

Soil Survey of the United States: National Cooperative Soil Survey--Committees and Partnerships.



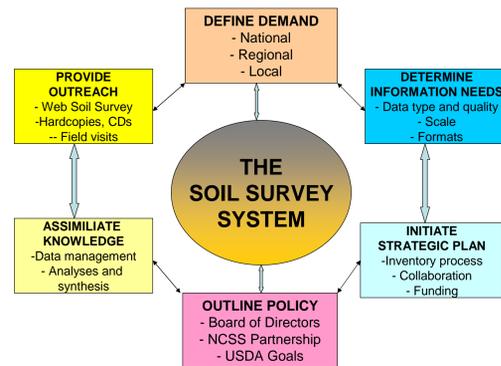
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The National Cooperative Soil Survey (NCSS) is a legislated partnership of Federal, state and local agencies, Land Grant Universities, 1890's Universities and Tribal Colleges with USDA-NRCS providing the framework and coordination.

The partnership has resulted in a standard system for mapping and assessing soil resources, so that soil information can be shared throughout the country and the world. To maintain a proactive and product-oriented soil survey, the NCSS system combines the resources of academic institutions, Federal, State, and local agencies, Tribes and private organizations. The goal of the NCSS is to build a consistent, seamless soil survey that is available both digitally and as printed documents. Research for the Soil Survey is coordinated and integrated with field mapping. Soil Information to the public is standardized and made available through the Web Soil Survey. The Web Soil Survey may be accessed at: <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/>

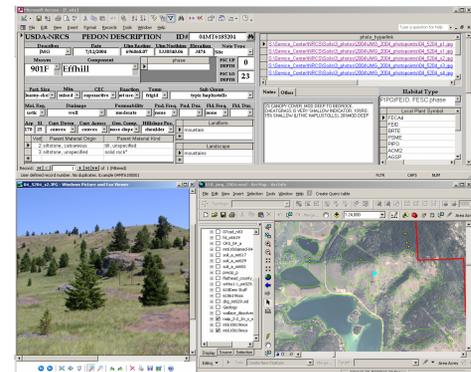


Linkages between National, Regional and State Meetings

The Chair of each regional standing committee attends the next national conference to ensure that issues of concern raised in regional committee deliberations are reported to the national conference and to provide clarification and counsel to the national committee regarding those issues. This individual also ensures that discussions of the national committee are well understood during deliberations of the regional committee during the year following the national conference. The Steering Committee, with the assistance of the National liaison, ensures that the issues raised by any regional ad hoc committees are directed to all appropriate individuals and that feedback is directed to the ad hoc committee so they are aware of the disposition of their concern.



The National Cooperative Soil Survey (NCSS) provides technical and operational coordination at National, regional, and State levels. Its activities relate to the technology for the collection, management, and presentation of information about the properties, patterns, and responses of soils and to other joint concerns, such as training and coordinated research and operations. Workshops, meetings, and conferences are held at each level to discuss and resolve concerns, evaluate proposals, and make recommendations for functioning of the cooperative soil survey. The National conference discusses subjects of national concern to the NCSS. The Director, Soil Survey Division, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), calls the conference after consulting with the conference steering committee. Attendees to the conference include national representatives of cooperating agencies and institutions. The Director invites other interested foreign and domestic groups and individuals and particularly principal users of soil surveys to participate. NRCS publishes the proceedings of the conference and distributes copies to the cooperators in the NCSS. The conference bylaws specify the objectives, membership, and committee responsibilities.



Communication and Connectivity

The Regional Conference Chair and the National liaison ensure that the individual who will present the regional report is aware of the importance of having a complete, written report available at the national conference. It is important to have continuity in the regional conference leadership for a minimum of the two year cycle from one regional conference to the next. Some regional conferences have semi-permanent committee chairs to maintain this continuity. If this is not the case, regional conferences are encouraged to document a process for their region that will provide needed continuity. If possible, this documentation should be incorporated into regional bylaws, as part of the guidance for functioning of the regional conference offices

National Committees

Research Agenda Standing Committee

Goals:

- Establish a targeted measurement program of chemical and physical relationships in soil properties and conditions using Benchmark soils and landscapes
- Evaluate baseline geo-chemical relationships in soil properties and conditions.

Charges:

- Identify, document, prioritize, and address the critical development issues within the NCSS.
- Articulate priority research needs.
- Determine opportunities for partnerships and for funding priority research needs.

NCSS Standards Standing Committee

Goals:

- Ensure Manuals and Soil Taxonomy are current

Charges:

- Receive recommendations from other regional committees and be the clearinghouse for issues dealing with standards. Establish subcommittees as needed to deal with issues identified.

New Technology Standing Committee

Goals:

- Identify and evaluate new inventory techniques
- Identify and evaluate new data base models for inventory and analysis of soil information.

Charges:

- To develop and document procedures, processes, and standards that will be used to integrate GIS, remote sensing, landscape modeling, and other similar technologies into the mainstream of the soil mapping and landscape inventory program.

