

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Soil and Plant Science Division

Soil Survey Region 4



MLRA 32 Soil Survey Office, Powell, Wyoming

Wyoming-NRCS Works with Local Cub Scouts

Purpose

To complete the requirements for the scientist elective and to earn a Webelos Badge and Arrow of Light Award, local Cub Scouts from Burlington and Powell, Wyoming, visited the soil survey laboratory in the NRCS building in Powell.

The visit began with a question and answer session. The Cub Scouts asked questions about the facility and employees. A hands-on tour of the laboratory followed. Activities included comparing different types of parent material, examining box profiles, soil texturing, and measuring and documenting pH and effervescence. The Scouts watched as a test for calcium carbonate equivalent was demonstrated.



“Kitchen” experiments that use household items to test hypotheses.



Each Cub Scout drew images to depict the differences in the soils based on parent material. Soil profiles provided inspiration.

To incorporate an ecological perspective, Marji Patz, NRCS ecological site specialist, discussed what plants need for survival and how soils assist in providing those needs. The group talked about the types of plants that could grow in the soils of the different box profiles and how plants help to improve the soil.

At the end of the session, the Scouts were given an assignment to complete their own science experiment and report on the results the following week. Each Scout received an NRCS “Plant a Post Card” and soil samples.



The Cub Scouts shared what they learned with the rest of their den and the pack. Soil texturing was the demonstration of choice.

Key Outcomes

Although this was a small group of Cub Scouts, they represented a diverse demographic. The passion for conservation we share as employees of the Soil and Plant Science Division is contagious to the youth of this generation! To quote one of the participants, “The coolest thing about your job is that you get to help people and have fun while you are doing it!”