

Agronomic Science Foundation Can You Dig It?

For those of you who might not know, *Dig It!* is a 5,000 ft² soils exhibit developed through a collaboration of the Smithsonian, SSSA, and the Agronomic Science Foundation (ASF) with support from government agencies like the USDA-ARS and USDA-NRCS. It was on temporary display at the National Museum of Natural History (NMNH) in Washington, DC from 18 July 2008 through 10 Jan. 2010.

During this time, more than two million people visited the display. *Dig It!* transported these visitors to the world beneath their feet with displays, videos, and more. It features more than 50 different soil monoliths representing each state, a hands-on soils display with infrared gas analyzers, and even a chef's challenge, which shows how different soils can be formulated from the same ingredients.

The Smithsonian staff and curator of the exhibit reported that it was one of the most successful exhibits ever of this nature. ASF is proud of this reception and how it engaged visitors both young and old. In fact, the exhibit still has a life of its own.

Since it left the NMNH, it has been traveling west in the United States. It visited The Durham Museum in Omaha, NE in 2010 from 2 October through 26 December, and the next stop will be in Spokane, WA at the Museum of Arts and Culture from 4 Feb. through 22 Sept. 2012. We are currently working to keep this traveling display moving in the



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future with potential stops in St. Louis, MO; Minneapolis, MN; and Raleigh, NC.

In conjunction with the physical display, SSSA's K-12 Committee developed a special publication called *Soil! Get the Inside Scoop*, which is already in its

second printing due to overwhelming popularity. In addition, the NMNH developed an educational website at www.si.edu, which provides educational content and curriculum for K-12 teachers as well as media and the general public.

There's Still Time to Get Involved

ASF appreciates all of the amazing support from donors in helping to bring this exhibit to life. The USDA also deserves special credit as it continues to be an integral part of the effort. There are many ways that you can still get involved with *Dig It!* and the educational effort to inform the next generation of scientists of the benefits of soils. It truly is a grassroots effort.

If you are interested in helping to bring *Dig It!* to your hometown to help spread the word locally to science teachers and schools, please contact me. The next stop in Spokane will provide additional volunteer opportunities for soil scientists, agronomists, teachers, and students alike. Get involved today!



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