



Jasper County Soil and Water Conservation District
211 E. Drexel Parkway
Rensselaer, IN 47978
(219) 866-8008 x3
jaspercountysoilandwater@gmail.com

March 24, 2026 – 3:00 PM CDT

Jasper County SWCD Education Center – Fairgrounds

Supervisors Present – Lana Zimmer, Jim Martin, Stuart Orr, Scott Bahler, Mark Kingma

Staff Present – Cayci Lane and Joshua Kesling

Partners Present – Courtney McFall, McKenna Nally

1. **Call to Order** - The meeting was called to order at 3:04pm by Board Chair Lana Zimmer.
2. **Partner Agencies and Public Comment**
 - a. **NRCS** – Kevin Shide provided the board with a written report outlining current NRCS program updates.
 - b. **ISDA and RITA - role of resource specialists** – Courtney McFall and McKenna Nally presented to the board a list of the ways they can assist the SWCD. Courtney also informed the board that transect season is approaching. For those unfamiliar, the transect is a windshield survey conducted across the county to collect data on cover crop usage, type of tillage, and the previous crop grown.
 - c. **RC&D – Jim Martin** – Jim Martin informed the board that the Weed Control Board submitted a grant application to the RC&D, but it was not awarded. He noted that the RC&D has a meeting this evening and he expects to learn the official reason for the denial at that time.
 - d. **Weed Control Board - Jim Martin** – Jim Martin informed the board that the WCB has a meeting scheduled for Thursday, March 26, to conduct an interview. He noted that they plan to make a hiring decision immediately following the interview. Jim explained that the county will allow 28 hours per week at a rate of \$21.95 per hour, and the SWCD will cover the additional 12 hours needed to complete a full work week. The SWCD will adjust the hourly rate on its portion to bring the total annual salary to approximately \$50,000. The county will provide a vehicle for the employee, except on the days the employee is working for the SWCD.
 - e. **Jasper County Invasives Initiative (JCII)** – Cayci Lane informed the board that there will be a JCII meeting on Tuesday, March 31, at 9am at SP19 in DeMotte. The primary purpose of the meeting is to plan a Weed Wrangle event.
 - f. **Kankakee River Basin & Yellow River Basin Development - Mark Kingma** – Mark Kingma informed the board that the Kankakee River Basin & Yellow River Basin Development recently held a technical advisory meeting, conducted a Zoom meeting regarding seeding permits, and continued work related to the removal of the State Line Bridge. He reported that progress on the bridge project is moving forward: the Corps of Engineers has issued a Memorandum of Agreement for historic mitigation and is preparing to issue the final permit for removal; a contractor has begun grubbing and clearing the worksite; and, in partnership with the Lake County Highway Department, a storage location for the disassembled bridge has been secured at the county highway property on US 41 in Lowell. Once the Corps' permit is received, the project will be ready to advertise and bid.
3. **Minutes from Previous Meeting**
 - a. **February Minutes** - The board reviewed the February meeting minutes. Mark Kingma made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, and Stuart Orr seconded the motion. The motion carried.
4. **Treasurer's Report**
 - a. **Monthly and YTD Financial Reports** - Cayci Lane presented the financial reports for February, and the board reviewed the information provided. The board suggested adding a line item for the new Weed Control Board employee salary. Jim Martin made the motion to approve the financial reports, and Scott



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Bahler seconded. The motion carried. The discussion regarding reappropriating WTB Part 2 and Drop Your Crop has been tabled for next month.

5. Old Business - Current Grant/Deliverables Updates

- a. **2026 Soil Pit** – Lana Zimmer informed the board that the soil pit event has been postponed until fall due to the amount of preparation required and the limited time available to complete it.
- b. **AgriVoltaics Tour** – Lana Zimmer reported that she has reached out to the Pulaski, Starke, and White County SWCD chairmen to gauge their interest in participating in a tour exclusively for SWCD employees and supervisors. Courtney McFall suggested using this event as the Northwest Region Summer Summit in August. Jim Martin made the motion to approve of this event, and Mark Kingma seconded it. The motion carried.
- c. **Education Center Renovations update**
 - i. **Education Center Mural Legend** – Joshua Kesling informed the board that the Mural Legend design has been finalized. He recommended allocating \$100 from the WTB Part 2 budget to support the project.
 - ii. **Outdoor space development** – Jim Martin informed the board that he spoke with Louie Nagel regarding the possibility of installing a privacy fence between the Education Center and the bathrooms on the east side of the water meter. Following discussion, the board agreed to schedule an executive meeting to further review and determine plans for utilizing that space.
 - iii. **Internet access** – Lana Zimmer informed the board that she has obtained the wifi password for the fairgrounds, however, the Ed Center will require its own receiver for wifi usage.
- d. **Tree Sale update – Josh** – Joshua Kesling informed the board that there have been 13 sales to date, totaling approximately \$1,500. He noted that March 31 is the final day to place orders.
- e. **LKWI contract update Cayci** – Cayci Lane reported that she submitted the revised LKWI application. She noted that once new funding is allocated, there will be \$46,673.99 available for cost-share. She also reminded the board that the LKWI Steering, Technical, and Education meetings are scheduled for Wednesday, March 25 at 1pm.
- f. **Invasives species new hire - contract needed** – The board discussed the need for a contract for the WCB employee and agreed to follow both county and district policies. Joshua Kesling will draft a very minimal contract for review.
- g. **Pollinator Walk with City Parks (had been tabled)** - The board tabled the discussion regarding the Pollinator Walk with the Rensselaer City Parks Department until next month.
- h. **Fair week event schedule needed** – Cayci Lane presented the board with the already submitted 2026 Fair Week schedule for the Education Center, noting that Fair Week will run from July 27-31 and will include two events: *Ecosystem Exploration* and *Build a BMP*. The board also agreed to move July's board meeting to the week prior to Fair Week.
- i. **Update on staff tracking system per APoW and Business Plan** – Joshua Kesling informed the board that he and Cayci Lane need to dedicate time to updating the spreadsheet used to track the APoW and the Business Plan.



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6. New Business

- a. **Garden Show on April 10-11** – The Weed Control Board and the JCSWCD will each host a table on Friday and Saturday. Between both groups, there will be technical brochures, pens, rain gauges, clips and native seed packets distributed. Lana Zimmer requested an allocation of \$350 from the WTB Part 2 budget to purchase native seed packets. Mark Kingma made the motion to approve, and Stuart Orr seconded. The motion carried
- b. **Grant submissions – Josh** – Joshua Kesling informed the board that the NIPSCO NiSource grant application is due on April 3. He reported that he is preparing to submit an application focused on forest and woodland invasive species removal.
- c. **2026 Initiatives (Board discussion and approvals, set dates and budgets)**
 - i. **Cover Crops cost-share** - The board tabled the discussion regarding Cover Crops Cost-Share until next month.
 - ii. **Sept. 18 - United Way Volunteer Day (Adopt-a-Ramp clean-up? Fairgrounds?)** – Lana Zimmer informed the board that United Way Volunteer Day will take place on September 18. She suggested that the JCSWCD organize volunteers to conduct a cleanup at Laird’s Landing on that date.
 - iii. **Water quality projects? (water testing, groundwater wells, other?)** – The board discussed potential water quality projects, including water testing. It was noted that the township is responsible for covering the cost of water testing.
- d. **Other** – Joshua Kesling requested to allocate \$2,000 for the Invasive Buy Back program out of the general fund. Mark Kingma made the motion to approve, and Scott Bahler seconded. The motion carried.

Mark Kingma made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:26pm, and Scott Bahler seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Jim Martin
Scott Bahler
Stuart Orr

Mark Kingma
Lana Zimmer