



Texas Soil Profiles

President's Letter



Dusten Russell, 2009 President

Well, summer is officially over and fall is setting in. I know everyone is looking forward to cooler temperatures! It seems that most of the state has been held hostage by the recent weather. Some have been inundated with more rain than they know what to do with while others have experienced record-breaking drought. And, because it's Texas, everyone has been subjected to scorching temperatures. But nothing lasts forever, and this change of seasons will hopefully soon usher in a little relief.

I would like to thank all of you who tirelessly promoted PSSAT these past few months. Hopefully our efforts will continue to spark interest and keep expanding our organization! Each new member adds unique experiences and perspective to our group as a whole and also helps ensure the survival of PSSAT for many years to come. I also want to keep encouraging member involvement. I know everyone is busy with work, but we'd really like to hear from you! If you're working on a big project, have a great idea, a story or comment, *please* send it in to Amanda Bragg and she will put it in the next newsletter.

One initiative that will really require a great deal of member input is a soils information addition to the website. I know many of you are called on each year to participate in various public events, such as giving presentations to school children, manning booths at field days and speaking to adult professional groups. I would like to know if the members would find a webpage with an assortment of soils facts, links and slide shows helpful. This would serve as a sort of one-stop-shop for people to access data, statistics and fun facts about soils instead of aimlessly searching random websites. This endeavor could not only save time, it could also provide more consistently correct information. We really need member feedback to determine the interest level about and to provide materials for this project, so please drop us a line!

I really do hope to see more of your articles, updates and comments in the next PSSAT newsletter. Remember, we can only progress and grow as much as our members' participation allows us. Here's to wishing you all a good, cool fall season!

Dusten Russell

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PSSAT Members Make Million Acre Mapper List

Submitted by: Nathan Haile

The National Cooperative Soil Survey partnership is closing in on its goal of mapping all soils in the United States. Thousands of soil scientists have contributed to this endeavor. The Chief of the Natural Resources Conservation Service has recognized those soil scientists who have mapped one million acres during their career. They are being recognized with a certificate and specially designed lapel pin. Below is a list of the PSSAT members who have achieved the “million acre” status. Congrats to each of them for their marvelous accomplishment.

Charles D. Batte	Lynn D. Gray	Dennis Ressel
Sam Brown	James M. Greenwade	William Risinger
Joseph Castille	Edward L. Griffin	Jerry Rives
Wilfred Crenwelge	Kirby L. Griffith	Kirthell Roberts
Tom Cyprian	Maurice Jurena	Nelson Rolong
Jamey Douglass	Lynn Loomis	Levi Steptoe, Jr
Wayne J. Gabriel	Conrad Neitsch	Dennis Williamson

Congrats to each of them for their marvelous accomplishment. Below is a link to see other soil scientists that have received this honor.

<http://soils.usda.gov/survey/mappers/index.html>

PROFESSIONAL SOIL SCIENTISTS ASSOCIATION OF TEXAS
ANNOUNCEMENT OF 2010 SCHOLARSHIP

The scholarship in the amount of \$1,500.00, sponsored by the Professional Soil Scientist Association of Texas (PSSAT), is intended to recognize and support an outstanding undergraduate student studying to become a soil scientist at a college or university in Texas and to promote interest in careers in soil science.

At the time of application, the student must be enrolled in a college or university in Texas, and be a sophomore, junior, or senior in a program of study that can lead to a career as a soil scientist. The student must be an undergraduate in good standing at the time the scholarship is awarded. The minimum completed course work necessary for consideration includes 3 semester hours in soil science and 12 semester hours in the biological, physical, or earth sciences that support soil science.

The selection criteria will include relevance of course work to a career in soil science, difficulty and diversity of courses taken, grade point ratio, honors and awards for scholarship, and membership in honor societies. Participation in recognized clubs and organizations, soil judging teams and other judging teams, elected offices, committees, projects, and similar endeavors will also be considered. Other selection criteria include evidence reflecting personal traits such as excellence of character, ethics, dependability, a can-do attitude, and a strong work ethic.

Deadline for submission is December 21, 2009: This is an absolute deadline. Application forms and more detailed information concerning the scholarship may be obtained by contacting (by letter, telephone or e-mail):

Jessica Lene-Jobe, Chairman
PSSAT Scholarship Committee
330 Rambling Oaks Road
Graham, TX 76450
(940) 550-5249
Jessica.Job@tx.usda.gov



2009 PSSAT Scholarship winner Gaylen Roberts with Vice-President John Sackett

Monticello Mine Hosts Tour

By: Dusten Russell

The Monticello Mine of Luminant Mining Company hosted a reclamation soils tour last May. The event featured a tour of Luminant's power plant facilities and several post-mine soil pits. Participants were able to examine firsthand the different progressive stages of the soil reclamation process, which also includes vegetative restoration. Attending the tour were professionals from a wide array of disciplines, including Texas A&M University, Texas Soil and Water Conservation Board, Railroad Commission of Texas, Northeast Texas Community College and NRCS.

Luminant Mining is very enthusiastic about the environment and reclamation. Since the initiation of mining, over 3,400 acres has been restored into wetland areas. They have also planted approximately 25 million trees as of December 2008. Luminant is the first mining company to be honored by the Forest Service with a designation of "Tree Farm" status. Aside from forestry, other post-mine land uses include pastureland, cropland, and fish and wildlife habitat areas.



Visitors at Monticello Mine get up-close and personal with soil pit.

Cyprian Volunteers at 2009 Possum Kingdom Tri District Land Judging Contest

By: Jessica Jobe and Sidney Paulson



Tom Cyprian at Possum Kingdom

Since retiring in 2004 Tom Cyprian has played a vital role in educating students through his involvement, as an Earth Team Volunteer in helping with land judging contests and field days. Tom has setup the Possum Kingdom Tri-District Land Judging Contest and the District 3 4-H Contest along with helping with Natural Resource Days in Young, Stephens and Palo Pinto Counties.

Prior to retiring, Tom spent 38 years working as a Soil Scientist with NRCS. During that time, Tom authored the Stephens, Throckmorton and Young County Soil Surveys then retired as the MLRA Project Leader in Graham.

Tom has a great desire to help his community and young people. The MLRA Soil Survey Staff at Graham appreciates Tom's volunteer services and the fact that he chooses to spend some of his time as an Earth Team Volunteer.

PSSAT Assists with Local Soil Judging Contests

Submitted by: Nathan Haile

Many members of the PSSAT assisted local conservation districts, Junior colleges, and local FFA chapters in conducting soil judging contest for 4H and FFA teams across the state. Below: members Bryon Lorenz, Jessica Jobe and Nathan Haile display many PSSAT informational items at the Tri County Land, Range and Pasture contest held at Possum Kingdom Lake.



Bryon Lorenz, Jessica Jobe, and Nathan Haile represent PSSAT at the Possum Kingdom Lake Land, Range, and Pasture Contest.



Nutrient Management Outreach in Bayonnais, Haiti

By: Dr. David Weindorf

On August 10-14, 2009, SSSA members Dr. John Kruse (Research Agronomist - Georgia Pacific) and Dr. David Weindorf (Assistant Professor - LSU AgCenter) traveled to Bayonnais, Haiti to provide agronomy outreach to farmers in the region. The Organization of the Christian Force in Bayonnais (OFCB), appealed to the ASA-CSA-SSSA membership earlier in the year for agronomic expertise. Bayonnais is an isolated, mountainous farming region approximately 100 km to the northwest of Port Au Prince. The region is characterized by steep slopes, cobbly/bouldery soils derived from limestone, mixed shrubs, and plantain and mango trees. Water is channeled from mountain streams to the village via concrete aqueducts. There is no electricity in the valley. Farming in the area consists primarily of rice in the lowlands and corn on upland slopes, divided into small parcels. Planting and harvesting are conducted with hand tools and there is no access to commercial fertilizer.



Upon arriving, the team evaluated a 200 m elevational transect from the valley stream to the top of upland hills, evaluating soil texture, pH, salinity, N, P, and K. The soils were consistently calcareous, with a pH of 7.2-7.8. The team trained local agronomists in colorimetric testing of nutrients using field-portable kits that showed N and K were moderate to high, but P was low. The P limitation also manifested itself as purple discoloration on corn in the area. The team set out to identify available nutrient streams to correct the deficiency by evaluating chicken, goat, and hog manure, the latter showing high P levels. The team set up a composting demonstration as a means of concentrating available nutrient sources from the community (food scraps, manure, green waste, etc.). The local school invited Drs. Kruse and Weindorf to lecture to a group of 75 12th graders on agronomic principles where they discussed basic concepts in soil science, nutrient management, and soil fertility.



The trip concluded with a meeting in Port Au Prince, Haiti with Dr. Myrlene Chrysostome ([Haitian](#) soil scientist) where funding opportunities, research projects, and agronomic development that could benefit Bayonnais and the nation of Haiti as a whole were discussed. Specifically, Dr. Chrysostome expressed an interest in watershed management, reforestation, and collection of georeferenced soil physicochemical data (of which none is currently available).



The team agreed that the two most pressing issues that could be addressed with expertise from agronomists and soil scientists are building a foundation of georeferenced soil data that would inform reforestation and agronomic efforts, and the formation of a basic Research and Extension framework for the island nation. This would include a soil testing lab, research sites that tested optimization of fertility practices and environmental effects of cropping systems, and locally trained Haitian agronomists that could transfer knowledge and research findings at a regional and local level.

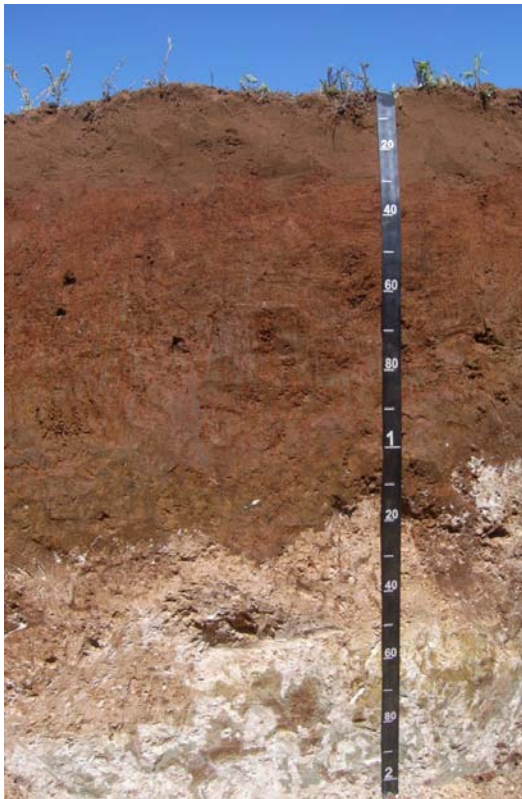
Soil Pit Sampling in the Hill Country

By: Amanda Bragg

In the Spring and Summer of 2009 the USDA – Natural Resources conservation service conducted a soil pit sampling of seven sites in Gillespie, Mason, and McCulloch Counties. Six of these sites are considered the official type locations for soil series; a seventh site is a proposed relocation site.

Each pit was dug to two meters deep with a backhoe. Soil scientists from Kerrville, San Angelo, Temple, and the National Soil Survey Laboratory in Lincoln, Nebraska worked together to catalog the changes in the soil with depth into soil horizons and collect samples from each horizon. The soil samples will be analyzed by the National Soil Survey Lab for bulk density, mineralogy, and texture. The rate of water flow downward through the soil profile or soil infiltration was also measured at each site.

Laboratory results and infiltration data will improve the land-use interpretations for each of the soil series. Interpretations include land suitability for ponds, septic systems, roads, dwellings, forage production, and wildlife management.



The Pedernales series type location located outside of Fredericksburg in Gillespie County.



Voca series type location located south of the town of Voca in McCulloch County.

Photo Contest Update

By: John Sackett

I am pleased to announce that Shanna Dunn has submitted the first photograph for the PSSAT Photo Contest. Thanks for getting the ball rolling Shanna. I've heard several people talk about taking "the perfect picture for the contest," and I encourage them to send it in. The December deadline is fast approaching, and it will be here before we know it. Help us document the natural beauty of Texas.

Recently, I have been kicking around the idea of having PSSAT sponsor the creation of a monthly calendar showing off some the photographs that were submitted for the contest. I am in the preliminary investigation stages to determine just exactly how much money it would cost to produce, say, 100 calendars. Right now, the only thing we get from PSSAT, as a member, is the receipt stub for our dues. It would be nice to get something from PSSAT that we could put on the office wall to give use a reminder that we are PSSAT members. As word spreads about the quality of our calendars, I envision that eventually PSSAT would be able to sell the calendars as a fundraiser. I would be very interested in knowing what the PSSAT members think about the calendar idea. If there seems to be support for it, I would investigate further into the exact cost. Since we raised the dues at our February 2009 meeting, we should have enough money the cover the printing costs.

For those interested in sending a picture to the PSSAT contest, all the information can be found on the internet at http://pssat.org/PhotoContest_2010.htm

From the Editor:

Special thanks to all the people who submitted material for this newsletter. Without your contributions this newsletter would be impossible to finish. If you have any articles, ideas, or thoughts for the next newsletter, please email them to editor@pssat.org.

Thanks,

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