

Advanced Conservation Drainage Training Program DRAINAGE WATER MANAGEMENT SESSION - PRESENTERS

Richard Cooke

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign



Dr. Richard Cooke is an Associate Professor of Agricultural and Biological Engineering at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and is affiliated with University of Illinois Extension. One of Dr. Cooke's primary research interests is optimizing subsurface drainage system design in order to maximize soil storage volume without adversely impacting crop yields. Dr. Cooke holds three degrees in Agricultural Engineering – a B.S. from University of the West Indies, an M.S. from the University of Guelph, and a Ph.D. from Virginia Polytechnic Institute.

Ruth Book, State Conservation Engineer

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service – Illinois



Dr. Ruth Book is the State Conservation Engineer for the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Illinois and has been named Fellow of the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers. She is responsible for the planning and design of all NRCS engineering conservation practices in the state. In recent years, Ruth has also provided national leadership for NRCS technical expertise with conservation drainage practices. With NRCS, Ruth has provided leadership in the development of software and technical guidance for engineering design. However, her wide-ranging career includes work in industry and academia, as well as government. She began her engineering career in hydraulic system design with Cessna Fluid Power and Eaton Hydraulics in Kansas and Minnesota. After taking time away from employment to raise a young family, she went back to school at the University of Illinois, earning a doctorate and doing some research and teaching. She joined NRCS in September 2000.

Jean McGuire, Field Outreach Specialist
The Wetlands Initiative



Jean McGuire is the field outreach specialist for the Smart Wetlands project which is a program of [The Wetlands Initiative](#). She was raised on an integrated crop and livestock farm in Clinton County, Iowa during the 1960s and 1970s. That means she showed livestock at the county fair, detasseled corn, walked beans, and spent many hours caring for calves and chickens.

Previously, Jean worked as a communications specialist with Iowa State University Extension and earned a graduate degree in rural sociology – the culture of agriculture. She recently became a part-owner of her family’s farms and looks forward to convincing her seven siblings that they need to install a constructed wetland on one of the farms. She

knows there will many barriers to achieving this goal, but she is hopeful those challenges can be conquered.

Megan Baskerville, Upper Sangamon River Watershed Manager
The Nature Conservancy - Illinois



Megan is the Upper Sangamon River Watershed Manager for The Nature Conservancy where she leads and motivates local and state level partners to quickly take coordinated on-the-ground action to meet ambitious supply chain sustainability goals. Previously, she served as the Watershed Specialist with the Macon County Soil & Water Conservation District for four years, where she successfully secured and led collaborative IEPA 319 and NRCS RCPP grant programs coordinating efforts to increase adoption of edge of field and in field practices to limit nutrient and sediment delivery to Lake Decatur. Megan completed the Advanced Soil Health Training course offered through American Farmland Trust. She is a trusted local resource for farmers, retailers and agency staff. She received her B.S. in Geography & Environmental

Resources from SIU-Carbondale.