



United States Department of Agriculture



Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service



Career Opportunities with NRCS Soil and Plant Science Division (SPSD)

October 8, 2020 2-3 pm EDT

Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

nrcs.usda.gov/

Agenda

What is NRCS and the Soil Science and Resource Assessment Deputy Area

- Dr. Luis Tupas, Deputy Chief, Soil Science and Resource Assessment

Why Should I Work for NRCS and the Soil and Plant Science Division?

- Dr. David Lindbo, Director, Soil and Plant Science Division

What is the “Virtual Recruitment Toolbox”?

- Philip Smith, Resource Soil Scientist, NRCS California

Recruitment and Outreach for the FPAC Mission Area

- Rick Tafoya and Demitrice Boozer, Recruitment and Outreach Team, FPAC Business Center

Discussions on Upcoming Pathway and Recent Graduate Job Announcements

- Bradley Shee, Pathways Program Coordinator, FPAC Mission Area

My Pathways Experience

- Katherine Gerdes, Soil Scientist, Fort Morgan, CO

Question and Answer

- Kendra Moseley, Ecological Site Regional Specialist, Davis, CA





United States Department of Agriculture



What is NRCS and the Soil Science and Resource Assessment Deputy Area



Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

nrcs.usda.gov/

What is NRCS and Why We Were Created?



Stratford, TX (1935)



Dallas, SD (1936)



Where are we going?

Eutrophication in the Gulf of Mexico,
Western Lake Erie Basin, Chesapeake Bay,
Lake Champlain

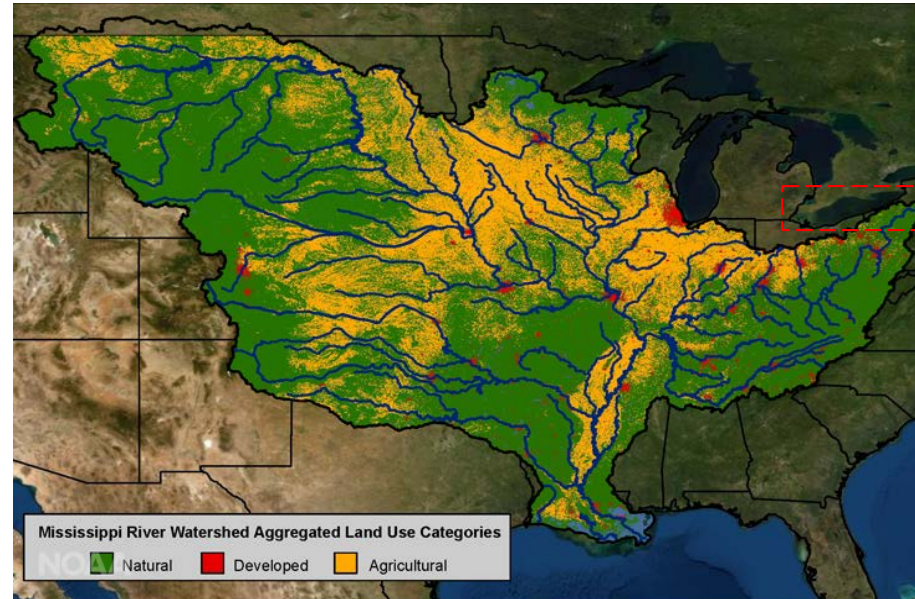
- Hypoxia
- Harmful Algal Blooms

Linking conservation dollars to outcomes

- assessing effects
- evaluating effective conservation options and strategies

Findings are used to:

- inform the design and delivery approaches of conservation programs
- update conservation practice standards
- develop assessment tools for field staff



Soil Science and Resource Assessment

Dr. Luis Tupas
Deputy Chief, SSRA

Two Divisions

- Resource Inventory and Assessment Division (RIAD)
- Soil and Plant Science Division (SPSD)

Two National Centers

- National Water and Climate Center (NWCC)
- National Soil Survey Center (NSSC) (under SPSPD)

Senior Scientist for Climate Change/Adaptation

Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

nrcs.usda.gov/



SSRA Innovation





United States Department of Agriculture



Why Should I Work for NRCS and Soil and Plant Science Division



Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

nrcs.usda.gov/

To Make a Difference

“The environment is where we all meet; where we all have a mutual interest; it is the one thing all of us share. It is not only a mirror of ourselves, but a focusing lens on what we can become.”

– Lady Bird Johnson



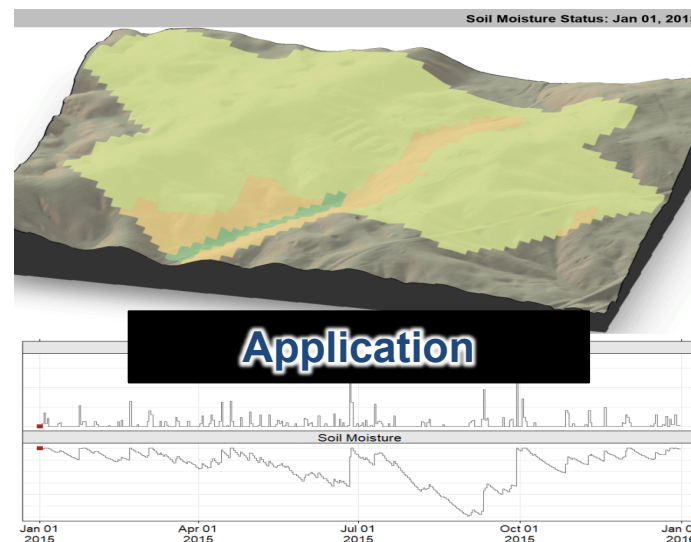
Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service



USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

nrcs.usda.gov/

Evolving: A Dynamic Soil Survey



Where are we going?



SPSD Commitment



- Serve an inclusive and diverse clientele
- To hire qualified candidates at USDA approved diversity recruitment events
- Commit to distribution of grant, employment, and internship opportunities at diverse institutions
- Build and track new partnerships



Professional Perks

- Career Advancement
- Travel (Domestic and International)
- Training
- Indoors/Outdoors Work



Cacao for Peace



Dream Lake in Colorado



United States Department of Agriculture



Virtual Recruitment Toolbox



Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

nrcs.usda.gov/

Virtual Recruitment Toolbox

Natural Resources Conservation Service
Soils
 United States Department of Agriculture

[About Us](#) | [Soil Survey Releases](#) | [National Centers](#) | [State Websites](#)

[Topics](#) | [Soil Survey](#) | [Soil Health](#) | [Contact Us](#)

[Browse By Audience](#) | [A-Z Index](#) | [Help](#)

You are Here: [Home](#) / [Focus Teams](#) / [Virtual Recruitment Toolbox](#)

[Stay Connected](#)

Quick Links

- Coastal Zone Soil Survey Team
- Communications and Outreach Team
- Digital Soil Mapping Team
- Dynamic Soil Properties Team
- Ecological Sites Team
- Initial Mapping Team
- Leadership Development and Recruitment Team
- Research Team
- Soil Survey Database Team
- Soil Survey Interpretations Team
- Taxonomy Team
- Training Team
- Urban Soils Team

Virtual Recruitment Toolbox

Pathways

- > [OPM Pathways Handbook](#)
- > [OPM Pathways Managers Guide](#)
- > [USDA Departmental Regulation](#)
- > [OPM Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- > [OPM Pathways Overview and Program Fact Sheets](#)

Universities

- > [Salary Tables for Federal Employees](#)
- > [Basic Requirements for Soil Scientist Series, 470](#)
- > [Basic Requirements for Geography Series, 0150](#)
- > [Basic Requirements for Cartography Series, 1370](#)
- > [Basic Requirements for Physical Science Technician Series, 1311](#)
- > [Basic Requirements for Ecology Series, 0408](#)
- > [Basic Requirements for Agronomist Series, 471](#)
- > [Basic Requirements for Soil Conservation Series, 0457](#)
- > [Basic Requirements for General Natural Resources Management and Biological Sciences Series, 0401](#)
- > [Basic Requirements for Management and Program Analysts, 0343](#)

Careers

- > [Soil at the Center](#) – Candiss Williams, Ph.D.
- > [The Science of Soil: Understanding the Major](#) – Joel Brown
- > [Day in the Life of a Soil Scientist](#) – Jim Marshall
- > [Day in the Life of a Soil Scientist series](#)
- > [The Science of Soil: Why Study Soil?](#)
- > [myNRCS Career](#)
- > [NRCS Careers in Soil Science](#)
- > [NRCS on Campus](#)
- > [Future Farmers of America](#) and [Soil Science Society of America](#) career video archives



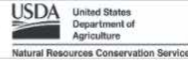
Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

nrcs.usda.gov/



NRCS on Campus

Soil and Plant Science Division

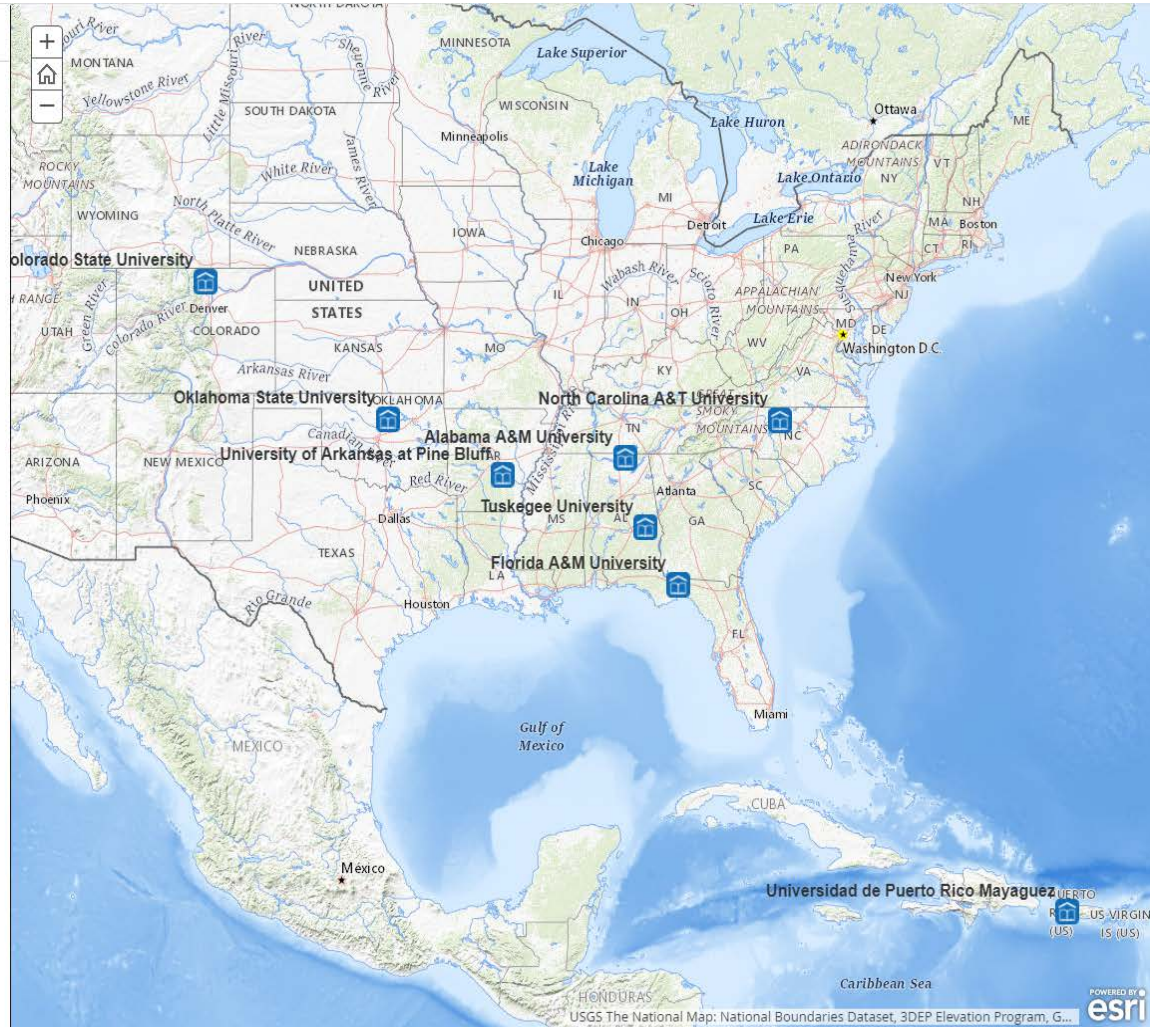


Soil Survey Offices on Campus

INTRODUCTION

The United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS) currently has offices located on the campus of 5 Historically Black Colleges and Universities and 1 Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) including: Alabama A&M University, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, Florida A&M University, Universidad de Puerto Rico Mayagüez, North Carolina A&T University, and Tuskegee University.

The Soil and Plant Science Division (SPSD) has also sponsored 13 agreements with 1890s and HSIs totaling \$850,000 since 2012. Together with these institutions the SPSD has accomplished goals such as: flight and data analysis using unmanned aerial vehicles, rapid soil carbon assessment using VNIR spectroscopy, characterization of trace metals in agronomic and forest samples, and sponsoring soil judging teams.





United States Department of Agriculture

Employee Profiles



Natural Resources Conservation Service

Soil and Plant Science Division

Employee Profile

ANN J. TAN

Discipline: Soil Science

Location: Morgantown, West Virginia

Email: ann.tan@usda.gov

Telephone: 304-291-4377 x 130



Where are you from?

Honolulu, Hawaii and San Jose, California. Go Giants!

What is your educational background?

I double majored in Soil Science, and Evolution, Ecology and Biodiversity at UC Davis. Then I got a masters in Geography at UC Santa Barbara.

What brought you to the NRCS?

Ever since I've read the Keys to Soil Taxonomy, I've always wanted to work for NRCS. After graduate school I got my first position with NRCS as a Soil Conservation Technician in the middle of the desert (Blythe, California). With encouragement from some great mentors, I then applied for Soil Scientist positions, and moved to the great state of Mississippi, as I've always wanted to travel to new places. And the rest is history!

What are you looking forward to in your current position?

I became an MLRA Office Leader in 2020. Supervising and learning a new area during a pandemic is challenging, but I love it. I love being able to help my staff grow navigate their roles, and I enjoy building relationships with our partners. My area, the Eastern Allegheny Plateau and Mountains, is also spectacularly beautiful and I feel so lucky to be able to work here. We have lush vegetation, mountains with views for miles, and of course, lots of fun soils.

Quote or motto you live by:

"Life shrinks or expands in proportion to one's courage." -Anais Nin

Provided by: Soil and Plant Science Division, Leadership Diversity and Recruitment Focus Team

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.



Natural Resources Conservation Service

NRCS South Carolina

Employee Profile

KRISTINE RYAN

Discipline: Soil Science

Location: Columbia, SC

Email: Kristine.ryan@usda.gov

Telephone: (803) 767-7496



Where are you from?

I was born and raised in the western suburbs of Chicago.

What is your educational background?

I earned a Bachelor of Science in Plant and Soil Science from Southern Illinois University - Carbondale and a Master of Public Health from Benedictine University in Lisle, Illinois.

What brought you to the NRCS?

I've always wanted a career that would take me outside. I loved the outdoors and was always passionate about the environment. I started my college career in the forestry program but after taking an 'intro to soil science' course, my interests evolved from forestry to soil science. It was fascinating to know there is a world beneath our feet that supports ALL life. I learned about NRCS from my advisors and professors and they helped guide me towards a career with NRCS.

What are you looking forward to in your current position?

I started my career in the Aurora MLRA Soil Survey Office in Illinois, spending 15 years updating and mapping soils, including the initial urban soil survey of Cook County and Chicago. The Aurora SSO is located about an hour west of downtown Chicago but close to the agricultural communities. I had the unique experience of seeing a range of soils and working with a diverse group of people. I became the State Soil Scientist of South Carolina in March of 2020. I look forward to learning new skills, working with new people, and building new partnerships.

Quote or motto you live by:

"We do not think ourselves into new ways of living, we live ourselves into new ways of thinking"
-Richard Rohr

Provided by: Soil and Plant Science Division, Leadership Diversity and Recruitment Focus Team

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.



Employee Profile

Eddie E. Davis Jr.

Profession: Area Soil Scientist

Location: Huntsville, Alabama

Email: eddie.davis@usda.gov

Telephone: (256) 535-7051



Where are you from?

Birmingham, Alabama. Currently living in Huntsville, Alabama

What is your educational background?

B.S. Environmental Science; Minor Chemistry, Alabama A&M University
Masters in Urban and Regional Planning; Environmental Planning, Alabama A&M University

What brought you to NRCS?

In the year of 2000, I was a USDA-NRCS 1890 Soil Science Scholar, a forerunner to the current Pathways Program. That year, I began my career as a Soil Scientist trainee in Nacogdoches, Texas. The following summer, I was a trainee in Washington County, Iowa. After the completion of my bachelor's degree, I became a Soil Scientist with NRCS in the Normal Soil Survey Office located in Huntsville, Alabama. There, I have had many positions and an array of experiences and responsibilities, ranging from Soil Survey Project Leader to ArcGIS data base manager-all spanning across a rewarding 18 years of service.

What are you looking forward to in your new position?

My most recent position is the Area Resource Soil Scientist for North Alabama. With this position, I look forward to not only providing technical soils information to our customers in a practical manner, but also be the bridge to educate and expose environmental issues and the importance of soil to people that are often forgotten about and unaware in many urban cities and rural communities.

Quote you live by:

"United we are the rock. Divided we are the sand." African Proverb

Provided by: Soil & Plant Science Division, Leadership Diversity and Recruitment Focus Team
USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

“A Day in the Life Series”



Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

nrcs.usda.gov/





Farm Production And Conservation-FPAC



United States Department of Agriculture

Farm Production and Conservation
FSA | NRCS | RMA | Business Center



Farm Service Agency

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) implements agricultural policy, administers credit and loan programs, and manages conservation, commodity, disaster and farm marketing programs through a national network of offices.

Simply stated, FSA has two primary functions: farm programs and farm loan programs. These programs provide a full range of support to producers, from beginning farmers and ranchers who need access to loans to start up their operations to established producers who endured catastrophic weather events and need disaster assistance or a strong financial safety net.



Natural Resources Conservation Service

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain and improve our natural resources and environment. NRCS employees continue to provide the information, tools, and delivery systems necessary for producers — in every State and territory — to conserve, maintain, and improve their natural resources. This locally led, science-based approach offers producers voluntary conservation solutions that enhance their environment and commercial viability.

Simply put—NRCS helps American farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners make conservation work for them. The system of practices we promote helps them improve production, reduce input costs, and conserve natural resources for the future. We also provide financial resources to help with the cost of getting conservation on the ground.



Risk Management Agency

The Risk Management Agency (RMA) serves America's agricultural producers through effective, market-based risk management tools to strengthen the economic stability of agricultural producers and rural communities. RMA is committed to increasing the availability and effectiveness of Federal crop insurance as a risk management tool



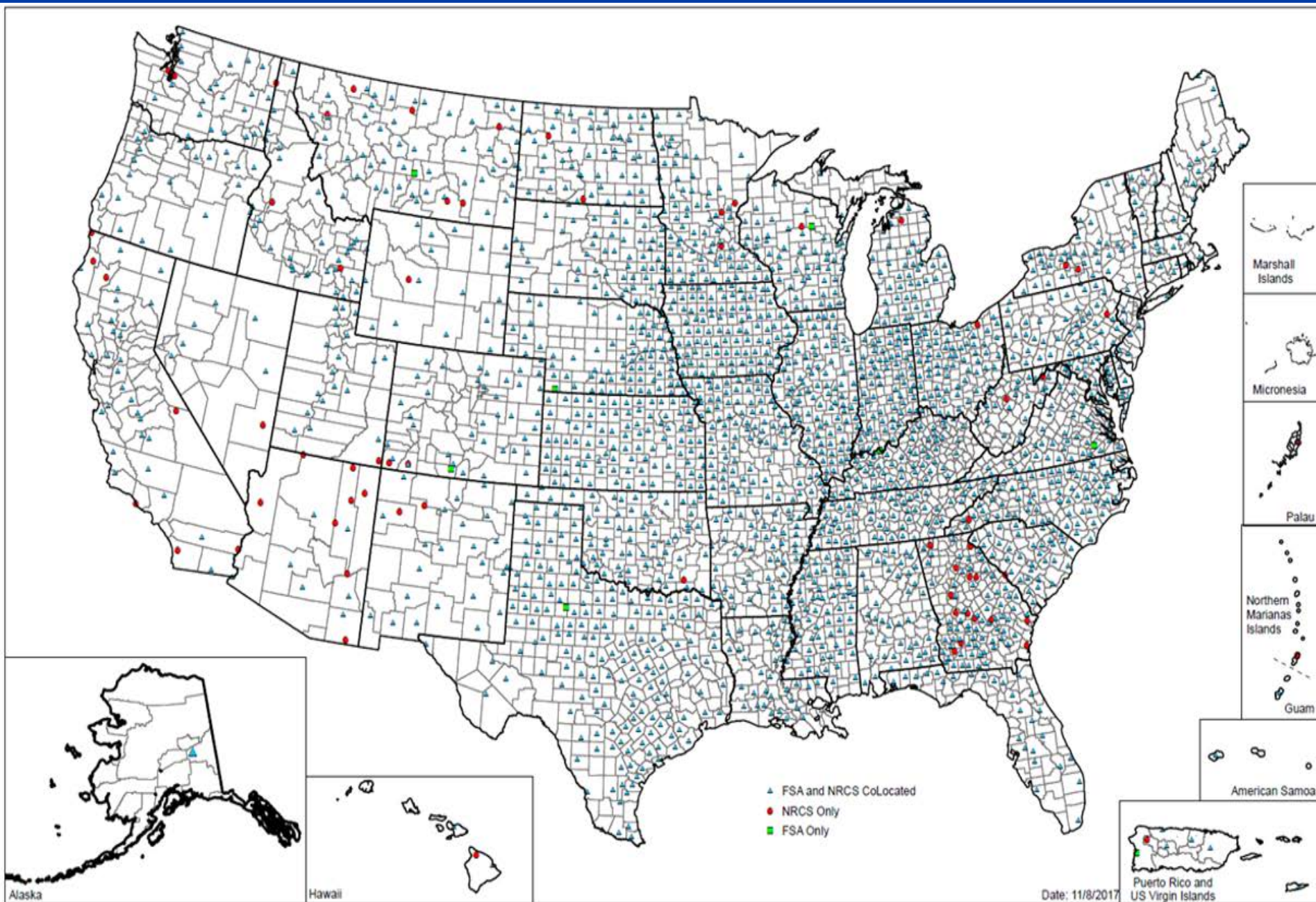
Business Center

The FPAC Business Center is a reflection of an improved way of doing business, using best practices from across the federal government and private industry. The FPAC Business Center is a new USDA agency, the result of a reorganization proposal to converge the administrative functions within the infancy FPAC mission area framework established in 2017. The FPAC mission area centralized operations' office, the FPAC Business Center, ensures all of the administrative and mission support offices collaborate and run smoothly. The FPAC Business Center handles a variety of functions, from human resources to financial management, enabling FSA, NRCS, and RMA to focus on serving farmers and ranchers.



United States Department of Agriculture

USDA-NRCS Offices Nationwide



Outreach and Recruitment provides assistance to FPAC management on recruitment programs to ensure the Agency has the depth, breadth, and diversity of talent to achieve its organizational goals.

- Technical resource on FPAC Outreach and Recruitment programs, including:
 - Special Emphasis Programs
 - Diversity recruitment initiatives
 - Internship Programs
 - Partnerships
 - Internal outreach collaboration
 - Employment branding and outreach plans
 - Workforce diversity analysis
 - Veterans and Disability programs



POCs- Rick Tafoya & Demitrice Boozer



Internship Program

Pathways provides students with paid opportunities to work and explore federal careers while still in school.

Recent Graduates Program

Pathways provides recent graduates opportunities to apply academic training and knowledge in a professional job.

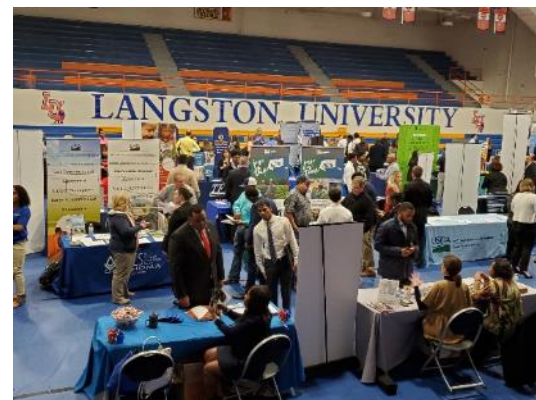
Presidential Management Fellows (PMF) Program

Pathways establishes the PMF Program as the federal government's premier leadership initiative for hiring graduate and professional degree candidates.



Summary of Opportunities:

- *Student Internship Programs-*
 - *Pathways Program*
 - *Third Party Internships*
 - *Thurgood Marshall College Fund-Internship Program*
- *1890 Scholars Program*
- *Earth Team/FSA Volunteer Program*
- *Entry Level Positions*
- *Professional Career Positions*





NRCS Pathways Opportunities

Announcement Date	NRCS-Type of Pathways Announcement
Oct. 13th	Pathways-Career Interns (24 SPSP Internships) All 0499 positions-- Agriculture/Natural Resources/Biological Sciences Majors: Range Science, Ag Science/Biology, Soil Science, Agronomy Wildlife Biology, Forestry, Environment Science & Other Related Ag & Natural Resource Majors)
Oct. 14th	Pathways-Career Interns All 0899 positions--Engineering Majors: Civil, Agriculture and Environmental
Oct. 15th	Pathways-Career Interns -- All other disciplines 1399/1099/0199/0399 Physical Sciences: Majors: Hydrology, Cartography, Geology Information & Arts: Majors: Public Affairs, Communications Social Sciences: Majors: Archeology, Economists Administrative: Management Analyst, Clerical
Oct. 19th	Recent Graduate positions (47 SPSP Positions in Ecology and Soil Science) *Another round of Recent Graduate job announcements in March 2021

Notes:

- All job announcements will be on USAJOBS.gov.
- All applicants must apply on USAJOB.gov
- All job announcements will be open for 5 business days or until closed by applicant cut offs
- Recent Graduate announcements will include eligibility of 120 days prior to graduation date and 2 years after graduation date

Apply—Join the USDA Family!!

Resources and Contacts

❑ For more information about NRCS, click <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov>.

❑ For more information about FSA, click <https://www.fsa.usda.gov>.

❑ For more information about RMA, click <https://www.rma.usda.gov>.

❑ For more information about FPAC Business Center, click <https://myfpac.usda.gov/>

❑ FPAC link with career information for students: <https://www.fpacbc.usda.gov/careers/>

❖ Questions or request additional resources, contact

Demitrice Boozer, HR Specialist

(301) 504-3784

demitrice.boozer@usda.gov

Rick Tafoya, HR Specialist

(515) 323-2258

rick.tafoya@usda.gov





United States Department of Agriculture

2020 Onsite Hiring Events



Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC) Pathways Opportunity Job Announcements

Calling all Current Student and Recent Graduates!!

Are you looking for opportunities within the U.S. Department of Agriculture?
Are you passionate about helping Agricultural producers and managing our
natural resources?

Get your applications ready!
FPAC's Agencies have over 750 Pathways positions
being announced starting in October!

See next page for details on the positions.

Important Notes: All job announcements will be on [USAJOBS.gov](https://www.usajobs.gov). All applicants must apply on
[USAJOBS.gov](https://www.usajobs.gov). All job announcements will be open for 5 business days or until closed by applicant cut offs.

Learn More About :

- [Careers in the FPAC Agencies](#)
- [USDA Pathways Programs](#)

Helpful Resources :

- [Pathways Internships Tutorial YouTube Video](#)
- [Applying for Federal Jobs YouTube Video](#)

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.



United States Department of Agriculture



Upcoming Job Announcements



Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

nrcs.usda.gov/

Where are the jobs?



BEWARE: Focus on these things

Do

- ✓ Quantify whenever possible – use numbers and data points to illustrate success.
- ✓ Check your application package for misspellings and typographical errors.
- ✓ Use active verbs to describe actual work performed. Be specific.
- ✓ Use your own words when writing a resume. Be concise.
- ✓ Edit your resume to reduce fluff and make every word count.
- ✓ Review your application package to ensure that it contains all of the required information listed under the “How to Apply” section of the vacancy announcement.
- ✓ Submit your application in a timely manner.

Don't

- x Make things up or inflate your accomplishments, level of responsibility, or skills.
- x Use personal pronouns (I, my, me) in a resume.
- x Be humble.
- x Don't use acronyms, unless you are certain everyone knows what the acronym is.
- x Use job description expressions like “duties included” or responsibilities:” – instead use accomplishment-oriented phrases that sell you.
- x Include personal information on your resume, other than contact information (examples: height, weight, age, date of birth, place of birth, marital status, ethnicity, health, reason for leaving previous jobs, etc.)
- x Use the same resume for every job. Take the time to tailor your resume for each position.



BEWARE: Focus on these things

Internships

- Announcement dates October 12-16, 2020
- Will I be able to meet the 640-hour work requirement?
- FPAC Agencies are announcing 750 internships (24 are within SPSPD)

Recent Graduates

- Announcement dates October 19-23, 2020
- Do I have enough of the required courses?
- FPAC Agencies will also be announcing several recent graduate positions (47 are within SPSPD)





United States Department of Agriculture



My Pathways Experience



Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

nrcs.usda.gov/

My Pathways Experience

• Background

- Grew up in Eastern Nebraska
- Studied Geology in undergrad
- Competed in soil judging for two years
- Found Pathways through a classmate in the program- Soil Conservation

• Application Process

- Positions open for ~4 days, over a weekend
- Submitted resume, cover letter, letters of recommendation from professors (I requested letters of rec and resume help a couple months in advance)
- Commence the waiting game!
 - Openings closed mid-April
 - Offer from NRCS in mid-May
 - Onboarded in Fort Morgan as intern in late June



2019 Soil Judging Contest

Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service



USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

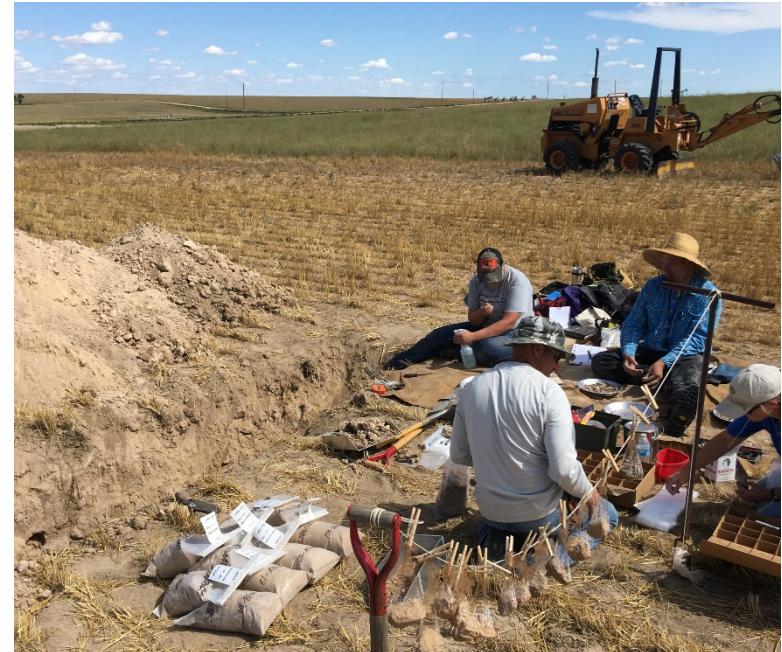
nrcs.usda.gov/

My Pathways Experience



Locations I've Worked

- **Fort Morgan, CO (2018)**
 - Basic soils info, intro to NASIS, NEON, Field office activities/trainings in Arikaree River area
- **Buffalo, WY (2019)**
 - Initial mapping, Soil temperature study
- **Lincoln, NE (2019-2020)**
 - NASIS round two, groundwater monitoring, soil monoliths, sampling for characterization & dynamic soils properties



Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

nrcs.usda.gov/



USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

My Pathways Experience

- **Challenges I experienced**

- Housing
 - Two of the three offices were in areas with highly competitive real estate markets or where rental property was scarce
- Financial Planning
 - Stipend- received midway through both summers
 - Travel
- Field Prep
- Computer Access
- Soils Credits



Questions



SPSD Diversity Focus Team



From top left to right: [Leslie Glover II](#) (Team Lead), [Luis Hernandez](#) (Co-Lead), [Ben Hannibal](#), [Kendra Mosely](#), [John Andreoni](#) (Co-Lead)

From bottom left to right: [Phil Smith](#), [Janella Cruz](#), [Manuel Matos](#), [Charles Kome](#), and [Kat Gerdes](#)



Please visit the [Focus Team Website](#) and [Sharepoint site](#) for further information!

Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

nrcs.usda.gov/



[John Andreoni](#), Management Analyst, Denver, CO

[Kendra Moseley](#), Ecological Site Regional Specialist, Davis, CA

[Manuel Matos](#), State Soil Scientist, San Juan, Puerto Rico

[Benjamin Hannibal](#), Program Analyst, Washington, DC

[Luis Hernandez](#), SSR 12 Regional Director, Amherst, Massachusetts

[Charles Kome](#), Soil Scientist, World Soil Resources, Greensboro, NC

[Philip Smith](#), Area Resource Soil Scientist, Salinas, CA

[Katherine Gerdes](#), Soil Scientist, Fort Morgan, CO

[Janella Cruz](#), Soil Conservationist, Santa Fe, NM

[Leslie Glover II](#), Assistant Program Manager, Washington, DC



Please take the post webinar evaluation



Link to the recorded webinar

