



2018

ICP ACCOMPLISHMENTS



## 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

# ICP 2018 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. Trainings hosted in 2018 by the Training and Certification Program include three Cropland Weed Identification trainings, four Invasive Species trainings, an Herbaceous Plant ID Webinar (<https://youtu.be/Xq9n9hBhews>), and two Pollinator trainings.

The 26th anniversary of the Pathway to Water Quality Exhibit at the Indiana State Fair was celebrated this year. The PWQ Committee, consisting of representatives from the ICP, tirelessly give countless hours to maintain and improve the exhibit. The committee is already working hard on updates and changes for 2019, including funding to maintain a coordinator. 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.

2018 marked the twelfth year for the Leadership Institute for SWCD supervisors, employees and ICP staff. “Leadership in Change”, “Board Development” and “Impacting Community” workshops were held, with a total of 71 participants attending the three workshops. Twenty-five of these individuals were new participants. Since 2006, 470 individuals have participated in the trainings and a total of 99 have completed the entire Cornerstone training series, including eight new graduates this year.



## Focus Area: Soil Health and Nutrient Management 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 2018 included:

### Staffing:

- Two Program Managers hired: Trisha McClain, Northern Program Manager and Jessica Hoehn, Southern Project Manager. Ashley Brucker, former CCSI Program Manager moved to a newly created position with American Farmland Trust in Ohio.
- Joe Rorick, Conservation Agronomist, received 4R Nutrient Management Specialist and Sustainability Specialist CCA certifications.

Material participation in 70 events, reaching approximately 6,000 individuals.

The events included:

- Over 400 attendees at three workshops featuring John Kempf, Amish soil health expert. (LaGrange/Adams-Wells, Daviess, Parke Co). More than 80% of attendees were from Amish or Mennonite communities.
- National FFA Convention Wrangler Jeans booth: With State Soil Health Specialist, organized soil health demonstrations manned by CCSI staff and NRCS Soil Health Team members. The demos reached 2,366 visitors from at least 42 states.
- Soil Health for Organic Transition Event (Madison Co) reaching over 80 row-crop farmer attendees relatively new to a soil health event.
- Pre-event for the Live Grazing and Cover Crop Field Day (Fulton and Pulaski Co) was organized by local conservation offices and provided outreach to local lake management group. More than 80 attendees with some people from over an hour away.
- Big Pine Watershed event drawing more than 200 attendees, and recognition from state and national leaders. (Benton and Warren)
- National Non-Point Source Conference and Inaugural One-Water Action Conference presentation and poster on the importance of partnerships and practical adaptation of social science in BMP adoption.

- 11 Train-the-Trainer events, 250 attendees. This included a 3-Day Soil Health Training approved as satisfying USDA-NRCS Soil Health and Sustainability Training requirements for Apprentice or Certified Conservation Planners.

Provided additional support to partners in their advancement of soil health, including:



- Launch of Soil Health Podcasts with Hoosier Ag Today along with supplemental materials ready for re-print or use in newsletters ([www.CCSIN.org/podcast](http://www.CCSIN.org/podcast))
- Publication of Non-Operating Landowner Outreach Tools ([www.CCSIN.org/landowners](http://www.CCSIN.org/landowners) and [www.CCSIN.org/landowner-outreach](http://www.CCSIN.org/landowner-outreach) )
- Curation of soil health and cover crop images for reuse in publications. ([www.CCSIN.org/visual-media-tools](http://www.CCSIN.org/visual-media-tools))
- Curation of Soil Health Events calendar and bi-weekly events update, including new tool to submit events. ([www.CCSIN.org/events](http://www.CCSIN.org/events))

Wrap-up of soil health investigations on 16 no-till/cover crop sites and 5 sites that were more conventionally farmed.

- Publication of Purdue Extension Publication: How to Understand and Interpret Soil Health Tests ([www.ccsin.org/publications/reportresults-2](http://www.ccsin.org/publications/reportresults-2) )
- Acceptance to Journal of Soil and Water Conservation, Section A: January-February 2019. Lessons Learned. Results reports for informational purposes.

## Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

2018 marks the 13th year of the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) in Indiana. The 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.

2018 was another good year for growth in enrollment in the Indiana CREP by interested landowners with 2,633.05 acres enrolled.

Accomplishments include:

- In 2018, landowners completed a variety of conservation practices and buffers with 2,240 acres completed.

- An estimated 477,860 trees have been planted through bottomland timber establishment in the Indiana CREP in 2018.
- Also in 2018, 905.4 acres of wetland restorations were completed, with an enrollment of 1,054 more acres planned for future installation.
- With the large number of practice acres completed in 2018, this resulted in the state paying out \$1,190,402.50 in direct payments to participants for installation of practices, and \$119,040.25 in administrative fees to partnering SWCDs.
- Total acres completed since inception of program – 15,147.3 (57.70% of the goal)
- Total acres enrolled since inception – 17,785.7 (67.76% of the goal)
- Total buffer lengths completed – 714.7 linear miles (3,773,749 feet) (23.8% of the goal)
- Over \$6.33 million in state funds have been invested to implement these conservation practices, and for every state dollar that is invested, \$4-\$13 federal dollars are matched through the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) incentives available through the FSA.
- Estimated Nutrient Load Reductions for CREP practices completed in 2018:
  - Sediment – 8,834 tons
  - Phosphorus – 11,362 lbs.
  - Nitrogen – 22,528 lbs.

The 2018 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 eighth year and continues to be one of the largest adaptive nutrient management farmer networks in the county. INfield Advantage is offered to Indiana growers as a joint project of multiple local, state and national government partners and NGOs. Indiana State Department of

Agriculture, Division of Soil Conservation, acts as the project coordinator shaping the program and ensuring that protocols are followed so that all growers will have a consistent productive experience.

There are no additional charges for the growers to participate. Each of the partners supplies local staff to help growers enroll their fields. The expenses connected to collecting aerial imagery and tissue/soil samples and preparing the fields reports are covered by Indiana Corn Marketing Council/Indiana Soybean Alliance and Indiana Pork’s checkoff funds.

This year INfield Advantage’s Advisory Council completed a draft strategic plan that prioritizes providing high level services to farmers. Using diverse on-farm research and data collection to engage growers and be a resource when communicating with others. These tools will advance the program and Indiana’s success story.

In 2018, INfield Advantage’s participants were able to choose from multiple complimentary programs within the project. The majority of the participants worked with the traditional program studying nitrogen use on corn. A few growers continued working with Indiana Pork’s Hog Manure project. Last year’s pilot program in soybeans was expanded to all participants and over 100 soybean fields were enrolled in 2018. And lastly, a small pilot program was started in partnership with the Soil Health Partnership and 11 fields were also enrolled in the SHP Associate/ Associate-Lite program.

2018 INfield Advantage statistics at a glance:

- 375 participating growers
- 33 active local groups covering 63 counties
- 1,043 fields – (115 in soybeans)
- 73,000 monitored acres



## Purdue

The North Central Region Water Network made up of land grant institutions including Purdue worked with the Soil and Water Conservation Society and other partners to plan the “One Water Action Forum” held December 11-13 in Indianapolis. This conference focused on unified approaches to dealing with water challenges. Working groups identified action steps for addressing priority concerns moving forward.

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.

The Transforming Drainage project includes scientists from universities in 10 states, Purdue included, and collaborators from industry to transform the way drainage is implemented across the agricultural landscape so that agriculture will be more resilient to climate change.

The Indiana Watershed Leadership Academy will hold its 14th class from January to May 2019. The Academy has trained over 380 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>).

Purdue is working with local and state partners in the St. Mary's watershed to create a better picture of the state of soils and waters and suggest practices and procedures to enhance soils and waters of the region.

The North Central Climate Collaborative is made up of Extension professionals from across the region who are working to increase the flow and usability of climate information for Extension, farmers, natural resource managers and communities as well as the adoption of climate-smart practices.

Purdue Agricultural Centers are conducting research on many aspects of cover crops, nutrient management and cropping systems to address the needs of Indiana's agriculture.

## **Focus Area: Special Projects and Initiatives**

*The ICP continued to coordinate and partner on special projects and initiatives across Indiana, including:*

- Coordinated on submitting new proposals for watershed projects, including the Regional Conservation Partnership Program, National Water Quality Initiative, Mississippi River Basin Initiative, 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 for the Gulf of Mexico and Annex 4 Task Force for the Western Lake Erie Basin, and supported the State Nutrient Strategy, Domestic Action Plan and Indiana Ag Nutrient Alliance goals.
- Supported the Eastern Tallgrass Prairie Landscape Conservation Cooperative and the US Forest Service and NRCS Joint Chiefs Forestry Project.
- Supported all existing ICP Initiatives and projects.
- 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 the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program and the Indiana Corridors program.

- Supported education on watersheds through the Pathway to Water Quality.
- Supported work on Invasive Species including a new DNR terrestrial invasives coordinator and a new project with SICIM.
- Supported Indiana’s Pollinator Plan and State Monarch Strategy.
- Supported the National Conservation Planning Partnership Campaign and coordinated a successful listening forum.

## Focus Area: Monitoring, Reporting Outcomes, and Outreach

### Conservation Accomplishments

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

- Landowners invested a record high \$14.3 million dollars towards new conservation practices that directly protect water quality. This investment occurred in a down farm economy.
- The landowner investment was matched by over \$37 million dollars of Federal (FARM Bill), State, and Local conservation investment.
- Together this private and public investment put over 19,000 new conservation practices on the ground in 2017 with 60 percent of these practices having direct positive impacts on water quality.
- Nearly 12,000 water quality improving practices kept sediment and nutrients on fields and out of State waters.
  - 889,768 tons or 8,898 train cars of Sediment reduced
  - 1.8 million pounds or 9 train cars of Nitrogen reduced
  - 923,119 pounds or 4 train cars of Phosphorus reduced
- Top 10 counties for installing new conservation practices in 2017: 1. Allen, 2. Washington, 3. Kosciusko, 4. Greene, 5. Noble, 6. DeKalb, 7. Harrison, 8. Knox, 9. Lawrence, 10. Dubois



*New Indiana Watersheds puzzle map, PWQ, 2018*

Additional information regarding Indiana's conservation accomplishments can be found on the ISDA website at <https://www.in.gov/isda/2991.htm>



## Cover Crop and Tillage Transect Survey

The ICP continued the Cover Crop and Tillage Transect Survey in 2017, resulting in the following:

- 26% of Indiana's corn and soybean acres managed with no till, a 325% increase since 1990
- 43% of Indiana's corn and soybean acres managed with conservation tillage, a 365% increase since 1990
- 6% of Indiana's corn and soybean acres managed with cover crops, a 300% increase since 2011

Additional information regarding Indiana's Cover Crop and Tillage Transect Survey can be found on the ISDA website at <https://www.in.gov/isda/2383.htm>





*New Soil Health Tunnel  
PWQ, 2018*

## Interactive Web Tools

- Indiana's Sediment and Nutrient Load Reductions Web Application – ISDA receives numerous requests throughout the year for nutrient load reduction and conservation workload data pertaining to smaller HUC 12 watersheds. In an effort to streamline these requests ISDA created an ArcGIS web application that allows users the ability to select/query watersheds of interest on a map and download the nutrient load reductions and conservation workload to a CSV file. The web application can be found on the ISDA web page at <https://www.in.gov/isda/2991.htm>.
- Cover Crop and Tillage Transect County Reports – ISDA created an interactive web map which allows users to select a county and view a report featuring the latest no till, conservation tillage, conventional tillage and cover crop results for corn, soybean, small grains and specialty crops. The interactive map can be found on the ISDA website at <https://www.in.gov/isda/2383.htm>.
- Story Maps - ISDA updated Indiana's major river and Great Lake basin ArcGIS Online story maps with the 2017 land use, nutrient load reduction, water monitoring and tillage transect data. The 2018 data will be published in April 2019. The story maps can be found on Indiana's Nutrient Reduction Strategy web page at <http://www.in.gov/isda/2991.htm>.



# **Your Indiana Conservation Partnership**

**Indiana Conservation Partnership**  
**[www.icp.iaswcd.org](http://www.icp.iaswcd.org)**

**Indiana Conservation Partnership Reports**  
**[www.in.gov/isda/icpreports/](http://www.in.gov/isda/icpreports/)**

**Pathway to Water Quality**  
**[www.pathwaytowaterquality.org](http://www.pathwaytowaterquality.org)**

