CIRCUM-PACIFIC MAP SERIES
MAP CP-45

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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Gordon P. Eaton, Director

INTERNATIONAL PERMAFROST ASSOCIATION

CIRCUM-ARCTIC MAP OF PERMAFROST AND GROUND ICE CONDITIONS

Compiled and Edited by
J. Brown
IPA Secretary General
O.J. Ferrians, Jr.
United States Geological Survey
J.A. Heginbottom
Geological Survey of Canada
E.S. Melnikov
VSEGINGEO: Institute for Hydrogeology and Engineering Geology
ROSCOMNEDRA: Committee of Geology of the Russian Federation

Regional Contributions by
G.F. Gravis, L.A. Konchenko and L.N. Kotlyak, VSEGINGEO; ROSCOMNEDRA, Russia
K.A. Kondrat'eva and S.F. Klyusky, Faculty of Geology, Moscow State University, Russia
H.J. Akerman, University of Lund, Sweden
Guo Dongxin and Qiu Guoqing, Lanzhou Institute of Glaciology and Geocryology, China
A.P. Gorbunov, Academies of Sciences, Kazakstan and Russia
W. Haeberli, Federal Institute of Technology, Switzerland
F. Dramis, University of Camerino, Italy
A. Weidick, Geological Survey Greenland and
B. Jakobsen, O. Humlum and N. Nielsen, University of Copenhagen, Denmark
L. King, Justus-Liebig University, Germany
M. Seppälä, University of Helsinki, Finland
A. Kotarba, Academy of Sciences, Poland

Cartography by
F.J. Sidlauskas, Jr., and G.F. Delfraki, Jr., U.S. Geological Survey

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George Gryc, General Chairman

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PERMAFROST AND GROUND ICE

Extent of Permafrost (percent of area)	Ground-Ice Content (visible ice in the upper 10–20m of the ground; percent volume)				
	Lowlands, highlands, and intra- and intermontane depressions characterized by thick overburden cover (>5–10 m)			Mountains, highlands, ridges, and plateaus characterized by thin overburden cover (<5–10 m) and exposed bedrock	
	High (>20%)	Medium (10–20%)	Low (0–10%)	High to medium (>10%)	Low (0–10%)
Continuous (90–100%)	Ch	Cm	Cl	Cb	Cl
Discontinuous (50–90%)	Dh	Dm	Dl	Db	Dl
Sporadic (10–50%)	Sh	Sm	Sl	Sb	Sl
Isolated patches (0–10%)	Ih	Im	Il	Ib	Il

Variations in the extent of permafrost are shown by the different colors; variations in the amount of ground ice are shown by the different intensities of color and, for the large bodies of ground ice, by symbols. Letter codes point to stratotypes to which basic permafrost and ground-ice values any particular unit belongs. The symbols for the large bodies of ground ice contribute to the definition of the map units. For example, "CMV ■ " indicates a unit underlain by continuous permafrost with high ice content, and characterized by sparse ice wedges and abundant massive ice.

OTHER FORMS OF PERMAFROST

- Deep relict permafrost (where known)
- Cryogenic within the upper 10–20 m of the ground. (shown only for Russia)

GROUND-ICE BODIES — General distribution of known occurrences of large bodies of ground ice

- ▽ ▼ Ice wedges (sparse, abundant)
- ▭ ▬ Massive ice bodies (sparse, abundant)
- + + Pingo ice and other perennial frost mound ice (sparse, abundant)

TEMPERATURE AND THICKNESS OF PERMAFROST

- -15.7 Typical mean annual ground temperature at the base of the layer of annual temperature fluctuations (°C)
- -3/-7 Range of typical mean annual ground temperature at the base of the layer of annual temperature fluctuations (°C). Where two or more map units are shown for combined areas and represent even number values, values are shown at the tops of the profiles
- ■ 16 Measured or interpolated thickness (m)
- ■ (197) Extrapolated or calculated thickness (m)
- ♦ 160/400 Depth to the top (numerator) and bottom (denominator) of relict permafrost (m)

SURFACE ICE

- Ice caps and glaciers
- Icings (shown only for Russia)

BOUNDARIES

- Boundaries of permafrost and ground-ice units; long dashed where gradational or estimated
- Southern limit of deep relict permafrost
- Northern limit of the area within which subsea permafrost is known or presumed to occur
- Lithological and mean annual ground temperature boundaries for morphocryotic and natural geosystems subareas
- Northern limit of trees

MORPHOGENETIC AND NATURAL GEOSYSTEMS

- 19 Morphogenetic and natural geosystem type (see Tables A and B for explanation)

LITHOLOGICAL CLASSES — Dominant rock types within the upper 10-20 m of the ground (shown only for Russia)

Unlithified:
- c Clay and silt
- d Coarse clastic deposits (debris)
- a Sand and eolian-sand deposits
- p Peat
- s Sand

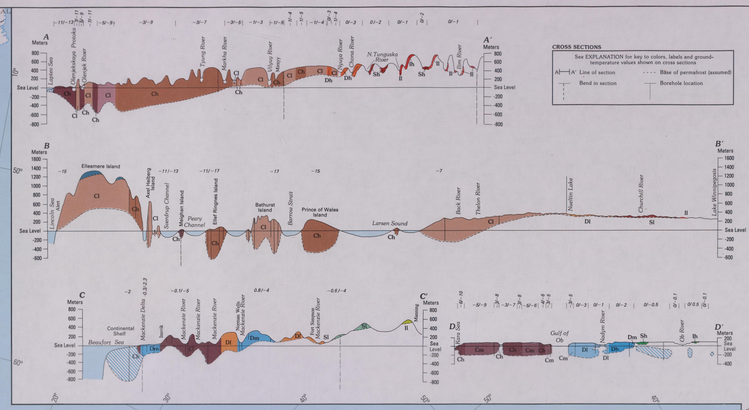
Lithified:
- k Soluble rocks (limestone, dolomite, gypsum)
- Insoluble rocks

Note: Combinations of letters indicate mixed composition of unlithified rocks (pc), listed in order of predominance, or layered composition of unlithified over lithified rocks (a/k). Saline ground is indicated by a bar above the letter (l̄).

CROSS SECTIONS

See EXPLANATION for key to colors, labels and ground-temperature values shown on cross sections

A–A' Line of section
Base of permafrost (assumed)
Bend in section
Borehole location



COMPILATION METHODS AND DEFINITIONS

This map summarizes current knowledge of the distribution and characteristics of permafrost and ground ice in the circumpolar sphere, using a physiographic approach for the delineation of the map units. For the first time, information on the distribution and extent of permafrost and ground ice is presented in a reasonably consistent manner for the continental land masses, including areas of permafrost in the subsea environment. It is to be emphasized, however, that the present map has been compiled from sources of maps, which were in themselves compiled from quite different data sources, with varying densities of data and different approaches to data integration. The present map reflects these differences in the degree of detail shown in different areas. Areas of Russia, China and Russia are defined differently, and the permafrost and ground-ice information are shown according to the relevant national source maps. Where necessary, map units have been adjusted adjacent to international land boundaries.

The following principles were used to use existing physiographic or landscape maps in each of the three major subareal permafrost regions (Russia, Alaska, and Canada) as the basis for delineating the permafrost map units. In preparing this map no attempt was made to conduct new field studies, and every attempt was made to use all readily available published and unpublished information.

Map units in Alaska are based on the 1965 map "Physiographic Diagrams of Alaska" (Wahrhaftig, 1965) and contain additional information that has become available since publication of the 1970 U.S. Permafrost Map (Ferrians, 1970). The Canadian contribution utilizes the 1967 map "Physiographic Regions of Canada" (Bostock, 1970) as a base map and contains much of the information presented on the new permafrost and ground-ice map prepared for the National Atlas of Canada, 5th edition (Heginbottom, J.A., and Radburn, L.K., 1992). Information for the Russian map units are derived from the geosciences or landscape approach described by Melnikov (1988), in which natural geosystems are delineated according to common relief, vegetation, soil and soil-forming materials, and climate (Table A). Units for the Russian subareas are based on the geocryological map of Yakutia (Shi and Mi (1988) and from Sedenov and Yasakiy (1993), respectively. Existing information for Nordic countries (Akerman, 1992), Greenland, and other mountainous regions of Europe (King and Akerman, 1993) and Asia (Qiu, 1993) was modified and compiled from numerous published and unpublished sources, with the assistance of regional specialists.

Permafrost is defined as a state of the ground, whether soil or other unconsolidated or bedrock material, that remains at or below 0°C (Permafrost Subcommittee, 1988). The minimum period is two years. In colder regions, permafrost occurs under essentially all land areas. It diminishes in areal extent until, at the southern limit, it occurs as isolated patches under favorable terrain conditions. Areas of permafrost are classified as continuous, discontinuous, sporadic, discontinuous, sporadic, and isolated patches of permafrost as well as the continuous permafrost zone.

Beneath land areas, most permafrost has existed for a long time, and has formed, degraded, and re-formed throughout the Pleistocene Epoch. Many areas presently covered by the shallow and extensive bodies of **subsea permafrost** beneath the continental shelves of the Arctic Ocean (Sarkhikov and others, 1991). These are relicts of the periods of lower sea level during the glacial maxima of the Quaternary Period, when large areas of continental shelf, now covered by the transgressing sea, were subjected to severe cold of a full glacial climate. During the interglacials and at postglacial time, these areas have been covered by a cold arctic ocean, and the **relict permafrost** of the continental shelves has been preserved. Extensive masses of deep relict permafrost occur in the coastal lowlands of northeastern Siberia, where it has survived from the glacial maxima of the Quaternary Period. Where ground freezing is presented by saline sediment conditions, and where groundwater is saline, permafrost occur as **cryopeg**s.

Ground ice occurs in three main forms: as crystogo on soil particles and in rocks; as the ice filling pore spaces in soil, bedrock and unconsolidated deposits (**pore ice**); as thin, tabular lenses and veins of ice (**segregated ice, intrusive ice** and **reticulate ice**); and as larger bodies of more-or-less pure ice, in the form of **ice wedges**, extensive sheets of **massive ice**, and perennial frost mound (**pingo**) cores (Mackay, 1972; Pollard and French, 1980; Rampton, 1988). Some ground ice bodies are known to result from the burial and preservation of bodies of surface ice, such as snow banks, river icings, and glacier ice.

The permafrost **temperature** and **thickness** values shown on the map are those that prevail at the present time, where measurements or calculated. Not all the boreholes penetrated the full thickness of the permafrost; some thickness values are based on calculation or extrapolation from other geophysical profiles. The mean annual temperature of the permafrost is represented by the temperature at the zero annual amplitude level of negligible annual change, at approximately 15–20 m depth.

Table A. Complexes of Cryogenic Processes in Different Regions

Geographical region (subregion)	Permafrost zone	Morphogenetic groups of natural geosystems (Table B)	Basic complex of cryogenic processes
I Arctic Islands	C	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19
II European North of Russia	C	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19
	D	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19
III Ural	C	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19
	D	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19
	S	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19
IV West Siberia	C	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19
	D	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19
	S	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19
V East Siberia	C	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19
	D	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19
	S	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19
VI Far East	C	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19
	D	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19
	S	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19
VII Mountains of South Siberia and Transbaikalia	C	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19
	D	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19
	S	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19
VIII Mongolia	C	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19
	D	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19
	S	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19

*Definitions:
C Continuous
D Discontinuous
S Sporadic
I Isolated patches

1 Cracked-thermokarst complex (low ice content to ice wedge formation, thermokarst)
2 Slab complex (tumuli, ravine, thermal karst)
3 Freezing-thermokarst (perennial cryogenic heaving, thermokarst)
4 Icing formation (icing, seasonal freezing with formation of injection and intrusive icings)
5 Thaw-glacial complex (depressions accumulation action of snow-bodies and glaciers)
6 Karst-rock complex (depressions, cryogenic weathering, activated karst, thermokarst, thermokarst, deflation, deepening, cryogenic)
7 Thermo-destructional complex (thermokarst, thermoerosion, thermoabrasion, thermo-abrasion, landslides)

Figure 1. Geocryological Regions of Russia and Mongolia.

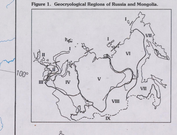


Table B. Morphogenetic Groups and Natural Geosystem Types

Genetic categories	Lowland plains	Plateaus High	Basins and depressions	Mountains and plateaus	Mountains
ACCUMULATIONAL					
Marine and glacial marine	1	2	12		
Glacial and lacustrine	3	4	13		
Glacial and fluvioglacial	5	6	14		
Alluvial, proluvial, deluvial, and solifluctional	7	8	15		
Eolian	9	10	16		
Accumulated	4	11	17	18	19

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