

Talking points about photos for instructors (Slides 8 and 9)

Slide 8, Photo 1: See if students notice the sharp contrast between the uncultivated hills, the flat, cultivated area and the vegetated swale (which may hide a stream) in between. The cultivated area looks well managed and there are no obvious signs of erosion. Notice the raised rows, also known as “furrow irrigated raised beds,” or FIRBs. FIRBs are a type of conservation agriculture: essentially a reversion to a form of sustainable agriculture that has been used for centuries. Modern-day FIRBs, however, can be worked with machinery (Govaerts et al, 2007).

Slide 8, Photo 2: It should be obvious from this photo that overwatering or not controlling drainage can be detrimental to crop production and will increase soil loss.

Slide 8, Photo 3: This is a photo of strip grazing, a form of rotational grazing. Although it looks like the cattle are damaging the grass, they are moved around so that they graze and fertilize a small area at a time. This area will be allowed to recover before it is grazed again. Overgrazing, however, can increase erosion.

Slide 8, Photo 4: Terraced farming helps control erosion even though the native vegetation was stripped off of these slopes; however, if the terraces are left fallow (unplanted) like these are then erosion of the exposed soil can just as easily occur as it would on continuous flat land.

Slide 9, Photo 5: Badlands are areas of extensive natural erosion.

Slide 9, Photo 6: Chaparral is a type of shrubland that can live in either desert or Mediterranean (where rain is limited to the winter) climates. It is common in California and the Baja Peninsula. Most erosion occurs during the rainy season, but vegetation can grow quite thick, where it helps to prevent erosion.

Slide 9, Photo 7: If you live in a city, you may mostly only see human-made parks. Although they are not “natural” areas, they may be the only “nature” you ever see. If you compare them to the pictures of the natural areas, parks are often are relatively flat, green, and well-maintained in comparison.

Slide 9, Photo 8: The prairie contains grasses, herbs and shrubs rather than trees. Farmland and towns and cities have replaced much of the native prairie that extended over a large portion of the U.S. before the settlers arrived.