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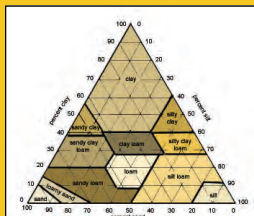
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Core Partner Meetings Yield Benefits

You can learn a lot over a cup of coffee or soft drink.

Just ask NRCS New Mexico. It sponsored six meetings in February and March throughout the state to meet with its core partners.



"The purpose of the meetings was to gain

input and feedback from NRCS core partners that have common goals for implementing local and state conservation projects," said Dennis Alexander, State Conservationist for NRCS New Mexico.

The state office sought input from its partners that will help direct NRCS and its conservation partnership to improve the delivery of service and identify current and future priority

resource needs.

The focus at the meetings was placed on natural resource priorities and the service NRCS provides.

"It was important for our non-governmental partners to understand who we are, how we operate and our decision-making process," said Steve Kadas, assistant State Conservationist for Operations, NRCS New Mexico.

George Chavez (center), State Resource Conservationist, NRCS New Mexico, reacts to a comment made during the Core Partners meeting in Moriarty, N.M. in February. Chavez, along with all of the NRCS New Mexico Leadership Team, participated in the six Core Partner meetings in February and March. (Photo by Rey T. Adame)

The meetings were productive as our core partners discussed Soil, Water, Animals, Plants, Air, and Energy.

The New Mexico Association of Conservation Districts coordinated all of the meetings and will provide NRCS with a cumulative report in the next few months.

NM State Conservationist Dennis Alexander

State Conservationist's Notes



I want to thank all of the New Mexico NRCS family for an extremely productive first half of this fiscal year. We are right on track with our program obligations and New Mexico is at the forefront in helping our agency move toward a clean national audit. I marvel at the way you have accepted the challenges of a somewhat tumultuous year for NRCS as well as other federal agencies. I sincerely appreciate your dedication and perseverance in getting the best service possible to our customers as our Congress has dealt with the difficult task of passing the FY 2011 budget.

In my work with partners across New Mexico I am constantly complemented by my peers and partners on the professionalism and work ethic of our workforce. During these conversations, I am sometimes embarrassed to accept the phrase because I know in my heart that each and every one of you are the ones responsible for the accomplishments we see out on the New Mexico landscapes. I am honored to serve as your State Conservationist and extremely proud of the contributions you make to our New Mexico farmers and ranchers and our natural resources.

As you all are aware, the Resource Conservation

and Development Program funding was discontinued as part of the budget resolution process this fiscal year. I want to say that the New Mexico RC&D Program was highly respected and the results of their work can be seen throughout almost every community in New Mexico.

We will miss their contributions to our rural communities in years to come. The seven RC&D coordinators have been temporarily assigned other duties until our agency has all of the available options for these employees to consider. Chief White and I want to be sure all options and considerations will be available to our coordinators as they move to their new permanent job assignments. These employees have been and will remain a valuable part of the NRCS family and Chief White is committed to their continued future employment with NRCS.

I would also like to mention the need for us to continue our credible and valued relationship with our core partners. We are fortunate as an organization to have a continued working relationship with our conservation districts and governmental partners. During February and March, our leadership met with our core partners in six different locations across the state to spend time listening and talking with these important partners. We discussed what natural resource issues they considered important and asked what is working well and where we need to improve. It was also an opportunity for us to more fully explain who we are; what we do; and how we make the decisions by which we operate as a federal agency.

I believe these meetings greatly benefitted us and our partners. We asked the New Mexico Association of Conservation Districts (NMACD) to administratively handle the meetings and record what was discussed. The NMACD will provide us with a final report sometime in the next few weeks. To those folks and agencies who contributed to arranging and sponsoring these meetings, I want to say thanks. Your contributions are greatly appreciated.

Get Social with the NRCS Employees' Club

Socializing is not uncommon in the workplace. Co-workers gather around the "water cooler," attend holiday celebrations, workplace potlucks, and come together to recognize life events. But who is the coordinator behind these occasions?

For NRCS NM, the Employees' Club is usually behind the latest office event. The club, established as a social organization for NRCS employees, sponsors many workplace social activities including parties, tournaments, and picnics.

Recently, the club hosted an Earth Day celebration with a plant give-away and potluck. The club raised a variety of plants, including geraniums and peppers, that were given out to USDA employees in exchange for small donations.

Kerri Mich, President of the club, says they aim to hold an event each month and hopes NRCS employees will join.

"We want everyone to participate and have fun," Mich says.

"Everyone is welcome to our meetings and we're open to any new ideas."

The club has also started monthly brown bag lunch meetings called *Lunch & Learn*. They give NRCS employees an opportunity to enjoy lunch with their co-workers while sharing life experiences. Upcoming lunch dates are May 19 and June 16 from 11:30-12:30 pm.

You can also join the NRCS Club on Friday, May 20 for a golf outing at the Pueblo de Cochiti Golf Course. Games will begin at 9:30 am and the cost is \$57+tax per person; this includes a cart, range ball, and green fees.

For more information on the club and its activities, contact Club President Kerri Mich at 761-4437 or kerri.mich@nm.usda.gov.



The FLTCIP to Hold Informational Workshop at USDA State Office

The Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program (FLTCIP) Open Season seminar will be held at the USDA State Office first floor conference room at 1:00 pm on Thursday, May 19, 2011.

The seminar is designed for non-enrolled employees who are interested in learning more about long-term care, FLTCIP plan options, and the application process. An FLTCIP expert will be in atten-

dance to discuss the options, give tips, and answer any questions.

During FLTCIP Open Season, there is an opportunity to enroll using abbreviated underwriting, which means applicants answer fewer health questions.

This is available to active duty Federal and U.S. Postal Service employees and spouses, same-sex domestic partners of eligible

civilian workforce members, and active members of the uniformed services and their spouses.

The FLTCIP Open Season is April 4 through June 24, 2011. For more FLTCIP information, visit www.LTCFEDS.com.

For more information on this event contact the NRCS Human Resources Department.



How to contact NRCS N.M.:

◆ State Office (505) 761-4400

◆ Public Affairs Officer

Rey T. Adame

(505) 761-4406 (office)

◆ Earth Team Volunteer

Triston Lovato—(505) 761-4405 (office)

◆ NW Area Office (505) 761-4447

◆ South Area Office (575) 648-2941

◆ East Area Office (575) 762-4769

Resource Conservation & Development: An RC&D Success Story

Adelante RC&D creates CWMA for Mora, San Miguel Counties

Adelante RC&D along with 14 other partners including significant help from NM Department of Agriculture officially established a Cooperative Weeds Management Area (CWMA) for Mora and San Miguel Counties in 2007.



Improving their environment

Students of Memorial Middle School in Las Vegas take part in removing noxious weed from school grounds. After receiving a class on the importance of weed control, students learned how to identify local weeds. They took part in a project to remove weeds before seeds mature and disburse.

(Courtesy photo)

The CWMA seeks to reduce the amount and prevent the spread of noxious weeds by inventorying all noxious weeds, providing outreach and educational opportunities on noxious weeds to all residents and applying various treatment methods such as chemical and mechanical within the bi-county CWMA.

More than \$140,000 grant funding from NM State Forestry and NRCS helped the CWMA hire a Weeds Project Coordinator, obtain high tech GIS mapping equipment, purchase an ATV and apply herbicides to infested areas.

Outreach has been provided to over 500 elementary, middle school and high school students through presentations at various schools.

Displays and presentations along with a brochure developed by Adelante & Tierra y Montes SWCD and a banner developed by Adelante & NRCS has provided information to over 600 adults on weed



tours, booth displays at county fairs and presentations. More than 600 acres have been mapped and over 450 acres have been treated.

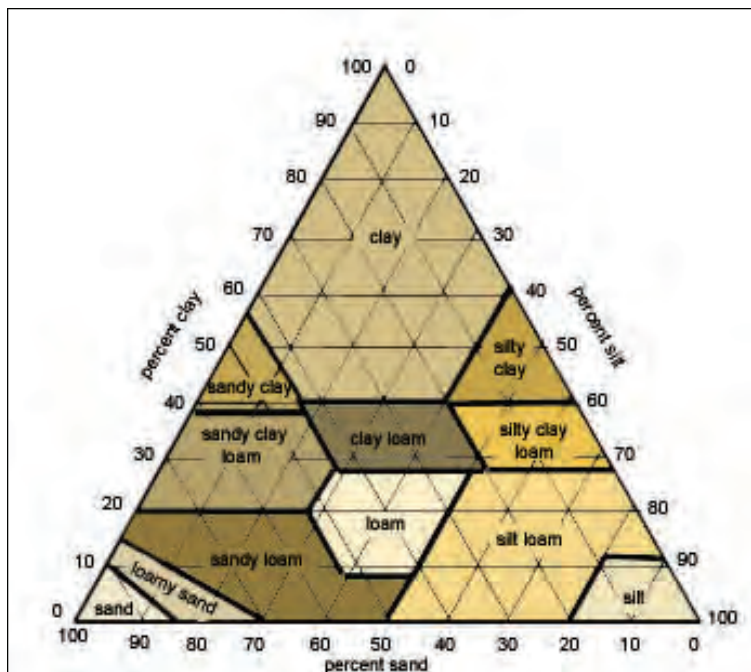
A Three-Sided Soil?

A closer investigation into the soil triangle

by **Edwin Kitzes**

As with most NRCS field offices, we get a lot of questions from producers. I frequently get asked about soils.

In my response, I'll use terms like, 'loam, sandy clay, and silt', but quickly realize that a visual of the 'soil triangle' will make everything much clearer.



The soil triangle, or 'pyramid' as it can sometimes be called, can be somewhat intimidating to the first time viewer. First developed in 1938 by the USDA for use in soil classifications, the soil triangle represents a profound fact that 'not all soils are created equally'. Let's take a closer look...

All soils can be divided into three major components; sand, silt and clay because these components represent the size of soil particles. (Note: The sand, silt and clay comprise the three sides of the Soils Triangle.)

By estimating what percent of each component you have in a given soil, you can use the triangle to find the corresponding name for your specific soil. For example, a soil with 30 percent sand, 40 percent silt and 30 percent clay would be called a 'clay loam.' To further clarify some confusion; a soil with the title 'loam' is only an arbitrary name signifying an ideal soil for most major agronomical crops.

Knowing what type of soil you have can be very helpful to a farmer, urban gardener, or even a building contractor, because each class has very different properties that can either help or hinder that person's desired activities.

So next time an eager producer comes into the office take the time to explain the soil triangle to them. Explain to them the difference between a 'clay' soil and a 'loamy sand', and how distinctive soils require different management practices.

(Editor's Note: Edwin Kitzes is an Agronomist with the NRCS Los Lunas Field Office)

Mid-year Progress Reviews Due

Mid-year Progress Reviews will be entered into EmpowHR by May 31, 2011. All employees should have a performance plan in place prior to this date. For more details, call Nicole Martinez, NRCS NM HR Specialist, at (505) 761-4410 or email her at: christina.martinez@nm.usda.gov

Diversity Day Celebration set for June 29th

The Diversity Day event made its first appearance last year. It was developed to give USDA employees an opportunity to recognize and celebrate diversity within the workplace.

This year's event will take place in the first floor conference room at the USDA state building on Wednesday, June 29, 2011 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

During this year's festivities, there will be speakers from various special emphasis groups, a potluck with ethnic foods, and salsa tasting.

For more information, contact Jean Foster at (505) 761-5445.

NRCS Supports in National American Indian Science and Engineering Fair (NAISEF)

NRCS was a major sponsor at the National American Indian Science and Engineering Fair (NAISEF) held this spring in Albuquerque.

The NAISEF event welcomed 258 students from 14 states, and 99 volunteer judges. Student science projects in engineering, environmental sciences and plant sciences were reviewed and judged.

NRCS is both an Amber and Circle of Support Partner sponsor for the annual event, which is given by the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES).



NRCS employees participated as NAISEF judges; from left to right: Johnny Green, TX, Roger Ford, NM, Nathaniel Todea, UT, Cliff Sanchez, NM, Carol Crouch, OK, Ron Hilliard, OK

AISES is a national, nonprofit organization which nurtures community development by bridging science and technology with traditional values. Through its educational programs, AISES provides opportunities for American Indians and Alaska Natives to pursue studies in science, engineering, and technology arenas. The AISES goal is to help American Indians and Native Alaskans become more self-reliant and self-determined members of their society and culture.

The NRCS sponsorship helps AISES provide that support.

Dr. Carol Crouch is a District Conservationist in Oklahoma and has the collateral duty of National Special Emphasis Program Manager American Indian Program Manager (AI/AN SEPM). Oklahoma NRCS State Conservationist Ron Hilliard and Dr. Crouch served as special award judges during the event. Dr. Crouch was also the special award judge for the American Indian Alaska Native Employee Association (AIANEAE) awards. These awards were given to three seniors who presented the top science projects in Engineering, Environmental Sciences, and Plant Sciences.

Two NRCS New Mexico Leadership Team members also served as judges at the conference. Cliff Sanchez, Assistant State Conservationist/Water Resources; and Roger Ford, State Engineer. Cliff Sanchez was the lead judge for Environmental Sciences. Roger Ford served as the final judging calculations team judge.

NRCS New Mexico also managed a career booth at the science fair, which provided visitors with NRCS educational materials and career brochures.

Take some time to remember Memorial Day– Monday, May 30th

As we continue to honor all Veterans and their service to America, Disability.gov would like to share information about some of the many programs, services and resources from across the Federal Government that are available to Veterans, their families and those who serve them.

[America's Heroes at Work](#) – This addresses the employment challenges of returning service members and Veterans living with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and/or Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder; resources include the recently released [Veterans Hiring Toolkit](#) for employers.

[Benefits.gov](#) – This has comprehensive information about benefits programs available to Veterans and their families.

[Disability.gov](#) – This has information and resources for Veterans covering: benefits, education, employment, health, and housing.

[Disability Benefits for Wounded Warriors](#) – Military service members can receive expedited processing of disability claims from the Social Security Administration. Benefits available through Social Security are different than those from the Department of Veterans Affairs and require a separate application.

[FedsHireVets.gov](#) – This is the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's government-wide Veterans employment website.

[HUDVet](#) – This has national, state and local

housing information for Veterans from the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development.

[Job Accommodation Network](#) – This has information about job accommodations and workplace supports for Veterans.



[myVA](#) – This has information about benefits for Veterans, including health care, job assistance, and education support through the GI Bill and home loans.

[National Resource Directory](#) – This provides access to services and resources at the national, state, and local levels to support the recovery, rehabilitation and community reintegration of Veterans and service members.

[Office of Disability Employment Policy](#) – This offers a variety of resources to help Veterans with disabilities understand training and employment services that may be available to them.

[Patriot Express](#) – This is a program of the U.S. Small Business Administration that helps Veterans and members of the military community who want to establish or expand a small business.

[Serve.gov](#) – This is an online resource for finding volunteer opportunities in your community and creating your own. Use [Serve.gov](#) to help you do your part. America's foundation will be built one community at a time -- it starts with you. [Serve.gov](#) is managed by the Corporation for National and Community Service.

[Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration](#) – This provides assistance with the mental and behavioral health needs of Veterans and their families.

[USA.gov](#) – This offers information about benefits, health care, job training, and other programs for Veterans.

[VAntage Point](#) – This is the official Department of Veterans Affairs blog.

[Veterans' Employment & Training Service](#) – This helps Veterans obtain meaningful careers, maximize their employment opportunities, and protect their employment rights.



May is Asian American/Pacific Islander Heritage Month

Celebrate Asian American/Pacific Islander Heritage Month with the *Festival of Asian Cultures* on Sunday, May 15 in downtown Albuquerque.

You can also attend the NM Japanese American Citizens League luncheon on Sunday, May 22 at the Evergreen Chinese Buffet.

For more information on these events, contact Jean Foster, Asian American/Pacific Islander Emphasis Program Manager, at (505) 761-5445.

Personnel

NRCS Welcomes New and Returning SCEP and STEP Students for the Summer!

SCEP Students

Completed Program:

Amber Synatschk, accepts permanent position in Clovis

Kiesha Yazzie, accepts permanent position in Tucumcari

Converted from STEP:

Jack Martinez, assigned to Roy

Leo Pacheco, assigned to Mora

Amy Chavez, assigned to Las Cruces

Returning SCEP:

Jedidiah Dunn, assigned to Roswell

Jessica Howe, assigned to Deming

New SCEP Students:

Carley Czubernat, assigned to T or C

Becca Dominick, assigned to Lovington

Steve Perez, assigned to Santa Fe

Tyffany Herrera, assigned to Raton

Claudius Price, assigned to Alamogordo

STEP Students

Returning STEP:

Taylor Atwood, returning STEP student, assigned to Tucumcari

William West, returning STEP student, assigned to Fort Sumner

Kyle Swimmer, new STEP student, assigned to Grants

Welcome to all!

NRCS ATV/UTV Safety Reminder



Before you start your trek off-road, there are a few things to consider: NRCS would like to remind everyone about the All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) and Utility Terrain Vehicle (UTV) safety policy.

All NRCS employees must wear a helmet, protective safety eye wear, and gloves while operating an ATV/UTV. The NRCS State Office will pay for the training and equipment use costs.

Employees are also encouraged to wear long pants and a long-sleeved shirt, field appropriate footwear, and additional protection such as knee/shin/elbow guards for additional safety.

NRCS employees must receive the ATV Safety Institute approved training before operating an ATV/UTV.

For more information, contact Vickie Suazo-Chanza, NRCS-NM Safety Officer, at (505) 761-4409.

Think 'Safety First!'

Personnel

Welcome Four New Team members!

Johnna Blankenship, Rangeland Management Specialist, Santa Rosa Service Center.

Daniel Bloedel, Resource Conserva-

tionist, NRCS NM State Officer.

Jean Cole, Purchasing Agent in Administrative Services.

Theresa Esplain, Secretary to the State Conservationist

April Luna, Soil Conservationist, Carlsbad Service Center.

Chanda Pettie, Wildlife Biologist, Resources Conservation staff.

Welcome!

Friendly Faces in New Places ...

John "Mike" Jones, formerly the Soil Conservationist in the Las Vegas service center, is now the District Conservationist in the Estancia Service center.

Brandon Bishop, former Rangeland Management Specialist in Datil, NM, is now the District Conservationist for the Socorro Service Station.

Edwin Kitzes, former Agronomist at the Roswell Service Center, is now at the Los Lunas Service Center.

Fernando Morales, former Civil Engineer on the Engineering staff has joined the Northwest Area staff and is now the Northwest Area Civil Engineer.

All changes were in effect by late February. Congratulations!

NRCS Says Good-bye, Good luck to Great Employees

Retirements

Effective December 2010:

Hollis Fuchs, South Area Conservationist

Rita Yarbough, Secretary to the State Conservationist

Effective January 2011:

Mark McKinley, NW Area Engineer

Paul Montoya, District Conservationist for the Santa Fe Service Center

Thomas Roybal, Soil Conservation Technician in

Carrizozo

William Schwebke, District Conservationist for the Datil Service Center

Gerald Stratton, Soil Scientist, on the Soils Staff at the State office

David Trujillo, Rangeland Management Specialist for the Las Cruces Soil Survey Staff

Effective February 2011:

Bob Moorhead, District Conservationist for the Carrizozo Service Center

Robert Wilson, Civil Engineer on the NRCS NM Engineering staff

Effective March 2011:

Robert Abercrombie, RC&D Coordinator for the El Llano Estacado RC&D Office in Tucumcari

Larry Flinn, NRCS Property Management Technician

Ed Rokni, Civil Engineer, NM State Office

Frank Casaus, Civil Engineering Technician in the NW Area Office

Resignations

Effective February 2011:

Bradley Podoll, former Rangeland Management Specialist on the Soils Staff

Holly Byrd, Soil Conservationist in the Portales Service Center

Jonathan Walker, Soil Conservation Technician in the Alamogordo Service Center

Effective March 2011:

Glenda Archuleta-Allen, Soil Conservation Technician in Roswell

Shantelle Candelaria, Soil Conservation Technician in the Cuba Service Center

Erin Kniffen, Soil Conservation Technician in Aztec

Good luck to all these folks!