

Research Needs Committee Meeting Minutes for Report

June 26, 2018

The Joint Northeast and South Research Needs Committee met in Room 116, with 15 people.

Priority #1

Evaluation, Adoption and Assessment of New CONSUS (continuous US) Digital Soil Map Products)

- Clarification on priority #1. Relating to the modeling community. Non soil scientists are taking the NRCS database and making decisions, putting into models and making products available to the public (e.g., Polaris?). These are questionable products. Research is needed to address issues related to these questionable products. This could be a national priority. There should be discussion within and with the DSM focus team (Jim Thompson) that could potentially help address some of these issues. There could be some resources from these existing programs.
- There was also discussion that NRCS leadership needs to think more about training non-traditional audience. There is large need from universities to have access to these training opportunities.

Priority #2

Water Resources

- Contributors were not present to explain in more detail about the intent (EPA). Some states have funding to support such work. It was felt that this fell more into the conservation practices than soil survey. In New England, some of this proposed work has already been done.

Priority #3

- **Quantifying Soil Ecosystem Services:** question was raised about what is a "Soil System." It was pointed to the "Catena" concept and a publication from NC State. Question was asked whether some of these ecosystem services quantification can be captured by the MLRA soil mapping team, and the answer is no. Nutrient management aspect of the soil ecosystem services was also discussed, but it was felt this fell into conservation rather than soil survey.

- Urban Soils: the committee felt this is a very important issue that relates to large population residing in urban areas. This is one important way to promote soil science, and reach a lot of people. It will also serve to reach non- traditional audience (not agriculture). There was mentioning about the need for a new soil order. Possible work can include the development on site assessment procedure/protocol, screening tools. The repurpose of contaminated orchard lands in suburban areas are also mentioned – opportunity for assessment the risk and management strategies.

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Priority #4

Urban Soils

- Richard Shaw's revisions:
- "It is necessity for quality information of soils in urban environments. Consideration for development of a screening (tool) protocol for characterizing some basic soil properties, testing and detecting various substances, toxic residual content and heavy metals etc. This information will be invaluable for urban agriculture and community gardening programs and provide point data for urban soil survey. New classification may be considered. Can be narrowly defined of what outcomes are expected from study. There is great interest in the use of these grounds for supporting community outreach programs that NRCS currently provides financial and technical assistance. Terms such as “Urban Deserts, High Tunnels, Agroforestry and Urban Gardening should all be preceded by a quantitative soil investigation”

For further discussion

- **Densic issues/evaluating cohesion:** the committee felt that these are the same issue. Hydrological interp is engineering. The issue is being addressed by a workgroup.

Summary: the committee agreed that the two priorities: inventory of soil resources and urban soils, directly fit into the priority of NCSS and SSD, and reaches the largest number of end users. Thus they should be emphasized and submitted as the top two priorities to the national committee.

Priorities:

1. **Evaluation, Adoption and Assessment of New CONSUS (continuous US) Digital Soil Map Products)**
2. **Urban Soils**
3. **Quantifying Soil Ecosystem Services**
4. **Water Resources**