

**Report of the  
Skagafjörður Archaeological  
Settlement Survey  
2007:**

**Excavations at Meðalheimur Area B**

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## ***Location***

The location was identified by two cores that presented substantial, isolated cultural deposits well below the H1 Tephra layer (see Meðalheimur coring report). The area was later examined with conductivity (see Meðalheimur EM-31 report) and GPR (see Meðalheimur Area B GRP report). There is no surface sign of any cultural activity. The area may partially be disturbed by the east-west farm road that runs to the site although that area (immediately south of the LOE) was not investigated and it is possible that the cultural deposit either is not present under the road or the road did not damage it.

## ***Excavation techniques.***

Area B was excavated and screened in 1x1m units, brought down by broad context. The units, when cultural, were screened through ¼ inch mesh and 2l flotation samples were taken from each unit. Contexts were excavated with trowel and spade.

## ***Contexts***

There are 12 main contexts and as well as other significant deposits. In reverse order of deposition: a hole dug for Area B into H3/H4, earthen wall [166], Turf wall [133], Floor [162], Lower midden [150], Middle midden [141], Upper midden [134], Wall fall [158], a small amount of Aeolian deposit, River cut [147], River (alluvial) deposit [143], 7-15cm of aeolian deposit, H1, 1300 Tephra [123], 10-20 cm of aeolian deposit, and plowed humus layer (20 cm)

The context numbers are sequential for the whole site and not just for Area B. Context numbers were assigned in the order that they were identified, but not in the order that those features were excavated.

## ***Building Sequence interpretation***

Initially fairly large but shallow hole was dug into the substantial H3/h4 deposit. Based on the coring data, the hole seems to have been between 8 and 15 m in diameter. Much of the up-cast from this hole seems to have been piled around the edges. The hole itself would not have been deep, maybe 10-20 cm at most. Some turf may have been put on top to form a wall. A series of at least 3 thick (3-5cm) greasy floors with substantial amounts of wood charcoal built up. These floors seem to be separated with tan sand, at various odd angles. After abandonment, there is some tuff/earthen wall slump, which probably happened before the water cut through the deposit. Sometime well before 1300 a small stream cut through the deposit and eroded away a significant part of the midden and floor. This took place very soon after the hole was abandoned as a midden, because the top of the river deposit [143] is at the same elevation as the top of the midden. In fact, the stream may have been the reason for abandonment. This stream cut (and midden deposit) happened well before the 1300 tephra was laid down.

### ***Interpretation.***

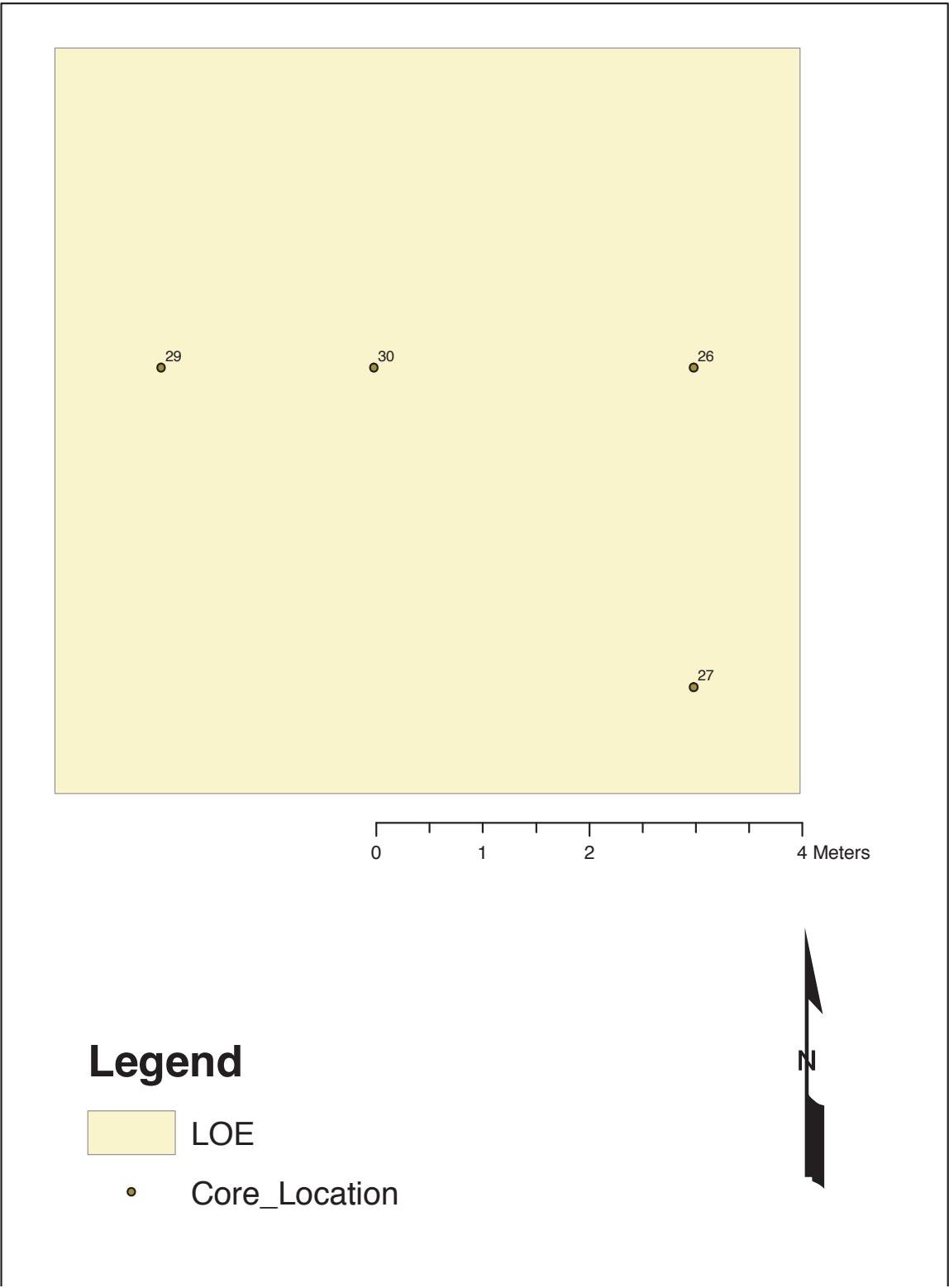
There appears to be two basic phases use phases. First, an occupation phase that produced the three thick floor layers [162]. This occupation might have been of semi-subterranean house or booth (tent). However, this is a very tentative interpretation since other than a single wall and a purple floor deposit, no other domestic features were encountered. In fact, no features at all were encountered and there were very few artifacts. However, the floor was not excavated, but floatation samples were taken from each 1x1 from each of the three floors. The floatation samples have not been analyzed. Second, the pit was used to dump substantial amounts of wood charcoal. These thick three deposits were screened but, very few artifacts were encountered. It is unlikely that this thick layer is burnt roof collapse, since no burnt turf or peatash was encountered. It seems most plausible to us that this deposit is the result of charcoal manufacturing, possible for use at the site, or more probably for use at Glaumbaer, were a smithy has been tentatively identified.



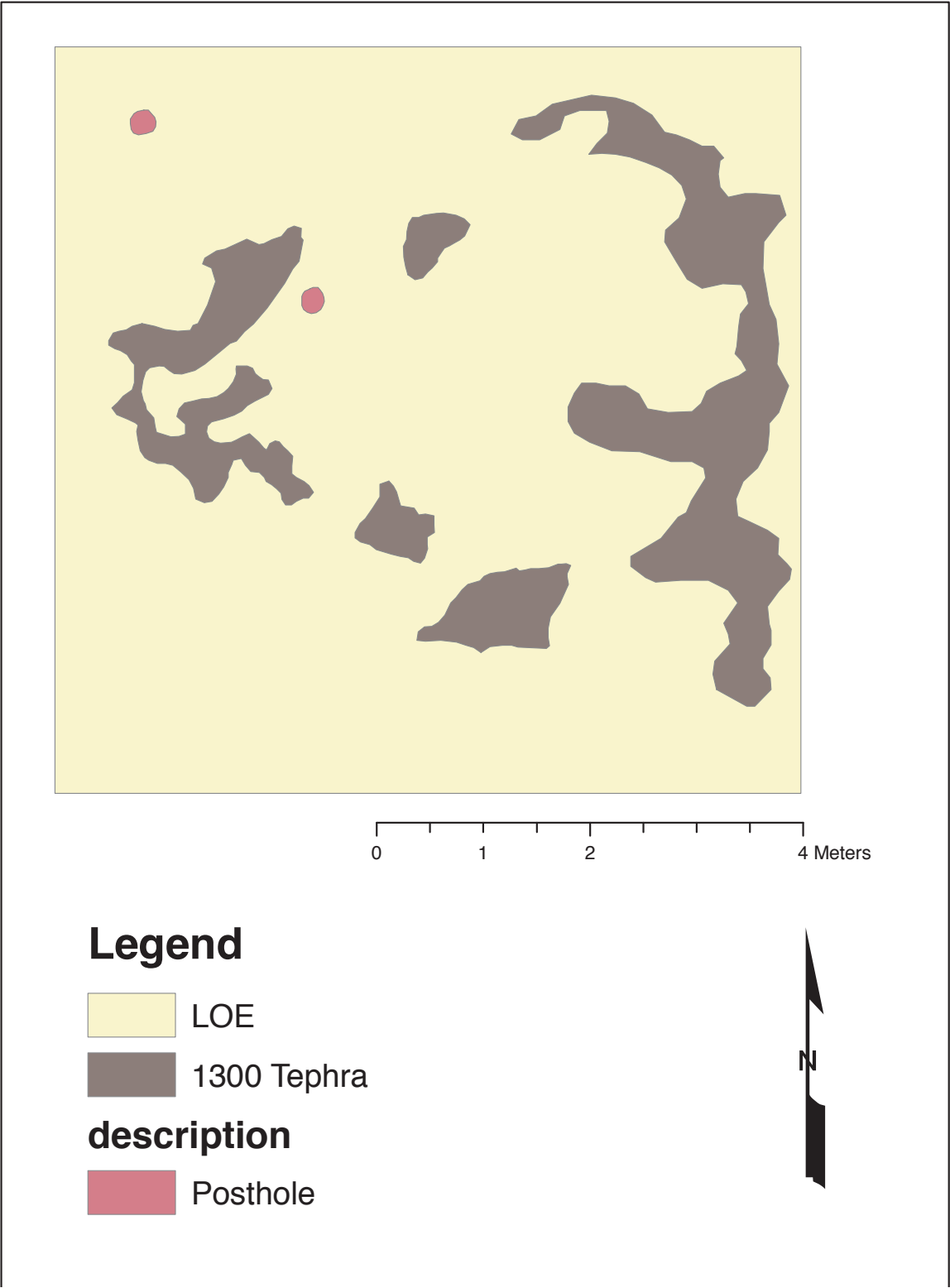
Photo of coring at Area B (near the cars). Looking south.



1300 tephra [123] looking north



Cores in Limit of Excavation (LOE)



Context [123] 1300 tephra with two recent postholes.

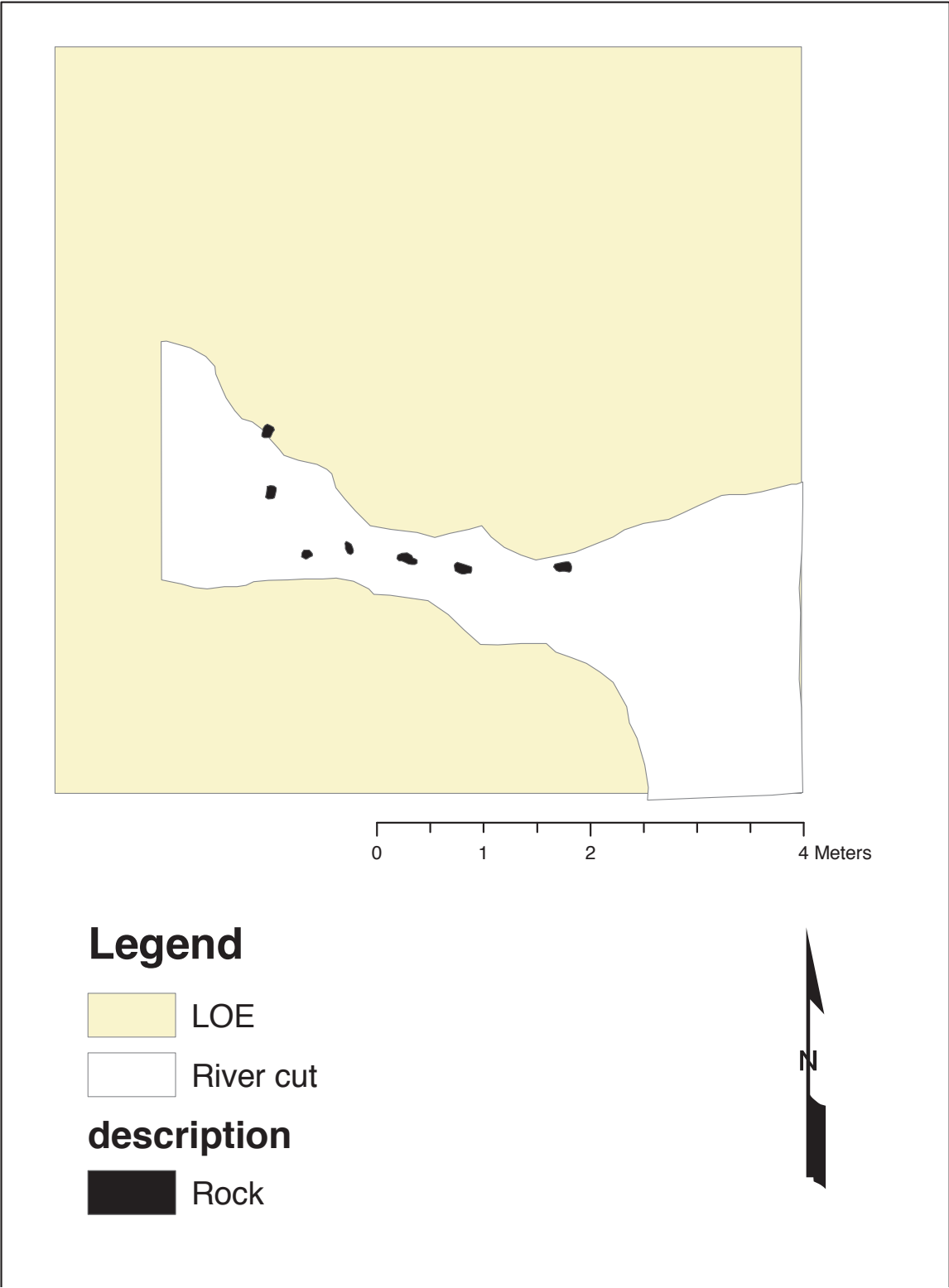
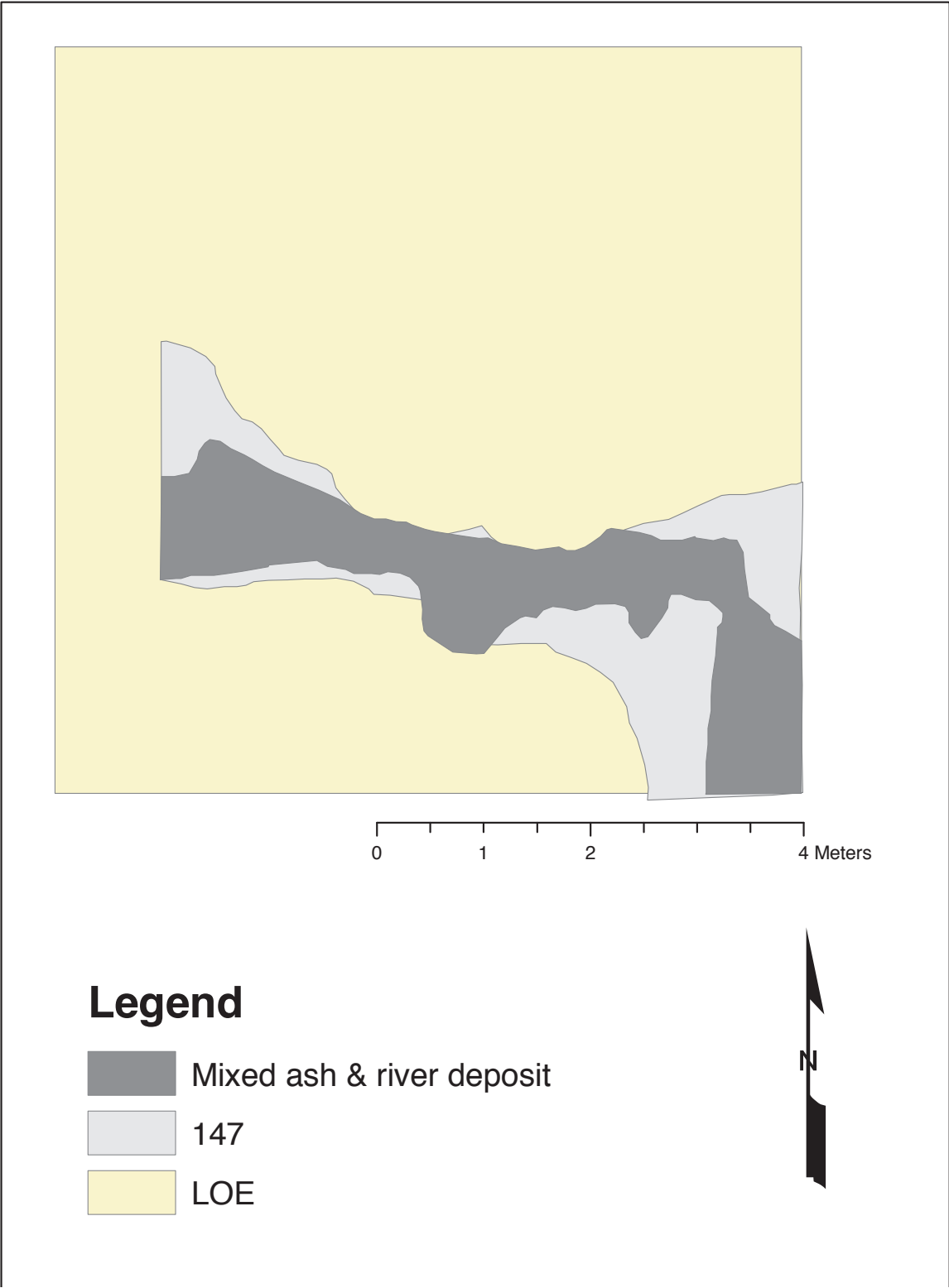


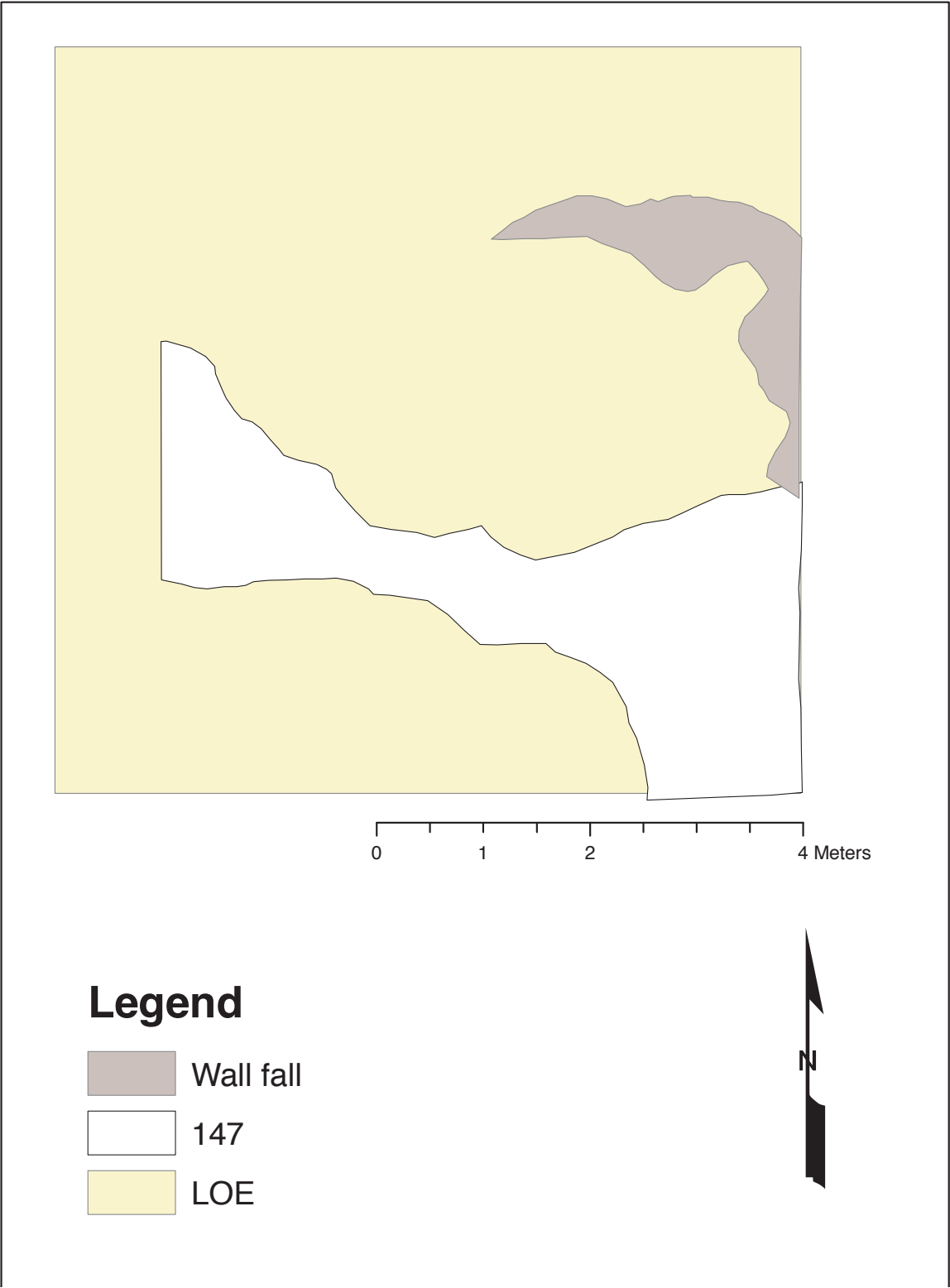


Photo of river deposit [143] looking north





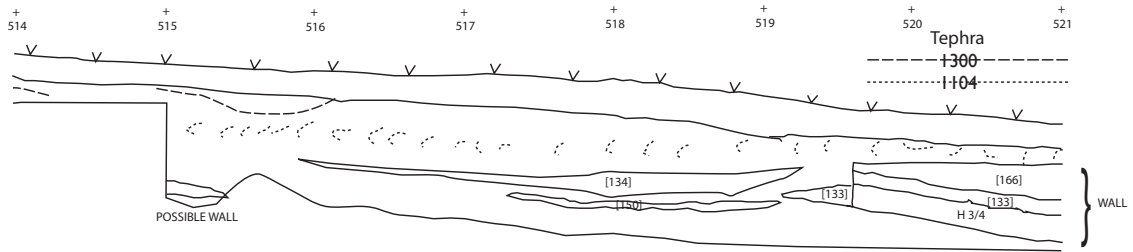
Context [143] mixed ash and river deposit with the river cut [147]



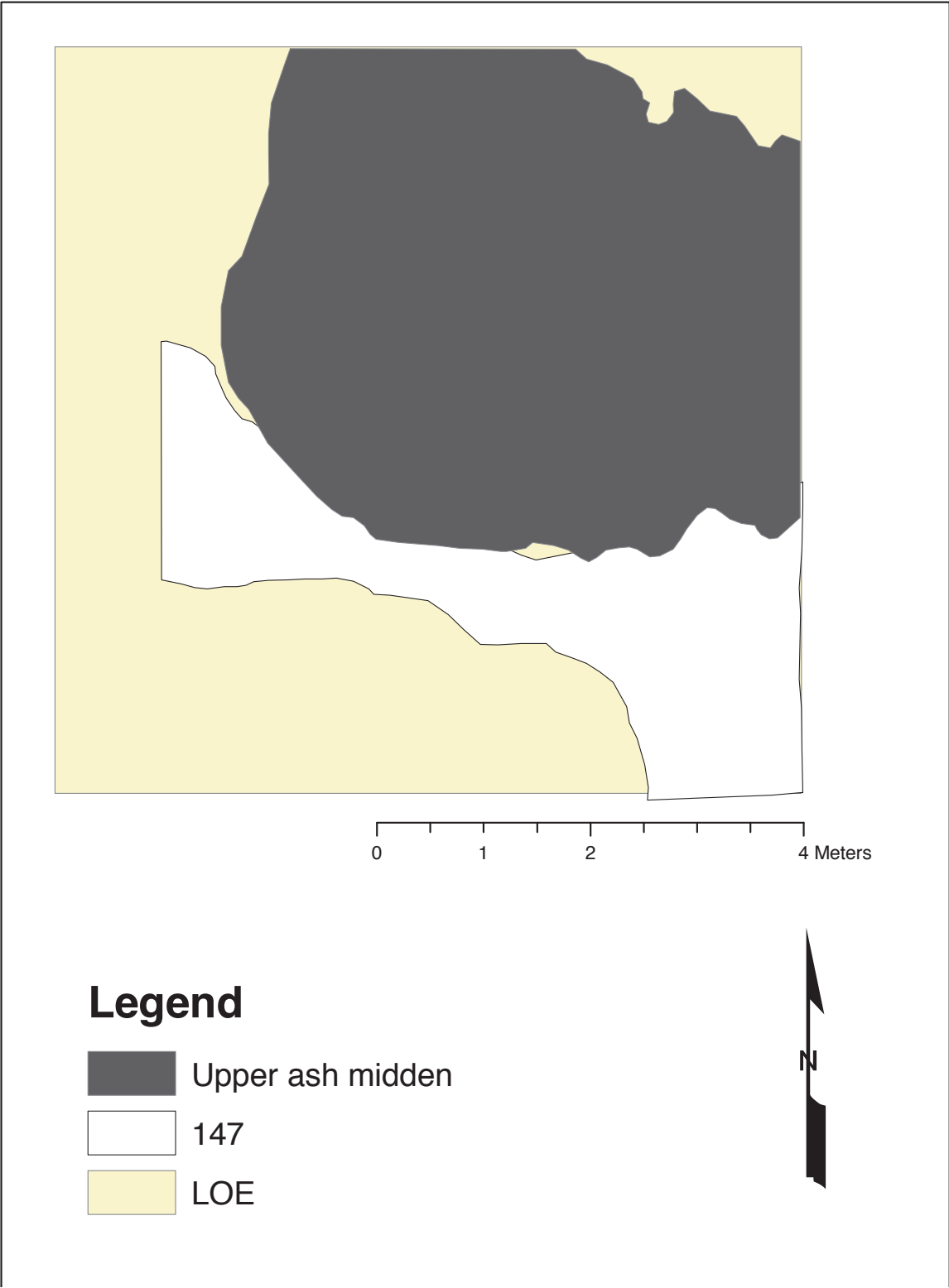
Wall fall [158]



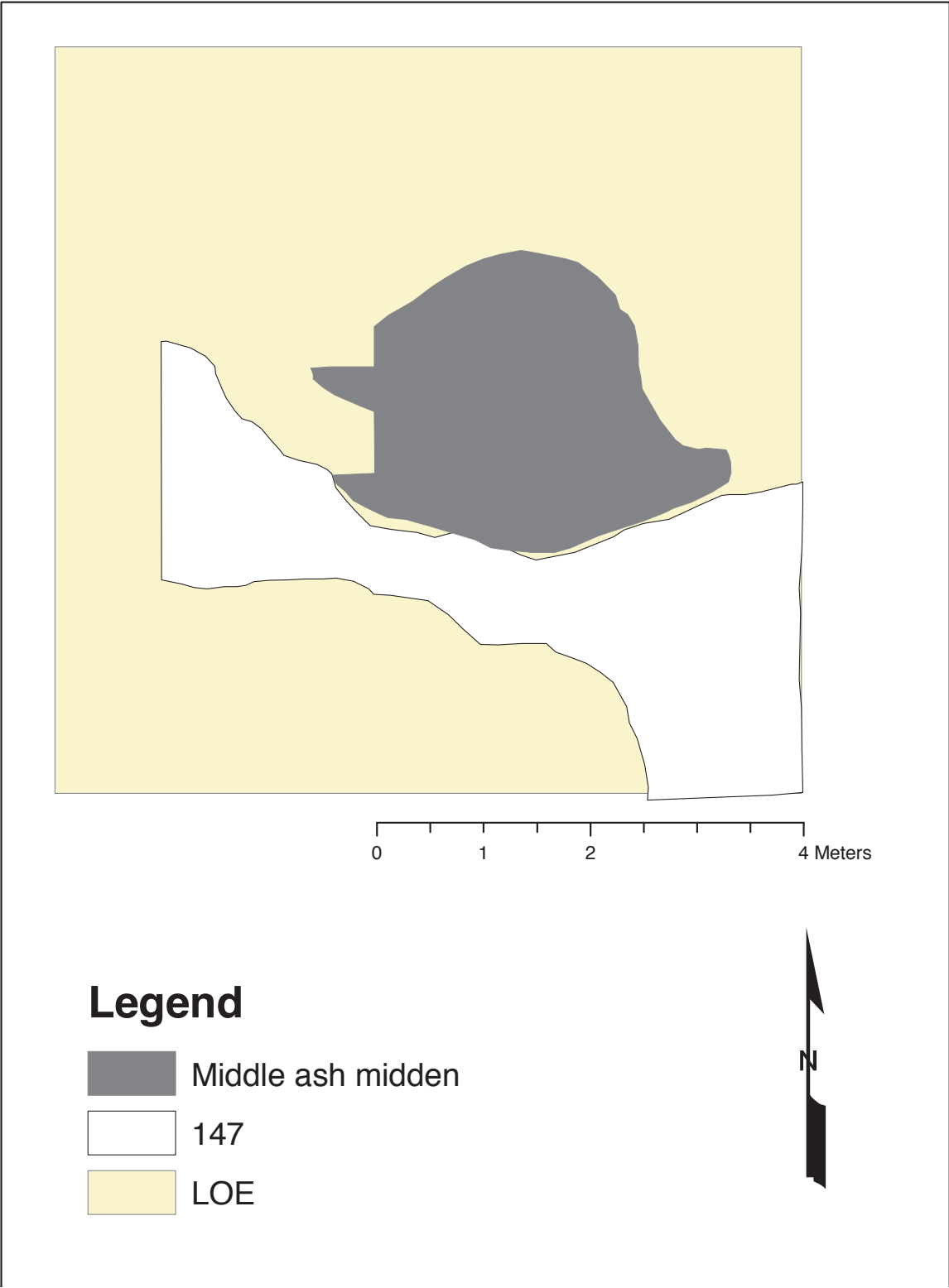
Photo of Upper midden [134]



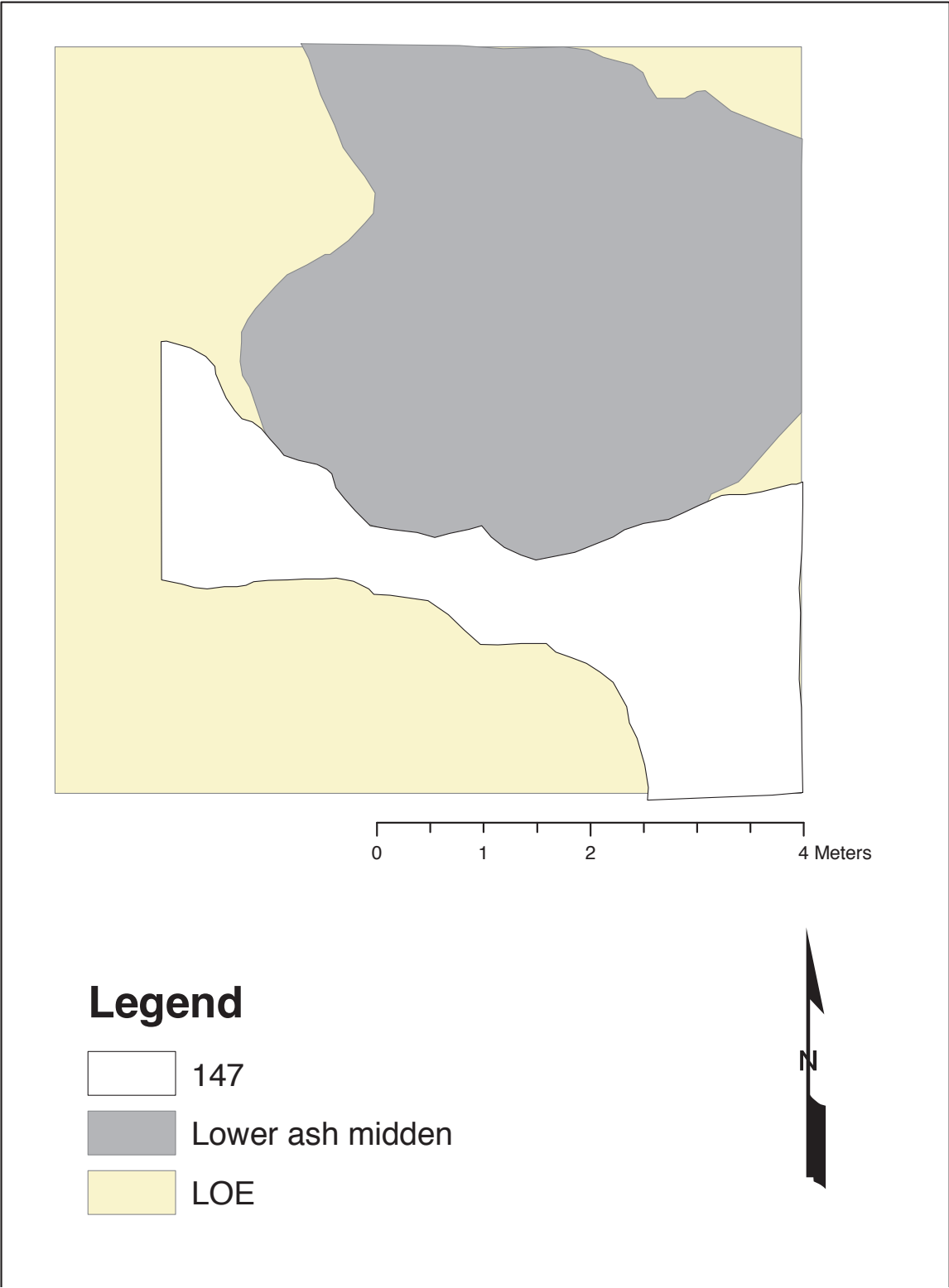
Profile of North Wall.



Upper ash midden [134] with river cut [147]



Middle ash midden [141] with river cut



Lower midden [150], just slightly under the river cut [147]



Photo of profile of thickest part of lower ash midden [150] looking north

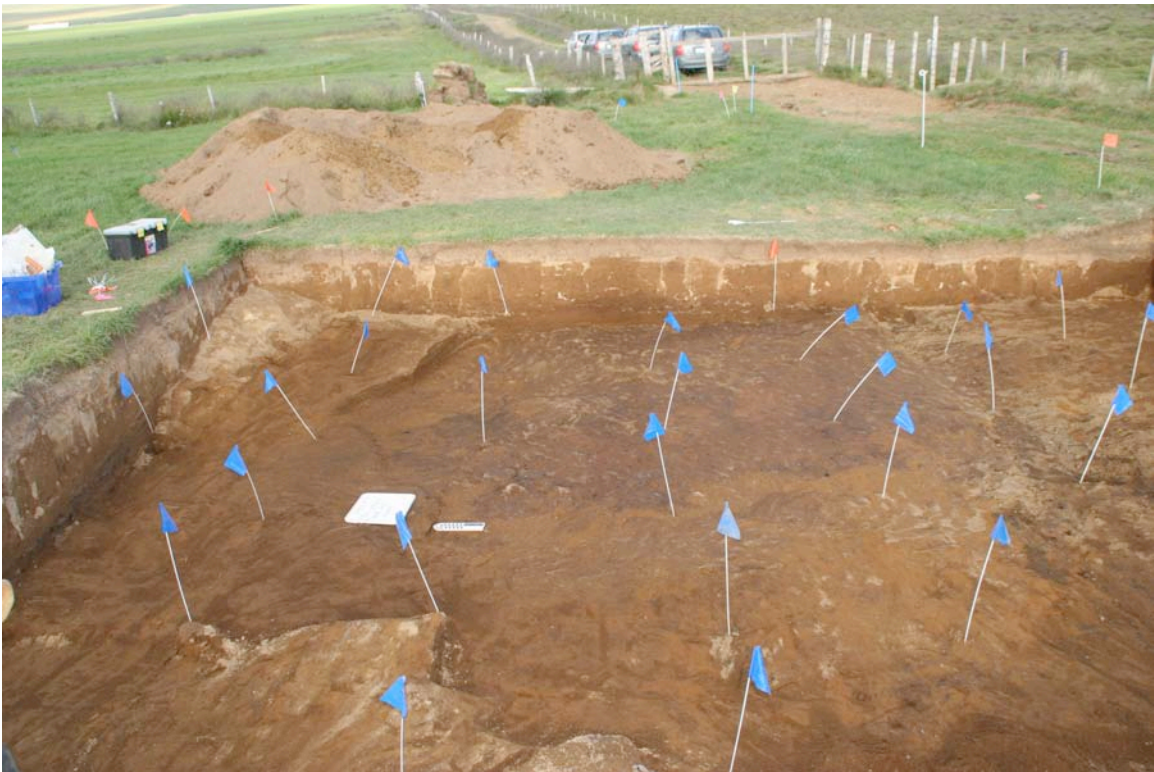
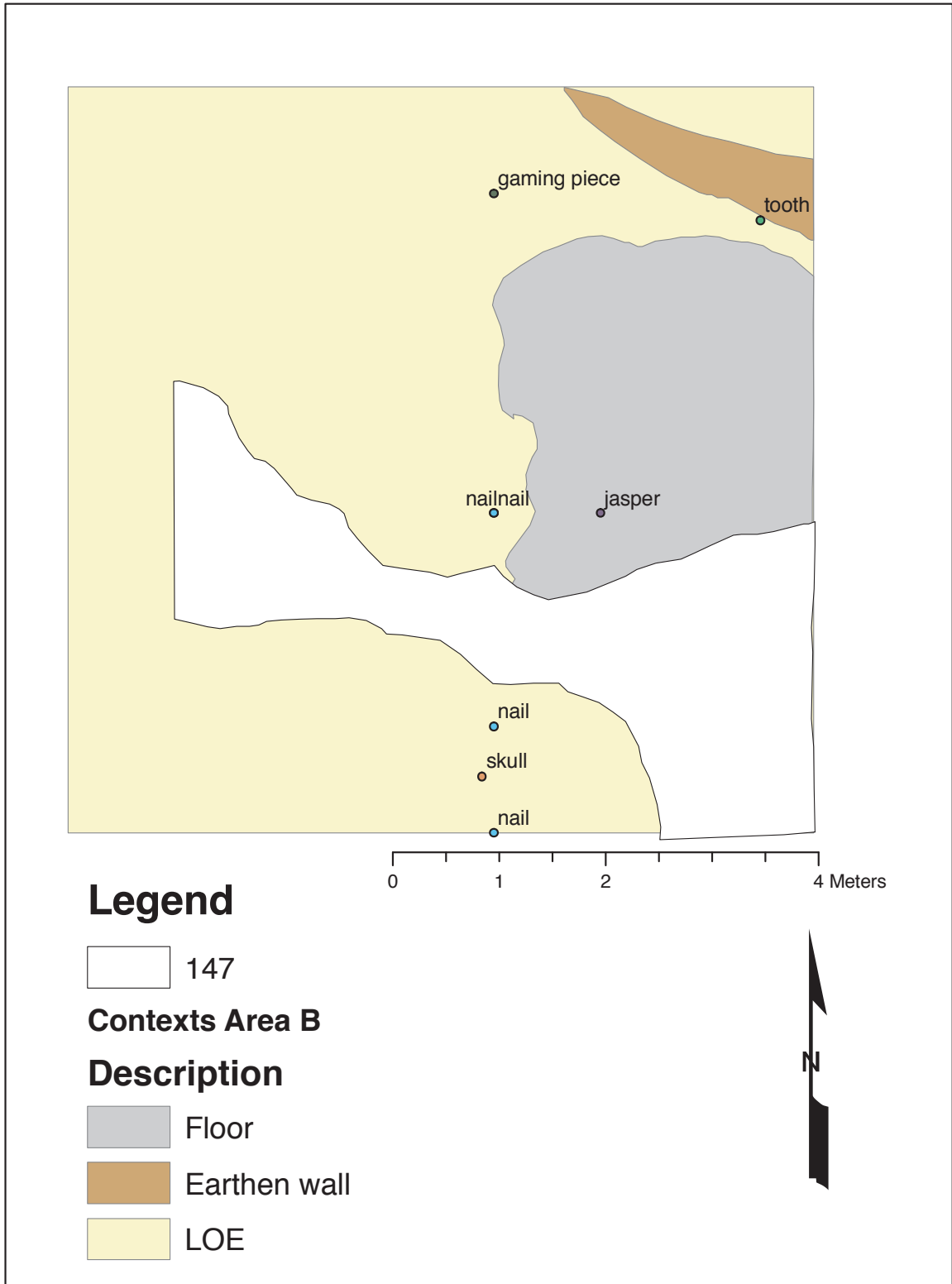
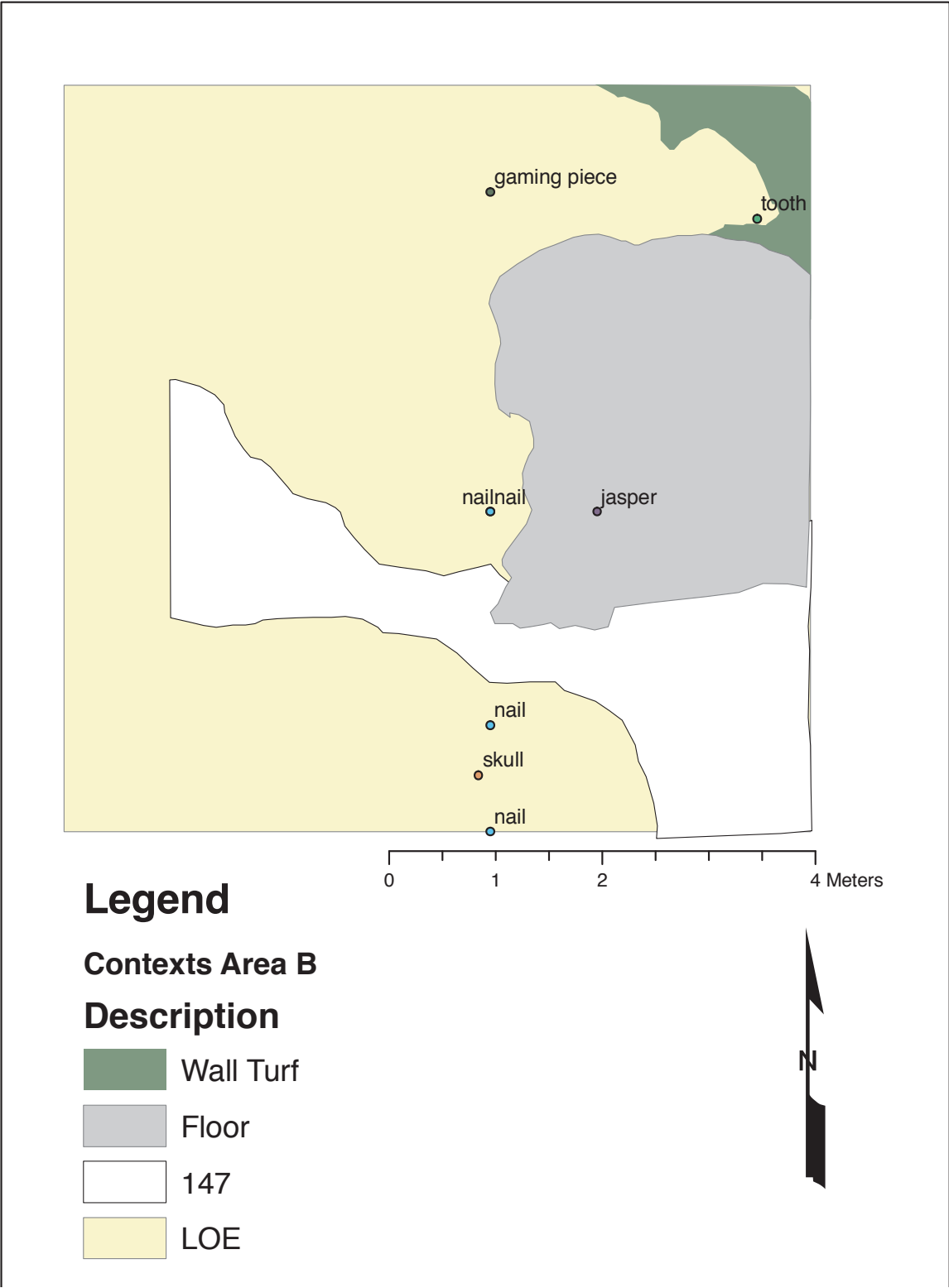


Photo of floor [162] looking east.



Floor [162] and earthen wall [166] with significant finds marked.





Turf wall [133] with floor [162]



Photo of cut into earthen wall [166] looking north the H3/H4 tephra is context [176] showing edge of the floor [162]



Photo of close up of earthen wall [166] floor [162] looking east. The white wisps above are H1



Photo of cut into earthen wall [166] and the tuff [133] looking west.



Photo of small cut into 3 layers of floor [162] from the river cut [147] looking north



Photo of cut into 3 layers of floor looking east into LOE profile.



Gaming piece found on top of floor near wall in lower midden.