

# Soil Science Division

## Soil Survey Region 5



### Hutchinson, Kansas, Soil Survey Office

## Range Management Camp for Youth

### Purpose

Each summer for more than 40 years, the Kansas Section of the Society for Range Management has sponsored a 4-day event for youths at camps around Kansas. Participants learn about plants, soils, rangeland management, and rangeland ecological processes. This year's camp was held once again at Camp Mennoscah near Murdock, in south-central Kansas.

Local conservation districts and private individuals sponsored 18 high school students (9 girls and 9 boys) from around Kansas to attend the camp. Camp counselors and educators spent time, in both the classroom and field, teaching the students life skills in the arena of rangeland management. On the last morning, a plant ID and multiple-choice question test was given.

In one of the field sessions, Chris Tecklenburg (ecological site specialist, NRCS, Hutchinson) spent a few hours providing guidance and information on texturing soils. He explained how the differences in soils affect the types of plants which grow or persist on the soils. Students learned how to use the soils information to determine the correct ecological site. Their determinations were based upon an ecological site key that was developed to differentiate the sites.

As a part of the discussion, David Kraft (regional ecological site specialist, NRCS, Salina) described the techniques used to determine production on the ecological sites and how to use the calculations in developing stocking rates and making management decisions.

### Key Outcomes

Over the years, the range management camps have produced long-term learning goals for students as they enter college and choose a major focus. Many students have become employees of NRCS.

Spending time with youth in an inviting learning environment has proven to be a valuable tool for future recruitment. It also fosters a working relationship between NRCS and those youth who, as adults, will be making decisions on land they own or operate. Teaching is part of helping people help the land.





*Ecological Site Specialist Chris Tecklenburg teaching students how to determine soil textures.*



*Great Plains ESD Specialist David Kraft teaching Kansas youth about range clipping.*