

# [***Soil Health Institute Launches Slakes: A Free Smartphone App To Measure Soil Aggregate Stability***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69VC-J621-JD3Y-Y1KM-00000-00&context=1516831)

FinancialWire

December 11, 2023 Monday

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**Length:** 771 words

**Body**

In celebration of World ***Soil*** Day, December 5, the ***Soil Health*** Institute (SHI) announced the release of a free phone application, Slakes, to empower and engage citizens around the world to measure aggregate stability: one of the most common indicators of ***soil health***. ***Soils*** with greater aggregate stability are more resistant to wind and water erosion, and are linked to improved water capture, infiltration, and storage, contributing to improved water management and agricultural productivity.

"Improving ***soil health*** benefits all," said Dr. Cristine Morgan, SHI's Chief Scientific Officer. "I am excited to see our team and partners make credible ***soil health*** measurement technology readily available to anyone with a smartphone."

The Slakes app uses a smartphone camera to take a picture of three dry ***soil*** aggregates before and after exposing them to water for 10 minutes. The app then automatically calculates an aggregate stability value. Weaker aggregates will slake (or break apart) more easily, while stronger aggregates will slake less, indicating better ***soil*** aggregation and healthier ***soil***.

"The Ida and Robert Gordon Family Foundation has been a long-time supporter of the ***Soil Health*** Institute because SHI brings us catalytic ideas that can scale," said Roberta Gordon, President CEO of the Ida and Robert Gordon Family Foundation. "Slakes is a great example."

SHI envisions that this application will be used by the public, K-12, and college educators in their curricula, as well as conservation professionals, farmers, advisors, and industry/policy stakeholders who are interested in quantifying the impact of management on ***soil health***.

"As one of the top commercial bank agricultural lenders in the U.S., Wells Fargo is a proud supporter of the ***Soil Health*** Institute and the development of Slakes," added Robyn Luhning, Chief Sustainability Officer at Wells Fargo. "Maintaining ***soil health*** is an important part of supporting climate resiliency for our customers and communities."

SHI recommends measuring aggregate stability using the Slakes app as part of a minimum suite of measurements to assess management induced changes in ***soil health***. Aggregate stability index values from Slakes can be compared across management practices to measure improvements in ***soil health***.

"Everyone should be able to analyze their ***soil*** quickly, inexpensively, and accurately" added Dr. Alex McBratney from the University of Sydney in Australia. "Which technology for doing this is more accessible and fun than a free app on your mobile phone?"

The Slakes app is available on Google Play and the App Store, and its development was made possible due to a partnership with the University of Sydney and the generous financial support from Wells Fargo Foundation and The Ida and Robert Gordon Family Foundation.

To download Slakes please visit [*https://soilhealthinstitute.org/our-work/initiatives/slakes/*](https://soilhealthinstitute.org/our-work/initiatives/slakes/) and contact [*info@soilhealthinstitute.org*](mailto:info@soilhealthinstitute.org) to learn more about potential integration into your organization.

About the ***Soil Health*** Institute

The ***Soil Health*** Institute is a global non-profit with a mission of safeguarding and enhancing the vitality and productivity of ***soils*** through scientific research and advancement. Our vision is a world wherefarmers and ranchers grow quality food, fiber, and fuel using ***soil health*** systems that sustain farms and rural communities, promote a stable climate and clean environment, and improve human ***health*** and well-being. Accordingly, the Institute brings together leaders in ***soil health*** science and the industry to conduct research and empower farmers and other landowners with the knowledge to successfully adopt regenerative ***soil health*** systems that contribute economic and environmental benefits to agriculture and society. The Institute's scientific team holds doctorates in various ***soil*** science and related disciplines, with specialties in carbon cycling, nutrient cycling, water cycling, nutrient management, ***soil*** microbiome, farmer/adviser education, ecosystem services, ***soil***-plant relationships, on-farm economics, and others. The team follows a comprehensive strategy for advancing adoption of regenerative ***soil health*** systems, as briefly described in this 5-minute video: [*https://soilhealthinstitute.org/our-strategy*](https://soilhealthinstitute.org/our-strategy)/

Healthy ***soils*** are the foundation for restoring our land. Together, we can create a secure future for all, mitigate the effects of climate change, and help farmers and organizations meet production and environmental goals at scale. Visit [*www.soilhealthinstitute.org*](http://www.soilhealthinstitute.org) to learn more, and follow us on YouTube, LinkedIn, and Facebook.

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**Load-Date:** December 11, 2023

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