

Soil Health Stewards:
Promoting Soil Health on Protected Agricultural Lands
> Action Plan Guidelines and Templates <

Overview and Requirements:

Congratulations for completing the *Soil Health Stewards* training! We hope that this training has provided you with new skills and ideas that will help you to promote soil health with the landowners and farmers you work with. Please use this Action Plan Template to think through ways that you and your organization can do more to promote soil health practices on both protected land, and land that you may be involved in protecting in the future.

This Action Plan is intended as a road map. We appreciate that there may be a need for, or value to tweaking or replacing the actions you outline here with others as you embark upon this work. We also recognize that committing to a formal plan with stated deadlines can be both an opportunity as well as a challenge.

As a group we will support participating entities as the year progresses. As part of the grant award, we ask that you submit a plan, using the template provided here by October 31, 2021. We will host two Zoom calls for all participants to check-in and discuss Action Plan progress. Those calls are scheduled for:

- Wednesday, February 23, 2022, from 2:00 – 3:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, June 22, 2022, from 2:00 – 3:30 p.m.

At the end of the grant term, we will ask you to review your Action Plan and report on what actions you took and how many landowners and farmers you assisted or engaged around soil health, as well as other relevant metrics. This report will be required in order to receive the remaining portion of grant funds. Reports are due August 31, 2022.

Guidelines for Action Plans:

When developing your Action Plan, consider all the touchpoints you have to connect with people in your organization and the farmers and landowners you work with—both those who own or work land on which you hold an easement, and those who may be interested in protecting their land in the future.

Examples of organizational touchpoints where engagement and outreach around soil health practices are possible:

- Staff training
- Board training
- Discussions/visits with landowners around potential easement donations or acquisitions
- Discussions/visits with landowners or farm managers around easement stewardship
- General communications with landowners and producers

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Examples of potential actions include (but are not limited to):

Staff and Board training

- Share soil health educational resources with other members of your staff or Board
- Send stewardship/monitoring staff to NRCS soil health conservation training
- Send stewardship/monitoring staff to soil health partner events, trainings, workshops, field days, etc.

Discussion/visits with landowners/farmers on easements donations, acquisitions, & stewardship

- Incorporate discussions around soil health with landowners prior to the sale or donation of an agricultural conservation easement
- Connect landowners/farmers with soil health community partners who can provide technical and financial assistance for soil health adoption
- Incorporate discussions around soil health, including how any newly adopted soil health practices are going, with landowners or farm managers as part of stewardship or monitoring visits on protected land

General communications with landowners and farmers

- Incorporate soil health messaging about basics, benefits, practices, management, adoption, etc. into internal and/or external communications (i.e., email and print newsletters and/or online presence)
- Distribute Soil Health Stewards Tool Kit to landowners and farm managers
- Use the Soil Health Case Studies as a handout when having a conversation around the benefits and costs of soil health
- Conduct soil health in-field assessments
- Identify soil health technical service providers from the public sector (e.g., NRCS, SWCD, or other State or Local) or the NGO or private sectors, and facilitate their engagement with your landowners/farmers
- Develop a formal network of soil health partners for your land trust or agency
- Provide landowners/farmers with information on NRCS and state conservation financial assistance programs
- Provide landowners with information about private ecosystem service market or corporate sustainability program opportunities
- Explore opportunities to incentivize soil health practices on protected land via pay-for-practice or pay-for-performance contracts or overlay easements
- Co-host soil health field days or workshops for landowners with conservation professionals
- Incorporate a tracking system to document when a landowner reaches out to get more info about a soil health practice or program, and when they report making changes on their land, to enable your entity to communicate local impact

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Soil Health Stewards Action Plan > Template <			
Entity Name: Submitted By: Date:			
Proposed Touchpoint	Proposed Action	Tasks For Completion	Proposed Timeline
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Soil Health Stewards Action Plan > Tracking Progress <				
Entity Name: Submitted By: Date:				
Action taken	Date	Action is ongoing – or – one time	Number of farmers, landowners, staff reached	Approximate number of acres impacted