All of this, and more information is available to you—the LAND USER.

For further information and direct land use assistance, contact your local Soil and Water Conservation District, the Soil Conservation Service, the Cooperative Extension Service, or the Purdue University Agricultural Experiment Station.

Understanding And Using Soil Surveys

Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics, State of Indiana, Purdue University and U.S. Department of Agriculture Cooperating. H. G. Dieslin, Director, Lafayette, Indiana.

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**Soil Surveys Can Help You**

Land is one of our most important natural resources. Every day people make decisions on how to use land. Some of these decisions are good—others are not. To assist you in making the best decision it is important that you understand that land consists of many different kinds of soils.

A publication called a Soil Survey has been, or will be completed for each of Indiana's 92 counties by 1984. These soil surveys tell you what kinds of soils exist in a county, where they are located and how they can be used to your advantage. Many are available now.

Regardless of your profession or occupation, soil surveys can help you with land use decisions. You can learn that each soil is different. These differences make it useful for many different purposes. Knowledge about the soils on your land will help you in using it to the greatest satisfaction now with the fewest problems later.
Farming? Building? Use Soils Information

Once you have decided on your purpose for using land, whether it be for a homestead, bowling alley, factory, or farm, the soil survey can help you locate soils with desirable properties. Each county soil survey describes favorable and unfavorable soil properties for particular uses. Soil properties are described for each kind of soil. Used wisely, knowledge of soils and their properties, gained from a soil survey, can be very useful to you.

Your county soil survey is made by soil scientists. They walk over the land and examine the soil with an auger to a depth of about five feet. As he examines each auger full of soil, the soil scientist records the soil properties that affect its use and management. After determining the extent or area of a specific soil, the soil scientist marks its exact location on an aerial photograph. As the photo above shows a soil survey looks like a jigsaw puzzle. When all soils in a county are mapped, and properties described, the map and other information is assembled. The publication is called the soil survey. The soil survey of your county is financed by local, state and federal funds.
This Martinsville loam is easily farmed and well drained.

cation of an identified soil can be indicated accurately on rial photographs.

There are many soil differences and all are important to land users. Soil properties described in soils surveys include:

1. Texture and Organic Content:
Is your soil sandy, loamy or clayey? How well does the soil in your garden or on your farm “work-up” for preparation?

2. Soil Wetness and Rapidity of Drying Out:
Does the soil have a high seasonal water table? Is there a need for removing surface water or to use tile to remove excess water from the subsoil?

3. Subsoil Percolation:
How well does water move through your soil? Will a septic system function properly on your soil?

4. Slope:
How rapidly does surface water run off sloping land? Would the lost runoff water have been useful later? Is the slope so steep that erosion occurs and create a sedimentation problem?

5. Water Holding Capacity:
Will enough water be in the soil to support plant growth—for crops, trees, pasture, wildlife plants, lawns and gardens? Will water move through your soil too quickly? If it does this indicates a droughy soil with a low water-holding capacity.

6. Position of the Landscape
Does the land lie so low that the soils are subject to flooding from streams and rivers? Are there areas where water collects as runoff from adjacent land?

Information contained in a soil survey can answer these and other soil related questions.

All of these properties are related. Your use of specific soils depends upon how much you understand about a soil’s particular properties. Like a jigsaw puzzle, these properties are pieces of a whole, and they must be considered together for wise land use.

How Can A Soil Survey Help You…

Information about specific soils and their properties is available from soil surveys—either in published or non-published form to everyone.

A soil survey is an inventory of soil resources. It contains maps of your county land area. These maps, with descriptive and interpretative materials included in the soil survey, describe the soils within your county. Sources for soils surveys are listed on the back page.