

INTRODUCTION

The Bernardsville quadrangle is in north-central New Jersey, in Morris and Somerset Counties, and straddles the boundary between the New Jersey Highlands and Piedmont Physiographic Provinces. Mesoproterozoic rocks of the Highlands underlie the north and west part of the map, and Mesozoic igneous and sedimentary rocks of the Piedmont underlie the remainder. The Ramapo fault is a structural and physiographic boundary between the two provinces.

The quadrangle is in the central Passaic River drainage basin, and this river drains the eastern part of the quadrangle from north to south. The northeast part of the map, east of Basking Ridge Township, contains the Great Swamp, a large tract of poorly drained natural wetland underlain by sediments of Pleistocene and recent age (Stanford, 2008), deposited on bedrock of the Borton Formation.

STRATIGRAPHY

The youngest bedrock in the quadrangle is Mesozoic and was deposited in the Newark basin, which was approximately 2,000 m of interbedded upper Triassic to Lower Jurassic sediments and igneous rocks. Mesozoic formations become progressively younger from west to east, although the stratigraphy is complicated by faults and local, regional faults. Sedimentary units, from oldest to youngest, are the Passaic, Feltville, Towaco, and Borton Formations. Most of these are well exposed, except for the Borton Formation, which is now largely covered by unconsolidated sediments. Conglomeratic facies of the Towaco Formation crop out in the eastern part of the map. Igneous units are the Orange Mountain Basalt, Preakness Basalt, and Hook Mountain Basalt that support the moderate relief in the Piedmont part of the map. The Hook Mountain Basalt and Preakness Basalt contain coarse-grained layers and local basaltic pegmatite at several stratigraphic intervals that are mapped as gabbronorite. Gabbronorite and pegmatite layers within the Preakness Basalt are interpreted to have formed through faciation from fine-grained basalt (Puffer and Volkert, 2001). Gabbronorite layers within the Hook Mountain Basalt, although not exposed in the map area, formed through a similar process.

Mesoproterozoic Rocks

The oldest rocks in the quadrangle are Mesoproterozoic and include various granites and gneisses metamorphosed to granulite facies about 1050 Ma during the Ottawan phase of the Grenville orogeny (Volkert, 2004). Temperature estimates for this high-grade metamorphism are 760°C from calcic-gabbro thermometry (Parker et al., 2006).

The youngest Mesoproterozoic rocks are small, irregular bodies of granite pegmatite that are undeformed and have discordantly intruded most other Mesoproterozoic rocks. None of the pegmatites are large enough to be shown on the map, but they are most common in areas underlain by hornblende granite. Pegmatites regionally have yielded U-Pb zircon ages of 1004 to 987 Ma (Volkert et al., 2005).

Gabbroic rocks are widely distributed in the map area. They include hornblende gabbro, alkalic and monzonite of the Byram Intrusive Suite, and monzonite of the comagmatic Lake Hopatcong Intrusive Suite, that together constitute the Vernon Supersuite (Volkert and Drake, 1998). Rocks of the Vernon Supersuite yield sensitive high-resolution ion microprobe (SHRIMP) U-Pb zircon ages of 1188 to 1182 Ma (Volkert et al., 2010).

Among the oldest Mesoproterozoic rocks are those of the Loose Suite, a sequence of metamorphosed volcanic and plutonic rocks of calc-alkaline composition formed in a continental-margin magmatic arc (Volkert, 2004). The Loose Suite includes quartz-algoscic gneisses, biotite-quartz-algoscic gneisses, hornblende-quartz-algoscic gneisses, hypersthene-quartz-algoscic gneisses, and diorite gneisses. These rocks are spatially associated with a sequence of supracrustal rocks formed in a back-arc basin incident of the Loose Suite (Volkert, 2004). They include potassic felsoid gneisses, monzonite gneisses, biotite-quartz-feldspar gneisses, clinopyroxene-quartz-feldspar gneisses, pyroxene gneisses, and amphibolite. Loose Suite and supracrustal rocks yield similar SHRIMP U-Pb zircon ages of 1239 to 1245 Ma (Volkert et al., 2010).

STRUCTURE

Mesozoic Bedding

Bedding in the Mesozoic rocks is varied and affected by numerous faults, as well as by the location of the quadrangle at the southwest end of the Watchung Syncline. Beds dip north in the southern part of the map and generally south in the northern part, defining five gently-dipping limbs of the syncline. The strike of beds displays two populations that are about N 70° E, and N 20° W, (fig. 1). Beds range in dip from 2° to 36° and average 12°.

Proterozoic Foliation

Crystallization foliation (the parallel alignment of mineral grains) in Mesoproterozoic rocks is an important feature from compressional stresses that deformed the rocks during high-grade metamorphism. Foliation is fairly uniform and strikes northeast at an average of N 47° E, (fig. 2). Foliations dip mainly southeast, and less commonly, northwest from 10° to 90° and average 55°.

Folds

Mesozoic rocks are deformed into the Watchung Syncline, a broad, upright, northeast-plunging fold that dominates the structure in the Piedmont part of the map. The Borton Formation crops out in the core of the fold and Preakness Basalt defines the limbs. Rocks in the northeast part of the map are part of the upright, southeast-plunging Vernon Supersuite. This fold is core by Towaco Formation, and Hook Mountain Basalt forms the limbs. Only the southern limb of the fold is present in the quadrangle. A complementary upright, southeast-plunging syncline core by Borton Formation, and highly dissected by faults, is mapped south of the anticline.

Folds that deform Mesoproterozoic rocks formed during the Grenville orogeny. The folds deform earlier-formed planar metamorphic fabrics, so they postdate the development of crystallization foliation. Characteristic fold axes include antiforms and synforms that are northeast-trending, southeast-overturned, or upright. Mineral lineations plunge gently northeast at 5° to 24° at an average of N 52° E, parallel to the axes of minor folds in antiforms and the axes of major folds.

Faults

The Ramapo Fault is a dominant structural feature that extends northeast from the Gladstone quadrangle (Houghton and Volkert, 1990) into New York State (Drake et al., 1990). The fault has complex and protracted history of movement that began in the Mesozoic. Multiple episodes of subsequent reactivation have left overlapping brittle and ductile fabrics that record normal, reverse, and strike-slip movement. The fault strikes about N 47° E, and dips 50° southeast, as indicated by borings drilled at Bernardsville Township (Ratcliffe et al., 1980) and for Route 287 between Monroville and Riverdale Boroughs (Woodward, 1985). However, outcrops of Mesoproterozoic rocks on the footwall of the fault, especially in the north in the Pompton Plains and Ramsey quadrangles, record mylonitization of probable Proterozoic and Palaeozoic age that dip steeply southeast at 60° to 85° (Volkert, 2010, 2011).

A series of north- to northeast-striking, steeply dipping faults south of the Ramapo Fault displace the axis of the Watchung Syncline and formation contacts from a few hundred to as much as 1,000 feet. Some of the northeast faults may be splays of the Ramapo Fault. Northeast-striking faults cut the north faults and, therefore, appear to be younger. All faults are characterized by very closely-spaced joints, thin zones of breccia and/or clayey-silt gouge, slickensides locally coated by chlorite and/or calcite, and ended gaps in outcrops. Slip lineations on fault surfaces record mainly oblique to high-angle dip-slip movement. Northeast faults strike N 70° E, to N 30° E, (fig. 3) and dip southeast, and less commonly, northwest. North faults strike about N 05° W, (fig. 3) and dip nearly equally west and east. The average dip of all faults is 85°.

Joints

Joints are a dominant structural feature in all rocks in the quadrangle. Those in Mesozoic sedimentary rocks are characteristically planar, moderately well formed, and unmineralized, except near faults. Surfaces are smooth and less commonly irregular. Joints in sandstone are better developed than those in siltstone and shale. Joints are spaced from <1 foot to several feet apart, except near faults where they are spaced <1 foot apart. Two distinct joint sets and a subvertical set are present in the sedimentary rocks. The strike of joints displays populations that are about N 10° E, N 20° W, and a subvertical set strikes about N 70° E, (fig. 4). Northeast striking joints dip southeast, and less commonly, northwest, and northwest striking joints dip southwest, and less commonly, northeast. The average dip of all joints is 85°.

Joints in Mesozoic igneous rocks are of two types, columnar (cooling) and tectonic. Columnar joints are present in all basalt formations in the area. They are characteristically polygonal, arrayed radially and varied in height and spacing. A comprehensive study of the origin and orientation of cooling joints in the basalts was undertaken by Faust (1978). Tectonic joints are present in all basalt formations, but they are commonly obscured by the more pervasive cooling joints. Tectonic joints are planar, moderately to well formed, smooth to slightly irregular, steeply dipping, unmineralized, and varied in their spacing from a few feet to tens of feet apart. In outcrops near faults, spacing is 1 foot or less apart and surfaces are locally mineralized by calcite and/or chlorite.

The dominant joint orientation in Mesoproterozoic rocks is nearly perpendicular to the strike of crystallization foliation, and this relationship is a consistent feature throughout the Highlands (Volkert, 1998). Joints are characteristically planar, moderately well formed, moderately to widely spaced, and moderately to steeply dipping. Surfaces of joints are smooth, and less commonly, slightly irregular. They are typically unmineralized except near faults where they are coated by chlorite and/or epidote. Joints are variably spaced from 1 foot to tens of feet apart. Those developed in massive rocks such as granite are spaced wider, irregularly formed and more commonly spaced than in layered gneisses. Joints formed near faults are spaced 2 feet or less apart. The dominant joint set strikes N 20° W, to N 70° W, and averages N 32° W, (fig. 5). This dip is nearly equal to the northeast and southwest. Subvertical sets strike about N 40° E, and N 70° E, and dip mainly northwest. The average dip of all joints is 75°.

ECONOMIC RESOURCES

Lower Jurassic Preakness Basalt was quarried near Bernardsville Borough for use as aggregate and dimension stone and Hook Mountain Basalt was quarried near Milington. A small, unnamed mica mine in Mesoproterozoic gneiss at Bernardsville was likely worked during the 19th century, but no information is available on the mine.

NATURALLY OCCURRING RADIATION

Background levels of naturally occurring radioactivity were measured in Mesozoic bedrock outcrops using a handheld Micro Rf meter and the results are given under the individual map unit descriptions. In general, basalts yield consistently low readings of about 6 Micro RfH regardless of stratigraphic position, texture, or composition. Sedimentary units yield higher, more varied readings that range from 9 to 21 Micro RfH and appear to be related mainly to grain size. Values recorded from sandstone and pebbly sandstone are lower than those from siltstone and shale, suggesting that clay minerals may be the host for the radiogenic phases.

DESCRIPTION OF MAP UNITS

NEWARK BASIN

Borton Formation (Lower Jurassic) (Olsen, 1980a) – Reddish-brown or brownish-purple, fine-grained, commonly micaceous sandstone, siltstone, and mudstone in fining-upward sequences 5 to 15 ft thick. Red, gray, and brownish-purple siltstone and black, blocky, partly dolomitic siltstone and shale are common in the lower part of unit. Irregular mud cracks, symmetrical ripple marks, hummocky and trough cross-laminated beds, burrows, and evaporite minerals are abundant in red siltstone and mudstone. Gray, fine-grained sandstone locally contains carbonized plant remains and reptile footprints in middle and upper parts of unit. Maximum thickness regionally is about 1,600 ft. Levels of natural radioactivity range from 13 to 15 (mean=14) Micro RfH in reddish-brown rocks and 15 to 17 (mean=16) Micro RfH in gray rocks.

Hook Mountain Basalt (Lower Jurassic) (Olsen, 1980a) – Dark greenish-gray to black, generally fine-grained basalt composed of plagioclase, clinopyroxene, and iron-titanium oxides. Unit contains small spherules to tubular gas-escape vesicles above scoriaceous flow contacts, some of which are filled by zoisite minerals or calcite. Unit consists of at least two, and possibly three major flows. Base of lowest flow is intensely vesicular. Tops of flows are weathered and vesicular. Maximum thickness regionally is about 300 ft. Levels of natural radioactivity range from 4 to 10 (mean=6) Micro RfH.

Towaco Formation (Lower Jurassic) (Olsen, 1980a) – Reddish-brown to brownish-purple, buff, olive-tan, or light-olive gray, fine- to medium-grained micaceous sandstone, siltstone, and silt mudstone in fining-upward sequences 3 to 10 ft thick. Unit consists of at least eight sequences of gray, greenish-gray, or brownish-gray, fine-grained sandstone, siltstone, and calcareous siltstone, and block micromineralized calcareous siltstone and mudstone with diagnostic pollen, fish, and dinosaur tracks. Irregular mud cracks and symmetrical ripple marks are present locally. Sandstone is commonly hummocky and trough cross-laminated, and siltstone commonly planar laminated or bedded and indistinctly laminated to massive. As much as several feet of unit have been thermally metamorphosed along the contact with Hook Mountain Basalt. Conglomerate and conglomeratic sandstone (Ks) containing subrounded clasts of quartzite and quartz in matrix of buff to tan, sand to silt interfinger with unit in northeastern part of the map. Maximum thickness regionally is about 1,250 ft. Levels of natural radioactivity range from 12 to 21 (mean=15) Micro RfH in reddish-brown rocks, 13 to 20 (mean=16) Micro RfH in gray rocks (Jt), and 8 to 13 (mean=11) Micro RfH in conglomerate (Kc).

Preakness Basalt (Lower Jurassic) (Olsen, 1980a) – Dark greenish-gray to black, fine-grained, dense, hard basalt composed mainly of calcic plagioclase, clinopyroxene and iron-titanium oxides. Unit contains small spherules to tubular gas-escape vesicles or rectly above scoriaceous flow contacts, some of which are filled by zoisite minerals or calcite. Dark-gray, coarse- to very-coarse-grained gabbronorite (Jgp) composed of clinopyroxene grains as much as 0.5 in. long and plagioclase grains as much as 1.0 in. long occurs at several stratigraphic intervals in the unit. Gabbronorite has sharp upper contacts and gradational lower contacts with fine-grained basalt. Unit consists of at least three major flows, the tops of which are marked by prominent vesicular zones as much as 8 ft thick. Radiating spherules columnar 2 to 24 in. wide, due to shrinkage during cooling, are abundant near the base of the lowest flow. A bed of reddish-brown siltstone 8 to 25 ft thick (Jst) separates the lower flows. Maximum thickness of unit is about 1,040 ft. Levels of natural radioactivity range from 4 to 8 (mean=5) Micro RfH.

Feltville Formation (Lower Jurassic) (Olsen, 1980a) – Reddish-brown or light grayish-red, fine- to coarse-grained sandstone, siltstone, shaly siltstone, and siltly mudstone, and light- to dark-gray or black, locally calcareous siltstone, siltly mudstone, and carbonaceous limestone. Upper part of unit is predominantly thin- to medium-bedded, reddish-brown siltstone, but south of the map area it contains beds of light-gray, fine-grained calcareous sandstone interbedded with light-gray, reddish-brown, or light greenish-gray, fine-grained quartzose sandstone that contains locally abundant carbonized plant remains. Reddish-brown sandstone and siltstone are moderately well sorted, commonly cross-laminated, and interbedded with reddish-brown, planar-laminated siltly mudstone and mudstone. Two thin, laterally continuous sequences, such as much as 10 ft thick of dark-gray to black carbonaceous limestone, light-gray limestone, and medium gray calcareous siltstone, and gray or olive, replicated shaly siltstone occur near the base, and along with the red beds, make up the Washington Valley Member of Olsen (1980a). Gray beds contain fish, reptiles, amphibians, and diagnostic plant fossils. As much as several feet of unit have been thermally metamorphosed along its contact with Preakness Basalt. Thickness regionally is about 510 ft. Levels of natural radioactivity from reddish-brown sandstone and siltstone range from 11 to 17 (mean=12.5) Micro RfH.

Orange Mountain Basalt (Lower Jurassic) (Olsen, 1980a) – Dark greenish-gray to black, fine-grained, dense, hard basalt composed mostly of calcic plagioclase, clinopyroxene and iron-titanium oxides. Unit contains small spherules to tubular gas-escape vesicles above base of flow contact, some of which are filled by zoisite minerals or calcite. Unit consists of three major flows that are separated in places by a weathered zone, a bed of thin reddish-brown siltstone, or by volcanoclastic rock. Lower part of upper flow is locally pillowed; lower flow part has pahoehoe flow structures. Middle flow is massive to columnar jointed. Lower flow is generally massive with widely spaced conular cooling joints and is pillowed near the top. Individual flow contacts are characterized by vesicular zones as much as 8 ft thick. Thickness of unit is about 590 ft. Levels of natural radioactivity range from 3 to 8 (mean=6) Micro RfH.

NEW JERSEY HIGHLANDS

Vernon Supersuite (Volkert and Drake, 1998)
Byram Intrusive Suite (Drake, 1984)
Hornblende granite (Mesoproterozoic) – Pinkish-gray or buff weathering, pinkish-white or light-pinkish-gray, medium- to coarse-grained, foliated granite composed of mesoperthite, microcline microperthite, quartz, oligoclase, and hornblende. Unit includes spherules of pegmatite too small to be shown on the map.

Microperthite alkalic (Mesoproterozoic) – Pale pinkish-white weathering, light-pinkish-gray, medium- to coarse-grained, foliated granite composed of microcline microperthite, quartz, oligoclase, and trace amounts of hornblende and magnetite.

Hornblende monzonite (Mesoproterozoic) – Tan, pinkish-gray or buff weathering, pinkish-gray or greenish-gray, medium- to coarse-grained, foliated rock of syenitic to monzonitic composition composed of mesoperthite, microcline microperthite, oligoclase, and hornblende. Locally contains quartz and/or clinopyroxene.

Lake Hopatcong Intrusive Suite (Drake and Volkert, 1991)
Pyroxene monzonite (Mesoproterozoic) – Gray, buff, or tan weathering, greenish-gray, medium- to coarse-grained, massive, moderately to indistinctly foliated syenitic to monzonitic composition of mesoperthite, microperthite to microcline microperthite, oligoclase, hornblende, titanite, magnetite, and apatite. Locally contains sparse amounts of quartz and/or hornblende.

Back Arc Rocks

Potassic felsoid gneiss (Mesoproterozoic) – Light-gray or pinkish-white weathering, pinkish-white or light-pinkish-gray, medium-grained, moderately foliated gneiss composed of quartz, microcline microperthite, oligoclase, and biotite. Locally contains garnet, sillimanite and magnetite.

Monzonite gneiss (Mesoproterozoic) – Buff weathering, light-greenish-gray or greenish-buff, medium-grained, moderately foliated gneiss composed of microcline microperthite, quartz, oligoclase, hornblende, and monazite. Unit is confined to one small body along Indian Grove Brook.

Biotite-quartz-feldspar gneiss (Mesoproterozoic) – Pale pinkish-white weathering, pinkish-gray and gray weathering (Yb), locally rusty (Yb), gray, tan, or greenish-gray, medium- to coarse-grained, moderately layered and foliated gneiss containing microcline microperthite, oligoclase, quartz, biotite, garnet, and sillimanite. Graphite and pyrrhotite are confined to the variant that weathers rusty. This variant is commonly spatially associated with thin, moderately foliated to well-layered quartzite that contains biotite, feldspar, and graphite.

Clinopyroxene-quartz-feldspar gneiss (Mesoproterozoic) – Pinkish-gray or pinkish-buff weathering, white to pale-pinkish-white, medium-grained, foliated gneiss composed of microcline, quartz, oligoclase, clinopyroxene, and trace amounts of titanite and magnetite.

Pyroxene gneiss (Mesoproterozoic) – White weathering, greenish-gray, medium-grained, foliated and layered gneiss composed of oligoclase, clinopyroxene, variable amounts of quartz, and trace amounts of opaque minerals and titanite. Commonly spatially associated with pyroxene amphibolite and biotite-quartz-feldspar gneiss.

Magmatic Arc Rocks

Loose Suite (Drake, 1984; Volkert and Drake, 1999)
Quartz-algoscic gneiss (Mesoproterozoic) – White weathering, light-greenish-gray, medium- to coarse-grained, foliated gneiss composed of oligoclase or andesine, quartz, and local hornblende, clinopyroxene and/or biotite. Commonly contains thin, conformable layers of amphibolite not shown on the map.

Biotite-quartz-oligoclase gneiss (Mesoproterozoic) – White or light-gray weathering, medium-gray or light greenish-gray, medium- to coarse-grained, foliated and layered gneiss composed of oligoclase or andesine, quartz, biotite, and local garnet. Some outcrops contain clinopyroxene. Locally contains thin, conformable layers of biotite-bearing amphibolite.

Hornblende-quartz-oligoclase gneiss (Mesoproterozoic) – White or light-gray weathering, greenish-gray, medium- to coarse-grained, foliated gneiss composed of oligoclase or andesine, quartz, hornblende, and local biotite. Some outcrops contain clinopyroxene. Locally contains thin, conformable layers of amphibolite.

Hypersthene-quartz-plagioclase gneiss (Mesoproterozoic) – Gray or tan weathering, greenish-gray or greenish-brown, medium-grained, foliated and layered gneiss composed of andesine or oligoclase, quartz, clinopyroxene, hornblende, and hypersthene. Commonly contains thin, conformable layers of amphibolite and mafic-rich quartz-plagioclase gneiss.

Diorite gneiss (Mesoproterozoic) – Light-gray or tan weathering, greenish-gray or greenish-brown, medium- to coarse-grained, gray, lustered, massive, foliated rock containing andesine or oligoclase, clinopyroxene, hornblende, and hypersthene, contains thin, mafic layers having the composition of amphibolite.

Other Rocks

Amphibolite (Mesoproterozoic) – Gray to grayish-black, medium-grained, foliated gneiss composed of hornblende and andesine. Some variants contain biotite and/or clinopyroxene. Amphibolite associated with the Loose Suite is metasedimentary in origin. Amphibolite associated with metasedimentary rocks may be metavolcanic or metasedimentary in origin. Both types are shown undifferentiated on the map.

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EXPLANATION OF MAP SYMBOLS

- Contact - Dotted where concealed. Dashed and queried where uncertain.
- Fault - Dotted where concealed. Dashed and queried where uncertain.
- Normal fault - U, upthrown side; D, downthrown side. Bar and ball show direction of dip of fault plane.
- Reverse fault - U, upthrown side; D, downthrown side. Bar and ball show direction of dip of fault plane.
- High-angle fault of unknown movement.
- FOLDS
 - Folds in Mesozoic rocks showing trace of axial surface, direction of dip of limbs, and direction of plunge.
 - Folds in Mesoproterozoic rocks showing trace of axial surface, direction of dip of limbs, and direction of plunge.
 - Syncline
 - Synform
 - Antiform
 - Overturned Antiform
 - Overturned Synform
- PLANAR FEATURES
 - Strike and dip of crystallization foliation
 - Inclined
 - Vertical
 - Strike and dip of inclined beds
- LINEAR FEATURES
 - Bearing and plunge of mineral lineation in Proterozoic rocks
- OTHER FEATURES
 - Active rock quarry
 - Abandoned rock quarry
 - Abandoned mica mine
 - Bedrock outcrop or float used in construction of map
 - Scoriaceous flow contact
 - Boring log or water-well record from Stanford (2008)
 - Form lines showing foliation in Proterozoic rocks. Shown in cross section only.

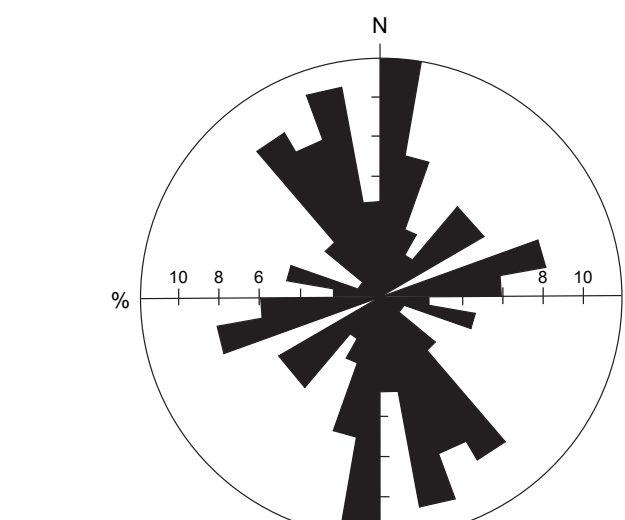


Figure 4. Rose diagram of joint orientations in Mesozoic sedimentary rocks.

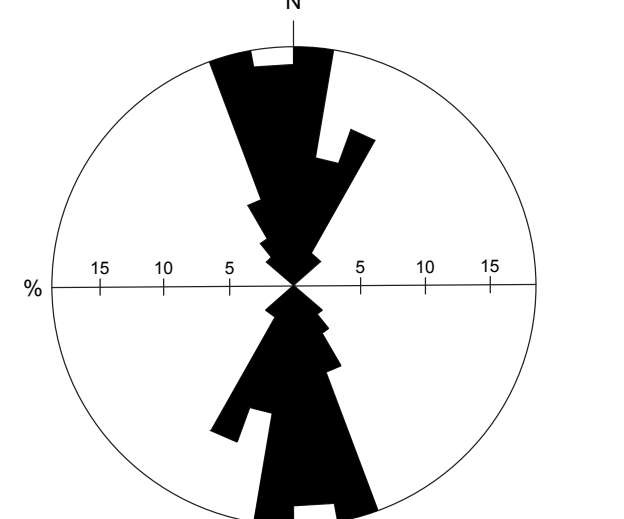


Figure 2. Rose diagram of crystallization foliation orientations in Mesoproterozoic rocks.

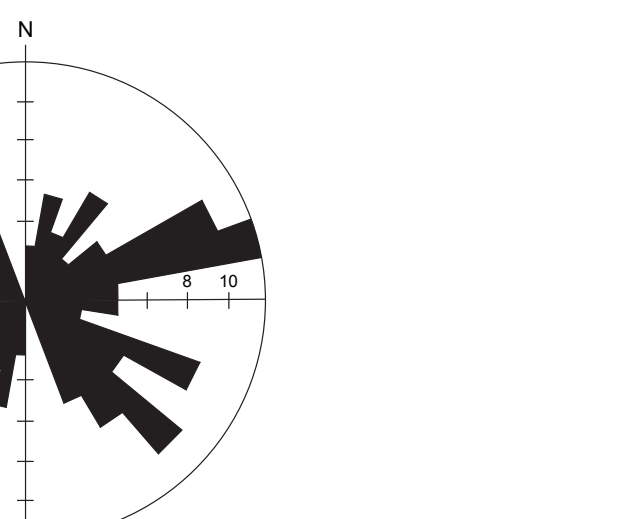


Figure 1. Rose diagram of bedding orientations in Mesozoic sedimentary rocks.

Bedrock Geologic Map of the Bernardsville Quadrangle,
Morris and Somerset Counties, New Jersey

by
Richard A. Volkert and Donald H. Monteverde
2012

