

Soil Surveys:

A Library Quick Guide

Library of Science and Medicine

Soil surveys are valued for many purposes by those who are involved in land planning programs. Soil surveys are used to evaluate soils for farms and forests, to determine site selection for construction, to identify special needs such as soil conservation or to assess the value of tracts of land.

For further information on our resources or guidance on searching a specific topic, please consult a reference librarian.

Where can I find Soil Surveys?

The New Brunswick Libraries began to add records of our holdings of soil surveys to IRIS, the online catalog (<http://www.iris.rutgers.edu>) in August 2002. However, many earlier editions are not listed in IRIS, and the documents card catalog at the Library of Science and Medicine must be consulted for exact call numbers.

At the Library of Science and Medicine, soil surveys are shelved in the Government Documents section, 2nd floor. The call number is **DOCUS A 57.38/#**, which groups the surveys by states, then by county name. Users can look up the soil surveys in the Documents Card Catalog under the heading "US Soil Conservation Service --Soil Survey – State—County". The New Jersey Soil Surveys are shelved under **DOCUS A 57.38/30**:

How is Soil Survey Info organized?

Soil surveys are arranged in **2 sections**:

Section 1 - General information about the county including history, topography and resources. This is followed by detailed descriptions of soils identified in the county. Tables and glossaries are also provided.

Section 2 - Soil maps of the country arranged in categories by order, suborder, great group, subgroup, family and series. These classifications are based upon observations in the field and in the laboratory.

How do I use a Soil Survey?

1. Locate the page in Section 1 called "**Index to Map Units.**" It divides the soils of the county into numbered areas.
2. Note the number of the map sheet containing your area of interest and turn to that sheet.
3. Locate your area of interest on the map sheet.
4. Make a note of the unit symbols that are located on the map area of interest.

How do I use a Soil Survey? (cont.)

5. Go back to "Index to Map Units" in Section 1. The name of each unit is listed along with the page number where the unit is described. Turn to the designated page for a description of the characteristics of that soil type.
6. Next consult the "Summary of Tables" following the "Table of Contents" to locate additional data on characteristics of particular soils.
7. If you are interested in finding information on specific aspects of the soils of the county such as use, properties, classification, and function, consult the "Table of Contents."

Where can I find Additional Soil Surveys?

The Engineering Soil Survey of New Jersey, volumes 1-36, is located in the book stacks at **LSM, TA1.R842**. Report #1 introduces the series and includes data for the state overall. County reports are also published in the various volumes.

Internet Sources

- NRCS – Natural Resources Conservation Service-Soils; <http://soils.usda.gov/>
- NCRS Soil Data Mart; <http://soildatamart.nrcs.usda.gov/>
- NRCS – Soil Survey Geographic (SSURGO) Database; <http://www.ncgc.nrcs.usda.gov/products/datasets/ssurgo/>
- NRCS - Published Soil Surveys for New Jersey; http://www.soils.usda.gov/survey/printed_surveys/state.asp?state=New%20Jersey&abbr=NJ
- NRCS - New Jersey State Office; http://soils.usda.gov/contact/state_offices/directories/nj.html