

SOIL AND PLANT SCIENCE DIVISION

Technical Soil Services

Southwest Soil Survey Region

Minden, Nevada, Major Land Resource Area (MLRA) Soil Survey Office (SSO)

Minden Soil Survey Office Reveals Secrets of the Soil at the Youth Wildlife Conservation Experience

Purpose

The Minden MLRA SSO, with assistance from Nevada Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) employees, participated in the Youth Wildlife Conservation Experience (YWCE) in Reno, Nevada, on January 18-19, 2024. This was our second year in a row providing support for the event. The YWCE provides a fun and interactive experience for young students with an interest in the outdoors. Our office showcased Nevada NRCS's famous Soil Tunnel, an inflatable display that simulates a subterranean traverse. The tunnel is plastered with information about various aspects of soil science, which the students peruse as they accomplish the treasure hunt activities geared towards their respective grade levels. Tables outside of the tunnel are topped with educational material, fun activities, and other giveaways.

Background

The YWCE is held by the Wild Sheep Foundation, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to enhance wild sheep populations, promote scientific wildlife management, and educate the public and youth on sustainable use and the conservation benefits of hunting. The youth event itself, held every year at the Reno-Sparks Convention Center, showcases vendors from a wide range of backgrounds that cover conservation in a broad sense. Our office has been invited to participate in this event for the past two years, and we expect to continue our support in the years to come.

Key Outcomes

In 2024, the YWCE set attendance records. A total of 2,754 kids showed up, over 900 more than the previous year. The young attendees who participated in our soil tunnel activity were

enthusiastic learners who seemed to greatly enjoy the activity. They were helped along in their quest for knowledge by eager NRCS employees from Nevada NRCS and the Southwest Soil Survey Region.



Figure 1. Minden MLRA SSO participants standing in front of the Soil Tunnel (from left to right: Matt Cole, Jessica Castiblanco, and Meghan Krueger).



Figure 2. Students participate at the Soil Tunnel display while Matt Cole (center) works the tables.