# Web Soil Survey

## A Users Guide Series

## Final Steps in Using WSS

When we last left off, we were working in the Soil Data Explorer Tab and its inner tabs. So far, we have discussed 4 of the 5 tabs and are left with the Soils Reports tab. Once I have covered the Soil Reports tab we will return to the remaining main tabs and finish up with some helpful hints.

The Soil Reports tab includes various formatted tabular and narrative report tables which containing data for each soil map unit in your AOI, and the components of those soil map units. Unlike the reports in the "Suitabilities and Limitations" and "Soil Properties and Qualities" tabs, no aggregation of data is done. The reports contain soil interpretive information as well as basic soil properties and qualities. Reports are organized by category and can be opened by clicking in the panel to the left and selecting a report. If you would like to learn more about the report, click View Description. To view the report, click View Soil Report and only the major components of the map unit will be included. If you would like, in the Options pane, you can select "Include Minor Soils" which will include all the map unit components in a report, regardless of their percent composition.

The last step in using Web Soil Survey is to get a Custom Soil Resource Report. This report can be generated from information you have added to the "Shopping Cart (Free)" tab from the Soil Map and Soil Data Explorer tabs. To customize your report, while in these tabs you will need to add the specific data you want to your shopping cart. To do this you'll view the information in the right column, and then click the Add to Shopping Cart button. Again, I would like to stress that even though it is called a shopping cart and you check out when you are done, everything is free. The first thing you will see in the Shopping Cart tab is the report properties panel which contains title and map options. The title of your report cannot be changed and always includes the name of the soil survey areas in your AOI. You can however, optionally add your own subtitle to the report. You can use the AOI name if you entered one on the AOI tab or enter a custom subtitle in the "Custom Subtitle" box or eliminate the subtitle entirely by selecting "None".

Map Options will specify how all the maps included in your report will be generated. The printed map always displays the full AOI extent, regardless of how you may have zoomed or panned the map on the screen. If you want your maps to be rendered to a certain scale, you may select your desired scale.

It may be that map scale values are disabled and unavailable because your AOI is so big that your maps cannot be printed on any of the available paper sizes. Note that when selecting a different scale, the choices for paper size will show if your maps will fit on a single sheet, or they will need to be "tiled" or broken up into multiple sheets. The last option you have for the maps is whether you want tick marks on the edge of the map. Tick marks represent meter coordinates in the UTM system and you can use them to locate items within your map or to compare your map with other maps.

Next, you can preview the contents of the report by clicking on items in the Table of Contents (TOC) panel. Here you can check or uncheck items to include or exclude that item from your custom report. Note that required content cannot be unchecked. If nothing appears in your TOC it is because you have not used the Add to Shopping Cart button while in the Soil Data Explorer and Soil Map tabs. Click an item in the TOC to highlight it. That section will appear in the display panel to the right of the TOC. To make it go away, click the item again, or highlight something else.

Finally, click the Check Out button and select a delivery method. You can either generate your report now or download it later, depending on the size of your report. If you select "Get Now" WSS will immediately create a PDF file which will open in a separate browser window and can be printed or saved. If you select "Download Later," you will be prompted to enter your email address. WSS will assemble your report and notify you via email the URL for your PDF when it is ready. "Get Now" is intended for relatively small reports and "Download Later" is intended for larger reports, however there is a limit to the size of report that WSS can generate. If the limit is reached the system will inform you and you'll need to deselect some items in the TOC.

This completes our walk-through for using WSS. As I have mentioned previously 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. On the following page will be some tips and tricks I have learned about while using WSS.

USDA

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# Tips & Tricks

**Printable Version vs Add to Shopping Cart…**

They are actually the same thing really. An example would be if you are hunting for specific information in WSS. Instead of adding what you want to the shopping cart and then generating a report with all the required information that goes on a report you can just use the Printable Version button and it will provide you with a PDF with just the information from that page. "Add to Shopping Cart" makes it easier to assemble a complete report especially if you have multiple items you would like details on.

**Viewing Soil Information By Use…**

If you are only looking for information relating to a certain land use you can filter the data. For example, say you were only interested in data related to cropland. While in the Soil Data Explorer tab right below is the drop-down menu to View Soil By Use. The drop-down option defaults to All uses so that all information is displayed, but you can choose from Cropland, Forestland, Hayland/Pastureland, Horticulture, Rangeland, Recreation and Urban Uses to filter the data so only information relating to selected land uses is displayed.

**Saving your AOI…**

Sadly, there is no way to save your entire session of WSS if you run out of time, however there are two ways you can save your AOI. The first is the "Link" option above the main tabs. Use the link to return to WSS exactly as it is now, with the same AOI, and with the map zoomed to the same location. You can bookmark the link, copy it and save it for future use, or email it to others. This is good for simple shaped AOIs with fewer vertexes. The more vertexes you have, the longer the link will be. The second method is to use the Export AOI option. This option becomes available below the Import AOI after you have added an AOI to your map. This will export your AOI as a zipped ESRI shapefile that you can use to re-open your AOI in WSS using Import AOI or save it so that you can open it in another application. Export AOI exports your AOI as a zipped shapefile consisting of four files, using the base filename entered as Base filename. To export your AOI as a zipped shapefile, enter a value for base filename. Note the base filename must consist only of letters, numbers, and "_" instead of using a space. Once you have created a base filename, press Export AOI and an information dialog will be displayed containing a link to your exported AOI, as a zipped shapefile. If you click the link, your browser will download the file and do whatever it is configured to do with zip files. If you right-click the link, your browser will present a context menu allowing you to save the zip file or open it in a suitable application. This is the method I recommend. Once it is saved you can re-import the zipped shapefile using Import AOI → Create AOI from Zipped Shapefile.

**Downloading Soils Data…**

We didn't cover this tab in the main articles, but you can download Soils Data for just your AOI or entire soil survey areas. These data packages are a zip file containing tabular soils data, a blank template database, and spatial soils data. Once downloaded, this data can be used in conjunction with your GIS and database software to perform custom analysis, queries, and reports to meet your specific needs. This option would be for more of you who are tech savvy and probably use either GIS or databases on a regular basis. For help on how to download or what to do with the data after it is downloaded use the "?" buttons in each section.

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**COMING SOON**

My next series will be covering the Farm Bill
and its relation to NRCS Programs