

Soil Science Division

Soil Survey Region 7



Tallahassee FL MLRA Soil Survey Office

2018 Tri County Land Judging Contest

Purpose

On February 2, 2018, the Florida FFA Association held the 2018 Tri County Land Judging Contest in Dixie County, Florida. The site was determined to be suitable by Tallahassee MLRA Soil Survey Office staff after the District Conservationist for Dixie County, Florida, requested a soil investigation. NRCS staff evaluated the field and located soil pits with different seasonal high water tables, clayey subsoils vs. sandy subsoils, and different slope classes. The site is owned by a farmer who is a USDA-NRCS customer and one of the local leaders in adopting strip till and winter cover crop systems to reduce runoff into local waterways and help conserve water resources.

Key Outcomes

Fifty high school students from nearby areas were invited to participate in the event. The students benefited from the land judging event by developing skills such as thinking clearly, communicating effectively, and performing in a competitive real-world environment.

An NRCS soil scientist helped with the identification and evaluation of soil sites to be assessed and provided explanations for the rating of each pit whenever students or professors had questions on the soil properties, qualities, or use for farming or home sites. The scientist also provided explanations for the ratings assigned to each pit.



LeRoy Crockett (NRCS resource soil scientist) answers questions.



Through this event, NRCS staff helped to foster learning activities related to soils and how to best use them. The public and students were taught the importance of “Helping People Help the Land” and the need to better understand soils. Events such as land judging contests help high school students become interested in careers in environmental issues and natural resources with emphasis in soil science. They promote the inclusion of soils instruction in the agricultural education curriculum and provide recognition for those who demonstrate skill and competency resulting from soils instruction.



Students near a pit in a depression review slope classes.



Pit in an area of Penney fine sand, 0 to 5 percent slopes (a very deep, excessively drained, sandy soil). Sand layers are visible at bottom of the pit.