

Think of someplace in the United States that you think is interesting in some way; this might be the neighborhood or town you were born or lived in, someplace you have or would like to visit, or just some random place that sounds like it might be interesting. The more exotic the better, actually; you are going to explore the soils there, so Clarke Co. GA may not be the best choice.

Find the area on Web Soil Survey. Try to adjust the scale/zoom to include an area of about a mile², although you can also zoom in on a smaller area to see more detail. The area should show 400-800 acres, with map scales of 1:6,000-10,000 (depending on your screen size). Print the soil map and legend when you're happy with it.

Look up the major series (the most common 4-6 of them) in the OSD database. Copy/paste the series descriptions. Now try to find some further information on the area that will help you write a nice report describing the origin, properties, and use of the soils present. Unfortunately the WSS page doesn't have information on geology and formation of soils. Use the NRCS page to see if a digital soil survey report is available for the county or one nearby, so you can get an overview of the geology and soils here. If not, you might just try googling. As for soil uses, choose one area of use (agriculture, urban use, forestry) and use the WSS interpretations to look at the general suitability of the soils for the given uses.

Your written report should include sections similar to the following:

1. Overview of soils and geology of [this area]
2. Soil profiles and properties of the soils.
3. Use of soils for [given use].

The written text need not be long, a few pages total could be sufficient. Include maps and pedon descriptions as attachments to the report. If we have covered any Soil Taxonomy by this date, you could also include some information on that as well.