**What’s the Big Deal About Soils?**

Use your science detective skills to uncover four ways soils are important for all living things on Earth, including YOU! Each exhibit stop below holds a clue to solving the mystery!

1. **Find the mural in the “Skin of the Earth” section.**

   Look for different living things in soils.
   How are these living things using soils?
   
   __________________________________________________________
   
   __________________________________________________________
   
   __________________________________________________________
   
   Why do you think this is important to know?
   
   __________________________________________________________
   
   __________________________________________________________
   
   __________________________________________________________

2. **Do the Soils Emissions Inspection Station interactive.**

   An infrared gas analyzer is used to detect how much carbon dioxide soils are releasing into the air.
   Where does the carbon dioxide in soils come from?
   
   __________________________________________________________
   
   __________________________________________________________
   
   How does the carbon dioxide that is released from soils affect our climate?
   
   __________________________________________________________
   
   __________________________________________________________
   
   __________________________________________________________

---

Smithsonian
National Museum of Natural History
What’s the Big Deal about Soils?

3. Find the water droplets in the “Ins and Outs” sculpture.

What happens to water when it reaches the ground?

__________________________________________

How do soils affect the water you use every day?

Hints can be found in the blue panels around the sculpture!

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

4. Visit the basement in “Our World, Our Soil.”

How many steps are you away from soils? Try one of the examples in the exhibition.

Now, try two more!

• If you eat a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, how many steps away are you from soils?

• If you play soccer, how many steps away from soils are you?

Congratulations!

You’ve just found four important uses of soils! Not only are soils home to a huge diversity of organisms and used to make everyday products, but they filter water and store and release carbon dioxide that influences climate.

How many more uses can you uncover?