



Natural Resources Conservation Service
6013 Lakeside Boulevard
Indianapolis, IN 46278

December 21, 2007

INDIANA BULLETIN NO. IN430-8-1

SUBJECT: SOI – Release of Major Land Resource Areas Explorer Tool

Purpose: To announce the release of Major Land Resource Areas Explorer Tool

Expiration Date: September 30, 2008

Background: In 2006, the updated and revised publication, Land Resource Regions and Major Land Resource Areas [MLRAs] of the United States, the Caribbean, and the Pacific Basin, Third Edition, (USDA Agriculture Handbook 296), and associated maps were released for use. These products are used for many purposes including decisionmaking for regional and national agricultural issues, allocation of research funding, organizing and operating natural resources conservation programs, and as a base map for restructuring the USDA/NRCS Soil Survey Program office.

Explanation: The large size of this publication makes it somewhat awkward to navigate. To enhance its use, an electronic tool, MLRA Explorer, has been developed through a partnership between USDA-NRCS and Penn State University. The MLRA Explorer is a World Wide Web application that presents Agriculture Handbook 296 (AH-296) in an online electronic format using Adobe Flex and Internet map service technologies. This tool allows users to search the electronic files by Land Resource Region, MLRA, State, County, Federal agency land ownership, Environmental Protection Agency's Ecoregions, eight-digit Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC), and/or Public Land Survey System (PLSS).

The MLRA Explorer Tool allows users to execute a search of AH-296 for a specific land parcel based on specific report criteria, which may include land ownership, selected sections of the handbook, HUCs, or PLSS locations. Information and maps can be displayed, saved to a report, and printed (maps and selected sections) in a custom report.

The MLRA Explorer Tool is available at <http://www.cei.psu.edu/mlra/> and highlighted and linked on the Web page located at <http://soils.usda.gov/>.

For further information, contact Travis Neely, State Soil Scientist/MO Leader at (317) 290-3200, ext. 380.

/s/

JANE E. HARDISTY
State Conservationist

DIST: 0