

Soil Health Program Interim Report 2021

Accomplishments

- To date the Utah Soil Health Program has hired a Soil Program Manager and two Soil Health Planners under the Conservation Division of the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food (UDAF). Each of the Soil Planners are stationed in the Ogden and Richfield Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) regional offices to assist with soil health efforts statewide.
- Appointments for the Soil Health Advisory Committee have been made by the Commissioner of UDAF, The following individuals have been appointed to serve on the Committee.

Zone 1

Braden McMurdie – Northern Utah CD

Calee Garn – Northern Utah CD

Zone 2

John Degirogio – Weber CD

Alisa Meyer – Shambip CD

Zone 3

McKinley Smoot – Kamas Valley CD

Zone 4

Trevor Barnson – Piute CD

Zone 5

Arlan Mayer – Twin M CD

Brent Hunter – E&I CD

Zone 6

Steve Forbes – Daggett CD

Technical experts from the NRCS, Utah State University (USU) Extension, Utah Association of Conservation Districts (UACD), Utah Division of Water Quality (DWQ), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Farm Bureau, and UDAF have been invited to assist in this committee. The committee is preparing to meet for its first time this month.

- The Soil Health in the West Conference and Beginners Soil Health Workshop is planned for Feb 15-17th 2022 in St. George, UT. This is a “first of its kind” regional conference and workshop for the Western US. It is expected that over 300 farmers and ranchers will attend.
- The Soil Health Partnership has acquired \$3.5 million in grant funds to support soil health efforts across the state, including a Conservation Innovation Grant from the NRCS totalling more than \$2 million for the next five years. This will be used to set up 16 on-farm demonstration sites or conduct research on soil health practices throughout the state.(See Table 1)
- The Soil Health Program has begun Collaborating with the Agriculture Voluntary Incentive Program (AgVIP) and the NRCS to help producers utilize soil health practices

to improve nutrient management planning, potentially reducing the need for expensive infrastructure projects .

Current Projects and Grants

The following projects and grant funds have been acquired either directly by the Soil Health Program or in partnership with other entities. All projects are designed to meet the objectives of the Soil Health Program.

Table 1: Summary of Current Soil Health Projects and Grant Funding

Project	Description	Total Project	Grant Money
District Interseeders	Building of two 6 row Inteerseders for use in Box Elder and Sevier Counties	\$90,000.00	\$70,000.00
NPS - Mitigating Phosphorus Grant	Using cover crops to reduce phosphorus loads on fields that have had over application of manure	\$54,200.00	\$27,500.00
Soil Health Planner NUCD	Hiring a full-time soil health planner to work in the Tremonton NRCS for the Northern Utah CD to promote soil health programs and conduct evaluations of current and past NRCS Soil Health Projects	\$76,000.00	\$75,000.00
NCCD - Soil Health Workshop	Annual soil health workshops held across the state - Soil Health in the West 2022	\$54,262.00	\$40,000.00
Box Elder Soil Health SFPs	Strategic funding pools for soil health projects in box elder county under NRCS EQIP program	\$866,500.00	\$734,000.00
NPS - Clarkston / Newton Soil Health Project	Watershed focused soil health project to increase the adoption of soil health practices in the area. Includes monitoring to understand the effects on soil moisture	\$43,602.39	\$34,602.30
Enhanced Soil Carbon farming - USU Soil Testing Grant	USU grant to measure soil health indicators on farms implementing soil health practices and relate soil test results to soil health management. Partnership with UDAF to assist in program outreach.	\$750,000.00	\$375,000.00
CIG- Soil Health On-Farm Trails	Setting up 16 On-farm demonstration sites to help promote soil health, conduct research and serve as outreach and education	\$2,788,143.00	\$1,710,288.00
Total		\$4,712,707.39	\$3,066,390.30

Program Expenses and Budget

In FY22 \$276,800 was allocated to the Soil Health Program at UDAF. To date \$15,886 has been spent. With the hiring of a Soil Health Program Manager, and two Soil Health Planners it is anticipated that these funds will be drawn down at a much faster rate (Table 2).

Table 2: FY22 Soil Health Budget and Expenditures

Budget Item	FY-22 Budget	Current Expenditures	Remaining
Personnel	\$230,000	\$15,833	\$214,167
Travel	\$20,000	\$0	\$20,000
DP Expenses	\$12,700	\$0	\$12,700
Other Expenses	\$14,100	\$53	\$14,047
Total	\$276,800	\$15,886	\$260,914