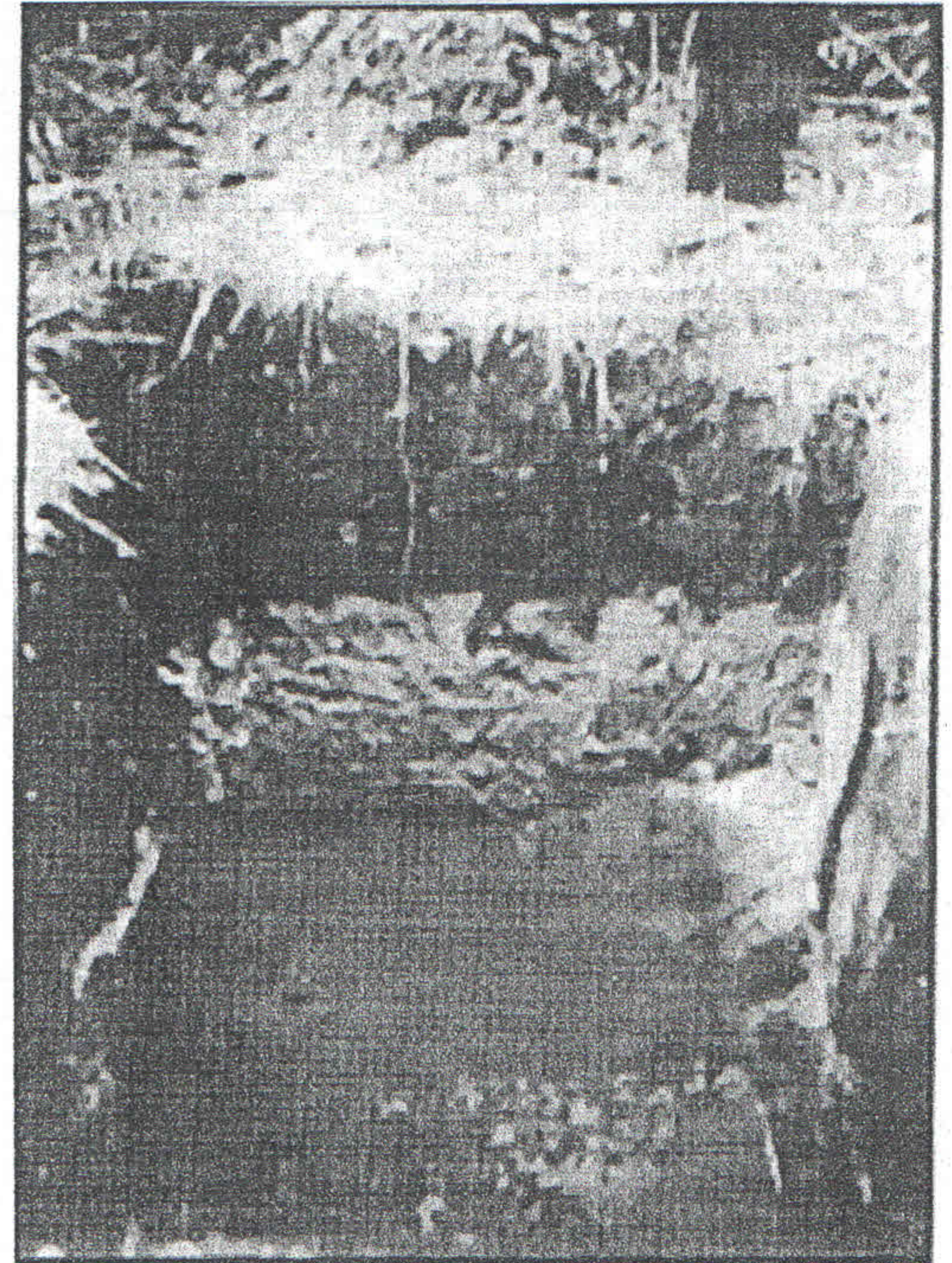


Activity 2: Soil Survey

Tasks To observe soil profiles and record wetland soil characteristics.

Materials Shovels, baking pan, soil survey data sheet

- Procedure**
1. Choose three sites along the transect line to dig soil pits or cores. One sample should be closest to the upland boundary of the site, one midway through the wetland, and one close to standing or running water (if present).
 2. Dig a pit at each site, about 1 to 2 feet square and at least 18 inches deep – or until you reach the water table.
 3. Use all your senses (*except taste*) to make observations of the soils and record these on the data sheets.
 4. Reconstruct a profile of each soil station on the baking pan to take back to the classroom.
 5. Fill in the pits before leaving the site to prevent wildlife from falling and becoming trapped in them.



wetland soil profile

Making Observations

- Is the soil the same from top to bottom in the pit, or are there distinct layers, like a cake?
- What colors do you notice?
- How does the soil smell?
- Pinch the soil from different layers between your fingers and feel the texture – is it rough or smooth?
- Does the soil leave stains on your fingers?
- Is it wet, damp, or dry?
- Is there any identifiable plant material (leaves, stems, roots) in the upper soil layer?
- How deep do plant roots penetrate the soil?
- What organisms (insects, earth worms) are living in the soil?
- What are the differences between the three pits?

Soil Survey Data Sheet

	Soil Characteristics		
	Station 1	Station 2	Station 3
<i>Number of soil layers</i>			
<i>Color</i>			
<i>Smell</i>			
<i>Texture (fine, gritty)</i>			
<i>Does it stain your fingers?</i>			
<i>Degree of wetness (wet, damp, dry)</i>			
<i>Presence of organics (leaves, roots)</i>			
<i>Presence of living organisms (insects, earth worms)</i>			
<i>Depth of plant roots</i>			