

## Observational Metrics

### Soil Crusting

<b>Ecological Process:</b>	The Water Cycle
<b>Why Monitor This Metric?</b>	Soil crusting can result from compaction and is an important indicator of soil erosion. It can impede seedling emergence and prevent water infiltration into the soil, leading to drought conditions below the crust and runoff on the surface of the soil.
<b>Tools Needed:</b>	Pen/Pencil, Data Sheet/Paper

#### The Process:

1. Enter the area in which you are assessing soil crusting.
2. Visually identify areas where soil crusting is occurring:
  - a. Do you see any areas of flaking or crusting (especially hard crusts that can be picked up in one piece)?
  - b. Is the crusting in patches?
  - c. Is the crusting across the whole field?
3. Record your observations on your data sheet.

#### Use Your Observations to Rate Soil Crusting (adapted from ROC)

- Poor: soil crusting is widespread in the field.
- Fair: soil crusting is not widespread but is greater than 5% of the field.
- Good: soil crusting is non-existent or less than 5% of the field.