



DIG IT!

THE SECRETS *of* SOIL

EXHIBITION PROSPECTUS

Organized by the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History and circulated by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service.

National tour made possible by the Nutrients for Life Foundation with additional support from the Soil Science Society of America.



Smithsonian Institution

A down-and-dirty exhibition from SITES and the National Museum of Natural History

Now available for booking



Dig It! advances public understanding of the diversity, complexity, and importance of soils.

“THIS IS THE MOST AMBITIOUS EXHIBITION EVER DEDICATED TO SOILS,
A RESOURCE AS IMPORTANT TO LIFE ON EARTH AS WATER AND AIR.”

Patrick Megonigal *Dig It!* curator and soil ecologist, Smithsonian Environmental Research Center

THE SKIN OF THE EARTH

A thin layer of soil covers a third of the Earth's surface. This complex and variable mixture of minerals, air, water, decaying remains of life, and countless living organisms helps sustain virtually every form of life on Earth.

Soils support natural ecosystems that clear the air we breathe and filter the water we drink. Soils grow the crops we sow for food, fiber, and fuel. Soils serve as foundations on which we build the structures of our daily lives.

Soils are alive. They are born, they breathe, they age.

Soils are everywhere.



Visitors get the dirt on how water moves through soil in an array of fun interactives and exhibition stations.

FIRST DIG

- Mechanical and computer interactives, scale models, video components, full-size soil monoliths from each state, panels and graphics
- \$150,000 per 3-month booking period plus prorated shipping
- 5,000 square feet
- High security
- Tour begins Spring 2010

BROWN IS THE NEW GREEN!

With public concern about the environment more pressing than ever, *Dig It! The Secrets of Soil* introduces visitors to a vital, but largely unexplored natural resource and ecosystem. This important and wildly popular new exhibition—on view at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History until January 2010—invites visitors to think about this hidden world in a whole new way.

Enlightening text, intriguing graphics, and a creative array of multimedia programs, scale models, hands-on activities, and soil samples (monoliths) unearth the many ways we benefit from soils and how we affect their health and productivity.

Dig It! is captivating hundreds of thousands of Smithsonian visitors of all ages and has garnered rave media reviews. Call us today to discuss how *Dig It!* can help your museum reach new audiences.



The Joy of Soil gallery celebrates our cultural relationships to soil with evocative photographs of people, animals, and landscapes.

DISCOVER THE AMAZING WORLD OF SOILS

1. The Skin of the Earth

Go underground, enter the world of soil, and meet some of the critters that call soil “home.”

★ THE SKIN OF THE EARTH

See and hear what goes on beneath the landscape with two videos and a cut-away mural.

2. Sizing Up Soils

Learn what soils are and why they’re important, identify their secret ingredients, and find your state soil.

✎ COLOR IT WET OR DRY

Study soil samples the way scientists do.

✎ WHERE IN THE SOIL WORD ARE YOU?

Solve the riddle of three mystery soils.

✎ HIDDEN HORIZONS

See how soils stack up.

✎ TEXTURE MATTERS

Predict how water moves through sand, silt, and clay.

★ FIND YOUR HOME EARTH

Check out your state soil in the All-American soils gallery.

★ CHEF’S CHALLENGE

Watch a video of two soil chefs “cooking” up unique soils.

3. Matters of Life and Death

Take a peek at the dramatic world of life, death, and decay beneath our feet.

✎ SOIL EMISSIONS INSPECTION STATION

Activate soil “breathalyzers” that detect carbon dioxide emissions from soil microbes.

★ MATTERS OF LIFE AND DEATH THEATER

Watch detectives solve a microbe mystery in this over-the-top CSI-style video.

4. The Big Picture

Find out what soils have to do with clean drinking water and climate change, and how you can make a difference.

★ THE BIG PICTURE

Test your soil savvy with a global map and computer quiz.

5. What’s Soil Got to Do with It?

Explore how soils affect where we live, work, and play.

✎ UNDERNEATH IT ALL

Examine models of two urban soils from our nation’s capital.

6. Our World, Our Soil

Uncover the unexpected ways soils have affected world civilizations and touch our lives today, from pottery and paint, to cosmetics and kitty litter.

✎ SOIL WISDOM WORLDWIDE

Touch a model of a man-made Amazonian rainforest soil.

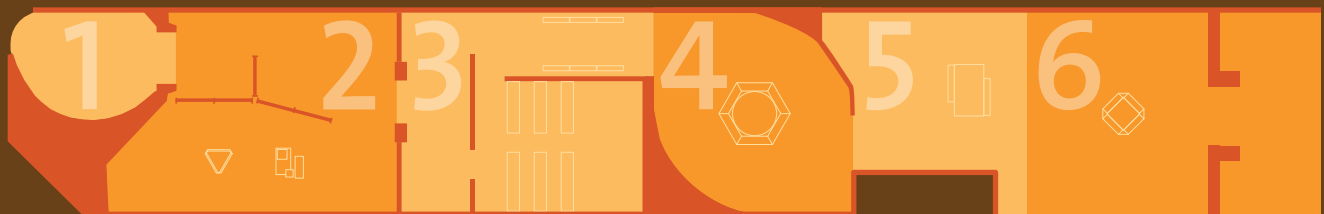
★ SOIL: THE SECRET INGREDIENT

Explore how soil touches every facet of our lives.

SPECIAL EXHIBITION FEATURES

✎ Interactive components

★ Video



SMITHSONIAN'S NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

The National Museum of Natural History is dedicated to inspiring curiosity, discovery, and learning about the natural world through its unparalleled research, collections, exhibitions, and education outreach programs. Opened in 1910, the green-domed Museum on the National Mall was among the first Smithsonian buildings constructed exclusively to house the national collections and research facilities. The Museum serves as one of the world's great repositories of scientific and cultural heritage as well as a source of tremendous pride for all Americans. www.mnh.si.edu

SMITHSONIAN ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH CENTER

The Center is a world leader in environmental studies of the coastal zone, home to 70 percent of all people. Its main campus is located on the Chesapeake Bay and encompasses 3,500 acres of forest, cropland, pasture, freshwater wetlands, tidal marshes, and estuaries. Using the campus and the world as a laboratory, the Center provides society with knowledge to meet critical environmental challenges in the 21st century. *Dig It!* curator Patrick Megonigal is a soil ecologist at the Center, where his laboratory group studies the response of wetland ecosystems to climate change. www.serc.si.edu

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION TRAVELING EXHIBITION SERVICE

SITES has been sharing the wealth of Smithsonian collections and research programs with millions of people outside Washington, D.C., for more than 50 years. SITES connects Americans to their cultural heritage through a wide range of exhibitions about art, science, and history, which are shown wherever people live, work, and play. www.sites.si.edu



Visitors can find their “home earth” in All-American Soils, an awe-inspiring display of 54 soil samples, or monoliths, representing each state in the nation, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, and Puerto Rico.

HERE'S THE DIRT

contents

- Flexibly-designed panel and case structure
- 2 environmental entry portals
- 2 internal portals
- 49 wall-hung and freestanding graphic panels
- 7 interactive computer stations
- 8 computer-based and mechanical interactives at 12 stations
- 3 large freestanding scale models
- 3 touchable soil models
- 5 video components, including a 10-min. feature video
- 54 soil monoliths (profile samples) from each state, territory, and the District of Columbia

supplemental

Brochure, docent material, hands-on cart "cookbook," curriculum material, educational and promotional resources, national and local speakers list

participation fee

\$150,000 per 3-month booking period, plus prorated shipping

size

5,000 square feet

security

High

shipping

SITES-designated carrier; 5-6 trucks; 90 crates, est.

tour begins

Spring 2010

DIGGING THE FOUNDATION

As a host of *Dig It!*, you will receive the following:

- Complete curatorial and registrarial information
- Thorough shipping, handling, and installation instructions
- Registrar and installation technicians to oversee/assist in installation and de-installation
- Wall-to-wall fine-arts insurance coverage under the Smithsonian's policy
- Public relations support in the form of digital press releases, images, and logos; digital graphic templates for promotional materials; and advice on promoting the exhibition and hosting special events
- Guidelines for local fundraising
- Educational and programming resources
- Ability to link to and from SITES website

SITES CONTACTS

Scheduling

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REGISTRARIAL REQUIREMENTS

The exhibition has been designated "high security" by SITES. Institutions hosting *Dig It!* must be able to meet the following security, environmental, and logistical requirements:

- Professional guards must monitor the exhibition whenever it is open to the public.
- The exhibition area must be secured from the public via alarm and/or guard surveillance during closing hours, installation, and deinstallation.
- Objects must be handled only by appropriately trained personnel.
- Temperature must be a constant 68–72° F; relative humidity must be between 35–60%.
- Light levels must not exceed 20 foot-candles. No direct sunlight may reach any portion of the exhibition.
- Crates must be stored in an area with heating and cooling.
- Venues must provide fire protection that meets local fire ordinances.
- Smoking, eating, and drinking are prohibited in the staging, storage, and exhibition areas.
- Venue must be able to support and maintain interactive elements that incorporate computers, internet connection, and electro-mechanical components.
- Venue must be able to provide equipment (such as fork-lift and pallet jacks) and staff necessary to receive and ship out the exhibition.
- Gallery ceiling heights must be able to accommodate 10-foot-tall components.
- Venue must have adequate space to construct walls and provide seating for the Matters of Life and Death Theater.
- Venue must provide SITES with a proposed floor plan 10 weeks prior to the arrival of the exhibition.

SITES will provide two SITES technicians to work with venue staff during exhibition installation and de-installation (but not during exhibition receipt and ship out).



A scale model of a typical suburban house lot underscores connections between soil and culture.

“POLITICAL INSTABILITY, ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY, HUNGER, AND POVERTY ALL HAVE THE SAME ROOT . . . THE SOLUTION TO EACH IS RESTORING THE MOST BASIC OF ALL RESOURCES, THE SOIL.”

Rattan Lal, soil scientist, Ohio State University, quoted in National Geographic, September 2008



Bold graphics, imaginative interactives, and hands-on activities offer kids plenty of intellectual and sensory stimulation.



Visit the *Dig It!* website at <http://forces.si.edu/soils> for behind-the-scenes information, family activities, soil events, and more!

In the Matters of Life and Death Theater, a CSI-style video follows a detective investigating the gritty underworld of life, death, and decay.



Burrow underground with

DIG IT!

THE SECRETS *of* SOIL

a new traveling exhibition now
available for booking from SITES.

Learn how soil touches nearly
every aspect of our lives.

Cover: A cut-away mural reveals
the world beneath our feet.
Wood Ronsaville Harlin

All photos by John Steiner

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www.catalonedesign.com

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SITES

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