Part 651 – Advance Soil Survey Information

651.0 Definition and Purpose

A. Advance soil survey information is information that has been gathered but is not yet published to the Web Soil Survey. The purpose of providing advance soil survey information is to furnish users with soil maps, interpretations, and other data prior to final correlation of the data.

B. Soil data posted to the Web Soil Survey is official soil information, certified for use by the state soil scientist in participation with the State Technical Guide Committee for USDA programs.

C. Interim reports are considered obsolete with the advent of the Web Soil Survey. Interim reports were defined as reports that were prepared and produced after the final correlation memorandum was signed and before the soil survey is published.

D. Progressively correlated soil information is now publicly accessed through the Web Soil Survey prior to the completion of the soil survey.

651.1 Policy and Responsibilities

A. Advance soil survey information for private lands is available for review by the public in NRCS offices and in the appropriate agency for public lands.

B. The party requesting the data normally bears the cost of preparation or reproduction, or both. The state conservationist or the appropriate head of the lead agency is responsible for determining how to finance and where to reproduce advance soil survey information.

651.2 General

A. Advance soil survey information is part of the technical assistance provided to conservation district cooperators. Conservation district cooperators are entitled to this technical assistance because of their Cooperative Working Agreement (CWA). Title 180, General Manual, Part 401, Subpart C, Section 401.22, and Subpart F, Section 401.40, provide more information. Soil survey information is encouraged to be correlated progressively and placed on the Web Soil Survey as it is updated or developed. Placing soil survey information onto the Web Soil Survey removes the information from the status of advance soil survey information.

B. Interested individuals can study and review copies of the field sheets, composite overlays, or digitized copies of field sheets and attribute data from which interpretations or conservation plans are prepared. They may purchase copies of these materials and copies of soil survey spatial and attribute databases according to procedures established in the State.

651.3 Restrictions

A. A soil map with interpretations that were prepared specifically for use in developing a conservation plan for a district cooperator may not be made available except under certain


B. Advance soil survey information requires special labeling. Section 651.5 discusses the requirements for labeling field sheets. These requirements also apply to composite overlays and digitized products that are provided outside the Web Soil Survey.

C. Information is not provided that is deemed sensitive to national security as identified by the Department of Defense, Homeland Security, or other Federal authority in any directive included in the MOU or other working agreement. See part 606, section 606.1, of this handbook for more information on working agreements.

651.4 Providing Quality Assurance, Quality Control, and Review

To ensure a quality product, map unit names, field sheets, composite overlays, digitized products, and interpretation tables and text are reviewed to ensure the information is legible and easily read and consistent with adjoining areas. An identification legend, a feature and special symbols legend, and supporting explanatory material must accompany all advance soil survey field sheets and digitized soil maps.

651.5 Labeling of Advance Soil Survey Information

A. Advance soil survey information is labeled with the names of the cooperating agencies; the Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture; the month and year it was prepared, and any necessary precautionary notes. These notes need not follow any specific format or be in finished form, but they must be legible. Part 607, subpart A, section 607.2B, of this handbook provides more information on labeling paper copies of aerial photo field sheets. All field sheets in advance soil survey information are labeled “ADVANCE COPY SUBJECT TO CHANGE.”

B. The text of all advance soil information and the electronic products contain a statement that warns that the information is not official NRCS information. For example, “Information in this report is unofficial data subject to change upon completion, correlation, and publication to the Web Soil Survey; therefore, the user is cautioned that some map units may be discontinued, others combined, or the name of some changed and, as a result, soil suitability ratings and interpretations are likely to change. Advance soil survey information is not valid to determine USDA Farm Bill program eligibility or requirements needed for Farm Bill compliance. These determinations require onsite visits and investigations.

C. Metadata associated with digital advance soil survey information should state the dataset is an advance copy subject to change.