

# Interpretation of Soil for Bone Preservation and Likelihood of Cadaver Burial

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## Abstract:

Popular interest in DNA genealogy and forensic science led to the development of a soil survey interpretation to identify the potential of soils to preserve bone and/or the likelihood of cadaver burial. Qualitative soil morphological information can help determine differential preservation and make predictions about bone preservation prior to excavation. For archaeologists, the effects may be dating the site, interpretation of the site construction and composition, and site selection for preservation in situ. For human biologists and forensic scientists, it includes the likelihood of burial, condition of the bones, and an assessment of the relative completeness of the skeleton. This soil interpretation was developed in the National Soil Information System (NASIS) and utilizes existing data found in modern National Cooperative Soil Surveys. Soil characteristics used in this interpretation include soil reaction (pH), soil temperature, soil texture, soil moisture, rock fragment content, and depth of soil.

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