

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Soil and Plant Science Division

Soil Survey Region 11—East Central Glaciated



Marion, Illinois, MLRA Soil Survey Office

Illinois Middle School Students Learn About Soils

Purpose

Zach Weber, soil scientist, teamed up with Brad Tarr, resource conservationist, to teach the basics of soil science to 24 seventh-grade students. The interactive presentations covered “soil versus dirt,” soil composition, the soil-forming factors, soil horizons, and soil conservation. Soil monoliths were used to demonstrate soil horizons and various soil properties.

The importance of topsoil and practices that conserve this valuable resource was emphasized. An apple represented the earth. As water, rock, desert, ice, urban land, and other areas were cut away, only a small sliver remained. This sliver represented the portion of the earth that has productive soils.



Zach Weber, soil scientist, teaches students the basics of soil science and soil conservation.

Key Outcomes

The students gained an appreciation for the importance of soils and conservation. This outreach at a local school gave these young people an increased knowledge of soils, conservation, and proper management of natural resources. Educating students about soil science helps to ensure a society that values soil as essential to life.

