The Methods of Soil Analysis books, published by SSSA, have been a staple in labs and soil science departments for years. For soil scientists around the world, they represent the best collection of soil methods available. Now, as SSSA expands its digital publishing initiatives, and as we prepare to celebrate the 2015 International Year of Soils, we are revamping the series to serve our readers better.

There is a strong desire to update and expand the Methods of Soil Analysis to (i) address new, related content areas; (ii) update existing methods on an ad hoc basis; and (iii) improve digital delivery and discoverability.

What’s Changing and What’s New?

Not everything is changing! We will continue to publish the Methods of Soil Analysis series titles on specific topics, and we hope to further expand our audiences to new and related disciplines. Methods books are becoming more targeted (subdisciplines) rather than an exhaustive examination across a broad range of methods. New Methods books can cover a wide range of topics, from techniques for frozen soils to soil science for archeology.

What’s new is that SSSA will publish individual Methods of Soil Analysis articles online! The digital methods articles will allow for the updating of procedures without having to update an entire book. The new digital Methods articles would present more like a review than articles in journals that present a single new method. Methods articles may describe perhaps three or four procedures, defining which is more appropriate for specific soil analyses in various situations. Each procedure will be described step by step.

The template for each article is as follows:

- Rationale for general procedure
- Review of existing procedures—including strengths, limitations, and interferences
- Individual steps in the preferred analysis—including justification as needed and analysis of results for each specific procedure
- Data quality and processing—precision, statistics, sensitivity, quality control
- Recommendations—including when to use which method
- Sample applications and case studies, including calculations
- Supplemental material

Sally Logsdon, National Laboratory for Agriculture and the Environment, Ames, IA, has agreed to serve as series editor for the Methods of Soil Analysis series, and a preliminary group of interested members have been assembled to explore ideas and move this project forward. They are envisioning an editorial board, a subcommittee of the Book and Multimedia Publishing Committee, to identify needed methods content and previously published methods that need updating. The resulting projects could be whole new books or single articles that represent updated versions of older published methods or new needed methods.

You can get involved by joining the editorial board or proposing a new Methods book.

Two Ways to Get Involved

1. Join this editorial board. We plan to establish an editorial board that includes representation from all SSSA divisions of interest. The terms of service for a board member would be three years, and terms could be renewed. Contact Lisa Al-Amoodi, Managing Editor of Books, Monographs, and Special Publications, to volunteer (lalamood@sciencesocieties.org).

2. Propose a Methods of Soil Analysis book idea. Contact Books Acquisitions Editor Nicole Sandler for information on preparing a book proposal (nsandler@sciencesocieties.org).

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