



Photo courtesy of Quin Holifield.

**Dr. Quin Holifield** (right)  
Soil Scientist  
Ph.D., State University of New York College of  
Environmental Science and Forestry (SUNY/CESF)  
USDA Forest Service scientist

## Meet a Soil Scientist!

Dr. Quin Holifield (on the right) is a soil scientist who asks questions about how soil affects the health of plants and animals. She wants to know if organisms living in the soil could indicate the health of plants and animals in the area.

### Word Game

Unscramble the letters to discover the word.

(Hint: Each word was used in the “Meet a Scientist” section above.)

OLIS \_\_\_\_\_

GOSNSARM I \_\_\_\_\_

MASNLIA \_\_\_\_\_

TICETSINS \_\_\_\_\_

EAHHLT \_\_\_\_\_

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## Be a Soil Scientist...

**A soil scientist is concerned with the physical, chemical, and biological characteristics and behavior of soils, as well as soil management for many different uses.**

Using only soil from your area, search for different types of soil. Remember to look for different colors, grain sizes (i.e., large, small), textures (i.e., hard, soft), and moisture levels (i.e., wet, dry). How many did you discover?

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Pick a soil that interests you. Rub a sample of the soil in the box below. Describe what makes it interesting.

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## Like Soil Science? Do More!

A handful of healthy soil can be home to billions of living organisms, especially decomposers such as fungi, bacteria, and insects. Soil can also contain non-living things such as water, rocks, and sand.

Without hurting any plants, take a handful of soil. Search for evidence of living and non-living things.

### Outdoor Tip:

Let the plants live! Avoid digging up or stepping on living plants by staying on the trail or in designated campground areas.

