To: Chairs and committee members.

From: National Leader Soil Survey Standards, Curtis Monger.

Subject: Reviewing proposed amendments to Soil Taxonomy.

Date: Feb. 10, 2020

The charge of the Taxonomy Committee is to generate a written report of recommendations on proposed amendments to Soil Taxonomy. These reports are very important for making final decisions about which amendments are to be approved and which are to be rejected. It is therefore essential to have a written record of each Regional Taxonomy Committee’s recommendations. The written record must contain recommendations to:

(1) approve,
(2) return to author, or
(3) reject.

If the decision is to return to author, the committee should offer suggestions for strengthening the proposal, such as providing more data, more field evidence, or more scrutiny of the negative impacts the change may have on Soil Taxonomy. If the decision is to reject, the committee should provide reasons for the rejection.

All new proposals are submitted to each of the four NCSS Regions. Consequently, some regions will be faced with the task of reviewing proposals outside their local expertise. Still, all committees should review all proposals and ascertain if fundamental principles of Soil Taxonomy have been followed.

Chairs will host multiple teleconferences during the months prior to the Regional Conferences. Information about what is required for a proposal can be found in the National Soil Survey Handbook Title 430 - Soil Survey or How to Submit a Taxonomy Proposal. By the time of the Regional Conferences occur in May, June, or July, the committees should have made their decisions about whether to approve, return to author, or reject the proposals. Attending the Regional Conferences is necessary because the conferences provide an opportunity to have face-to-face discussions and resolve remaining issues. The Taxonomy Committee chair gives an oral report the last day of the conference.

The written report should be completed by the end of the conference, but no later than two weeks afterwards. The written report is submitted to the National Leader of Soil Survey Standards for archiving and recommending a decision on proposals. The written report is also submitted to the Conference’s liaison from the National Soil Survey Center for posting on the NCSS webpage. These are Dave Hoover (West NCSS), Drew Kinney (Northeast NCSS), Curtis Monger (North Central NCSS), Mike Robotham (South NCSS).