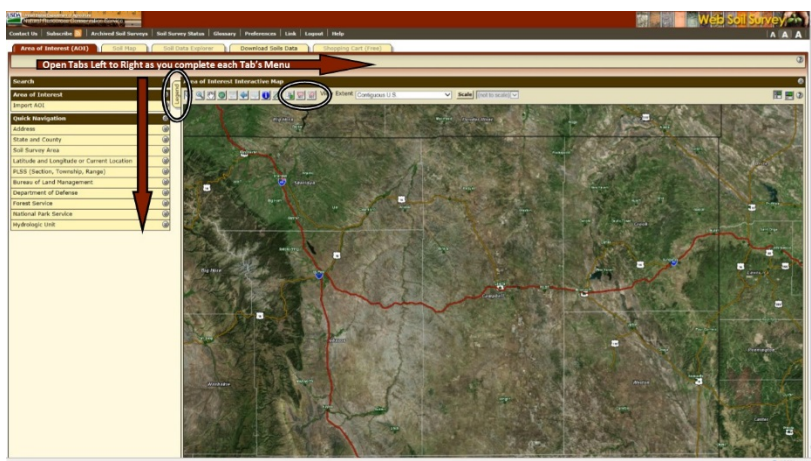# Web Soil Survey



## A Users Guide Series

### this issue...

- Getting Started with WSS

- How to Find WSS Online

### Future Articles in this Series...

- The Soil Map & Data Explorer Tab

## First Steps in Using WSS
## Handy Tools & Establishing an Area of Interest

### How to Find WSS Online

Finding Web Soil Survey is as simple as typing it into any search engine. It is typically the first link on the results page, but if you are unsure just look for the "usda.gov" at the end of the hyperlink. Once you are there click on the green button to get started!



### Publications and Tutorials

- YouTube
- WSS Home Page Blue Hyperlinks
- Brochure/Pamphlets



Article By:
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To recap we have now wrapped up discussing some benefits and the history of Web Soil Survey (WSS). Continuing our series, we will finally be launching WSS in this 3rd installment.

Getting started I should mention, there are a lot better and more complete publications and tutorials available on how to use WSS that will be able to go into much greater detail and provide you with illustrations. What I hope to provide you with is some basic instruction and explanations to make your experience a better one. With that said, it is my opinion that one of the most important things to do is familiarize yourself with the different tabs along the top and their correlating menus down the left side. The typical workflow is such you complete tabs left to right while working your way down the menus for each tab. Once you have gotten everything out of that specific tab's menu you move on to the next tab. A great tip if you are wondering what something does or what to do next is all the help windows identified by the "?" buttons. Another nice feature is to hold your mouse curser over it without clicking and it should identify itself. One last handy feature, which I feel gets overlooked, is the "Legend" tab located between the menu window and map window. When you click on this tab it opens the Legend window where you can control what is showing on the map.

So let's get started! When you first launch WSS it will start out on the first tab called Area of Interest (AOI). The first thing WSS survey needs you to do is establish the AOI so it can have a defined boundary to work within. Currently there are two ways to define an AOI in WSS. The first option is for those who have access to GIS since it involves importing a GIS shapefile. In the Menu window located under the search bar is the Area of Interest bar which is where you can implement this option. Just click on import and choose the appropriate option to upload your AOI boundary. The second option is to manually draw in the boundary of your AOI. To do this you need to zoom into the area you're working on the map.

You could always grab the zoom tool and draw a box around the area you want to focus, but some handy ways to get where you need to go is by using the quick navigation tools in the menu. Looking down the list you can choose which option will work the best for you.

Once you get to where you can see on the map the entire area you want to evaluate, you will need to select one of two tools to manually draw your AOI. The two tools are located all the way on the right hand side of the tool set and they have AOI written on them. The first one with a box shape in it will do just that and draws a box/rectangle for an AOI boundary. The second AOI tool you can actually draw a multi-sided polygon to make any shape you need to more specifically fit your AOI to a boundary. Important note is to double click or Ctrl+Click to finish the last point in the polygon. If you made a mistake you can just begin drawing a new AOI and the new one will overwrite the previous drawn one.

Once you have completed drawing an AOI a new information pane opens in the menu window. This gives you the options to name your AOI, how you want your map unit symbols to be labeled, acreage of your AOI, and shows you the soil data available from WSS. From here you can also clear your AOI if you desired to start over. Once you are satisfied you are ready to move on the next tab which will be discussed in the next article.

Please keep in mind that there are other sources for soils data, but using WSS is the best way to get the latest soils information. Soil surveys are being completed and published in printed form and digital form on an ongoing schedule. As time passes, the data in printed surveys can become out of date. The up-to-date official information about the soils in a given area is now available in digital form for each of the Soil Survey Areas. However, WSS will always provide interactive access to the most current information for your AOI.