

# Determining your soil type – using USDA-NRCS’s Web Soil Survey.

September 2009 – CSU Extension

## Introduction

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resource Conservation Service has built an online database for soil types across the country. Considering the variety of soil types even within a county, this tool has good resolution and reasonable accuracy. For the purposes of an irrigation audit it is more than adequate and relatively easy to use.

## Process

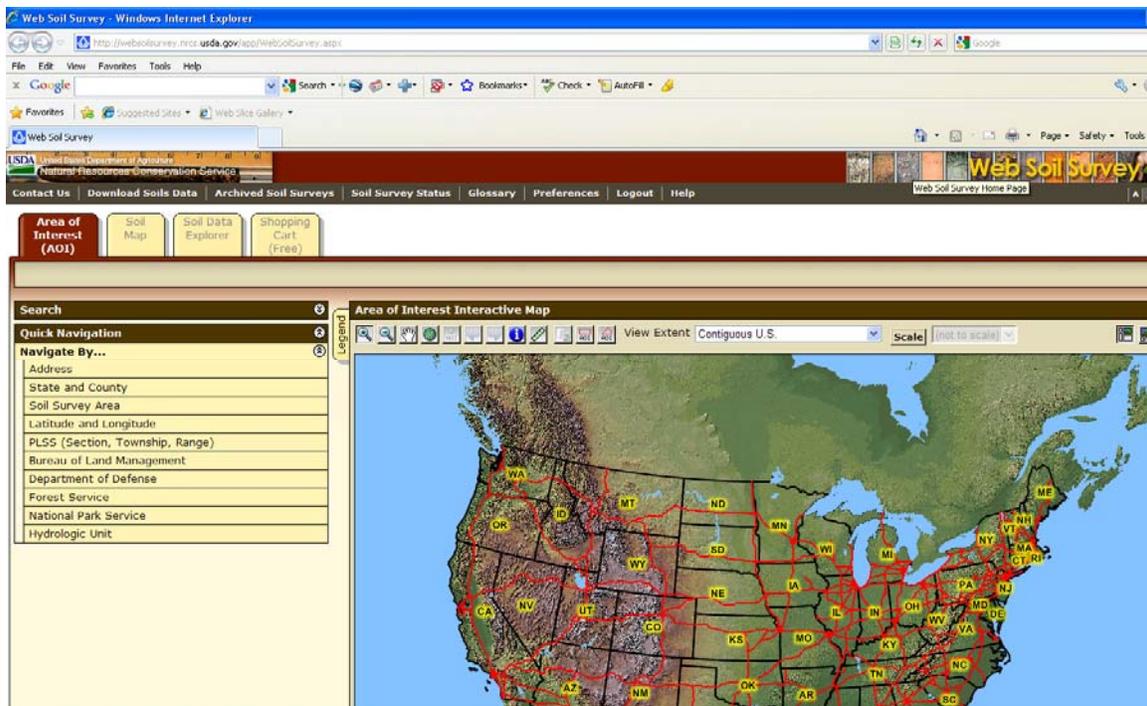
A. Go to the NRCS’s Web Soil Survey (WSS) home page:

<http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/HomePage.htm>

B. Press the large green start button:

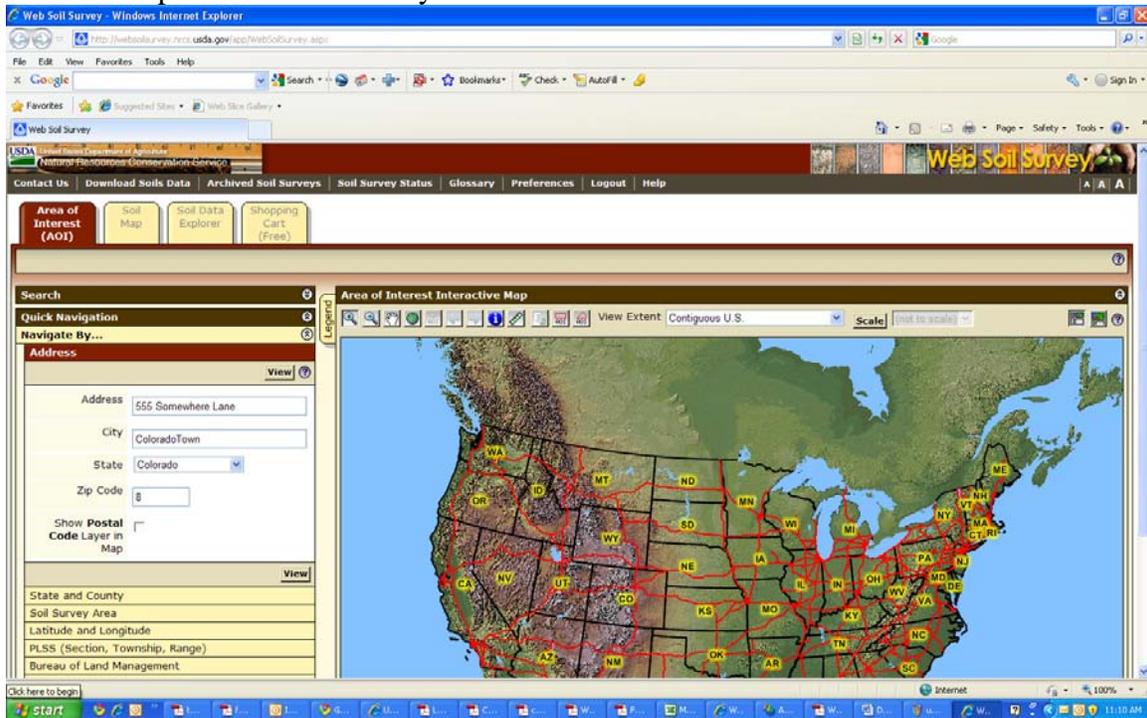


This will open a new window with the WSS database open and running. It features a large map of the US with states in the main frame. Maximize so it looks like this:



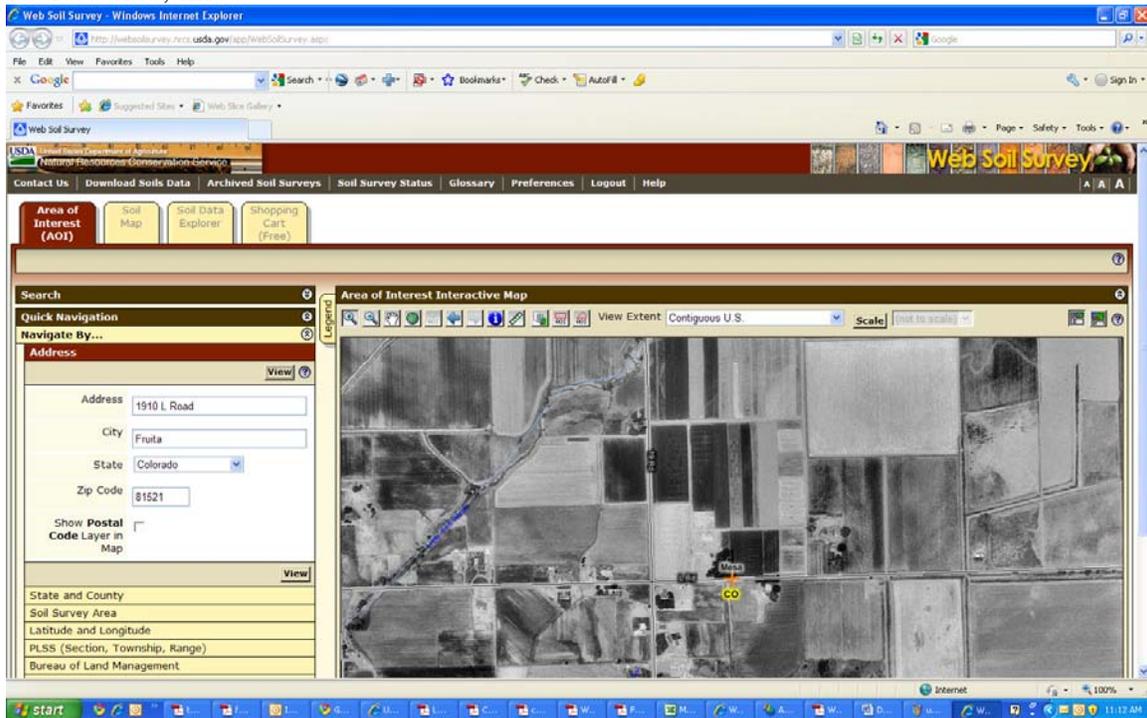
C. Now press the “Address” bar located directly under “Navigate By...” in the left column.

This will expand an address entry tab like so:

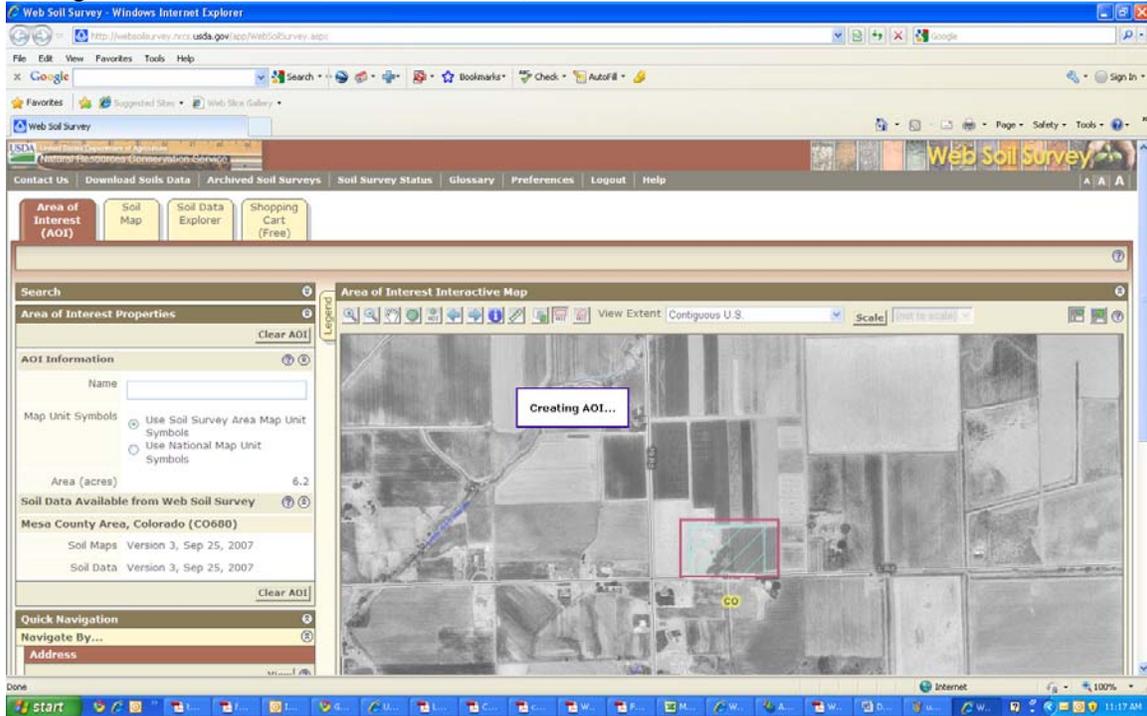


D. Enter address, city, state and zipcode of the lawn you are auditing.

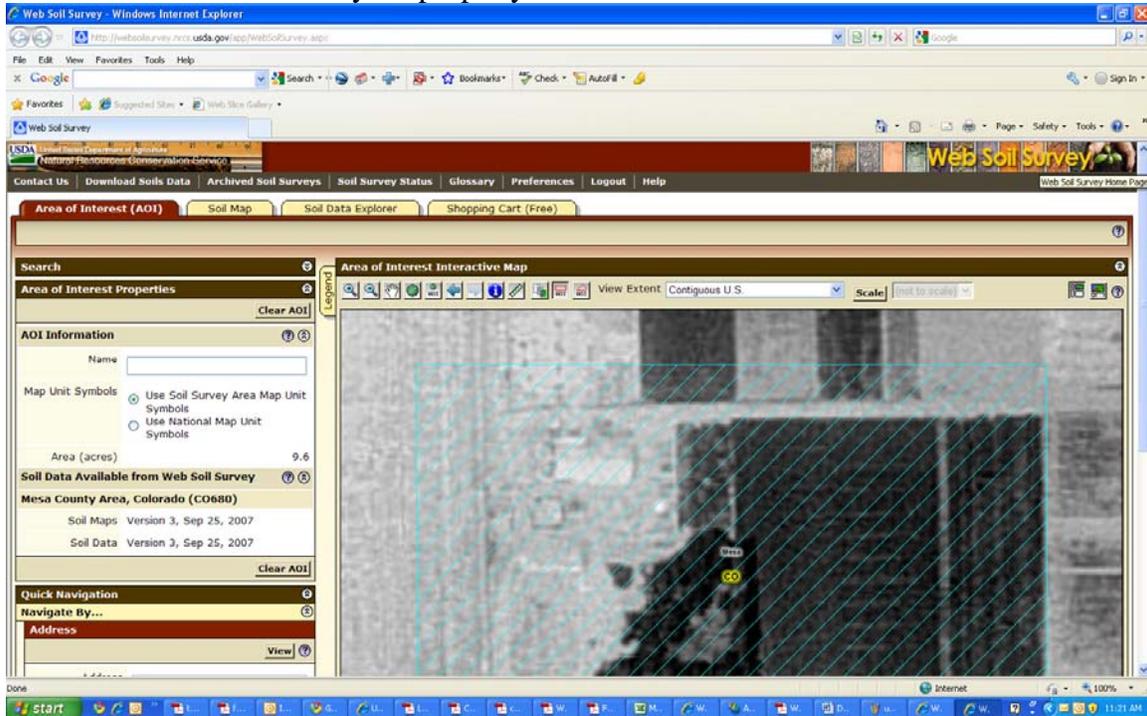
The country map will change to a close-up “Google Earth” style aerial view of your address area, like so:



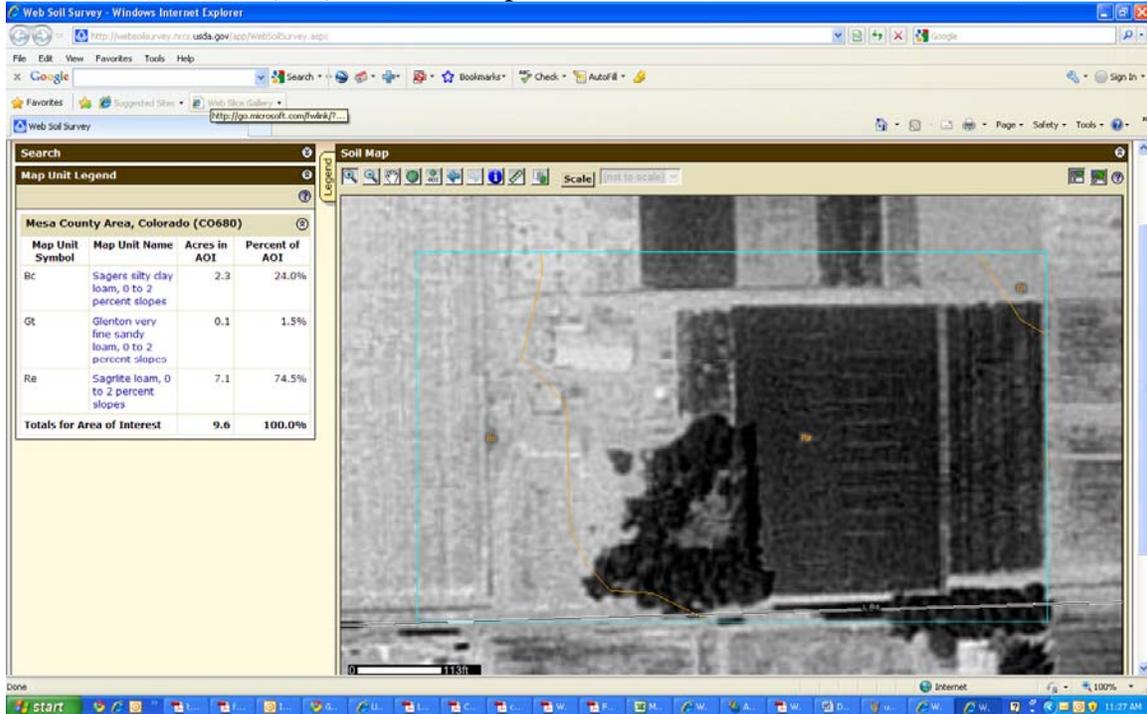
E. At the top of the main map frame are a series of (12) square buttons. Use the 2<sup>nd</sup> from the right: “AOI” button (Area of Interest) button to select the audit area:



Once the AOI is created at your property level:



F. You can view the soil map by selecting the “Soil Map” tab immediately to the right of the “Area of Interest (AOI)” tab at the top of the screen (under the header banner):



In this case the audit was on a piece of lawn within the “Re” section which is identified in the legend as a “Sagrite Loam” or more simply just a Loam soil.

**Note:** when categorizing soil types at the general level, ignore more specific nomenclature such as names or adjectives like “very fine” – the general classifications are what’s important: loams, clays, sandy loams, silty clay loams, etc.

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