Wetland Reserve Easement Program, projects in the Western Lake Erie Basin, 319 Nonpoint Source, Clean Water Indiana and Lake and River Enhancement projects.
- Maintained a map of all funded watershed projects to identify gaps in relation to resource concerns.
- Participated in the Hypoxia Task Force and Annex 4 Task Force for the Western Lake Erie Basin.
- Supported National Water Quality Initiative and Mississippi River Basin Initiative projects.
- Supported the Eastern Tallgrass Prairie Landscape Conservation Cooperative and the US Forest Service and NRCS Joint Chiefs Forestry Project.
- Supported the Ohio River Water Quality Trading Project.
- Coordinated efforts in the Western Lake Erie Basin, including the Annex 4 Domestic Action Plan, Regional Conservation Partnership Program project, WLEB Initiative, and SWCD projects.
- Supported education on watersheds through the Pathway to Water Quality.

## ***Focus Area: Targeting, Monitoring, Outcomes***

The ICP is a national leader in conservation data sharing to identify statewide impacts, demonstrate outcomes, and efficiently target resources.

- Updated the Indiana Nutrient Reduction Strategy in collaboration with the Environmental Protection Agency: <http://www.in.gov/isda/2991.htm>
  - Continued engagement with the Gulf of Mexico Hypoxia Taskforce including partnering on a Walton Family Foundation grant with Arkansas and University of Illinois to develop tools for conservation data to be shared across state borders to demonstrate water quality improvement in large river basins.
- ICP staff assisted with installing 20,898 new conservation practices in 2015, with 12,221 having direct water quality impacts.
- Water quality load reductions (soil and nutrients retained on the land and kept out of water) from these 12,221 brand new, assisted, voluntary conservation practices in 2015 include:
  - 1,093,763 tons of sediment, enough to fill 10,937 fifty-foot freight cars;
  - 2,284,033 lbs of Nitrogen, enough to fill 11 fifty-foot freight cars;
  - 1,144,892 lbs of Phosphorus, enough to fill 5.5 fifty-foot freight cars;
  - These new practices resulted in a public investment of \$27,362,612 and private investment (landowner match) of \$10,857,905 (an increase of over \$10 million from 2014);
  - Full report here: [http://www.in.gov/isda/files/2015\\_ICP\\_Conservation\\_Accomplishments.pdf](http://www.in.gov/isda/files/2015_ICP_Conservation_Accomplishments.pdf);
  - Find conservation impacts to your drinking water source here: <http://www.in.gov/isda/2991.htm>
- Continued Tillage and Cover Crop Transects: <http://www.in.gov/isda/2383.htm>
  - Increased no till acres on corn and soybean fields by 466% since 1990
  - Increased conservation tillage on corn and soybean fields by 311% since 1990
  - Increased cover crop acres on corn and soybean fields by 400% since 2011