Report of the Skagafjörður Archaeological Settlement Survey 2008:

Coring and test pit at Halldórsstaðir

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Halldórsstaðir Cores

Starting August 3, 2008 we began a coring program around the modern farm buildings at Halldórsstaðir with the goal of finding the original farm mound. The ultimate goal was to place a test pit to accurately determine a farm establishment date. A stream cut indicated that there was some remnants of the farmmound, but it proved elusive. Finally, after several attempts, we identified the area in back of the barn and the location of the farmmound midden. Coring in this area proved difficult, as the farmer had spread a 10-20cm think layer of gravel and large stones over the pasture. Therefore, before we could employ the core, we used a spade to dig through the gravel layer. All depths are recorded below the gravel surface.

Once below the gravel, we used a JMS backsaver core with two extensions if necessary. Core locations were recorded with a sub-meter GPS in Real time. In general we first placed cores on a 10m grid. The spacing was then confined to identify the deepest part of the midden as well as the oldest part of the midden (closed to the LNS).

Fourteen cores were taken. Of those, we encountered two instances of a black grainy tephra that is either the 1300 or the 1766 tephra. Below that 11 had H1, 6 had the 1000 layer, 3 had the LNS, and 6 went deep enough to encounter the H3 or H4 tephras. These are difficult to distinguish unless there is a break. Therefore we termed them H3. Two of the cores hit rocks before non-cultural material was encountered at the bottom of the core.

We identified a single area of deep midden: Core 760 (95 cm of midden & turf) as well as 758 (60 cm of midden) and 757 (65 cm of midden) had good tephra presentation as well. We therefore placed a final core (not recorded) at E 476964.08 N 567323.40 which indicated slightly deeper midden than core 760 and good tephra preservation. The southwest corner of the 1x1 m test pit was placed at this spot.

Halldórsstaðir Test pit.

Excavated material from the 1x1 m test pit placed at E 476964.08 N 567323.40 was not screened. Flotation sample from each context below [102] were taken and floated but have not yet been analyzed. Below the gravel layer [101] we encountered a severely disturbed midden deposit [102] that is probably the result of bulldozing to flatten the area. Immediately below the disturbed midden was an intact pink peat ash midden [103]. A darker midden with more wood ash [104] was encountered below the peat ash deposit. In the middle of this deposit, H1 was well presented. The darker wood ash midden below H1 was floated separately as [105]. Cursory inspection indicated that [103], [104], and [105] had no artifacts and few bones. Context 102 was richer in bones. Context 105 ended 5-6 cm below H1 and 4-6 cm above V-1000, which was also clearly visible. The

V-1000 was surrounded by aeolian deposits [106]. A well-preserved LNS was encountered at the bottom of the pit just above a substantial H3 deposit.

Interpretation

If we have identified the deepest and oldest part of the farmmound midden, it would appear to have been established between 1000 and 1104, probably closer to 1104.

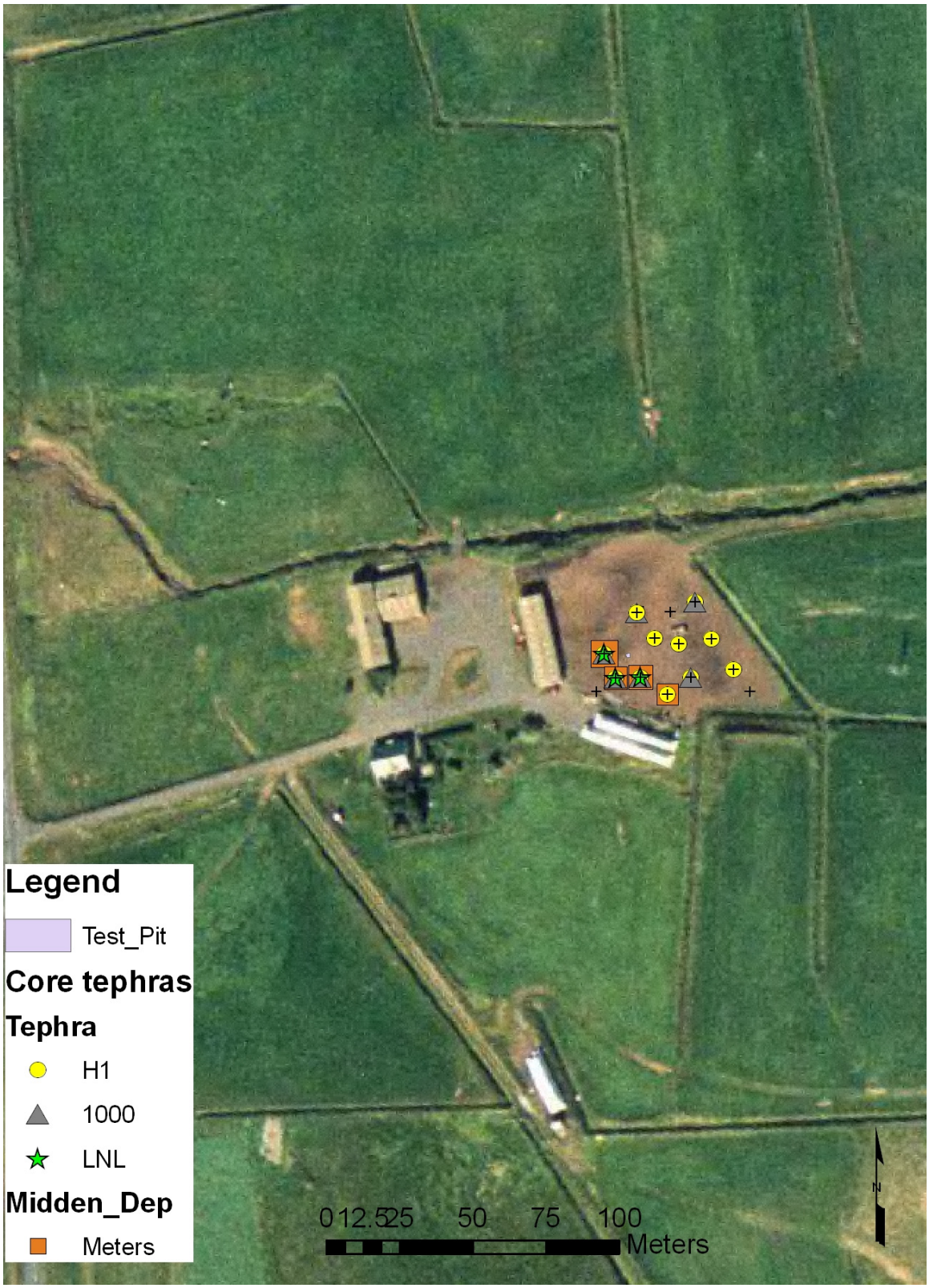

Figure 1. Location of cores and test pit at Halldórsstaðir

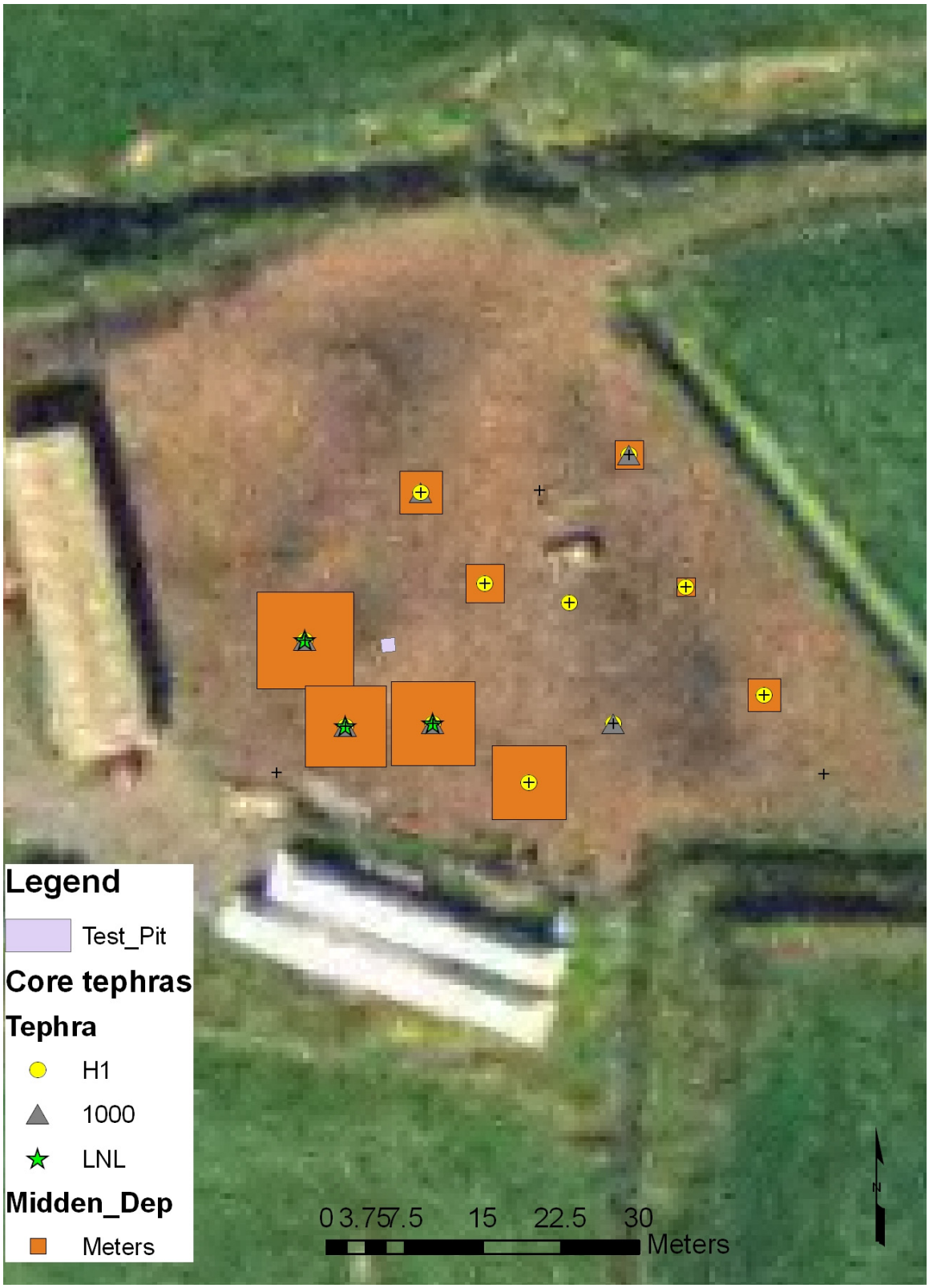

Figure 2. Distribution of cores with tephras (indicated by symbols) and midden depth (indicated by square size).

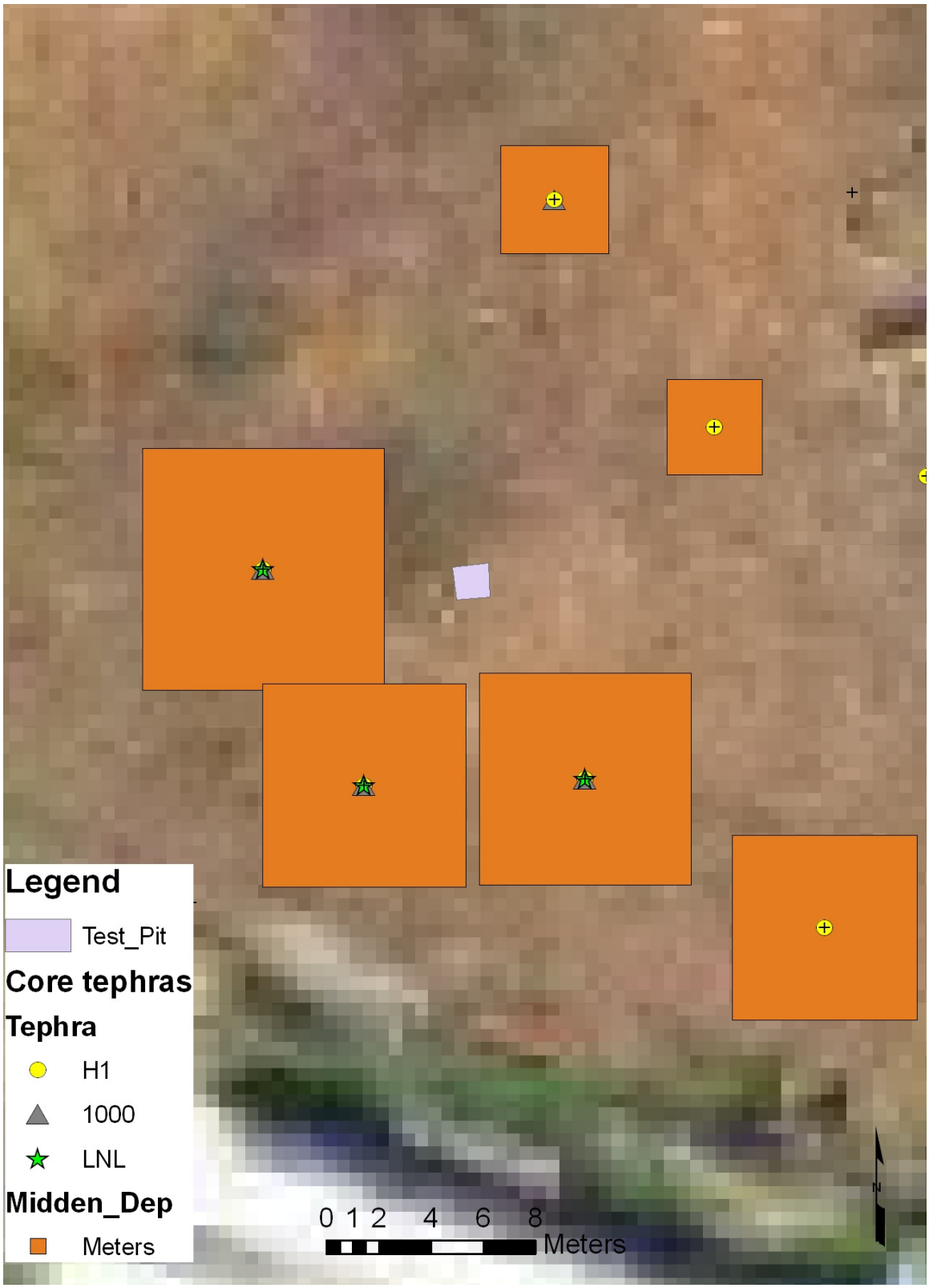

Figure 3. Location of 1x1m test pit.

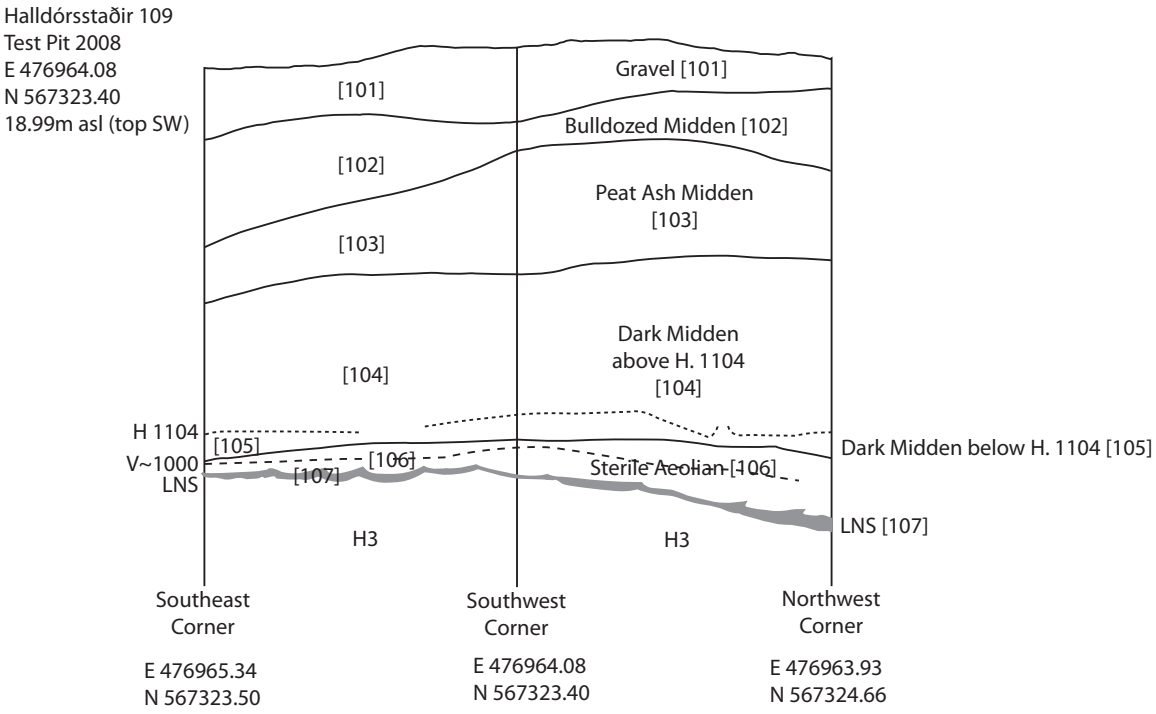

Figure 4 Halldórsstaðir Profile.

	description	top depth	bottom depth	Thickness
CORE	751	476967.814	567338.695	
	Clay	0	10	10
	Low Density Cultural	10	58	48
	Midden	58	75	17
	Sand	75	85	10
	Iron Pan	85	90	5
CORE	752	476979.212	567338.962	
	Clay	0	18	18
	Turf/Hay	18	22	4
	Turf	22	50	28
	Aeolian Deposit	50	70	20
	Charcoal	70	80	10
	Rock	80	81	1
CORE	753	476987.764	567342.35	
	Clay	0	10	10
	Turf/Hay	10	?	5
	Aeolian Deposit	15	?	5
	Midden	20	25	5
	Aeolian Deposit	25	?	23
	Midden	48	50	2
	Clay	50	62	12
	Iron Pan	62	64	2
	Clay	64	68	4
	Iron Pan	68	72	4
CORE	754	476993.253	567329.683	
	Clay	0	10	10
	Aeolian Deposit	10	15	5
	Low Density Cultural	15	42	27
	Midden	42	45	3
	Aeolian Deposit	45	70	25
	Rock	70	71	1
CORE	755	476986.298	567316.542	
	Clay	0	30	30
	Low Density Cultural	30	80	50
	Aeolian Deposit	80	110	30
	Iron Pan	110	120	10
CORE	756	476973.928	567330.001	
	Clay	0	15	15
	Midden	15	28	13
	Low Density Cultural	28	110	82
	Aeolian Deposit	110	130	20

	description	top depth	bottom depth	Thickness
CORE	757	476968.984	567316.556	
	Humus	0	8	8
	Midden	8	73	65
	Low Density Cultural	73	100	27
	Aeolian Deposit	100	150	50
CORE	758	476960.545	567316.309	
	Humus	0	10	10
	Midden	10	60	50
	Charcoal	60	62	2
	Low Density Cultural	62	100	38
	Turf	100	110	10
	Midden	110	120	10
	Clay	120	130	10
	Aeolian Deposit	130	150	20
CORE	759	476953.94	567311.837	
	Rock	0	2	2
CORE	760	476956.685	567324.563	
	Gravel	0	20	20
	Humus	20	55	35
	Midden	55	75	20
	Turf	75	85	10
	Midden	85	150	65
	Aeolian Deposit	150	170	20
CORE	761	476982.058	567328.136	
	Hay	0	43	43
	Low Density Cultural	43	80	37
	Aeolian Deposit	80	120	40
CORE	762	476978.157	567310.892	
	Midden	0	12	12
	Midden	12	45	33
	Aeolian Deposit	45	78	33
	Midden	78	83	5
	Aeolian Deposit	83	100	17
	Silt	100	120	20
CORE	763	477006.433	567311.764	
	Humus	0	10	10
	Clay	10	20	10
	Low Density Cultural	20	30	10
	Aeolian Deposit	30	100	70
CORE	764	477000.728	567319.291	
	Humus	0	10	10
	Low Density Cultural	10	30	20

description	top depth	bottom depth	Thickness
Midden	30	40	10
Aeolian Deposit	40	70	30

		Tephra Layer	Depth	East	North
Core	751			476967.814	567338.695
		H1	41		
		1000	50		
		H1	62		
Core	752			476979.212	567338.962
		black-unknown	70		
Core	753			476987.764	567342.35
		black-unknown	35		
		H1	55		
		1000	57		
		H3	73		
Core	754			476993.253	567329.683
		H1	40		
Core	755			476986.298	567316.542
		H1	78		
		1000	82		
Core	756			476973.928	567330.001
		H1	120		
		H3	130		
Core	757			476968.984	567316.556
		H1	107		
		1000	109		
		LNL	110		
Core	758			476960.545	567316.309
		H1	138		
		1000	140		
		LNL	142		
		H3	150		
Core	760			476956.685	567324.563
		H1	70		
		1000	165		
		LNL	170		
Core	761			476982.058	567328.136
		1300_1766	65		
		H1	78		
		H3	98		
Core	762			476978.157	567310.892
		H1	73		
Core	763			477006.433	567311.764
		H3	75		

		Tephra Layer	Depth	East	North
Core	764			477000.728	567319.291
		1300, 1766	23		
		H1	33		
		H3	65		