There's Good and Bad In Wide Variety of Soils in Louisiana

We in Louisiana have many kinds of good soil, and some that are not so good, according to Donald Landry, Work Unit Conservationist of the Soil Conservation Service. "People who use the soil have a wide variety to choose from in their operations," he said.

Soil surveys provide the information about the soil. They show the kind of soil, the slope on which it lies, and the degree of erosion. They may also record such facts as color, size particles, drainage, acidity, flooding hazard, and many others. Often more information about a certain soil and water conservation. Research people use soil surveys in setting up crop and fertilizer studies. Agricultural Extension workers use the data in helping farm people do a better job of farming.

Land values set by appraisers are often based on soil surveys. The information is used for individual tracts as well as common standards for all holdings. Possible uses, based on the kind of soil, may make a difference in how much the land is worth to potential buyers.

Soil surveys are made by trained soil scientists. They are made cooperatively by the Soil Conservation Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station. Other state, local or federal agencies may also participate.

"In Louisiana we are soil mapping approximately 700,000 acres each year," Landry stated. "Four parishes, St. Mary, Terrebonne, Acadia and Bossier, have been completely mapped recently and the reports published. Some day all of Louisiana will be surveyed, and the answers to a lot of questions will be available."

In the meantime, unpublished information about the soils in Vermilion parish is available through the local Soil Conservation Service office.

SOIL SURVEY — A soil scientist is shown above recording data on an aerial photograph after making a soil examination. Such soil tests are recommended by Donald Landry, Work Unit Conservationist of the Iberia-Vermilion Soil Conservation District, who says that the good must be separated from the bad in the wide variety of soil found in Vermilion parish and Louisiana.

Necessary information for a number of possible uses is the objective of a soil survey," Landry added.

Soil surveys provide the basic information for every complete soil and water conservation plan made with the Iberia-Vermilion Soil Conservation District. Uses that can be made of the land and the treatments needed for it are pointed out to the landowner, and he makes his decisions as to how he is going to manage his land.

These decisions are written into his plan, and a copy of the soil and capability map is made a part of the plan. Farm planning for land use and conservation is the most common use of soils information gained from the survey.

But there are many other possible uses. The forestry industry uses soil surveys to determine tree growth rates, kinds of trees best suited to the land, best seasons for harvest, and many other facts. Engineers make good use of soils information. They can calculate how fast water will enter the soil and how fast it will pass through. They may make a difference in the location of roads, buildings, homes or industries.

City planners use soils information to find out about the support for buildings, airports, and roads.