Bob Roseler
Ohio Division of Lands and Soil

Soil Resource Specialist Robert Roseler of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Lands and Soil, reports that he and Earl Carlton, Conservationist for SCS in the Summit SWCD, were recently contacted by a construction foreman who had spotted what he considered to be a soil hazard on a school construction site. He was holding up construction to clarify that problem.

When Carlton and Roseler arrived, they found that the site was within a rolling, pitted outwash plain consisting of well-drained gravelly soils and kettle holes occupied by wet sands and muck. The problem area was a small pocket of shallow muck over wet sand that was so small that it was not shown on the completed soil map. The pocket had been excluded from engineering testing and the design for the building foundation, which crossed it, was based on test data from the surrounding Chili soils.

Roseler, who is assigned to the offices of the Tri-County (Ohio) Regional Planning Commission to interpret the soil survey, illustrated and explained the soils and their characteristics in a conference with the contractor, soil engineer, architect and school board. To insure a solid foundation for the school, the construction contract was altered to allow removal of the muck, drainage, and filling. This cost the school district an additional $70,000.

When it was realized that the extra expense and delay could have been prevented by consultation with the soil specialist in the site selection stage of planning, all concerned stated that the same mistake would not be made again.