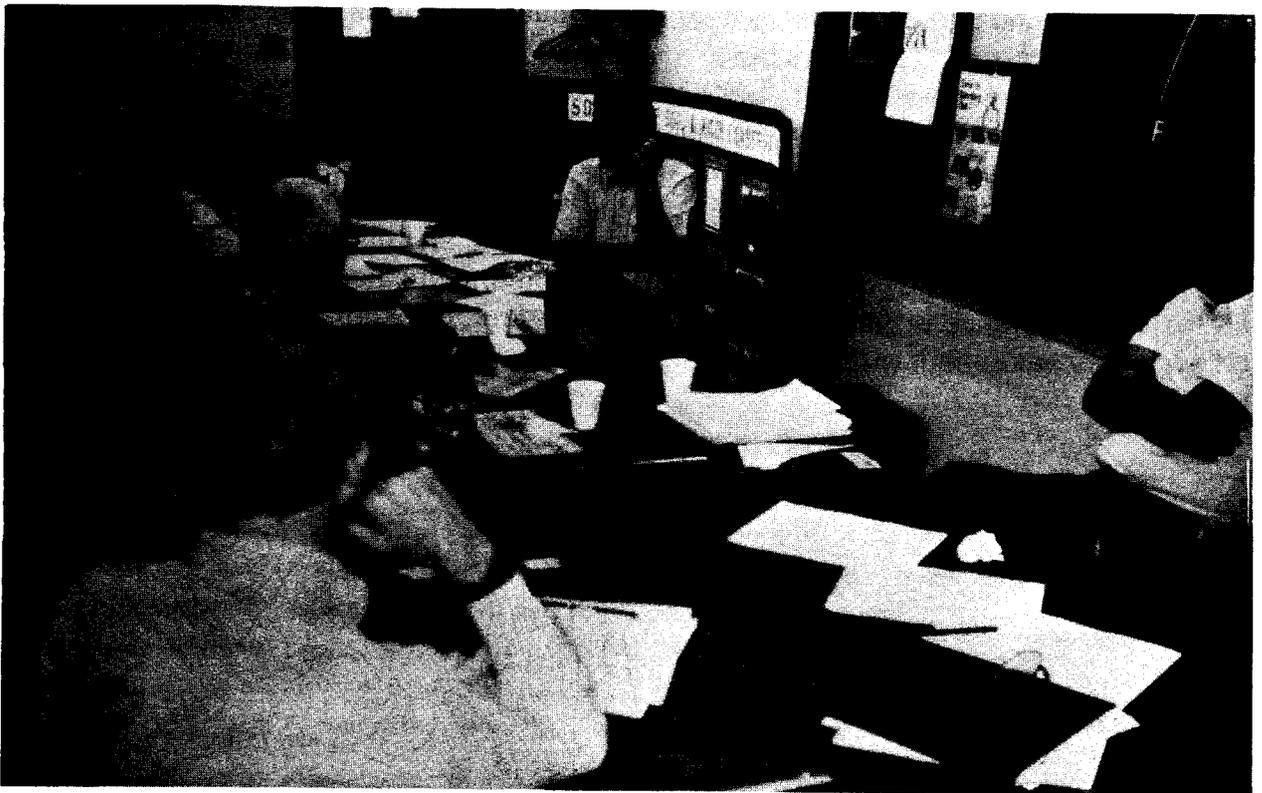


Proper Planning

Proper planning in land use development recognizes that land is a limited resource and has many physical variations which need to be considered prior to development. Proper planning provides conservation and wise use of the soil, water, and related resources. Use of soil survey information to get the facts about the land, including erosion and sediment control, is one of the first steps to proper planning.

Land is a Limited Resource

Major consideration must be given to prime farmlands and the long-range need to retain the productive capability and environmental values of American agriculture and forestry. Developments that result in irreversible land use changes represent a loss of valuable resources. West Virginia has approximately 500,000 acres of land that are considered prime farmland. The long-term implications of the land use conversions on the productive capacity of our farmland should be evaluated.



Soil conservation districts play a major role in planning proper land use through programs in erosion, sediment, and water quality control.

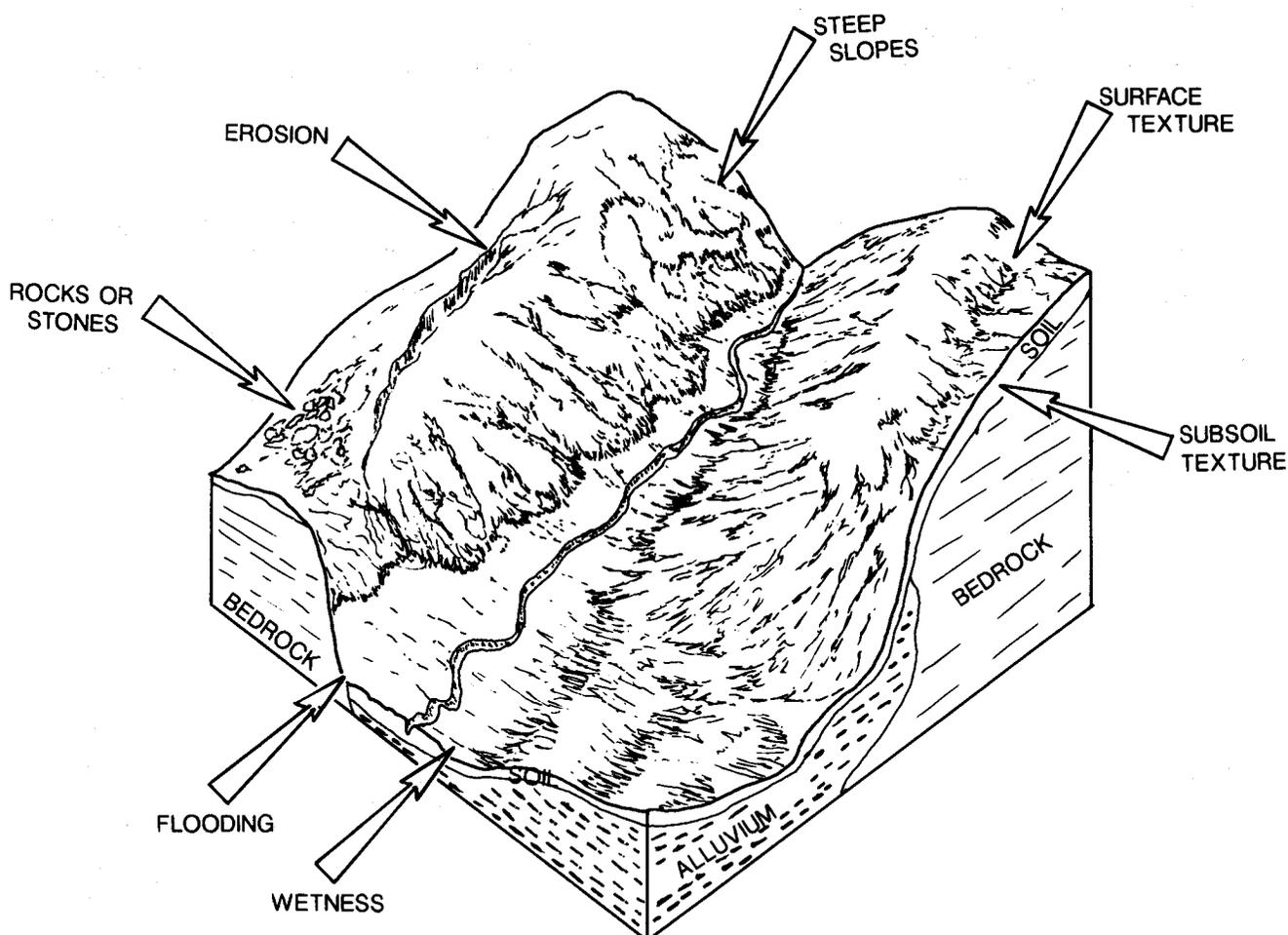
nize the usefulness of soil surveys as an aid in selecting sites and designing structures to minimize soil related problems. Sometimes adjustments in locating structures to avoid highly erodible soils or steep topography can greatly reduce erosion problems.

Soil maps are made by soil scientists. The scientists locate the soil boundaries and other features, such as streams and roads, on aerial photographs. The soil surveys describe the characteristics and properties of each kind of soil including soil texture, slope, depth, erodibility, permeability, degree of wetness, and other information useful to land developers.

Soils are rated according to their limitations for a given use. These soil limitations are expressed as slight, moderate, or severe. Soils with slight limitations have few problems which limit their use for a given purpose. Moderate limitations can generally be overcome with careful planning and design of structures during development. Severe limitations indicate the need for very careful consideration of a site prior to development. In some instances, the cost of overcoming a given soil limitation may be excessive. In other instances, it may be feasible to design the structure or adopt measures which will overcome the soil limitation.



Urban planners and others use soil surveys as a tool in land development.



Get the facts from soil surveys.

Some of the common soil-related limitations in West Virginia are flooding, high shrink-swell, shallowness to bedrock, wetness, slipping, slow permeability, and very steep slopes. Examples of resulting problems are flooded buildings and other structures, cracking and failing building foundations, wet basements, collapsing roadbeds, malfunctioning septic tank

systems, excessive erosion, and sedimentation damage. Measures necessary to help overcome these problems are much easier to identify once the soil-related problems are recognized. However, it is important that a competent consultant, engineer, or technician be contacted for on site investigation and subsequent design of structures for development.