



What to do about....

Using the Web Soil Survey

Soil is a dirty topic, but everyone needs to learn more about it! Soils information can be crucial to making wise decisions on how to best use the land. Soil maps and related soil data can provide information for a variety of land users including homeowners, gardeners, farmers, developers, home builders, engineers, community planners and others. The USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), working cooperatively with their conservation partners such as local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) across the nation, has launched a tool to help people identify the soils on their property as well as the soil data for that site. This new natural resource tool is called the “Web Soil Survey” which allows users to find soils information for most locations in the United States. The Web Soil Survey is available on the web at: <http://soils.usda.gov/survey/>

The Web Soil Survey (WSS) site has three basic steps to make the site a simple yet powerful way to access and analyze soil data. The steps are “Define”, “View”, and “Explore”. In the “Define” step the user selects the Area of Interest (AOI) on an appropriate map that identifies the location that they desire soils information for. The AOI tab on the website allows the user to define an area by zooming in on a map and drawing a box around an area or by selecting it from a choice list. The user must complete this step before they can go on to the next two steps. In the “View” step, the user clicks on the Soil Map tab to view and print a map of the soils in their area of interest. In the third “Explore” step the user can click on the “Soil Data Explorer” tab to access soil data for their area of interest. Use this data to determine the suitability of the soils in an area for the proposed use.

The Web Soil Survey site has many help screens and a “Web Soil Survey- How to use it” file in PDF format that offers help and support on using the site. Like most new concepts, a little patience is needed to learn the ins and outs of the system, but with a little effort most people become masters of the site with a few brief trial runs.

The Marion County Soil & Water Conservation District strongly encourages people to obtain soils maps and soils information to help them as they make plans for using the land. If you find your soil type is rated as having severe to moderate limitations for your intended use please call to get additional assistance. There may be improvements that you could make to make your site more suitable. We can also assist you in obtaining aerial photos, soils information, soils maps, and other natural resource technical assistance contact our office at 317-786-1776.

**For more information contact the Marion County Soil & Water Conservation District
(317)786-1776 www.marionswcd.org**