



The 2010 Northeast Regional Cooperative Soil Survey Conference

Pennsylvania hosted the 2010 Northeast Regional Cooperative Soil Survey Conference at Elizabethtown College, in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, June 6-10th. State Soil Scientist, Ed White opened the Conference describing the new Era in Soil Survey: a new structure, new tools, advanced technology, new opportunities, and an exponentially increasing need to help society make informed decisions.

Monday morning sessions included reports from the Soil Survey Division, National Soil Survey Center, Technical Soil Services, National Park Service and activities of the National Society of Consulting Soil Scientists along with breakout sessions for Committee meetings. During a Monday evening dinner with a “Pennsylvania Dutch” menu, Dr. Donald Kraybill, Senior Fellow of the Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies, spoke on Amish and Mennonite agriculture and culture throughout the northeast.

Denise Coleman, State Conservationist in Pennsylvania opened Tuesday’s session with a welcome and discussion of the value of the Soil Survey program to the USDA, NRCS, state agencies and the public. The technical sessions included a wide variety of timely topics in soil survey: Storm water issues, Mill Dams and Legacy Sediments, ARS Nutrient and Hydrologic studies, LiDAR data applications, detailed climate analysis for Pennsylvania, ecosystem services and the National Atlas, the National Carbon Accounting Strategy, and the status of the Multistate Hydropedology NE-1038 project from each participating University. Concurrent sessions included Ecological Site Descriptions, the North American Soil Geochemical Landscapes Project, Soil Interpretations- Productivity and Risk, PaOneStop-On line Conservation Planning tool, Solifluction in the Ridge and Valley, and Soil Based Drought Vulnerability assessment. A well attended poster session followed the presentations.

Wednesday’s Technical Tour brought all of the presentations into sharp focus, a morning drizzle, turning into a cold wet rain did not hamper the enthusiasm or technical discussions of the tour participants. At the first stop the Mid Atlantic Hydric Soil Committee led discussion of the TF-2 Red Parent Material Hydric Soil Indicator. Mill Dams, Legacy Sediments and the sedimentary soils (Fig.2), and a restored Mill Dam floodplain site (Fig. 1) were observed at the second stop, with Dorothy Merritts and Bob Walters leading the discussions. At the third stop, Patrick Drohan led the group through multiple terrace profiles on the Susquehanna River. After lunch, the group visited Warwick Township to learn about their innovative approaches to Storm water management, farmland preservation, nutrient management, and



Figure 1 Restored Legacy Sediment Site



Figure 2. Frank Stoltzfus discusses the Masonic Village Farm operation as Soil Scientists observe a Legacy Sediment soil profile

wetland restoration and the positive effects these have had throughout the township and to Lititz Creek. Storm water BMP's from porous pavement, bioswales and basins were observed in action during a period of heavy rainfall. A Hagerstown soil profile highlighted the stop.

The final technical tour stop was at the Waltz Vineyard, which highlighted the complexity of viticulture and terrior (soil, climate and landscape) in the northeast. Viniculture and Viticulture were discussed by owners Jan and Kim Waltz, Farm Manager Jeff Zick, Vineyard Soil Specialist James Fisher and Cooperative Extension Viticulture Specialist Mark Chien, and field soil profiles were studied in heavy rain. After a long, wet day in the field, Waltz Vineyard hosted a wine tasting and dinner. They were presented with two soil monoliths of their "Terrior" (Fig.3).



Fig. 3. (L to R) John Chibirka, James Fisher, Patrick Drohan present soil monoliths to Jan Waltz and Jeff Zick

On Thursday, the six conference committees presented their final reports and the Regional Soil Survey Offices (MO 12, 13 and 14) presented their reports. A need for an Soil Interpretations subcommittee was discussed.

Tony Jenkins, State Soil Scientist in Maine, volunteered to host the 2012 Northeast Regional Conference, likely to be in Orono, ME in July.

The 2010 Northeast Region Silver Spade Award was presented to Jim Turenne, NRCS Research Soil Scientist, Rhode Island, by past recipient John Galbraith. Jim was recognized for the innovative work he has done.



Fig. 4. John Galbraith (L) presenting Silver Spade Award to Jim Turenne.

More than 85 Soil Scientists (including U. of Maryland students for the field tour) attended all or part of the Conference. All the presentations, committee and MO reports, and additional photos from the 2010 Northeast Regional Soil Survey Conference are available on the Cooperative Soil Survey Web Site.