

ICP 2017 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 (as well as the Indiana District Employees Association) 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. The top three training requests were invasive species (plants), weed identification, and pollinators. Trainings hosted this year by the Training and Certification Program included three Cropland Weed Identification Trainings, and a Grazing Management & Pasture Plant Identification Workshop.

The 25th anniversary of the Pathway to Water Quality Exhibit at the Indiana State Fair was celebrated this year. A special ceremony was held with Lt. Governor Crouch and other ICP leaders speaking. With the beautiful weather this year we had a great crowd join us during the fair. The PWQ Committee, consisting of representatives from the ICP, tirelessly give countless hours to maintain and improve the exhibit. 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.

2017 marked the eleventh year for the Leadership Institute for SWCD supervisors, employees and ICP staff. "Leadership in Change" and "Communication" workshops were held, with a total of 48 participants attending the two workshops. Twenty-six of these individuals were new participants. Since 2006, 445 individuals have participated in the trainings and a total of 95 have completed the entire Cornerstone training series, including four new graduates this year. ICP Partners are working on revamping the program, and a key change this year was moving to a one day format. More discussions for improvement will continue into 2018.

Focus Area: Soil Health Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative (CCSI)

CCSI continues to provide training, outreach, and other soil health education support for partners across Indiana – contributing to the State's leadership in adoption of cover crops and other soil health practices. Activities for 2017 included:

- With input and participation from a wide number of partners and stakeholders, finalized and published the 2017 CCSI Strategic Plan (www.CCSIN.org/ccsi-strategic-plan).
- Material participation in 88 events, reaching approximately 5,000 individuals including 16 Train-the-Trainer events, 60+ presentations at workshops/field days and three ag retailer trainings or round tables and more.
- Provided additional support to partners in their advancement of soil health through the production of articles, soil health and cover crop images for reuse in publications, curation of Soil Health Events calendar and more.
- Continuation of soil health investigations on 16 no-till/cover crop sites and 5 sites that were more conventionally farmed.

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

2017 marks the 12th year of the Conservation Reserved Enhancement Program (CREP) in Indiana. This program covers eleven priority watersheds within the Wabash River system 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.

- Accomplished:
 - Total acres completed since inception of program - 12, 837 (48.9% of the goal)
 - Total acres enrolled since inception - 15,359 (58.5% of the goal)
 - Total buffer lengths completed - 658 linear miles (3,475,609 feet) (21.9% of the goal)
 - 743,201 trees planted through bottomland timber establishment
 - 2017 completed acreage: 2,357.04
 - Wetland restorations completed: 437 acres
- Direct state payments of \$1,044,495.50 for installation of practices due to large enrollment in 2016. Payments totaling \$104,449.55 in administrative fees made to partnering SWCDs.



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

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) (continued)

- Over \$4.97 million in state funds have been invested to implement these conservation practices, and for every state dollar that is invested, \$7-\$10 federal dollars are matched through the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) incentives available through the FSA.
- Estimated Nutrient Load Reductions for CREP practices completed in 2017:
 - Sediment - 8,313 tons
 - Phosphorus - 10,070 lbs.
 - Nitrogen - 20,011 lbs.
- The 2017 CREP Annual Report can be found on the ISDA website at <http://www.in.gov/isda/2837.htm>

INfield Advantage

INfield Advantage works with small regional groups of farmers who are interested in improving their nutrient use efficiency on their corn fields by sharing their management decisions and the resulting impact those decisions had on their production with a goal of creating personalized local guidance for future management innovations. This year the program completed its seventh year and continues to be one of the largest adaptive nutrient management farmer networks in the country. In 2017, there were 35 active regional groups located across more than 60 Indiana counties. On average, each group enrolled 12 growers and nearly 30 fields. State-wide, nearly 1,100 fields, on over 70,000 acres, were monitored using the INfield Advantage tools. Based on a participant survey, the participants have a direct impact on the management of over a half million cropland acres across the state.

Purdue

- “The Purdue Extension Conservation through Community Leadership Program guides community groups, boards, and commissions through facilitated action planning sessions to support locally-driven natural resource management strategies and policy.” - Kara Salazar
- The Purdue Extension Soil Health Education website provides experiential learning activities, reference, videos and photos for educators of junior high and high school age youth on soil basics and aspects of soil health.
- Members of Purdue’s Protecting Pollinators development team were honored with the 2017 Entomology Education Project Award for their efforts to educate about vital pollinator species.
- The Indiana Watershed Leadership Academy will hold its 13th class from January to May 2018. The Academy has trained over 360 watershed leaders since its inception in 2006, expanding Indiana’s capacity for successful watershed management. Graduates are engaged throughout Indiana and beyond in improving environmental stewardship and water quality. (<http://www.purdue.edu/watersheds>)

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.

Focus Area: Targeting, Monitoring, Outcomes

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

- Building upon Indiana’s Nutrient Reduction Strategy, created and published interactive lake and river basin “storymaps” highlighting Indiana’s commitment to enhance water quality throughout every major water basin in the State: in.gov/isda/2991.htm
- Within each basin targeted projects and practices, water quality monitoring, and water quality + land use outcomes are noted

Highlighted within these story maps the ICP working alongside landowners in 2016 (*Note: 2017 data will be published March 2018*):

- Helped farmers set a record, investing more of their own money (\$13.3 million) towards new conservation practices that directly protect water quality. This investment occurred in a down farm economy.
- This figure was matched by over \$40 million dollars of Federal (FARM Bill), State, and Local conservation investment.
- Together this private and public investment put nearly 18,000 new conservation practices on the ground in 2016 with 60% of these practices having direct positive impacts on water quality.
 - These 10,602 water quality improving practices kept sediment and nutrients on fields and out of State waters:
 - 802,976 tons or 8,029 train cars of Sediment reduced
 - 1.6 million lbs or 8.25 train cars of Nitrogen reduced
 - 832,929 lbs or 4 train cars of Phosphorus reduced

Top 10 counties for installing new conservation practices in 2016: 1. Washington, 2. Noble, 3. Kosciusko, 4. Wabash, 5. Harrison, 6. Dubois, 7. Allen, 8. DeKalb, 9. Greene, 10. Knox (County specific information here: in.gov/isda/2382.htm)

The ICP continued the Cover Crop and Tillage Transect in 2017 and found:

- 34% of IN’s corn and soybean acres managed with No Till, a 379% increase since 1990
- 50% of IN’s corn and soybean acres managed with Conservation Tillage, a 311% increase since 1990
- 9% of IN’s corn and soybean acres managed with Cover Crops, a 466% increase since 1990