HIGH ALTITUDE PHOTOGRAPHY FOR SOIL SURVEY

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The aerial photograph is the most valuable tool for mapping soils. Before the initiation of large atlas sheets (22" x 22") for mapping soils, the 4" = 1 mile photographs were relatively small, easy to handle, and somewhat comfortable for the Soil Scientist to carry while field mapping. The mapping of a sheet was complete in one-third the time as compared to the larger, high altitude (1:20,000) maps, giving the Soil Scientist a sense of accomplishment.

Now that most of our soil mapping is done at publication scale, things just aren't the same. The atlas sheet now used is too large and bulky for practical use in the field, unless altered by folding or cutting. Our Soil Survey Party has introduced a method of mapping soils accurately with a base that is easy to handle, easy to carry, lightweight, and can be easily written or inked on. Atlas sheet transparencies can be readily copied with an Ozalid machine which can be found in most printing offices. This machine produces a beautiful, flexible copy that is used for field mapping. Cost of reproducing transparencies in this area is about six cents per square foot. The paper copy can be folded or cut to whatever size is practical for the individual. After the field mapping is complete, soil lines and mapping unit numbers can be transferred easily to the transparency by using a light table or glass window.

This method has worked very well for us. The original atlas sheets remain in the office unscarred for reference and stereoscopy.

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