

# QUATERNARY GEOLOGY

## CHESTER, CONNECTICUT

### LIST OF MAP UNITS

- |  |  |                                   |
|--|--|-----------------------------------|
| <b>POSTGLACIAL DEPOSITS - late Holocene, late Wisconsinan</b>        | <b>GLACIAL MELTWATER DEPOSITS - late Wisconsinan</b>           | <b>Explanation of Map Symbols</b> |
| Artificial Fill  | Undifferentiated Meltwater Deposits                            | Ice Margin Position               |
| Coastal Beach and Dune Deposits                                      | Deposits of Major Ice-Dammed Lakes                             | Inferred Ice Margin Position      |
| Tidal Marsh Deposits   | Deposits of Major Sediment-Dammed Lakes                        | Esker                             |
| Floodplain Alluvium  | Deposits of Related Series of Major Ice-Dammed Ponds           | Glacial Striation or Groove       |
| Swamp Deposits   | Deposits of Related Series of Major Sediment-Dammed Ponds      | Drumlin Axis and Center           |
| Talus  | Deposits of Proximal Meltwater Streams                         | Meltwater Channel                 |
| <b>EARLY POSTGLACIAL DEPOSITS - early Holocene, late Wisconsinan</b> | Deposits of Distal Meltwater Streams                           | Glacial Lake Spillway             |
| Stream Terrace Deposits  | <b>GLACIAL ICE-LAID DEPOSITS - late Wisconsinan, Illinoian</b> | Location of Lower Till            |
| Inland Dune Deposits   | Thin Till Deposits   | Two-Till Outcrop                  |
|  | Thick Till Deposits  | Delatic Bedding Locality          |
|  | End Moraine Deposits   | Weathered Bedrock Outcrop         |
|  |  | Radiocarbon-Dated Locality        |
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- |   |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
| <b>Explanation of Map Symbols</b>   | <b>Elevation Contours</b> |
| Area of glacial/valley deposits grading to glacial lake   | 100 Ft. Interval          |
| Area of lake-bottom sediments   | 50 Ft. Interval           |
| Drainage Divide - Boundary between major geologic basins  |                           |
| Drainage Divide - Boundary within major geologic basin dividing it into north-draining and south-draining regions |                           |

### EXPLANATION

Quaternary Geology is a 1:24,000-scale data that illustrates the geologic features formed in Connecticut during the Quaternary Period, which spans from 2.588 ± 0.005 million years ago to the present and includes the Pleistocene (glacial) and Holocene (postglacial) Epochs. The Quaternary Period has been a time of development of many details of the Connecticut landscape and all surficial deposits. At least twice in the last Pleistocene, continental ice sheets swept across Connecticut from the north. Their effects are of pervasive importance to present-day occupants of the land.

The Quaternary Geology information illustrates the geologic history and the distribution of depositional environments during the emplacement of unconsolidated glacial and postglacial surficial deposits and the landforms resulting from those events in Connecticut. These deposits range from a few feet to several hundred feet in thickness, overlie the bedrock surface and underlie the organic soil layer of Connecticut. Quaternary Geology is mapped without regard for any organic soil layer that may overlie the deposit.

The Connecticut Quaternary Geology information was initially compiled at a 1:24,000 scale (1 inch = 2,000 feet) then recompiled for a statewide 1:125,000-scale map, Quaternary Geology Map of Connecticut and Long Island Sound Basin. A companion map, the Surficial Materials Map of Connecticut, emphasizes the surface and subsurface texture (grain-size distribution) of these materials. The Quaternary geology and surficial material features portrayed on these two maps are very closely related, each contributing to the interpretation of the other.

Most of Connecticut's surficial material is glacially derived, and can be divided into two broad depositional categories: Glacial Ice-Laid Deposits (nonsorted and generally nonstratified till, thick till, and end moraine) which are generally exposed in the uplands, and are the most widespread surficial deposit in Connecticut; and Glacial Meltwater Deposits (sorted and stratified delatic, river bottom, lake bottom, and inland dune deposits) which are most commonly concentrated in valleys and lowlands.

Particular attention has been paid to understanding the distribution and characteristics of stratified meltwater deposits because they have historically influenced development patterns and groundwater availability throughout the state. Within the meltwater category, six classes of deposits have been recognized based on the conditions that prevail during their emplacement. Four of the seven indicate whether previously deposited sediment, or the glacier itself, impounded the lake or pond where emplacement occurred (see the meltwater deposit discussion below). Meltwater stream deposits are differentiated based on their distance (proximal or distal) from the ice sheet when they were emplaced, and a separate meltwater map unit is reserved for deposits of undetermined provenance (unsorted).

**Postglacial Deposits** were emplaced by various processes after the melt back of the last ice sheet. Some of these deposits were emplaced early in post-glacial time and have been grouped together as Early Postglacial Deposits. Later deposits, resulting from processes that are still active (or are man-made), have been grouped together as Postglacial Deposits.

**Glacial Ice-Laid Deposits** (nonsorted and generally nonstratified till, thick till, and end moraine), **Glacial Meltwater Deposits** (sorted and stratified delatic, river bottom, lake bottom, and inland dune deposits), and **Postglacial Deposits** (flood-plain alluvium and swamp deposits, but also including stream-terrace, talus, dune, tidal-marsh, beach, channel fill, marine delta deposits, and artificial fill) that were emplaced in comparable topographic and depositional settings, and therefore share similar characteristics, are categorized and color coded in the Legend Description. Related Map Elements include eskers, drumlin axes, ice-margin positions, scarp, drainage divides, glacial lake spillways, meltwater channels, stratiotic grooves, dated sample locations, glacial/valley and lake-bottom facies as overlays on glacial lake map units and various types of exposures.

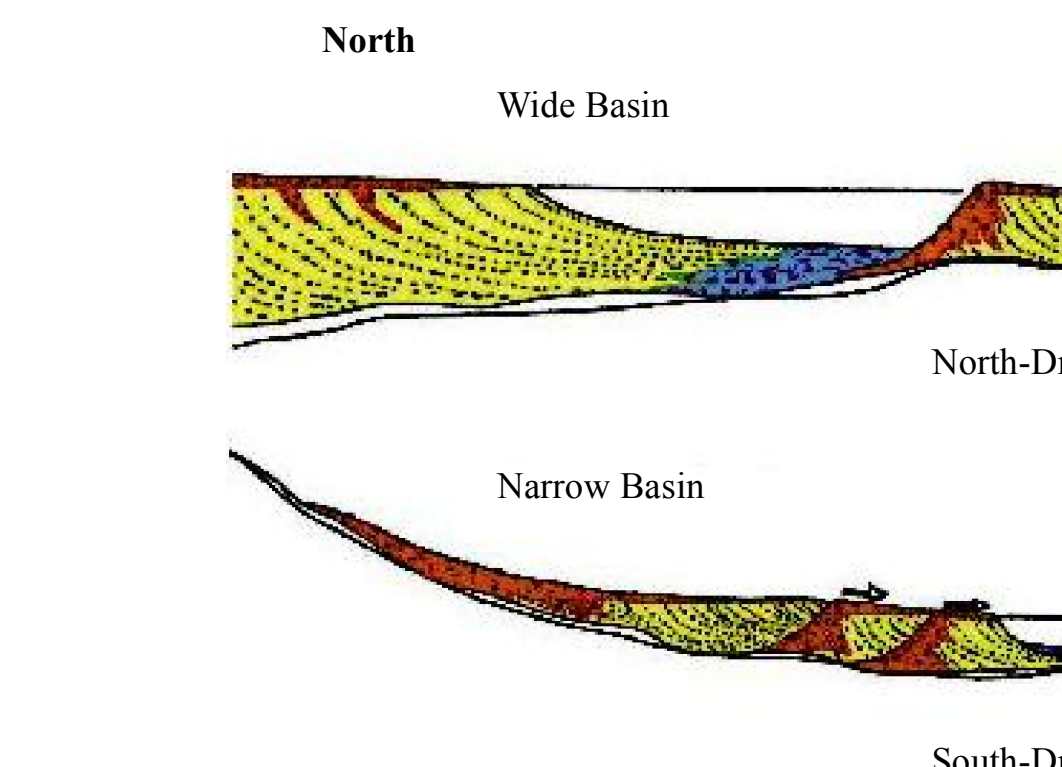


Figure 1: A morphosequence is a body of meltwater deposits composed of a continuum of land forms, grading from ice-contact forms (eskers, kames) to non-ice-contact forms (fret valleys, delta plains), that were deposited simultaneously at and beyond the margin of a glacier, graded to a specific base level. Grain-size decreases from coarse gravel at ice-contact, through sand and gravel and sand beneath delta plains and forest slopes to silt and clay in lake-bottom deposits (after Stone and others, 2005).

Deposition of the morphosequences that progressively filled bedrock valleys and lowlands as the last glacier melted northward required the presence of impounded lakes and ponds. The nature of the impoundments and the timing of their emplacements were controlled by the topography of the area being deglaciated. Where a northward succession of ice positions was established in south-draining basins, previously deposited sediment formed the dams, and the oldest morphosequences occupied the lowest, widest parts of the valley. Deposition then progressed up valley, with the youngest depositional sequences occupying higher, narrower portions of the valley (Figure 2). In north-draining basins the opposite is true. The ice itself was the impoundment, and the oldest morphosequences were emplaced in the higher, narrower portions of the basin. As the ice front retreated northward, a succession of lower bedrock spillways were opened and the valleys widened. In this case, the youngest depositional sequences occupied the lowest, widest portions of the valley (Figure 2).

Postglacial deposits provide locally important ecological, agricultural, commercial, and recreational resources. Talus, a result of rockfall at the base of steep bedrock (primarily trap rocks) cliffs, and inland dune deposits, that developed as winds swept across newly exposed glacial lake beds, provide ecological niches that are unique to Connecticut. Beach, dune, marsh and swamp deposits are key ecological elements of coastal and near-coastal settings. Deposits of floodplain alluvium are largely composed of sands, gravels and silts that have been reworked from glacial deposits and mixed with organic matter which increases their fertility. Despite their fertile, prone nature, low, flat, fertile floodplains have historically been attractive for agricultural uses and development related to water-dependent commerce.

### DATA SOURCES

**QUATERNARY GEOLOGY DATA** - Quaternary Geology shown on this map are from the Quaternary Geology Poly, Point Feature, and Line Feature dataset intended to be used at a 1:24,000 scale. Based on Connecticut Quaternary Geology digital spatial data published in 2005 by the U.S. Geological Survey, in cooperation with the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection. These data were digitized from the 1:24,000-scale compilation sheets prepared for the statewide Quaternary Geology Map of Connecticut, (Stone, J.R., Schaller, J.P., London, E.H., DiGiacomo-Cohen, M.L., Lewis, R.S., and Thompson, W.B., 2005. U.S. Geological Survey special map, 2 sheets, scale 1:125,000).

**BASE MAP DATA** - Based on data originally from 1:24,000-scale USGS 7.5 minute topographic quadrangle maps published between 1969 and 1992. It includes political boundaries, railroads, airports, hydrography, geographic names, and geographic places. Streets and street names are from Tele Atlas' copyrighted data. Base map information is neither current nor complete.

**CONTOUR DATA** - Derived from Connecticut's 2000 statewide LIDAR, (Light Detection And Ranging) dataset by the University of Connecticut, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Department of Natural Resources and the Environment. These data are a Beta product intended for research and dissemination purposes. NOTE: Contour lines data is known to be incorrect in some areas due to anomalies in the underlying elevation data used to generate those specific contour lines. Areas where contour lines do not naturally occur, do not naturally curve where expected, or don't exist where they probably should are good indications of erroneous data.

