



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture



Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service



In cooperation with the  
United States Department  
of the Interior, Bureau of  
Indian Affairs, and  
Montana Agricultural  
Experiment Station

# MT651—Soil Survey of Sanders and Parts of Lincoln and Flathead Counties, Montana

## Part II



The original maps and tables have been deleted from this online version. Since the soil survey's publication, more data on soil properties may have been collected, new interpretations developed, or existing interpretive criteria modified. Maps and current data tables can be accessed through the Web Soil Survey (<http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/>).



# How to Use This Soil Survey

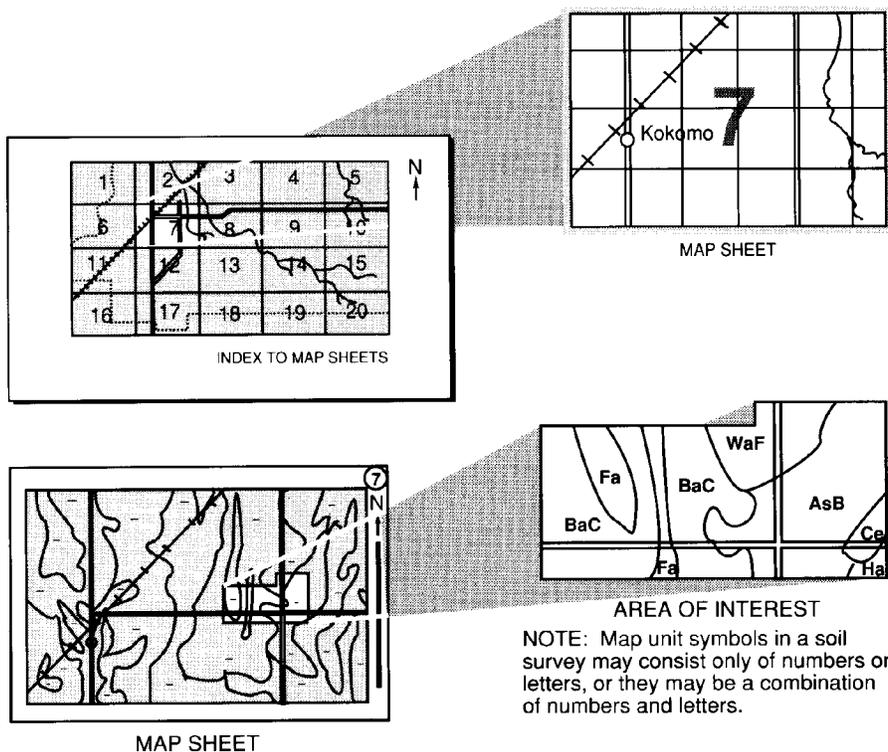
## Detailed Soil Maps

The detailed soil maps can be useful in planning the use and management of small areas.

To find information about your area of interest, you can locate the Section, Township, and Range by zooming in on the **Index to Map Sheets**, or you can go to the Web Soil Survey at (<http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/>).

Note the map unit symbols that are in that area. The **Contents** lists the map units by symbol and name and shows the page where each map unit is described.

See the Contents for sections of this publication that may address your specific needs.



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This soil survey is a publication of the National Cooperative Soil Survey, a joint effort of the United States Department of Agriculture and other Federal agencies, State agencies including the Agricultural Experiment Stations, and local agencies. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (formerly the Soil Conservation Service) has leadership for the Federal part of the National Cooperative Soil Survey.

Major fieldwork for this soil survey was completed in 1995. Soil names and descriptions were approved in 1996. Unless otherwise indicated, statements in this publication refer to conditions in the survey area in 1996. This survey was made cooperatively by the Natural Resources Conservation Service; the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs; and the Montana Agricultural Experiment Station. It is part of the technical assistance furnished to the Eastern Sanders County Conservation District; the Green Mountain Conservation District; the Flathead Conservation District; the Lincoln Conservation District; and the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs. Financial assistance was provided by the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The most current official data are available through the NRCS Soil Data Mart website at <http://soildatamart.nrcs.usda.gov>. Soil maps in this survey may be copied without permission. Enlargement of these maps, however, could cause misunderstanding of the detail of mapping. If enlarged, maps do not show the small areas of contrasting soils that could have been shown at a larger scale.

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**Cover: View of the Clark Fork River Valley looking southeast toward the town of Plains.**

*Additional information about the Nation's natural resources is available online from the Natural Resources Conservation Service at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov>.*

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- 582F—Waldbillig-Holloway gravelly silt loams, moist, 30 to 50 percent slopes
- 631E—Rockhill-Mitten-Rock outcrop complex, 8 to 35 percent slopes
- 632F—Rockhill-Rock outcrop complex, 15 to 60 percent slopes
- 641D—Lionwood-Scotmont-Whitepine complex, 4 to 15 percent slopes
- 641E—Lionwood-Scotmont-Whitepine complex, 15 to 35 percent slopes
- 671C—Glaciercreek gravelly silt loam, 2 to 8 percent slopes
- 671E—Glaciercreek gravelly silt loam, 8 to 30 percent slopes
- 691B—Tamarack-Crystalex complex, 0 to 4 percent slopes
- 691D—Tamarack-Crystalex complex, 4 to 15 percent slopes
- 691E—Tamarack-Crystalex complex, 15 to 30 percent slopes

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- 691F—Tamarack-Crystalex complex, 30 to 60 percent slopes  
692B—Tamarack fine sandy loam, 0 to 4 percent slopes  
731A—Meadowpeak-Firetower silt loams, 0 to 2 percent slopes  
732A—Meadowpeak silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes, frequently flooded  
771G—Beeskove-Mollman-Rock outcrop complex, 40 to 80 percent slopes  
781D—Fernline-Cabinet silt loams, 4 to 15 percent slopes  
781E—Fernline-Cabinet silt loams, 15 to 30 percent slopes  
791B—Redlock-Fernline silt loams, 0 to 4 percent slopes  
791D—Redlock-Fernline silt loams, 4 to 15 percent slopes  
791E—Redlock-Fernline silt loams, 15 to 35 percent slopes  
792D—Redlock-Fernline-Iffgulch complex, 0 to 15 percent slopes  
807A—McLangor mucky peat, 0 to 2 percent slopes  
808A—Barzee mucky peat, 0 to 2 percent slopes  
811D—Noxlin-Fernline silt loams, 4 to 15 percent slopes, stony  
821D—Combest gravelly silt loam, 4 to 15 percent slopes  
824E—Dubay silt loam, 15 to 30 percent slopes  
834F—Krause gravelly silt loam, 15 to 45 percent slopes  
842E—Selon fine sandy loam, 15 to 30 percent slopes  
842F—Selon fine sandy loam, 30 to 60 percent slopes  
858E—Waldbillig gravelly silt loam, moist, 8 to 30 percent slopes  
860D—Bonnash gravelly silt loam, 4 to 15 percent slopes  
860E—Bonnash gravelly silt loam, 15 to 35 percent slopes  
862E—Beaverdump gravelly loam, 15 to 35 percent slopes  
867E—Glaciercreek gravelly silt loam, cool, 8 to 30 percent slopes  
867F—Glaciercreek gravelly silt loam, cool, 30 to 45 percent slopes  
871G—Stevie-Rock outcrop complex, 40 to 70 percent slopes  
884E—Loneman silt loam, 15 to 35 percent slopes  
884F—Loneman silt loam, 35 to 60 percent slopes  
887E—Stevie gravelly silt loam, 15 to 35 percent slopes  
891B—Stargulch very fine sandy loam, 0 to 4 percent slopes  
893A—Bigbeaver silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes, frequently flooded  
895A—Ibex silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes  
897C—Mollman gravelly loam, 2 to 8 percent slopes  
897E—Mollman gravelly loam, 8 to 30 percent slopes  
971E—Mollman gravelly loam, dry, 15 to 30 percent slopes  
971F—Mollman gravelly loam, dry, 30 to 50 percent slopes  
DA—Denied access  
DAM—Dam  
W—Water

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For tables with the most current data, please visit the  
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# Agronomy

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General management needed for crops and for hay and pasture is suggested in this section. The system of land capability classification used by the Natural Resources Conservation Service is explained, and the estimated yields of the main crops and hay and pasture plants are listed for each soil.

Planners of management systems for individual fields or farms should consider obtaining specific information from local Natural Resources Conservation Service or Cooperative Extension Service offices.

There are 35,700 acres of cropland in the survey area. Approximately 32,000 acres are hayland. About 15,000 acres, or 47 percent, of the hayland is irrigated, with most hay grown in the eastern semiarid valleys. About 41 percent of the cropland is irrigated. Most of the small grains are grown in the Paradise-Thompson Falls area. An additional 17,000 acres are dry and irrigated pasture throughout the survey area.

Common annual crops include winter wheat, spring wheat, barley, and oats. Perennial forages are mainly grass-legume and legume hay. Some oats and barley are also grown for hay. Field peas and mint are increasing in popularity. The Paradise-Thompson Falls area is well suited to fruit trees, vegetables, and nurseries.

Climate and soils vary widely throughout the survey area. For discussion purposes, there are three distinct regions, each having unique management concerns. These regions are the eastern semiarid valleys, the Paradise-Thompson Falls area, and the Thompson Falls-Heron area; these last two areas make up the Clark Fork River valley. A problem common to each region is the lack of growing-season rainfall. Unlike eastern Montana farmlands that receive about 70 percent of their annual moisture during the growing season, this survey area receives only about 30 percent. This shortage of growing-season moisture most severely impacts the semiarid valley areas.

## ***Eastern Semiarid Valleys***

The eastern semiarid valley region is characterized by annual precipitation of less than 14 inches and by valley bottom soils that formed mainly in glacial lake sediments on nearly level to strongly dissected lake terraces. Large portions of these soils have high levels of sodium salts and are low in organic matter.

Management efforts should be aimed at overcoming the effects of sodium salts, low organic matter, and inadequate growing-season rainfall. Irrigation is required to successfully annual crop most of these soils. Irrigation, proper fertilization, and increasing organic matter will help to overcome the effects of sodium. These soils are best suited to growing perennial forage crops that will maintain or increase the organic matter levels.

## ***Paradise-Thompson Falls Area***

This area is mild with annual precipitation of about 17 inches per year. The dominant soils are formed in loamy alluvial deposits on nearly level terraces along the river. These soils are productive with few limitations for cropping. Most of these soils are prime farmland if irrigated.

The high terraces above the valley floor are formed in deposits left by the draining of glacial Lake Missoula. These terraces are nearly level to strongly dissected mixed sand and clay material.

Management concerns for this area include water erosion on frozen soil and localized soil blowing. Residue management, surface roughening, and crop rotation will reduce soil blowing and water erosion.

## ***Thompson Falls-Heron Area***

This area is moister and cooler than the other two areas with annual precipitation over 25 inches and a

growing season generally less than 90 days. The valley floor is a combination of stream terraces and reworked deposits of glacial Lake Missoula. Shallow water tables are common. Most of these soils formed under forest vegetation and are generally acidic and low in fertility.

Management efforts should be aimed at overcoming the short growing season, low fertility, and soil acidity. Shallow water tables present an additional challenge. Choosing quick maturing varieties, harvesting grain for hay, and raising perennial forages help to overcome the short growing season. Adding lime, fertilizer, and other soil amendments along with selecting acid-tolerant crops can overcome soil limitations. Areas with shallow water tables are best left in perennial vegetation.

## Cropland Limitations and Hazards

Management concerns affecting the use of the detailed soil map units in the survey area for crops are shown in the table, "Main Cropland Limitations and Hazards." The main concerns in managing nonirrigated cropland are conserving moisture, controlling soil blowing and water erosion, and maintaining soil fertility.

*Conserving moisture* consists primarily of reducing the evaporation and runoff rates and increasing the water infiltration rate. Applying conservation tillage and conservation-cropping systems, farming on the contour, stripcropping, establishing field windbreaks, and leaving crop residue on the surface conserve moisture.

Generally, a combination of several practices is needed to control *soil blowing* and *water erosion*. Conservation tillage, stripcropping, field windbreaks, tall grass barriers, contour farming, conservation-cropping systems, crop-residue management, diversions, and grassed waterways help to prevent excessive soil loss.

Measures that are effective in maintaining *soil fertility* include applying fertilizer, both organic and inorganic, including manure; incorporating crop residue or green-manure crops into the soil; and using proper crop rotations. Controlling erosion helps to prevent the loss of organic matter and plant nutrients. All soils used for nonirrigated crops respond well to applications of fertilizer.

Some of the limitations and hazards shown in the table cannot be easily overcome. These are *channels*, *flooding*, *depth to rock*, *ponding*, *gullies*, and *lack of timely precipitation*.

Additional limitations and hazards are as follows:

*Areas of rock outcrop and slickspots*—Farming around these areas may be feasible. Subsoiling or deep ripping soft sedimentary beds increases the effective rooting depth and the rate of water infiltration.

*Excessive permeability*—This limitation causes deep leaching of nutrients and pesticides. The capacity of the soil to retain moisture for plant use is poor.

*Lime content, limited available water capacity, poor tilth, restricted permeability, and surface crusting*—These limitations can be overcome by incorporating green-manure crops, manure, or crop residue into the soil; applying a system of conservation tillage; and using conservation-cropping systems. In addition, crops may respond well to additions of phosphate fertilizer to soils that have a high content of lime.

*Potential for ground-water pollution*—This limitation is a hazard in soils with excessive permeability, hard bedrock, or a water table within the profile.

*Short frost-free period*—If the growing season is less than 90 days, short-season crops or grasses should be grown.

*Slope*—Where the slope is more than 8 percent, soil blowing and water erosion may be accelerated unless conservation-farming practices are applied.

*Surface rock fragments*—This limitation causes rapid wear of tillage equipment; it cannot be easily overcome.

*Surface stones*—Stones or boulders on the surface can hinder normal tillage unless they are removed.

*Salt and sodium content*—In areas where this is a limitation, only salt- and sodium-tolerant crops should be grown.

On irrigated soils, the main management concerns are *efficient water use*, *nutrient management*, *control of erosion*, *pest and weed control*, and *timely planting and harvesting* for a successful crop. An irrigation system that provides optimum control and distribution of water at minimum cost is needed. Overirrigation wastes water, leaches plant nutrients, and causes erosion. Also, overirrigation can create drainage problems, raise the water table, and increase soil salinity.

Following is an explanation of the criteria used to determine the limitations or hazards.

*Areas of rock outcrop*—Rock outcrop is a named component of the map unit.

*Areas of rubble land*—Rubble land is a named component of the map unit.

*Areas of slickspots*—Slickspots are a named component of the map unit.

*Channeled*—The word “channeled” is included in the name of the map unit.

*Depth to rock*—Bedrock is within a depth of 40 inches.

*Excessive permeability*—The upper limit of the permeability range is 6 inches or more within the soil profile.

*Flooding*—The component of the map unit is occasionally flooded or frequently flooded.

*Gullied*—The word “gullied” is included in the name of the map unit.

*Lack of timely precipitation*—The component of the map unit has a xeric moisture regime, and the amount of annual precipitation is no more than 14 inches.

*Lime content*—The component is assigned to wind erodibility group 4L or has more than 5 percent lime in the upper 10 inches. Wind erodibility groups are defined in the “Soil Properties” section.

*Limited available water capacity*—The available water capacity calculated to a depth of 60 inches or to a root-limiting layer is 5 inches or less.

*Ponding*—Ponding duration is assigned to the component of the map unit.

*Poor tilth*—The component of the map unit has more than 35 percent clay in the surface layer.

*Potential for ground-water pollution*—The soil has a water table within a depth of 4 feet or hard bedrock within the profile, or permeability is more than 6 inches per hour within the soil.

*Restricted permeability*—Permeability is 0.06 inch per hour or less within the soil profile.

*Salt content*—The component of the map unit has an electrical conductivity of more than 4 in the surface layer or more than 8 within a depth of 30 inches.

*Short frost-free period*—The map unit has a growing season of less than 90 frost-free days.

*Slope*—The upper slope range of the component of the map unit is more than 8 percent.

*Sodium content*—The sodium adsorption ratio of the component of the map unit is more than 13 within a depth of 30 inches.

*Soil blowing*—The wind erodibility index multiplied by the selected high C factor for the survey area and then divided by the T factor is more than 8 for the component of the map unit.

*Surface crusting*—The sodium adsorption ratio in the surface layer is 5 or more for any texture and 4 or more if the texture is silt, silt loam, loam, or very fine sandy loam.

*Surface rock fragments*—The terms describing the texture of the surface layer include any rock fragment modifier except for gravelly or channery, and “surface stones” is not already indicated as a limitation.

*Surface stones*—The terms describing the texture of the surface layer include any stony or bouldery modifier or the soil is a stony or bouldery phase.

*Water erosion*—The surface K factor multiplied by the upper slope limit is more than 2 (same as prime farmland criteria).

*Water table*—The component of the map unit has a water table within a depth of 60 inches.

## Crop Yield Estimates

The average yields per acre that can be expected of the principal crops are shown in the table, “Land Capability and Yields per Acre of Crops and Pasture.” In any given year, yields may be higher or lower than those indicated in the table because of variations in rainfall and other climatic factors. The land capability classification of each map unit is shown in the table.

The nonirrigated small grain yields presented are a maximum potential estimated using a crop yield model based on Montana Agricultural Experiment Station Special Report Number 35 (Brown and Carlson, 1990). Basic model assumptions include soil moisture at field capacity to 40 inches, a 70 percent annual precipitation probability as published by the National Climatic Center, fertilization to yield, and full pest and weed control. Irrigated small grain yields are not provided. The model has been validated with collected yield data.

Forage crop yields are estimates based mainly on the experience and records of farmers, conservationists, and extension agents. Available yield data from nearby counties and results of field trials and demonstrations are also considered.

The management needed to obtain the indicated yields of the various crops depends on the kind of soil and the crop. Management practices can include improving drainage, controlling erosion, and protecting areas from flooding; selecting proper planting and seeding rates; choosing suitable high-yielding crop varieties; appropriately and timely tilling; controlling weeds, plant diseases, and harmful insects; ensuring favorable soil reaction and optimum levels of nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, and trace elements for each crop; effectively using crop residue, barnyard manure, and green-manure crops; and harvesting to ensure the smallest possible loss.

For provided irrigated crop yields, it is assumed that the irrigation system is adapted to the soils and

to the forage crops grown, that good-quality irrigation water is uniformly applied as needed, and that tillage is kept to a minimum.

The estimated yields reflect the productive capacity of each soil for each of the principal crops. Yields are likely to increase as new production technology is developed. The productivity of a given soil compared with that of other soils, however, is not likely to change.

Crops other than those shown in the table are grown in the survey area, but estimated yields are not listed because the acreage of such crops is small. Local offices of the Natural Resources Conservation Service or the Cooperative Extension Service can provide information about the management and productivity of the soils for those crops.

## Pasture and Hayland Management

Under good management, proper grazing is essential for the production of high-quality forage, stand survival, and erosion control. Proper grazing helps plants to maintain sufficient and generally vigorous top growth during the growing season. Brush control is essential in many areas, and weed control generally is needed. Rotation grazing and renovation also are important management practices.

Yield estimates are often indicated in animal unit months (AUM), or the amount of forage or feed required to feed one animal unit (one cow, one horse, one mule, five sheep, or five goats) for 30 days.

Local offices of the Natural Resources Conservation Service or the Cooperative Extension Service can provide information about forage yields other than those shown in the table, "Land Capability and Yields per Acre of Crops and Pasture."

## Land Capability Classification

Land capability classification shows, in a general way, the suitability of soils for most kinds of field crops. Crops that require special management are excluded. The soils are grouped according to their limitations for field crops, the risk of damage if they are used for crops, and the way they respond to management. The criteria used in grouping the soils do not include major and generally expensive landforming that would change slope, depth, or other characteristics of the soils, nor do they include possible but unlikely major reclamation projects. Capability classification is not a substitute for interpretations designed to show suitability and limitations of groups of soils for rangeland, for forest land, or for engineering purposes.

In the capability system, as described in "Land Capability Classification" (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1961), soils generally are grouped at three levels: capability class, subclass, and unit. These levels indicate the degree and kinds of limitations affecting mechanized farming systems that produce the more commonly grown field crops, such as corn, small grains, hay, and field-grown vegetables. Only class and subclass are used in this survey.

*Capability classes*, the broadest groups, are designated by the numbers 1 through 8. The numbers indicate progressively greater limitations and narrower choices for practical use.

If properly managed, soils in classes 1, 2, 3, and 4 are suitable for the mechanized production of commonly grown field crops and for pasture and woodland. The degree of the soil limitations affecting the production of cultivated crops increases progressively from class 1 to class 5. The limitations can affect levels of production and the risk of permanent soil deterioration caused by erosion and other factors.

Soils in classes 5, 6, and 7 are generally not suited to the mechanized production of commonly grown field crops without special management, but they are suitable for plants that provide a permanent cover, such as grasses and trees. The severity of the soil limitations affecting crops increases progressively from class 5 to class 7. Local offices of the Natural Resources Conservation Service or the Cooperative Extension Service can provide guidance on the use of these soils as cropland.

Areas in class 8 are generally not suitable for cropland, pasture, or woodland without a level of management that is impractical. These areas may have potential for other uses, such as recreational facilities and wildlife habitat.

*Capability subclasses* indicate the dominant limitations in the class. These subclasses are designated by adding a letter, *E*, *W*, *S*, or *C*, to the class numeral, for example, 2E. The letter *E* shows that the main hazard is the risk of erosion unless a close-growing plant cover is maintained; *W* shows that water in or on the soil interferes with plant growth or cultivation (in some soils the wetness can be partly corrected by artificial drainage); *S* shows that the soil is limited mainly because it is shallow, droughty, or stony; and *C*, used in only some parts of the United States, shows that the chief limitation is climate that is very cold or very dry.

There are no subclasses in class 1 because the soils of this class have few limitations. Class 5 contains only the subclasses indicated by *W*, *S*, or *C*.

because the soils in class 5 are subject to little or no erosion. Class 5 soils have other limitations that restrict their use mainly to pasture, rangeland, forest land, wildlife habitat, or recreation.

The capability classification of each map unit is given in the table, “Land Capability and Yields per Acre of Crops and Pasture,” at the end of this section.

## **Prime Farmland and Other Important Farmland**

In this section, prime farmland and other important farmland are defined. The soils in the survey area that are considered prime farmland are listed in the table, “Prime and Important Farmland,” at the end of this section.

### **Prime Farmland**

Prime farmland is one of several kinds of important farmland defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It is of major importance in meeting the Nation’s short- and long-range needs for food and fiber. Because the supply of high-quality farmland is limited, the U.S. Department of Agriculture recognizes that responsible levels of government, as well as individuals, should encourage and facilitate the wise use of our Nation’s prime farmland.

Prime farmland, as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and is available for these uses. It could be cultivated land, pastureland, forestland, or other land, but it is not urban or built-up land or water areas. The soil qualities, growing season, and moisture supply are those needed for the soil to economically produce sustained high yields of crops when proper management, including water management, and acceptable farming methods are applied. In general, prime farmland has an adequate and dependable supply of moisture from precipitation or irrigation, a favorable temperature and growing season, acceptable acidity or alkalinity, an acceptable salt and sodium content, and few or no rocks. It is permeable to water and air. It is not excessively erodible or saturated with water for long periods, and it either is not frequently flooded during the growing season or is protected from flooding. Slope ranges mainly from 0 to 6 percent. More detailed information about the criteria for prime farmland is available at the local office of the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

A recent trend in land use in some parts of the survey area has been the loss of some prime farmland to industrial and urban uses. The loss of prime farmland to other uses puts pressure on marginal lands, which generally are more erodible, droughty, and less productive and cannot be easily cultivated.

The map units in the survey area that are considered prime farmland are listed in the table, “Prime and Important Farmland.” This list does not constitute a recommendation for a particular land use. On some soils included in the list, measures that overcome a hazard or limitation, such as flooding, wetness, and droughtiness, are needed. The need for these measures is indicated in parentheses after the map unit name. Onsite evaluation is needed to determine whether or not the hazard or limitation has been overcome by corrective measures. The extent of each listed map unit is shown in the “Acreage and Proportionate Extent of the Soils” table. The location is shown on the detailed soil maps. The soil qualities that affect use and management are described in the section “Soil Series and Detailed Soil Map Units.”

### **Unique Farmland**

Unique farmland is land other than prime farmland that is used for the production of specific high-value food and fiber crops. It has the special combination of soil qualities, location, growing season, and moisture supply needed for the economic production of sustained high yields of a specific high-quality crop when treated and managed by acceptable farming methods. Examples of such crops are citrus, cranberries, olives, tree nuts, and vegetables.

Unique farmland is used for a specific high-value food or fiber crop; has an adequate supply of available moisture for the specific crop because of stored moisture, precipitation, or irrigation; and has a combination of soil qualities, growing season, temperature, humidity, air drainage, elevation, aspect, and other factors, such as nearness to markets, that favors the production of a specific food or fiber crop.

Lists of unique farmland are developed as needed in cooperation with conservation districts and others.

### **Additional Farmland of Statewide Importance**

Some areas other than areas of prime and unique farmland are of statewide importance in the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, and oilseed crops. The criteria used in defining and delineating these areas are determined by the appropriate state

agency or agencies. Generally, additional farmland of statewide importance includes areas that nearly meet the criteria for prime farmland and that economically produce high yields of crops when treated and managed by acceptable farming methods. Some areas can produce as high a yield as areas of prime farmland if conditions are favorable. In some states, additional farmland of statewide importance may include tracts of land that have been designated for agriculture by state law.

Farmland of statewide importance is included in the list of prime farmland. Criteria is available in the "Montana Field Office Technical Guide" (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Section II).

### **Additional Farmland of Local Importance**

This land consists of areas that are of local importance in the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, and oilseed crops and are not identified as having nationwide or statewide importance. Where appropriate, this land is identified by local agencies. It may include tracts of land that have been designated for agriculture by local ordinance.

Lists of this land are developed as needed in cooperation with conservation districts and others.

## **Erosion Factors**

Soil erodibility (K) and soil-loss tolerance (T) factors are used in an equation that predicts the amount of soil lost through water erosion in areas of cropland. The procedure for predicting soil loss is useful in guiding the selection of soil and water conservation practices.

### **Soil Erodiability (K) Factor**

The soil erodibility factor (K) indicates the susceptibility of a soil to sheet and rill water erosion. The soil properties that influence erodibility are those that affect the infiltration rate, the movement of water through the soil, and the water storage capacity of the soil and those that allow the soil to resist dispersion, splashing, abrasion, and the transporting forces of

rainfall and runoff. The most important soil properties are the content of silt plus very fine sand; the content of sand coarser than very fine sand; and the content of organic matter, soil structure, and permeability.

### **Fragment-Free Soil Erodiability (Kf) Factor**

This is one of the factors used in the revised Universal Soil Loss Equation. Kf factor shows the erodibility of the fine-earth fraction, or the material less than 2 millimeters in size.

### **Soil-Loss Tolerance (T) Factor**

The soil-loss tolerance factor (T) is an estimate of the maximum annual rate of soil erosion that can occur over a sustained period without affecting crop productivity. The rate is expressed in tons of soil loss per acre per year. Ratings of 1 to 5 are used, depending on soil properties and prior erosion. The criteria used in assigning a T factor to a soil include maintenance of an adequate rooting depth for crop production, potential reduction of crop yields, maintenance of water-control structures affected by sedimentation, prevention of gullyng, and the value of nutrients lost through erosion.

### **Wind Erodiability Groups**

Wind erodibility is directly related to the percentage of dry, nonerodible surface soil aggregates larger than 0.84 millimeter in diameter. From this percentage, the wind erodibility index factor (I) is determined. This factor is an expression of the stability of the soil aggregates or the extent to which they are broken down by tillage and the abrasion caused by windblown soil particles. Soils are assigned to wind erodibility groups (WEG) having similar percentages of dry soil aggregates larger than 0.84 millimeter. Wind erodibility groups are defined in the "Soil Properties" section.

Local offices of the Natural Resources Conservation Service or the Cooperative Extension Service can provide additional information about wind erodibility groups and K, Kf, T, and I factors.

# Range

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Sue Noggles, Rangeland Management Specialist, Natural Resources Conservation Service, helped to prepare this section.

Approximately 250,000 acres, or 26 percent, of the survey area supports rangeland vegetation. About 320,000 acres, or 33 percent, supports forest understory vegetation that is suitable for livestock grazing.

Cow-calf operations are the major type of livestock enterprise. Range and forestland grazing are supplemented with both irrigated and nonirrigated pasture and hayland regrowth. A 5- to 6-month winter feed period is common throughout the area.

The range is used primarily for grazing domestic livestock. However, it also is used as wildlife habitat, recreational areas, and watershed, and it has esthetic value.

In areas that have similar climate and topography, differences in the kind and amount of vegetation produced on range are closely related to the kind of soil. Effective management is based on the relationship between the soils and vegetation and water.

*Rangeland* is defined as land on which the historic climax plant community is predominantly grasses, grasslike plants, forbs, or shrubs. Rangeland includes lands revegetated naturally or artificially when routine management of that vegetation is accomplished mainly through manipulation of grazing. Rangeland includes natural grasslands, savannas, shrublands, most deserts, tundra, alpine communities, coastal marshes, and wet meadows (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1976). The composition and production of the plant community are determined by soil, climate, topography, overstory canopy, and grazing management.

*Grazeable forestland* is defined as land on which the understory includes, as an integral part of the forest plant community, plants that can be grazed without significant impairment of other forest values.

*Native and naturalized pasture* are defined as forestland and naturalized open areas, other than rangeland, that are used primarily for the production of forage for grazing by livestock and wildlife.

Overstory trees, if present, are managed to promote naturally occurring native and introduced understory forage species located on the site (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1976).

The table, "Rangeland and Grazeable Understory—Productivity and Characteristic Plant Communities," shows, for each listed soil, the ecological site (rangeland ecological site or representative habitat type); the total annual production of vegetation in favorable, normal, and unfavorable years; the characteristic native vegetation; and the average percent composition of each species. Only those soils that are used as rangeland or grazeable forestland, or are suited to use as rangeland or grazeable forestland, are listed. Explanation of the column headings in this table follows.

*Ecological site* includes rangeland ecological site and representative habitat type as defined below.

*Rangeland ecological site* is a distinctive kind of rangeland with specific physical characteristics, which differs from other kinds of rangeland in its ability to produce a distinctive kind and amount of vegetation (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1976).

Many different ecological sites are in the survey area. Over time, the combination of plants best suited to a particular soil and climate has become established. If the soil is not excessively disturbed, this group of plants is the natural plant community for the site. Natural plant communities are not static but vary slightly from year to year and place to place.

The relationship between soils and vegetation was ascertained during this survey; thus, ecological sites generally can be determined directly from the soil map. Soil properties that affect moisture supply and plant nutrients have the greatest influence on the productivity of range plants. Soil reaction, salt content, and a seasonal high water table are also important. The "Montana Field Office Technical Guide," (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Section II) available at local offices of the Natural Resources Conservation Service, can provide specific information about rangeland ecological sites.

*Representative habitat type* is an aggregation of all land areas capable of producing similar climax plant communities. Habitat types are considered basic ecological subdivisions of landscapes. Each is recognized by distinctive combinations of overstory and understory plant species at climax. They are named for the dominant or characteristic vegetation of the climax community. Habitat types are useful in soil surveys when assessing the combined effects of aspect, slope, elevation, and soil properties on potential plant growth. The representative habitat type or phase displayed in this table is documented in the Pfister system (Pfister and others, 1977).

*Total annual production* is the amount of vegetation that can be expected to grow annually on well-managed range that is supporting the historic climax plant community. It includes all vegetation, whether or not it is palatable to grazing animals. It includes the current year's growth of leaves, twigs, and fruit of woody plants up to a height of 4.5 feet. Total annual production does not include the increase in stem diameter of trees and shrubs. It is expressed in pounds per acre of air-dry vegetation for favorable, normal, and unfavorable years. In a favorable year, the amount and distribution of precipitation, along with temperature, make growing conditions substantially better than average. In a normal year, growing conditions are about average. In an unfavorable year, growing conditions are well below average, generally because of low available soil moisture.

*Dry weight* is the total annual yield per acre of air-dry vegetation. Yields are adjusted to a common percent of air-dry moisture content. The relationship of green weight to air-dry weight varies according to such factors as exposure, amount of shade, recent rains, and unseasonable dry periods.

*Characteristic native vegetation* consists of the grasses, forbs, and shrubs that make up most of the potential natural plant community on each soil. The plants are listed by common name. Under *composition*, the expected percentage of the total annual production is given for each species making up the characteristic vegetation. The amount that can be used as forage depends on the kinds of grazing animals and on the grazing season. For grazed forestland, the table shows the kind and percentage of understory plants expected under a canopy density that is most nearly typical of forestland in which the production of wood crops is highest.

The quantity and quality of understory vegetation vary with the kind of soil, the age and kind of trees in the canopy, the density of the canopy, and the depth and condition of the litter. The density of the canopy

determines the amount of light that understory plants receive.

## Similarity Index

Similarity index, one method to evaluate an ecological site, compares the present plant community to the historic climax plant community for that site or to a desired plant community that is one of the site's potential vegetation states. The similarity index to the historic climax plant community is the percentage, by weight, of historic climax vegetation present on the site. Likewise, a similarity index to a desired plant community is the percentage, by weight, of the desired plant community present on the site. As the name implies, this method assesses the similarity of the plant community to the historic climax or desired plant community. The similarity index can provide an indication of past disturbances, as well as future management or treatment, or both, needed to achieve the client's objectives (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1976).

Abnormal disturbances that change the natural plant community include repeated overuse by livestock, excessive burning, erosion, and plowing. Grazing animals select the most palatable plants within a community. These plants will eventually die if they are continually grazed. A very severe disturbance can destroy the natural community. Under these conditions, less desirable plants, such as annuals and weeds, can invade. If the plant community has not deteriorated significantly, it eventually can return to dominantly natural plants if proper grazing management is applied.

Knowledge of the ecological site and the similarity index is necessary as a basis for planning and applying the management needed to maintain or improve the desired plant community for selected uses. Such information is needed to determine management objectives, proper grazing systems and stocking rates, suitable wildlife management practices, potential for recreational uses, and condition of watersheds.

## Rangeland Management

Rangeland management requires a knowledge of the kinds of soil and of the potential natural plant community. It also requires knowledge of the similarity index for the ecological site.

The objective in grazing land management is to provide the kind of plant community that provides for and maintains a healthy ecosystem, produces quality forage for the grazing animals, and meets the needs

of the grazing land enterprise and the desires of the landowner (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1976). Proper grazing management generally results in the optimum production of vegetation, reduction of less desirable species, conservation of water, and control of erosion. Sometimes, however, a similarity index percentage somewhat below the potential meets grazing needs, provides wildlife habitat, and protects soil and water resources.

Grazing management is the most important part of any rangeland management program. Proper grazing use, timely deferment of grazing, and planned rotation grazing systems are key practices. The experience of ranchers and research has shown that if no more than one-half of the current year's growth is grazed, a plant community in good or excellent condition can be maintained, and one in fair condition can be improved. The remaining one-half enables plants to make and store food for regrowth and root development. As a result, the desirable plants remain healthy and are not replaced by less desirable grasses and weeds. Also, the plant cover protects the soil from water erosion and soil blowing, increases moisture retention, improves tilth, increases the rate of water infiltration, and helps to control runoff.

Certain practices commonly are needed to obtain a uniform distribution of grazing. These practices include developing livestock watering facilities, fencing, properly locating salt and mineral supplements, constructing livestock trails in steeply sloping areas, and riding or herding.

Various kinds of grazing systems can be used in range management. No single grazing system is best under all conditions. The grazing system should increase the quantity and improve the quality of the range vegetation; should meet the needs of the individual operator; and should be designed according to topography, type of grazing animals, and resource management objectives.

Special improvement practices are needed in areas where management practices do not achieve the desired results or where recovery is too slow under forage management alone. These practices include range seeding, brush management, water spreading, prescribed burning, and mechanical treatment.

Some soils are suited to mechanical treatment for range improvement. On other soils, however, only proper grazing management can improve the range. Capability classes are designated by the numbers 1 through 8. The numbers indicate progressively greater limitations and narrower choices for practical use. Many soils in capability classes 1 through 4 are suited to such practices as seeding, mechanical

brush and weed control, and water spreading. Those soils in capability classes 7 and 8, however, are not suitable. Many soils in capability classes 1 through 4 are suited to tillage for seedbed preparation before native or introduced forage plant species are seeded. Soils in capability class 6 may be suited to limited surface disturbance, such as scarification, for seeding and as a means of increasing the rate of water infiltration for seed germination.

Where feasible, mechanical renovation practices, such as shallow chiseling, can help to speed recovery of the desired plants. These practices open up the surface and thus allow absorption of more moisture and production of more desirable plants. Mechanical renovation, brush management, and timely deferment of grazing allow recovery of desired plants.

Seeding may be needed in areas where less desirable plants are dominant. A clean, firm seedbed should be prepared, suitable species should be selected for seeding, and rest periods should be long enough to allow the new plants to become established. Special improvement practices can be effective only if the management system helps to keep the desirable plants healthy.

## Understory Management

Understory vegetation consists of grasses, forbs, shrubs, and other plants. If well managed, some forestland can produce enough understory vegetation to support grazing of livestock or wildlife, or both, without damage to the trees.

Forest understory production can be influenced by controlling canopy density in addition to the management of stocking rates, distribution, and season of use. Often both the woodland and range resources can be enhanced through thinning the overstory to canopy levels that optimize both timber and forage production. Broadcast seeding of disturbed areas soon after timber harvest can improve forage quantity and quality and reduce the chances of undesirable plants occupying the site.

Steepness of slopes and distance to drinking water are severe grazing management problems in much of the mountain and foothill areas. Variations in primary season of use, production levels, and plant communities because of elevation and aspect changes present additional challenges. Long, steep slopes provide limited access to livestock. Less sloping areas are subject to overuse. Grazing should be delayed until the soil is firm enough to withstand trampling and the plants have matured enough to withstand grazing pressure.

Riparian areas should be protected from overuse by livestock. Misuse results in deterioration of protective vegetation, reduction of streambank stability, and excessive erosion. Developing off-

stream-watering locations can successfully prevent cattle from overgrazing riparian areas and encourage better livestock distribution.

# Forestland

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Forestland makes up 650,000 acres, or 68 percent, of the survey area. Forest acreage, by ownership, is as follows: corporate timberlands—185,000 acres; Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes—190,000 acres; and nonindustrial private—275,000 acres.

Available water capacity, depth, fertility, and texture influence the ability of soils to support tree growth. Aspect, climate, elevation, and soils determine the kinds of trees that can grow on any site and their growth rates. In the survey area, the forested soils range from shallow to very deep, from nongravelly to extremely gravelly, and from fine textured to coarse textured. Because of differences among the soils, as well as differences in climate, geology, and topography, forests vary in composition and productivity.

Forested soils and adapted tree species are related to environmental gradients of soil temperature and moisture. Ponderosa pine is the only adapted tree species on xeric, frigid soils, including the sandy Sacheen and the clayey, sodium-affected, Millpocket soils. Western black cottonwood is typically associated with Lamoose and similar soils on low stream terraces and flood plains throughout the survey area. Lamoose and similar soils flood and have a water table near the soil surface during part of the growing season. Mean annual precipitation for this group ranges from 14 to 18 inches.

Generally, precipitation increases and temperature decreases with elevation gains in the foothill and mountain areas. As the topography becomes more rugged, aspect becomes a significant environmental factor. Ponderosa-pine and Douglas-fir forests with a bunchgrass-dominated understory typify ustic—dry, frigid soils. Landscapes include steep low- to mid-elevation south- and west-facing slopes, generally below 5,000 feet. The effective precipitation ranges from 18 to 20 inches. Associated soils include Finleypoint dry, Repp, Sharrott dry, Winkler, and Yourame dry.

Ponderosa-pine and Douglas-fir forests with an understory of common snowberry, kinnikinnick, mallow ninebark, Oregongrape, and pinegrass

dominate the ustic—moist, frigid soils. Landscapes include gentle low- to mid-elevation slopes on all aspects and steep topography on northern and eastern aspects below 4,000 feet. The effective precipitation ranges from 20 to 25 inches. Associated soils include Combest, Eaglewing, Finleypoint, Flott, Half Moon, Lozeau, Mocmont, Repp cool, Sharrott, Wildgen, Winkler cool, and Yourame.

With increased effective precipitation, udic, frigid soils support forests of western larch and grand fir along with Douglas-fir, lodgepole pine, and ponderosa pine. In the west end valley floor areas, western white pine, western red cedar, and western hemlock are also adapted. Common understory plants consist of beargrass, blue huckleberry, pinegrass, and twinflower. Landscapes include steep northern and eastern aspects below 5,000 feet and gentle topography on all aspects where effective precipitation ranges from 25 to 35 inches. Associated soils include Courville, Mitten, Rumblecreek, Selway, Tevis, and Winfall.

In the Salish Mountains, the temperatures are cool, but precipitation is relatively low. In this udic--dry, frigid area, the overstory contains western larch along with Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine with an understory of snowberry, pinegrass, Oregongrape, and kinnikinnick. The absence of blue huckleberry reflects the lower effective precipitation that ranges from 22 to 25 inches. Associated soils include Courville dry, Mitten dry, and Rumblecreek dry, Tevis dry, and Winfall dry.

The cold, moist environments at elevations above 5,000 feet on northern and eastern aspects and on all aspects above 6,000 feet are represented by the udic, cryic soils including Felan, Holloway, Phillcher, and Waldbillig. Douglas-fir, Engelmann spruce, lodgepole pine, subalpine fir, and western larch are associated with the lower elevations within this group. Common understory plants include beargrass, grouse whortleberry, and rusty menziesia. In the upper elevation ranges of this group, cool cryic climatic phases of the Holloway and Waldbillig soils support Engelmann spruce, lodgepole pine, and subalpine fir, with Douglas-fir and western larch no

longer adapted. The Phillcher soil occurs only at the highest elevations near the timberline where mountain heath and whitebark pine, along with Engelmann spruce and subalpine fir, become significant plant community components

The soil temperature regimes (cryic and frigid) and the soil moisture regimes (udic, ustic, and xeric) associated with the soils in the above environments are defined in "Keys to Soil Taxonomy" (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1998).

Forest managers can use the "Forestland Management" and "Forestland Productivity" tables to plan the use of soils for wood crops. Only those soils suitable for wood crops are listed. The estimates of the productivity of the soils in this survey are based on data acquired in the survey area and on published data (Alexander, 1966; Brickell, 1966; Brickell, 1968; Cummings, 1937; Dahms, 1964; Haig, 1932; Meyer, 1938; Mont. Dept. of State Lands, 1982; Myers, 1967; Sauerwein, 1979).

## Woodland Ordination System

The "Forestland Management" table lists the ordination (woodland suitability) symbol for each soil. The ordination system is a nationwide uniform system of labeling soils or groups of soils that are similar in use and management. The primary factors evaluated in the woodland ordination system are productivity of the forest overstory tree species and the principal soil properties resulting in hazards and limitations that affect forest management. There are three parts of the ordination system—class, subclass, and group. The class and subclass are referred to as the ordination symbol.

## Ordination Class Symbol

The first element of the ordination symbol is a number that denotes potential productivity in terms of cubic meters of wood per hectare per year for the indicator tree species; the larger the number, the greater the potential productivity. Potential productivity is based on site index and the corresponding culmination of mean annual increment. For example, the number 1 indicates a potential production of 1 cubic meter of wood per hectare per year (14.3 cubic feet per acre per year), and 10 indicates a potential production of 10 cubic meters of wood per hectare per year (143 cubic feet per acre per year).

*Indicator species* is a species that is common in the area and is generally, but not necessarily, the most productive on the soil. It is the species that

determines the ordination class. In the "Forestland Productivity" table, an indicator species is the first species listed for a particular map unit. This table shows the productivity for all species where data have been collected.

*Site index* is determined by taking height measurements and determining the age of selected trees within stands of a given species (Alexander, 1966). This index is the average height, in feet, that the trees attain in a specified number of years. This index applies to fully stocked, even-aged, unmanaged stands. The site indexes shown in the "Forestland Productivity" table are averages based on measurements made at sites that are representative of the soil series. When the site index and forestland productivity of different soils are compared, the values for the same tree species should be compared (Dahms, 1964). The higher the site index number, the more productive the soil for that species. Site index values are used in conjunction with yield tables (Cummings, 1937; Myers, 1967) to determine mean annual yields. Indirectly, they are used to determine the productivity class in the ordination class symbol.

Expected tree growth rate and the diversity of trees on a site are determined by a combination of elevation, aspect, soils, and climate. The ability of soils to support tree growth is dependent on variability in soil depth, fertility, texture, and available water capacity. Forested soils in the area range from shallow to very deep, nongravelly to extremely gravelly, fine textured to coarse textured, and those containing no lime to those containing high amounts of lime.

Equipment limitations were related to logging operations. Of prime consideration were difficulties encountered in yarding logs and the influence of logging activities on soil properties. Primary soil features considered for this rating were slope, soil texture, soil depth, seasonal soil wetness, and stoniness.

Seedling mortality ratings apply to planting stock one or two years of age, with the evaluation period beginning at the time of planting. For natural regeneration, the evaluation period was considered to begin a year after germination.

Windthrow hazard ratings were developed as follows:

Soils on north slopes that remain moist into the spring, and those having a high basal area to limit root development, were considered moderately prone to windthrow even though the soil materials provided a good anchoring medium for tree roots. On drier sites, clayey soils without rock fragments were also considered in this category.

Soils having a high water table (within 20 inches of the surface) long enough to inhibit root development were considered to be severely susceptible to windthrow.

When making ratings for plant competition, the limitation was considered slight if adequate regeneration usually occurs on a soil within 5 years.

For most species, overstory yield estimates were determined from the average annual yield versus site index curves. These curves were developed by adjusting data presented in yield tables published from several different sources. Average annual yield values were computed at the culmination of mean annual increment. Total cubic-foot-volume estimates are based on trees that are more than 4-inch diameter breast height.

### Ordination Subclass Symbol

The second element, or subclass, of the ordination symbol is a capital letter that indicates certain soil or physiographic characteristics that contribute to important hazards or limitations to be considered in management. The subclasses are defined as follows:

*Subclass X* indicates that forestland use and management are limited by stones or rocks.

*Subclass W* indicates that forestland use and management are significantly limited by excess water, either seasonally or throughout the year. Restricted drainage, a high water table, or flooding can adversely affect either stand development or management.

*Subclass T* indicates that forestland use and management are limited by a root zone that has toxic substances. Excessive alkalinity, acidity, sodium salts, or other toxic substances impede the development of desirable species.

*Subclass D* indicates that forestland use and management are limited by a restricted rooting depth. The rooting depth is restricted by hard bedrock, a hardpan, or other restrictive layers in the soil.

*Subclass C* indicates that forestland use and management are limited by the kind or amount of clay in the upper part of the soil.

*Subclass S* indicates that forestland use and management are limited by sandy soil, a low available water capacity, and a normally low content of available plant nutrients. The use of equipment is limited during dry periods.

*Subclass F* indicates that forestland use and management are limited by a high content of rock fragments that are larger than 2 millimeters and smaller than 10 inches. This subclass includes flaggy soils.

*Subclass R* indicates that forestland use and management are limited by excessive slope.

*Subclass A* indicates that no significant limitations affect forestland use and management.

## Forestland Management and Productivity

Information about the management and productivity of the forested map units in the survey area is given in the “Forestland Management” and “Forestland Productivity” tables.

### Management Concerns

In the “Forestland Management” table, the soils are rated for erosion hazard, equipment limitation, seedling mortality, windthrow hazard, and plant competition.

*Erosion hazard* is *slight* if there is little or no hazard of erosion, *moderate* if some measures are needed to control erosion during logging and road construction, and *severe* if intensive management or special equipment and methods are needed to prevent excessive soil loss.

*Equipment limitation* is *slight* if the use of equipment is not limited to a particular kind of equipment or time of year; *moderate* if there is a short seasonal limitation or a need for some modification in the management of equipment; and *severe* if there is a seasonal limitation, a need for special equipment or management, or a hazard in the use of equipment.

*Seedling mortality* ratings are for seedlings from good planting stock that are properly planted during a period of average rainfall. A rating of *slight* indicates that the expected mortality of the planted seedlings is less than 25 percent; *moderate*, 25 to 50 percent; and *severe*, more than 50 percent.

*Windthrow hazard* is *slight* if trees in wooded areas are not expected to be blown down by commonly occurring winds, *moderate* if some trees are blown down during periods of excessive soil wetness and strong winds, and *severe* if many trees are blown down during periods of excessive soil wetness and moderate or strong winds.

*Plant competition* is *slight* if there is little or no competition from other plants; *moderate* if plant competition is expected to hinder the development of a fully stocked stand of desirable trees; and *severe* if plant competition is expected to prevent the establishment of a desirable stand unless the site is intensively prepared, weeded, or otherwise managed for the control of undesirable plants.

## Potential Productivity

The potential productivity of merchantable, or *common trees*, is expressed as a site index, which is described under the heading “Ordination Class Symbol.” Commonly grown trees are those that forestland managers generally favor in intermediate or improvement cuttings. They are selected based on growth rate, quality, value, and marketability.

The column, *Trees that stands are commonly managed for*, in the “Forestland Productivity” table lists trees that are suitable for commercial wood production and that are suited to the soils.

## Main Forest Access Road Limitations and Hazards

The major management concerns affecting the use of the detailed soil map units in the survey area for forest access roads are listed in the “Main Forest Access Road Limitations and Hazards” table. The significance of each limitation or hazard and the criteria used to determine the limitation or hazard are described in this section.

*Areas of rock outcrop* and *depth to bedrock* can increase the cost of road construction and influence route planning. Constructing roads is difficult because of the need for rock removal and the need for additional soil material to provide a suitable road surface.

*Boulders* increase the cost of road construction and influence route planning. Construction is difficult mainly because of the need for extraction and disposal of the boulders.

*Dustiness* of the road surface material may cause safety problems and accelerate equipment wear. Dust-abatement measures are needed during dry periods.

*Flooding* in the area where a road is constructed may restrict use, result in damage to the roadway, and result in the sedimentation of waterways. The hazard of flooding can be reduced by installing a drainage system, elevating the roadbed, and using riprap and diversions.

*Low soil strength* of the soil material used to construct the road surface can result in rutting, in drainage problems, and in poor trafficability during wet periods. The road should be used only during dry periods or when the surface is frozen. Surfacing with material of suitable strength and installing a drainage system can help to overcome this limitation.

Roadbed material that has a high *shrink-swell potential* shrinks and swells markedly during dry and

wet periods. Excessive shrinking and swelling can damage the road surface or other features, such as bridge abutments, culverts, and erosion-control structures.

A steep *slope* results in increased construction and maintenance costs and increased sedimentation because of the large cuts necessary to create an adequate roadbed. Seeding the cut slope to suitable vegetation minimizes sedimentation. Large cuts can increase instability of the slope. Where slumping is a hazard, slope failure can become a significant maintenance and environmental problem.

*Slumping* causes safety problems and increases maintenance costs. Frequent clearing of slumped soil in the roadbed or rebuilding of the roadway may be needed to keep the road serviceable and drainage systems functioning.

*Stones* cause problems in maintaining a smooth road surface that has good trafficability. Unless the stones are removed, additions of suitable stone-free material may be needed when the road is surfaced.

The erodibility of the soil material in the roadbed influences the probability of *water erosion* resulting from the channeling of runoff in the roadway. Erosion can result in the sedimentation of streams. It can be controlled by reducing road grades and controlling runoff onto and off of the road surface through the installation of drainage measures.

Roads built across soils that have a *water table* may require substantial ballast, fabric, internal drainage systems, and other measures that maintain a road surface that has good trafficability. Construction and use of the road only during periods when the water table is not near the surface or when the road is frozen help to maintain trafficability and reduce the potential for site damage.

Following is an explanation of the criteria used to determine the limitations or hazards.

*Areas of rock outcrop*—Rock outcrop is a named component of the map unit.

*Areas of rubble land*—Rubble land is a named component of the map unit.

*Boulders*—The terms describing the texture within a depth of 24 inches include a bouldery modifier, or the soil is a bouldery phase.

*Depth to rock*—Hard bedrock is within a depth of 60 inches.

*Dustiness*—The surface layer is silt, silt loam, loam, or very fine sandy loam.

*Flooding*—The component of the map unit is occasionally flooded or frequently flooded.

*Low soil strength*—The component of the map unit has one of the following Unified classifications

(ASTM, 1993) within the 60-inch profile: ML, CL, MH, CH, OL, PT, or GC.

*Shrink-swell potential*—The component of the map unit has a high shrink-swell potential in a layer that is at least 10-inches thick and is within 40 inches of the surface.

*Slope*—The upper slope limit is more than 35 percent.

*Slumping*—The component of the map unit meets the requirements for low soil strength and has slopes of more than 35 percent.

*Stones*—The terms describing the texture within a depth of 24 inches include a very stony or extremely stony modifier, or the soil is a very stony or extremely stony phase.

*Water erosion*—The surface K factor multiplied by the upper slope limit is more than 10.

*Water table*—The component of the map unit has a water table within a depth of 60 inches.

# Recreation

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Soils of the survey area are rated in the “Recreational Development” table according to limitations that affect their suitability for recreation. The ratings are based on restrictive soil features, such as wetness, slope, and texture of the surface layer. Susceptibility to flooding is considered. Not considered in the ratings, but important in evaluating a site, are the location and accessibility of the area, the size and shape of the area and its scenic quality, the ability of the soil to support vegetation, the access to water, the potential water impoundment sites, and either the access to public sewer lines or the capacity of the soil to absorb septic tank effluent. Soils subject to flooding are limited, in varying degrees, for recreational uses by the duration of flooding and the season when it occurs. Onsite assessment of the height, duration, intensity, and frequency of flooding is essential in planning recreational facilities.

*Camp areas* are tracts of land used intensively as sites for tents, trailers, and campers and for outdoor activities that accompany such sites. These areas require site preparation, such as shaping and leveling the tent and parking areas, stabilizing roads and intensively used areas, and installing sanitary facilities and utility lines. Camp areas are subject to heavy foot traffic and some vehicular traffic. Soils are rated based on soil properties that influence the ease of developing camp areas and performance of the areas after development. Also considered are the soil properties that influence trafficability and promote the growth of vegetation after heavy use.

*Picnic areas* are natural or landscaped tracts of land that are subject to heavy foot traffic. Most vehicular traffic is confined to access roads and parking areas. Soils are rated based on soil properties that influence the cost of shaping the site, trafficability, and the growth of vegetation after development. The surface of picnic areas should absorb rainfall readily, remain firm under heavy foot traffic, and not be dusty when dry.

*Playgrounds* are areas used intensively for baseball, football, or similar activities. These areas require a nearly level soil that is free of stones and that can withstand heavy foot traffic and maintain an

adequate cover of vegetation. Soils are rated based on soil properties that influence the cost of shaping the site, trafficability, and the growth of vegetation. Slope and stoniness are the main concerns in developing playgrounds. The surface of the playgrounds should absorb rainfall readily, remain firm under heavy foot traffic, and not be dusty when dry.

*Paths and trails* are areas used for hiking and horseback riding. These areas should require little or no cutting and filling during site preparation. Soils are rated based on properties that influence trafficability and erodibility. Paths and trails should remain firm under foot traffic and not be dusty when dry.

*Golf fairways* are subject to heavy foot traffic and some light vehicular traffic. Cutting or filling may be required. The best soils for use as golf fairways are firm when wet, not dusty when dry, and not subject to prolonged flooding during the period of use. They have moderate slopes and no stones or boulders on the surface. The suitability of the soil for tees or greens is not considered in rating the soils.

The interpretive ratings in this table help engineers, planners, and others to understand how soil properties influence recreational uses. Ratings for proposed uses are given in terms of limitations. Only the most restrictive features are listed. Other features may limit a specific recreational use.

The degree of soil limitation is expressed as slight, moderate, or severe.

*Slight* means that soil properties are favorable for the rated use. The limitations are minor and can be easily overcome. Good performance and low maintenance are expected.

*Moderate* means that soil properties are moderately favorable for the rated use. The limitations can be overcome or modified by special planning, design, or maintenance. During some part of the year, the expected performance may be less desirable than that of soils rated *slight*.

*Severe* means that soil properties are unfavorable for the rated use. Examples of limitations are slope, bedrock near the surface, flooding, and a seasonal high water table. These limitations generally require

major soil reclamation, special design, or intensive maintenance. Overcoming the limitations generally is difficult and costly.

The information in the "Recreational Development" table can be supplemented by other information in

this survey, for example, interpretations for dwellings without basements and for local roads and streets in the "Building Site Development" table and interpretations for septic tank absorption fields in the "Sanitary Facilities" table.

# Wildlife Habitat

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Soils affect the kind and amount of vegetation that is available to wildlife as food and cover. They also affect the construction of water impoundments. The kind and abundance of wildlife depend largely on the amount and distribution of food, cover, and water. Wildlife habitat can be created or improved by planting appropriate vegetation, by maintaining the existing plant cover, or by promoting the natural establishment of desirable plants.

## Elements of Wildlife Habitat

The following paragraphs describe the elements of wildlife habitat.

Grain and seed crops are domestic grains and seed-producing herbaceous plants used by wildlife. Examples of these crops grown in the survey area are barley, oats, wheat, and, occasionally, oil seed crops such as buckwheat, canola, and sunflower.

Grasses and legumes are domestic perennial grasses and herbaceous legumes planted for wildlife food and cover. Examples of grasses and legumes in the survey area are alfalfa, brome, clover, meadow fescue, orchardgrass, reed canarygrass, timothy, and trefoil.

Wild herbaceous plants are native or naturally established forbs, grasses, and grasslikes that provide food and cover for wildlife. Examples of wild herbaceous plants in the survey area are American licorice, American vetch, basin wildrye, geranium, goldenrod, Idaho fescue, lupine, milkvetch, needlegrass, prairie clover, sedge, sunflower, and wheatgrass.

The major soil properties affecting the growth of forage and grain crops and wild herbaceous plants are amount of water available to plants, depth of the root zone, flooding, salinity or sodicity, texture of the surface layer, and wetness. The length of the growing season also is important.

Deciduous trees and woody understory produce bark, buds, catkins, foliage, nuts or other fruit, and twigs that wildlife eat. Examples of deciduous trees and woody understory in the survey area are antelope huckleberry, birch, bitterbrush, grouse

whortleberry, mountain mahogany, Oregongrape, quaking aspen, Rocky Mountain maple, skunkbush sumac, and willow. Examples of fruit-producing shrubs in the survey area that are suitable for planting on soils that have good potential for these plants are American plum, chokecherry, hawthorn, honeysuckle, redosier dogwood, rose, russet and silver buffaloberry, and serviceberry.

Coniferous plants are cone-bearing trees, shrubs, or ground covers that provide habitat or supply food in the form of browse, fruitlike cones, or seed. Examples of coniferous plants in the survey area are Douglas-fir; limber and lodgepole pine; and common, horizontal, and Rocky Mountain juniper.

The major soil properties affecting the growth of coniferous and deciduous trees and shrubs are amount of water available to plants, depth of the root zone, and wetness.

Wetland plants are annual and perennial wild herbaceous plants that grow on moist or wet sites. Submerged or floating aquatic plants are excluded. Wetland plants produce food or cover for wetland wildlife. Examples of wetland plants in the survey area are bulrush; cattail; rush; sedge; smartweed; waterplantain; and some grasses, such as mannagrass, reed canarygrass, and reedgrass.

The major soil properties affecting wetland plants are acidity or alkalinity, slope, texture of the surface layer, and wetness.

Shallow-water areas have an average depth of less than 5 feet. These areas, either naturally wet or created by dams, levees, or water-control measures in marshes or streams, are useful as habitat for some wildlife species. Examples of shallow-water areas in the survey area are beaver ponds and other wildlife ponds, muskrat marshes, waterfowl feeding areas, and wildlife watering developments.

The major soil properties affecting shallow-water areas are depth to bedrock, permeability, slope, surface stoniness, and wetness.

## Kinds of Wildlife Habitat

Habitat for openland wildlife consists of cropland, meadows, pasture, and other areas that are

overgrown with grasses, herbs, and shrubs. These areas produce grain and seed crops, grasses and legumes, and wild herbaceous plants. Wildlife attracted to openland areas include cottontail rabbit, field sparrow, Hungarian partridge, killdeer, meadowlark, pheasant, red fox, sage grouse, and sharp-tailed grouse.

Habitat for woodland wildlife consists of areas of coniferous or deciduous trees and shrubs or a mixture of these and associated grasses, legumes, and wild herbaceous plants. Wildlife attracted to woodland areas include black bear, deer, elk, owl, porcupine, raccoon, ruffed grouse, thrush, tree squirrel, wild turkey, and woodpecker.

Habitat for wetland wildlife consists of open, marshy or swampy, shallow-water areas that support water-tolerant plants. Wildlife attracted to wetland areas include beaver, bittern, duck, geese, heron, kingfisher, mink, muskrat, otter, and rail.

Habitat for rangeland wildlife consists of areas of shrubs and wild herbaceous plants. Wildlife attracted to rangeland areas include antelope, deer, lark bunting, meadowlark, and sage grouse.

## **Wildlife of Sanders and Parts of Lincoln and Flathead Counties**

Habitat quality and interspersions determine wildlife population levels. Suitability of a particular habitat for a wildlife species depends greatly on the nature of the plant communities present. Prevailing land use practices and management determine the quantity, quality, and distribution of plant communities. To some extent, the soils of the area govern these factors.

Rating soils for their ability to produce vegetative elements for wildlife habitat does not take into account local climatic influences, present use of soils, juxtaposition of habitat types or elements, or present distribution of wildlife species. For these reasons, the selection and suitability of an area for wildlife habitat development require onsite evaluation.

The survey area provides a variety of wildlife habitats, including coniferous forests, irrigated and nonirrigated cropland, marshes, mountainous areas of rolling foothills to glaciated peaks, ponds, rangeland, reservoirs, riparian woodland, rivers, and streams.

Rocky Mountain elk occur in all of the mountain ranges of the survey area. Elk habitat is classified as either grass or browse ranges based on the availability of winter food. Browse ranges

predominate in the mountains of the survey area. Elk spend summer and fall at relatively high elevations, where moist, lush forests are interspersed with grassy mountain meadows. They begin to move to lower elevations late in fall, depending upon the amount of snowfall. In forested environments, elk thrive during the shrub stage of plant succession. Elk numbers are lower in areas where coniferous trees grow in old burns and clearcuts and replace browse and herbaceous plants. Elk prefer bunchgrass ranges but are adaptable and also occupy timbered mountains and canyons.

Moose are most commonly found in the northern part of Sanders County, as well as west of the town of Helmville and along the eastern and western portions of the southern third of the survey area. They graze high-elevation spruce and fir forests extensively in summer and fall. As winter snows accumulate on high slopes, moose move along drainages to lower-elevation winter ranges where they reach their greatest population densities. Moose are primarily browsers in winter, utilizing a variety of willows and other deciduous shrubs. During summer, they often feed on aquatic plants of marshes, rivers, and streams.

Both mule deer and white-tailed deer occupy the survey area. Mule deer are especially numerous at mid and high elevations and along the foothills of major mountain ranges. White-tailed deer generally inhabit the lower areas, such as foothills, stream bottoms, and valleys. Their winter ranges are along the footslopes and south-facing slopes of mountains throughout the survey area.

Populations of Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep reside near Perma on the Flathead Indian Reservation, along the Clark Fork River, and on the National Bison Range.

A herd of about 300 bison, as well as populations of Rocky Mountain goats, inhabits the National Bison Range. Rocky Mountain goats also occupy the Thompson River area.

Black bear are common in forests of the northwest. Grizzly bear inhabit the Cabinet Range.

Bald and golden eagles, along with osprey, inhabit the valley bottoms in the major drainages.

Merriam's turkey inhabit the west end of the survey area from Thompson Falls to the Idaho state line. Turkey habitat can be enhanced by interspersing cropland and pasture with brushy drainageways and woodland.

Hungarian partridge and ring-necked pheasant inhabit farmlands throughout the survey area. A varied land use pattern, including annual weeds,

brushy cover, cattail marshes, irrigated and nonirrigated cropland, and small grains supports these introduced game birds.

Land management practices beneficial to Hungarian partridge and ring-necked pheasant include proper grazing use, protection of woody cover from burning or eradication, and retention of stubble and waste grain during winter through elimination of fall tillage. Field hedgerows and shelterbelts provide woody cover and winter food supply for both species. Bottomlands that support habitat for ring-necked pheasant include brushy ditchbanks, brushy drainageways, cattail marshes, and irrigated and nonirrigated cropland.

Three species of forest-dwelling grouse—blue, spruce, and ruffed—occur in the coniferous forests and riparian woodlands of the survey area. A variety of habitats, such as brushy draws, mixed forests, and stream bottoms, are important to forest grouse throughout the seasons. Blue and spruce grouse winter at high elevations. In early spring, they descend to semi-open timber areas for breeding, nesting, and rearing of chicks.

Blue grouse habitat is closely associated with the distribution patterns of Douglas-fir and true fir and the soil associations that support forests with these species as components.

Ruffed grouse inhabit the dense cover of coniferous and deciduous shrubs and trees,

especially along stream courses. Adult ruffed grouse may spend most of their lives in an area of less than 2 square miles.

Many marshes, ponds, potholes, reservoirs, rivers, and sloughs scattered throughout the survey area provide habitat for an abundance of waterfowl during spring and fall migrations and during the summer production period. Ducks, geese, and a variety of marsh and shore birds use these bodies of water for resting, nesting, and rearing of young.

Beaver, mink, and muskrat inhabit the principal watercourses. Badger, bobcat, coyote, ground squirrel, and a variety of small mammals occur throughout the survey area.

Populations of game and nongame species can be enhanced by using conservation practices to improve their habitat. These practices include development of odd or irregularly shaped areas in and adjacent to farmland to provide food and cover, protection of habitat from fire or grazing, and establishment of woody vegetation to provide winter shelter. Wildlife habitat may also be enhanced through application of commonly employed conservation practices including minimum tillage, planned grazing systems, pond construction, shelterbelts and field windbreaks, and stripcropping.



# Engineering

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This section provides information for planning land uses related to urban development and to water management. Soils are rated for various uses, and the most limiting features are identified. Ratings are given for building site development, sanitary facilities, construction materials, and water management. Ratings are based on observed soil performance and on estimated data and test data in the "Soil Properties" section.

*Information in this section is intended for land use planning, for evaluating land use alternatives, and for planning site investigations prior to design and construction. The information, however, has limitations. For example, estimates and other data generally apply only to that part of the soil within a depth of 5 or 6 feet. Because of the map scale, small areas of different soils may be included within the mapped areas of a specific soil.*

*The information is not site specific and does not eliminate the need for onsite investigation of the soils or for testing and analysis by personnel experienced in the design and construction of engineering works.*

Government ordinances and regulations that restrict certain land uses or impose specific design criteria were not considered in preparing the information in this section. Local ordinances and regulations should be considered in planning, in site selection, and in design.

Soil properties, site features, and observed performance were considered in determining the ratings in this section. During the fieldwork for this soil survey, determinations were made about grain-size distribution, liquid limit, plasticity index, soil reaction, depth to bedrock, hardness of bedrock within 5 or 6 feet of the surface, soil wetness, depth to a seasonal high water table, slope, likelihood of flooding, natural soil structure aggregation, and soil density. Data were collected about kinds of clay minerals, mineralogy of the sand and silt fractions, and kinds of adsorbed cations. Estimates were made for erodibility, permeability, corrosivity, shrink-swell potential, available water capacity, and other behavioral characteristics affecting engineering uses.

This information can be used to evaluate the potential of areas for residential, commercial,

industrial, and recreational uses; make preliminary estimates of construction conditions; evaluate alternative routes for roads, streets, highways, pipelines, and underground cables; evaluate alternative sites for sanitary landfills, septic tank absorption fields, and sewage lagoons; plan detailed onsite investigations of soils and geology; locate potential sources of gravel, sand, earthfill, and topsoil; plan drainage systems, irrigation systems, ponds, terraces, and other structures for soil and water conservation; and predict performance of proposed small structures and pavements by comparing the performance of existing similar structures on the same or similar soils.

Additional interpretations can be made using the information in the tables, along with soil maps, soil descriptions, and other data provided in this survey.

Some of the terms used in this soil survey have a special meaning in soil science and are defined in the "Glossary."

## Building Site Development

The "Building Site Development" table shows the degree and kind of soil limitations that affect shallow excavations, dwellings with and without basements, small commercial buildings, local roads and streets, and lawns and landscaping. Limitations are considered *slight* if soil properties and site features generally are favorable for the indicated use and limitations are minor and easily overcome; *moderate* if soil properties or site features are not favorable for the indicated use and special planning, design, or maintenance is needed to overcome or minimize the limitations; and *severe* if soil properties or site features are so unfavorable or so difficult to overcome that special design, significant increases in construction costs, and possibly increased maintenance are required. Special feasibility studies may be required where the soil limitations are severe.

*Shallow excavations* are trenches or holes dug to a maximum depth of 5 or 6 feet for basements, graves, open ditches, utility lines, and other purposes. Ratings are based on soil properties, site features, and observed soil performance. Ease of digging,

filling, and compacting is affected by the depth to bedrock, to a cemented pan, or to a very firm dense layer; stone content; soil texture; and slope. Depth to a seasonal high water table and susceptibility of the soil to flooding affect the time of year that excavations can be made. Soil texture and depth to the water table affect the resistance of the excavation walls or banks to sloughing or caving.

*Dwellings and small commercial buildings* are structures built on shallow foundations on undisturbed soil. The load limit is the same as that for single-family dwellings no higher than three stories. Ratings are made for dwellings without basements, dwellings with basements, and small commercial buildings without basements. Ratings are based on soil properties, site features, and observed soil performance. A high water table, flooding, shrinking and swelling, and organic layers can cause the movement of footings. A high water table, depth to bedrock or to a cemented pan, large stones, and flooding affect the ease of excavation and construction. Landscaping and grading that require cuts and fills of more than 5 or 6 feet are not considered.

*Local roads and streets* have an all-weather surface and carry automobile and light truck traffic all year. They have a subgrade of cut or fill soil material; a base of gravel, crushed rock, or stabilized soil material; and a flexible or rigid surface. Cuts and fills generally are limited to less than 6 feet. Ratings are based on soil properties, site features, and observed soil performance. Depth to bedrock or to a cemented pan, a high water table, flooding, large stones, and slope affect the ease of excavating and grading. Soil strength (as inferred from the engineering classification of the soil), shrink-swell potential, potential for frost action, and depth to a high water table affect the traffic-supporting capacity.

*Lawns and landscaping* require soils on which turf and ornamental trees and shrubs can be established and maintained. Ratings are based on soil properties, site features, and observed soil performance. Soil reaction; a high water table; depth to bedrock or to a cemented pan; available water capacity in the upper 40 inches; and content of salts, sodium, and sulfidic materials affect plant growth. Flooding; wetness; slope; stoniness; and amount of sand, clay, or organic matter in the surface layer affect trafficability after vegetation is established.

## Sanitary Facilities

The "Sanitary Facilities" table shows the degree and the kind of soil limitations that affect septic tank

absorption fields, sewage lagoons, and sanitary landfills. This table also shows the suitability of the soils for use as a daily cover for landfill.

Soil properties are important in selecting sites for sanitary facilities and in identifying limiting soil properties and site features to be considered in planning, design, and installation. Soil limitation ratings of *slight*, *moderate*, or *severe* are given for septic tank absorption fields, sewage lagoons, and trench and area sanitary landfills. Soil suitability ratings of *good*, *fair*, and *poor* are given for daily cover for landfill.

A rating of *slight* or *good* indicates that the soils have no limitations or that the limitations can be easily overcome. Good performance and low maintenance can be expected. A rating of *moderate* or *fair* indicates that the limitations should be recognized but generally can be overcome by good management or special design. A rating of *severe* or *poor* indicates that overcoming the limitations is difficult or impractical. Increased maintenance may be required.

*Septic tank absorption fields* are areas in which subsurface systems of tile or perforated pipe distribute effluent from a septic tank into the natural soil. The centerline of the tile is assumed to be at a depth of 24 inches. Only the part of the soil between depths of 24 and 60 inches is considered in making the ratings. Soil properties and site features considered are those that affect the absorption of the effluent, those that affect the construction and maintenance of the system, and those that may affect public health.

Ratings are based on soil properties, site features, and observed soil performance. Permeability, a high water table, depth to bedrock or to a cemented pan, and flooding affect absorption of the effluent. Large stones and bedrock, or a cemented pan, interfere with installation.

Unsatisfactory performance of septic tank absorption fields, including excessively slow absorption of effluent, surfacing of effluent, and hillside seepage, can affect public health. Ground water can be polluted if highly permeable sand and gravel or fractured bedrock is less than 4 feet below the base of the absorption field, if slope is excessive, or if the water table is near the surface. There must be unsaturated soil material beneath the absorption field to filter the effluent effectively. Many local ordinances require that this material be of a certain thickness.

*Sewage lagoons* are shallow ponds constructed to hold sewage while aerobic bacteria decompose the solid and liquid wastes. Lagoons should have a

nearly level floor surrounded by cut slopes or embankments of compacted, relatively impervious soil material. Aerobic lagoons generally are designed to hold sewage within a depth of 2 to 5 feet. Relatively impervious soil material for the lagoon floor and sides is desirable to minimize seepage and contamination of local ground water.

The “Sanitary Facilities” table gives ratings for the natural soil that makes up the lagoon floor. The surface layer and, generally, 1 or 2 feet of soil material below the surface layer are excavated to provide material for the embankments. Ratings are based on soil properties, site features, and observed soil performance. Considered in the ratings are slope, permeability, a high water table, depth to bedrock or to a cemented pan, flooding, large stones, and content of organic matter.

Excessive seepage resulting from rapid permeability in the soil or a water table that is high enough to raise the level of sewage in the lagoon causes a lagoon to function unsatisfactorily. Pollution results if seepage is excessive or if floodwater overtops the lagoon. A high content of organic matter is detrimental to proper functioning of the lagoon because it inhibits aerobic activity. Slope, bedrock, and cemented pans can cause construction problems, and large stones can hinder compaction of the lagoon floor.

*Trench sanitary landfill* is an area where solid waste is disposed of by placing refuse in successive layers in an excavated trench. Waste is spread, compacted, and covered daily with a thin layer of soil, excavated from the trench. When the trench is full, a final cover of soil material at least 2-feet thick is placed over the landfill. Soil properties that influence the risk of pollution, the ease of excavation, trafficability, and revegetation are the major considerations in rating the soils.

*Area sanitary landfill* is an area where solid waste is disposed of by placing refuse in successive layers on the surface of the soil. Waste is spread, compacted, and covered daily with a thin layer of soil that is imported from a source away from the site. A final cover of soil at least 2-feet thick is placed over the completed landfill. Soil properties that influence trafficability, revegetation, and the risk of pollution are the main considerations in rating the soils for area sanitary landfills.

Both types of landfill must be able to bear heavy vehicular traffic. Both types involve a risk of ground-water pollution. Ratings in the “Sanitary Facilities” table are based on soil properties, site features, and observed soil performance. Permeability, depth to bedrock or to a cemented pan, a high water table,

slope, and flooding affect both types of landfill. Texture, stones and boulders, highly organic layers, soil reaction, and content of salts and sodium affect trench landfills. Unless otherwise stated, the ratings apply only to that part of the soil within a depth of about 6 feet. For deeper trenches, a limitation rated slight or moderate may not be valid. Onsite investigation is needed.

*Daily cover for landfill* is the soil material that is used to cover compacted solid waste in an area sanitary landfill. Soil material is obtained offsite, transported to the landfill, and spread over the waste. The suitability of a soil for use as cover is based on properties that affect workability and the ease of digging, moving, and spreading the material over the refuse daily during both wet and dry periods.

Soil texture, wetness, rock fragments, and slope affect the ease of removing and spreading the material during wet and dry periods. Loamy or silty soils that are free of large stones or excess gravel are the best cover for a landfill. Clayey soils are sticky or cloddy and difficult to spread; sandy soils are subject to soil blowing.

After soil material has been removed, the soil material remaining in the borrow area must be thick enough over bedrock, a cemented pan, or the water table to permit revegetation. Soil material used as final cover for a landfill should be suitable for plants. The surface layer generally has the best workability, the most organic matter, and the best potential for plants. Material from the surface layer should be stockpiled for use as the final cover.

## Waste Management

Soil properties are important when organic waste is applied as fertilizer and wastewater is applied in irrigated areas. They are also important when soil is used as a medium for treatment and disposal of organic waste and wastewater. Unfavorable soil properties can result in environmental damage.

Use of organic waste and wastewater as production resources results in energy and resource conservation and minimizes the problems associated with waste disposal. If disposal is the goal, applying a maximum amount of the organic waste or the wastewater to a minimal area holds costs to a minimum and environmental damage is the main hazard. If reuse is the goal, a minimum amount should be applied to a maximum area, then environmental damage is unlikely.

Interpretations developed for waste management may include ratings for manure- and food-processing waste; municipal sewage sludge; use of wastewater

for irrigation; and treatment of wastewater by slow rate, overland flow, and rapid infiltration processes.

Specific information regarding waste management is available from local Natural Resources Conservation Service or Cooperative Extension Service offices.

## Construction Materials

The “Construction Materials” table gives information about the soils as a source of roadfill, sand, gravel, and topsoil. Soils are rated *good*, *fair*, or *poor* as a source of roadfill and topsoil. They are rated as a *probable* or *improbable* source of sand and gravel.

*Roadfill* is soil material that is excavated in one place and used in road embankments in another place. In the “Construction Materials” table, soils are rated as a source of roadfill for low embankments, generally less than 6-feet high and less exacting in design than higher embankments.

Ratings are for soil material below the surface layer to a depth of 5 or 6 feet. It is assumed that soil layers will be mixed during excavating and spreading. Many soils have layers of contrasting suitability within their profile. The “Engineering Index Properties” table provides detailed information about each soil layer. This information can help to determine the suitability of each layer for use as roadfill. Soil performance after it is stabilized with lime or cement is not considered in the ratings.

Ratings are based on soil properties, site features, and observed soil performance. Thickness of suitable material is a major consideration. Ease of excavation is affected by large stones, a high water table, and slope. How well the soil performs in place after it has been compacted and drained is determined by its strength (as inferred from the engineering classification of the soil) and shrink-swell potential.

Soils rated *good* contain significant amounts of sand or gravel or both. They have at least 5 feet of suitable material, a low shrink-swell potential, few cobbles and stones, and slopes of 15 percent or less. Depth to the water table is more than 3 feet. Soils rated *fair* are more than 35 percent silt- and clay-sized particles and have a plasticity index of less than 10. They have a moderate shrink-swell potential, slopes of 15 to 25 percent, or many stones. Depth to the water table is 1 to 3 feet. Soils rated *poor* have one or more of the following characteristics: a plasticity index of more than 10, a high shrink-swell potential, many stones, slopes of more than 25 percent, or a water table at a depth of less than

1 foot. They may have layers of suitable material, but it is less than 3-feet thick.

*Sand* and *gravel* are natural aggregates suitable for commercial use with a minimum of processing. They are used in many kinds of construction. Specifications for each use vary widely. In the “Construction Materials” table, only the probability of finding material in suitable quantity in or below the soil is evaluated. Suitability of the material for specific purposes is not evaluated nor are factors that affect excavation of the material.

Properties used to evaluate the soil as a source of sand or gravel are gradation of grain sizes (as indicated by the engineering classification of the soil), thickness of suitable material, and content of rock fragments. Kinds of rock, acidity, and stratification are given in the soil series descriptions. Gradation of grain sizes is given in the “Engineering Index Properties” table.

A soil rated as a *probable* source has a layer of clean sand or gravel or a layer of sand or gravel that is up to 12 percent silty fines. This material must be at least 3-feet thick and less than 50 percent, by weight, large stones. All other soils are rated as an *improbable* source. Fragments of soft bedrock, such as shale and siltstone, are not considered sand and gravel.

*Topsoil* is used to cover an area so that vegetation can be established and maintained. The upper 40 inches of a soil is evaluated for use as topsoil. Reclamation potential of the borrow area is also evaluated.

Toxic material and such properties as soil reaction, available water capacity, and fertility affect plant growth. Slope, the water table, rock fragments, soil texture, and thickness of suitable material affect ease of excavating, loading, and spreading. Slope, the water table, rock fragments, bedrock, and toxic material affect reclamation of the borrow area.

Soils rated *good* have friable, loamy material to a depth of at least 40 inches. They are free of stones and cobbles, have little or no gravel, and have slopes of less than 8 percent. They are low in content of soluble salts, are naturally fertile or respond well to fertilizer, and are not so wet that excavation is difficult.

Soils rated *fair* are sandy soils; loamy soils that have a relatively high content of clay; soils that have only 20 to 40 inches of suitable material; soils that have an appreciable amount of gravel, stones, or soluble salts; or soils that have slopes of 8 to 15 percent. Soils are not so wet that excavation is difficult.

Soils rated *poor* are very sandy or clayey; have less than 20 inches of suitable material; have a large amount of gravel, stones, or soluble salts; have slopes of more than 15 percent; or have a seasonal high water table at or near the surface.

The surface layer of most soils generally is preferred for topsoil because of its organic matter content. Organic matter greatly increases the absorption and retention of moisture and nutrients for plant growth.

## Water Management

The “Water Management” table gives information about soil properties and site features that affect water management. The degree and kind of soil limitations are given for pond reservoir areas; embankments, dikes, and levees; and aquifer-fed excavated ponds. Limitations are considered *slight* if soil properties and site features generally are favorable for the indicated use and limitations are minor and easily overcome; *moderate* if soil properties or site features are not favorable for the indicated use and special planning, design, or maintenance is needed to overcome or minimize limitations; and *severe* if soil properties or site features are so unfavorable or so difficult to overcome that special design, significant increase in construction costs, and possibly increased maintenance are required.

This table also gives for each soil the restrictive features that affect drainage, irrigation, terraces and diversions, and grassed waterways.

*Pond reservoir areas* hold water behind a dam or embankment. Soils best suited to this use have low seepage potential in the upper 60 inches. Seepage potential is determined by permeability of the soil and depth to fractured bedrock or other permeable material. Excessive slope can affect the storage capacity of the reservoir area.

*Embankments, dikes, and levees* are raised structures of soil material, generally less than 20-feet high, constructed to impound water or to protect land against overflow. In the “Water Management” table, soils are rated as a source of material for embankment fill. Ratings apply to soil material below the surface layer to a depth of about 5 feet. It is assumed that soil layers will be uniformly mixed and compacted during construction.

Ratings do not indicate the ability of the natural soil to support an embankment. Soil properties to a depth even more than the height of the embankment can affect performance and safety of the

embankment. Generally, deeper onsite investigation is needed to determine these properties.

Soil material in embankments must be resistant to seepage, piping, and erosion and have favorable compaction characteristics. Unfavorable features include less than 5 feet of suitable material and a high content of stones or boulders, organic matter, or salts or sodium. A high water table affects the amount of usable material and trafficability.

*Aquifer-fed excavated ponds* are pits or dugouts that extend to a ground-water aquifer or to a depth below a permanent water table. Excluded are ponds fed only by surface runoff and embankment ponds that impound water 3 feet or more above the original surface. Depth to a permanent water table, permeability of the aquifer, and quality of the water as inferred from the salinity of the soil affect excavated ponds. Depth to bedrock and the content of large stones affect the ease of excavation.

*Drainage* is the removal of excess surface and subsurface water from the soil. How easily and effectively the soil is drained depends on the depth to bedrock, to a cemented pan, or to other layers that affect the rate of water movement; permeability; depth to a high water table or depth of standing water if the soil is subject to ponding; slope; susceptibility to flooding; subsidence of organic layers; and the potential for frost action. Depth to bedrock or to a cemented pan, large stones, slope, and the hazard of cutbanks caving affect excavating and grading and the stability of ditchbanks. Productivity of the soil after drainage is adversely affected by extreme acidity or by toxic substances in the root zone, such as salts, sodium, or sulfur. Availability of drainage outlets is not considered in the ratings.

*Irrigation* is the controlled application of water to supplement rainfall and support plant growth. Depth to the water table, the need for drainage, flooding, available water capacity, intake rate, permeability, erosion hazard, and slope affect the design and management of an irrigation system. Large stones and depth to bedrock or to a cemented pan affect the construction of a system. Depth of the root zone, the amount of salts or sodium, and soil reaction affect the performance of a system.

*Terraces and diversions* are embankments or a combination of channels and ridges constructed across a slope to control erosion and conserve moisture by intercepting runoff. Slope, wetness, large stones, and depth to bedrock or to a cemented pan affect the construction of terraces and diversions. Restricted rooting depth, severe hazard of soil blowing or water erosion, excessively coarse texture,

and restricted permeability adversely affect maintenance.

*Grassed waterways* are natural or constructed channels, generally broad and shallow, that conduct surface water to outlets at a nonerosive velocity. Large stones, wetness, slope, and depth to bedrock

or to a cemented pan affect the construction of grassed waterways. A hazard of soil blowing, low available water capacity, restricted rooting depth, toxic substances such as salts or sodium, and restricted permeability adversely affect the growth and maintenance of the grass after construction.

# Soil Properties

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Data relating to soil properties are collected during the course of a soil survey. Data and estimates of soil and water features, listed in the tables, are explained on the following pages.

Soil properties are determined by field examination of the soils and by laboratory index testing of some benchmark soils. Established standard procedures are followed. During the survey, many shallow borings are made and examined to identify and classify the soils and to delineate them on soil maps. Samples are taken from some typical profiles and tested in the laboratory to determine grain-size distribution, plasticity, and compaction characteristics.

Estimates of soil properties are based on field examinations, on laboratory tests of samples from the survey area, and on laboratory tests of samples of similar soils in nearby areas. Tests verify field observations, verify properties that cannot be estimated accurately by field observation, and help to characterize key soils.

Estimates of soil properties shown in the tables include the range of grain-size distribution and Atterberg limits, the engineering classification, and the physical and chemical properties of the major layers of each soil. Pertinent soil and water features also are given.

## Engineering Index Properties

The "Engineering Index Properties" table gives estimates of the engineering classification and of the range of index properties for major layers of each soil in the survey area. Most soils have layers of contrasting properties within the upper 5 or 6 feet.

*Depth* to the upper and lower boundaries of each layer is indicated. Soil series descriptions in Part I of this survey give the range in depth and information on other properties of each layer.

*Texture* is given in the standard terms used by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. These terms are defined according to percentages of sand, silt, and clay in the fraction of the soil that is less than 2 millimeters in diameter. "Loam," for example, is soil that is 7 to 27 percent clay, 28 to 50 percent silt, and less than 52 percent sand. If the content of particles

coarser than sand is as much as 15 percent, an appropriate modifier is added, for example, "gravelly." The "Glossary" defines textural terms.

*Classification* of the soils is determined according to the Unified soil classification system (ASTM, 1993) and the system adopted by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO, 1986).

The Unified system classifies soils according to properties that affect their use as construction material. Soils are classified according to grain-size distribution of the fraction less than 3 inches in diameter and according to plasticity index, liquid limit, and organic matter content. Sandy and gravelly soils are identified as GW, GP, GM, GC, SW, SP, SM, and SC; silty and clayey soils as ML, CL, OL, MH, CH, and OH; and highly organic soils as PT. Soils exhibiting engineering properties of two groups can have a dual classification, for example, SP-SM.

The AASHTO system classifies soils according to those properties that affect roadway construction and maintenance. In this system, the fraction of a mineral soil that is less than 3 inches in diameter is classified in one of seven groups from A-1 through A-7 based on grain-size distribution, liquid limit, and plasticity index. Soils in group A-1 are coarse grained and low in content of fines (silt and clay). At the other extreme, soils in group A-7 are fine grained. Highly organic soils are classified in group A-8 based on visual inspection.

If laboratory data are available, the A-1, A-2, and A-7 groups are further classified as A-1-a, A-1-b, A-2-4, A-2-5, A-2-6, A-2-7, A-7-5, or A-7-6. As an additional refinement, the suitability of a soil as subgrade material can be indicated by a group index number. Group index numbers range from 0 for the best subgrade material to 20 or higher for the poorest.

*Rock fragments* 3 to 10 inches in diameter and larger than 10 inches in diameter are indicated as a percentage of the total soil on a dry-weight basis. The percentages are estimates determined mainly by converting volume percentage in the field to weight percentage.

*Percentage (of soil particles) passing designated sieves* is the percentage of the soil fraction less than 3 inches in diameter based on an oven-dry weight.

The sieves, numbers 4, 10, 40, and 200 (USA Standard Series), have openings of 4.76, 2.00, 0.420, and 0.074 millimeters, respectively. Estimates are based on laboratory tests of soils sampled in the survey area and in nearby areas and on estimates made in the field.

*Liquid limit* and *plasticity index* (Atterberg limits) indicate the plasticity characteristics of a soil. The estimates are based on test data from the survey area, or from nearby areas, and on field examination.

The estimates of grain-size distribution, liquid limit, and plasticity index are generally rounded to the nearest 5 percent. Thus, if the ranges of gradation and Atterberg limits extend a marginal amount (1 or 2 percentage points) across classification boundaries, the classification in the marginal zone is omitted in the table.

## Physical and Chemical Properties

The “Physical Properties of the Soils” and “Chemical Properties of the Soils” tables show estimates of some characteristics and features that affect soil behavior. These estimates are given for the major layers of each soil in the survey area. The estimates are based on field observations and on test data for these and similar soils.

The following paragraphs describe the columns in the “Physical Properties of the Soils” table.

*Depth* to the upper and lower boundaries of each layer is indicated. Range in depth and information on other properties of each layer are given in the series descriptions in Part I of this survey.

Particle size is the effective diameter of a soil particle as measured by sedimentation, sieving, or micrometric methods. Particle sizes are expressed as classes with specific effective diameter class limits.

*Clay* as a soil separate, or component, consists of mineral soil particles that are less than 0.002 millimeter in diameter. The estimated clay content of each major soil layer is given as a percentage, by weight, of the soil material that is less than 2 millimeters in diameter.

The content of sand, silt, and clay affects the physical behavior of a soil. Particle size is important for engineering and agronomic interpretations, for determination of soil hydrologic qualities, and for soil classification.

The amount and kind of clay greatly affect the fertility and physical condition of the soil. They determine the ability of the soil to adsorb cations and to retain moisture. They influence shrink-swell

potential, permeability, plasticity, ease of soil dispersion, and other soil properties. The amount and kind of clay in a soil also affect tillage and earth-moving operations.

*Moist bulk density* is the weight of soil (oven-dry) per unit volume. Volume is measured when the soil is at field moisture capacity, that is, the moisture content at  $\frac{1}{3}$ -bar moisture tension. Weight is determined after drying the soil at 105 degrees C. In the “Physical Properties of the Soils” table, the estimated moist bulk density of each major soil horizon is expressed in grams per cubic centimeter of soil material that is less than 2 millimeters in diameter. Bulk density data are used to compute shrink-swell potential, available water capacity, total pore space, and other soil properties. The moist bulk density of a soil indicates the pore space available for water and roots. A bulk density of more than 1.6 can restrict water storage and root penetration. Moist bulk density is influenced by texture, kind of clay, content of organic matter, and soil structure.

*Permeability* refers to the ability of a soil to transmit water or air. The estimates indicate the rate of downward movement of water when the soil is saturated. They are based on soil characteristics observed in the field, particularly structure, porosity, and texture. Permeability is considered in the design of soil drainage systems and septic tank absorption fields.

*Available water capacity* refers to the quantity of water that the soil is capable of storing for use by plants. The capacity for water storage is given in inches of water per inch of soil for each major soil layer. Capacity varies, depending on soil properties that affect the retention of water and the depth of the root zone. The most important properties are the content of organic matter, soil texture, bulk density, and soil structure. Available water capacity is an important factor in the choice of plants or crops to be grown and in the design and management of irrigation systems. Available water capacity is not an estimate of the quantity of water actually available to plants at any given time.

*Shrink-swell potential* is the potential for volume change in a soil with a loss or gain in moisture. Volume change occurs mainly because of the interaction of clay minerals with water and varies with the amount and type of clay minerals in the soil. The size of the load on the soil and the magnitude of the change in soil moisture content influence the amount of swelling of soils in place. Laboratory measurements of swelling of undisturbed clods were made for many

soils. For others, swelling was estimated based on the kind and amount of clay minerals in the soil and on measurements of similar soils.

If the shrink-swell potential is rated moderate to very high, shrinking and swelling can cause damage to buildings, roads, and other structures. Special design is often needed.

Shrink-swell potential classes are based on the change in length of an unconfined clod as moisture content is increased from air-dry to field capacity. The classes are *low*, a change of less than 3 percent; *moderate*, 3 to 6 percent; and *high*, more than 6 percent. *Very high*, more than 9 percent, is sometimes used.

*Organic matter* is the plant and animal residue in the soil at various stages of decomposition. In the "Physical Properties of the Soils" table, the estimated content of organic matter is expressed as a percentage, by weight, of the soil material that is less than 2 millimeters in diameter.

The content of organic matter in a soil can be maintained or increased by returning crop residue to the soil. It affects the available water capacity, infiltration rate, and tilth. Organic matter is a source of nitrogen and other nutrients for crops.

*Erosion factors* are shown in the "Physical Properties of the Soils" table as the K factor (K and Kf) and the T factor. *Erosion factor K* indicates the susceptibility of a soil to sheet and rill erosion by water. Factor K is one of six factors used in the Universal Soil Loss Equation (USLE) to predict the average annual rate of soil loss by sheet and rill erosion in tons per acre per year. The estimates are based primarily on percentage of silt, very fine sand, sand, and organic matter (up to 4 percent) and on soil structure and permeability. Values of K range from 0.02 to 0.69. Other factors being equal, the higher the value, the more susceptible the soil is to sheet and rill erosion by water.

*Erosion factor K* indicates the erodibility of the whole soil. The estimates are modified by the presence of rock fragments.

*Erosion factor Kf* indicates the erodibility of the fine-earth fraction, or the material less than 2 millimeters in size.

*Erosion factor T* is an estimate of the maximum average annual rate of soil erosion by wind or water that can occur without affecting crop productivity over a sustained period. The rate is in tons per acre per year.

*Wind erodibility groups* are made up of soils that have similar properties affecting their resistance to soil

blowing in cultivated areas. The groups indicate the susceptibility of soils to soil blowing. Soils are grouped according to the following distinctions:

1. Coarse sands, sands, fine sands, and very fine sands. These soils generally are not suitable for crops. They are extremely erodible, and vegetation is difficult to establish.

2. Loamy coarse sands, loamy sands, loamy fine sands, loamy very fine sands, and sapric soil material. These soils are very highly erodible. Crops can be grown if intensive measures to control soil blowing are used.

3. Coarse sandy loams, sandy loams, fine sandy loams, and very fine sandy loams. These soils are highly erodible. Crops can be grown if intensive measures to control soil blowing are used.

- 4L. Calcareous loams, silt loams, clay loams, and silty clay loams that have more than 5 percent finely divided calcium carbonate. These soils are highly erodible. Crops can be grown if intensive measures to control soil blowing are used.

4. Clays, silty clays, noncalcareous clay loams, and silty clay loams that are more than 35 percent clay. These soils are moderately erodible. Crops can be grown if measures to control soil blowing are used.

5. Noncalcareous loams and silt loams that are less than 20 percent clay and sandy clay loams, sandy clays, and hemic soil material. These soils have less than 5 percent finely divided calcium carbonate. They are moderately erodible. Crops can be grown if measures to control soil blowing are used.

6. Noncalcareous loams and silt loams that are more than 20 percent clay and noncalcareous clay loams that are less than 35 percent clay. These soils have less than 5 percent finely divided calcium carbonate. They are moderately erodible. Crops can be grown if ordinary measures to control soil blowing are used.

7. Silts, noncalcareous silty clay loams that are less than 35 percent clay, and fibric soil material. These soils have less than 5 percent finely divided calcium carbonate. They are very slightly erodible. Crops can be grown if ordinary measures to control soil blowing are used.

8. Soils that are not subject to soil blowing because of rock fragments on the surface or because of surface wetness.

*Wind erodibility index* is a numerical value indicating the susceptibility of soil to soil blowing, or the tons per acre per year that can be expected to be lost to soil blowing. There is a close correlation between soil blowing and the size and durability of

surface clods, rock fragments, organic matter, and a calcareous reaction. Soil moisture and frozen soil layers also influence soil blowing.

The following paragraphs describe the columns in the "Chemical Properties of the Soils" table.

*Depth* to the upper and lower boundaries of each layer is indicated.

*Cation-exchange capacity* is the total amount of exchangeable cations that can be held by the soil, expressed in terms of milliequivalents per 100 grams of soil at neutrality (pH 7.0) or at some other stated pH value. Soils having a low cation-exchange capacity hold fewer cations and may require more frequent applications of fertilizer than soils having a high cation-exchange capacity. Soils having a high cation-exchange capacity can retain cations. The ability to retain cations helps to prevent the pollution of ground water.

*Soil reaction* is a measure of acidity or alkalinity and is expressed as a range in pH values. The range in pH of each major horizon is based on many field tests. For many soils, values have been verified by laboratory analyses. Soil reaction is important in selecting crops and other plants, in evaluating soil amendments for fertility and stabilization, and in determining the risk of corrosion.

*Calcium carbonate* equivalent is the percent of carbonates, by weight, in the soil. The availability of plant nutrients is influenced by the amount of carbonates in the soil. Incorporating nitrogen fertilizer into calcareous soils helps to prevent nitrite accumulation and ammonium-N volatilization.

*Gypsum* is given as the percent, by weight, of hydrated calcium sulfates in the soil. Gypsum is partially soluble in water and can be dissolved and removed by water. Soils that have a high content of gypsum (more than 10 percent) may collapse if the gypsum is removed by percolating water.

*Salinity* is a measure of soluble salts in the soil at saturation; it is expressed, in millimhos per centimeter at 25 degrees C, as the electrical conductivity of the saturation extract. Estimates are based on field and laboratory measurements at representative sites of nonirrigated soils. The salinity of irrigated soils is affected by irrigation water quality and by water application frequency. Hence, the salinity of soils in individual fields can differ greatly from the value given in the table. Salinity affects the suitability of a soil for crop production, the stability of the soil if used as construction material, and the potential of the soil to corrode metal and concrete.

*Sodium adsorption ratio* is the measure of sodium relative to calcium and magnesium in the water

extracted from saturated soil paste. Soils having a sodium adsorption ratio of 13 or more may be characterized by increased dispersion of organic matter and clay particles, reduced permeability and aeration, and general degradation of soil structure.

## Water Features

The "Water Features" table gives estimates of several important water features used in land-use planning that involves engineering considerations. These features are described in the following paragraphs.

*Hydrologic soil groups* are groups of soils that, when saturated, have the same runoff potential under similar storm and ground cover conditions. Soil properties affecting the runoff potential are those that influence the minimum rate of infiltration in a bare soil after prolonged wetting and when the soil is not frozen. These properties include depth to a seasonal high water table, intake rate, permeability after prolonged wetting, and depth to a very slowly permeable layer. The influences of ground cover and slope are treated independently and are not taken into account in hydrologic soil groups.

In the definitions of the hydrologic soil groups, the infiltration rate is the rate at which water enters the soil at the surface and is controlled by surface conditions. The transmission rate is the rate at which water moves through the soil and is controlled by properties of the soil layers.

The four hydrologic soil groups are:

Group A. Soils having a high infiltration rate (low runoff potential) when thoroughly wet. They consist chiefly of very deep, well-drained to excessively drained sands or gravelly sands. These soils have a high rate of water transmission.

Group B. Soils having a moderate infiltration rate when thoroughly wet. They consist chiefly of moderately deep or deep, moderately well-drained or well-drained soils that have moderately fine texture to moderately coarse texture. These soils have a moderate rate of water transmission.

Group C. Soils having a slow infiltration rate when thoroughly wet. They consist chiefly of soils having a layer that impedes the downward movement of water or soils of moderately fine texture or fine texture. These soils have a slow rate of water transmission.

Group D. Soils having a very slow infiltration rate (high runoff potential) when thoroughly wet. They consist chiefly of clays that have a high shrink-swell potential, soils that have a permanent high water table, soils that have a claypan or clay layer at or near

the surface, and soils that are shallow over nearly impervious material. These soils have a very slow rate of water transmission.

*Flooding*, the temporary covering of the soil surface by flowing water, is caused by overflow from streams or by runoff from adjacent slopes. Shallow water standing or flowing for short periods after rainfall or snowmelt is not considered flooding. Standing water in marshes and swamps or in closed depressions is considered ponding.

The “Water Features” table gives the *frequency* and *duration* of flooding and the months of the year when flooding is most likely to occur. Frequency, duration, and probable months of occurrence are estimated. Frequency generally is expressed as none, rare, occasional, or frequent. *None* means flooding is not probable; *rare* that it is unlikely but is possible under unusual weather conditions (the chance of flooding is nearly 0 percent to 5 percent in any year); *occasional* that it occurs infrequently under normal weather conditions (the chance of flooding is 5 to 50 percent in any year); and *frequent* that it occurs often under normal weather conditions (the chance of flooding is more than 50 percent in any year).

Duration is expressed as *very brief* (less than 2 days), *brief* (2 to 7 days), *long* (7 to 30 days), and *very long* (more than 30 days). The time of year when flooding is most likely to occur is expressed in *months*. About two-thirds to three-fourths of all flooding occurs during the stated period.

The information on flooding is based on evidence in the soil profile, namely thin strata of gravel, sand, silt, or clay deposited by floodwater; irregular decrease in organic matter content with increasing depth; and little or no horizon development.

Also considered is local information about the extent and level of flooding and the relation of each soil on the landscape to historic floods. Information on the extent of flooding based on soil data is less specific than that provided by detailed engineering surveys that delineate flood-prone areas at specific flood frequency levels.

*High water table* (seasonal) is a zone of saturation at the highest average depth during the wettest season. A seasonal high water table is at least 6-inches thick, persists in the soil for more than a few weeks, and is within 6 feet of the surface. Indicated in the “Water Features” table are *water table depth*, *kind of water table*, and *months* of the year when the water table usually is highest.

An *apparent* water table is indicated by the level at which water stands in a freshly dug, unlined borehole after adequate time is allowed for adjustments in the surrounding soil.

A *perched* water table is one that is above an unsaturated zone in the soil. The basis for determining that a water table is perched may be general knowledge of the area. The water table is proven to be perched if the water level in a borehole is observed to fall when the borehole is extended.

Two numbers in the column, *water table depth*, indicate the normal range in depth to a saturated zone. Depth is given to the nearest half foot. The first numeral in the range indicates the highest water level. A plus sign preceding the range in depth indicates the water table is above the surface of the soil. *> than 6.0* indicates the water table is below a depth of 6 feet or it is within a depth of 6 feet for less than a month.

*Ponding* is standing water in a closed depression. Unless a drainage system is installed, water is removed only by percolation, transpiration, or evaporation. *Ponding duration* is expressed as *very brief* if less than 2 days, *brief* if 2 to 7 days, *long* if 7 to 30 days, and *very long* if more than 30 days. *Maximum ponding depth* is the depth of the ponded surface water.

## Soil Features

The “Soil Features” table gives estimates of several important soil features used in land-use planning that involves engineering considerations. These features are described in the following paragraphs.

*Depth to bedrock* is given if bedrock is within a depth of 60 inches. The depth is based on many soil borings and on observations during soil mapping. The rock is either soft or hard. If the rock is soft or fractured, excavations can be made with trenching machines, backhoes, or small rippers. If the rock is hard or massive, blasting or special equipment generally is needed for excavation.

*Subsidence* is the settlement of organic soils or of saturated mineral soils of very low density. It generally results from either desiccation and shrinkage or oxidation of organic material, or both, following drainage. Subsidence takes place gradually, usually over a period of several years. The “Soil Features” table shows the expected initial subsidence, which generally is a result of drainage, and total subsidence, which results from a combination of factors.

*Potential frost action* is the likelihood of upward or lateral expansion of the soil caused by the formation of segregated ice lenses (frost heave) and the subsequent collapse of the soil and loss of strength on thawing. Frost action occurs when moisture moves into the freezing zone of the soil. Temperature, texture, density, permeability, content of organic matter, and depth to the water table are the most important factors

considered in evaluating the potential for frost action. It is assumed that the soil is not insulated by vegetation or snow and is not artificially drained. Silty and highly structured, clayey soils that have a high water table in winter are the most susceptible to frost action. Well-drained, very gravelly, or very sandy soils are the least susceptible. Frost heave and low soil strength during thawing cause damage mainly to pavements and other rigid structures.

A *low* potential for frost action indicates the soil is rarely susceptible to formation of ice lenses; a *moderate* potential indicates the soil is susceptible to formation of ice lenses, resulting in frost heave and subsequent loss of soil strength; and a *high* potential indicates the soil is highly susceptible to formation of ice lenses, resulting in frost heave and subsequent loss of soil strength.

*Risk of corrosion* pertains to potential soil-induced electrochemical or chemical action that dissolves or weakens uncoated steel or concrete. The corrosion rate of uncoated steel is related to such factors as

soil moisture, particle-size distribution, acidity, and electrical conductivity of the soil. The corrosion rate of concrete is based mainly on sulfate and sodium content, texture, moisture content, and soil acidity.

Special site examination and design may be needed if the combination of factors results in a severe hazard of corrosion. The steel in installations that intersect soil boundaries or soil layers is more susceptible to corrosion than steel in installations that are entirely within one kind of soil or within one soil layer.

For *uncoated steel*, the risk of corrosion, expressed as *low*, *moderate*, or *high*, is based on soil drainage class, total acidity, electrical resistivity near field capacity, and electrical conductivity of the saturation extract.

For *concrete*, the risk of corrosion, also expressed as *low*, *moderate*, or *high*, is based on soil texture, acidity, and amount of sulfates in the saturation extract.

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# Glossary

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**Ablation till.** Loose, permeable till deposited during the final downwasting of glacial ice. Lenses of crudely sorted sand and gravel are common.

**Aeration, soil.** The exchange of air in soil with air from the atmosphere. The air in a well-aerated soil is similar to that in the atmosphere; the air in a poorly aerated soil is considerably higher in carbon dioxide and lower in oxygen.

**Aggregate, soil.** Many fine particles held in a single mass or cluster. Natural soil aggregates, such as granules, blocks, or prisms, are called peds. Clods are aggregates produced by tillage or logging.

**Alkali (sodic) soil.** (See Sodic (alkali) soil.)

**Alluvial fan.** A body of alluvium, with overflow of water and debris flow deposits, whose surface forms a segment of a cone that radiates downslope from the point where the stream emerges from a narrow valley onto a less sloping surface. Source uplands range in relief and areal extent from mountains to gullied terrains on hillslopes.

**Alluvium.** Material, such as sand, silt, or clay, deposited on land by streams.

**Alpha,alpha-dipyridyl.** A dye that when dissolved in 1N ammonium acetate is used to detect the presence of reduced iron (Fe II) in the soil. A positive reaction indicates a type of redox feature.

**Animal-unit-month (AUM).** The amount of forage required by one mature cow of approximately 1,000 pounds weight, with or without a calf, for 1 month.

**Aquic conditions.** Current soil wetness characterized by saturation, reduction, and redox features.

**Area reclaim (in tables).** An area difficult to reclaim after the removal of soil for construction and other uses. Revegetation and erosion control are extremely difficult.

**Argillite.** Weakly metamorphosed mudstone or shale.

**Aspect.** The direction in which a slope faces.

**Association, soil.** A group of soils or miscellaneous areas geographically associated in a characteristic repeating pattern and defined and delineated as a single map unit.

**Available water capacity (available moisture capacity).** The capacity of soils to hold water available for use by most plants. It is commonly defined as the difference between the amount of soil water at field moisture capacity and the amount at wilting point. It is commonly expressed as inches of water per inch of soil. The capacity, in inches, in a 60-inch profile or to a limiting layer is expressed as:

Very low .....	0 to 3.75
Low .....	3.75 to 5.0
Moderate .....	5.0 to 7.5
High .....	more than 7.5

**Avalanche chute.** The track or path formed by an avalanche.

**Backslope.** The geomorphic component that forms the steepest inclined surface and principal element of many hillslopes. Backslopes in profile are commonly steep and linear and descend to a footslope. In terms of gradational process, backslopes are erosional forms produced mainly by mass wasting and running water.

**Badland.** Steep or very steep, commonly nonstony, barren land dissected by many intermittent drainage channels. Badland is most common in semiarid and arid regions where streams are entrenched in soft geologic material. Local relief generally ranges from 25 to 500 feet. Runoff potential is very high, and geologic erosion is active.

**Basal area.** The area of a cross section of a tree, generally referring to the section at breast height and measured outside the bark. It is a measure of stand density, commonly expressed in square feet.

**Basal till.** Compact glacial till deposited beneath the ice.

**Base saturation.** The degree to which material having cation-exchange properties is saturated with exchangeable bases (sum of Ca, Mg, Na, and K), expressed as a percentage of the total cation-exchange capacity.

**Base slope.** A geomorphic component of hills consisting of the concave to linear (perpendicular

to the contour) slope that, regardless of the lateral shape, forms an apron or wedge at the bottom of a hillside dominated by colluvium and slope-wash sediments (for example, slope alluvium).

**Bedding planes.** Fine strata, less than 5-millimeters thick, in unconsolidated alluvial, eolian, lacustrine, or marine sediment.

**Bedrock.** The solid rock that underlies the soil and other unconsolidated material or that is exposed at the surface.

**Bedrock-floored plain.** An extensive nearly level to gently rolling or moderately sloping area that is underlain by hard bedrock and has a slope of 0 to 8 percent.

**Bench terrace.** A raised, level or nearly level strip of earth constructed on or nearly on a contour, supported by a barrier of rocks or similar material, and designed to make the soil suitable for tillage and to prevent accelerated erosion.

**Blowout.** A shallow depression from which all or most of the soil material has been removed by the wind. A blowout has a flat or irregular floor formed by a resistant layer or by an accumulation of cobbles or gravel. In some blowouts, the water table is exposed.

**Board foot.** A unit of measure of the wood in lumber, logs, or trees. The amount of wood in a board 1 foot wide, 1 foot long, and 1 inch thick before finishing.

**Bottom land.** The normal flood plain of a stream, subject to flooding.

**Boulders.** Rock fragments larger than 2 feet (60 centimeters) in diameter.

**Bouldery.** Refers to a soil with .01 to 0.1 percent of the surface covered with boulders.

**Bouldery soil material.** Soil that is 15 to 35 percent, by volume, rock fragments that are dominated by fragments larger than 24 inches (60 centimeters) in diameter.

**Breaks.** The steep and very steep broken land at the border of an upland summit that is dissected by ravines.

**Breast height.** An average height of 4.5 feet above the ground surface; the point on a tree where diameter measurements are ordinarily taken.

**Brush management.** Use of mechanical, chemical, or biological methods to reduce or eliminate competition from woody vegetation and thus to allow understory grasses and forbs to recover or to make conditions favorable for reseeding. Brush management increases forage production and thus reduces the hazard of erosion. It can improve the habitat for some species of wildlife.

**Cable yarding.** A method of moving felled trees to a nearby central area for transport to a processing facility. Most cable yarding systems involve use of a drum, a pole, and wire cables in an arrangement similar to that of a rod and reel used for fishing. To reduce friction and soil disturbance, felled trees generally are reeled in while one end is lifted or the entire log is suspended.

**Calcareous soil.** A soil containing enough calcium carbonate (commonly combined with magnesium carbonate) to effervesce visibly when treated with cold, dilute hydrochloric acid.

**Caliche.** A more or less cemented deposit of calcium carbonate in soils of warm-temperate, subhumid to arid areas. Caliche occurs as soft, thin layers in the soil or as hard, thick beds directly beneath the solum, or it is exposed at the surface by erosion.

**California bearing ratio (CBR).** The load-supporting capacity of a soil as compared to that of standard crushed limestone, expressed as a ratio. First standardized in California. A soil having a CBR of 16 supports 16 percent of the load that would be supported by standard crushed limestone, per unit area, with the same degree of distortion.

**Canopy.** The leafy crown of trees or shrubs. (See Crown.)

**Capillary water.** Water held as a film around soil particles and in tiny spaces between particles. Surface tension is the adhesive force that holds capillary water in the soil.

**Cation.** An ion carrying a positive charge of electricity. The common soil cations are calcium, potassium, magnesium, sodium, and hydrogen.

**Cation-exchange capacity.** The total amount of exchangeable cations that can be held by the soil, expressed in terms of milliequivalents per 100 grams of soil at neutrality (pH 7.0) or at some other stated pH value. The term, as applied to soils, is synonymous with base-exchange capacity but is more precise in meaning.

**Channeled.** Refers to a drainage area in which natural meandering or repeated branching and convergence of a streambed have created deeply incised cuts, either active or abandoned, in alluvial material.

**Channery soil material.** A soil that is, by volume, more than 15 percent thin, flat fragments of sandstone, shale, slate, limestone, or schist as much as 6 inches along the longest axis. A single piece is called a channer.

**Chemical treatment.** Control of unwanted vegetation through the use of chemicals.

- Chiseling.** Tillage with an implement having one or more soil-penetrating points that shatter or loosen hard, compacted layers to a depth below normal plow depth.
- Cirque.** A semicircular, concave, bowl-like area that has steep faces primarily resulting from erosive activity of a mountain glacier.
- Clay.** As a soil separate, the mineral soil particles less than 0.002 millimeters in diameter. As a soil textural class, soil material that is 40 percent or more clay, less than 45 percent sand, and less than 40 percent silt.
- Clayey soil.** Silty clay, sandy clay, or clay.
- Clay film.** A thin coating of oriented clay on the surface of a soil aggregate or lining pores or root channels. Synonyms: clay coating, clay skin.
- Claypan.** A slowly permeable soil horizon that contains much more clay than the horizons above it. A claypan is commonly hard when dry and plastic or stiff when wet.
- Clearcut.** A method of forest harvesting that removes the entire stand of trees in one cutting. Reproduction is achieved artificially or by natural seeding from the adjacent stands.
- Climax plant community.** The stabilized plant community on a particular site. The plant cover reproduces itself and does not change so long as the environment remains the same.
- Closed depression.** A low area completely surrounded by higher ground and having no natural outlet.
- Coarse textured soil.** Sand or loamy sand.
- Cobble (or cobblestone).** A rounded or partly rounded fragment of rock 3 to 10 inches (7.6 to 25 centimeters) in diameter.
- Cobbly soil material.** Material that has 15 to 35 percent, by volume, rounded or partially rounded rock fragments 3 to 10 inches (7.6 to 25 centimeters) in diameter. Very cobbly soil material has 35 to 60 percent of these rock fragments, and extremely cobbly soil material has more than 60 percent.
- Codominant trees.** Trees whose crowns form the general level of the forest canopy and that receive full light from above but comparatively little from the sides.
- COLE (coefficient of linear extensibility).** (See Linear extensibility.)
- Colluvium.** Soil material or rock fragments, or both, moved by creep, slide, or local wash and deposited at the base of steep slopes.
- Commercial forest.** Forestland capable of producing 20 cubic feet or more per acre per year at the culmination of mean annual increment.
- Complex slope.** Irregular or variable slope. Planning or establishing terraces, diversions, and other water-control structures on a complex slope is difficult.
- Complex, soil.** A map unit of two or more kinds of soil or miscellaneous areas in such an intricate pattern or so small in area that it is not practical to map them separately at the selected scale of mapping. The pattern and proportion of the soils or miscellaneous areas are somewhat similar in all areas.
- Concretions.** Grains, pellets, or nodules of various sizes, shapes, and colors consisting of concentrated compounds or cemented soil grains. The composition of most concretions is unlike that of the surrounding soil. Calcium carbonate and iron oxide are common compounds in concretions.
- Conglomerate.** A coarse-grained, clastic rock composed of rounded or subangular rock fragments more than 2 millimeters in diameter. It commonly has a matrix of sand and finer-textured material. Conglomerate is the consolidated equivalent of gravel.
- Conservation cropping system.** Growing crops in combination with needed cultural and management practices. In a good conservation cropping system, the soil-improving crops and practices more than offset the effects of the soil-depleting crops and practices. Cropping systems are needed on all tilled soils. Soil-improving practices in a conservation cropping system include the use of rotations that contain grasses and legumes and the return of crop residue to the soil. Other practices include the use of green manure crops of grasses and legumes, proper tillage, adequate fertilization, and weed and pest control.
- Conservation tillage.** Any tillage and planting system in which a cover of crop residue is maintained on at least 30 percent of the soil surface after planting in order to reduce the hazard of water erosion. In areas where soil blowing is the primary concern, a system that maintains a cover of at least 1,000 pounds of flat residue of small grain or the equivalent during the critical erosion period.
- Consistence, soil.** Refers to the degree of cohesion and adhesion of soil material and its resistance to deformation when ruptured. Consistence includes resistance of soil material to rupture and to penetration; plasticity, toughness, and stickiness of puddled soil material; and the manner in which the soil material behaves when subject to

compression. Terms describing consistence are defined in the "Soil Survey Manual" (Soil Survey Division Staff, 1993).

**Consolidated sandstone.** Sandstone that disperses within a few hours when fragments are placed in water. The fragments are extremely hard or very hard when dry, are not easily crushed, and cannot be textured by the usual field method.

**Consolidated shale.** Shale that disperses within a few hours when fragments are placed in water. The fragments are extremely hard or very hard when dry and are not easily crushed.

**Contour stripcropping (or contour farming).** Growing crops in strips that follow the contour. Strips of grass or close-growing crops are alternated with strips of clean-tilled crops or summer fallow.

**Control section.** The part of the soil on which classification is based. The thickness varies among different kinds of soil, but for many it is that part of the soil profile between depths of 10 inches and 40 or 80 inches.

**Coprogenous earth (sedimentary peat).** Fecal material deposited in water by aquatic organisms.

**Corrosion.** Soil-induced electrochemical or chemical action that dissolves or weakens concrete or uncoated steel.

**Cover crop.** A close-growing crop grown primarily to improve and protect the soil between periods of regular crop production, or a crop grown between trees and vines in orchards and vineyards.

**Crop residue management.** Returning crop residue to the soil, which helps to maintain soil structure, organic matter content, and fertility and helps to control erosion.

**Cropping system.** Growing crops according to a planned system of rotation and management practices.

**Cross-slope farming.** Deliberately conducting farming operations on sloping farmland in such a way that tillage is across the general slope.

**Crown.** The upper part of a tree or shrub, including the living branches and their foliage.

**Culmination of the mean annual increment (CMAI).** The average annual increase per acre in the volume of a stand. Computed by dividing the total volume of the stand by its age. As the stand increases in age, the mean annual increment continues to increase until mortality begins to reduce the rate of increase. The point where the stand reaches its maximum annual rate of growth is called the culmination of the mean annual increment.

**Cutbanks cave (in tables).** The walls of excavations tend to cave in or slough.

**Decreasers.** The most heavily grazed climax range plants. Because they are the most palatable, they are the first to be destroyed by overgrazing.

**Deep soil.** A soil that is 40 to 60 inches deep over bedrock or to other material that restricts the penetration of plant roots.

**Deferred grazing.** Postponing grazing or resting grazing land for a prescribed period.

**Depth, soil.** Generally, the thickness of the soil over bedrock. Very deep soils are more than 60 inches deep over bedrock; deep soils, 40 to 60 inches; moderately deep, 20 to 40 inches; shallow, 10 to 20 inches; and very shallow, less than 10 inches.

**Depth to rock (in tables).** Bedrock is too near the surface for the specified use.

**Dip slope.** A slope of the land surface, roughly determined by and approximately conforming to the dip of the underlying bedrock.

**Diversion (or diversion terrace).** A ridge of earth, generally a terrace, built to protect downslope areas by diverting runoff from its natural course.

**Divided-slope farming.** A form of field stripcropping in which crops are grown in a systematic arrangement of two strips, or bands, across the slope to reduce the hazard of water erosion. One strip is in a close-growing crop that provides protection from erosion, and the other strip is in a crop that provides less protection from erosion. This practice is used where slopes are not long enough to permit a full stripcropping pattern to be used.

**Dominant trees.** Trees whose crowns form the general level of the forest canopy and that receive full light from above and from the sides.

**Drainage class (natural).** Refers to the frequency and duration of periods of saturation or partial saturation during soil formation, as opposed to altered drainage, which is commonly the result of artificial drainage or irrigation but may be caused by the sudden deepening of channels or the blocking of drainage outlets. Seven classes of natural soil drainage are recognized:

*Excessively drained.*—These soils have very high and high hydraulic conductivity and a low water-holding capacity. They are not suited to crop production unless irrigated.

*Somewhat excessively drained.*—These soils have high hydraulic conductivity and a low water-holding capacity. Without irrigation, only a narrow range of crops can be grown, and yields are low.

*Well drained.*—These soils have an intermediate water-holding capacity. They retain optimum amounts of moisture, but they are not wet close enough to the surface or long enough during the growing season to adversely affect yields.

*Moderately well drained.*—These soils are wet close enough to the surface or long enough that planting or harvesting operations or yields of some field crops are adversely affected unless a drainage system is installed. Moderately well-drained soils commonly have a layer with low hydraulic conductivity, a wet layer relatively high in the profile, additions of water by seepage, or some combination of these.

*Somewhat poorly drained.*—These soils are wet close enough to the surface or long enough that planting or harvesting operations or crop growth is markedly restricted unless a drainage system is installed. Somewhat poorly drained soils commonly have a layer with low hydraulic conductivity, a wet layer high in the profile, additions of water through seepage, or a combination of these.

*Poorly drained.*—These soils commonly are so wet, at or near the surface, during a considerable part of the year that field crops cannot be grown under natural conditions. Poorly drained conditions are caused by a saturated zone, a layer with low hydraulic conductivity, seepage, or a combination of these.

*Very poorly drained.*—These soils are wet to the surface most of the time. The wetness prevents the growth of important crops (except rice) unless a drainage system is installed.

**Drainage, surface.** Runoff, or surface flow of water, from an area.

**Drainageway.** An area of ground at a lower elevation than the surrounding ground and in which water collects and is drained to a closed depression or lake or to a drainageway at a lower elevation. A drainageway may or may not have distinctly incised channels at its upper reaches or throughout its course.

**Drumlin.** A low, smooth, elongated oval hill, mound, or ridge of compact glacial till. The longer axis is parallel to the path of the glacier and commonly has a blunt nose pointing in the direction from which the ice approached.

**Duff.** A generally firm organic layer on the surface of mineral soils. It consists of fallen plant material that is in the process of decomposition and includes everything from the litter on the surface to underlying pure humus.

**Dune.** A mound, ridge, or hill of loose, windblown granular material (generally sand), either bare or covered with vegetation.

**Ecological site.** An area where climate, soil, and relief are sufficiently uniform to produce a distinct natural plant community. An ecological site is the product of all the environmental factors responsible for its development. It is typified by an association of species that differ from those on other ecological sites in kind and/or proportion of species or in total production.

**Eluviation.** The movement of material in true solution or colloidal suspension from one place to another within the soil. Soil horizons that have lost material through eluviation are eluvial; those that have received material are illuvial.

**Endosaturation.** A type of saturation of the soil in which all horizons between the upper boundary of saturation and a depth of 2 meters are saturated.

**Eolian soil material.** Earthy parent material accumulated through wind action; commonly refers to sandy material in dunes or to loess in blankets on the surface.

**Ephemeral stream.** A stream, or reach of a stream, that flows only in direct response to precipitation. It receives no long-continued supply from melting snow or other source, and its channel is above the water table at all times.

**Episaturation.** A type of saturation indicating a perched water table in a soil in which saturated layers are underlain by one or more unsaturated layers within 2 meters of the surface.

**Erosion.** The wearing away of the land surface by water, wind, ice, or other geologic agents and by such processes as gravitational creep.

*Erosion (geologic).* Erosion caused by geologic processes acting over long geologic periods and resulting in the wearing away of mountains and the building up of such landscape features as flood plains and coastal plains. Synonym: natural erosion.

*Erosion (accelerated).* Erosion much more rapid than geologic erosion, mainly as a result of human or animal activities or of a catastrophe in nature, such as fire, that exposes the surface.

**Erosion pavement.** A layer of gravel or stones that remains on the surface after fine particles are removed by sheet or rill erosion.

**Escarpment.** A relatively continuous and steep slope or cliff breaking the general continuity of more gently sloping land surfaces and resulting from erosion or faulting. Synonym: scarp.

- Esker.** A long, narrow, sinuous, steep-sided ridge composed of irregularly stratified sand and gravel that were deposited by a subsurface stream flowing between ice walls or through ice tunnels of a retreating glacier and that were left behind when the ice melted. Eskers range from less than a mile to more than 100 miles in length and from 10 to 100 feet in height.
- Even aged.** Refers to a stand of trees in which only small differences in age occur between individual trees. A range of 20 years is allowed.
- Excess fines (in tables).** Excess silt and clay in the soil. The soil does not provide a source of gravel or sand for construction purposes.
- Excess sodium (in tables).** Excess exchangeable sodium in the soil. The resulting poor physical properties restrict the growth of plants.
- Extrusive rock.** Igneous rock derived from deep-seated molten matter (magma) emplaced on the earth's surface.
- Fallow.** Cropland left idle in order to restore productivity through accumulation of moisture. Summer fallow is common in regions of limited rainfall where cereal grain is grown. The soil is tilled for at least one growing season for weed control and decomposition of plant residue.
- Fast intake (in tables).** The rapid movement of water into the soil.
- Fertility, soil.** The quality that enables a soil to provide plant nutrients, in adequate amounts and in proper balance, for the growth of specified plants when light, moisture, temperature, tilth, and other growth factors are favorable.
- Fibric soil material (peat).** The least decomposed of all organic soil material. Peat contains a large amount of well-preserved fiber that is readily identifiable according to botanical origin. Peat has the lowest bulk density and the highest water content at saturation of all organic soil material.
- Field moisture capacity.** The moisture content of a soil, expressed as a percentage of the oven-dry weight, after the gravitational, or free, water has drained away; the field moisture content 2 or 3 days after a soaking rain; also called *normal field capacity*, *normal moisture capacity*, or *capillary capacity*.
- Fine textured soil.** Sandy clay, silty clay, or clay.
- Firebreak.** Area cleared of flammable material to stop or help control creeping or running fires. It also serves as a line from which to work and to facilitate the movement of firefighters and equipment. Designated roads also serve as firebreaks.
- First bottom.** The normal flood plain of a stream, subject to frequent or occasional flooding.
- Flaggy soil material.** Material that has, by volume, 15 to 35 percent flagstones. Very flaggy soil material has 35 to 60 percent flagstones, and extremely flaggy soil material has more than 60 percent flagstones.
- Flagstone.** A thin fragment of sandstone, limestone, slate, shale, or (rarely) schist 6 to 15 inches (15 to 38 centimeters) long.
- Flood plain.** A nearly level alluvial plain that borders a stream and is subject to flooding unless protected artificially.
- Fluvial.** Of or pertaining to rivers; produced by river action, as a fluvial plain.
- Foothill.** A steeply sloping upland that has relief of as much as 1,000 feet (300 meters) and fringes a mountain range or high-plateau escarpment.
- Footslope.** The geomorphic component that forms the inner, gently inclined surface at the base of a hillslope. The surface profile is dominantly concave. In terms of gradational processes, a footslope is a transitional zone between an upslope site of erosion (backslope) and a downslope site of deposition (toeslope).
- Forb.** Any herbaceous plant not a grass or a sedge.
- Forest cover.** All trees and other woody plants (underbrush) covering the ground in a forest.
- Forest type.** A stand of trees similar in composition and development because of given physical and biological factors by which it may be differentiated from other stands.
- Fragipan.** A loamy, brittle subsurface horizon low in porosity and content of organic matter and low or moderate in clay but high in silt or very fine sand. A fragipan appears cemented and restricts roots. When dry, it is hard or very hard and has a higher bulk density than the horizon or horizons above. When moist, it tends to rupture suddenly under pressure rather than to deform slowly.
- Frost action (in tables).** Freezing and thawing of soil moisture. Frost action can damage roads, buildings and other structures, and plant roots.
- Genesis, soil.** The mode of origin of the soil. Refers especially to the processes or soil-forming factors responsible for the formation of the solum, or true soil, from the unconsolidated parent material.
- Giant ripple mark.** The undulating surface sculpture produced in noncoherent granular materials by currents of water and by the agitation of water in wave action during the draining of large glacial lakes, such as Glacial Lake Missoula.

- Glacial drift.** Pulverized and other rock material transported by glacial ice and then deposited. Also, the sorted and unsorted material deposited by streams flowing from glaciers.
- Glacial outwash.** Gravel, sand, and silt, commonly stratified, deposited by glacial meltwater.
- Glacial till.** Unsorted, nonstratified glacial drift consisting of clay, silt, sand, and boulders transported and deposited by glacial ice.
- Glaciated uplands.** Land areas that were previously covered by continental or alpine glaciers and that are at a higher elevation than the flood plain.
- Glaciofluvial deposits.** Material moved by glaciers and subsequently sorted and deposited by streams flowing from the melting ice. The deposits are stratified and occur as kames, eskers, deltas, and outwash plains.
- Glaciolacustrine deposits.** Material ranging from fine clay to sand derived from glaciers and deposited in glacial lakes mainly by glacial meltwater. Many deposits are interbedded or laminated.
- Gleyed soil.** Soil that formed under poor drainage, resulting in the reduction of iron and other elements in the profile and in gray colors.
- Grassed waterway.** A natural or constructed waterway, typically broad and shallow, seeded to grass as protection against erosion. Conducts surface water away from cropland.
- Gravel.** Rounded or angular fragments of rock as much as 3 inches (2 millimeters to 7.6 centimeters) in diameter. An individual piece is a pebble.
- Gravelly soil material.** Soil that is 15 to 35 percent, by volume, rounded or angular rock fragments up to 3 inches (7.6 centimeters) in diameter. Very gravelly soil is 35 to 60 percent gravel, and extremely gravelly soil is more than 60 percent gravel by volume.
- Grazeable forestland.** Land capable of sustaining livestock grazing by producing forage of sufficient quantity during one or more stages of secondary forest succession.
- Green manure crop (agronomy).** A soil-improving crop grown to be plowed under in an early stage of maturity or soon after maturity.
- Ground water.** Water filling all the unblocked pores of the material below the water table.
- Gully.** A miniature valley with steep sides cut by running water and through which water ordinarily runs only after rainfall. The distinction between a gully and a rill is one of depth. A gully generally is an obstacle to farm machinery and is too deep to be obliterated by ordinary tillage; a rill is of lesser depth and can be smoothed over by ordinary tillage.
- Gypsum.** A mineral consisting of hydrous calcium sulfate.
- Habitat type.** An aggregation of all land areas capable of producing similar climax plant communities.
- Hard bedrock.** Bedrock that cannot be excavated except by blasting or by the use of special equipment that is not commonly used in construction.
- Hardpan.** A hardened or cemented soil horizon, or layer. The soil material is sandy, loamy, or clayey and is cemented by iron oxide, silica, calcium carbonate, or other substance.
- Head out.** To form a flower head.
- Heavy metal.** Inorganic substances that are solid at ordinary temperatures and are not soluble in water. They form oxides and hydroxides that are basic. Examples are copper, iron, cadmium, zinc, manganese, lead, and arsenic.
- Hemic soil material (mucky peat).** Organic soil material intermediate in degree of decomposition between the less decomposed fibric material and the more decomposed sapric material.
- High-residue crops.** Such crops as small grain and corn used for grain. If properly managed, residue from these crops can be used to control erosion until the next crop in the rotation is established. These crops return large amounts of organic matter to the soil.
- Hill.** A natural elevation of the land surface, rising as much as 1,000 feet above surrounding lowlands, commonly of limited summit area and having a well-defined outline; hillsides generally have slopes of more than 8 percent. The distinction between a hill and a mountain is arbitrary and is dependent on local usage.
- Horizon, soil.** A layer of soil, approximately parallel to the surface, having distinct characteristics produced by soil-forming processes. In the identification of soil horizons, an uppercase letter represents the major horizons. Numbers or lowercase letters that follow represent subdivisions of the major horizons. An explanation of the subdivisions is given in the "Soil Survey Manual" (Soil Survey Division Staff, 1993). The major horizons of mineral soil are as follows:
- O horizon.*—An organic layer of fresh and decaying plant residue.
- A horizon.*—The mineral horizon at or near the surface in which an accumulation of humified organic matter is mixed with the mineral material.

Also, a plowed surface horizon, most of which was originally part of a B horizon.

*E horizon.*—The mineral horizon in which the main feature is loss of silicate clay, iron, aluminum, or some combination of these.

*B horizon.*—The mineral horizon below an A or E horizon. The B horizon is in part a layer of transition from the overlying A to the underlying C horizon. The B horizon also has distinctive characteristics, such as (1) accumulation of clay, sesquioxides, humus, or a combination of these; (2) prismatic or blocky structure; (3) redder or browner colors than those in the A horizon; or (4) a combination of these.

*C horizon.*—The mineral horizon or layer, excluding indurated bedrock, that is little affected by soil-forming processes and does not have the properties typical of the overlying soil material. The material of a C horizon may be either like or unlike that in which the solum formed. If the material is known to differ from that in the solum, an Arabic numeral, commonly a 2, precedes the letter C.

*Cr horizon.*—Sedimentary beds of consolidated sandstone and semiconsolidated and consolidated shale. Generally, roots can penetrate this horizon only along fracture planes.

*R layer.*—Consolidated bedrock beneath the soil. The bedrock commonly underlies a C horizon, but it can be directly below an A or a B horizon.

**Humus.** The well-decomposed, more or less stable part of the organic matter in mineral soils.

**Hydrologic soil groups.** Refers to soils grouped according to their runoff-producing characteristics. The chief consideration is the inherent capacity of soil bare of vegetation to permit infiltration. The slope and the kind of plant cover are not considered but are separate factors in predicting runoff. Soils are assigned to four groups. In group A are soils having a high infiltration rate when thoroughly wet and having a low runoff potential. They are mainly deep, well drained, and sandy or gravelly. In group D, at the other extreme, are soils having a very slow infiltration rate and thus a high runoff potential. They have a claypan or clay layer at or near the surface, have a permanent high water table, or are shallow over nearly impervious bedrock or other material. A soil is assigned to two hydrologic groups if part of the acreage is artificially drained and part is undrained.

**Igneous rock.** Rock formed by solidification from a molten or partially molten state. Major varieties

include plutonic and volcanic rock. Examples are andesite, basalt, and granite.

**Illuviation.** The movement of soil material from one horizon to another in the soil profile. Generally, material is removed from an upper horizon and deposited in a lower horizon.

**Impervious soil.** A soil through which water, air, or roots penetrate slowly or not at all. No soil is absolutely impervious to air and water all the time.

**Increasesers.** Species in the climax vegetation that increase in amount as the more desirable plants are reduced by close grazing. Increasesers commonly are the shorter plants and the less palatable to livestock.

**Infiltration.** The downward entry of water into the immediate surface of soil or other material, as contrasted with percolation, which is movement of water through soil layers or material.

**Infiltration capacity.** The maximum rate at which water can infiltrate into a soil under a given set of conditions.

**Infiltration rate.** The rate at which water penetrates the surface of the soil at any given instant, usually expressed in inches per hour. The rate can be limited by the infiltration capacity of the soil or the rate at which water is applied at the surface.

**Intake rate.** The average rate of water entering the soil under irrigation. Most soils have a fast initial rate; the rate decreases with application time. Therefore, intake rate for design purposes is not a constant but is a variable depending on the net irrigation application. The rate of water intake, in inches per hour, is expressed as follows:

Less than 0.2 .....	very low
0.2 to 0.4 .....	low
0.4 to 0.75 .....	moderately low
0.75 to 1.25 .....	moderate
1.25 to 1.75 .....	moderately high
1.75 to 2.5 .....	high
More than 2.5 .....	very high

**Intermittent stream.** A stream, or reach of a stream, that flows for prolonged periods only when it receives ground-water discharge or long, continued contributions from melting snow or other surface and shallow subsurface sources.

**Invaders.** On range, plants that encroach into an area and grow after the climax vegetation has been reduced by grazing. Generally, plants invade following disturbance of the surface.

**Irrigation.** Application of water to soils to assist in production of crops. Methods of irrigation are:

*Basin.*—Water is applied rapidly to nearly level plains surrounded by levees or dikes.

*Border.*—Water is applied at the upper end of a strip in which the lateral flow of water is controlled by small earth ridges called border dikes, or borders.

*Controlled flooding.*—Water is released at intervals from closely spaced field ditches and distributed uniformly over the field.

*Corrugation.*—Water is applied to small, closely spaced furrows or ditches in fields of close-growing crops or in orchards so that it flows in only one direction.

*Drip (or trickle).*—Water is applied slowly and under low pressure to the surface of the soil or into the soil through such applicators as emitters, porous tubing, or perforated pipe.

*Furrow.*—Water is applied in small ditches made by cultivation implements. Furrows are used for tree and row crops.

*Sprinkler.*—Water is sprayed over the soil surface through pipes or nozzles from a pressure system.

*Subirrigation.*—Water is applied in open ditches or tile lines until the water table is raised enough to wet the soil.

*Wild flooding.*—Water, released at high points, is allowed to flow onto an area without controlled distribution.

**Kame.** A moundlike hill of glacial drift, composed chiefly of stratified sand and gravel.

**Kame terrace.** A terracelike ridge consisting of stratified sand and gravel that were deposited by a meltwater stream flowing between a melting glacier and a higher valley wall or lateral moraine and that remained after the disappearance of the ice. It is commonly pitted with kettles and has an irregular ice-contact slope.

**Lacustrine deposit.** Material deposited in lake water and exposed when the water level is lowered or the elevation of the land is raised.

**Lake plain.** A surface marking the floor of an extinct lake, filled in by well-sorted, stratified sediments.

**Landslide.** The rapid downhill movement of a mass of soil and loose rock, generally when wet or saturated. The speed and distance of movement, as well as the amount of soil and rock material, vary greatly.

**Large stones (in tables).** Rock fragments 3 inches (7.6 centimeters) or more across. Large stones adversely affect the specified use of the soil.

**Lateral moraine.** A ridgelike moraine carried on and deposited at the side margin of a valley glacier. It is composed chiefly of rock fragments derived from the valley walls by glacial abrasion and plucking or by mass wasting.

**Leaching.** The removal of soluble material from soil or other material by percolating water.

**Linear extensibility.** Refers to the change in length of an unconfined clod as moisture content is decreased from a moist to a dry state. Linear extensibility is used to determine the shrink-swell potential of soils. It is an expression of the volume change between the water content of the clod at  $1/3$ - or  $1/10$ -bar tension (33kPa or 10kPa tension) and oven dryness. Volume change is influenced by the amount and type of clay minerals in the soil. The volume change is the percent change for the whole soil. If it is expressed as a fraction, the resulting value is COLE, coefficient of linear extensibility.

**Liquid limit.** The moisture content at which the soil passes from a plastic to a liquid state.

**Loam.** Soil material that is 7 to 27 percent clay particles, 28 to 50 percent silt particles, and less than 52 percent sand particles.

**Loamy soil.** Coarse sandy loam, sandy loam, fine sandy loam, very fine sandy loam, loam, silt loam, silt, clay loam, sandy clay loam, or silty clay loam.

**Loess.** Fine-grained material, dominantly of silt-sized particles, deposited by wind.

**Low-residue crops.** Such crops as corn used for silage, peas, beans, and potatoes. Residue from these crops is not adequate to control erosion until the next crop in the rotation is established. These crops return little organic matter to the soil.

**Low strength.** The soil is not strong enough to support loads.

**Marl.** An earthy, unconsolidated deposit consisting chiefly of calcium carbonate mixed with clay in approximately equal amounts.

**Masses.** Concentrations of substances in the soil matrix that do not have a clearly defined boundary with the surrounding soil material and cannot be removed as a discrete unit. Common compounds making up masses are calcium carbonate, gypsum or other soluble salts, iron oxide, and manganese oxide. Masses consisting of iron oxide or manganese oxide generally are considered a type of redox concentration.

**Mean annual increment (MAI).** The average annual increase in volume of a tree during its entire life.

**Mechanical treatment.** Use of mechanical equipment for seeding, brush management, and other management practices.

**Medium textured soil.** Very fine sandy loam, loam, silt loam, or silt.

**Merchantable trees.** Trees that are of sufficient size to be economically processed into wood products.

**Metamorphic rock.** Rock of any origin altered in mineralogical composition, chemical composition, or structure by heat, pressure, and movement. Nearly all such rocks are crystalline.

**Microhigh.** An area that is 2 to 12 inches higher than the adjacent microlow.

**Microlow.** An area that is 2 to 12 inches lower than the adjacent microhigh.

**Mineral soil.** Soil that is mainly mineral material and low in organic material. Its bulk density is more than that of organic soil.

**Minimum tillage.** Only the tillage essential to crop production and prevention of soil damage.

**Miscellaneous area.** An area that has little or no natural soil and supports little or no vegetation.

**Miscellaneous water.** A sewage lagoon, an industrial waste pit, a fish hatchery, or a similar water area.

**Moderately coarse textured soil.** Coarse sandy loam, sandy loam, or fine sandy loam.

**Moderately deep soil.** A soil that is 20 to 40 inches deep over bedrock or to other material that restricts the penetration of plant roots.

**Moderately fine textured soil.** Clay loam, sandy clay loam, or silty clay loam.

**Mollic epipedon.** A thick, dark, humus-rich surface horizon (or horizons) that has high base saturation and pedogenic soil structure. It may include the upper part of the subsoil.

**Moraine.** An accumulation of glacial drift in a topographic landform of its own, resulting chiefly from the direct action of glacial ice. Some types are lateral, recessional, and terminal.

**Morphology, soil.** The physical makeup of the soil, including the texture, structure, porosity, consistence, color, and other physical, mineral, and biological properties of the various horizons, and the thickness and arrangement of those horizons in the soil profile.

**Mottling, soil.** Areas of color that differ from the matrix color. These colors are commonly attributes retained from the geologic parent material. (See Redox features for indications of poor aeration and impeded drainage.)

**Mountain.** A natural elevation of the land surface, rising more than 1,000 feet above surrounding

lowlands, commonly of restricted summit area (relative to a plateau) and generally having steep sides. A mountain can occur as a single, isolated mass or in a group forming a chain or range.

**Muck.** Dark, finely divided, well-decomposed organic soil material. (See Sapric soil material.)

**Mudstone.** Sedimentary rock formed by induration of silt and clay in approximately equal amounts.

**Munsell notation.** A designation of color by degrees of three simple variables—hue, value, and chroma. For example, a notation of 10YR 6/4 is a color with hue of 10YR, value of 6, and chroma of 4.

**Naturalized pasture.** Forestland that is used primarily for the production of forage for grazing by livestock rather than for the production of wood products. Overstory trees are removed or managed to promote the native and introduced understory vegetation occurring on the site. This vegetation is managed for its forage value through the use of grazing management principles.

**Neutral soil.** A soil having a pH value of 6.6 to 7.3. (See Reaction, soil.)

**Nutrient, plant.** Any element taken in by a plant essential to its growth. Plant nutrients are mainly nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, calcium, magnesium, sulfur, iron, manganese, copper, boron, and zinc obtained from the soil and carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen obtained from the air and water.

**Observed rooting depth.** Depth to which roots have been observed to penetrate.

**Organic matter.** Plant and animal residue in the soil in various stages of decomposition. The content of organic matter in the surface layer is described as follows:

Very low .....	less than 0.5 percent
Low .....	0.5 to 1.0 percent
Moderately low .....	1.0 to 2.0 percent
Moderate .....	2.0 to 4.0 percent
High .....	4.0 to 8.0 percent
Very high .....	more than 8.0 percent

**Outwash plain.** An extensive area of glaciofluvial material that was deposited by meltwater streams.

**Overstory.** The trees in a forest that form the upper crown cover.

**Oxbow.** The horseshoe-shaped channel of a former meander, remaining after the stream formed a cutoff across a narrow meander neck.

**Pan.** A compact, dense layer in a soil that impedes the movement of water and the growth of roots.

For example, *hardpan*, *fragipan*, *claypan*, *plowpan*, and *traffic pan*.

**Parent material.** The unconsolidated organic and mineral material in which soil forms.

**Peat.** Unconsolidated material, largely undecomposed organic matter, that has accumulated under excess moisture. (See Fibric soil material.)

**Ped.** An individual natural soil aggregate, such as a granule, a prism, or a block.

**Pedon.** The smallest volume that can be called "a soil." A pedon is three dimensional and large enough to permit study of all horizons. Its area ranges from about 10 to 100 square feet (1 square meter to 10 square meters), depending on the variability of the soil.

**Percolation.** The movement of water through the soil.

**Percs slowly (in tables).** The slow movement of water through the soil, adversely affecting the specified use.

**Permeability.** The quality of the soil that enables water or air to move downward through the profile.

*Terms describing permeability are:*

Very slow .....	less than 0.06 inch
Slow .....	0.06 to 0.2 inch
Moderately slow .....	0.2 to 0.6 inch
Moderate .....	0.6 to 2.0 inches
Moderately rapid .....	2.0 to 6.0 inches
Rapid .....	6.0 to 20 inches
Very rapid .....	more than 20 inches

**pH value.** A numerical designation of acidity and alkalinity in soil. (See Reaction, soil.)

**Phase, soil.** A subdivision of a soil series based on features that affect its use and management, such as slope, stoniness, and flooding.

**Piping (in tables).** Formation of subsurface tunnels or pipelike cavities by water moving through the soil.

**Plastic limit.** The moisture content at which a soil changes from semisolid to plastic.

**Plasticity index.** The numerical difference between the liquid limit and the plastic limit. The range of moisture content within which the soil remains plastic.

**Playa.** The generally dry and nearly level lake plain that occupies the lowest parts of closed depressional areas, such as those on intermontane basin floors. Temporary flooding occurs primarily in response to precipitation and runoff.

**Plowpan.** A compacted layer formed in the soil directly below the plowed layer.

**Ponding.** Standing water on soils in closed depressions. Unless the soils are artificially drained, the water can be removed only by percolation or evapotranspiration.

**Poor filter (in tables).** Because of rapid permeability or an impermeable layer near the surface, the soil may not adequately filter effluent from a waste disposal system.

**Poorly graded.** Refers to a coarse-grained soil or soil material consisting mainly of particles of nearly the same size. Because there is little difference in size of the particles, density can be increased only slightly by compaction.

**Potential natural community (PNC).** The biotic community that would become established on an ecological site if all successional sequences were completed without interferences by man under the present environmental conditions. Natural disturbances are inherent in its development. The PNC may include acclimatized or naturalized nonnative species.

**Potential rooting depth (effective rooting depth).**

Depth to which roots could penetrate if the content of moisture in the soil were adequate. The soil has no properties restricting the penetration of roots to this depth.

**Prescribed burning.** The application of fire to land under such conditions of weather, soil moisture, and time of day as presumably will result in the intensity of heat and spread required to accomplish specific forest management, wildlife, grazing, or fire hazard reduction purposes.

**Productivity, soil.** The capability of a soil for producing a specified plant or sequence of plants under specific management.

**Profile, soil.** A vertical section of the soil extending through all its horizons and into the parent material.

**Proper grazing use.** Grazing at an intensity that maintains enough cover to protect the soil and maintain or improve the quantity and quality of the desirable vegetation. This practice increases the vigor and reproduction capacity of the key plants and promotes the accumulation of litter and mulch necessary to conserve soil and water.

**Quartzite, metamorphic.** Rock consisting mainly of quartz that formed through recrystallization of quartz-rich sandstone or chert.

**Quartzite, sedimentary.** Very hard but unmetamorphosed sandstone consisting chiefly of quartz grains.

**Range condition.** The present composition of the plant community on a range site in relation to the potential natural plant community for that site. (See Similarity index.)

**Range site.** (See Ecological site.)

**Rangeland.** Land on which the potential natural vegetation is predominantly grasses, grasslike plants, forbs, or shrubs suitable for grazing or browsing. It includes natural grasslands, savannas, many wetlands, some deserts, tundras, and areas that support certain forb and shrub communities.

**Reaction, soil.** A measure of acidity or alkalinity of a soil, expressed in pH values. A soil that tests to pH 7.0 is described as precisely neutral in reaction because it is neither acid nor alkaline. The degrees of acidity or alkalinity, expressed as pH values, are:

Ultra acid .....	less than 3.5
Extremely acid .....	3.5 to 4.4
Very strongly acid .....	4.5 to 5.0
Strongly acid .....	5.1 to 5.5
Moderately acid .....	5.6 to 6.0
Slightly acid .....	6.1 to 6.5
Neutral .....	6.6 to 7.3
Slightly alkaline .....	7.4 to 7.8
Moderately alkaline .....	7.9 to 8.4
Strongly alkaline .....	8.5 to 9.0
Very strongly alkaline .....	9.1 and higher

**Recessional moraine.** A moraine formed during a temporary but significant halt in the retreat of a glacier.

**Red beds.** Sedimentary strata that are mainly red and are made up largely of sandstone and shale.

**Redox concentrations.** Nodules, concretions, soft masses, pore linings, and other features resulting from the accumulation of iron or manganese oxide. An indication of chemical reduction and oxidation resulting from saturation.

**Redox depletions.** Low-chroma zones from which iron and manganese oxide or a combination of iron and manganese oxide and clay has been removed. These zones are indications of the chemical reduction of iron resulting from saturation.

**Redox features.** Redox concentrations, redox depletions, reduced matrices, a positive reaction to alpha,alpha-dipyridyl, and other features indicating the chemical reduction and oxidation of iron and manganese compounds resulting from saturation.

**Reduced matrix.** A soil matrix that has low chroma in situ because of chemically reduced iron (Fe II).

The chemical reduction results from nearly continuous wetness. The matrix undergoes a change in hue or chroma within 30 minutes after exposure to air as the iron is oxidized (Fe III). A type of redox feature.

**Regeneration.** The new growth of a natural plant community, developing from seed.

**Regolith.** The unconsolidated mantle of weathered rock and soil material on the earth's surface; the loose earth material above the solid rock.

**Relict stream terrace.** One of a series of platforms in or adjacent to a stream valley that formed prior to the current stream system.

**Relief.** The elevations or inequalities of a land surface, considered collectively.

**Residuum (residual soil material).** Unconsolidated, weathered or partly weathered mineral material that accumulated as consolidated rock disintegrated in place.

**Rill.** A steep-sided channel resulting from accelerated erosion. A rill generally is a few inches deep and not wide enough to be an obstacle to farm machinery.

**Riser.** The relatively short, steeply sloping area below a terrace tread that grades to a lower terrace tread or base level.

**Riverwash.** Unstable areas of sandy, silty, clayey, or gravelly sediments. These areas are flooded, washed, and reworked by rivers so frequently that they support little or no vegetation.

**Road cut.** A sloping surface produced by mechanical means during road construction. It is commonly on the uphill side of the road.

**Rock fragments.** Rock or mineral fragments having a diameter of 2 millimeters or more; for example, boulders, stones, cobbles, and gravel.

**Rock outcrop.** Exposures of bare bedrock other than lava flows and rock-lined pits.

**Root zone.** The part of the soil that can be penetrated by plant roots.

**Rooting depth (in tables).** Shallow root zone. The soil is shallow over a layer that greatly restricts roots.

**Rubble land.** Areas that have more than 90 percent of the surface covered by stones or boulders. Voids contain no soil material and virtually no vegetation other than lichens. The areas commonly are at the base of mountain slopes, but some are on mountain slopes as deposits of cobbles, stones, and boulders left by Pleistocene glaciation or by periglacial phenomena.

**Runoff.** The precipitation discharged into stream channels from an area. The water that flows off the surface of the land without sinking into the

soil is called surface runoff. Water that enters the soil before reaching surface streams is called ground-water runoff or seepage flow from ground water.

**Saline soil.** A soil containing soluble salts in an amount that impairs growth of plants. A saline soil does not contain excess exchangeable sodium.

**Salinity.** The electrical conductivity of a saline soil. It is expressed, in millimhos per centimeter, as follows:

Nonsaline .....	0 to 4
Slightly saline .....	4 to 8
Moderately saline .....	8 to 16
Strongly saline .....	more than 16

**Sand.** As a soil separate, individual rock or mineral fragments from 0.05 to 2.0 millimeters in diameter. Most sand grains consist of quartz. As a soil textural class, a soil that is 85 percent or more sand and not more than 10 percent clay.

**Sandstone.** Sedimentary rock containing dominantly sand-sized particles.

**Sandy soil.** Sand or loamy sand.

**Sapric soil material (muck).** The most highly decomposed of all organic soil material. Muck has the least amount of plant fiber, the highest bulk density, and the lowest water content at saturation of all organic soil material.

**Saturation.** Wetness characterized by zero or positive pressure of the soil water. Under conditions of saturation, the water will flow from the soil matrix into an unlined auger hole.

**Sawlogs.** Logs of suitable size and quality for the production of lumber.

**Scarification.** The act of abrading, scratching, loosening, crushing, or modifying the surface to increase water absorption or to provide a more tillable soil.

**Scribner's log rule.** A method of estimating the number of board feet that can be cut from a log of a given diameter and length.

**Sedimentary plain.** An extensive nearly level to gently rolling or moderately sloping area that is underlain by sedimentary bedrock and that has a slope of 0 to 8 percent.

**Sedimentary rock.** Rock made up of particles deposited from suspension in water. The chief kinds of sedimentary rock are conglomerate, formed from gravel; sandstone, formed from sand; shale, formed from clay; and limestone, formed from soft masses of calcium carbonate. There are many intermediate types. Some wind-deposited sand is consolidated into sandstone.

**Sedimentary uplands.** Land areas of bedrock formed from water- or wind-deposited sediments. They are higher on the landscape than the flood plain.

**Seepage (in tables).** The movement of water through soil. Seepage adversely affects the specified use.

**Semiconsolidated sedimentary beds.** Soft geologic sediments that disperse when fragments are placed in water. The fragments are hard or very hard when dry. Determining the texture by the usual field method is difficult.

**Sequum.** A sequence consisting of an illuvial horizon and the overlying eluvial horizon. (See Eluviation.)

**Series, soil.** A group of soils that have profiles that are almost alike, except for differences in texture of the surface layer or of the underlying material. All the soils of a series have horizons that are similar in composition, thickness, and arrangement.

**Shale.** Sedimentary rock formed by the hardening of a clay deposit.

**Shallow soil.** A soil that is 10 to 20 inches deep over bedrock or to other material that restricts the penetration of plant roots.

**Sheet erosion.** The removal of a fairly uniform layer of soil material from the land surface by the action of rainfall and surface runoff.

**Shelterwood system.** A forest management system requiring the removal of a stand in a series of cuts so that regeneration occurs under a partial canopy. After regeneration, a final cut removes the shelterwood and allows the stand to develop in the open as an even-aged stand. The system is well suited to sites where shelter is needed for regeneration, and it can aid regeneration of the more intolerant tree species in a stand.

**Shoulder.** The uppermost inclined surface at the top of a hillside. It is the transitional zone from the backslope to the summit of a hill or mountain. The surface is dominantly convex in profile and erosional in origin.

**Shrink-swell (in tables).** The shrinking of soil when dry and the swelling when wet. Shrinking and swelling can damage roads, dams, building foundations, and other structures. It can also damage plant roots.

**Side slope.** A geomorphic component of hills consisting of a laterally planar area of a hillside. The overland waterflow is predominantly parallel.

**Silica.** A combination of silicon and oxygen. The mineral form is called quartz.

**Silt.** As a soil separate, individual mineral particles that range in diameter from the upper limit of clay (0.002 millimeters) to the lower limit of very fine sand (0.05 millimeters). As a soil textural class, soil that is 80 percent or more silt and less than 12 percent clay.

**Siltstone.** Sedimentary rock made up of dominantly silt-sized particles.

**Similar soils.** Soils that share limits of diagnostic criteria, behave and perform in a similar manner, and have similar conservation needs or management requirements for the major land uses in the survey area.

**Similarity index.** A similarity index is the percentage of a specific vegetation state plant community that is presently on the site.

**Sinkhole.** A depression in the landscape where limestone has been dissolved.

**Site class.** A grouping of site indexes into five to seven production capability levels. Each level can be represented by a site curve.

**Site curve (50-year).** A set of related curves on a graph that shows the average height of dominant or dominant and codominant trees for the range of ages on soils that differ in productivity. Each level is represented by a curve. The basis of the curves is the height of dominant or dominant and codominant trees that are 50 years old or are 50 years old at breast height.

**Site curve (100-year).** A set of related curves on a graph that shows the average height of dominant or dominant and codominant trees for a range of ages on soils that differ in productivity. Each level is represented by a curve. The basis of the curves is the height of dominant or dominant and codominant trees that are 100 years old or are 100 years old at breast height.

**Site index.** A designation of the quality of a forest site based on the height of the dominant stand at an arbitrarily chosen age. For example, if the average height attained by dominant or dominant and codominant trees in a fully stocked stand at the age of 50 years is 75 feet, the site index is 75.

**Skid trails.** Pathways along which logs are dragged to a common site for loading onto a logging truck.

**Slash.** The branches, bark, treetops, reject logs, and broken or uprooted trees left on the ground after logging.

**Slickens.** Accumulations of fine textured material, such as material separated in placer-mine and ore-mill operations. Slickens from ore mills commonly consist of freshly ground rock that has undergone chemical treatment during the milling process.

**Slickensides.** Polished and grooved surfaces produced by one mass sliding past another. In soils, slickensides may occur at the bases of slip surfaces on the steeper slopes; on faces of blocks, prisms, and columns; and in swelling clayey soils, where there is marked change in moisture content.

**Slickspot.** A small area of soil having a puddled, crusted, or smooth surface and an excess of exchangeable sodium. The soil generally is loamy or clayey, is slippery when wet, and is low in productivity.

**Slope.** The inclination of the land surface from the horizontal. Percentage of slope is the vertical distance divided by horizontal distance, then multiplied by 100. Thus, a slope of 20 percent is a drop of 20 feet in 100 feet of horizontal distance. In this survey the following slope classes are recognized:

Nearly level .....	0 to 2 percent
Gently sloping .....	2 to 4 percent
Moderately sloping .....	4 to 8 percent
Strongly sloping .....	8 to 15 percent
Moderately steep .....	15 to 25 percent
Steep .....	25 to 45 percent
Very steep .....	more than 45 percent

**Slope (in tables).** Slope is great enough that special practices are required to ensure satisfactory performance of the soil for a specific use.

**Slow intake (in tables).** The slow movement of water into the soil.

**Slow refill (in tables).** The slow filling of ponds, resulting from restricted permeability in the soil.

**Small stones (in tables).** Rock fragments less than 3 inches (7.6 centimeters) in diameter. Small stones adversely affect the specified use of the soil.

**Sodic (alkali) soil.** A soil having so high a degree of alkalinity (pH 8.5 or higher) or so high a percentage of exchangeable sodium (15 percent or more of the total exchangeable bases), or both, that plant growth is restricted.

**Sodicity.** The degree to which a soil is affected by exchangeable sodium. Sodicity is expressed as a sodium adsorption ratio (SAR) of a saturation extract, or the ratio of  $\text{Na}^+$  to  $\text{Ca}^{++} + \text{Mg}^{++}$ . The degrees of sodicity and their respective ratios are:

Slight .....	less than 13:1
Moderate .....	13-30:1
Strong .....	more than 30:1

**Sodium adsorption ratio (SAR).** A measure of the amount of sodium (Na) relative to calcium (Ca) and magnesium (Mg) in the water extract from saturated soil paste. It is the ratio of the Na concentration divided by the square root of one-half of the Ca + Mg concentration.

**Soft bedrock.** Bedrock that can be excavated with trenching machines, backhoes, small rippers, and other equipment commonly used in construction.

**Soil.** A natural, three-dimensional body at the earth's surface. It is capable of supporting plants and has properties resulting from the integrated effect of climate and living matter acting on earthy parent material, as conditioned by relief over periods of time.

**Soil separates.** Mineral particles less than 2 millimeters in equivalent diameter and ranging between specified size limits. The names and sizes, in millimeters, of separates recognized in the United States are as follows:

Very coarse sand .....	2.0 to 1.0
Coarse sand .....	1.0 to 0.5
Medium sand .....	0.5 to 0.25
Fine sand .....	0.25 to 0.10
Very fine sand .....	0.10 to 0.05
Silt .....	0.05 to 0.002
Clay .....	less than 0.002

**Solum.** The upper part of a soil profile, above the C horizon, in which the processes of soil formation are active. The solum in soil consists of the A, E, and B horizons. Generally, the characteristics of the material in these horizons are unlike those of the material below the solum. The living roots and plant and animal activities are largely confined to the solum.

**Species.** A single, distinct kind of plant or animal having certain distinguishing characteristics.

**Stone line.** A concentration of coarse fragments in a soil. Generally, it is indicative of an old weathered surface. In a cross section, the line may be one fragment or more thick. It generally overlies material that weathered in place and is overlain by recent sediment of variable thickness.

**Stones.** Rock fragments 10 to 24 inches (25 to 60 centimeters) in diameter if rounded or 15 to 24 inches (38 to 60 centimeters) in length if flat.

**Stony.** Refers to a soil containing stones in numbers that interfere with tillage, or stones cover .01 to 0.1 percent of the surface. Very stony means that 0.1 to 3.0 percent of the surface is covered with stones. Extremely stony means that 3 to 15 percent of the surface is covered with stones.

**Stony soil material.** Soil that is 15 to 35 percent, by volume, rock fragments that are dominated by fragments 10 to 24 inches (25 to 60 centimeters) in diameter.

**Strath terrace.** A surface cut formed by the erosion of hard or semiconsolidated bedrock and thinly mantled with stream deposits.

**Stream channel.** The hollow bed where a natural stream of surface water flows or may flow; the deepest or central part of the bed, formed by the main current and covered more or less continuously by water.

**Stream terrace.** One of a series of platforms in a stream valley, flanking and more or less parallel to the stream channel. It originally formed near the level of the stream and is the dissected remnants of an abandoned flood plain, streambed, or valley floor that were produced during a former stage of erosion or deposition.

**Stripcropping.** Growing crops in a systematic arrangement of strips or bands that provide vegetative barriers to soil blowing and water erosion.

**Structure, soil.** The arrangement of primary soil particles into compound particles or aggregates. The principal forms of soil structure are *platy* (laminated), *prismatic* (vertical axis of aggregates longer than horizontal), *columnar* (prisms with rounded tops), *blocky* (angular or subangular), and *granular*. *Structureless* soils are either *single grain* (each grain by itself, as in dune sand) or *massive* (the particles adhering without any regular cleavage, as in many hardpans).

**Stubble mulch.** Stubble or other crop residue left on the soil or partly worked into the soil. It protects the soil from wind erosion and water erosion after harvest, during preparation of a seedbed for the next crop, and during the early growing period of the new crop.

**Subsoil.** Technically, the B horizon; roughly, the part of the solum below plow depth.

**Subsoiling.** Tilling a soil below normal plow depth, ordinarily to shatter or loosen a layer that is restrictive to roots.

**Substratum.** The part of the soil below the solum.

**Subsurface layer.** Any surface soil horizon (A, E, AB, or EB) below the surface layer.

**Summer fallow.** The tillage of uncropped land during the summer to control weeds and allow storage of moisture in the soil for the growth of a later crop. A practice common in semiarid regions, where annual precipitation is not enough to produce a crop every year. Summer fallow is frequently practiced before planting winter grain.

- Summit.** A general term for the top, or highest level, of an upland feature, such as a hill or mountain. It commonly refers to a higher area that has a gentle slope and is flanked by steeper slopes.
- Surface layer.** The soil ordinarily moved in tillage, or its equivalent in uncultivated soil, ranging in depth from 4 to 10 inches (10 to 25 centimeters). Frequently designated as the “plow layer,” or the “Ap horizon.”
- Tailwater.** The water directly downstream of a structure.
- Talus.** Rock fragments of any size or shape, commonly coarse and angular, derived from and lying at the base of a cliff or very steep rock slope. The accumulated mass of such loose, broken rock formed chiefly by falling, rolling, or sliding.
- Taxadjuncts.** Soils that cannot be classified in a series recognized in the classification system. Such soils are named for a series they strongly resemble and are designated as taxadjuncts to that series because they differ in ways too small to be of consequence in interpreting their use and behavior.
- Terminal moraine.** A belt of thick glacial drift that generally marks the termination of important glacial advances.
- Terrace.** An embankment, or ridge, constructed across sloping soils on the contour or at a slight angle to the contour. The terrace intercepts surface runoff so that water soaks into the soil or flows slowly to a prepared outlet. A terrace in a field generally is built so that the field can be farmed. A terrace intended mainly for drainage has a deep channel that is maintained in permanent sod.
- Terrace (geologic).** An old alluvial plain, ordinarily flat or undulating, bordering a river, a lake, or the sea.
- Terracette.** Small, irregular step-like forms on steep hillslopes, especially in pasture, formed by creep or erosion of surficial materials that may or may not be induced by trampling of livestock such as sheep or cattle.
- Texture, soil.** The relative proportions of sand, silt, and clay particles in a mass of soil. The basic textural classes, in order of increasing proportion of fine particles, are *sand*, *loamy sand*, *sandy loam*, *loam*, *silt loam*, *silt*, *sandy clay loam*, *clay loam*, *silty clay loam*, *sandy clay*, *silty clay*, and *clay*. The sand, loamy sand, and sandy loam classes may be further divided by specifying “coarse,” “fine,” or “very fine.”
- Thin layer (in tables).** A layer of otherwise suitable soil material that is too thin for the specified use.
- Till plain.** An extensive, nearly level to gently rolling or moderately sloping area that is underlain by or consists of till and that has a slope of 0 to 8 percent.
- Tilth, soil.** The physical condition of the soil as related to tillage, seedbed preparation, seedling emergence, and root penetration.
- Toeslope.** The outermost inclined surface at the base of a hill. Toeslopes are commonly gentle and linear in profile.
- Too arid (in tables).** The soil is dry most of the time, and vegetation is difficult to establish.
- Topsoil.** The upper part of the soil, which is the most favorable material for plant growth. It is ordinarily rich in organic matter and is used to topdress roadbanks, lawns, and land affected by mining.
- Trace elements.** Chemical elements, for example, zinc, cobalt, manganese, copper, and iron, in soils in extremely small amounts. They are essential to plant growth.
- Trafficability.** The degree to which a soil is capable of supporting vehicular traffic across a wide range in soil moisture conditions.
- Tread.** The relatively flat terrace surface that was cut or built by stream or wave action.
- Tuff.** A compacted deposit that is 50 percent or more volcanic ash and dust.
- Understory.** Any plants in a forest community that grow to a height of less than 5 feet.
- Upland.** Land at a higher elevation, in general, than the alluvial plain or stream terrace; land above the lowlands along streams.
- Valley.** An elongated depressional area primarily developed by stream action.
- Valley fill.** In glaciated regions, material deposited in stream valleys by glacial meltwater. In nonglaciated regions, alluvium deposited by heavily loaded streams.
- Variation.** Refers to patterns of contrasting colors assumed to be inherited from the parent material rather than to be the result of poor drainage.
- Varve.** A sedimentary layer or a lamina or sequence of laminae deposited in a body of still water within a year. Specifically, a thin pair of graded glaciolacustrine layers seasonally deposited, usually by meltwater streams, in a glacial lake or other body of still water in front of a glacier.
- Very deep soil.** A soil that is more than 60 inches deep over bedrock or to other material that restricts the penetration of plant roots.

**Very shallow soil.** A soil that is less than 10 inches deep over bedrock or to other material that restricts the penetration of plant roots.

**Water bars.** Smooth, shallow ditches or depressional areas that are excavated at an angle across a sloping road. They are used to reduce the downward velocity of water and divert it off and away from the road surface. Water bars can easily be driven over if constructed properly.

**Water-spreading.** Diverting runoff from natural channels by means of a system of dams, dikes, or ditches and spreading it over relatively flat surfaces.

**Weathering.** All physical and chemical changes produced in rocks or other deposits at or near the earth's surface by atmospheric agents. These

changes result in disintegration and decomposition of the material.

**Well graded.** Refers to soil material consisting of coarse-grained particles that are well distributed over wide range in size or diameter. Such soil normally can be easily increased in density and bearing properties by compaction. Contrasts with poorly graded soil.

**Wilting point (or permanent wilting point).** The moisture content of soil, on an oven-dry basis, at which a plant (specifically a sunflower) wilts so much that it does not recover when placed in a humid, dark chamber.

**Windthrow.** The action of uprooting and tipping over trees by the wind.

# Accessibility Statement

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