

Observational Metrics

Soil Colour

Ecological Process:	The Nutrient Cycle, Community Dynamics, The Water Cycle
Why Monitor This Metric?	Soil colour can be indicative of the level of organic matter in the soil. Typically, the darker the colour, the more organic material is present. The colour of the subsoil can also indicate if the soil is waterlogged. If waterlogged, the soil can appear grey or grey with brown spots.
Tools Needed:	Shovel, Spray Bottle with Water, Camera, Pen/Pencil, Data Sheet/Paper

The Process:

1. Enter the area in which you are assessing soil colour.
2. Use your shovel to dig a hole in the sample area.
3. Grab a handful of topsoil and wet it with a spray bottle if needed.
4. Record the colour of the soil on your data sheet/paper.
 - a. Is your soil light brown/tan?
 - b. Is your soil dark brown?
 - c. Is your soil light black?
 - d. Is there soil mottling (i.e., red/dark red spots or grey color)?
5. If it is a light colour, dig deeper into the subsoil and repeat the test.
6. If both soil samples are light in colour, this can indicate a need for more organic matter.
7. Take pictures for reference.

Use Your Observations to Rate Soil Colour (adapted from ROC)

- Poor: soil is light brown/tan or mottled.
- Fair: soil is brown/dark brown.
- Good: soil is dark brown/black.