



Illinois Soil Classifiers Association Newsletter

Winter — February 2025

Upcoming Events:

2025 Annual Meeting March 12

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Message from the President

As a wise man once said, “history is who we are and why we are the way we are”. For those of us who either have an appreciation for this ideology or just simply like reminiscing about the “good old days”, a lot of significant history can be found if we take a look back at the year, 1975. Watergate, the premier of Saturday Night Live, the end of the Vietnam War, and for those of you fortunate enough to witness firsthand, the introduction of the Altair 8800. Now some of these events are clearly more fateful than others, but they indeed did all occur during the year of 1975. However, there is another event that occurred during that same year, and for some of our more seasoned members it might be one of the more memorable highlights. That event would of course be the Illinois Soil Classifiers Association’s inaugural Annual Meeting!

I know it may be hard for some of you to believe, but yes, ISCA is nearing its 50th birthday. It truly is overwhelming yet inspiring to think about all of the contributions to soil science and the State Of Illinois that our Association has made over the years. Many of you committed numerous years of service to mapping the soils in every corner of the state while others of you devoted your careers to the advancement of soil science through research and the development of suitable land management practices. The amount of knowledge and experience that exists within the confines of our membership is nothing short of humbling. And no matter how long your tenure has been as a member of this great association, I hope all of you realize how crucial your participation is to the longevity of it. Of course, special thanks should be given to our charter members who were enlightened enough to establish ISCA and helped pave the way for future professionals in the soil science field. It would also be remiss of me to not thank all of our past officers and committee chairs who have charitably donated a lot of their time to enable the proper functioning of a professional organization. A 50th anniversary is certainly a momentous occasion, and such a milestone could obviously never be achieved without the presence of dedicated individuals focused on one overarching mission.

So, in order to properly celebrate our 50th Annual Meeting, we will be honoring the many contributions to the Association that our members have made in the past while simultaneously exploring how those past contributions will help propel us into the future. The meeting will be held at the Allerton Mansion in Monticello, and further details in regards to this year’s meeting can be found later on in this edition to the ISCA Newsletter. In order to help bolster the theme of this year’s meeting, our guest speaker will be Dr. Kevin McSweeney, who is a professor at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and someone who I believe many of you are familiar with. Dr. McSweeney’s lecture will be centered around two topics. The first will be focused around Dr. McSweeney’s pedology course and the unique approach he takes in educating his class on the soil forming factors. The second will be a blast from the past for many of you as he is looking to revisit Soils of Illinois and possibly implement additions to the vast amount of insight the book offers on the suitabilities and limitations of the soils in Illinois. Unlike conventional lectures, however, we are hoping everyone in attendance will be willing to engage in lively discussion over these topics.

In closing, I look forward to seeing you all at ISCA’s 50th Annual Meeting, and I hope that all of you that are able to will attend! It has been my honor and privilege to serve as President this past year, and thank you to everyone who has helped guide me and support the Association during my term!

- Brandon Mueller

50th Annual ISCA Meeting

Submitted by Brandon Mueller



Wednesday, March 12th, 2025

11:45 AM

Allerton Park & Retreat Center

Allerton Mansion

515 Old Timber Road, Monticello, IL 61856

*** Registration Deadline is March 3rd, 2025 ***

Register online at illinoissoils.org by clicking on the Announcements bookmark

Each individual planning to attend must register using the form on the website

Payment can be made with a major credit card through PayPal

Cost (includes lunch catered by Baxter's Grille):

\$25 - ISCA Members and Attendees

\$10 - Students

Agenda

10:30 AM	Council Meeting
11:00 AM	Registration
11:45 AM	Opening Remarks
12:00 PM	Buffet Style Lunch
1:00 PM	Burt Ray Award
1:05 PM	Student Scholarship Award
1:15 PM	Guest Speaker
2:30 PM	Business Meeting*

This meeting will provide **3.0 PDHs** for **Category C** - Attendance or participation in seminars, tutorials, clinics, workshops, symposia, in-house courses, field tours/exercises, or technical presentation made at meetings, conventions, or conferences.

*Those who would like to attend **only** the 2:30 PM business meeting may participate for **FREE**

50th Annual ISCA Meeting Guest Speaker

Submitted by Brandon Mueller

Dr. Kevin McSweeney

Kevin McSweeney is a soil scientist at the University of Illinois. He received his B.Sc. in Environmental Science from the University of Sheffield, UK, in 1976. He received a Ph.D. in Soil Science/Agronomy from the University of Illinois in 1983, where his research focused on reclamation of surface-mined landscapes.

He spent 30 years at the University of Wisconsin as a Professor of Soil Science and Environmental Studies and held various administrative positions, including Director, School of Natural Resources and Director of the Arboretum.

He has conducted research in Latin America, Africa, China, and South East Asia. He is a Fellow of the Soil Science Society of America, former Co-Editor-in-Chief of *Geoderma* and Honorary Research Fellow, International Center on Land Reclamation, China University of Mining & Technology.



Ballot for 2025 ISCA Elections

Voting rights are for Full Members only. Ballots can be emailed, mailed in, or brought to the Annual Meeting. Please vote for one candidate for each office by placing an **X** next to the name. Biographies are provided on the following pages with more information about each candidate. Write-in candidates must have agreed prior to election to run for that office.

President—Elect

Mary Beth Falsey

Write-In Candidate for President—Elect _____

Vice President

Ken Anderson

Dr. Eric Brevik

Write-In Candidate for Vice—President _____

Secretary

Liz Miernicki

Write-In Candidate for Secretary _____

VOTE PRIOR TO THE ANNUAL MEETING IN ONE OF TWO WAYS:

- Email your ballot to swiesbro@illinois.edu
Please scan or photograph your ballot and return it as an attachment to an email with "Ballot" in the subject line. That way the ballot can be stored until virtually "opened" by the Nominations Committee without compromising your secrecy.
- Mail your ballot to:
Scott Wiesbrook
580 CR 1700E
Philo, IL 61864

Seal your ballot in a separate envelope marked "Ballot" on the outside. Put the labeled ballot envelope in another envelope and mail with postage. Please include your return address on the outer envelope to ensure you are an eligible voter. Envelopes without a return address will not be counted. Unopened, mailed ballots will be recorded as to who has voted prior to the Annual Meeting. The unopened, separately sealed ballots will then be passed to the Nominations Committee at the Annual Meeting.

***All email and mail-in ballots must be received by March 11, 2025 to be counted. ***

2025 ISCA Election Candidate Biographies

Submitted by Bob Oja

President—Elect

- **Mary Beth Falsey** is Falsey is the Water Quality Supervisor for DuPage County Stormwater Management where she has worked for over 20 years. She spent the first 11 years in the Wetlands Division reviewing wetland permits and delineations, specializing in hydric soil verifications and determinations. Since 2015, she has been the Water Quality Supervisor and is responsible for DuPage County's compliance with the County's NPDES ILR40 permit and also coordinates the County's IEPA grant funded efforts on watershed planning for impaired waterways. Mary Beth attended Northern Illinois University where she received a B.S. in Geography with an emphasis Natural Environmental Systems and an M.S. in Geography with an emphasis in Soil Science. She is an active ISCA member who previously served as President in 2019 and has planned and instructed at several ISCA Hydric Soils Courses. She holds several certifications including Certified Floodplain Manager (CFM), Certified Professional in Erosion and Sediment Control (CPESC), and Certified Erosion, Sediment and Stormwater Inspector (CESSWI). In her free time, she enjoys reading, hiking, wakesurfing, and spending time with her cat.

Vice—President

- **Ken Anderson** started a new chapter in April 2022 as an Environmental Project Manager for Engineering Resources Associates, Inc., and has transitioned to Business Development Coordinator. Prior to this transition Ken worked as Chief of Planning and Operations for the Forest Preserve District of Kane County for over 3.5 years. Before this Ken spent 30 years working for the County of Kane in various positions from Director of the Kane County Department of Environmental and Water Resources to a Soil Scientist/Planner with the Kane County Development Department. He is blessed with a beautiful wife and 3 daughters, 1 still in college. He has a Bachelor of Science in Watershed Management and Natural Resource Management with a minor in Soil Science from the University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point. He enjoys fishing, golfing, leading a community group at his church, spending time in the Lord's creation and HT time.
- **Dr. Eric Brevik** is a Professor of Soil Science and Geology at Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIU). He received his bachelor's and masters degrees in geology from the University of North Dakota and his PhD in soil science from Iowa State University. He has 25 years of experience in higher education at Valdosta State University (Georgia), Dickinson State University (North Dakota), and SIU. This time has included 6 years as a department chair and 3.5 years as a college dean. Eric teaches an array of courses at the upper undergraduate and graduate level, including soil genesis, morphology, and classification; soil fertility; soil physical properties; soil description and interpretation; and scientific communication. His research interests include soil genesis, soil mapping, links between soils and geology, human impacts on the soil resource, science education, and soil science history. In his spare time Eric enjoys travel, relaxing at the lake, and spending time with his family.

Secretary

- **Liz Miernicki** has been a soil scientist in the Wetland Science Program at the Illinois Natural History Survey since May 2020. She conducts wetland determinations and mitigation site assessments. In August 2023, Liz started coaching the soil judging team at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign (UIUC). She also has been teaching an introduction to soil science course each Spring at Parkland College since January 2022. As a member of ISCA, Liz has served as President and has chaired the Nominations Committee and Ethics, Certification, and Membership Committee. Liz graduated with a B.S. in Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences and a M.S. in Crop Sciences from UIUC in 2015 and 2017, respectively. She grew up in Oak Lawn and Mokena, Illinois, but has been living in Champaign for the past 14 years. Outside of work, Liz and her husband Boswell enjoy walking their hound dog Bruce, playing euchre with friends, and attending Illini basketball games.

2025 ISCA Student Member Scholarship

Submitted by Ashtyn Stufflebeam

A scholarship of \$500 will be awarded to one student member every year at the ISCA Annual Meeting held in the spring. This scholarship is in place to help encourage students to get involved with the Illinois Soil Classifiers Association. Winners must be present at the Annual Meeting to be eligible.

This year's scholarship winner will be selected by the ISCA Executive Council from the applications submitted by **February 28, 2025**. All applicants will be thoroughly assessed to make sure they meet the following requirements.

To be eligible to win the scholarship the student must:

- Be enrolled full time in an accredited Illinois or neighboring institution
- Major in soil science or related program (is on track to complete 15 credit hours of soil science required to be a soil scientist)
- Currently be enrolled in or has already completed a minimum of 3 credit hours of soil science
- Maintain a GPA of 3.0 or higher
- Be a Student Member of ISCA (with dues paid)
- Be present at the Annual Meeting to accept the scholarship (unless otherwise approved by the council)

To become a student member of ISCA visit <https://www.illinoissoils.org/about/membership/> and complete the **Application for Membership**

Please be sure to pay Student Membership Dues (\$5/year) upon submitting your Application for Membership. Student membership dues may be submitted via mail or PayPal on the ISCA website. *Membership must be granted and dues paid in order to be eligible for the Student Scholarship award.*

Note, Applications for Membership are separate from the ISCA Student Member Scholarship Application. It is advised to complete the application for Student Membership as soon as possible to allow the ISCA Executive Council time to review the membership application before granting membership.

Complete and submit the **ISCA Student Member Scholarship Application form** by **February 28, 2025**

2025 Bent Auger Award—Call For Nominees

Submitted by Liz Miernicki

It is once again time to select a new winner of the prestigious Bent Auger Award. As its name suggests, this award is given each year to an individual or group of individuals who displays “excellence” in the field. Qualifying events/situations are numerous and unrestricted. Stories do not have to be true but are preferably based on partial truth.

Competition can be fierce, so make sure your story is well prepared and fully *exaggerated*. This award has been held by many of the leaders and founders of the ISCA. It is a great honor and looks good on any resume.

If you know anyone who is deserving of this award for 2025, please send nominations to Brandon Mueller at bmueller@wrksoiltesting.com.

2024 ISCA Fall Meeting Recap

Submitted by Brandon Mueller

The 2024 Fall Meeting took place on Wednesday, October 2, 2024 at Giant City State Park Lodge in Makanda, IL. Joseph Devera from ISGS, Heather Carey from the USFS Shawnee National Forest, and Kristi Dodson from IDNR's Office of Mines and Minerals were the featured guest speakers. Mr. Devera delivered a chronological history on the rich but complex geology of Southern Illinois and spoke about intriguing discoveries he had uncovered while working out in the field. Ms. Carey talked about the reasoning behind the establishment of the Shawnee National Forest as well as the history of the people who had called it home over the years. Ms. Dodson discussed the many different intricate steps behind the modern mined land reclamation process and how reclaimed land is managed and monitored.

Following the conclusion of the lectures and a delicious fried chicken lunch provided by Giant City Lodge, the meeting attendees headed to a location just south of Carbondale to look at four soil pits. All four pits displayed poorly drained or somewhat poorly drained soils that were derived from loess. There was some lively debate on whether or not one of the pits had overlying colluvial sediments on top of the loess. And further discussion occurred over the fragic properties that were identified in two of the pits.



2024 ISCA Fall Meeting Recap

Submitted by Brandon Mueller



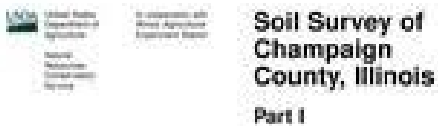
Thank you to everyone who attended and helped make the 2024 Fall Meeting a success!



County Soil Surveys Available

Submitted by Liz Miernicki

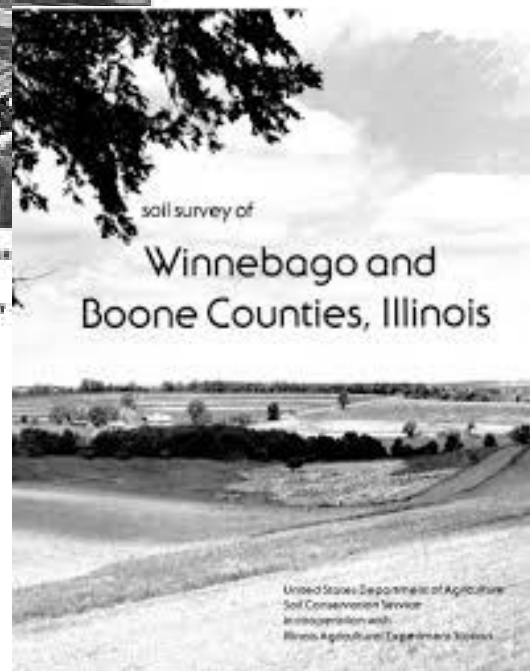
Physical copies of various Illinois county soil surveys were saved from the recycle bin last Fall. It's import to note that the collection does not include all 102 counties and publication years vary. Whether you are collecting the surveys of the counties you mapped in or just would like a new paper weight, please contact Liz Miernicki at miernic2@illinois.edu for further information.



SOIL SURVEY OF DU PAGE AND PART OF COOK COUNTIES, ILLINOIS



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE,
in cooperation with
ILLINOIS AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION



www.illinoissoils.org

ISCA Newsletter Staff

Alicia Metzger,
Chairperson

Email:
Newsletter@illinoissoils.org

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 and Twitter

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 or Twitter. Search Facebook for "Illinois Soil Classifiers Association" or Twitter for @ISCA_Soil. Anyone may post messages, announcements, pictures or events that may be of interest to our membership. These are great platforms for posting information and 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 Facebook or Twitter, it is easy to set up. Just go to www.facebook.com or www.twitter.com and follow the instructions. Unfortunately, these sites are 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 or if you have any questions or comments.

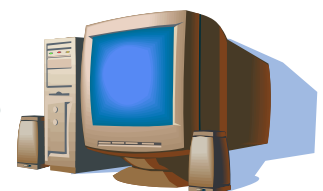


ISCA Newsletter Committee is looking for pictures of its members, past or present, to include in future newsletters!

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. It is an excellent resource to keep you informed on the latest soils issues. Better yet... make it your home page!



ISCA Newsletter
46W951 Country Lane
Maple Park, IL 60151

Visit the ISCA website for access to all newsletters
<https://www.illinoissoils.org/member-resources/newsletter/>

Change of Address Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-Mail: _____

*Mail to: Scott Wiesbrook, ISCA Secretary, 1816 S. Oak St., IL 61820