



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

November 25, 2025 – 3:00 PM CDT

Jasper County SWCD Education Center – Fairgrounds

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

Staff Present – Cayci Lane

Staff Absent – Joshua Kesling

Partners Present – McKenna Nally and Courtney McFall

Public Attendees – Cheryl Fugate

1. **Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order at 3:03pm by Board Chair Lana Zimmer.

2. **Partner Agencies and Public Comment**

- a. **ISDA** – Courtney McFall informed the board of a new cover crop incentive program jointly offered by the Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) and the USDA Risk Management Agency (RMA). The program provides a \$5 per verified acre discount on crop insurance premiums for producers who plant cover crops in 2025, with a maximum of 750 eligible acres per producer. Courtney noted that acres already receiving support through any other cost share program are not eligible for this incentive. The program will open on January 5, 2026, with applications accepted through March 15, 2026.
- b. **RC&D – Jim Martin** – Jim Martin informed the board that the RC&D held a meeting on November 18th. He was unable to attend and is awaiting the official meeting minutes before providing an update on the topics discussed.
- c. **Weed Control Board - Jim Martin** – Jim Martin informed the board that the WCB remains interested in hiring an Invasive Species Specialist. He reported that the county has committed \$25,000 toward the employee's salary and requested that the SWCD board consider providing additional financial support to help fund the position. Jim also noted that the WCB will be approaching township trustees to request financial contributions for the position.
- d. **Jasper County Invasive Initiative (JCII)** – Cayci Lane and Stuart Orr informed the board that there was no additional update at this time, other than confirmation of an upcoming meeting scheduled for December 8th at 9:00 am.

3. **Minutes from Previous Meeting**

- a. **October minutes** – The board reviewed the October meeting minutes. Stuart Orr made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, and Jim Martin seconded. The motion carried.

4. **Treasurer's Report**

- a. **Monthly and YTD Financial Reports** – Cayci Lane presented the Treasurer's Report. Jim Martin made a motion to approve the report as presented, and Scott Bahler seconded. The motion carried.

5. **Old Business - Current Grant/Deliverables Updates**

- a. **Education Center Renovations** – The board discussed a bid from FBi Buildings to install windows on the north wall and remove the existing north doors, replacing them with a wall. The estimated cost discussed was approximately \$5,500 and the board considered various window types during the discussion. Jim Martin made the motion to proceed with the installation of two windows and to authorize Scott Bahler to make the final decision on the window selection, with a total project cost not to exceed \$6,500. Scott Bahler seconded the motion. The motion carried.
- b. **Native Plant/Tree Sales; view the printed form and make final modifications if necessary** – Cayci Lane presented the board with the plant sale form created by the staff. After review, the board collectively agreed that the proposed prices were too high. The board requested revisions to include a clear profit



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margin, to offer bare-root plants only (no potted plants), and to table the final decision until the December meeting.

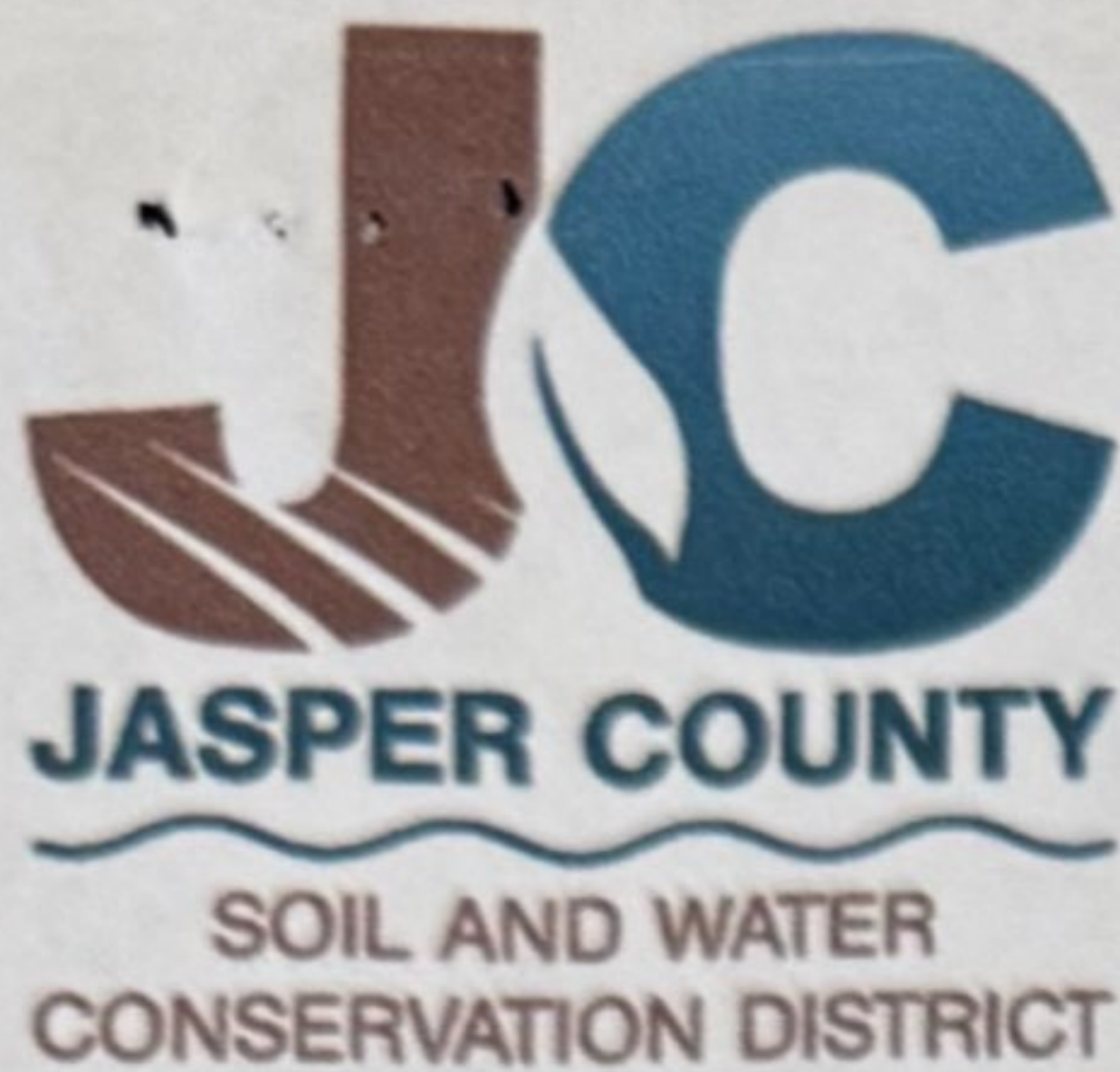
- c. **MOU for JCII** – Cayci Lane presented to the board the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for JCII. The MOU clarifies that the SWCD holds JCII's funds, but that JCII may request access to its funds at any time without requiring SWCD board approval. Cayci requested that, once the MOU is reviewed and accepted, all board members must sign the document.
- d. **LKWI Update** – Lana Zimmer informed the board that the LKWI grant was awarded an additional \$41,000 in funds for cost share programs. Lana also noted that the grant period has been extended through January 11, 2028.
- e. **2026 Initiatives** – Lana Zimmer stated that she would like the board to discuss what level of support they wish to provide to the WCB to assist with hiring an invasive species specialist. Jim Martin requested that the board approve allocating up to \$20,000 from the Clean Water Indiana State Funds to support the WCB employee position and invasive species control efforts. Jim Martin made the motion to approve. Stuart Orr seconded. The motion carried.
- f. **2026 County Appropriations** – Lana Zimmer informed the board that the SWCD requested a 10% increase across the entire budget, but the request was not granted by the County Council. Lana noted that the Council did approve a \$2,500 salary increase. Lana also reminded the board that the MOU for the additional employee salary expires on December 31st.
- g. **Other** – McKenna Nally and Courtney McFall informed the board that Benton County has become the first SWCD to own a park. Benton County purchased the property with the intention of conducting woodland restoration, and the park is located within the Big Pine watershed.

6. New Business

- a. **Annual Meeting Update** – Cayci Lane informed the board that the Annual Meeting will be held on February 24th at Embers Venue. Cayci also noted that she and Joshua Kesling have scheduled a meeting with Dawn Slack on December 2nd at 9:00am via Zoom to discuss potential presentation topics and to confirm Dawn's interest in serving as the Annual Meeting speaker.

7. Staff Update

- a. **RCHS Angel Tree** – Cayci Lane asked the board to consider approving sponsorship of a teenager listed on the RCHS Angel Tree. The letter on the Angel Tree explains the student's general seasonal needs when it comes to daily goods and wearable items like clothing. Cayci noted that \$100 coming out of the general fund would be more than sufficient to purchase gifts and necessary supplies. Scott Bahler made the motion to approve. Jim Martin seconded. The motion carried.
- b. **Disc Golf Sponsorship (Parks Department)** – Cayci Lane asked the board to consider approve a Disc Golf Sponsorship Sign for the Rensselaer Parks Department. Cayci explained that the SWCD would pay \$100 to receive a sponsor sign at the Brookside Disc Golf Course, placed in one of the most popular holes. The sign remains posted in perpetuity or until the course is no longer in use. Cayci noted that this sponsorship significantly broadens the SWCD's visibility within the community. Rensselaer Parks Department data indicates that nearly 4,000 people use the course each year, making the potential



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- public impact substantial and continually growing. Mark Kingma made the motion to approve, Scott Bahler seconded. The motion carried.
- c. **Christmas Tree (Parks Department)** – Cayci Lane asked the board to approve the SWCD sponsoring a Christmas tree in Potawatomi Park for the annual Holiday Tree Trail put on by the Rensselaer Parks Department. Cayci noted that the registration fee is \$40, and an additional \$100 would be sufficient to purchase a native Christmas tree and necessary supplies. Jim Martin mentioned that he may have a Red Cedar tree available that he would be willing to cut down for the event. After discussion, the board collectively agreed that \$200 would be sufficient to cover all expenses for the sponsorship. Jim Martin made the motion to approve, Scott Bahler seconded. The motion carried.
- d. **Cost Amendments for Jackets** – Cayci Lane informed the board that the previously approved \$100 per person for winter jackets was insufficient. Cayci noted that the jackets will require \$140 each to cover the cost of the jacket and embroidery. Jim Martin made the motion to approve, Scott Bahler seconded. The motion carried.

Mark Kingma made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Stuart Orr. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 4:21 PM CST.

Lana Zimmer

Jim Martin

Mark Kingma

Stuart Orr

Scott Bahler

Respectfully Submitted: Cayci Lane

Next Meeting December 16, 2025 at Education Center