

Natural Resources Conservation Service

## Soil Science Division

Soil Survey Region 12



### Soil Survey Office at Paul Smiths, New York (12-PAS)

## Soil Scientists Repair Soil Monolith Collection at Paul Smith's College

### Purpose

Soil scientists from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) soil survey office in Paul Smiths, New York, are helping to restore the soil monolith collection at Paul Smith's College. The soil monoliths are part of a larger soils display at the college's Visitors Interpretive Center (VIC). A soil monolith is a "slice" of soil that is dried, coated (to maintain its structure), and mounted to a board for wall mounting. The monoliths in the college's display were over 30 years old and were starting to fall apart. Soil survey office staff cleaned the display boxes, collected a new soil profile, and prepared the profile for display.



Soils display at Paul Smith's College without monoliths.

### Key Outcomes

NRCS soil scientists Jerry Smith, Janella Cruz, and Rebecca Fox created a new soil monolith for the soils display at Paul Smith's College. The monolith is 3 to 5 feet in height, 4 to 8 inches in width, and 1 to 3 inches in thickness. The soil "slice" used for the new monolith consists of a gravelly glacial outwash soil.

The monoliths are part of a larger display about glaciation and how it shaped the Adirondack landscape, the ecosystems within the Adirondacks, and the events that led to the creation of the Adirondack Park. The Adirondack Park, which consists of 6 million acres, is the largest State park in the United States and has been designated as a forever wild forest preserve.

The VIC at Paul Smith's College opened in 1989 and was designed to introduce visitors to the special features of the Adirondack Park. Many visitors come to study the soils display before they head out on the various trails the college has to offer. The soil survey staff plans to create a second monolith, from a glacial till soil, to be used in the college's soil display.





**Soil scientist Rebecca Fox cuts an outline of a glacial outwash profile.**



**Soil scientist Janella Cruz sprays the soil monolith with a glue mixture (to maintain structure).**