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# Environmental Update



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## Some great information about soil ...

Dr. David Lindbo, a NCSU professor and soil scientist, likes to tell his classes that we couldn't survive without soil. It is one of the four basic necessities, which are:

**air** - we need it to breathe

**water** - it makes up the majority of our body and our food

**sun** - it is our planet's driving source of energy

**soil** - it provides our food, fiber, and building materials

For all of the importance of soil, we don't pay much attention to it as adults. At least, not until we are trying to build or grow something. Then, the soil often becomes a restricting factor that requires modification or changes to plans.

In school, students have a couple of opportunities to learn about soil. Their teachers have workshops that they can attend to obtain information and teaching materials. Outside instructors, such as myself, go to schools to give presentations.

With all of this, there is a wealth of readily available information for people who want to learn more about soil. Here are a few that may be of interest to you:

*Soil! Get the Inside Scoop.* Lindbo *et al.* 2008. Soil Science Society of America. Written for children age 9 - 12.

<http://soilassociation.org/downloads/June2008/SoilScooporderform.pdf>

*Soil Solutions.* NCSU 4-H 3<sup>rd</sup> grade curriculum.

<http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/4hplantandsoils/soilsolutions.html>

*Soil Systems in North Carolina.* Technical bulletin 314. 1999. NCSU Soil Science Department. (For copies, contact [david\\_lindbo@ncsu.edu](mailto:david_lindbo@ncsu.edu) or [diana\\_rashash@ncsu.edu](mailto:diana_rashash@ncsu.edu)) A great teacher resource.

*From the Surface Down: An introduction to Soil Surveys for agronomic use.* US Department of Agriculture. Second Edition, 2010.

<ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/NSSC/Educational.../surdown.pdf>

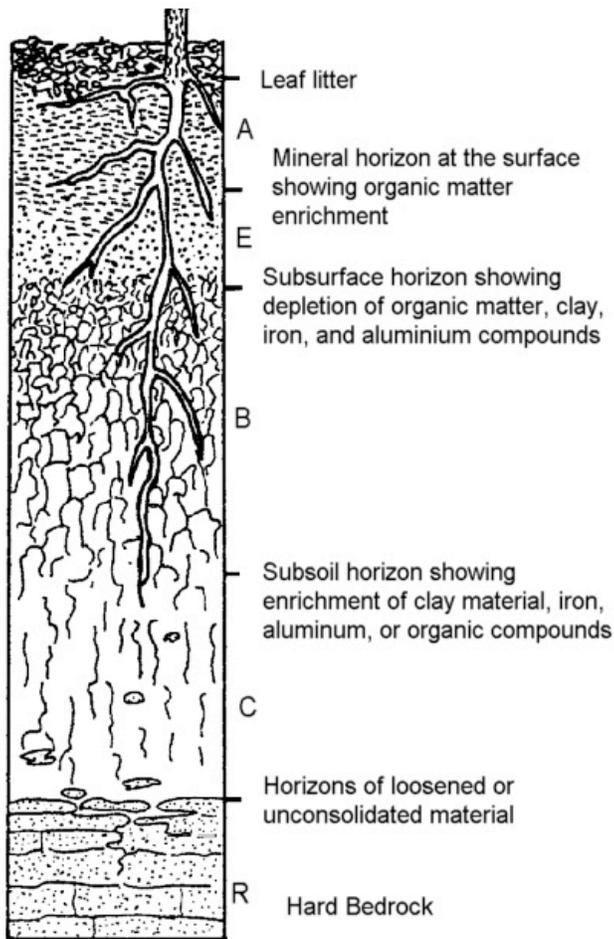
A great resource for teachers and students.

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## Soil profiles ...

It was mentioned in the previous newsletter that named soils are identified based on their characteristic descriptions. The descriptions discuss the layers or *horizons* of the soil, where they occur, and their thickness. An example soil profile is shown in the figure below:



## Switching to weather ...

In recent weeks, several folks have called to ask about, as they put it, “all that rain we’ve been getting.” It turns out that they moved here within the past five years. To them, the rain has been a new anomaly. They are surprised to hear that we had been in a drought for the past several summers, and that this year is getting us closer to “normal”.

According to the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), the average annual rainfall for Onslow County is 57.96 inches. The NRCS rainfall and growing season information for any county can be looked up at:

<http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/climate/wetlands.html>

Precipitation data is available from the NC State Climate Office:

Regional information:

<http://www.nc-climate.ncsu.edu/climate/climdiv.php>

Specific location information:

<http://www.nc-climate.ncsu.edu/services/request.php>

Onslow County Rainfall, in inches		
Month	Actual Precipitation	Historical Average
Jan 2012	1.52	5.17
Feb 2012	2.04	4.16
Mar 2012	2.27	4.64
Apr 2012	2.81	3.15
May 2012	5.17	3.67
Jun 2012	3.86	4.95
Jul 2012	13.44	7.22
Totals:	31.11	32.96

According to the data, Onslow County is just a tad below its average annual rainfall, but it is much closer to “normal” than it has been in several years. In comparison, the totals through July for 2009, 2010, and 2011 were 22.1”, 22.05”, and 17.07”, respectively. July was a distinctly wet month. August is on track for also providing a near- to above-normal rainfall total. So far, eastern NC is living up to its standing summer weather forecast of “hot, hazy, and humid; with chance of afternoon thunderstorms.”

Stormy Word Find:



- |          |         |                |        |
|----------|---------|----------------|--------|
| rainfall | cleanup | precipitation  | summer |
| drought  | hazard  | tropical storm | fall   |
| flood    | coast   | hurricane      | wind   |
| warning  | debris  | preparation    | hail   |
| erosion  | clouds  | storm surge    | rain   |
| watch    | season  | baseflow       | radar  |

p t h g u o r d e b r i s  
 i r e g r u s m r o t s z  
 r o e r o s i o n s a p w  
 e p d c c r a d a r p r l  
 m i r l i t a o f g t e l  
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 u a z a b r i i n a s a f  
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 d s h u r r i c a n e a i  
 u t a p a d h s l t r t a  
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## Clean Water Act ...

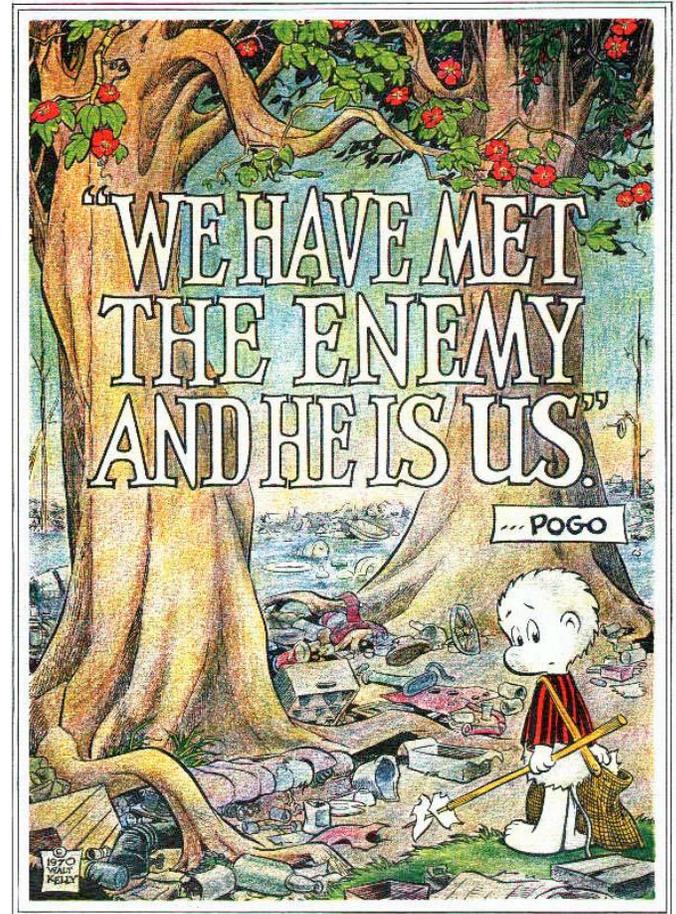
This year marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Clean Water Act (CWA). Much, thankfully, has changed since the problems of the 60s and 70s. Many of these problems were editorialized via cartoons. In honor of the CWA anniversary, here are a couple of glimpses of early pollution comics:



Bill Roberts, circa 1970

**Save the date!** Onslow pesticide collection event on Nov. 27<sup>th</sup> from 10 am to 2 pm.

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Walt Kelly, 1970 Earth Day Poster

## Don't forget ...

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<http://onslow.ces.ncsu.edu/content/Envedarchive>