



Letter to the Editor

Re: submission of Discussion of “The DeKalb mounds of northeastern Illinois as archives of deglacial history and postglacial environments” by Curry et al. (2010) [Quaternary Research, v. 74, pp. 82–90]

The purpose of this Letter to the Editor is to correct errors that appear in Curry et al. (2010). The errors not only misinform the reader about certain facts but also extend to undermine the integrity of other particular citations (not authored by Brandon Curry) because they would consequently also mislead the general public. There is a chronology to the errors, so it would be best to start with the earliest one.

1. Curry and Yansa (2004, pg. 307) misstated that Iannicelli (2003) determined the DeKalb mounds derived from sediment within ice-wall lakes. Instead, Iannicelli (2003) concluded that the DeKalb mounds are morainic (from glacial dead-ice depositional processes). The formational mechanism between combinatorial dead-ice landforms and an ice-walled lake plain/plateau greatly differs, as magnificently illustrated by Parizek (1970). Curry (personal comm., 2008) and Yansa (personal comm., 2008) were informed about their mistake and each offered an apology to this writer. Later, Petras (2010, pg. 12) makes the same mistake as Curry and Yansa (2004, pg. 307) by saying that Iannicelli (2003) sided with an ice-walled lake hypothesis but then convoluted the problem by later rightfully saying that Iannicelli (2003) interpreted the DeKalb mounds as deposits from dead-ice (morainic). Brandon Curry, who was an official advisor to Petras (2010), is responsible for the confusion caused within Petras (2010) because it was confirmed that he was very well-informed the second time around about Iannicelli (2003), well before the publication of Petras (2010).
2. Curry et al. (2010) continues the pattern of trying to gain support for an ice-wall lake origin of the DeKalb mounds, as did Curry and Yansa (2004), through inaccuracy. Curry et al. (2010, pg. 82) erroneously said that Flemel et al. (1973) did not dismiss an ice-wall lake origin for the creation of the DeKalb mounds. To the absolute contrary, Flemel et al. (1973) firmly declared (verbatim) “Aside from the major difficulties with an ice-walled lake origin, there are other objections to this hypothesis”. This is besides Flemel et al. (1973) rationalizing with many reasons against an ice-wall lake origin while Iannicelli (2003) concurred with this.
3. Another way that Curry et al. (2010) tries to gain support for their ice-walled lake hypothesis of DeKalb mound formation, is by leaving out crucial circumstances that would rule against an ice-wall lake origin. The occurrence of outwash being in the vicinity (along the perimeter) of till (Lineback, 1979) where some of the DeKalb mounds of Illinois overlay (Flemel et al., 1973), was tactically not reported by Curry et al. (2010). Flemel et al. (1973) calculated that their likely occurrence in the outwash besides the till is one reason among many other reasons in ruling out an ice-wall lake origin. Iannicelli (2003) concurred with their reasons while also concurring with Clayton's (1967, Fig. 1) and Parizek's (1970, Fig. 11) illustration for the general formation of outwash mounds.

4. Other faulty statements by Curry et al. (2010, pg. 85) include (verbatim) “We suggest that the difference between the two ideas of open-system pingo-ice and glacial dead-ice is not significant and reflect nuances in terminology”. Factually speaking, there is a “world of difference” between these two ideas, which is, of course, the source (ground-water flowage; compaction of x amount of accumulated snow) that supplies the two very different types of ice (frozen water; glacial ice) which originate from almost the opposite ends of the earth.
5. A puzzling statement made by Curry et al. (2010, pg. 85) that certainly needs clarification says (verbatim) “once the glacial dead-ice is buried by 1 m of supraglacial debris, the ice is permafrost”. Conversely, the Associate Committee on Geotechnical Research (1988) defines “ice” as water in the solid state while they define “permafrost” as ground (soil or rock) that remains at 0°C for at least 2 yr.

This Letter to the Editor exposes all together: a published contradiction; omitted revealing information; and perplexing published statements.

Sincerely,

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