



Association of American
State Geologists



United States
Geological Survey

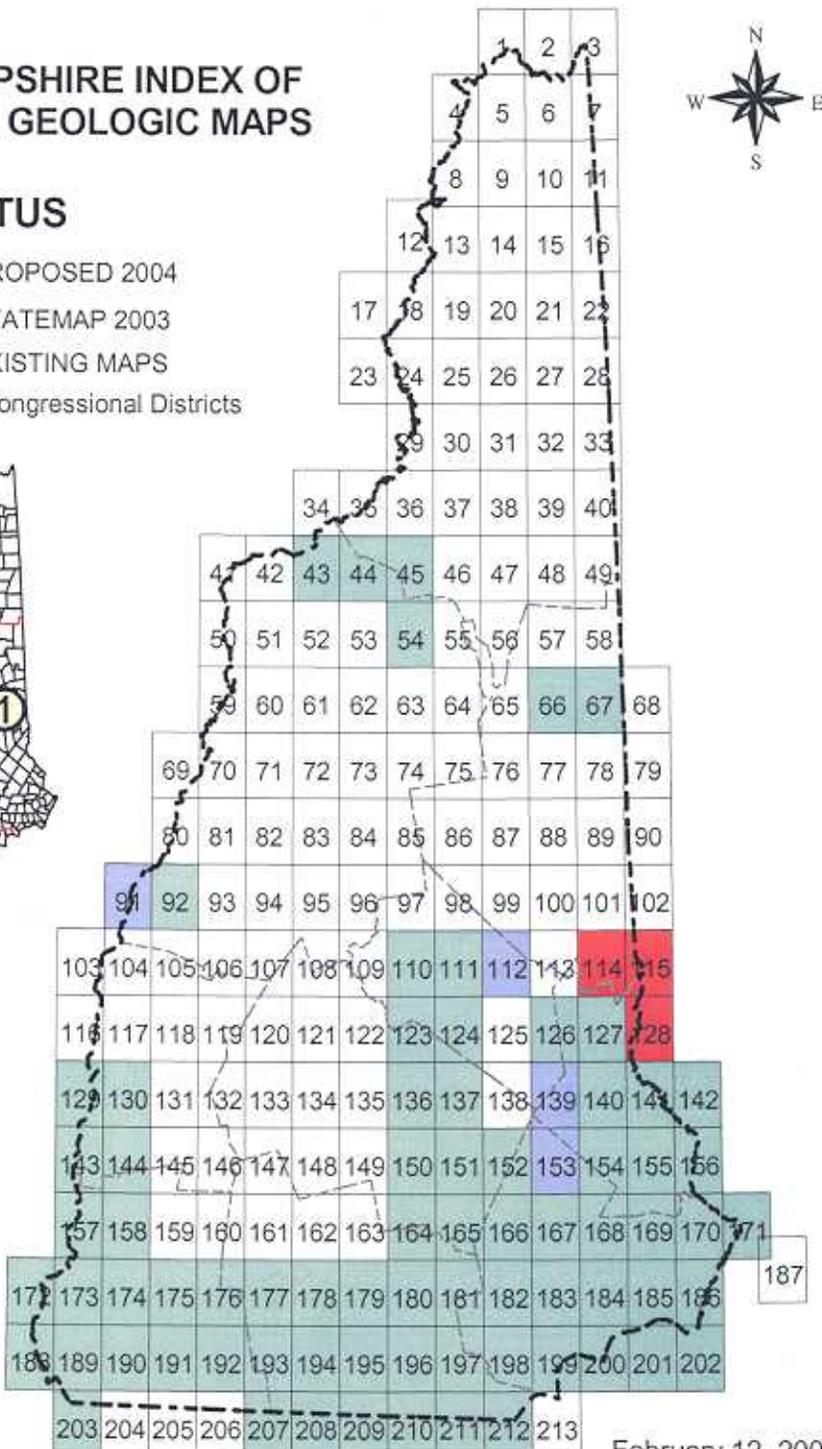


National Cooperative Geologic Mapping Program

- 43 LITTLETON
- 44 BETHLEHEM WEST
- 45 BETHLEHEM EAST
- 54 SOUTH TWIN MTN
- 66 NORTH CONWAY WEST
- 67 NORTH CONWAY EAST
- 91 HANOVER
- 92 ENFIELD
- 110 WINNISQUAM LAKE
- 111 LACONIA
- 112 WEST ALTON
- 114 SANBORNVILLE
- 115 GREAT EAST LAKE
- 123 NORTHFIELD
- 124 BELMONT
- 126 ALTON
- 127 FARMINGTON
- 128 MILTON
- 129 SPRINGFIELD
- 130 CLAREMONT SOUTH
- 136 PENACOOK
- 137 LOUDON
- 139 PARKER MOUNTAIN
- 140 BAXTER LAKE
- 141 ROCHESTER
- 142 SOMERSWORTH
- 143 BELLOWS FALLS
- 144 ALSTEAD
- 150 CONCORD
- 151 SUNCOOK
- 152 GOSSVILLE
- 153 NORTHWOOD
- 154 BARRINGTON
- 155 DOVER WEST
- 156 DOVER EAST
- 157 WALPOLE
- 158 GILSUM
- 164 GOFFSTOWN
- 165 MANCHESTER NORTH
- 166 CANDIA
- 167 MOUNT PAWTUCKAWAY
- 168 EPPING
- 169 NEWMARKET
- 170 PORTSMOUTH
- 171 KITTERY
- 172 PUTNEY
- 173 SPOFFORD
- 174 KEENE
- 175 MARLBOROUGH
- 176 DUBLIN
- 177 PETERBOROUGH NORTH
- 178 GREENFIELD
- 179 NEW BOSTON
- 180 PINARDVILLE
- 181 MANCHESTER SOUTH
- 182 DERRY
- 183 SANDOWN
- 184 KINGSTON
- 185 EXETER
- 186 HAMPTON
- 188 BRATTLEBORO EAST
- 189 HINSDALE
- 190 WEST SWANZEY
- 191 TROY
- 192 MONADNOCK MOUNTAIN
- 193 PETERBOROUGH SOUTH
- 194 GREENVILLE
- 195 MILFORD
- 196 SOUTH MERRIMACK
- 197 NASHUA NORTH
- 198 WINDHAM
- 199 SALWM DEPOT
- 200 HAVERHILL
- 201 NEWBURYPORT WEST
- 202 NEWBURYPORT EAST
- 203 NORTHFIELD MA
- 207 ASHBURNHAM
- 208 ASHBY
- 209 TOWNSEND
- 210 PEPPERELL
- 211 NASHUA SOUTH
- 212 LOWELL

NEW HAMPSHIRE INDEX OF SURFICIAL GEOLOGIC MAPS

- STATUS**
- PROPOSED 2004
 - STATEMAP 2003
 - EXISTING MAPS
 - Congressional Districts



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SUMMARY OF STATEMAP GEOLOGIC MAPPING PROGRAM IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

Federal Fiscal Year	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	Total
Federal Dollars Awarded to DES	\$35,000	\$50,000	\$48,000	\$60,000	\$25,000	\$52,465	\$41,545	\$45,000	\$68,717	\$425,727

What is a Geologic Map

Geologic maps are an important source of natural-resource information. They depict the underlying bedrock (solid rock near the earth's surface) or surficial geologic materials (e.g., alluvium, glacial deposits), as if the soils and vegetation had been removed. In New Hampshire, bedrock consists of igneous and metamorphic (crystalline) rocks. Alluvium, which consists of unconsolidated sand, gravel, clay, and silt in stream valleys – is younger than the underlying bedrock. Glacial deposits consist of material that has been transported by glaciers and deposited directly by the ice (glacial till) or by glacial melt water (glacial drift) on the underlying bedrock. In some areas, these deposits can be hundreds of feet thick. Geologic maps graphically show the rock type, age, and horizontal distribution of bedrock and surficial deposits near the earth's surface. Geologic maps also show the related geologic structures (faults, fractures, and folds) that would be exposed if the soils were stripped away.

A geologic map shows the distribution of rock units and other geologically related information within a specific geographic area. Each rock unit is identified and named based on distinctive characteristics that can be mapped over large distances. Geologic maps provide a way of presenting the three-dimensional shape of the bedrock geology on a flat piece of paper using lines, symbols, and colors.

Benefits and Uses

Geologic maps are usually the starting point for any geologically related investigation. They are useful in construction and engineering projects, city and county planning, and in a variety of environmental assessments. Large projects (dams, roads, bridges, buildings) require detailed geologic analysis because of monetary, health, and safety concerns. Smaller projects, such as surface water impoundments, houses and water wells, benefit from an understanding of the surficial geology. For example, if a farm pond is located in porous glacial deposits (such as sand and gravel), these materials may function as a drain, and the pond will not hold water. If placed in a less porous unit (such as glacial till, which contains clay), the pond should not leak. This basic information about the local geology can be ascertained from a geologic map. Other examples of how geologic maps can be used are listed below.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Evaluation of geologic hazards (landslides, earthquakes, land subsidence) -Planning transportation and utility routes -Site selection for public facilities (landfills, treatment facilities, waste-disposal sites, schools) -Land-use planning and evaluation of land-use proposals -Regulatory decision-making | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Environmental assessment and protection planning (underground storage tanks, landfills, aquifer contamination) -Development and protection of ground water -Natural-resource assessment, exploration, development, and management -Basic earth-science research |
|---|---|

Geologic maps can be used to evaluate and predict the consequences of natural and human-induced activities on the environment. Using the information on geologic maps during a project's planning and design stage produces long-term benefits and reduces problems that may develop after the project is completed.

Geologic Mapping in New Hampshire

The New Hampshire Geological Survey (NHGS), a unit of the NH Department of Environmental Services, actively participates in the U.S.G.S. Federal Cooperative STATEMAP program. New Hampshire has been glaciated several times in recent geologic history, and the resulting surficial geologic materials directly affect all forms of land use. As a result, NHGS mapping has focused on completing geologic mapping of these surficial materials. The engineering properties of these surficial deposits have significant implications for highway and building-foundation construction, and waste management. In addition, much of the water supply for the state's communities is derived from surficial deposits. Geologic maps are important sources of information for aiding in water-supply evaluation and protection, land-use planning, transportation design, resource evaluation, recreation, and seismic-risk evaluation. Comprehensive geologic information is needed to address these issues and to provide the foundation for proper planning and preventative measures to ameliorate these and other environmental problems in the future. To date, NHGS has completed surficial geologic mapping in 76 of the 213 quadrangles that encompass the state, which amounts to approximately 36% completion. The map on the opposite side shows the status of surficial mapping for the state.