

ACCESSING USDA/NRCS SOIL DATA

Determining the soil series and associated laboratory data for a specific area of interest can readily be accomplished by accessing the WEB based USDA/NRCS soil data archives. This access provides valuable reference information to apply the Texture Triangle method of soil water characteristics and corresponding reference data and soil profile descriptions. These WEB access screens contain access to a significant variety of soils information beyond those related to soil water characteristics, thus a guide for specific selections will prove useful to the casual user. The following WEB links and screen selections will result in identifying one or more soil series for the graphically selected "area of interest" and associated laboratory data for more specific textures and moisture characteristics.

Specific questions can be addressed directly by using the "Contact Us" link in the home page.

I: Determine the mapped Soil Series for the area of interest (AOI):

Access <http://soils.usda.gov>.

1. On left margin, select "Quick Access /Web Soil Survey"
2. Select "Start WSS" (Web Soil Survey) on main screen.
3. On national map, use cursor to select broad "Area of Interest" (AOI)
4. Using the button row above the map, select the first button, "Zoom in" and use the cursor to outline a region of the US map.
5. Then select consecutively smaller areas until the local area of interest is delineated and visible. Use the "Layers Tab" options to select features to display on the map.
6. Using the far right two buttons above the map, select "Area of Interest" (AOI) button, then use the cursor to delineate the specific land surface of interest.
7. From the tabs at the top of the main screen heading, select the "Soil Map". The map will now show the soils mapped for the AOI and a list of the soil series names will appear on the left panel with map symbols, mapped unit name, area and percent of area.
8. Having now identified the specific soil series of the simulation area allows proceeding to find the laboratory data associated with these series for further analyses or applications.

II: Determine the soil series laboratory data for profile layers, texture and characteristics:

Access NRCS Soils Website <http://soils.usda.gov>.

1. Select from the left margin list " Quick Access/ Soil Lab Data"
2. Select from left margin list "Characterization Data"
3. On the "Query Table, enter state and county, select "soil series / correlated" and enter the series name with no extensions for texture or slope.
4. A list of the identified the soil series laboratory reports will display.
5. Select one or more of the series, the choice of either an on-line display or download file and "continue".

6. From the list provided, select "Primary Characterization Data", then "Get Report".
7. A table of measured physical and chemical properties will be presented for each Soil Series identified.
8. Guided by this report, a series of soil profile layers can be developed for hydrologic simulations. These profile layers may number more or less than the analyzed soil layers. Data of particular interest would be texture, organic matter and bulk density (as available) for each hydrologic profile layer.