**INSTRUCTIONS FOR JOINING NRCS SOIL UNIT
DESCRIPTIONS TO SPATIAL FEATURE CLASS**

Download soil data from NRCS web source:

http://soildatamart.nrcs.usda.gov/

Soil spatial data obtained from NRCS does not include descriptions for soil units. However, if you choose to download spatial & tabular data from NRCS, then the tabular dataset contains data intended for a Microsoft database from which we can extract information. Inside the tabular folder there is a text file called mapunit.txt. The text fields are delimited by the pipe character, |. The first field corresponds to the spatial data's MUSYM (Map Unit Symbol) field, and the second field is the soil unit description, which is the field we need to join. Open Excel and go to File > Import. Import the file as a delimited text file using the pipe key, |, as the delimiter. Once the data is imported, delete any extraneous fields and add two header fields at the top of the data: MUSYM and Description. Save the file (.xls, not .xlsx) and then go into ArcMap. Add the excel sheet as data, then right-click and choose export data. Export as a .dbf file. Use the tool in the toolbox called Join Field because it provides a permanent join. Fill out these values to join your data:

Input Dataset: Soil shapefile without soil descriptions
Input Join Field: MUSYM
Join Table: .dbf file with soil descriptions
Output Join Field: MUSYM
Join Fields: Description

The soil descriptions will be appended to your soil shapefile and then you can enable map symbology with the description field.