WJC Decks and Remodeling Details Soil Assessment in Deck Foundation Planning

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WJC Decks and Remodeling has published guidance on soil assessment in deck foundation planning, following a 2026 season in which parts of Minnesota moved from flash drought conditions into heavy rainfall within a matter of weeks.

The guidance draws on published soil survey data for the region. According to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, between seventy and eighty percent of soils across the Anoka Sand Plain are excessively drained, consisting largely of sandy upland material. The same survey work identifies organic soils formed in ice block depressions and tunnel valleys distributed throughout the outwash plain, including a substantial deposit in the eastern portion of the county.

That combination is the reason foundation planning cannot be standardised across a service area. Two properties a short distance apart can sit on materially different ground, and the United States Department of Agriculture series description for the region records slopes ranging from level to eighteen percent within the same soil classification.

"The soil map tells you what to expect, not what you will find," said Phil Haluptzok, Owner of WJC Decks and Remodeling. "Two lots on the same street can come back differently once someone is standing on them. That is why the assessment happens before the design is finished rather than after."

Sandy soils drain quickly and hold comparatively little moisture. Organic soils in the low-lying depressions behave differently, retaining water and offering less consistent support. A foundation approach suited to one is not automatically suited to the other, which is why the company treats the site visit as the point at which the footing method is determined rather than a formality completed after drawings are approved.

The company installs helical piers and Diamond Piers alongside traditional concrete footings. Helical piers

are advanced into the ground to reach firmer bearing material, which is relevant where an upper layer offers inconsistent support. Diamond Piers use a precast concrete head with driven steel pins to distribute load across a wider area. Poured concrete footings remain appropriate on suitable soil and grade. Which system a property receives depends on the ground conditions found on site rather than a standard specification applied across every project.

Site conditions beyond soil type also carry weight. Where water collects after heavy rain, how a lot falls away from the house, and how much of the ground sits in shade through the day all influence how a foundation performs across seasons. Those observations are made during the site visit and recorded alongside the soil profile.

Foundation choice carries through to the framing above it. The company builds with pressure-treated wood, aluminium, and pressure-treated engineered lumber. Ground conditions can produce seasonal movement as moisture levels change, and connections in the substructure are detailed with that movement in mind. Framing material selection is treated as a structural decision that follows from the foundation approach rather than a separate matter settled independently.

Existing decks offer their own evidence. Uneven settling, post movement, or a beam line that no longer runs true can indicate that the original foundation did not account for conditions on that particular parcel. Those signs are typically visible from ground level without specialist equipment, and they tend to become more apparent after a season that swings between extremes of moisture. The company provides deck inspection for homeowners who want an assessment of an existing structure before deciding between repair and replacement.

Where an inspection identifies problems originating below the surface, addressing the foundation directly is often more durable than correcting what is visible above it. Resurfacing a deck whose footings have moved leaves the underlying condition in place, which is why the assessment distinguishes between wear at the surface and movement in the substructure.

Foundation preparation forms the fourth stage of the company's six-step process, following the initial consultation, design, and permit acquisition, and preceding construction and final inspection. Sequencing the assessment early allows the footing method to inform the design rather than constrain it once drawings are complete. Where the assessment indicates conditions that require a different approach, that becomes apparent while the layout can still be adjusted.

The consultation takes place on site, where the company measures the space, reviews how the household intends to use it, and discusses scope and timeline. Ground conditions are assessed during that visit alongside the other factors that shape the design.

WJC Decks and Remodeling is a family-owned deck and outdoor living contractor founded in 2016, serving Andover and the surrounding north metro. The company designs and builds composite and PVC decks along with porches, pergolas, patios, privacy screens, and other outdoor structures, with all work handled by its own crews from the initial consultation through to final walkthrough.

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WJC Decks & Remodeling is a family-owned, veteran-led residential deck builder serving Andover, Anoka County, and the Northwest Metro since 2016.

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