

Web Soil Survey

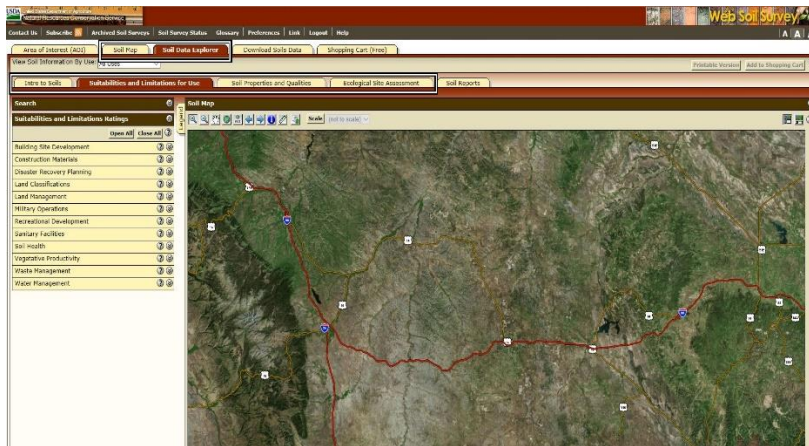
A Users Guide Series

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Second Step in Using WSS Soil Map & Soil Data Explorer

In this 4th installment we will be picking up where we left off working in Web Soil Survey (WSS) with our Area of Interest (AOI). This is where we really get into the meat of the program and find out what you really want to know about your soils and maybe even something you never really thought about before but find interesting.

So, in case you have forgotten we have opened WSS and created our AOI using one of the methods described in the previous article. The second step in using Web Soil Survey is to look at the Soil Map for your area of interest. The soil map shows the soil map units in your AOI. The Map Unit Legend Summary table in the left column shows you the name and map symbol of each map unit, the percent of each map unit in the AOI, and the total acreage of each map unit in the AOI. For multi-part AOIs, each AOI part will be shown and the soil survey area(s) they intersect. You can display the map unit description for a single soil unit by clicking the soil unit name. The description will appear in a dialog, which has a Printable Version control. The Map Unit Descriptions report, containing descriptions of all soil map units in your AOI, is automatically added to your shopping cart for a Custom Soil Resource Report. To get a Printable Version of this report, navigate to the Soil Data Explorer tab's Soil Reports inner tab. Open the AOI Inventory folder, view the Map Unit Description report, and click Printable Version.

While using WSS, you may want to refer back to your soil map. You can do so on the screen by clicking the Soil Map tab, or you can print the soil map by clicking the Printable Version button. The default Soil Map, Map Unit Legend, and Map Unit Descriptions are automatically added to the Shopping Cart, but if you would like to change the layers on the map and give it a different name you can do so and click the Add to Shopping Cart button to customize the map in your report.

Next, we can move on to the Soil Data Explorer tab. This tab contains five inner tabs: Intro to Soils, Suitabilities and Limitations for Use, Soil Properties and Qualities, Ecological Site Assessment, and Soil Reports. The default inner tab is Suitabilities and Limitations for Use.

This tab along with the Soil Properties and Qualities tab includes various soil interpretations displayed as thematic maps with a summary table for the soil map units in the selected AOI. A single value or rating for each map unit is generated by aggregating the interpretive ratings of individual map unit components. Ratings are organized by category, such as "Building Site Development." Open a ratings category in the panel to the left, and select a rating, such as "Dwellings with Basements." To learn more about the rating, click View Description. In the View Options pane, select the items you want to view. To view or change the aggregation method or other advanced parameters, click Advanced Options. When ready, click View Rating to hopefully get the answers you're looking for. To learn more on these options and methods, the help buttons (?) are invaluable and not something you want to overlook, or you can use the first tab Intro to Soils, which contains mountains of information.

That leaves the Ecological Site Assessment tab. This tab includes ecological site descriptions, plant growth curves, state and transition models, and selected National Plants Database information. Individual soil map unit components can be correlated to a particular ecological site. The Dominant Ecological Site map is generated automatically when you click on the Ecological Site Assessment tab. It shows all the ecological sites in your AOI, aggregated by dominant condition. The Ecological Sites by Map Unit Component table lists the ecological sites assigned to map unit components in your AOI. To view ecological site data, select an ecological site in the panel to the left and select one of the numbered plant communities, or select This Ecological Site. In the View Options pane, select the items you want to view. Note that the options for This Ecological Site are not the same as those for an individual plant community. When ready, click View Plant Community Info if you selected an individual plant community, or View Ecological Site Info if you selected This Ecological Site.

COMING UP NEXT IN THE FINAL INSTALLMENT...

We will wrap up the remaining tabs in WSS along with explaining the difference between Printable and Add to Shopping Cart. I'll have a few more tips and tricks to help you better navigate WSS efficiently and effectively.

