



2011 Annual Report Soil Survey Program

This report contains fiscal year activity for the state of Colorado from the time period of October 2010 to September 2011.

Who We Are

NRCS provides technical and financial assistance to help agricultural producers and others care for the land. NRCS has six mission goals that include high quality, productive soils; clean and abundant water; healthy plant and animal communities; clean air; an adequate energy supply; and working farms and ranchlands.

Vision

Productive Lands -
Healthy Environment

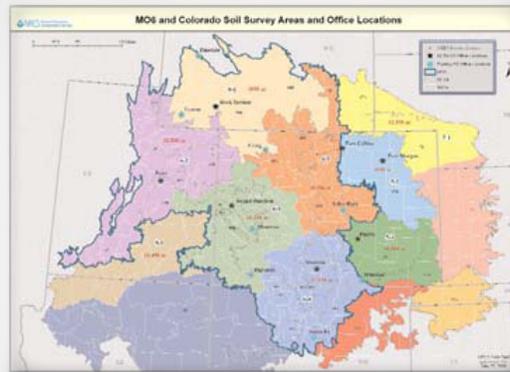
Mission

Helping People Help the Land

“Soil surveys can be used for general farm, local, and wider area planning.

Futhermore, the NRCS Web Soil Survey provides soil data and access to the largest natural resource information system in the world.”

Steve Park,
State Soil Scientist



The Program

Soil surveys have been an important resource tool for 100 years. At first, soil surveys were conducted to find areas in which to expand agriculture. Today, they are used to plan ways to protect soil and water from erosion, sedimentation, and pollution.

Federal, state, and local governments, private individuals, and businesses use soil information for:

- Agriculture
- Engineering
- Transportation
- Urban development
- Wetlands
- Wildlife habitat
- Farm Bill program eligibility and ranking criteria

Colorado Encompasses:

- 66,618,200 acres
- 63 percent in private ownership
- 22 percent National Forest Lands
- 12 percent U.S. Bureau of Land Management Lands
- The rest is divided between

The MLRA Soil Survey Offices, established within the past few years, will ignore political boundaries, resulting in a seamless and more uniform inventory of soils.

To view soil survey maps, visit <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/>.

National Parks, Native American ownership, and other Federal lands.

Soil Surveys Available

Soil surveys are available in published or in draft form for 99.8 percent of the state's privately owned and state land, and 99.5 percent of the state's Federal land.

2011 Accomplishments

Approximately 313,400 acres of land were updated.

Soil surveys were posted in digital form for the Wet Mountains-Spanish Peak Area.

The Soil Survey of Costilla County Area was published.

For More Information

Visit our web site at www.co.nrcs.usda.gov.

NRCS CONSERVATION PROGRAM SUCCESS STORY

Rapid Assessment of U.S. Soil Carbon (RaCA) for Conservation Planning and Modeling

Issue:

Soil carbon varies on the landscape thereby causing a need to sample and develop Ecological Site Descriptions (ESD).

What NRCS CO is Doing:

The objective of this project was to evaluate how soil carbon varies on the landscape, to develop a scientifically-based, statistically valid baseline inventory of soil carbon stocks and to facilitate improvement of existing decision support tools for conservation planning. The sampling took place from October 1, 2011 through September 30, 2011. In Colorado a total of 1,310 sites were sampled and documented. Seven two-person teams from the entire region participated in the completion of this project, and three ecological site inventory personnel were hired to accelerate the inventory and development of Ecological Site Descriptions (ESDs). The samples await scanning with the spectrometer probe at the Colorado State University Lab. The projected RaCA products include improved maps and knowledge about the distribution of soil carbon stocks, which will be in the form of a publically accessible database, for modeling and validation. This will also lead to the enhancement of soil survey dataset on soil carbon and related properties. **Program used: CTA**

Soil Surveys and the Once Over in Colorado

Issue:

Appropriate land use is greatly determined by the condition of its soil.

What NRCS CO is Doing:

Colorado recently saw the completion of its initial soil survey (often referred to as the “once over”). This is a tremendous milestone not only for NRCS but also for the state as Colorado’s soil survey efforts began with a Reconnaissance Soil Survey of the Cache La Poudre Valley in 1899. Since then, soil scientists have walked Colorado’s landscapes digging holes and collecting information on the more than 5,000 soil map units and 1,500 unique soil types. Colorado consistently ranks in the top five states for customer downloads from Web Soil Survey. **Program used: CTA**



MLRA Soil Survey Leader examines soil for categorization and data collection.