



# Illinois Farm Bureau's efforts toward implementing the Illinois Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy

Austin Omer  
Associate Director of Natural Resource Policy  
Illinois Farm Bureau



# ILLINOIS FARM BUREAU

- Organizational policy
- Priorities annually set by the IFB Board of Directors
  - 2022 - Promote agriculture's contribution toward improving the environment
    - Showcase agriculture's progress on climate, sustainability
    - Advocate farmer's perspective with agencies rewriting Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) rule
- Many areas of environmental policy touch life on the farm in Illinois:
  - Federal and state conservation programs
  - Water quality and quantity
  - Air quality
  - Climate change and ecosystem markets
  - Wetlands
  - Soil health and preventing soil erosion
  - Pollinators and the Monarch butterfly
  - Livestock
  - Fertilizer use
  - Use of crop protection products
  - Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS)





# ILLINOIS NUTRIENT LOSS REDUCTION STRATEGY (NLRS)

- Set interim goal for 2025 of 25% reduction in P loads and 15% reduction in nitrate-N loads
- 2021 report of progress
- Continued focus needed - data collection, conservation programs, watershed planning and implementation





## IFB'S NLRS EFFORTS

- From 2015-2022, IFB has committed over \$2.4 million to implement the NLRS
- 4 Priority Areas:
  - Education and outreach to farmers, landowners and the general public
  - Supporting research of BMPs to reduce nutrient loss from ag fields
  - Supporting farmer implementation efforts across the state
  - Demonstrating progress toward the long-term goals of the NLRS.



## Education and outreach to farmers, landowners and the general public

### In 2021 -

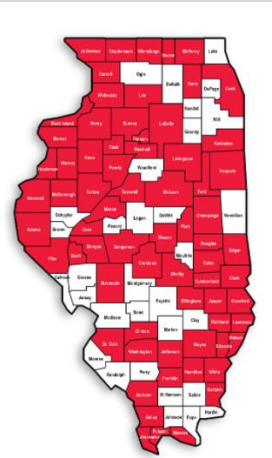
- [www.ilfarmersconserve.com](http://www.ilfarmersconserve.com)
  - 2021 – 5 M social media impressions, over 85,000 clicks to learn more
  - 26,500 website visits
  - 2.5 M impressions on Google Ads with over 1.2 M watching the entire videos.
- 15 IFB social media posts, reaching 40,000 people
- 98 FarmWeek and FarmWeekNow.com articles
- 10 press releases
- 75 radio interviews through RFD network
- 38 videos produced and sharing on IFB and external platforms
- 300 M potentially reached through external media
- 12 hybrid field days, 2,800 reached in person and virtual (still counting)
- 1,300 reached through other IFB events (in person and virtual)





# NUTRIENT STEWARDSHIP GRANT PROGRAM

- 2020 - Went virtual and will continue some sort of virtual efforts
- 2021 - 28 counties working on 21 projects
- 2022 - 25 CFBs will collaborate on 21 nutrient stewardship projects.
- 13 County Farm Bureaus (CFB) will work together on nine pollinator projects





# EDGE OF FIELD PARTNERSHIPS

## Bioreactor and Saturated Buffer Partnerships

- To Improve Water Quality and Implement the Illinois NLRS
- Focus on documenting progress for the NLRS: resources, outreach, land and facilities, and water
- Working on 5<sup>th</sup> bioreactor and second saturated buffer



2021  
Woodchip Bioreactor Partnership Update





# SUPPORTING RESEARCH OF BMPS TO REDUCE NUTRIENT LOSS FROM AG FIELDS

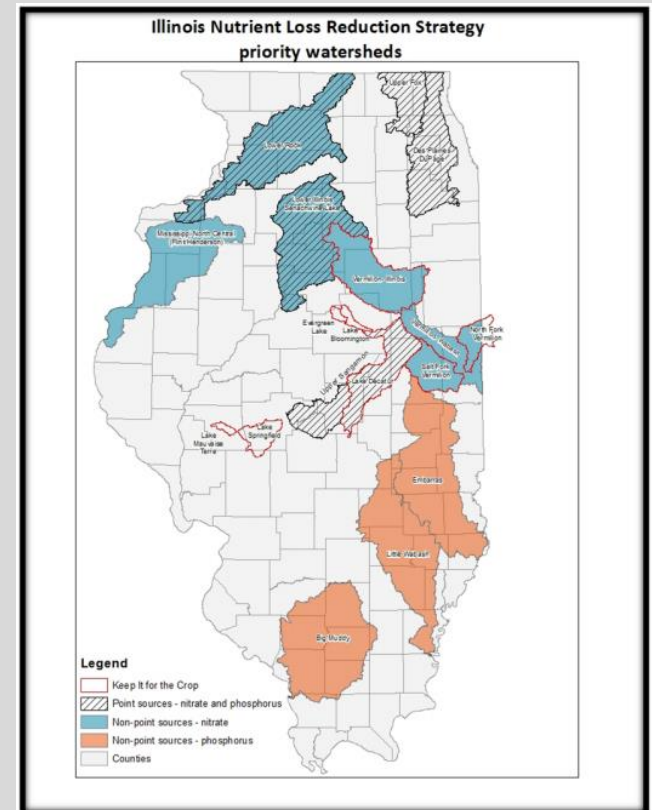
- In 2021, we have supported 65 researchers on 25 projects at 25 different institutions to potentially bring in over \$35 million for research in Illinois. For both 2020 and 2021 supported over \$95 million with \$37 million being awarded.
- IL Nutrient Research and Education Council – \$31M
- Submitted review of science on conservation practices to update NLRs Science Assessment.
  - Review of performance of in-field structural practices (terraces, grade stabilization structures, water and sediment control basins, and improved inlets) submitted to NLRs science team.





# SUPPORTING FARMER IMPLEMENTATION EFFORTS ACROSS THE STATE

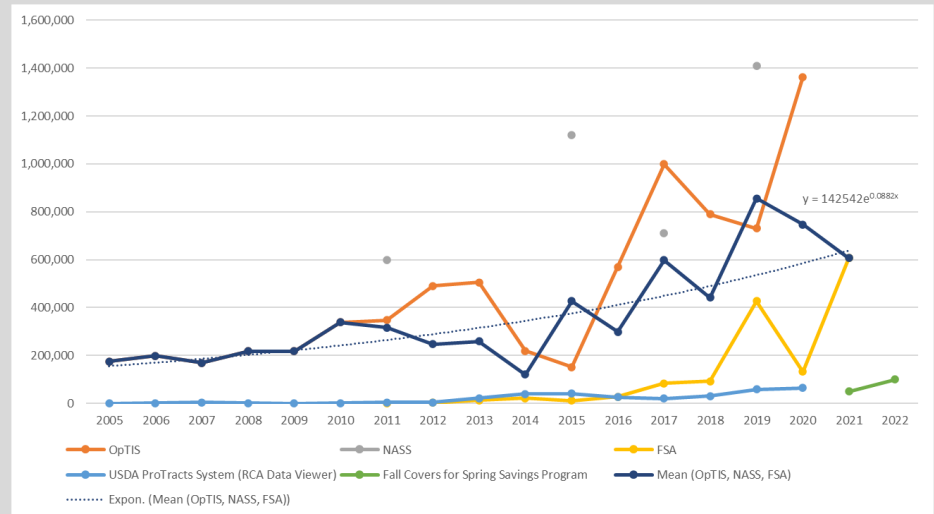
- Support watershed planning and implementation in the NLRs Priority watersheds of **the Flint/Henderson, Embarras, and MS North Central watersheds** alongside SWCDs, U of I Extension, and Northwater Consulting
- Partnered with drinking water supplies, SWCD and Northwater Consulting in **Lake Decatur, Lake Springfield, Lake Bloomington and Lake Vermilion** watersheds to support watershed planning and implementation
- Partnered with Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago and IL Association of Wastewater Agencies on various programs and projects
- Promoted various state and federal programs to implement the practices recommended in the NLRs





# DEMONSTRATING PROGRESS TOWARD THE LONG-TERM GOALS OF THE NLRS.

- Tracking progress
- Great success of sustained investment
- Every agricultural organization in the state is working on this in someway!





## TAKEAWAYS FROM THIS WORK

- Effective approaches - make local connections to local organizations.
- Continue to focus on connecting researchers to farmers!
- Need to do a better job supporting local farmers who have experience.
- Need to continue to support and improve the tracking of conservation practices on private lands while respecting farmer's privacy.
- Support IEPA's efforts to continue to improve the water quality sampling we have throughout the state.
- Support watershed planning! Show up and contribute.



**Thank you!**

Austin Omer

[aomer@ilfb.org](mailto:aomer@ilfb.org)

(309) 557-3220

[www.ilfb.org](http://www.ilfb.org)