

GEOTECHNICAL REVIEWS

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**Iowa Geological and Water Survey
Paul VanDorpe and Soren Rundquist**

What is the purpose of a geotechnical review?

A geotechnical review informs the department of existing hydrogeological conditions at a wastewater site, such as

- what geological materials are present at the site; how might they relate to lagoon construction; how might they affect groundwater movement; are there saturated materials at the site?
- what hydrological conditions exist at the site; what are the surface water conditions; where does groundwater flow; are there aquifers present / how will they be affected?

Why are we doing these geotechnical reviews?

So that wastewater sites do not become a source of contamination by releasing products into the environment which would endanger the safety and well being of Iowans, directly or indirectly.

First and foremost:

GEOTECHNICAL REVIEWS

@

Iowa Geological and Water Survey

#1 Where in the world are we?

?



A topographic **location map** – what does it tell us?

5-mile radius

What Cheer

Text

Site

An aerial photo location map — what does it tell us?

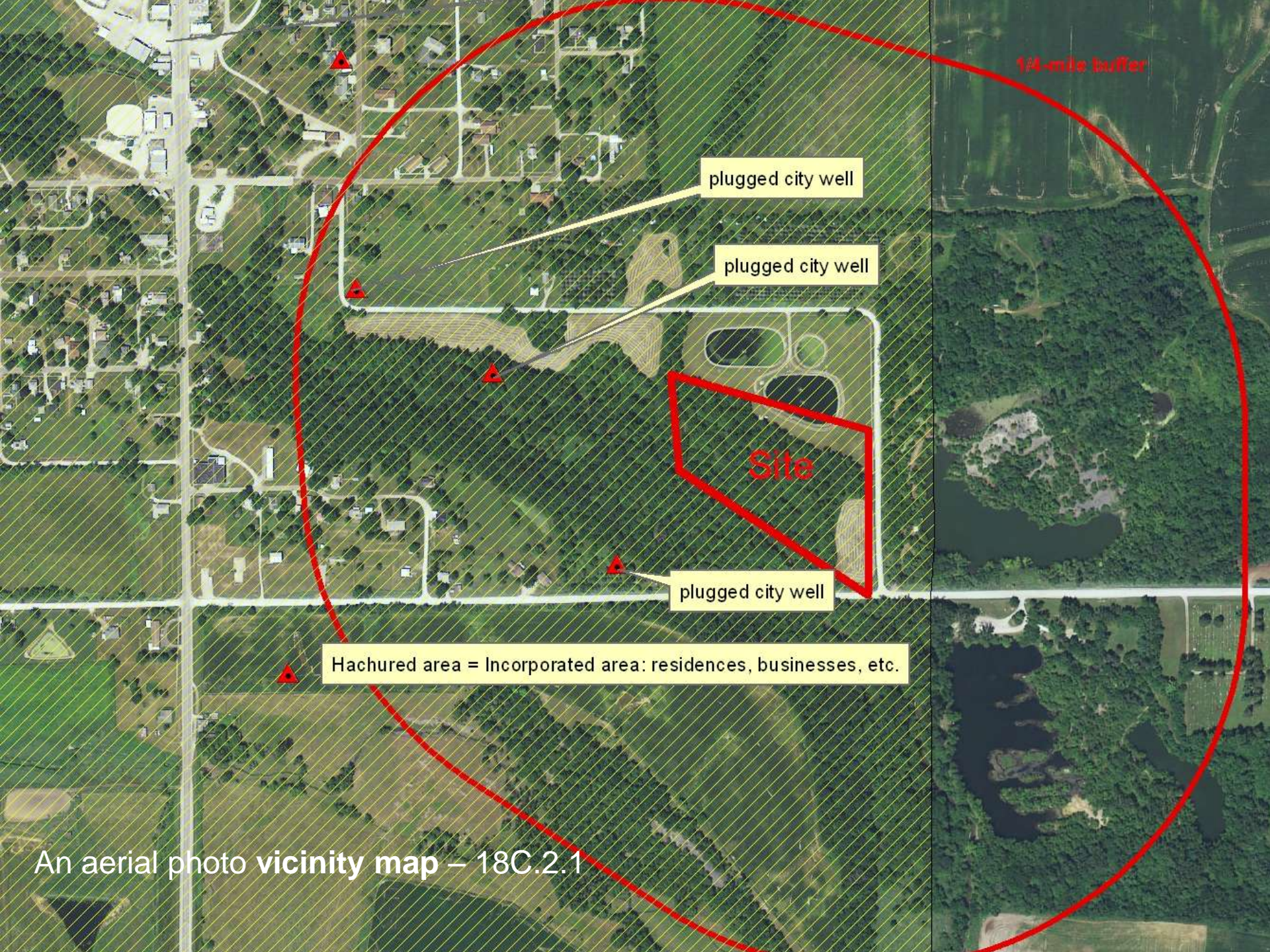


A closer aerial photo **location map** – what does it tell us?



What Cheer

Site



1/4-mile buffer

plugged city well

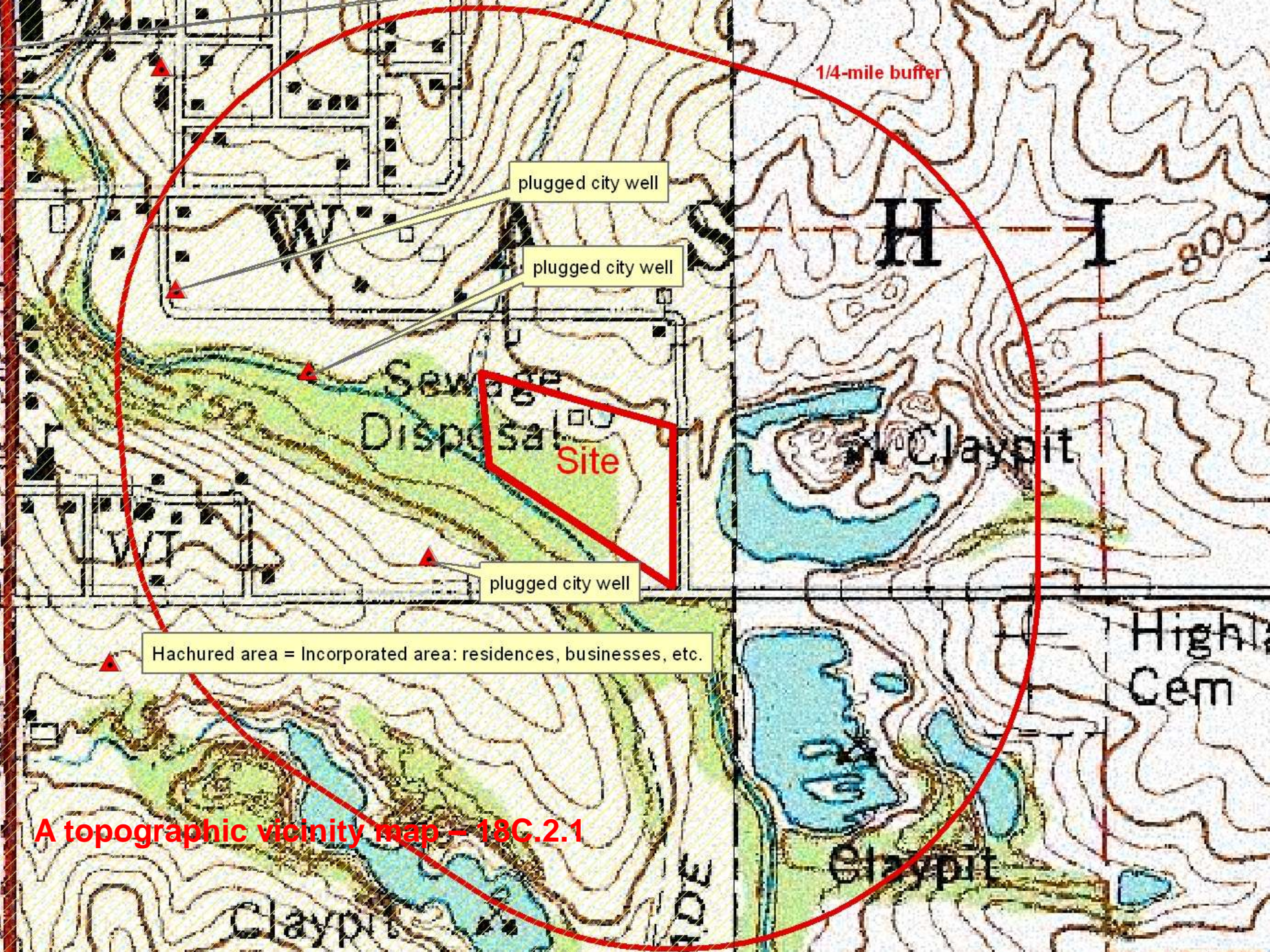
plugged city well

Site

plugged city well

Hachured area = Incorporated area: residences, businesses, etc.

An aerial photo vicinity map – 18C.2.1



1/4-mile buffer

plugged city well

plugged city well

Sewage
Disposal
Site

plugged city well

Hachured area = Incorporated area: residences, businesses, etc.

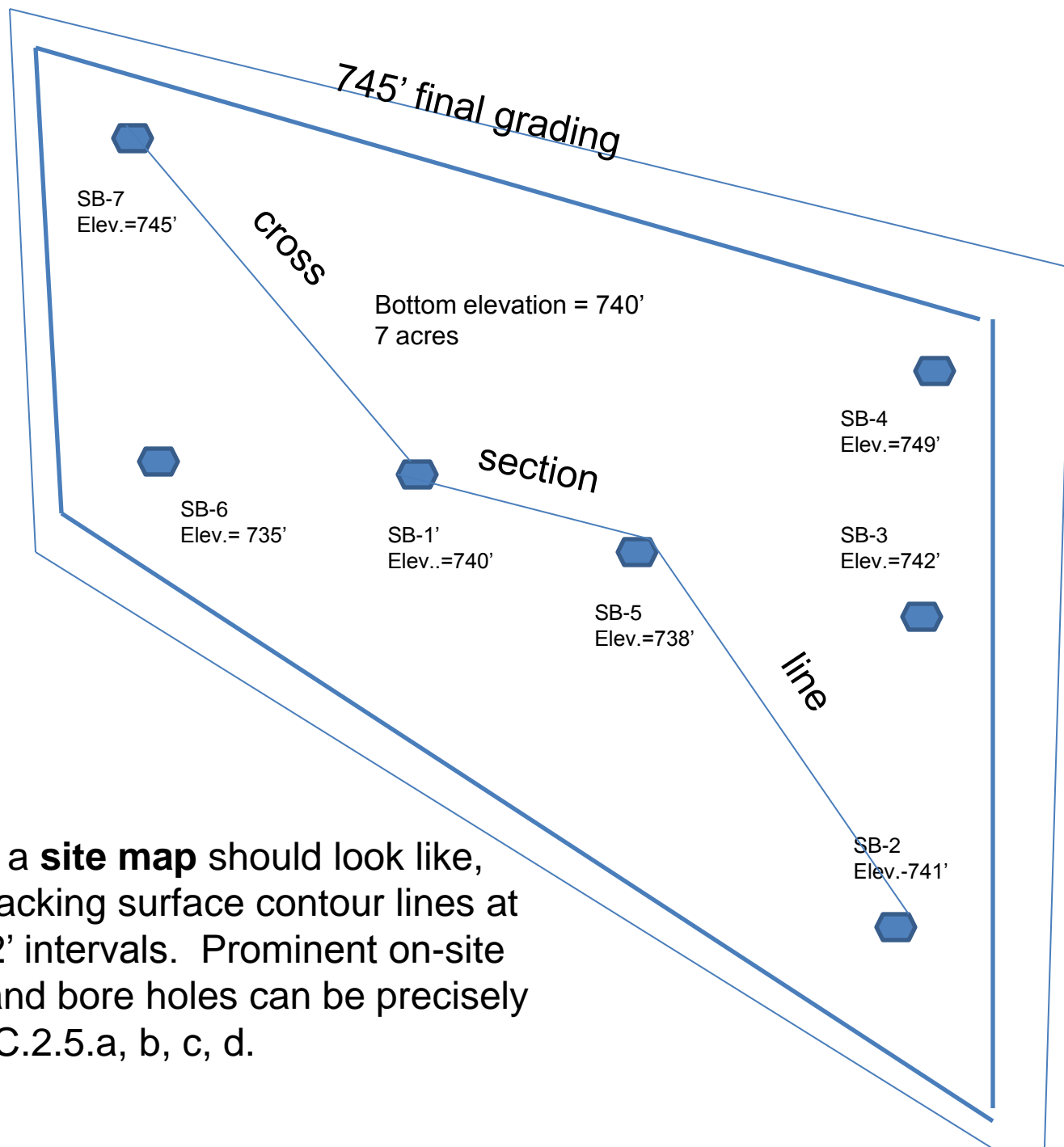
Claypit

High
Cem

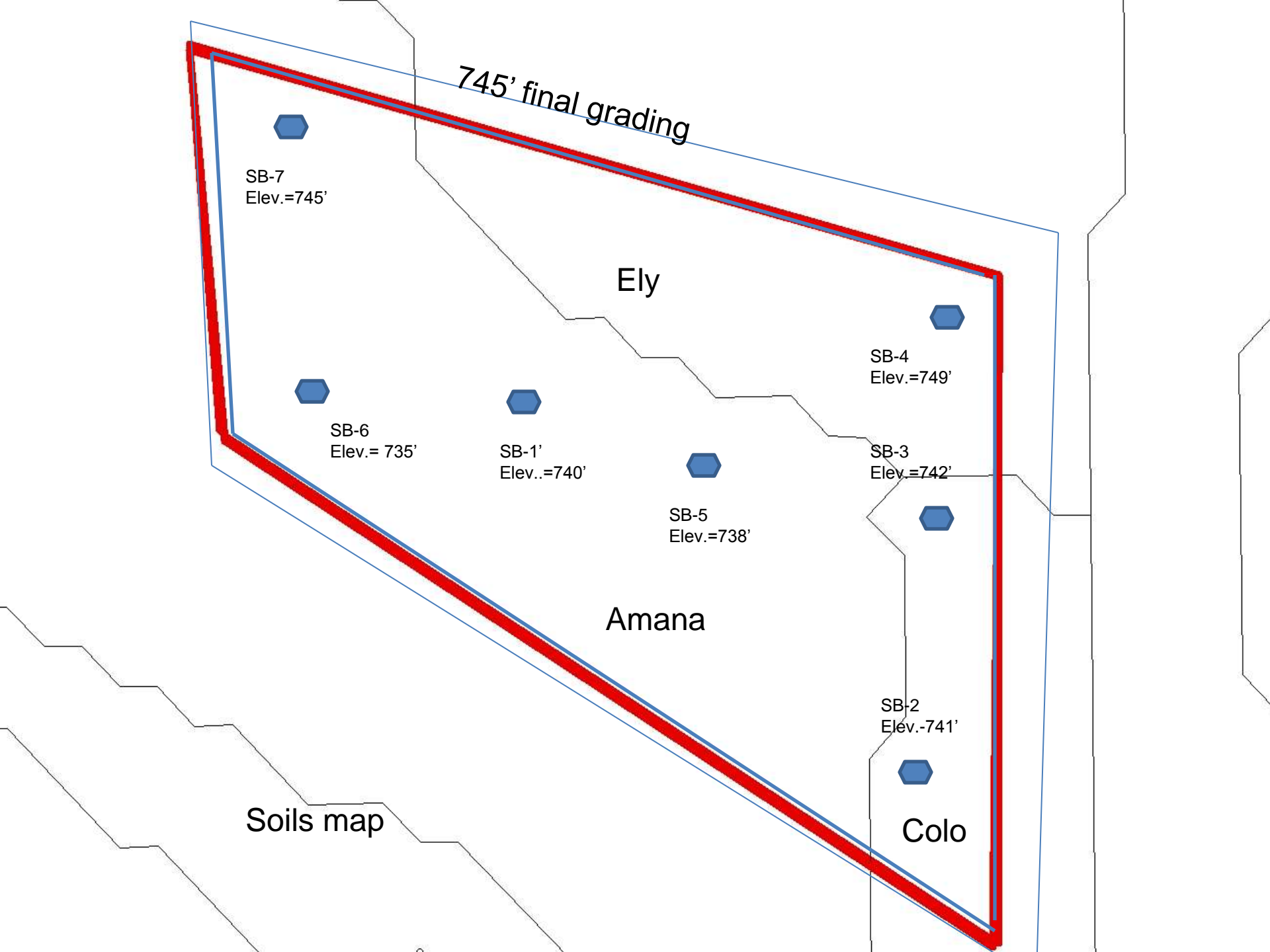
Claypit

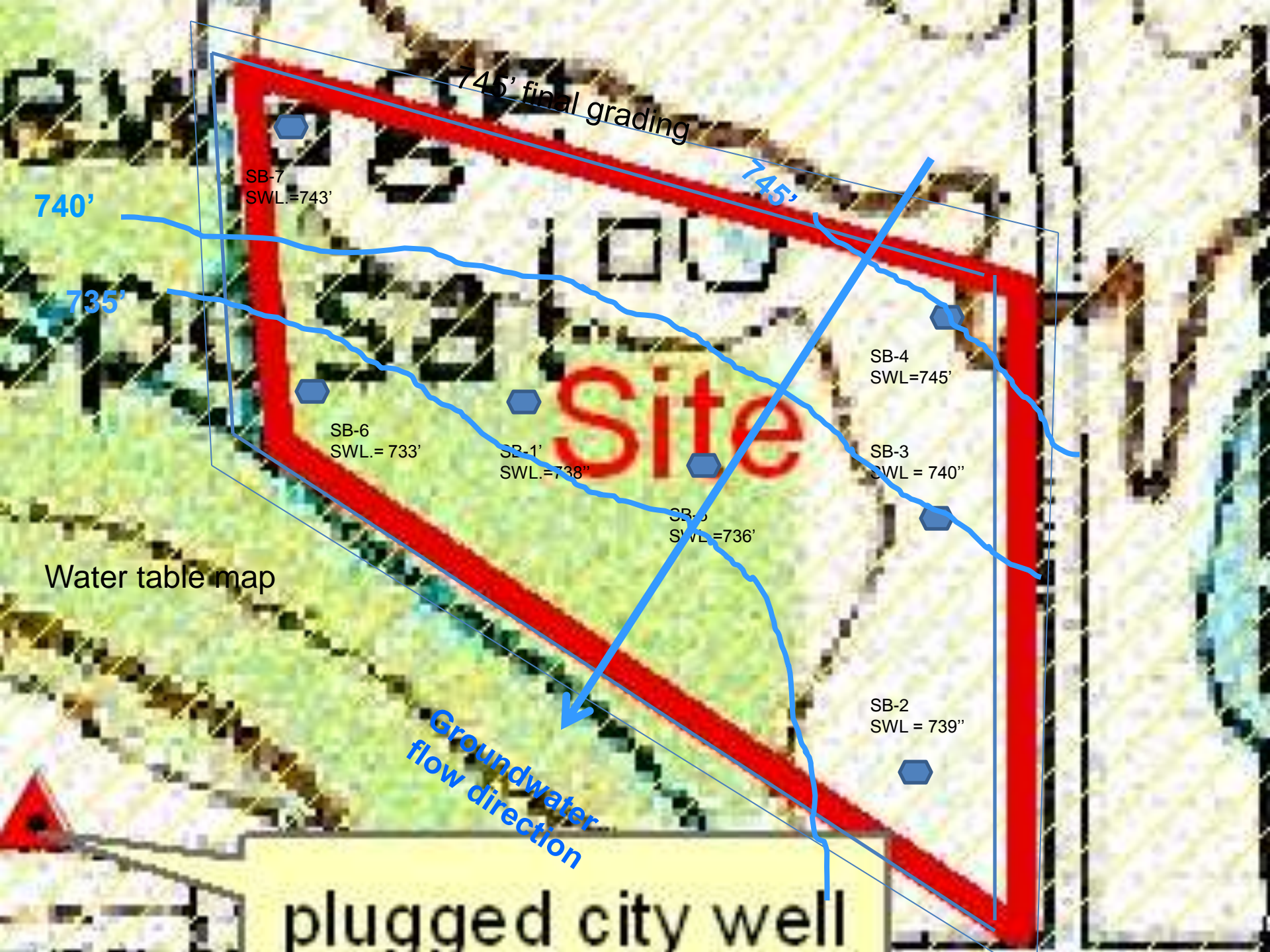
Claypit

A topographic vicinity map – 18C.2.1



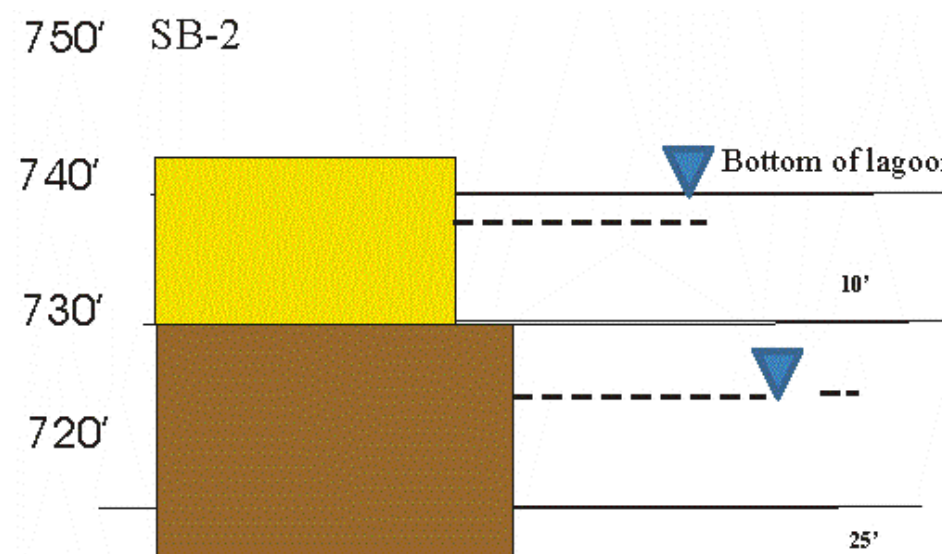
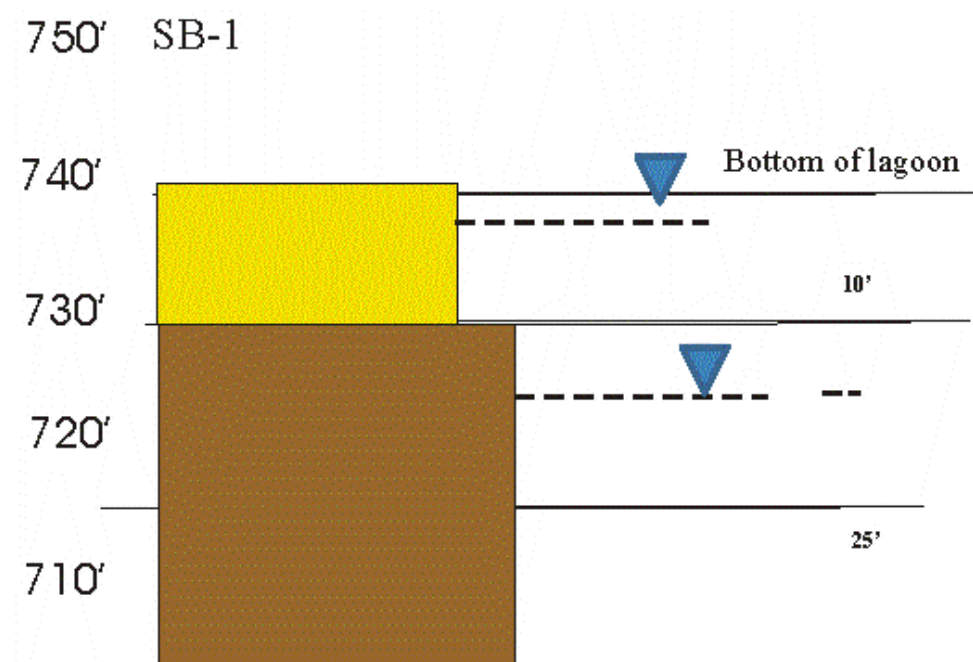
This is what a **site map** should look like, except it is lacking surface contour lines at either 1' or 2' intervals. Prominent on-site landmarks and bore holes can be precisely located. 18C.2.5.a, b, c, d.

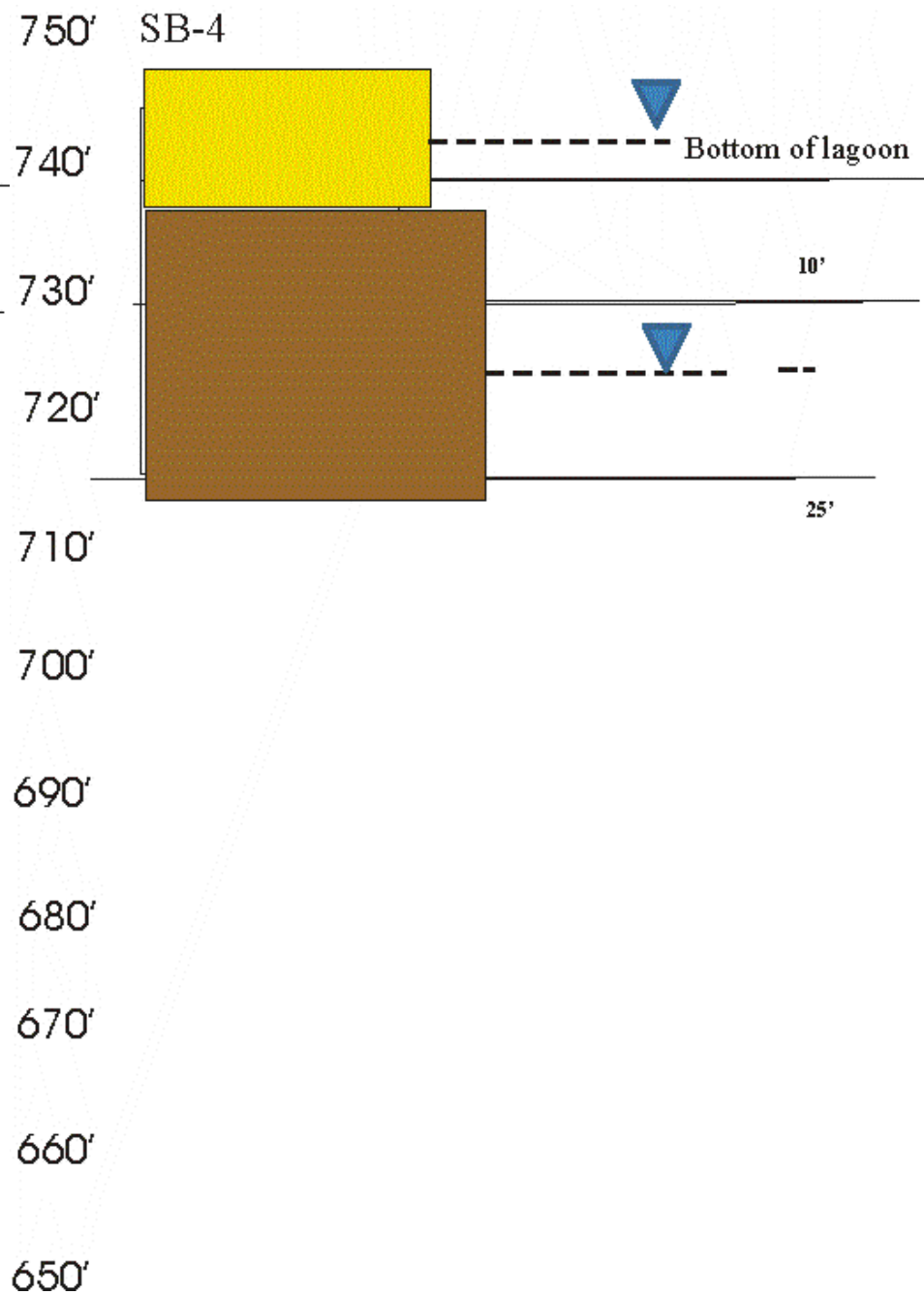
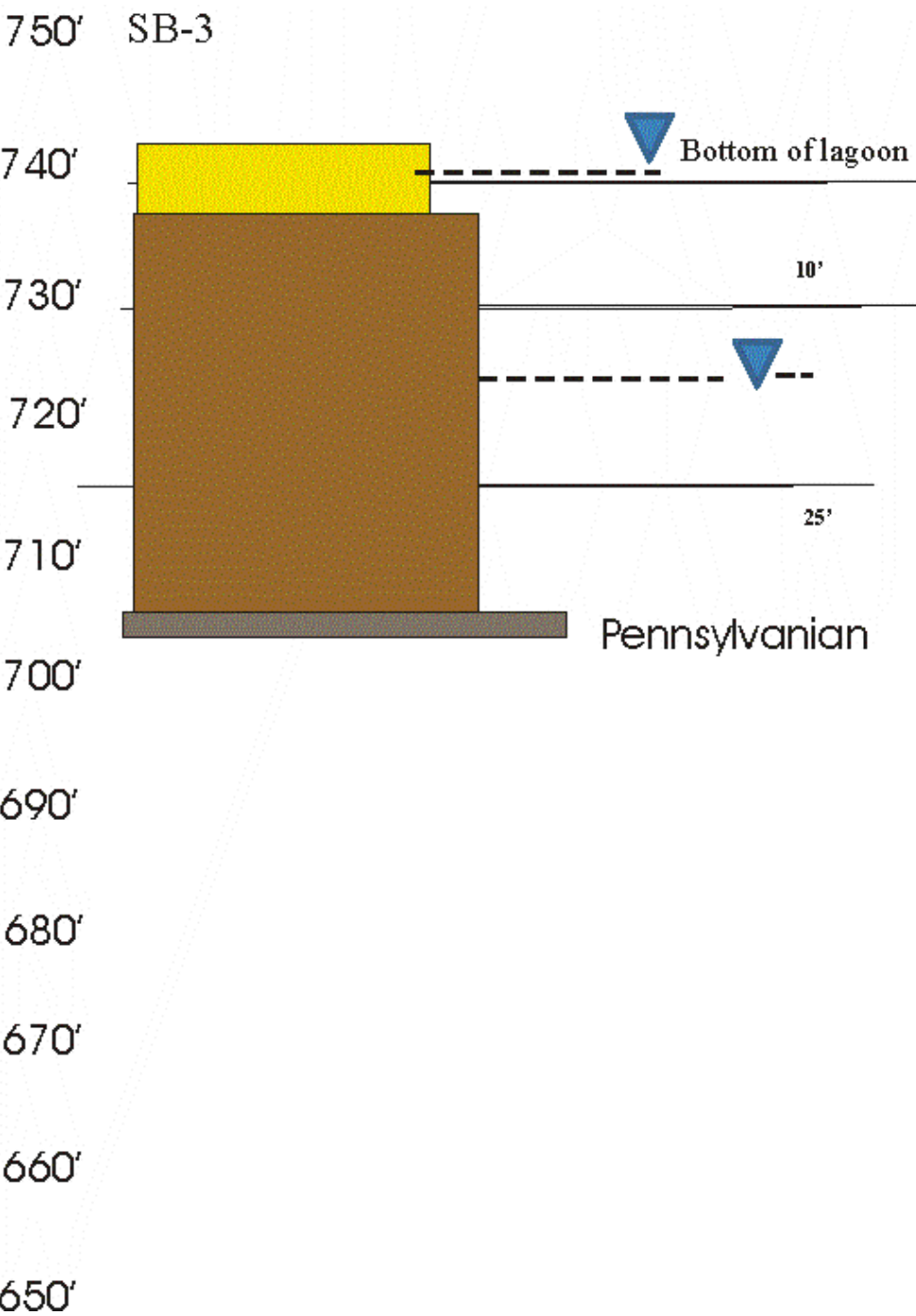


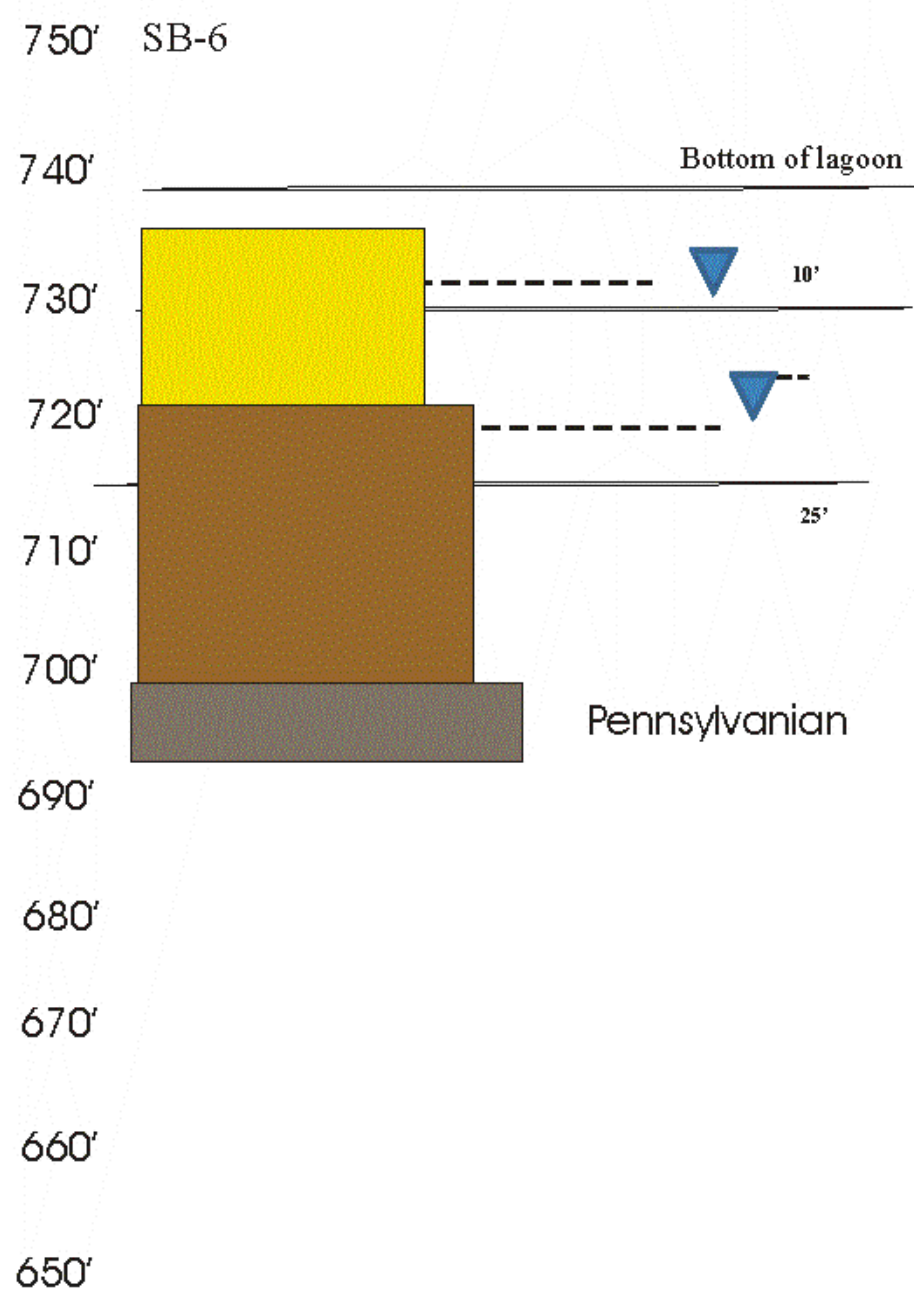
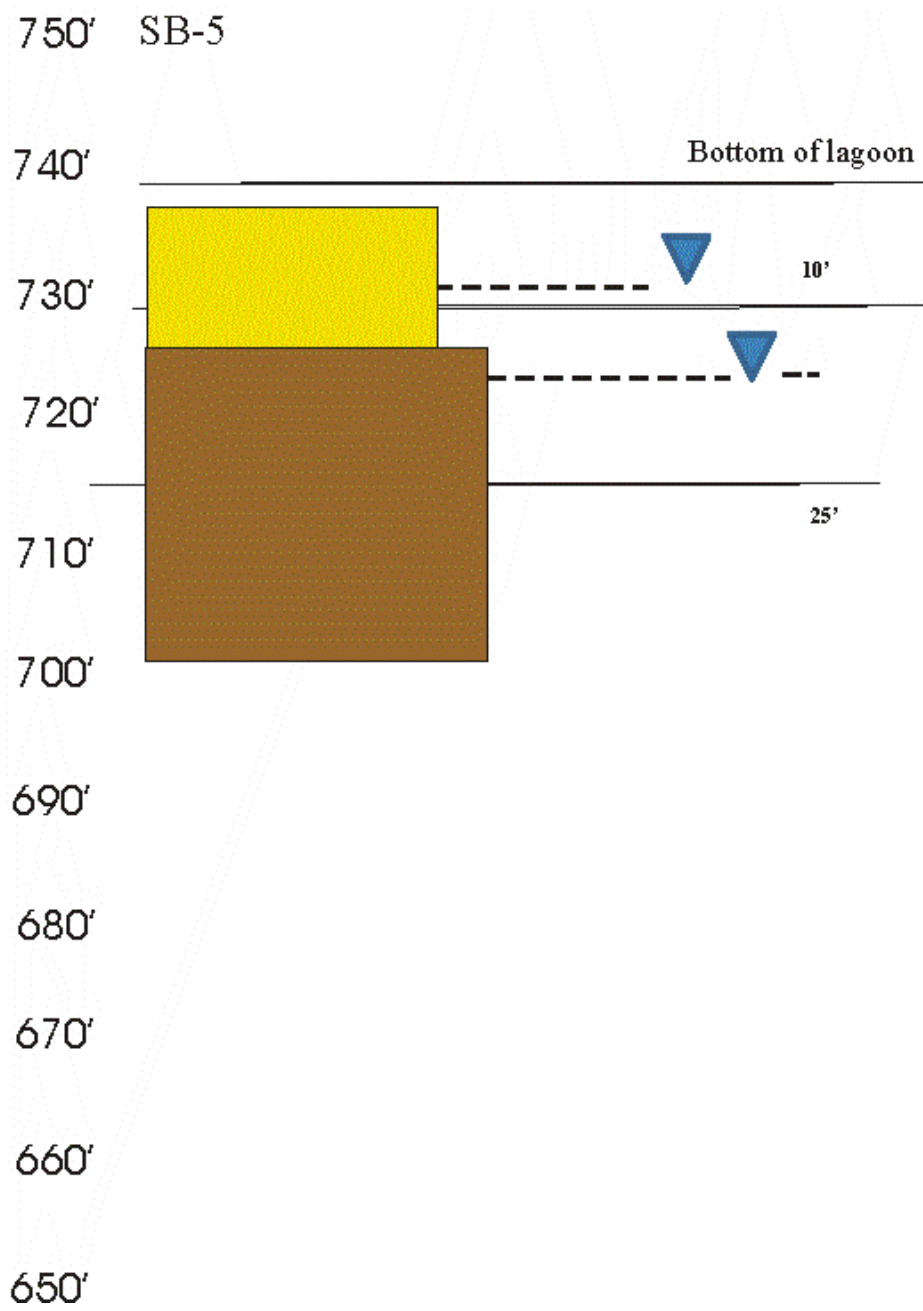


	surface	bedrock	depth to	10' below	25' below	Mississippian	Soil	flood	parent	depth to
	elevation	elevation	bedrock	bottom	bottom	contact estimate		frequency	material	water
SB-1	740	701	39	10	25	680	Amana	occasional	alluvium	1'-3'
SB-2	741	700	41	11	32	655	Colo	occasional	alluvium	1'-3'
SB-3	742	705	37	12	33	660	Colo	occasional	alluvium	1'-3'
SB-4	749	710	39	19	40	660	Ely	none	local alluvium	2'-5'
SB-5	738	702	36	8	29	670	Amana	occasional	alluvium	1'-3'
SB-6	735	700	35	5	26	680	Amana	occasional	alluvium	1'-3'
SB-7	745	720	25	15	36	685	Amana	occasional	alluvium	1'-3'

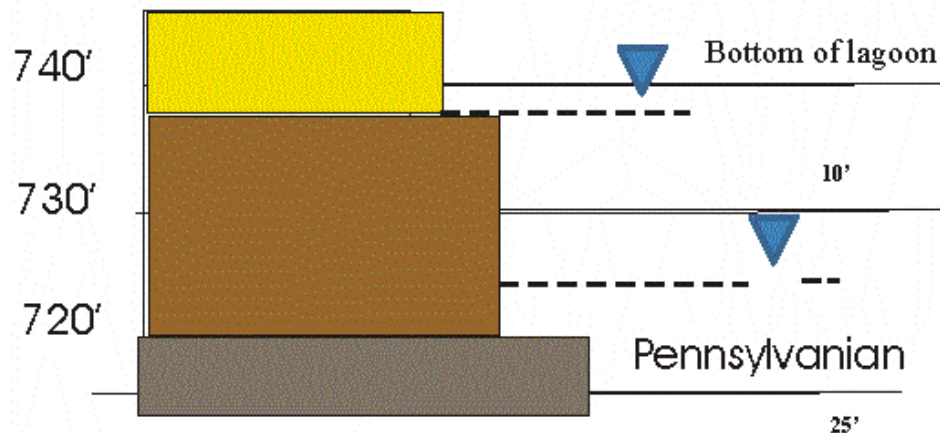
Most of this information should all be available before on-site drilling commences.



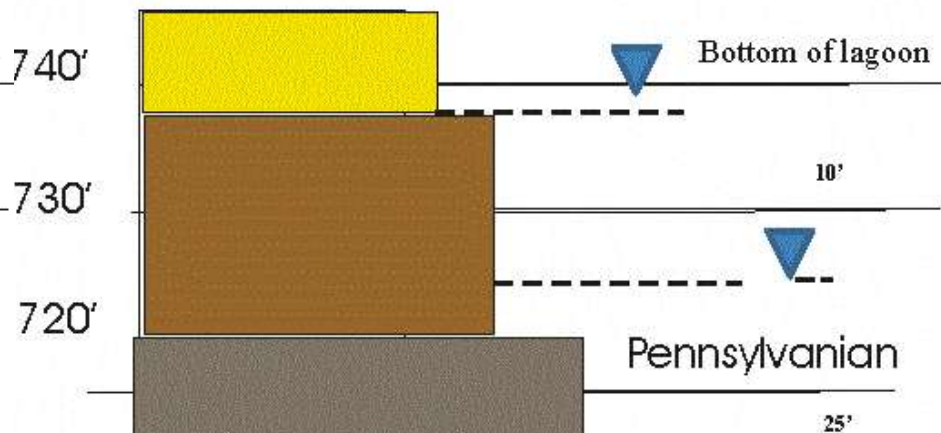




750' SB-7



750' Anticipated site geology



710'

710'

700'

700'

690'

690'

680'

680'

670'

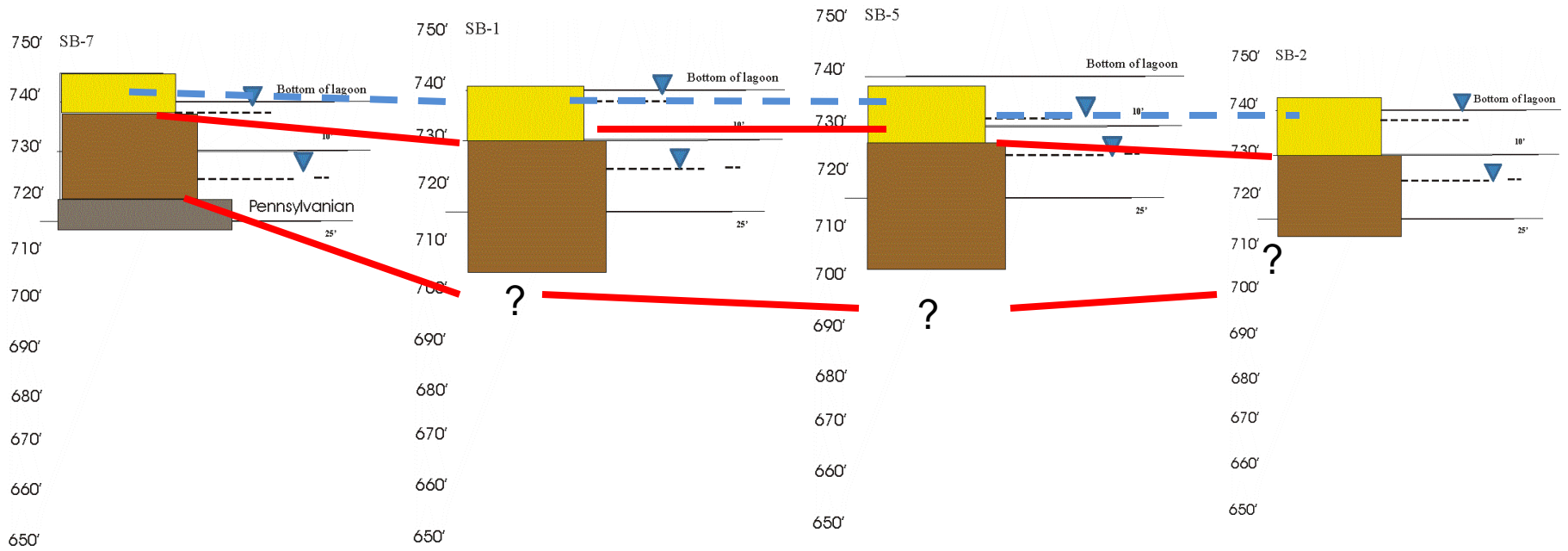
670'

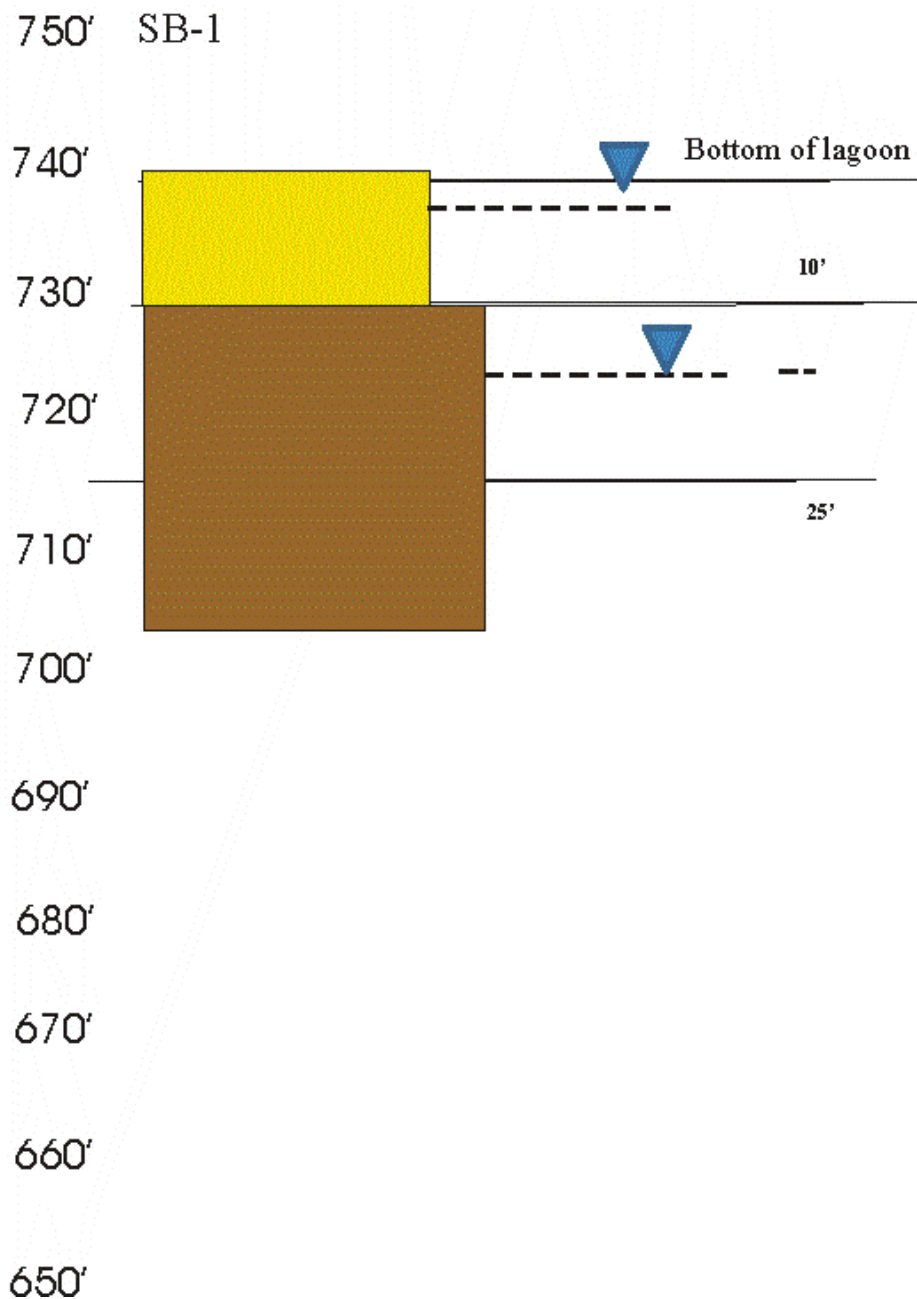
660'

660'

650'

650'





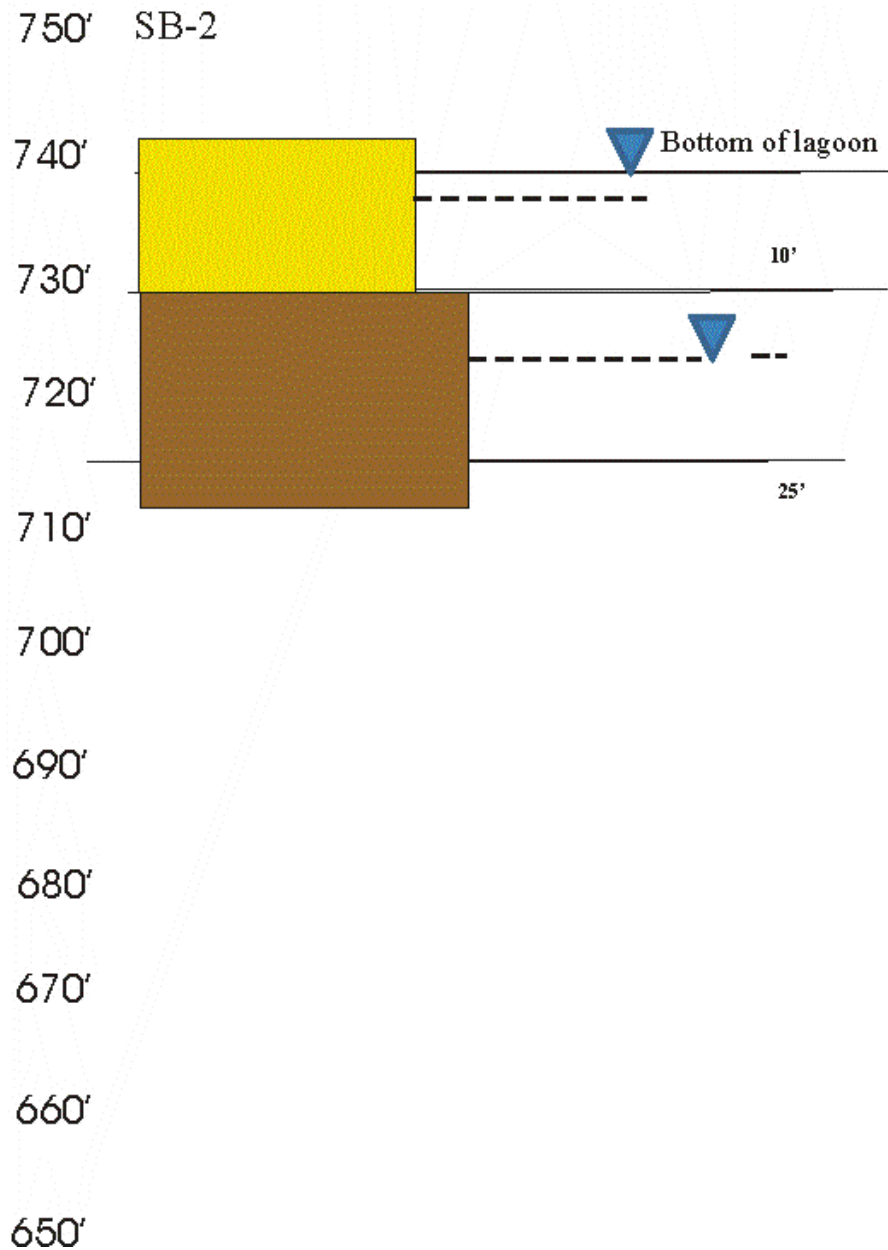
SB-1

No cut or fill.

Alluvial soils, high water table.

Alluvium above glacial till, bedrock is where?

This borehole is greater than 25 feet below the bottom of the lagoon.



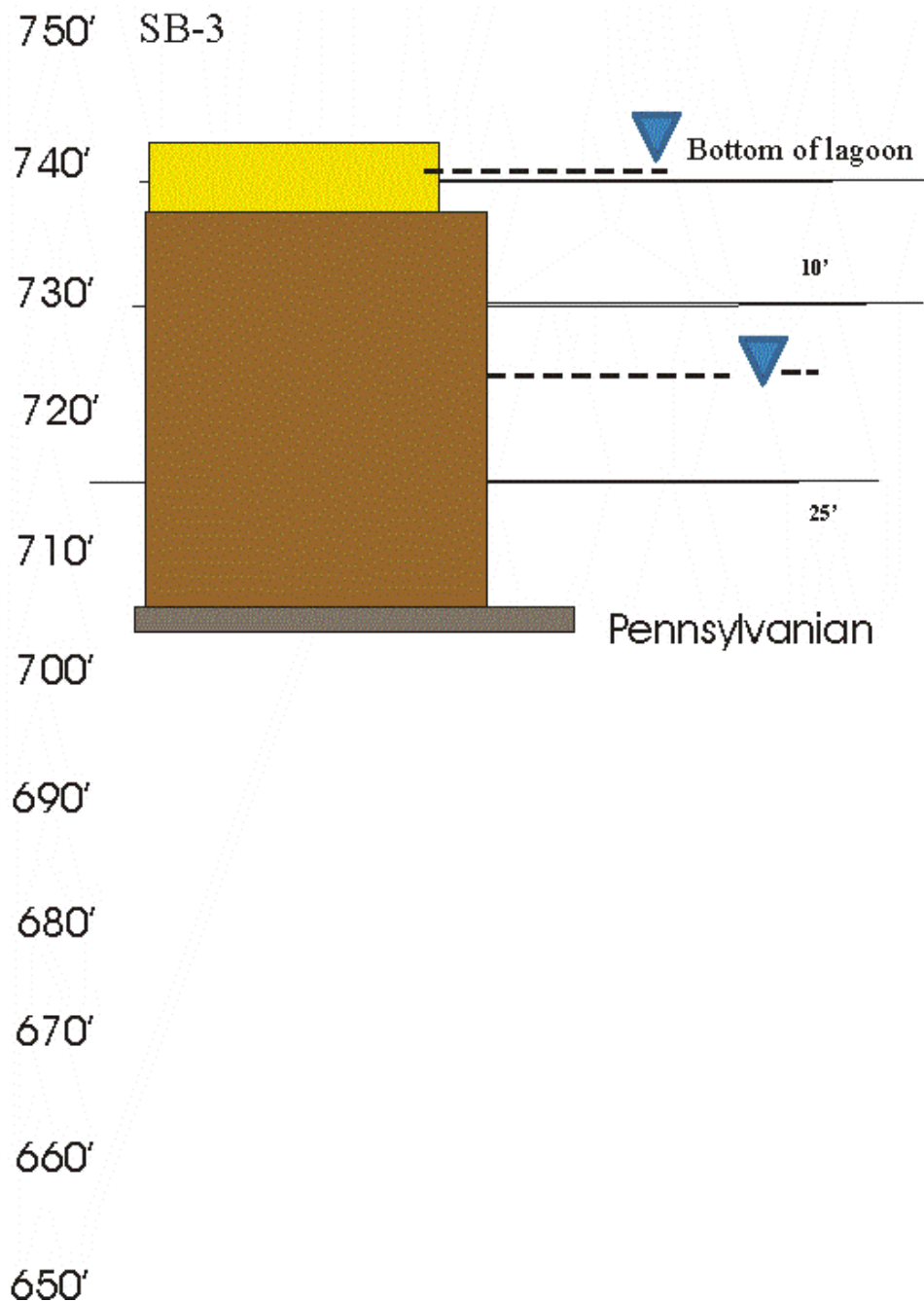
SB-2

1 foot cut.

Alluvial soils, high water table.

Alluvium above glacial till, bedrock is where?

This borehole is slightly greater than 25 feet
below the bottom of the lagoon.



SB-3

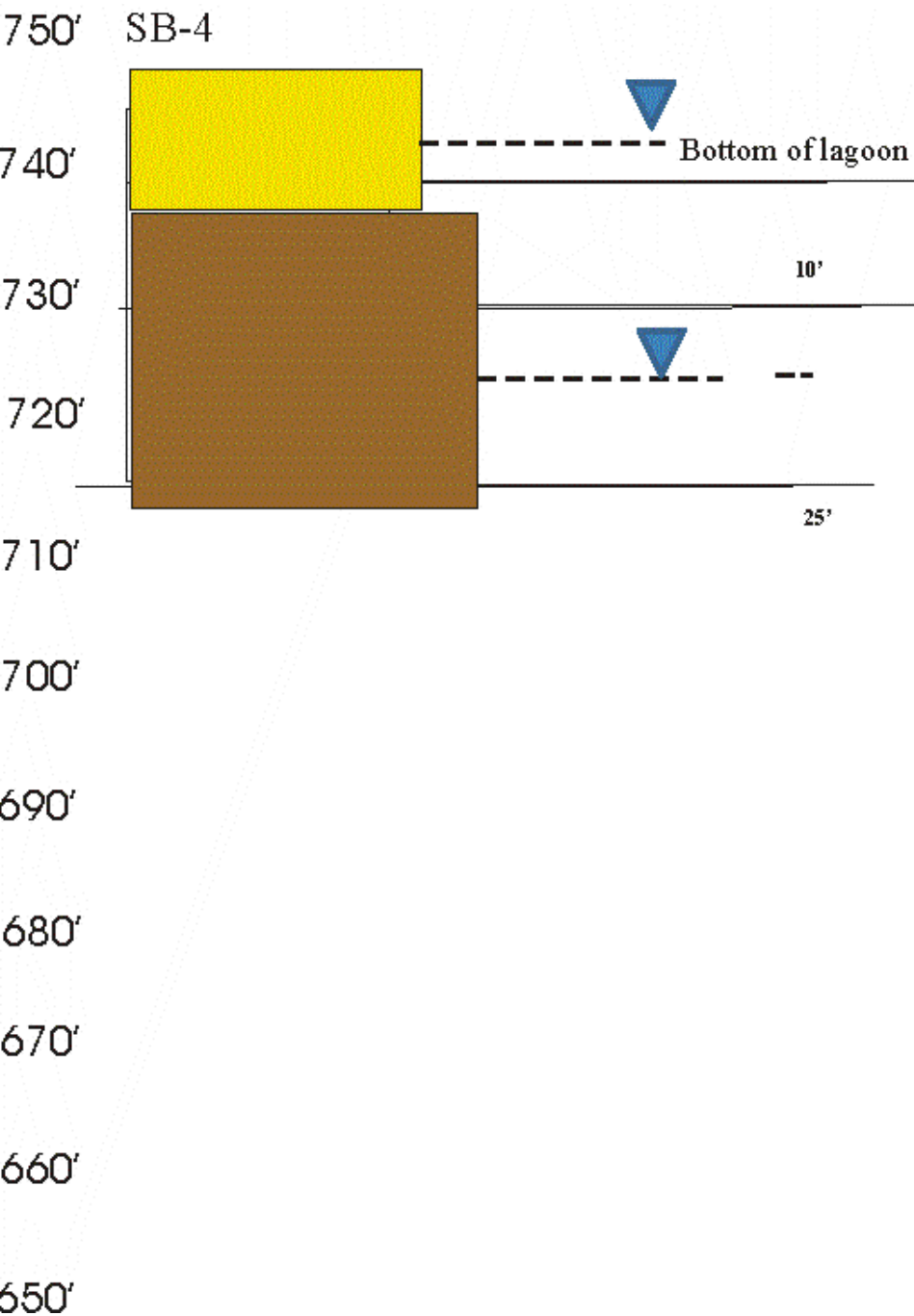
2 foot cut.

Alluvial soils, high water table.

Alluvium above glacial till.

Pennsylvanian bedrock, not a regional aquifer.

This borehole is greater than 25 feet below the bottom of the lagoon.



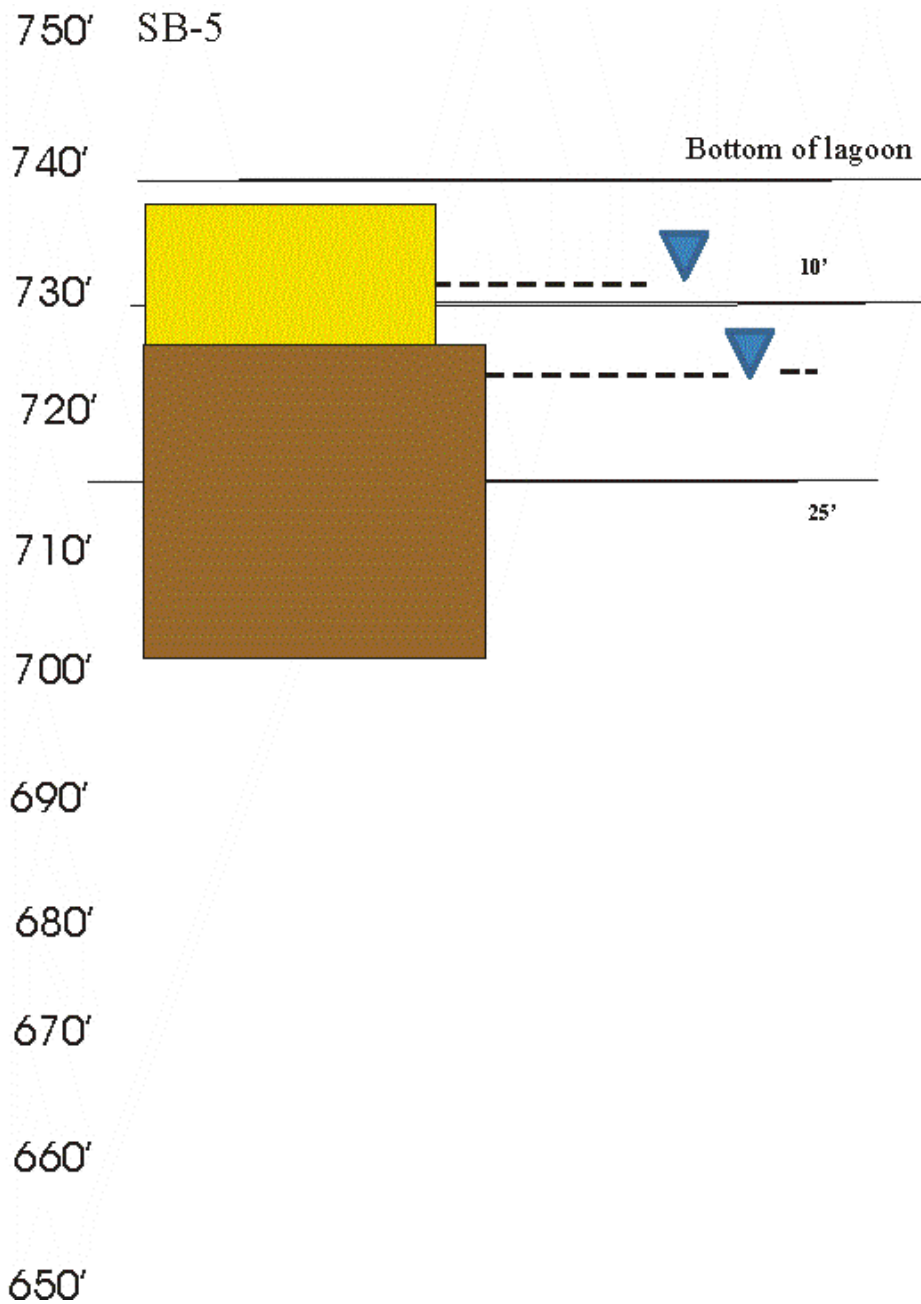
SB-4

7 foot cut; 6 feet below the water table.

Alluvial soils, high water table.

Alluvium above glacial till, bedrock is where?

This borehole is slightly greater than 25 feet
below the bottom of the lagoon.



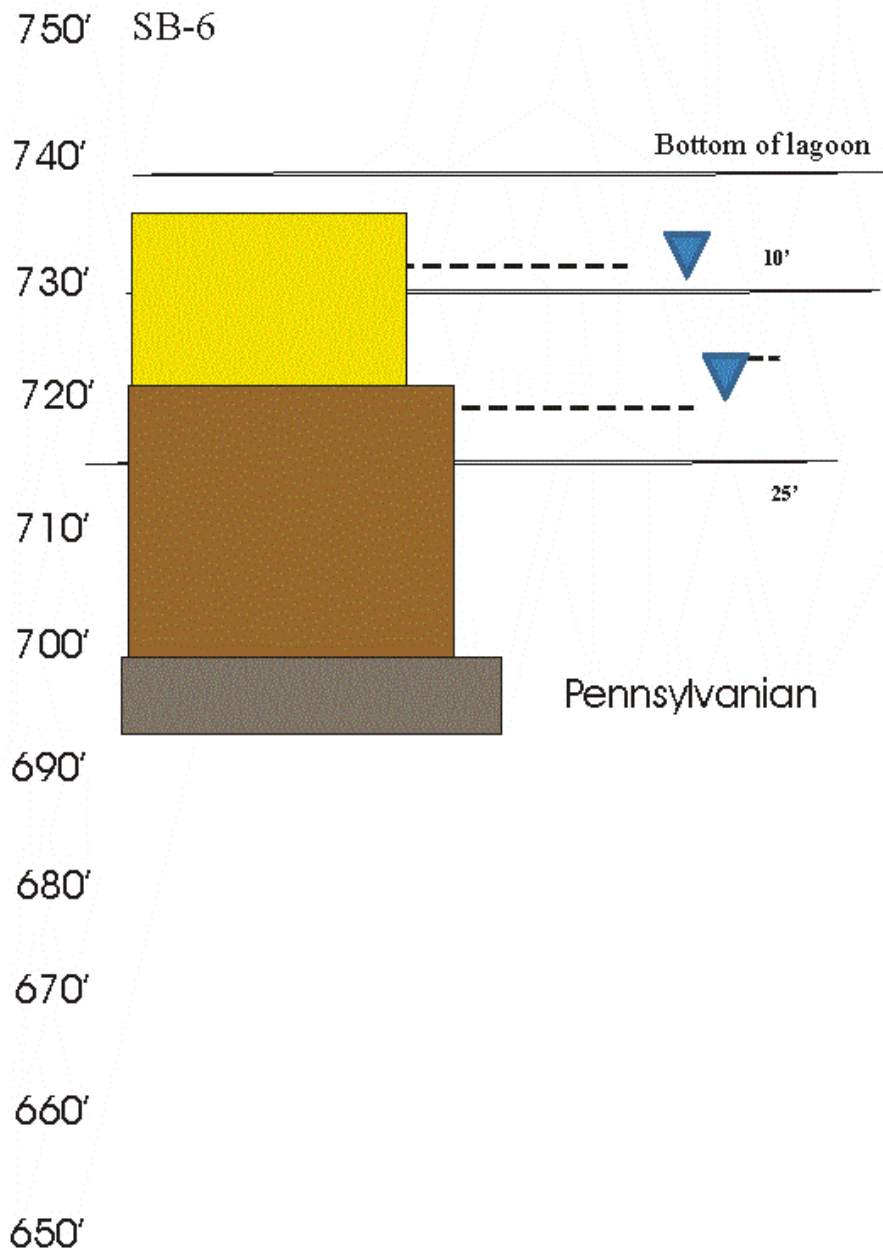
SB-5

2 foot fill; 8 feet above the water table.

Alluvial soils, high water table.

Alluvium above glacial till, bedrock is where?

This borehole is greater than 25 feet below
the bottom of the lagoon.



SB-6

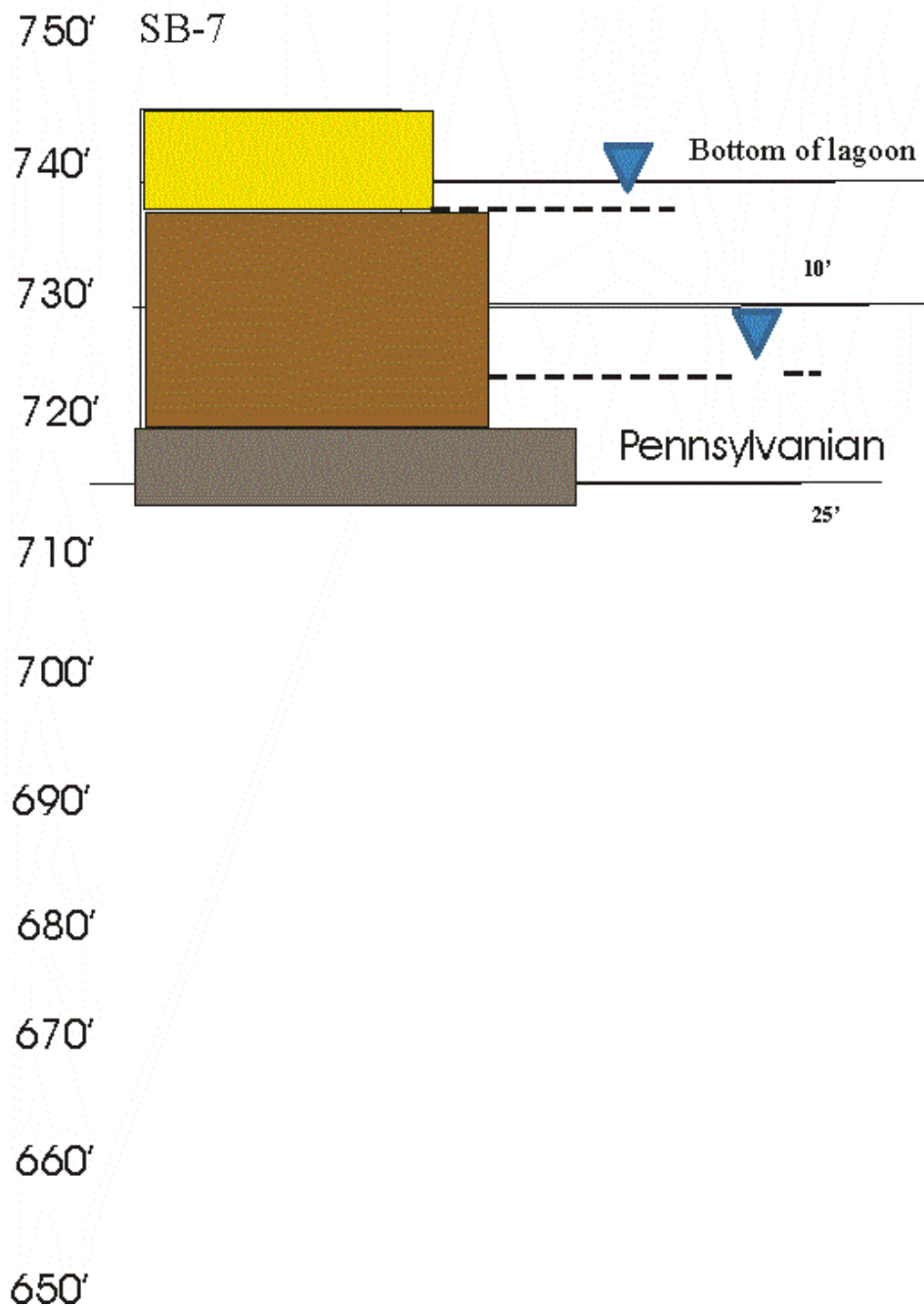
5 foot fill; 8 feet above the water table.

Alluvial soils, high water table.

Alluvium above glacial till.

Pennsylvanian bedrock, not a regional Aquifer.

This borehole is greater than 25 feet below the bottom of the lagoon.



SB-7

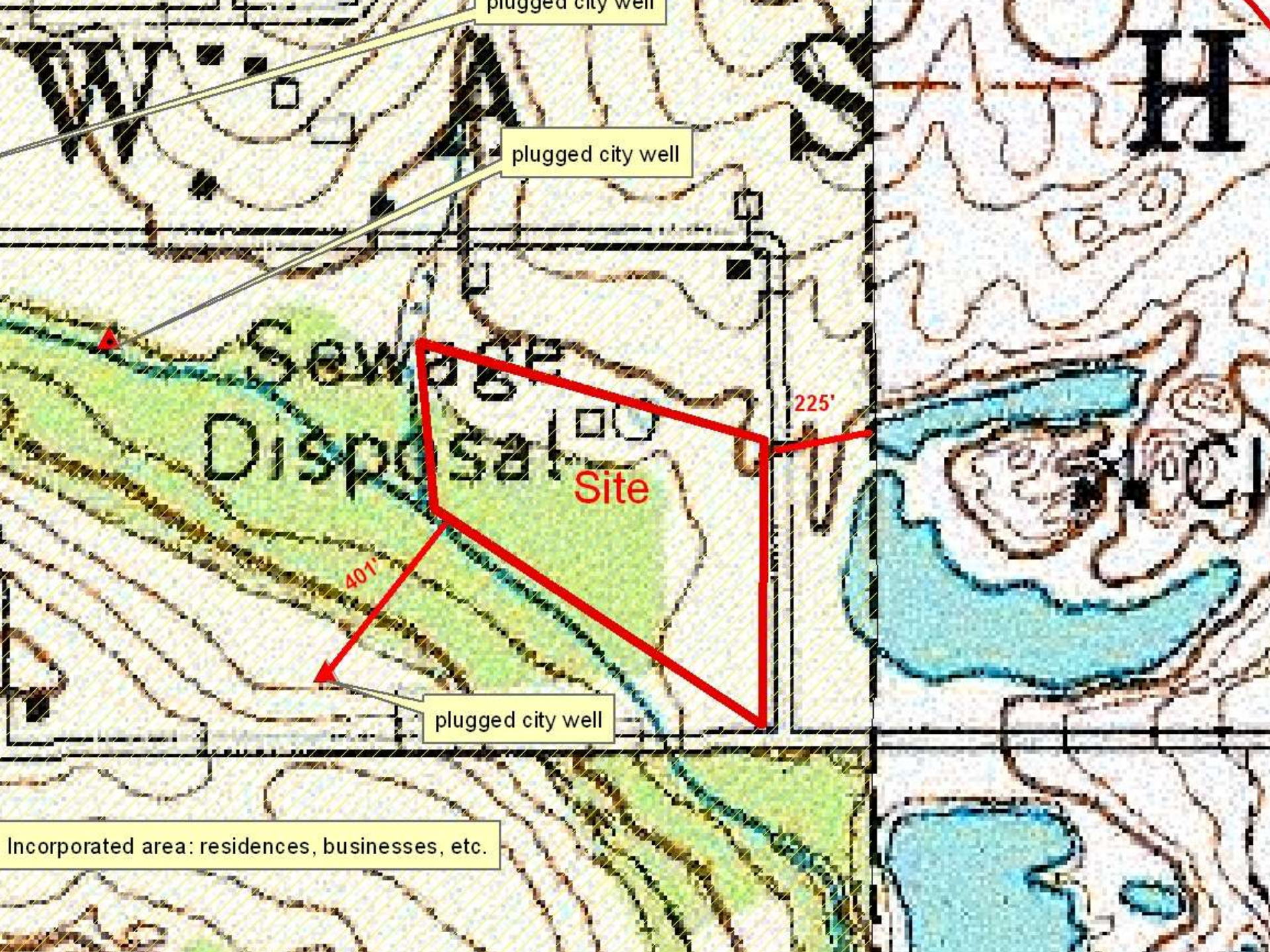
5 foot cut.

Alluvial soils, high water table.

Alluvium above glacial till.

Pennsylvanian bedrock, not an aquifer.

This borehole is greater than 25 feet below the bottom of the lagoon.



plugged city well

plugged city well

Sewage
Disposal Site

225'

401'

plugged city well

Incorporated area: residences, businesses, etc.

18C.3.5.1 Horizontal Separation

64.2(3) Site approval under 64.2(2) shall be based on the criteria contained in the Ten States Standards, design manuals published by the department, applicable federal guidelines and standards, standard textbooks, current technical literature and applicable safety standards. To the extent that separation distances of this subrule conflict with the separation distances of Iowa Code section 455B.134(3) “f,” the greater distance shall prevail. The following separation distances from a treatment works shall apply unless a separation distance exception is provided in the “Iowa Wastewater Facilities Design Standards.” The separation distance from lagoons shall be measured from the water surface.

a. 1000 feet from the nearest inhabitable residence, commercial building, or other inhabitable structure. If the inhabitable or commercial building is the property of the owner of the proposed treatment facility, or there is written agreement with the owner of the building, the separation criteria shall not apply. Any such written agreement shall be filed with the county recorder and recorded for abstract of title purposes, and a copy submitted to the department.

b. 1000 feet from public shallow wells.

c. 400 feet from public deep wells.

d. 400 feet from private wells.

e. 400 feet from lakes and public impoundments.

f. 25 feet from property lines and rights-of-way.

When the above separation distances cannot be maintained for the expansion, upgrading or replacement of existing facilities, the separation distances shall be maintained at no less than 90 percent of the existing separation distance on the site, providing no data is available indicating that a problem has existed or will be created

Therefore, if public well were still active, separation distances are met.

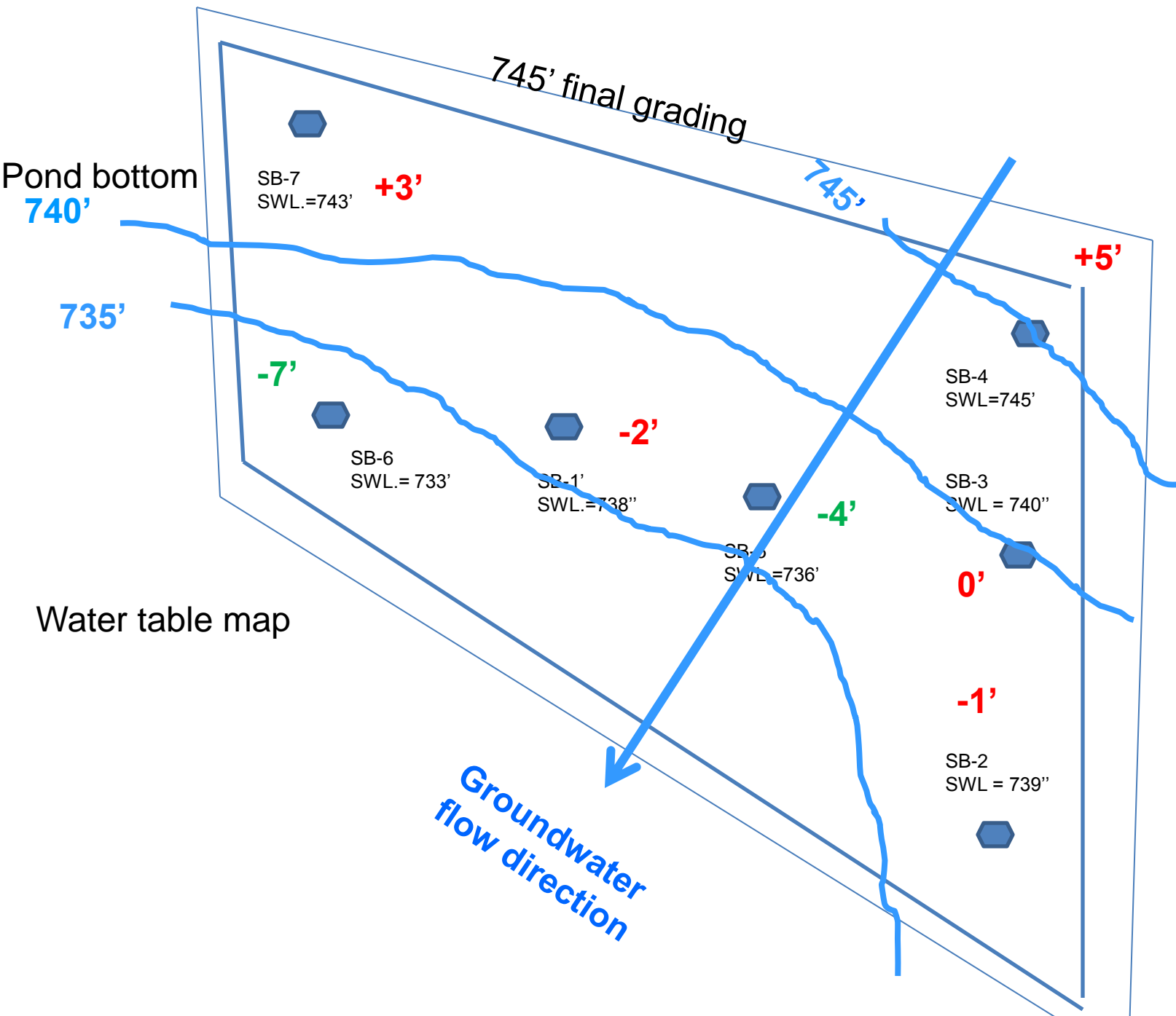
Are the ponds “lakes” or “public impoundments?”

What about the stream and property lines?

18C.3.5.2 Vertical Separation

A minimum separation of four feet between the pond seal and the *maximum groundwater table* is recommended; however, *in no case shall the top of the pond seal be below the maximum groundwater table*. Where the groundwater table occurs as a result of a perched groundwater condition, see section 18C.3.5.3

.
If the maximum anticipated groundwater table is less than two feet below the bottom of the lagoon, the lagoon shall be provided with a synthetic liner.



18C.3.5.3 Perched Groundwater

Provisions for the permanent artificial lowering of perched groundwater layers on a site may be considered. Perched groundwater layers shall be considered as those distinct layers of groundwater of limited area caused by the blockage of normal seepage of rainwater / snowmelt / runoff by an impervious soil layer. Detailed Justification shall be provided to confirm that the groundwater layers are of limited area and to confirm the adequacy of the proposed drainage around the pond system.

Minimum requirements shall include the permanent lowering of the perched groundwater table to an elevation one foot below the top of the pond seal. If the perched groundwater table after permanent lowering is less than two feet below the bottom of the lagoon, the lagoon shall be provided with a synthetic liner.

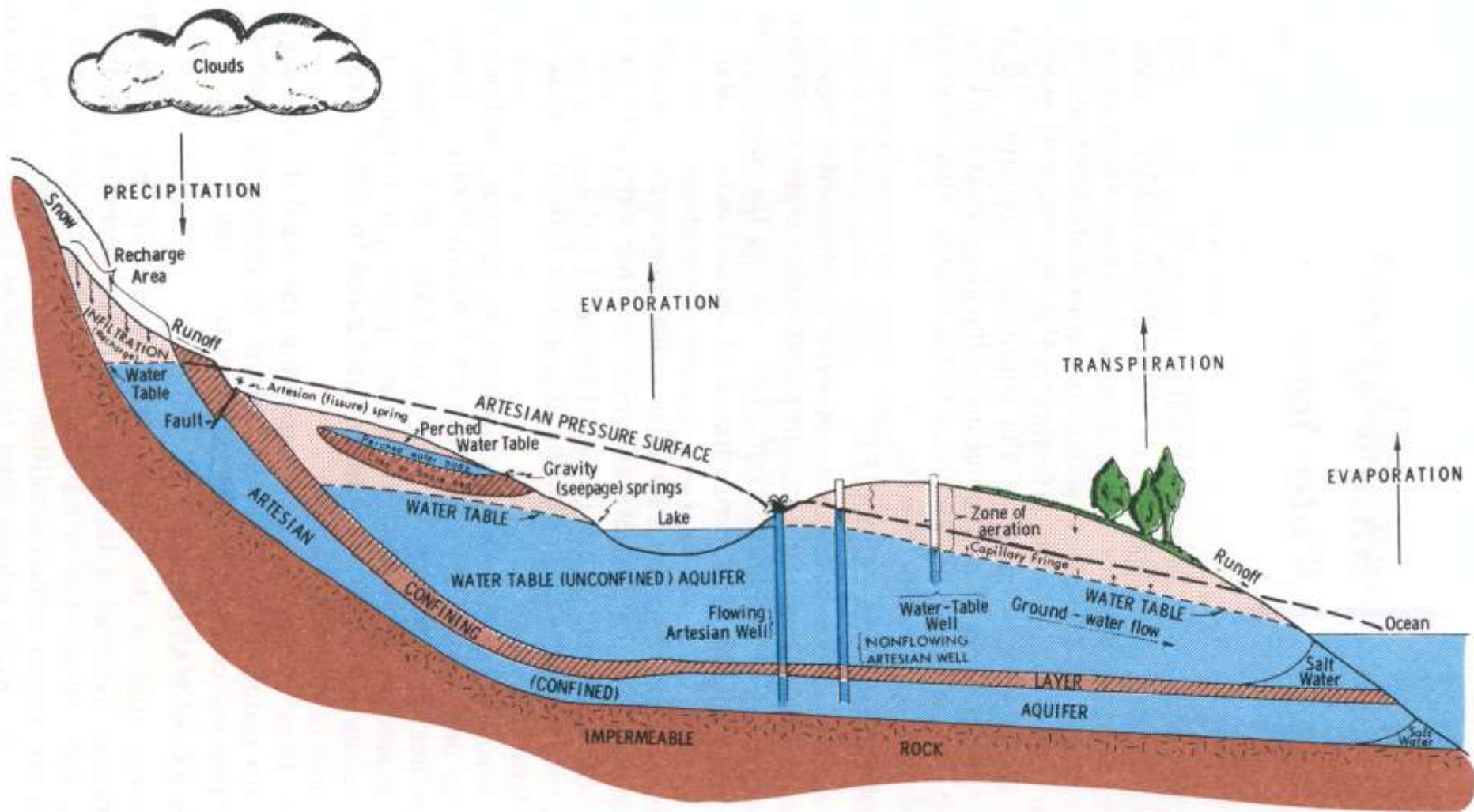
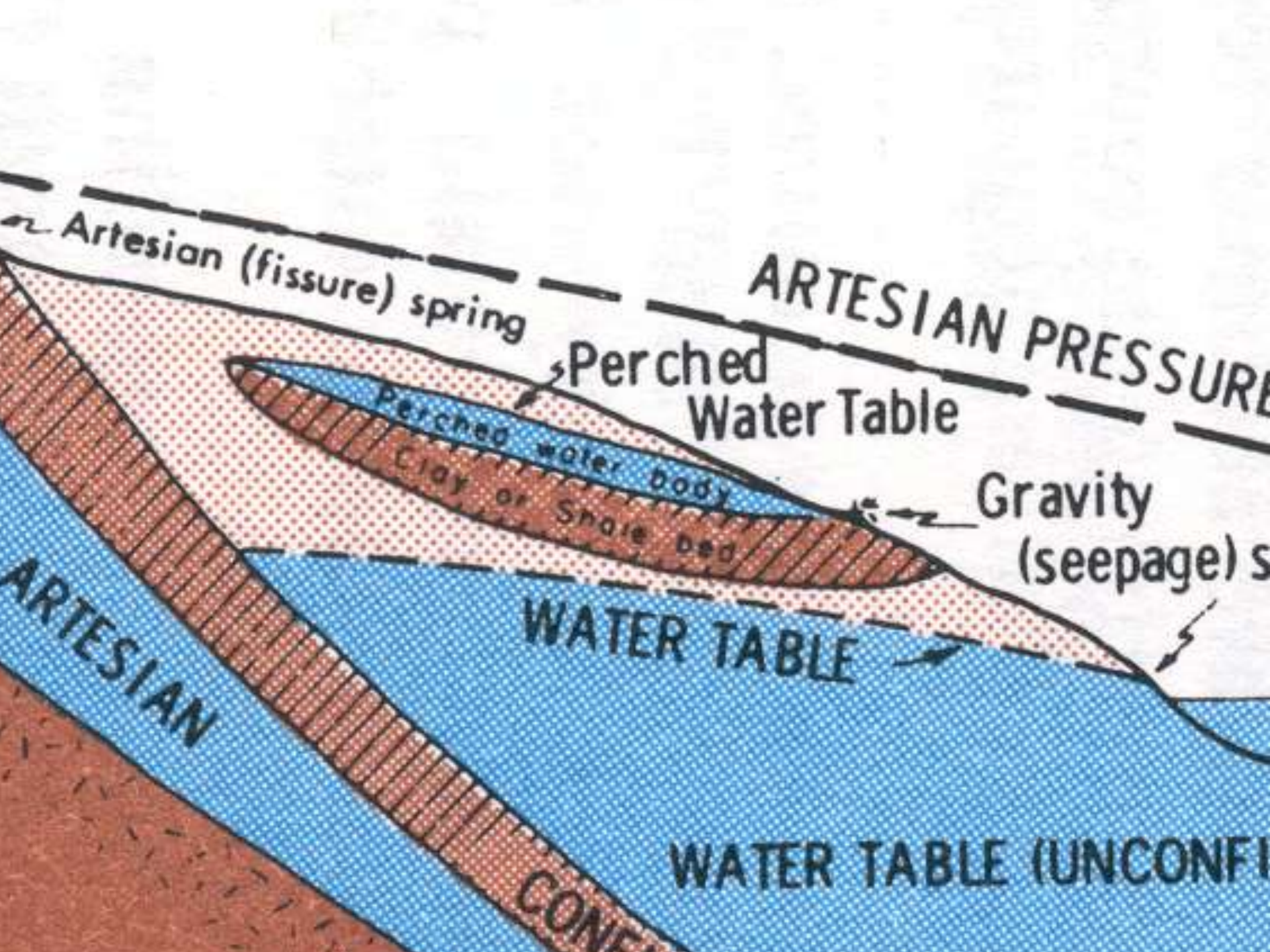


FIGURE 1. The hydrologic cycle.



Is there perched groundwater at the What Cheer site? Proof?

How far does the groundwater table have to be lowered to comply with the rules at this site?

How would you do it?

DOCUMENT IT!

18C.3.6.1 Karst Features

The pond shall not be located on sites that exhibit Karst features: i.e., sink holes or solution channeling generally occurring in areas underlain by limestone or dolomite.

All proposed lagoon facilities in Karst areas will require special review early in the siting procedure. Proposed locations shall be submitted for review and if it is determined that a potential for sinkhole development exists, a lagoon system will not be permitted.

If the facility is located in an area of known or suspected fractured limestone (Karst topography), all cells must be lined with a synthetic liner.









18C.3.6.2 Bedrock Separation

A separation of ten feet between the pond bottom and any bedrock formations is recommended with a minimum separation of four feet required. A synthetic liner shall be required if the lagoon bottom is to be located less than ten feet above a carbonate or sandstone formation.









MEMO FROM: Iowa Geological and Water Survey

DATE: 7/1/2011

Criteria required for Iowa Geological and Water Survey (IGWS) geotechnical review of proposed wastewater lagoons according to *Iowa Wastewater Facilities Design Standards Chapter 18C Waste Treatment Ponds (Lagoons)* [specifically Chapter 18C2 and 18C3].

One application - the application submitted to IGWS must be for a single site; multiple ponds or cells are acceptable, so long as the map products clearly show the appropriate layout of the site.

Location map - this is the map which shows the relationship of the proposed wastewater facility with various landmarks (towns, roads, landscape, boundaries, etc.). This map should show the surrounding area for a few miles. Topographic maps are ideal for presenting this type of information. Other map bases will be accepted so long as the site can be easily located.

Site map – this is the map or set of maps which show the site plus at least ¼-mile radius in order to identify any wells, tile lines, restricted facilities, and the geotechnical borings for the site. The maps can be on a topographic or aerial photo base, HOWEVER, the boring logs must be on a topographic base which is the same as the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) quadrangles.

At a minimum, the application must contain the following information

- Proposed pond acreage.

- Proposed pond bottom elevation.

- Boring logs:

 - with surface elevation to match USGS topography.

 - Split spoon samples – blows/foot.

 - Water levels measured upon completion of drilling and one week later, at a minimum.

 - Detailed materials descriptions.

 - Number of borings and depths according to rule 18C.2.5.

- Discussion of general geology of site.

- Discussion of local groundwater flow conditions.

If any of the above items is missing, IGWS will return the application to the Wastewater Engineering Section.

Deborah Quade
Section Supervisor
Geology and Groundwater Section

The Good



EXAMPLES

The Bad



The Ugly

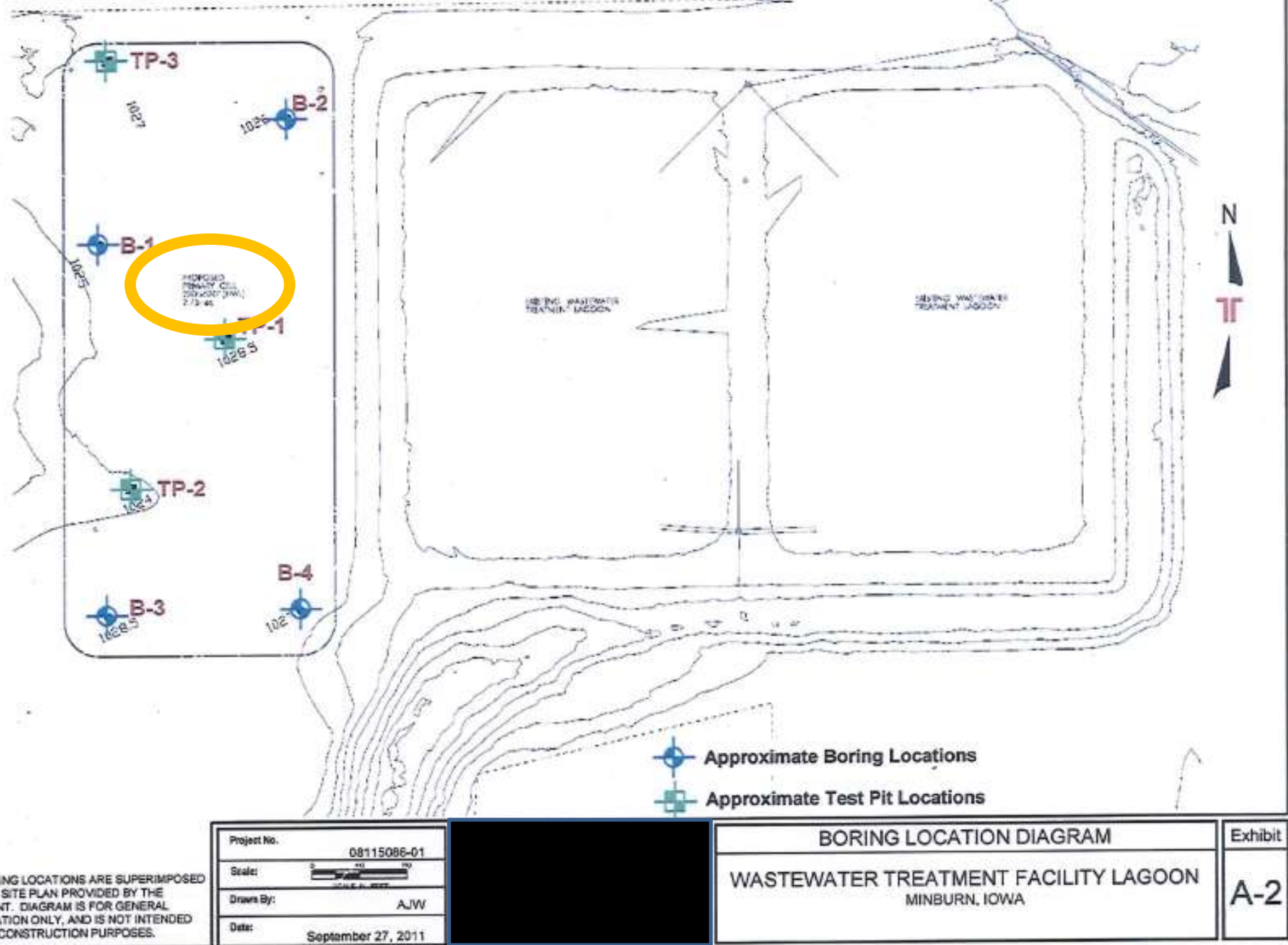




NOTE: VICINITY MAP SUPERIMPOSED ON A GOOGLE MAPS IMAGE. DIAGRAM IS FOR GENERAL LOCATION ONLY, AND IS NOT INTENDED FOR CONSTRUCTION PURPOSES.

Project No. 08115086-01		VICINITY MAP	Exhibit
Scale: NOT TO SCALE		WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY LAGOON MINBURN, IOWA	A-1
Drawn By: A.J.W.			
Date: September 27, 2011			

The Good: name of community (albeit hard to read) and site location on an aerial photo base.



The Bad: contours not labeled; acres hard to read; no pond bottom elevation



The Ugly: no contours, no labeling, what and where is this; where is the lagoon?

CLIENT KIRKHAM MICHAEL ASSOCIATES		PROJECT WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY LAGOON								
SITE WEST OF EXISTING LAGOON CELLS MINBURN, IOWA		TESTS								
GRAPHIC LOG	DESCRIPTION	DEPTH, ft.	USCS SYMBOL	SAMPLES				TESTS		
				NUMBER	TYPE	RECOVERY, in.	SPT - N BLOWS / ft.	CONTENT, %	DRY UNIT WT pcf	UNCONFINED STRENGTH, psf
Approx. Surface Elev.: 1027 ft										
0.3	Root Zone at Surface	1026.5			PA					
1	<u>SILTY FINE SAND</u> , Dark Brown	1026								
	<u>SILTY FINE TO COARSE SAND</u> , Brown Loose									
6.5		1020.5								
	<u>SANDY LEAN CLAY</u> , Trace Gravel Brown Gray Medium Stiff to Stiff Occasional Sand Seams									
			SM	1	SS	6	6			
					PA					
			CL	2	SS	1	7	1		3000*
					PA					
			CL	3	SS	1	13	1		5000*
					PA					
			CH	4	SS	1	13	2		6500*
					PA					
			CH	5	SS	1	18	1		8000*
					PA					
			CH	6	SS	1	18	2		6000*
					PA					
			CL	7	SS	18	18	14		9000*

The Good: split spoon blows / foot changes; change coincides with lithologic change: significance?

The stratification lines represent the approximate boundary lines between soil and rock types: in-situ, the transition may be gradual.

*Hand Penetrometer
**140 Lbs Automatic SPT Hammer

WATER LEVEL OBSERVATIONS, ft		BORING STARTED 9-21-11	
WL	N/E WD 13.5 on 10/4/2011	BORING COMPLETED 9-21-11	
WL		RIG 772	FOREMAN PF
WL	WCI @ 20.5' on 10/4/2011	APPROVED AJW	JOB # 08115086

Sheet 1 of 1

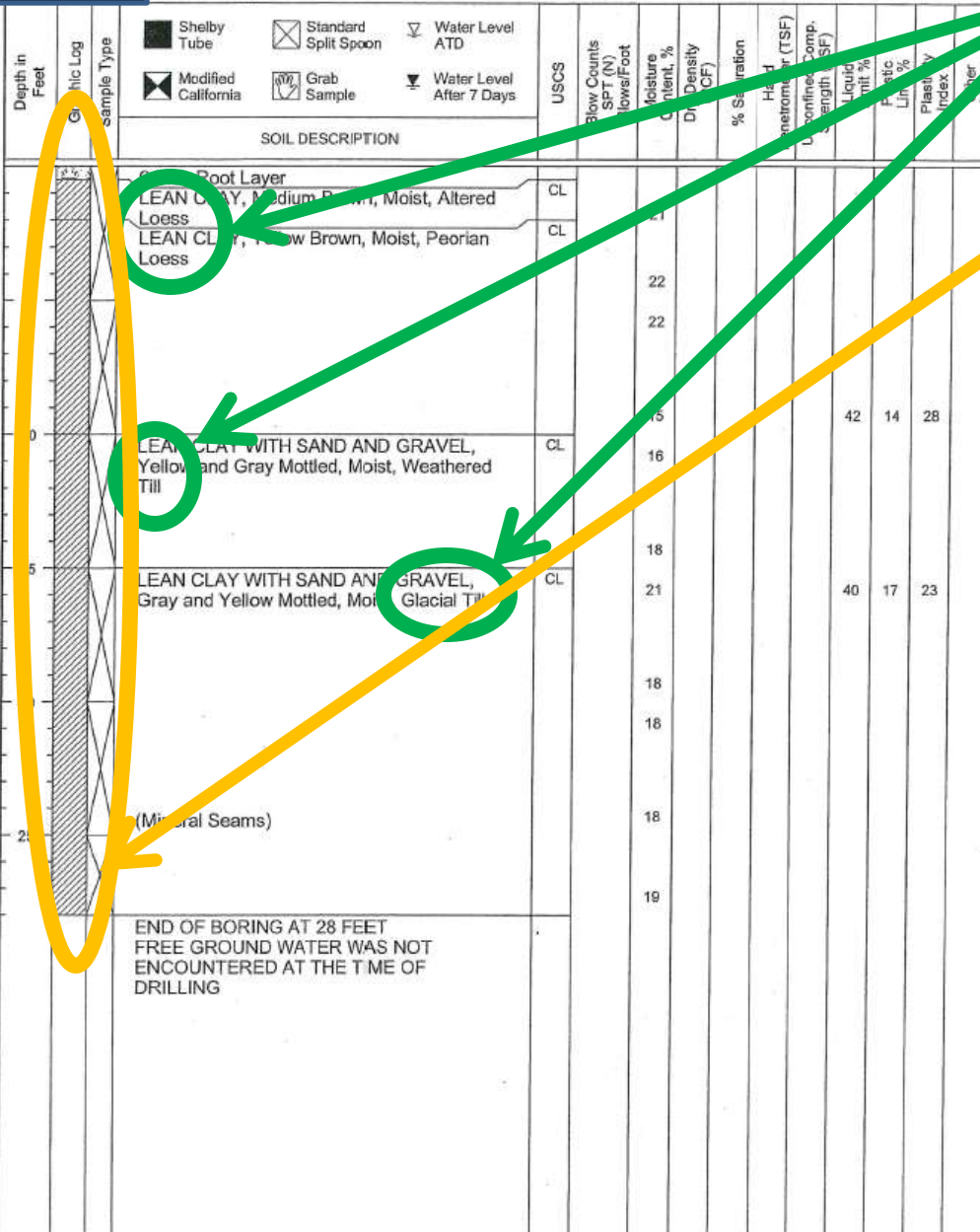
Sheet 1 of 1

Job Number: **G1901**
Project: **3-Celled Lagoon and Lift Station**
Date Started: **4/19/07**
Date Completed: **4/19/07**

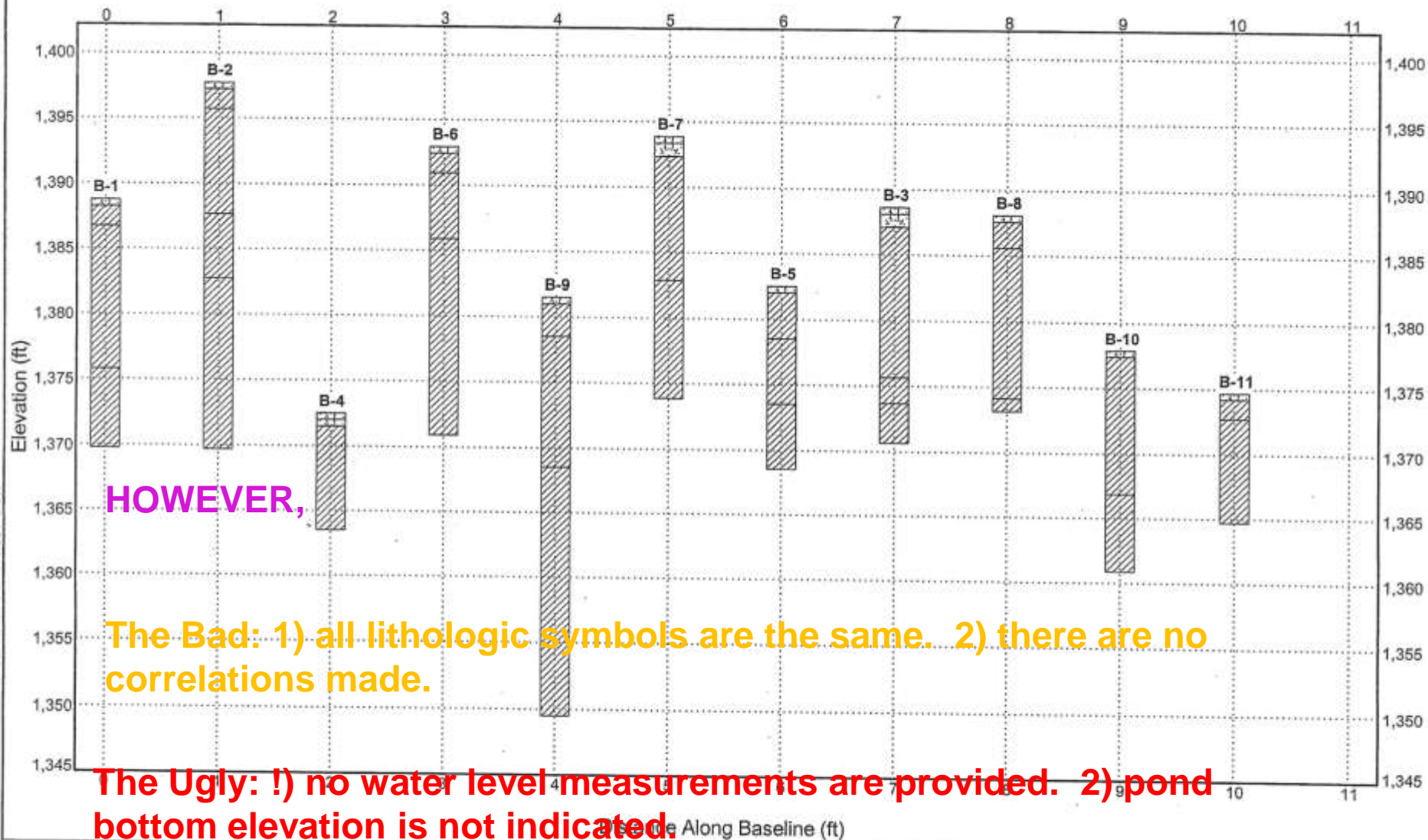
Boring No.: **B-2**
Boring Location: **Ireton, Iowa**
Drill Type: **HOLLOW STEM**
Ground Elev.: **1397.7**

The Good: actually identifies rock types.

✖ The Bad: no change in symbols.



The Good: all wells can be compared.



3-Celled Lagoon and Lift Station
Ireton, Iowa

Project Number: G1901

The Good: location map on a topographic base.

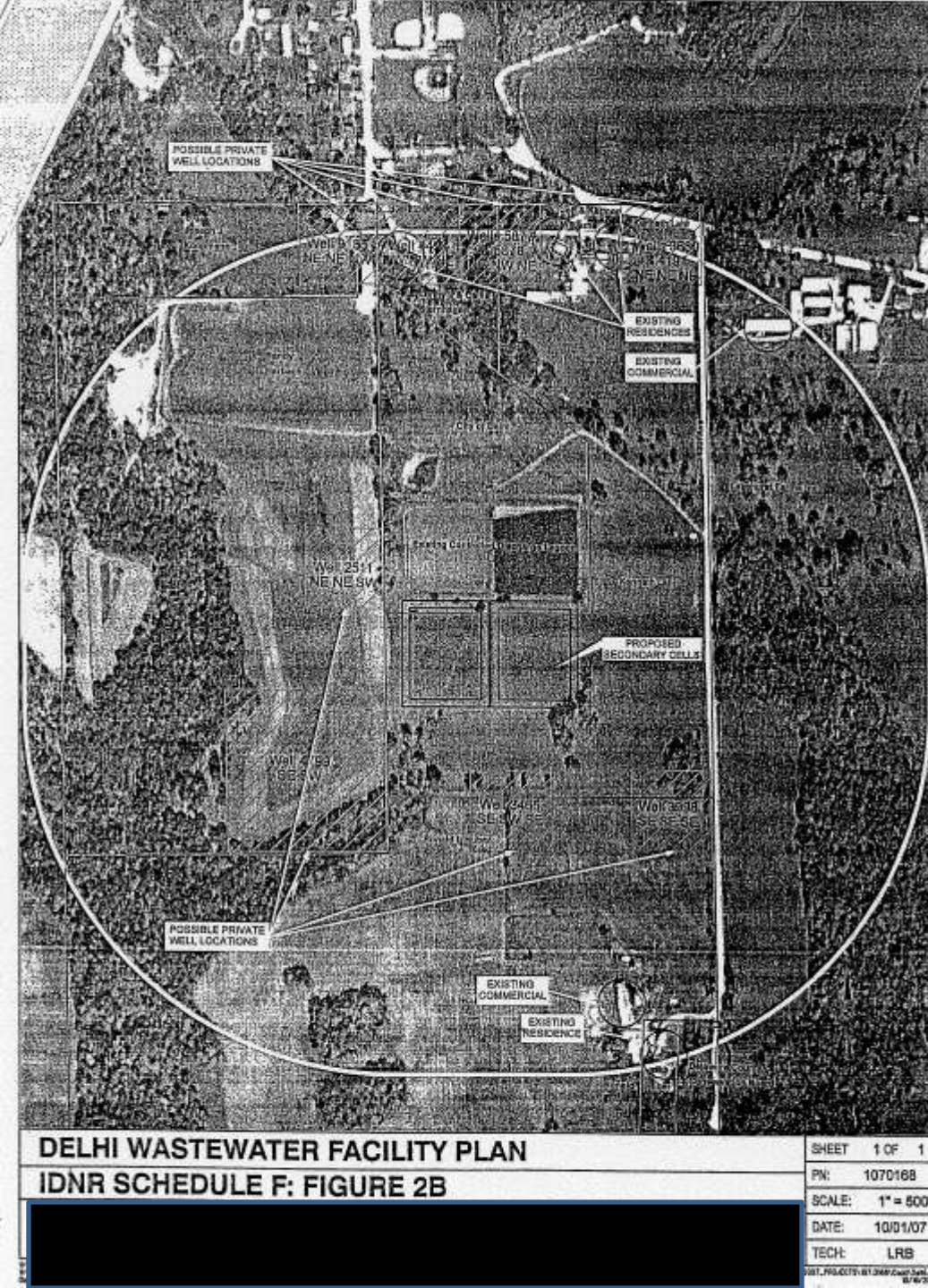


DELHI LAGOON TOPOGRAPHY

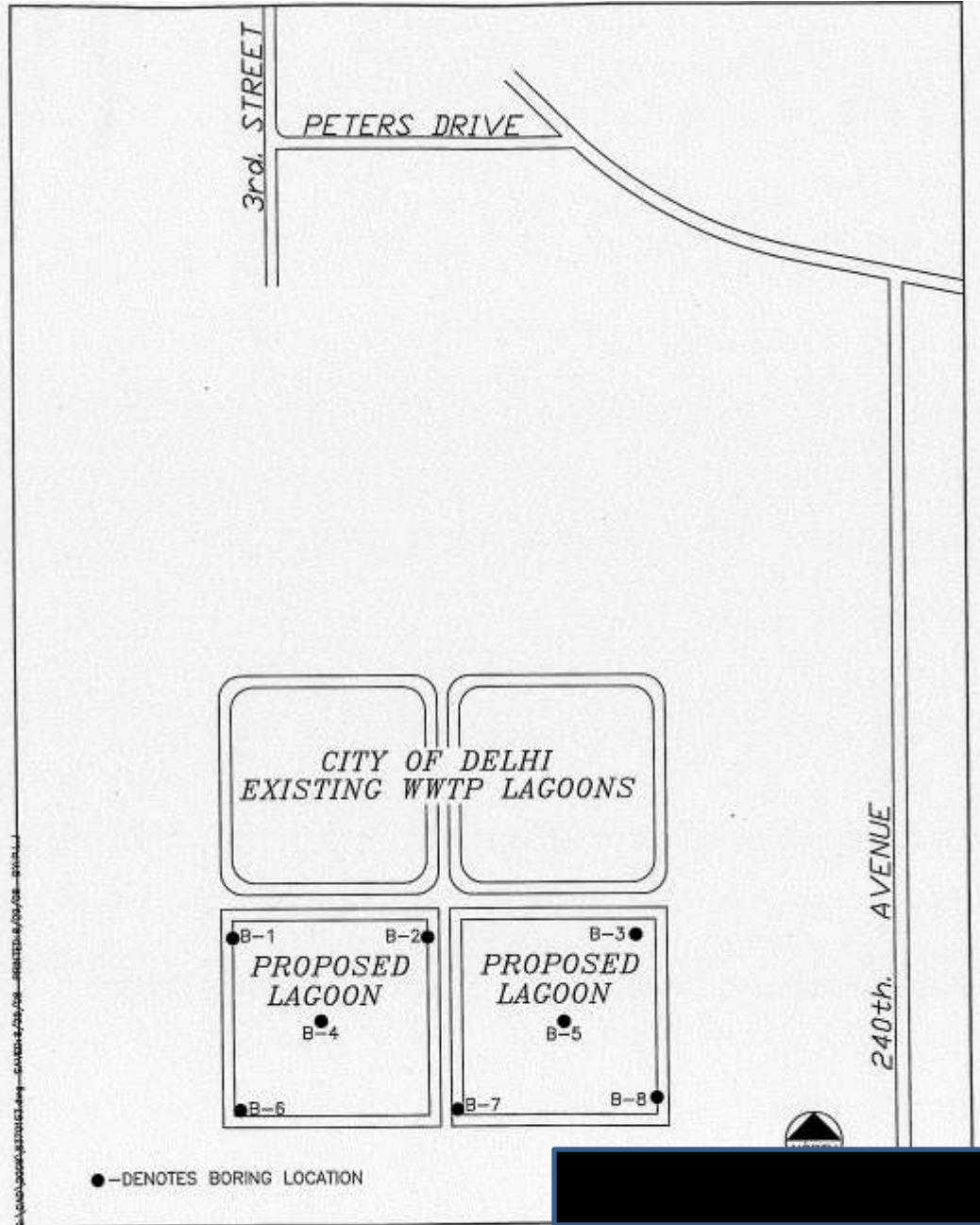
FIGURE 3.2

The Good: vicinity map; aerial photo base is acceptable. Identifies lagoon site, possible private wells, commercial entities, municipal limits.

The Bad: difficult to read.



The Ugly: 1) no topographic base for the site map. 2) site map does not match lagoons as displayed on the vicinity map. 3) boring log elevations are not on this site map.



LOG OF TEST BORING									
JOB NO. 1158370153		VERTICAL SCALE 1" = 4'		BORING NO. B-1					
PROJECT Delhi WWTP Lagoons Delhi, Iowa									
DEPTH IN FEET	DESCRIPTION OF MATERIAL		GEOLOGIC DESCRIPTION	SPT #	WL	SAMPLE		LABORATORY TESTS	
	SURFACE ELEVATION 973.9					NO.	TYPE	TEST	UNIT
1.0	TOPSOIL; Dark brown silty clay with grass surface		TOPSOIL	1		HSA	22		
	SILTY CLAY; Dark brown, stiff (CL)		FINE ALLUVIUM	2		SB	24		
4.0	SAND; Fine grained, light brown, medium dense (SP)		COARSE ALLUVIUM	12		SB	14		
7.0	SILTY CLAY; With fine grained sand lens, mottled browns grays, medium (CL)		FINE ALLUVIUM	4		SB	16		
				6	▼	SB	22		
12.0	SANDY CLAY; With trace gravel, mottled browns, stiff (CL)		TILL	10		SB	20		
				13		SB	19		
18.0	SANDY LEAN CLAY; With trace gravel, dark gray, very stiff (CL)			19		SB	19		
				29		SB	17		
26.0	END OF BORING								
WATER LEVEL MEASUREMENTS				START 8-13-08		COMPLETE 8-13-08			
DATE	TIME	CAVE-IN DEPTH	WATER LEVEL	METHOD 4.25" HSA @ 1200					
8/13/08	1200		NO WATER ENCOUNTERED						
8/14/08			9.75						
				CREW CHIEF T. Niedert					

The Good: actually identifies rock types.

The Bad: no change in symbols.

The Ugly: Water levels were taken the day after drilling instead of one week (or longer) later.

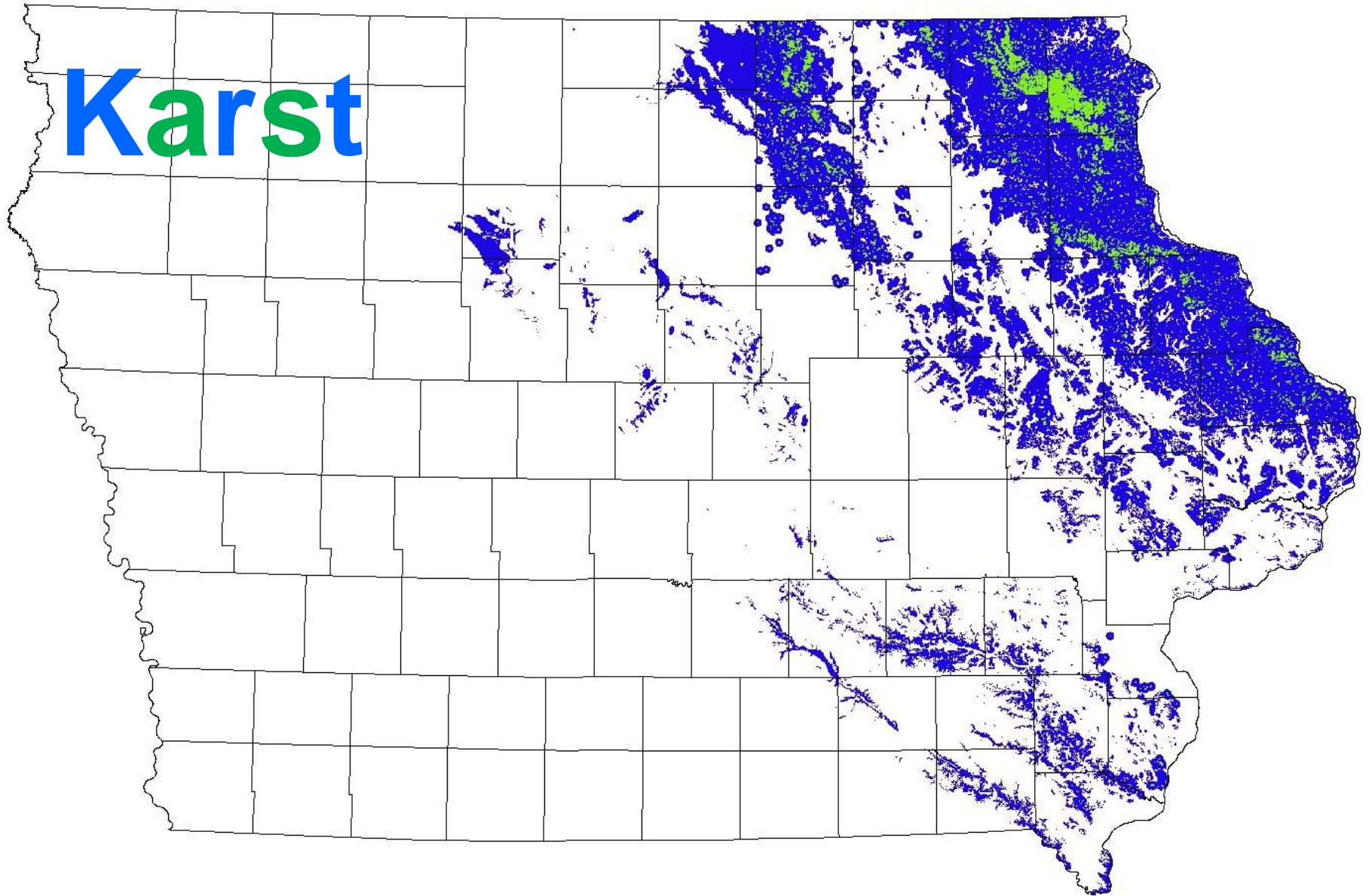
Proposed rule change: groundwater table is the seasonal high water table determined by temporary monitoring wells not earlier than 7 days following installation; other pertinent information may be utilized to determine the seasonal high groundwater table.

LOG OF TEST BORING																															
JOB NO. 1158370153		VERTICAL SCALE 1" = 4'		BORING NO. B-8																											
PROJECT Delhi WWTP Lagoons Delhi, Iowa																															
DEPTH IN FEET	DESCRIPTION OF MATERIAL SURFACE ELEVATION 982.6	GEOLOGIC ORIGIN	SPT (N)	WL	SAMPLE		LABORATORY TESTS																								
					NO.	TYPE	MC	DO	LL	PI	Cp or (Q _u)																				
2.0	TOPSOIL; Dark brown silty clay with grass at surface	TOPSOIL			1	HSA	33																								
	LIMESTONE; Yellow white, hard SS refusal at 4.5'	LIMESTONE	67		2	SB	7																								
5.0	LIMESTONE; Auger refusal at 5.0' END OF BORING		50		3	SB	3																								
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div> <p>WATER LEVEL MEASUREMENTS</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>DATE</th> <th>TIME</th> <th>CAVE-IN DEPTH</th> <th>WATER LEVEL</th> <th>METHOD</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>8/13/08</td> <td>1440</td> <td colspan="2">NO WATER ENCOUNTERED</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>8/14/08</td> <td></td> <td colspan="2">NO WATER ENCOUNTERED</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td colspan="2"></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </div> <div> <p>START 8-13-08 [REDACTED] E 8-13-08 @ 1440</p> <p>METHOD 4.25" HSA</p> <p>CREW CHIEF T. Niedert</p> </div> </div>												DATE	TIME	CAVE-IN DEPTH	WATER LEVEL	METHOD	8/13/08	1440	NO WATER ENCOUNTERED			8/14/08		NO WATER ENCOUNTERED							
DATE	TIME	CAVE-IN DEPTH	WATER LEVEL	METHOD																											
8/13/08	1440	NO WATER ENCOUNTERED																													
8/14/08		NO WATER ENCOUNTERED																													

18C.3.6.2 Bedrock Separation:
A separation of 10 feet is recommended; a minimum of 4 feet is required.

If less than 10 feet above a carbonate or sandstone formation, a synthetic liner is required.

18C.3.6.1 Karst Features: The pond shall not be located on sites that exhibit Karst features: i.e., sink holes or solution channeling generally occurring in areas underlain by limestone or dolomite.



This map contains a GRID representing areas within 1000 feet of known sinkholes and other areas that have carbonate bedrock within 50 feet of the ground surface.

Sources of data and other information:

Topography <http://ortho.gis.iastate.edu/>

Soils <http://soils.usda.gov/technical/classification/osd/index.html>

Information for Karst areas and potential Karst areas can be found from the following links

(1)

http://programs.iowadnr.gov/ims/website/livestock_burial_zones/viewer.htm

*Tip: Looking for Karst region by turning off the burial function and turning on Karst function of the interactive mapping. **Redraw map.***

(2) <ftp://ftp.igsb.uiowa.edu/igspubs/pdf/ofm-2010-07.pdf>

Tip: Be patient

Iowa DNR Interactive Mapping

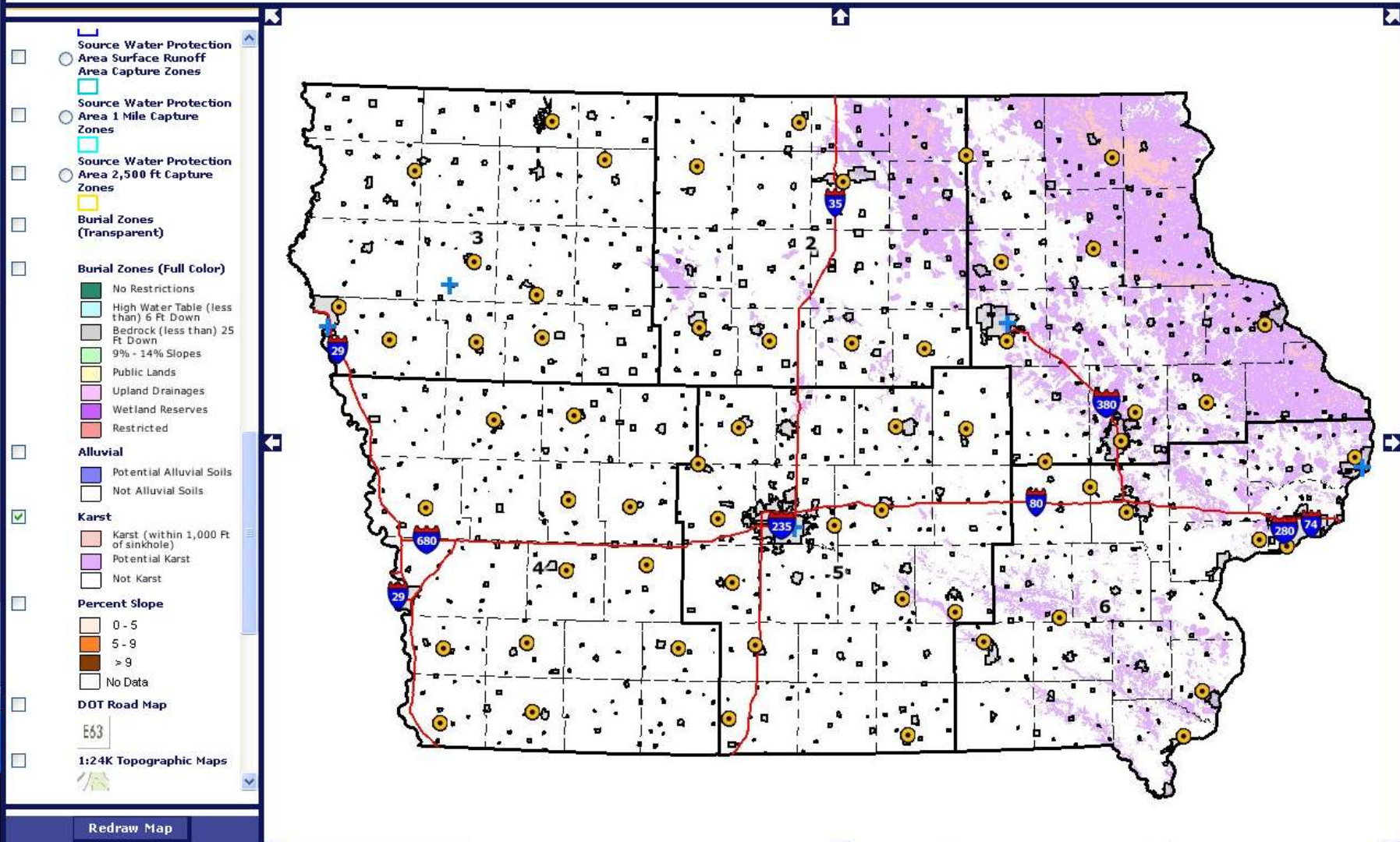
for website help, [click here](#)

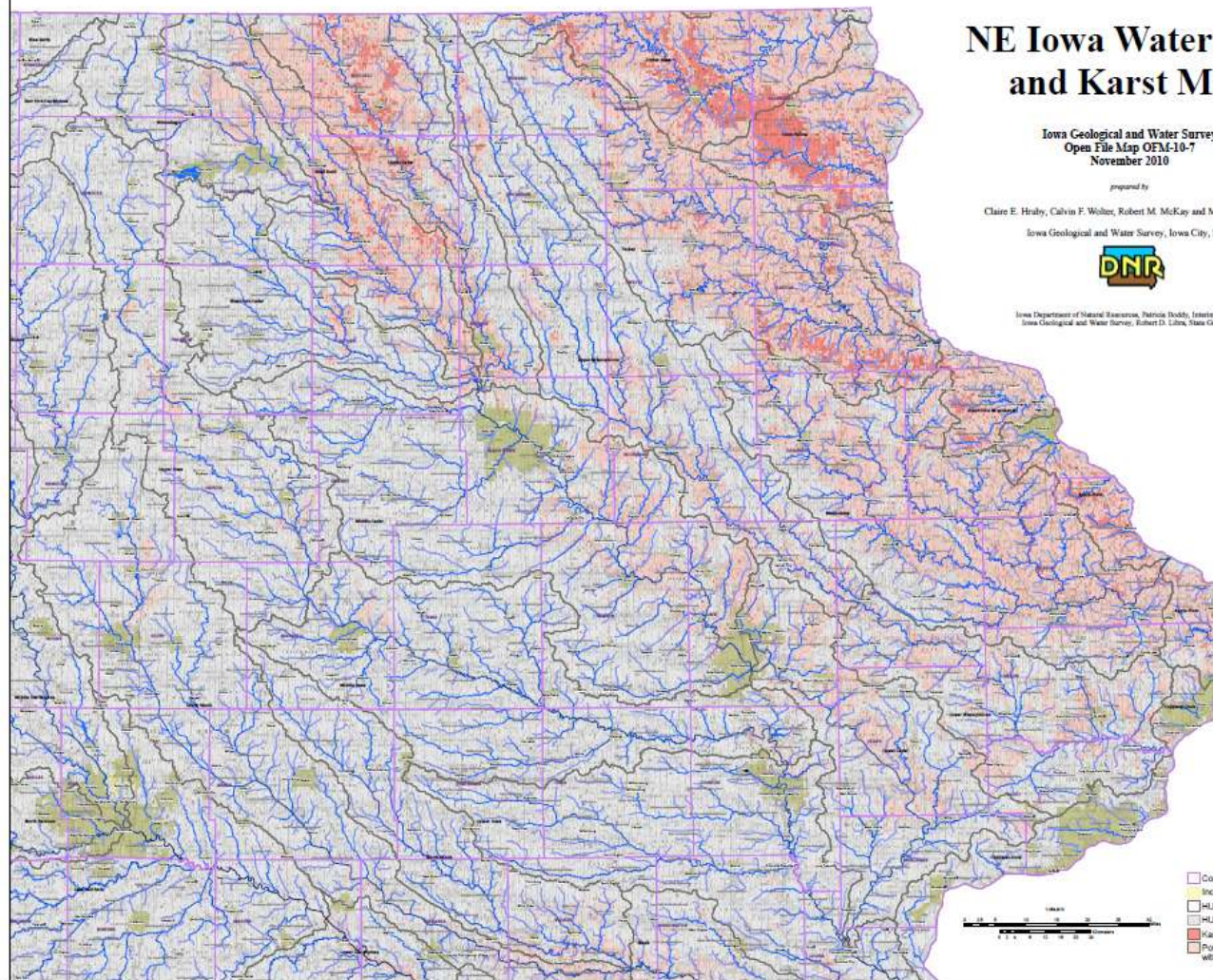


3,500

Some of this material was made possible, in part, by a Grant from the United States Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). It may not necessarily express APHIS' views. If you're a **first-time user** of this site, then [click here](#).

Click on this symbol in the Toolbar to zoom to a **legal description**. For more updates [click here](#).





NE Iowa Watershed and Karst Map

Iowa Geological and Water Survey
Open File Map OFM-10-7
November 2010

prepared by

Claire E. Hruby, Calvin F. Wolter, Robert M. McKay and Michael J. Bosak
Iowa Geological and Water Survey, Iowa City, Iowa



Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Patricia Doherty, Interim Director
Iowa Geological and Water Survey, Robert D. Lohr, State Geologist



Legend

- Counties
- Incorporated Cities
- HUC-8 Watersheds
- HUC-12 Subwatersheds
- Karst - Within 1000 ft of alluvium
- Potential Karst - Carbonate bedrock within 50 ft of the surface



The types of information supplied with the application that would be most informative to the Department:

- 1) A location map (or aerial photo – 5 miles is OK).
- 2) A vicinity map (or aerial photo – 1500' is OK); showing water bodies.
- 3) A site map or maps on a USGS topographic base showing the following:
 - a) current land topography at 1' or 2' intervals across the site.
 - b) modification of site topography.
 - c) bottom elevation of lagoon or pond.
 - d) acreage of pond or lagoon.
 - e) soils map with soils on site identified.
 - f) boreholes accurately located with elevations that match borehole descriptions.
 - g) a water table map on current land topography base; indicate flow direction (18C.2.5 "...groundwater characteristics (including elevation and flow)..."
 - h) if site excavation will seriously modify any of the above, provide additional maps showing the anticipated changes.
- 4) Borehole logs should contain the following:
 - a) name, location, elevation, drilling date;
 - b) lithologic description and stratigraphic determination, depths, blows/foot (if appropriate);
 - c) symbol column depicting lithology and/or stratigraphy
 - d) water levels/conditions (i.e., moist, dry) – during drilling, after drilling, 7 or more days after drilling. Were measurements made in an open hole or with a well (screen, slotted PVC, etc.). Provide well construction details.

CONTINUED: The types of information supplied with the application that would be most informative to the Department:

and diagrams on boring logs.

e) other observations: 10' below pond bottom; 25' below pond bottom A cross section wherever possible; at the very least, a project area driller's logs compilation is better than nothing.

- 5) A narrative, reasonably brief, discussing regional setting (location (section, township and range preferred), landform, topography, etc.). geology, hydrogeology, groundwater flow direction and other pertinent groundwater characteristics, and environmental concerns.

If anyone wants to have a hydrogeological site evaluation at any time, just call,

BECAUSE:

We're from the government.

We're here to help

YOU!

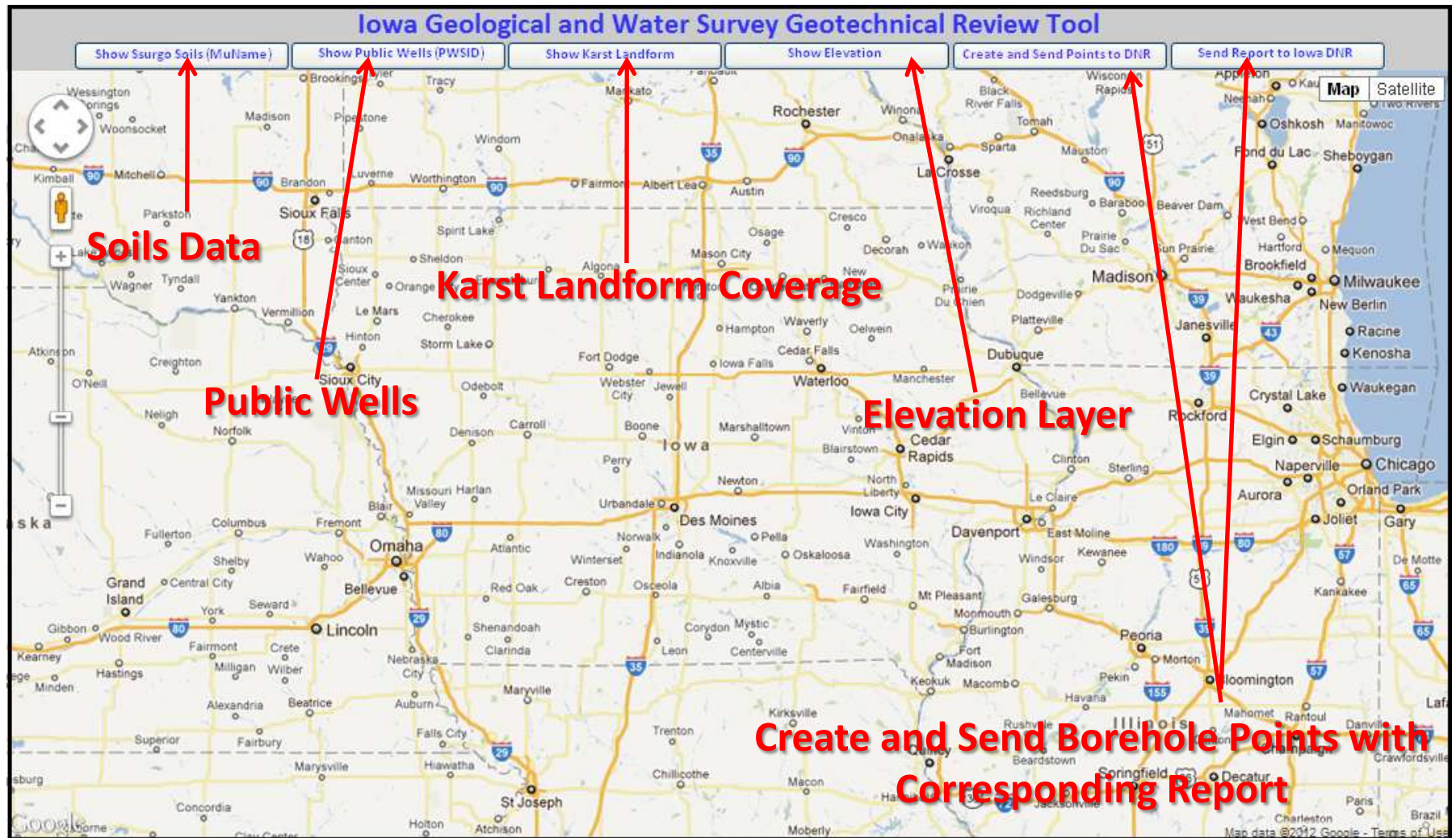


In fact, we want you to provide the department with the best hydrogeological information available . To that extent, we are offering you the opportunity to have IGWS build you a custom web application.

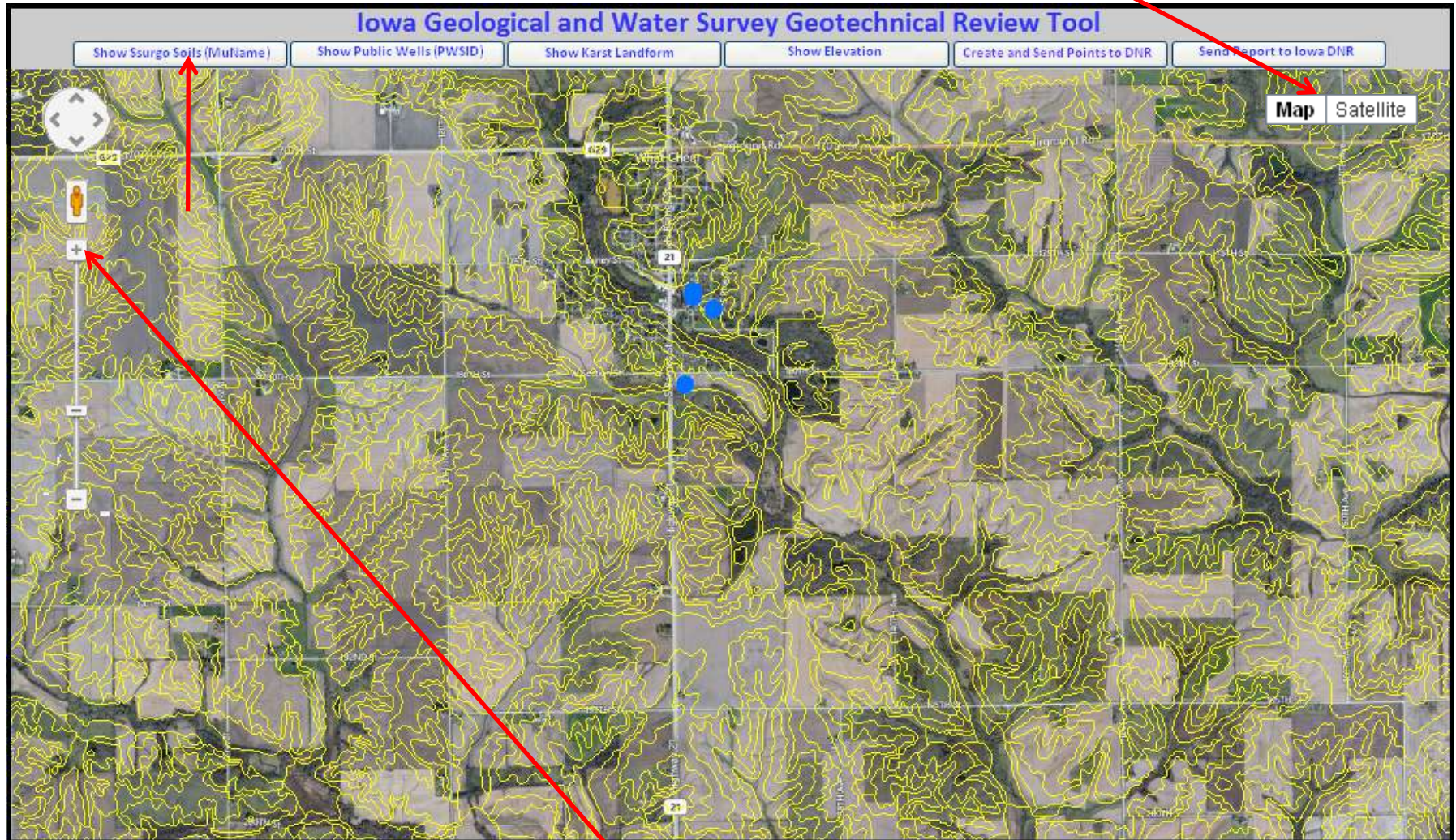


It would look something like this:

Potential Web App for Streamline Data Transfer with the Iowa DNR

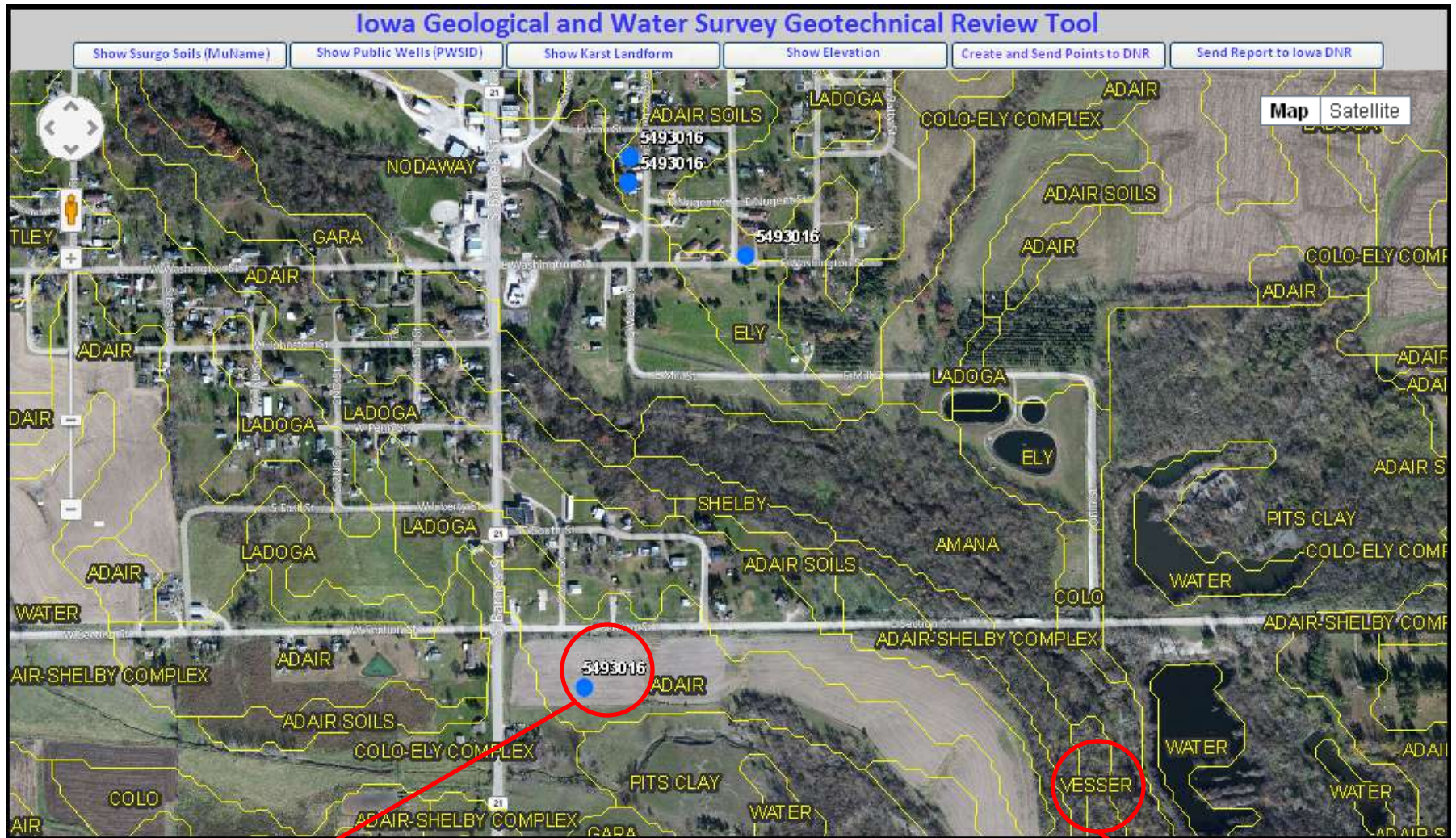


The Ability to Zoom in with Aerial Coverage



Labels Appear after zoomed in past 1:10,000

Zoom Into Detailed Environment of What Cheer Iowa for Better Reference



PWSID Well ID

MuName Soil Types

Create Data and send to the DNR with a few clicks of the Mouse



This is your chance:

COMMENTS?

A photograph of Paul VanDorpe, a man with a mustache and glasses, sitting at his desk. He is wearing a light-colored, short-sleeved button-down shirt. His hands are clasped in front of him. The desk is cluttered with papers, a calculator, a pen, and a computer mouse. A computer monitor is visible in the background, displaying a video with the text "We're from the government. You're free to help." and "YOU".

Paul VanDorpe

**Geology and Groundwater Section
Iowa Geological and Water Survey**

**109 Trowbridge Hall
Iowa City, IA 52242-1319**

Paul.VanDorpe@dnr.iowa.gov

Voice: 319/335-1580

Fax: 319/335-2754

Web: <http://www.igsb.uiowa.edu>

