

Charges for Soil and Ecosystems Committee – South Region

Cooperative Soil Survey

Co-Charis: Dr. Grizelle Gonzales, Greg Taylor

Members: Dee Pederson, Dr. Ramble Ankumah, Michelle Clendenin, Mary Savin, Sean Schaeffer, Susan Casby-Horton, Nelson Rolong, Dillon Wallace

Old Business:

1. South Committee Charges:
 - Committee will discuss the need for MLRA subdivisions across large, complex areas to more accurately reflect fundamental soil – site concepts and correlations.
 - *USDA Handbook 296 is currently being updated to better divide MLRAs. Further discussion is ongoing and welcome.*
 - Committee will discuss the status of the regional inventory and business plan
 - *Currently the plan is to compete Provisional Ecological Site Descriptions as a bases for further work (Correlated, Approved, etc.).*

Another challenge to the development and interpretation of many ecological sites in the South Region hinges on the design, accurate representation, and “ease of interpretation” of complex State and Transition Models (STMs).

- Committee will discuss the challenges of developing complex STMs (State and Transition Models), improvements to the design, and approaches for their accurate interpretation by the user. *Are these fulfilling the needs of our customers and not just NRCS? What changes, if any, are needed to create ESDs that are usable and understandable by all? Can we make a product that negates the need for other agencies or organizations to produce their own ESDs?*
- EDIT is a new, more user friendly, database that’s being worked on. *Will be a discussion item.*

2. Duluth National meeting:

- Create venues to share information
 - *Cloudvault* will be used by chairs to make info available to members
 - Explore other avenues to more easily share data and information

The *cloudvault* idea was discussing ways to share files and information. The second arrow is pertaining to ways to share information with partners, customers, users, the public, etc.

- Coordinate more frequent communications – How are we currently communicating? What’s working? What’s not working and needs fixing? How to improve or fix the problems?

New Business:

1. Utility of our ES products. Are what we're producing (NRCS, USFS, and other cooperators) useful to our current or potential customers?
2. New EDIT database.
3. Moving away from "Box & Arrow" state and transition models to a matrix similar to an Excel spreadsheet.
4. ESD in Coastal and Subaqueous areas. *Excerpts from SOI – Request for assistance from SSD, December 9, 2015:*
 - Under: Work Items –*Develop ecological sites in coastal areas*
 - Under: *Why does NRCS need to complete assessment of coastal soils? - Assist with maintaining and restoring hydrologic and ecological functions of the coastal area.*
 - *Under same heading as above: To provide useful ecological site descriptions*
 - *Other outcomes from this initiative where ESDs would be needed or useful*