



## Indiana Native Pollinator Workshop Speaker Biographies

### **Deb Fairhurst, Program Manager of Accountability and Technology, ISDA's Division of Soil Conservation**

Deb is currently the Program Manager of Accountability and Technology for the Indiana State Department of Agriculture's Division of Soil Conservation. Deb coordinates the Division's GIS efforts, as well as administers various SharePoint sites and websites including the Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative and Indiana's On Farm Networks.

Prior to working for the Division of Soil Conservation, Deb worked for Purdue University's Agronomy Department as an Information Specialist. Her primary responsibilities included producing promotional materials and administering websites for various soil and water conservation programs including the Soil and Water Quality Program, Lake and River Enhancement Program, Hoosier Riverwatch, and Project WET.

From 1996 to 1999, Deb worked for the Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts as an Information Specialist. Deb was responsible for producing program support materials for Indiana's Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

From 1986 to 1996, Deb worked as an Information Specialist for the IDNR's Division of Fish and Wildlife. Her primary responsibilities included creating marketing and promotional materials for Indiana's Non-game Wildlife Program, as well as coordinating media relations for the Bald Eagle and Peregrine Falcon Reintroduction Programs.

A natural resources graduate of Ball State University, Deb resides at Sweetwater Lake in Brown County Indiana where she enjoys fishing in her spare time.

### **Jennifer Hopwood, Midwest Pollinator Conservation Specialist, Xerces Society**

As the Xerces Society's Midwest pollinator conservation specialist, Jennifer provides resources and training for pollinator habitat management, creation, and restoration to agricultural professionals and land managers. Jennifer holds a Master's in Entomology from the University of Kansas, and has been involved in research focused on bee communities in roadside plantings, prairie remnants, forests, and community gardens. Prior to joining Xerces, Jennifer taught at a community college and assisted with research examining the effects of grassland management on insects. Jennifer lives in Michigan, where she serves on the advisory board for the Michigan Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program.

### **Kathleen Prough, State Apiary Inspector, State of Indiana**

A native of Michigan, Kathleen is a graduate of Western Michigan University, where she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology and received certification to teach secondary education. She worked as a seasonal apiary inspector for the Michigan Department of Agriculture from 1988 until 1992.

Kathleen has served as Chief Apiary Inspector for the state of Indiana since 1994. A valuable resource to beekeepers statewide, Kathleen is available to inspect hives to diagnose possible diseases or parasite infestations. She works with other State Apiarists to conduct nationwide research on the health of honeybee colonies and the presence or absence of particular problems in hives. Kathleen also puts her skills to use travelling around the state and speaking to beekeeping groups and the general public to promote good beekeeping techniques and honeybee-safe gardening practices.

### **Ernie Shea, Project Coordinator, Native Pollinators in Agriculture Project**

Ernie Shea is the coordinator of the Native Pollinators in Agriculture Project, a national effort to identify opportunities to increase populations of native pollinators and enhance the delivery of “free” pollination services from these valuable species.

Ernie has 30 years of experience at the national, state and local level where he has worked in partnership with government agencies, agricultural and conservation organizations and business leaders helping landowners and managers conserve, protect and ensure the orderly development of the nation’s natural resources.

From 1986-2004 Shea served as Chief Executive Officer of the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD). As CEO of NACD, Shea represented and facilitated the effective functioning of the association consisting of nearly 3,000 local units of government, 17,000 public officials and 7,000 employees with combined annual budgets exceeding \$1billion.

Prior to working at the national level, Shea held a number of senior leadership positions with the Maryland Department of Agriculture, including Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for Agricultural Development and Resource Conservation. Among other responsibilities, Shea served as the senior Department official responsible for Chesapeake Bay restoration work. He also provided leadership for soil and water conservation, land preservation, domestic and international marketing and other service oriented programs designed to strengthen the state’s agricultural industry.

Ernie resides in Lutherville, Maryland and is the President of Natural Resource Solutions LLC, a conservation planning and consulting firm that helps clients craft solutions to complex natural resource challenges.

### **Sarah Simpson, Director of Agricultural Policy, ISDA**

Sarah Simpson is the Director of Agricultural Policy for the Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA). She is also currently serving as the Interim Director of the Division of Soil Conservation. As Director of Ag Policy, Sarah is part of ISDA’s Advocacy Team and oversees the areas of Policy Development and Regulatory Coordination. In this role, Sarah works with agriculture groups during legislative session and in the rulemaking process to advocate for state and local laws and regulations that are based in science and do not impede economic development in agriculture. She serves as state ag regulatory liaison, which involves assisting agribusinesses with permitting and compliance issues to ensure they continue to grow and invest in Indiana. Sarah also supports the activities of the Indiana Land Resources Council, which provides planning and zoning assistance to local units of government.

Sarah has been with ISDA since 2006 and prior to these roles, she served as the Interim Director of the Indiana Grain Buyer and Warehouse Licensing Agency and the Program Manager for Regulatory Affairs.

Before joining ISDA, she worked for her family’s swine production and grain business in Carroll County. Sarah received her bachelor’s degree from Purdue University in Management in 1999, and her juris doctorate from Valparaiso University School of Law in 2005.

### **Dave Stratman, State Biologist, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service- Indiana**

Education:

B.S. in Biology, University of Southern Indiana, 1977

M.P.A. in Environmental Policy and Natural Resource Management, School of Public and Environmental Affairs, Indiana University, 1992

NRCS Positions:

1993 – present, State Biologist, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service - Indiana

Miscellaneous Professional:

- Member of The Wildlife Society and numerous environmental groups including Friends of Goose Pond FWA
- Special interest in wetlands, bats and herps (amphibians and reptiles)

Professional Interests:

- Restoration of native species in altered landscapes
- Biodiversity on private lands
- Restoration and management of wetlands in agricultural landscapes
- Ecosystem management