



Field Book for Describing and Sampling Soils (Version 3.0)

National Soil Survey Center, Natural Resources Conservation Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture

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From the foreword: Purpose: The following instructions, definitions, concepts, and codes are a field guide for making or reading soil descriptions and sampling soils as presently practiced in the USA. (Note: References cited in the foreword are listed at the end of Chapter 1 [p. 1-31].) Background: Soil description methodology was developed by soil scientists throughout the entire course of the soil survey. The USDA published small instruction booklets for field parties, including soil descriptions, in 1902-1904, 1906, and 1914. The first USDA guide for soil horizon identification and description was released in 1937 (Bureau of Chemistry and Soils, 1937). Dr. Roy Simonson and others later summarized and revised this information (Soil Survey Staff, 1951; Soil Survey Staff, 1962). Brief "color-book" inserts with shorthand notation were released by the Soil Conservation Service (Spartanburg, SC, 1961; Western Technical Center, Portland, OR, 1974). Previous Field Books were released in 1998 (Schoeneberger et al.) and 2002 (Schoeneberger et al.). This is an updated field Book version that summarizes current knowledge, includes updates since 2002, and reflects changes in source documents. Standards: This field Book summarizes and updates current National Cooperative Soil Survey conventions for describing soils (Soil Survey Manual [Soil Survey Division Staff, 1993]; National Soil Survey Handbook [Soil Survey Staff, 2012d]; National Soil Information System (NASIS), release 6.2 [Soil Survey Staff, 2012c]; and NASS Data Dictionary [Soil Survey Staff, 2012a]). Some content is an abbreviation of primary sources.

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