

## Soils of Liberty Township

By Jack Wooldridge

Back in the last ice age, glaciers carved out the area we now know as Liberty Township. During the most recent (Wisconsin) glacier's advance, a wide range of sediments were carried in the ice. As it melted and retreated, it created several glacial lakes. The Great Meadows, now farmland, was once one of these glacial lakes and is composed of the sediment dropped by the glacier and washed down from the hills. We are quite lucky to have such a good soil deposit here, as the northern third of our state was heavily affected by the Wisconsin glacier, resulting in young and thin soils.

The oldest rocks in this area were formed in the protozoic era of the Precambrian eon. These rocks were once shale, sandstone, limestone and volcanic rock before, buried deep below the earth, they were morphed into the granites and gneisses below Jenny Jump Mountain. Also, limestone deposits were formed when this area became a shallow sea, and eroded when exposed. These form the bedrock for our soils.

Now you can see how the soils of Liberty Township came to be here, but what types of soils do we have? I was lucky to get a look at a very good map of the soils in Liberty Township, which cleared this up for me. The most prevalent types of soil are all variations on Washington Loam, although other soil types are prevalent in large numbers. What is Washington Loam? We live in an area of Washington Gravelly Loam, and here's what the map had to say about this: *Deep, gently sloping. Well drained. Permeability is moderate. High water table greater than 6 feet. This is prime farmland with good potential for cultivation. Some difficulty where gravel content is highest. Well suited for woodland use.*

So we live in an area with good potential for cultivation. I'm sure my dad would be glad to hear that! If you live in Liberty Township and you want to know what type of soil you are on, you can check out the Liberty Township Environmental Resources Inventory.

Sources:

Liberty Township Environmental Resources Inventory