

# FFA Leadership Development Program

2014 Soil Stewardship Public Speaking Contest Theme:



To prepare for the public speaking contest, students are to consult with their Ag Science teacher and use the Guidelines Packet accessible on the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board's website. The student is also to work with their soil and water conservation district (SWCD) as a local resource. A statement signed by an SWCD representative must be attached to the submitted speech.

If the student needs help finding information on how to locate and contact their soil and water conservation district, the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board will be happy to provide students with the name and address of the SWCD that serves the local school district.

This program is a partnership between the Texas FFA, the Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association of Texas, the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board, and the Association of Texas Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

For more information contact:

**Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board**  
P.O. Box 658  
Temple, TX 76503  
(254) 773-2250 or 800-792-3485  
<http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov>



# Scholarships Available



Three scholarships will be presented by the Association of Texas Soil and Water Conservation Districts at the annual Texas FFA convention. One \$3,000.00 scholarship will be awarded to the first place contestant, one \$2,000.00 scholarship will be awarded to the second place contestant and one \$1,000.00 scholarship will be awarded to the third place contestant at the convention.

Scholarship money must be used to defray costs of a recipient's education at a technical institution, college, or university of the recipient's choice. All scholarships will be awarded directly to a public speaking contest winner's chosen technical school, college, or university in the student's name upon proof of registration as a full-time student at the institution of higher learning.

**Expense Paid Trips:** The state first place scholarship winner and his or her advisor will receive an expense paid trip under State of Texas travel guidelines to the annual meeting of Texas Soil and Water Conservation District Directors. The first place Soil Stewardship Public Speaking Contest Winner is required to present his or her state winning speech at the annual meeting of SWCD Directors.

## To Access the Guidelines Packet

1. Click on the Texas State Soil & Water Conservation Board's website: [www.tsswcb.texas.gov](http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov)
2. On the left side of the home page, under Program Quick Links click on "SWCD Information & Education."
3. Click on "[Soil & Water Stewardship Public Speaking Contest](#)" and scroll down for the 2014 Program Guidelines Packet

## To Get the Student Started

Using the prompt statements or questions noted in the speech outline on page six, the student is to center his/her speech on the theme "*Dig Deeper: Mysteries in the Soil*" The focus of the speech is to demonstrate knowledge gained as a result of research and personal consultation with the local soil and water conservation district. It is further recommended that the student consult the listed resources that follow to gain a well rounded view of the theme topic. **Other resources may also be consulted in addition to the listed references.**

### Recommended Resources for Speech Development

[http://sydney.edu.au/sydney\\_ideas/lectures/2012/why\\_arent\\_we\\_talking\\_about\\_soil.shtml](http://sydney.edu.au/sydney_ideas/lectures/2012/why_arent_we_talking_about_soil.shtml)

Why Aren't We Talking About Soil? Makes mention of a few interesting facts. Example: A handful of soil contains a billion organisms and more DNA than in a human body. The Earth's soil contains more carbon than the atmosphere and more water than all the lakes and rivers. As Da Vinci pointed out 500 years ago, we know more about the cosmos than the soil beneath our feet. While climate change, ocean acidification and biodiversity loss dominate news headlines, the topic of soil security rarely rates a mention.

The integral role played by soil in the health of ecosystems and human populations should be reason enough for all of us to understand this issue and its complexity.

[http://faculty.msmary.edu/envirothon/current/guide/factors\\_of\\_soil\\_formation.htm](http://faculty.msmary.edu/envirothon/current/guide/factors_of_soil_formation.htm)

Talks about factors of soil formation such as soils are natural expressions of the environment in which they were formed. They are derived from an infinite variety of materials that have been subjected to a wide spectrum of climatic conditions. Soil development is influenced by the topography on which soils occur, the plant and animal life which they support and the amount of time which they have been exposed to these conditions. Website also points out the five major factors that influence soil formation.

[http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/High\\_School\\_Earth\\_Science/Soils](http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/High_School_Earth_Science/Soils)

Website discusses why soil is an important resource, how soil forms from existing rocks, describes the different textures and components of soil, describes a soil profile and defines the three climate related soils.

<http://www.fao.org/docrep/t0389e/t0389e02.htm>

Website addresses how soil is destroyed or degraded: Topics include: Soil is a complex mixture, soil teems with life, only a fraction of land is arable, erosion destroyed civilizations, the worst threat is erosion, bad farming encourages soil loss, rainfall energy varies, why some soils erode easily, organic soils soak up water, "Invisible" erosion takes toll, gullies climb uphill, how erosion reduces yields, eroding soil affects water resources, windblown soil endangers land, poor management degrades soil, and soils degrade through water logging and loss of nutrients

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/soils/edu/>

Website provides information about soil facts, 10 key messages to understanding soils, fundamental concepts of soil, facts about state soils such as designated state soil for Texas.

<http://www.nature.com/scitable/knowledge/library/soil-the-foundation-of-agriculture-84224268>

Discussion on Soil: The Foundation of Agriculture-- Throughout human history, our relationship with the soil has affected our ability to cultivate crops and influenced the success of civilizations. This relationship between humans, the earth, and food sources affirms soil as the foundation of agriculture.

<http://www.texasalmanac.com/topics/environment/soils-texas>

Discusses soil types of Texas: One of Texas' most important natural resources is its soil. Texas soils are complex because of the wide diversity of climate, vegetation, geology, and landscape. More than 1,300 different kinds of soil are recognized in Texas. Each has a specific set of properties that affect its use. Texas can be divided into 21 Major Land Resource Areas that have similar or related soils, vegetation, topography, climate, and land uses. Following are brief descriptions of these areas:

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/tx/soils/>

Website provides information about: General Soil Map of Texas, How Soil surveys Can Help Ranchers, Prime Farmland - Texas Criteria, Texas Online Soil Surveys Manuscripts, Texas Soil Orders, and Texas Historical Soil Survey Maps and Manuscripts

<http://pssat.org/TexasSoils.htm>

Information On Texas Soils: website talks about several sources of information on the soils in Texas.

**Specific Instructions:** The speech must be between *six and eight minutes in length*.  
For specific rules and requirements relating to the contest, consult the Degree Check Guidelines.

## Objective of Speech

The objectives of the speech are as follows:

1. The speaker is expected to demonstrate knowledge on how and why soils are the foundation of agriculture and civilization.
2. The speaker should be able to define why it is important to conserve soils and the role soil and water conservation districts play in providing services and programs to conserve soil resources.
3. The speaker should be able to address how soils can be destroyed or degraded to include the significant consequences of soil degradation and erosion.
4. The speaker should be able to explain how soils are derived from an infinite variety of materials subjected to a wide spectrum of climatic conditions.
5. The speaker is expected to demonstrate general knowledge about the soil types of Texas and the various uses of soil surveys.



# Speech Outline

## Introduction

- Introduce the theme “Dig Deeper: Mysteries in the Soil?”
- Set the tone of the speech with some thought provoking quote about the importance of soil resources.

## Body of Speech

- State some facts about why soil management and protection is a critical issue facing Texas citizens today.
- From interviews and discussion with local soil and water conservation district personnel (USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service personnel, a soil and water conservation district employee, or a conservation district director) discuss ways in which the local agricultural and urban communities are addressing soil conservation issues.
- Discuss how local communities, the state and nation benefit from programs and practices utilized on agricultural lands.

## Conclusion

- What does the theme, “Dig Deeper: Mysteries in the Soil” mean to you?

*\* It is not required that the above prompt questions be addressed in the speech as chronologically listed. The student has the flexibility to rearrange the prompt questions in a manner that permits a smooth flow of delivery. The student also has the flexibility to introduce other concepts into his or her speech that he or she feels relevant to the presentation.*

# Soil and Water Conservation District Consultation Affidavit

I certify that \_\_\_\_\_ consulted with  
the \_\_\_\_\_ Soil and Water Conservation  
District in preparation for the 2014 Soil and Water Stewardship Public Speaking  
Contest (“Dig Deeper: Mysteries in the Soil”).

\_\_\_\_\_

(Student Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_

(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_

(SWCD Representative Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_

(Date)

*(This form should be submitted along with the speech.)*

