Expansive Soil and Rock Susceptibility

Dixie Clean Stormwater Coalition

0 1.5 3 6

Miles

Source: Lund, W.R. et al, 2008, Expansive Soil and Rock Susceptibility Map for the St. George-Hurricane Metropolitan Area. Utah Geological Survey.

EXPLANATION

SOIL

ESH Soils with high susceptibility for volumetric change are typically clay rich and have a liquid limit (LL) ≥45, a plasticity index (PI) ≥20, and/or a swell/collapse test (SCT) value of ≥3 percent swell. Soils with these characteristics are of limited aerial extent at the surface in the study area, but are frequently found at depth as shown by the geotechnical database (see GEOTECHNICAL DATA EVALUATION section in accompanying text). This phenomenon reflects the fact that most of the geotechnical data available for the study area come from the municipalities of St. George, Santa Clara, Ivins, and Washington, portions of which are underlain at shallow depth (typically <20 feet) by bedrock with high or moderate susceptibility for volumetric change. The influence of this shallow, often clay-rich source rock on overlying soils is apparent in the geotechnical data collected from below a depth of 60 inches.

ESM Soils classified by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) as having moderate susceptibility for volumetric change (LL from 20 to 50, and PI from nonplastic [NP] to 30). These values overlap at their upper ends with soils in the high susceptibility category. Chen (1988) recognized that while PI is an indicator of expansive potential, other factors also exert an influence, and therefore reported a range of PI values when categorizing soil's capacity to shrink or swell.

ESL Soils classified by the NRCS as having low susceptibility for volumetric change (LL from 0-30, and PI from NP-15). These values overlap at their upper ends with soils in the moderate susceptibility category. However, the low category includes soils with highly variable potential for volumetric change that do not fit easily into the moderate or high categories.

ROCK

ERH Bedrock units with high shrink/swell susceptibility include claystone horizons in the Virgin Limestone Member of the Moenkopi Formation; the Petrified Forest Member of the Chinle Formation, known locally as the "Blue Clay;" the lower red beds of the Dinosaur Canyon Member and the Whitmore Point Member of the Moenave Formation; the Iron Springs Formation, which contains abundant clay-rich strata in its lower part; and a thin interval (maximum thickness 90 feet) of montmorillonitic clay that lies between the Carmel Formation and the overlying Iron Springs Formation. Landslides mapped within these rock units were also included in the high-susceptibility category. These bedrock units contain an abundance of expansive clay minerals and are commonly associated with expansive rock problems in the study area.

ERM Bedrock units with moderate shrink/swell susceptibility include the Shinarump and lower, middle, and upper red members of the Moenkopi Formation; the Co-op Creek and Crystal Creek Members of the Carmel Formation; and the Temple Cap Formation. These rock units are chiefly fine grained and contain alternating strata of shale, claystone, mudstone, siltstone, sandstone, and limestone. Not all or necessarily the majority of these strata contain expansive clay minerals, but past experience in the study area has shown that a sufficiently high percentage of strata do contain expansive clays that foundation problems are often associated with these rock units. Where mapped as undivided, we assigned a moderate susceptibility to the Moenkopi Formation, Carmel Formation, and grouped Triassic, Triassic/Jurassic, and Jurassic/Cretaceous rocks. Landslides mapped within moderate-susceptibility units are also included in this category.

ERL Bedrock units with low shrink/swell susceptibility include the Timpoweap Member of the Moenkopi Formation and the the Kayenta Formation. Although we consider these units to have a low susceptibility relative to the bedrock units identified above, they contain some fine-grained, clay-rich strata that may cause shrink/swell problems locally.

CONCEALED

CHESR Area of highly expansive soil or rock (≥5 percent swell) in the shallow subsurface (≤20 feet), but with little or no evidence of such material at the ground surface. Based on past engineering experience, such highly expansive soil or rock can cause differential displacements at the ground surface even when overlain by as much as 20 feet of nonexpansive material, and these areas are considered to have a high potential for expansive soil and rock problems.