



Portage

Soil & Water

Conservation District

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November 1, 2018

Dear Educators:

You are invited to participate in the **2019 NACD (National Association of Conservation Districts) Poster Contest** that is sponsored by the Portage County Soil & Water Conservation District.

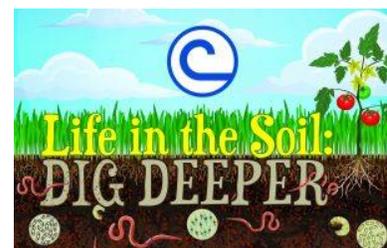
This year's theme is **"Life in the Soil: Dig Deeper"**. Soil is an integral part of our everyday lives and is far too often overlooked as it is one of our most important natural resources. Soil is the foundation for many of the items we use in our daily life, such as food, clothing, clean water, homes and more. Soil performs many critical functions in almost any ecosystem (whether a farm, forest, prairie, marsh, or suburban landscape) including but not limited to providing a medium for plant growth, regulating water drainage, flow, and storage, recycling raw materials, nutrient cycling, providing habitat for soil organisms, filtering water and pollutants, and acting as a carbon sink. Soil conservation has never been more critical (I am sure many of you have heard the staggering topsoil loss statistics and the 500 year timeframe that it takes to rebuild 1 inch of topsoil...), and we welcome the opportunity to support your classroom efforts with soil health education. We realize how challenging it is to add anything else to the demands you already have in the classroom. So why should you take on this project?

- Portage SWCD provides the poster paper, and other needed classroom supplies to support this project including informational resources.
- All student participants receive a certificate and a tree seedling for their efforts. Planting a tree is an opportunity for students to actively engage in natural resource conservation, directly connected to the soil theme as well as many others.
- The top three county level winners will win prizes and have their posters displayed at the Randolph Fair. The top winner from each grade division will be sent on to state.
- The Portage County Garden Clubs are available to assist educators by delivering supplies and awards, judging posters, and delivering winning posters to PSWCD.

If you are interested in participating, we can make arrangements to drop off supplies when you need them. We understand that taking on new projects can be very difficult when educators are held to such strict curriculum, but we feel that soil health education can be applied broadly and incorporated into many different types of lessons, whether that be covering the topics of what is living and non-living for younger students, all the way to the complex chemistry and biology that makes up the soil sciences for the older students. Some teachers make this an outside of class project or a "blizzard bag", while others incorporate it into their classroom projects. We have also had great luck with art teachers incorporating this contest into their lessons. We all rely on the soil, and we should all have the opportunity to learn about its depth and importance!

Thank you for your interest in this conservation program.
I look forward to working with you!

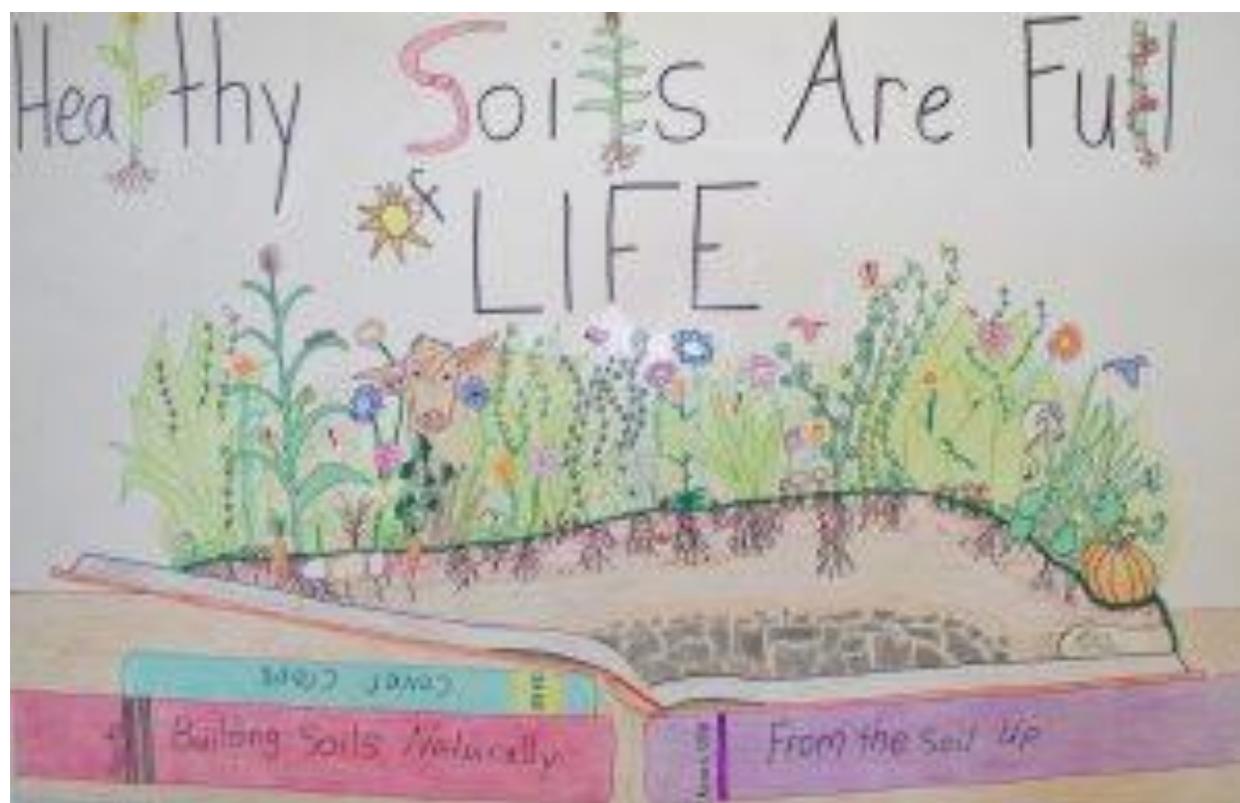
Taylor Hillyer
District Education Technician
Portage Soil & Water Conservation District



K-1 National Winner



2-3 National Winner



4-6 National Winner



7-9 National Winner



10-12 National Winner

