

## Results of 2006 Training Strategic Plan Initiatives

<b>Goal 1; Enhance course content, develop new courses where necessary, and provide training that includes emphasis on interpretations, new technologies, USDA programs, law and public policy, and other aspects of a well balanced soil survey program.</b>	
	Objective 1: Incorporate blended learning into training including increased use of web-based learning
<b><i>Progress made-ongoing effort</i></b>	1. Increase use of and repetition of hands-on exercises and activities in training to increase retention of learning in all courses.
<b><i>Completed as needed</i></b>	2. Incorporate flexible precourse and post course assignments in training courses where appropriate to enhance the learning experience and help in retention of learning in all courses.
<b><i>Done-BLM does not have access to Aglearn for security reasons</i></b>	3. Work with NEDC to insure that Co-operators who need access to our distance learning have that access.
<b><i>Will be completed summer 09 by posting links to course materials on website</i></b>	4. Develop refresher materials, when appropriate, to capture updates to past training in technology that is changing rapidly, develop a mechanism to notify people of the updates, and post for access.
	Objective 2: Do required maintenance on the existing NEDC courses in order to address the skills required by soil scientists to accomplish the SSD Mission into the foreseeable future
<b><i>All courses went through redevelopment</i></b>	1. Work with instructor cadres to incorporate new, adopted technology, policy, and procedures in each SSD sponsored NEDC course on an ongoing basis.
<b><i>Done</i></b>	2. Work with instructor cadres to incorporate the NCSS soil scientist skills matrix developed for each current course and incorporate these skills into course objectives for all courses
<b><i>Done</i></b>	3. Work with NEDC to assign and credit CEUs to SSD sponsored courses as each course is updated/redesigned/designed.
<b><i>Done</i></b>	4. Add the NASIS training courses to NEDC course catalog.

<b>Done-in form of suggested syllabuses of learning, posted on website</b>	5. Determine “core” courses appropriate for soil scientists and provide to State Soil Scientists.
<b>Done</b>	6. Develop method of delivering test scores to State Soil Scientists, supervisors, and students, distributing more than one level of course certification based on performance versus attendance, and allocating CEUs based on successful completion of training versus attendance only.
	Objective 3: Develop new courses and training modules to address unmet needs of the Soil Survey Division’s four mission areas.
<b>Done-list of existing courses posted on website</b>	1. The SSD Leadership should approach the Human Resources Management Division and check on the need for a soil survey training course for NRCS and cooperator non soil scientists to meet undergraduate level course requirements for GS-457 series. If one is needed the SSD Training Coordinator should help locate an existing university online course or develop a suitable course.
<b>Done</b>	2. Complete development of an ArcGIS SDV training course to help in delivery of soil survey products by Technical Soil Services staff and others.
<b>Done-designed new course to replace ST-P&amp;A (Technical Soil Services)</b>	3. Apply the skills matrix to the ArcGIS SDV course and the Soil Technology-Programs and Applications course to decide if there is potential for a new course or a complete redesign of the Programs & Application course relevant to TSS; a basic TSS course, SDV course, marketing, community relationships, etc. to address the mission in regards to TSS.
<b>Developed list of GIS training which is posted on website. Developed syllabus of learning for GIS. Remote sensing courses in various stages of development</b>	4. Address list of new GIS related training needs, either as new course, new modules within existing courses, our utilize existing courses outside Soil Survey Division responsibility:. Also consider training needs inclusive of the Soil Resource Inventory Toolbox (SRIT): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3D visual techniques</li> <li>• Digital remote sensing</li> <li>• ERDAS Imagine</li> <li>• Geodatabase management</li> <li>• Data analysis, interpretive, and development tools (Spatial Analyst, 3D Analyst, Terrain navigator, Developing block diagrams, etc.)</li> <li>• Projections and coordinate systems (existing ESRI training)</li> <li>• Mobile computing</li> </ul>

<p><b>Addressed in various ways. Mgt of SS by MLRA course developed. Intro to Conservation Planning part of Syllabus of learning</b></p>	<p>5. Address list of new training needs, other than GIS, either as new course, new modules within existing courses, our utilize existing courses outside Soil Survey Division responsibility:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrative duties for project leaders</li> <li>• Ecological Site Descriptions and state transition models</li> <li>• Soil Genesis and Morphology</li> <li>• Introduction to Conservation Planning (NEDC AgLearn course)</li> <li>• Effective interagency cooperation to enhance the NCSS program (NHQ sponsored SSS training)</li> </ul>
<p><b>No progress. Attempts generated little interest to help in doing this</b></p>	<p>6. Work with NCSS people throughout each region of the country and on an as need basis develop web-based training modules related to Soil Taxonomy and soil classification that is relevant to each region.</p>
<p><b>No progress. Is now part of effort to develop OJT modules. Larry West's shop has taken responsibility.</b></p>	<p>7. Work with NCSS people throughout each region of the country and on an as need basis develop web-based training modules related to Pedology that is relevant to each region.</p>
	<p>Objective 4: Enhance use of professional development workshops by MLRA Offices, States, and NTSC's as a method of technology transfer</p>
<p><b>No Progress. No interest.</b></p>	<p>1. Promote workshop concept to all SSS/MOLs and Regional Soil Scientists as means of providing training and developmental material. SSD training coordinator will prepare and provide a template for workshops and assist in developing workshops upon request.</p>
<p><b>Done. Little though some action.</b></p>	<p>2. Encourage workshop hosts to share agendas and workshop materials with others in the NCSS through the SSD training coordinator. The soils.usda.gov website should be utilized to accomplish this action.</p>
	<p>Objective 5: Market this training strategic plan throughout NRCS and the NCSS program</p>
<p><b>Done</b></p>	<p>1. SSD Training Coordinator or representative should attend regional SSS meetings and/or regional work planning conferences and provide an overview of the changes coming in SSD technology transfer.</p>
<p><b>Done</b></p>	<p>2. SSD Training Coordinator should write an article in an issue of the NCSS newsletter to provide an overview of the changes coming in SSD technology transfer.</p>

<b><i>Has been some effort but little in way of results.</i></b>	3. SSD Training Coordinator is encouraged to establish and maintain relationships with Tech Specialists at each NTSC for cooperative efforts in technology transfer.
<b><i>Done</i></b>	4. SSD Training Coordinator should maintain contact with SSS and Center directors to encourage continued support for training activities, on an ongoing basis.
<b><i>Not sure if this was done.</i></b>	5. SSD should link this training strategic plan to the NRCS Human Capital Strategic Plan and that plan's part that addresses training needs.
	Objective 6: Maintain the two Soil Science Institutes
<b><i>Done</i></b>	1. Assess demand for each Institute and conduct each according to the demand over the next three to five years. Reassess the need again after that period of time.
<b><i>Done</i></b>	2. Check past history of Institutes in regards to CEUs. Work with NEDC to assess and assign Continuing Education Units (CEUs) to each soil science institute's curriculum.
<b><i>Done</i></b>	3. Develop method of delivering test scores to State Soil Scientists, supervisors, and students, distributing more than one level of course certification based on performance versus attendance, and allocating CEUs based on successful completion of training versus attendance only.
	Objective 7: Encourage soil scientists to utilize other educational opportunities within and outside the agency
<b><i>Done-posted on website</i></b>	1. Query for existing on-line courses sponsored at universities across the country and provide list as part of a job aid that helps soil scientists explore educational opportunities that will help them support the 4 mission areas of the SSD, with emphasis on distance learning opportunities available
<b><i>On as need basis</i></b>	2. SSD leadership should continue to take the initiative to annually identify appropriate grad program subject(s) areas and submit them to the Agency Leadership.
<b><i>No opportunities presented themselves</i></b>	3. SSD leadership should, as budget allows, look into increasing opportunities for grad program participation, if the demand is there and when it can benefit the needs of the agency. This should be done on an ongoing basis.
<b><i>Ongoing</i></b>	4. The SSD should continue to administratively support (admin. leave to attend classes for example) education by the individual, if that education supports the needs of the agency. This should be done on an ongoing basis.

<b>Goal 2; Develop the teaching skills of those providing training</b>	
	Objective 1: Provide course instructors with the tools and skills they need to be effective instructors
<b><i>Done-held workshop at NSSC, provide Training for Dummies to new</i></b>	1. Provide "Train the Trainer" training to all current and future instructor cadre members through whatever means possible, on an as need basis.
<b><i>Done-posted on website</i></b>	2. Prepare a set of guidelines for instructors to include guidance, tips, and tools relevant to training instruction within the SSD.
<b><i>Ongoing</i></b>	3. Work continually with MLRA Office Leaders, State Soil Scientists, center directors, and national leaders to encourage our best potential instructors to become instructor cadre members.
<b><i>This is in place and utilized</i></b>	4. The SSD, and States should utilize the current incentive awards program for providing awards or certificates, as appropriate, to instructors to thank them and encourage them to remain with the instructor cadres.
<b><i>Done with letters</i></b>	5. States, MO's, Centers, etc. should be recognized for committing staff resources to training activities.
	Objective 2: Provide supervisors and others who provide On the Job Training (OJT) with the guidance and tools they need to effectively do that job
<b><i>Developed OJT module. Both stand alone and used in Mgt and TSS courses</i></b>	1. Develop a training module as a vehicle to provide supervisors with the methods, tools and job aids necessary for effectively providing OJT. The module to be stand alone or part of the Correlation & Management of MLRA Soil Surveys course.
<b><i>In progress- volunteers from field from both</i></b>	2. Develop guidelines, tools, and job aids to assist project leaders and other supervisors responsible for providing effective OJT. To support the proposed training module in initiative #1 above.
	3. Provide a template training plan for a new employee's first year to 18 months of employment.
<b><i>Done-posted on website</i></b>	4. Provide a template Employee Development Plan (EDP) that includes all possible formal training needs for all soil scientists, to be edited by the employee and supervisor to address the specific needs of the employee.
<b><i>Done-learner-supervisor contract required for all course participants</i></b>	5. Require student and supervisor to have contact with each other prior to training to discuss course content, prerequisites, expectations, and follow up.

<b>Nothing done actively</b>	6. Encourage the use of rotational training to allow employees to shadow mentors in soil survey or other disciplines.
<b>Nothing done</b>	7. Encourage the use of the Education Grants Program for employees below the GS-11 grade level.
<b>Goal 3; Make job aids available to all within the SSD</b>	
	Objective 1: Develop a clearinghouse of job aids from around the NCSS where they can be shared with others
<b>Done as part of OJT development effort</b>	1. solicit existing job aids and prepare a system to capture and categorize them and make them accessible to other potential users through a single web based clearinghouse at the NSSC.
<b>Done-OJT effort is result</b>	2. solicit needs for new job aids, develop them, and add to the clearinghouse.
<b>Done-being addressed as part of OJT effort</b>	3. Address the first list of training aids proposed for development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Photographing soil profiles</li> <li>• Selected Taxonomy topics</li> <li>• Selected soil Description topics</li> <li>• Soil monolith construction</li> <li>• Soil sampling techniques</li> <li>• Pedon and PDAs</li> </ul>