

# Use and Management of the Soils

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This soil survey is an inventory and evaluation of the soils in the survey area. It can be used to adjust land uses to the limitations and potentials of natural resources and the environment. Also, it can help to prevent soil-related failures in land uses.

In preparing a soil survey, soil scientists, conservationists, engineers, and others collect extensive field data about the nature and behavioral characteristics of the soils. They collect data on erosion, droughtiness, flooding, and other factors that affect various soil uses and management. Field experience and collected data on soil properties and performance are used as a basis for predicting soil behavior.

Information in this section can be used to plan the use and management of soils for crops and pasture; as rangeland and woodland; as sites for buildings, sanitary facilities, highways and other transportation systems, and parks and other recreational facilities; and for wildlife habitat. It can be used to identify the potentials and limitations of each soil for specific land uses and to help prevent construction failures caused by unfavorable soil properties.

Planners and others using soil survey information can evaluate the effect of specific land uses on productivity and on the environment in all or part of the survey area. The survey can help planners to maintain or create a land use pattern that is in harmony with nature.

Contractors can use this survey to locate sources of sand and gravel, roadfill, and topsoil. They can use it to identify areas where bedrock, wetness, or very firm soil layers can cause difficulty in excavation.

Health officials, highway officials, engineers, and others may also find this survey useful. The survey can help them plan the safe disposal of wastes and locate sites for pavements, sidewalks, campgrounds, playgrounds, lawns, and trees and shrubs.

## Crops and Pasture

General management needed for crops and pasture is suggested in this section. The crops or pasture plants best suited to the soils, including some not commonly grown in the survey area, are identified; 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 the detailed information given in the description of each soil under the heading "Detailed Soil Map Units." Specific information can be obtained from the local office of the Natural Resources Conservation Service or the Cooperative Extension Service.

## Yields per Acre

The average yields per acre that can be expected of the principal crops under a high level of management are shown in table 5. 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 yields are 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 concerns for the different soil types within Woodruff County include: seasonal wetness, excessive surface water, occasional and frequent flooding, moderate to very severe erosion hazard, droughtiness, and high concentration of sodium near the surface. A partial list of management measures to reduce the impact of the above concerns and obtain the indicated yields include: installing surface drainage; erosion control measures, such as conservation tillage, contour farming, and terraces where needed; proper planting and seeding rates; suitable high-yielding crop varieties; appropriate and timely tillage; control of weeds, plant diseases, and harmful insects; favorable soil reaction and optimum levels of nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, and trace elements for each crop; effective use of crop residue, barnyard manure, and green manure crops; and harvesting that ensures the smallest possible loss.

For yields of irrigated crops, it is assumed that the

irrigation system is adapted to the soils and to the 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.

The local office of the Natural Resources Conservation Service or of the Cooperative Extension Service can provide information about the management and productivity of the soils for those crops listed or other crops not shown in the table.

### Land Capability Classification

Land capability classification shows, in a general way, the suitability of soils for use as cropland. 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 woodland, or for engineering purposes.

In the capability system, soils are generally grouped at three levels—capability class, subclass, and unit. Only class and subclass are used in this survey.

*Capability classes*, the broadest groups, are designated by Roman numerals I through VIII. The numerals indicate progressively greater limitations and narrower choices for practical use. The classes are defined as follows:

Class I soils have few limitations that restrict their use.

Class II soils have moderate limitations that reduce the choice of plants or that require moderate conservation practices.

Class III soils have severe limitations that reduce the choice of plants or that require special conservation practices, or both.

Class IV soils have very severe limitations that reduce the choice of plants or that require very careful management, or both.

Class V soils are not likely to erode, but they have

other limitations, impractical to remove, that limit their use.

Class VI soils have severe limitations that make them generally unsuitable for cultivation.

Class VII soils have very severe limitations that make them unsuitable for cultivation.

Class VIII soils and miscellaneous areas have limitations that nearly preclude their use for commercial crop production.

*Capability subclasses* are soil groups within one class. They are designated by adding a small letter, *e*, *w*, *s*, or *c*, to the class numeral, for example, IIe. 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 I because the soils of this class have few limitations. The soils in class V are subject to little or no erosion, but they have other limitations that restrict their use to pasture, rangeland, woodland, wildlife habitat, or recreation. Class V contains only the subclasses indicated by *w*, *s*, or *c*.

The capability classification of each map unit is given in the section "Detailed Soil Map Units."

### Woodland Management and Productivity

Soils vary in their ability to produce trees. Available water capacity and depth of the root zone have major effects on tree growth. Fertility and texture also influence tree growth. Elevation, aspect, and climate determine the kinds of trees that can grow on a site. Elevation and aspect are of particular importance in mountainous areas.

This soil survey can be used by woodland managers planning ways to increase the productivity of forest land. Some soils respond better to applications of fertilizer than others, and some are more susceptible to landslides and erosion after roads are built and timber is harvested. Some soils require special reforestation efforts. In the section "Detailed Soil Map Units," the description of each map unit in the survey area suitable for timber includes information about productivity, limitations in harvesting timber, and management concerns in producing timber. The common forest understory plants also are listed. Table 6 summarizes this forestry information and rates

the soils for a number of factors to be considered in management. *Slight*, *moderate*, and *severe* are used to indicate the degree of the major soil limitations to be considered in forest management.

The table lists the *ordination symbol* for each soil. The first part of the ordination symbol, a number, indicates the potential productivity of a soil for the indicator species in cubic meters per hectare. The larger the number, the greater the potential productivity. Potential productivity is based on the site index and the point where mean annual increment is the greatest.

The second part of the ordination symbol, a letter, indicates the major kind of soil limitation affecting use and management. The letter *R* indicates a soil that has a significant limitation because of steepness of slope. The letter *X* indicates that a soil has restrictions because of stones or rocks on the surface. The letter *W* indicates a soil in which excessive water, either seasonal or year-round, causes a significant limitation. The letter *T* indicates a soil that has, within the root zone, excessive alkalinity or acidity, sodium salts, or other toxic substances that limit the development of desirable trees. The letter *D* indicates a soil that has a limitation because of a restricted rooting depth, such as a shallow soil that is underlain by hard bedrock, a hardpan, or other layers that restrict roots. The letter *C* indicates a soil that has a limitation because of the kind or amount of clay in the upper part of the profile. The letter *S* indicates a dry, sandy soil. The letter *F* indicates a soil that has a large amount of coarse fragments. The letter *A* indicates a soil having no significant limitations that affect forest use and management. If a soil has more than one limitation, the priority is as follows: R, X, W, T, D, C, S, and F.

Ratings of the *erosion hazard* indicate the probability that damage may occur if site preparation or harvesting activities expose the soil. The risk is *slight* if no particular preventive measures are needed under ordinary conditions; *moderate* if erosion-control measures are needed for particular silvicultural activities; and *severe* if special precautions are needed to control erosion for most silvicultural activities. Ratings of moderate or severe indicate the need for construction of higher standard roads, additional maintenance of roads, additional care in planning harvesting and reforestation activities, and the use of special equipment.

Ratings of *equipment limitation* indicate limits on the use of forest management equipment, year-round or seasonal, because of such soil characteristics as slope, wetness, stoniness, and susceptibility of the surface layer to compaction. As slope gradient and length increase, it becomes more difficult to use wheeled equipment. On the steeper slopes, tracked

equipment is needed. On the steepest slopes, even tracked equipment cannot be operated and more sophisticated systems are needed. The rating is *slight* if equipment use is restricted by wetness for less than 2 months and if special equipment is not needed. The rating is *moderate* if slopes are so steep that wheeled equipment cannot be operated safely across the slope, if wetness restricts equipment use from 2 to 6 months per year, if stoniness restricts the use of ground-based equipment, or if special equipment is needed to prevent or minimize compaction. The rating is *severe* if slopes are so steep that tracked equipment cannot be operated safely across the slope, if wetness restricts equipment use for more than 6 months per year, if stoniness restricts the use of ground-based equipment, or if special equipment is needed to prevent or minimize compaction. Ratings of moderate or severe indicate a need to choose the best suited equipment and to carefully plan the timing of harvesting and other management activities.

Ratings of *seedling mortality* refer to the probability of the death of naturally occurring or properly planted seedlings of good stock in periods of normal rainfall, as influenced by kinds of soil or topographic features. Seedling mortality is caused primarily by too much water or too little water. The factors used in rating a soil for seedling mortality are texture of the surface layer, depth to a seasonal high water table and the length of the periods when the water table is high, rock fragments in the surface layer, rooting depth, and the aspect of the slope. The mortality rate generally is highest on soils that have a sandy or clayey surface layer. The risk is *slight* if, after site preparation, expected mortality is less than 25 percent; *moderate* if expected mortality is between 25 and 50 percent; and *severe* if expected mortality exceeds 50 percent. Ratings of moderate or severe indicate that it may be necessary to use containerized or larger than usual planting stock or to make special site preparations, such as bedding, furrowing, installing a surface drainage system, and providing artificial shade for seedlings. Reinforcement planting is often needed if the risk is moderate or severe.

Ratings of *windthrow hazard* indicate the likelihood that trees will be uprooted by the wind. A restricted rooting depth is the main reason for windthrow. The rooting depth can be restricted by a high water table, a fragipan, or bedrock or by a combination of such factors as wetness, texture, structure, and depth. The risk is *slight* if strong winds cause trees to break but do not uproot them; *moderate* if strong winds cause an occasional tree to be blown over and many trees to break; and *severe* if moderate or strong winds commonly blow trees over. Ratings of moderate or

severe indicate that care is needed in thinning or that the stand should not be thinned at all. Special equipment may be needed to prevent damage to shallow root systems in partial cutting operations. A plan for the periodic removal of windthrown trees and the maintenance of a road and trail systems may be needed.

Ratings of *plant competition* indicate the likelihood of the growth or invasion of undesirable plants. Plant competition is more severe on the more productive soils, on poorly drained soils, and on soils having a restricted root zone that holds moisture. The risk is *slight* if competition from undesirable plants hinders adequate natural or artificial reforestation but does not necessitate intensive site preparation and maintenance. The risk is *moderate* if competition from undesirable plants hinders natural or artificial reforestation to the extent that intensive site preparation and maintenance are needed. The risk is *severe* if competition from undesirable plants prevents adequate natural or artificial reforestation unless the site is intensively prepared and maintained. A moderate or severe rating indicates the need for site preparation to ensure the development of an adequately stocked stand. Managers must plan site preparation measures to ensure reforestation without delays.

The *potential productivity of common trees* on a soil is expressed as a *site index* and a *volume* number. Common trees are listed in the order of their observed general occurrence. Generally, only two or three tree species dominate. The first tree listed for each soil is the indicator species for that soil. An indicator species is a tree that is common in the area and that is generally the most productive on a given soil.

The *site index* is determined by taking height measurements and determining the age of selected trees within stands of a given species. This index is the average height, in feet, that trees attain in a specified number of years. This index applies to fully stocked, even-aged, unmanaged stands. The estimates of the productivity of the soils in this survey are based on published data ( ).

The *volume* is the yield likely to be produced by the most important trees, expressed in cubic feet per acre per year calculated at the age of culmination of mean annual increment.

*Trees to plant* are those that are used for reforestation or, under suitable conditions, natural regeneration. They are suited to the soils and can produce a commercial wood crop. The desired product, topographic position (such as a low, wet area), and personal preference are three factors among many that

can influence the choice of trees for use in reforestation.

## Recreation

In table 7, the soils of the survey area are rated according to the 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, vegetation, access to water, potential water impoundment sites, and access to public sewer lines. The capacity of the soil to absorb septic tank effluent and the ability of the soil to support vegetation are also important. Soils subject to flooding are limited for recreational uses by the duration and intensity of flooding and the season when flooding occurs. In planning recreational facilities, onsite assessment of the height, duration, intensity, and frequency of flooding is essential.

In the table, the degree of soil limitation is expressed as slight, moderate, or severe. *Slight* means that soil properties are generally favorable and that limitations are minor and easily overcome. *Moderate* means that limitations can be overcome or alleviated by planning, design, or special maintenance. *Severe* means that soil properties are unfavorable and that limitations can be offset only by costly soil reclamation, special design, intensive maintenance, limited use, or a combination of these measures.

The information in the table can be supplemented by other information in this survey, for example, interpretations for septic tank absorption fields in table 9 and interpretations for dwellings without basements and for local roads and streets in table 8.

*Camp 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. The best soils have gentle slopes and are not wet or subject to flooding during the period of use. The surface has few or no stones or boulders, absorbs rainfall readily but remains firm, and is not dusty when dry. Strong slopes and stones or boulders can greatly increase the cost of constructing campsites.

*Picnic areas* are subject to heavy foot traffic. Most vehicular traffic is confined to access roads and parking areas. The best soils for picnic areas are firm when wet, are not dusty when dry, are not subject to

flooding during the period of use, and do not have slopes, stones, or boulders that increase the cost of shaping sites or of building access roads and parking areas.

*Playgrounds* require soils that can withstand intensive foot traffic. The best soils are almost level and are not wet or subject to flooding during the season of use. The surface is free of stones and boulders, is firm after rains, and is not dusty when dry. If grading is needed, the depth of the soil over bedrock or a hardpan should be considered.

*Paths and trails* for hiking and horseback riding should require little or no cutting and filling. The best soils are not wet, are firm after rains, are not dusty when dry, and are not subject to flooding more than once a year during the period of use. They have moderate slopes and few or no stones or boulders on the surface.

## Wildlife Habitat

Paul Brady, biologist, Natural Resources Conservation Service, helped to prepare this section.

Woodruff County has 306,800 acres of cropland comprising about 81 percent of the county. About half of this cropland (152,000 acres) has been in soybeans in recent years, with rice (55,000 acres) and wheat (53,000) as other major crops. Milo, corn, and cotton are grown on most of the other cropland.

About 48,000 acres in the county are forested, mainly bottomland hardwoods along the major streams and in scattered tracts.

Only 3,000 or so acres are in pasture or hayland, most of which is bermudagrass, with some clover, fescue, and annual lespedeza.

Major plant groups and species important to wildlife in Woodruff County include oaks, hickories, hackberry, sugarberry, dogwoods, pines, plums, hawthorns, blackberry, elderberry, viburnums, peppervine, sumacs, Virginia creeper, greenbrier, honeysuckle, bluestems, clover, annual lespedeza, panicums, partridge pea, common ragweed, tickclover, and vetches.

Some of the most productive wildlife habitats in the county are where bottomland hardwoods are connected by brushy edges to well managed crop fields. Such areas and other perennial habitats in the county provide homes for white-tailed deer, wild turkey, squirrels, bobwhite quail, raccoons, coyotes, opossum, foxes, rabbits, owls, hawks, numerous nongame birds, small mammals, reptiles, and other wildlife.

The new and still expanding Cache River National Wildlife Refuge is managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. It presently covers 10,530 acres in the

scattered tracts of its Woodruff County portion. These areas provide some high quality habitats and public hunting for deer, turkey, ducks, squirrels, quail, raccoons, and other wildlife.

The Rex Hancock-Black Swamp Wildlife Management Area, which includes nearly 4,000 acres in the county, is managed by the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission. This area provides public hunting mainly for deer, ducks, squirrels, trapping for furbearers, and habitat for numerous other game and nongame species.

Other lowland habitats, including swamps and areas in and around streams and lakes in the county, also support a wide variety of waterfowl and furbearers, such as beaver, muskrat, mink, raccoon, skunk, bobcat, coyote, fox, and opossum.

About 7,300 acres of erosive cropland in the county have been planted to pines, oaks, grasses, and legumes as part of the National Conservation Reserve Program. These plantings have developed perennial wildlife habitats and timber resources of high quality while conserving thousands of tons of topsoil. This saving of topsoil, so valuable in its own right, also keeps the soil from polluting nearby streams, lakes, and ponds—a tremendous benefit to the physical, chemical, and biological health of these waters and their aquatic life.

Fishery resources and sport fishing areas in Woodruff County include more than 2,000 acres of lakes and 165 miles of streams. Major lakes are Horseshoe Lake, just south of Augusta; White Lake; and Seven Mile Lake. Major streams are the White River, Cache River, Bayou DeView, and Taylor Bay. These lakes and streams and scattered farm ponds and reservoirs provide habitats and fishing for largemouth bass, crappies, channel catfish, flathead catfish, bluegill sunfish, redear sunfish, and other species.

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.

## Engineering

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. The ratings are based on observed performance of the soils and on the 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 the 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.

The information in the tables, along with the soil

maps, the soil descriptions, and other data provided in this survey, can be used to make additional interpretations.

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**

Table 8 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. The limitations are considered *slight* if soil properties and site features are generally 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, utility lines, open ditches, and other purposes. The ratings are based on soil properties, site features, and observed performance of the soils. The ease of digging, filling, and compacting is affected by the depth to bedrock, a cemented pan, or a very firm, dense layer; stone content; soil texture; and slope. The time of the year that excavations can be made is affected by the depth to a seasonal high water table and the susceptibility of the soil to flooding. The resistance of the excavation walls or banks to sloughing or caving is affected by soil texture and depth to the water table.

*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 small commercial buildings without basements, for dwellings with basements, and for dwellings without basements. The ratings are based on soil properties, site features, and observed performance of the soils. A high water table, flooding, shrinking and swelling, and organic layers can cause the movement of footings. Depth to 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 are generally limited to less than 6 feet. The ratings are based on soil properties, site features, and observed performance of the soils. Depth to bedrock or to a cemented pan, depth to 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, frost action potential, and depth to a high water table affect the traffic-supporting capacity.

### Sanitary Facilities

Table 9 shows the degree and the kind of soil limitations that affect septic tank absorption fields, sewage lagoons, and sanitary landfills. The limitations are considered *slight* if soil properties and site features are generally 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.

The table also shows the suitability of the soils for use as daily cover for landfill. A rating of *good* indicates that soil properties and site features are favorable for the use and that good performance and low maintenance can be expected; *fair* indicates that soil properties and site features are moderately favorable for the use and one or more soil properties or site features make the soil less desirable than the soils rated good; and *poor* indicates that one or more soil properties or site features are unfavorable for the use and overcoming the unfavorable properties requires special design, extra maintenance, or costly alteration.

*Septic tank absorption fields* are areas in which effluent from a septic tank is distributed into the soil through subsurface tiles or perforated pipe. Only that part of the soil between depths of 24 and 72 inches is evaluated. The ratings are based on soil properties, site features, and observed performance of the soils. Permeability, depth to 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 soil. Lagoons generally are designed to hold the sewage within a depth of 2 to 5 feet. Nearly impervious soil material for the lagoon floor and sides is required to minimize seepage and contamination of ground water.

The 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. The ratings are based on soil properties, site features, and observed performance of the soils. Considered in the ratings are slope, permeability, depth to 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.

*Sanitary landfills* are areas where solid waste is disposed of by burying it in soil. There are two types of landfill—trench and area. In a trench landfill, the waste is placed in a trench. It is spread, compacted, and covered daily with a thin layer of soil excavated at the site. In an area landfill, the waste is placed in successive layers on the surface of the soil. The waste is spread, compacted, and covered daily with a thin layer of soil from a source away from the site.

Both types of landfill must be able to bear heavy vehicular traffic. Both types involve a risk of ground-water pollution. Ease of excavation and revegetation should be considered.

The ratings in the table are based on soil properties, site features, and observed performance of the soils. Permeability, depth to bedrock or to a cemented pan, depth to a 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. The soil material is obtained offsite, transported to the landfill, and spread over the waste.

Soil texture, wetness, coarse 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 are 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. The soil material used as the final cover for a landfill should be suitable for plants. The surface layer generally has the best workability, more organic matter, and the best potential for plants. Material from the surface layer should be stockpiled for use as the final cover.

### Construction Materials

Table 10 gives information about the soils as a source of roadfill, sand, gravel, and topsoil. The 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. The ratings are based on soil properties and site features that affect the removal of the soil and its use as construction material. Normal compaction, minor processing, and other standard construction practices are assumed. Each soil is evaluated to a depth of 5 or 6 feet.

*Roadfill* is soil material that is excavated in one place and used in road embankments in another place. In this table, the 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.

The ratings are for the 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 table showing engineering index properties provides detailed information about each soil layer. This information can help to determine the suitability of each layer for use as roadfill. The performance of soil after it is stabilized with lime or cement is not considered in the ratings.

The ratings are based on soil properties, site

features, and observed performance of the soils. The thickness of suitable material is a major consideration. The 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 a plasticity index of more than 10, a high shrink-swell potential, many stones, or slopes of more than 25 percent. They are wet and have a water table at a depth of less than 1 foot. They may have layers of suitable material, but the material 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 table, only the probability of finding material in suitable quantity is evaluated. The suitability of the material for specific purposes is not evaluated, nor are factors that affect excavation of the material.

The 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), the thickness of suitable material, and the 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 table on engineering index properties.

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. Coarse fragments of soft bedrock, such as shale and siltstone, are not considered to be 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. Also evaluated is the reclamation potential of the borrow area.

Plant growth is affected by toxic material and by such properties as soil reaction, available water

capacity, and fertility. The ease of excavating, loading, and spreading is affected by rock fragments, slope, a water table, soil texture, and thickness of suitable material. Reclamation of the borrow area is affected by slope, a water table, rock fragments, bedrock, and toxic material.

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. The 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 is generally preferred for topsoil because of its organic matter content. Organic matter greatly increases the absorption and retention of moisture and releases a variety of plant nutrients as it decomposes.

### **Water Management**

Table 11 gives information on the 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. The limitations are considered *slight* if soil properties and site features are generally favorable for the indicated use and limitations are minor and are 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 increase in construction costs, and possibly increased maintenance are required.

This table also gives the restrictive features that affect each soil for 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. The seepage potential is determined by the permeability of the soil

and the 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 this table, the soils are rated as a source of material for embankment fill. The ratings apply to the 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.

The ratings do not indicate the ability of the natural soil to support an embankment. Soil properties to a depth greater 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. It also affects trafficability.

*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. Excavating and grading and the stability of ditchbanks are affected by depth to bedrock or to a cemented pan, large stones, slope, and the hazard of cutbanks caving. The productivity of the soil after drainage is adversely affected by extreme acidity or by toxic substances in the root zone, such as salts, sodium, and 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. The design and management of an irrigation system are affected by depth to the water table, the need for drainage, flooding, available water capacity, intake rate, permeability, erosion hazard, and slope. The construction of a system is affected by large stones and depth to bedrock or to a cemented pan. The performance of a system is affected by the depth of the root zone, the amount of salts or sodium, and soil reaction.

*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. A restricted rooting depth, a severe hazard of wind erosion or water erosion, an 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 wind erosion, 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.