



WEST VIRGINIA NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE 2007 ANNUAL REPORT

Fiscal Year 2007 was a very productive and challenging year for the West Virginia (WV) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Employees, our partners, farmers, and other private landowners do the important work of enhancing, improving and protecting our natural resources on America's private land. This report highlights our accomplishments in FY 2007. The success outlined in this report was the result of a lot of teamwork, partnerships, and collaboration.

Through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) and the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP), WV-NRCS funded more than \$10.6 million of conservation projects on private lands with fewer numbers of staff than last year.

- West Virginia NRCS funded 521 applications for EQIP assistance totaling \$7,900,250.38 on 48,022 acres.
- The WHIP program completed wildlife habitat management plans and contracts on 10,979 acres for 90 landowners, obligating \$905,015 for cost-share payments to West Virginia landowners.
- In 2007, \$2.15 million in federal FRPP funds were provided to protect 3,396 acres of farmland with an easement value of \$6.01 million.

The work went beyond Farm Bill programs. The NRCS Staff provided technical assistance to thousands of landowners across the state.

- NRCS staff gave technical assistance to more than 4,805 West Virginians. Conservation System Plans were written on 68,771 acres of grazing land and 21,727 acres of cropland.
- West Virginia Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Programs (PL-566 and PL-534) benefited 2,019,467 people, 3,561 farms and 2,418,572 tons of soil were saved from erosion.
- West Virginia's six RC&D Councils completed 68 projects during FY-07 and have another 208 projects that are currently active.
- Modern soil survey information is available for the entire state of West Virginia.

I recognize our partners in conservation and the public benefits gained from private lands. To help NRCS meet the growing customer demands and new conservation opportunities, we must look at ways to expand our collective capacity. We very much value the role of state and local conservation agencies, Conservation Districts, and the members of the State Technical Committee in our cooperative efforts to provide conservation assistance. We strive to further strengthen the conservation partnership with farm and environmental groups, Technical Service

Providers, Resource Conservation and Development Councils, the West Virginia Conservation Agency, the West Virginia Department of Agriculture, and the West Virginia Association of Conservation Districts.

The following pages are a glimpse of employees, partners, and land owners who are helping people help the land. Services covered include:

- Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA)
- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
- Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)
- Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP)
- Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D)
- Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Programs (PL-566 and PL-534)
- Soil Survey Program

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin Wickey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Kevin Wickey
State Conservationist
West Virginia

"The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or a part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."

Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA)

Overview

The foundation and history of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is based on helping landowners and land users voluntarily apply conservation on their land. Technical assistance is simply about helping people help the land. NRCS employees provide conservation options, recommendations, planning, practice design, and/or application assistance to individual farmers, local governments and individual homeowners. Farmers, NRCS's largest customer base, rely on our technical staff to help them plan and apply conservation practices that improve water quality, reduce soil erosion, and enhance forest land, wetlands, grazing lands, and wildlife habitat. The agency also helps individuals and communities after floods, or other natural disasters.

The foundation and history of NRCS is based on helping landowners and land users voluntarily apply conservation decisions on their land. The strength of NRCS is our professional staff helping people make wise decisions about their natural resources. Technical assistance for natural resources conservation is accomplished through West Virginia's fourteen local Conservation Districts.

2007 Accomplishments

In 2007, NRCS staff gave technical assistance to more than 4,805 West Virginians. Other accomplishments include:

Practice	Measure
Conservation System Plans Written, Cropland (Acres)	21,727
Conservation System Plans Written, Grazing Land (Acres)	68,771
Grazing Land, Practices Applied (Acres)	43,215
Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans Written	59
Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans Applied	53
Non-federal Land with Conservation Applied to Improve Fish and Wildlife Habitat (Acres)	29,186
Cropland with Conservation Applied to Improve Soil Quality (Acres)	15,600
New Plant Materials Released to Commercial Growers (Number)	1
Digital Soil Surveys made Available (number)	9
Wetlands Created, Resorted or Enhanced (Acres)	20

Needs Addressed by CTA

Local Conservation Districts identify the resource needs, set local priorities, and develop conservation plans with individuals to address identified resource concerns on their specific location. Conservation technical assistance provides:

- Outreach to new and under-served customers, and landowner contacts to explain services and program available.
- Assistance to farmers, private land owners, groups, and others to plan and implement practices that meet the conservation objectives and address resource issues.
- Follow-up with landowners after practice installation to ensure proper operation and maintenance.
- Basic soils information provided to both rural and urban land users.
- Assistance to Conservation Districts and the WV Conservation Agency with EPA 319 Water Quality Projects, the WV Lime Program and the reduction of noxious weeds such as Multiflora Rose and Autumn Olive.
- Support to Conservation Districts conservation education efforts such as Envirothon, land judging, conservation camps, local workshops and tours.
- Help to Conservation Districts for the development of voluntary Farmland Protection Program proposals.
- Assistance to local Watershed Associations in efforts with stream restoration activities.
- Support to Conservation District efforts to address urban and rural non-farm soil erosion, sediment, and stormwater management issues.
- Support to the Appalachian Plant Materials Center by doing plant collection evaluations and field trials.

2007 Success Story

Success Story	Office	Program
Dry Fire Hydrants Help Local Rural Community http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/news/success/07success/07hydrantCTAlewisburg.html	Lewisburg Service Center	CTA



The rural community of Clintonville, West Virginia has had very limited access to public water to assist with fire protection. With the cooperation of the members of the Clintonville Volunteer Fire Department and the Greenbrier Valley Conservation District, the NRCS Lewisburg Field Office staff assisted with the installation of a dry fire hydrant. Dry fire hydrants are non pressurized fire hydrants permanently installed in water sources such as ponds, streams, and cisterns.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

Overview

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides financial assistance to apply management and structural practices to address specific natural resource concerns.

Contracts are based on conservation plans developed under CTA and may be up to ten years in length to provide a long-term commitment for producers to apply needed practices. The program strives to achieve the most environmental benefits possible.

Local Work Groups, convened by Conservation Districts, provide recommendations to NRCS regarding conservation practices for cost-sharing, cost-share rates, ranking criteria, sign-up periods and other program details. The Local Work Group recommendations are reviewed by the State Technical Committee which provides additional recommendations and advice to the NRCS State Conservationist before final program decisions are made.

2007 Accomplishments

In 2007, West Virginia funded 521 applications for EQIP assistance totaling \$7,900,250.38 on 48,022 acres.

NRCS Conservationists developed plans for the following conservation practices:

West Virginia's Resource Concern Priorities for EQIP in 2007

Some priority resource concerns addressed by local planners include:

Summary Conservation Practices	Applied	Applied Count
Fence (382) (ft)	388,372	346
Pipeline (516) (ft)	95,104	207
Prescribed Grazing (528) (ac)	17,303	1,108
Prescribed Grazing (528A) (ac)	13,339	983
Animal Trails and Walkways (575) (ft)	9,042	14
Nutrient Management (590) (ac)	8,240	548
Forage Harvest Management (511) (ac)	5,538	376
Use Exclusion (472) (ac)	4,837	106
Pasture and Hay Planting (512) (ac)	3,183	241
Conservation Crop Rotation (328) (ac)	1,010	62
Pest Management (595) (ac)	861	49

2007 EQIP Success Story:

Success Story	Office	Program
Local Producers have Incentives to Protect Riparian Areas http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/news/success/07success/07fenceEquipWhip.html	Mount Clare Service Center	EQIP, WHIP



A cooperative effort led to the completion of three riparian area fencing projects on Harrison County farms this year. Participants entered into Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) contracts with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and also participated in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife (FWS) Partners for Fish and Wildlife program, which is a program to assist private landowners with fish and wildlife habitat restoration.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)

Overview

The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) is a voluntary program administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for people who want to develop and improve wildlife habitat on their lands. Through WHIP, financial assistance is available from NRCS to help establish and improve wildlife habitat.

West Virginia targeted four major habitat types for financial assistance. These habitat types include the development of riparian areas for improved water quality and wildlife habitat; farm wildlife for small game habitat such as cottontail rabbits and native grasslands for songbirds; protection of rare threatened and endangered species such as the federally endangered clubshell mussel; and woodland wildlife species habitat improvements for ruffed grouse and wild turkey.

Conservation practices eligible for WHIP funding include the restoration of grassland habitat in field borders and entire fields; the restoration of riparian areas with trees, shrubs or herbaceous plants; and improvement of woodlands. The use of warm season grasses and native plants are encouraged, as they are more likely to create a higher quality habitat while protecting soil from erosion and improving water quality.

Applications are evaluated and ranked using statewide criteria. Successful applicants who own or control land agree to prepare and implement a conservation plan for wildlife developed under CTA. This plan describes the landowner's objectives for improving wildlife habitat, a list of practices tailored for the applicant's property that will be installed, details needed to install them, and a schedule for implementation.

2007 Accomplishments

Wildlife habitat management contracts were completed on 10,979 acres for 90 landowners, obligating \$905,015 for cost-share payments to West Virginia landowners.

West Virginia's Resource Concern Priorities for WHIP in 2007

Some priority resource concerns addressed by local planners include:

Summary Conservation Practices	Applied	Applied Count
Field Border (386) (ft)	46,095	32
Fence (382) (ft)	31,482	17
Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645) (ac)	14,117	364
Pipeline (516) (ft)	535	3
Early Successional Habitat Development/Management (647) (ac)	517	217
Hedgerow Planting (422) (ft)	482	1
Use Exclusion (472) (ac)	481	14

Summary Conservation Practices	Applied	Applied Count
Tree/Shrub Establishment (612) (ac)	227	55
Forage Harvest Management (511) (ac)	219	21
Pasture and Hay Planting (512) (ac)	207	45
Nutrient Management (590) (ac)	198	47

2007 WHIP success stories:

Success Story	Office	Program
Club uses WHIP to Improve Former Mine http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/news/success/07success/07plotsWhip.html	Lewisburg Service Center	WHIP
Local Producers have Incentives to Protect Riparian Areas http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/news/success/07success/07fenceEqipWhip.html	Mount Clare Service Center	EQIP, WHIP



The Clearco Sportsman's Club of Charmco, WV participate in the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) to improve habitat for turkey and other wildlife. The club created 60 acres of food plots which increase the plant diversity and improve wildlife habitat. The openings are up to 3 acres in size.



A cooperative effort led to the completion of three riparian area fencing projects on Harrison County farms this year. The fence allows for better control of livestock on the farm and allows landowners to keep livestock out of streams and rivers on their property.

Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program (FRPP)

Overview

Protecting farmland from permanent conversion to non-agricultural land uses in West Virginia is at a critical stage. The state has limited prime farmland acreage and the loss of each acre has a more profound impact upon the rural economy, rural lifestyle, and farm families than in any other state. For this reason the legislature passed the states' Voluntary Farmland Protection Act in 2000 to complement the Federal Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program. Counties and the State can cooperate with local land trusts and landowners to purchase voluntarily offered agricultural conservation easements that permanently reserve these lands for farming. FRPP provides matching funds to help purchase development rights to keep productive farmland in agricultural uses.

Sixteen counties have organized under the WV Voluntary Farmland Protection Program and are gathering funds through local real estate transfer tax to fund the non-federal portion of the easement purchases. Eighteen counties have formed boards but only 16 have the transfer tax in place and are up and operational. The WV Agricultural Land Protection Authority is up and running at the state level and working with the state legislature to provide easement purchase funds for projects in counties which do not have boards up and running and to make grants to operational counties under the state law.

Each year more landowners in the state submit proposals than NRCS is able to fund. This level of interest is expected to grow in future years as counties develop their programs and the state program becomes fully operational.

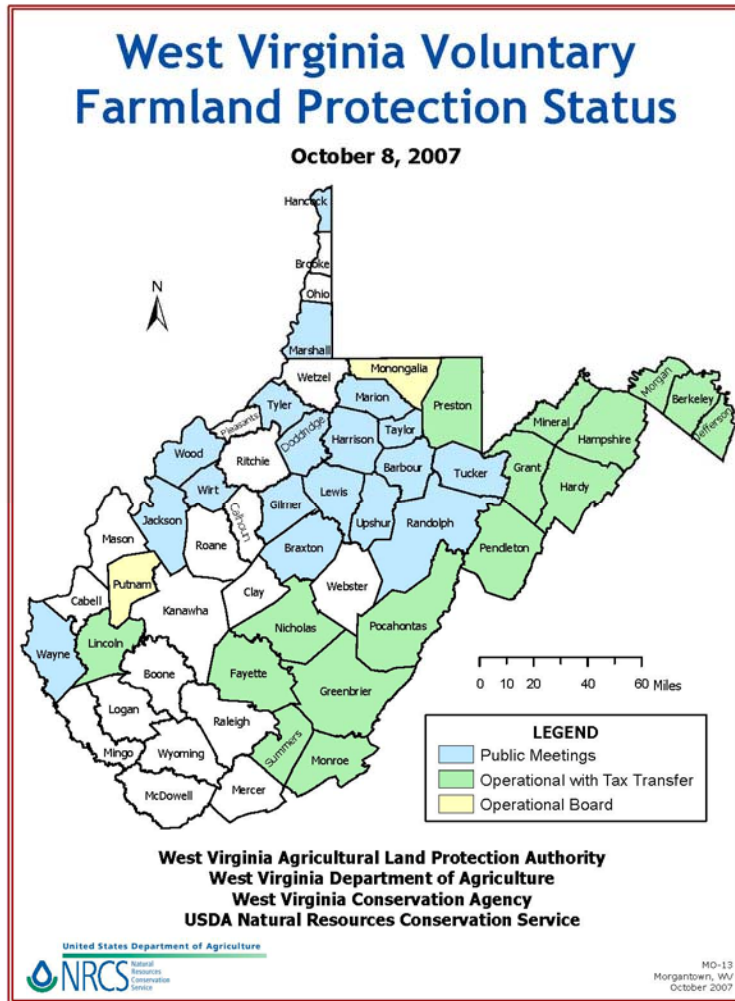
2007 Accomplishments

In 2007, \$2.15 million in federal FRPP funds were provided to protect 1,139 acres of farmland with an easement value of \$6.01 million. The acres include 758 prime acres, 58 acres of non-forested wetlands and 85 acres of non-wetland forests. Cooperating entities include the Morgan, Berkeley, Jefferson, Hardy, Monroe, and Fayette County Farmland Protection Boards and the Potomac Conservancy. Go to <http://www.wvfarmlandprotection.org/> for more information.

Year	Financial Assistance	Contracts	Acres	Total Value
2007	\$2,149,592	8	3,396	\$6,006,200
2006	\$1,886,185	8	1,035	\$3,772,370
2005	\$1,979,001	10	1,428	\$5,824,250
2004	\$1,599,511	14	1,782	\$5,417,013
2003	\$977,536	12	920	\$2,753,840
2002	\$400,000	4	550	\$1,298,900

2007 FRPP Success Story

Success Story	Office	Program
FRPP Grand Slam http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/news/07nov_nv/frpp.html	Philippi-East Area Office	FRPP



Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D)

Overview

The Resource Conservation and Development Program was created so local citizens could develop and carry out an action-oriented plan for the social, economic, and environmental betterment of their communities. The RC&D program was given permanent authorization in the 2002 Farm Bill.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) administers the program and provides a coordinator to support RC&D councils. West Virginia has six councils that cover all 55 counties. These councils are made up of local citizens, which generally represent counties, cities, and conservation districts. The councils set priorities for the RC&D area.

The mission of the RC&D Program is to make available the administrative, educational and technical resources of USDA and other public and private partnerships to increase the ability of communities to meet their regionally identified resource conservation and development needs.

The six RC&D Areas in West Virginia are:

- Great Kanawha RC&D
- Little Kanawha RC&D
- Mountain RC&D
- Northern Panhandle RC&D
- Potomac Headwaters RC&D
- Wes-Mon-Ty RC&D

2007 Accomplishments

The RC&D Program has 4 elements they are working on nationwide.

- Land Conservation
- Land Management
- Water Management
- Community Development

Together the six RC&D Councils completed 68 projects during FY-07 and have another 203 projects that are currently active.

Fiscal Year 2006 Accomplishments	Totals
Acres of Wildlife Habitat Improved	1,389
Acres of Water Bodies Improved	5
Rivers and Streams Improved or Restored (number)	4
Acres of Watershed or Area-wide Conservation Plans Developed	148,000

Local Businesses Created or Retained in Rural Communities (number)	97
Acres of Recreational Area Established, Improved, or Retained	10
Communities with services provided or improved	122
People Developing New Skills through Workshops and Training Events (number)	4,839
Business Benefiting from New Technology	33
People Benefiting from New Technology	2,030
Economically or Socially Disadvantaged People Served	42,854
Citizens Served	294,904

RC&D is a mix of conservation, economic development, environmental enhancement, and community development.

Regional and National

Nationally, West Virginia is recognized as having strong RC&D Councils with a track record of successes. The West Virginia Councils strongly support the national and regional RC&D Associations. A member of the Northern Panhandle RC&D Council, Howard Coffield, currently serves on the board of the National Association of RC&D Councils, and as the President of the Mid-Atlantic RC&D Association.

The Little Kanawha RC&D received the "Outstanding Council of the Year" national award. The Coordinator of the Year Award national award went to Kurt Simon of the Little Kanawha RC&D Council.



The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) administers the program and provides a coordinator to support RC&D councils. West Virginia has six councils that cover all 55 counties.

Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Programs (PL-566 and PL-534)

Overview

The purpose of the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Programs (PL-566 and PL-534) are to assist state and local governments plan and carry out works of improvement for watershed protection and restoration. They provide for technical and financial assistance by the NRCS to local organizations representing the people living in small watersheds. The PL-534 authority applies to the Upper Potomac drainage (Grant, Morgan, Mineral, Hardy, Pendleton, and Hampshire Counties), while PL-566 applies throughout the State. Resource concerns addressed by these programs include in 2007:

- Flooding
- Water supply
- Water quality
- Soil erosion
- Fish and wildlife habitat development
- Water-based recreation

The NRCS provides technical assistance in watershed planning, design, project installation, operation and maintenance of installed measures. NRCS also works with sponsoring local organizations as well as other local, state, and federal entities to obtain all necessary land rights and non-federal matching funds.

These programs match local, state, and federal funds and technical resources to provide a seamless delivery system to local sponsoring organizations. West Virginia places a strong emphasis on developing locally led plans that address all relevant resource issues. The NRCS has assisted local sponsors and watershed organizations installed 170 dams and over 50 miles of stream channel improvement in West Virginia.

Project Benefits

In 2007, these projects provided the following benefits to West Virginia:

- 98,208 acres of nutrient management
- 100,504 tons of animal waste properly disposed
- 1,215,545 tons of soil saved from erosion
- 194,349 tons of reduction of annual sedimentation
- 1,933 streams and corridors enhanced or protected
- 144 water bodies or stream segments improved that also provide recreation opportunities
- 397 wetlands created, enhanced or restored
- 229,120 upland or riparian wildlife habitat created, enhanced or restored
- 1,035,609 people benefited
- 1,831 farms and ranches benefited
- 344 bridges benefited
- 210 public facilities benefited

- 898 businesses benefited
- 5,072 homes benefited
- 105 domestic water supplies benefited

The combination of water supply and flood-free land can draw new businesses to a community and help broaden and stabilize the economic base. The Mill Creek Project in Jackson County generated \$30 million worth of growth.

Watershed Rehabilitation

The Watershed Rehabilitation Program enables West Virginia to address concerns associated with dams constructed through NRCS assistance. Some of these dams are reaching the end of their economic life and could pose a threat to public safety. This is becoming a major concern nationwide.

Current Activities

The NRCS is currently providing planning assistance to local sponsors on the following:

- Dunloup Creek Watershed (Fayette and Raleigh Counties)
- New Creek Watershed Dam Rehabilitation (Grant County)
- Big Sandy Watershed (Mingo, McDowell, and Wayne Counties in WV)
- Horseshoe Run Natural Stream Restoration Project

The NRCS has completed plans for the following projects, which are now in the design phase:

- Lost River Watershed (Hardy County)
- Upper Deckers Creek Watershed (5 sites in Monongalia and Preston Counties)

The following projects are in the construction or implementation phase:

- Upper Tygarts Valley Watershed Project (Randolph County)
- Little Whitestick Creek Project Phase III (Raleigh County)
- North Fork Hughes River Watershed Project (Ritchie County)
- Potomac Headwaters Land Treatment Watershed Project (Hardy, Mineral, Pendleton, Hampshire, and Grant Counties)
- Knapps Creek Natural Stream Restoration Project (Pocahontas County)

2007 Success Stories:

Success Story	Office	Program
WV Potomac Headwaters Land Treatment Watershed Project http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/news/success/07success/07moorefield534.html	Moorefield Service Center	PL-534
NRCS Provides Adequate Water Source in Randolph County, West Virginia http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/news/success/07success/07elkfork566.html	Engineering and Water Resources	Public Law-566



PL-534 is a unique program which uses both Federal and State funds to provide technical assistance to livestock and poultry producers in the development and implementation of nutrient management plans and to provide needed cost-sharing assistance for the installation of water quality improvement practices for livestock and poultry operations.



The Elkwater Fork Dam, in the Upper Tygarts Valley River Watershed, is a project to supply safe drinking water to 21,500 residents. This is a unique project to NRCS in West Virginia utilizing roller-compacted concrete (RCC) to provide the 54-acre water supply impoundment.

Soil Survey Program

Overview

Soil surveys provide a field-based scientific inventory of soil resources, including soil maps, data about the physical and chemical properties of soils, and information on the potentials and limitations of each soil. Soil surveys have many uses, but are developed to help people make decisions on how to best use the land. These decisions are based on properties and characteristics of the soils, which are published in the soil survey report or as part of a digital database.

2007 Accomplishments

Modern soil survey information is now available for the entire state of West Virginia. In fiscal year 2007, update mapping was completed on over 400,000 acres, the third highest acreage in the East region. Our focus is now on updating the soil surveys that were published in the late 1950s and early 1960s. It is important to keep the base imagery, soil physical and chemical properties, and interpretations up-to-date.

Soil Survey Updating in Progress

Soil Survey project work is now completed and two new MLRA Soil Offices are now in place to maintain the soils database. The Morgantown (13-3) and Huntington (13-2) are two of the 143 new offices nationwide charged with maintaining soil surveys. NRCS works cooperatively with West Virginia University, the USDA Forest Service, and the West Virginia Conservation Agency to maintain and update soil surveys on Federal and private land in West Virginia.

Soil Survey Digitizing is completed. The digitizing of soil maps and the development of soil survey geographic databases are an integral part of the soil survey process today. Demand for digital soils data increases each year. This information is utilized in a Geographic Information System (GIS) and is being used more commonly by local units of government as well as by federal and state agencies. Development of digital soils data is completed for all counties in West Virginia. The Fayette and Raleigh project is being completed in cooperation with the USDI National Park Service. All are available on the internet as the Web Soil Survey.

The Soil Survey Geographic Database (SSURGO) is the most detailed geographic database. Using the Web Soil Survey, a digital soils data viewer, or Soils Explorer, a user can browse through the digital soils maps and accompanying reference data, selected interpretations, and a photo gallery with pictures of soil profiles, landscapes, and block diagrams.

Digitized Soil Surveys may be downloaded from: <http://soildatamart.nrcs.usda.gov> or interactively at the Web Soil Survey: <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/>.

2007 Success Story:

Success Story	Office	Program
Soil Survey Staff Fall 2007 Field Week http://www.wv.nrcs.usda.gov/news/success/07success/07soil.html	West Virginia Soil Survey	Soil Survey



The West Virginia Soil Survey Staff held their Fall 2007 Field Week October 1 – 5, 2007 in Hardy County's Trout Run watershed. This year, the staff is focusing on seasonal infiltration and subsurface water dynamics across Benchmark soils in MLRA-147. Top: Mike Jones is setting up the Tension Infiltrometer. Bottom: Eileen O'Neill is calculating Frame Bulk Density.