EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MLRA Soil Survey Area Data Mapunit and Legend Management in NASIS
Under the November 2007 Soil Survey Program Restructuring
In MLRA Soil Survey Region Office 10

- NSSH 610.03 provides instructions to evaluate each non-MLRA soil survey areas within the context of the greater MLRA soil survey area.
- NSSH 610.05 provides two methods for managing MLRA Soil Survey Area Legends in NASIS. The "alternative" method accomplishes these evaluation instructions in the most efficient manner[1].
- The Region 10 **SDQSs have reached agreement** to use the "alternative" method.

Data Management, Data Delivery, and Progress Reporting, while intertwined due to the current architecture of NASIS, **are treated as separate functions**. Data Management is conducted by the MLRA Offices while Data Delivery and Progress Reporting are state responsibilities.

Soil Properties and Soil Qualities are populated on a physiographic region (MLRA or other) basis; Soil Interpretations can be populated on either an MLRA basis or state / county basis. **Data Exports, therefore, contain** MLRA (physiographic region) wide Soil Properties and Soil Qualities, plus state (or county) wide Soil Interpretations.

Because the above process **employs progressive correlation**, small physiographic regions, rather than an entire county, can be periodically[2] delivered to the SDM, rather than waiting for an entire county to be completed.

Major advantages include:

1. All the data for each physiographic region is in one location in NASIS - one Legend, rather than scattered in multiple subsets.
2. All changes to that data automatically occur in the Overlap tables, rather than having to make the identical change in multiple subsets.
3. Existing county legends, mapunits, and correlations in NASIS are not compromised or altered in any way.
4. Duplicate county or MLRA Legends are no longer needed for data management purposes.
5. The Legend is a true physiographic region legend, rather than an assemblage of unrelated (in time and spatially) "Non-MLRA Soil Survey" areas. (This "assemblage" is the result if the "preferred" method of MLRA Legend Management suggested in NSSH 610.05 is used.)
6. The MLRA Soil Survey Leader and Soil Data Quality Specialist have one work location in NASIS to manage the legend and to record all decisions for each mapunit.
7. Initial, update, and extensive revision soil survey projects are accommodated under the same data management / delivery techniques.

MLRA Region 10 is responsible for 23 MLRAs. **Currently, each MLRA has a legend in NASIS.** A January 22, 2009 inventory revealed that there are 9516 Mapunits and 8762 linked DMUs currently in place in the database associated with those 23 MLRA Legends. There were 36 other MLRA Legends in NASIS being managed by other MLRA Offices on January 22; as of May 27, 2009, there were an additional 11 MLRA Legends.

Startup costs are estimated to be a few hours to two days per MLRA (shared among the SDQSs and MLRA SSL), in addition to about two hours of training (via Net Meeting, if on-site is not feasible) for the MLRA Soil Survey Leaders and staffs. This investment of time is recovered[3] by the efficiencies gained in data management.

Delays in **delivering soil survey products** to SDM / SDW / WSS will not occur, and with the use of the efficiencies gained, could be delivered ahead of currently projected delivery dates.

New skills are not needed for NASIS users, just a paradigm shift toward working with MLRAs rather than counties. The only difference in this progressive correlation method from the pre-restructuring method is the boundary of the soil survey area[4], not the way we manage data or correlate it.

[1] Proposed changes to the NSSH will not have a preferred or alternate method of Legend management.
[2] Using whatever timeframe a state uses as its refresh rate.
[3] Probably within one year.
[4] It is no longer a county, but now a physiographic region.