

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Soil and Plant Science Division

Central Appalachian Interior Mountains and Plateaus



Marietta, Ohio Soil Survey Office

Completing Off-Site Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Determinations

Purpose

A significant workload of Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland determinations in West Virginia was reduced with the help of the soil science staff at the Marietta, Ohio Soil Survey Office. These determinations are critical for determining USDA program benefit eligibility for many producers. The assistance emphasized the commitment of the office to remain customer-focused.

Background Information

Debby Cunningham, Soil Scientist on the Marietta Soil Survey Office staff, was requested to assist with completing the workload of HEL and Wetland determination reports (Figure 1). Southern West Virginia has a high number of requests for HEL and Wetland determinations, some nearly a year old. Earlier in the year, Debby had completed a detail as Acting Resource Soil Scientist in the WV NRCS South Area. The original detail focused on compliance requests which resulted in Debby receiving training and hands-on experience to complete those requests.

Since the completion of her detail, additional assistance has been requested. Debby worked in conjunction with the WV South Area Resource Soil Scientist, to complete 35 HEL determinations and 45 Wetland determination reports in just a few months. Those determinations have served 106 people in 24 West Virginia counties. In addition, Debby responded to phone calls from producers who had received adverse determinations, giving satisfactory explanations, and documenting the assistance provided.



Figure 1. Wetland determination map used for a compliance report identifies an area determined to be Non-Wetland (NW).

Key Outcomes

Technical Soil Services (TSS) activities for the Marietta SSO increased dramatically as a result of the Acting Resource Soil Scientist detail. Prior to her detail, Debby recorded 10 TSS activities (1st quarter, FY20). Following the detail (3rd quarter, FY20), she recorded over 60 TSS activities for over 280 hours. This assistance reduced a backlog of compliance requests and provided accurate, efficient, and consistent determinations on a large scale in a short period of time. The Marietta Soil Survey Office staff continues to act on requests for assistance related to HEL and Wetland compliance, as well as a variety of other requests.

