



# **User Perspective – NASCA: Partnership in Soil Survey with State Government**



**Presented at National  
Cooperative Soil  
Survey Conference**

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# MOU signed in January, 2003





# Soil Survey and Soil Conservation History

- **Soil Survey's origins in late 19<sup>th</sup> Century**
- **USDA + Experiment Stations and Extension Service**
- **Soil Conservation Act of 1935**
- **Standard State Soil Conservation Districts Law distributed in February, 1937 (FDR)**





# **State Soil Conservation Districts Laws**

- **Arkansas' law enacted in March, 1937**
- **Enacted in 21 other states in 1937**
- **By 1947, enacted in every state plus Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands**



# Soil Scientists on SCA Staffs

- **20 in Missouri**
- **9 in Ohio**
- **5 in North Carolina**
- **3 in Kentucky**
- **1 in some other states**





# 2007 NASCA Survey

## Regarding

- **the perceived need for maintaining and updating soils information where soil surveys have been completed**
- **NRCS' plans for reorganizing their soil survey project office staffing by Major Land Resource Areas (MLRA)**



# States Responding

- Louisiana
- Maryland
- Michigan
- Minnesota\*
- Missouri
- Ohio
- South Carolina
- Washington
- West Virginia\*

\* MLRA Office States



# State Profiles

- **Range from 1 in-state project office for 5 areas in state to 4 in 7**
- **Percentage of state in areas with project offices in state ranges from about 35 to 95**
- **4 states have 1 or more staff soil scientists**
- **2 states provide no funding or staff support at state level**



# Is updating existing soils information critical in all or part of your state?

- 1 state had not finished “once-over”
- 8 considered the need as critical (20-50% of state)
- 1 cited benchmark soils approach
- 1 identified joining and unified legend





# **How do you expect maintenance and update work in your state to be served by NRCS soil scientists?**

- **3 thought “better”**
- **4 thought “worse”**
- **2 expressed concerns but did not speculate**



# **When do you expect the plan to be fully implemented for all parts of your state?**

- 2 said 2007 or 2008**
- 2 said 2009**
- 1 said when on-going subsets are completed, between 2009 and 2011**
- 4 either did not know or did not speculate**



# **Is process developed for communicating update needs in state to project office staffs based in other states?**

- 3 said “yes” (1 noted that it had been done without state involvement.)**
- 3 said “no”**
- 3 said that it was being developed**



## **Other Comments About Reorganization Plan?**

- 3 were concerned about cooperation and local input**
- 1 was concerned about efficiency with large areas for each office**
- 1 was concerned about NRCS funding**
- 1 was concerned about consistency between MOs**



## **General Observations**

- **MO states, states with >85% in areas with in-state offices, and states that provide little support were more positive.**
- **States with soil scientists on staff and with a high interest in updating were the less positive.**

# Key to Partnerships

## Communications

- Say what you mean, mean what you say
- “When” matters



