

**15A NCAC 18E .0503 SOIL MORPHOLOGY**

The soil morphology shall be evaluated in accordance with the following:

- (1) Texture – The texture of each soil horizon in a profile shall be classified into 12 soil textural classes based upon the relative proportions of sand, silt, and clay sized mineral particles. The soil textural class shall be determined in the field by hand texturing samples of each soil horizon in the soil profile in accordance with the criteria in Guide to Soil Texture by Feel, Journal of Agronomic Education, USDA, NRCS. Table IV identifies the Soil Groups that shall be suitable with respect to texture.

**Table IV.** Soil Groups that are suitable with respect to texture

Soil Group	USDA Soil Textural Class	
I	Sands	Sand
		Loamy Sand
II	Coarse Loams	Sandy Loam
		Loam
III	Fine Loams	Silt
		Silt Loam
		Sandy Clay Loam
		Clay Loam
		Silty Clay Loam
IV	Clays	Sandy Clay
		Silty Clay
		Clay

Laboratory testing of the soil textural class may be substituted for field testing when the laboratory testing is conducted in accordance with ASTM D6913 and D7928. When laboratory testing of soil texture is proposed, the LHD shall be notified a minimum of 48 hours before samples are to be taken by the licensed professional, if required by G.S. 89C, 89E, or 89F. The authorized agent and the licensed professional shall be present when the samples are collected. Samples shall be representative of the soil horizon being evaluated for texture. Split samples shall be made available to the LHD when requested. The licensed professional shall document chain of custody and seal, sign, and date the first page of the report.

- (2) Structure – Soil structure shall be determined in the field for each soil horizon in the soil profile and shall be classified and suitability determined in accordance with Table V. If an authorized agent determines that the soil structure cannot be determined from auger borings, pits shall be required.

**Table V.** Soil structure and associated suitability classification

Structure	Diameter	Classification
Granular	N/A	suitable
Blocky	≤ 1 inch or 2.5 cm	suitable
	> 1 inch or 2.5 cm	unsuitable
Platy	N/A	unsuitable
Prismatic	≤ 2 inches or 5 cm	suitable
	> 2 inches or 5 cm	unsuitable
Absence of structure: Single Grain	N/A	suitable
Absence of Structure: Massive - no structural peds	N/A	unsuitable

- (3) Clay Mineralogy – Clay mineralogy shall be determined in the field by evaluation of moist and wet soil consistence in accordance with the USDA-NRCS Field Book for Describing and Sampling Soils. The clay mineralogy shall be classified and suitability determined in accordance with Table VI.

**Table VI.** Clay mineralogy field method results, associated mineralogy, and suitability classification

<b>Soil Consistence</b>	<b>Mineralogy</b>	<b>Classification</b>
Moist		
Loose, very friable	Slightly expansive	suitable
Friable, firm	Slightly expansive	suitable
Very firm or extremely firm	Expansive	unsuitable*
Wet		
Nonsticky, slightly sticky Nonplastic, slightly plastic	Slightly expansive	suitable
Moderately sticky Moderately plastic	Slightly expansive	suitable
Very sticky or very plastic	Expansive	unsuitable*

\*If either the moist consistence or wet consistence is unsuitable then clay mineralogy is classified unsuitable.

- (a) Laboratory testing of ACEC may be substituted for field testing to determine clay mineralogy. The laboratory testing shall be conducted in accordance with USDA-NRCS Soil Survey Laboratory Information Manual, Soil Survey Investigations Report No. 45, and Kellogg Soil Survey Laboratory Methods Manual, Soil Survey Investigation Report No. 42, page 229, or EPA Method 9080. Table VII shall be used to determine the clay mineralogy suitability when laboratory testing is used. When using laboratory testing to determine clay mineralogy, the clay content of the soil shall be greater than 35 percent and the organic matter component shall be less than 0.5 percent.

**Table VII.** Clay mineralogy laboratory method results, mineralogy, and associated suitability classification

<b>ACEC in cmol/kg</b>	<b>Mineralogy</b>	<b>Classification</b>
≤ 16.3	Slightly expansive	suitable
> 16.3	Expansive	unsuitable

- (b) When laboratory testing of clay mineralogy is proposed, the LHD shall be notified a minimum of 48 hours before samples are to be taken by the licensed professional, if required by G.S. 89C, 89E, or 89F. The authorized agent and the licensed professional shall be present when the samples are collected. Samples shall be representative of the soil horizon being evaluated for clay mineralogy. Split samples shall be made available to the LHD when requested. The licensed professional shall document chain of custody and seal, sign, and date the first page of the report.
- (4) Organic Soils - Organic soils shall be considered unsuitable.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 130A-335(e);  
Eff. January 1, 2024.*