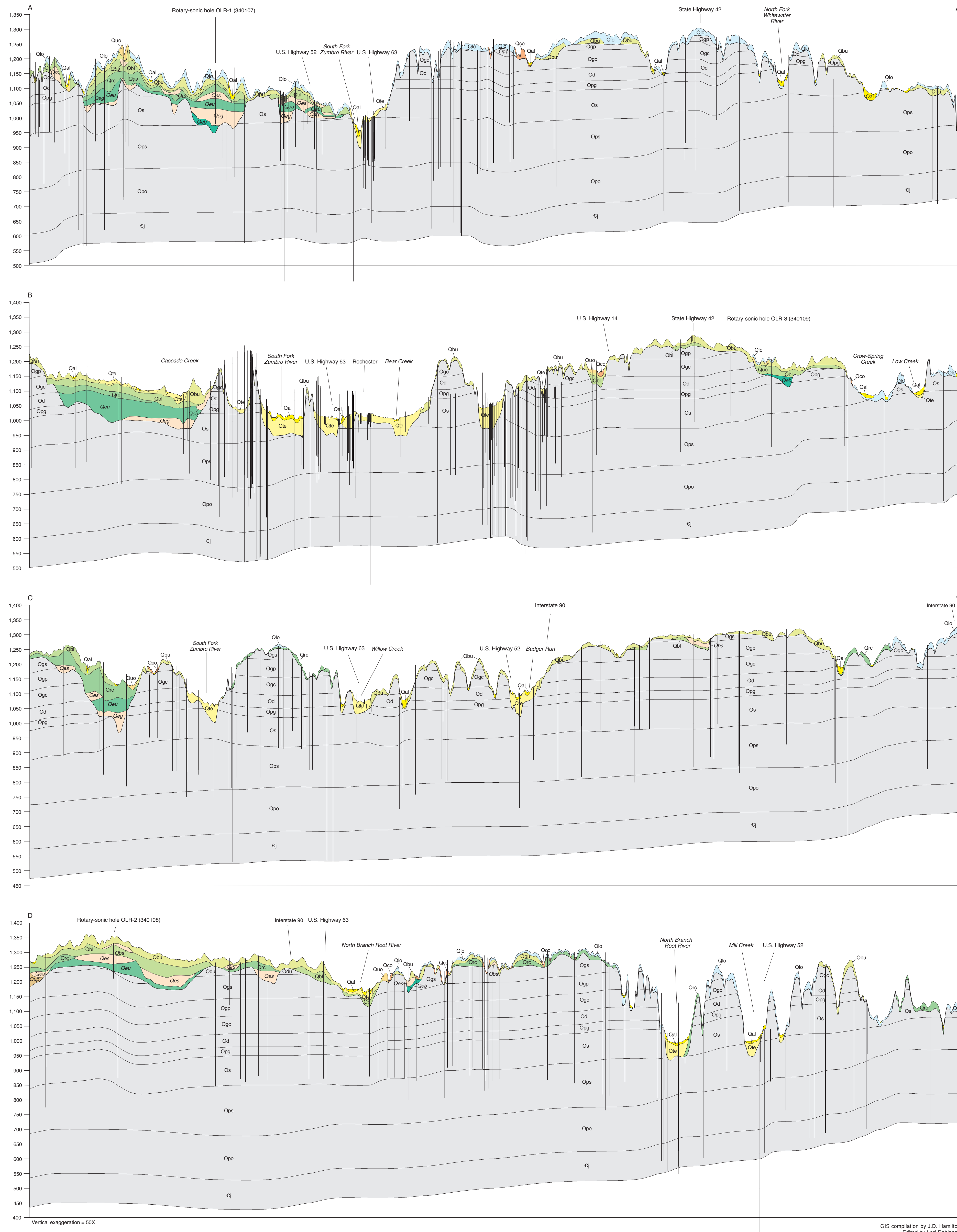


QUATERNARY STRATIGRAPHY

By
Jennifer M. McDonald and Katherine J. Marshall

2020



CROSS-SECTION SYMBOLS

Geologic contact—Approximately located.
Dotted line—Well logs from the County Well Index within 0.5 mile (0.5 kilometer) of the cross-section line. Rotary-sonic core holes are labeled. The top of the drill hole may not coincide with the cross-section surface elevation line because the point is located near, but not on, the cross-section line and therefore may have a different surface elevation. In areas of less data, subsurface records (not shown) within 0.5 mile (1 kilometer) of the cross-section line were used to depict the units.

INTRODUCTION

The Quaternary Stratigraphy plate depicts the unconsolidated sediments encountered between the land and bedrock surfaces in Olmsted County. Cross sections A–A' through D–D' are representative of 40 cross sections (Fig. 1) for the Olmsted County Geologic Atlas. Because the thickness of unconsolidated sediments in Olmsted County is relatively shallow, a generalized depiction of the bedrock, to roughly 1,000 feet (305 meters) below the surface, is also shown in cross sections A–A' through D–D'. For a more detailed description of the bedrock, see Plate 2, *Bedrock Geology*. Cross sections of the unconsolidated material allow the creation of a three-dimensional model of the Quaternary sediments of Olmsted County. Plate 5, *Sand-Distribution Model*, shows the major sand bodies from this model. All the cross sections used to develop the model can be accessed through the digital files available on the Minnesota Geological Survey's website.

To define the geologic units shown on the cross sections, interpretations of new data collected for this study are combined with data from previous studies completed in the area (Plate 3, *Surficial Geology*). Most of the geologic units match the units mapped on Plate 3, but some new units appear only in the subsurface. Other units are the result of dividing units from the surficial map into multiple subsurface units. Figure 2 illustrates the relationships between age, provenance, stratigraphic position, and location of the glacial sediments in Olmsted County. Exposures, auger samples, drill core, and drill cuttings, combined with water-well and soil-boring driller's logs (Plate 1, *Datashub Map*), were used to interpret the stratigraphy. Samples and descriptions from four rotary-sonic core sites (Figs. 3 through 6) were examined for this study. Figure 7 contains images from the rotary-sonic core sites that represent the major glacial till units in the subsurface. Table 1 summarizes the texture and composition of the most prevalent glacial tills.

Several factors should be kept in mind when viewing the cross sections. First, the vertical dimension in the cross sections was exaggerated 50 times the horizontal dimension in order to show the commonly thin, complex units of the Quaternary sequence. As a result, the relief of surfaces is greater and dip of units appear much steeper than true. Second, the complexity of the subsurface units and variable in both thickness and elevation over relatively short distances. This more accurately reflects the complexity of Quaternary deposits, especially those deposits that are older and have undergone more episodes of erosion. Lastly, in Olmsted County, Quaternary units are commonly very thin and patchy, and in areas where the depth of the bedrock is 10 feet (3 meters) or less, it is difficult to portray more than one Quaternary unit, and therefore the cross sections only display the underlying Quaternary unit. For this reason, the geology represented on the surficial geology map (Plate 3) does not always match what is depicted in the cross-section view. For example, where the Quaternary sediments are a thin veneer over steeply sloping bedrock valleys, the overlying Quaternary units were commonly drawn as continuous units extending down the valley walls, although in reality these units are commonly topped by colluvium (see Plate 3 for unit descriptions). For this reason, the colluvium unit (Oco) is not depicted as extensively in the cross sections and sand-body models as it is shown on the surficial geology map. It should also be noted that, due to the nature of projecting elevations and depth of bedrock, in a cross-sectional view, the cross sections do not accurately represent areas where the surficial unit is Oco (see Plate 3 for unit description). Because the surficial geology map represents the geology below the soil horizon, the Oco unit depicts where bedrock is covered by less than 3 feet (1 meter) of Quaternary sediment or less. This is difficult to depict in the cross-sectional view and the closest in proximity Quaternary unit represents the Ocu unit.

Most diamict (unsorted sediment) in Olmsted County is interpreted to be till, sediment more or less directly deposited by glacial ice. Till is composed of clay to boulder-sized fragments (Table 1). The Quaternary deposits present in the subsurface of the county are divided in the cross sections into finer- and coarser-grained sediment. The till and fine-grained lake sediment are depicted in green shades, which can be considered potential aquifers, and the glacial outwash and fluvial sediments are depicted in yellow and orange hues, which are potential aquifers. By convention, the name designations of subsurface sand and gravel beds deposited are associated with their underlying till (except for the sand/gravel unit Ocu, which is a surficial unit) even though meltwater from the ice that deposited the overlying till may in fact be responsible for depositing some or all of the sand and gravel. Till and gravel units, therefore, commonly include sediment derived from more than one formation.

Sand bodies were assumed to divide the deposits of the various glacial episodes that affected the county (Fig. 2), acknowledging that sand lenses occur within, as well as above and below, individual till and fine-grained lake deposits. The characteristics of the various tills of Olmsted County are generally similar to those described in other studies (Table 1). They were distinguished in the subsurface primarily on the basis of intervening sand beds, except for within the vicinity of core holes. In the absence of intervening sand beds, individual till units were distinguished by changes in described texture, oxidation, color (Fig. 7), hardness, or where core, auger, or cuttings samples were available, in clast content (Table 1). An organic layer, part of the Bennington Member of the Rose Creek Formation, commonly separates the Browerville and Rose Creek Formations. However, it has been documented in rotary-sonic cores drilled in neighboring Dodge County (Meyer and others, 2019) that organic beds are also found within the Browerville Formation, as interposed sediment within till or in a peat layer separating two tills of the formation. This peat layer within the Browerville Formation indicates the formation was laid down during more than one ice advance, with sufficient time between advances for an organic layer to accumulate.

Although lithologic differences are present where more than one Browerville Formation till is depicted, the differences are not consistent from site to site. Therefore the division of the Browerville Formation into two units on the cross sections (Ocu, Oqo) is only approximate, and was done primarily as a means to depict sand beds within the formation for the sand models (Plate 5). The younger Browerville Formation was mapped as part of the Ocu unit because it was more recently deposited, whereas the Browerville Formation is relatively thin, such as in eastern Olmsted County. The Elmdale Formation was also divided into two units on the cross sections (Ocu, Oqo) as a means to depict sand beds within the formation for the sand models (Plate 5). The Elmdale Formation was also likely laid down by more than one ice advance (Meyer, 2000), but data were insufficient

HOLOCENE

Ocu Sand and gravel, sandy loam to silt loam (Surficial Geology unit).

Ocu Gravelly sand to sandy loam (Surficial Geology unit).

Ocu Peoria Formation

Ocu Silt loam (Surficial Geology unit)—Shown as a stippled pattern on Plate 3.

Ocu Pre-Wisconsinan (Illinoian and Pre-Illinoian Episodes, undivided)

Ocu Sand to gravelly sand with minor beds of silt and clay (Surficial Geology unit).

Ocu Browerville Formation

Ocu Loam diamicton (modified unit)—Included in map unit Ocu on Plate 3. In places can range from clay loam to silt loam to sandy loam in texture, and include beds and lenses of silt and clay to sand and gravel.

Ocu Sand to gravel (new unit)—Primarily glacial/fluvial sediment laid down by meltwater from glacial ice that deposited till of the Browerville Formation. Primarily topped by unit Ocu (see cross section C–C').

Ocu Loam diamicton (modified unit)—Included in map unit Ocu on Plate 3. In places can range from clay loam to silt loam to sandy loam in texture, and include beds and lenses of silt and clay to sand and gravel.

Ocu Browerville and Rose Creek Formations

Ocu Sand to gravel (new unit)—Primarily glacial/fluvial sediment of the Browerville and/or Rose Creek Formations.

PRE-WISCONSINAN

Ocu Sand to gravelly sand with minor beds of silt and clay (Surficial Geology unit).

Ocu Browerville Formation

Ocu Loam diamicton (modified unit)—Included in map unit Ocu on Plate 3. In places can range from clay loam to silt loam to sandy loam in texture, and include beds and lenses of silt and clay to sand and gravel.

Ocu Sand to gravel (new unit)—Primarily glacial/fluvial sediment laid down by meltwater from glacial ice that deposited till of the Browerville Formation. Primarily topped by unit Ocu (see cross section C–C').

Ocu Loam diamicton (modified unit)—Included in map unit Ocu on Plate 3. In places can range from clay loam to silt loam to sandy loam in texture, and include beds and lenses of silt and clay to sand and gravel.

Ocu Browerville and Rose Creek Formations

Ocu Sand to gravel (new unit)—Primarily glacial/fluvial sediment of the Browerville and/or Rose Creek Formations.

CLAST TYPE

Percentage of total grains counted	Percentage of total grains counted	Percentage of total grains counted	Percentage of total grains counted	Percentage of total grains counted	Percentage of total grains counted	Percentage of total grains counted	Percentage of total grains counted	Percentage of total grains counted	Percentage of total grains counted
Pre-Wisconsinan	Pre-Wisconsinan	Pre-Wisconsinan	Pre-Wisconsinan	Pre-Wisconsinan	Pre-Wisconsinan	Pre-Wisconsinan	Pre-Wisconsinan	Pre-Wisconsinan	Pre-Wisconsinan
Crystalline	Chert	Shale	Light	Dark	Red	Pre-Wisconsinan	Pre-Wisconsinan	Pre-Wisconsinan	Pre-Wisconsinan
80.2	19.4	0.4	89.0	12.0	2	78.3	18.1	3.6	
83.1	16.7	0.1	83.6	14.1	2.3	81.1	18.5	0.4	
82	17.2	0.8	84.0	15.2	0.8	81	17	2	

MATRIX TEXTURE

Percentage of the matrix fraction	Percentage of the matrix fraction	Percentage of the matrix fraction	Percentage of the matrix fraction	Percentage of the matrix fraction	Percentage of the matrix fraction	Percentage of the matrix fraction	Percentage of the matrix fraction	Percentage of the matrix fraction	Percentage of the matrix fraction
Pre-Wisconsinan	Pre-Wisconsinan	Pre-Wisconsinan	Pre-Wisconsinan	Pre-Wisconsinan	Pre-Wisconsinan	Pre-Wisconsinan	Pre-Wisconsinan	Pre-Wisconsinan	Pre-Wisconsinan
Organic	Silt	Clay	Crystalline	Chert	Shale	Light	Dark	Red	Pre-Wisconsinan
14	33.6	3.6	39	38	23	80.2	19.4	0.4	89.0
13	31	3.4	41	37	22	83.1	16.7	0.1	83.6
62.4	52	3.8	35	43	22	82	17.2	0.8	84.0

KEY FOR FIGURES 3 THROUGH 6

- Organic layer
- Sand/gravel
- Silt/clay
- Till
- Headed bedrock

GIS compilation by J.D. Hamilton
Edited by Lori Robinson

ROSE CREEK FORMATION

Ocu Loam diamicton (Surficial Geology unit)—In places can range from silt loam to sandy loam in texture, and include beds and lenses of silt and clay to sand and gravel (Fig. 3). In Olmsted County, the Rose Creek Formation may also include St. Francis Formation diamicton. The St. Francis Formation was not mapped as a separate unit because of its very patchy distribution. The St. Francis Formation is a reddish brown (7.5YR 4/3 to 5YR 4/4) till of the Superior provenance. During this project, it was only found in rotary-sonic core OLR-1 (Figs. 3, 7). This Superior-provenance till was also observed by Hobbs (1988) and most likely correlates to the St. Francis Formation mapped in Dodge County by Meyer and others (2019); unit Ocu, but has been included as part of the Rose Creek Formation because it has been interpreted to be a thin inclusion within Rose Creek Formation diamicton.

Ocu Sand to gravel (new unit)—Included in map unit Ocu on Plate 3. Primarily glacial/fluvial sediment of the Rose Creek and/or Elmdale Formations. May also include sediment of the St. Francis Formation.

Ocu Elmdale Formation

Ocu Loam diamicton (modified unit)—Included in map unit Ocu on Plate 3. In places can range from clay loam to silt loam to sandy loam in texture, and include beds and lenses of silt and clay to sand and gravel.

Ocu Sand to gravel (new unit)—Primarily fluvial sediment, but likely includes some coarse-grained lacustrine sediment in places.

Ocu Loam diamicton (modified unit)—Included in map unit Ocu on Plate 3. In places can include beds and lenses of silt and clay to sand and gravel. In western Olmsted County, a carbonate-rich, silty lacustrine sediment below the Elmdale Formation till in a core hole (OLR-1; Fig. 3), and a silt till exposed in an outcrop (Q003293; Fig. 1) both resemble the "VW" till of central Minnesota (Meyer and Knabbe, 1996; Lasardi, 2014; Meyer, 2019). This complex older unit is likely included in unit Ocu in Olmsted County. Silty, carbonate-rich samples towards the base of some sections of Elmdale Formation till could indicate incorporation of the "VW" till or a "VW" lacustrine unit, such as observed in the silty clay lacustrine sediments found at the bottom of rotary-sonic core OLR-2 (Fig. 4).

UNDIFFERENTIATED PELESTINESE DEPOSITS

Ocu Sand to gravel (new unit)—Sediment of unknown provenance. Unit Qcu is not shown in any cross sections featured on the hard copy of the plate, but was mapped in Olmsted County and can be found in the digital files of the cross sections.

Ocu Undifferentiated sediment (new unit)—Includes diamicton and bedded clay, silt, sand, and gravel. Shown in areas where control data were absent.

PALEOZOIC

Ocu Bedrock units—Shown in gray; see Plate 2, *Bedrock Geology*, for detailed description of the bedrock geology.

Ocu Shakopee Formation of the Prairie du Chien Group

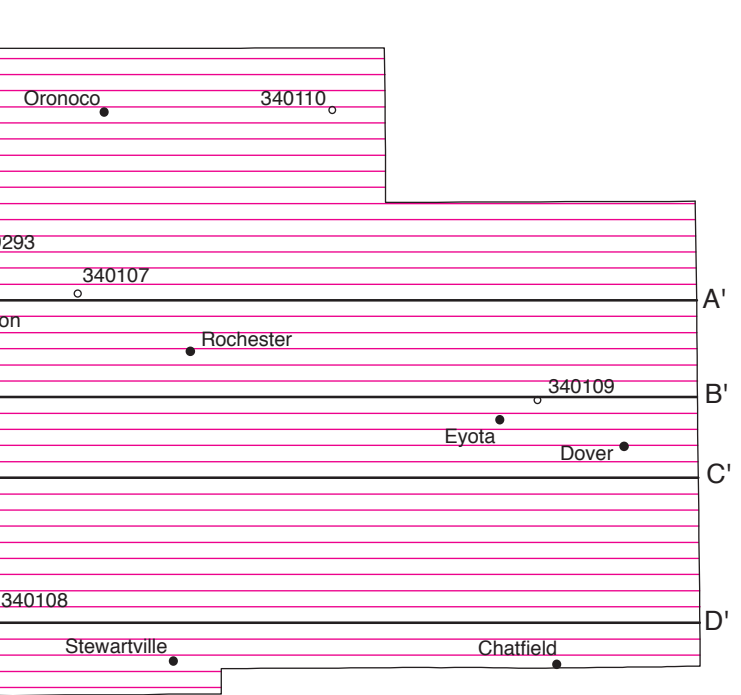
Ocu Onkotah Domes of the Prairie du Chien Group

Ocu Jordan Sandstone

Ocu St. Lawrence Formation

REFERENCES

Hobbs, H.C., 1988, Surficial geology, pl. 3 of Balaban, N.H., project manager, Geologic atlas of Olmsted County, Minnesota: Minnesota Geological Survey County Atlas C-3, scale 1:100,000, 9 pls.
 ———, 1998, Use of 1:2 millimeter sand-grain composition in Minnesota Quaternary studies, in Paterson, C.L., and Wright, H.E., Jr., eds., Contributions to Quaternary studies in Minnesota: Minnesota Geological Survey Report of Investigations RI-49, p. 193-208.
 Johnson, M.D., Adams, R.S., Gowan, A.S., Harris, K.L., Hobbs, H.C., Jennings, C.E., Knabbe, A.R., Lasardi, B.A., and Meyer, G.N., 2016, Quaternary lithostratigraphic units of Minnesota: Minnesota Geological Survey Report of Investigations RI-68, 262 p.
 Lasardi, B.A., 2014, Quaternary stratigraphy, pl. 4 of Lasardi, B.A., project manager, Geologic atlas of Morrison County, Minnesota: Minnesota Geological Survey County Atlas C-31, pt. A, scale 1:100,000, 5 pls.
 Meyer, G.N., 2000, Quaternary geology of Mower County, Minnesota, in Mossler, J.H., project manager, Contributions to the geology of Mower County, Minnesota: Minnesota Geological Survey Report of Investigations RI-50, p. 34-61.
 ———, 2015, Quaternary stratigraphy, pl. 4 of Meyer, G.N., project manager, Geologic atlas of Mower County, Minnesota: Minnesota Geological Survey County Atlas C-35, pt. A, scale 1:100,000, 6 pls.
 Meyer, G.N., and Knabbe, A.R., 1996, Quaternary geology of Stearns County, Minnesota, in Meyer, G.N., and Swanson, L., eds., Text supplement to geologic atlas of Stearns County, Minnesota: Minnesota Geological Survey County Atlas C-10, pt. C, p. 16-39.
 Meyer, G.N., Marshall, K.J., and McDonald, J.M., 2019, Quaternary stratigraphy, pl. 3 of Steenberg, J.R., Geologic atlas of Dodge County, Minnesota: Minnesota Geological Survey County Atlas C-47, pt. A, scale 1:100,000, 6 pls.
 Thorleifson, L.H., Conrad, D.R., and Salley, A.E., 2019, Geochronology of till from Minnesota drill cores: Minnesota Geological Survey Open-File Report OFR 19-2.
 Thorleifson, L.H., Harris, K.L., Hobbs, H.C., Jennings, C.E., Knabbe, A.R., Livesy, R.S., Lasardi, B.A., and Meyer, G.N., 2017, Till geochronology and mineral reconnaissance of Minnesota: Minnesota Geological Survey Open-File Report OFR 17-1, 512 p., 15 digital files, 5 digital images.



EXPLANATION

- Rising Mountain-provenance deposits
- Pre-Wisconsinan deposits
- Superior-provenance deposits
- Winnepigocan deposits
- Period of sediment erosion and/or deposition of neoglaciated sediment

GIS compilation by J.D. Hamilton
Edited by Lori Robinson

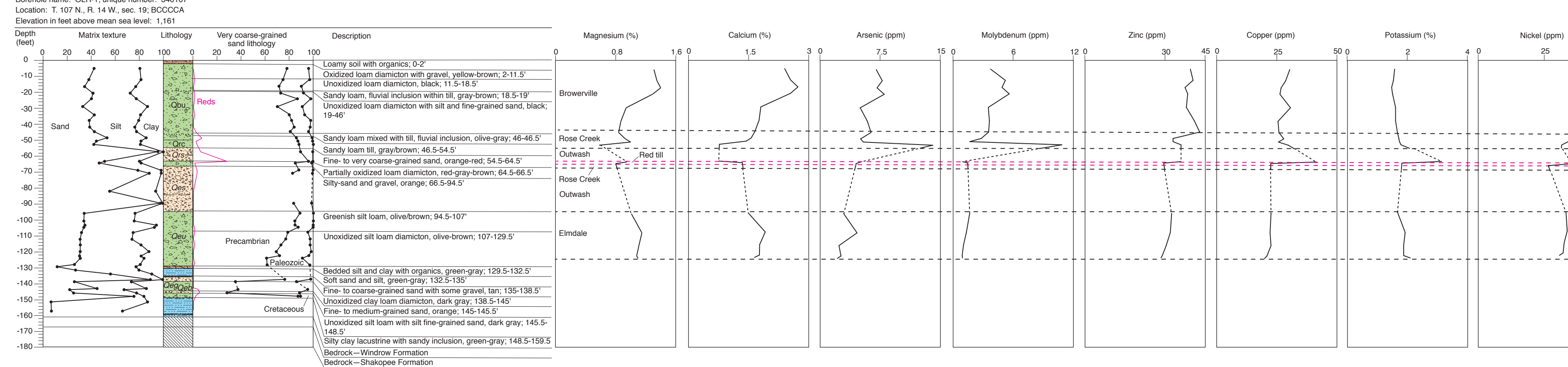


Figure 3. Descriptive log for rotary-sonic core OLR-1. Location is shown on Figure 1 and Plate 1, *Datashub Map*. Plots represent the geochemical analysis of the ϵ_{63} -micro fraction of till. Bedrock was described by Julia Steenberg.

Figure 4. Descriptive log for rotary-sonic core OLR-2.

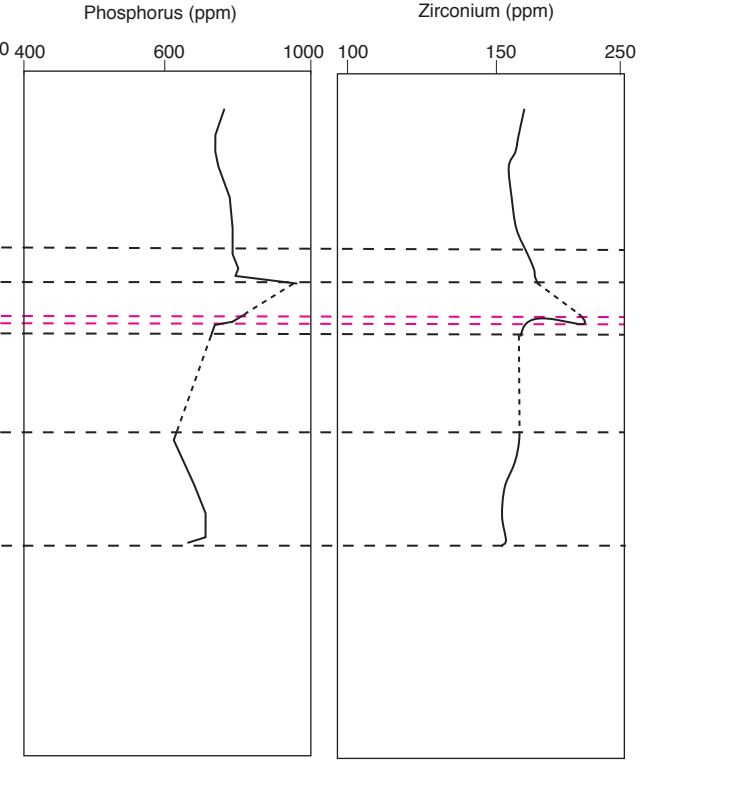


Figure 4. Descriptive log for rotary-sonic core OLR-2. Location is shown on Figure 1 and Plate 1. Bedrock was described by Julia Steenberg.

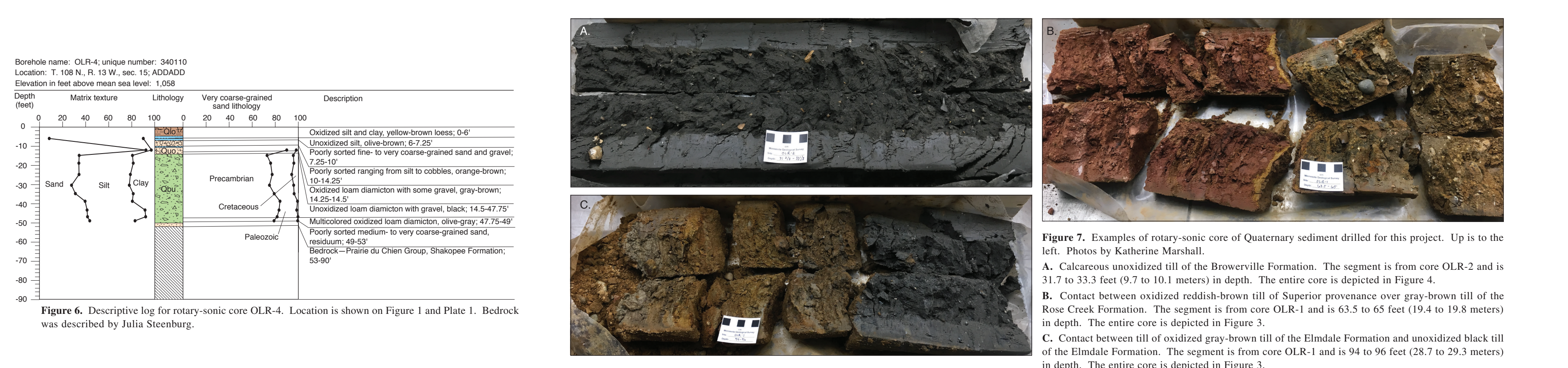


Figure 5. Descriptive log for rotary-sonic core OLR-3. Location is shown on Figure 1 and Plate 1. Bedrock was described by Julia Steenberg.

Figure 6. Descriptive log for rotary-sonic core OLR-4.

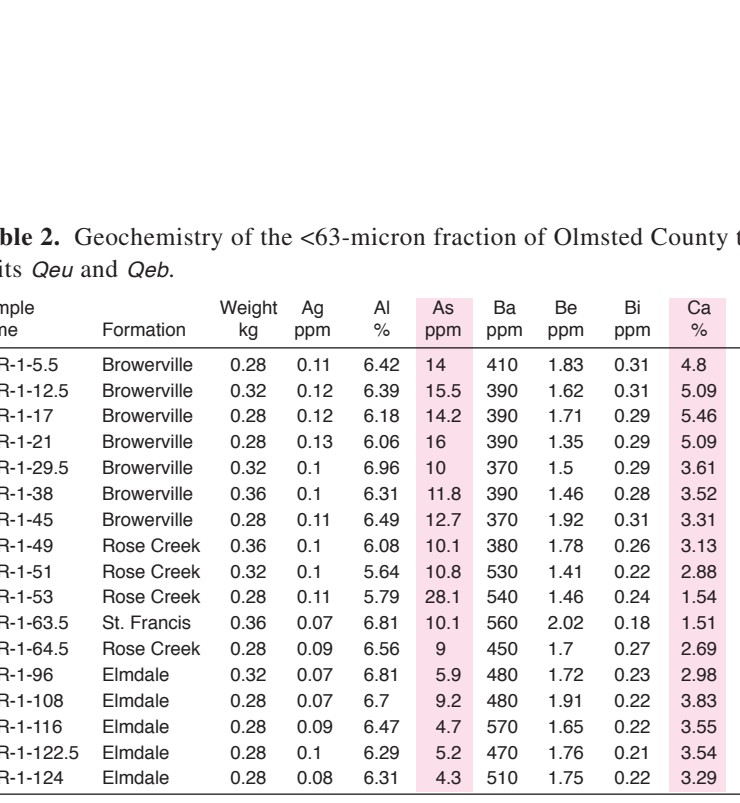


Figure 6. Descriptive log for rotary-sonic core OLR-4. Location is shown on Figure 1 and Plate 1. Bedrock was described by Julia Steenberg.

Figure 7. Examples of rotary-sonic core of Quaternary sediment drilled for this project.



Figure 7. Examples of rotary-sonic core of Quaternary sediment drilled for this project. Up is to the left. Photos by Katherine Marshall.

Table 2. Geochemistry of the ϵ_{63} -micro fraction of Olmsted County till, analyzed by ICP-mass spectrometry.

Sample name	Weight	Al	As	Ba	Be	Bi	Br	Ca	Co	Cr	Cu	Fe	Ge	Hf	In	K	La	Mn	Mg	Mo	Nb	Ni	P	Pb	Rb	S	Se	Si	Sm	Ta	Tb	Ti	Tl	U	V	Zn	Zr												
Formation	g	ppm	ppm	ppm	ppm	ppm	ppm	ppm	ppm	ppm	ppm	ppm	ppm	ppm	ppm	ppm	ppm	ppm	ppm	ppm	ppm	ppm	ppm	ppm	ppm	ppm	ppm	ppm	ppm	ppm	ppm	ppm	ppm	ppm	ppm	ppm	ppm												
OLR-1-5	Browerville	0.28	0.11	6.42	11	410	1.63	0.31	4.8	0.32	87.5	10.6	0.1	3.99	3.04	3.83	17.8	0.18	4.8	0.055	1.27	44.6	0.69	1.31	4.38	3.74	0.45	15.7	35.2	0.80	21.6	7.81	-0.002	0.03	0.91	11.7	1.19	13.1	0.98	0.1	1.28	0.395	0.66	4.2	104	1.3	23.9	7.9	17.5
OLR-1-6	Browerville	0.32	0.12	6.39	11.6	390	1.62	0.31	5.0	0.31	87.5	10.6	0.1	3.99	3.04	3.83	17.8	0.18	4.8	0.055	1.27	44.6	0.69	1.31	4.38	3.74	0.45	15.7	35.2	0.80	21.6	7.81	-0.002	0.03	0.91	11.7	1.19	13.1	0.98	0.1	1.28	0.395	0.66	4.2	104	1.3	23.9	7.9	17.5
OLR-1-7	Browerville	0.28	0.11	6.18	14.2	300	1.71	0.30	4.6	0.30	87.5	10.6	0.1	3.99	3.04	3.83	17.8	0.18	4.8	0.055	1.27	44.6	0.69	1.31	4.38	3.74	0.45	15.7	35.2	0.80	21.6	7.81	-0.002	0.03	0.91	11.7	1.19	13.1	0.98	0.1	1.28	0.395	0.66	4.2	104	1.3	23.9	7.9	17.5
OLR-1-8	Browerville	0.28	0.11	6.08	16	290	1.85	0.29	5.0	0.31	87.5	10.6	0.1	3.99	3.04	3.83	17.8	0.18	4.8	0.055	1.27	44.6	0.69	1.31	4.38	3.74	0.45	15.7	35.2	0.80	21.6	7.81	-0.002	0.03	0.91	11.7	1.19	13.1	0.98	0.1	1.28	0.395	0.66	4.2	104	1.3	23.9	7.9	17.5
OLR-1-9	Browerville	0.32	0.1	6.98	10	370	1.15	0.30	3.61	0.45	84.4	12.8	7.5	4.19	30.7	4.13	16.55	0.16	4.2	0.058	1.16	45.4	0.41	0.94	0.07	0.31	0.49	1.57	10.3	22.4																			