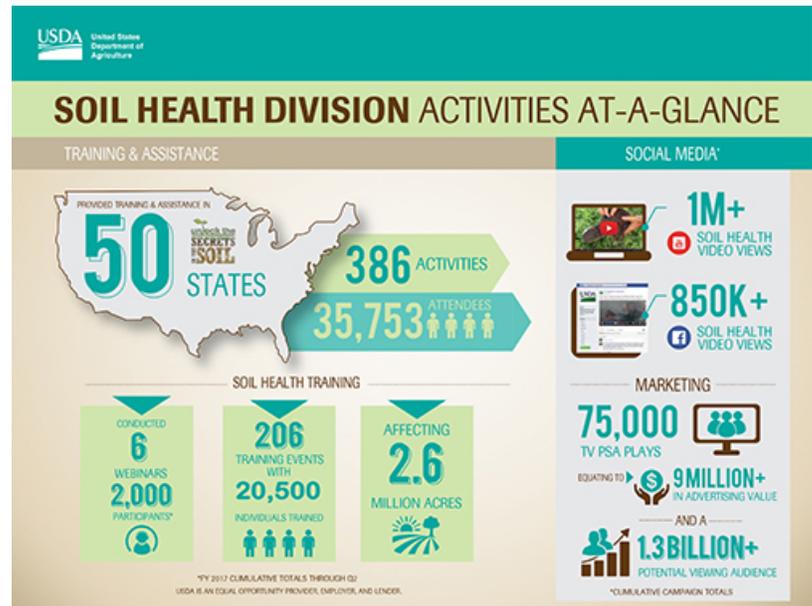


Dear Soil Health Enthusiasts,

FY 17 has brought much change and activity and good progress in Soil Health. Much is visible in the field as your Soil Health Division continues to provide training and technical assistance – see a small sampling of what our customers are saying below. Other progress is still behind the scenes as we are standing up national strategies and business processes, and develop mechanisms for providing services to better meet the needs of states and the soil health community at large.



Our staff reached over 36,000 participants, some of whom manage or influence well over 2 million acres, touching every state and area in the first two quarters of FY17, despite significant budget constraints in Q1 (Please see the SHD accomplishments attachment for a regional breakdown). Not only did we exceed our total FY16 numbers already, but this was done with about ½ the travel dollars per participant reached in comparison to last year. This is a testament to the dedication of our staff to make the most of diminishing resources, the services of our Asset Management Division to help our division get equipped with vehicles that are allowing us to save on travel costs, and larger audiences as Soil Health Teams everywhere inspire our nation’s producers to experiment with innovative soil health management systems, and adopt these across large acreages as they succeed.

As the new national Conservation Planning Certification policy has gone into effect, we are already starting to work with many of you on developing and implementing a soil health training strategy that is feasible for meeting your states’ certification needs. If you have not done so already, please don’t hesitate to reach out to your SHD specialist for assistance.

Information Highlights

- **SHD Accomplishments** – national and regional summaries of activities
- **SHD Services** – short 1p overview of the types of assistance we can provide
- **Soil Health Division Communication and Assistance Agreement Form** – please fill out, sign and return to SHD
- **SH Certification for Conservation Planners** – more information is available [here](#) on our SharePoint site
- **In Field Soil Health Assessment** – please share your insights on [here](#) (NB 450-17-5)
- **SHD Contacts and Feedback Survey** can be found [here](#).

We are providing technical assistance to state NRCS staff and partners, and developing and teaching trainings and workshops. Please see the ***“SHD services”*** attachment for a sampling of the kinds of efforts we can help with, and the ***“SHD Communication and Assistance Agreement Form”*** we have developed to facilitate clarity in communication and better coordination between SHD and states so that we can better leverage resources to add value to your local and regional soil health efforts.

Across the country, Soil Health Division staff are contributing to technical activities in state, regional, and national efforts. We have a number of factsheets and other technical documents in development that will be rolling out in the coming months and year, and we are working across divisions and deputy areas to integrate the most current science on soil health into the agency’s practice standards, resource concerns, policies, tools, and programs.

We continue to build national, regional, and local relationships and influence stakeholders across the spectrum, from our own agency’s staff, to producers, non-profits, and industry, to universities, colleges, other research and teaching partners and other federal agencies. A few activity highlights from across the nation:

- A number of staff are working with faculty at universities, including a number of those serving historically underserved populations, providing assistance in developing extension and teaching curriculum on soil health for increased adoption of soil health management systems, and for preparing the next generation to move into agricultural professions

What our customers are saying

State Conservationist, Denise Coleman, PA:

“Your participation in the event brought a unique perspective and a contagious energy to the event. Your attention to the importance of conservation planning, resource concerns, and significance of strong relationships with our customers will help planners improve the quality of conservation placed on the ground. All this will improve the Pennsylvania resource base. Thank you again - your presence really made a difference to the quality of this meeting.”

State Conservationist, at completion of state NEDC course: “I’ve been hearing great things all week and... ‘I’ve never seen my DCs this excited about anything.”

District Conservationist: “We are so appreciative of the time you spent with us ... As the DC I’m fortunate to know most of the guys that attended fairly well. They all sang your praises ... You lit a spark around here, and a big one at that! Thanks a MILLION!”

District Conservationist: “The passion you stirred in these fellas up here is well, freaking insane! I’ve accepted 5 cover crop applications in the last 2 weeks and one was from a man who sat at my desk two years ago and told me no-till would never work on his ranch. I talked with him until I was blue (2 years ago) but you managed to convince him!”

Producer: “I just wanted to share some pictures of the cover crops I planted after meeting you at the workshop this summer. Thanks for your advice and inspiration!”

Producer: “... I have come to the conclusion that the vast majority of farmers have absolutely no idea of the potential that using no-till with diverse covers holds, I was one of them until just recently.”

with a good understanding of soil health.

- In a number of states intensive trainings for soil health certification of planners have been started or even completed. Trainings are often organized at the area level to save travel costs for state staffs
- Several of our staff have played key leadership roles in the development of the new Northeast and Southeast Cover Crops Councils
- Several of our staff are participating on working groups of regional nutrient management extension leadership, water quality teams, microbiome efforts, and many other regional and cross-organizational groups, and are building bridges and opportunities better communication, effective collaboration and leveraging of resources

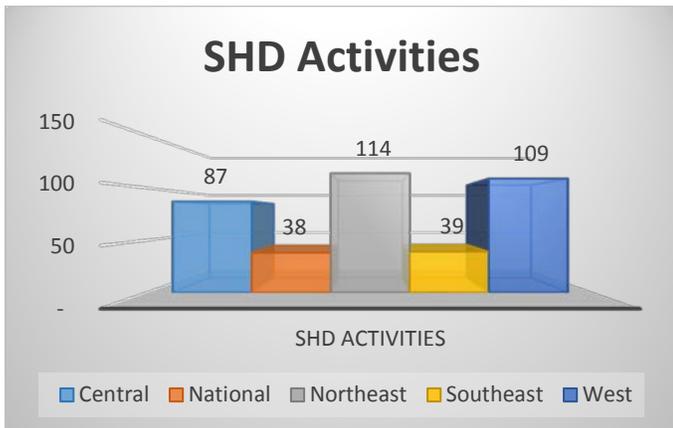
You can now find our staff more easily by going to our [contacts page](#) linked from 'Related Links' on the national NRCS soil health page. We are excited to welcome two additional team members on our division staff: we were able to hire a Presidential Management Fellow, Carl Koch, to serve as our divisions Special Projects Coordinator. We also currently have Steve Cole (SLDP member, usually ASTC FO in Minnesota) detailed into our Partnership Liaison position until September, focusing on integrating Soil Health Division into the General Manual. We appreciate any insights on how we can better serve you, and so are working to make it easier for you all to provide direct feedback. In addition to welcoming feedback

As much as I am proud of our accomplishments to date, I'm equally excited by the prospect of all that we can accomplish together as an agency in the months and years ahead. SHD's success can only be fully measured in the context of the value we bring to you and your customers. To ensure we continue to provide and improve our services to you, we would welcome hearing from you by email, phone, and in person, as well as via our new [feedback survey](#) on our contacts page, and the customer service feedback links you will start to see on our staffs' emails in the coming weeks.

Please contact any of our staff to let us know what we can do to more fully enable your soil health efforts. On behalf of SHD staff, I look forward to continuing our work together to protect and improve the health of our nation's living and life-giving soil.

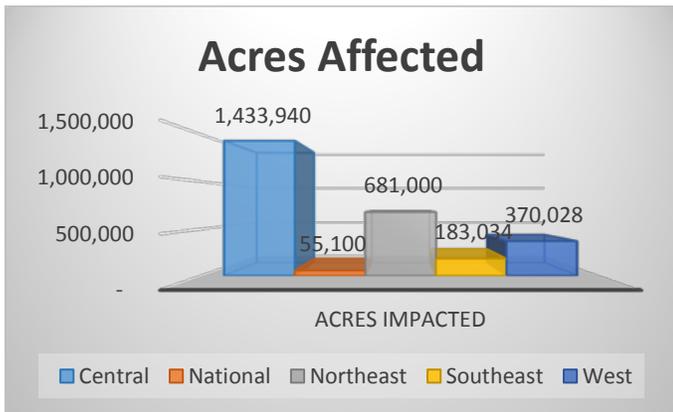
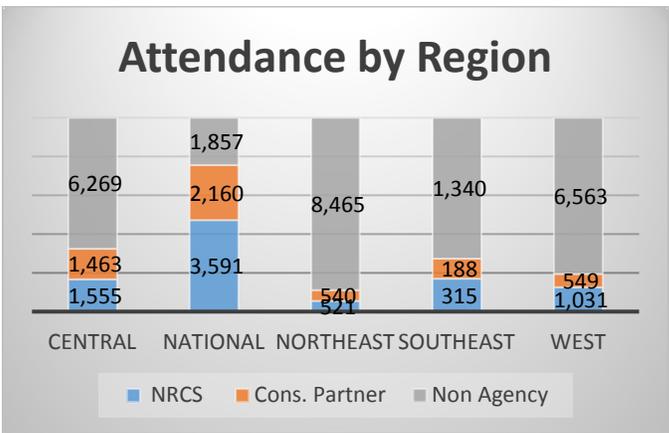
Thank you for your support,
Bianca Mobius-Clune

Soil Health Division Accomplishments FY 2107, Quarters 1 & 2



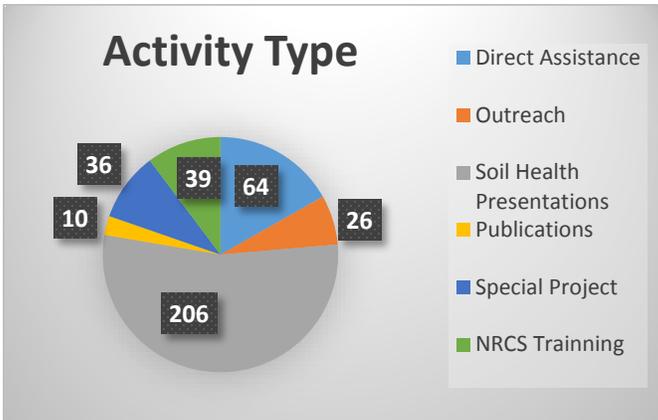
Activities include training, outreach, direct assistance or special projects that SHD staff provided

NRCS	7,013
Cons. Partners	4,900
Non-Agency	24,494
Total	36,407



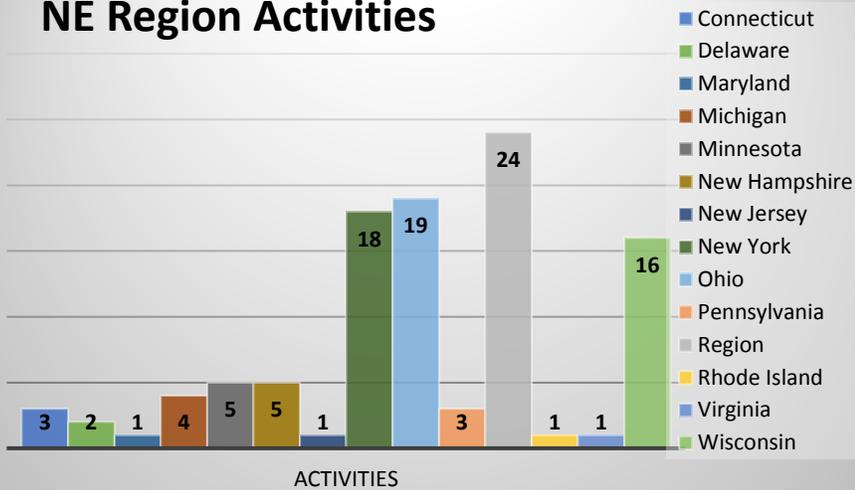
Acres Affected:
Represents the acres of agricultural land that was managed by the participants of the events.
Total: 2,673,102

- Activities include:
- Participating on Cover Crop Councils
 - Farmer visits
 - State Technical Committee presentations
 - Review of technical documents
 - Support Soil Health Advisory Board
 - Soil health training at a variety of events



Northeast Region Accomplishments

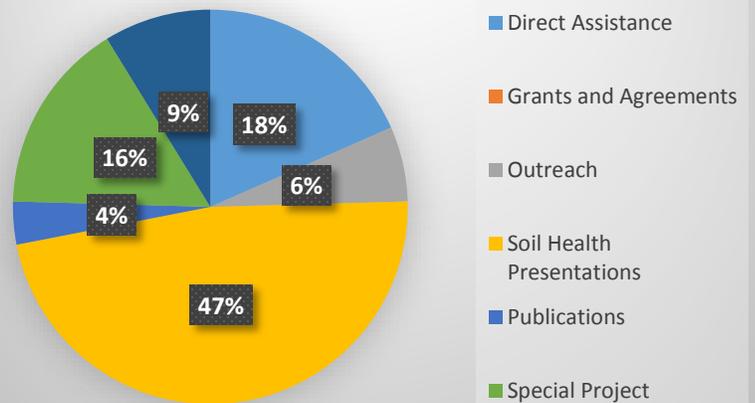
NE Region Activities



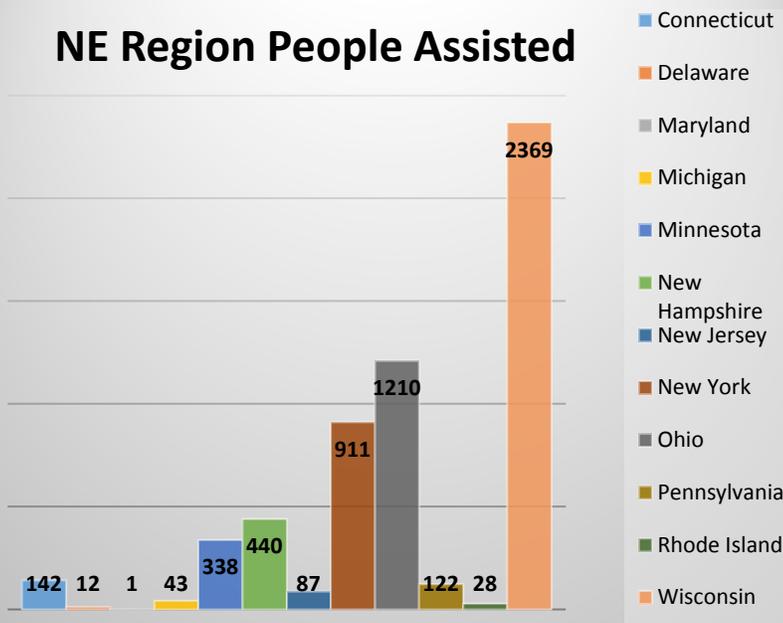
Total number of Soil Health Activities was 114.

Assistance was provided in a variety of area.

NE Region Activity Type



NE Region People Assisted

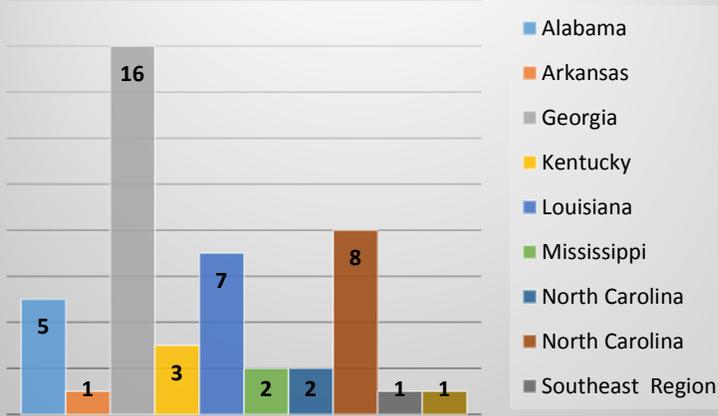


The total number of individual assisted in the region was 7745. This was broken down as follows:

- NRCS 521
- Partners 540
- Non-Gov 8465

Southeast Region Accomplishments

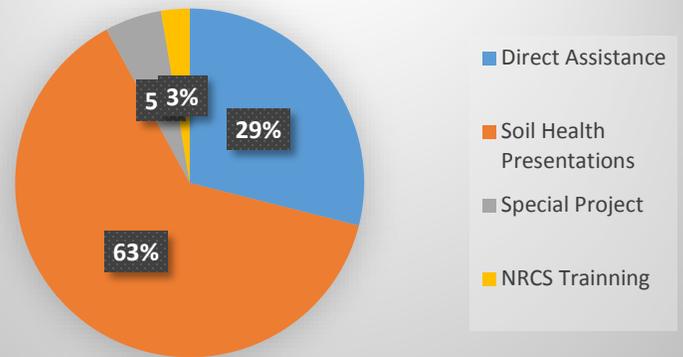
SE Region Activities



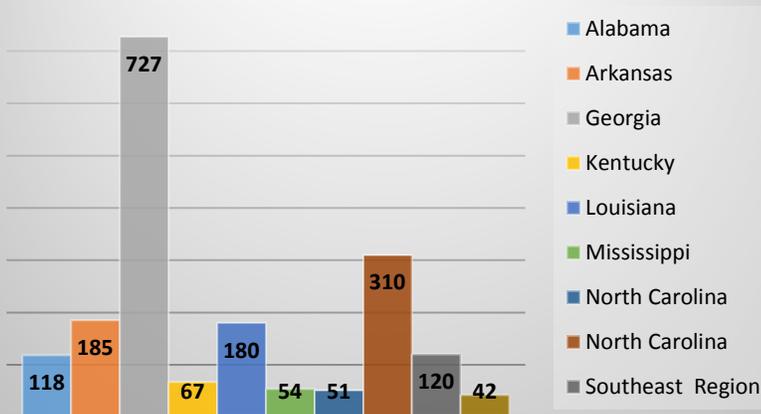
Total number of Soil Health Activities was 46.

Assistance was provided in a variety of area.

SE Region Activity Type



SE Region People Assisted

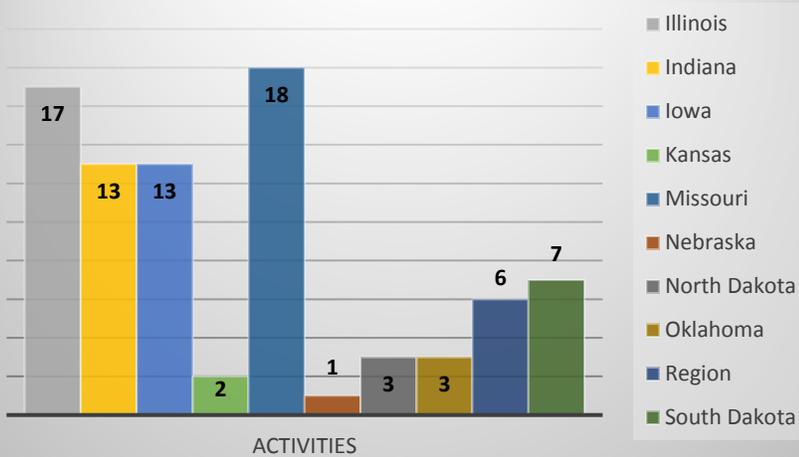


The total number of individual assisted in the region was 1843. This was broken down as follows:

- NRCS 315
- Partners 188
- Non-Gov 1340

Central Region Accomplishments

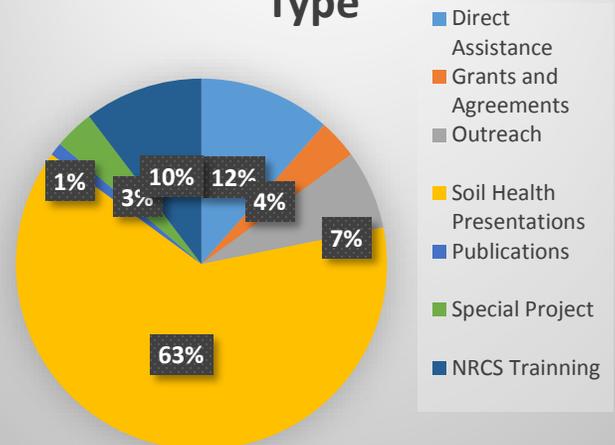
Central Region Activities



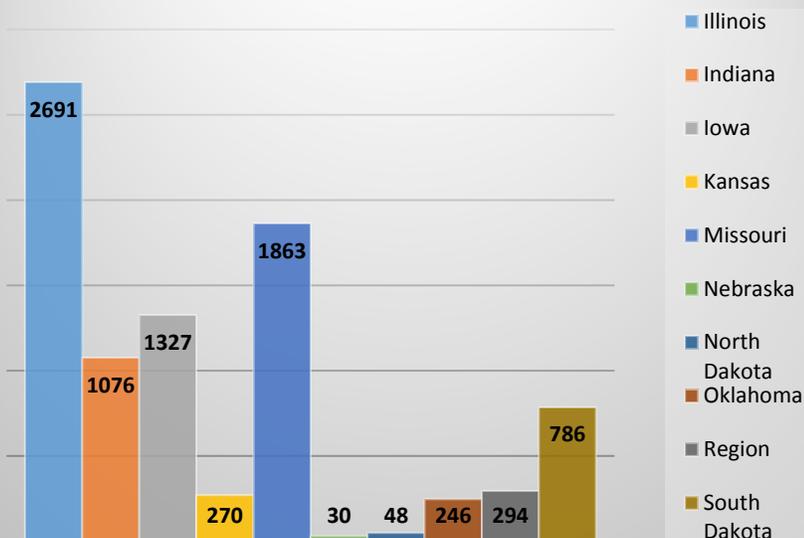
Total number of Soil Health Activities was 87.

Assistance was provided in a variety of area.

Central Region Activity Type



Central Region People Reached

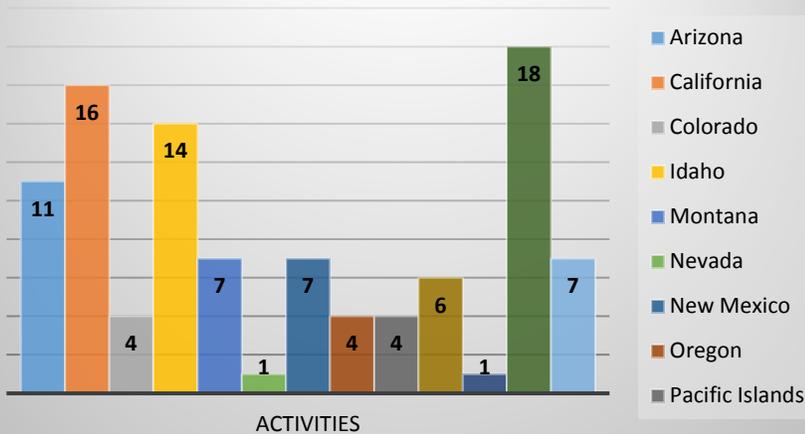


The total number of individual assisted in the region was 8631. This was broken down as follows:

- NRCS 1555
- Partners 1463
- Non-Gov 6269

West Region Accomplishments

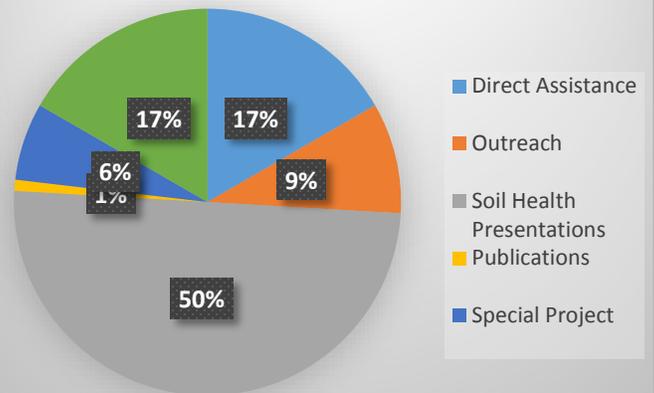
SHD West Region Activities



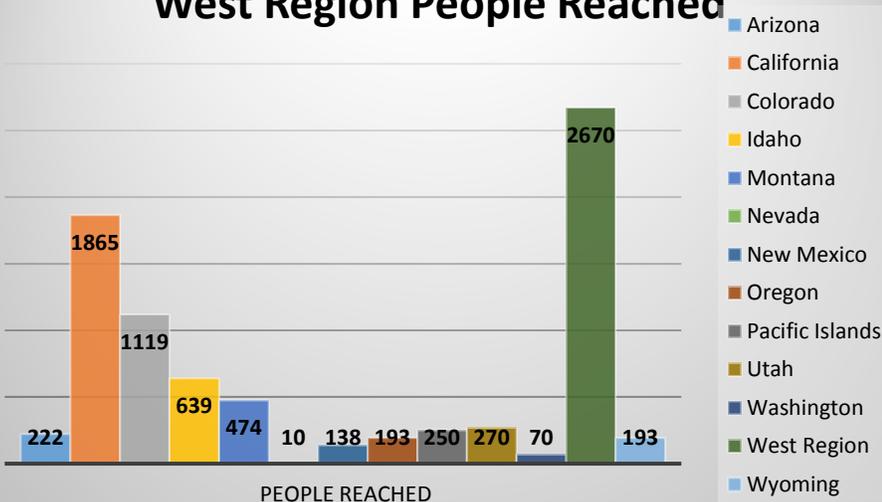
Total number of Soil Health Activities was 100.

Assistance was provided in a variety of area.

West Region Activity Type



West Region People Reached



The total number of individual assisted in the region was 8143. This was broken down as follows:

- NRCS 1031
- Partners 549
- Non-Gov 6563