



SPECIAL EDITION

Illinois Farm Community Launches the Conservation Story Map



Farmers across Illinois are adopting practices to keep nutrients on their fields and out of waterways. With the aid of a new interactive map, these farmers are sharing their stories of which practices worked best for them.

[The Conservation Story Map](#) has catalogued more than fifty stories from across the state. Click the link to find out which sustainable practices are at work in your area.

"Our farming community needs a place to tell about all of the many ways they are good stewards of the land," Lyndsey Ramsey, Associate Director of Natural & Environmental Resources with the Illinois Farm Bureau said. "This map serves that purpose."

We've highlighted some of those stories below.

Passing the Test

Champaign County farmer Dirk Rice experimented with many cover crops until settling on cereal rye for its winter hardiness.

Dirk has also gained greater insight into his land's nitrogen needs through regular [soil](#) and [water nutrient testing](#). Rice feels his soil contains enough nitrogen, so he can reduce application in the future.



All Natural Solutions

Bill and Pamela Kunke run Creekside Natural Farm in Minooka.



In addition to planting corn and soybeans, the Kunkes plant [cover crops](#) to keep nutrients in place.

Recently, the Kunkes partnered with Trees Forever to [plant hardwoods and shrubs](#) along a nearby creek to improve soil health and water quality.

Safe Haven

Mercer County hunter Alan Snyder began a 50-acre "science experiment" which later became a 100-acre wildlife haven.

Snyder converted the former grassy pasture into a [wetland, acting as a natural filter](#) for surface runoff from an adjacent abandoned landfill and nearby farmland. Additionally, the wetland has become a natural home for ducks and other wildlife.



Keeping it 4R Crop

Matt Bradshaw uses a variety of best management practices on his Pike County farm. He tests manure for nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium content before application, and also regularly [tests his soil](#).

Matt adheres to the [4R's of nutrient stewardship](#): Right source, Right rate, Right time, and Right place.

What's Your Strategy?

What practices are you using on your farm to protect water quality? If you would like to be featured on the Conservation Story Map, contact Lyndsey Ramsey with the Illinois Farm Bureau for more information: lr Ramsey@ilfb.org.

Working Together.

The Conservation Story Map is funded by the Illinois Corn Growers Association, Illinois Soybean Association checkoff program, Illinois Farm Bureau, American Farmland Trust, Soil Health Partnership, the Zea Mays Foundation, and the Illinois Council on Best Management Practices.

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