



Illinois Soil Classifiers Association Newsletter

Fall-November 2014

Message from the President

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Over the last several years it seems as though much of our efforts within ISCA have been directed towards consulting related concerns. There have been some important issues that needed to be addressed but I feel in the future we should direct more of our efforts towards public awareness of what we are. Our organization is much more than consulting and we should do more towards educating the general public about soil science.

One idea in development is a multi-day field trip that includes some of our more representative soil series and geographic areas. This trip would be designed to be accessible to the general public. It would be broad in scope and suitable for those with a limited knowledge of soil classification. The field trip would cover about a third of the state over several days; people could sign up for one day or multiple days depending on their interest. If successful, we would in following years cover the remaining part of the state with additional field trip(s). If this is something you might be interested in helping with or have some suggestions for implementation we would be interested in hearing from you.

Regards,

Bruce Putman, President ISCA
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58th Annual ASA Region 3 Soil Judging Contest

The 58th Annual American Society of Agronomy Region 3 Soil Judging Contest was held in northwestern Illinois October 8-11. The contest was co-hosted by Black Hawk College – East Campus (BHE) and the University of Illinois (UI). Fifty-four students from 8 teams participated overall, with additional students from 3 community college teams participating as well. The winners are listed in the tables below. Plaques were provided by the Illinois Soil Classifiers Association.

Scott Wiesbrook, Illinois Natural History Survey (INHS), was the superintendent of the contest, while the head official was Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Soil Scientist Ron Collman. Andrew Larson, professor at BHE, provided sites, food, and even dug all the practice pits. Other ISCA members who served as officials and helped describe practice or contest pits included Ian Kenney (INHS), Steve Elmer (NRCS, Ret.), Steve Zwicker (NRCS, Ret.), and Brad Cate (private consultant). Complete descriptions were made for 8 practice pits and 6 contest pits. Soils described included Hapludolls, Hapludalfs, Argiudolls, Endoaquolls, Argiaquolls, and an Argialboll.

The contest consists of 4 pits judged individually and 2 pits described collectively as a team by each school. The individual contest pits were located on the Philip Wiesbrook family farm (operated by Andy Wiesbrook) south of Mineral in Bureau County. The group contest pits were located north of Geneseo in Henry County on land operated by the Samuelson family. Practice pits were located in southern Henry County on the DeDecker and Johnston family farms and on land owned by BHE. Steve Elmer and Tom Anderson (private consultant) graciously donated the use of their probe truck to collect samples for analysis. Rick Ganschow, Jacob Samuelson, and Charlie Decrane provided and/or operated backhoes to excavate the pits. Soil particle size analyses were conducted in Dr. Michelle **Wander's (UI) lab at the by Scott Wiesbrook and Jenwei Tsai (INHS). Pallets were provided by Brandon Hall (former two time NACTA national soil judging champion, BHE and UW-Platteville) and West Central FS. Pit monitors for the contest were Ian Kenney, George Geatz (INHS), Brandon Hall, and Drew Cotton (BHE).**

I am very grateful to all those individuals who helped out in any way. The event was a success because of all the hard work, time, and treasure expended by all the volunteers, landowners, and donors. There is no better way to get young people interested in a career in soil science than soil judging, and we couldn't do it without help from all quarters. Thanks again to everyone who helped support soil judging this year!!!

Scott Wiesbrook

p.s. 300+ more pictures are available in the photo section of Mike Konen's Facebook page.

Soil Judging Results

Overall Results (top 4 eligible for Nationals):

Rank	School	Overall Point Total
1	Purdue University	3235
2	UW-Platteville	3207
3	Northern Illinois University	3173
4	University of Illinois	3025
5	UW -Steven's Point	2991
6	UW- Whitewater	2758
7	UW-Madison	2722
8	Ball State University	2570

Group Judging Results:

Rank	School Name	Total Group Score
1	Northern Illinois University	517
2	UW -Steven's Point	474
3	Purdue University	461
4	University of Illinois	458
5	Ball State University	456
6	UW-Platteville	450
7	UW- Whitewater	428
8	UW-Madison	410

See pictures from
the contest on the
next 2 pages.

Individual Results:

Rank	Name	School #	Total
1	Maggie Shoue	Purdue University	954
2	Betta McGaughey	Purdue University	928
3	Brittany Iverson	UW-Platteville	924
4	Alec Kueter	UW-Platteville	913
5	Brian Maule*	Northern Illinois University	910
6	Tom Lund	Northern Illinois University	907
7	Vincent Conte	University of Illinois	881
8	Shelbi Louck	Purdue University	880
9	Danielle Morgan	UW-Platteville	876
10	Katie Fagan	Purdue University	869
*Denotes Burton W. Ray Scholarship Award Winner			



Ron Collman, Scott Wiesbrook, and Ian Kenney describe a contest pit (Mapped as Plano SIL).



Ron Collman, Steve Zwicker, and Scott Wiesbrook describe a contest pit (Mapped as Plano SIL, but had 54 cm of colluvium on top of buried horizons).



Ron's favorite pit of the contest! (Mapped as Coyne L) Alluvium over windblown sand (with a little organic at surface), over a truncated paleosol formed in glacio-lacustrine sediments. Below the water level was outwash.



Pit Monitor Ian Kenney cleans out a pit during the contest while students contemplate their answers.

ISCA Joins IAPSC for Fall Tour

ISCA would like to thank the Indiana Association of Professional Soil Classifiers (IAPSC) for hosting a joint fall workshop near West Lafayette, Indiana on the 11th and 12th of September. Approximately 11 ISCA members attended. The first day was reserved for a field exam administered at Purdue's Agronomy Farm by the Indiana Registry of Soil Science Board. The exam consisted of describing 2 soil pits and texturing approximately 9 samples. The description format closely resembles that used in collegiate soil judging. Horizonation, colors, textures, structure, landform, soil order, slope, aspect, and several other attributes were described and or selected from a pick list. The Indiana Registry requires that certified classifiers take the exam at least once every 3 years to maintain certification. The exam scores are intended to alert an individual as to which academic or field skills, if any, may require improvement and are not issued as a pass or fail grade.

Day two began at John S. Wright Forestry Center with a welcome followed by a presentation on Visualizing Soil Landscapes with iPads by Dr. Darrell Schulze. Dr. Schulze demonstrated an iPad application that combines geospatial soil, drainage, elevation, hillshade, and other data layers into an easy to use portable tool that includes GPS positioning capability. Most of this information is also available in Illinois but must be pulled together separately from several databases using GIS software. With his application, little experience is required to be off and running. If only we'd had these kinds of tools back in the day of mapping (or have the opportunity to remap)!

Following an overview of the afternoon tour, business meeting, and tasty but healthy lunch we were shown an advanced treatment unit resembling a recirculating sand filter serving the forestry center. Spray heads distribute the effluent over small coupons of bioreactive plastic rather than the typical sand/gravel media. Apparently this system is no longer installed due to some serious remediation issues (i.e. removal, pressure washing, and replacement of the media in the chamber) because of media clogging if the system is overloaded. This is a good reminder for us to be open to new technology but cautious in its adoption.

The afternoon tour visited a Wetland Reserve Program constructed wetland in the Wabash River bottoms adjacent to the Wabash and Erie Canal. Using control structures, a variety of moist soil and emergent habitats in both mineral and organic soils were created primarily for duck hunting.

As many of you know, one reason ISCA held a joint conference with Indiana is because we are exploring ways to amend the experience required to become a soil classifier. With few active soil surveys, it is becoming exceedingly difficult to satisfy the current experience definitions. The Council and committees are looking at the possibility of implementing a field exam/practicum to insure that **applicants who aren't able to obtain structured mapping experience can describe, classify, and interpret soils** in addition to passing a written exam. Also, like the Indiana "Exam", ISCA is considering proposing periodic participation in an exam structured workshop with the intent of bringing areas where we've diverged from the norm or need to improve to our individual attention. Look for more information in the spring newsletter and/or at the annual meeting.

-submitted by Brad Cate

See pictures from
the Fall Tour on
next page.



Participants discuss the organic content at the Dean Craig Wetland site.



Group photo taken at the Dean Craig site.

Days Gone By



Recognize any of these soil scientists from the 1979 Soil Scientist Workshop? This is just one half of the group. The other half appeared in our last newsletter!

DATE: 3/12-15/79 NO.
 SUBJECT : SOIL SCIENTISTS WORKSHOP
 PHOTOGRAPHER:
 LOCATION : CHAMPAIGN, ILLINOIS
 CAPTION
1st Row: L. Vancil, M. Lilly, S. Donath, T. Goddard
 (L to R)
2nd Row: M. Bramstedt, R. Sims, S. Higgins, H. Mount,
 B. Currie, M. LaVan.
3rd Row: R. High, E. Voss, S. Zwicker, I. Watterson,
 J. Doll, J. Steinkamp, L. Acker, P. Waldo,
 L. Bushue, C. Wacker, W. Fitzgerald.
4th Row: K. Gotsch, B. Schoepfel, S. Martin, R. Windhorn,
 B. Kreznor, G. Hamilton, M. Kuhn, M. Walker,
 J. Simpson, B. Pope.
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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.

ISCA on Facebook

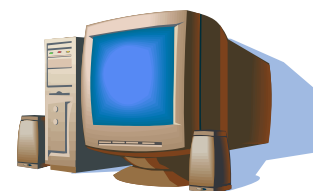
For those of you who want to keep in touch with ISCA members and others interested in soils in Illinois, join our group on Facebook. Search Facebook for “Illinois Soil Classifiers Association” and become a friend of ISCA. Anyone may post messages, announcements, pictures or events that may be of interest 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 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 if you have any difficulty in accessing the ISCA Group or if you have any questions or comments.



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

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

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