

Map Unit Description

The map units delineated on the detailed soil maps in a soil survey represent the soils or miscellaneous areas in the survey area. The map unit descriptions in this report, along with the maps, can be used to determine the composition and properties of a unit.

A map unit delineation on a soil map represents an area dominated by one or more major kinds of soil or miscellaneous areas. A map unit is identified and named according to the taxonomic classification of the dominant soils. Within a taxonomic class there are precisely defined limits for the properties of the soils. On the landscape, however, the soils are natural phenomena, and they have the characteristic variability of all natural phenomena. Thus, the range of some observed properties may extend beyond the limits defined for a taxonomic class. Areas of soils of a single taxonomic class rarely, if ever, can be mapped without including areas of other taxonomic classes. Consequently, every map unit is made up of the soils or miscellaneous areas for which it is named and some minor components that belong to taxonomic classes other than those of the major soils.

Most minor soils have properties similar to those of the dominant soil or soils in the map unit, and thus they do not affect use and management. These are called noncontrasting, or similar, components. They may or may not be mentioned in a particular map unit description. Other minor components, however, have properties and behavioral characteristics divergent enough to affect use or to require different management. These are called contrasting, or dissimilar, components. They generally are in small areas and could not be mapped separately because of the scale used. Some small areas of strongly contrasting soils or miscellaneous areas are identified by a special symbol on the maps. If included in the database for a given area, the contrasting minor components are identified in the map unit descriptions along with some characteristics of each. A few areas of minor components may not have been observed, and consequently they are not mentioned in the descriptions, especially where the pattern was so complex that it was impractical to make enough observations to identify all the soils and miscellaneous areas on the landscape.

The presence of minor components in a map unit in no way diminishes the usefulness or accuracy of the data. The objective of mapping is not to delineate pure taxonomic classes but rather to separate the landscape into landforms or landform segments that have similar use and management requirements. The delineation of such segments on the map provides sufficient information for the development of resource plans. If intensive use of small areas is planned, however, onsite investigation is needed to define and locate the soils and miscellaneous areas.

An identifying symbol precedes the map unit name in the map unit descriptions. Each description includes general facts about the unit and gives important soil properties and qualities.

Soils that have profiles that are almost alike make up a *soil series*. All the soils of a series have major horizons that are similar in composition, thickness, and arrangement. Soils of a given series can differ in texture of the surface layer, slope, stoniness, salinity, degree of erosion, and other characteristics that affect their use. On the basis of such differences, a soil series is divided into *soil phases*. Most of the areas shown on the detailed soil maps are phases of soil series. The name of a soil phase commonly indicates a feature that affects use or management. For example, Alpha silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes, is a phase of the Alpha series.

Some map units are made up of two or more major soils or miscellaneous areas. These map units are complexes, associations, or undifferentiated groups.

A *complex* consists of two or more soils or miscellaneous areas in such an intricate pattern or in such small areas that they cannot be shown separately on the maps. The pattern and proportion of the soils or miscellaneous areas are somewhat similar in all areas. Alpha-Beta complex, 0 to 6 percent slopes, is an example.

An *association* is made up of two or more geographically associated soils or miscellaneous areas that are shown as one unit on the maps. Because of present or anticipated uses of the map units in the survey area, it was not considered practical or necessary to map the soils or miscellaneous areas separately. The pattern and relative proportion of the soils or miscellaneous areas are somewhat similar. Alpha-Beta association, 0 to 2 percent slopes, is an example.

An *undifferentiated group* is made up of two or more soils or miscellaneous areas that could be mapped individually but are mapped as one unit because similar interpretations can be made for use and management. The pattern and proportion of the soils or miscellaneous areas in a mapped area are not uniform. An area can be made up of only one of the major soils or miscellaneous areas, or it can be made up of all of them. Alpha and Beta soils, 0 to 2 percent slopes, is an example.

Some surveys include *miscellaneous areas*. Such areas have little or no soil material and support little or no vegetation. Rock outcrop is an example.

Additional information about the map units described in this report is available in other soil reports, which give properties of the soils and the limitations, capabilities, and potentials for many uses. Also, the narratives that accompany the soil reports define some of the properties included in the map unit descriptions.

Report—Map Unit Description

Washington County, Colorado

17—Colby-Norka loams, 5 to 9 percent slopes

Map Unit Setting

Elevation: 3,800 to 5,500 feet

Mean annual precipitation: 12 to 17 inches

Mean annual air temperature: 48 to 52 degrees F

Frost-free period: 135 to 155 days

Map Unit Composition

Colby and similar soils: 45 percent

Norka and similar soils: 35 percent

Minor components: 20 percent

Description of Colby

Setting

Landform: Hills
Down-slope shape: Linear
Across-slope shape: Linear
Parent material: Loess

Properties and qualities

Slope: 5 to 9 percent
Depth to restrictive feature: More than 80 inches
Drainage class: Well drained
Capacity of the most limiting layer to transmit water
(Ksat): Moderately high to high (0.57 to 2.00 in/hr)
Depth to water table: More than 80 inches
Frequency of flooding: None
Frequency of ponding: None
Calcium carbonate, maximum content: 15 percent
Available water capacity: High (about 10.6 inches)

Interpretive groups

Land capability classification (irrigated): 6e
Land capability (nonirrigated): 6e
Ecological site: Loamy Slopes (R067BY008CO)

Typical profile

0 to 8 inches: Loam
8 to 60 inches: Silt loam

Description of Norka

Setting

Landform: Hills
Down-slope shape: Linear
Across-slope shape: Linear
Parent material: Loess

Properties and qualities

Slope: 5 to 9 percent
Depth to restrictive feature: More than 80 inches
Drainage class: Well drained
Capacity of the most limiting layer to transmit water
(Ksat): Moderately high to high (0.20 to 2.00 in/hr)
Depth to water table: More than 80 inches
Frequency of flooding: None
Frequency of ponding: None
Calcium carbonate, maximum content: 15 percent
Available water capacity: High (about 10.7 inches)

Interpretive groups

Land capability classification (irrigated): 6e
Land capability (nonirrigated): 6e
Ecological site: Loamy Slopes (R067BY008CO)

Typical profile

0 to 4 inches: Loam
4 to 13 inches: Silty clay loam
13 to 60 inches: Silt loam

Minor Components**Otero**

Percent of map unit: 10 percent

Ulysses

Percent of map unit: 10 percent

18—Colby-Ustic Torriorthents complex, 9 to 30 percent slopes**Map Unit Setting**

Elevation: 4,000 to 6,500 feet
Mean annual precipitation: 12 to 17 inches
Mean annual air temperature: 46 to 52 degrees F
Frost-free period: 125 to 155 days

Map Unit Composition

Colby and similar soils: 40 percent
Ustic torriorthents and similar soils: 35 percent
Minor components: 25 percent

Description of Colby**Setting**

Landform: Intermittent streams
Down-slope shape: Linear
Across-slope shape: Linear
Parent material: Calcareous loess

Properties and qualities

Slope: 9 to 30 percent
Depth to restrictive feature: More than 80 inches
Drainage class: Well drained
Capacity of the most limiting layer to transmit water (Ksat): Moderately high to high (0.57 to 2.00 in/hr)
Depth to water table: More than 80 inches
Frequency of flooding: None
Frequency of ponding: None
Calcium carbonate, maximum content: 15 percent
Available water capacity: High (about 10.8 inches)

Interpretive groups

Land capability (nonirrigated): 6e
Ecological site: Loamy Slopes (R067BY008CO)

Typical profile

0 to 8 inches: Silt loam
8 to 60 inches: Silt loam

Description of Ustic Torriorthents**Setting**

Landform: Intermittent streams

Down-slope shape: Linear

Across-slope shape: Linear

Parent material: Calcareous alluvium and/or calcareous loess

Properties and qualities

Slope: 15 to 30 percent

Depth to restrictive feature: More than 80 inches

Drainage class: Well drained

Capacity of the most limiting layer to transmit water

(Ksat): Moderately low to high (0.06 to 2.00 in/hr)

Depth to water table: More than 80 inches

Frequency of flooding: None

Frequency of ponding: None

Calcium carbonate, maximum content: 15 percent

Maximum salinity: Nonsaline (0.0 to 2.0 mmhos/cm)

Available water capacity: Moderate (about 6.8 inches)

Interpretive groups

Land capability (nonirrigated): 7e

Typical profile

0 to 3 inches: Variable

3 to 60 inches: Loam

Minor Components**Haverson**

Percent of map unit: 12 percent

Ulysses

Percent of map unit: 8 percent

Bridgeport

Percent of map unit: 5 percent

47—Norka-Colby loams, 3 to 5 percent slopes**Map Unit Setting**

Elevation: 3,800 to 5,500 feet

Mean annual precipitation: 12 to 17 inches

Mean annual air temperature: 48 to 52 degrees F

Frost-free period: 135 to 155 days

Map Unit Composition

Norka and similar soils: 60 percent

Colby and similar soils: 35 percent

Minor components: 5 percent

Description of Norka**Setting**

Landform: Plains
Down-slope shape: Linear
Across-slope shape: Linear
Parent material: Calcareous silty loess

Properties and qualities

Slope: 3 to 5 percent
Depth to restrictive feature: More than 80 inches
Drainage class: Well drained
Capacity of the most limiting layer to transmit water (Ksat): Moderately high to high (0.20 to 2.00 in/hr)
Depth to water table: More than 80 inches
Frequency of flooding: None
Frequency of ponding: None
Calcium carbonate, maximum content: 15 percent
Available water capacity: High (about 10.7 inches)

Interpretive groups

Land capability classification (irrigated): 3e
Land capability (nonirrigated): 3c
Ecological site: Loamy Plains (R067BY002CO)

Typical profile

0 to 4 inches: Loam
4 to 13 inches: Silt loam
13 to 60 inches: Silt loam

Description of Colby**Setting**

Landform: Plains
Down-slope shape: Linear
Across-slope shape: Linear
Parent material: Loess

Properties and qualities

Slope: 3 to 5 percent
Depth to restrictive feature: More than 80 inches
Drainage class: Well drained
Capacity of the most limiting layer to transmit water (Ksat): Moderately high to high (0.57 to 2.00 in/hr)
Depth to water table: More than 80 inches
Frequency of flooding: None
Frequency of ponding: None
Calcium carbonate, maximum content: 15 percent
Available water capacity: High (about 10.6 inches)

Interpretive groups

Land capability classification (irrigated): 3e
Land capability (nonirrigated): 4e
Ecological site: Loamy Plains (R067BY002CO)

Typical profile

0 to 8 inches: Loam

8 to 60 inches: Silt loam

Minor Components**Weld**

Percent of map unit: 3 percent

Ulysses

Percent of map unit: 2 percent

78—Weld silt loam**Map Unit Setting**

Elevation: 4,200 to 5,900 feet

Mean annual precipitation: 12 to 17 inches

Mean annual air temperature: 48 to 52 degrees F

Frost-free period: 135 to 155 days

Map Unit Composition

Weld and similar soils: 90 percent

Minor components: 10 percent

Description of Weld**Setting**

Landform: Plains

Down-slope shape: Linear

Across-slope shape: Linear

Parent material: Loess

Properties and qualities

Slope: 0 to 2 percent

Depth to restrictive feature: More than 80 inches

Drainage class: Well drained

Capacity of the most limiting layer to transmit water

(Ksat): Moderately low to moderately high (0.06 to 0.20 in/hr)

Depth to water table: More than 80 inches

Frequency of flooding: None

Frequency of ponding: None

Calcium carbonate, maximum content: 15 percent

Available water capacity: High (about 10.4 inches)

Interpretive groups

Land capability classification (irrigated): 2e

Land capability (nonirrigated): 3e

Ecological site: Loamy Plains (R067BY002CO)

Typical profile

0 to 5 inches: Silt loam

5 to 15 inches: Silty clay

15 to 19 inches: Silty clay loam

19 to 60 inches: Loam

Minor Components

Platner

Percent of map unit: 4 percent

Rago

Percent of map unit: 3 percent

Colby

Percent of map unit: 3 percent

Data Source Information

Soil Survey Area: Washington County, Colorado

Survey Area Data: Version 13, Feb 23, 2010