

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

LITHOLOGIC DESCRIPTION OF A SEDIMENT CORE FROM  
ROUND LAKE, KLAMATH COUNTY, OREGON

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## Introduction

As part of a series of investigations designed to study the Quaternary climatic histories of the western U.S. and the adjacent northeastern Pacific Ocean, a sediment core was collected from Round Lake, Klamath County, Oregon, in the fall of 1991. This report presents basic data concerning the Round Lake site, as well as lithologic descriptions of the recovered sediments. The drilling methods and core sampling and curation techniques used are described by Adam (1993).

## Acknowledgement

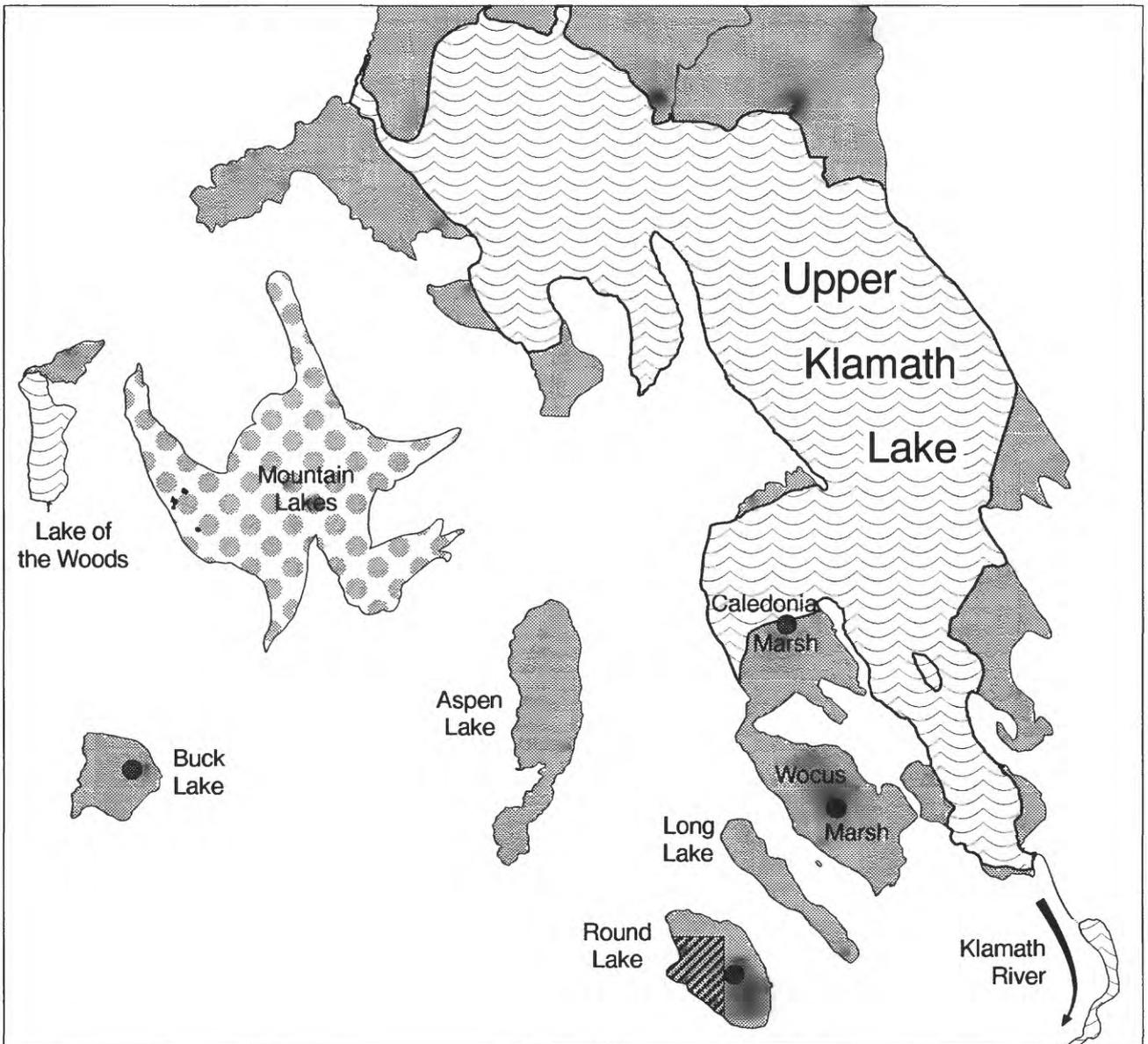
Coring at Round Lake was made possible by the gracious cooperation of Mr. Les Northcutt, the owner of the property.

## Site description

Round Lake is a broad open valley about 2.5 km wide and 5 km long that lies just west of the southern end of Upper Klamath Lake, Oregon (Figure 1), at an elevation of about 1300 meters. The basin is one of a series of northwest-southeast trending basins that also includes the Klamath graben and Long Lake. Regional bedrock consists of basalt and basaltic andesites of Pliocene and upper Miocene age (Walker and McLeod, 1991; Sherrod and Pickthorn, 1992). The eastern rim of the basin consists of low faulted blocks oriented NNW-SSE; the western side of the basin is formed by steeply-dipping normal fault scarps that extend up to 430 m above the present basin floor. The region is tectonically active; a series of earthquakes with Richter magnitudes up to 5.5 occurred within a few km of Round Lake in the fall of 1993, causing extensive damage in Klamath Falls (Sherrod, 1993; Dewey, 1993).

Portions of the Upper Klamath Lake drainage were heavily glaciated at times during the Pleistocene (Crandell, 1965). The Mountain Lakes Wilderness Area, about 15 km northwest of Round Lake, was glaciated during at least the most recent Pleistocene glacial interval (Carver, 1972), with the glaciers mostly confined to the north side of the peaks. Further north, the crest of the Cascades between Mt. McLaughlin and Mt. Mazama (now Crater Lake) was extensively glaciated. Although glacial runoff from both the Mountain Lakes and southern Cascade glaciers flowed into the Upper Klamath Lake basin, the Round Lake basin remained entirely unglaciated.

The floor of the basin has been modified for agriculture over the past several decades; a series of roads and drainage ditches allow access. According to Mr. Marvin Barrett (oral communication, 1994), a resident of Klamath Falls who was born at Round Lake in 1922 and grew up in the valley, the valley floor was much wetter than today until a 12-inch-diameter hole was drilled through the lacustrine deposits into the underlying permeable volcanics. That hole, together with a series of dikes and drainage ditches, allowed the local ranchers to control water levels in various parts of the valley floor, although the valley bottom is still waterlogged in the spring (Mrs. Les Northcutt, oral communication, 1991). More recently, the southwest quadrant of the valley floor has been diked off from the rest of the valley and used as a wildlife preserve by the State of Oregon (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.--** Map showing relationship of the Round Lake Valley to Upper Klamath Lake and nearby coring sites. Open-water lakes are shown by wave pattern, lake deposits by dark gray pattern, and extent of glaciation in the Mountain Lakes Wilderness Area by light gray dot pattern. Core sites are shown by dots. Cross-hatching in Round Lake indicates location of wildlife preserve.

The core location (Figure 1) was selected to be as close to the geographical center of the basin as we could safely move the heavy drill rig, well away from any edge effects. The lowest part of the valley floor, however, lies to the west of the drill site, and comprises most of the wildlife preserve; this can be clearly seen on color aerial photographs of Round Lake taken in 1980 (U.S.G.S. Project GS-VEYU-C, Roll 1, negatives 303 and 304).

**Core description**

A single 50-m core was taken at Round Lake between September 17th and 20th, 1991.

Drives 1 through 9 were taken using Shelby tubes; drives 10 through 41 were taken using conventional rotary drilling with a 3-inch diameter core barrel. Drilling was stopped when circulation of drilling mud was lost and could not be recovered.

### Core recovery

The depth interval drilled for each drive and the percent recovery are shown in Figure 2 and in Table 1. The Figure 2 column labeled "Drives" shows an unlabeled, shaded box for each drive recovered (drive 15 had zero recovery). The upper boundary represents the depth at which drilling began for that drive as reported by the driller, plus a possible adjustment to account for >100% recovery. These boxes are offset in an alternating pattern to facilitate comparison of the bottom of one drive with the top of the next drive. Immediately to the right of the "Drives" column, the "Slugs" column displays similar but labeled boxes that identify the drive, the slugs (A, and sometimes B and C) into which the drive was divided for storage, and the thickness of sediment actually recovered. In addition, some drives are plotted using a vertical offset that compensates for apparent overlap between drives (see example below). The data used are shown in Table 1.

As an example, consider drives 31 and 32. Drive 31 extended from a starting depth of 25.25 m to a bottom depth of 28.30 meters, recovering 2.37 meters of sediment from an interval 3.05 m thick, for a recovery of 77.7% (Table 1). Drive 32 extended from 28.30 to 31.35 m and recovered 3.13 m of sediment from a 3.05-m-thick interval, for a recovery of 102.7%. The "extra" recovery for drive 32 is assumed to represent material left in the hole when drive 31 was recovered. Similar overlaps are found between drives 24 and 25, and 39 and 40. However, the total amount of sediment recovered from the hole, as shown in the "Slugs" column, can be accommodated within the total depth drilled if adjustments are made to the top depths of selected drives. The adjustment for drive 32 is -1.29 m, as shown in the column labeled "Offset" (Table 1). The offset is added to the driller's depth for the top of the drive to produce a calculated depth for the top of the drive. The depths shown on the lithologic logs in Appendices B and C are based on the calculated depths for the tops of the drives.

### Dating

Age control is derived from tephra layers identified in the core (Table 2). The section is of Pleistocene and Holocene age. The match of Sample 3475 with the Rio Dell ash bed we assume is fortuitous, based on the identification near the base of the Round Lake core of several ash beds known or strongly suspected to be younger than the Rio Dell ash bed. One of these (Sample 3483) matches our Sample 542, which comes from a depth of 125.7 m in the Tulelake core and has an estimated age of 1.36 Ma (Rieck and others, 1992). Bracketing sample 3483 is a group of tephra that appear to correlate with a similar group of tephra found at the base of the Wocus Marsh core, about 7 km to the northeast (Adam and others, 1994). The presence of the Rockland ash bed at a depth of 27-28 meters in the Wocus Marsh core is reasonably consistent with the ~1.3-1.4 Ma age implied for the base of the core by tephra correlations with the Round Lake and Tulelake cores. Why the Rockland ash bed is not found in the Round Lake core is not clear; perhaps it corresponds to one of the gaps in the core.

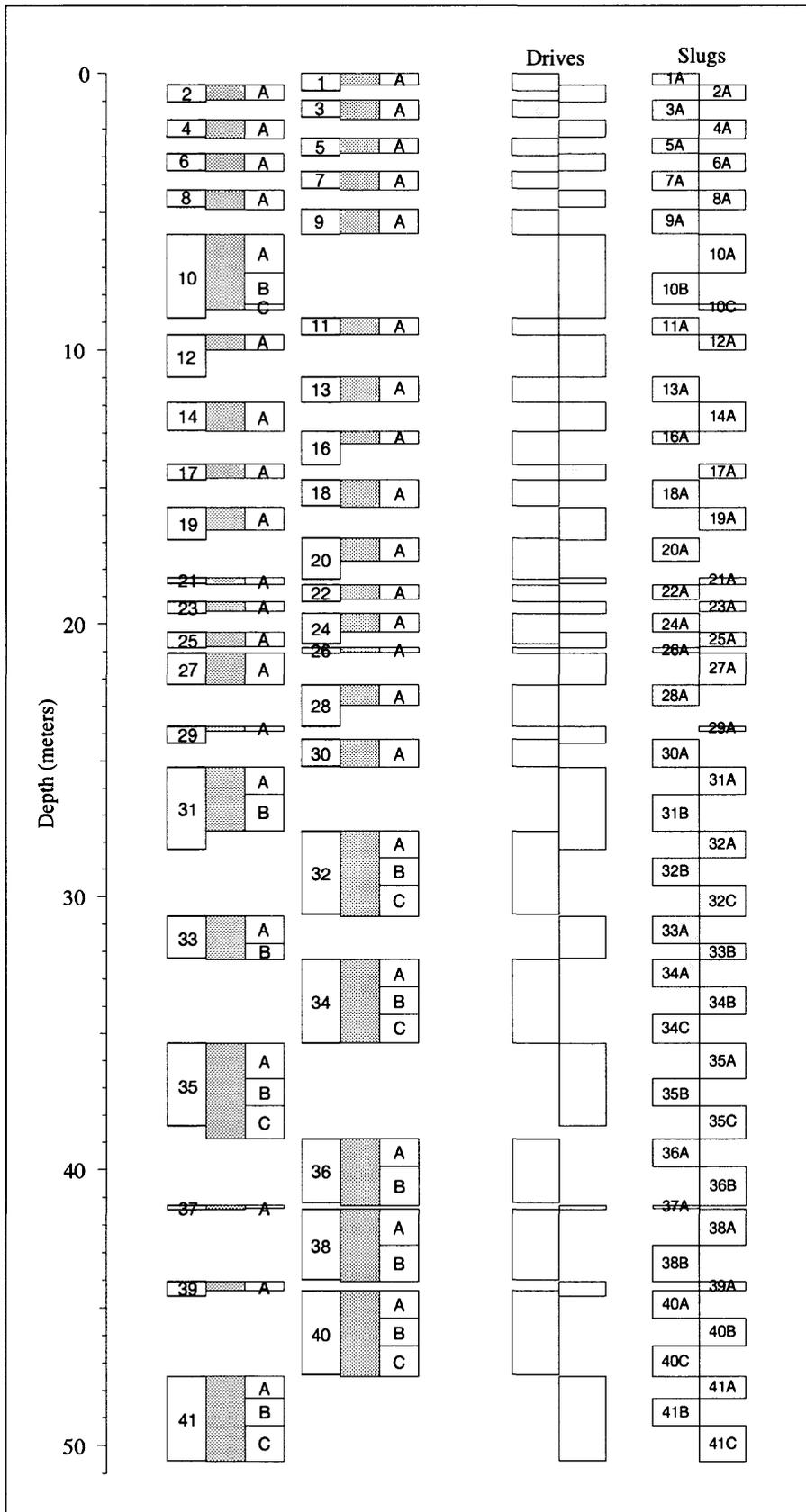


Figure 2.-- Core recovery for Round Lake core.

## Lithology

A very generalized lithology of the section is shown in Figure 3; a detailed lithologic log for is shown in Appendix B, using the patterns shown in Appendix A. Depths are shown in meters from the ground surface. Each stratigraphic unit is described to the right of the stratigraphic column. Most descriptions were taken from the fresh cores in the field, but some further descriptions were done in the laboratory. Color codes are taken from the Rock Color Chart distributed by the Geological Society of America (Rock Color Chart Committee, 1948).

The overall lithology of the section is characterized by open-water lake muds below a depth of about 25 meters, overlain by 25 meters of very tight clays that appear to represent deposits of an intermittent lake or swamp. Coring in the upper half of the section was difficult and core recovery was not as complete as in the lower half of the core.

The record indicates that the Round Lake basin has existed for at least the past one million years. The shift from perennial to ephemeral lake deposits is tentatively attributed to a drop in the regional water table caused by downcutting of the Klamath River across a hydrologic barrier at Long Point. Study of the climatic record preserved in the cores will help to separate the effects of climate on sediment type from possible tectonic effects on the connection between the Round Lake sub-basin and the rest of the Upper Klamath Lake drainage.

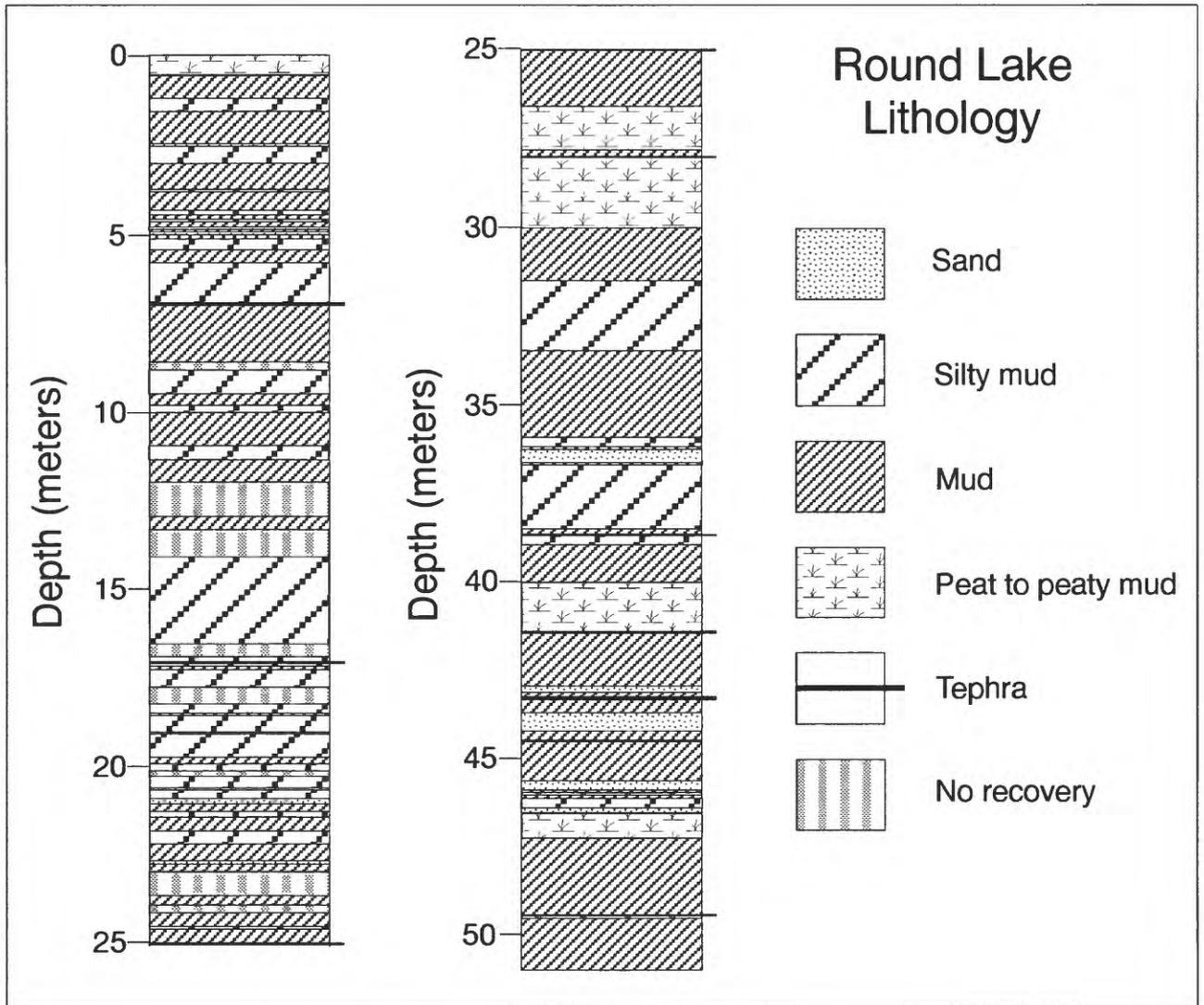
**Table 1.--Drive data for Round Lake Core 1**

Drive number	Driller's Depth (m)		Recovery		Offset	Calculated depth for top of drive (m)
	Top	Bottom	meters	Percent		
1	0.00	0.61	0.41	67.2	0.00	0.00
2	0.61	1.22	0.55	90.2	-0.20	0.41
3	1.22	1.83	0.71	115.6	-0.26	0.96
4	1.83	2.44	0.68	111.5	-0.16	1.67
5	2.44	3.05	0.53	86.9	-0.10	2.34
6	3.05	3.66	0.64	105.0	-0.17	2.88
7	3.66	4.27	0.67	109.9	-0.14	3.52
8	4.27	4.88	0.70	114.8	-0.08	4.19
9	4.88	5.79	0.89	97.3	0.00	4.88
10	5.79	8.84	2.75	90.2	0.00	5.79
11	8.84	9.45	0.61	100.0	0.00	8.84
12	9.45	10.98	0.54	35.4	0.00	9.45
13	10.98	11.89	0.90	98.4	0.00	10.00
14	11.89	12.91	1.05	103.3	0.00	10.91
15	12.91	14.13	0.00	0.0	0.00	12.91
16	12.91	14.13	0.46	37.7	0.03	12.91
17	14.13	14.71	0.51	87.3	0.00	14.13
18	14.71	15.65	1.00	106.4	0.00	14.71
19	15.65	16.84	0.84	70.3	0.06	15.71
20	16.84	18.37	0.85	55.8	0.00	16.84
21	18.37	18.57	0.25	123.0	-0.05	18.32
22	18.57	19.18	0.53	86.9	0.00	18.57
23	19.18	19.61	0.36	83.3	-0.10	19.08

24	19.61	20.71	0.68	62.2	-0.17	19.44
25	20.30	20.86	0.52	92.9	0.00	20.30
26	20.86	21.06	0.18	90.0	0.00	20.86
27	21.06	22.21	1.16	100.9	-0.01	21.06
28	22.21	23.73	0.76	49.9	0.00	22.21
29	23.73	24.34	0.18	29.5	0.00	23.73
30	24.26	25.25	1.02	103.0	-0.06	24.21
31	25.25	28.30	2.37	77.7	-0.03	25.25
32	28.30	31.35	3.13	102.7	-0.71	27.62
33	31.35	32.88	1.58	103.6	-0.63	30.75
34	32.88	35.92	3.05	100.0	-0.58	32.35
35	35.92	38.97	3.53	115.8	-0.57	35.39
36	38.97	41.29	2.42	104.7	-0.09	38.97
37	41.29	41.44	0.14	93.3	0.01	41.39
38	41.44	43.98	2.61	102.7	0.00	41.53
39	43.98	44.49	0.32	63.0	0.07	44.14
40	44.49	47.54	3.12	102.3	-0.11	44.46
41	47.54	50.58	3.08	101.0	-0.04	47.58

**Table 2.--Analyzed tephra from Round Lake**

<u>Sample Number</u>	<u>Tephra layer</u>	<u>Depth (m)</u>	<u>Age</u>
3469	Paoha Island (Mono Lake) ash bed	6.78-6.85	160-180 ka
3475	Rio Dell ash bed lookalike	25.11-25.12	1.5 Ma
3477	previously undescribed	38.69-38.70	?
3479	may match samples 3367 and 3368 in Wocus Marsh core	41.30-41.33	?
3480	may match samples 3368, 3467, and 3468 in Wocus Marsh core	44.22-44.25	?
3483	matches Sample 542 in Tulelake core and samples 61484-45 and 61484-47 at Topsy Reservoir	49.51-49.55	1.36 Ma
3484	may match samples 3367, 3467, and 3468 in Wocus Marsh core	49.94-49.95	<1.45 Ma



**Figure 3.--** Generalized Lithology of the Round Lake core.

## References Cited

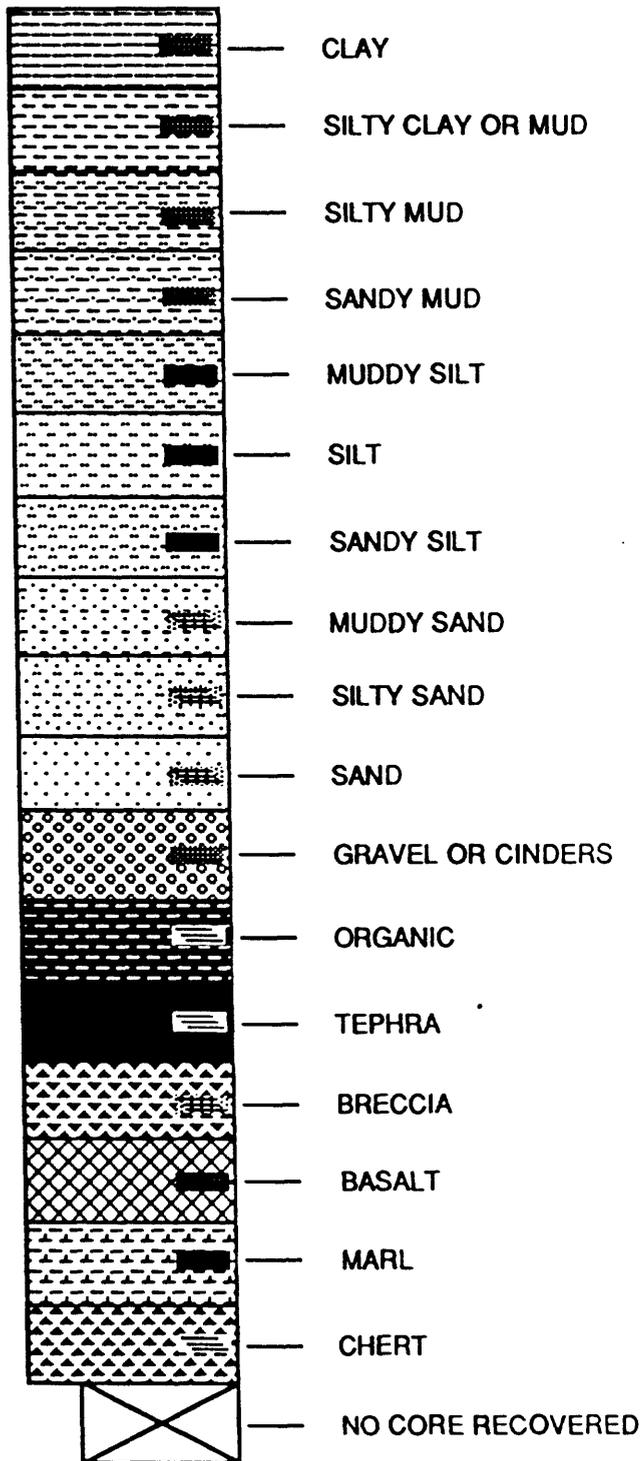
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## Appendix A

### Legend showing patterns used for Lithologic Logs

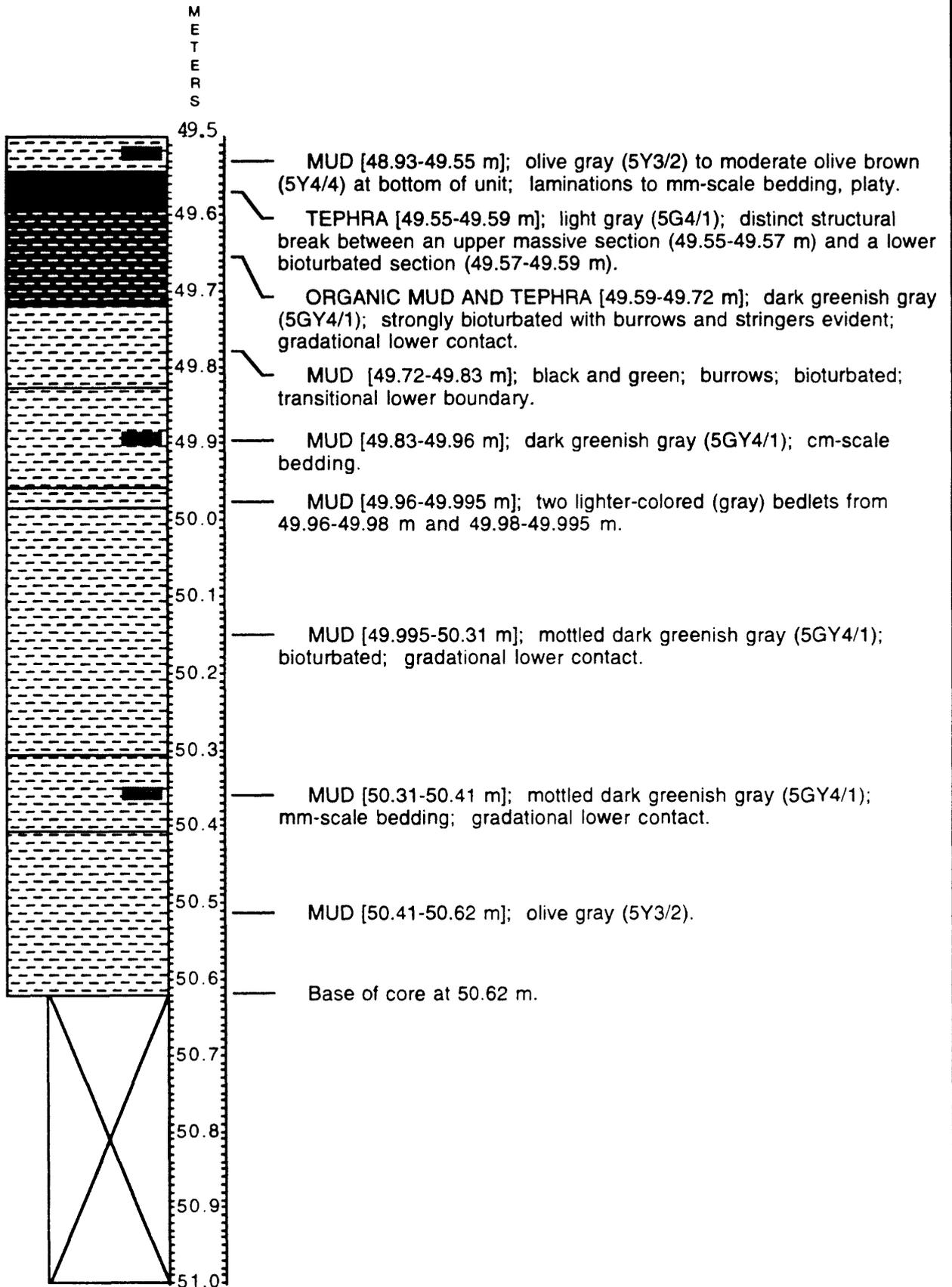
Small box inset within each pattern is used to indicate laminations within the unit (see written descriptions for more detail).

# KEY TO LITHOLOGIES AND LAMINATION SYMBOL

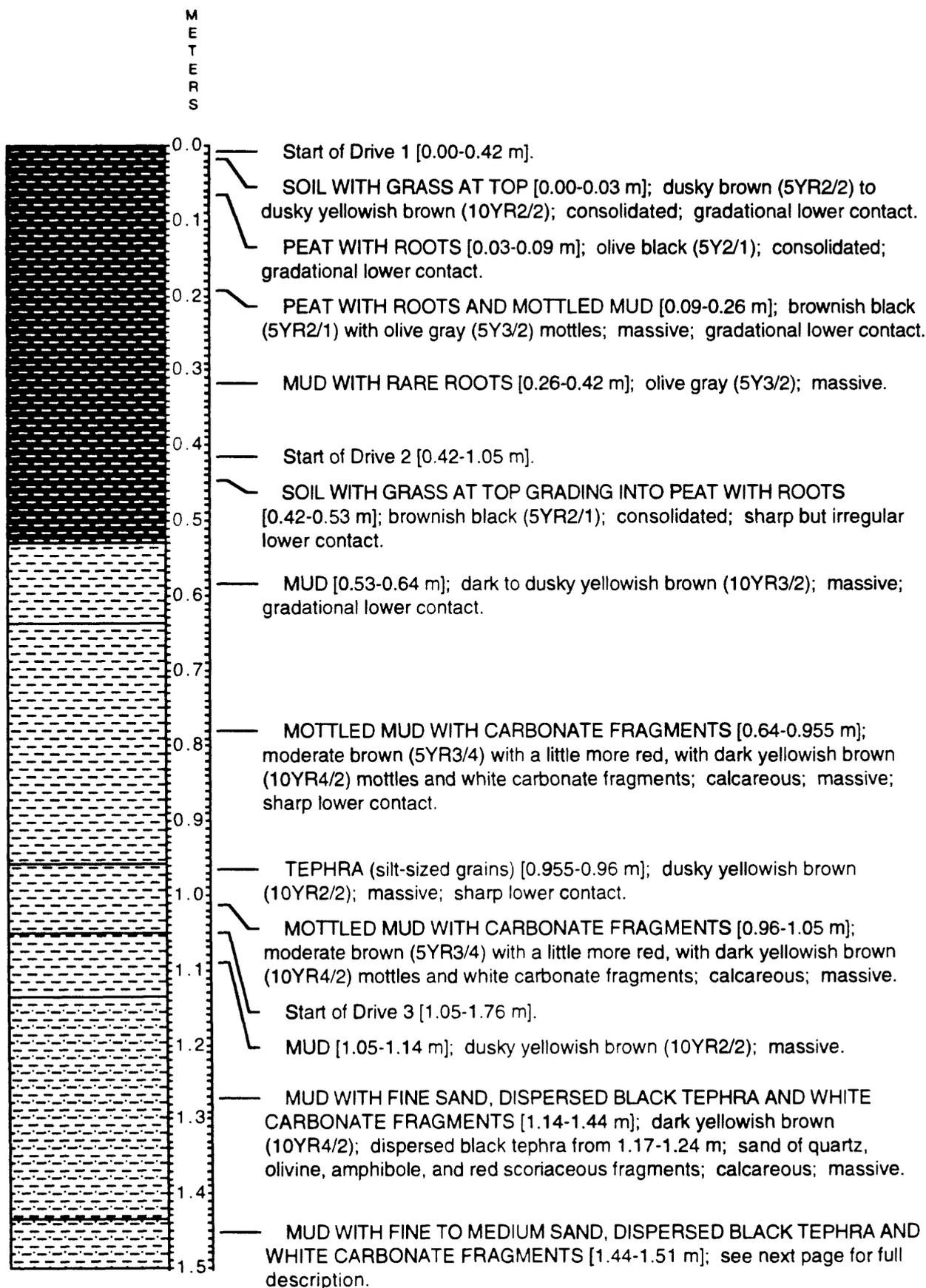


**Appendix B**  
**Lithologic Log**

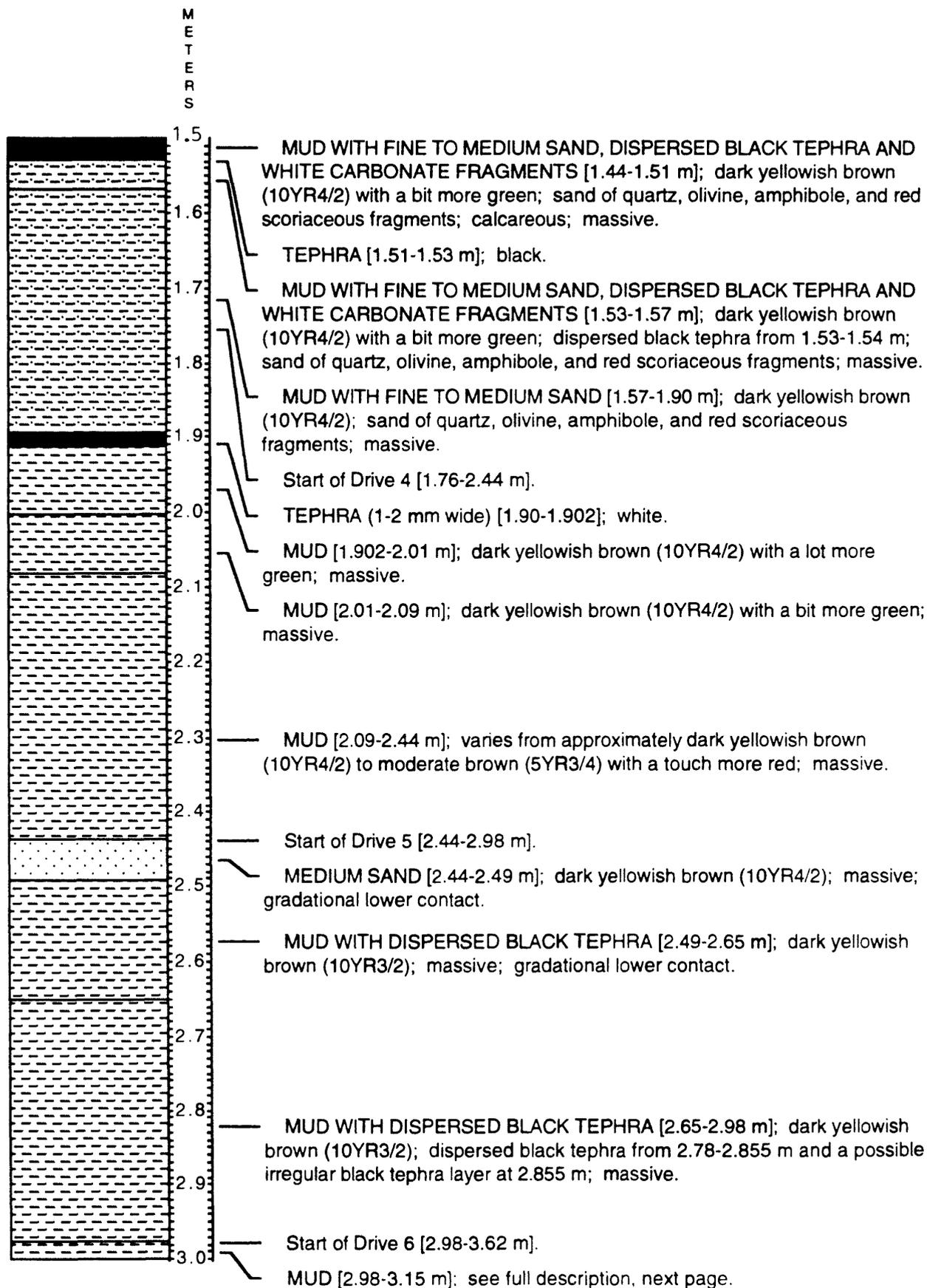
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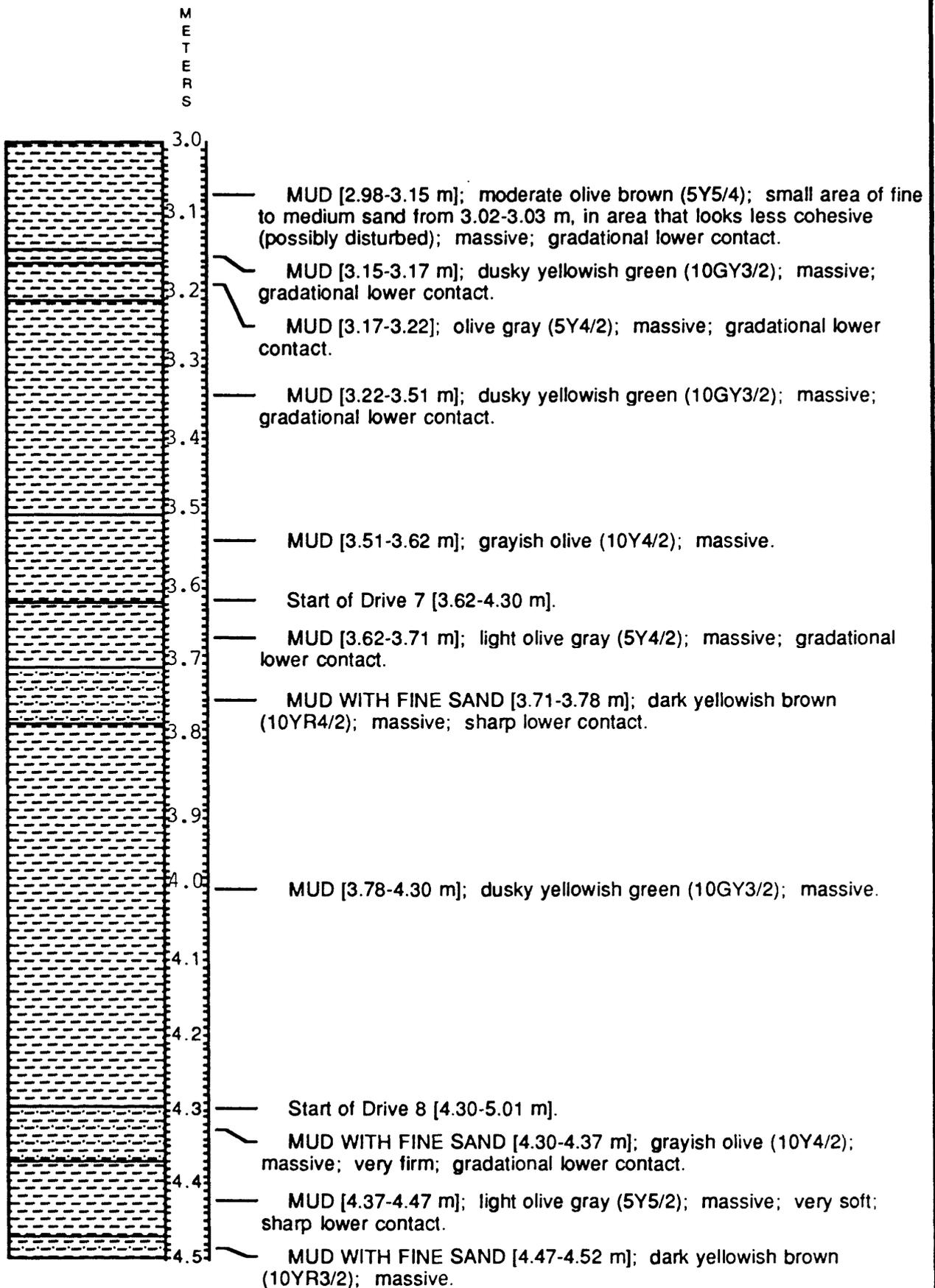
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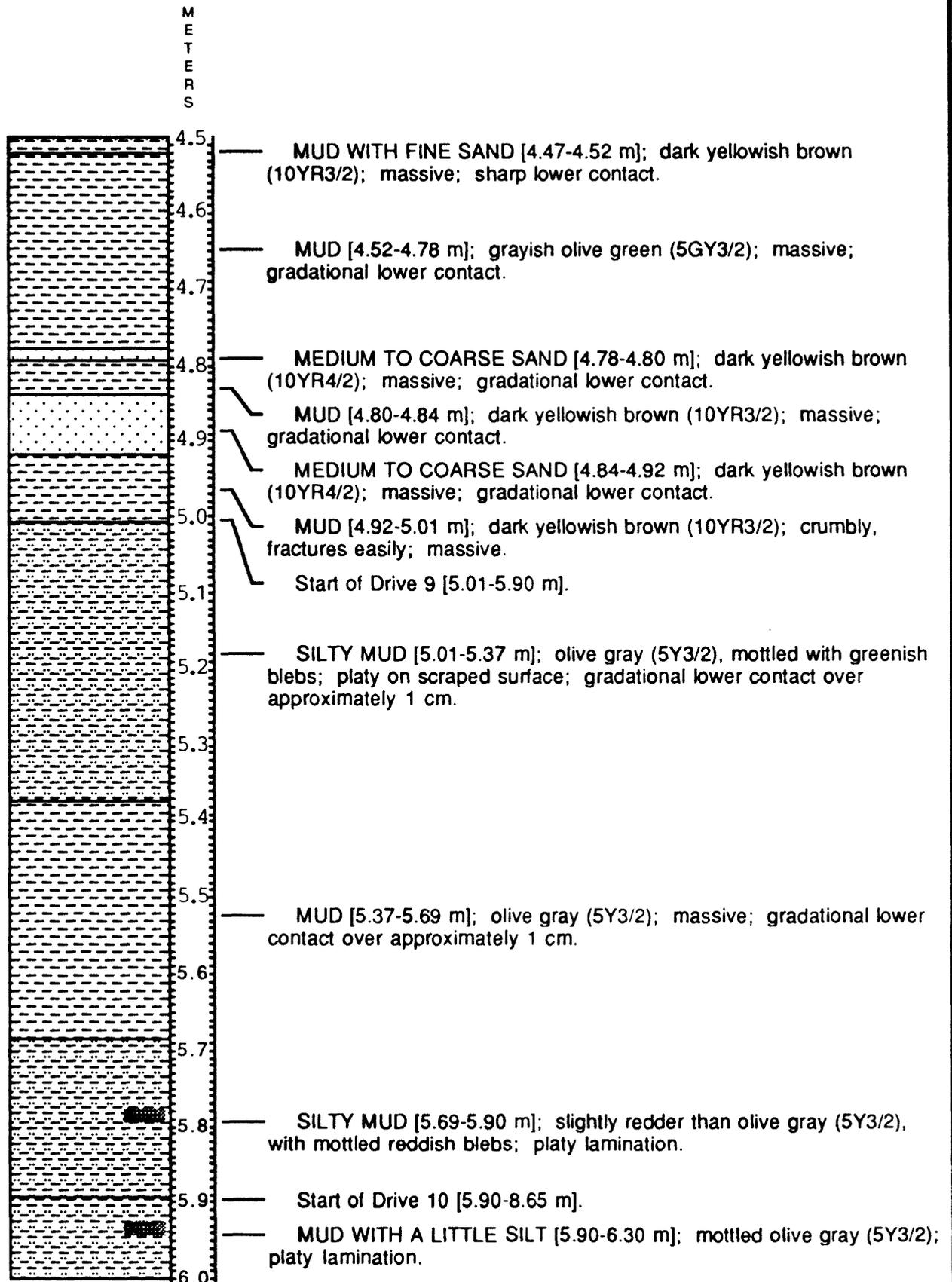
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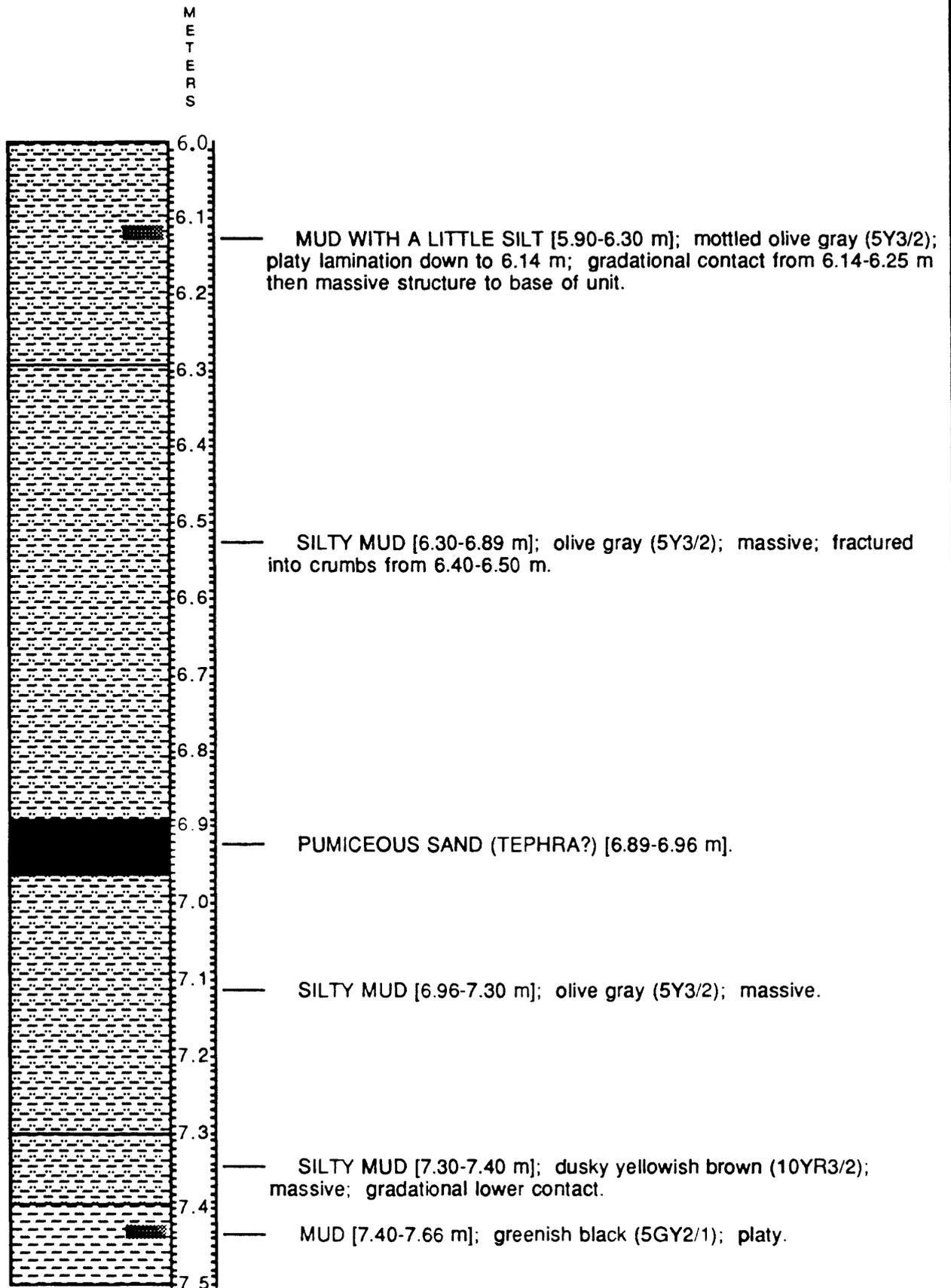
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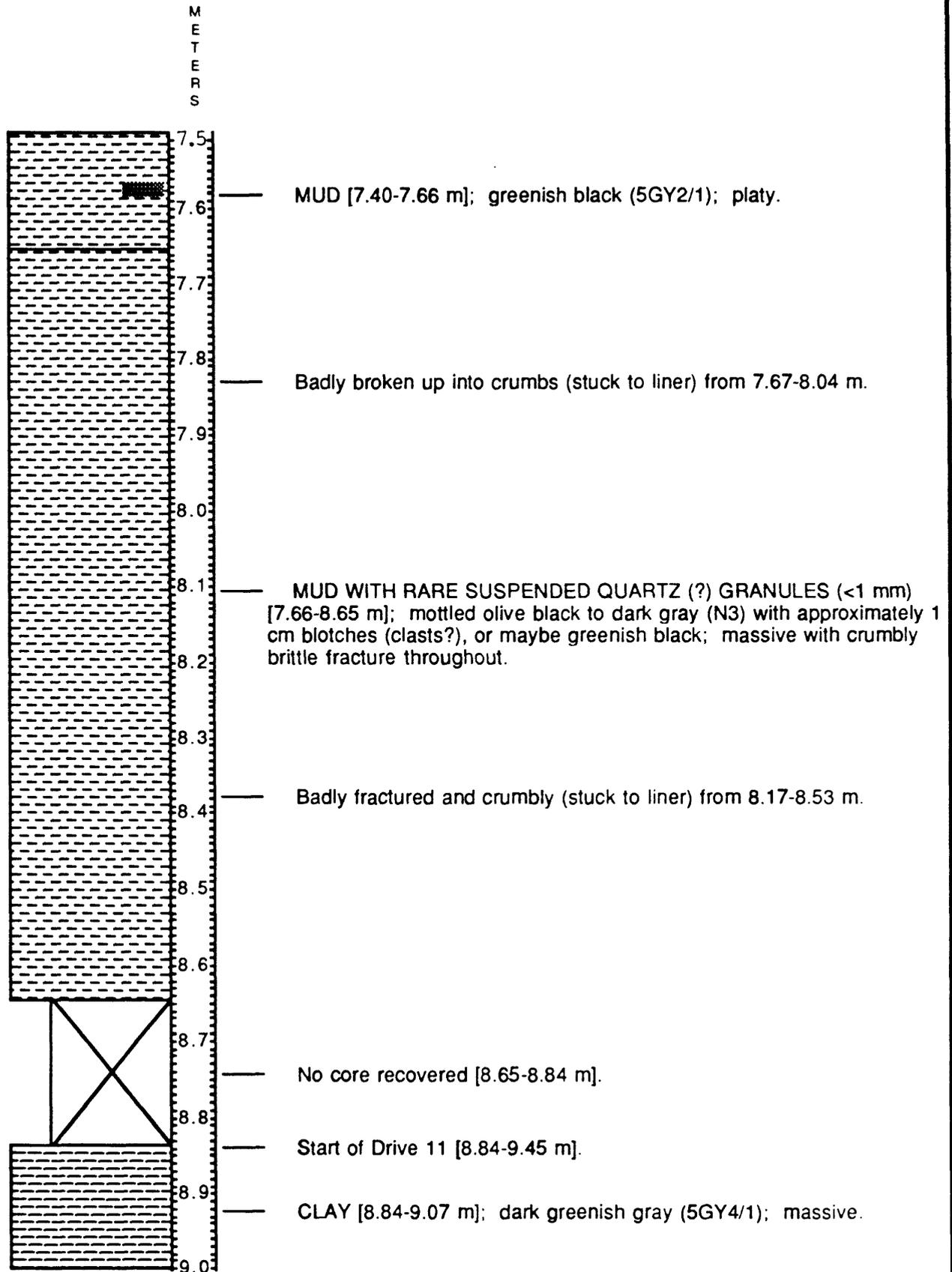
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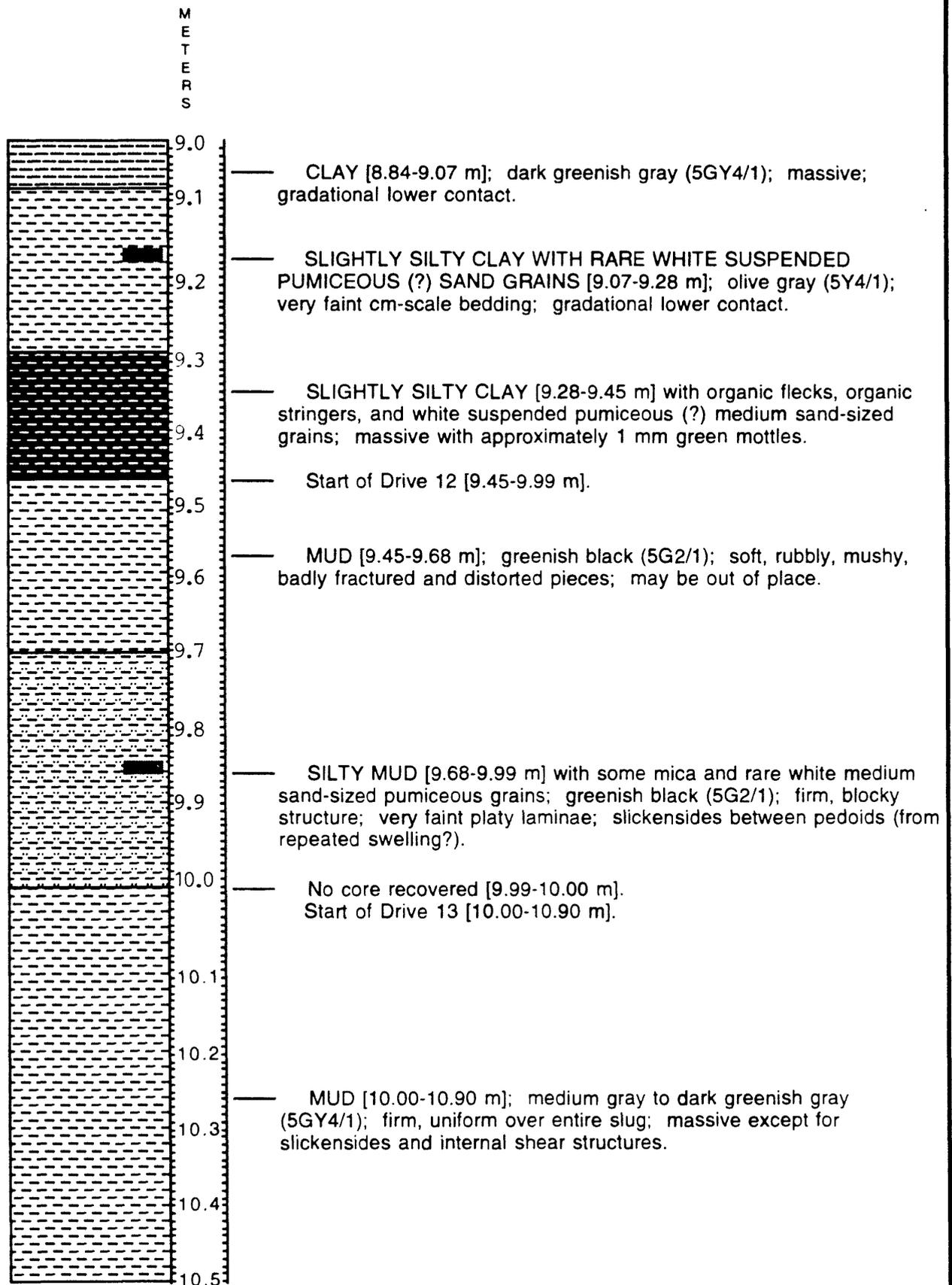
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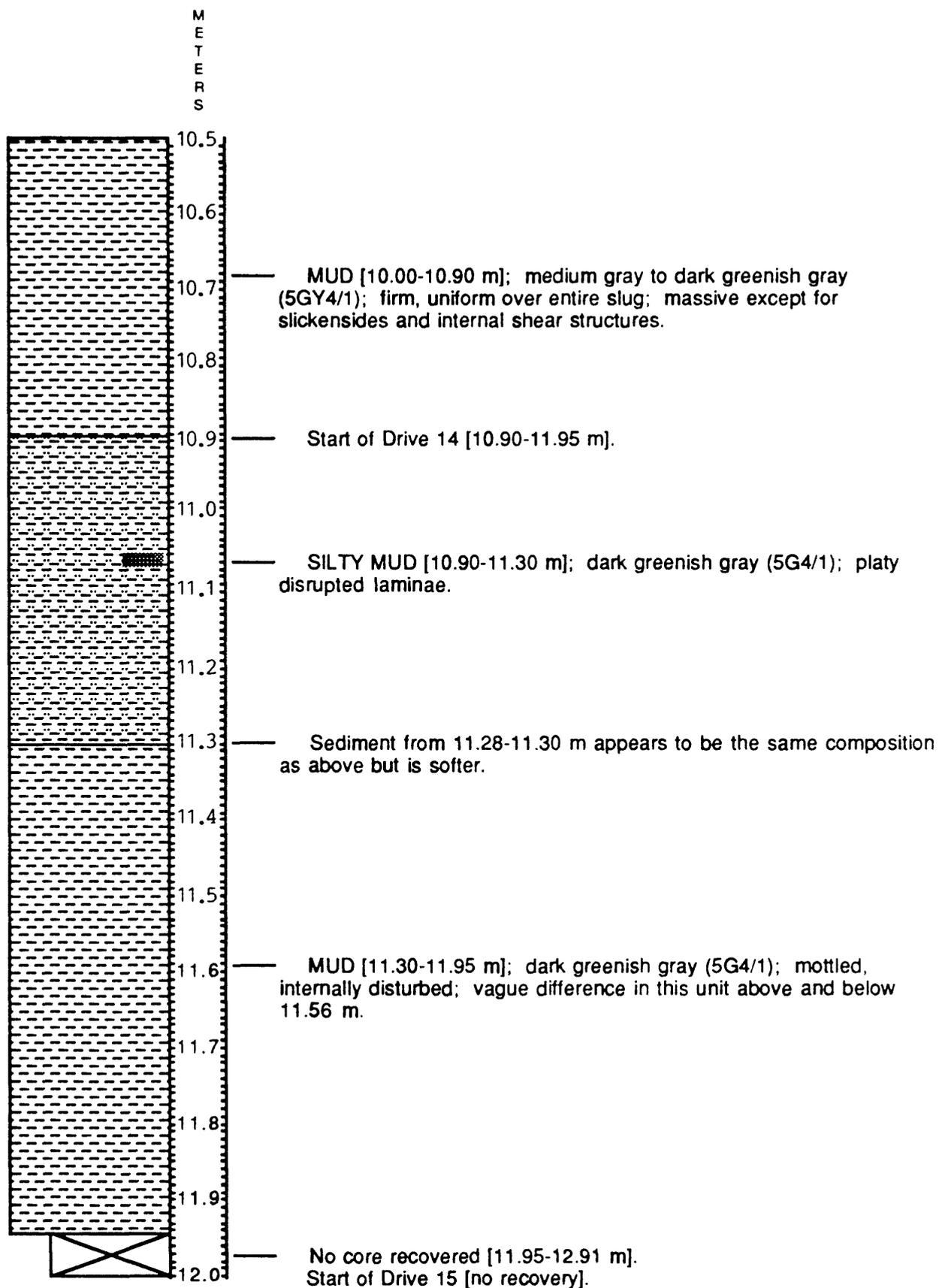
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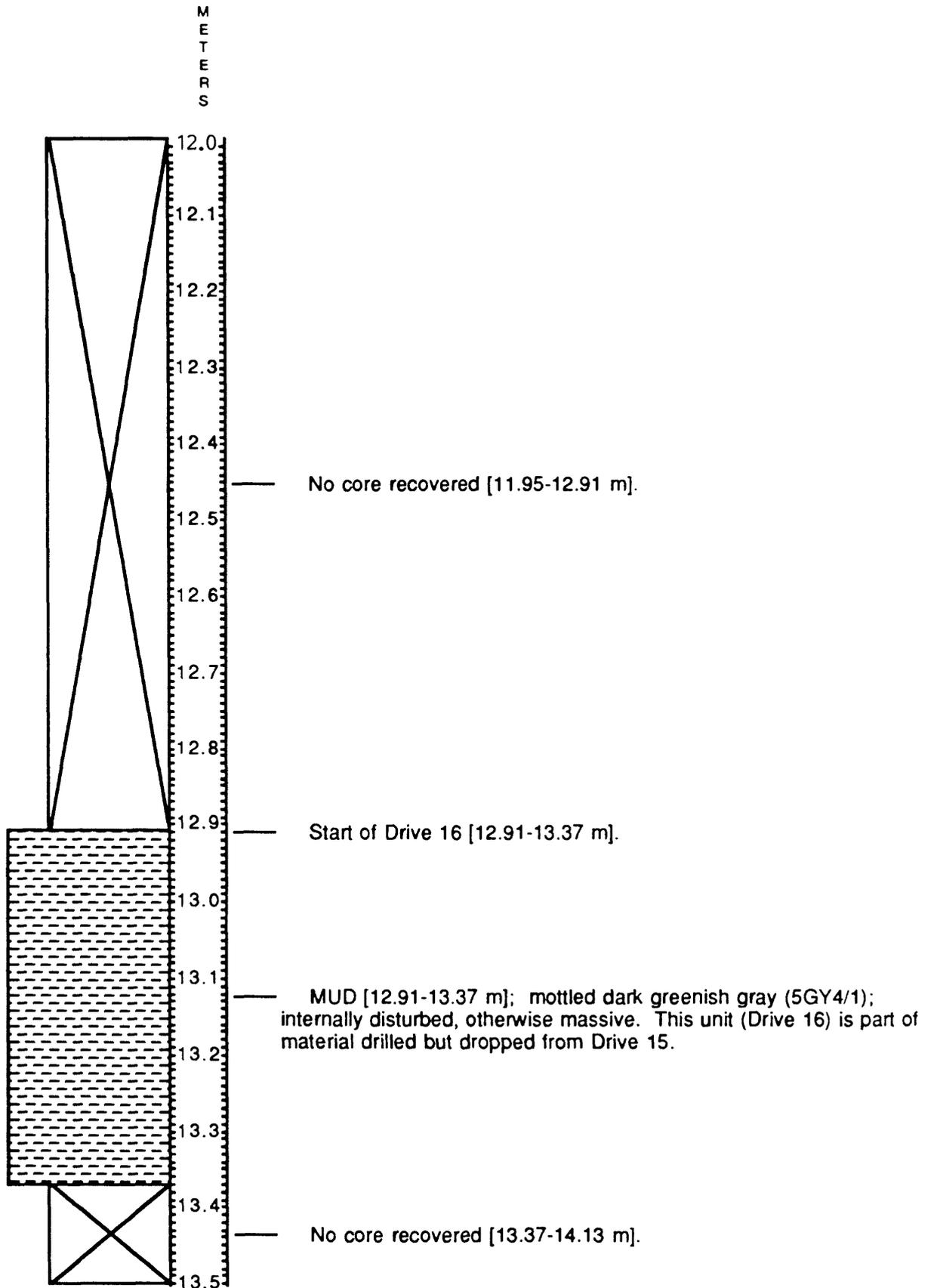
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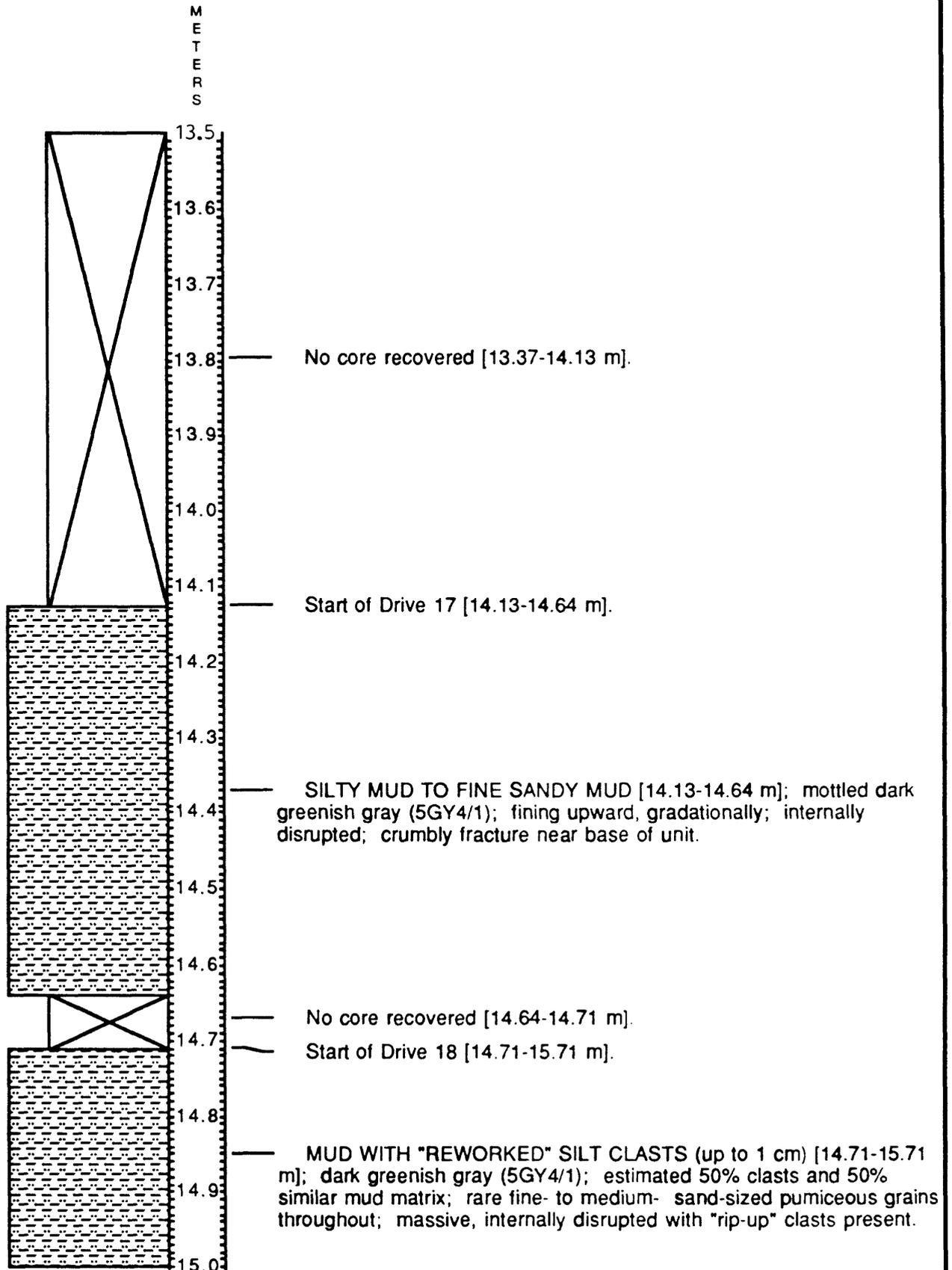
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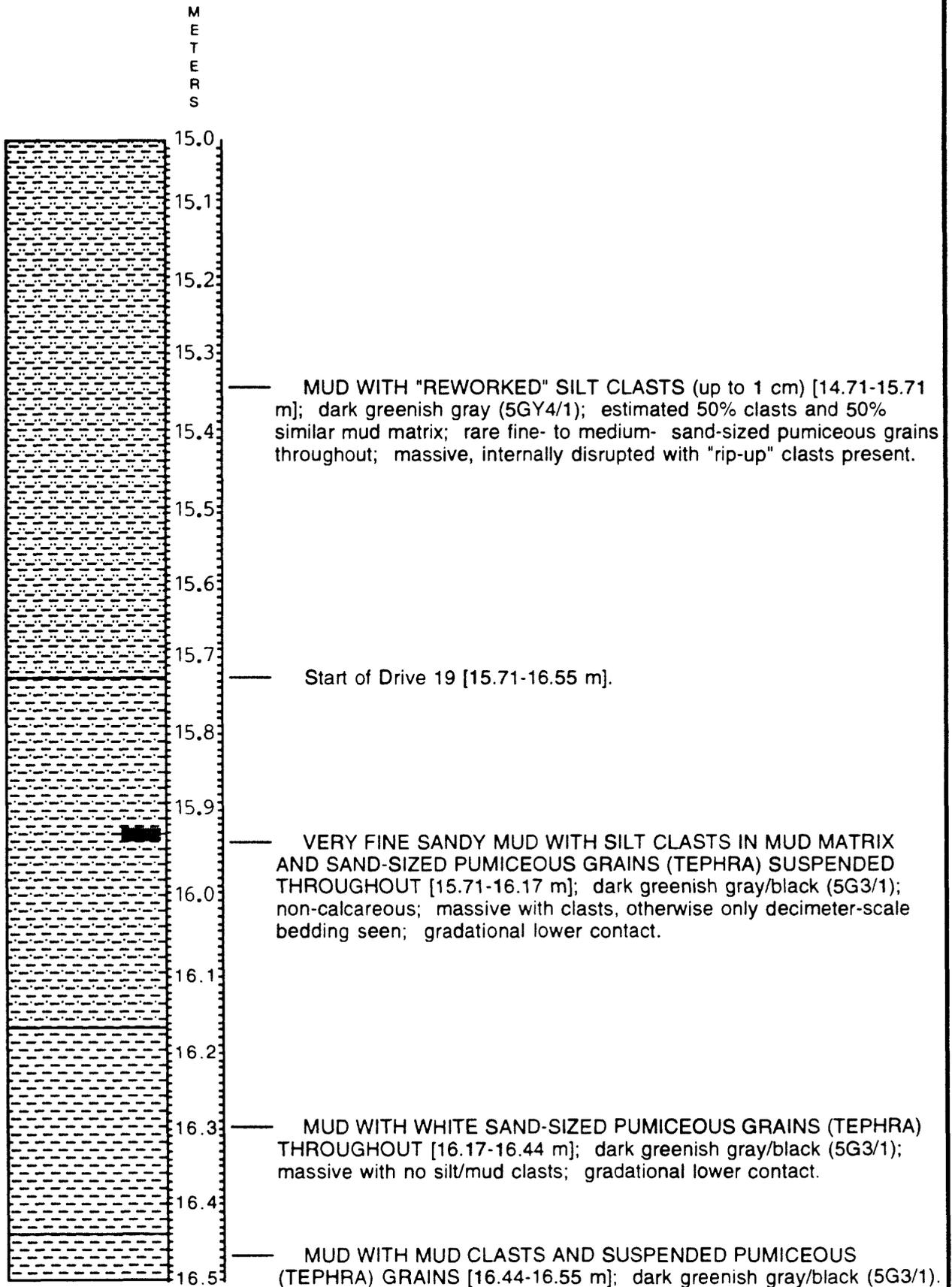
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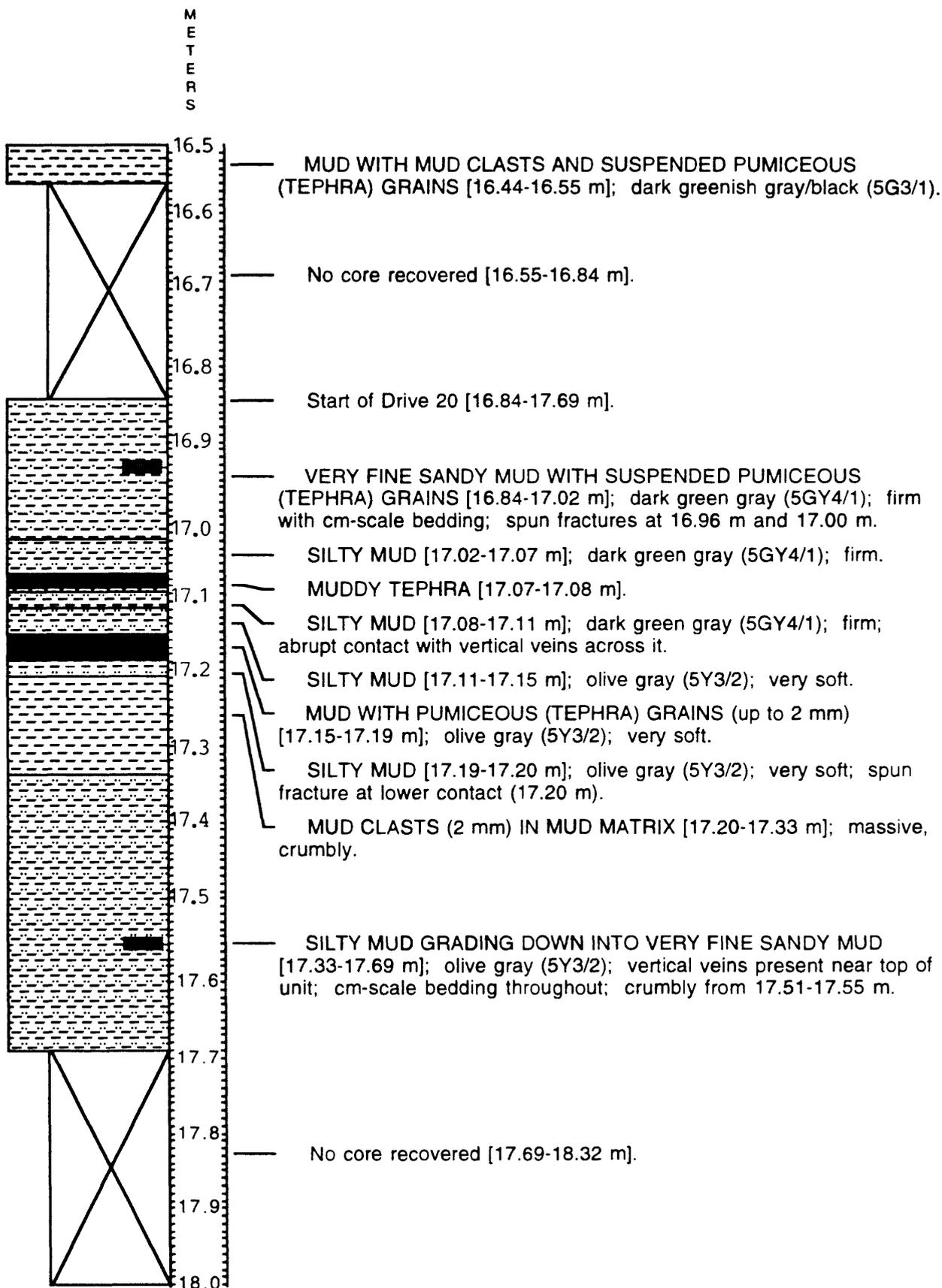
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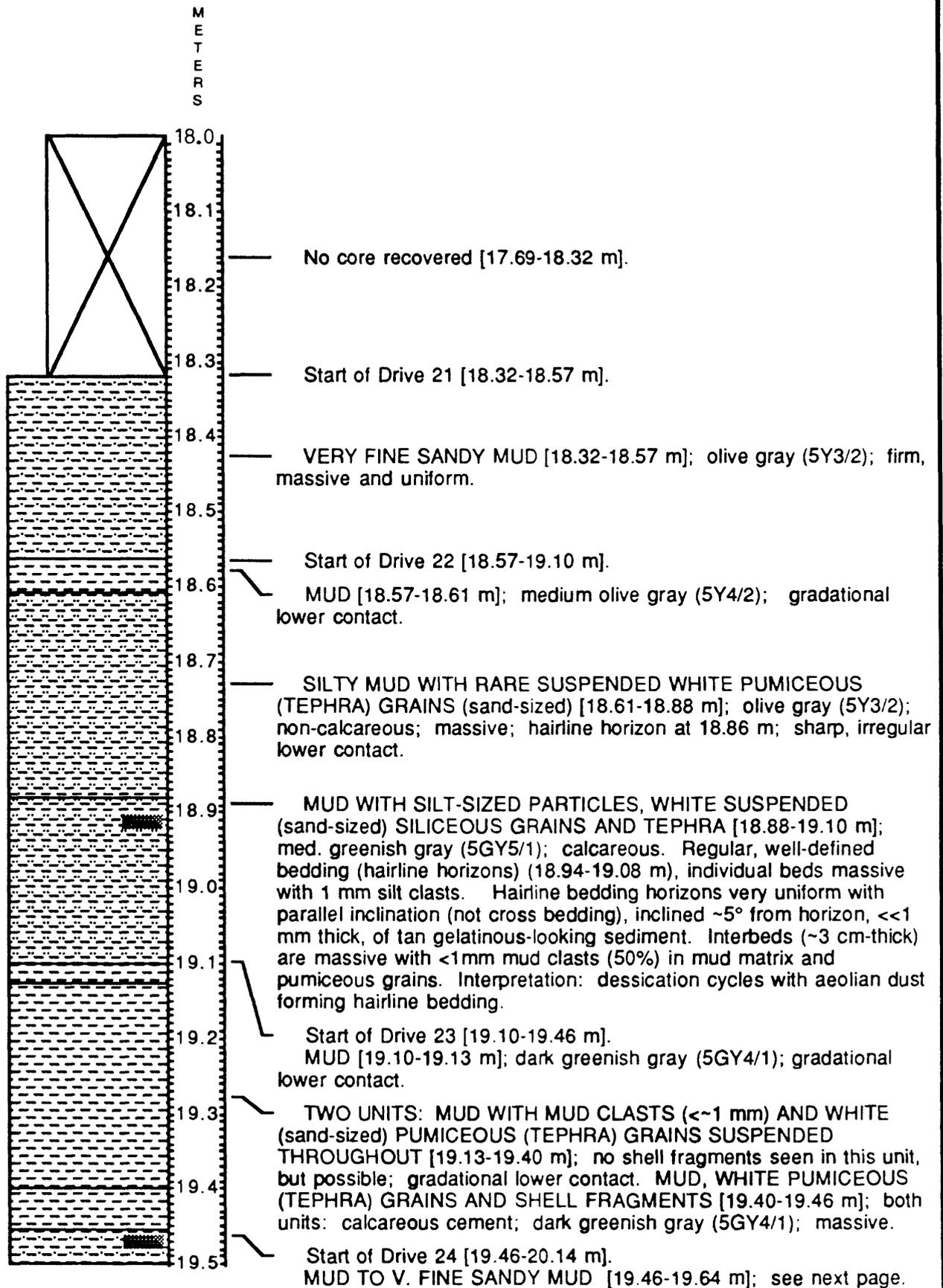
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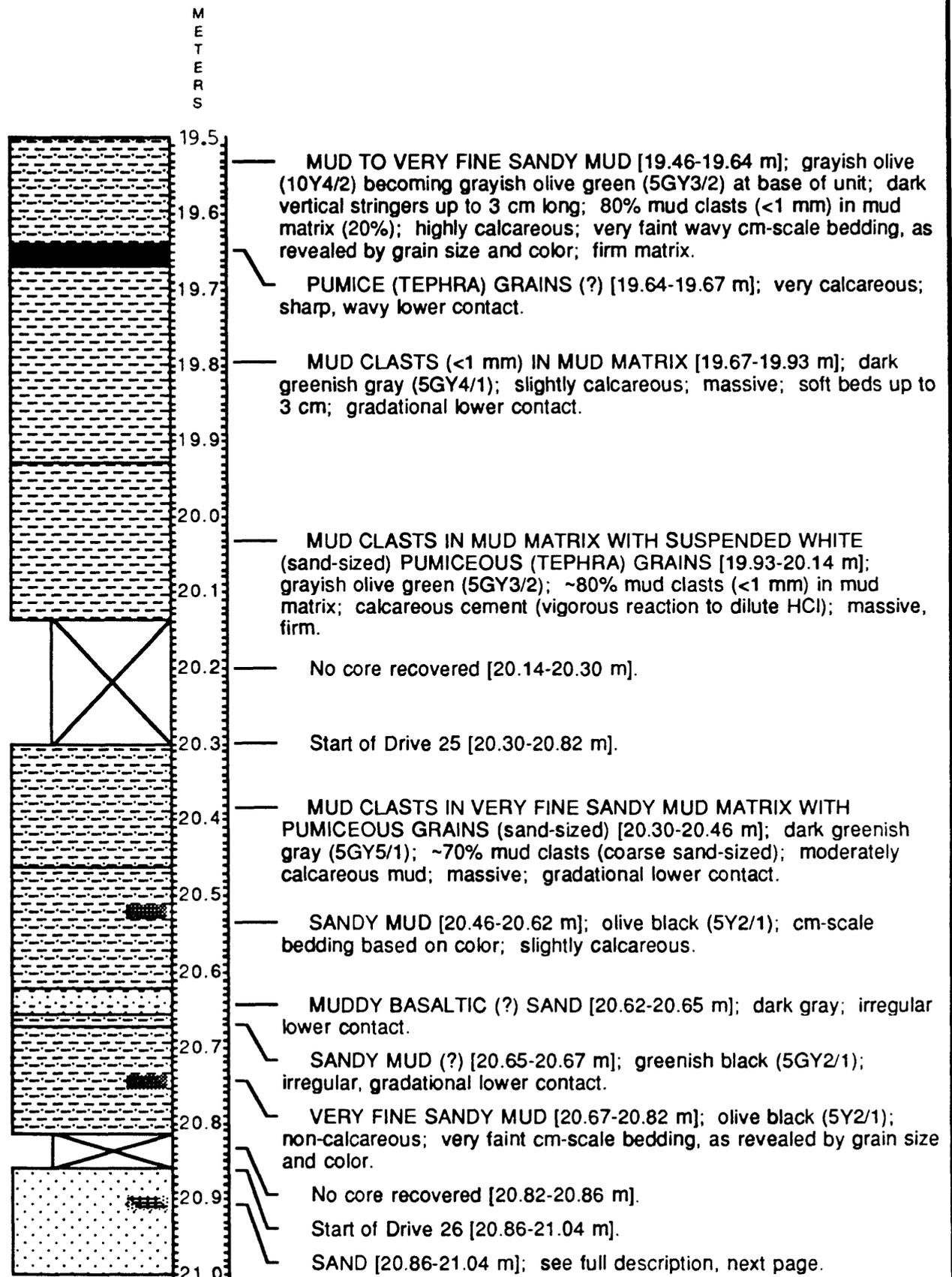
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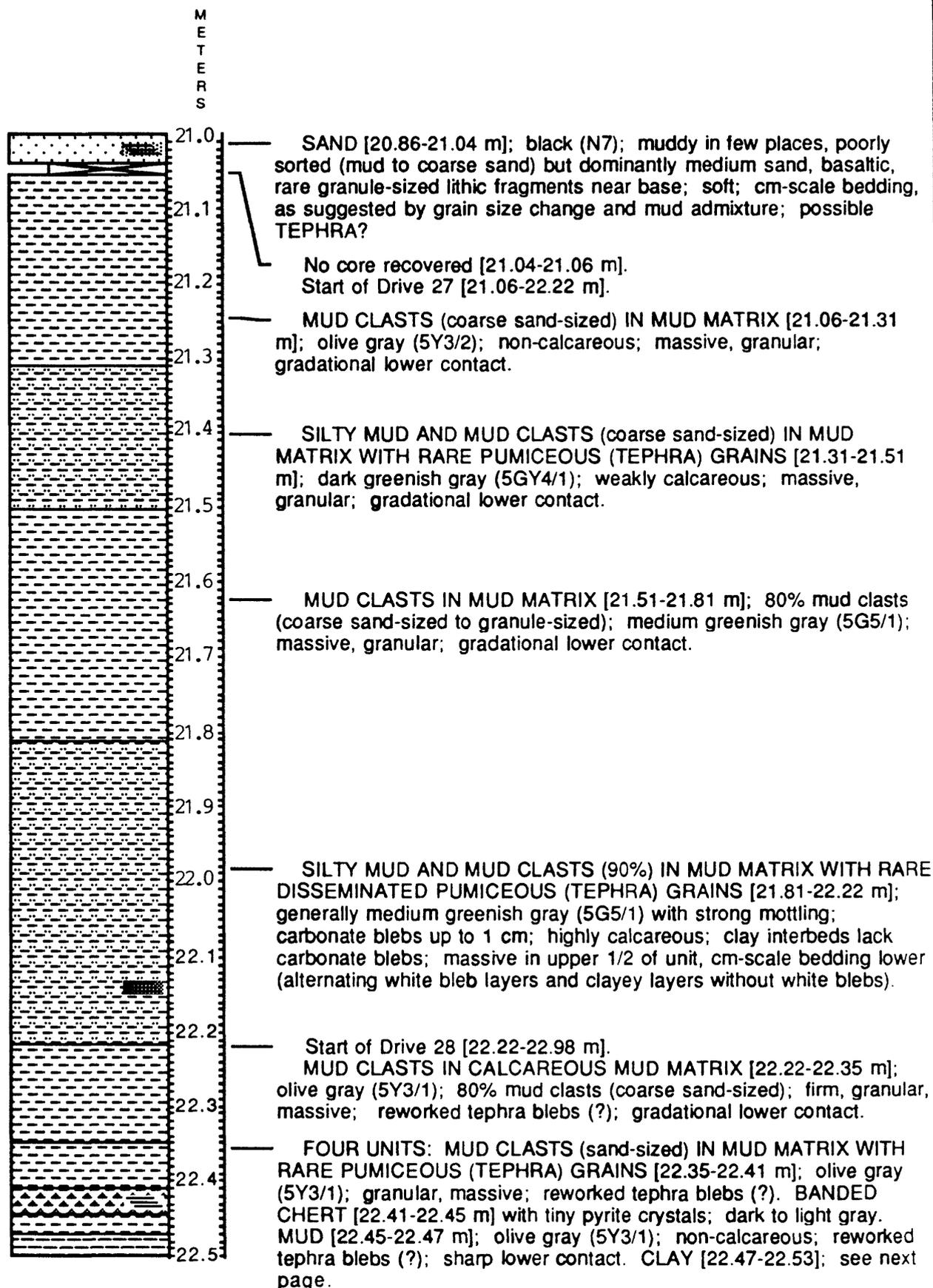
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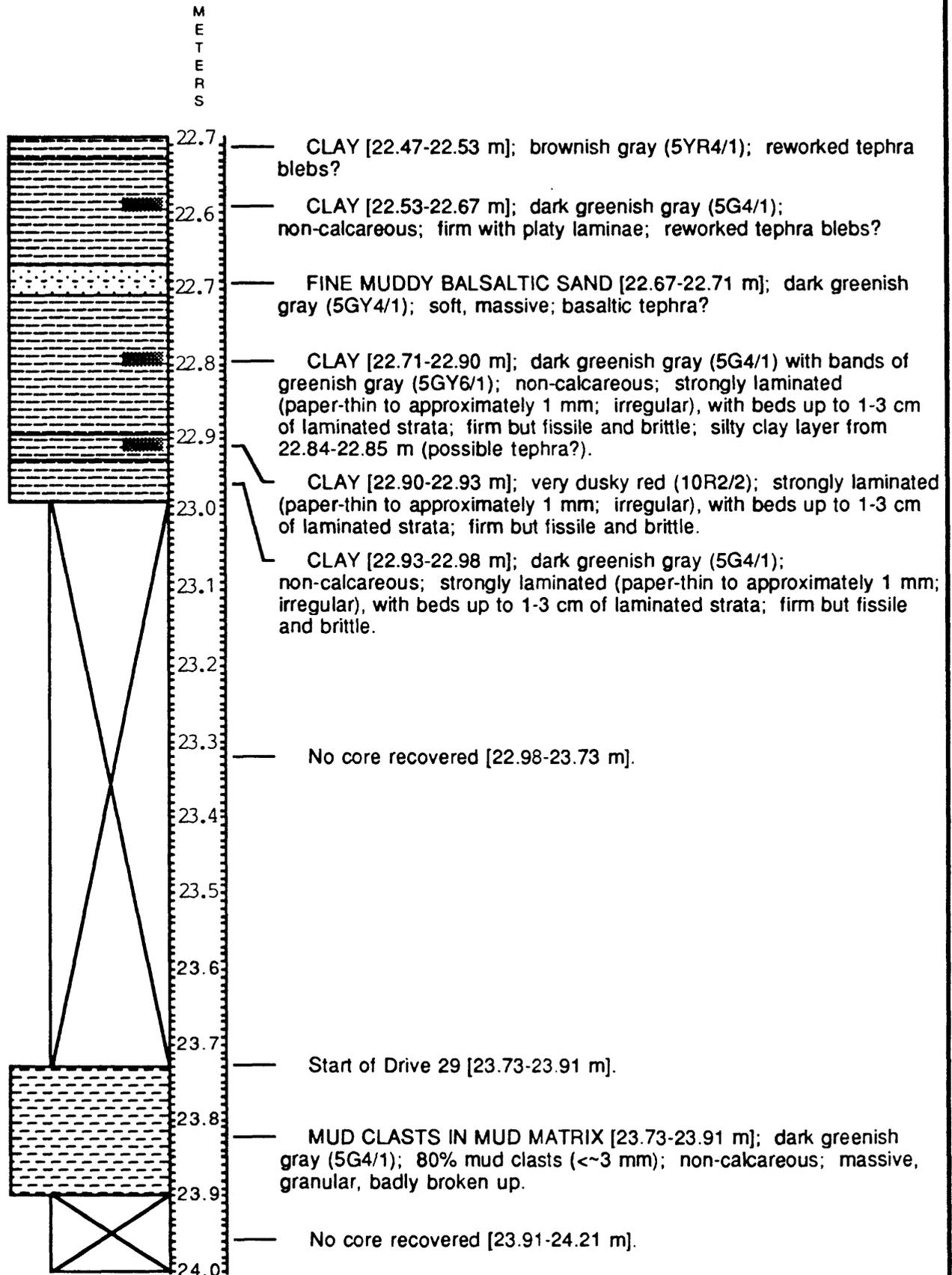
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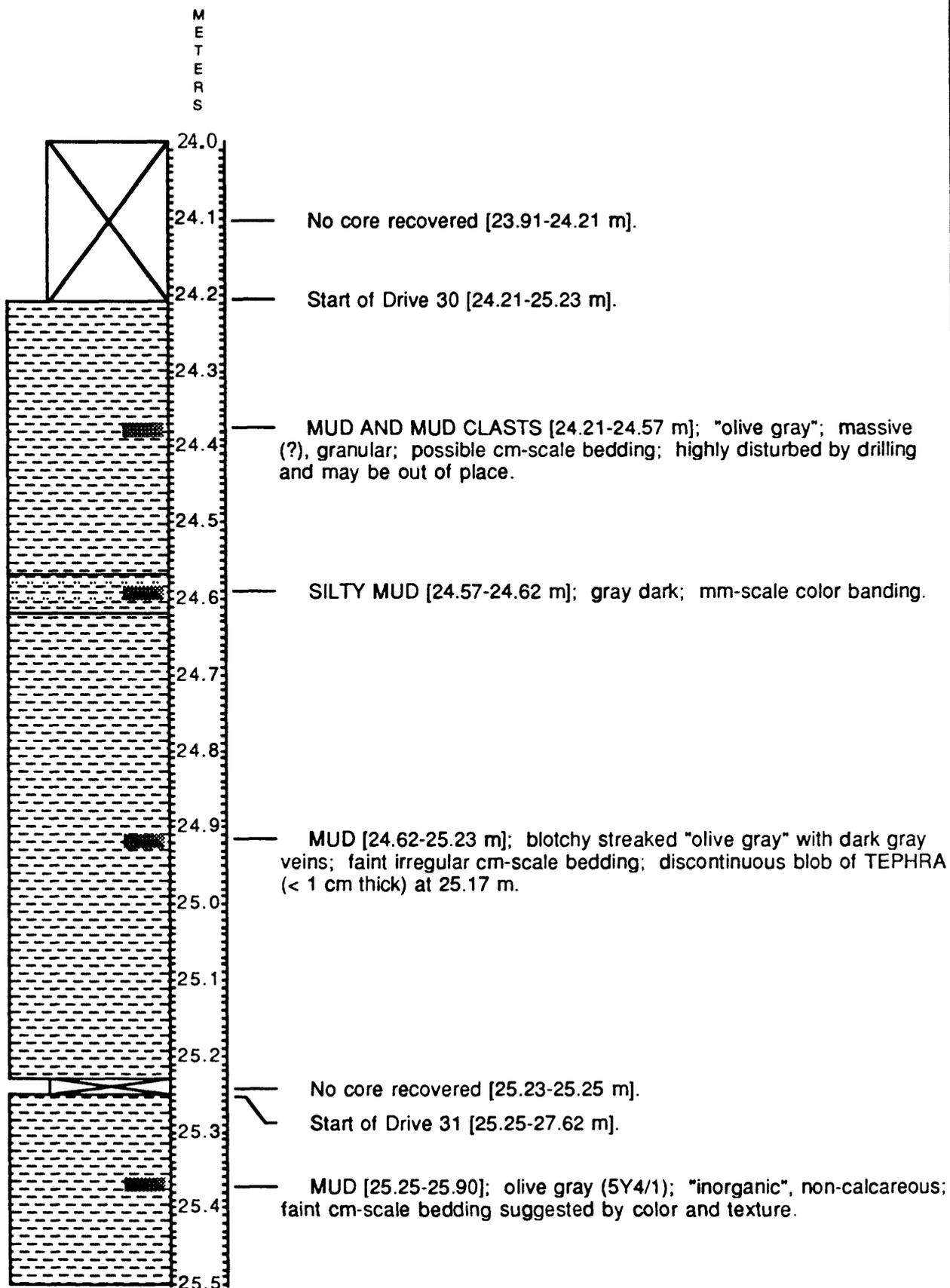
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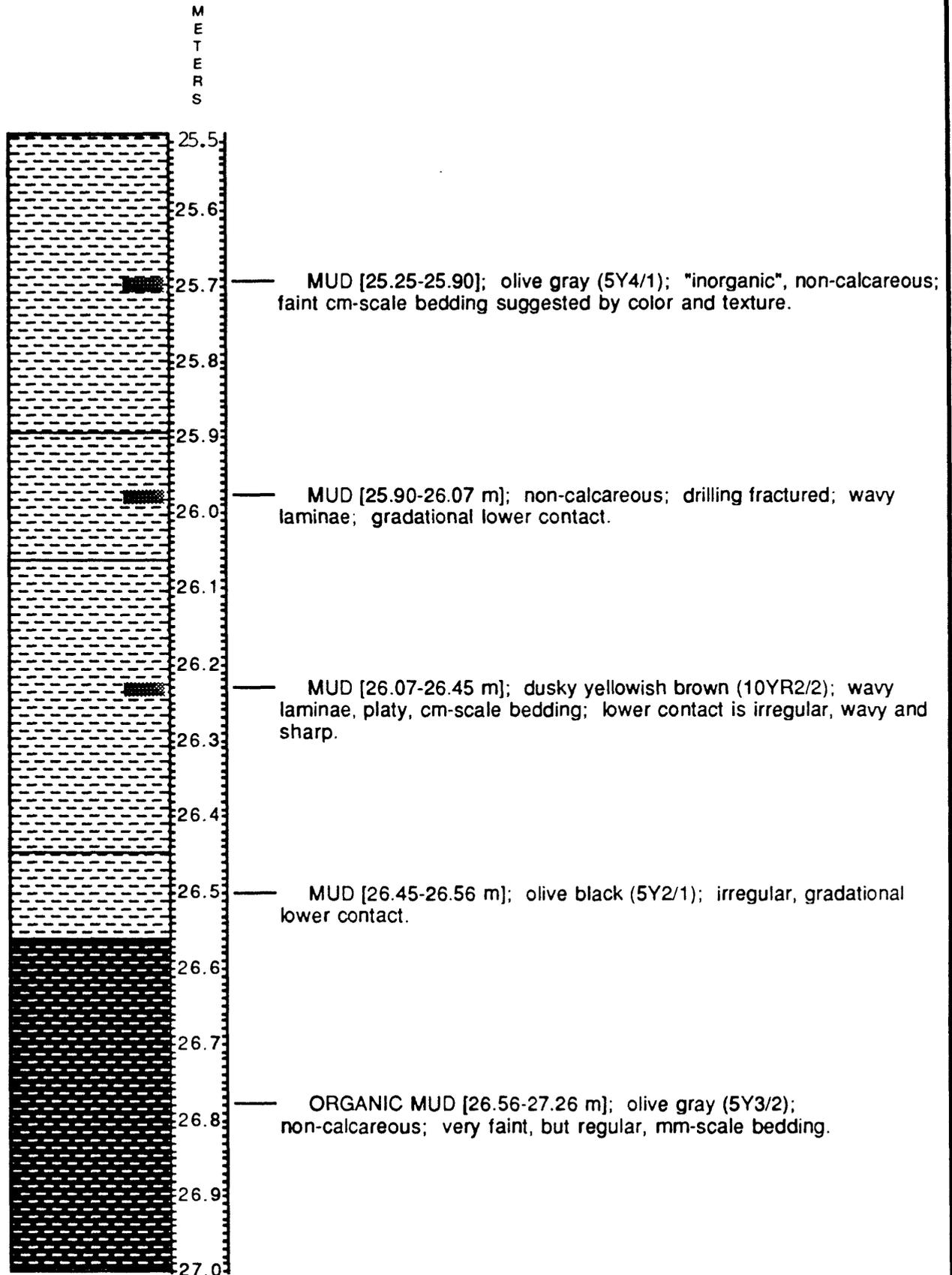
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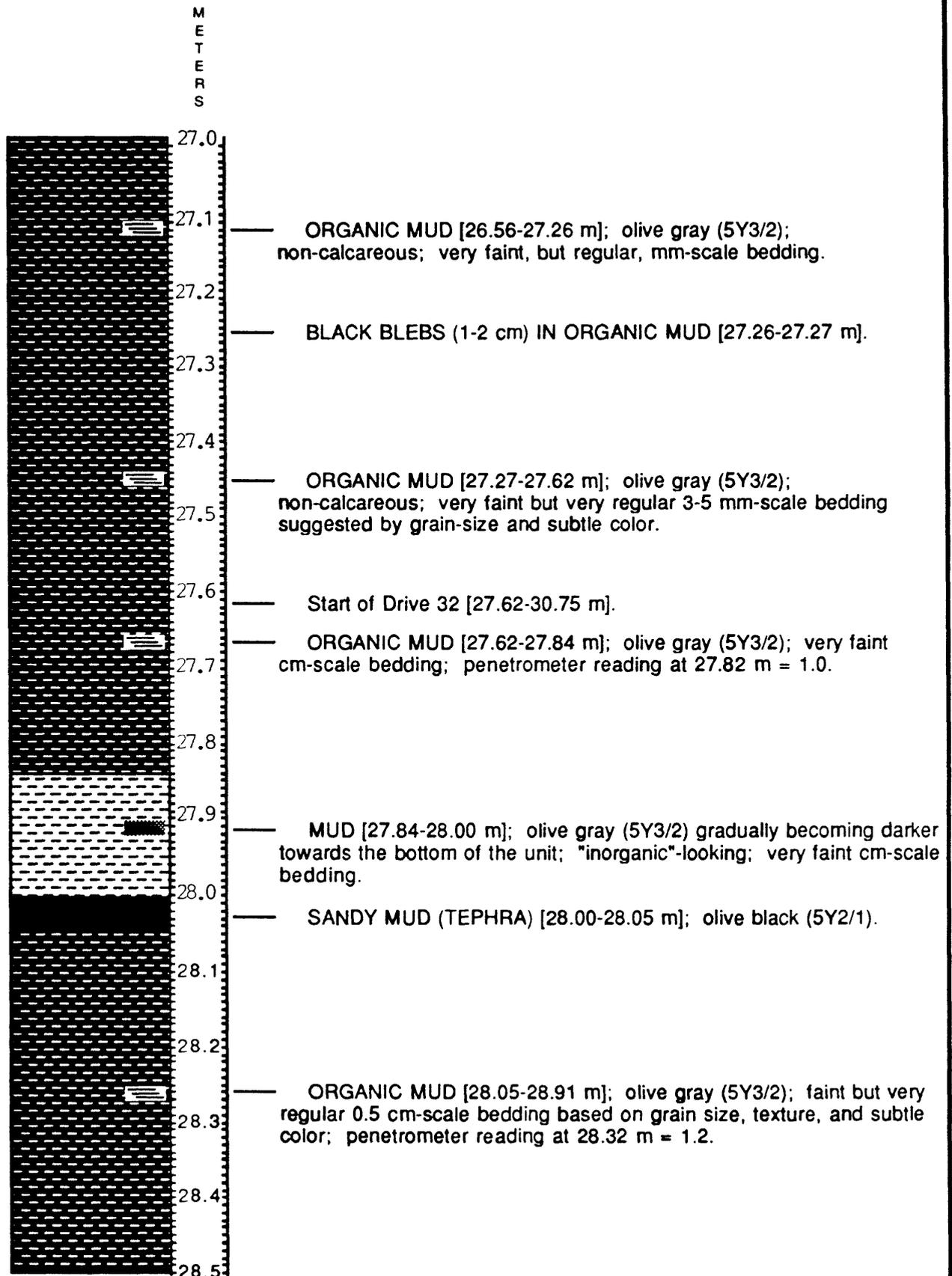
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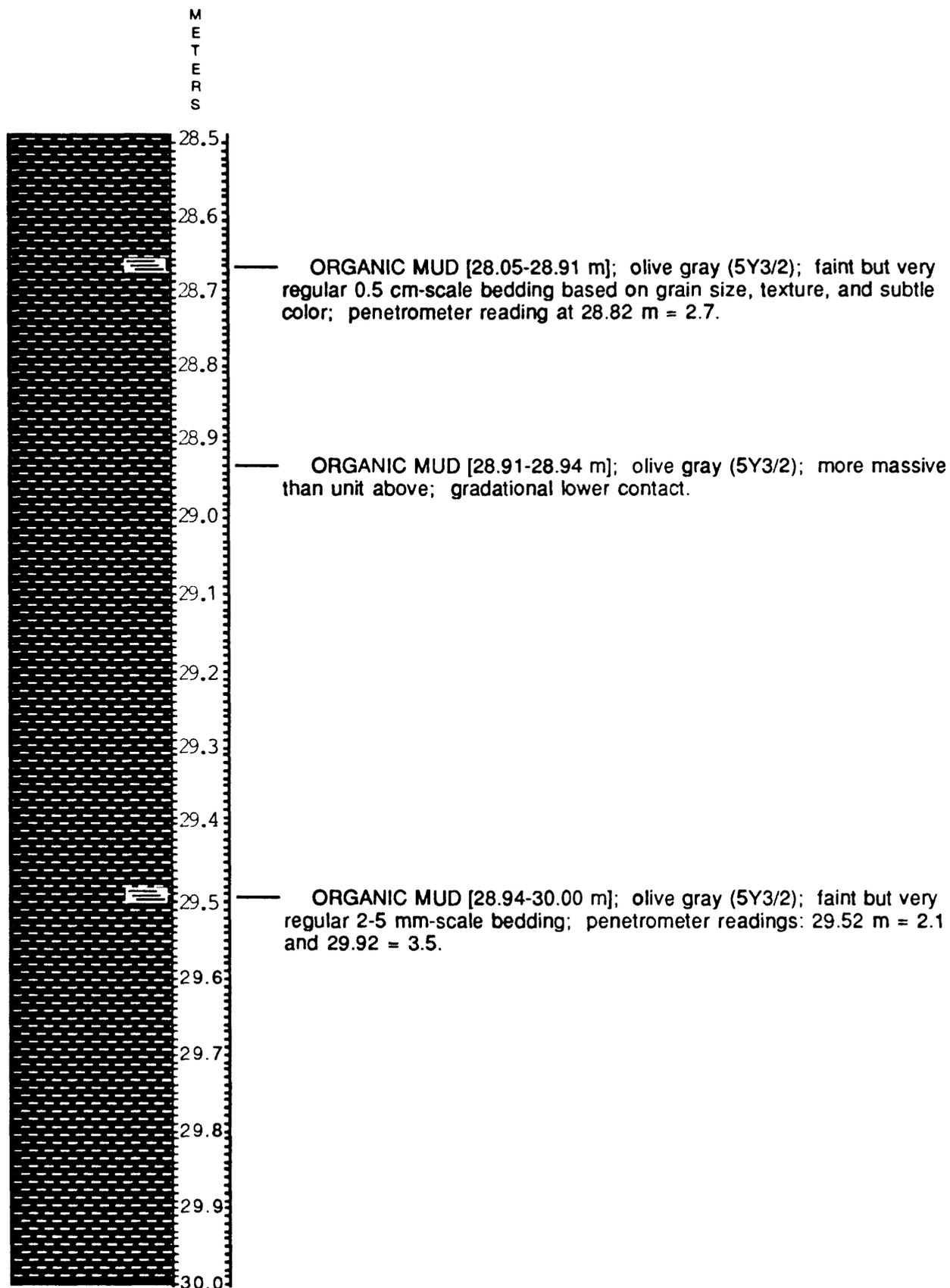
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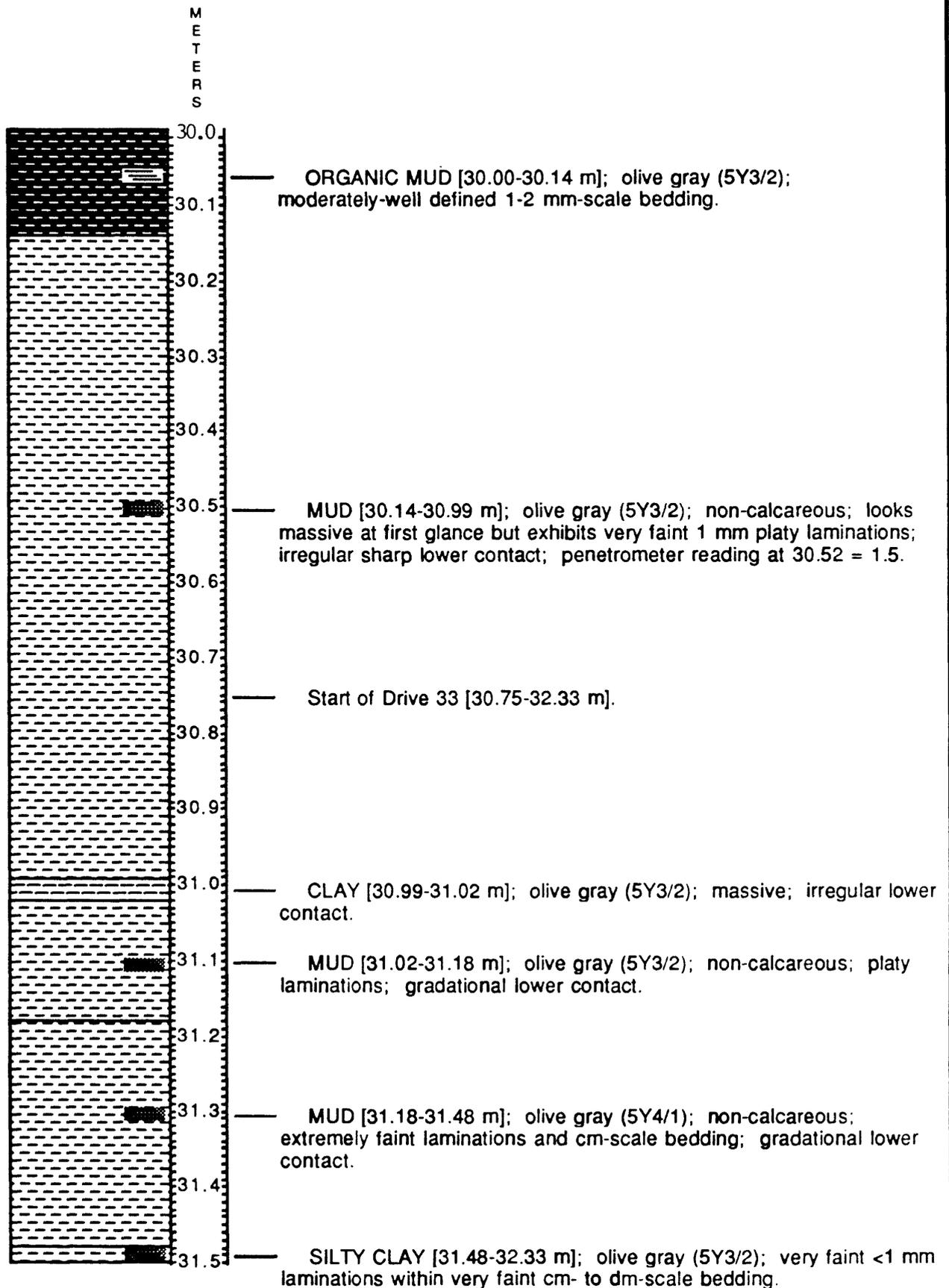
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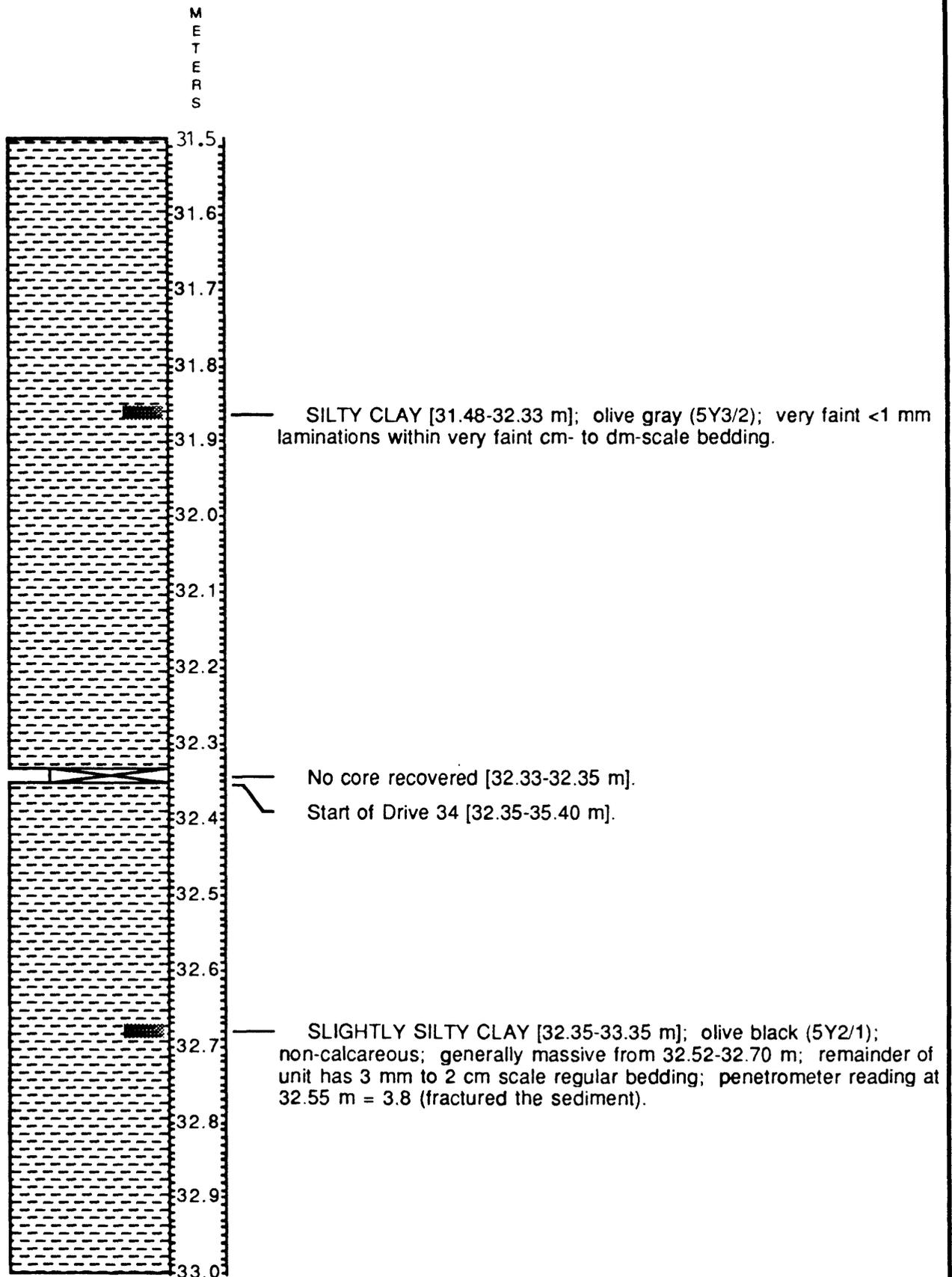
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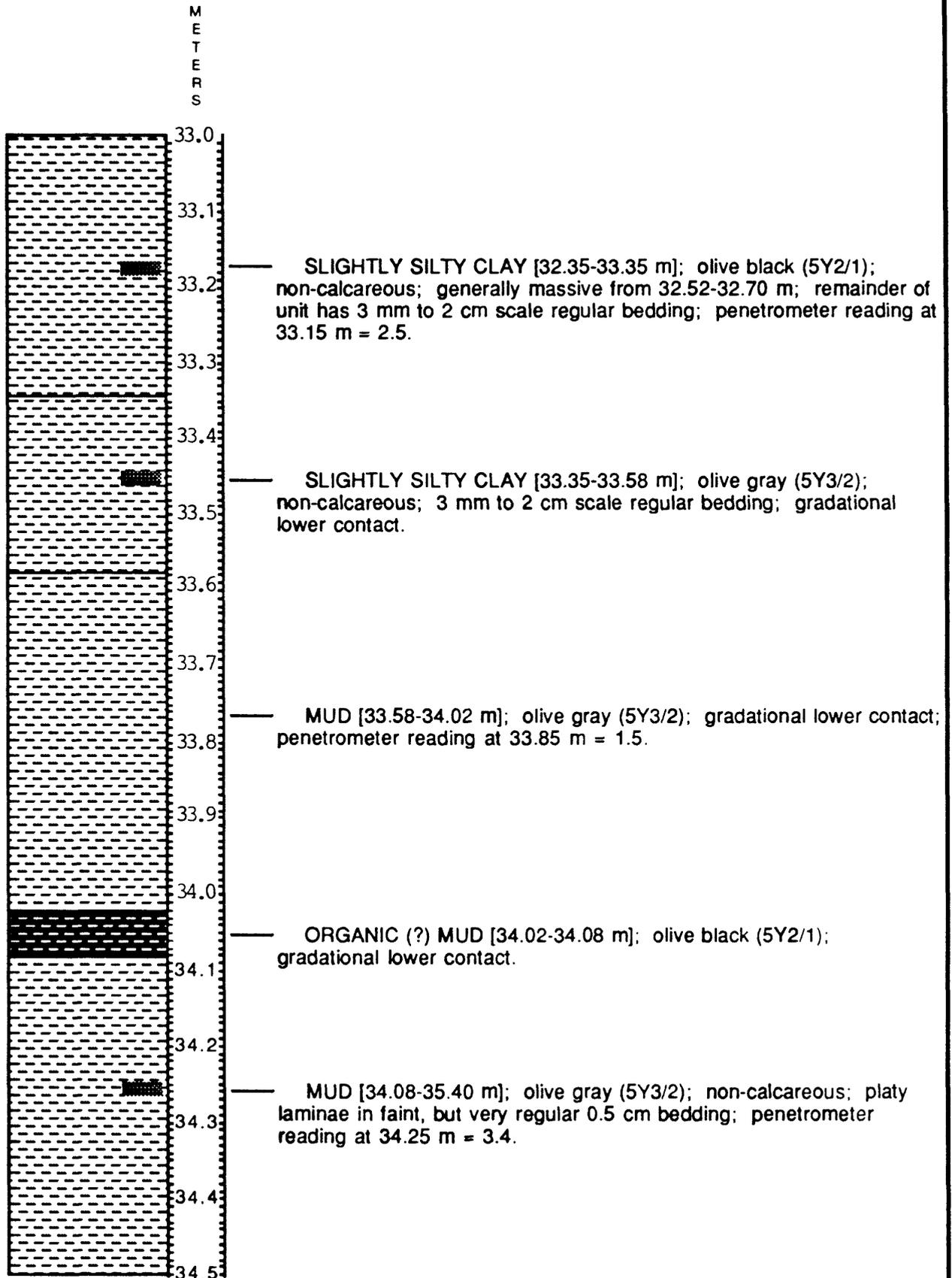
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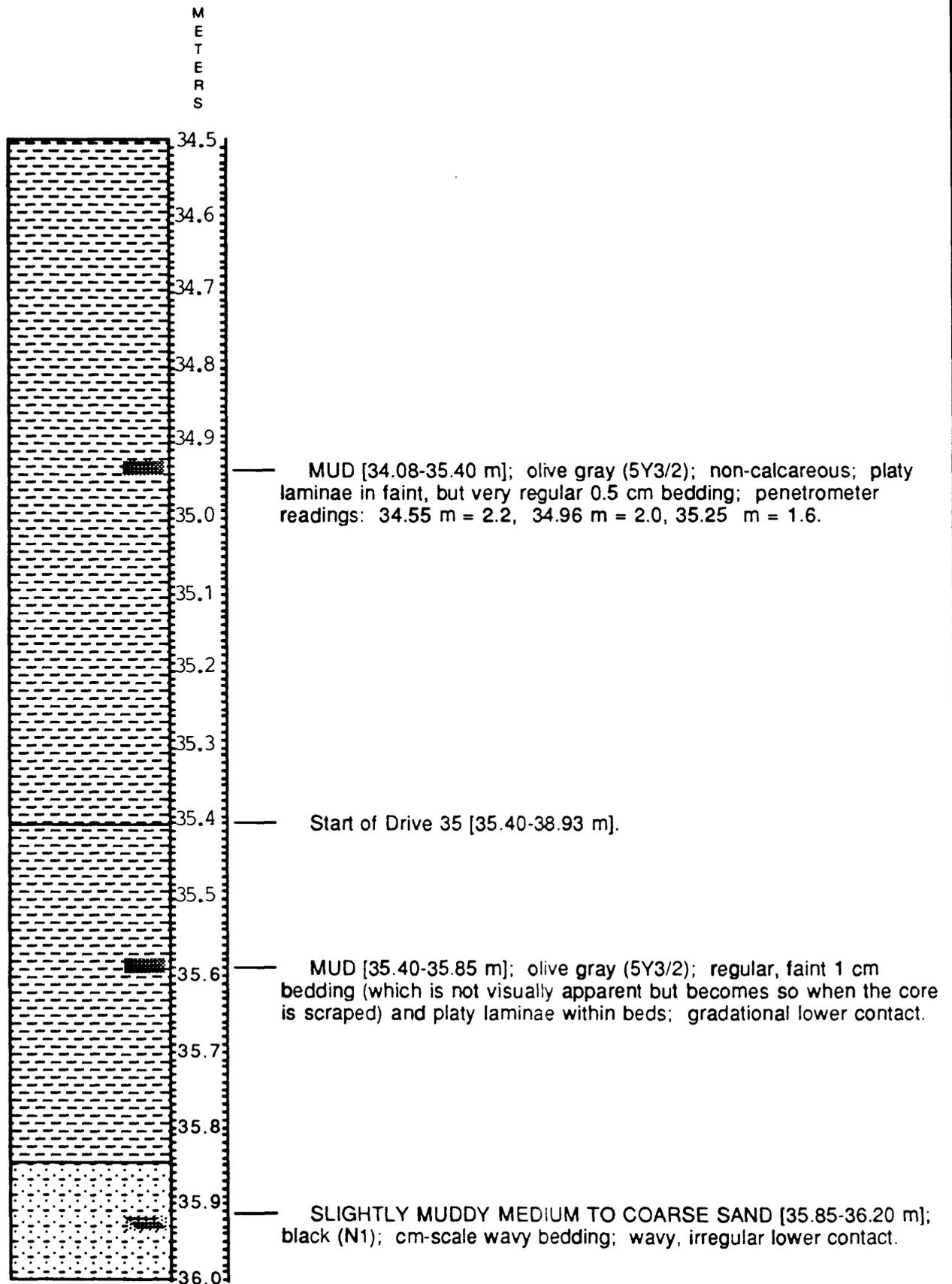
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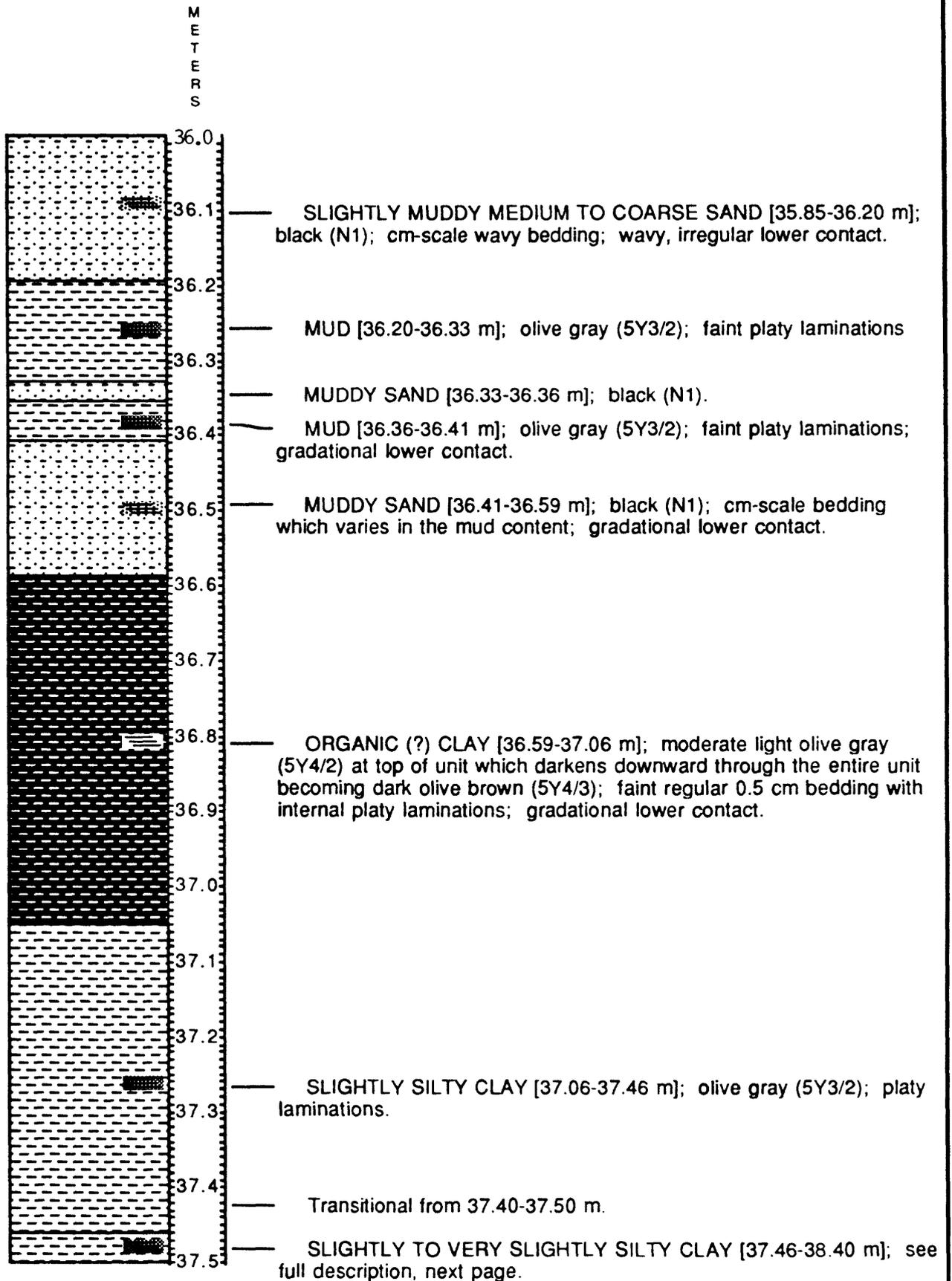
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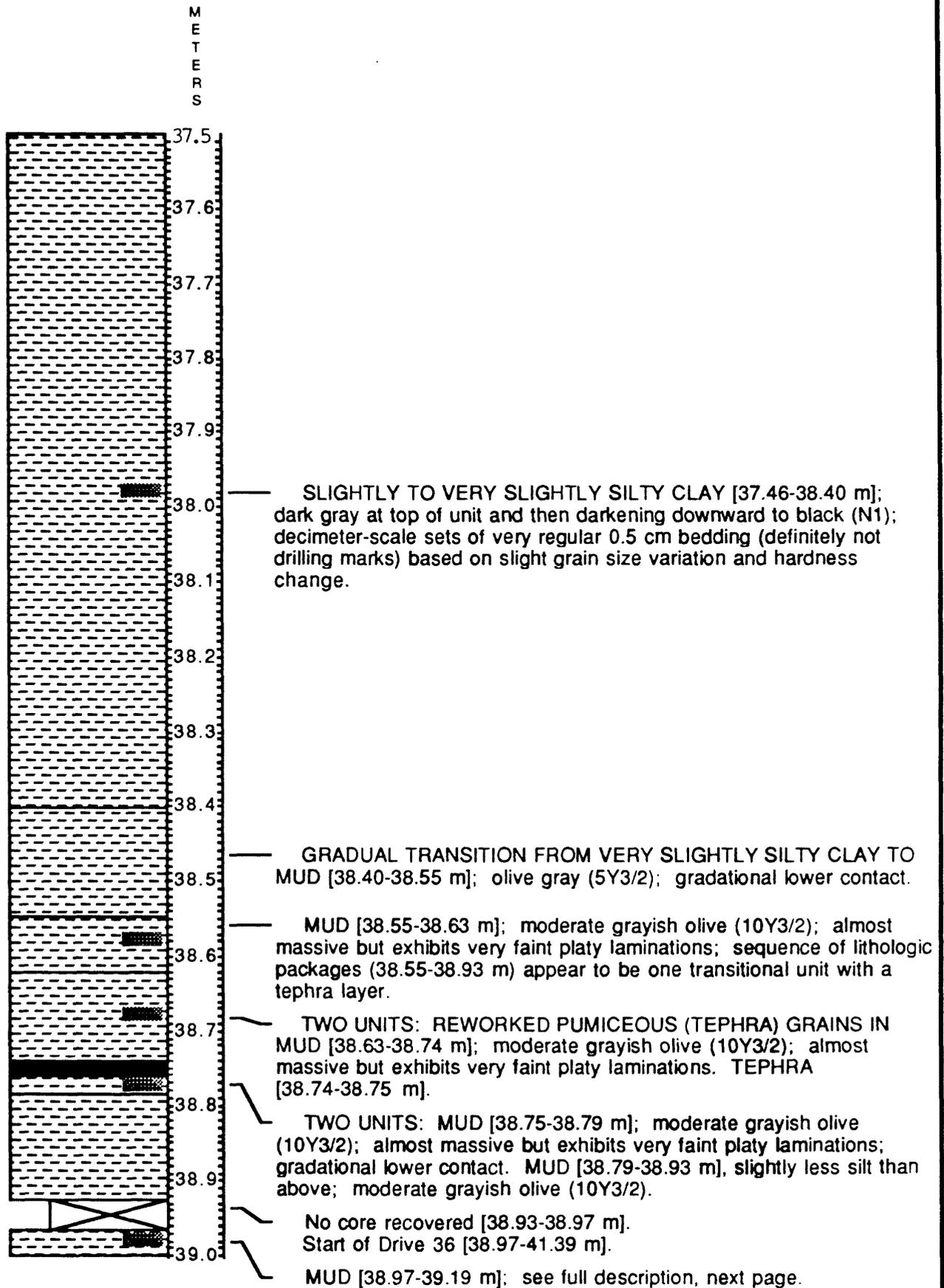
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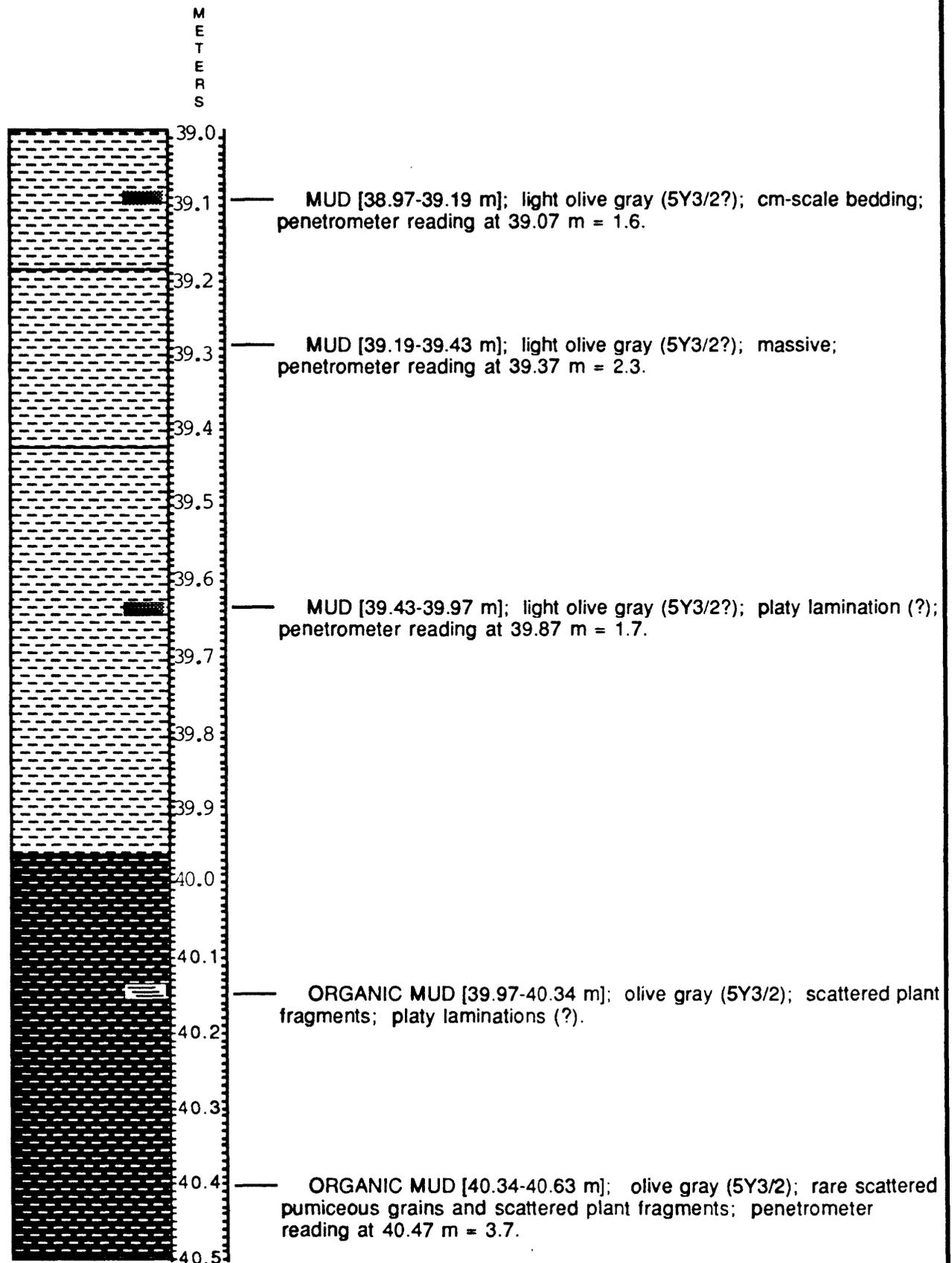
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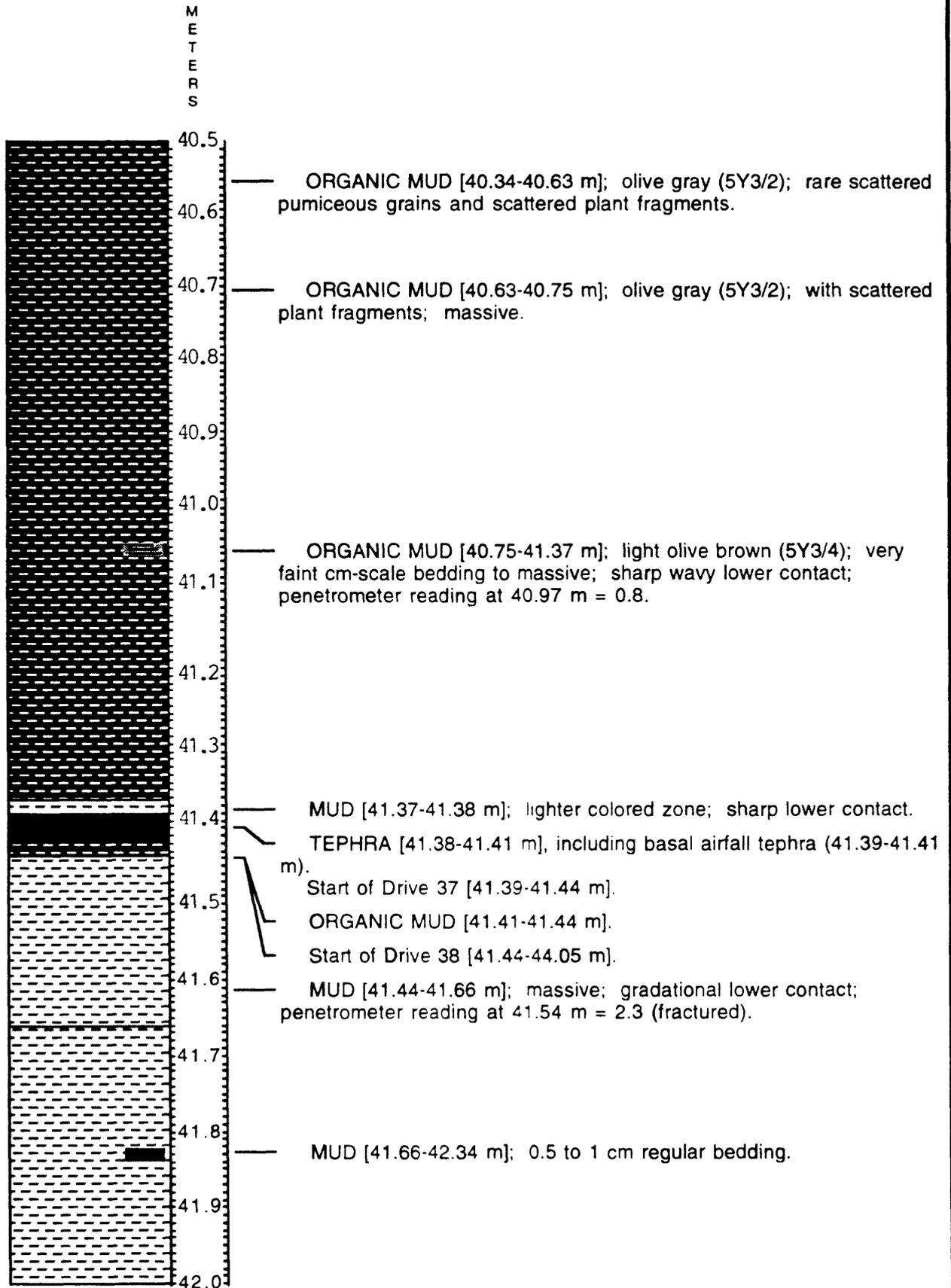
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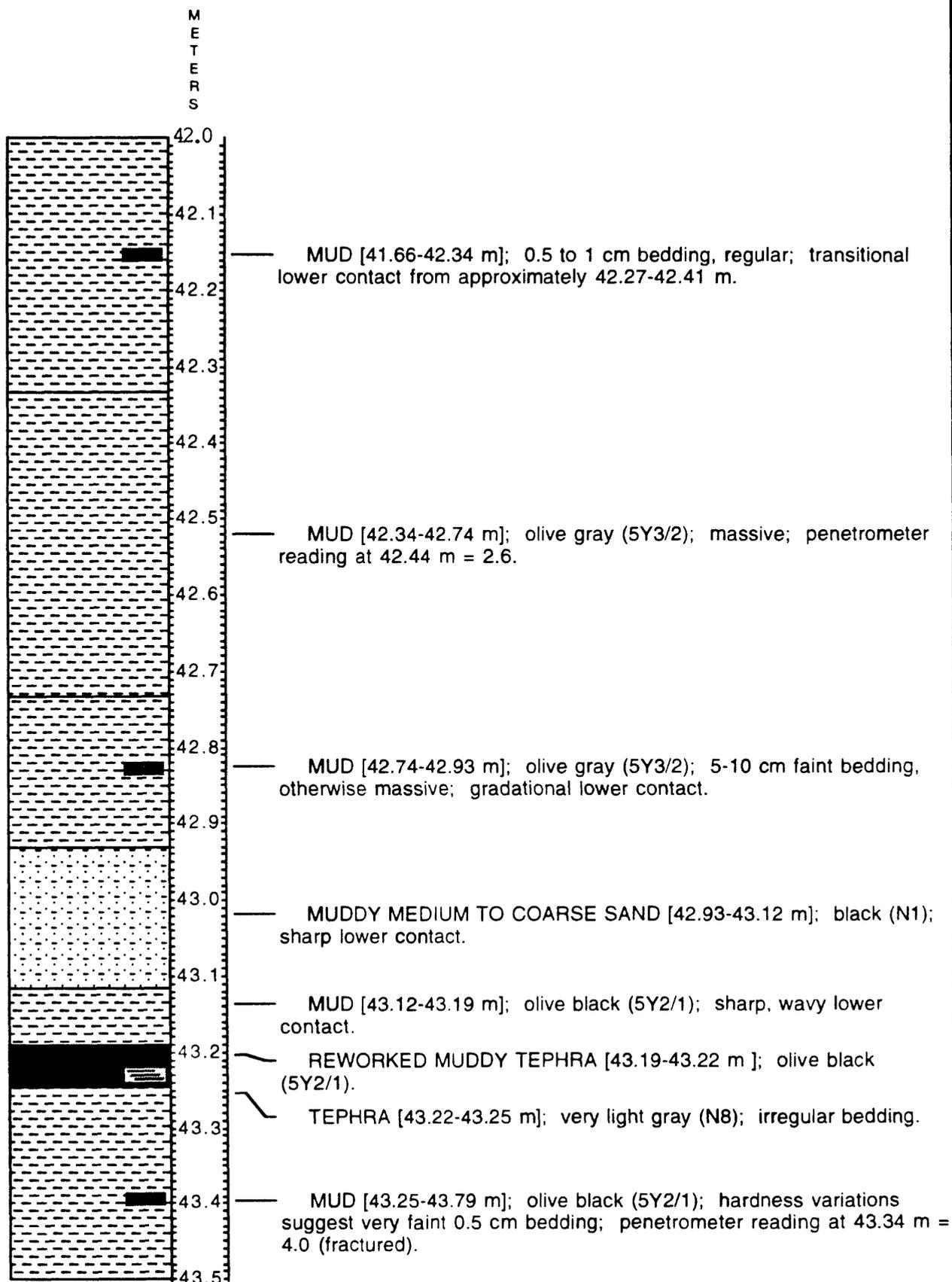
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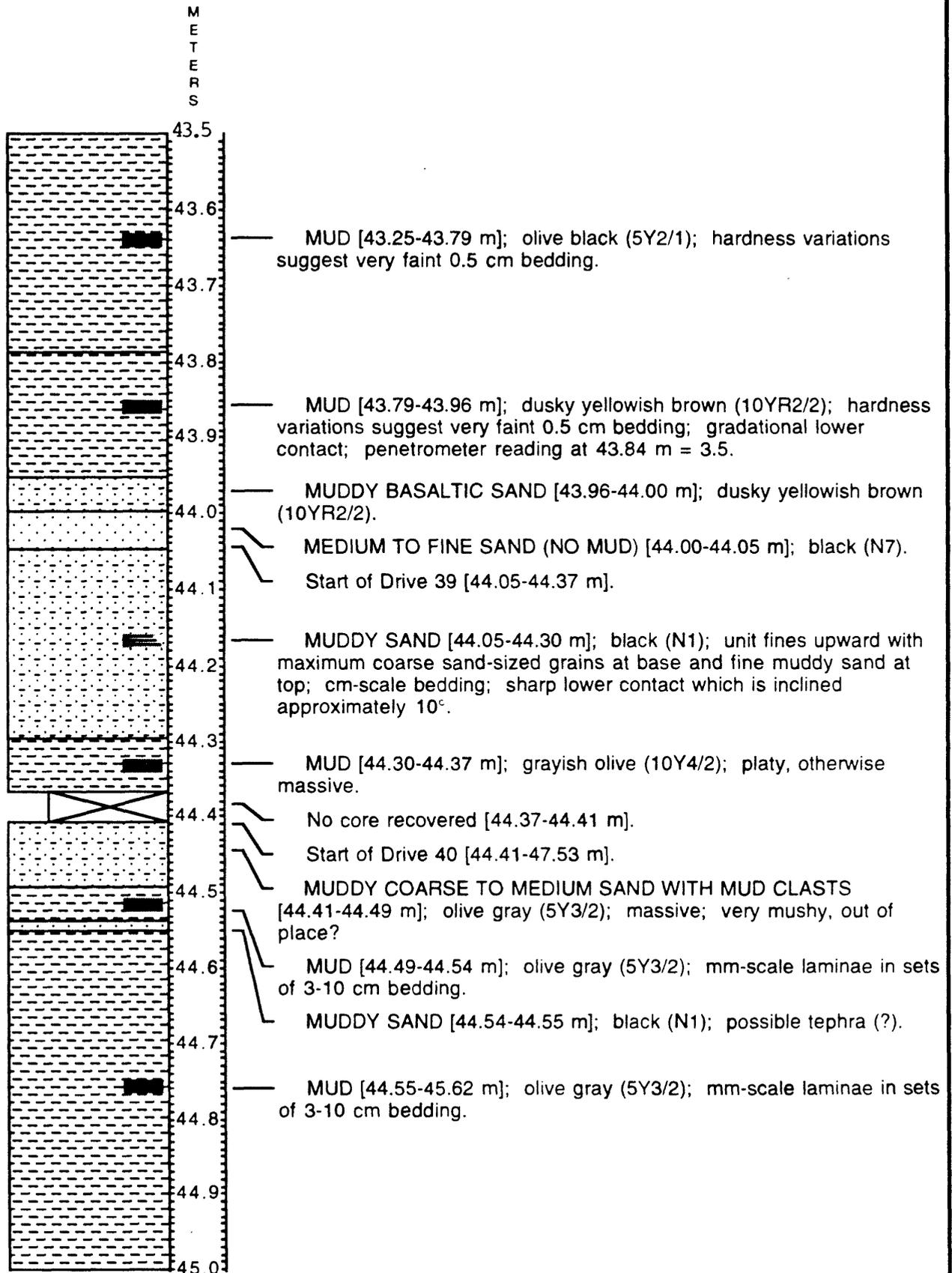
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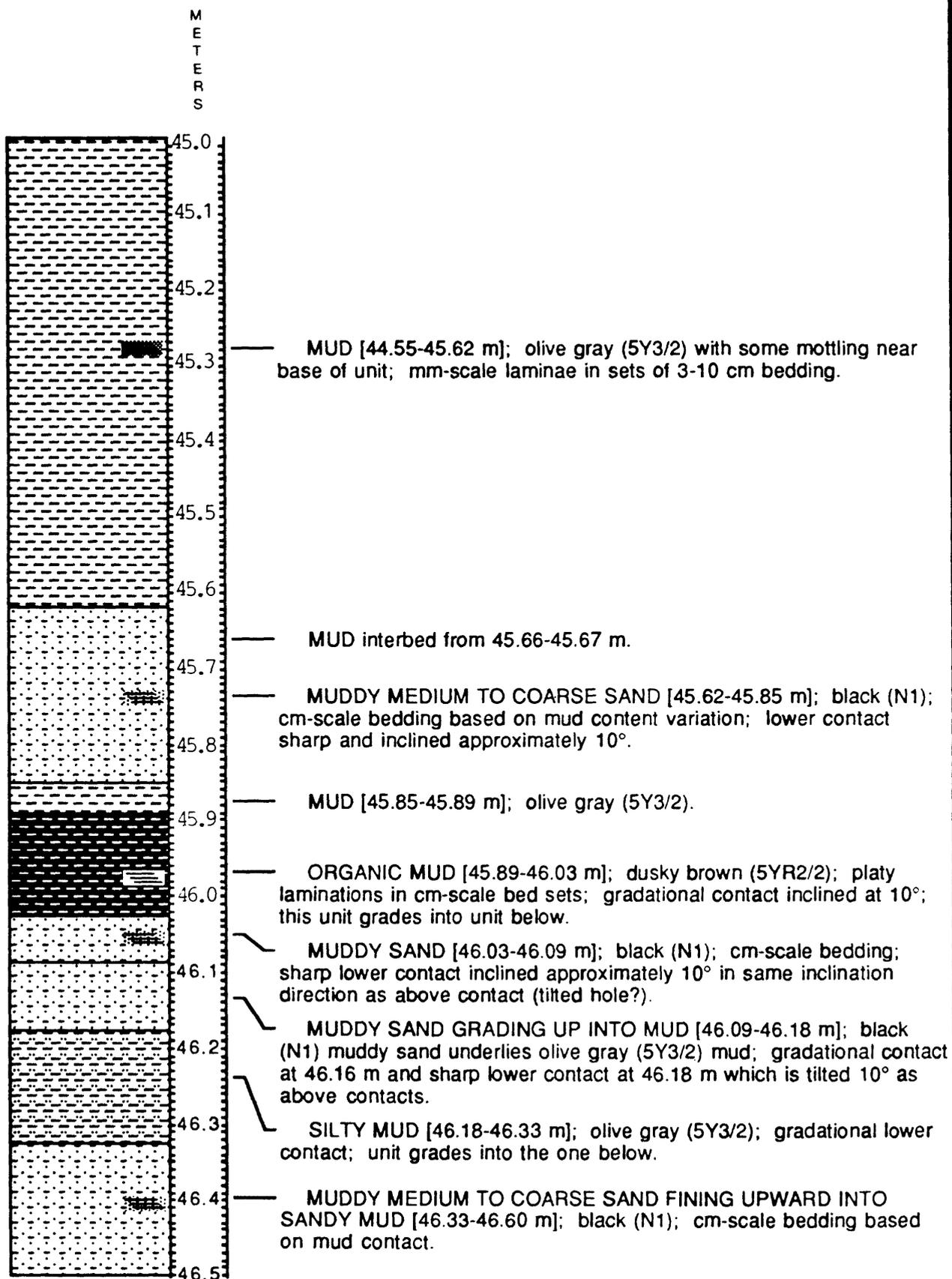
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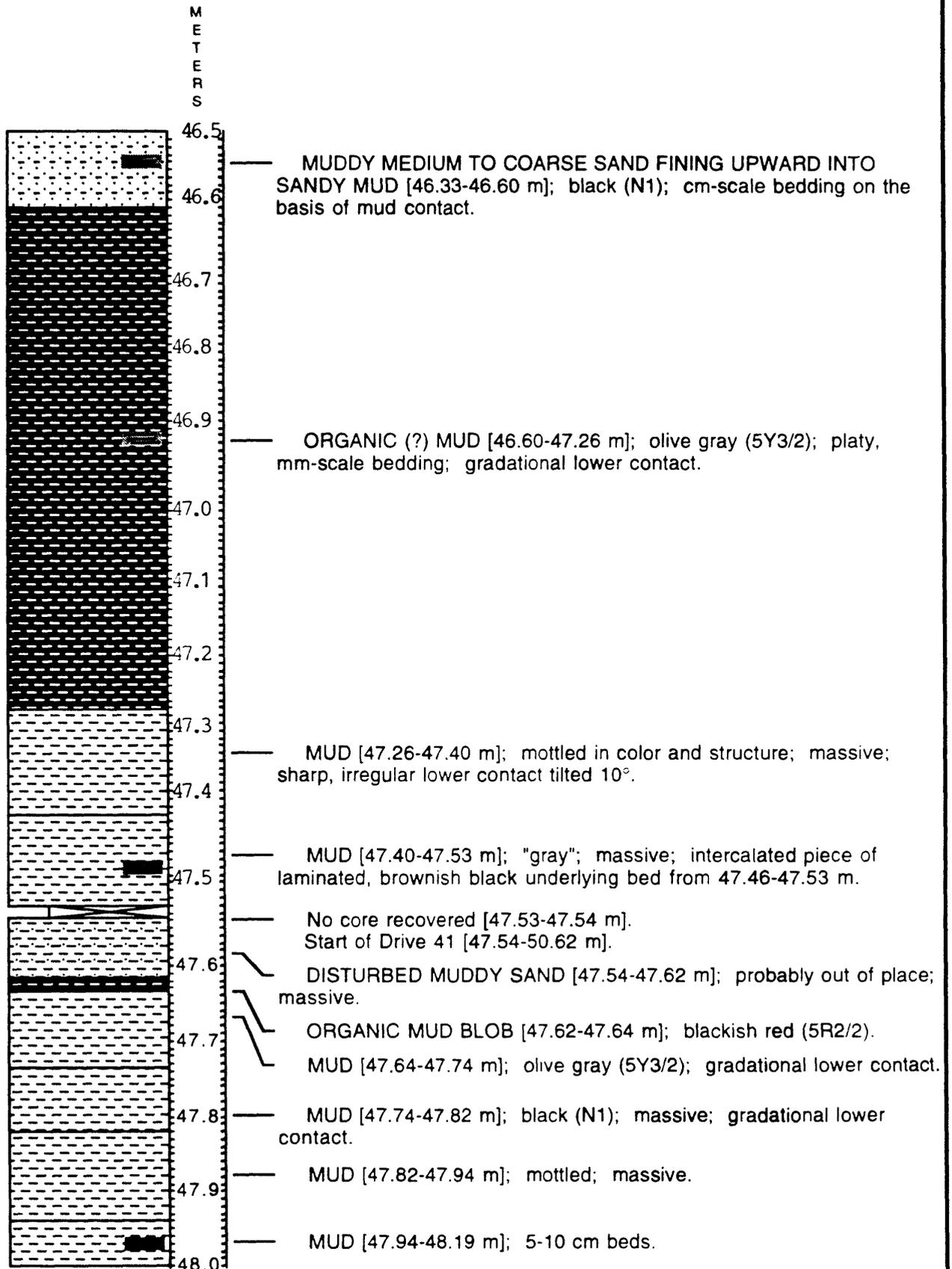
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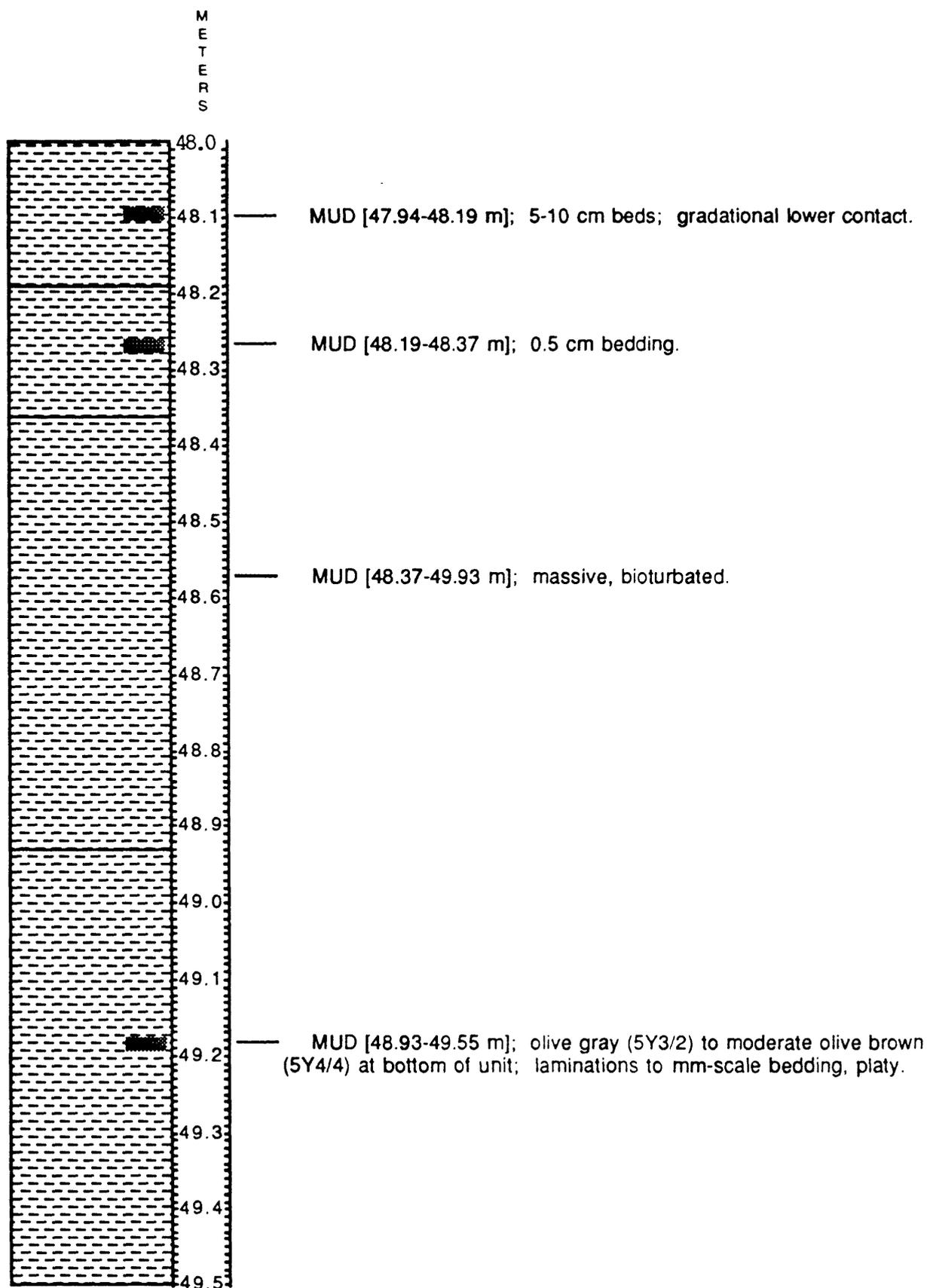
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