

SOIL AND PLANT SCIENCE DIVISION

Technical Soil Services

South Central Region



Kerrville, Texas, MLRA Soil Survey Office

4-H District 10 and 11 Soil Judging Contest

Purpose

Staff from the Kerrville MLRA Soil Survey Office (SSO) were asked to dig and describe four soil pits to help conduct the District 10 and 11 4-H soil judging contest. The 4-H soil judging contest provides local 4-H members the opportunity to learn about soils and an introduction to the basics of soils.

Background

Prior to his field visit, on April 12, 2023, Travis Waiser (Kerrville MLRA SSO Soil Scientist and MLRA Leader) used Web Soil Survey to identify a location with differing soil features within a short distance of each other. Once he was in the field, Travis determined pit locations and took soil samples for particle size analysis.

During the week of April 18–21, he began preparing for the District 10 and 11 4-H soil judging contest. Travis analyzed soil characteristics both in and out of the soil pit to accurately populate soil judging answer keys. He evaluated soil texture, structure, consistency, depth, slope, and erosion at four soil pits to interpret infiltration rate, runoff potential, permeability, and site drainage for each pit.

On Friday, April 21, the soil judging contest took place with 27 students in attendance representing multiple counties, along with county agents, parents, and coaches, bringing the total attendance to 42 individuals. Once students completed the soil judging contest, Travis walked through each pit detailing how soil assessments were made.

Key Outcomes

The 4-H soil judging contest is a great opportunity for students from third to twelfth grade to gain exposure to soils, discuss soil degree opportunities at colleges, and learn about careers as a soil scientist. The Kerrville MLRA SSO staff enjoys teaching and coaching students and staff about soil. The students, parents, and coaches all gain knowledge and understanding of the different soils across the landscape and see soil science is an exciting career path.



The four soil pits evaluated during the soil judging contest.



Travis Waiser (Kerrville MLRA SSO, Soil Scientist and MLRA Leader) discussing soil properties at one of the pit locations after the contest.