

# CONSULTING SOIL SCIENTISTS of the CAROLINAS, Inc.

(Chapter to the National Society of Consulting Soil Scientists NSCSS)

P.O. Box 2522, Wilmington, NC 28402 – 2522

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Mr. Toby Rodgers and Ms. Lisa Palazzi  
Washington Society of Professional Soil Scientists (WSPSS)  
P.O. Box 881  
Newman Lake, WA 99025 - 0881

Dear Mr. Rodgers and Ms. Palazzi,

In response for information regarding professional certification or licensing, especially as it pertains to the professional practice of soil science or land quality mapping:

Professional licensing is a big step for any occupation or profession. It not only establishes the need for a legally defined and recognized specialty of practice, but more importantly the public need for a standard of care, responsibility, liability, and ethical standards. National organization (SSSA; NSCSS) and many States within our region have established professional soils licensing or certification, so we are familiar with their criteria and needs for it.

Prior to 1970, soil science and land quality evaluations were for the most part agriculturally based. There was little need for soils certification / licensing, as poor estimates or evaluations did not affect the public as a whole. Since 1970, many environmental land-use policies and regulations evolved with soil and land as critical base factors: ---404 wetlands; ---401 wetlands; ---on-site waste treatment; ---soil & erosion control; ---stormwater control; ---coastal management act; ---conservation overlays; ---planning & zoning; and etc). Land value, its' potential or limitation, and sometimes legal ownership may hinge on whether the soil or land is hydric, wet, dry, impermeable, rocky, steep sloped, salic, "Waters of the U.S. or State", or usable / unusable for a specific use.

Soils based environmental & land-use standards coupled with the establishment of professional soil practices have changed the paradigm. Individuals professing to possess the educational requirements, minimum experience, and to adhere to recognized policies should be held to a higher standard. The general public should expect to have a pool of professionals that are responsible for their works both ethically and liability.

This is where the individual State's have to decide whether to register, certify, or license a particular profession. Is there a significant need for protection of human or environmental health, welfare, and value? What profession is most qualified to perform the works? Are there conflicts between other licensed professions? This is where elected representatives have to be made aware of the facts and determine whether: ---if there is a significant need for licensing?; ---a distinct & separate profession?; and ---how it would be established & funded? If approved, most States will require minimum licensing requirements, establish a licensing board of peers, it be self funded through annual licensures, and self policing through ethics & enforcement.

Additional information can be found at:

North Carolina soils licensing act & requirements:  
<http://www.ncblss.org/>

South Carolina Soil Classifiers Registration Program:  
<http://www.scstatehouse.net/coderegs/c116.htm>  
<http://www.scstatehouse.net/code/t40c065.htm>

Virginia Board for Professional Soils Scientists and Wetland Professionals:  
<http://www.dpor.virginia.gov/dporweb/Soil%20Scientists%20CIB.pdf>

Georgia Board of Registration for Soil Scientists:  
[http://www.sssga.com-georgia\\_senate\\_bill\\_95.htm](http://www.sssga.com-georgia_senate_bill_95.htm)

SSSA American Registry of Certified Professionals in Agronomy, Crops, & Soils:  
<http://www.soils.org/>

The National Society of Consulting Soil Scientists registry:  
<http://www.nscss.org/REGISTRY%20APPLICATION.pdf>

I've also attached a recent article regarding licensing from Soil Science Society of America. If you need additional information regarding this issue please contact me, or contact the National Society of Consulting Soil Scientist or the Soil Science Society of America. I hope you find this information helpful.

Larry F. Baldwin, CPSS/Sc  
NSCSS President-elect 2007  
CSSC Board of Director 2008  
NCLSS #1040; ARCPACS #2183

