

TANANA -- ALASKA STATE SOIL



Tanana Soil Profile (undisturbed with permafrost)

Surface layer: dark brown organic material

Subsurface layer: black mucky silt loam

Subsoil - upper: olive brown silt loam

Subsoil - lower: gray and olive brown very sandy loam

Substratum: gray and olive brown permanently frozen silt loam and sandy loam

The Tanana series consists of a mantle of mixed silty micaceous loess and alluvium overlying coarser textured alluvium. Under climax native vegetation, Tanana soils are poorly drained and contain permafrost within 50 inches of the surface. If the surface vegetation and organic mat is disturbed, either through wildfire or cultural activities such as farming, the soil will warm and become well drained. Tanana soils are on alluvial terraces. They support a native plant community of aspen, paper birch, white spruce, and black spruce. When cleared and developed for agriculture, Tanana soils are used for hay and pasture, small grains, and vegetables.

The Tanana series was established in the Yukon-Tanana Area of Alaska in 1914. It was named after the Tanana River, whose name in-turn was derived from the Athabaskan word for "mountain river". Tanana soils are extensive throughout the lowland areas of Interior Alaska. Tanana soils are important agricultural soils in Alaska. The mean annual precipitation is about 12 inches, and the mean annual temperature is about 26 degrees F.

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