

Preface

Our objective is to produce a book that celebrates the diversity, importance, and intrinsic beauty of soils around the world and helps the reader to understand the ways that soils are related to the landscapes in which they form and the life that they support. Jock Churchman in 2013 nicely captured our underlying philosophy when he wrote: “Like the Lorax who speak for the trees in Dr Seuss’ wonderful environmental fable, one of the most important roles for *soil scientists* may be to speak for the soil.” We want every person on Earth to appreciate how important our soil resource is. Swaisgood and Sheppard in 2010 suggested that “The gloom and doom niche in conservation is well occupied, By contrast the hope niche is relatively open....” Thus we want to give a positive message, rather than the fearful warnings that tend to dominate much of today’s environmental writing.

We want to take our readers on a global journey through soils and landscapes ranging from the Arctic to the Antarctic, sharing the delight of discovery and sense of awe for the amazing variety and processes that soils utilize to support the ecosystems of different landscapes. Exploring the relationships between landscapes and the underlying soils can increase a reader’s understanding of the soils beneath the landscapes in which they live, work, and travel.

A book of this type cannot be comprehensive. The soils and landscapes discussed are ones in which at least one of the authors has first hand experience. By using a wide range of examples, we seek to give some insight into the variety and fascination that is to be found in the study of soils. There are many excellent publications and websites people can go to for more in-depth information. A list of sources and some suggested further reading are included in Appendix 2, as a starting point for the interested person.

The best way to learn and get to know soils is to get out there and get close to the soil. Plant a garden, make a clay sculpture, and enjoy the feel, sight, sound, and smell of the soil in its endless dance with water and life.

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Celebrating Soil

Discovering Soils and Landscapes

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