

VOLCANIC STRATIGRAPHY AND SECONDARY
MINERALIZATION OF U.S.G.S. PUCCI GEOTHERMAL
TEST WELL, MOUNT HOOD, OREGON

by

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and

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INTRODUCTION

In 1979 and 1980, seven geothermal test wells were completed near Mount Hood, Oregon by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) as part of a joint study involving the U.S. Department of Energy (USDOE) the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries (DOGAMI), and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). The drill holes were part of a concentrated effort to evaluate the geothermal potential of Mount Hood, a 3424 m Oregon Cascade volcano that has had minor eruptive activity as recently as the mid-1800's (Crandell, 1980). One 1220 m well, called the Pucci drill hole, was drilled on the south slope of the mountain at an elevation of 1628 m, about 1 km SSW of Timberline Lodge near the base of the Pucci ski chairlift (3S/9E-7dbb) (Lat. 45° 19' 18", Long. 121° 42' 46") (Fig. 1). Drilling methods and specifications, drillers log, temperature data, and generalized lithology of the hole are

Figure 1 near here

given in Robison, Forcella, and Gannett (1981). Results of several geophysical surveys of the drill hole are on file with the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries, Portland, Oregon.

Ninety-one sample splits of drill cuttings from ~ 6.1 m intervals in the 610 m hole that was completed in 1979 were provided for this study. An additional 225 sample splits (3.05 m intervals) from 536 m to the bottom of the drill hole at 1220 m were added to the study following the 1980 deepening of the drill hole. A portion of the hole (from 536 to 610 m) was redrilled in 1980 due to caving at the bottom of the 1979 drill hole.

Stratigraphic and petrologic observations of the cuttings were made by the first author at the drill site using a binocular microscope. In the lab, the drill cuttings were wet sieved through a 200 mesh (0.074 mm) screen and both fractions were air dried and saved. Cuttings retained on the screen were systematically examined by binocular microscope. Nearly 200 slurry slides of finely-ground, hand-picked alteration material and representative rock types were X-rayed at 1°/min. from 3° to 38° 2 θ using unfiltered Cu K α radiation on a Norelco X-ray diffractometer equipped with a focusing monochromator. Scanning electron microscope (SEM) examinations were made of several samples of alteration minerals using a Cambridge Stereoscan 180 that is capable of providing qualitative chemical data by energy-dispersive X-ray analysis (EDAX).

Many of the samples studied contained rounded, soft, buff-colored grains (frequently coated by a white calcite crust) of cement that was introduced during drilling. X-ray diffractograms of the exotic grains show calcite, portlandite, brownmillerite, vaterite, and thaumasite: a mineral association that is very suggestive of portland cement (Taylor, 1964). Other introduced drilling contaminants (comprising as much as 50 percent of some samples) include metal filings from drill steel and casing, often oxidized to orange iron-oxide staining and cementing material, and plastic and plant fragments from lost circulation material.

LITHOLOGIC LOG OF PUCCI DRILL CUTTINGS

The Pucci drill hole is sited near the headwaters of the west fork of the Salmon River in an area Crandell (1980) shows as a possible pathway for future pyroclastic flows, mudflows and floods and in a unit mapped by Wise

(1968, 1969) as Quaternary clastic debris that consists of reworked detritus and pyroclastic material. The drilled interval is composed of approximately 5 to 158.5 m thick units of this volcanoclastic material that are interbedded with 28 grayish pyroxene andesite flows that vary in thickness from 3 to 97.5 m (Fig. 2). Most samples of drill cuttings contain at least

Figure 2 near here

some contamination rock chips from higher in the drill hole. The volcanoclastic and andesitic flow intervals identified in Figures 2 and 3 are based upon the predominant character of the grains studied from each sample; unit thicknesses and boundaries are corrected to match geophysical logs. It is possible, however, that some of the thicker units, in particular, may have thin volcanoclastic debris or lava flow units that were not adequately represented by the recovered samples, or did not have a distinct signature on the electric logs and thus were not identified. The lithologic log of Figure 2 is divided into 2 intervals, 0 to 731.5 m and 731.5 to 1220 m, on the basis of different alteration mineral assemblages and degree of alteration.

0-731.5 m

Nineteen lava flows were identified in the upper 731.5 m of the Pucci drill hole. All but one of the flows, a black to brownish-black microvesicular olivine(?) basalt, consist of grayish pyroxene andesite with about 5-10 percent clear plagioclase (~0.5-3 mm) and 1-3 percent clear brown orthopyroxene (hypersthene) (0.1-3 mm) phenocrysts. Most X-rayed

samples also contained abundant vapor-phase(?) α -cristobalite and magnetite and minor vapor-phase tridymite and clinopyroxene; a few samples have traces of quartz, K-feldspar(?) and an amphibole (probably hornblende). Nearly every flow has some degree of iron-oxide (hematite) alteration, but only flows 9, 14, 16, 18, and 19 contain minor amounts of one or more of the alteration minerals: montmorillonite, calcite, pyrite, chalcedony or α -cristobalite. The andesite flows are interbedded with volcanoclastic debris intervals. These debris units are probably of variable origin and may include colluvium, mudflow, landslide, or fluvial material. The angular to rounded varicolored pyroxene andesite rock chips contain clear plagioclase and brown hypersthene phenocrysts. Accessory minerals include abundant magnetite and vapor-phase(?) α -cristobalite and minor clinopyroxene, amphibole, K-feldspar(?), and vapor-phase tridymite. Nearly all of the debris units contain secondary alteration minerals that may include hematite, opal, gypsum(?), chalcedony, kaolinite, montmorillonite, pyrite, 10 A° mica, calcite, α -cristobalite, β -cristobalite, natroalunite, and quartz.

731.5-1220 m

From 731.5 m to the bottom of the drill hole at 1220 m, flows 20 to 28 consist of various shades of red, green, or gray pyroxene andesite. Phenocrysts are cloudy to clear plagioclase and pyroxene. Clinopyroxene appears to be dominant over orthopyroxene, although most mafic crystals are altered to green to blue-green montmorillonite. One X-ray trace contained minor vapor-phase(?) α -cristobalite (most α -cristobalite appears to have

been altered to quartz or chalcedony?); no other accessory minerals were identified. Fracture or vein(?) and vug fillings consist of calcite, chalcedony, stilbite, laumontite, hematite, montmorillonite, magnetite, quartz, mordenite, chlorite, pyrite, and vermiculite(?).

The lava flows are interbedded with varicolored, subangular to rounded, hydrothermally altered, pyroxene andesite, volcanoclastic debris material. Secondary minerals identified from the debris units include calcite, chalcedony, hematite, montmorillonite, laumontite, stilbite, heulandite, chlorite, mordenite, pyrite, and epistilbite.

SECONDARY MINERALIZATION

The distribution of alteration minerals in the Pucci drill hole is shown in Figure 3. Iron oxide, identified as hematite on numerous X-ray traces, occurs in the majority of samples studied and was not included

Figure 3 near here

in the figure. The alteration minerals opal, α -cristobalite, β -cristobalite, 10 A° mica (illite or celadonite?), kaolinite, natroalunite, and gypsum were only identified in X-ray traces from volcanoclastic debris units above 731.5 m; some hydrothermal montmorillonite, chalcedony, calcite, quartz and pyrite also occur in these debris units (and in a few lava flows near the base of the interval). With the exception of quartz, all of the minerals listed could have formed due to near vent fumarolic alteration (Naboko, 1959; Crandell, 1971) and many representatives from this group of minerals have been found both near the summit and in debris deposits flanking Mount Hood (Bargar, 1980; Beeson,

Keith and Bargar, 1980). The single quartz crystal fragment occurred near the base of the interval and probably originated from erosion of older volcanic rocks. A few flows near the base of the interval contain traces of hydrothermal minerals that could be contamination from the interbedded debris units.

Below 731.5 m, the drill cuttings contain an almost completely different set of hydrothermal minerals that include: chalcedony, quartz, montmorillonite, vermiculite(?), chlorite, calcite, pyrite, and several zeolite minerals: epistilbite, heulandite, laumontite (Fig. 4), mordenite (Fig. 5), and stilbite (Fig. 6).

Figures 4, 5, and 6 near here

The maximum temperature measured in the Pucci drill hole was 80°C at the hole bottom (J. H. Robison, U. S. Geological Survey, personal communication, 1981). Kristmannsdottir (1978) summarizes temperature data for hydrothermal alteration minerals found in basaltic rocks from Iceland geothermal areas. Pyrite and calcite occur over a wide temperature range. The zeolite minerals epistilbite, heulandite, mordenite, and stilbite generally are found below 100°C, whereas laumontite begins to form by replacement of other zeolites at temperatures above 100° to 120°C and is stable up to 230°C (Kristmannsdottir and Tomasson, 1978). Chalcedony has been found at temperatures lower than 100°C while quartz forms at higher temperatures. montmorillonite occurs at low temperature, below 200°C, and chlorite begins to form above 200°C.

Kristmannsdottir's (1978) data would suggest that all of the hydrothermal minerals found below 731.5 m in the Pucci drill hole, except for laumontite, quartz and chlorite, could have formed at the temperature of the present geothermal regime. Even laumontite could conceivably have formed at the temperature measured in the Pucci drill hole because warm spring water (40°-65°C) in New Zealand has been shown to be supersaturated with respect to laumontite (Barnes, Downes, and Hulston, 1978). However, the presence of quartz (although possibly of detrital origin?) and especially chlorite suggest that the temperature conditions may have been warmer in the past. Similar arguments have been used by Tomasson and Kristmannsdottir (1974) to suggest retrograde metamorphism in some low temperature geothermal areas of Iceland.

CONCLUSIONS

A geologic cross-section, drawn by Wise (1969), is reproduced here as Figure 7. The Pucci drill hole is projected about 2 km northwestward to

Figure 7 near here

intersect with the trace of the cross-section (see dashed line of Figure 1 for approximate cross-section trend). Wise's cross-section suggests that if a 1200 m drill hole were put down at the projected Pucci location it would penetrate ~500 m of the main shield-building deposits of Mount Hood, ~350 m of upper Miocene¹ volcanic material and ~350 m of Late Miocene Rhododendron Formation. No rock cuttings of the Rhododendron Formation were identified in the Pucci drill hole; however, the upper 731.5 m consists of interbedded pyroxene andesite flows and volcanoclastic debris units of the Mount Hood main shield-building material and the bottom 488.5 m are highly altered andesite lava flows and interbedded volcanoclastic debris units that are interpreted here as being upper Miocene.

Wise (1969) describes the upper Miocene (see footnote 1) pyroxene andesite lavas south of Mount Hood as fractured and extensively altered. His appendix indicates that montmorillonite, chalcedony, and opal were identified as alteration minerals. On Zigzag Mountain to the west of Mount Hood, Wise found that the upper Miocene (see footnote 1) lava flows are

¹ On the basis of K-Ar ages of 4-7 m.y., Wise (1969) indicates that these rocks are lower Pliocene; however, recent revision of the geologic time scale (Sohl, and Wright, 1980) suggests that they are Late Miocene.

about 1500 feet (457 m) thick and that they contain some flows with large (up to 10 mm) hypersthene phenocrysts.

Figures 2 and 3 show a major break between comparatively fresh lava flows and debris units above 731.5 m and the extensively altered units in the bottom 488.5 m of the drill hole. Geophysical logging data of Robison and others (1981) suggest fracturing in a large section of the drill hole from 942 to 1039 m. Rock chips containing slickensided(?) montmorillonite and chalcedony and zeolite mineralization in veins(?) or fractures are abundant throughout the lower third of the drill hole. The groundmass and mafic(?) phenocrysts in this section show considerable alteration with some flows containing large pyroxene(?) phenocrysts altered to blue-green montmorillonite.

Alteration minerals in drill cuttings from interbedded lava flows and volcanoclastic debris units penetrated by the Pucci drill hole appear to have originated from two different sources. From 0 to 731.5 m the alteration mineral assemblage, primarily concentrated in the debris units, suggests near vent fumarolic alteration of material subsequently transported by sedimentary processes. The majority of lava flows in this drill hole interval are mostly fresh with some hematite alteration. Below 731.5 m both the lava flows and volcanoclastic debris units are very altered and the hydrothermal mineral assemblage is quite similar to that described in older rocks related to Western Cascade volcanism (Peck and others, 1964; Beeson, Keith and Bargar, 1980).

A reconstruction of the sequence of geologic events suggested by the drill cuttings recovered from the Pucci drill hole includes: (1) deposition of a thick section of interbedded pyroxene andesite flows and volcanoclastic debris units of Late Miocene (see footnote 1) age; (2) hydrothermal alteration of the entire stratigraphic section; possibly due to the onset of a newer Pliocene or later eruptive period related to construction of the present Mount Hood edifice about 660,000 years ago (White, 1979, 1980); (3) deposition of numerous pyroxene andesite lava flows (and one olivine basalt flow) along with interbedded volcanoclastic debris units that brought fumarolic alteration minerals down from vent areas at the top of the mountain; and (4) secondary minerals found in the lower part of the Pucci drill hole suggest that low grade hydrothermal alteration may still be continuing at the present time, although the data are ambiguous.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

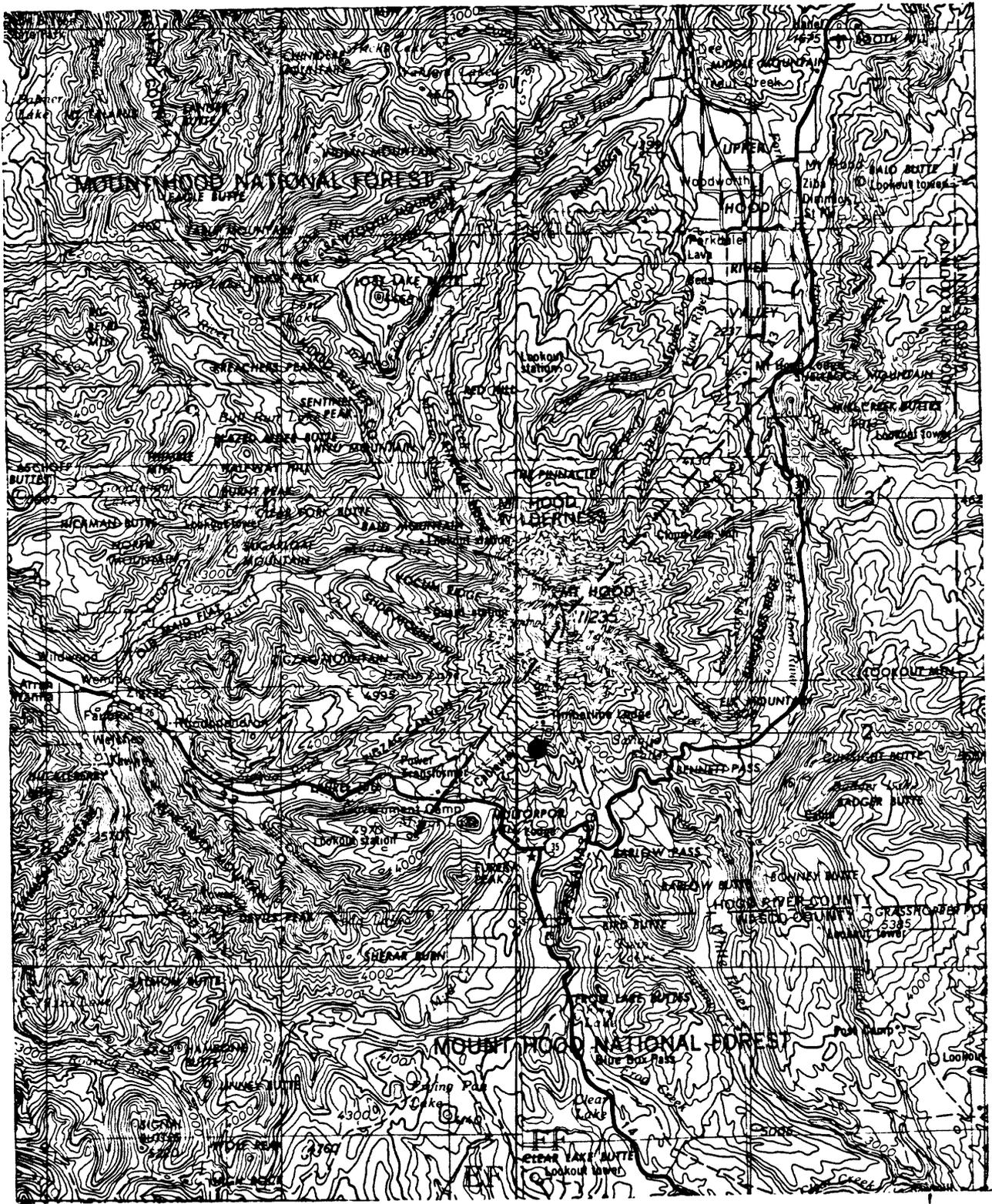
This study benefitted from the laboratory assistance of J. R. Boden and scanning electron microscope work of R. L. Oscarson. M. C. Guffanti and M. H. Beeson critically reviewed the manuscript.

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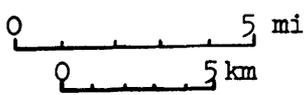
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- 45°
30'

- 45°
15'

122° 00'

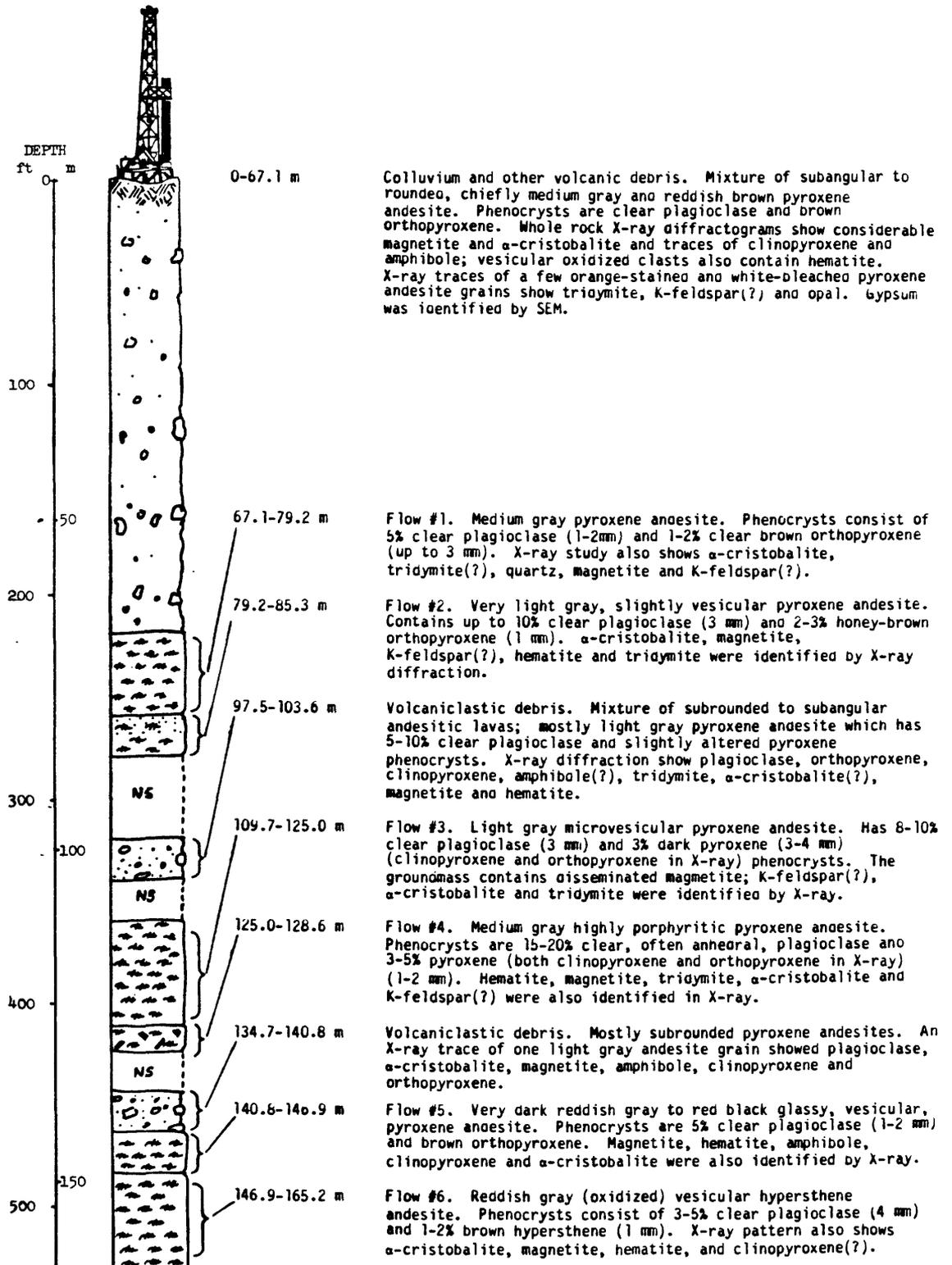


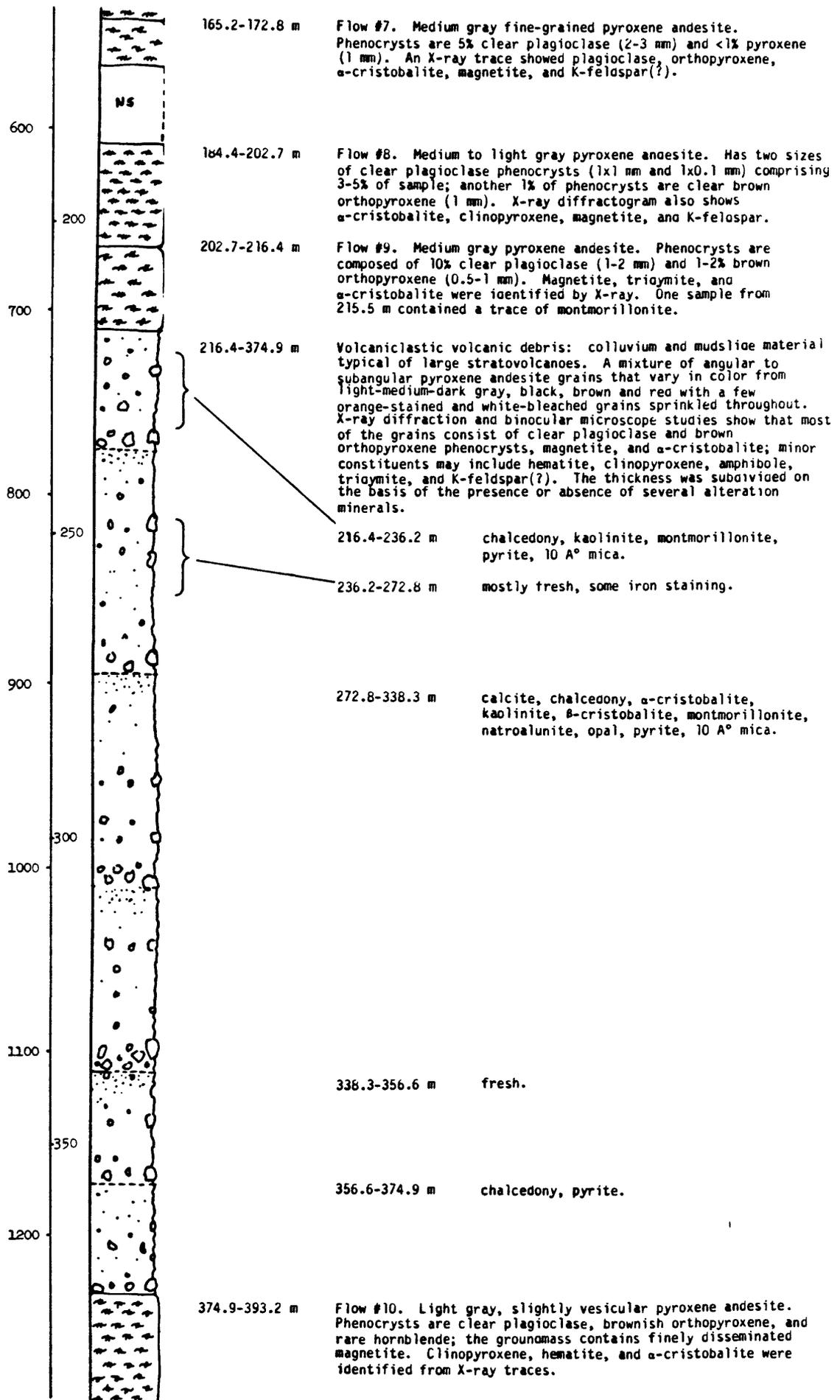
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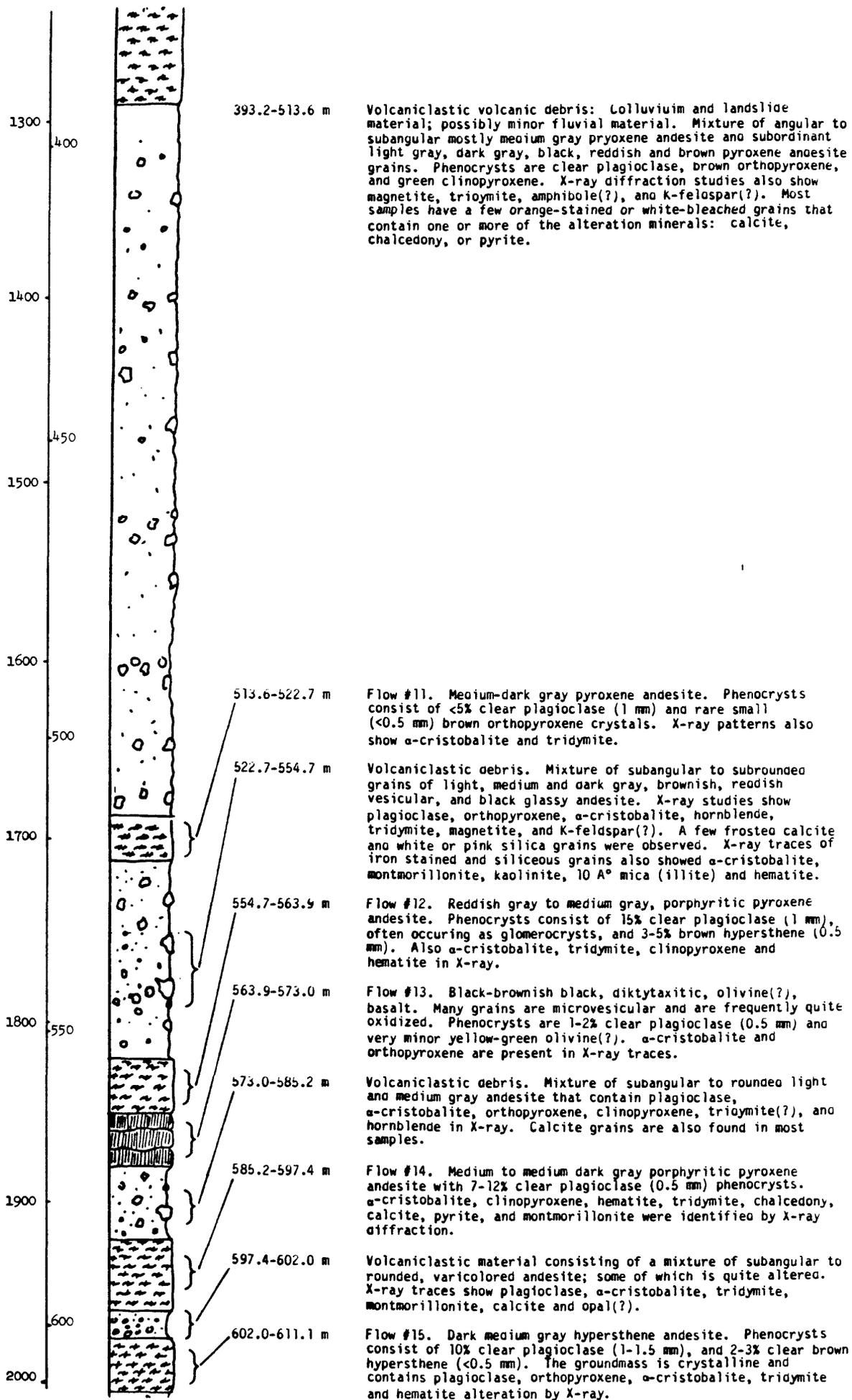
Figure 1. Location map of Pucci drill hole. From the Dalles 2° sheet. Dashed line shows trend of Figure 7 cross-section.

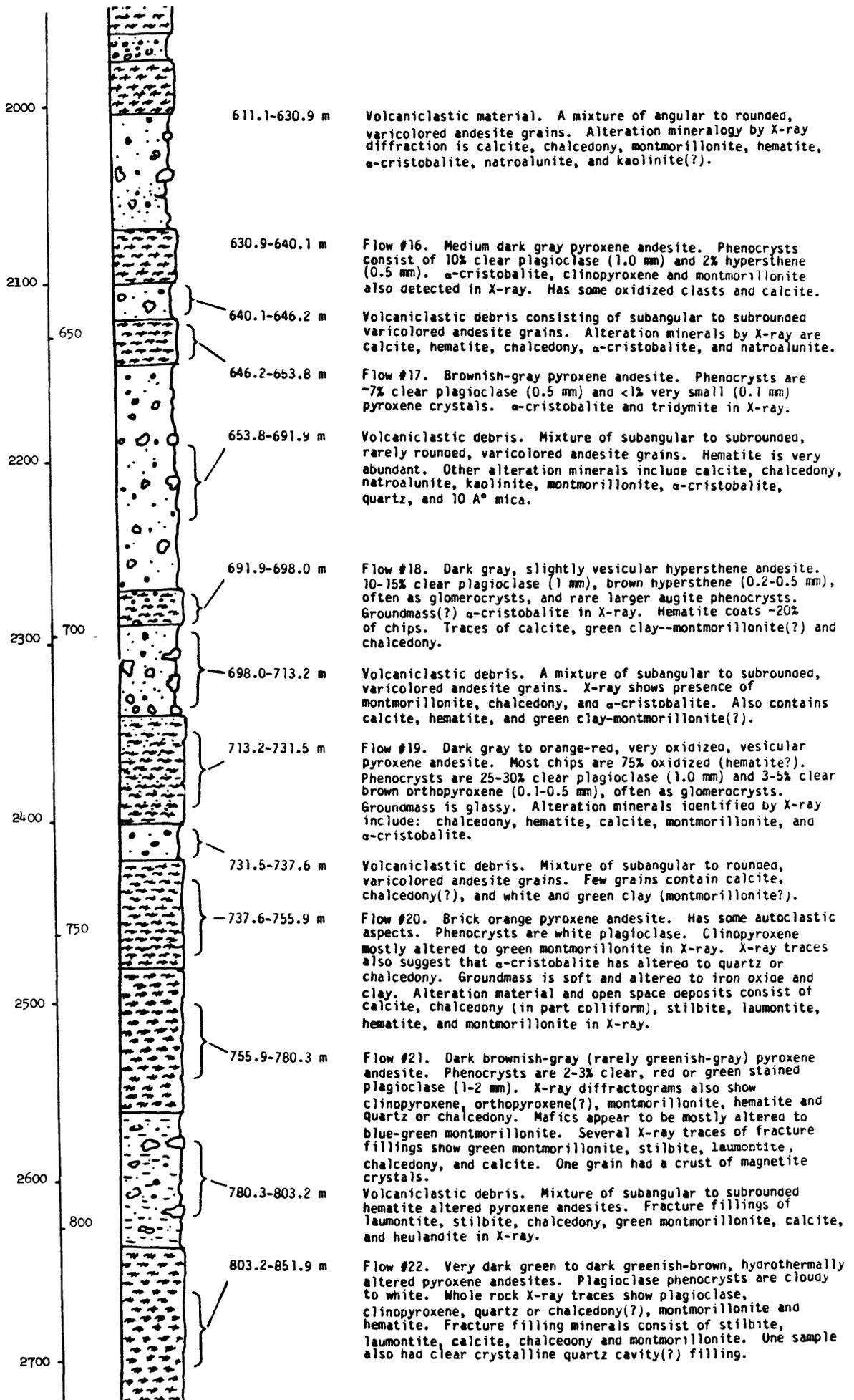


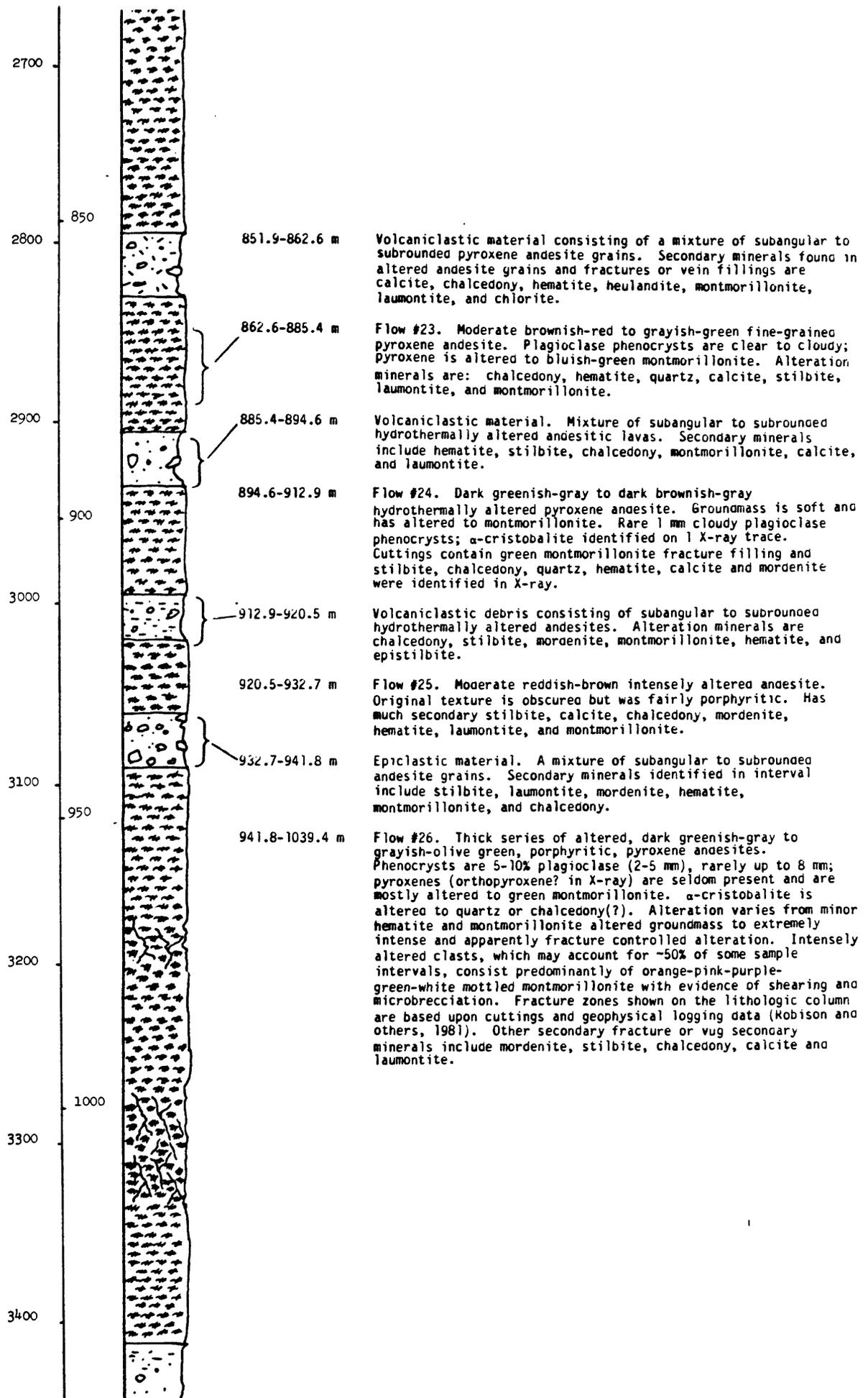
Figure 2. Lithologic log of the Pucci geothermal test well. [NS--no sample available]











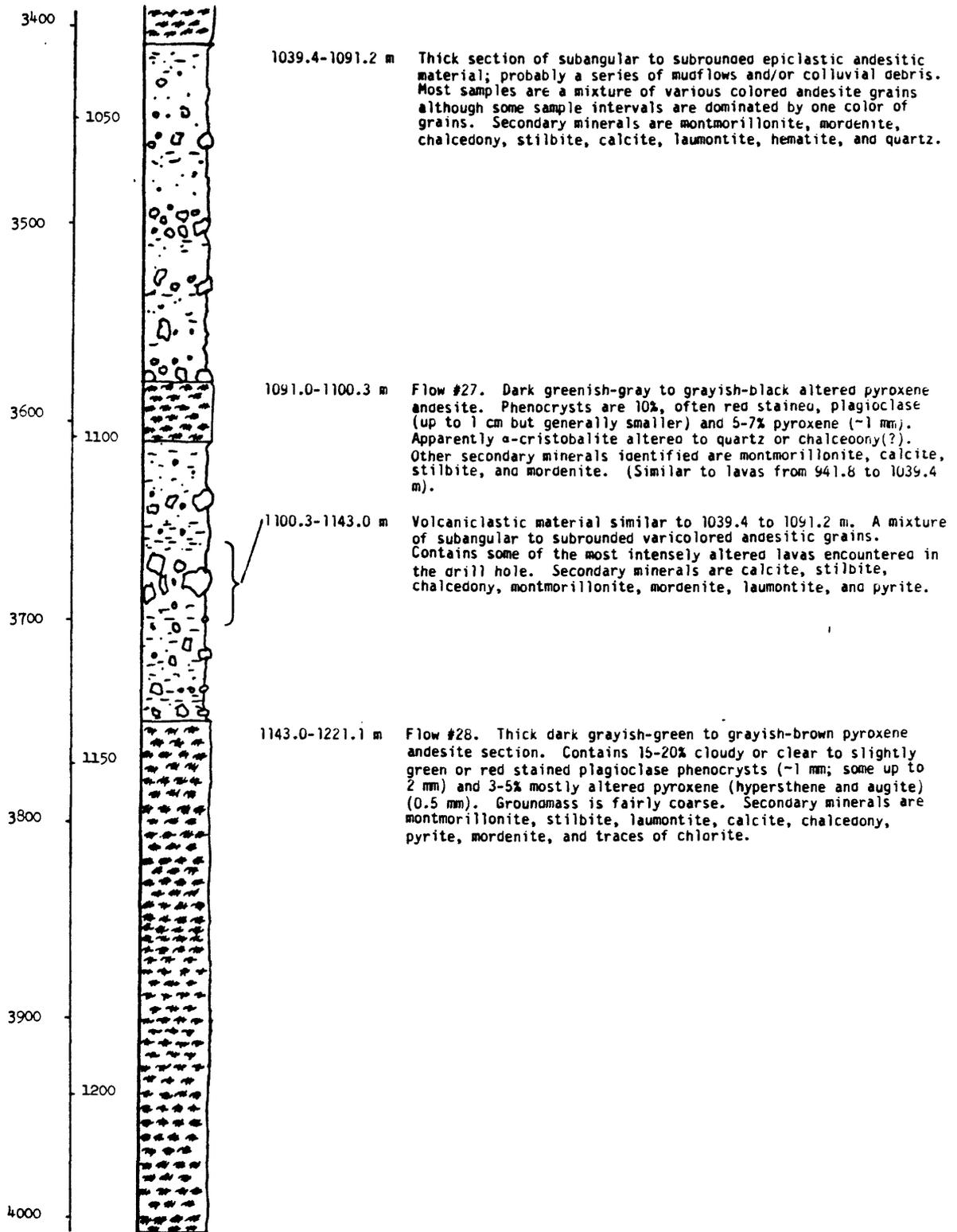
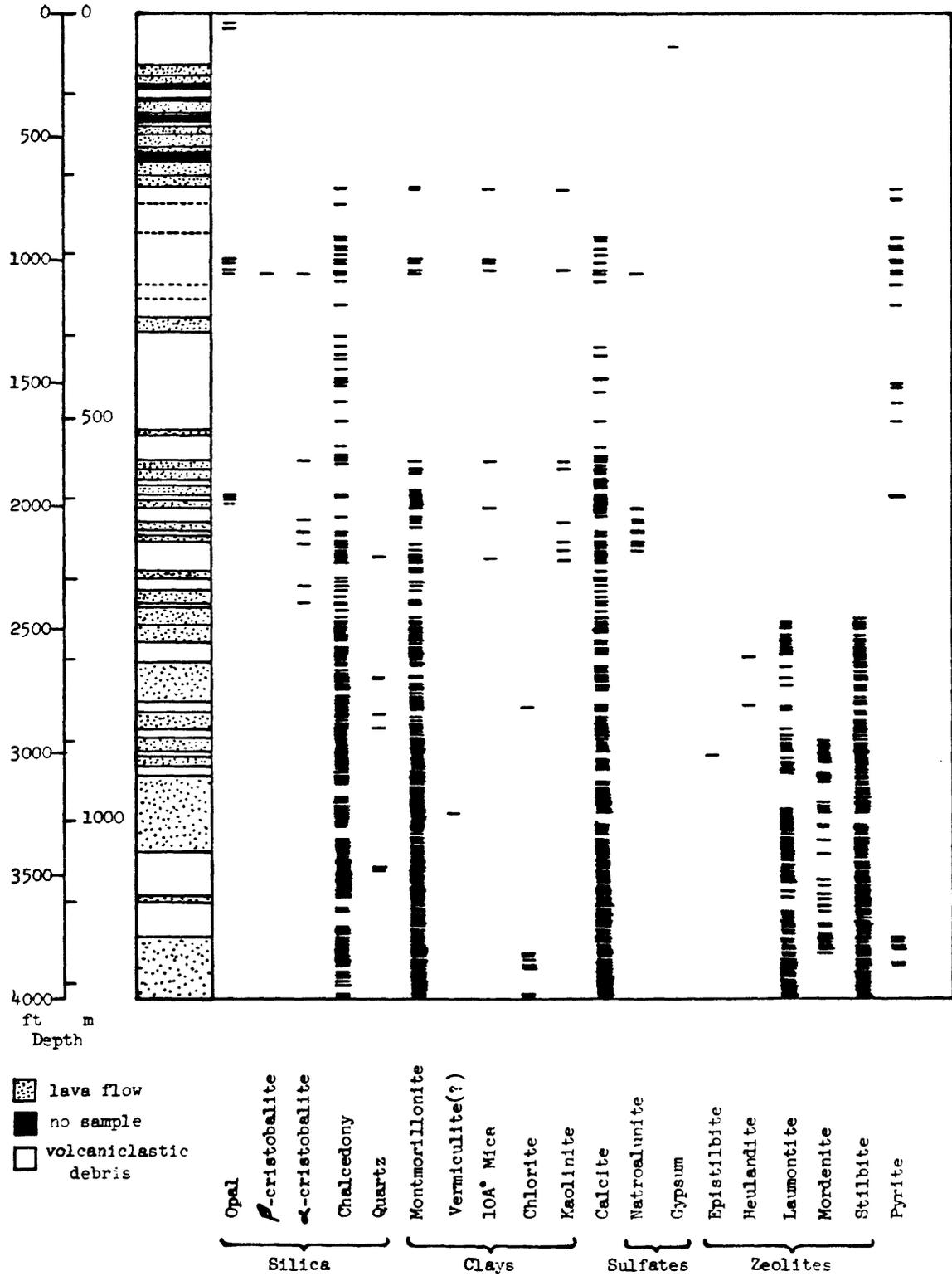


Figure 3. Distribution of secondary minerals in the Pucci drill hole.



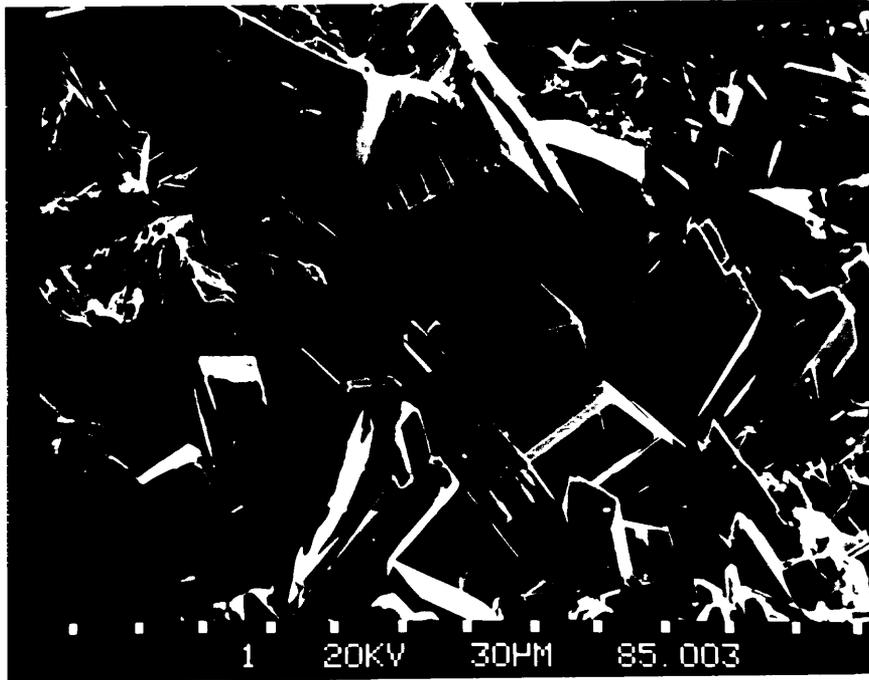


Figure 4. Scanning electron micrograph of intergrown laumontite crystals from vein filling at 1125-1128 m. Distance between white tick marks at bottom is 30 microns.

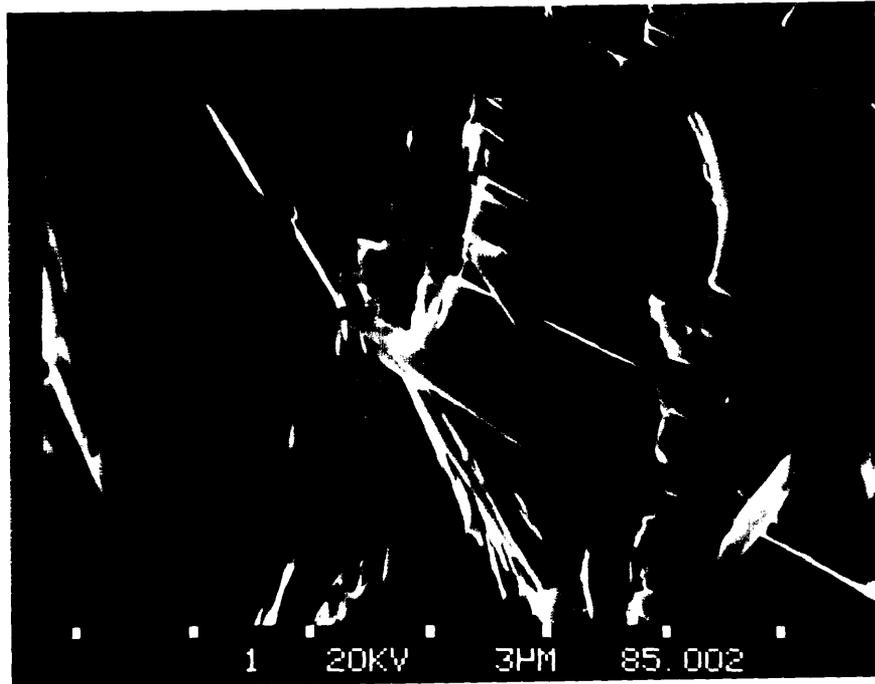


Figure 5. Scanning electron micrograph of fibrous mordenite crystals from 1161-1164 m. Distance between white tick marks at bottom is 3 microns.

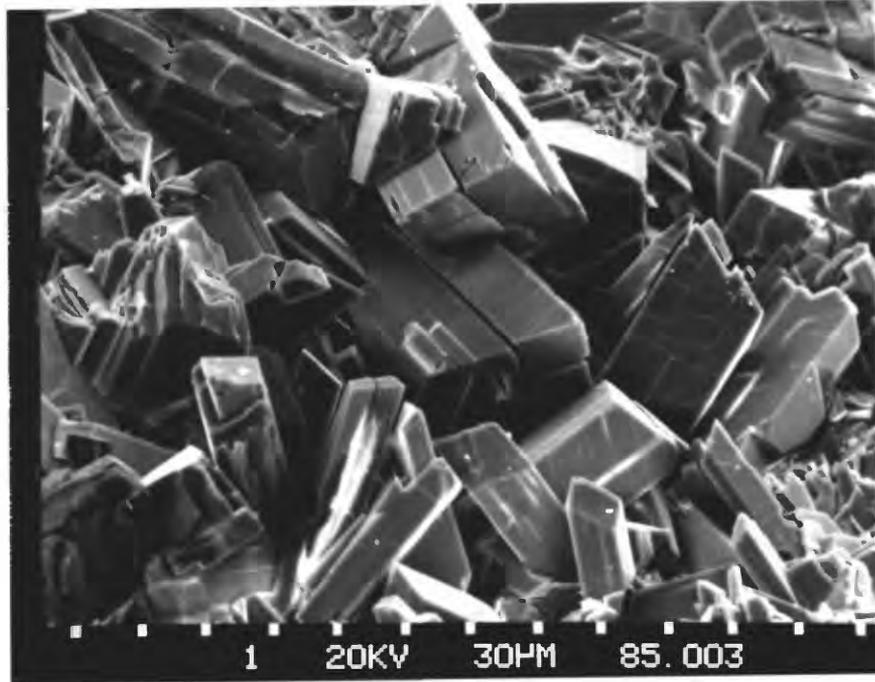


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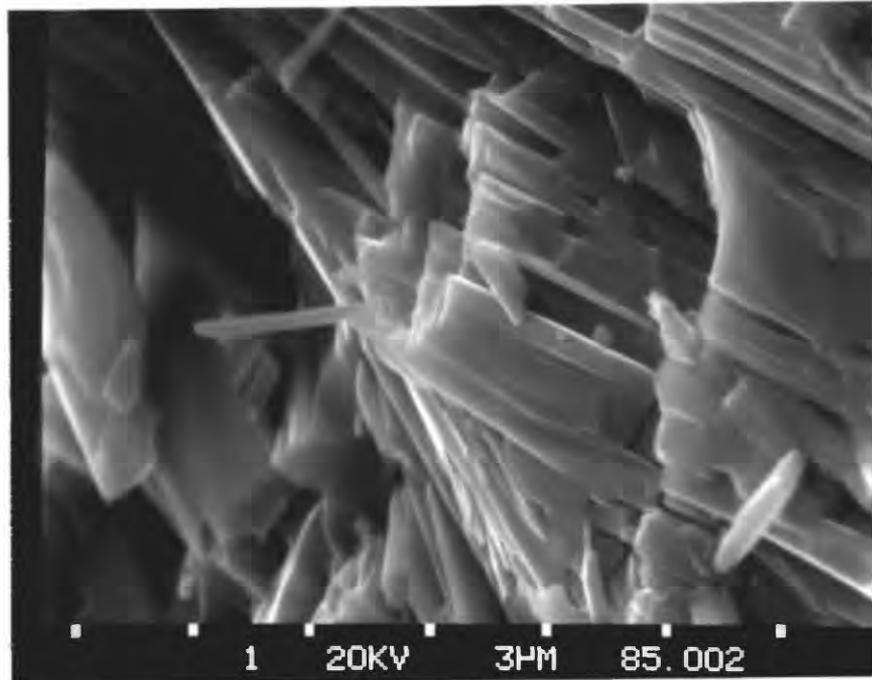


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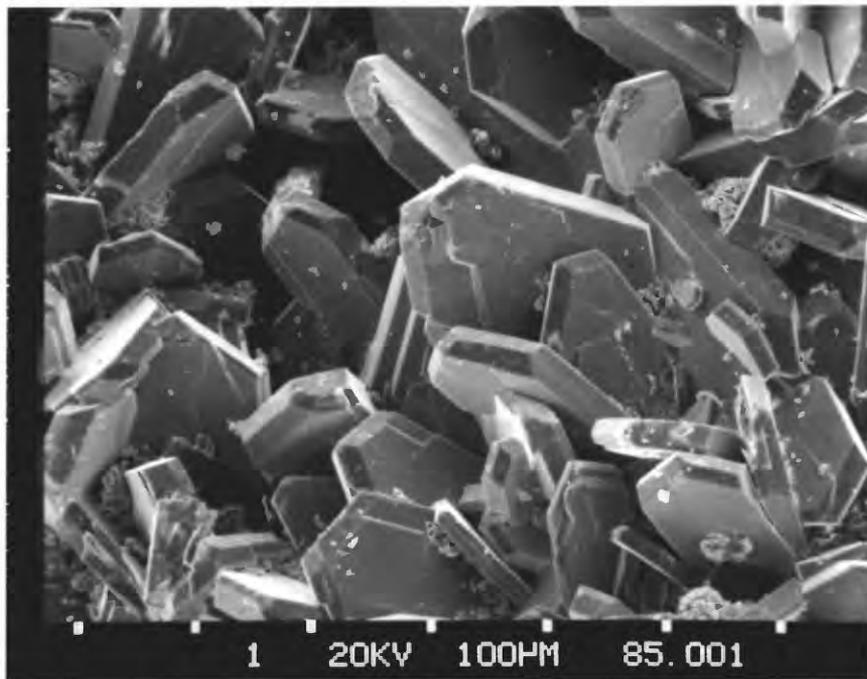


Figure 6. Scanning electron micrograph of intergrown tabular crystals of stilbite with later coatings of montmorillonite crystals from 966-969 m. Distance between white tick marks at bottom is 100 microns.

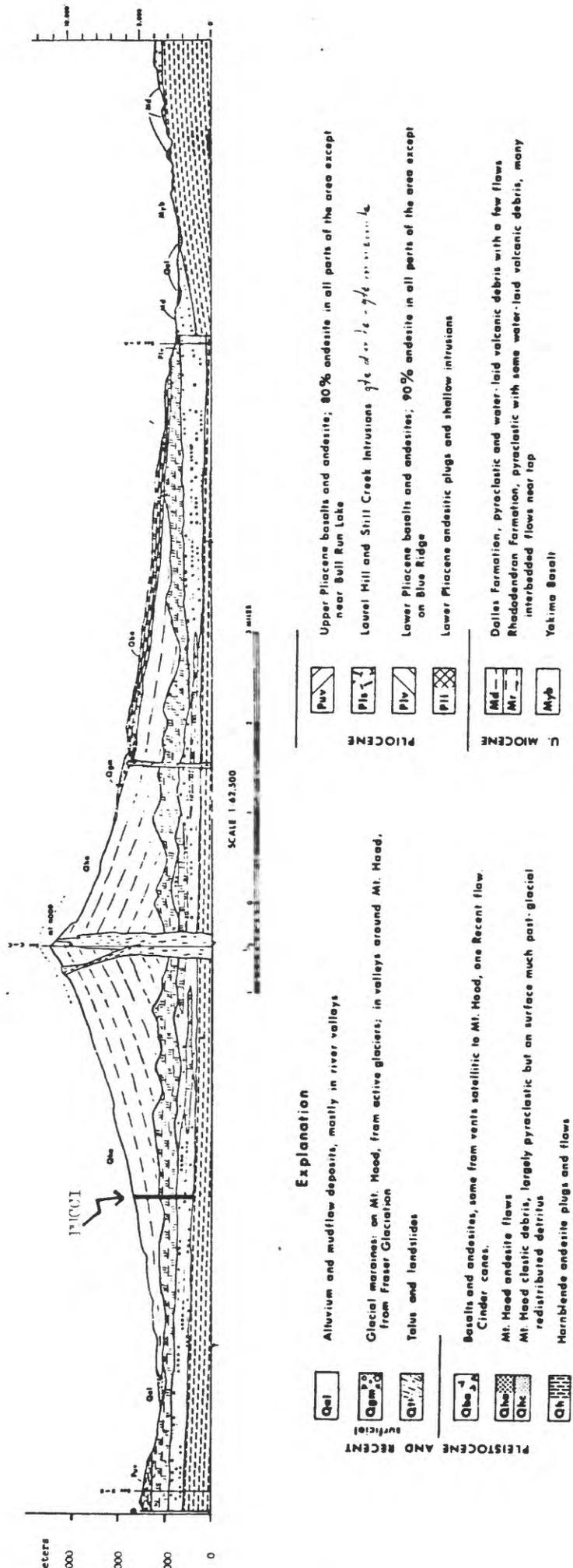


Figure 7. Geologic cross-section drawn through Mount Hood near the Pucci drill hole (after Wise, 1969) (Wise's lower Pliocene unit (Piv) is probably Late Miocene; see footnote 1).