

NCSS Standards Committee
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Las Cruces, NM

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Charges

- Review NSSH 630 – Benchmark Soils and suggest needed revisions and clarifications.
- Review proposal by Fanning and Rabenhorst to revise the definitions of:
 - Sulfidic Materials
 - Sulfuric Horizon

Benchmark Soils

- Result of our NCSS committee Discussions.
- In general:
 - Set definition apart as a clear, stand-alone item.
 - Stressed MLRA context/shortened, added “ecological importance.”
 - Added MLRA-SSO responsibilities.
 - Clarified other responsibilities
 - Especially that MO has approval authority for changes.

Benchmark Soils

- Improved discussion of the criteria for evaluating benchmark status.
 - “Extent” is the benchmark series, plus those it represents.
 - Taxonomic duplication assessed for the MLRA (not all soils in USA).
 - Existing data – described what is meant by “completeness”.
 - Added “Other” considerations
 - Major parent materials and landforms
 - Ecological importance
 - Unique interpretations and/or land use

Benchmark Soils

- Endorsed continued use of a narrative record for each benchmark soil.
 - Add list of those other series for which the benchmark soil data can potentially be extended to.
- As SC/OSED are eventually integrated into NASIS:
 - Add benchmark status to the official description.
 - Indicate the MLRA('s) where it is considered a benchmark.
 - provide for some mechanism to house narrative records as part of the database.

Acid Sulfate Soils

General Summary of Proposal

1. Background Text is updated to:
 - correct some small errors,
 - more accurately describe mineral species,
 - clarify concepts
2. Revise criteria to better reflect current knowledge.

Proposal for Revision by Fanning and Rabenhorst

Sulfidic Materials Proposed Changes

1. Incubation procedure
 - Extend period from 8 to “16 weeks or longer...”
2. Allow 2nd way to meet sulfidic materials criteria
 - Materials with high S that do not reach low pH on incubation due to buffering, but can still produce acid drainage waters.
 - A soil like this was visited on WCSS tour in MD
 - Mirrors criteria from WRB.

Proposal for Revision by Fanning and Rabenhorst

Sulfuric Horizon Proposed Changes

1. Allow pH between 3.5 and 4.0 if sulfuric acid producing minerals are present in the material.
2. Delete color criteria because it has been shown to be inaccurate in identifying the presence of jarosite.

Recommendations

- NSSC Standards Staff should take steps needed to implement the proposed revisions to NSSH 630 – Benchmark Soils.
- As soon as the policy is released, MLRA-SSO management teams should ensure that the guidance is used in evaluating the current BMS list, and that BMS are considered in guiding soil survey projects and investigations.

Recommendations

- As SC/OSED are integrated into NASIS:
 - the OSED should be enhanced to indicate that a soil is a BMS, and in which MLRA('s).
 - Provision should be made to include the Benchmark Soil Narrative Record as part of the database so it can be accessed and delivered as needed.

Recommendations

- NSSC Standards Staff should take steps needed to include the revisions for acid sulfate soils into the 11th edition Keys to Soil Taxonomy.