



Soil and Plant Science Division Technical Soil Services Northwest Soil Survey Region

Beginner Hydric Soils Workshop for the Society of Wetland Scientists (SWS)—Rocky Mountain Chapter

Fort Morgan, Colorado, Major Land Resource Area (MLRA) Soil Survey Office (SSO)

Purpose

In 2025, the SWS—Rocky Mountain Chapter president reached out to the Fort Morgan MLRA SSO requesting assistance to provide basic hydric soils education to members of the chapter. On September 30, 2025, Soil Scientists Dylan Casey and Matt Wellick from the Fort Collins MLRA SSO and Soil Survey Leader Andy Steinert from the Fort Morgan MLRA SSO met with 20 members of the chapter to discuss the basics of hydric soils in a field setting (fig. 1).



Figure 1.—Members of the SWS—Rocky Mountain Chapter discussing landform position and microfeatures at a local State wildlife area.

Background

The workshop was intended for early wetland professionals seeking practical knowledge and experience with hydric soils. This workshop was an opportunity to gain hands-on experience in the field. Prior to the workshop, Steinert selected multiple sites across a local State wildlife area to visit with the group. At each of these sites, the workshop participants dug a small hole by hand and determined properties such as soil texture and color. The participants discussed the hydric soil indicators that were (or were not) present at each site (fig. 2).



Figure 2.—(Left) Workshop participants determining if hydric soil indicators are present in a soil profile. (Right) Soil Survey Leader Andy Steinert (lower left) and Soil Scientist Matt Wellick (lower right) talking to the participants about the use of hydrogen peroxide for verifying the presence of manganese concentrations.

Key Outcomes

The participants gained valuable hands-on, in-field experience soil texturing, looking at hydric soils, and using “Field Indicators of Hydric Soils in the United States” to determine what hydric soil indicators were present (or not present) at each site (fig. 3). The workshop also allowed SWS members, who are professionals from various agencies and organizations, to interact with each other and learn about each other’s field experiences with hydric soils. The Fort Morgan MLRA SSO staff gained valuable knowledge about the challenges that other professionals encounter with their jobs when dealing with hydric soils and how they use soils data in their work.

Based on the positive response from the participants and chapter president, the opportunity for collaborating on future hydric soils workshops is very promising. This was the second workshop of this type in the last three years.



Figure 3.—Soil Scientist Dylan Casey discussing the formation of redox concentrations in the soil.