2013 Tillage Transect Background and Procedures

What is the Tillage TRANSECT?

- A windshield cropland survey.
- Uses Excel for data collection and analysis.
- Conducted by conservation partnership personnel.
- Statistically reliable (95% Confidence).
- Records present crop, previous crop, tillage, residue cover, cover crops, soil loss factors, watershed codes, GPS coordinates and comments.
- Route designed for obtaining county data.
- Typically 450+ points per county.

Deliverables to the Partnership:

- Track cropland use, conservation cropping system and cover crop adoption, residue cover, energy savings, and soil loss by county, state or watershed.
- Data will be compiled to evaluate cropland use for corn, soybeans, cover crops, hay, small grains, CRP and other (i.e. truck crops, tobacco, etc.).
- Data will be managed to look at energy consumption trends.
- Data will be managed to look at carbon sequestration and other market based conservation potential.
- Opportunity for communications and collaboration for partnership staff to evaluate the conservation needs in the county.

Transect Procedures

General

- Transect will be completed in all counties in May or June of 2013.
- Local partnership managers should assess local workload and availability of staff.
- It is recommended that representatives from all members of the partnership participate in the survey whenever possible to improve collaboration.
- Typically a county will have 450+/- points and can be completed in around one full work day.
- At least three people are needed to conduct the survey whenever possible (driver, spotter, and recorder--4th person valuable to improve accuracy of the data and traffic safety).

NRCS Role

- DC serves as local coordinator (recruits partner participants, schedules data collection, retrieval and loading of GPS waypoints, and manages local data files).
- NRCS provides or assures availability of maps, laptop computer and GPS equipment.
- NRCS provides or assures availability of a vehicle which can accommodate the team.

- NRCS coordinates training, as needed, for the local team.
- DC returns completed and quality checked excel spreadsheet data file to appropriate ISDA- District Support Specialist.
- NRCS State Office assists with developing database and/ or programming for compilation and errors checking of the completed county excel files.

ISDA Role

- Distributes spreadsheet files with instructions to District Conservationists.
- Receives completed Transect Excel files from District Conservationists.
- Conducts quality assurance reviews on completed Excel files from the field and forwards to NRCS State Office.
- Distributes state wide results to partners via website.
- Assists with data collection (DSS's and RS's where possible).

SWCD Role

- Determines local needs for data and frequency of transect to meet the needs.
- Assists with data collection and recruitment of partners.
- Distributes results to local leaders, media and partners.

Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service

- Assists with data collection and recruitment of partners.
- Distributes state wide results to media, farm organizations, and researchers.
- Assists with statistical accuracy oversight.

Farm Service Agency

- Assists with data collection and recruitment of partners.
- Distributes state wide results to media, farm organizations, and researchers.

Indiana Department of Environmental Management

- Assists with data collection when possible.
- Distributes state wide results to media when applicable.

Indiana Department of Natural Resources

- Assists with data collection when possible.
- Distributes state wide results to media when applicable.

State Soil Conservation Board

- Distributes state wide results to media when applicable.