

# **Karst of Springfield, Ohio**

by  
**Douglas J. Aden**

with  
GIS and cartography by Dean R. Martin

Open-File Report 2012-2  
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*Cover image:* At the top of the photo is the massive and unfractured Cedarville Dolomite. Below, a spring flows from the blocky and highly fractured Springfield Dolomite.

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## Introduction

*Karst* terrain forms by dissolution of carbonate rocks, such as limestone or dolomite, or evaporites, such as gypsum or salt, and is characterized by features including sinkholes, disappearing streams, caves, and springs. *Sinkholes* are enclosed depressions that do not usually hold water; they often have a “throat” or opening at the bottom where they drain to the subsurface. When a stream flows into a sinkhole, it is known as a *disappearing stream* or *losing stream*. Water flowing into the ground can cause solution enlargement of natural fractures in the rock and these fractures eventually can grow into caves. In Ohio, a *cave* is defined as “...a naturally occurring void, cavity, recess, or system of interconnecting passages beneath the surface of the earth or within a cliff or ledge...” (State of Ohio, 1989).

The many passageways formed in karst terrain allow for high connectivity between the land surface and the water table. These passageways permit water to bypass soil and rock layers that filter out contaminants. Consequently, when compounds such as fertilizers, pesticides, and waste enter sinkholes, they are rapidly transported to the water table and quickly pollute water wells, streams, and rivers. When water exits these solutional features, a *spring* is formed. Such springs enable release of these contaminants at the surface. These different features may pose infrastructure complications: roads, utilities, houses, and other facilities built in karst areas are at risk of subsidence, collapse, or other damage.

In order to provide a reference for future planning on both the local and regional scale, this map book identifying the known and suspected karst areas of Springfield, Ohio, has been produced.

## Previous Work

Karst areas have been studied in Ohio for many years. In the 1980s and 1990s, karst was researched for the proposed Superconducting Super Collider and mapped statewide to determine areas suitable

for storage of low-level nuclear byproducts. Ohio’s preliminary map of karst features (Pavey and others, 1999) was completed in 1997 and released in 1999; it since has been updated with new data in 2002, 2004, and 2007 and soon will be updated again. In the spring of 2008, severe karst-related flooding occurred in Bellevue and initiated increased concern regarding Ohio’s geohazards (Raab and others, 2009). In 2011, karst was mapped in the rapidly developing Delaware County region (Aden and others, 2011). Finally, from late 2011 to 2012 karst areas were mapped in the Springfield and Donnelsville 7.5-minute quadrangles using methods that were refined in the Delaware County region, and new features were added to those provided by an Ohio Environmental Protection Agency study (Raymond and McGinnis, 2007).

## Methodology

To locate sinkholes, a digital elevation map (DEM) generated from LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) data was used to create a map layer that identified low, enclosed areas. To locate potential sinkholes, these low spots were cross referenced with known karst points, bedrock geology, aerial photography of multiple sources and ages, soil maps, drift thickness maps, and water well logs. Suspect locations were then visited in the field, evaluated, and photographed. Through this process many of the LiDAR returns were found not to be sinkholes; features such as building foundations, broken field tiles, steep-walled streams, and road culverts often produced enclosed areas similar in shape to sinkholes. Many of these misleading features were eliminated remotely using both 6-inches-per-pixel aerial photography and experience from past field verification. However, many points remained that could not be distinguished remotely and these were visited in the field.

## Results

The resulting karst feature set was overlain on four different geologic data sets to show how the features

are related to the local geology. The first of these is the land surface map (p. 4), which shows the 96 two-km<sup>2</sup> tiles that form the project area overlain on the DEM of the land surface. This map shows that in Springfield karst features often occur near a break in slope.

Tiles outlined in red contain the karst features identified throughout the project area. No karst was identified in black-outlined tiles. In total there are 112 karst features, including 32 springs, in 22 tiles. On the top left of each aerial imagery page (p. 8–28) is a Tile Number that references the corresponding numbered tile on the four overlay maps.

There are four types of karst features identified on each map:

- ♦ Red circles indicate field-verified features, i.e., those that have been visited in the field and confirmed as karst.
- ♦ Orange circles indicate sites that were field visited but could not be verified at the time; for example a suspicious depression that is flooded or that lacks an active sink throat and cannot be clearly classified.
- ♦ Yellow circles represent areas with suspect characteristics, such as a distinct LiDAR depression, but where access to the property could not be gained.
- ♦ Blue squares represent springs where water was found flowing from the subsurface.

The next overlay map is the Bedrock Geology map (p. 5). This map shows that the karst features are restricted primarily to the dolomites, one of the main rock types that forms solutional cavities. Eighty of the 112 points are within the Silurian-age Cedarville, Springfield, & Euphemia Dolomites (**Scse** on the bedrock map) with the majority of the rest in the Brassfield Limestone (within the **Sm-b**). These formations and the others on the Bedrock Geology map are buried in many places by surficial glacial materials. The depth of the bedrock below the surficial materials is called Bedrock Topography and is shown on page 6. The bedrock elevations were subtracted from the DEM (p. 4) to create the Drift Thickness map (p. 7). Drift Thickness is useful because where the drift is shallow—about 25 ft or less in this region—sinkholes are commonly expressed. Other sinkholes may exist but were either buried beneath the glacial drift or

prevented from forming by the thick drift. The Drift Thickness map clearly shows that the karst features are concentrated along areas of thin glacial drift.

## Conclusions

Of the 112 mapped karst features, 79 have photos, and 38 show up on LiDAR. Of the springs, five have a LiDAR response while 26 do not. Springs do not typically show up as depressions unless a catch basin was built and subsequently failed. The large number of sinks and springs found without LiDAR attests to the need for spending time in the field near known karst areas, looking for new features and talking to the public. Farmers and other land holders are still one of the best sources of local information; particularly for historical features, such as drained ponds, old mill races, and even sinkholes that have been periodically filled in.

In addition to this map book, a CD containing the GIS data, metadata, LiDAR depressions, and photographs of many of the features is available. The GIS data contains details such as the location of each point and a brief description of what was found there. The metadata provides information on the sources and quality of the data used in this project. The LiDAR depressions layer records the depth and area for many of the sinkholes. In addition, the collection of photographs captured for many of these features can be used to monitor the growth of preexisting sinkholes and development of new karst features, as well as assisting in identification. Identification is important because karst regions are highly susceptible to pollution and structures built near them may subside. These maps will allow areas of land development near karst features to be better planned and maintained.

## Acknowledgments

Both the Delaware County Region project and the Springfield project were funded by the Great Lakes Geologic Mapping Coalition surficial mapping grant program.

## References Cited

Aden, D.J., Powers, D.M., Pavey, R.R., Jones, D.M., Martin, D.R., Shrake, D.L., and Angle, M.P., 2011,

Karst of the western Delaware County, Ohio, region: Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Geological Survey Open-File Report 2011-4, 2 p., 35 maps, accessible at < [http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/Portals/10/pdf/OpenFileReports/OFR\\_2011-4.pdf](http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/Portals/10/pdf/OpenFileReports/OFR_2011-4.pdf) > .

State of Ohio, 1989, Ohio Revised Code 1517.21 Cave definitions, in chap. 1517 of Title 15 Conservation of Natural Resources: State of Ohio, Ohio Revised Code, accessible at < <http://codes.ohio.gov/orc/1517.21> > .

Pavey, R.R., Hull, D.N., Brockman, C.S., Schumacher, G.A., Stith, D.A., Swinford, E.M., Sole, T.L., Vorbau, K.E., Kallini, K.D., Evans, E.E., Slucher, E.R., and Van Horn, R.G., with GIS and cartography by Powers, D.M., and Vogt, K.L., 1999, Known and probable karst in Ohio: Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Geological Survey Map EG-1, scale 1:500,000. [Revised 2002, 2004, 2007.]

Raab, James, Haiker, Bill, Jones, Wayne, Angle, Michael, Pavey, Rick, Swinford, Mac, and Powers, Donovan, 2009, Ground water induced flooding in the Bellevue Ohio area, spring and summer 2008: Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Water Technical Report of Investigation 2009-1, 19 p., accessible at < [http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/Portals/7/pubs/reports/Bellevue\\_Final\\_Report.pdf](http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/Portals/7/pubs/reports/Bellevue_Final_Report.pdf) > .

Raymond, Heather, and McGinnis, John, 2007, Clark County karst investigation: Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, 27 p.

## Further Reading

The following resources provide additional information on karst and its effects in Ohio and beyond.

### Ohio Department of Natural Resources

“Revised Ohio Karst Map Helps Homeowners, Developers and Land-use Planners Define Areas of Possible Groundwater Pollution and Unstable Terrain,” press release dated October 30, 2007, accessible at < [http://ohiodnr.com/home\\_page/NewsReleases/tabid/18276/EntryId/204/10-29-07-Revised-Ohio-Karst-Map.aspx](http://ohiodnr.com/home_page/NewsReleases/tabid/18276/EntryId/204/10-29-07-Revised-Ohio-Karst-Map.aspx) > .

*Karst Flooding in Bellevue, Ohio, and Vicinity—2008*, ODNR Division of Geological Survey, Map EG-5, 2012, accessible at < <http://ohiodnr.com/?TabId=24066> > .

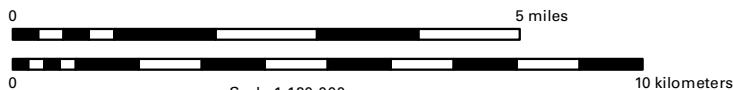
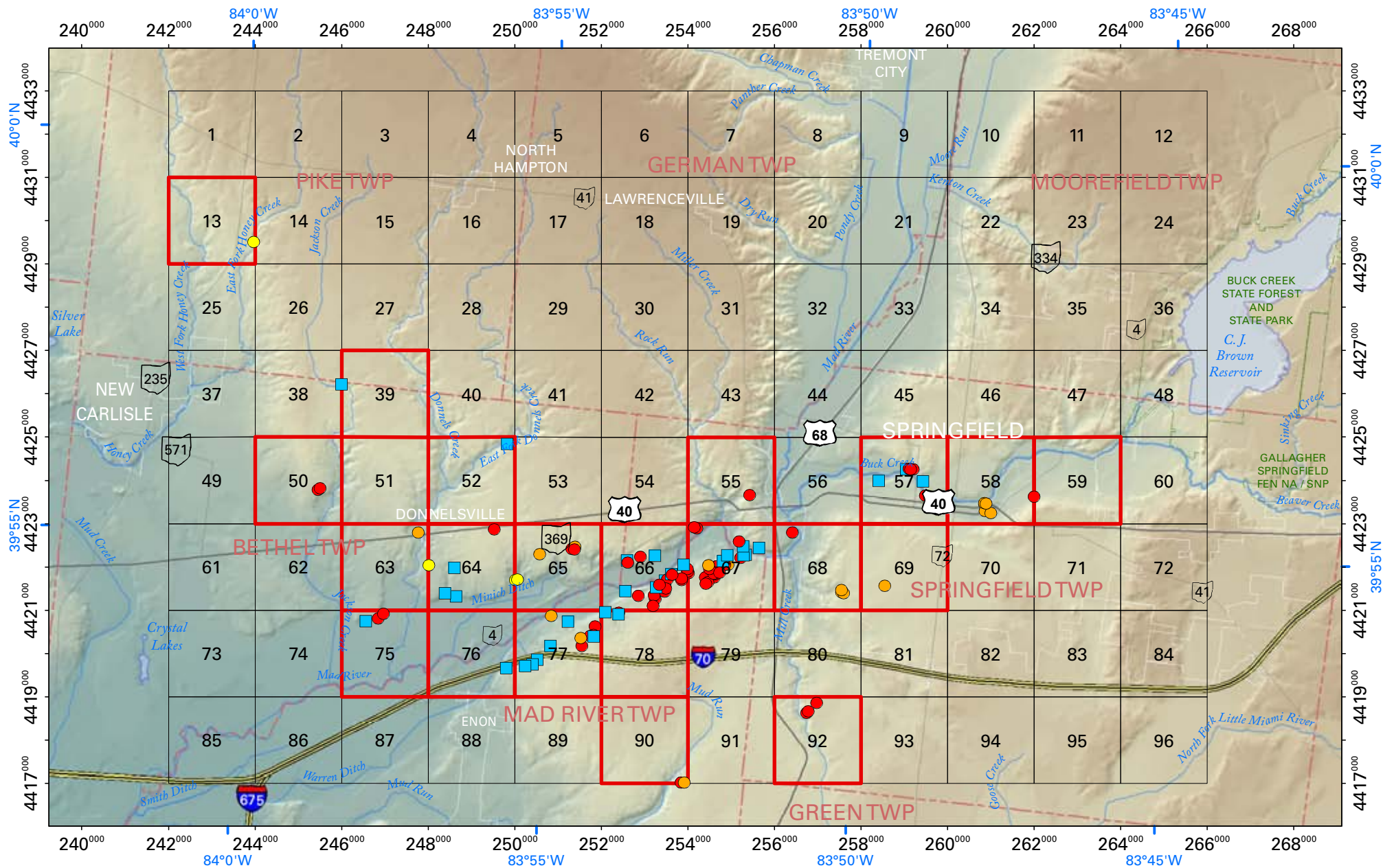
### American Geological Institute

*Living With Karst—A Fragile Foundation*, AGI Environmental Awareness Series, no. 4, accessible at < <http://www.agiweb.org/environment/publications/karst.pdf> > .

### U.S. Geological Survey

*USGS Groundwater Information, Karst and the USGS*, accessible at < <http://water.usgs.gov/ogw/karst/> > .





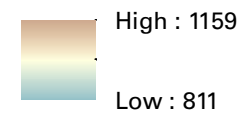
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- Tiles containing karst features
- US National Grid

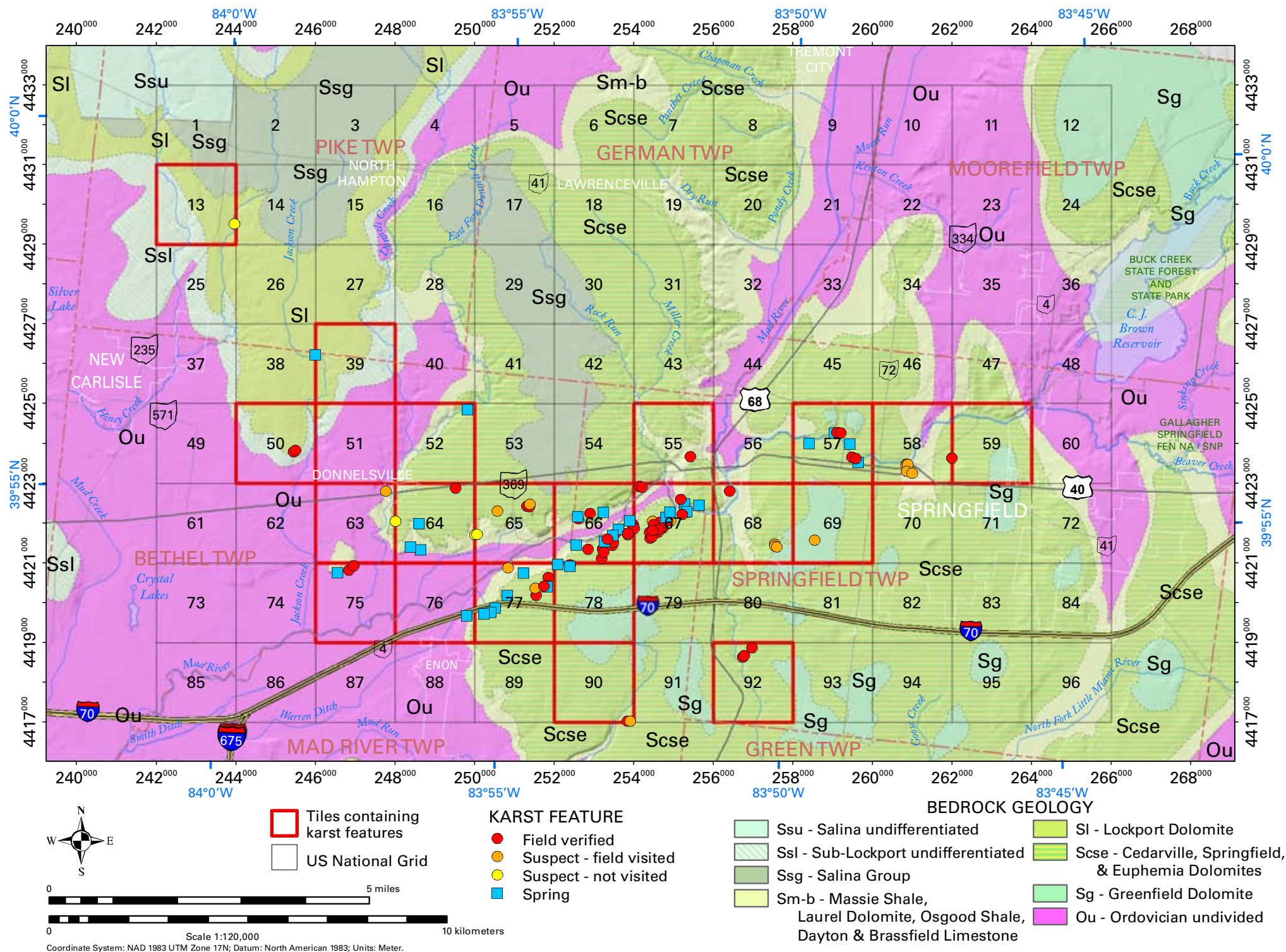
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- Field verified
- Suspect - field visited
- Suspect - not visited
- Spring

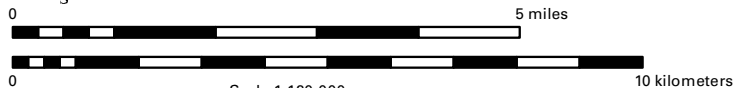
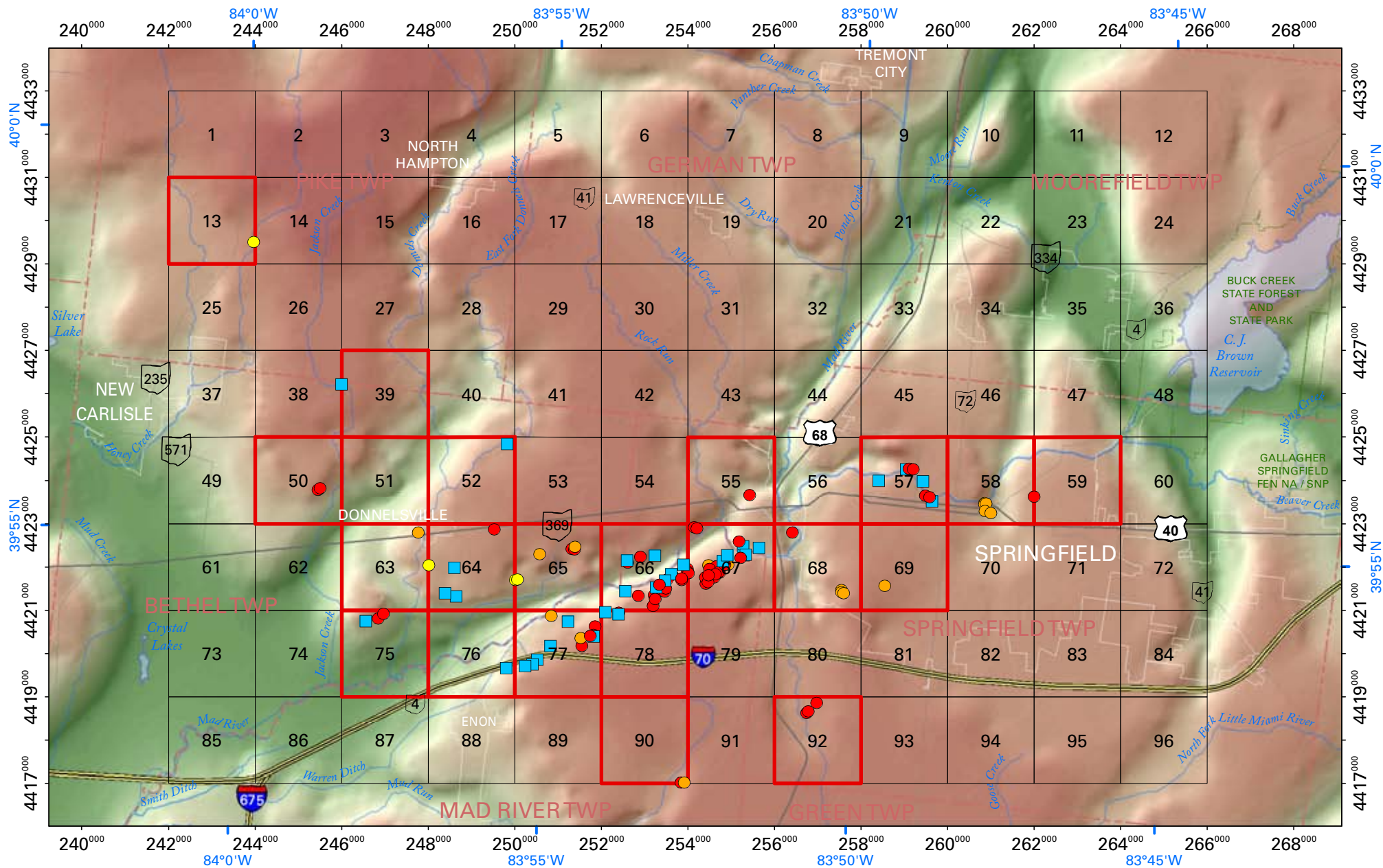
#### ELEVATION in feet











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- Tiles containing karst features
- US National Grid

#### KARST FEATURE

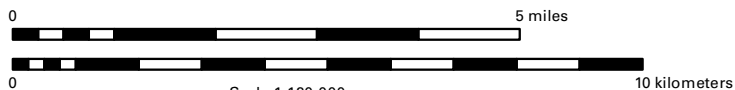
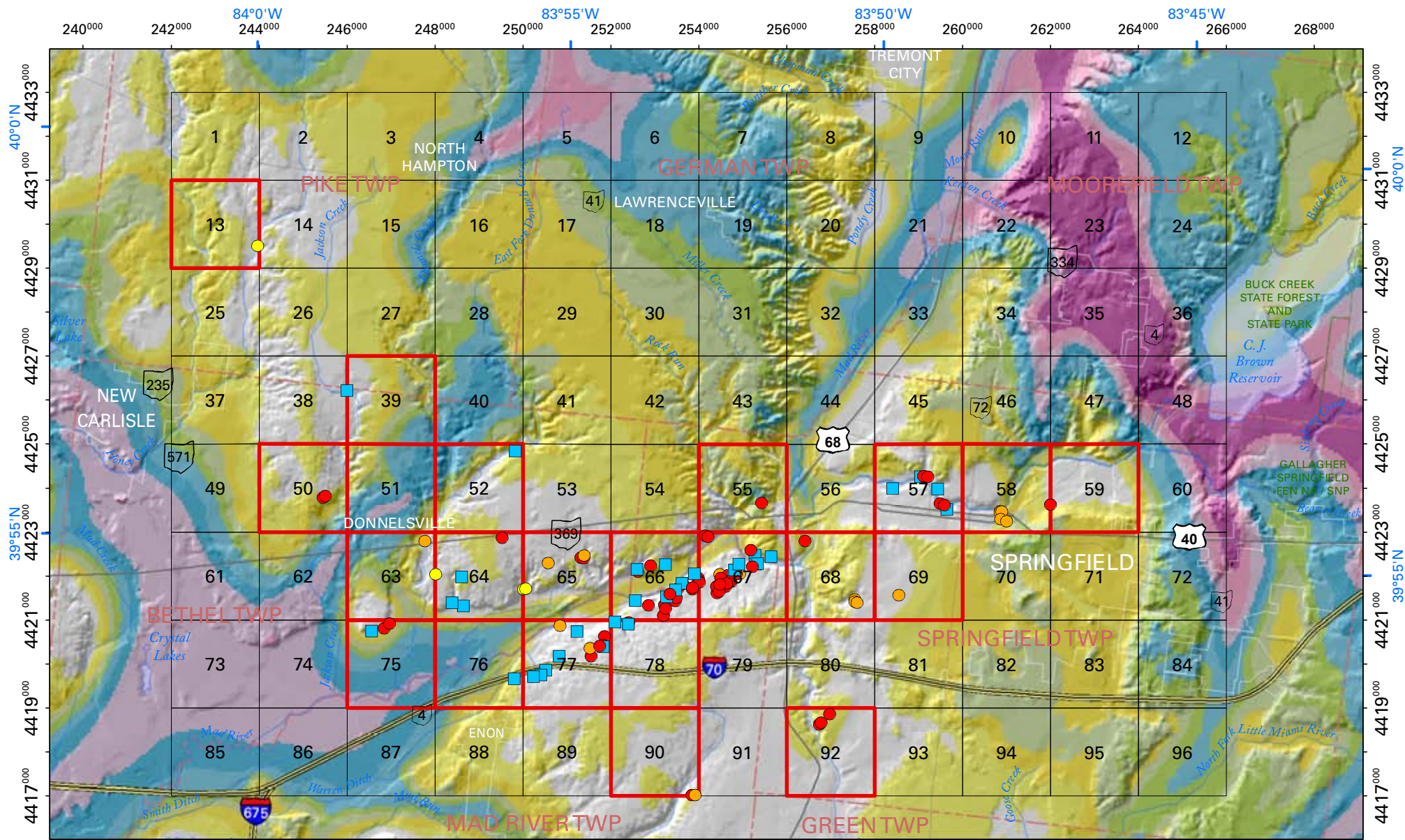
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- Suspect - field visited
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- Spring

#### BEDROCK TOPOGRAPHY

Elevation in feet







Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 17N; Datum: North American 1983; Units: Meter.

- Tiles containing karst features
- US National Grid

#### KARST FEATURE

- Field verified
- Suspect - field visited
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- Spring

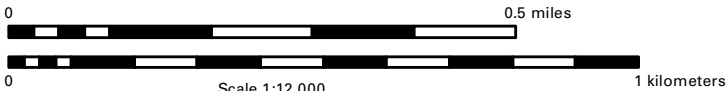
#### DRIFT THICKNESS in feet

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100,000-m Square ID    Grid Zone Designation  
**KE**                      **17S**



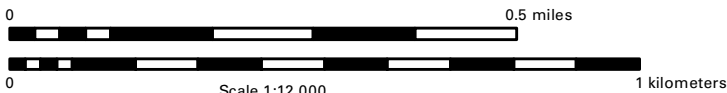
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- KARST FEATURE**
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  - Spring





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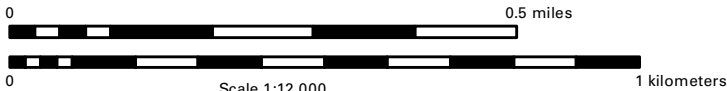
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- Field verified
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- Spring





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Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 17N; Datum: North American 1983; Units: Meter.

**KARST FEATURE**

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- Spring



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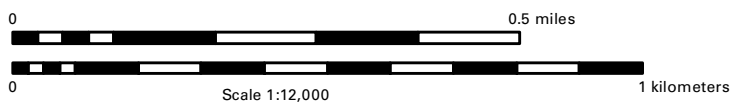
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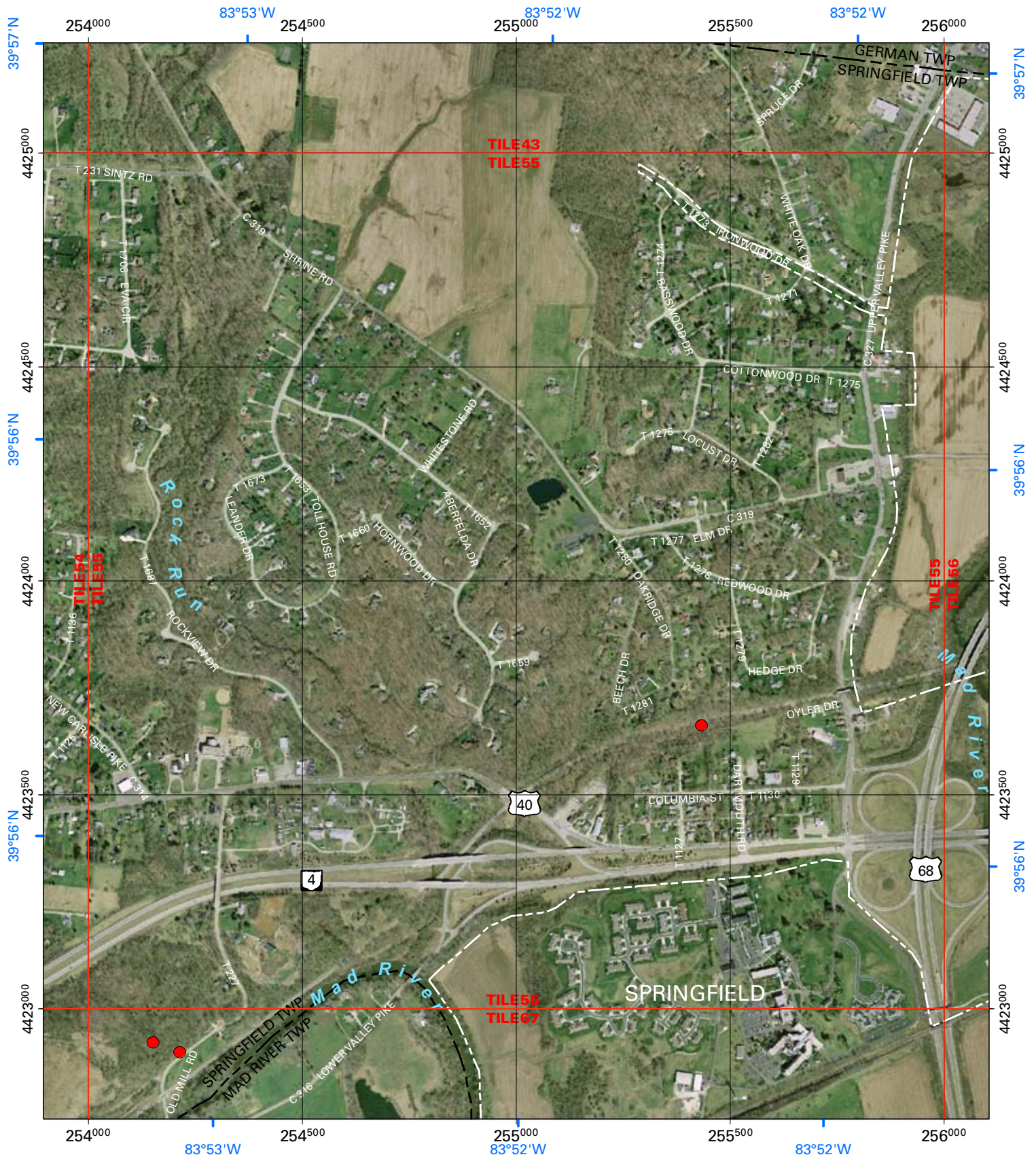
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- Field verified
- Suspect - field visited
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- Spring



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#### KARST FEATURE

- Field verified
- Suspect - field visited
- Suspect - not visited
- Spring

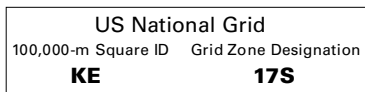
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0 1 kilometers  
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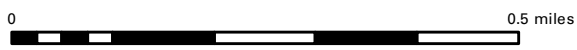
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83°50'W 258<sup>000</sup> 83°49'W 258<sup>500</sup> 83°49'W 259<sup>000</sup> 83°48'W 259<sup>500</sup> 260<sup>000</sup>



- Field verified
- Suspect - field visited
- Suspect - not visited
- Spring



0 Scale 1:12,000

1 kilometers

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 17N; Datum: North American 1983; Units: Meter.



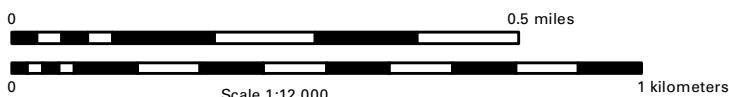


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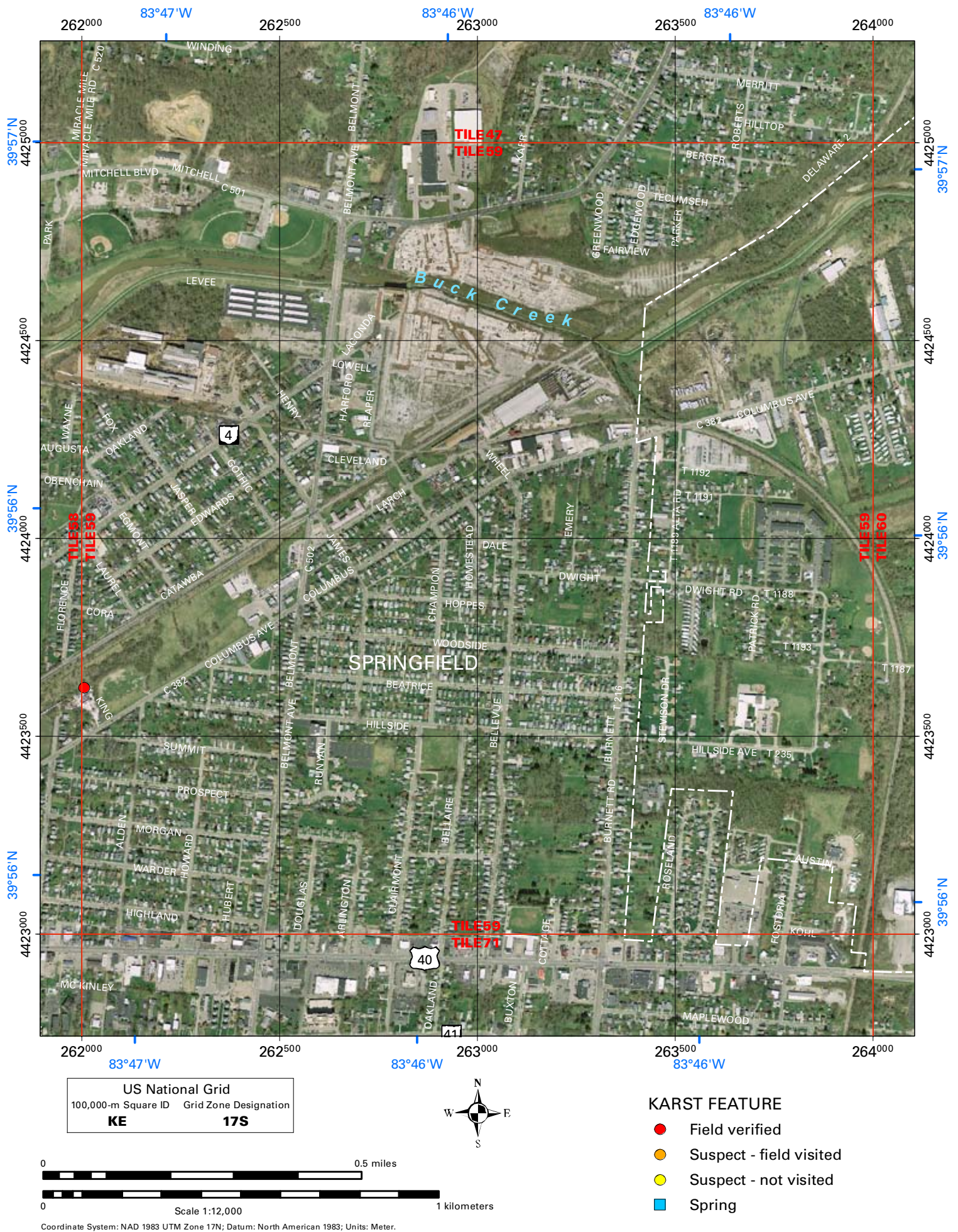
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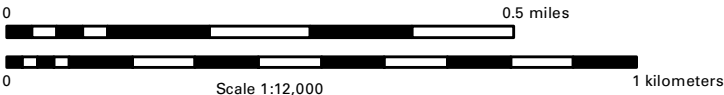




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- KARST FEATURE**
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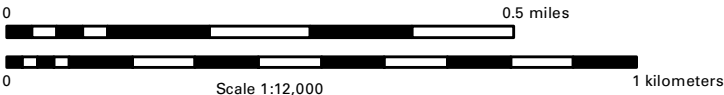




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- KARST FEATURE**
- Field verified
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  - Spring

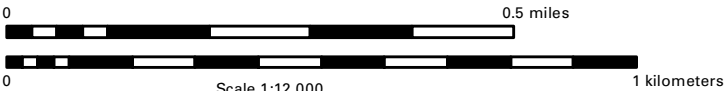


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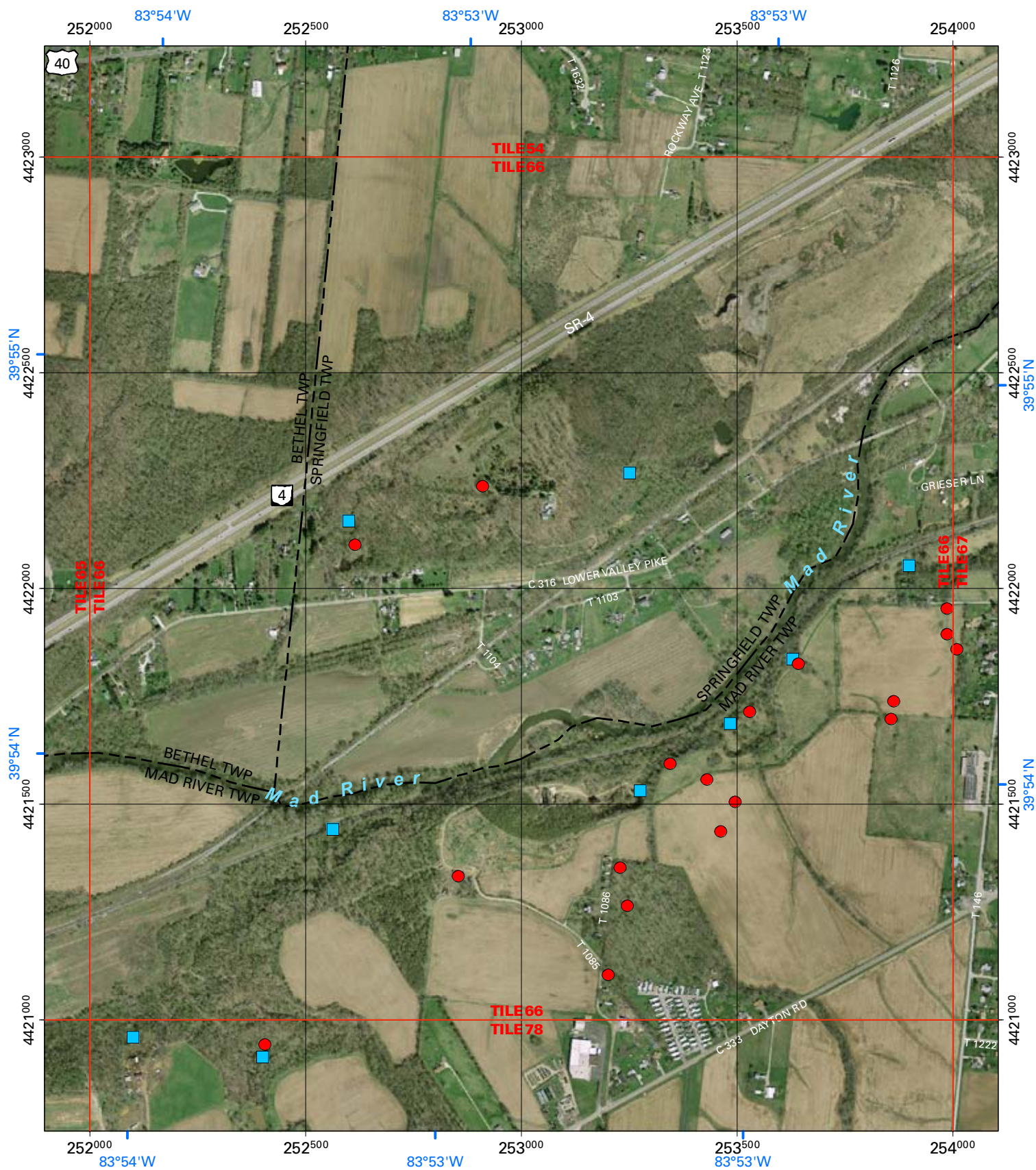
US National Grid  
100,000-m Square ID    Grid Zone Designation  
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- KARST FEATURE**
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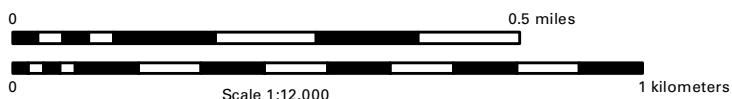


US National Grid  
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#### KARST FEATURE

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- Suspect - field visited
- Suspect - not visited
- Spring

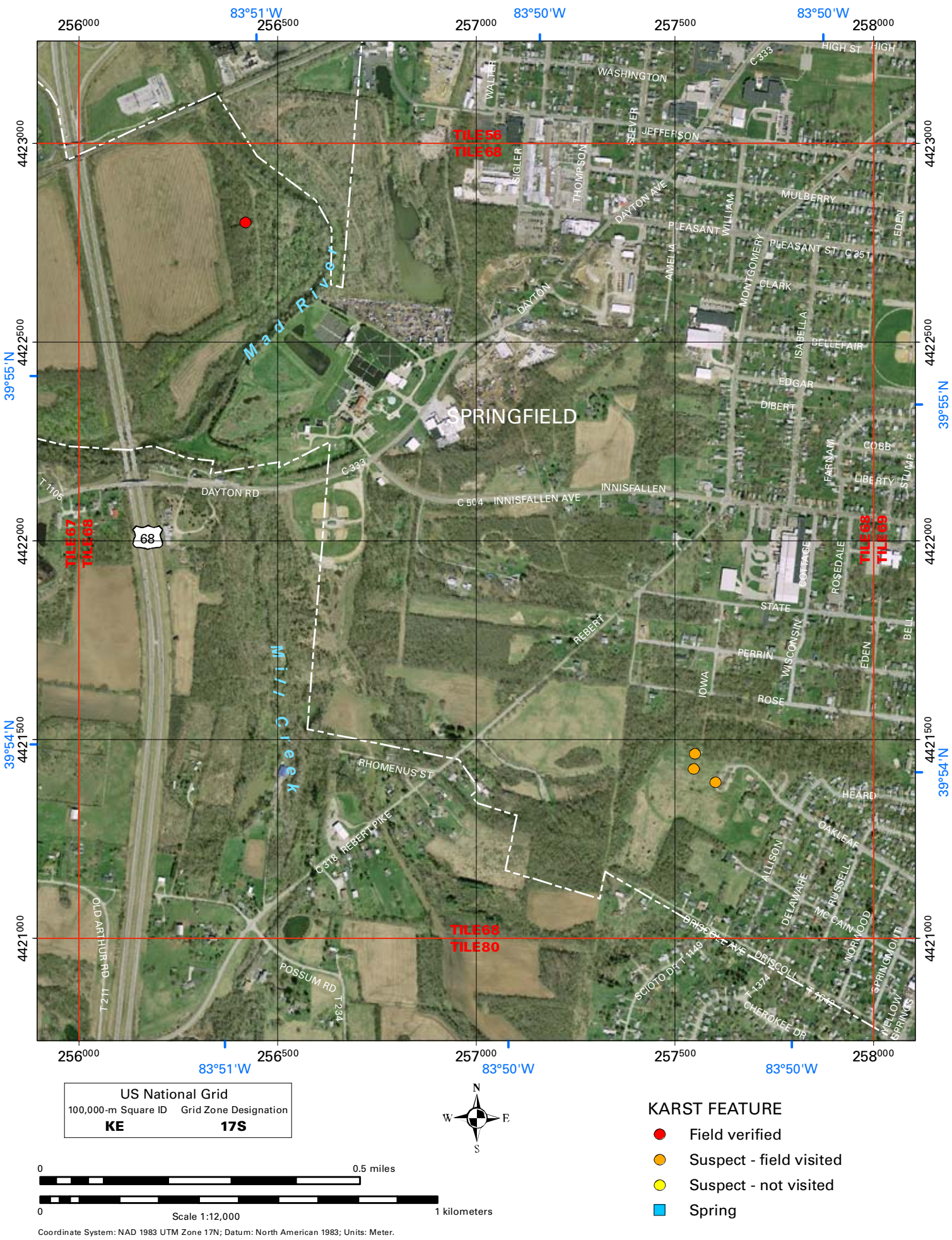


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Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 17N; Datum: North American 1983; Units: Meter.







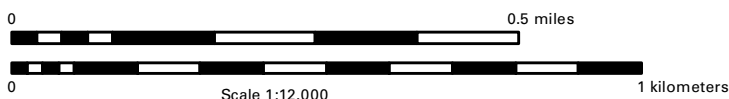


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**KE**                      **17S**



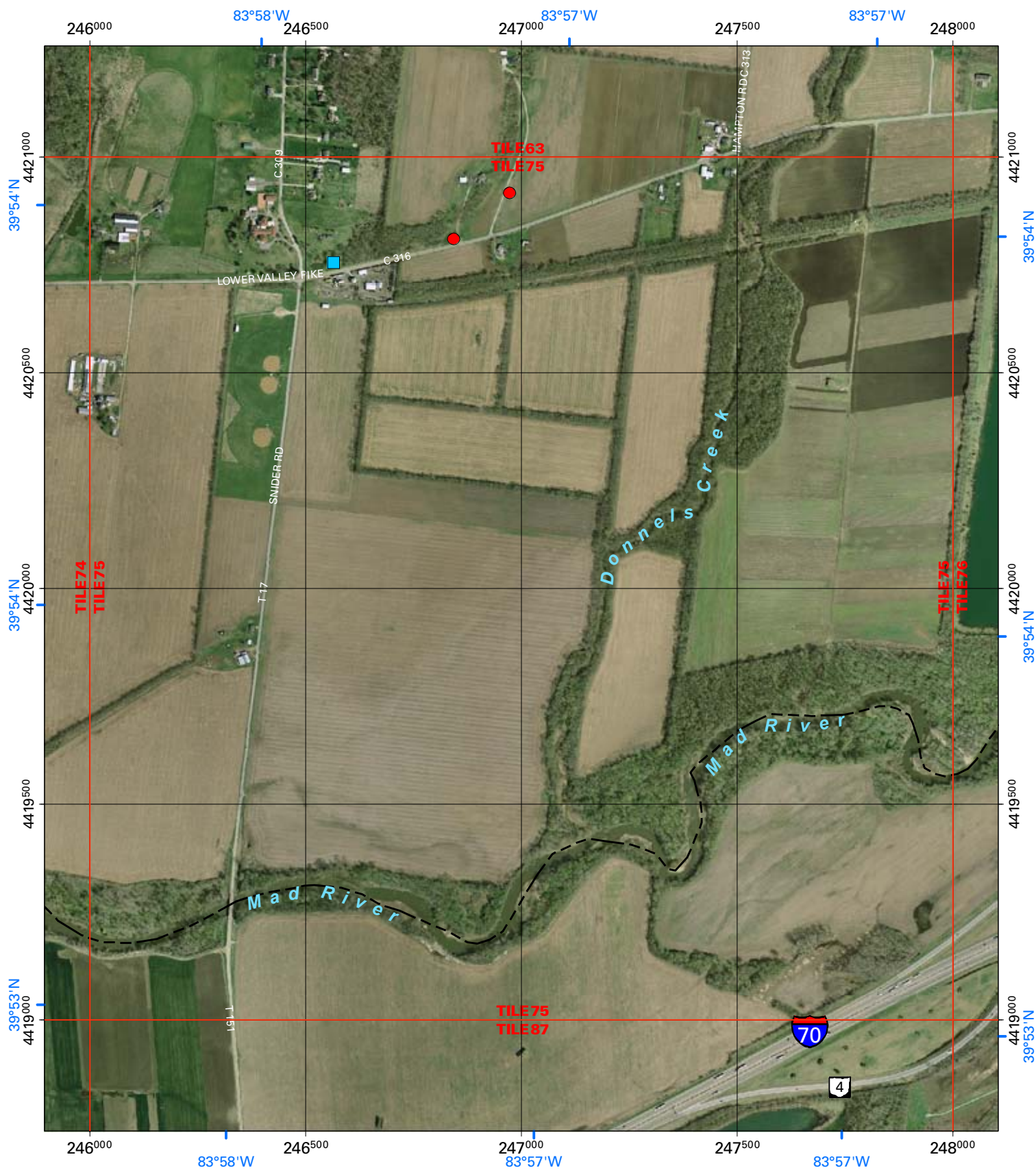
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- Spring



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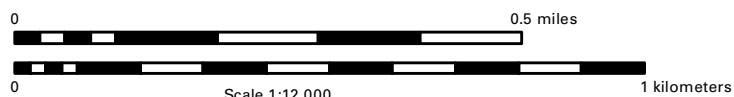


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## KARST FEATURE

- Field verified
- Suspect - field visited
- Suspect - not visited
- Spring



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 17N; Datum: North American 1983; Units: Meter.



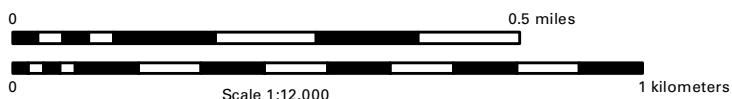


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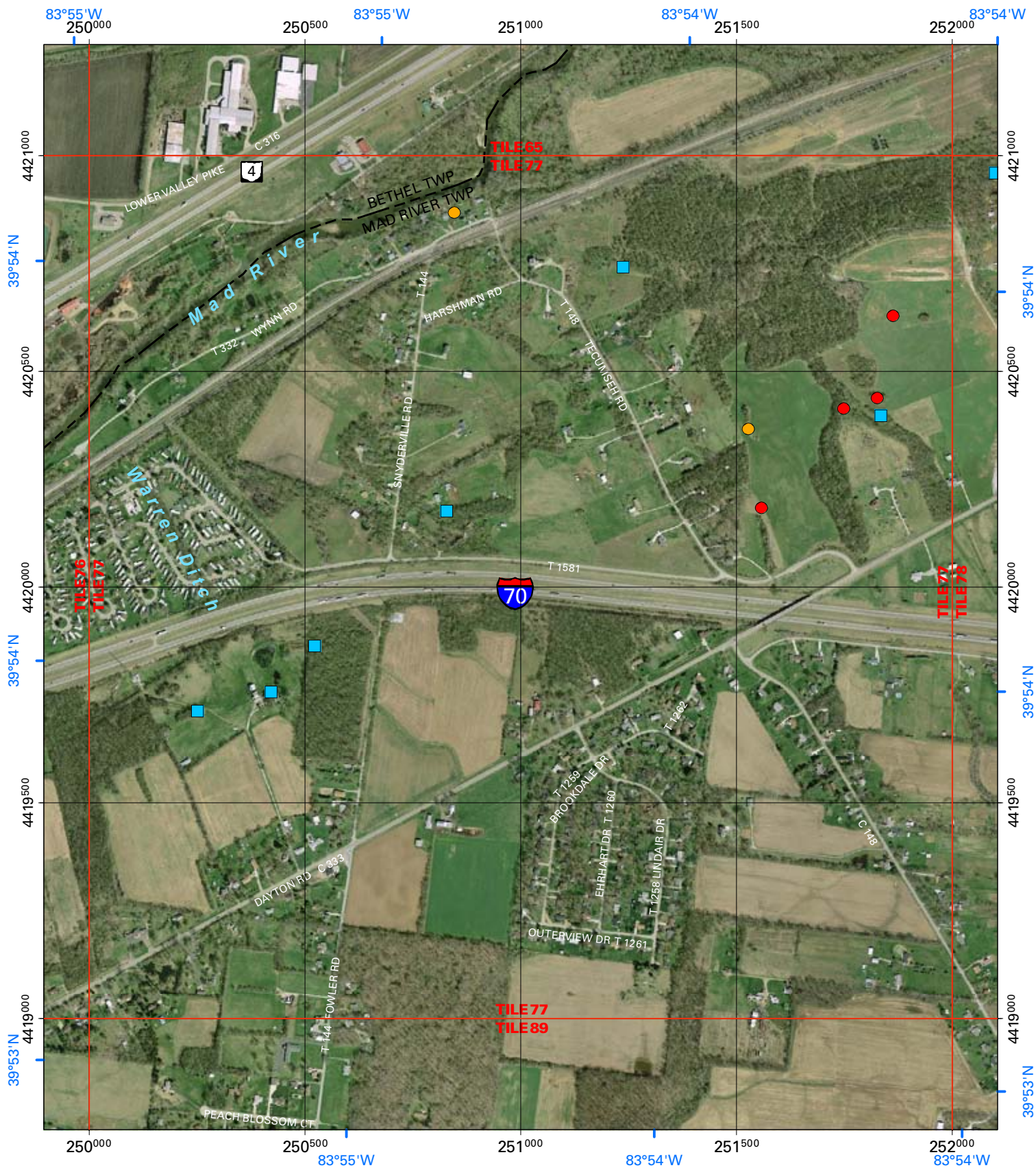
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- Spring



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Tile Number: 77

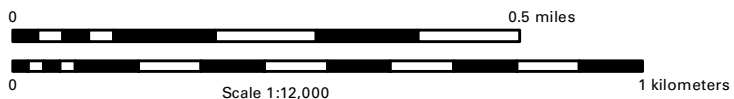


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| <b>KE</b>           | <b>17S</b>            |



## KARST FEATURE

- Field verified
- Suspect - field visited
- Suspect - not visited
- Spring



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 17N; Datum: North American 1983; Units: Meter.

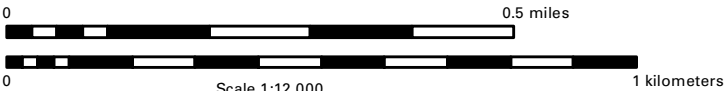








US National Grid  
100,000-m Square ID    Grid Zone Designation  
**KE**                      **17S**



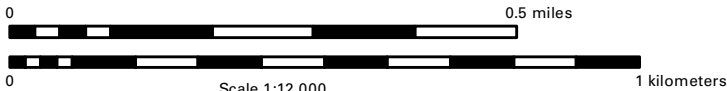
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- KARST FEATURE**
- Field verified
  - Suspect - field visited
  - Suspect - not visited
  - Spring





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Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 17N; Datum: North American 1983; Units: Meter.

KARST FEATURE

- Field verified
- Suspect - field visited
- Suspect - not visited
- Spring