

Land Improvement Contractors Of America · Illinois Chapter

September - October 2018

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SUMMER PICNIC & MEMBERS' MTG., SOMETHING NEW & SOMETHING OLD



(page 16)

ILLINOIS SUSTAINABLE AG PARTNERSHIP COLLABORATIONS



ILLINOIS
SUSTAINABLE
AG PARTNERSHIP

(page 10)

Also Featured Inside:

- ▶ **House and Senate Farm Bill Side by Side Compared to Current Law** (page 6)
- ▶ **Extension Connection: Simulated Impacts of Tile Drains on the Water Resources of the Upper Sangamon River Basin** (page 12)
- ▶ **“LICA to Me”: Norm Kocher** (page 21)

Illinois LICA
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Upcoming Events:

Board of Directors Meeting
ILICA Office: Brimfield
September 8, 2018

Board of Directors Meeting
TBD
November 3, 2018

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FEATURES

- House and Senate Farm Bill Side by Side Compared to Current Law 6,15
- Members of the Illinois Sustainable Ag Partnership See Collaboration.10,11,14
- Summer Picnic & Members' Mtg., Something New & Something Old. . . 16-17
- "LICA to Me" 21

COLUMNS

- President's Message 4
- New Members. 5
- 2018 Board Member Schedule & Attendance. 5
- ILICA Ladies Page: 9 Steps to a Smart Start. 8-9
- Extension Connection 12-13
- Advertisers Index 19
- Board Meeting Notice 19
- Calendar of Events 19
- ILICA Classifieds 21
- Safety Feature: Excavation Site Safety Practices. 22

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Greetings, July is a blur in our rearview mirror, and we are blowing right through August. Marie and I attended the National LICA Annual Meeting in Grand Rapids, Michigan July 10-14 at the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel. The hotel had a unique character to it; half the building was built in the early 1900's with beautiful woodwork and craftsmanship. The other half of course, had more modern features to accommodate guests today. A guest speaker that I enjoyed was a Mr. David Pacheco. He is a National Construction Engineer for USDA National Resources Conservation Service. His seminar discussed the process NRCS uses to develop construction standards and how LICA can participate and provide input into the process.

ILICA Drainage Workshop was held August 9-10 at Richland Community College in Decatur. Thanks to Eric Layden, Education Chair, for coordinating the workshop. Even though the attendance may have low, the sessions were high quality.

As far as the "Moving Dirt – Digging Holes" report, we completed our third wetland in partnership with The Wetlands Initiative and the Illinois Sustainable Ag Partnership at the Fulton farm in Livingston County. The project was a little over one acre with us moving a lot of dirt, but it sure looked

good when it was completed. We were lucky that the site received 0.3" of rain, whereas 10 miles north at home I got 2" of rain. The first rain since we returned home from Grand Rapids on July 14. Hopefully the wetland area can catch up within the next coming weeks. I would like to give my thanks to three individuals, Bill Doubet, Steve Anderson and Tom Beyers, for being on site Monday morning until Saturday at 5 p.m. when the project was complete. There are countless numbers of individuals that gave 1, 2 or 3 days of their time and provided crews to get the wetland completed. To you, I also give my sincere Thanks for your job well done. We just completed our second Woodchip Bioreactor in partnership with the Illinois Farm Bureau at the Ganschow Farm located in Bureau County. A special Thank You to Brian and Tyler Brooks and Joe Streitmatter for coordinating and constructing the project.


We are having the Area 3 Golf Outing & Trap Shoot on Friday, Aug 24. The Trap Shoot will begin at 9:30 a.m. with golf starting at 1 p.m. with a shotgun start. I want to thank the golf outing co-chairs Bill Dean and Wayne Litwiller for organizing this event, in addition to organizing the June 1st Area 6 event.

We are fast approaching fall construction season, please be careful and safe.

Be Safe,

Lee

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2018 BOARD MEMBER MTG. ATTENDANCE

A = absent P = present C = cancelled meeting

Area / Director	Jan	Mar	May	July	Sep	Nov
Pres: Lee Bunting	P	P	P	P		
VP: Grant Curtis	P	P	P	P		
1st VP: Steve Anderson	P	P	P	P		
Area 1 - Brian Brooks	P	P	P	P		
Area 2 - Stuart Anderson	P	P	P	P		
Area 3 - Wes Litwiller	P	P	A	A		
Area 3 - Joe Streitmatter	P	P	P	P		
Area 4 - David Kennedy	P	P	A	P		
Area 4 - John McCoy	P	A	P	P		
Area 5 - Earl Mast	P	A	P	A		
Area 6 - Jon Seevers	P	P	P	P		
Area 6 - Scott Day	P	A	A	P		
Area 7 - Vacant						
Area 8 - Norm Kocher	A	A	A	A		
Area 8 - Tom Beyers	P	P	P	P		
Associate Dir: Brad Baker	P	A	P	A		

BOARD & MEMBERS' MEETING SCHEDULE

Unless changed by the Board during the year, the ILICA business meetings are scheduled as follows:

September 8, 2018 - Regular Meeting of the Board:
 ILICA Office, Brimfield

November 3, 2018 - Regular Meeting of the Board:
 TBD

Exact location, committee meeting times & other details will be published in the ILICA News and sent to members via mail and/or email.



HOUSE & SENATE FARM BILL SIDE BY SIDE COMPARED TO CURRENT LAW

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

Current Law	House Draft	Senate Draft
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding baseline is \$1.75 billion per year • Livestock set aside at 60% • 5% of funding must go to practices that support wild-life • 5% must also go to socially disadvantaged and beginning farmers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Merges CSP into EQIP. • Maintains distinct cost-share (EQIP) and stewardship (CSP) functions. • Increases funding from \$1.75 million to \$3 billion for both types of contracts by 2023 • Eliminates livestock set aside • Leaves wildlife and beginning/socially disadvantaged set aside as current law 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaves EQIP as separate program from CSP • Reduces funding to \$1.47 billion in 2019 and slowly increases to \$1.59 billion by 2023 • Reduces livestock set aside to 50% • Increases to 10% the amount that must support wildlife • Increases to 15% the amount that must each go to socially disadvantaged and beginning farmers

Conservation Stewardship Program

Current Law	House Draft	Senate Draft
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding at 10 million acres per year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminates CSP as a standalone program. • Removes requirements that a whole farm must be enrolled in CSP and must meet a stewardship threshold. • Authorizes State Technical Committees and Local Working Groups to set priority resource concerns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces CSP funding to 8.8 million acres per year, an approximately \$1 billion cut over 10 years • “Streamlines” a producer moving from EQIP to CSP • Increases to 15% the amount that must each go to socially disadvantaged and beginning farmers

Conservation Reserve Program

Current Law	House Draft	Senate Draft
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National acreage cap set at 24 million acres • Rental rates set at county rental rent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases national acreage cap to 29 million acres • Reduces rental rates to 80% of county rental rate with further reductions for subsequent reenrollments • Reduces cost share from 50% to 40% • Sets aside 3 million acres for only grassland CRP contracts • Allows grazing as mid contract management • Allows enrollment into EQIP during final year of contract 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases national acreage cap to 25 million acres • Reduces rental rates to 88.5% of county rental rate • Authorizes new initiatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40% of all continuous acres for new Clean Lakes Estuaries and Rivers Initiative (CLEAR) focused on water quality • 30% of all continuous acres for State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) • Increases flexibility for grazing acres

Regional Conservation Partnership Program

Current Law	House Draft	Senate Draft
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receives \$100 million in mandatory funds • Also receives 7% of total funds from EQIP, CSP and ACEP • Funding pools set at <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 35% for CCA • 40% for national pool • 25% for state pool 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases mandatory RCPP funding to \$250 million • Eliminates 7% donor program funding • Leaves the funding pools the same • Requires simplified application process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases mandatory RCPP funding to \$200 million • Keeps 7% donor program funding • Changes funding pool to 40% state/multi-state and 60% CCA • Up to 30% of total program funds may be diverted for use in a new “grant” program that drastically evolves RCPP past initial intent • Clarifies match as either monetary or in-kind

Agriculture Conservation Easement Program

Current Law	House Draft	Senate Draft
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces funding from \$400 million to \$250 million by end of farm bill 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funds ACEP at \$500 million annually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funds ACEP between \$400 million and \$450 million per year



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ILICA Ladies Page

As the lazy days of summer slip away, it will soon be time to put away the beach chairs and corner lemonade stands and prepare for going back to school. Here are some tips to make the transition easier.

Adjust to the new routine

Ease into the school-year schedule. Getting back into the school routine can be a challenge for everyone in the family. To make the adjustment easier, start early.

- ✓ A few weeks before school starts, move bedtime back to an earlier time.
- ✓ Put a positive spin on going back to school. Talk about the fun things your child will learn, the old friends he'll see and the new friends he'll make.
- ✓ If your child is anxious about starting the next grade, reassure her that other children have these feelings too.
- ✓ Don't make plans for big trips right before the start of school.
- ✓ Establish school-day schedules for homework, TV, baths, and bedtime.
- ✓ Arrange play dates with friends from school to re-establish connections that may have been dropped for the summer, or to create new ones.



9 Steps to a Smart Start

Get organized

Take advantage of the slower pace during your time away from school to set up for the busy school year ahead.

- ✓ Many schools send out school information and a packet of forms to fill out before school starts. If you can discipline yourself to fill out the paperwork several days before it's due, you'll avoid a last-minute panic.
- ✓ Have the necessary immunization records available for easy reference.
- ✓ Update school emergency contact and health information for the coming year.
- ✓ As you read through all the school information, mark important dates (such as back-to-school night, parent-teacher conferences, and school holidays) on the family calendar.
- ✓ Start a folder for school newsletters and other papers so that you can easily find and refer to them if necessary.
- ✓ Establish a "get ready the night before" policy. Pick clothes for the next day and pack the backpack every evening before bedtime, and you'll save precious time in the morning.

Shopping: take advantage of sales

School clothes: It's always a great idea to buy what you know you'll need early, if you can. Go through your children's wardrobes and weed out everything they've outgrown. By reducing the clutter, you will be able to get them dressed quickly and easily.

Keep in mind school dress codes while shopping. Some schools prohibit short skirts and tank tops for girls and "sagging" (baggy trousers that hang low) for boys. Schools may also have rules regarding printed words or phrases on clothes.

School supplies: Although it's difficult to predict what different teachers will require, you can get ahead of the game by buying certain staples. Here's a general list of items that elementary school students usually need:

Glue stick	Notebooks
Scissors	Binder
No. 2 pencils	Loose-leaf notebook paper
Eraser	Pocket folders
Colored pencils	Printer paper
Box of crayons	Drawing paper
Kleenex	Construction paper
Water-based markers	Plastic ruler
Ballpoint pens	Pencil sharpener
	School box
	Scotch tape
	Stapler
	Backpack

Here are some additional items middle and high school students usually need:

- Two combination locks (for hall locker & for gym locker)
- Binder dividers
- Calculator

Nutrition: plan healthy meals

Get creative with easy, healthy ideas for school-day meals. If you plan and gather what you need on the weekends, you'll make life a lot less stressful and meals more nutritious during the week.

Breakfast: Remember the most important meal of the day. Fruit smoothies make a quick and healthy addition to the usual fare.

Lunch: If you will be packing a lunch from home, be sure to have a sturdy lunch box or a supply of paper bags on hand. Here are some quick and creative ideas for making school lunches healthy and fun:

- ✓ For the younger child, use cookie cutters to make sandwiches into interesting shapes.

(Cont. pg. 9)

ILICA Ladies Page (cont.)

- ✓ Sneak vegetables such as lettuce, cucumber, or zucchini slices into sandwiches.
- ✓ Buy baked chips, low-fat crackers, or pretzels. Avoid items with trans fats in them such as packaged cookies, snack cakes, and regular chips.
- ✓ Choose 1% or fat-free milk or 100% fruit juices.
- ✓ Make fruit fun to eat by cutting it into slices and putting it on a skewer or include small containers of applesauce or pineapple packed in its own juice.
- ✓ For the younger child, write a surprise message or draw a funny picture and put it in her lunch.
- ✓ Get older children to help pack their lunches. You may need to arrange the morning routine (or evening routine if you do this the night before) so that you don't do this chore by yourself.

Dinner: Plan dinners for the week ahead and shop on the week-ends to avoid last minute trips to the grocery store.

Set priorities and schedules

To make the best use of your time and keep life from being harried, think about priorities for family members and then schedule them into the week.

For children: Before school begins, discuss what extracurricular activities your child will participate in. If your child needs a little extra encouragement to audition for jazz band or to take that early morning Italian class, now is the time to go over the benefits of these activities. If, however, your child needs to have limits set, have her pick her favorite activities and forgo the rest. Be realistic and don't fall victim to over-programming. Make sure to leave enough time to do homework and for family time.

For parents: Determine how much time you can give to the school each month as a volunteer and involved parent: in the classroom, on field trips, for fundraising events and on school-wide committees.

For the family: Start a family calendar in a common area where each family member can write down his or her activities.

Prepare for the homework ahead

Having set routines and a place to study at home will make it easier for your child to be organized and successful at school.

- ✓ Set up a well-lit, quiet place with a good work surface to do homework. Try to keep this place dedicated to homework and free of other clutter.
- ✓ Establish a regular homework time. This will help your student to complete assignments on time.
- ✓ Discourage distractions such as television, radio, the Internet, or phone conversations during homework time.

Arrange for transportation

Everyone will feel better if transportation to and from school is addressed well before the start of the school year, particularly if your child is walking, riding his bike, or taking the bus.

Walking or biking

- ✓ Chart out a route to school or to the school bus stop.
- ✓ If your child is going to a new school, take a dry run a few days before school starts.
- ✓ Go over the rules of stranger awareness and traffic safety. Warn your child to always walk with a friend, and to avoid vacant lots and places where there are not a lot of people.
- ✓ Be sure your child has your daytime phone number (including area code) and address, as well as the number of another familiar adult.
- ✓ Scout out safe houses in the neighborhood where your child can go in case of an emergency.

Taking the bus

- ✓ Remember to get the new bus schedule!
- ✓ If your child will be taking the bus for the first time, discuss the bus route and bus safety rules with her.

Driving

- ✓ If you will be driving your child, have a backup arrangement with another parent in case you are delayed for some reason.
- ✓ Confirm carpool arrangements in advance and make sure your child knows who will be picking him up before and after school.
- ✓ Become familiar with your school's traffic safety rules, drop-off and pick-up procedures.

Confirm after-school care arrangements

Most after-school care arrangements must be made months ahead, frequently in the winter or spring before your child starts school. As the school year approaches, however, it's a good idea to confirm your plans.

- ✓ Make sure your child knows where he is going after school.
- ✓ Double-check on your care plans and communicate with the provider a few days before school starts.
- ✓ If your child will be home alone after school, establish safety rules for locking doors and windows, and for answering the door and the telephone. Make sure she knows to check in with you or another adult when she arrives at home.

MEMBERS OF THE ILLINOIS SUSTAINABLE AG PARTNERSHIP SEE COLLABORATION AND ALIGNMENT AS THE KEYS TO SUCCESS IN MEETING SUSTAINABILITY GOALS

By: *Caroline Wade, Illinois Agriculture Program Director, The Nature Conservancy*

The **Illinois Sustainable Ag Partnership (ISAP)** is a coalition of organizations (The Nature Conservancy, Illinois Corn Growers Association, American Farmland Trust, Illinois Central College, Soil Health Partnership, The Zea Mays Foundation, The Wetlands Initiative, Precision Conservation Management) working collaboratively on agriculture programs that promote whole system conservation solutions focused on soil health and water management to reduce nutrient losses and meet sustainability goals. The founding members came to together in 2015 around the shared goals of the Illinois Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy and was born from the recognition that Illinois' limited resources and technical capacity would need to be working in sync and be more strategically focused if any of the individual programs were to be successful. Since 2015, the group has expanded its scope to focus on broader sustainability goals since the stacked benefits of conservation

practices go far beyond just water quality. ISAP is providing the needed coordination across sustainable ag programs and with other partners in the state to identify the best opportunities for increasing the adoption of conservation practices. ISAP founding members recently created a mechanism to open the coalition to other Contributing Partners who are interested in dedicating time and energy to the partnership and who have identified expertise or program capacity that could be synced with ISAP's current efforts to amplify their own programs while supporting the group's common goals.

ISAP's joint efforts include development of a website - www.ILSustainableAg.org, a coordinated event calendar, consistent messaging, shared resources, educational materials, outreach guides and agendas, advanced training programs, networks of Soil Health Specialists and Conservation Drainage Specialists, templates for social surveys, the Conservation Story Map - www.conservationstorymap.com for sharing farmer

(Continued pg. 11)



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ILLINOIS SUSTAINABLE AG PARTNERSHIP (CONT.)

success stories, a network of demonstration farm sites, and connected farmer engagement platforms through the S.T.A.R. and Precision Conservation Management programs. Experts and scientists working with ISAP will provide technical advice for farmers, retailers, and advisors through online and printed materials and through online forums around soil health and conservation drainage to facilitate questions, discussions, and shared learning experiences. Shared resources, such as the mobile rainfall simulator, soil demonstration kits, and portable nitrate sensors will be used for hands-on learning. Efforts will focus on translating technical information and designing programs to reach average farmers and their advisors.

ISAP's Advanced Training Programs have adopted a strong model of creating a cadre of trainees from a variety of backgrounds and with a unique collection of roles and responsibilities within the ag sector. The trainees go through a long-term series of trainings and get to know each other's areas of expertise, which creates an ongoing network of sustainable ag professionals who share new information, challenges and successful strategies. The **Advanced Soil Health Training** program addresses the tremendous need in Illinois to increase the number of farmers, retailers, CCAs, and conservation practitioners who better understand the science of soil health and the interrelated set of production management changes required to transition to this new system. This intensive, classroom and in-field training model will provide six two-day sessions over 18 months to create cadres of conservation practitioners and farmer advisors with an ongoing

network of experts and supporting resources for implementing soil health systems. Topics will include soil structure, chemistry, and biology; cover crop selection, management, and termination; planting and tillage equipment; and field day demonstrations training. The focus will be not only on the technical details of how to shift to improved soil health practices, but the science behind why they work, the programs available to help farmers implement them, and training on messaging, communication, and outreach to farmers on the benefits to their farm and the environment. Many of the ISAP founding members serve on the Steering Committee along with other experts and local partners. ISAP's newest training program, **Advanced Conservation Drainage**



ILLINOIS
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Training, has brought new partners into the fold including ILICA, USDA-NRCS, Pheasants Forever, IADD, and AISWCD, who are all serving on the

program's steering committee. This series provides intensive classroom and hands-on training for drainage designers, contractors, farmers, farmer advisors, retailers, and conservation practitioners to better understand the implementation and functioning of edge of field practices. Topics covered include not only technical details on planning, designing and construction, but also an introduction on why the practices are needed, the science behind why they work, the programs available for helping farmers implement them, and training on messaging, communication, and outreach to farmers on the benefits of a whole system approach to drainage. Attendees will attend three, two-day sessions, over a six-month period creating a strong network of knowledgeable experts who can share consistent information. This will help streamline the process for

farmers and make conservation drainage a standard part of tile installation and farm management. The trainings series will repeat and cover various parts of the state with a focus on local resource concerns, local conditions, and local partners. A primary goal of this series is to create a strong and varied network of professionals who are interacting with farmers around improved water management and support that network through ongoing communications, resources and discussion forums.

ISAP members are working with the Association of Illinois SWCDs and Champaign County SWCD to expand the **S.T.A.R. Farmer Recognition Program** (www.ccsxcd.com/S.T.A.R./), which gives farmers who are interested in adopting new practices or starting the journey to improved soil health and sustainability a longer-term plan and clear expectations of the steps involved. As they continue to make

(Continued pg. 14)

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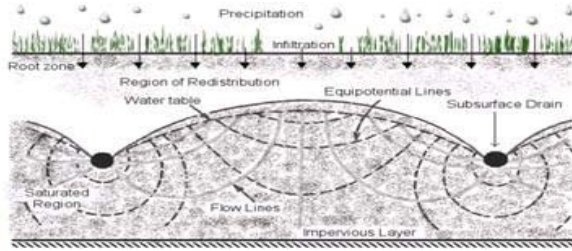
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The Extension Connection

SIMULATED IMPACTS OF TILE DRAINS ON THE WATER RESOURCES OF THE UPPER SANGAMON RIVER BASIN

Source: Botero-Acosta^a, A., Chu, M.L.^a, Stumpf, A.J.^b

^a Agricultural and Biological Engineering, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

^b Illinois State Geological Survey, Prairie Research Institute, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

Note: This article was part of a study published in the *Hydrological Processes*: Botero-Acosta, A., Chu, M.L., Stumpf, A.J., 2018. *Impacts of environmental stressors on the water resources of intensively managed hydrologic systems*. *Hydrological Processes* 2018. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hyp.13244>. 1-16.

Tile drainage largely affects the surface and subsurface flow in a watershed and hence the fate and transport of pollutants in our water bodies. This is especially significant for an intensively managed watershed like the Upper Sangamon River Basin (USRB). We evaluated the impacts of Watershed Management Practices (WMPs) on the surface and groundwater resources of the USRB using a coupled watershed and river model, MIKE-SHE/MIKE 11 (Botero-Acosta et al., 2018). MIKE-SHE (DHI, 2018) is a physically-based, fully distributed watershed model that simulates water movement on the surface, the unsaturated (vadose zone), and saturated zone (groundwater). Once the water reaches the river, the propagation of the hydrograph along the river was simulated by MIKE 11 (DHI, 2018), a 1-D hydrodynamic river model.

MIKE-SHE was set-up and parameterized for the USRB considering physical attributes of the watershed such as topography, climate, land use, soil properties, and aquifer properties. The Upper Sangamon River was represented in MIKE 11 by defining the river network and the properties of the river profile. Three monitoring gauge stations, Fisher, Monticello, and Decatur (USGS, 2017) were used to evaluate the performance of MIKE-SHE and MIKE 11 in representing the water movement in the USRB. The response of USRB was measured in terms of the changes in streamflow and groundwater level in these three stations. A baseline model was then established to represent the current climate and land use conditions in the watershed.

One of the WMP modifications that we considered in this study was the deactivation of the tile drainage system to understand how tile system, introduced many years ago in the USRB, have modified the natural behavior of the watershed. All the other components (e.g., land use, climate, and saturated and unsaturated zones parameters) remained the same as in the baseline model. Simulation results revealed that the drains decreased the daily streamflow in Fisher by approximately 1% and approximately 9% at Monticello and Decatur. These changes were relatively small compared to the large effects on the maximum observed discharge, which increased by up to 400% when drains were removed. As expected, the average

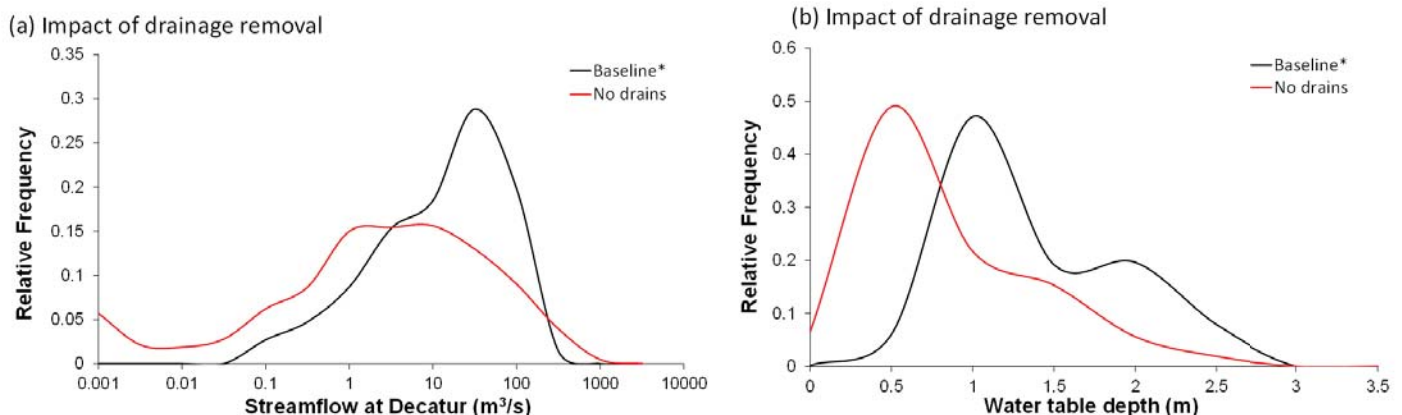


Figure 1. Impacts of tile drainage removal. PDFs of (a) streamflow and (b) water table depth below ground level (bgl) at Decatur under current climate and land use conditions.

Adopted from Botero-Acosta et al. (2018).

(Continued pg. 13)

The Extension Connection (cont.)

water table depth decreased by 30% to 50% when the subsurface drains were removed. Even negative values of the water table depth were found at Fisher and Decatur, indicating that without the drains, the water table could rise above the ground level.

The probability density function (*PDF*) of the assessment endpoints variables, streamflow and water table depth, were constructed to visually evaluate the water fluxes variations for each scenario. Figure 1 showed the effects of tile drainage removal on the average daily streamflow and water table depth at Decatur. Parallel results to that in Decatur were found in Fisher and Monticello and were not shown here. Drainage removal decreased the frequency of higher magnitude streamflow values (Figure 1a), and increased the frequency of smaller water table depths *bg*, bringing the phreatic level up (Figure 1b). It can be observed how the highest frequency of water table depth shifted to the left when the drains were disabled. The rising of the water table above the ground surface can be seen through the relative frequency of water table depths of 0 m and less (Figure 1b), behavior that was not observed in the baseline. The shift in the *PDF* of the water table depth allowed crop production in USRB by draining the excess groundwater.

However, tile drainage also increased the frequency of high magnitude daily streamflow events (Figure 1a), which can be one of the main causes of water quality impairment in Lake Decatur since the drains provided a faster flow pathway for contaminants. This issue is exacerbated by agricultural activities, causing non-point source pollution from fertilizers and pesticides. In fact, Lake Decatur has high concentrations of fertilizers, pesticides, and sediments transported by the USRB streams and drained water, exceeding the drinking water standards for nitrate and phosphorus (Bekele et al., 2014).

References:

Botero-Acosta, A., Chu, M.L., Stumpf, A.J., 2018. Impacts of environmental stressors on the water resources of intensively managed hydrologic systems. *Hydrological Processes* 2018. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hyp.13244>. 1-16.

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ILLINOIS SUSTAINABLE AG PARTNERSHIP (CONT.)

changes, they also benefit from ongoing encouragement, recognition of progress, and peer acceptance of their changes as standard farming practices. This program is designed to fill those needs while providing a mechanism for tracking and verifying practices changes at a county level. The program awards points for the adoption of practices that have been identified by local stakeholders as a priority for addressing local resource concerns, specifically reducing nutrient losses. From improved nutrient management to cover crops to edge

of field water treatment and even crop rotation or inclusion of livestock, a suite of practices can result in between one and five stars. Practices will be subject to verification and aligned with NLRS and supply chain sustainability goals to create value for growers and their customers. A team approach toward implementing sustainable ag practices will strengthen

the conservation conversation between the farmer, their retailer, and their conservation advisor. Once a field has been evaluated through the S.T.A.R. tool, the farmer is given a field sign with their earned number of stars, which can be increased as they adopt additional practices. The signs provide farmers with recognition of their good work and create awareness in the farming community, leading to a normalization of the new system of production practices. The simple ratings are county specific and vetted by a local technical advisory committee made up of representatives from all the ag sectors – retail, commodity, agency and farmers. The S.T.A.R. ratings may be used in the market place to compete for land leases, secure more favorable lending rates, be prioritized for cost share, and, if combined with a robust verification component or linked to Field to Market, could provide continuous improvement data for supply chain partners.

For farmers interested in taking the next step, **Precision Conservation Management (PCM)** www.precisionconservation.org is a farmer-led effort for engaging farmers in sustainability assessments and conservation planning, tying the assessments to an economic analysis, and then connecting farmers to the technical support needed to implement the practices that work best for their unique farming enterprise. The PCM platform is designed to capture and analyze agronomic and conservation information on a field-by-field basis. Multiple tools are used as part of the analysis and results are compiled into a comprehensive, sustainability fo-

cus, Resource Analysis and Assessment Plan (RAAP) that helps provide direction to the farmer in changing production systems but also brings in an economic analysis of practices on a field and farm scale, which can help determine the risks to benefit ratio. A PCM Specialist works closely with the farmer to share results and make connections to a wide variety of technical support and local incentive opportunities, including NRCS cost share. All of the ISAP members are working to link their programs to the PCM program as a way to ensure

the farmers find value in the changes they are making within the context of a viable long-term approach to their farm management operations.

Finally, the **Cropgrower Satellite Imagery Analysis Project** will allow ISAP to measure progress. All ISAP's programs are designed to increase the adoption of conservation practices

and soil health systems in Illinois. To understand the effectiveness and breadth of impact, practice adoption must be measured. While program enrollment is one indicator of progress, it won't capture independent implementation that may also be an outcome of programs or broader educational efforts. Illinois Corn and The Nature Conservancy have partnered to complete a bi-annual assessment of buffers, cover crops, and tillage practices across the state using analysis of high-resolution satellite imagery. The first report, due out in Fall 2018, will compare acres of practices on the ground during the winters of 2015-2016 and 2017-2018.

ISAP members believe in the power of collaboration to maximize the impact of individual programs and would welcome additional voices on the team. If you are interested in exploring ways to become involved or if you would like to learn more about ISAP, go to www.ILSustainableAg.org.

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HOUSE & SENATE FARM BILL SIDE BY SIDE COMPARED TO CURRENT LAW (CONT.)

Watershed Program

Current Law	House Draft	Senate Draft
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$250 million dollars in mandatory funds for the life of the farm bill for watershed rehab 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$500 million in mandatory funding over life of the bill (\$100 million per year) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No mandatory funding provided

House Miscellaneous

- Authorizes a Feral Swine Eradication and Control Pilot Project and authorizes \$100 million in mandatory funding.

Senate Miscellaneous

- Authorizes Senator Thune's (R-SD) Soil Health and Income Protection (SHIP) Program
 - The SHIP program allows producers to not plant up to 15 percent of their acres that are the most marginal and receive a payment that is half of the county's rental rate under CRP
 - Contracts would be for 3-5 years and would also include a two percent increase in premium discount for rest of crop
- Modifies **Good Farming Practices** rules, the process used in the federal crop insurance program to decide whether or not a farm is eligible for indemnity payments, to include conservation activities and enhancements (including cover cropping but all other conservation practices and enhancements as well).
 - Clarifies the definition of cover crop termination in a way that will reduce farmers' fears that cover cropping could risk their crop insurance coverage.
 - Requires continuing education for loss adjusters and insurance agents to ensure familiarity with conservation activities and organic and sustainable practices.
- Directs RMA to consider on an annual basis the demonstrated risk reduction from cover cropping, crop rotation, precision farming, or other conservation practices, and then decide whether or not to offer premium discounts.

- Establishes a new **Conservation Data initiative** including a conservation and farm productivity data warehouse at a university with a wide range of USDA data from multiple agencies.

Source: Adapted from NACD article: <http://www.nacdnet.org/2018/06/27/nacds-take-the-2018-senate-farm-bill/>



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SUMMER PICNIC & MEMBERS' MTG., SOMETHING NEW AND SOMETHING OLD

The recent 2018 Summer Picnic & Members' Meeting held on July 7th mixed old with new to provide attendees two tours full of history, technology, and "behind-the-scenes" experiences.

Starting the morning off, our members were hosted by Advanced Drainage Systems (ADS) at their manufacturing facility located in Mendota, IL. Here members learned about the history, growth, and progression of ADS since their founding over 50 years ago. Members also had the opportunity to tour the plant floor, learning about various pipe materials, extruders, fitting fabrication, and other plastic pipe manufacturing details. They even witnessed 60" triple wall pipe being made!

From Mendota, members made the short half hour jaunt south to the Lock 16 Center in LaSalle, IL. A delicious lunch was served by the Center, right ahead of the members' meeting. Following the members' meeting, a short walk down to the Illinois & Michigan Canal (I & M) brought members to the afternoon tour site: a 70 passenger, 1840s replica canal boat drawn by a mule. Before the canal boat ride, members learned about mule tending 101 from period dressed guides, teaching us all about our "horse"power source for the evening: "Moe." The canal boat ride tour lasted about an hour down a restored section of the I & M Canal. Members learned all about the history of the canal and the area, as Moe tugged us peacefully down the canal on a warm summer evening. Many members summed up the tour with one word: relaxing.

Fun event tour facts:

ADS

- ~60 manufacturing plants worldwide
- 400+ million pounds plastic recycled annually (one of the top 5 largest recycling companies in North America)
- 8.5+ billion feet of pipe in service worldwide
- 4,500+ employees

I & M Canal

- Constructed 1836-1848 (12 yrs. on & off; economic depression & state bankruptcy pushed completion 9 years beyond anticipated)
- 60 feet wide, 6 feet deep, 96 miles long connecting Great Lakes (Chicago) to Mississippi River, via the Illinois River (LaSalle); provided passengers an all-water travel option/route from New York Harbor to Chicago, IL, to St. Louis, MO and even to New Orleans, LA

- Open for traffic 85 years; peak passenger transportation 1848-1852; growth of railroad transformed canal use from passenger travel to goods shipment 1853-1933, connecting southern goods (sugar, molasses, tobacco, oranges) to Chicago markets and furthering Midwest & Eastern goods transport (lumber, grain, merchandise).

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SUMMER PICNIC & MEMBERS' MTG., SOMETHING NEW AND SOMETHING OLD (CONT.)



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Illinois

Board of Directors Meeting

September 8, 2018

ILICA Office - Brimfield, IL

Committee meetings: 10 am - 1 pm

Board Meeting: 2 pm

Board of Directors Meeting

November 3, 2018

TBD

Committee Meetings: 10 am - 1 pm

Board Meeting: 2 pm



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“LICA TO ME”



Author Norm Kocher, C.F.C.O, Inc. based in Lawrenceville, IL, takes a break by his green sponsorship sign at the Area 6 Golf Outing

In 1972, I went to work for a tile manufacturing company in Lawrenceville, IL.

In 1978, I left the company and went to work for a drainage contractor. That’s where I met Gary Kaiser. Gary was the excavator operator. I was the overseer of the IL division of drainage. I also met John Collings. He had an excavating business of his own.

In 1982, John, Gary and I started Complete Farm Conservation Operation, Inc. (CFCO, Inc.). We installed drain tile and ran an excavator. Then in 1985 when the “swamp buster” law was passed, we worked with John, clearing and building terraces.

In 1988, we held a three (3) day LICA show in Flat Rock, IL.

John and I joined LICA in the late 70’s. We started selling T-L Irrigation systems in 1990, having sold over 650 systems in IL, IN and KY.

In 1992, we started mowing 26 miles of levee along the Wabash and Ambraw River here in Lawrence Co.

We have all had good experiences in LICA, as well as good friendships along the way. We have also gotten a good education. We have traded equipment with other LICA members, and they have borrowed from us. We have saved a lot of money through LICA connections from suppliers and equipment dealers.

I have found that you get more out of LICA than a person can put in. Every contractor needs to be in LICA. You can learn from their workshops and other LICA members. Even the suppliers and equipment dealers you meet through LICA can teach you something.

I’ve served on different committees for LICA Area 8, and I’m still on a few committees. Joining LICA was the best thing I ever did as a contractor.

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Whether you are new or a seasoned employee, it is essential that you adhere to Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations to ensure the safety of the entire work crew.

Trench Requirements

- Trenches 5 feet or more in depth require a protective system.
- Trenches that are 4 feet or more require a safe means of entrance and exit.
- Trenches that are 20 feet or more require an exit system designed by a registered professional engineer.



Do not enter a trench without inspecting it at the start of a shift or after a rain shower to ensure that all safety precautions are still in place.

your local one-call system to locate all of the utility lines. Then, label or remove them to prevent injury.

Trench accidents can also happen if safe entrance and exit routes are not present or adequate for the situation. Workers may slip back into the trench as they are trying to climb up a ladder if it is unsupported, placed on a steep slope or is poorly built.

To prevent injury while entering and exiting a trench, only the designated competent person should approve the structural device used. Workers should also place the ladder in a trench shield while trying to enter and exit to avoid a cave-in.

By complying with OSHA regulations and following these safety precautions, the risk of injury at your job site will be greatly reduced. Illinois LICA wants everyone on our team to keep safety in mind!

Protective Systems

The designated competent person should inspect the area and determine which protective system will suit the job site and soil most effectively. This is essential, as equipment movement, underground utilities and vibrations can cause a surcharge load on the sides of the trench, forcing it to cave in on the workers inside. The following are the most commonly used protective systems:

- Sloping: Protects workers by cutting back the trench wall at an angle inclined away from the excavation
- Shoring: Protects workers by installing aluminum hydraulic supports to prevent soil movement
- Shielding: Protects workers by using trench boxes to prevent cave-ins

In addition to one of these three safety measures, a low-traffic zone must be designated around the trench allowing only essential equipment to enter. This will minimize the amount of vibration to which the trench is exposed.

Avoiding Accidents

Excavation accidents can occur if the underground utilities are not located and removed prior to digging a trench. Contact

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