

Oregon Geoscience – Soils Data Workgroup

Minutes of February 18, 2004 meeting (in Tangent, OR)

Attendees:

Bill Clingman, LCOG

Don Kirby, DOR

Alan Campbell, OVID

Bryan Capitano, OVID

Jimmy Kagan, OSU/ONHP

Nancy Tubbs, USGS

Ed Arabas, DAS

Cy Smith, DAS

Don Howard, FSA

Jim Johnson, ODA

Gary Wright, DOR

Doug Holdt, DOR

Scott Jackson, DOR

Ning Zhang, OSU

Steve Campbell, NRCS

Ian Reid, NRCS

Paul Staub, DOGAMI

This wide-ranging meeting was the first Geoscience workgroup effort to focus on soils data for Oregon. Cy Smith, state GIS coordinator, outlined the Framework process in Oregon. Cy compared other state Framework efforts to Oregon's ongoing effort. Basically, it's a process to focus resources to attain priority statewide data themes. Five presentations aimed to – first provide information about NRCS soil data and then illustrate the range of soil data usage. These are briefly summarized:

Ian Reid of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provided an overview of soil data and a status report on Oregon soil surveys. A soil survey area may consist of a county, multiple counties, or parts of multiple counties. A comment was made that when a survey splits a county (i.e. Lane County), this can cause problems for the user. Ian described the certification process including edgematching soil survey data and the regional correlation task. A map was distributed showing soil survey digitizing status in Oregon.

Steve Campbell of the NRCS described the soil survey geographic database (SSURGO). The national SSURGO website has been the primary source for online soil data. During 2004 this is changing through development of the Soil Data Mart (<http://soildatamart.nrcs.usda.gov/>). Steve profiled the Soil Data Mart website, demonstrating some of its applications. There were questions/discussion regarding the Access database format, and ArcView/ArcInfo downloads. This page is mainly for single soil survey acquisition. Steve next discussed the Oregon NRCS website (http://www.or.nrcs.usda.gov/pnw_soil/mo1_gis.html), and demonstrated the Soil Data Viewer – a data filtering tool. Thematic mapping from various calculations was demonstrated.

Don Kirby of the Oregon Department of Revenue described his use and need of soil data for his agricultural land assessment work. Farm production classes were contrasted with soil type classes. Don described his problem with how soil class grouping changes from one county to adjoining counties. Example plots/data were provided for Sherman and Gilliam counties.

Bill Clingman of Lane Council of Governments presented a range of LCOG soil data usage. A tool was developed to clip out soil data by tax lot parcel boundary. The intent here is to address statewide land use planning goals regarding agricultural land. Another example presented the Eugene Comprehensive Stormwater Management Plan. Soil data were used to produce numerous maps that went into the Plan. Bill described several problems he has encountered with soil data:

- soil surveys focus on agricultural lands versus forested lands
- complexity of soil classes and attribute tables
- spatial registration
- null values
- cross county attributes (information changes at county/soil survey boundary)
- attempts to tie into U.S. Forest Service productivity

Alan Campbell of NW Vineyards/Northwest Viticulture Center presented an overview of the wine industry's use/need for soil data. The knowledge and interest in soil information by Oregon grape growers is evolving. Sixteen Oregon counties have vineyards and Alan described a project to develop an Oregon Vineyard website to serve the Online Vineyard Database. The types of soil information needed by winegrape growers were described. Alan stated that while the NRCS has been very cooperative for vineyard-based soil data, he expressed frustration with the un-intuitive nature of soil descriptions.

Time ran out at this meeting to have a full discussion of issues and opportunities raised. The Geoscience Soils workgroup needs to determine how to proceed regarding soils data for the Oregon spatial data user community. Meeting discussion brought to light a number of issues/questions and pointed to various ways the workgroup might proceed:

- Shall the group adopt the FGDC Soil Geographic Data Standard (http://www.fgdc.gov/standards/status/sub2_2.html) for Oregon that is nearing final endorsement at the national level?
- How might OGIC resources be best directed regarding Oregon soils data:
 - What would OGIC funding "buy" in relation to ongoing NRCS mapping? Can OGIC resources hasten the completion status of Oregon soil surveys (green out the map that Ian Reid distributed)?
 - Should OGIC resources be directed to development of template(s) for Oregon soils data, to possibly become an Oregon subset of the NRCS datasets?

These two items will be discussed at the next Geoscience – Soils meeting.