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Geologic, Geotechnical, and Geophysical Investigation of a Shallow Landslide, Eastern Kentucky

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Geologic, Geotechnical, and Geophysical Investigation of a Shallow Landslide, Eastern Kentucky

Matthew M. Crawford, Junfeng Zhu, and Steven E. Webb

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Our mission is to increase knowledge and understanding of the mineral, energy, and water resources, geologic hazards, and geology of Kentucky for the benefit of the Commonwealth and Nation.

Earth Resources—Our Common Wealth

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Technical Level



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Abstract

In eastern Kentucky, landslides occur in colluvial soils or at the colluvium-bedrock contact, and are commonly triggered by heavy rainfall. These slides occur particularly where steep slopes and weak rocks combine with various methods of slope modification. Landslides can damage roadways, infrastructure, and residences, and mitigation costs can exceed \$10 million per year.

The Meadowview landslide in Boyd County was investigated to assess the geologic conditions, extent, and behavior of a rainfall-triggered landslide in eastern Kentucky and evaluate the use of electrical resistivity as a tool to characterize a shallow colluvial landslide. Although this type of landslide is common in Kentucky, there are few comprehensive landslide characterization studies combining geologic, geotechnical, and geophysical assessment. This study successfully used traditional geologic and geotechnical data to characterize an active landslide and electrical resistivity to interpret landslide stratigraphy, moisture regimes, and depth to the slide plane. The surface and borehole electrical-resistivity arrays across the Meadowview landslide resulted in inverted resistivity sections with distinct resistivity contrasts that correlate to landslide stratigraphy, depth of slide plane, and groundwater regimes.

Introduction

In eastern Kentucky, landslides mainly occur in colluvial soils that mantle steep slopes and easily weathered rocks. Colluvium varies in thickness and composition across the state, primarily depending on slope morphology and rock type. Landslides commonly triggered by heavy rainfall damage roadways, infrastructure, and residences; mitigation costs exceed \$10 million per year (Crawford, 2014; Overfield, in press). This study investigated the Meadowview landslide, which occurred in Boyd County, in April 2011. It was caused by a combination of natural and manmade factors. Local geology, steep slope, house foundation excavation, vegetation removal, and fill placement contributed to the landslide. The purpose of this project was to assess the geologic conditions, geometry, and behavior of a rainfall-triggered landslide in eastern Kentucky and evaluate the use of electrical resistivity as a tool to characterize a shallow colluvial landslide. A variety of instruments, sensors, and laboratory testing was used to collect information on meteorologic and hydrologic conditions and landslide movement. A slope inclinometer and total station survey system monitored landslide movement. Piezometers and a rain gage collected groundwater and rainfall data, respectively. Laboratory analysis conducted by Terracon Inc. provided material index and strength properties. An eight-channel resistivity meter measured surface and borehole electrical resistivity.

This type of landslide is common in Kentucky, but there are few publicly available, comprehensive landslide characterization studies that include geophysical analysis. Transportation officials mitigate landslides along roadways, but very few other government agencies analyze landslide hazards, and if they do, their results are not made public or are difficult to access. Private geotechnical engineering firms investigate landslides and provide mitigation services, but the data in their reports are not typically accessible to the public. The data collected and interpreted in this project provide detailed analysis for one landslide, but can serve as an example for future landslide hazard studies that combine geotechnical and geophysical techniques to investigate shallow colluvial landslides.

Geologic Setting and Regional Landslide History

Eastern Kentucky is located in the east-central Appalachian Plateau, part of the larger southern Appalachian Basin. This physiographic region extends from Pennsylvania into parts of Ohio, West Virginia, Kentucky, Virginia, and Tennessee (Gray and others, 1979; Radbruch-Hall and others, 1982; Outerbridge, 1987a) (Fig. 1). The plateau is highly dissected with relief that ranges from approximately 120 to 300 m. Interbedded clastic sedimentary rocks of Paleozoic age dominate the region. Steep slopes have high incidences of landslides, and landslide susceptibility stems from particular bedrock lithologies and colluvial soils (Gray and Gardner, 1977; Outerbridge, 1987b).

This region is prone to landslide hazards, particularly during large precipitation events. In 1998, storms produced 165 mm of rain in 72 hr over southeastern Ohio, causing six fatalities and millions of dollars in property and infrastructure damage (Shakoor and Smithmyer, 2005). In July 1939, in Wolfe and Breathitt Counties, Ky., 508 mm of rain fell during a thunderstorm over 2 days, causing four debris flows (Wieczorek and Morgan, 2008). Flash flooding in Virgie, Ky., in May 1999 caused several damaging debris flows (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association, National Weather Service, Jackson, Ky., July 13, 2011, personal communication). Persistent rainfall totaling 381 to 457 mm across eastern Kentucky from late April to mid-May 2011 caused more than 60 landslides. A short, intense storm that dropped approximately 90 mm of rain in 3 hr over a very localized area caused a large, damaging landslide in Powell County, Ky. (Crawford, 2012). These examples are all shallow colluvial mass-wasting events, in which slope morphology, colluvium thickness, composition, water conditions, changes in load, and changes in frictional resistance are factors affecting stability.

Meadowview Landslide

The Meadowview landslide is located in Boyd County, eastern Kentucky. The bedrock in the area consists of interbedded shale, underclay, sandstones, and coals of the Princess Formation (Fig. 2). Identifying slope geomorphology is an important part of assessing landslide susceptibility. Natural colluvial soils accumulate in concave parts of slopes, and often have high landslide incidences. There is evidence of preexisting landslide activity along the ridge, adjacent to the main slide area, including old (historic?) scarps, hummocky topography, and bent tree trunks.

Plastic and semiplastic shales and underclays are highly impermeable and the least competent rocks in the area (Dobrovolny and others, 1963). Most landslides occur along the underclays where hillsides are steep. Many small landslides have occurred along these beds in hillside excavations for houses. These rocks develop sandy to clayey colluvial soils on the slopes and residual soils on the ridgetops. Colluvium ranges in thickness from 1 to 3 m. The landslide material consists of colluvium with added disturbed material from foundation excavation. The colluvium and excavated material observed at the surface is light brown, clayey to silty, with abundant shale and sandstone fragments. The soft clay soil is mottled gray and the silty shale fragments are micaceous. During bulldozing, an outcrop of gray, soft clay was exposed near the toe of the slide that correlates to the "clayey shale" described in the lithologic logs of boreholes at the site. Large sandstone slabs are also present in the slide material. During the excavation of the



3



Figure 1. Locations of the project area, Appalachian Plateau, eastern Kentucky, and Boyd County.

house foundation, material was pushed down into a naturally concave part of the slope. The concavity was accentuated near the toe by additional excavation for a power line that leads from the base of the slope toward the crown of the slide.

The Meadowview landslide occurred in late April 2011 as approximately 203 mm of rain fell during the month (Community Collaborative Rain, Hail, and Snow Network, 2013; Kentucky Mesonet, 2013) and triggered the failure. The slope containing the slide ranges from approximately 13° near the ridgetop, above the crown, and steepens to 16.7° near the toe of the slide. The landslide occurred in a naturally concave part of the slope that is forested except for the trees and shrubs removed during excavation for residential construction. The landslide is active, containing multiple scarps, seeps, and small localized flows. Rotational movement occurred in the uppermost part of the landslide and, closer to the toe, the slide material morphed into a translational flow. The slide measures approximately 44 m along a southwestnortheast longitudinal axis and 40 m wide along a transverse axis near its middle (Fig. 3). The main scarp height ranges from a few centimeters at the flanks to approximately 1.5 m near the middle.



Figure 2. Hillshade geologic map showing the location of the Meadowview landslide (circled). The stratigraphic column shows the lithology of the Princess Formation.

The volume of material displaced by the landslide was calculated as approximately 2,517 m³, using the method of Cruden and Varnes (1996) and the Working Party on Worldwide Landslide Inventory (1990), assuming a half-ellipsoid shape and using a maximum depth of rupture (approximately 2.7 m). A prominent secondary scarp is present approximately 10 m downslope from the head scarp. Small tension cracks occur on the flanks of the upper slide area. Seeps and high concentrations of water occur at the toe of the landslide.

Geotechnical Investigation *Boreholes and Material Properties*

Six boreholes were drilled into the Meadowview landslide (Fig. 2) on March 13–14, 2013. A 3.25-in. hollow-stem auger was used to core all boreholes. Continuous sampling with a standard-penetration-test split spoon (18-in.) obtained moisture content through most of the borehole. A summary of the material properties is shown in Table 1. Field soil descriptions are based on the American Society for Testing and Materials classification group names. Two boreholes (B1 and B3) were constructed with inclinometer casing, two boreholes (B2 and B4) were converted to open standpipe piezometers, and two boreholes (B5 and B6) were cased with slotted PVC and used for electrical-resistivity measurements. Boreholes B1 and B3 were logged and stratigraphy was interpreted.

Borehole B1 was drilled into bedrock to a total depth of 6.5 m and well below the assumed failure surface. The uppermost soil consisted of 2.7 m of disturbed colluvium, and water was encountered at a depth of 1.2 m. The disturbed colluvium was divided into two types: 1.2 m of sandy, lean clay with gravel overlying 1.5 m of sandy, fat clay. The boundary between the two colluvial types may explain a difference in the disturbed material that came from excavation of a house foundation above the landslide and natural hillslope colluvium. Below the disturbed colluvium are three layers: 0.6 m of stiff to hard, fat clay; 0.76 m of weathered claystone; and 2.4 m of clayey shale. The boring was terminated at 6.5 m in weathered clayey shale. Soil density increased significantly at the contact between the two colluvium types and also between the native fat clay and weathered claystone. Field N-values increased from 4 to 43 between the two colluvium types and 18 to 50 between the clay and claystone. Field N-values are the number of blows (by a hammer) per foot during a standard penetration test required to drive a steel soil sampler into the ground.

Borehole B3 was drilled to a total depth of 4.7 m. The uppermost soil consisted of 0.6 m of dis-



Figure 3. Aerial image of the Meadowview landslide. The main landslide area is within the dashed outline. Axes show dimensions of the slide. Borehole locations and instrumentation types also shown.

turbed colluvium, and groundwater was encountered near the surface. Below the fill is 1.8 m of lean clay and 2.7 m of clayey shale. Drilling was terminated when carbonaceous, laminated, weathered shale was encountered at about 4.7 m deep. Field N-values increased at the lean clay–clayey shale contact, indicating an increase in density.

The complete log and laboratory data for borehole B1, provided by Terracon Consultants Inc., are available in Appendix 1. Laboratory data not described in the text include Atterberg limits, grain-size distribution, and triaxial shear strength. Total and effective stress parameters were determined from a consolidated undrained (with pore pressure) test.

Surface and Subsurface Water Observation

Rainfall. Rainfall data were collected by a tippingbucket rain gage. The gage consists of a stand-alone collector and recording system. The recorder can accumulate 1 yr of rainfall data with 1-min resolution. The tipping bucket was set with a 0.25 mm/tip threshold. We installed the rain gage on March 19, 2013. Total rainfall accumulation at the Meadowview landslide from installation to May 20, 2014 (14 mo), was 1,227.2 mm (Fig. 4). Average annual precipitation from 1981 to 2010 in nearby Ashland, Ky., was 1,122.7 mm (National Climatic Data Center, 2014). Considering the average annual precipi

Table 1. States	summary of the material properties from bo gnations are from the United Soil Classifica	rehole samp ition System	oles and loo 1.	gs of the Me	eadowview	landslide. Fiel	d description							
Borehole	B1													
Depth (m)	Field Description	Percent Gravel	Percent Sand	Percent Silt	Percent Clay	Plasticity Index	Field N-Value							
0–1.2	sandy lean clay with gravel (CL)—fill	4.3	45.5	23.8	26.3	16	5							
1.2–1.5	2–1.5 sandy fat clay (CH)—fill 4.2 28.6 23.1 44.1 N/A													
1.5–2.7	sandy fat clay (CH)—fill	9.1	41.4	19.4	30.1	N/A	5							
2.7–3.4	2.7–3.4 fat clay (CH) very stiff to hard, residual soil structure 16													
3.4–4.1	.1 claystone severely weathered, very soft 50													
4.1–6.5	clayey shale	thinly lami nated, inte	nated, wea erbedded sa	thered, very andy shale	/ soft, trace	, thinly lami-	N/A							
Borehole	B3													
Depth (m)	Field Description	Percent Gravel	Percent Sand	Percent Silt	Percent Clay	Plasticity Index	Field N-Value							
0–0.6	sandy lean clay with gravel (CL)	modera	ately stiff, n	nicaceous, s	sandstone f	fragments	8							
0.6–1.8	lean clay (CL)	6.6	37.6	21.8	34.0	8	11							
1.8-4.6	clay shale	thinly lami	nated, wea	thered, very	/ soft	9	24							
4.6-4.8	shale	carbonace	eous, fissile	, weathered	l, soft	N	/A							



Figure 4. Daily rainfall measured at the Meadowview landslide.

tation in the area, the Meadowview landslide occurred during a slightly dry year. **Piezometer Data.** Boreholes B2 and B4 were converted to open-standpipe piezometers and used to measure groundwater levels within the landslide

mass. Piezometers were constructed with a slotted PVC casing consisting of a porous tip attached to the PVC pipe. The porous tip was isolated in the zone of interest with a bentonite seal. Water flows through the tip and can stabilize in the pipe, representing the piezometric surface. We recorded water levels using a water-level indicator consisting of an electronic probe and cable reel. The initial waterlevel readings in B2 and B4 (both 3-m total depth) were taken on March 19, 2013. We measured water levels once a week for the first 2 mo, then recorded monthly after that, because water levels did not fluctuate extensively.

Beginning on April 12, 2013, we also used a wireless, battery-powered pressure recorder to measure the groundwater levels in piezometer B2 (below the assumed failure zone). The recorder contains a pressure sensor that is placed at the bottom of the piezometer, measuring water level above the sensor. The sensor samples water levels at user-defined intervals. Elevated groundwater levels affect landslides, and precipitation that elevates the level to an instability threshold can often be the triggering mechanism. Field reconnaissance at the Meadowview landslide prior to drilling revealed the main landslide area to be very wet, especially near the toe. There were several seepage zones throughout the landslide. Based on our hydrostratigraphic model for the site, we inferred that observed shale

beds were responsible for formation of perched water tables along the slope. Water flows along low-permeability clay shales, and seeps out where these beds intersect the surface.

We correlated groundwater fluctuations (measured in the piezometers) with rainfall. The largest pulses of rainfall caused an increase in groundwater level in the piezometers. A graph from late June to mid-September 2013 correlates increases in groundwater level above the bottom of the borehole with rainfall pulses (Fig. 5). In B2, groundwater level change above the sensor, after rainfall pulses, varied from 80 mm in spring of 2013 to 122 mm in spring of 2014. The timeframe for the groundwater increase ranged from 1 to 3 days following a rainfall pulse. The clayey colluvial fill stores a lot of water, which is perched on the low-permeability clay layers, controlling a smaller groundwater level response to rainfall.

Landslide Movement

Inclinometer. Inclinometer measurements were used to determine the magnitude, rate, direction, and depth of movement at boreholes B1 and B3. We used an inclinometer, which included a biaxial probe that contains two perpendicular accelerometers, in effect monitoring the displacement normal to the axis of the borehole casing. The baseline inclinometer reading was taken on March 25, 2013.



Figure 5. Maximum daily groundwater levels measured from the pressure recorder in borehole B1 compared with daily rainfall from June 25 through September 23, 2013. Groundwater level increased after rainfall events.

Readings were taken once a week for the first 2 mo and once a month after that. Cumulative horizontal displacement in B1 in the head of the landslide through May 20, 2014, was approximately 2 cm. Cumulative displacement in B3 near the toe of the landslide through May 20, 2014, was approximately 5 cm. The greatest average velocity in B1 (0.05 mm/d) occurred from June 11 to July 2, 2013. This interval corresponded with 78.7 mm of rainfall and had the second highest daily total during monitoring, 36.8 mm on June 26. The two greatest average velocity increases in B3 were 0.16 mm/d from April 19 to May 8, 2013, and 0.5 mm/d from April 19 to May 20, 2014. These intervals corresponded with 46.9 and 130.7 mm of rainfall, respectively. Although the inclinometer measured little movement, landslide movement and rainfall events were correlated (Fig. 6).

Generally, the increase in movement in B3 in spring 2013 and spring 2014 correlated with the obvious pulses of rainfall. During the summer months, pulses of rain triggered most of the movement in B1. Movement increased significantly in April and May 2014, backed up by more rainfall in these months (166.5 mm) than in 2013 (92.2 mm). So that seasonal patterns in movement can be observed, monitoring should extend beyond the 14 months of data presented here. Cumulative and incremental inclinometer data from boreholes B1 and B3 are provided in Appendix 2.

Total Station. Surface displacement was monitored at various locations on the landslide using a total station to supplement subsurface displacement information from the inclinometer. Eight survey monuments were secured with concrete approximately 0.45 m into the ground and leveled. The monuments were distributed along the landslide's longitudinal axis from near the main scarp down to the toe (Fig. 7). The inherent accuracy of total-station surveying allows small amounts of movement to be detected even before cracking or tension scarps are apparent.

A relative coordinate system was created using the monuments and two known reference base points outside the slide area assumed to be stable. These points were above the head scarp and located on structures that appeared not to have moved. We designated one of the reference points as the origin of the coordinate system so that the monuments could be rotated, georeferenced with true north, and plotted on an aerial photograph. Measurements were calculated once a month starting May 1, 2013, and ending November 13, 2013. Displacements were measured using the differences in easting, northing, and height from the startingdate measurements. This allowed displacement of



Figure 6. Inclinometer displacement versus time in boreholes B1 and B3, plotted with rainfall. From June 11 to July 2, 2013, a high frequency of rainfall occurred, resulting in highest average velocity displacement during the study. Rainfall from June 11 to July 2, 2013, totaled 78.7 mm and included the second highest daily rainfall amount of 36.8 mm on June 26.



Figure 7. Locations of total station monuments.

each stake to be monitored over time, as well as the overall average stake displacement over time. The general direction of movement is to the northeast, which corresponds to the general slope direction and movement of material. Monuments S3, S5, S6, and S8 moved in the expected direction, trending generally northeast (Figs. 8–9). Except for S8, these monuments moved horizontally a total of 5.8 cm. S8 had horizontal displacement of approximately 3.74 cm in the northeast direction. S8 is at the toe where the landslide flows, and more subsurface displacement was measured with the inclinometer.

Not all monuments moved in the expected direction, and several had little downslope movement, which was not discernable from the minimum resolvable distance threshold of the total station (approximately 5 mm); thus, the general direction was not determined. Several points appeared to move upslope, however, located on the slump block or at a hinge and showed no movement. S7, for example, showed backward movement and movement over time that generally trended southeast. This is reasonable, because S7 lies near the flank of the landslide that faces southeast and may have undergone initial rotational movement on the steep flank of the slide. The monuments that moved downslope were all in the lower part of the landslide, below the secondary scarp, where the translational flow is occurring. The relatively small horizontal movement of the

Electrical Resistivity



Figure 8. Georeferenced coordinate system showing surface displacement of all eight monuments in the Meadowview landslide. The general trend of movement is downslope, toward the northeast. Monuments in the area indicated by the dashed circle show approximate area of little discernable movement or movement backward from rotation.

monuments agrees with the small subsurface horizontal offset measured by the inclinometer.

Electrical Resistivity

The technique of 2-D electrical resistivity has been proven successful for imaging many different types of landslides in order to detect slide planes, lithologic interfaces, and moisture regimes (Brooke, 1973; Bogoslovsky and Ogilvy, 1977; McCann and Forster, 1990; Godio and Bottino, 2001; Bichler and others, 2004; Lapenna and others, 2005; Drahor and others, 2006; Sastry and others, 2006; Jongmans and Garambois, 2007; Perrone and others, 2008; Sass and others, 2008; Schrott and Sass, 2008; de Bari and others, 2011; Travelletti and others, 2012; Van Dam, 2012). We measured electrical resistivity six times and borehole resistivity twice at two different times of the year (Fig. 10). The borehole and surface measurements were initially conducted on separate dates on June 14 and July 26, 2013, respectively, and both repeated on November 13, 2013. The surface measurements were set up as two arrays perpendicular to the slope direction and one array parallel to the slope direction, down the axis



Figure 9. Movement of total station monument S3 over time. The general direction of movement is to the northeast.

of the landslide, using an eight-channel resistivity meter. The surface arrays used a dipole-dipole electrode configuration with 1.5-m electrode spacing. Short spacing allows for higher resolution and is optimal for landslides anticipated to be shallow (less than 10 m). The dipole-dipole array has been proven to be successful for obtaining higher-resolution data and determining shallow interfaces in landslides (Lapenna and others, 2005; Schrott and Sass, 2008).

The borehole measurements were made in B5 and B6, the slotted PVC boreholes, and used a cross-hole method that measured voltage between electrodes. We used borehole electrodes at 0.5-m intervals. The boreholes were spaced 7.1 m apart and were 5 m deep, so as to have an aspect ratio (depth of hole/distance between holes) close to 1.5, to maximize resolution (Advanced Geosciences Inc., 2003). The cables hung in the two open boreholes. The electrodes had to be in direct contact with the soil (as with the surface arrays), so the PVC was filled with water to transmit the current to the soil. The boreholes were aligned with surface array MVS1, which is parallel to the downslope direction of the slide. This allowed comparison with the surface electrical-resistivity tomography images of MVS1 and MVS2, which was arranged perpendicular to the downslope direction.

Resistivity Results

Layering and clear resistivity contrasts show that high and low zones are present in the inverted images and reflect the shallow landslide geometry and both rotational and translational style of movement. Because electrical-resistivity surveys measure the potential difference of voltage injected into a nonhomogenous (and anisotropic) subsurface, the data must be inverted to reconstruct the subsurface resistivity from measured and modeled voltage data. This is called inversion, and helps to create the image profiles used to interpret the subsurface. Interpreted surfaces coincide with sharp drops in resistivity, indicating high water content (perched water) or possibly higher clay content. These zones, including the failure surface, correlate with lithologies observed in the boreholes, measured moisture content, and landslide depth determined from the two inclinometers. The surface and borehole arrays show ranges of electrical-resistivity values that are generally the same with all profiles, and the ranges do not vary significantly between the two different measurement dates. Very



Figure 10. Electrical-resistivity array locations in the Meadowview landslide.

little precipitation had fallen in the 2 days leading up to all the measurements, and little groundwater fluctuation occurred in piezometer B2. Overall precipitation amounts were less in the fall than in the summer, which may account for slight differences in the inverted imagery.

Example Inverted Resistivity Sections

MVS1, 7/26/2013: Parallel to the landslide axis in the downslope direction – MVS1 spans 45.7 m and extends downslope from the crown of the slide to the toe (Fig. 11). The inverted resistivity section shows that distinct layering and contrasts in resistivity are evident near the head scarp of the slide. A semi-

continuous high-resistivity layer (oranges to reds) is present near the surface, ranging between approximately 50 and 600 Ω -m. An identifiable break in the high-resistivity layer occurs at the surface at the head scarp displacement. A thin, lower-resistivity zone (greens) appears below the high-resistivity layer, ranging from 30 to 50 Ω -m. Perched water on the underlying clay shales creates the lower resistivity (higher conductivity) values. This zone continues downslope, occurring near the surface where water intersects the surface seeps near the toe of the landslide. A patchy low-resistivity zone (blues) occurs below the high-resistivity zone, approximately 2.7 m below the surface in the head of the landslide. This lowresistivity zone ranges from approximately 8 to 19 Ω -m. Starting at the head scarp, this low-resistivity zone extends downslope for about 22 m and has an undulating, arcuate shape. It becomes shallower farther downslope and ends abruptly. We interpreted this zone as the failure surface; this was confirmed by inclinometer data that

indicated the failure surface's depth at B1 to be about 2.7 m. Below the low-resistivity zone, resistivity increased to a range of approximately 30 to 50Ω -m (greens) down to the bottom of the section.

To get a closer look at the resistivity data, we extracted resistivity and depth (x, y, and z) from the raw inverted resistivity data at the location of borehole B1. These data are shown in a resistivity profile through the high- and low-resistivity layers near the head scarp (Fig. 12). The sharp peak of a resistivity increase at a depth of 1 m to about 128 Ω -m correlates to the lithologic change in the disturbed colluvial fill. This material grades from



Figure 11. Inverted electrical-resistivity array MVS1. Dashed lines represent multiple failure surfaces. Locations of boreholes, the head scarp, and secondary scarp are shown.

a sandy lean clay into a moderately stiff, sandy fat clay. There was also a big jump in density at this interface, as shown by the blow counts in the lithologic logs. Water was encountered during drilling at this interval, at about 1.2 m. Resistivity then decreased (moisture content increased) to approximately 19 Ω -m. This interval and the lowresistivity peak correlate with the contact between high-moisture conditions at the colluvial fill and very stiff, fat clay shale, which is also the inferred failure surface. Below the inferred failure surface, the resistivity increased slightly as the moisture content decreased.

Midslope, approximately 17.3 m downslope from the head scarp, resistivity ranged between 14 and 19 Ω -m in the low-resistivity zone that is the interpreted failure surface. Below the failure surface, resistivity increased toward two distinct high-resistivity zones. One is a continuous arcuate zone that continues downslope; the other deeper zone is lenticular shaped. These may be the deeper, drier(?) clay-shale layers (less conductive). These high-resistivity zones ranged between approximately 80 and 160 Ω -m. No borehole was drilled midslope, but the interpreted failure surface (lowresistivity peak) from the resistivity profile from MVS1 (Fig. 13) correlates with the failure surface determined from the inclinometer data.

0 21% 14% 26% 2 32% Disturbed colluvium-fat clay Disturbed contact, failure surface colluvium 4 Claystone-clay shale contact contact 5% Depth (m) 10 12 % are moisture contents at approximate depth, taken 3/13/13 14 A 20 40 60 80 100 120 Electrical resistivity $(\Omega-m)$

Toward the toe (Fig. 11), the distinct resistivity zones became more complex. Extracted resistivity and depth data (x, y, and z) from the raw inverted-resistivity profiles at the location of borehole B3 showed a high-resistivity peak of 79 Ω -m just below the surface. At B3, the colluvial fill was only 0.6 m deep, supporting the shallow flow type of slope movement at the toe. The failure surface was difficult to identify in the inverted-resistivity section's correlation to the borehole data. The inclinometer data from borehole B3 indicated that the failure surface was 1.2 to 1.5 m below the surface. The underlying high-resistivity layer (curved yellow layers and orange layer that start midslope) was approximately 90 to 130 Ω -m and correlates to the lean clay-clay shale contact where a stiff, structured lean clay transitions to a very soft, weathered clay shale. A distinct low-resistivity peak of approximately 50 Ω -m occurred about 4.3 m below the surface, which correlates with the clayey shaleshale contact and a decreasing moisture content, as described in the borehole. A high-resolution, lenticular zone was present at the end of the MVS1 array. This zone was approximately 2 m in length and had significantly higher resistivity values than the continuous high-resistivity zone that started midslope and curved toward the toe. This feature could be a large sandstone boulder that was dislodged during excavation of the house foundation.

> Large boulders of that size, up to 1.5 m in length, were identified in the field, at the toe of the slide.

> MVS2, 7/26/2013: Perpendicular to the downslope direction, upper *slope* – Electrical-resistivity array MVS2 spanned 36.6 m perpendicular to the downslope direction along the upper part of the slide. This array crosses borehole B1 (Fig. 14). There was a clear contrast between a higher-resistivity zone and an underlying low-resistivity zone. We interpreted this boundary to be the failure surface, which corresponds with the colluvial fill and fat clay

Figure 12. Vertical electrical-resistivity profile at borehole B1. Depth starts at the first point, toward the top of the curve, which is at the surface.



Electrical Resistivity



Figure 13. Vertical-resistivity profile taken midslope from section MVS1. The low-resistivity peak correlates with the failure surface depth measured with the inclinometer. Depth starts at the first point, toward the top of the curve, which is at the surface. Values on the inclinometer reading are depth in feet.

bedrock contact, and the landslide depth indicated in the inclinometer data from borehole B1. Two lenticular-shaped high-resistivity zones (possibly connected) occupied the right side of the inverted section above the failure surface. The right side of the section (toward the end) runs northwest, leading toward the head scarp. A moderately thick (approximately 1 to 1.5 m) sandstone layer crops out behind the head scarp, and MVS2 may be intersecting this high-resistivity layer.

Resistivity at this location and along the identified failure surface ranged between approximately 20 and 30 Ω -m. Similarly to MVS1, a highresistivity peak from x, y, z data extracted at the B1 location correlates to the contact between colluvial fill types, sandy lean clay, and sandy fat clay. The highest moisture content along the B1 transect was measured at a low-resistivity peak, supporting the location of the failure surface. MVS3, 7/26/2013: Perpendicular to the downslope direction, toe slope – Electrical-resistivity array MVS3 spans 24.4 m in a transverse direction across the toe of the slide. The inverted section shows a complex pattern of resistivity zones (Fig. 15). An undulating low-resistivity zone was present near the surface. This zone ranged from approximately 24 to 50 Ω -m. This low-resistivity zone transitioned to a high-resistivity zone with lenticular regions. The undulating boundary between the low- and high-resistivity zones for MVS3 was shallow, about 0.6 m deep, and correlates to the contact between sandy lean clay with gravel fill and stiff, residual, lean clay. The inclinometer measurements from borehole B3 indicate the failure surface is below the colluvial fill-lean clay contact; therefore, the failure zone at the toe may also include the lean clay unit.



Figure 14. Inverted-resistivity profile MVS2 in a transverse direction, below the head scarp of the landslide.



Figure 15. Inverted-resistivity profile MVS3 perpendicular to the downslope direction, along the toe of the landslide.

November Results

On November 13, 2013, arrays with the same starting and ending points used for the July arrays were laid out and the electrical resistivity was measured. In general, the resistivity contrasts, interpreted features, and correlations to stratigraphic boundaries were similar to what was measured in July (Figs. 16-18). One change in MVS1 was the presence of a low-resistivity zone (8–26 Ω -m) that extended down vertically below the inferred failure surface, just in front of the head scarp (Fig. 16). This zone accentuated the rotational movement in the head. More water may have infiltrated this area, causing the low-resistivity zone. For MVS3 (November measurement), the measurements from the high-resistivity zones (24–50 Ω -m) were larger and spaced differently than the measurements from the July inverted section. Approximately 104 mm less rainfall was measured in the month preceding the November resistivity measurements. This could account for the increased area of higher resistivity in MVS3.

Borehole Resistivity

A cross-hole method was used to measure resistivity. Similarly to the surface dipole-dipole array, this method is designed to measure the voltage between all electrodes that hang down in the boreholes. Figure 19 shows, in the center of the inverted section, a change in resistivity that correlates with a change in material type in borehole B1 (black dashed line). B1 is between the slotted PVC holes (B5 and B6), which are 7.1 m apart. There was no significant difference between the June 14 and November 11 measurements and resulting inverted profiles. Figure 13 shows the resistivity data at depth taken from the middle of the borehole profile. There is a slight decrease in resistivity that correlates to the failure surface depth.

Discussion

For discontinuous, variable bedrock lithologies and heterogeneous soils, drilling boreholes may not provide the data needed to interpret the landslide type and failure surface. Geophysical investigations, specifically electrical resistivity, provide an overall view of the subsurface that can supplement drilling and be correlated with soil properties. Geophysical and geotechnical data sets for landslides are primarily independent when seeking to acquire shear strength, however. The challenge is taking a nonunique solution of resistivity measurements in the subsurface and linking those values to mechanical properties that can be used in shear-strength models. Quality subsurface data, including detailed lithologic logs, an idea of



Figure 16. Inverted-electrical-resistivity array MVS1-2, measured in November 2013. Dashed lines represent multiple failure surfaces. Locations of borehole B1, the head scarp, and secondary scarp are shown.

Discussion



Figure 17. Inverted-electrical-resistivity array MVS2-2, measured in November 2013. Dashed lines represent the failure surface near the head scarp. Location of borehole B1 is shown.



Figure 18. Inverted-electrical-resistivity array MVS3-2, measured in November 2013. Dashed lines represent the failure surface at the toe. Location of borehole B3 is shown. The contrast between the low-resistivity zone and the high-resistivity zone was less conspicuous in November than it was in July.



Figure 19. Borehole resistivity results from June 14, 2013. The middle of the inverted section shows a contrast in resistivity that correlates to the colluvial fill–fat clay stratigraphic boundary.

groundwater flow, and applicable laboratory data, are imperative for using electrical resistivity as a tool for characterizing landslide behavior. Investigations of shallow, colluvial landslides that aim to correlate electrical resistivity with factors needed to calculate shear strength would benefit from having a tool for repetitive stability assessment.

The success of electrical-resistivity measurements to characterize thin, shallow colluvial soils on shallow weathered rock will allow landslidehazard research to be expanded by not only identifying failure planes and moisture regimes, but by relating the electrical-resistivity values to soil properties such as moisture content, matric suction, and porosity that govern slope stability. Although not addressed in this study, the practical application of a better understanding of shallow colluvial landslides is to demonstrate that nonintrusive, repeatable electrical-resistivity measurements can be correlated with soil properties for effective slopestability assessments.

Conclusions

Traditional geologic and geotechnical data were used to characterize an active shallow colluvial landslide on weathered rock; electrical resistivity was used to help determine the landslide failure plane, stratigraphy, and moisture regimes. Borehole logs provided details of subsurface stratigraphy. Increases in groundwater levels corresponded with particular precipitation events. During the study, total displacement in borehole B1 was 2 cm and in borehole B2 at the toe, 5 cm. The highest average velocity at B1 occurred between mid-June and early July 2013. During this interval, 78.7 mm of rain fell, and the second highest daily accumulation during monitoring, 36.8 mm, occurred on June 26. The highest average velocity at B3 occurred from July 2-18, 2013, during which 91.4 mm of rain fell. The rainfall at the site during the year was approximately 127 mm less than the average annual rainfall in the region, which may explain why there was only minor movement over the course of the year. The total station measurements of surface movement supplemented the subsurface inclinometer measurements.

The surface electrical-resistivity measurements across the Meadowview landslide resulted in inverted-resistivity sections with distinct resistivity contrasts that correlate to borehole stratigraphy, depth, and groundwater conditions. Lowresistivity zones were indicators of high moisture contents and correlated to the failure surface of the landslide. The inverted-resistivity profiles confirmed the curviplanar and undulating nature and shallow depth of the failure surface indicated by the inclinometer data.

The Meadowview landslide is moving very slowly (Cruden and Varnes, 1996), and although not much movement was observed during the study period, an intense or long-duration rainfall has the capability of triggering future movement. This type of landslide is common in eastern Kentucky, particularly where construction of hillside homes results in slope modifications. Factors contributing to the landslide include the steep slope, weak bedrock, and cut-and-fill slope modification associated with residential development. These conditions occur throughout much of eastern Kentucky, and a better understanding of these types of landslides will aid in landslide hazard analysis.

Acknowledgments

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Appendix 1: Log and Laboratory Data

	BORING LOG NO. B-1 Page 1 of 1													
PR	OJECT: Meadowview Lane Landslide					CLIENT: Kent	tucky G	eolog KY	jic S	Survey	,		J	
SIT	E: Boyd County Rush, Kentucky					LUXI	ngton, i							
90-	LOCATION See Exhibit A-2	t.)	/EL ONS	ΥΡΕ	(In.)	s T		P (psf)	STR	ENGTH	TEST	(%)	т of)	ATTERBERG LIMITS
GRAPHIC I	DEPTH	DEPTH (F	WATER LEY OBSERVATI	SAMPLE T	RECOVERY	FIELD TES	RQD %	LABORATC TORVANE/HF	TEST TYPE	COMPRESSIVI STRENGTH (psf)	STRAIN (%)	WATER CONTENT	DRY UNI WEIGHT (F	LL-PL-PI
	FILL - SANDY LEAN CLAY WITH GRAVEL (CL), light brown to orange and reddish brown, soft to medium stiff,	_	-	X	9	2-3-2 N=5						12		
	sandstone fragments, shale fragments, some organics	-			8	2-2-2 N=4						14		36-20-16
	4.0 FILL - SANDY FAT CLAY (CH), with some	-		ľ	9	0-1-42 N=43		2000 (HP)				21		
	cobbles and gravel, light brown, soft to medium stiff	5-		\mathbb{X}	9	1-8-4 N=12						26		
		-		\mathbb{X}	12	5-2-3 N=5						19		
	9.0	-	-		9	2-2-2 N=4						32		
co.cepu	hard, residual soil structure	10-	-		12	3-8-10 N=18		4500 (HP)				15		
	CLAYSTONE, light gray, completely to severely weathered, very soft, soil-like	-	-		18	3-18-32 N=50 38-50/6"						8		37-21-16
	13.5	-	-	Þ	10	N=50/6"						5		
	CLAYEY SHALE, light gray with some orange and reddish-brown, thinly laminated to laminated, completely weathered, very	- 15-			12	35-45-50/5" N=50/5"						12		
	soft, trace thinly laminated interbedded sandy shale	-	-	X	6	37-50/4" N=50/4"						10		
	21.5	- - 20- -	-		51		13							
	Boring Terminated at 21.5 Feet	-												
		-												
	Stratification lines are approximate. In-situ, the transition ma	y be gra	adual.				Hamm	er Type:	Auto	matic				
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	WATER LEVEL OBSERVATIONS	-					Boring St	tarted: 3	/13/20	13	Borir	ng Com	oleted: 3	3/13/2013
	4' while Drilling			21		acon	Drill Rig:				Drille	er: CSD		
			Project No.: N2135021 Exhibit: A-3											

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	BO	RIN	١G	L	OG NO. B-	2					F	Page	1 of 1	
PROJECT: Meadowview Lane Landslide					CLIENT: Kentu	ucky G	eolog	gic S	Survey					
SITE: Boyd County Rush, Kentucky														
ပ္ LOCATION See Exhibit A-2	()	/EL	ΡE	(In.)	L (RY (psf)	STR	ENGTH	TEST	(%)	cf)	ATTERBERG LIMITS	
С С С С С С С С С С С С С С С С С С С	DEPTH (F	WATER LEV OBSERVATIO	SAMPLE TY	RECOVERY (FIELD TES RESULTS	RQD %	LABORATO TORVANE/HP	TEST TYPE	COMPRESSIVE STRENGTH (psf)	STRAIN (%)	WATER CONTENT (DRY UNI WEIGHT (p	LL-PL-PI	
FILL - SANDY LEAN CLAY WITH GRAVEL (CL), light brown, sandstone fragments throughout 4.0	-		-											
FILL - SANDY FAT CLAY WITH GRAVEL (CH), light brown, sandstone and shale fragments throughout	5-	-		12										
9.0	-			14										
<u>SHALE</u> , clayey, very soft	10													
Stratification lines are approximate. In situ, the transition of	- 10- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -					Hammy	ar Turgei	Auto	matic					
Guauncauon nines are approximate. In-situ, the transition r	nay be gra	auudi.				namm	or rype:	AULU	nauc					
Advancement Method: 3.25" Hollow Stem Auger Abandonment Method:	See E> proced See Ap proced See Ap abbrev	chibit A ures. opendi: ures a opendi: iations	x B for nd ad x C fo 3.	desc r desc dition r expl	ription of field cription of laboratory Ial data (if any). Ianation of symbols and	Notes: Boring c 5 b to	converte '-10' bel entonite op	d into ow gro chips	piezome ound surfa and stee	ter, 5' so ace. Se I manho	creen pl ealed wi ole cove	laced fr ith 5' of er/concr	om ete at	
				_		Boring Started: 3/16/2013 B					Boring Completed: 3/16/2013			
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	_			,	3	Project No.: N2135021 Exhibit:						A-4		

	BOF	RIN	IG	L	OG NO. B-	-3					F	Page	1 of 1
PROJECT: Meadowview Lane Landslide					CLIENT: Kent	tucky G	eolog KY	jic S	Survey	,		0-	
SITE: Boyd County Rush, Kentucky					LEAN	ngton, i	N						
COCATION See Exhibit A-2	⁻ t.)	VEL	YPE	(In.)	ST		DRY P (psf)	STR	RENGTH	TEST	(%)	IT pcf)	ATTERBERO LIMITS
ОН На Раз О В РЕРТН	DEPTH (F	WATER LE OBSERVATI	SAMPLE T	RECOVERY	FIELD TE RESULT	RQD %	LABORATC TORVANE/HI	TEST TYPE	COMPRESSIV STRENGTH (psf)	STRAIN (%)	WATER CONTENT	DRY UN WEIGHT (I	LL-PL-PI
FILL - SANDY LEAN CLAY WITH GRAVEL (CL), light brown and olive-brown, medium stiff, micaceous	_		X	13	2-4-4 N=8		1500 (HP)				17		
LEAN CLAY (CL), trace sand, brown to dark brown, stiff to very stiff, residual soil	_		X	14	3-5-6 N=11						16		
structure	_		X	13	4-5-7 N=12						13		27-19-8
6.0	5 -		X	15	9-7-17 N=24						11		
CLAYEY SHALE, olive-gray to dark gray, thinly laminated to very thinly bedded, highly weathered, very soft to soft	_		\square	14	27-38-50/5" N=50/5"						6		29-20-9
	-		X	6	50/6" N=50/6"						7		
	- 10-		X	5	50/5" N=50/5"								
	-												
	-			23		7							
	-												
15.0 15.5 SHALE, carbonaceous, black, thinly Vaminated, highly weathered, soft	15-		μ										
Boring Terminated at 15.5 Feet	-												
	-												
	20-												
	-												
	-												
	_												
Stratification lines are approximate. In-situ, the transition ma	25- ay be gra	idual.				Hamme	er Type:	Auto	matic				
Advancement Method: 3.25" Hollow Stem Auger	See Ex procedu See Ap procedu	hibit A ures. pendix ures a	-3 for B for nd add	desc r desc dition	ription of field cription of laboratory al data (if any).	Notes: Boring o to	converte o 15.5' d	d to in epth	clinomete	er, fully	grouted	I from s	urface
	abbrevi	iations		. c.pi	and on or bymbola and					_			
WATER LEVEL OBSERVATIONS Water level not determined	٦				aron	Boring St	arted: 3	16/20	13	Borir	ig Completed: 3/16/2013		
				. ,		Project N	lo.: N213	35021		Exhil	bit:	A-5	

BORING LOG NO. B-4 Page 1 of 1														
PR	OJECT: Meadowview Lane Landslide					CLIENT: Kentu	ucky G	eolog	gic S	Survey	,	•	- 35	
SIT	E: Boyd County Rush, Kentucky													
LOG	LOCATION See Exhibit A-2	=t.)	VEL IONS	YPE	(In.)	ST		DRY P (psf)	STR	RENGTH	TEST	د (%)	IT pcf)	ATTERBERO LIMITS
GRAPHIC	DEPTH	DEPTH (I	WATER LE OBSERVAT	SAMPLE 1	RECOVERY	FIELD TE RESULT	RQD %	LABORAT TORVANE/H	TEST TYPE	COMPRESSIV STRENGTH (psf)	STRAIN (%)	WATEF	DRY UN WEIGHT (LL-PL-PI
	FILL - SANDY LEAN CLAY WITH GRAVEL (CL), brown, soft to medium stiff	-	_		14									
	LEAN CLAY (CL), brown to dark brown, residual soil structure to completely weathered claystone	- -	-											
	6.0 <u>CLAYEY SHALE</u> , gray to dark gray, highly to severely weathered, very soft to soft	5-												
		-	-											
	10.0 Boring Terminated at 10 Feet	10-												
		_	-											
		-	-											
		15-												
		-	-											
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		20-												
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	Stratification lines are approximate. In-situ, the transition m	25- ay be gra	dual.				Hamme	er Type:	Auto	matic				
Advan 3.2	icement Method: " Hollow Stem Auger	See Ex procedu See Ap procedu	hibit A ures. pendix ures ar	-3 for	desc r desc dition	ription of field cription of laboratory al data (if any).	Notes: Boring c 5 b	converte '-10' beli entonite	d into ow gro chips	piezomet ound surfa and stee	ter, 5' s ace. Se I manhe	creen pl ealed wi	aced fro th 5' of er/concr	om ete at
Aband	lonment Method:	See Ap abbrevi	pendix	c C to	r expl	anation of symbols and		γĻ						
	WATER LEVEL OBSERVATIONS Water level not determined	٦	Г -				Boring Started: 3/16/2013 Boring Completed: 3/16/2013							3/16/2013
		1		1		JLUI	Drill Rig:				Drille	er: CSD		
			Project No.: N2135021 Exhibit: A-6											

BORING LOG NO. B-5 Page 1 of 1															
PR	OJECT: Meadowview Lane Landslide				CLIENT: Ke	entucky G	eolog	jic S	Survey			- 3-			
SIT	E: Boyd County Rush, Kentucky				Le		<u> </u>								
90-	LOCATION See Exhibit A-2	t.)	/EL ONS	ŕΡΕ	Sut a		ЯΥ	STR	ENGTH	TEST	(%)	T ocf)	ATTERBERG LIMITS		
GRAPHIC I	DEDTH	DEPTH (F	WATER LEV OBSERVATI	SAMPLE TY	FIELD TES RESULTS	RQD %	LABORATO HP (psf)	TEST TYPE	COMPRESSIVE STRENGTH (psf)	STRAIN (%)	WATER	DRY UNI WEIGHT (p	LL-PL-PI		
	9.0 EEPTH FILL - LEAN CLAY/FAT CLAY (CL), with varying amounts of sand and gravel EAN CLAY/FAT CLAY (CL), brown, residual soil structure 12.0 SHALE, clayey, very soft								0						
	18.5 Boring Terminated at 18.5 Feet	20-	-												
	Stratification lines are approximate. In-situ, the transition may l	25- be gradual.				Hamme	er Type:	Auto	matic						
Advance 3.25	Vancement Method: See 3.25" Hollow Stem Auger proc See proc andonment Method: See abb			lesci desc itiona expla	ription of field cription of laboratory al data (if any). anation of symbols a	Notes: Backfille	ed with s uttings b	slotted backfill	screen fr ed aroun	om 0' tr d scree	o 18.5'. n.	Sand a	and		
	WATER LEVEL OBSERVATIONS	٦٢		_		Boring St	Boring Started: 3/16/2013					Boring Completed: 3/16/2013			
POR .	ייאנכי ופיפו ווטן טפופוווווופט		26	ſ	JCOL	Drill Rig:				Drille	er: CSD				
				,		Project N	o.: N213	35021		Exhil	bit:	A-7			

	BORING LOG NO. B-6 Page 1 of 1													
F	PR	OJECT: Meadowview Lane Landslide				CLIENT: Kentucky Geologic Survey								
╞	SIT	TE: Boyd County Rush, Kentucky				Lexii	iigion, I	N I						
	ő	LOCATION See Exhibit A-2		NS	щ			≿	STR	RENGTH	TEST	()	Ĵ	ATTERBERG LIMITS
	GRAPHIC LC		DEPTH (Ft.)	WATER LEVE OBSERVATIOI	SAMPLE TYF	FIELD TEST RESULTS	RQD %	LABORATOR HP (psf)	TEST TYPE	COMPRESSIVE STRENGTH (psf)	STRAIN (%)	WATER CONTENT (%	DRY UNIT WEIGHT (pcf	LL-PL-PI
		DEPTH FILL - LEAN CLAY/FAT CLAY (CL), with varying amounts of sand and gravel 9.0 LEAN CLAY/FAT CLAY (CL), brown, residual 10.0 soil structure SHALE, clayey, very soft 18.0 Boring Terminated at 18 Feet												
NG LOG IS NOT VALID IF SEPARALEU FROM URIGINAL REMURT.	dvan 3.25 band	Stratification lines are approximate. In-situ, the transition may be not been been been been been been been bee			desci desc ition: expl	ription of field cription of laboratory al data (if any). anation of symbols and	Hamm Notes: Backfill c	er Type: ed with s uttings b	Auto	matic screen fr ed around	om 0' ti d scree	o 18'. S n.	Band and	d 3/16/2013
		Water level not determined								er: CSD				
							Project N	o.: N21:	35021		Exhil	bit:	A-8	



ATTERBERG LIMITS RESULTS













TRIAX_Terracon-B2@6.5.xls



Appendix 2: Cumulative and Incremental Inclinometer Data



Kentucky Geological Survey Inclinometer Installation KGS#2 MArch 25, 2014 to April 27, 2014 Terracon Consultants, Inc. Louisville, KY





Kentucky Geological Survey Inclinometer Installation KGS#2 MArch 25, 2014 to April 27, 2014 Terracon Consultants, Inc. Louisville, KY

