

# INDIAN CREEK WATERSHED PROJECT

Few projects demonstrate the contributions of as many CTIC members as the Indian Creek Watershed Project. The commitment of stakeholders from the halls of USDA to the fields of Livingston County, Illinois, has made Indian Creek a model for watershed projects throughout the Midwest and across the country.

Through the Indian Creek Watershed Project, we are demonstrating conservation practices on the field scale. And we're learning about leadership, organization and farmer outreach.

The Indian Creek Watershed Project brings together people from across conservation agriculture, from policymakers to researchers, Ag retailers, agribusiness leaders, association organizers, local districts and farmers.

## LOCAL DISTRICTS

### Livingston County Soil and Water Conservation District

Ask anyone about the Indian Creek Watershed Project and it doesn't take long for them to bring up Terry Bachtold's name. Terry is the agriculture resource coordinator for the Livingston County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), and the tireless engine that has kept the project going from the start.

## GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

### Illinois Environmental Protection Agency

Boosts from funding were vital to the launch and success of the project. Section 319 funding through the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) provided critical support for the demonstration plots, farmer meetings, field days, steering committee operations and SWCD assistance. In fact, IEPA injected nearly \$750,000 into the watershed. The 319 grants also attracted more than \$573,000 in additional matching funds.

IEPA instituted an extensive water quality grab sampling program in Indian Creek and partnered with the **U.S. Geological Survey** to establish a long-term continuous monitoring station in the watershed.

### USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

USDA's Mississippi River Basin Initiative provided additional funds—through Environmental Quality



Incentives Program and Conservation Stewardship Program—to help farmers take the risk of trying new farming practices and see the results.

## AGRIBUSINESS ASSOCIATION

### The Fertilizer Institute

A long-time CTIC member, The Fertilizer Institute (TFI) represents the industry's leading fertilizer companies and tirelessly promotes the responsible stewardship of crop nutrients. The 4Rs of Nutrient Stewardship—the right fertilizer source at the right rate at the right time, in the right place—which the Institute developed with the International Plant Nutrition Institute, are a central theme for the Indian Creek Watershed Project.

## GROWER ASSOCIATIONS

### Illinois Soybean Association

Grower associations connect CTIC to thousands of farmers and other stakeholders, making them an invaluable link in the chain that focuses on conservation systems that can make growers more profitable and achieve soil, water and air quality goals.

### Illinois Corn Marketing Board

Illinois Corn Marketing Board funded demonstrations of nitrogen rate trials and 4R principles on Mike Trainor's farm, showcasing sustainable practices in real-world conditions and inspiring adoption of conservation systems.





## AG RETAILERS

### Trainor Grain

As an ag retailer and a farmer, Mike has been leading test plots and demonstrations of a range of enhanced efficiency fertilizers that slow the conversion of N into leachable forms, as well as split applications and other strategies to reduce the chances of nutrients moving into Indian Creek.

Local ag retailers like Mike Trainor—and their state association, the Illinois Fertilizer and Chemical Association—are key partners in the Indian Creek Watershed Project.

## INDEPENDENT AGRONOMISTS

### Harold Reetz & Tim Smith

Dr. Harold Reetz of Reetz Agronomics and Tim Smith of CropSmith have coordinated the demonstration plots in the watershed since the project's start. They have taught farmers how to plan, plant and manage on-farm trials, presented findings at annual meetings and field days, collected data and published reports to share findings from the plots nationwide.

Using a model developed by long-time CTIC partner, the International Plant Nutrition Institute, Reetz and Smith have emphasized the importance of assessing nitrogen fertilizer in terms of nitrogen use efficiency (NUE) or maximum economic rate of nitrogen (MERN)—emphasizing profitability, not just yield.

## UNIVERSITY RESEARCH

### Dr. Linda Prokopy, Purdue University

Dr. Linda Prokopy, professor of Forestry and Natural Resources at Purdue University, has been studying the social sciences behind the success of the Indian Creek Watershed Steering Committee. Her research seeks insight into the social indicators that can measure effectiveness and predict outcomes of projects like Indian Creek. A video by Prokopy and her team shares tips that can help other watershed groups. It's a great example of the wide range impact that CTIC projects can facilitate.

## PROJECT SPONSORS



Indian Creek Watershed Project is funded in part by Illinois Environmental Protection Agency through Section 319 of the Clean Water Act.

