



# Illinois Soil Classifiers Association Newsletter

Fall-November 2012

## Upcoming Events:

Council Meeting Dec. 2

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## Message from the President

It seems like I was just preparing a write-up for the newsletter submission last week, but no, that was actually in August. But, as I look at my calendar, Thanksgiving is just around the corner. Time slows for no one. Within the NRCS, Soil Survey continues to move forward with reorganization. What used to be the Soil Survey Division is now the Soil Science Division. This has resulted in the closure of 26 MLRA and MO offices across the nation, although there has been no impact on Illinois survey offices at this time. It was interesting to note that even though several soil scientists had or have to be relocated to new duty stations, there were more vacant soil scientist positions than displaced individuals. The need for soil scientists still exists and as the agency will be faced with more retirements in the next couple of years, there will be opportunity for aspiring soil science students (assuming government agencies have a budget).

ISCA would like to welcome its newest student member, Kristopher Osterloh. Kristopher is currently a graduate student under the advisement of Dr. Mike Konen at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb. His research is focused on the affects of prairie restoration on dynamic soil properties. Kristopher is also the assistant coach for the NIU soils judging team. He obtained his BS in Earth Sciences from California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo in 2011. Welcome, Kristopher.

I would like thank Jesse Kurylo, Mike Konen, Brandon Curry, and Tim Prescott for an outstanding fall tour this year. The fall tour focused on ice-walled lake plains and ice-wedge polygons in DeKalb County. The tour began with presentation from Mike, Brandon, and Tim at Davis Hall, Northern Illinois University. Field stops were **very informative and interesting. Be sure to check out ISCA's Facebook page to see the photos.**

The Missouri Association of Professional Soil Scientists (MAPSS) likewise did an excellent job of hosting the 2012 Central States Forest Soils Workshop, near Potosi, Missouri, this year. Due to last minute budget discrepancies as the federal government moved into a new fiscal year, about 40 individuals had to cancel their plans for participation, but total attendance was still over 60 participants. The focus of the tour was the development of Ecological Site Descriptions and soil/landscape relationships. Be sure to check out the photos in this newsletter. Well done, Missouri!

Mark Bramstedt has resigned as the Appointee to the State Advisory Committee on Private Sewage Disposal. I have appointed Don Fehrenbacher as the new appointee. Thank you, Mark, for all your hard work!

In closing, there is much to be done in the upcoming year. Plans are underway for the March Annual Meeting and the 2013 Central States Forest Soils Workshop to name a couple. Jesse Kurylo is taking suggestions for speaker topics for the upcoming annual meeting, so be sure to contact her if you have any suggestions ([jkurylo@inhs.uiuc.edu](mailto:jkurylo@inhs.uiuc.edu)). Have a great holiday season, everyone!

Frank Heisner  
President ISCA  
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## Dale Calsyn 35 Years of Service with the NRCS

Dale Celebrated 35 Years of Service with NRCS on October 23, 2012!

The Aurora MLRA Staff would like to congratulate Dale for such a great accomplishment. Thanks Dale for all of your hard work.

**The following are a few words from Dale's fellow co-workers over the years:**

From Steve Elmer: I have known Dale professionally since 1977, when we were part of the Henry County Soil Survey staff together, and later as Major Land Resource Area Project Leaders in northern Illinois. Dale has been one of the most competent, productive, and professional soil scientists that I have ever been associated with in my entire soil science career. It was my privilege to have worked with Dale over the years on the Illinois soil survey. **The early MLRA years in the late 80's and 90's under McLeese were exciting times, and in the process Illinois became a leader in the national MLRA effort.** Dale was a major contributor to the Illinois MLRA effort then, as I am sure he continues to be today. Dale: Congratulations on 35 years in the soil survey world! It may have been a dirty job (literally or figuratively), but I look back on those years as a gift from God. I hope that the memories that you have bring you to the same conclusion.

From Bob Tegeler: I transferred to Henry Co. in 1977, to assist with the Henry Co. Soil Survey. This was the first time that I had met Dale. A few weeks after I arrived, we had a field review. Soil Correlators from the SCS, now NRCS, State Office were in attendance. At one of the field stops, one of the correlators looked at the soil core for that stop, and remarked that he wondered why that soil core looked the way it did. **To that question Dale commented: "God must have wanted it that way". I had never heard anyone make a comment like that to a correlator before that review or since, for that matter.** It made me realize that Dale was not afraid to inject a little humor into his work.

Dale and I attended a NASIS Training Session in Indianapolis. This was our first opportunity to work in the NASIS database. During one of the training sessions, my connection to NASIS crashed and I had to start all over. Fortunately, I was sitting next to Dale. He pulled out his notes and brought me back up to speed. **I had also taken notes during the training, but they were nothing like Dale's. They were highly organized and provided step by step guidance.** This situation was just another indication of the quality of work that Dale has done during his career.

**I could discuss the "coffee games" and "Swisher Sweets", but those are stories for another day.**



Dale Calsyn (left) receiving a Special Achievement Award in October, 1979 while a member of the Henry County Soil Survey Project (submitted by Steve Elmer)

## Dale Calsyn 35 Years of Service with the NRCS

From Jeff Deinger: When Jennifer asked for some stories about Dale I had to sit back and try to remember what funny/bent auger worthy things he did during the 17 years that I was with him. I instant messaged Karla Petges in Juneau, WI to see if she could jog my memory and neither of us could think of any appropriate stories.

**What I do remember is Dale was the office ROCK he was always there, rarely took vacations, wasn't very flashy and never really changed.** He never yelled, rarely was upset, was always on an even keel and we always seemed to get the work done. We moved the office 3 times and he had 12 different soil scientists on his staff at various times when I was in that office. Most managers would not like the constant change but Dale would just shrug his shoulders, say "Whatever" and go back to his office. **Thirty five years is nothing for Dale's generation (most of which are still active soil scientist with NRCS today) he is good for at least another 20.** Congratulations Dale!



Dale Calsyn (right) soil sampling in Grant Park, Chicago, IL in 1992

## Dale Calsyn 35 Years of Service with the NRCS

A Tale about Dale and His Diligence: Submitted by Mark Bramstedt

**Dale Calsyn, Eric Engle, Don Fehrenbacher and I were working in Cook County in the early 1990's. The Chicago District of the Army Corps of Engineers had requested a wetland investigation of an area where about five feet or more of rubble had been dumped in the 1950s-1960s. Mark Matusiak (former soil survey employee and ISCA Member) was working for the Chicago District at that time and I think we were at the site at his request. The site consisted of irregular piles of concrete, appliances and other household goods, mixed with soil. This debris had been placed over some low natural dune and swale wetlands of coarse-loamy soils. The irregular piles of soil and fill material created pockets of wet areas that the Corps was planning to take into their jurisdiction as wetlands. (This led into the infamous "wetland in a bucket on a deck" argument with the Corps, but that is a story unto itself.) As one can imagine the scene, the sampling at times was difficult, however all of us continued to do our best. The fill material was hard and dense, so hammering the probe was the only way that samples could be taken. Don and I were working as a pair and Dale and Eric had teamed up. It wasn't too long into the sampling before Don and I heard some commotion from the other team. In the process of hammering, Dale had hurt his hand. Since the fill material was so hard and dense, one had to hold the handle of the probe to keep the probe from bouncing and swaying as it was pounded with the mallet. Either Dale's aim was a little off or he decided to shift his hand to get a better grip. In either case, it was the wrong move to make. Dale pounded his hand against the handle of the probe on that tender stretch of skin between the thumb and the forefinger. Blood started flowing immediately. Dale went to his truck, grabbed his dusty SCS-issued First-Aid kit and applied a series of Band-Aids to control the bleeding. If it hadn't hurt so much, it would have been a little comical as he had applied several ineffective and outdated band-aids on an area that is difficult to cover. Dale wanted to tough it out and finish the job. He tried to continue on with the sampling and took a few more probes, but the bleeding wouldn't stop. His Band-aids wouldn't stay on and his sampling equipment was starting to look a bit disgusting. His hand must have been throbbing and he finally admitted that it would be a good idea to get it checked out and possibly get some stitches. We were however, on the south side of Chicago. Would you go to a hospital on the south side? Dale wrapped his hand and the hanging Band-Aids in an old bandana and finally heeded our comments to go to a hospital. He apologized for causing disruption to the day and for not being able to finish sampling, but gave up and allowed Eric to take him to the hospital. He didn't go to a south side medical center, but with the pressure from the bandana, the bleeding slowed enough that he decided to go to a hospital back near his home. Dale received a tetanus shot and several stitches because of the misplaced blow of the hammer. He sports a small scar on his left**

hand as a reminder of this south-side incident and of the pain he suffered. This incident is just an example of the diligence that Dale has for his work in the soil survey program. Congratulations, Dale for your work ethic and the dedication that you have shown for your Uncle Sam these 35 years!



**Dale Calsyn (left) soil sampling at Soldier Field, Chicago, IL in 1992**

## Dale Calsyn 35 Years of Service with the NRCS



Soil Scientists in 1979 (Dale Calsyn first row, 2<sup>nd</sup> person from the right)



Soil Scientists in 2004 (Dale Calsyn, second row, 1st person from the left)

## Dale Calsyn 35 Years of Service with the NRCS



Roger Windhorn and Dale Calsyn enjoying an ISCA field tour in 2006



Dale Calsyn sampling the Ashkum OSD site in Will County, 2011

## 32nd Annual Central States Forest Soils Workshop

Submitted by Doug Gaines  
Photographs by Doug Gaines, Frank Heisner and Roger Windhorn

A group of us from ISCA attended the 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Central States Forest Soils Workshop in Potosi, Missouri October 9 - 11, 2012.



Hughes Mountain volcanic rock structure

The tour focused on the relationships of the soils and woody vegetation and their respective locations on the landscape (exposed/ protected slope, aspect, etc.) The discussions concerned how to make our woodlands/forests healthier and for what purpose. Dr. Fred Young has been working on a system to identify these different systems of soils/ growth to be used in other areas. We looked at 4 sites in (2) MLRA's. In MLRA 116C we looked at St. Joe State Park and Hughes Mountain and in MLRA 116A we looked at Murray Hill and Long Ridge Conservation Area. Most of the soils were shallow to bedrock and the bedrock ranged from Sandstone, Dolomite, Limestone, to Igneous. The foresters had many discussions over whether or not we were in forest, woodland, or savannah (a term they define differently than we do in Illinois). The soil scientists had many discussions over classification, and horizon designations. None of these discussions got heated and were all solved over a beer or two at the end of the day (right?). As usual, more information was disseminated than I can take in at one time, so I will be digesting for awhile. If someone is interested in looking at the tour book, let me know & I will bring it to the next ISCA gathering.

Next year's 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Central States Forest Soils Workshop will be held in Illinois. Ideas are flowing and I believe this next workshop will be exciting and very informative.



View from the top of the Devil's Honeycomb, a rhyolite formation on Hugh's Mountain

## 32nd Annual Central States Forest Soils Workshop



Sunrise over the lake at Trout Lodge, host facility of the 2012 Central States Forest Soils Workshop



View of the Missouri Ozarks



## 32nd Annual Central States Forest Soils Workshop



Group Photograph on Hughes Mountain



Ken Gotsch and Roger Windhorn



Frank Heisner and Karla Petges

## 32nd Annual Central States Forest Soils Workshop



Presentation of a fragipan soil  
by the Missouri hosts



Doug Gaines has a question  
regarding soil classification



Doug Gaines and Frank Heisner examine an Ultisol

## 32nd Annual Central States Forest Soils Workshop



Karla Petges and Doug Gaines listen to a presentation at one of the stops



Frank Heisner (center) tackles his lunch on top the Devil's Honeycomb

## 2012 Illinois Soil Classifiers Association Fall Tour

Between 25 and 30 ISCA members and guests met at Davis Hall, Northern Illinois University (NIU) on November 10 for the ISCA Fall Tour. Dr. Mike Konen (NIU) and Dr. Brandon Curry (Illinois Geological Survey) gave presentations on ice-walled lake plains and relict ice-wedge polygons, their formation and influence on the soil landscape. Tim Prescott (USDA-NRCS) gave a presentation on the use of LIDAR technology in identifying these features.

The presentations were followed with a tour of 4 stops near DeKalb and Waterman. Soil cores had been pulled from the interiors and rims of the ice-walled lake plains, and a relict ice-wedged polygon site. Mike and Brandon led discussions of the relationships between the geomorphic positions, soil series, and soil stratigraphy at each site on an otherwise subtle landscape.

Thanks to Mike, Brandon, Tim, and the NIU students who helped assemble this year's tour.



Brad Cate enjoys his lunch while Mike Konen discusses the features of an ice-walled lake plain

## 2012 Illinois Soil Classifiers Association Fall Tour



Above:

The ISCA Tour group  
gathers at the first stop

Right:

ISCA members examine  
a soil core



## 2012 Illinois Soil Classifiers Association Fall Tour



Mike Konen leads a discussion of relict ice-wedged polygons



ISCA members examine cores while Mike Konen and Steve Zwicker discuss the depositional properties of the ice-walled lake features

## 2012 Illinois Soil Classifiers Association Fall Tour



ISCA members enthusiastically examine a soil core



Brandon Curry discusses the stratigraphy of a soil core



Soil structure in the overlying loess material on a relict ice-wedged polygon



## Using the NRCS Web Soil Survey: Free Public Access to the Nation's Soil Resource Data

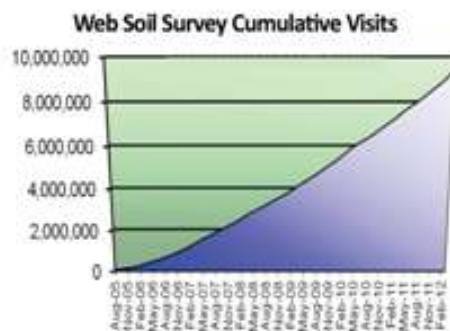
The NRCS Soil Science Division has transitioned from its traditional, static soil surveys published in bound hard copy to a more fluid online format that allows NRCS to continually update soil survey data as needed and from which customers can create custom soil survey reports for just their area of interest.



The simple yet powerful way to access and use soil data.



NRCS implemented the Web Soil Survey (<http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/>) in 2005. Web Soil Survey allows customers to prepare reports for their particular area of interest, save a digital copy, and/or print a copy. During FY 2010, the first year for which statistics are available, over 135,000 custom reports were developed by customers. In FY 2011, over 155,000 reports were developed. It is anticipated that about 175,000 custom reports will be generated in FY 2012.

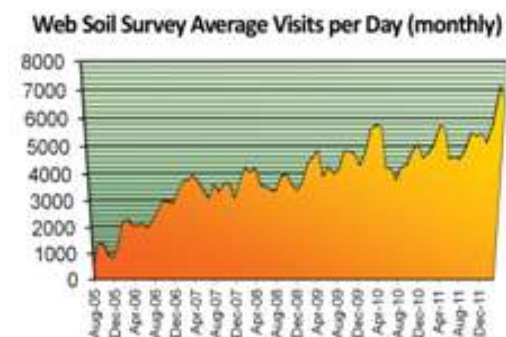


Not all users of soil survey information generate custom reports. About 800,000 single-theme reports or interpretive maps were generated in both FY 2010 and FY 2011. In FY 2010, about 1.7 million individuals accessed Web Soil Survey, and in FY 2011, about 1.8 million people used it.

As of February 2012, Web Soil Survey has enjoyed 9.2 million visitors to the site. By not producing hard-copy soil surveys, NRCS has saved the tax payers over 2 million dollars in printing costs.

About 92 percent of private and tribal lands are covered by soil surveys. There are currently 28 soil surveys underway. These soil surveys and maps will be completed in digital format and made available on the Web Soil Survey. In addition to these 28 soil surveys, updates are being done on soil survey data across the country to allow better interpretation of soil behavior for specific uses and for emerging issues, such as climate change and nutrient management.

This online application for accessing soil data permits a more efficient delivery of USDA programs. Updating existing data on an ongoing basis has allowed rapid responses to new demands, including responses to the recent disasters of Hurricane Katrina and the Gulf oil spill.





## ISCA on Facebook

For those of you who want to keep in touch with ISCA members and others interested in soils in Illinois, **join our group on Facebook.** Search Facebook for “Illinois Soil Classifiers Association” and become a friend of ISCA. Anyone may post messages, announcements, pictures or events that may be of interest to our membership. This is a great venue for posting meetings of other associations or organizations who use soil information. This is also a great place to post pictures of recent projects, interesting soils, or maybe **something unrelated to soils, but of general interest to the membership.** If you don't have a Facebook account, it is easy to set up. Just go to [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) and follow the instructions. Unfortunately, the Facebook site is restricted on some government computers, so many of you will need to do this at home. Contact [webmaster@illinoissoils.org](mailto:webmaster@illinoissoils.org) if you have any difficulty in accessing the ISCA Group or if you have any questions or comments.



## T r a d i n g P o s t

This spot is reserved for members who would like to buy, sell, trade, or announce an item, event, or activity in our newsletter. Please limit your classified ad to 25 words or less. Email your ad to the newsletter at [newsletter@illinoissoils.org](mailto:newsletter@illinoissoils.org)

FOR SALE: used Giddings rig, Briggs-Stratton eng., mounted on trailer made from 1950 Chevy 3/4 T pickup bed. Needs turret seal replaced. Contact Don Johnson, 217-356-7437 land; 390-4839 cell: [dljohns@illinois.edu](mailto:djohns@illinois.edu)

Thanks, Don Johnson

Key to this edition's "Days Gone By" picture:

Jasper County Soil Survey

Roger Risley, Bryan Fitch, Mark Bramstedt and  
Bill Kreznor

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### Submissions

This is YOUR newsletter. If you wish to submit material, here are some preferences.

- Send information by the last week of the month before the newsletter is scheduled to be published.
- Digital copy in Microsoft Word
- Use as little formatting (indents, bullets, charts) as possible. This increases the work to get it into Publisher. It can be done, but increases work load for the committee.

The Newsletter Committee reserves the right to make edits/ corrections deemed appropriate

### Publication Schedule

- Winter (February)
- Spring (May)
- Summer (August)
- Fall (November)



The Illinois Soil Classifiers Association is an organization promoting the wise use of the soil resource. ISCA is made up of professional soil classifiers in public service, private industry, and education and includes students and others interested in preserving soil. A soil classifier maps, describes and interprets soils according to a national system of soil classification. ISCA was established in 1975 and is affiliated with the American Registry of Certified Professionals in Agronomy, Crops, and Soils.

## Days Gone By



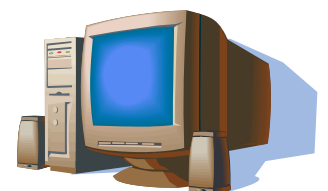
Can you identify the soil scientists taken in this 1985 Soil Survey Office Photograph  
**Answers to this edition "Days Gone By" are on page 17.**



ISCA Newsletter Committee is looking for pictures of it's members, past or present, to include in future newsletters. Submissions can be sent electronically or hard copy to the staff address, see above and left. Please include a narrative for the caption! If hard copies are sent please indicate if they are to be returned otherwise photographs will be retained in an archive photos file.

[www.illinoissoils.org](http://www.illinoissoils.org)

**New, exciting links have been added to the "announcements" page on our website. Be sure to bookmark this page. Its an excellent resource to keep you informed on the latest soils issues. Better yet... make it your home page!**



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Visit the ISCA website to see the color version of this newsletter

[www.illinoissoils.org/news](http://www.illinoissoils.org/news)

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### Change of Address Form

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\*Mail to: Bob Tegeler, ISCA Secretary, 124 Joan Drive, Divernon, IL 62530