LEADERSHIP AND RECRUITMENT FOCUS TEAM

FY 2017

VISION – Helping feed the world, through conservation
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

STRATEGIC HIGHLIGHTS
United States Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue recently promoted facts-based and data driven decision making as one of the cornerstones of his administration. As a science-based partnership the National Cooperative Soil Survey (NCSS) applauds this priority. For years the NCSS has perfected its products through process driven observation, corporate data bases, and industry tested analysis protocols. We do not create map units, soil series, or ecological sites without the analysis of observations and data and we should not continue to use operational functions that don’t have the same data driven rigor. The Leadership and Recruitment Focus team seeks to begin an operational culture change by equipping 100 Soil Science Division (SSD) employees with leadership theory, tools, and metrics by the end of FY18 and using the multiplier effect to reach the entire NCSS by FY20.

For years the NCSS has discussed the concept of soil and ecosystem resilience; however there is a strong need for workforce resilience. We must develop a workforce capable of quickly recovering from setbacks and changes, which will allow for seamless continuity for future success. This is done by creating leaders at every level of the organization and by using diversity as a strength. Diversity comes in many different forms, just one example is ethnic minorities and people of multi-racial backgrounds. These groups comprise about 38% of the U.S. population, however, only 13% of the Soil Science Division is non-white. We will discuss opportunities for NCSS to improve diversity on multiple levels. NCSS may be missing an opportunity to increase its outlook and scope by casting a broader net and engaging the entire US citizenry. We will continue to create a culture of people over process and using data to focus recruitment on workload, need, and recruiting, hiring, and retaining diversity.

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS
The SSD has spent over $8,000,000 since 2010 on Cooperative Ecosystems Studies Units (CESUs) agreements with no metric for tracking the students that have benefitted from these agreements to include employment with NCSS. It is our goal to start an internal SSD return on investment tool in FY18 to track these students.

From 2014-2017 the Soil Science Division advertised 61 Pathway internships at a cost of $155,000 and 64 Recent Graduate positions costing $1,792,000 without tracking students development to include conversion and retention rates. As part of the Leadership and Recruitment Focus Team, a goal is to start an internal SSD tracking mechanism in FY18.

OPERATING HIGHLIGHTS
A new culture and behaviors must be engendered
- Seeing leadership as something we do not a job position
- Tracking of dollars spent on recruitment efforts including stipends, salaries, support, travel, recruiting events, training activities, and agreements to get a holistic view of return on investment.

LOOKING AHEAD
It is heavily documented that leadership, diversity, and targeted recruitment play a significant role in organizational advancement. An added dimension to consider is incorporating Continuous Process Improvement (CPI) techniques to project execution and performance validation. USDA has developed a team to help NCSS with CPI and also workshop facilitation and CPI coaching. Through the Soil Science Division, NCSS will take advantage of CPI to improve on the concepts of this team and streamline more of its operations.

Leslie Glover II, Leadership and Recruitment Focus Team Lead
Leadership and recruitment go hand in hand. In John C Maxwell’s book “How Successful People Lead” the author reveals that proper recruitment is the first step to developing good leaders. “If you recruit the best people, put them in the right positions, show them how to lead, equip them to lead, develop them to lead, empower them to lead, and then measure their success to maximize their efforts then we will have succeeded in building the right culture in our organization.”

In today’s society, change is constant and regardless of the appearance, organizations are always at various stages in the change continuum. Increasingly, it is necessary to develop a culture of leaders that can direct that change. For the first time in American history there are 5 different generations in the workforce and each has its own priorities, culture, and values. Traditional leadership structures focused on creating individually empowered leaders at the very top of hierarchical bureaucratic forms of organization are too static to deal effectively with dynamic change. These strategies make meaningful change nearly impossible because not enough individual leaders at different levels of the organization are available to create momentum or deal with the unintended consequences of new initiatives. Recruiting and training a diverse workforce to be leaders in their sphere of influence early in their career can create greater resilience in an organization.

The Team will engage with the agency on two agency established fronts Leadership Development and Diversity and Recruitment. The Leadership Development component will design an SSD centered frame work as a companion to the current NRCS Leadership Development Framework. The Leadership Development team created strategies, guidelines, and a culture of leadership from the time employees is recruited into the agency until the end of their time with the organization. The Diversity and Recruitment component will work with the NRCS Diversity and Recruitment Branch to develop strategies and guidelines to create a culture of diversity as well as recruitment strategies geared toward the NCSS vision and succession plan.

A recent study “The State of Diversity in Environmental Organizations” by Dorceta E. Taylor indicated that organizations have committed goals and resources to diversity saw the most positive gains in diversity initiatives. It further indicated that different recruitment strategies and techniques should be used for different affinity groups. Governmental organizations in particular had the most success when recruiting to specified legal goals. In all cases, government agencies were more likely to indicate that they wanted to see the initiative developed rather than support them. This becomes a waste of tax payer dollars and does not maximize the workforce potential that exists. Government environmental agencies were least likely to say they would support initiatives that included of more issues of interest to low-income and working class communities or ethnic minorities that were already on the organization's priority list. Simple changes to our recruitment strategy to include topics relevant to diverse audiences such as urban soils, Native American lands mapping, organic farming, sustainability, and climate change during our recruitment efforts could have an impact on getting and retaining a more diverse workforce. Finally diversity is not just about affinity groups it's about taking advantage of every opportunity to maximize our workforce and culture. Diversity exists in many different forms and recruitment doesn't have to start with college students. For example the team recently discussed with the CEO of Future Farmers of America, Mark Poeschl, about the opportunity to add a virtual tour to AgExplorer for a soil scientist career path to expand our reach to junior high and high school students that may not know the potential exists for a career in soil scientist. For the NCSS to remain strong and relevant it must be ready for the challenges that lie ahead. The work of this team is to provide one aspect of that preparation.
OVERARCHING RECOMMENDATIONS

LISTED BY PRIORITY

- Match future needs with current succession planning for Soils 2026 effort, retirements, and attrition.
- Develop leaders throughout the organization who view leadership as something they do, not as a job title.
- Behavioral change, in particular the population and analysis of operational data. We use scientific database to analyze our products we must do the same for operations. This should include reports on first level supervisor hiring history, tracking of student interactions and development, conversion rate of interns, retention rates and program review for improvements.
- Partnerships with Universities that have MLRA Soil Survey Offices must be better utilized and more interactions and development must be had with students benefitting from NCSS funding.
- Targeted recruitment of the Civilian Labor Force averages followed by the Federal Workforce averages.

SPECIFIC TO THE SOIL SCIENCE DIVISION

- The top priority must be an internal agreement and signed Decision Memorandum with the Regional Conservationists to include the Soil Science Division in the current state structure for Special Emphasis Programs. The agreement should:
  - Delineate clear guidelines between SSD and states
  - Outline budget and training needs
  - Include advertisement of SSD positions at recruitment events
  - Establish working groups to enhance future needs
  - Establish metrics for success
- To remain within our OMB hiring cap we need to hire outside the system with fellowship programs such as the USDA Fellows, Presidential Management Fellows, Soil Science Society of America (SSSA), State Department, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU), and American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) do not count against the cap because they are contract workers.
- To maintain our diversity we need to use our internal special hiring authorities such as:
  - Schedule A
  - Student Volunteer Program (part time student hiring authority).
  - Local and Programmatic Support Services IDIQ Contract
- Partner with USDA to get more information and numbers on LBGTQ staff
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TEAM CHARGES

**Overall Goal** - To ensure the proper investment of the Soil Science Division’s time, treasure, and talent resulting in leadership development and diversity through recruitment using data driven analytics

- **Charge**: Coordinate with other focus teams to ensure continuity of activities, training and information exchange
  - **Action Taken**: Coordinated discussion between National Future Farmers of America and NRCS Public Affairs to include a soil scientist virtual field trip into Agexplorer.com.
  - **Action Taken**: Two meetings and coordination with NRCS Diversity and Recruitment Branch on strategies
  - **Action Taken**: Two team members were asked to participate in a Leadership Development Focus Group for SSRA and S&T conducted by NEDC.
  - **Action Taken**: Submitted opportunity to provide updated SSD, NSSC materials for the national new employee orientation with Outreach Focus Team. This meets one of the short term recommendations of the Outreach Focus Team.
  - **Action Taken**: Coordinated new NCSS contacts database with Outreach Team for future diversity and recruitment efforts.
  - **Action Taken**: Provided Training Team overview of areas of overlap and will participate in September meeting.
  - **Action Taken**: Coordinate marketing materials of interest to ethnic minorities with Urban Soil Focus Team.

- **Charge**: Provide a national perspective to regions and teams. Supplement and enhance activities of regional and local board of advisors (BOA) and management teams (MGT)
  - **Action Taken**: Provided report to NCSS steering committee
  - **Action Taken**: Provided report and brief to SSD Leadership Team

- **Charge**: Develop and maintain website
  - **Action Taken**: Initial information added to SharePoint and Focus Team webpage
  - **Action Taken**: Created a Google Doc for evaluating YouTube Videos
  - **Action Taken**: Opportunities submitted in SSD Weekly

- **Charge**: Identify leadership needs and gaps
  - **Action Taken**: Needs
    - Created formalized leadership vision which includes measurements for improvement
    - Created a tool to track “detail” and “acting” positions
    - Created a tool to track conference attendance
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- **Action Taken**: Gaps
  - Need an update of requirements for GS 470 series to include more GIS and ecological course work
  - Improve recruitment of ecologists and ecological site specialists
  - All employees within 5 years of their retirement should have as part of their performance plan to work/mentor/impart knowledge to employees within 5 years of starting their career

- **Charge**: Provide framework for ongoing review of leadership development
  - **Action Taken**: Developed a curriculum for leadership development which tracks formal, self-paced, and OJT role out in late October in AgLearn.

- **Charge**: Identify training course(s) both internal and external to encourage and enhance leadership development
  - **Action Taken**: Several types and levels of training are included in plan (see Curriculum)
    - AgLearn
    - YouTube
    - USDA Mentor Program
    - USDA Leadership Essentials Certificate Program
    - Team Leader and Aspiring Leader

- **Charge**: Identify diversity and recruitment needs and venues
  - **Action Taken**: Assess Needs
    - A tool is needed to track Pathways, CESUs, and Collaborative Research Grants with expenditures and conversion rates of students. (NRCS has new Service now tool for Pathways).
    - Decision Memorandum outlining partnership between SSD and Regional Conservationists
    - Training for Special Emphasis Program Managers
    - Synchronize recruitment activities with hiring cycles (on-site events)
    - Synchronize recruitment with the academic calendar of Colleges and Universities
    - Synchronize recruitment of affinity groups specific to their background and what has proven to be successful, for example improve the ranks of women in leadership roles.
    - Work with NRCS Human Resource Area to announce more Schedule A positions and add Schedule A positions to the USDA hiring freeze exemption status.
    - Quarterly and yearly reports from Workforce Strategy Division on SSD demographics
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- Engage with local summer intern programs such as Washington DC Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP)
- Where applicable use Student Volunteer Program which is a hiring authority for hiring students on a part time basis.
  - **Action Taken:** Venues
    - Submitted response to HR Data Call for “Recruitment Events for FY2018” to include SSD relevant venues.
    - The State of Diversity in Environmental Organizations was used to identify best practices for recruitment.
    - Created spreadsheet for tracking dissemination of job announcements and which events we recruit at.
    - Quarterly and yearly reminders to report findings to Directors set by Assistant Program Manager.

- **Charge:** Coordinate recruitment
  - **Action Taken:** Identified 43 schools that offer a B.S. in Soil Science and 100 schools that have course offerings that would qualify a student for the GS-470 series. Set up schools for job announcements as they come out.
  - **Action Taken:** Create a tool for tracking the number of times students have been interacted with.
  - **Action Taken:** Identified twenty 1890 Land Grant, Hispanic Serving, and 1994 institutions that provide course offerings that would qualify for GS-470 series.
  - **Action Taken:** Create flow chart with recommendations for synchronizing recruitment with academic cycles.
  - **Action Taken:** Work with NSSC for metric for tracking students involved with SSD Collaborative Research Grants created.
  - **Action Taken:** Open positions must be moved to workload. Hiring Managers must have a work plan in place for what the student will be doing before they can advertise a position.
  - **Action Taken:** Students should do a presentation of their work experience to local leaders and complete a survey of how the summer went for yearly improvement.
  - **Action Taken:** Students will get a personalized experience and follow up. Recruitment is not just showing up and taking resumes. It’s about cultivating relationships. Students should receive feedback from supervisor on how their work products can be improved and what they should work on during the academic school year, and the Division must be notified of their development.
  - **Action Taken:** Created spreadsheet for tracking first level supervisor’s selection history.
  - **Action Taken:** Team developed a strategy for diversity engagement if SSD separates Civil Rights positions from states.
**Introduction:**

On December 8, 2009, the White House issued a memorandum, the Open Government Directive (external link), requiring agencies to take immediate, specific action to achieve key milestones in transparency, participation, and collaboration. An open government is one that is transparent, participatory, and collaborative. Sharing information, hearing and implementing ideas, and engaging in ongoing conversation with employees and the public not only increase our own accountability, but also build trust with the American people. We want to hire the best, respect our workforce, and expect the best in order to build a world-class workforce to serve the American people.

**Objective:**

The Soil Science Division (SSD) recognizes the need to develop amongst its ranks a leadership program that will cultivate a cadre of staff who lead collaboratively in the next steps toward agriculture and environmental solutions within NCSS. The challenges of today’s government environment require peer-to-peer leadership skills more now than ever before. Listening and building upon ideas shared by others enables us to become more innovative, effective, and efficient in the work we do. This program is intended to integrate with the agencies upcoming Leadership Development Framework. The new frame work includes the redesigned Strategic Leadership Development Program (SLDP) which absorbed the Emerging Leaders Development Program.

In the book “Leadership Challenge” authors James Kouzes and Barry Posner identified key characteristics critical for leadership success including the ability to:

- Inspire others in a positive manner
- Simulate a shared vision
- Motivate others to lead
- Enable others to act
- Encourage the heart

The Soil Science Division wishes to build a leadership cadre of individuals early in their career with a commitment to the NRCS and NCSS mission. We want to encourage involvement with and enthusiasm for the work performed in conservation, soil science, and other NCSS mission areas. We want to develop leaders in a collaborative style regardless of their formal or informal position of authority in the organization. Through this program, our employees will explore the desire to advance to a position of increased leadership and responsibility, and build confidence to perform leadership tasks when required.

The Center for Creative Leadership recognizes four methods of leadership learning:
1. Challenging Job Assignments (42%)

2. Interaction with Leaders (22%)

3. Hardships and Setbacks (20%)

4. Other (including classroom training (16%)

Key learning objectives for the program will be:

- Create, share, and apply knowledge and skills to address the challenges faced by public sector organizations
- Develop the values and competencies that are the foundation of public service, transcending individual professions and missions
- Learn to project and exercise personal authority to get things done and influence decisions
- Recognize strengths and learn to deploy them strategically to create collaborative organizational outcomes
- Identify key roles, skills and mental models needed to support collaboration
- Assess the organization's ability to collaborate and how personal work can impact change in the system
- Explore diversity within a group environment and the contributions that diverse perspectives lend to collaboration, problem solving, and entrepreneurial thought
- Improve the understanding of peer leadership and group dynamics in order to increase the agency's ability to influence others and contribute to high quality group work environments

**Proposed Program for “Recruitment to Leadership”:**

The Soil Science Division will initiate the program as an opt-in program for all Soil Science Division employees and partners with E-Authentication access (technical, field, lab, and administrative) and create cohorts based on the number of participants that opt-in. The program will be an ongoing process, but online leadership development courses from Ag Learn must be completed within 1-year of application to the program, before applicant can go to the next element. Program will consist of 5 elements:

**Element 1.** Participants will utilize the USDA Mentor Program. SSD leadership members, soil survey regional directors, and state soil scientists will serve as mentors. (E-authentication is required, Lisa Visokey is the coordinator)

- The participants will take the AgLearn, self-paced, one hour Mentor training
  - Employees within 5 years of retirement may also be requested to mentor participants as part of their Performance Plan
    - We can use “NSSC” as the Organization Unit in the USDA Mentor Portal
    - Use AgLearn tracking tool called “Curricula” for tracking certification.
- Participants must review Leadership Playlist on YouTube and provide synopsis using the Challenge, Context, Action, Result model.
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- Participants must complete self-assigned leadership webinars available in AgLearn (see Curriculum)

Estimated Cost: $0

**Element 2.** Development of 2 cohort levels

- Cohort 1 for GS 5-9, and Cohort 2 for GS 9-12. Staff at the GS-13 and above will be encouraged to enter the NRCS SLDP and/or USDA Leadership Essentials Certificate Program (LECP).
  - If necessary multiple groups will be established within cohorts including specialized cohorts for mission areas outside of soil science.
- Completion of Team Leader and Aspiring Leader online courses are required within 1-year of application to the program before applicant can go to the next element
- Continue Mentoring Program
- Additional materials
  - NEDC courses Supervising For Excellence, and Managing For Excellence
- Participants will be required to add Leadership Development training to their Individual Development Plan
- Participants must complete webinars offered under the 2014 USDA Student Training Plan (see Curriculum)

Estimated Cost: $0

**Element 3.** Each year an application process will be required for element 3. The process will depend on the number of applicants and needs. If necessary the application process will be competitive based on application and interview process the SLDP uses for consistency. Participants will read four leadership books to equip them with modern leadership doctrines and philosophy. Each participant will provide an oral summary of lessons learned from the readings at SSD leadership meetings. A list of approved books will be provided.

- Review George Washington University SLDP webinars and leadership activities on SSD SharePoint.
- Continue Mentoring Program
- Participants must complete webinars offered under the 2014 Recent Graduates Training Plan (see Curriculum)

Estimated Cost: $500/per participant

**Element 4.** Complete a "detail" or "acting assignment" at National Headquarters, National Soil Survey Center, Regional Soil Survey Office, or State Office shadowing a national leader, soil survey regional director or state soil scientist. Assignments outside of the Soil Science Division are also encouraged to expand the participants understanding of agency priorities and goals outside of NCSS.

- Starting with element 4 participants will be begin documenting proficiency using the Challenge, Context, Action, Result model.
- Participants will also be required to complete an Executive Development Plan.
• Participants are also encouraged to take the “DiSC Facilitation” personality test to better understand personalized success strategies.

• Continue Mentoring Program
  o 1) Instructor-led, resident, multi-day;
  o 2) instructor-led, virtual, four hour

Estimated Cost: $4,000 – 6,000/per participant

**Element 5.** Completion of a cohort project to enhance collaborative leadership in an organizational issue of the National Cooperative Soil Survey. Soil Science Division will develop a list of potential projects, primarily from stretch assignments proposals not used by agency leadership in the SLDP to ensure participants are exposed to the agencies Senior Leadership. Participants will craft and implement a strategic action plan that will demonstrate personal leadership and link individual strengths and talents to the agency’s mission. Project will include presentation of framework, implementation, and outcomes either at NCSS conference or by webinar.

Estimated Cost: $0

**After Completion.**

Program participants will be encouraged to continue to grow as leaders. The agency has several advanced leadership programs and participants are encouraged to transition into them.

• Strategic Leadership Development Program (program accepts application in November of each FY)
• Federal Executive Institute for Senior Executive Service – Candidate Development Program (program accepts applications each December and is used in the Executive Core Qualifications certification process).

**FAQs and ACTION ITEMS**

1. How do we ensure that soil scientist involved with initial mapping don’t get passed over for detail and leadership opportunities?
   a. By making it part of their performance plan to develop staff through the leadership development program
   b. By creating a selection process for level 4 and 5 that requires approval by second level supervisors
   c. Creating mapping detail assignments and integrating our recruitment and hiring strategy to the places where initial mapping is needed.

2. Program will need a coordinator to make sure goals are being met. Consideration should be given not to conflict supervisor local needs with national strategy.

3. Leadership opportunities will be posted to the Soil Science Division Weekly Update.

4. We can use “NSSC” as the Organization Unit in the USDA Mentor Portal and we can add another local coordinator with Suzy Riedel.
5. Certification for each part of the program will be done through an AgLearn tracking tool called "Program, which will be released with Next Gen AgLearn. The tracking tool is a single collection title with contains all the required events whether they are self-certified, OJT, official internal training, and/or external training. This tool will work the same way the new certified planner curriculum does in AgLearn. SSD will submit the list of training events to NEDC.

CURRICULUM

Self-assigned leadership webinars available in AgLearn

- Leadership Essentials: Creating Your Own Leadership Development Plan
- Just Listen: Discover the Secret to Getting Through to Absolutely Anyone
- 100 Great Time Management Ideas
- 100 Ways to Build Self-Esteem and Teach Values
- 100 Ways to Motivate Yourself
- 100 Ways to have a Great Day at Work
- 151 Quick Ideas to Improve Your People Skills
- Everything you need to know about leadership in 60 seconds
- Conquering the Challenges of Public Speaking

The following are webinars offered under the 2014 USDA Student Training Plan:

- Peer Political Styles
- Managing Your Workspace
- Professionalism, Business Etiquette, and Personal Accountability
- Developing a Right Attitude for Performing under Pressure
- The Value of Peer Relationships

The following are webinars offered under the 2014 Recent Graduates Training Plan:

- Creating your Individual Development Plan
- Leadership
- Communications Skills and Project Management
- Coping with Accusations in the Workplace
- Developing your Career
- Conquering Career Stagnation

BOOKS

- "Mastering Leadership" by Bob Anderson,
- "Spirit of Leadership" by Bob Anderson,
- “Kotter 8 Stages of Change” (Harvard Business Review),
The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership: Follow Them and People Will Follow You (2007) by John Maxwell,
A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving by Bardach,
Act Like a Leader, Think Like a Leader by Ibarra,
Managing Transitions by Bridges,
Political Savvy by Deluca or Developing Political Savvy by Genry & Leslie,
Becoming a Strategic Leader CCL by Hughes, Beatty, and Dinwoddie,
Grit by Duckworth,
Putting Your Values to Work by Dr. Fairholm,
Dysfunctions of a Team by Lencioni,
The Influencer by Grenny, Patterson, Maxfield, McMillan, and Switzler
Change the Culture Change the Game by Roger Connors and Tom Smith
The Outward Mindset: Seeing Beyond Ourselves by The Arbinger Institute
NCSS and SSD must focus its recruitment efforts specific to workload, positions, and affinity groups. SSD has not historically tracked its pathway students in a meaningful coordinated fashion. In 2016 NRCS started in March with 209 interns (from 14 SSD) 106 men, 88 females, 24 Black, 16 Hispanic, 0 Asian & Pacific Islander, 0 Native American/Alaskan by June it changed to 211 men, 166 females, 62 Black, 40 Hispanic, 0 Asian & Pacific Islander, 5 Native American/Alaskan and finally to 174 men, 125 females, 44 Black, 29 Hispanic, 0 Asian & Pacific Islander, 4 Native American/Alaskan. There will always be attrition as hiring and retention rates fluctuate, but a stagnant and redundant trend seems to be occurring in our recruitment and hiring practices. We do not have data on how many of these students are converted which is a major concern. The Soil Science Division has spent over $8,000,000 since 2010 on CESU agreements with no way of tracking the students that have benefitted from these agreements or if they later become NCSS employees. To remedy this lack of data we will start an internal SSD return on investment tool in FY18. From 2014-2017 the Soil Science Division advertised 61 Pathway internships costing $155,000 and 64 Recent Graduate positions costing $1,792,000 without tracking which students were being converted or once converted how long they remained or why they eventually left. Furthermore, no coordinated effort was undertaken to understand if students actually progressed and where nurtured during their time with the organization. We will start an internal SSD tracking mechanism in FY18. The following are some key facts from the “State of Diversity in Environmental Organizations” relevant the National Cooperative Soil Survey and may help our recruitment efforts.

**Entry-level recruitment**
- Environmental organizations have made significant progress on entry level gender diversity, but the gains have gone mostly to White women.
- Ethnic minorities and people of multi-racial backgrounds comprise about 38% of the U.S. population, however, the percentage of "minorities" on the boards or general staff of environmental organizations never exceeds 16%.
- Cross-race, cross-class, and cross-cultural collaborations are still uncommon in environmental organizations.
- Environmental jobs are still being advertised and new employees recruited in ways that introduce unconscious biases and facilitate the replication of the current workforce. Recruitment for new staff frequently occurs through word-of-mouth and informal networks. This makes it difficult for ethnic minorities, the working class, LGBTQ, or anyone outside of traditional environmental networks to find out about job openings and apply for those jobs.
- Environmental organizations do not use the internship pipeline effectively to find affinity group workers. Though environmental organizations host ethnic minorities as interns, they have been very reluctant to nurture or convert these students. Despite the claim of few job openings, most of the organizations in the study reported that they hired staff in the last three years, yet a low percentage hired minorities in that same time period.

**Leadership-level recruitment**
- The most popular diversity initiative being undertaken in environmental organizations is the promotion of women already working in an organization to leadership positions.
- Men dominate the executive director positions in government environmental agencies. Promotions go primarily to white females. Women of color are still on the outside looking in, along with their male counterparts.
- Environmental organizations are much less likely to promote ethnic minorities already working in an organization to leadership positions. The diversity manager’s position is the only position that minorities are more likely to hold than whites in environmental organizations; however, relatively few of the organizations had such a position.
- According to the Department of Labor the Senior Executive Service consists of 66.1% men, 33.9% women. 79.3% white, 11.1% Black, 4.4% Hispanic, 3.4% Asian, 1.2% Native American, and 0.6% Multiracial.

**Strategies by affinity group**
- **African American**
  - Increase the specific word-of-mouth and informal networks by partnering with 1890 Institutions that have soils majors, MLRA Project Offices, or offer enough soils coursework for 470 positions.
  - Look to increase the number of African American Earth Team Volunteers as an early recruitment tool by looking at issues of concern to them such as food deserts, environmental justice, and urban soils.
- **Asian and Pacific Islander**
Environmental organizations recruit from minority professional gatherings infrequently. Begin onsite recruitment at Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences annual conference. This professional organization has a proven track record of producing scholars and staff across all affinity groups including AAPI.

- **Disabled**
  - Partner with OPM’s Office of Diversity and Inclusion for strategies and resources for Recruiting, Hiring, and Retaining People with Disabilities/Targeted Disabilities.
  - Recruit more college students with Disabilities using OPM’s Workforce Recruitment Program for College Students with Disabilities (WRP)
  - Advertise more non-technical positions as Schedule A appointments using OPM’s “Shared List of People with Disabilities”
  - Apply for Schedule A exemption for disabled staff not to count against FTE cap

- **Hispanic and Latino**
  - Look to increase the number of Hispanic and Latino Earth Team Volunteers as an early recruitment tool
  - Increase the specific word-of-mouth and informal networks by partnering with Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities (HACU) and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) that have soils majors or offer enough soils or ecological coursework for 470, 457, and interdisciplinary positions.
  - Additional partnerships with HACUs should be pursued as well as targeting recruitment efforts with topics of interest to Hispanics and Latinos.

- **LBGTQ**
  - Currently little information exists on LBGTQ and most are self-identified data. We will need to partner with USDA efforts to develop a plan specific to this affinity group.
  - In general a specific effort will have to be made to create cross-cultural collaborations that have not be done in the past.

- **Native American**
  - Additional partnerships with Hispanic Serving Institutions should be pursued as well as targeting recruitment efforts with topics of interest Native Americans such as Native-Lands mapping.
  - In the past soil science and conservation has primarily focused on crop production, but that focus is rapidly changing to environmental issues which have historically been a concern for native communities. We can focus on the role that soil science plays in those environmental issues when recruiting native students.
  - Look to increase the number of Native American/Alaskan Native Earth Team Volunteers as an early recruitment tool

- **Veterans**
  - SSD is already at the civilian labor force numbers for veterans and disabled veterans. Continue the use Schedule C appoints which favor veterans.
  - Consider partnering with USDA to identify positions in the armed forces that are relevant to soil science and make sure those positions are advertised with those service members leaving active duty.

- **White**
  - SSD currently is at or above Civilian Labor Force, Federal workforce, and NRCS numbers in this affinity group. Recruitment in this area and particularly for white males is working effectively. No new strategies are being suggested at this time, with the exception of partnering with FFA to make students aware of careers in soil science at an earlier age.

- **Women**
  - Continue to recruit female in all demographics, but focus on targeting females for leadership roles. There are 63 “leadership” level positions in the Soil Science Division (GS 13 and above).
    - 17/63 are women (all white females)
    - 12/172 working units in NRCS with female at GS 13 or above
    - 8 of those 12 working units have a female as the first line supervisor (67% of our female leaders are concentrated in only 8 working units we need to improve our coverage)
CLF (2014) and (2024) - Civilian Labor Force Numbers from 2014 and projections for 2024
NRCS (2016) – NRCS Numbers from 2016
SSD (2017) - SSD Numbers from 2014

SSD was below the actual and projected Civilian Labor Force and Federal work force for all racial and ethnic distributions.
31% of the Soil Science Division workforce is 55 years of age and above. Recent research is showing that baby boomers are not retiring at the pace once projected, a significant number of baby boomers are working late into their 60s and beyond. According to a Gallup Poll "While the average age at which U.S. retirees say they retired has risen steadily from 57 to 61 in the past two decades, boomers -- the youngest of whom will turn 50 this year -- will likely extend it even further. Nearly half (49%) of boomers still working say they don't expect to retire until they are 66 or older, including one in 10 who predict they will never retire."
The Bureau of Labor Statistics added reporting of disabilities to its datasets in 2008. Currently 17.5% of Americans with reported disabilities are currently employed. There is not a figure for what percentage of the workforce that represents. In 2015, there were about 5.2 million people with disabilities employed in the United States. While the largest share of employed people with disabilities worked in management, professional, and related occupations (31.3 percent), this was smaller than the share of people with no disabilities employed in these same occupations (39.2 percent). Employed people with disabilities were more heavily concentrated in service occupations and in production, transportation, and material moving occupations than their counterparts with no disabilities. SSD currently has 6% of its staff which have reported a disability including disabled veterans.
According to Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics – cartographers / (photogrammetrists) GIS specialists are one of the fastest growing occupations in the nation, expected to increase by 29.3% in the next decade.
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The State of Diversity in Environmental Organizations, Dorceta E. Taylor, Ph.D., University of Michigan, July 2014.


Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights Strategic Plan FY 2016-2020


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