

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Mike Sucik, NRCS State Soil Scientist
Phone: 515-284-4135

Detailed Iowa Soils Information Now Online

Des Moines, IA – Finding soils information for more than half of Iowa’s counties is just a click away. Soil survey manuscripts with soils data, maps, diagrams, tables and other details are available online for 52 of Iowa’s 99 counties, as of Nov. 1.

The Soil Survey Division of the USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) recently placed the manuscripts online at http://soils.usda.gov/survey/online_surveys/iowa/. Before, this information was only available in hard copy or on compact disc from your local USDA Service Center.

Soil survey manuscripts contain detailed information about every soil in the county – including soil formation, properties, classification, total acres, and interpretations and suitability for each soil.

The interpretations and suitability section – “Use and Management of the Soils” – identifies the limitations that affect specific uses and indicate the severity of those limitations. For example, a recreational planner in Humboldt County designing a hiking trail could look up the soils in a proposed location to see if they were suitable for hiking. Ratings are both written and numerical, based on soil features, such as wetness, slope, texture of the surface layer, and susceptibility to flooding. Soil suitability ratings are available for other recreational activities, too, including playgrounds, camping areas, off-road motorcycle trails and golf fairways.

Suitability ratings for cropland, pastureland, wildlife habitat, tree planting, building site development, sanitary facilities, and other purposes are also available.

Mike Sucik, Iowa NRCS state soil scientist, says customer convenience is the primary goal of having the soil survey manuscripts online. He also hopes soil survey manuscripts will reach a broader audience. “Homebuilders, community planners, highway departments, engineers, sanitarians and golf course superintendents will find the information valuable,” says Sucik. “Soil surveys provide great information for students and teachers, too.”

Sucik says the ability to print individual pages right at home or work is another major benefit. “If you’re only concerned about one or two sections of land, you only need to print that map,” he said. “That information will be handy for recordkeeping, especially.”

According to Sucik, more county information will be continually added and updated. If you live in a county without an online soil survey manuscript, contact your local NRCS office for a copy. Visit <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?state=ia> to locate the NRCS office nearest you.