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September - October 2015

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Area 8 Member Meeting
BM Truck - Olney, IL - Dec. 1st

Area 8 Member Meeting
**Erb Equipment Company -
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WHAT A SUMMER WE'VE HAD!



BUREAU COUNTY WETLAND PROJECT

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TILING DEMO ENJOYS HUGE CROWDS

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Area 3 Golf Outing Ends Up With Great Support *(page 6)*

Soil & Water Conservation Districts In Jeopardy of Closing *(page 9)*

**Extension Connection: A Process-based Tool For Sizing
Bioreactors** *(page 12-13)*

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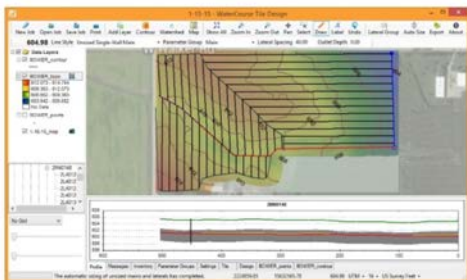
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The *ILICA News* is the official publication of Illinois Land Improvement Contractors Association, Inc. at 118 E. Knoxville St., Brimfield, IL 61517. (309) 446-3700.

Subscription price is \$50.00 per year, issued bi-monthly: Jan.-Feb.; Mar.-Apr.; May-June; July-Aug. Sept.-Oct.; Nov.-Dec., and also includes one annual directory.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Since the August newsletter ILICA has been very busy. As I stated in the August message, we would be in Bureau County constructing a wetland for the Wetlands Initiative. When we ILICA members got there we saw that the Committee had done their homework and preparations. Our Associates had really stepped up with plenty of good looking equipment and supplies to make this project go smoothly. A new field entrance culvert by the county including signage and tents strategically placed for the presenters from all the agency and commodity groups for three days running was in place.

Tuesday morning construction began with stripping and stockpiling the topsoil from the surface of the site so that after construction of the wetland 6" of topsoil could be spread on top of the entire site. A 15" tile outlet about 500' away is planned to be the effluent to be filtered by the approximate 1.5 acre two foot deep containment with a DWM control box at the outlet. Daily, the landowner Mike Thacker, prepared freshly grilled sandwiches for all in attendance including presenters and workers. By Thursday it was taking shape and things were coming together but we were dealing with wet conditions and we had more saturated dirt than we had need of. A large stockpile of subsoil solved the situation and by Friday afternoon the entire project was substantially complete and the landowner had the site fertilized, seeded and some critical areas mulched.

Jill Kostel from the Wetlands Initiative was very easy to work for and work with, Mike Thacker and family went above and beyond and the ILICA members showed up ready to work. We will put this project in the books as a very successful exhibition and the Wetlands Initiative will be gathering research results for years, to assist with BMPs to reduce nutrient loads escaping from our corn fields here in Illinois.

Just a couple weeks later ILICA tiling machines were at the Farm Progress show at Decatur. The project involved plowing the laterals for a 40 acre field just east of the 2013 tiling project. The 12" main was already in place about 6' deep. ILICA was to begin tiling at noon. By 10am, 13 set ins were opened up and taps made. The laterals were just over half a quarter long and it only took about an hour for four different plows to complete 13 laterals. The committee had completed the layout and the Associates again, had plenty of tile and fittings on site. I was only there for the first day but two more days of similar exhibition and the project was completed.

Thank You to the Show Committee chairs and co-chairs; Thank You to the members who donated their time and machines; Thank You to the Associates for all of their support to complete this project. And I received a compliment about this field demo. ILICA had their prep work done with ma-

chines set ready to run on time, as it should be. Class Act! Great Job! Looked professional. Check out Dave Kennedy's interview on the Farm Progress show internet site. Great Job!



We enjoyed great weather for both of these projects, worked safely, took care of the machines, there were no maintenance calls, and the finished projects were satisfying to the customers. The customers are already talking about future projects. What more could a conservation contractor desire?

And if that wasn't enough, the Area 3 golf outing also had great support again this year. With all our summer projects, attendance wasn't as strong as past years, but thanks to all those who were there or provided sponsorship. Great job to the ILICA organization for all these successful projects! Have a safe and productive autumn. Hope to see you all at Annual Convention in January.

Tom Beyers, President

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AREA 3 GOLF OUTING ENDS UP WITH A GEORGEIOUS DAY AND GREAT SUPPORT

Outing Sponsors



The 7th Annual Area 3 golf outing ended up as a beautiful sunny day in Central Illinois although several guests drove through rain to get there. But by the time lunch was over and folks were climbing into the carts, the sun was out. A big change from our June scheduling!

As documented in the other articles in this newsletter, this has been a very, very busy summer for ILICA volunteers. From mid-July's drainage workshop right up to this golf outing, ILICA committees were planning, meeting or making on-site visits to complete 2 very successful building projects, exhibit at the Farm Progress Show and hold this final fund raiser of the year.

But despite this hectic pace, most of those volunteers golfed at the outing, although early harvest and other conflicts did appear to impact our attendance. Everyone there however, had a wonderful time on this beautiful course and as always, the support of our sponsors was off the charts!

Our sincere thanks goes out to our generous outing sponsors, shown above, as well as every green and tee, meal or raffle prize sponsor. These golf outings have helped sustain the organizations' bottom line in the absence of the bi-annual building projects of the past so every donation is appreciated. Thankfully, new partners are beginning to provide opportunities for occasional conservation expos, as was the case this year. These projects help ILICA continue to grow as a resource to the industry, making the organization stronger than ever.

(right) Mark Baker & Kyle from Springfield Plastics, one of our outing sponsors, golfing with Bill Doubet and Roger Watwood from JULIE; Bill Dean watching his long, straight shot no doubt; David Kennedy with another outing sponsor, Kevin Shimp of Port Industries, Matt Byrd & Jeremy Smith of Martin Equipment, our dinner sponsor; Dustin Courson, Courson & Associates, also an outing sponsor with Terry Welty, CL Cummings, and Dan Stoerzbach. *(below)* Tim Neuhauser with Envision Group, on the green with Brian Brooks; CIT foursome, Ryan Duncheon, Dan Mitchell, Dustin Neeley and Dan Basham on one of the most beautiful and difficult holes on this course.



BUREAU COUNTY WETLAND PROJECT



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After a long drought in ILICA style conservation expos, the Bureau County wetland project was completed on time and to everyone's satisfaction with good weather all week! Ok, that part isn't like an ILICA style conservation expo, but the format and goals of this project certainly were.

Jill Kostel and Vera Leopold of the Wetlands Initiative coordinated the tents, tour stop personnel, lunch speakers and volunteer t-shirt design along with their engineering responsibilities for this project. Tour stops included grassed waterways, filter strips, a soil pit, cover crops, the constructed wetland of course, tile drainage and water quality and monitoring. Outstanding lunch speakers were lined up including Doug Grass from Pheasants Forever, Dean Oswald and Caroline Wade from the Illinois Council on Best Management Practices, Jean Payne from the Illinois Fertilizer & Chemical Association and Dick Breckenridge, Illinois EPA.

Our thanks goes out to our generous associates shown above, for their donations of equipment and materials and to the Thacker family for their outstanding hospitality. Mike Thacker grilled lunch for attendees and workers each day of the show and



(top of page) Panoramic shot after seeding and mulch provided by Jill Kostel, The Wetlands Initiative; *(above)* Donated equipment moving lots of dirt every day; During lunchtime, workers could take a break in the shade and listen to guest speakers along with attendees.

(below, l to r) Donated structure from Agri Drain being installed at the outlet; Another example of how well our ILICA volunteers work together, even when there is a lot of equipment operating in a relatively small space at the same time.

Continued on page 14



ILICA LADIES PAGE

Throw a Fall Harvest Party

<http://www.bhg.com/crafts/party-ideas/themes/> - By Sarah Wolf

Pumpkin Serving Bowl

Turn a pumpkin into a festive bowl perfect for chips. Use half of a large hollowed-out pumpkin set on top of a bed of twigs and fall berries to make the perfect serving bowl for your fall party.



Vertical Pumpkin Display

Give a plant stand an autumn-theme job by turning it into a pedestal for mini pumpkins.



Welcoming Pumpkin Decorations

A pile of pumpkins in a rainbow of fall hues is a sweetly seasonal way to greet guests. Pick the shapeliest pumpkin to be the center of attention and paint "welcome" on its side using crafts paint and a small artist's brush.



Outdoor Party Decorating Ideas

A red barn is an ideal setting for a fall garden party. Pumpkins carved with simple decorative slits line the path, inviting guests to come and sit around the harvest-theme table.



Dress a Harvest Table

A horse trough topped with an old door stands in as a buffet table. Green hydrangeas billow from a giant glass cookie jar surrounded by green and white gourds.



Cider Serving Arrangement

Pumpkins, squash, kale, gourds, and a basket of mums surround a bowl brimming with apple cider. Set the bowl in a large basket for a rustic presentation, and place cups and napkins in smaller baskets.



Fall Foliage Wine Cooler

Wrap a bittersweet vine around a tin bucket and add some fallen leaves to transform it into a stylish wine cooler.



Pumpkin Flower Vase

A hollowed-out pumpkin becomes a seasonal vase to showcase fall blooms. It's used here as a centerpiece for the dinner table.



Put Garden Containers to Use

Select unusual containers, such as this yellow sap bucket and green wooden vase, to fill with napkins and flatware.



Old Toolbox Drink Cooler

An old blue box, perhaps once used to store tools, serves as a makeshift cooler. Surround the drink cooler with colorful pumpkins and fall berries to complete the look for your harvest party.

Add a Toasty Fire

Bring in a portable fire pit to set the stage for a magical and warm nighttime gathering. For a sweet treat after dinner, you can use them to toast marshmallows.

Provide Warm Blankets

Throw blankets made from simple cuts of fleece from a fabrics store keep guests toasty when they're not settled by the fire.

Swing in Style

A swing hung from a sturdy branch allows kids another way to relish the last days of mild weather. Decorative lights strung on cut branches extend the fun into twilight.



SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS IN JEOPARDY OF CLOSING

By the time this newsletter is in the hands of the ILICA membership, it may already be too late for many competent, dedicated SWCD employees to remain in their current jobs. The knowledge and experience that will be lost through this political stalemate will take years to rebuild.

The following information was forwarded to the ILICA office by Laura DeOrnellas, Conservation Program/Marketing Manager at the Macon County Soil & Water Conservation District. It was emailed to ILICA leadership in time for a September 22nd call in campaign. Please, let your voice be heard too.

History

- Poor agricultural practices and years of sustained drought, caused the Dust Bowl in the 1930's.
- In 1937, President Roosevelt wrote the governors of all the states recommending legislation that would allow local landowners to form soil conservation districts.
- Congress unanimously passed legislation making soil and water conservation a national policy and priority.



What happens if the budget is not resolved by the end of September?

- Over half Illinois' 97 SWCDs will likely close their doors and lay off staff and Illinois will lose the infrastructure and "boots on the ground" necessary to deliver critical natural resource conservation on private lands.
- Illinois' Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy to help farmers voluntarily implement conservation practices will be severely handicapped, sending a clear message to the U.S. EPA about Illinois' commitment to addressing the Gulf of Mexico Hypoxia zone, exposing Illinois farmers to potential future enforcement and regulatory actions similar to the Chesapeake Bay watershed.
- The delivery of over \$400 million in conservation contracts with the US Department of agriculture will be impaired.
- 85 – 90 thousand tons of additional soil will erode into Illinois' surface waters.
- 170- 180 thousand pounds of nitrogen and 85-90 thousand pounds of phosphorous will leach into Illinois' waterways that otherwise would not.
- No further state cost share programs to help farmers put conservation on the ground.
- No further educational programs brought to you by Macon County Soil and Water Conservation District.

Don't let History repeat itself!!

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TILING DEMO ENJOYS HUGE CROWDS DURING 2015 FARM PROGRESS SHOW

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Also thanks to:
Central Illinois Ag & River Valley Pipe

Things were much different than 2013 for the ILICA show committee at this year's Farm Progress Show in Decatur. Crops were harvested early to allow ILICA volunteers access to the field for marking the layout and opening up access to the already installed main. Harvest demonstrations were being done as planned and the FPS trams were bringing hundreds of people out to the demonstration sites where four tile plows stood ready to begin the tiling demonstration at noon ... and they were right on time!

As you can see from the donating participants sign above, ILICA received outstanding support for this project so completing the installation during the three day event was more a matter of pacing themselves than operating on a full court press. The four tile plows made short work of the 4" lateral installation and while other demonstrations were going on, our volunteers had time to open up more start holes so they were ready to fire up the engines when the next scheduled demonstration was to begin.

Co-chairs on this project were David Kennedy and Bill Dean with lots of help from Brian Brooks, Jon Seevers, and Joe Streitmatter. Other volunteers included Tom Beyers, Grant Curtis, Jon and Mark McCoy, and Chet Moreland. Of course there was still time for our volunteers to visit the "big show" too, which seems to get bigger every year.



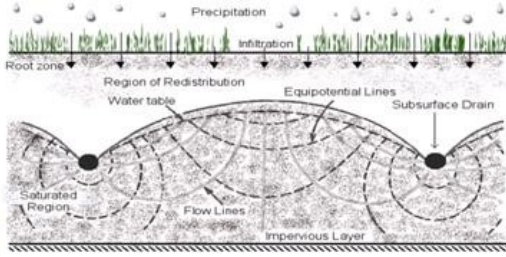
ILICA also continues to participate in the Partners in Conservation tent on the FPS grounds. This year's tent saw more activity than ever with a farmer panel discussion twice each day. A variety of topics were discussed and before these panel discussions concluded, there would be 30 - 40 people in the audience, asking questions about cover crops and other conservation measures. But then offering FPS guests the opportunity to take a seat in the shade didn't hurt either!

After a busy and hot opening day, Veronica and Jon Seevers invited ILICA workers and guests to their home for a grilled pork chop supper and home-made ice cream sandwiches,

Continued on page 21



(above) 2 photos of the HUGE crowds watching ILICA volunteers install laterals during the noon to 1 pm scheduled demo. Drone aerial shot of ILICA plows staged to fire up right on time. *(courtesy of Christian Kaufman, SFDI)* *(left)* Partners in Conservation tent farmer discussion panel, which was very popular at this year's show.



The Extension Connection

A Process-based Tool For Sizing Bioreactors

Source: University of Illinois Extension

Bioreactors are among the edge of field practices listed in the Illinois Nutrient Loss Reduction Plan. Some stakeholders find them more attractive than other practices, such as wetlands, because of their small footprints. However, they can have a high upfront cost, so there is a need to optimize their design.

Research being conducted at the University of Illinois is being used to develop a new model for sizing bioreactors. Unlike its predecessor, this model incorporates the effects of temperature and inflow nitrate concentration on system performance. It has been implemented as a stand-alone Excel worksheet, and is, therefore, more accessible and easier to use. The interface for the design tool is shown in Figure 1.

In keeping with the NRCS practice standard, bioreactors may be sized based on either a percentage of tile capacity, or on the daily flow with a 10% probability of being exceed. The flow is determined by using a computer model with 30 years of historic rainfall and temperature data. The tool comes with a database that makes it possible to design bioreactors for each county in each state in the Midwest with significant drainage. The soil, crop rotation, and drainage depth and spacing can also be specified as shown in Figure 2. There is also an option for

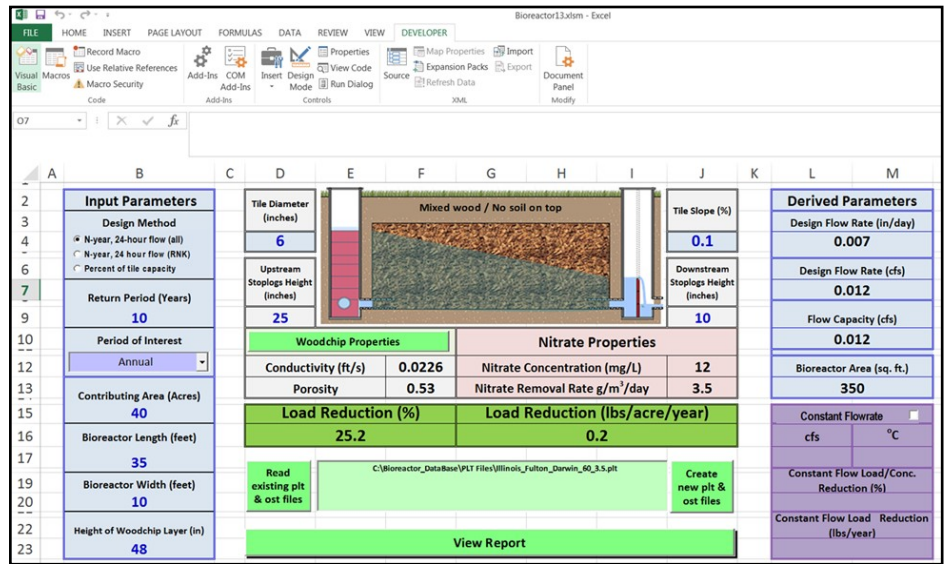


Figure 1. Excel interface for new process-based bioreactor sizing tool

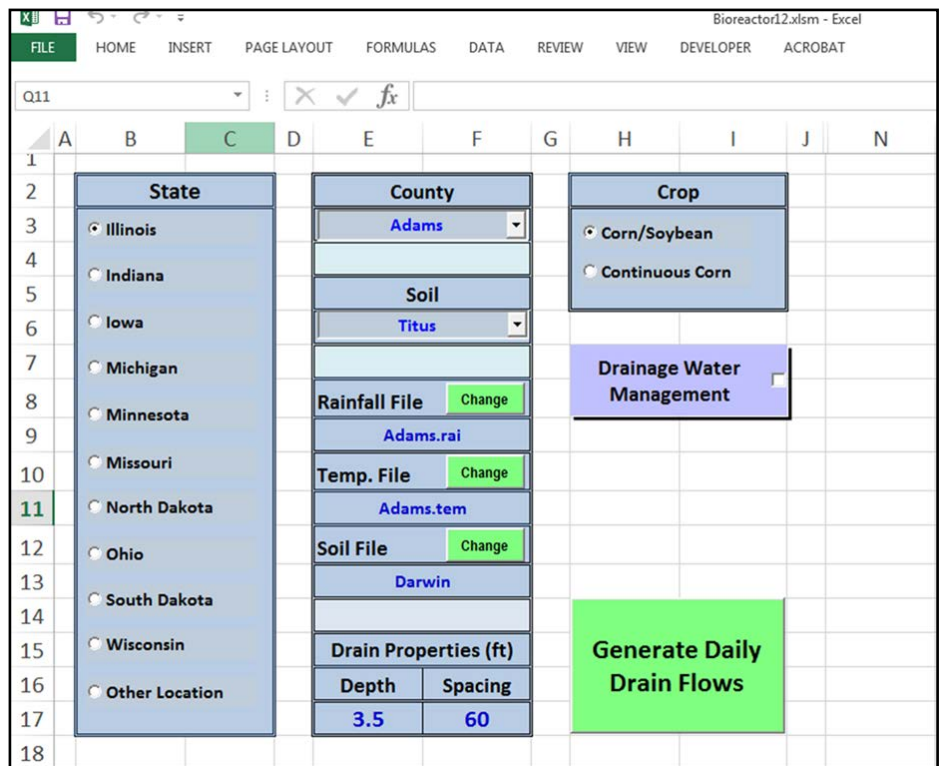


Figure 2. Excel interface for new process-based bioreactor sizing tool.

A Process-based Tool For Sizing Bioreactors

CONT.

sizing bioreactors for constant flow systems such as waste streams from treatment plants.

In the tool, the bioreactor is assumed to have a constant concentration throughout. The flow rate through the system each day is the lesser of tile flowrate from the field and the capacity of the bioreactor. If the tile flow rate exceeds the bioreactor capacity, the excess tile flow bypasses the system. If the nitrate concentration in the bioreactor exceeds a specified threshold value the mass of nitrate is a function of the woodchip volume and temperature. If the concentration is less than the threshold value then the amount of nitrate removed is a percentage of the amount of nitrate in the bioreactor. The concentration is updated each day, based on the concentration at the beginning of the day, and the mass of nitrate removed.

The user has the option of adjusting the stop log settings in the control structures up to six times each year, to control the water levels in the bioreactor. The tool can also be used to determine the single stop log setting that optimizes load reduction. The results from one such analysis is shown in Figure 3. The higher the stop logs, the greater the treatment volume in the bioreactor. However, the highest load reduction does not necessarily occur at the highest settings.

Bioreactors are typically sized to remove 50 to 80% of the nitrate load. At removal percentages below this range the bioreactors are not very cost effective, and above this range there may be unintended consequences, such as sulfate reduction and the release of hydrogen sulfide. The tool can be used to determine bioreactor areas for specified removal percentages.

The tool is being tested and will be made available on the Illinois Drainage Guide before the end of the year.

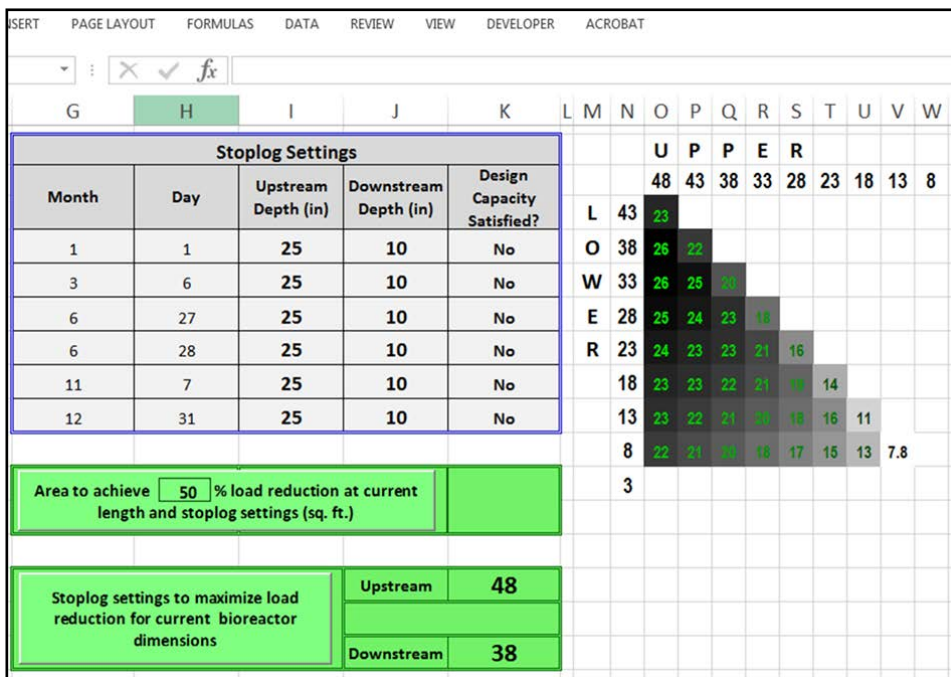


Figure 3. Worksheet for stop log settings and area determination.

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In the next issue of *ILICA News*, the Extension Connection article will address manure applications to tile drained fields.



TRENCHING AND EXCAVATION BOX OPTIONS

During a discussion at the last board meeting about trench boxes, it seems that although there are a lot of options out there, each has its own set of drawbacks as well. After a little online research it appears, first of all, that consumer reports really don't address things like trench boxes and secondly, Brian Bothast at the local OSHA office cannot recommend specific manufacturers but did provide some direction for this article.

Sunbelt Rentals and other construction rental stores offer a few options like those shown here. These rental stores are pretty easy to find and could offer a contractor with the occasional need for trenching or excavation shoring an economical option.



Shoring Shields



Modular Aluminum Panels



2" Wall Aluminum Trench Boxes

Steel Trench Boxes

2" Wall Aluminum Trench Boxes are aluminum extruded shields with a slim 2" wall that comes standard with a tough, T-6 knife edge and rugged top cap. Available in lengths to 12 feet, they are sized for rubber tire backhoes. Steel Trench Boxes feature high-tensile steel sidewalls and extra pipe clearance for dependable, rugged performance in-the-trench. They provide effective protection for contractors working in moderate to deep trench applications in a variety of soil conditions.

Shoring Shields feature the exclusive Speed Struts®, which incorporate hydraulic cylinders and return springs within rugged telescoping steel sleeves. They allow for 3 and 4-sided trench support, while providing increased protection to critical components. Quick-connect pins and hydraulic fittings permit rapid assembly/disassembly, and changeover to larger or smaller Speed Struts. An exclusive patented hydraulic manifold** enables control of all cylinders from a single point outside the excavation, permitting precise regulation of cylinder pre-load in irregular, non-uniform excavations.

Modular Shields Speed Shore's Modular Aluminum Panel (MAP) trench shield system is engineered for high strength, ultra-low weight, and ease of handling. Modular panels, end-members, and adjustable spreaders are light enough for transport by pickup, and can be quickly configured for 2, 3 or 4-sided applications. A two-man crew can readily assemble the system by hand for placement in the trench by a rubber-tired backhoe.

BUREAU COUNTY WETLAND PROJECT *CONT.*

hosted an evening meal for the workers, who typically stayed until dark to make sure everything got done on time. Show committee chairs David Kennedy, Joe Streitmatter and Brian Brooks also have our sincere thanks for all their time put in before and after the actual show dates. These projects are not successful by chance. A lot of planning and forethought takes place behind the scenes and these guys got the job done. The other ILICA volunteers who showed up during the 4 day project were Tom Beyers, Steve & Stuart Anderson, Lee Bunting, Grant & Ron Curtis, Bill Dean, Joe Krupps and Wes Litwiller, some of whom brought staff too.

All in all, as the first expo ILICA has been involved in for several years, it went well. Jill Kostel of the Wetlands Initiative worked for two years to secure grants, design and coordinate this project. She worked tirelessly alongside the ILICA volunteers to accomplish this success and will continue to monitor the site for the impact this wetland will have on nutrient reduction.



Jill Kostel, Senior Environmental Engineer of The Wetlands Initiative with expo attendees at the constructed wetland stop.



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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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Fax: (____) _____ Email: _____

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| <input type="checkbox"/> DI - Drainage/Irrigation | <input type="checkbox"/> RBD - Road Boring/Drainage |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DWM - Drainage Water Mgmt | <input type="checkbox"/> R - Reclamation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> EC - Erosion Control | <input type="checkbox"/> SA - Dealer/Service Co./Government Agency/
Consultant/Insurance Agency |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> ODW - Open Ditch Leveling | Other: _____ |

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- Associate Membership - \$295** (Associate members are those businesses that manufacture or sell equipment, materials or services used by active members)
- Affiliate Membership - \$85** (Affiliate members are individuals employed by an active member in the business that makes the active member eligible for membership)

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Illinois

November Meeting of the Board
Northfield Inn & Suites - Springfield, IL
November 7, 2015

Committee Meetings - 10 am - 1 pm
Regular Meeting of the Board - 2 pm

Area 8 Member Meeting
BM Truck Equipment - Olney, IL
December 1, 2015

Free Catered Dinner - 6 pm
Educational Program to follow

Area 8 Member Meeting
Erb Equipment Company - Mt. Vernon, IL
December 2, 2015

Come See the New Shop!
Free Catered Dinner - 6 pm
Educational Program to follow

National

LICA Winter Convention
San Antonio, Texas
February 2016

LICA Summer Convention
Hosted by Missouri LICA
July 2016

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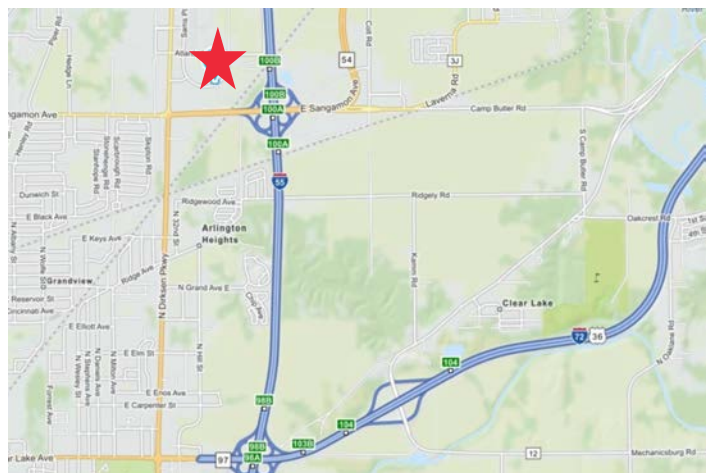
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Meeting Notice

Regular Meeting of the Board
November 7, 2015 - 2 pm
Northland Inn & Suites
3280 Northfield Dr., Springfield, IL
Committee Meetings - 10 am - 1 pm

Sangamon Avenue - Exit 100; North on Dirksen to Northfield Dr.
Conference center is on the west end of the hotel complex.



SAFETY FEATURE: PREVENTING TRENCH COLLAPSE

It's a simple matter of physics—trench walls want to collapse. When they do, it happens quickly and the results can be fatal. It doesn't take much dirt to trap and crush a worker, which is why it is important that you take the proper precautions during excavations that require a trench deeper than 5 feet.



Keep the Surface Clean

Trench collapse occurs when the trench walls can no longer contain the large amount of pressure put on them by the surrounding soil. While this can be a problem at any depth, it is made worse when excavated materials are piled at the edge of the trench. To reduce some of the pressure put on trench walls:

- Pile all excavated materials at least 2 feet back from the edge of the trench. If there is not enough room to allow at least 2 feet, remove excavated materials from the immediate location.
- Do not work around the edge of the trench when others are below.
- Keep equipment away from the trench edge. Not only can it cause cave-ins but there is also a chance that it could fall on those working below.

Slope for Stability

Another way to reduce the pressure put on trench walls is to use a sloping or benching system.

- Sloped Walls – A 34-degree slope should be used when digging to prevent a section near the top from giving out and burying the bottom of the trench.
- Benching – When there is enough space available, benching allows a trench to be dug in a series of steps that slowly descend to the deepest point.

Reinforce Trench Walls

Once a trench has been dug, the walls should be braced in a way that will protect those working in the area if a cave-in does occur.

- Construct a support system made with posts, beams, shores or planking and hydraulic jacks.
- Never excavate more than 2 feet past the bottom of the support system.
- Make sure there is always a safe exit route within 25 feet of where you are working in the trench.

Trench Boxes

A trench box can be used as a convenient alternative to building a support system directly into a trench. However, for it to provide the proper protection it must be used properly.

- Always place the trench box before entering the trench.
- Enter directly into the box.
- Never move the box while workers are in the trench.
- Never perform work in the trench outside of the box.

Discussion Date: _____

Employee Participants

TILING DEMO ENJOYS HUGE CROWDS DURING 2015 FARM PROGRESS SHOW

CONT.



along with their warm hospitality. Several people enjoyed a relaxing evening, sitting around the pool, discussing the days successes. Our genuine thanks to the Seever for a delightful evening which included a “non-rain event” by the time folks were leaving ... just ask Jon!

There is already talk about the 2017 Farm Progress Show in Decatur and of the next field project ILICA would be invited to tile. There is also discussion about including more safety related aspects to the demonstration, since this is such a high profile venue. The board has given the green light to begin talks with the landowner to get this one in the planning stage as early as possible.

(above) Dane and Stephen Leghissa from Tesmec getting ready to enjoy a delicious supper prepared by Veronica and Stan Seever; The always popular ILICA golf cart, used as a taxi service and for delivering ice and lunches to the field project; “Sammy Soil”, who should get a medal for going above and beyond the call of duty, in costume, several times a day, in 95°+ heat, all three days! And he was always animated and friendly. (lower left) Gwen Kolb from US Fish & Wildlife performing “the dance of the Monarch butterfly” during a particularly slow time in the conservation tent.

2016 ILICA CONVENTION HOTEL REGISTRATION DETAILS

JANUARY 13TH - 16TH: EMBASSY SUITES
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ROOM RATE - \$112+TAX

This year’s ILICA convention theme is “County Fair” and instead of doing the “Best Dressed” contest on Thursday evening, participants are being asked to “dress up” their favorite farm animal instead ... stuffed of course ... no live animals allowed! January will be here before you know it so start thinking about YOUR entry.

Which means, ILICA Associate members will soon begin to put their convention travel schedules on the books. The following information will guide exhibitors and guests through the East Peoria Embassy Suites’ online process to reserve a room for January’s event. Rooms go fast at this very popular hotel so please don’t wait!

Get your room reserved today!

Go to the Hilton/Embassy Suites East Peoria website and select your arrival and departure dates and click “Add special rate codes” which is in blue letters. It will then show a “Group code” option where the guests will type in the ILICA group code, “**ILI**”. Once that is entered, click on “Check Rooms & Rates” and it will take you to all the available room types to make the reservation.

Exhibitor set up is Wednesday after 6pm or before 8 am on Thursday. The trade show is open until Noon Friday.

(Open bar in the exhibit hall Wednesday evening)



FUNDING LETTER SENT TO CONGRESS

More than 100 organizations, including LICA, have signed onto a letter urging House and Senate head appropriators to maintain mandatory conservation funding set aside in the 2014 farm bill. The groups are protesting conservation-program cuts in the House and Senate fiscal 2016 agriculture appropriations bills, decisions that exacerbate the already-steep reductions to water quality, soil health and wildlife efforts in the 2014 farm bill.



Source: John Peterson: LICA Director of Government Relations

farm bill amount approved last year, \$301 million in the House bill and \$303 million in the Senate bill. The Senate bill also rescinds \$73 million in carryover funding for EQIP.

These cuts would also affect the work of the Regional Conservation Partnership Program, a new, highly touted farm bill program that relies on partnerships among the federal government, state and local agencies, and nonprofit organizations to work on conservation over a large landscape, rather than individual properties. RCPP draws its funding from the CSP and EQIP funding baselines, the letter states.

"These proposed cuts are shortsighted and would severely limit the capacity of farmers, ranchers, and foresters to conserve water, maintain their soil, and prepare for extreme weather events," the letter says. The letter also urges appropriators to adopt the Senate funding level of \$855 million for discretionary conservation operations, which includes the Conservation Technical Assistance Program. Many of these programs are of interest to LICA Members working with farmers or ranchers.

The letter was sent today (*September 17th*) as Congress scrambles to find a short-term solution to fund the government before the fiscal year ends Oct. 1.

In passing the last farm bill, Congress "consolidated or eliminated nearly a dozen conservation programs and reduced mandatory funding by \$4 billion, with sequestration scheduled to cut an additional \$2 billion," the letter says. "The House and Senate Agriculture Committees did their part to reduce federal spending and did so voluntarily. The cuts contained in the new farm bill were real, serious, and deep."

The House and Senate agriculture appropriations bills, which have passed their respective committees but have not been debated on the floor, made further cuts, including a 2.26-million-acre reduction to the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), the country's largest agricultural conservation program, in the House bill. Both chambers shrank funding for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) from the

2014 UFG - STATE LICA PROGRAM PROVIDES 7.5% SAFETY DIVIDEND



CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL PARTICIPATING MEMBERS. CHECK WITH YOUR AGENT IF YOU HAVE NOT RECEIVED YOUR CHECK!

National LICA Winter Convention

Drury Plaza Hotel Riverwalk
San Antonio, Texas
February 29 – March 6



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