

Newest WSS (3.2) Online

The hugely popular *Web Soil Survey* (WSS) website recently released its latest version-- 3.2. Originally introduced in 2005, the latest update provides improvements and enhancements that help users at all levels be better informed and prepared when making land-use-decisions. Developed by USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the free, web-based-application provides a wealth of soils information, data, and soil survey maps—all free and downloadable. Visit and see for yourself at: <http://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov/App/HomePage.htm>

Users will be happy to learn that the 3.2 version now has a “Use Quick Map” function added to the Preferences menu. This feature allows quicker map drawing with a fewer limitations. Other improvements and enhancements include:

- Internet Explorer v.11 is now the minimum standard for WSS. Chrome and Firefox can also be used;
- Area of Interests (AOI) can now be imported for use in WSS, along with field names to identify the various parcels;
- Thematic maps created for the AOI can now be downloaded using a WMS or a WFS service to use on a local GIS software;
- AOI Download now contain the thematic maps created during the session;
- Scale Warnings are now displayed on the screen and on printed maps whenever the user zooms beyond the scale of mapping.

All WSS 3.2 new features and fixes can be seen at:

<http://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov/App/NewFeatures.3.2.htm>

Since the beginning, the WSS has attracted a wide array of online visitors from all over the world. During the first few months of its presence on the web the site averaged a respectable 1000 users per day, but now averages more than 7,000 users a day. As a soil science web based application, it's easy and intuitive, giving the novice users the ability to get started and achieve their objectives.

Soil Surveys and all the data and maps needed to produce them provides critical information for land use decisions, both on the farm and in the city. Whether a developer is looking to purchase land, or a farmer is considering alternative crops, soil survey data is a critical element in the equation that produces profits while protecting natural resources.

Providing soil and soil survey information to anyone with a computer has been a major achievement for NRCS. The agency remains committed to continuing the effort and anticipates that the customer base will continue to grow as the agency continues to make the site better and better.