

DESCRIPTION OF MAP UNITS

	Description of materials	Distribution and thickness	Topography and drainage	Permafrost	Susceptibility to frost action	Suitability for construction	Special problems
Q1 Thermokarst deposits	Lithology dependent upon the materials in which the thermokarst basin develops. In the area underlain by marine silt and clay (Qm) the thermokarst deposits contain organic matter and peat. These units are thin to medium sand and silty sand; those formed in units Qm and Qd often contain disseminated detrital organic matter and chunks of peat of various sizes. Scattered, isolated, angular blocks of peat and sand, and of granules to small pebbles occur where thermokarst deposits are developed in Qm. Unit includes the deposits of minor streams and lakes, and the lake basins. Most thermokarst basins contain or have contained lakes or ponds, and the deposits in them are primarily lacustrine in origin.	Occurs primarily in the northern part of the map area; not differentiated within the alluvium or deltaic deposits. Generally less than 8 m thick.	Forms flat to moderately dissected areas within isolated, interlocking, or overlapping basins. Maximum surface relief within basins ranges from about 2 m to 10 m, and is determined by the size of the depressions and presence of pingos. Pingos occurs primarily in thermokarst-lake deposits developed in Qm (Carter and Galloway, 1979) and in a maximum height of about 10 m. Maximum relief between basin floors and surface of ground may be as much as 10 m. Drainage is poor except in those basins in the eolian sand unit that have been breached and deeply dissected.	Perennially frozen immediately below a thin active layer about 0.5 m thick. Amount of excess ice is largely dependent upon the age of the deposits; early units may contain up to 10 percent excess ice. Subsequent units, especially lacustrine, contain less excess ice. Subsequent units may have relatively low ice contents. However, wedge lake basins generally are very susceptible due to ice in the subglacial strata and high surface lake concentration of silt and organic matter.	Highly frost susceptible where developed in marine silt and clay. Susceptibility in remainder of area varies within individual thermokarst basins depending upon the amount of excess ice and the nature of the matrix and subjacent strata of recently drained lake basins.	Generally unsuitable as a source of materials due to silt, organic and ice content, and the seasonal flooding of thermokarst basins by snow melt. The older deposits are less suitable as construction sites due to increasing amount of excess ice with age.	Differential settlement may occur due to permafrost. Very poor drainage except where deeply incised. Pingos developed in granular materials.
Q2 Alluvium	Stratified deposits of gravel, gravelly sand, sand, and minor silt. Contains detrital wood and peat. Includes deposits of floodplain lakes and thermokarst lakes. Units Q2a and Q2b are thin to medium sand and silty sand. All of the units contain disseminated detrital organic matter and chunks of peat of various sizes. Scattered, isolated, angular blocks of peat and sand, and of granules to small pebbles occur where thermokarst deposits are developed in Qm. Unit includes the deposits of minor streams and lakes, and the lake basins. Most thermokarst basins contain or have contained lakes or ponds, and the deposits in them are primarily lacustrine in origin.	Occurs along all the major streams in the quadrangle. Includes floodplain and alluvial terrace deposits as much as 8 m above modern streams. Probably not more than 5 m thick along modern channels.	Forms channels and bars of the modern rivers and terraces of older river courses. Channel scars are well preserved on the lower terraces. Terrace drainage generally poor. Subject to flooding to 6 or 8 m above low water on some subjects.	Permafrost underlies the entire unit except for a 2 to 6 m thick unfrozen layer beneath some of the larger channels and lakes. Elsewhere, active layer about 0.5 m thick. Active layer may be as much as 6 percent silt and the silt deposits that form the channel fills.	Organic-rich silty materials that fill abandoned channels and form overbank deposits are highly frost susceptible. Point bar and channel deposits with less organic material and the silt deposits that form the channel fills.	Provides good foundations in channel and bar areas where material consists of medium to coarse sand, gravelly sand, and gravel, and moderately good to poor foundations in areas where the point bar and channel fills are organic-rich lacustrine silt. The fills in abandoned channels is not suitable for foundations. Deposits with low silt content may be suitable for streambeds.	Subject to bank erosion, scour, channel shifting, and seasonal flooding. Wind erosion and dune building common on point bars and bars occur on other parts of the floodplain. Organic-rich lacustrine silt in the fills may pose environmental problems.
Q3 Deltaic deposits	Sand and silty sand grading to silt at the coast. Contains some very fine-grained organic matter.	Occurs at the mouths of the Canning, Aichilik, Egegik, and Konukatuk Rivers. Thickness undetermined, but probably less than about 15 to 20 m.	Forms channels, banks, islands, sandbars, and mudflats of the modern deltas. Very poorly drained. Lakes and ponds common on islands. Low dunes common on and adjacent to sandbars.	Permafrost underlies the entire unit except for a 2 to 6 m thick unfrozen layer beneath some of the larger channels and lakes. Elsewhere, active layer about 0.5 m thick. Active layer may be as much as 6 percent silt and the silt deposits that form the channel fills.	Highly frost susceptible. Ice in the active layer generally less than 0.5 m beneath bare ground. Common areas; somewhat thinner areas. Open taliks may occur beneath the deepest channels and lakes.	Deposits with proper silt content may be suitable for borrow, but excavation may cause environmental problems and water infiltration to foundation. Not suitable for foundations due to frost susceptibility, poor drainage, and frequent channel shifts.	Subject to seasonal flooding, formation of river-ice dams, bank erosion, scour, and channel shifting.
Q4 Beach deposits	Marine deposits of gravel, gravelly sand, sand, and minor silt. Contains peat and wood. Gravel composed of chert, granite, quartzite, dolomite, diabase, and other rock types and, is derived from erosion of older deposits.	Present locally along the Beaufort Sea coast, and as offshore islands. Deposits are thin and narrow, generally from 1 to 3 m thick and from 10 to 50 m wide. Offshore islands may be as much as 1 km wide.	Forms offshore islands and low ridges along and slightly inland from the modern shorelines. Deposition good on ridges but where more than one ridge is present the inter-ridge areas are poorly drained.	The active layer on presently forming beach and Granular materials not susceptible to frost action.	Poor for concrete due to chert and organic content and unsuitable size grading. Otherwise, generally good except may require addition of binder for surfacing or base course. Materials limited in volume.	Subject to ice slope along shore and in altitude. Excavation of streambed materials may pose impact effect of parrowing activities on coastal erosion and deposition.	
Q5m Eolian silt and sand over marine silt and clay	Eolian silt and sand, clayey silt, silty clay, and minor sandy silt. Marine deposits contain scattered ice-raftered pebbles, cobble gravel, and gravelly sand. Chert, granite, quartzite, dolomite, and other rock types not found in streams draining the north flank of the Brooks Range. Also present are angular blocks of peat and sand, and foraminifera, ostracodes, and ostracodes. The upper 2 m of these deposits have been extensively reworked by thermokarst-lake activity and are overlain by 1 to 2 m of peat.	Occurs along the coast and on Flaxman Island. Eolian silt and sand from 2 to 5 m thick. Thickness of older units not determined, but extends at least 10 m to the base of coastal bluffs that are as much as 6 m in height.	Forms poorly to moderately well-drained surfaces isolated by thermokarst-lake basins.	Perennially frozen beneath an active layer that is generally less than 0.5 m thick. Active ice wedges well developed and fossil ice wedges may be at depth of a few meters. Ice content is low and natural voids down to 8 or 9 m below surface and may induce minor settlement upon thawing that the 3.3 m noted in marine sand near Barrow (Hussey and Michelson, 1966).	Highly frost susceptible.	Not suitable for foundations because of excessive differential settlement on thaw of ice-rich permafrost. Construction materials not readily available.	Early eroded. Silt has high liquefaction potential when thawed.
Q5a Eolian silt and sand over alluvium	Eolian silt and sand overlying alluvium of local derivation. The silt and fine sand contains disseminated fine-grained organic material and is thin to medium sand. Thickness of older units not determined. The underlying alluvium is poorly stratified to stratified pebbles to cobble gravel and gravelly sand containing angular to rounded clasts derived from nearby bedrock outcrops.	Occurs east of the Aichilik River in the southern part of the map area. Thickness undetermined.	Forms flat to gently undulating lowland surfaces that are dissected to depths of about 10 m. Drainage good to fair.	Active layer generally less than 0.5 m thick. Ice wedges well developed and sediment may contain a high volume of interstitial ice.	Silt and silty sand are frost susceptible.	Not suitable for borrow except as binder material. Not suitable for foundations because of excessive differential settlement on thaw of ice-rich permafrost.	Excess pulled by running water when water is channeled by construction activities or when surface vegetation is removed. Dewatering of surface vegetation may cause melting of ice wedges and lead to subsidence. Locally, deposits may be liquefiable when thawed and saturated.
Q6 Fluvial gravel and gravelly sand	Stratified deposits of pebble, cobble, and boulder gravel, gravelly sand, and minor silty sand. Grain size progressively decreases toward the south. Glass well rounded and contains a wide variety of rock types derived from the Brooks Range. Includes outwash of several glacial episodes. Generally covered by less than 1 to 2 m of peat and eolian sand or silt.	Occurs widely throughout the map area. Thickness undetermined.	Forms stream terraces and inactive parts of alluvial fans and outwash fans. Poorly drained.	Perennially frozen beneath an active layer that is generally less than 0.5 m thick. Active ice wedges well developed but interstitial ice content probably not in excess of natural voids.	Granular materials not susceptible to frost action.	Poor for concrete due to chert content. Otherwise generally good except may require addition of binder for surfacing or base course. Generally provides good natural foundations if proper construction techniques are used to avoid melting ice wedges.	Excess pulled by running water when water is channeled by construction activities or when surface vegetation is removed. Dewatering of surface vegetation may cause melting of ice wedges and lead to subsidence. Locally, deposits may be liquefiable when thawed and saturated.
Q6g Eolian silt and sand over fluvial gravel and gravelly sand	Eolian silt and very fine sand overlying gravel, gravelly sand, and minor silty sand. The silt and fine sand contains disseminated fine-grained organic material and is thin to medium sand. Thickness of older units not determined. The underlying fluvial deposits and outwash have the characteristics described for map unit Q5.	Occurs widely throughout the map area. Eolian silt and sand ranges in thickness from 2 m to about 10 m. Thickness of underlying gravel undetermined.	Forms gently rolling terrain dissected by gullies as much as 10 m deep. Drainage good to fair.	Active layer generally less than 0.5 m thick. Ice wedges well developed and silt and very fine sand may contain a high volume of interstitial ice.	Silt and silty sand are frost susceptible.	Fine-grained materials not suitable for borrow except as binder; coarse-grained materials not suitable because of thickness of overburden. Not suitable for foundations because of excessive differential settlement on thaw of ice-rich permafrost.	Excess pulled by running water when water is channeled by construction activities or when surface vegetation is removed. Dewatering of surface vegetation may cause melting of ice wedges and lead to subsidence. Locally, deposits may be liquefiable when thawed and saturated.
Q7c Colluvial deposits	Variable composition ranging from silt and very fine sand with dispersed pebbles and cobbles to silty, gravelly rubble. Contains disseminated, fine-grained organic material and is thin to medium sand. Thickness of older units not determined and contains blocks of peat of various sizes, and pieces of detrital wood.	Occurs throughout the southern part of the map area. Thickness from 1 to 10 m.	Forms valley and gully slopes and bottoms. Drainage good on upper slopes, poor on lower slopes and in valley and gully bottoms.	Perennially frozen beneath an active layer that is generally less than 0.5 m thick. Contains ice wedges and moderate to high volumes of interstitial ice beneath lower slopes and valley bottoms.	Highly frost susceptible.	Generally unusable as a source for materials because of organic content. Not suitable for foundations on lower slopes and valley bottoms because of excessive differential settlement on thaw of ice-rich permafrost.	Excess pulled by running water when water is channeled by construction activities or when surface vegetation is removed. Disruption of surface vegetation may cause melting of ground ice and lead to subsidence.
Q8d Debris flow deposits	Silty rubble containing angular blocks up to several m in diameter of sandstone, limestone, and dolomite.	Occurs along the front of the Sadlerochit Mountains west of Itkilliyak Creek. Thickness undetermined but possibly 5 to 0 m.	Forms fan-shaped deposits at the mouths of steep gullies. Well drained.	Perennially frozen beneath an active layer that is probably no thicker than 0.5 m. Ice in excess of natural voids probably not present.	Generally not frost susceptible, except where silt content exceeds 6 percent.	Not suitable for foundations because of steep slopes. Not suitable for borrow.	Slopes unstable if undercut. New debris flows may occur at these localities and at the mouths of other steep gullies.
Q9d Younger glacial drift	Till and minor ice-contact deposits. The till is unstratified, unsorted, compact, stony, gravelly, silt, erratic blocks up to 3 m in diameter. The ice-contact deposits are stratified sand and gravelly sand.	Occurs along the Canning River and from the Sadlerochit River to a few km east of the Aichilik River. As much as 200 m thick.	Forms hummocky plains and lobate moraines developed during at least three separate glacial episodes (oldest to youngest) on the Canning, Kukpuk, and Niguanak Rivers. 200 m. Hummocks generally well drained; depressions generally poorly drained and may contain accumulations of silt and peat.	Perennially frozen beneath an active layer that is probably less than 0.5 m thick. May be thicker on upper few m but thin at depth. Buried glacial ice may be present in Q9d.	Till moderately to highly frost susceptible depending upon local composition. Ice-contact deposits generally not frost susceptible unless silt content greater than 6 percent.	Till may be useful as impermeable fill but otherwise unusable as construction materials without much screening and washing. Probably not suitable for natural foundations due to high ice content.	Slopes subject to mass movement.
Q10d Older glacial drift	Very poorly exposed; three of the four occurrences mapped by inference only. The single exposure is on the Jago River, and the others are of unstratified, unsorted, stony, silt, erratic blocks up to 1.5 m in diameter.	Occurs between Itkilliyak Creek and the Sadlerochit River, on the Jago River, and Matukuk River. Thickness undetermined but at least 25 m at the Jago River locality.	Forms a low ridge west of the Sadlerochit River, irregular terrace on the Jago River, and hummocky terrain west of Matukuk River. Drainage poor to fair.	Perennially frozen beneath an active layer that is probably no more than 0.5 m thick. Contains ice wedges and moderate to high volumes of interstitial ice beneath Matukuk River.	Moderately to highly frost susceptible depending on local composition.	Till may be useful as impermeable fill but otherwise unusable as construction material without much screening and washing. Probably not suitable for natural foundations due to high ice content.	Slopes subject to mass movements.
Q11g Gravel	Stratified deposits of pebble, cobble, and boulder gravel. Clasts predominantly of sandstone, limestone, and dolomite. Commonly has a silty, calcareous matrix.	Occurs between the Tamayariak River and Marsh Creek. Up to 20 m thick.	Forms dissected river terraces and upland surfaces. Well drained.	Entire unit is perennially frozen. Thickness of active layer is unknown but may be as much as 2 m on unvegetated, south-facing slopes. Ice content not known but probably not exceed natural voids. Ice wedges probably well developed.	Susceptible to frost action where matrix is silty.	Suitable for fill, base course, and surface course (with proper grading). Provides good natural foundations if proper construction techniques are used to avoid melting ice wedges.	-----
Q12g Eolian silt and sand over fluvial gravel, gravelly sand, and sand	Eolian silt and very fine sand overlying gravel, gravelly sand, and sand. The silt and fine sand contains disseminated fine-grained organic material and is thin to medium sand. Thickness of older units not determined and contains clasts of a wide range of rock types derived from the interior of the Brooks Range.	Occurs between the Canning and Sikirelak Rivers. Silt and sand as much as 15 m thick. Total sand deposit ranges from 10 m to at least 25 m.	Forms undulating upland surfaces that are dissected to depths of 25 m. Drainage good to poor.	Active layer less than 0.5 m thick. Ice wedges well developed and silt and very fine sand may contain a high volume of interstitial ice.	Silt and silty sand are frost susceptible.	Fine-grained materials not suitable for borrow except as binder; coarse-grained materials not suitable because of thickness of overburden. Not suitable for foundations because of excessive differential settlement on thaw of ice-rich permafrost.	Excess pulled by running water when water is channeled by construction activities or when surface vegetation is removed. Disruption of surface vegetation may cause melting of surface vegetation may cause melting of ground ice and lead to subsidence.
Q13m Fluvial gravel over marine sand, silt, and clay	Pebble, cobble, and boulder gravel of fluvial and perhaps glaciogenic origin; overlying marine sand, silt, and clay. The gravel and sand are angular to subangular clasts composed of a wide range of rock types derived from the interior of the Brooks Range. The marine deposits are stratified and contain clasts of a wide range of rock types derived from the interior of the Brooks Range.	Occurs between the Kataktuk and Sadlerochit Rivers in the northern part of the map area. The gravel is as much as 10 m thick. Aggregate thickness is 10 m.	Forms ridges on the north and south flanks of the marsh incision and across its crest. Generally well drained.	Perennially frozen beneath an active layer that may be as thick as 0.5 to 1.0 m on south-facing slopes. Ice content not known but probably does not exceed natural voids. Gravel probably does not contain excess ice.	Surface materials generally not susceptible to frost action.	Should provide good natural foundations away from bluff edges. Gravel may be suitable for fill, base course, or surfacing.	Marine deposits subject to mass movements.
Q14s Alluvial and eolian sand and marine sand and silt	Highly variable composition, but generally consists of stratified deposits of marine silt, sand, gravelly sand, and clay, overlying fluvial gravel, gravelly sand, and minor organic-rich silt, which in turn, locally, is thin to medium sand. The silt and fine sand contains disseminated fine-grained organic material and is thin to medium sand. Thickness of older units not determined and contains clasts of a wide range of rock types derived from the interior of the Brooks Range. The marine beds are about 10 m thick.	Occurs between the Kataktuk River and Poole River in the northern part of the map area. Thickness of marine deposits 1 to 6 m. Fluvial deposits 5 to 10 m; eolian deposits 1 to 5 m; peat and peaty sand 1 to 5 m. Aggregate thickness is 10 m.	Forms flat to gently rolling terrain broken by thermokarst basins and ravines. Drainage good on slopes, fair to poor in flatter areas.	Perennially frozen beneath an active layer that is probably no more than 0.5 m thick. Contains ice wedges and may have interstitial ice in excess of natural voids.	Silt and clay generally frost susceptible. Silt and clay may contain excess ice.	Not suitable for foundations because of excessive differential settlement on thaw of ice-rich permafrost.	Easily eroded by running water if flow is concentrated by construction activities or if surface vegetation is removed. Disruption of surface vegetation may cause melting of ice wedges and lead to subsidence.
Q15s Marine and nonmarine siltstone, shale, sandstone, and minor conglomerate	Poorly indurated pebble to cobble conglomerate with a sandy matrix. Clast rock types include siliceous sandstone, siltstone, quartz, chert, and tuff(?)	Occurs north of the Kayik River at the west edge of the map. Thickness undetermined but at least 85 m.	Forms low hills. Well drained.	Perennially frozen but ice content insignificant.	Fine-grained and/or thin bedded units susceptible to frost action.	Generally not suitable for borrow except locally as binder material. Not suitable for foundations due to slope instability.	Subject to mud flows, debris flows, and rock falls.
Q16s Conglomerate	Poorly indurated pebble to cobble conglomerate with a silty to clayey matrix that locally may be bentonitic. Clast rock types include siliceous sandstone, siltstone, quartz, chert, and tuff(?)	Occurs north of the Kayik River at the west edge of the map. Thickness undetermined but at least 80 m.	Forms low hills. Well drained.	Perennially frozen but ice content insignificant.	Frost susceptible where silt content exceeds 6 percent.	Not suitable for construction materials without much screening and washing. May locally provide adequate foundations but disturbed slopes may be unstable.	Subject to mud flows on disturbed slopes.
Q17s Muddy conglomerate	Indurated pebble conglomerate, sandstone, and siltstone.	Occurs between Okipikrourak River and Angun River in the southern part of the map area. Nearly 3 km thick.	Forms an east-west trending belt of low hills. Well drained.	Perennially frozen but ice content insignificant.	Generally not frost susceptible.	Should provide adequate natural foundations. Suitable for fill, base course, and surface course (with proper grading); but unsatisfactory for aggregate because of chert content.	-----
Q18s Conglomerate, sandstone, and siltstone	Silicified tuff and bentonitic shale with minor silty shale.	Occurs between the Tamayariak and Sadlerochit Rivers. Thickness undetermined.	Forms knobs and hillsides north of the Sadlerochit Mountains. Well drained.	Perennially frozen but ice content insignificant.	Subject to frost shattering along joints and bedding planes.	Should provide adequate natural foundations. Unsuitable for construction materials except perhaps for crushed stone.	-----
Q19s Pyroclastic rocks	Marine and nonmarine sandstone, siltstone, and shale. Thinly to thickly bedded; moderately to poorly indurated.	Occurs in southern part of the map area from near the west edge of the map to near the Egegik River. Also occurs in the central part of the map area along the Igash River and west of the Niguanak River. Thickness undetermined.	Forms outcrops on colluvial slopes and, locally, forms knolls on valley sides. Well drained.	Perennially frozen but ice content insignificant.	Thin bedded and/or fine-grained units susceptible to frost action.	Locally, may provide good foundations. Some sandstone outcrops may provide suitable sources for crushed stone.	Evaluation of slope stability requires knowledge of local rock structure with respect to land slope.
Q20s Sandstone, siltstone, and shale	Predominantly well indurated, resistant ferruginous sandstone and orthoquartzite and siliceous siltstone. Locally conglomeratic. Equivalent to the Sadlerochit Group as mapped by Reiser and others (1980).	Occurs between the Sadlerochit and Kataktuk Rivers and between the Okipikrourak River and Angun River in the southern part of the map area. Thickness variable; 200 m at the type locality for the Sadlerochit Group (Detterman and others, 1975).	Forms cuestas, river bluffs, and steep hillsides. Well drained.	Perennially frozen but ice content insignificant.	Subject to frost shattering along joints and bedding planes.	Suitable for crushed stone and riprap. Generally not suited for construction sites because of steep slopes.	Subject to rock falls.
Q21s Sandstone, siltstone, and quartzite	Basaltic volcanic wacke, tuff, agglomerate, tuffaceous sandstone, volcanic conglomerate, flow breccia, calcareous dolomite, stromatoporoid dolomite, and pisolithic dolomite.	Occurs on both sides of the Kongakut River at the southern edge of the map. Thickness 10 to 100 m.	Forms river bluffs and knolls on ridge crests.	Perennially frozen but ice content insignificant.	Subject to frost shattering along joints and bedding planes.	Possibly suitable for crushed stone. Generally not suited for construction sites because of steep slopes.	Subject to rock falls.
Q22s Limestone and dolomite	Fine-grained limestone, oolithic limestone, bioclastic limestone, stromatoporoid dolomite, and pisolithic dolomite.	Occurs between the Sadlerochit and Kataktuk Rivers and between the Okipikrourak River and Angun River. Thickness variable; but locally, more than several hundred m.	Forms steep slopes. Well drained.	Perennially frozen but ice content insignificant.	Subject to frost shattering along joints and bedding planes.	Suitable for crushed stone and, locally, for riprap. Generally not suitable for construction sites because of steep slopes.	Subject to rock falls.
Q23s Slate, phyllite, argillite, quartzite, and chert	Predominantly thin-to-medium-bedded, fissile, pelitic rocks, locally, silicified, with interbedded quartzite and chert.	Occurs east of the Kongakut River in the southern part of the map area. Exposed thickness from 50 to more than 300 m.	Forms bluffs, ridgecrests, and knolls. Well drained.	Perennially frozen but ice content insignificant.	Subject to frost shattering along joints and bedding planes.	Locally, may be suitable for crushed stone. Generally not suited for construction sites because of steep slopes.	Subject to rock falls on steep slopes.

ENGINEERING-GEOLOGIC MAPS OF NORTHERN ALASKA, COASTAL PLAIN AND FOOTHILLS OF THE ARCTIC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE