USE THAT OLD MAPPING

Ali has his shuffle and Austin has his transfer!??
Confused? Don't be. . . .

Maybe we have a unique situation—but I doubt it. Kalamazoo County, Mich. is a typical glaciated region of 382,000 acres. In the county, approximately 40,000 acres are till, 200,000 acres are outwash, and 142,000 acres are alluvium, moraines, and ridges. Soil mapping for conservation planning covered 60% of the county before Soil Taxonomy came into use. As in other areas this conservation plan mapping was considered obsolete.

When I came to Kalamazoo County in July 1975 I was shocked to see acreage reports of 500-1,000 acres mapped per man day. A brief explanation helped to straighten things out. Party Leader Frank Austin, who has mapped in the area for over 30 years, has developed a legend for transferring the conservation plan mapping (1950 photos) to 1967 photos. The transfer was done with a stereoscope and the field sheets after transfer looked very good. With this explanation in mind the acreage mapped per day was understandable.

Let's look at the process behind the transferring method. Take for example a 1950 photo with a 234 B1 delineation. Under the old classification system this was a Spinks loamy sand, a Gray-Brown Podzolic soil. Today this 234 B1 mapping unit may contain either the Coloma series an Alfic Udipsamment; mixed, mesic, or the Spinks series a Psammentic Hapludalf; sandy, mixed, mesic. By paying close attention to indicators such as oak, maple, sassafras, and various grasses, by field checking, and by aerial photo interpretation “trends” of soil formation in particular areas of the county could be predicted. This method made it very easy to transfer the obsolete mapping on the 1950 photos directly into the present day detailed soil survey. This method worked on 60% of the soils in Kalamazoo County.

If you are wondering what type of county this method will work in, look for one which has uniform soils and has a great percentage mapped by one man.

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