DEADLINES AND REMINDERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Link</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 16, 2018</td>
<td>National Bulletin 430-18-5</td>
<td>Soil Science Division Assignment Candidate Database</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 31, 2018</td>
<td>National Bulletin 120-18-6</td>
<td>Annual Training for Purchase Cardholders and Approving Officials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 19, 2018</td>
<td>National Bulletin 360-18-22</td>
<td>Phased Retirement Application Period <strong>NEW</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 30, 2018</td>
<td>National Bulletin 360-18-23</td>
<td>Mandatory Training for Fiscal Year 2018 <strong>NEW</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRCS Directives</td>
<td><a href="http://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/default.aspx">http://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov/default.aspx</a></td>
<td>Mandatory Training for Fiscal Year 2018 <strong>NEW</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Deadlines and Reminders</td>
<td><a href="https://ems-team.usda.gov/sites/NRCS_SSRA/ssd/Lists/Announcements/AllItems.aspx">https://ems-team.usda.gov/sites/NRCS_SSRA/ssd/Lists/Announcements/AllItems.aspx</a></td>
<td>(accessible by NRCS staff only)</td>
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WEBINARS AND TRAINING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date and Time</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Information</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 13-15, 2018</td>
<td>Digital Soil Mapping with ArcSIE</td>
<td>NEDC training in Morgantown, WV</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 14, 2018</td>
<td>Spatial Analysis Workshop</td>
<td>NEDC training in Adobe Connect</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 15, 2018 1pm ET</td>
<td>Taking Government Mobile Devices on Foreign TDys Webinar</td>
<td>See National Bulletin 280-18-6 for call-in information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 20, 2018 2pm ET <strong>NEW</strong></td>
<td>Microbial Diversity of Oregon Soils: Links to Soil Health</td>
<td>Adobe Connect <a href="https://nrcs.adobeconnect.com/_a757707842/r4npr03rjm/">https://nrcs.adobeconnect.com/_a757707842/r4npr03rjm/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 22, 2018 2pm ET <strong>NEW</strong></td>
<td>Digital Soil Mapping in Practice: Essex County, Vermont Initial Soil Survey – The First Officially Correlated and Published NRCS Raster Soil Survey</td>
<td>Adobe Connect <a href="https://nrcs.adobeconnect.com/_a757707842/r4npr03rjm/">https://nrcs.adobeconnect.com/_a757707842/r4npr03rjm/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 26-30, 2018</td>
<td>Remote Sensing for Soil Survey Applications</td>
<td>NEDC training in Fort Worth, TX</td>
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</tbody>
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### Meetings, Conferences, and Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Link/Other Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018 Technical Planning Workshop for the North Dakota Cooperative Soil Survey</td>
<td>April 17, 2018</td>
<td>Mandan, ND</td>
<td><a href="mailto:wade.bott@nd.usda.gov">wade.bott@nd.usda.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018 NCSS Regional Conferences</td>
<td>May 21-25, 2018</td>
<td>Tucson, AZ</td>
<td>West NCSS Conference</td>
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<td></td>
<td>June 25-29, 2018</td>
<td>Summersville, WV</td>
<td>Northeast/South NCSS Conference</td>
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<td>July 9-12, 2018</td>
<td>Brookings, SD</td>
<td>North Central NCSS Conference</td>
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<tr>
<td>21st World Congress of Soil Science</td>
<td>August 12-17, 2018</td>
<td>Rio de Janeiro, Brazil</td>
<td><a href="https://www.21wcss.org/">https://www.21wcss.org/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soil Science Society of America International Annual Meeting</td>
<td>January 6-9, 2019</td>
<td>San Diego, CA</td>
<td><a href="https://www.sacmeetings.org/">https://www.sacmeetings.org/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="https://ems-team.usda.gov/sites/NRCS_SSRA/ssd/Lists/Calendar/calendar.aspx">https://ems-team.usda.gov/sites/NRCS_SSRA/ssd/Lists/Calendar/calendar.aspx</a> (accessible by NRCS staff only)</td>
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### Notices

**Lyme Disease Videos**

Lyme disease is the most common tick-borne disease in the United States. The Centers for Disease Control estimate that 300,000 people are diagnosed with Lyme disease in the U.S. each year. However, because diagnosing Lyme can be difficult, many people who have Lyme disease are misdiagnosed. Lyme disease is a great threat in the spring when ticks are nymphs and hard to see. For information and videos on Lyme disease please visit the following website: [http://danielcameronmd.com/lyme-disease-videos/](http://danielcameronmd.com/lyme-disease-videos/)

### Updates from National Headquarters

None.
Science of Soil Interpretations Training Delivered

Twenty-eight NRCS and USDA FS employees representing 12 states and Puerto Rico participated in the SSD’s training course, “Science of Interpretations”, February 27 - March 2. The training focus is on identification of site and soil properties important for an interpretation regardless of current database restrictions. Activities include small group discussion and online literature and staff interviews to gain knowledge and insight used in creation of an interpretation criteria table. Participants created interpretation criteria tables for six soil health resource concerns: Subsidence, Compaction, Organic Matter Depletion, Concentration of Salts and Other Chemicals, Soil Organism Habitat Loss or Degradation, and Aggregate Stability. This work is used in the next training in the series, “NASIS Designing and Developing Soil Interpretations”, to write the interpretations with SQL into NASIS where, after proper testing, they can be released in Web Soil Survey. Bob Dobos, NSSC, was the lead instructor with mentoring support provided by Wade Bott, State Soil Scientist ND; Richard Reid, MLRA SSO TX; Olga Vargas, Resource Soil Scientist, NY; and Mike Kucera, Shawn McVey, and Cathy Seybold, NSSC. A third session focusing on forestry and catastrophic interpretations is scheduled for delivery May 8-11. Enrollment is in AgLearn.

Science Fair Outreach Effort

The National Soil Survey Center’s popular “Soil Tunnel” was part of the 23rd Annual Lincoln Public Schools Science Fair held March 1, 2018 in Lincoln, Nebraska. More than 700 students participated in the competition displaying projects that addressed everything from aeronautics to wildlife. The Soil Tunnel has become a popular attraction at the Science Fair as well as making regular appearances at local area schools. Designed to give the children a hands-on experience, the tunnel provides an up-close look at what goes on below the surface. Those who enter the tunnel meet bugs, worms, roots, and quiet dens that provide safe havens for newborn “critters.” Michelle Edmund, Mike Pearson and Patty Jones all employed at the National Soil Survey Center’s Kellogg National Soil Survey Laboratory, staffed the tunnel by providing both instruction and guidance as each visitor makes its way through the darkness.
California – Region 2 Hanford MLRA SSO Provides Soils Training to BLM Employees and Contractors
Submitted by Philip Smith, MLRA Soil Survey Leader, Hanford, CA

On February 27, Soil Survey Region 2’s Hanford MLRA Soil Survey Office provided soils instruction and training to 23 Bureau of Land Management (BLM) employees and contractors for that agency's AIM-Monitoring program. AIM-Monitoring is a component of the “Bureau of Land Management Assessment, Inventory and Monitoring for Integrated Renewable Resources Management” (AIM Strategy) which provides information about ecosystems and trends for decision making.

The 23 participants represented field crews stationed out of Bakersfield, CA, Ridgecrest, CA and Southern Nevada (Las Vegas) Field Offices. There were also participants out of the Central Coast Field Office in Marina, CA, the Bishop, CA, Field Office, and Reno, NV. The soils training included a morning classroom presentation on methods of describing soil profiles and site data collection. In the afternoon, the class went to a field site near McKittrick, CA, where they practiced soil texturing with samples provided by the Kellogg Soil Survey Lab. Hanford SSO staff also demonstrated site and pedon descriptions in the afternoon training session, first as a large group exercise, and later with teams of 4 to 5 participants for more hands-on learning.

Within Soil Survey Region 2, the Bureau of Land Management owns and manages lands covering nearly 61 million acres in the states of CA, ID, NV, OR, and the Pacific Basin, or roughly 37 percent of the Region.
California – ASA-SSSA Region 6 Soil Judging Contest Held in Northern California
Submitted by Phil Smith, MLRA Soil Survey Leader, Hanford, CA

The American Society of Agronomy and the Soil Science Society of America’s Region 6 Soil Judging Contest was held March 3, 2018, in Butte County, California. This was the third ASA-SSSA Region 6 contest in as many years since being revitalized in 2016. This year’s contest was coordinated by Dr. Garrett Liles, Assistant Professor of Soil Science at California State University Chico (Chico State). Dr. Liles is also Chair Elect of the Soil Education and Outreach Division of the Soil Science Society of America. The ASA-SSSA Region 6 Soil Judging contest capped a successful three-day “soil-ebration” in Butte County where Dr. Liles and Chico State hosted the California Soil Survey Cooperators (NCSS) Meeting and the Professional Soil Scientists Association of California’s (PSSAC) annual field tour. This multi-day “soil-ebration” successfully brought together NCSS cooperators and stakeholders to exchange ideas and identify opportunities for collaboration through presentations, open dialog, and experiencing the dynamic landscapes at the interface of the Sierra Nevada and Cascade mountain ranges in the Northern Sacramento Valley. Aligning the soil judging contest with the NCSS meeting and PSSAC field tour was a very efficient and effective way for soil science professionals to connect with students majoring in agriculture, earth sciences and related fields.

The ASA-SSSA Region 6 Soil Judging Contest marked another year of growth and popularity for this hands-on educational and skill building experience in the western U.S. This year the number of participating universities increased to four with Humboldt State University joining California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly), Fresno State University, and Chico State – all returning from last year’s competition. The University of California at Riverside also sent students, for the second consecutive year, where they, too, learned and gained knowledge of soils and geomorphology. Butte Community College provided the contest site with many Butte students there to observe soil judging in action. In total, twenty-six students participated in the judging competition with Cal Poly winning the team judging portion and Fresno State the winners of the group judging event. The top five individuals were awarded trophy plaques for their individual achievements. The regional contest was also a qualifier for nationals, with Cal Poly and Fresno State advancing to the National Contest which will be held in Martin, TN, March 18-23.

Each year the ASA-SSSA Region 6 Contest has been hosted in the Golden State, California NRCS and Soil Survey Region 2 have been strong supporters, providing technical assistance and personnel to administer the contest. Private consultants, landowners, Resource Conservation Districts, and organizations such as the Professional Soil Scientists Association of California have also provided financial and logistical support.
Soil judging in ASA-SSSA Region 6 has considerable momentum with continued growth expected. Looking ahead, new teams are expected to participate (New Mexico State University, UC Riverside, etc.) in next fall’s regional contest and Cal Poly has stepped up to host the 2019 national contest. With the enthusiasm and dedication of students, coaches, and home institutions, support from USDA-NRCS as well as the private sector – the future is bright for soil judging in ASA-SSSA Region 6.

Dr. Garrett Liles (left) welcomes soil judgers to the ASA-SSSA Region 6 Contest held at Butte Community College near Chico, CA. Photo credit: Irfan Ainuddin
Cal Poly’s soil judging team collaborate at the group judging pit. Photo credit: Irfan Ainuddin

Soil Survey Region 2 soil scientists Rafael Ortiz (left) and Ann Tan (right) assist PSSAC President David Kelley with distributing SSSA’s “I Heart Soil” stickers and PSSAC’s “I Dig Soil” stickers, which are very popular among soil judgers.
Representatives from Soil Science Division attended the Oregon Society of Soil Scientists (OSSS) Winter Meeting titled “Growing your Soil Health Toolbox” in Corvallis, Oregon. Attendees also included public and private professionals in soil science and agriculture, including university faculty and students.

Presentations ranged from theory to practical tools for promoting soil health with producers. Thursday night talk by Dr. David Montgomery (University of Washington) framed current soil health efforts in the context of ancient agriculture and soil degradation. On Friday morning, he shared personal experience improving soil health in his own backyard garden—a story that included his accidental discovery of similarities between microbes in healthy soil and healthy human bodies.

Presentations by Shannon Andrews and Jenn Moore-Kucera drew attention to growing Soil Health Assessment dataset. There are 193 samples from the Pacific Northwest, alone. The speakers posed the question: How do we interpret soil health scores? What standard should we use to say whether soil health is “good” or “needs improvement”? Differences in inherent soil properties and agricultural systems complicate these questions. Soil groupings based on physiography and inherent soil properties should facilitate comparisons. Soil Survey Data can provide the basis for groupings but may be insufficient for determining soil health score thresholds; a soil series, for example, could have multiple “potentials” based on the type of agricultural system used.

Friday’s field trip showcased adjacent soils with contrasting management. Participants practiced collecting soil health assessment data.

Link to OSSS website: http://www.oregonsoils.org/

Attendees listen to a presentation about long term agricultural research by Don Wysocki, Soil Scientist with Oregon State University Extension.
An example of the poster session. This one highlight cover crop trials in dryland wheat-fallow systems of the Columbia plateau by NRCS Soil Conservationist Garrett Duyck.

Attendees listen to Don Wirth of Cala Farms discuss his soil health management system while looking at a Woodburn soil.
Attendees looked at soils across the fence line with two different management systems comparing soil health.

**Wisconsin – Registration Open for Annual Cooperative Soil Science Meeting**

*Submitted by Jason Nemecek, State Soil Scientist, Madison, WI*

Join us for the 2018 Cooperative Soil Science Work Planning Meeting where soil science cooperators and supporters collaborate on potential future projects and learn through sharing current and upcoming soil activities. Please register NOW at the link below. Seats are filling fast!

**When:** Thursday, March 29, 2018, 9:30 am–3:00 pm

**Where:** University of Wisconsin-Platteville, Doudna Hall, Room 136. Park in lot #1; campus and parking maps are here: [www.uwplatt.edu/explore/maps](http://www.uwplatt.edu/explore/maps)

**Purpose:** Your input and partnership are important to NRCS so we can provide the most accurate and current soils, climate, ecological, and geospatial information in formats that meet our user’s needs. We value cooperator work and public data needs, which help steer project development and delivery. This annual meeting will enable attendees to think outside the box, in creative and innovative ways, while collaborating with NRCS, multiple Universities and cooperating soils organizations.

Please confirm your registration at the following link by March 10, 2018. Please share with interested soils cooperators. **REGISTER HERE**

Questions? Please contact Jason Nemecek, NRCS Wisconsin state soil scientist.
PERSONNEL ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Tim Miland** has been named as the Acting State Soil Scientist for Minnesota. Tim is the Area Resource Soil Scientist for the Northwest Area and is headquartered in Altoona, WI.

A detail opportunity is available for the Acting Regional Director for Soil Survey Region 1 (Portland, OR). Information and the application process is below.

**Detail Opportunity**  
Soil Science & Resource Assess, Soil Science/Soil Operations  
Acting Soil Survey Regional Director  
Portland, Oregon

*There is no temporary promotion associated with this detail.*

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Soil Science & Resource Assess, Soil Science/Soil Operations is seeking an individual to serve a 120-day detail as Acting Soil Survey Regional Director. The selected employee will have no more than three weeks of travel to Portland, Oregon or other locations.

**Qualifications**
- Open to GS-0470-13/14 eligible NRCS employees

**Main Duties**
- The employee provides leadership and management for assuring the scientific accuracy and technical quality of soil survey data including properties, classification, mapping, interpretations, database management, Ecological Site Description development, text, and maps prepared for distribution in various formats throughout the region.
- Provides supervision to members of subordinate staff including Soil Survey Regional Office staff such as Soil Scientists, GIS specialists, vegetative specialists, office assistants, and other staff as well as Soil Survey Offices in the Region including Major Land Resource Area (MLRA) Soil Survey Leaders performing a full range of supervisory functions.
- Provides leadership, technical expertise, and quality assurance in all phases of the soil survey program within the assigned Soil Survey Region. This includes mapping, classification, correlation, investigations, interpretations, Ecological Site Description development, map compilation, map finishing, publications, and database management.
• Ensures that soil surveys and other services are responsive to the needs of the various users, in compliance with standards and policies, and that resources are utilized efficiently and economically.
• Consults with and advises national office soil scientists, state office soil scientists, and directors of cooperating agencies on both technical and administrative problems affecting the progress and technical quality of soil surveys.
• Serves on Soil Survey Region Management Teams in the region along with State Soil Scientists and applicable partners to prioritize and approve project plans and annual plans of operation.

Basic Education Requirement
• Soil Scientist Series, 0470

Basic Requirements
• Degree: Successful completion of a full 4-year course of study in an accredited college or university leading to a bachelor's or higher degree that included a major field of study in soil science or a closely related discipline that included 30 semester hours or equivalent in biological, physical, or earth science, with a minimum of 15 semester hours in such subjects as soil genesis, pedology, soil chemistry, soil physics, and soil fertility.

OR
• Combination of education and experience -- courses equivalent to a major in soil science or a related discipline that included at least 30 semester hours in the biological, physical, or earth sciences. At least 15 of these semester hours must have been in the areas specified above, plus appropriate experience or additional education.

Experience and Knowledge
• Mastery in pedology and related sciences sufficient to stand as an equal with world-leading soil scientists in the areas of pedology, technical soil services, soil classification, soil interpretation, and soil mapping (including digital soil mapping techniques).
• Knowledge of soil genesis, soil classification, soil geography, soil morphology, and soil management to develop new concepts of soil survey information from all types of land uses and from a variety of agencies.
• Knowledge to evaluate soil survey needs, sort through facts, proposals, and soil-climate-plant-landscape relationships to formulate new improved ways to use soil survey information that is scientifically sound and strengthens technology.
• Background in leading a team to achieve effective outcomes.
• Ability to communicate effectively.

Please apply by submitting your resume (no more than 2 pages) and a short paragraph on why you are interested in this detail opportunity; include strengths and experience that you would bring to this detail. Submit electronically to hrmd-nrcs@wdc.usda.gov by March 16, 2018. Please obtain your supervisor’s approval prior to submitting your application and include it with your packet.