



NEWS RELEASE

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Be a Part of the History of Soils in Illinois

SPRINGFIELD, IL February 15, 2023. Your land, your soil may have been part of an historical and extensive soil sampling program dating back to 1899 by the University of Illinois. If your land was part of the original research, then the Illinois Nutrient Research and Education Council (NREC) needs your help in bringing soil sampling of that specific location full circle.

Dr. Andrew Margenot of the University of Illinois explains, “Our predecessors had the foresight to keep records of soil sampling locations and to store those samples at the University. By resampling soil from these same locations, we will gain unprecedented insight on how these soils have changed over 120 years.” Dr. Margenot is funded with research dollars from NREC and the Illinois Farm Bureau.

Ultimately, what Dr. Margenot learns will enable improvements in soil fertility management and conservation, including updates to the Illinois Agronomy Handbook.

The original soils and approximately 450 locations that the researchers seek to re-sample are now largely located on private land. Researchers are looking to identify and contact those land owners and/or producers to ask permission to sample soils. Sampling will have negligible impact with a small soil probe down three feet at three points within a 10 to-15 foot-area. All soil sample results will be shared at no cost to the landowner/farmer and will be anonymous to protect privacy of the specific sampling location.



To learn if your land is among the original sampling sites, use the QR code to link to a Google map showing the locations. When you click on the pin of a specific location, you will be taken to an embedded link to share your name and contact information for the research team to follow up. You can also contact the team directly at rothman@illinois.edu or margenot@illinois.edu.



A one-page summary of the project history, goals, and process can be found on the Illinois NREC website.

The Illinois Nutrient Research & Education Council (NREC) was created by state statute in 2012. Funded by a 75-cent per ton assessment on bulk fertilizer sold in Illinois, NREC provides financial support for nutrient research and education programs to ensure the discovery and adoption of practices that address environmental concerns, optimize nutrient use efficiency, and ensure soil fertility. A 13-member NREC Council annually solicits, reviews and funds projects that fulfill the organization’s mission.

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