



ILLINOIS  
**SUSTAINABLE**  
AG PARTNERSHIP



# 2020 Annual Report

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# Overview

Since its founding in 2017, ISAP has focused on messaging, outreach, training and education for farmers and their trusted advisors to bring together and disseminate new information and lessons learned in plain, practical language.

Members work collaboratively to amplify the programs of each organization, share resources to gain efficiencies, and identify synergies in achieving soil health and nutrient loss reduction goals.

**ISAP'S MISSION IS TO CREATE A NETWORK TO SUPPORT A SYSTEMS APPROACH TO IMPROVE SOIL HEALTH AND REDUCE NUTRIENT LOSS**

Photo Credit: iStock



Precision Conservation Management



**Illinois Extension**  
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

THE ZEA MAYS FOUNDATION



ISAP WELCOMED TWO NEW MEMBERS IN 2020:



# 2020 Impacts

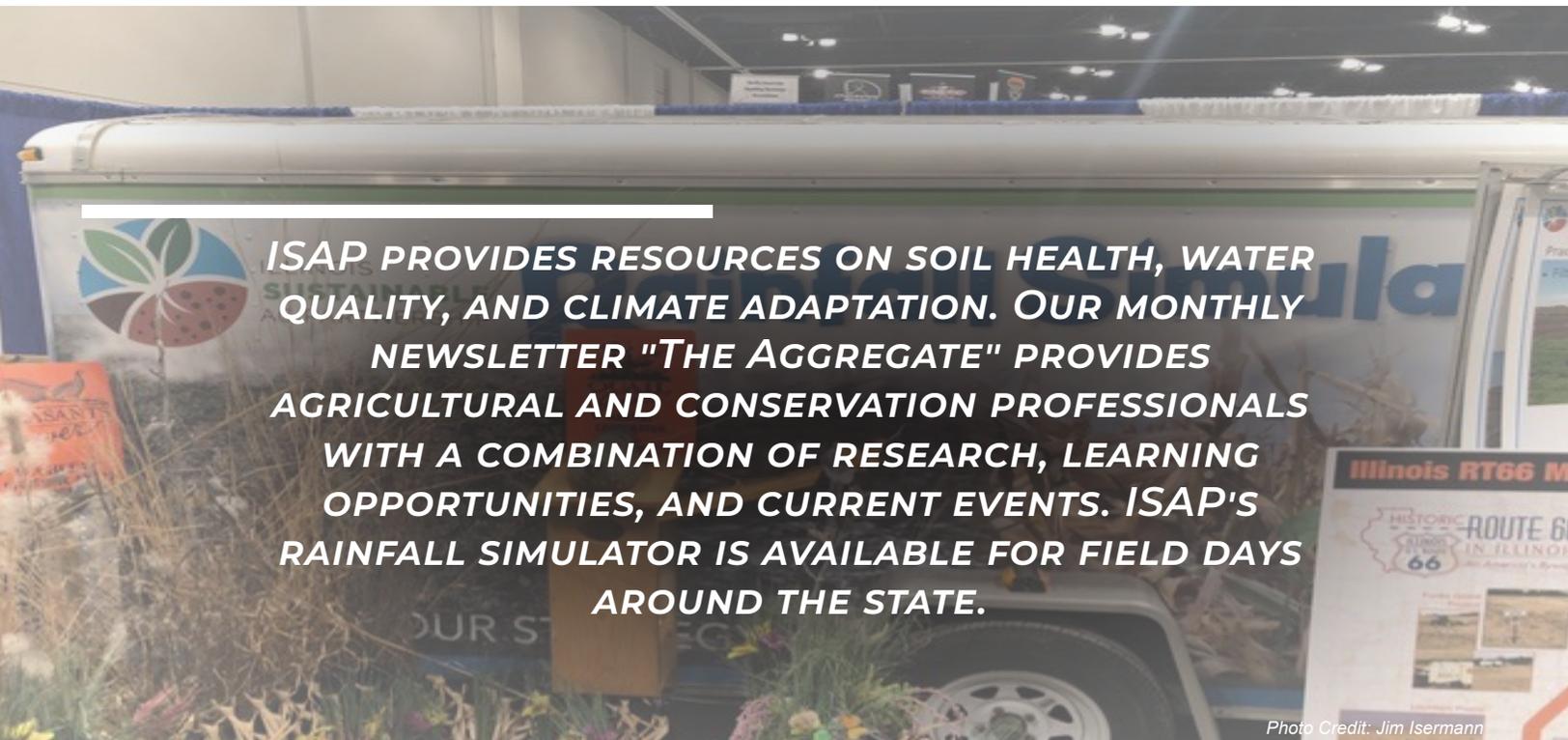
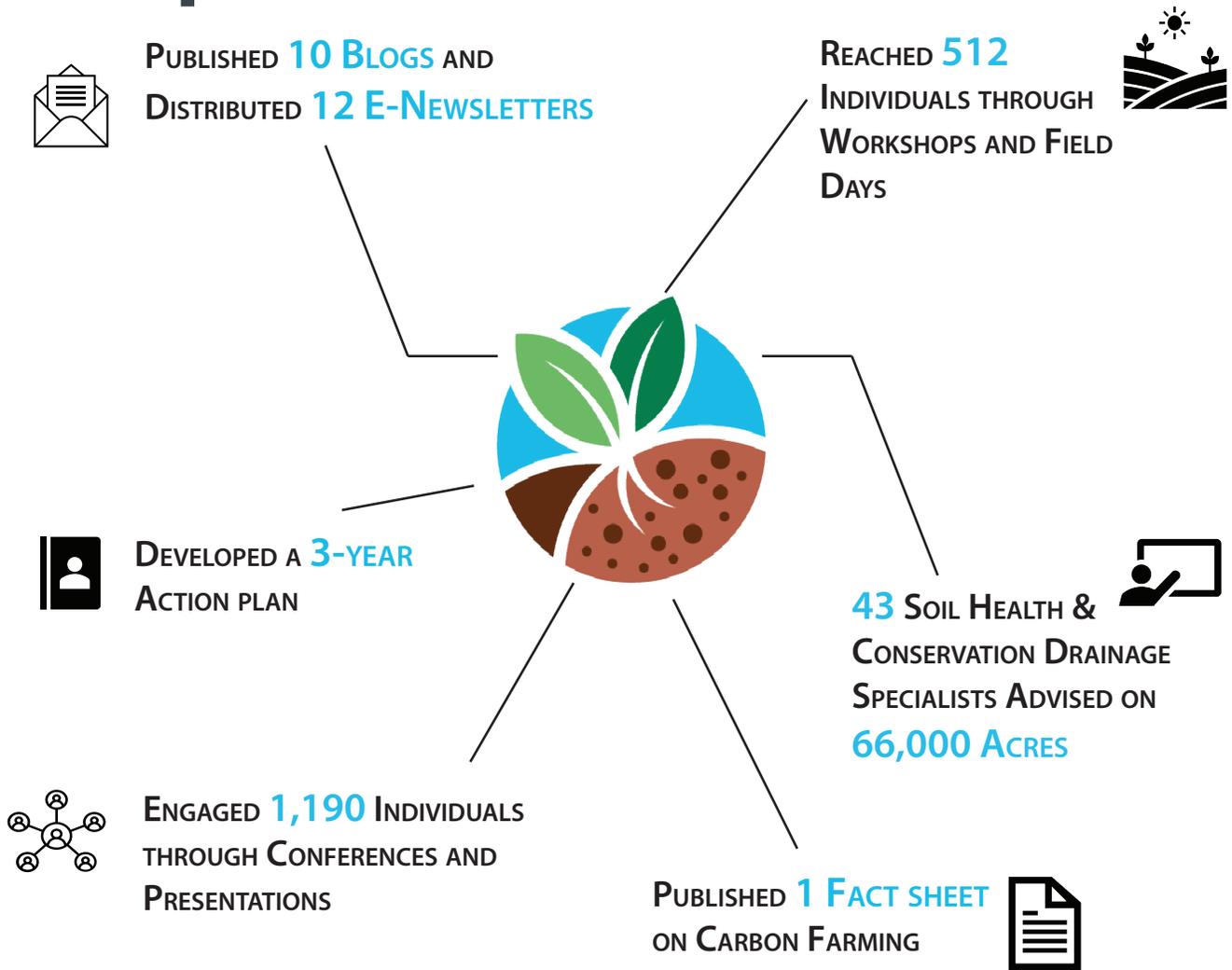


Photo Credit: Jim Isermann

# Theory of Change

In 2020, members of ISAP participated in a series of discussions to refine the Partnership’s purpose and priorities. The resulting “Theory of Change” ensures our work will be effective toward meeting the goals of the Illinois Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy (NLRs) and achieving environmental outcomes.

## Core Strategies

How do we create our desired impact?

Increase farmer recognition in the ECONOMIC VALUE of conservation practices

Serve as the clearinghouse for SOIL HEALTH & CONSERVATION DRAINAGE EDUCATION

Accelerate the ADOPTION OF CONSERVATION PRACTICES that improve soil health, “carbon cycle balance”, & water quality

## Enabling Outcomes

What is needed to bring about change?

Farmers and advisors have access to data and view ISAP as a trusted source of information.

All education is action oriented, fosters knowledge transfer, and motivates change on the landscape.

ISAP members and partners are using a consistent message to inform and engage key audiences.

Policies and funding priorities are supporting practices with the biggest water quality and climate impacts.

## Desired Impact

What is our “long-term” goal?



Illinois agriculture voluntarily meets NLRs goals and benefits from being part of the climate solution

ISAP’s success relies on a purpose-driven foundation and commitment of individual members to the Partnership’s mission.

## Note from ISAP Chair

In an already taxing year, ISAP partners were challenged to think about “**what do we wish to create for the future of Illinois agriculture.**” Members drew upon diverse expertise to envision a landscape with a combination of practices that build upon soil health and reduce nutrient loss. To achieve this shared vision, we must deliver a consistent message, share the latest research and economic findings, and encourage policies and funding opportunities that result in benefits to both farmers and the environment. More pragmatically, it requires collaboration, commitment, and trust.

Working collaboratively with partners is our key to success! In this report, you will see where multiple organizations worked together to deliver ISAP programs throughout the state. With our strong foundation, the newly adopted Theory of Change provides a coherent framework that will guide our work in the coming years and ensure that all partners are working toward the collective vision.

I am humbled by the trust partners have placed in me as Chair, and I am proud of ISAP’s achievements over the past year.



*Jill Kostel*



**PRODUCTION  
RISK  
MANAGEMENT**

ISAP's Risk Management Conference highlights the use of soil health and conservation drainage practices as tools to mitigate production risk.

CLIMATE | FARM PRODUCTION | SOIL HEALTH | CONSUMER DEMAND | RESILIENCY



ISAP'S 2020 RISK MANAGEMENT WEBINAR SERIES

# BRIDGING THE GAPS

The 2020 conference reached over 200 people through three online webinars highlighting climate adaptations, working capital and consumer demand for sustainably raised crops.



*The climate session was one of the best I have ever seen in making the point that weather has changed in the Midwest and that farmers need to get better at adapting.*

LEADERSHIP FOR THE RISK MANAGEMENT  
CONFERENCE PROVIDED BY:



Consumer demand and corporate responsibility have motivated many national and international corporations to set voluntary greenhouse gas (GHG) emission targets and develop science-based strategies to achieve desirable environmental outcomes. ISAP produced a fact sheet summarizing the total potential market opportunity for Illinois farmers.

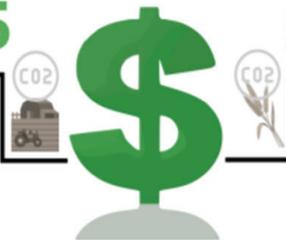
## POTENTIAL CARBON SEQUESTRATION MARKET FOR ILLINOIS

Estimates generated using the CarPE TOOL™, assuming a \$15/Tonne price point

**\$151,854,645**

If 100% of available  
acres in IL converted to

**NO TILL\***



**\$166,030,110**

If 100% of available  
acres in IL planted

**COVER CROPS\***

*\*Dollar amounts are intended to reflect the total market opportunity for new practice implementation in IL. Available acres represent cropland acres not currently utilizing the referenced practices. CarPE Tool™: <https://farmland.org/carpetool/>*

LEADERSHIP FOR PRODUCING THE  
CARBON FACT SHEET PROVIDED BY:





## SOIL HEALTH & IN-FIELD MANAGEMENT

ISAP developed the Advanced Soil Health Training (ASHT) to increase the number of Illinois farmers, retailers, crop advisors and conservation professionals who understand the science of soil health and related production management changes. The intensive classroom and in-field training model spans 18 months and graduates are encouraged to share what they learn through presentations and field days.



Photo Credit: Jennifer Jones

Congratulations to the Tri-State Cohort, a group of 20 individuals from southeast Illinois, southwest Indiana, and northwest Kentucky, who completed ASHT in June 2020. And welcome to 29 trainees from northwest Illinois and eastern Iowa, the Bi-State Cohort, who started training in 2020.

LEADERSHIP FOR ADVANCED SOIL HEALTH TRAINING PROVIDED BY:



Illinois Extension  
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS' URBANA-CHAMPAIGN



A phosphorus management workshop held in September highlighted current research on phosphorus placement and phosphorus runoff with cover crops. The event was supported by the Upper Macoupin Creek Watershed partnership and reached producers and farm advisors from across Illinois and the upper Midwest.

**78%** of attendees indicated they were very likely to share the information with farmers and colleagues

ESTIMATED REACH:  
**252,000 ACRES**

Photo Credit: iStock

LEADERSHIP FOR THE PHOSPHORUS MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP PROVIDED BY:





**WATER  
QUALITY &  
EDGE-OF-FIELD**

ISAP's Advanced Conservation Drainage Training program highlights practices like saturated buffers, constructed wetlands, controlled drainage and bioreactors, which are designed to capture and treat high levels of nitrate-nitrogen from tile flow. Workshops provide participants with knowledge and tools to make conservation drainage practices a standard part of tile installation and farm management through intensive classroom and hands-on training.

**ON THE LEADING  
EDGE**

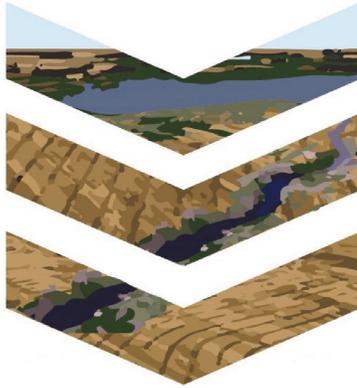


Photo Credit: Jill Kostel

The 2020 conservation drainage training was comprised of a three-part webinar series titled "On the Leading Edge." The first session provided an overview of hydrology, water quality and conservation drainage, and the second and third sessions examined conservation drainage at the practice and watershed scales.

*Edge-of-Field practices bring tremendous value to Illinois' agricultural landscape. Research and monitoring data show that many EoF conservation practices provide significant water quality improvements, particularly by reducing nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment losses from surface and subsurface drainage.*

Photo Credit: Jill Kostel

LEADERSHIP FOR THE CONSERVATION  
DRAINAGE TRAINING PROVIDED BY:





# NETWORK OF PRACTITIONERS

ISAP is cultivating a network of practitioners to support a systems approach to improve soil health and reduce nutrient loss.



Photo Credit: Jean Brokish

Alphabet Soup is an informal group of agriculture professionals, conservation practitioners, farmer advisors, and industry partners. Discussions explore issues, strategies, programs and resources to encourage farmers to implement nutrient reduction and conservation practices.

LEADERSHIP FOR ALPHABET SOUP PROVIDED BY:



IL Corn



**MORE THAN 40 INDIVIDUALS, INCLUDING CROP CONSULTANTS, FARMERS, SWCD EMPLOYEES, & OTHER PROFESSIONALS ARE LISTED AS SPECIALISTS**

**CONVENED 8 COVER CROP CALLS WITH FIELD STAFF & RESEARCHERS ACROSS ILLINOIS**



**SPECIALISTS ARE AVAILABLE TO ASSIST FARMERS & OTHERS LOOKING TO LEARN MORE ABOUT CONSERVATION CROPPING SYSTEMS AND EDGE-OF-FIELD PRACTICES**

Photo Credit: April Opatik



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