

READING GUIDE*

Interpretations I: Interpretive Systematics

Soil Survey Division Staff (1993), Chapter 6, p. 281-290 (p.1-8)

OBJECTIVE: *To understand the structure and function of interpretive rating systems used in soil survey.*

1. What are the steps that are followed for the development of soil survey interpretations?
2. **Why is it important to provide the user with the specific soil property or properties that cause a soil to be limiting for a given land use? Why is it important to know if there are multiple soil properties present that limit land use?**
3. Are interpretations developed for one land use readily adaptable without modification to other land use ratings? **Why or why not?**
4. How does the inherent variability of map unit composition effect the application of soil interpretations? Why are these concerns greater when the land use decision making includes relatively small areas and/or relatively expensive management decisions?
5. Why are soil interpretations considered to provide information on the likelihood that an area is suitable for a particular land use? What action is recommended to further screen an area or areas for a planned land use?
6. **Why are considerations that determine the economic value of land (e.g., distance to roads or markets) not a factor used to develop soil interpretation ratings?**
7. List examples of reasons why published interpretations may no longer be appropriate for a given land use or for a given map unit delineation.
8. **Why are interpretations made separately for all named components of a map unit?**
9. **How do specific use inferences differ from integrative inferences in terms of their development and their application?**
10. What are *management groups*? What are specific examples of common management groups?
11. In general, how do limitation ratings differ from suitability ratings?
12. What categories are used for the limitation rating system? What is the meaning of each of these categories?
13. **Why is a level of risk associated with the various limitation rating categories?**
14. What categories are used for the suitability rating system? What is the meaning of each of these categories?
15. Why might a limitation rating of "very severe" be used? What is an example of a situation when "very severe" is an appropriate category to use?

SYNTHESIS:

16. How does map unit type (consociation vs. complex vs. association vs. undifferentiated group) influence the application of soil interpretations?

* Questions in plain type represent basic facts and concepts. Questions in **bold** type are those that are answered in the text but require more careful consideration. The Synthesis questions at the end help you apply the facts and concepts to a relevant issue.