Geological Controls on Victim Recovery Dog (VRD) Responses During the Search for Homicide Graves

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The objective of this presentation is to provide an overview of the possible influences of geology, including; soils, rocks, hydrogeology (groundwater), volatile organic compounds (VOC) (odour), and geomorphology and the responses of Victim Recovery Dogs (VRD) during the search for homicide graves. This presentation will focus on open area searches and the deployment of VRDs in areas where shallow, unmarked, homicide graves are suspected to be located, in highly porous and permeable soils, such as peat. Although specific case details will not be provided due to the sensitive and ongoing nature of these types of searches, geological observations will be presented but the locations made anonymous, in order to draw attention to this relatively under researched aspect of ground search and help promote discussions and debate.

This presentation is based on the following:

Donnelly, L. J., Grime, M., Harrison, M. 2013. Interpretation of Victim Recovery Dog (VRD) Responses During Ground Searches for Homicide Graves and the Potential Influences of Geology, Hydrogeology, Peat Stratigraphy and Barometric Pressure Fluctuations. IUGS-IFG RFCFS, Moscow, 22 October 2013, Booklet of Abstracts, 16-17 (in English), 18-19 (in Russian).