Soil Scientist Finds Great Stripping Place

When Pete Fletcher, soil scientist in Massachusetts, was asked to help locate the "Great Stripping Place," you can imagine what thoughts might have run through his mind. Was it a remote turnaround in the woods, or did it involve some kind of hanky-panky? Actually, it was a celebrated historic site that the Walpole (Massachusetts) Historical Commission was trying to locate. In Colonial days, the stripping of bark from Atlantic white cedar logs was done before they were floated downstream to a mill.

The site had been tentatively located by one of the commissioners who had used old deeds; however, he was not able to verify the location in the field. To locate the site, he needed the help of soil sleuth, Pete Fletcher, who possesses an expert knowledge of soils. Pete made a close inspection of the area in question and found a flat-topped mound of charcoal about 2 feet thick and 30 feet square, into which several test hole borings were made. They revealed that an E horizon about 3 in. thick had developed directly beneath the mound in the mineral material. This was sufficient validation for the commissioner to declare the area as the official location of the "Great Stripping Place," a historic site.

This is just another example of how an understanding of soils can sometimes be used in investigations beyond the ordinary.

Texas Soil Scientists Organize

Earl R. Blakley

An organizational meeting for Professional Soil Scientists of Texas was held in Austin, Feb. 17, 1983. Soil scientists from Federal, State, university, private industry, and consulting backgrounds participated. About 55 were in attendance.

The session was held in conjunction with a 2-day meeting of the Texas Chapter, American Society of Agronomy (ASA). Charles Thompson, Soil Conservation Society (SCS) State Soil Scientist, Temple, served as interim President for the association, and presided during the business session.