



CHARTER
of the
SOIL SCIENCE INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUP
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS
COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, NATURAL RESOURCES, AND SUSTAINABILITY
NATIONAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COUNCIL

A. Official Designation

The Soil Science Interagency Working Group (SSIWG) is hereby established by action of the National Science and Technology Council (NSTC); Committee on Environment, Natural Resources, and Sustainability (CENRS); Subcommittee on Ecological Systems.

B. Purpose and Scope

Soils underpin many of Earth's vital ecosystems. Soils—themselves ecosystems composed of organic and inorganic components, air, and water—are foundational to all plant, animal, and human life on land. Intrinsic soil properties, combined with dynamic soil properties like the ability to absorb water and the abundance of organisms, contribute to soil health. Soils are critical to all land uses: crop and range lands, native grass and forest lands, and urban and developed lands. Soils play a significant role in many ecosystem services, including crop production and food security. They store carbon, helping to mitigate climate change; filter and store water, protecting the quality of rivers, lakes, and oceans; mitigate and treat pollutants; and provide diverse habitats for plant, animal, and microbial life. With such high demands on soils, prioritizing research on how to identify, inventory, manage, and sustain them is vital to the survival of the Nation. Assisting Federal agencies to coordinate the creation of a soil inventory as well as monitoring, research, and dissemination efforts will help encourage the use of sustainable soil practices and ultimately the conservation of the Nation's soil resources.

The purpose of the SSIWG is to develop a Federal Strategic Plan to establish soil research priorities, ensure availability of tools and information for improved soil management and stewardship, deliver key information to help land managers implement soil conserving systems, and inform related policy coordination and development. The Plan should identify the current needs, gaps, and recommendations from Federal agencies (and relevant agency reports), taking into account how future Federal actions could benefit from an understanding of and engagement with current international activities. The Plan should provide recommendations for improving the coordination of soil science research, soil health, development, implementation, and evaluation of soil conservation and management practices among Federal agencies and also

between Federal agencies and non-Federal domestic and international soil science efforts. The SSIWG shall also strive to enhance the Federal R&D enterprise by embracing diversity, recognizing that the inclusion of a broad range of backgrounds and perspectives is critical to achieving robust intellectual dialogue.

C. Functions

To achieve its goals, the SSIWG will draft a comprehensive Federal Strategic Plan for soil science and conservation priorities that enhance the sustainability and health of our soil resources. The initial draft of this Plan will be delivered to the SES by no later than December 31, 2016. The final Plan will be published no later than June, 2017. The Plan will:

- 1) Analyze gaps and opportunities in soil science research.
- 2) Identify existing soil sample collections, inventory, monitoring, management, and stewardship practices by Federal Agencies and research opportunities for improving them.
- 3) Identify soil-related data needs, resources, and opportunities for increasing data usability and accessibility.
- 4) Identify current Federal policies and incentive programs surrounding soil conservation and management to identify evidence-based opportunities for assessing them.
- 5) Develop a whole-of-nation approach to promote soil science, health, sustainability, and conservation through education; training; basic and applied research; and engagement with local and state governments, institutions of higher learning, non-profits, and the private sector.
- 6) Explore opportunities to recommend a "Grand Challenge" aimed at fundamentally changing public perception of soils and soil management, inviting industry, academia, and citizen scientists to develop new tools and techniques to improve soil management-systems to stave off erosion and degradation, assess or quantify soil conditions, and promote long-term soil health, regeneration, sustainability, and monitoring.

D. Membership

NSTC departments and agencies who are members of the SES may designate members to serve on the SSIWG. The SSIWG Co-Chair agencies will be designated by the SES Chair.

The following NSTC departments and agencies are represented on the SSIWG:

Department of Agriculture (Co-Chair);
Department of Commerce;
Department of Defense;
Department of Energy;
Department of Health and Human Services;
Department of Homeland Security;
Department of the Interior (Co-Chair);
Department of State;
Department of Transportation;
Environmental Protection Agency;
National Aeronautics and Space Administration (Co-Chair);
National Science Foundation;
Smithsonian Institution; and

U.S. Agency for International Development.

The following components of the Executive Office of the President may also be represented on the SSIWG:

Council on Environmental Quality;
Office of Management and Budget; and
Office of Science and Technology Policy.

Cooperating departments and agencies may include other such Executive organizations, departments, and agencies as the SSIWG Co-chairs may designate as appropriate. The SSIWG will also strive to enhance the Federal research and development enterprise by embracing diversity, recognizing that inclusion of a broad range of backgrounds and perspectives is critical to achieving robust intellectual dialogue.

E. Private-Sector Interface

The SSIWG may seek advice from the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST) and will recommend to the CENRS and/or the Assistant to the President for Science and Technology the nature of any additional private-sector¹ advice needed to accomplish its mission. The SSIWG shall also interact with and receive *ad hoc* advice from various private-sector groups consistent with the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA).

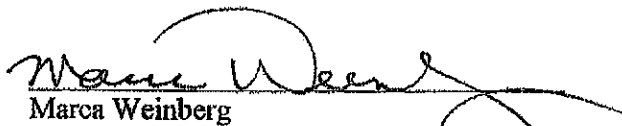
F. Termination Date

Unless renewed and approved by the Co-chairs of the CENRS prior to its expiration, the SSIWG shall terminate no later than one year from the date of approval, July 31, 2017.

G. Determination

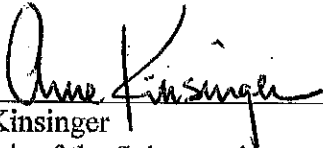
I hereby determine that the establishment of the SSIWG is in the public interest in connection with the performance of duties imposed on the Executive Branch by law and that such duties can best be performed through the advice and counsel of such a group.

Approved:


Marca Weinberg
Co-Chair of the Subcommittee on Ecological Systems
and
Director, Resource and Rural Economics Division,
Economic Research Service,
U.S. Department of Agriculture

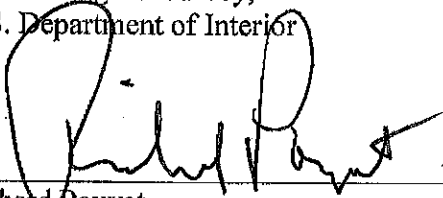
6/28/16
Date

¹ The Federal Advisory Committee Act, 5 U.S.C. App., as amended, does not explicitly define "private sector," but the phrase is generally understood to include individuals or entities outside the Federal government such as, but not limited to, the following: non-Federal sources, academia, State, local or Tribal governments, individual citizens, the public, non-governmental organizations, industry associations, and international bodies.



Anne Kinsinger
Co-Chair of the Subcommittee on Ecological Systems
and
Associate Director for Ecosystems,
U.S. Geological Survey,
U.S. Department of Interior

6/29/16
Date



Richard Pouyat
Co-Chair of the Subcommittee on Ecological Systems
and
Senior Policy Analyst for Climate Resilience and Land Use,
Office of Science and Technology Policy,
The White House

6/28/16
Date