

CHATFIELD BASIN
WATER-QUALITY DATA ASSESSMENT
1999-2001 High-Flow Screening Surveys and
1990-2000 Groundwater-Quality, Plum Creek Alluvial Wells

Prepared for:

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Prepared on Behalf of:

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Prepared by:

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Mr. Walt Foutz, CPG
Commodore Advanced Sciences, Inc.
4251 Kipling Street, Suite 575
Wheat Ridge, CO 80033-6810

Subject: Chatfield Basin Water-Quality Data Assessment, Task-Order Report
TDS Project No. 9903

Dear Mr. Foutz:

As discussed with you and Mr. Doug Dennison on October 10, I am please to submit to you one original (camera-ready, unbound) and three (3) bound copies of the subject report. I understand that the Chatfield Watershed Authority (CWA) may request that I provide a brief overview presentation of the results of this investigation. Tentatively, the presentation is scheduled for January 22, 2002.

Meanwhile, please let me know if you have questions or need additional information. I have transmitted the spreadsheet files to you separately by e-Mail.

Thank you for contacting TDS Consulting Inc. for execution of this task order.

Yours truly,

Timothy D. Steele, Ph.D.
President, TDS Consulting Inc.

File: 9903

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Introduction

On October 10, 2001, Commodore Advanced Sciences, Inc. (CAS) requested TDS Consulting Inc. (TDS) to perform a water-quality data evaluation on behalf of the Chatfield Watershed Authority (CWA). The assessment focused on (1) screening-survey data collected approximately weekly at 23 streamflow sites throughout the watershed for a 1-to-3 month period for each of calendar years 1999 through 2000 (season for high flows); and (2) groundwater-quality data for up to six alluvial wells collected intermittently since 1990 along Plum Creek. The assessment was conducted during November 2001, and the results are documented herein.

Approaches

Two components of the long-term and ongoing water-quality monitoring program for the Chatfield watershed were considered in this data assessment:

- So-called watershed-wide “screening-survey” data for up to 23 sites along major and small tributaries located throughout the watershed; and
- Groundwater-quality data for up to six alluvial wells along Plum Creek.

For the screening surveys, three watershed-wide surveys were completed during June 1999, and 12 surveys were completed during the April-through-June periods of 2000 and 2001. Focus was on estimating/measuring flows and on field-measured indicator water-quality variables: total suspended solids (TSS), specific conductance (SC), pH, dissolved oxygen (DO), water temperature, nitrate-nitrogen (NO₃-N) concentration, and total-phosphorus (T-P) concentration. For one or two of the surveys during 2000, laboratory analyses of ortho-phosphorus concentrations were made; however, these few data averages were only included in the summary tabulation.

For the groundwater-quality data, up to six Plum Creek alluvial wells were sampled during the 1990-2000 period. The following details are provided of the changing patterns for surveys over this period, providing data results for up to 27 alluvial-well sampling surveys:

- 1990: monthly, for July through September and November through December;
- 1991: quarterly, for the months of April, June, September, and December;
- 1992: quarterly, for the months of February, May, August, and November;
- 1993; bi-annual, for the months of February and November;
- 1995: annually, for the month of June;
- 1998: bimonthly, for the months of April through June; and
- 2000: bimonthly, for the months of April through June.

The groundwater-quality data focused on the following variables: water temperature, specific conductance (SC), dissolved oxygen (DO, intermittent data); total nitrogen (T-N), total phosphorus (T-P), and total ortho-phosphorus. Fewer, more recent analyses of nitrate-nitrogen and nitrite-nitrogen concentrations are included in the data summary but are not further used in the assessment. For alluvial-well 6W, data were available only for the 1990-1993 period of record. Also, for several (approximately seven) of the surveys, alluvial-well 4W was not sampled or could not be accessed.

The appropriate data sets were compiled using both electronic files provided by CAS and completing these with other data included in published CAS annual monitoring reports for the CWA. Some effort was required for this data-compilation phase, due to the following causes: different formats for the electronic files, missing records (found in published data), and occasional data transcriptional errors.

For both data components (screening surveys and groundwater quality), the water-quality data assessment principally relied upon statistical averages for the periods of record and time-series graphics for the principal variables considered. In the results and discussion sections that follow, some of the limitations of the data are specifically provided. Recommendations for future consideration are also provided.

Results

Screening Surveys.—The following observations and watershed conditions were noted (Table 1 and Appendix A):

Total Suspended Solids

- The highest average TSS concentrations (all exceeding 65 mg/L) were found for lower East Plum Creek from Castle Rock to Sedalia (sites CH12, CH13, and CH14), the lowest part of West Plum Creek at Sedalia (site CH24), and the three mainstem Plum Creek sites (CH15, CH16, and CH17).
- Relatively low average TSS concentrations (all less than 10 mg/L) were found for South Platte River sites (CH03, CH04, CH06, and CH07), the Lockheed-Martin tributary (believed to be Brush Creek, site CH05), Massey Draw (site CH08), Cook Creek (site CH09), Bear Creek (site CH21), and upper West Plum Creek (site CH22).
- The remaining seven sites were characterized by intermediate average TSS concentrations (ranging between nearly 14 and over 40 mg/L; sites CH01, CH02 on Deer Creek; sites CH10 and CH11 for upper East Plum Creek; Indian Creek and Jackson Creek (tributaries of West Plum Creek, sites CH18 and CH19), and the mid-reach of Plum Creek (near Dakan Road, site CH23).

Specific Conductance

- The highest average SC value of 1.026 mmhos/cm (or 1026 umhos/cm) was for Massey Draw (site CH08). Two intermediately-high average SC values occurred for lower Deer Creek (site CH02, 0.814 mmhos/cm) and for Brush Creek (site CH05, 0.687 mmhos/cm).

- Relatively low average SC values (0.117 mmhos/cm or less) were noted for five streams (Table 1): (a) Cook Creek (site CH09); (b) upper East Plum Creek (site CH10); Jackson Creek (site CH18); (d) Bear Creek (site CH21); and upper West Plum Creek (site CH22).
- For the remaining 14 stream sites, average SC values remained in the range between 0.211 and 0.393 mmhos/cm, still characterizing good water quality from an overall salinity perspective.
- A number of site averages were affected by a series of high SC measurements recorded for the 4/5/00 survey, indicating a possible field-instrument problem (see below).

Relative Streamflows

- The smaller tributaries were characterized by seasonal streamflows averaging less than 15 cfs: sites CH01, CH02, CH05, CH08, CH09, CH10, CH18, CH20, CH21, and CH22.
- Lower reaches of both East Plum Creek (sites CH14 through CH 17) and West Plum Creek (sites CH 23 and CH24) were characterized by average streamflows of between about 20 and 40 cfs.
- For the mainstem South Platte River, seasonal average streamflows ranged between 253 and 345 cfs (sites CH03, CH04, CH06, and CH07).

Other Physical Variables (pH, DO, and temperature)

- For upper Deer Creek (site CH01), the average pH value was 6.27 (standard units). Otherwise, for all other (22) sites, average pH values remained between 7 and 8, which is considered normal. However, a downward trend in pH values over the period of record was noted for numerous sites (Appendix B).
- The highest average DO (exceeding 8 mg/L) concentrations were noted for upper tributaries (site CH01 on Deer Creek; the mainstem South Platte River at all four sites, Brush Creek at site CH05), Massey Draw at site CH08), Indian Creek at site CH18, and Bear Creek at site CH21). For all other sites, the average DO concentrations all were 8.05 mg/L or lower (but above 7 mg/L).
- Seasonal water temperatures were highly variable for any given site, due in large part to different times of day for measurement. Systematically low water-temperature values were recorded for the 05/03/01 screening survey for a number of sites (Appendix A), indicating a possible instrument-calibration problem.

Nutrient Species (N and P)

- For T-P, the highest average concentrations (ranging between 0.79 and 2.58 mg/L) were associated with the lower segments of East Plum Creek (sites CH12, CH13, and CH14), lower West Plum Creek (site CH24), and the mainstem Plum Creek (sites CH15, CH16, and CH17). A relatively high average T-P concentrations was noted for Indian Creek (0.60 mg/L). For the remaining screening-survey sites (Table 1), average T-P concentrations were 0.40 mg/L or less. The lowest average T-P concentrations were associated with the South Platte River (ranging between 0.13 and 0.19 mg/L; sites CH03, CH04, CH06, and CH07). Due

to detection-limit shifts, 2001 T-P concentrations were consistently higher than for 1999 or 2000; a systematic bias in average T-P concentrations results (Appendix A).

- Average T-N concentrations were contrasted with those for T-P: Relatively low T-N concentrations (1.9 mg/L or less) occurred for East Plum Creek, except for the upper site CH10; lower West Plum Creek (site CH 24), the mainstem Plum Creek (all three sites), and Indian Creek. Otherwise, average T-N concentrations ranged between 2.0 and 2.6 mg/L (Table 1). Some intermittently high T-N concentration anomalies occurred (Appendix A).

Groundwater Quality.—Six alluvial wells were selected for characterization of groundwater quality along Plum Creek. The wells, identified as 1W through 6W, were generally located in an upstream-to-downstream sequence. As was noted above, well 6W was sampled only during 1990-1993, and well 4W was not sampled during several of the surveys. The following observations and alluvial-well conditions were noted (Table 2 and Appendix B):

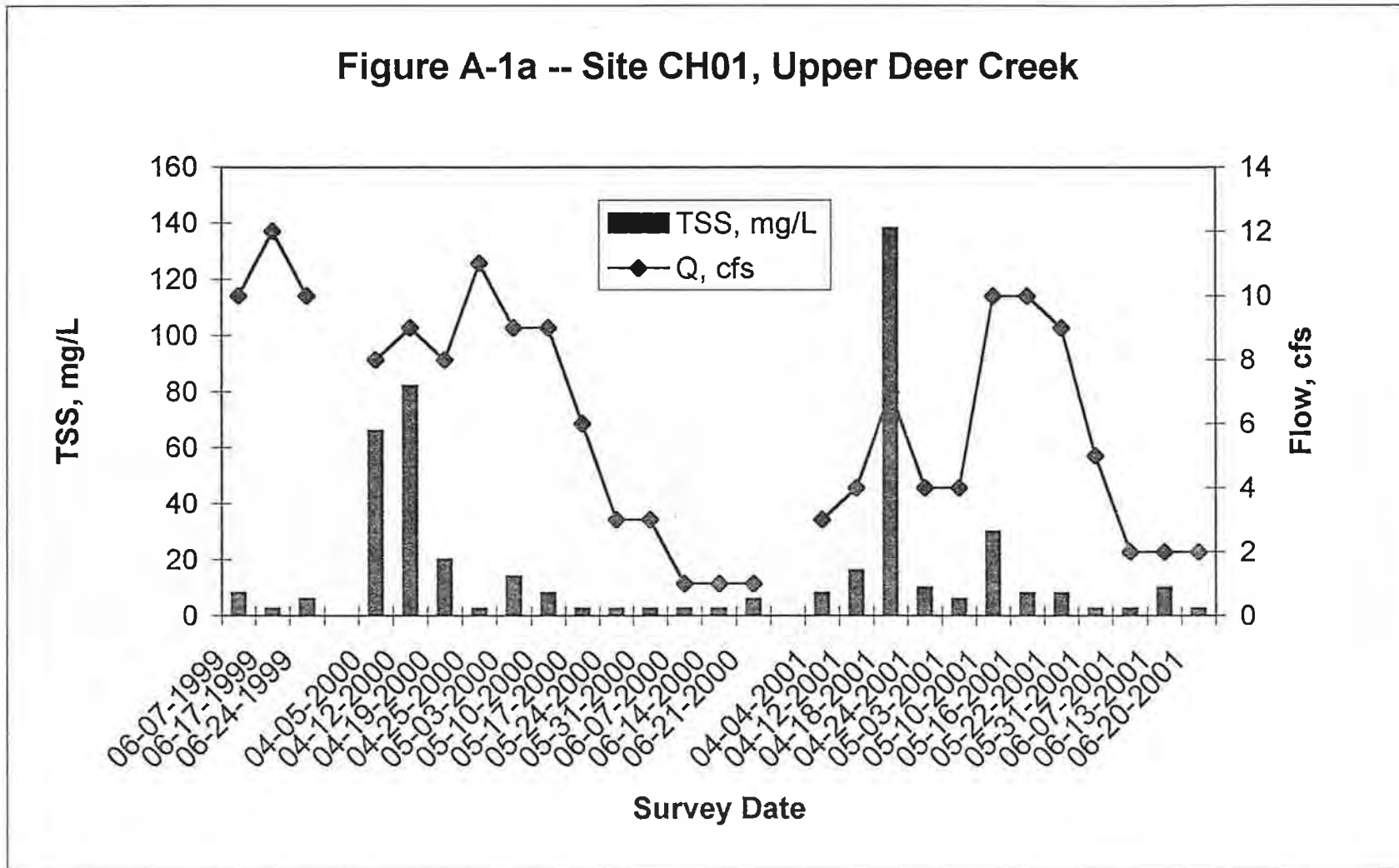
- Due to the irregular intervals, water temperatures varied greatly and did not depict any seasonal patterns. Average water temperatures ranged between 10.0 and 15.4 degrees C.
- Specific conductances, with two exceptions, were below 600 umhos/cm (Table 2). For wells 2W and 5W, one high SC value for each was noted, which was judged to be anomalous. Average SCs ranged between 252 and 363 umhos/cm. For the five wells with long-term records (1990-2000), some increasing time trends in the data series were noted (Appendix B).
- Dissolved-oxygen concentrations in the wells indicated two distinct patterns. For the upper Plum Creek sites (1W, 2W, and 3W), DO concentrations averaged between 7.01 and 7.34 mg/L; whereas, for the lower Plum Creek sites (4W, 5W, and 6W), DO concentrations averaged between 4.04 and 5.04 mg/L (Table 2). DO concentrations were not reported for the 1995 and 1998 surveys (Appendix B).
- The wells' pH values averaged within a narrow range, between 6.94 and 7.26 standard units.
- Regarding nutrient species, again two distinct patterns were noted (see DO discussion above and Table 2). For the upper-reach wells (1W, 2W, and 3W), average nutrient-species concentrations were higher: T-N, 2.40-3.17 mg/L; T-P, 0.09-0.17 mg/L, and Ortho-P, 0.07-0.16 mg/L. For the lower-reach wells (4W, 5W, and 6W), nutrient concentrations were lower: T-N, 0.24-0.35 mg/L; T-P, 0.01-0.02 mg/L; and Ortho-P, 0.01-0.02 mg/L. Intermittent anomalously high nutrient concentration values were noted (Appendix B).
- Several examples of anomalous values include the following: Well 1W, T-P, 0.75 mg/L; Well 2W, SC, 963 umhos/cm; Well 2W, T-P, 0.514 mg/L; Well 4W, SC, 557 umhos/cm; Well 5W, SC, 925 umhos/cm, and Well 6W, T-N, 1.2 mg/L.

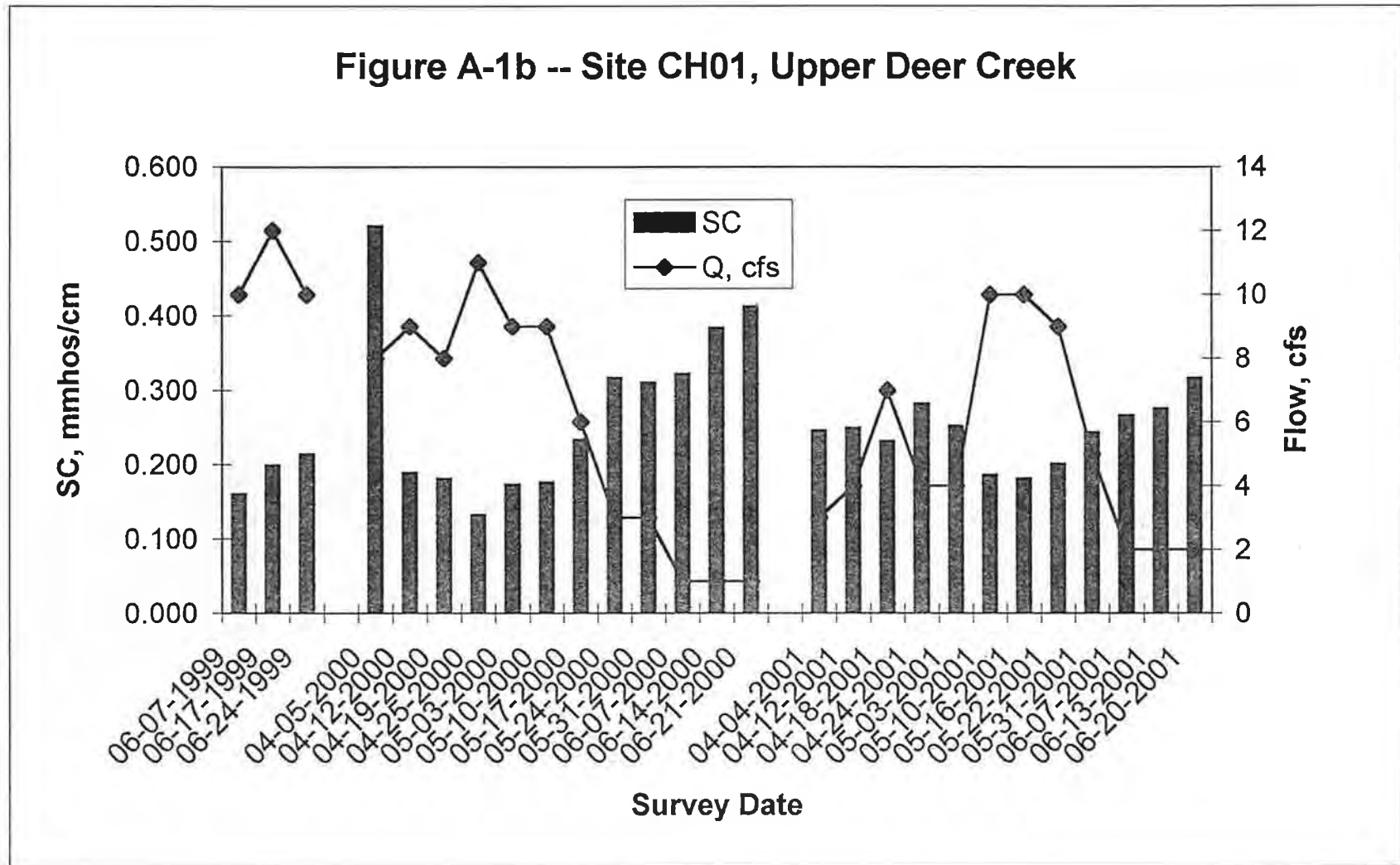
Table 1 -- Chatfield Basin Screening Data, Average Seasonal (April-June) Values, 1999-2001

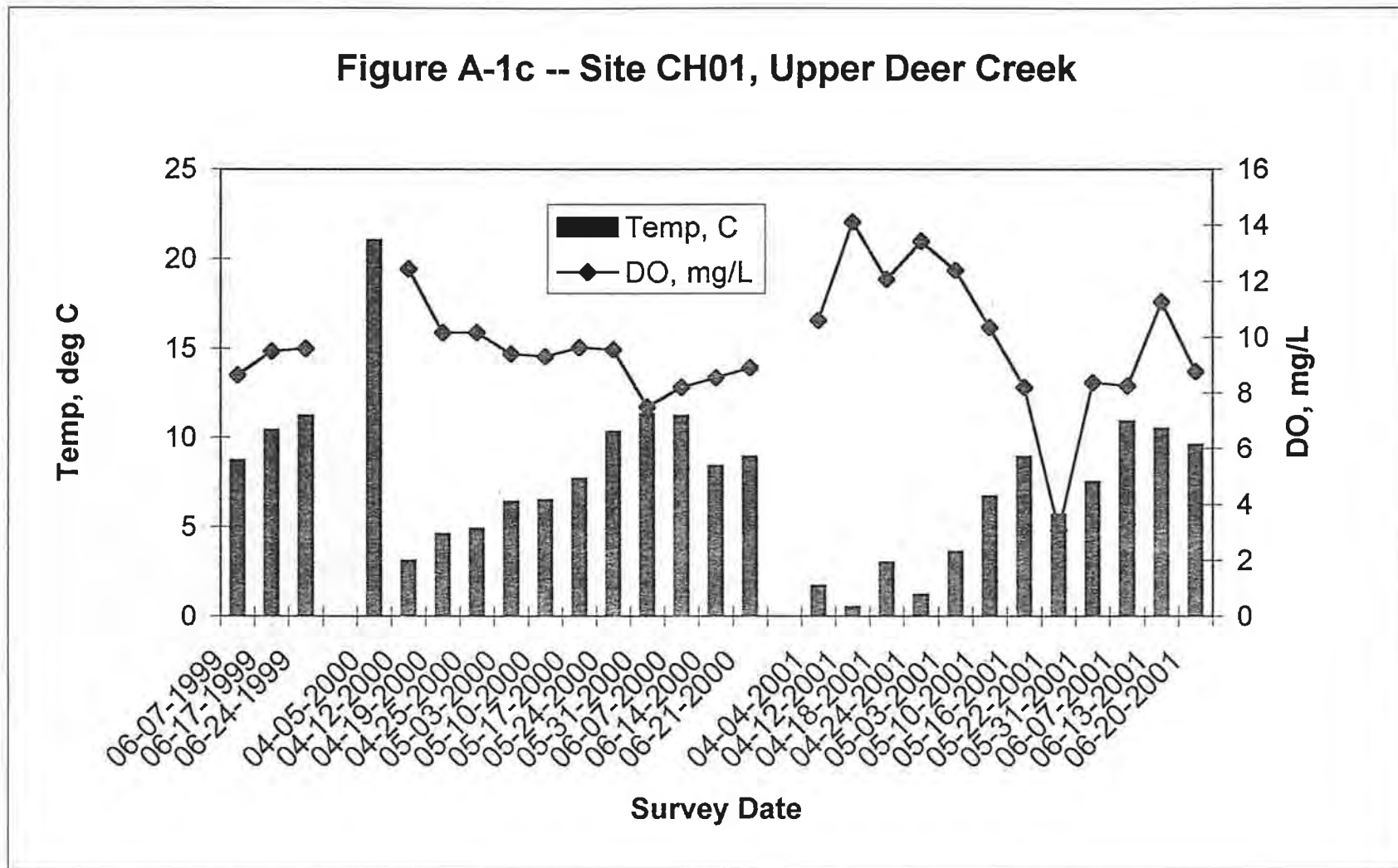
Site ID	Site	Time	TSS, mg/L	Q, cfs	SC	pH, SU	DO, mg/L	Temp, C	NO3-N, fld	T-P, field	Ortho-P, lab
CH01	UDC	675	17.4	6.04	0.254	6.27	9.71	7.6	2.4	0.24	0.018
CH02	LDC	871	13.9	6.00	0.814	7.25	7.16	10.5	2.1	0.32	0.032
CH03	SPSP	849	3.98	345	0.393	7.31	9.33	8.8	2.5	0.13	0.003
CH04	SPWC	730	5.15	253	0.262	7.03	9.05	8.6	2.0	0.15	0.003
CH05	BCLM	767	9.16	1.94	0.687	7.22	8.67	9.6	2.2	0.25	0.034
CH06	SPCR	920	6.87	263	0.302	7.71	9.20	10.4	2.1	0.18	0.003
CH07	SPPR	921	6.23	259	0.299	7.62	9.11	10.2	2.2	0.19	0.003
CH08	MDCP	884	9.33	3.02	1.026	7.90	9.24	12.1	2.6	0.22	0.006
CH09	CCNR	1314	4.96	3.89	0.117	7.44	7.06	15.1	2.0	0.18	0.009
CH10	EPCCC	1284	16.6	13.9	0.102	7.73	7.83	14.8	2.3	0.26	0.003
CH11	EPC25	1247	22.1	21.3	0.192	7.77	7.56	15.9	1.8	0.31	0.012
CH12	EPCCR	1215	65.9	25.9	0.217	7.71	7.12	17.0	1.7	0.79	0.011
CH13	EPCMB	1151	80.0	30.7	0.278	7.72	7.13	16.1	1.5	0.95	0.027
CH14	EPC67	1132	303	36.1	0.342	7.72	7.35	17.1	1.4	2.58	0.043
CH15	PC16	1032	172	80.3	0.287	7.67	7.85	14.2	1.5	1.21	0.032
CH16	PCTR	921	94.4	98.0	0.304	7.36	7.46	11.7	1.8	1.00	0.021
CH17	PCCR	943	93.6	96.5	0.330	7.44	8.05	11.4	1.6	0.76	0.019
CH18	ICRG	1096	40.4	5.20	0.387	7.72	8.33	13.6	1.7	0.60	0.019
CH20	JCRD	1454	14.1	14.1	0.098	7.71	7.34	15.9	2.2	0.20	0.016
CH21	BCPP	1369	4.24	1.35	0.092	7.66	9.28	9.9	2.2	0.22	n/a
CH22	WPCRR	1346	6.08	14.4	0.117	7.58	7.42	15.4	2.1	0.29	0.007
CH23	WPCDR	1419	28.5	20.3	0.220	7.77	7.41	17.0	2.3	0.40	0.016
CH24	WPC67	1133	82.4	35.1	0.211	7.72	7.71	15.3	1.9	0.88	0.010

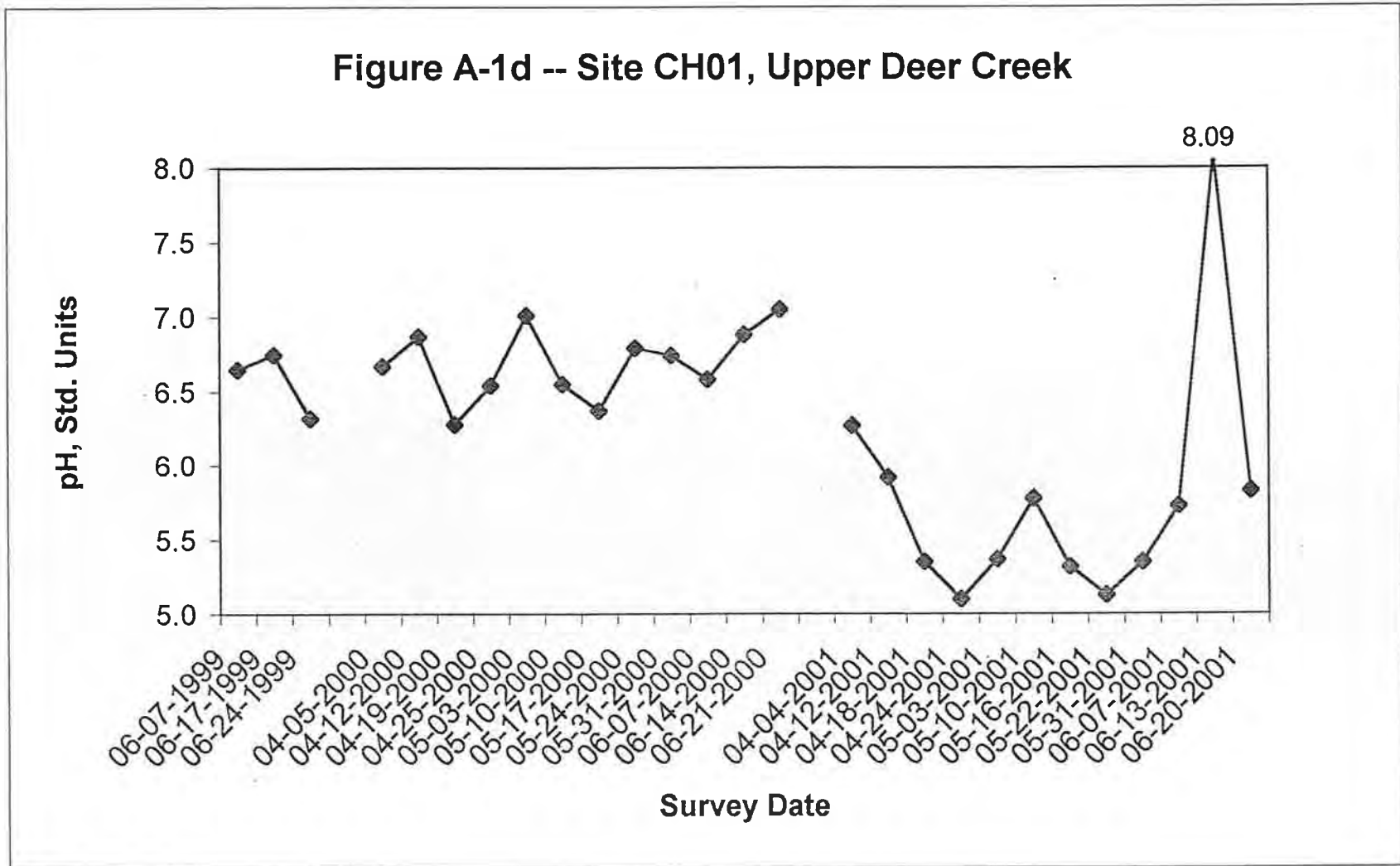
Table 2 -- Plum Creek Alluvial-Well Data, Average Values, 1990-2000

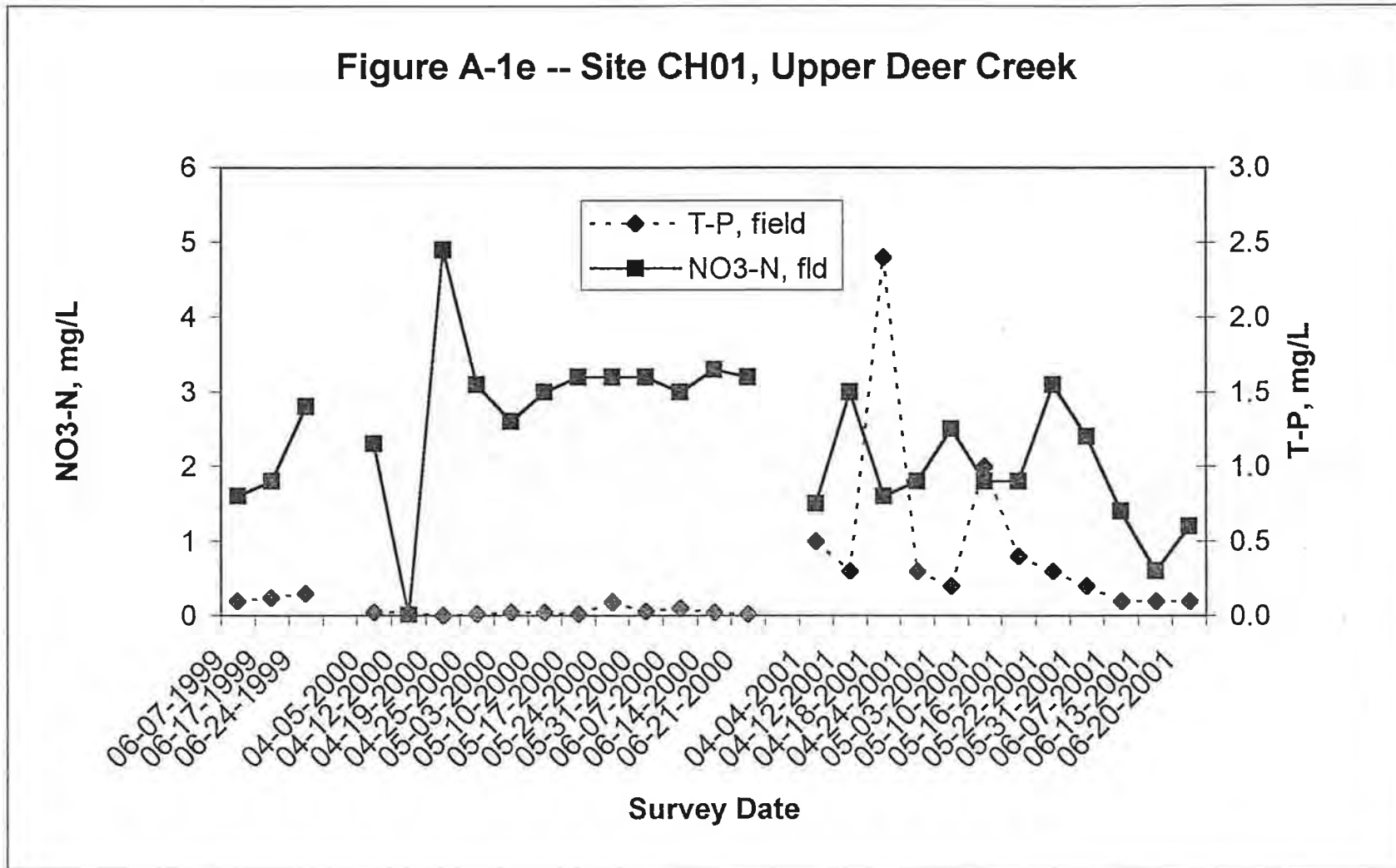
Item	TIME	SPECIFIC								
		TEMPERATURE (DEG C)	CONDUCTANCE FIELD (US/CM)	OXYGEN, DISSOLVED (MG/L)	pH, FIELD (STANDARD UNITS)	NITROGEN TOTAL (MG/L as N)	PHOSPHORUS, TOTAL (MG/L as P)	PHOSPHORUS ORTHO, TOTAL (MG/L as P)	NITRATE (mg/L as N)	NITRITE (mg/L as N)
Alluvial Well 1W										
Mean	1101	11.3	344	7.34	6.97	2.40	0.12	0.07	2.44	0.005
#Values	27	27	28	19	27	30	30	30	13	13
Maximum	1400	14.1	475	11.4	8.17	4.7	0.75	0.204	3.51	0.005
Minimum	850	5.0	230	4.8	6.2	0.2	0.01	0.0025	2.08	0.005
Alluvial Well 2W										
Mean	1085	11.9	363	7.01	7.02	3.17	0.09	0.09	3.38	0.005
#Values	27	27	28	19	27	29	29	29	13	13
Maximum	1415	15.0	963	11.8	8.23	5.1	0.514	0.417	4.07	0.005
Minimum	820	5.0	220	4.76	6.4	0.6	0.02	0.035	2.61	0.005
Alluvial Well 3W										
Mean	1150	11.6	362	7.32	6.97	2.75	0.17	0.16	3.58	0.005
#Values	26	26	27	18	26	28	28	28	13	13
Maximum	1515	14.8	458	11.4	8.4	4.8	0.5	0.407	4.67	0.005
Minimum	930	5.0	230	4.2	6.1	0.2	0.011	0.0025	2.88	0.005
Alluvial Well 4W										
Mean	1090	15.4	252	4.04	7.26	0.35	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.005
#Values	21	20	21	13	20	22	21	22	10	10
Maximum	1430	20.9	557	7.6	8.3	3.2	0.052	0.033	0.06	0.005
Minimum	830	9.5	180	2.2	6.5	0.05	0.0025	0.0025	0.01	0.005
Alluvial Well 5W										
Mean	1078	11.4	341	5.04	6.94	0.33	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.005
#Values	26	25	26	17	25	27	26	26	13	13
Maximum	1550	13.2	925	7.1	8.33	2.3	0.06	0.08	0.04	0.005
Minimum	620	8.0	185	2.8	5.89	0.05	0.0025	0.0025	0.01	0.005
Alluvial Well 6W										
Mean	1252	10.0	262	4.83	7.24	0.24	0.01	0.01	n/a	n/a
#Values	13	12	12	12	11	13	13	13	0	0
Maximum	1500	19.0	330	6.9	8.2	1.2	0.05	0.05	0	0
Minimum	1030	4.0	170	3.1	6.7	0.05	0.0025	0.0025	0	0

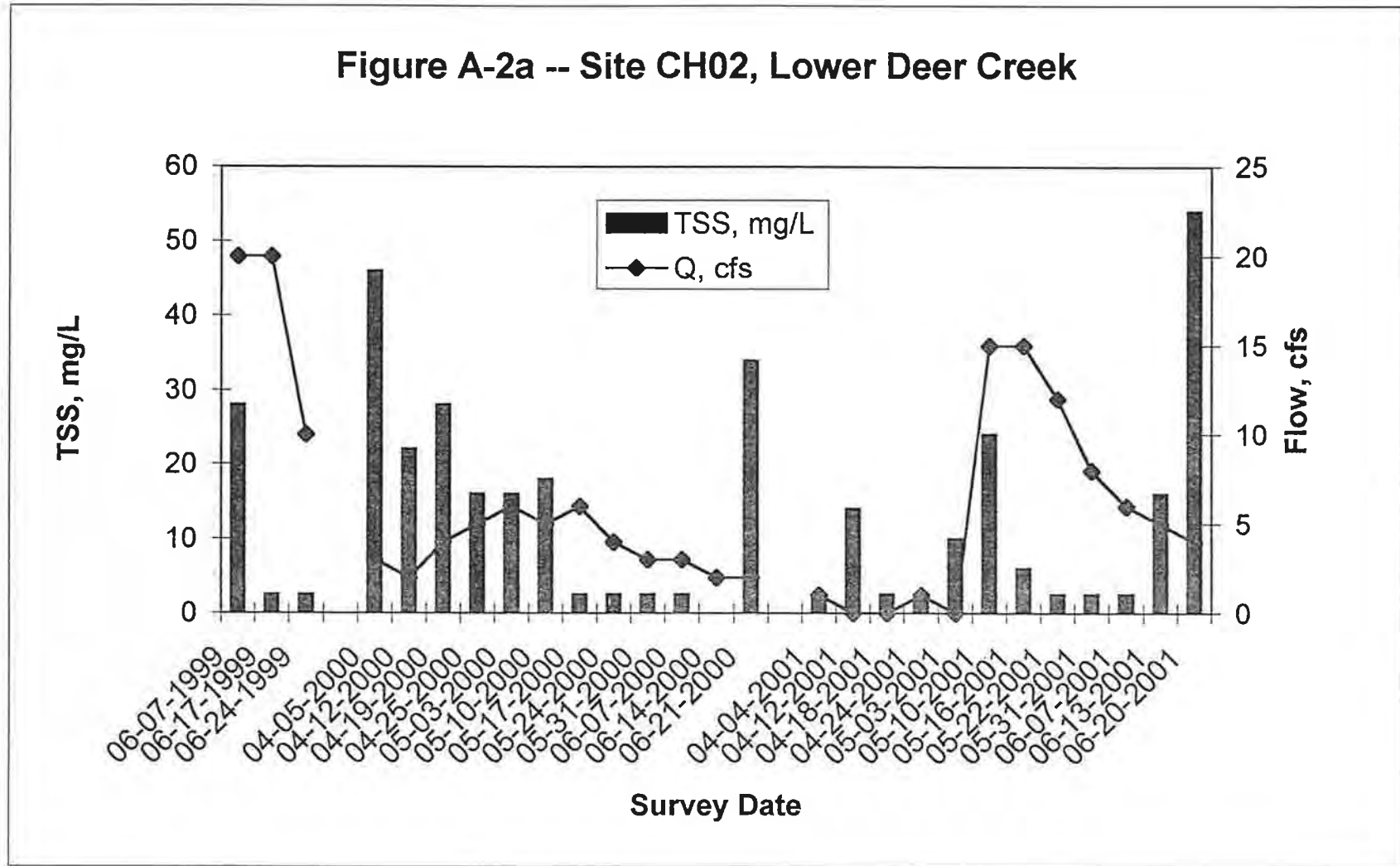


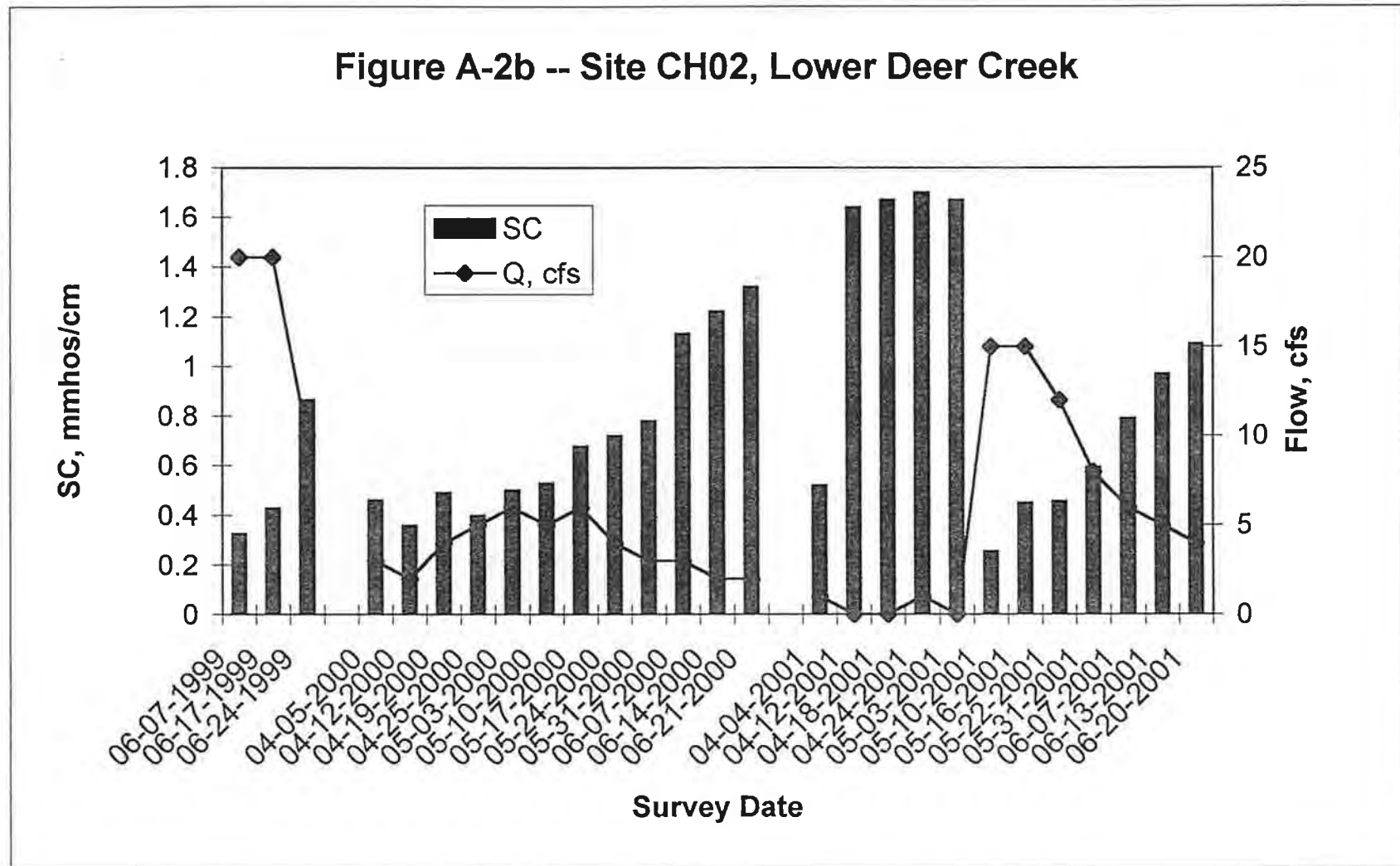


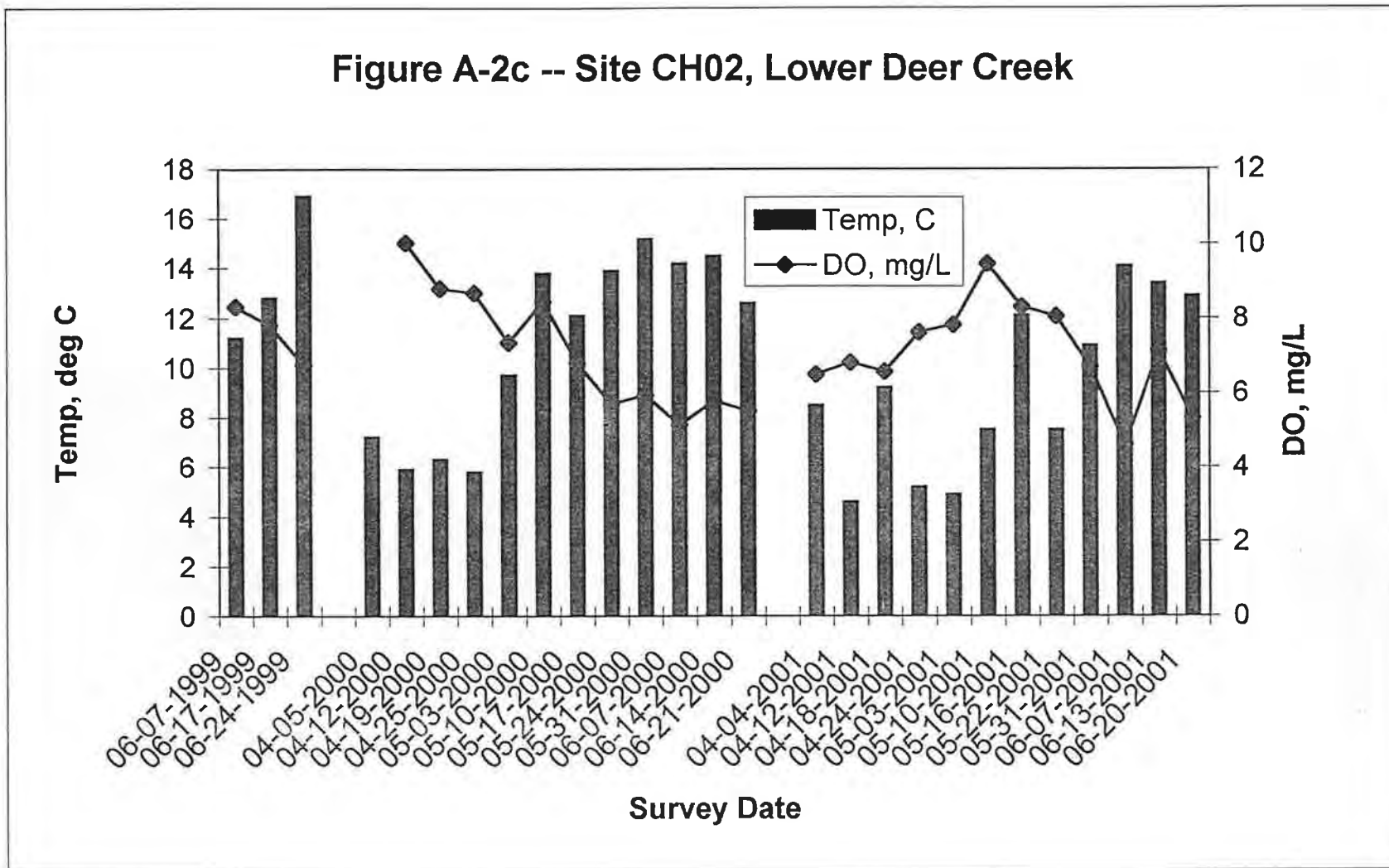


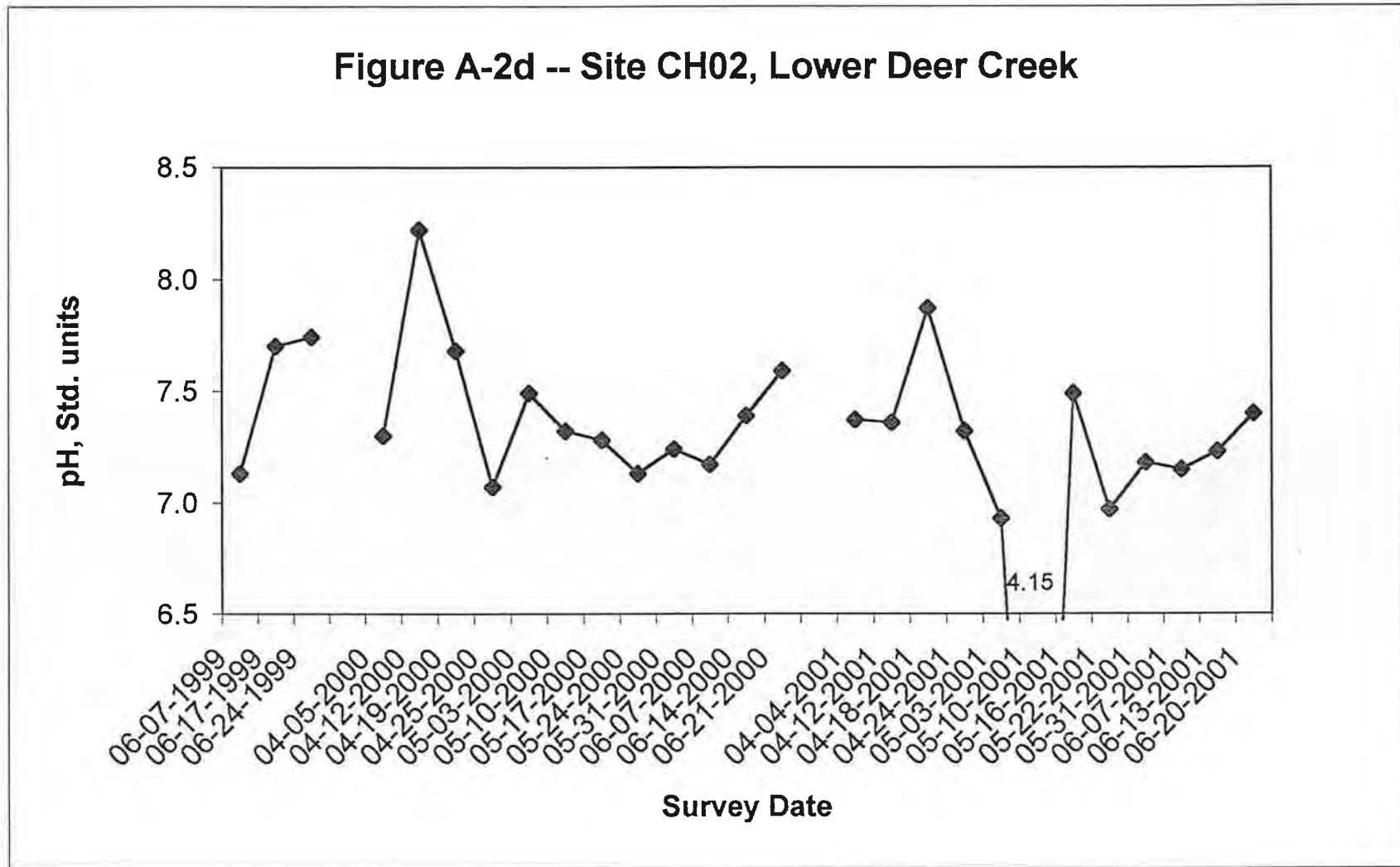


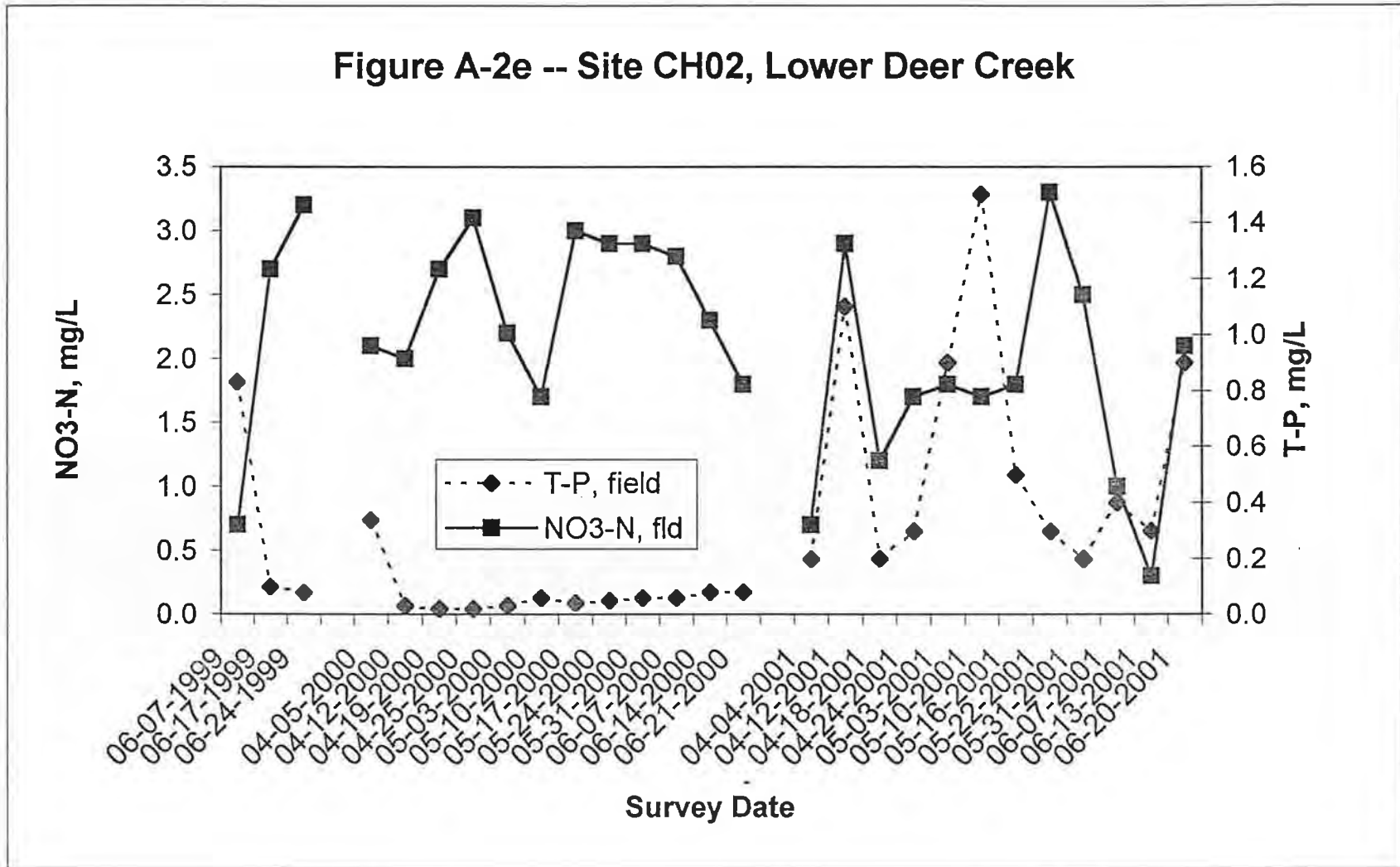


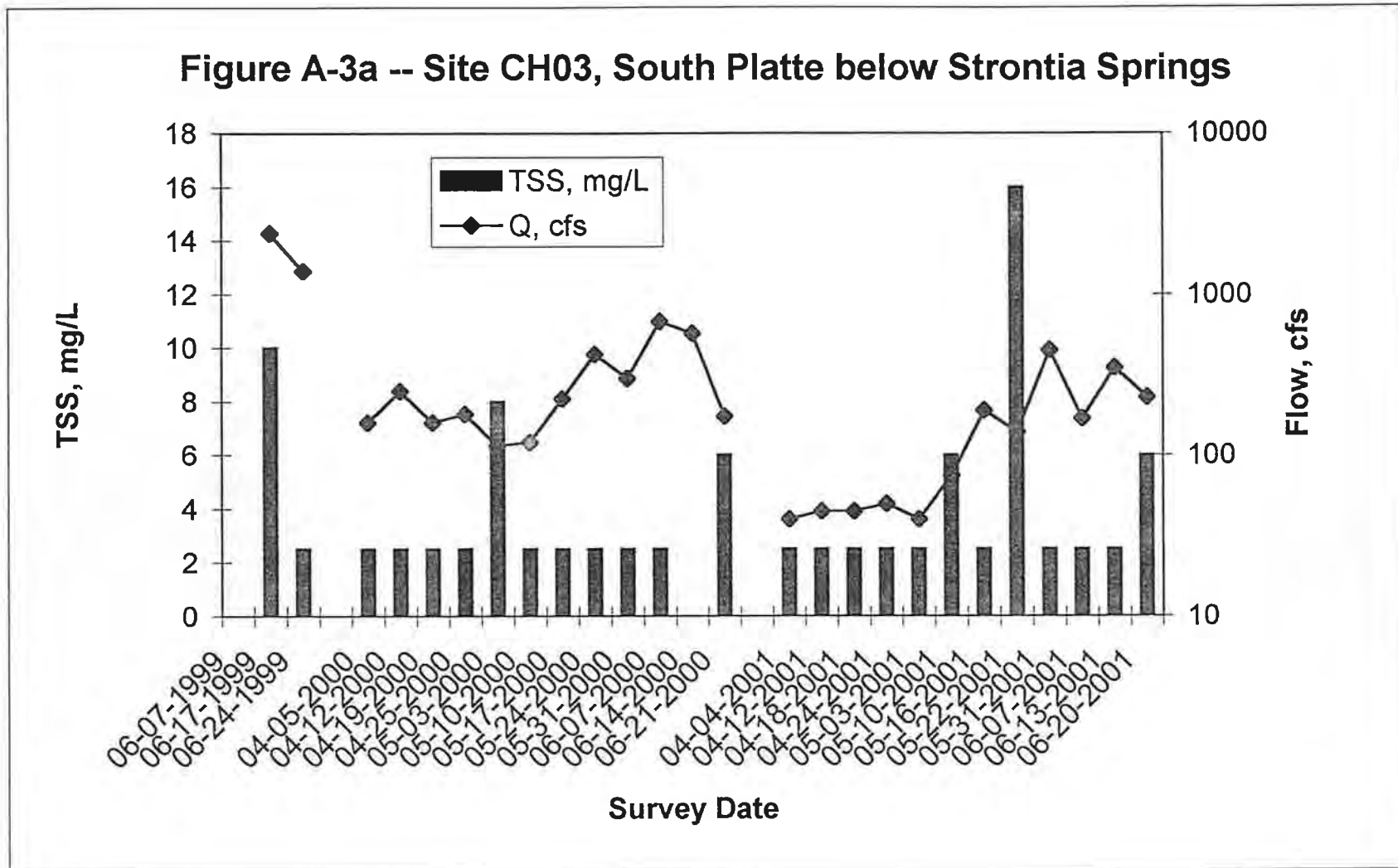


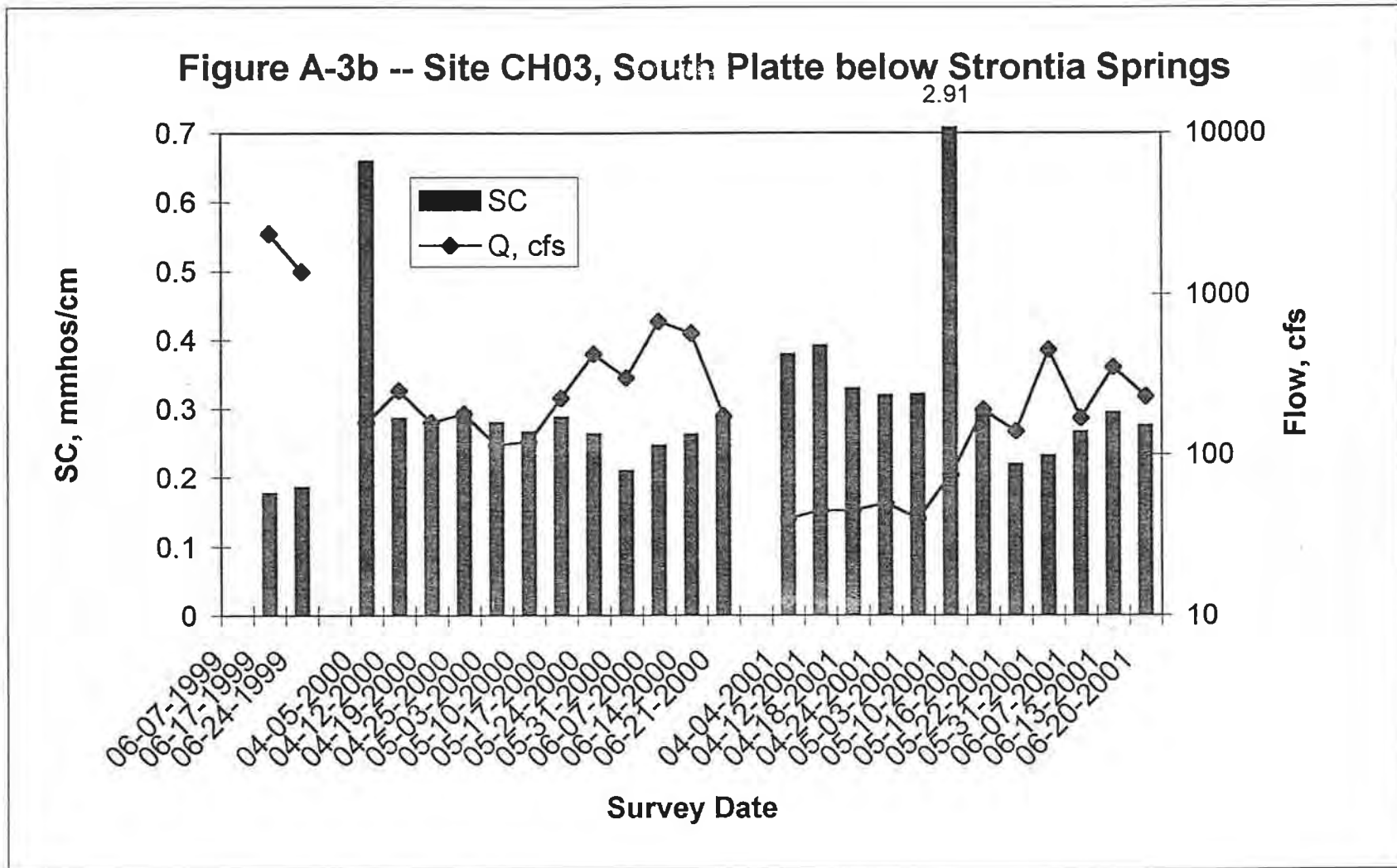


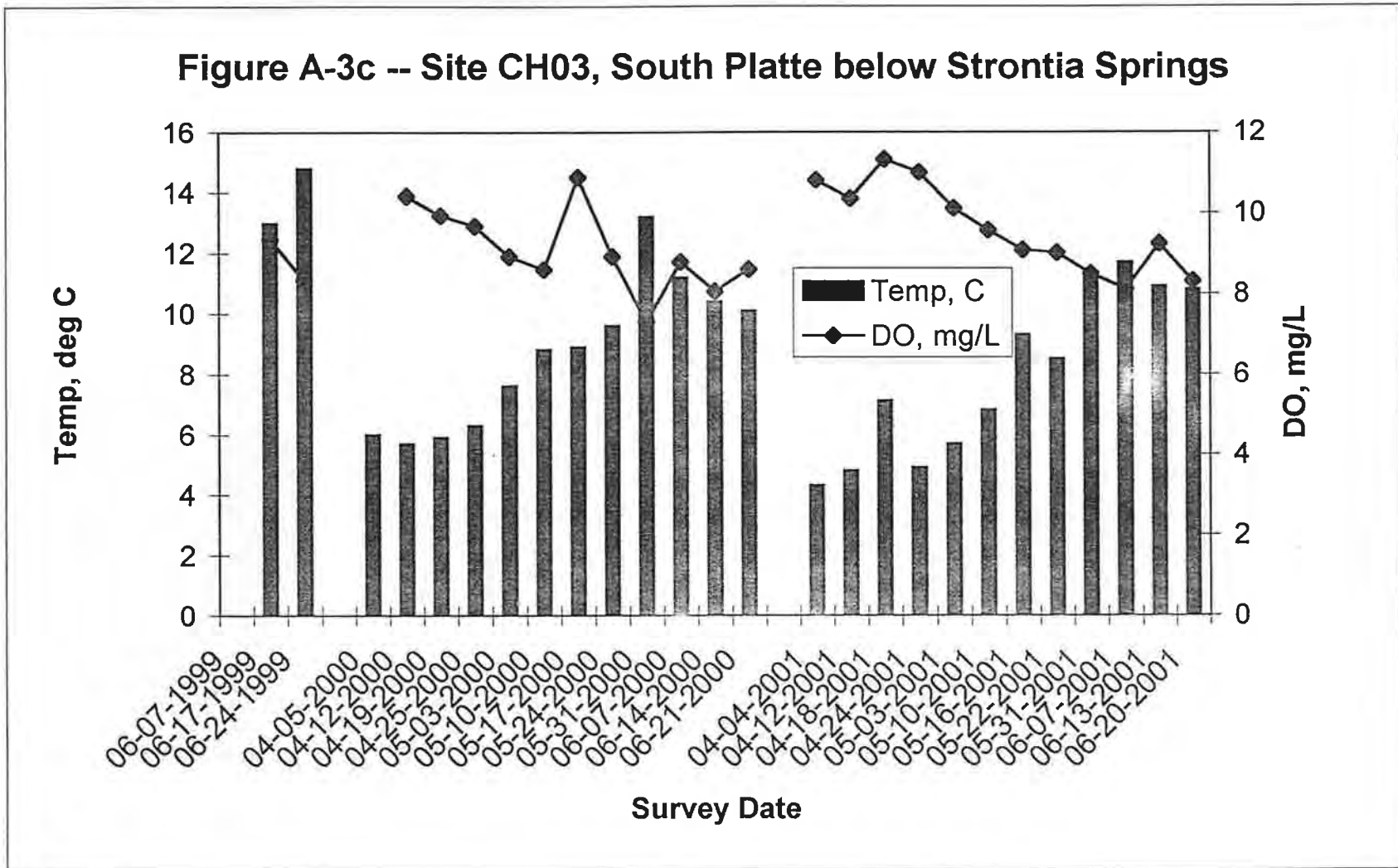


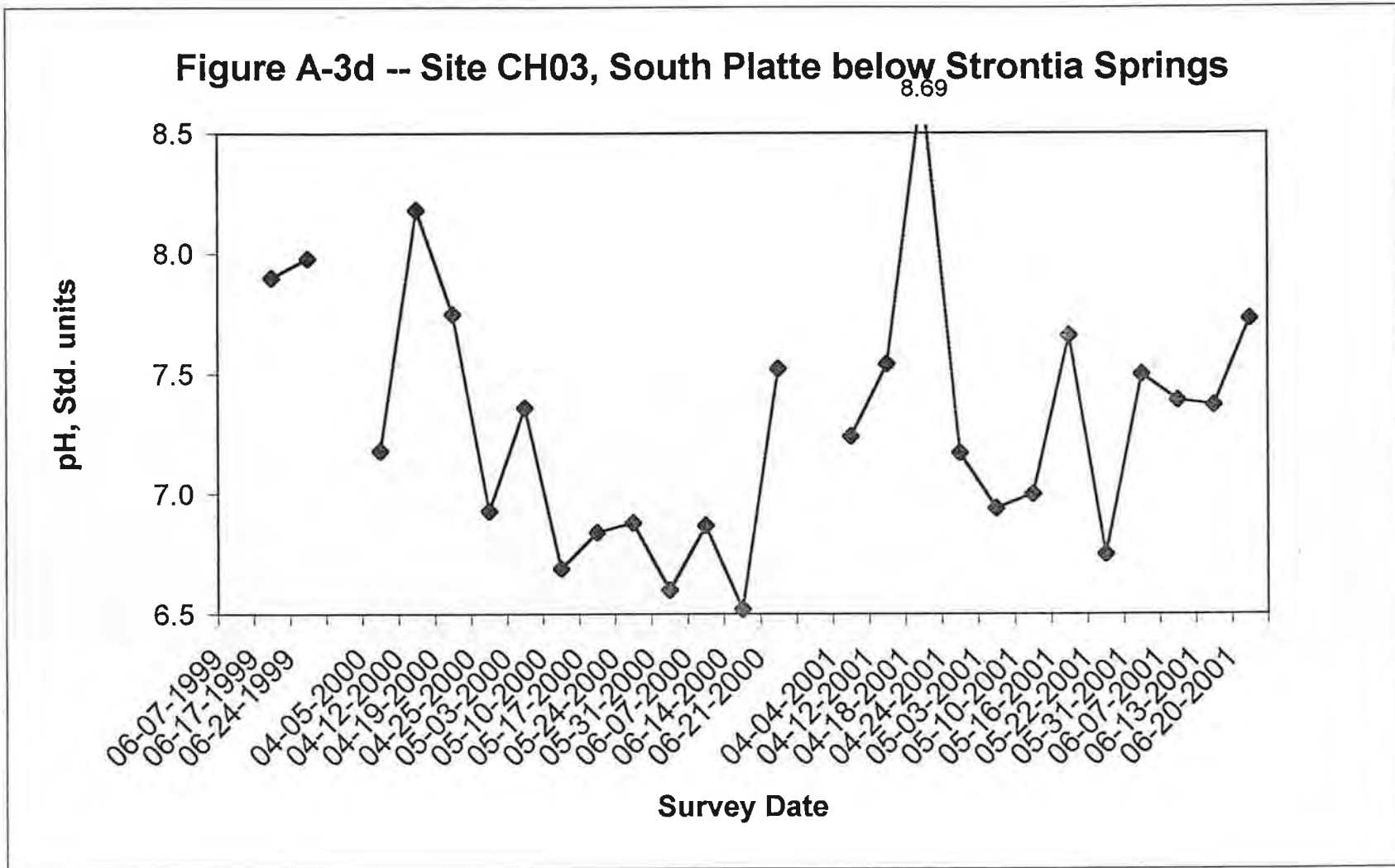


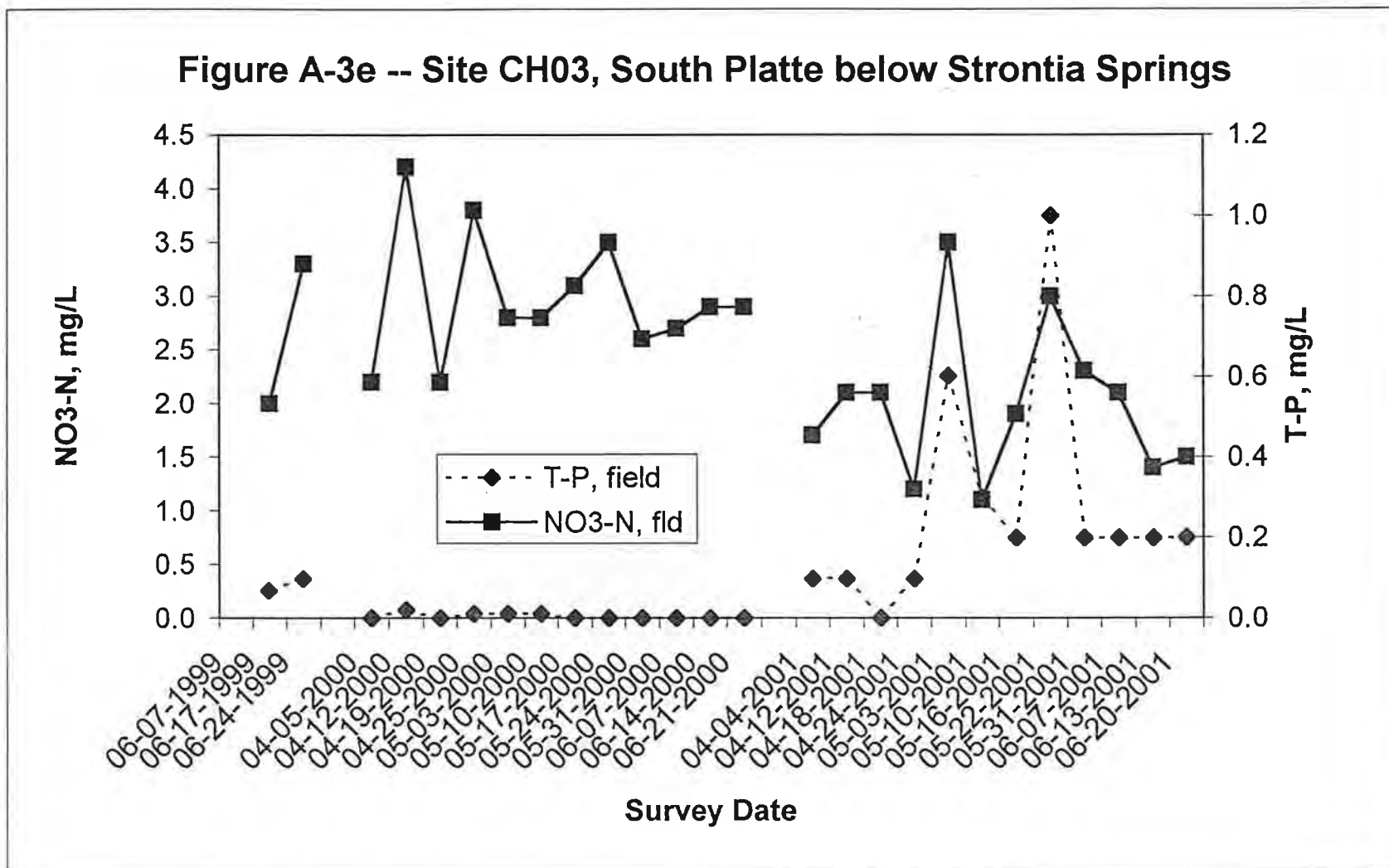


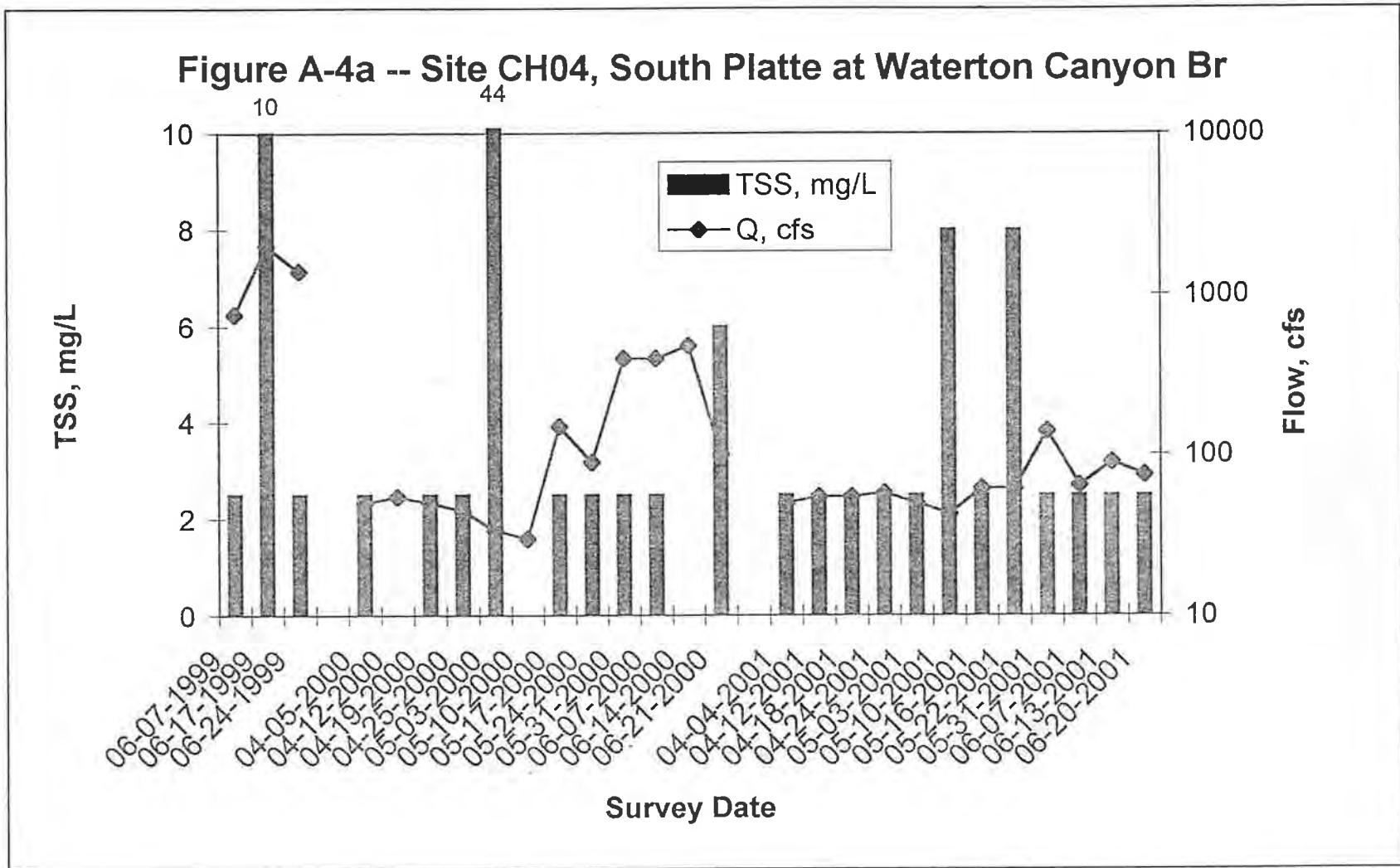


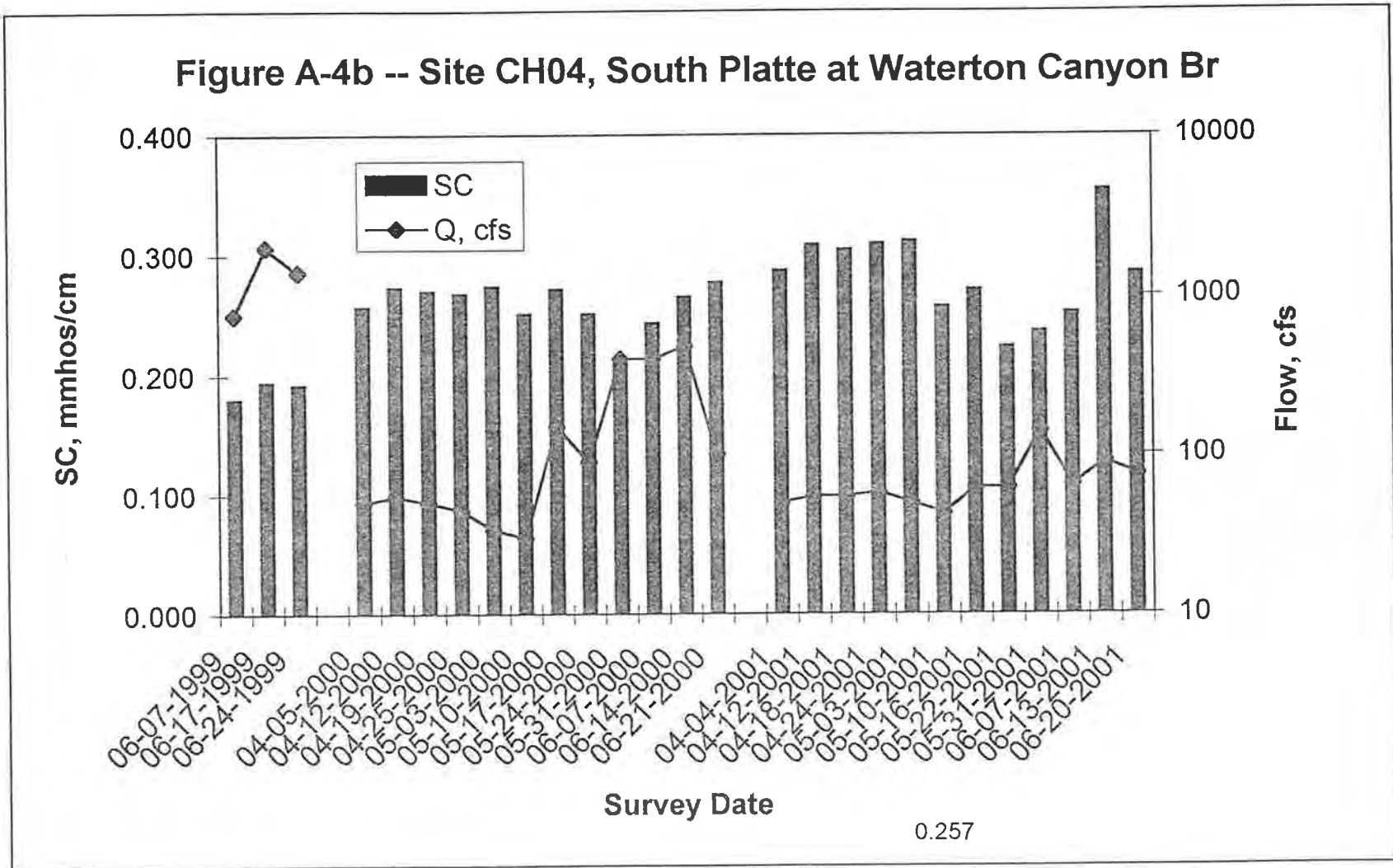


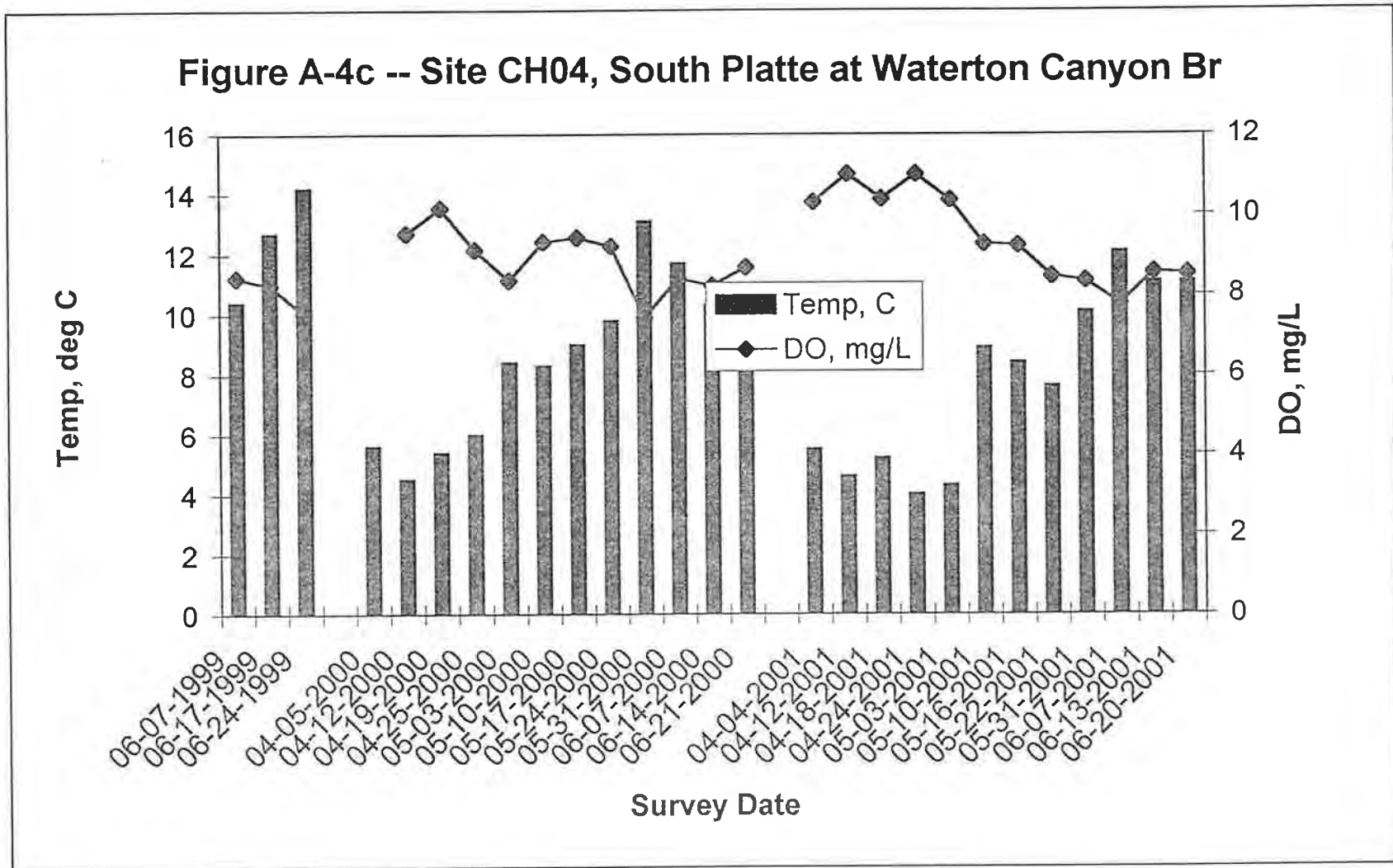


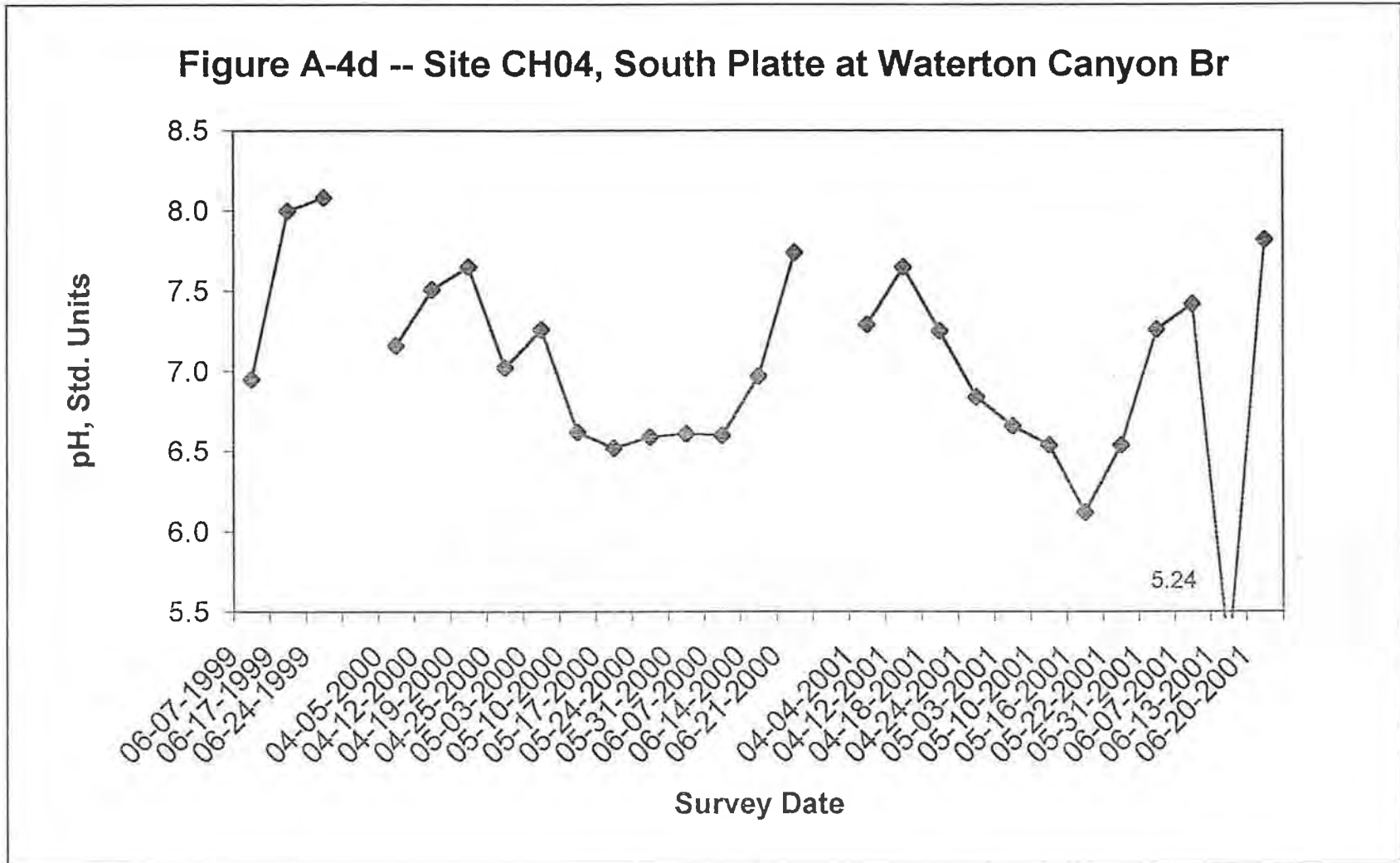


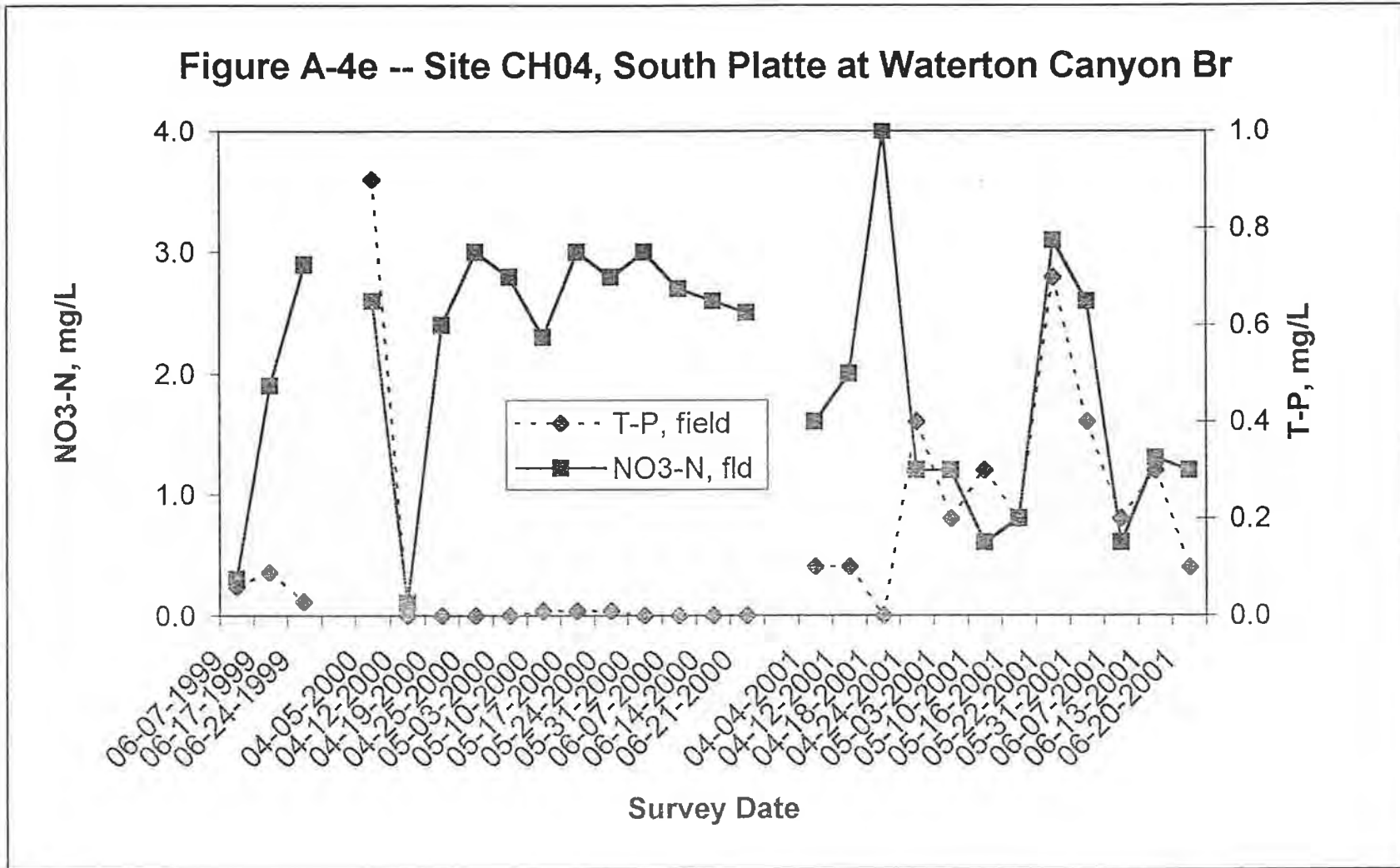


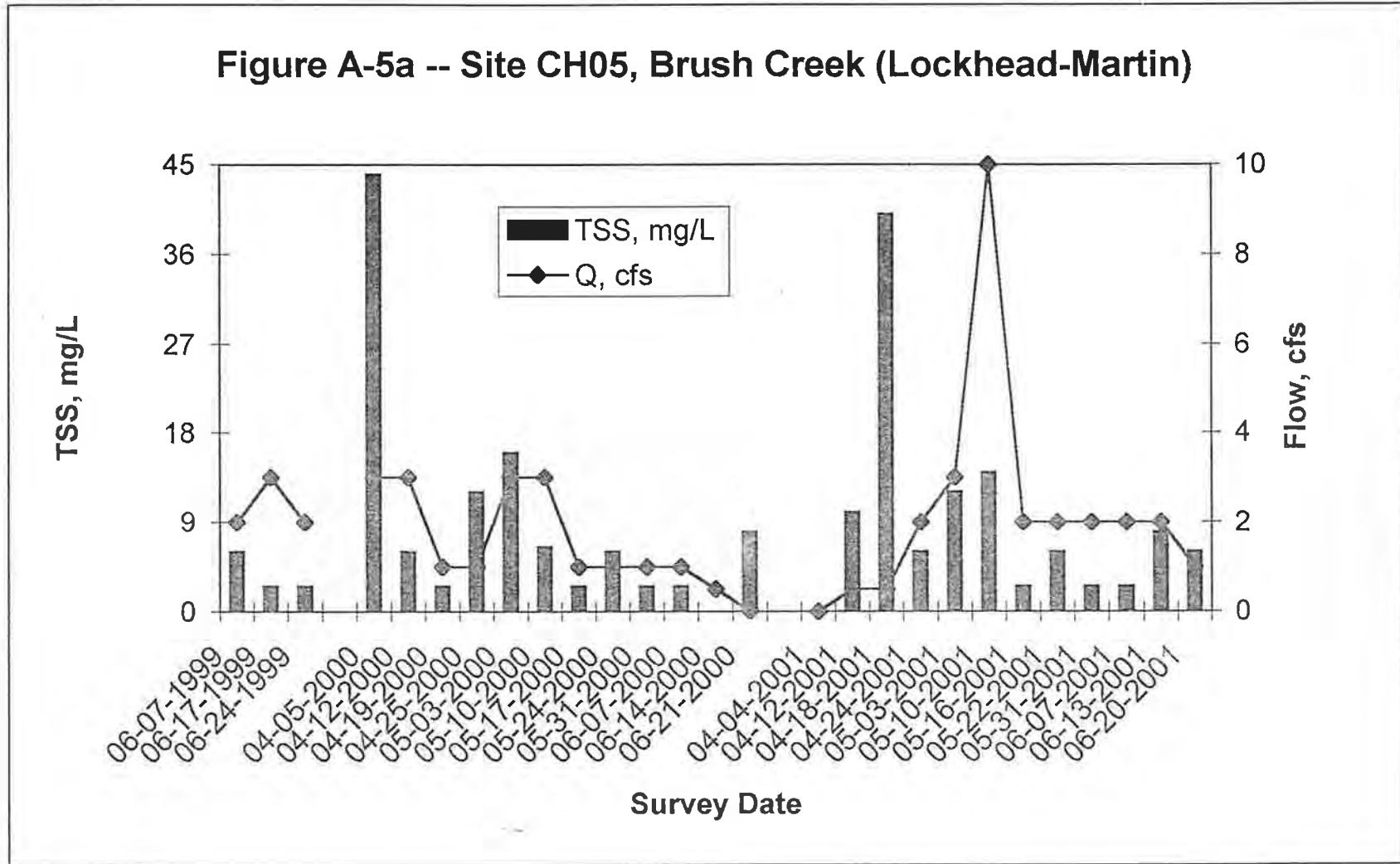


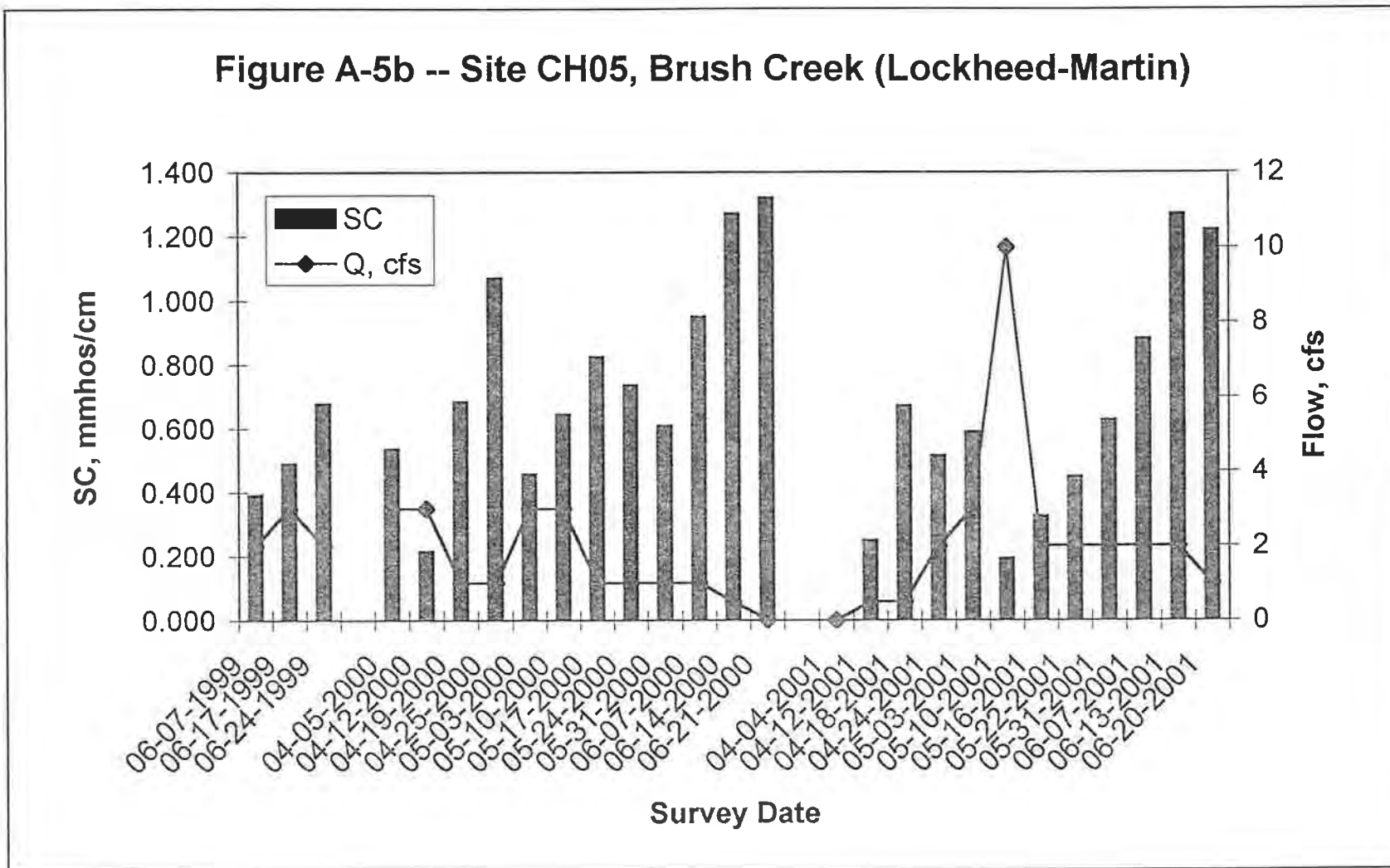


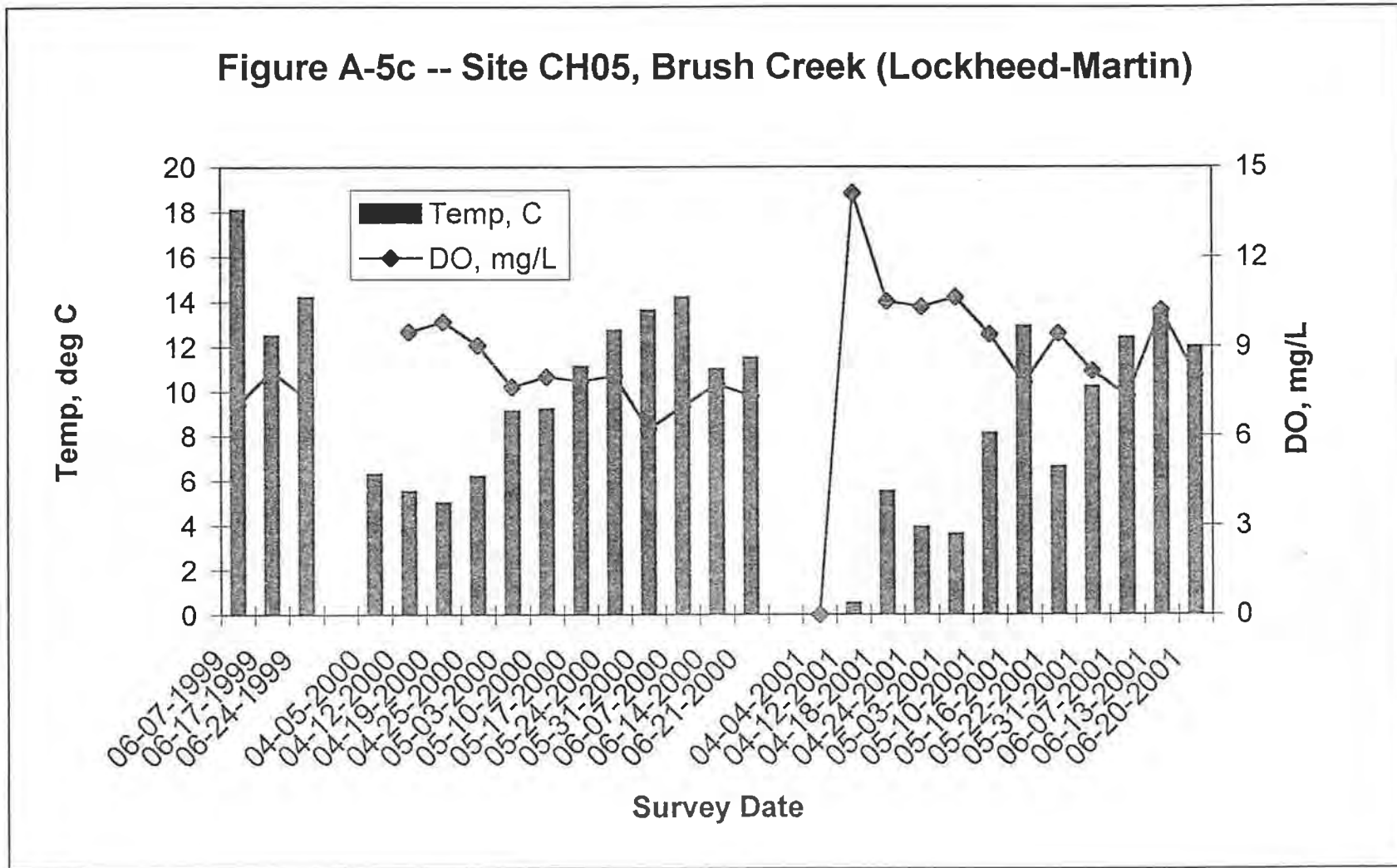


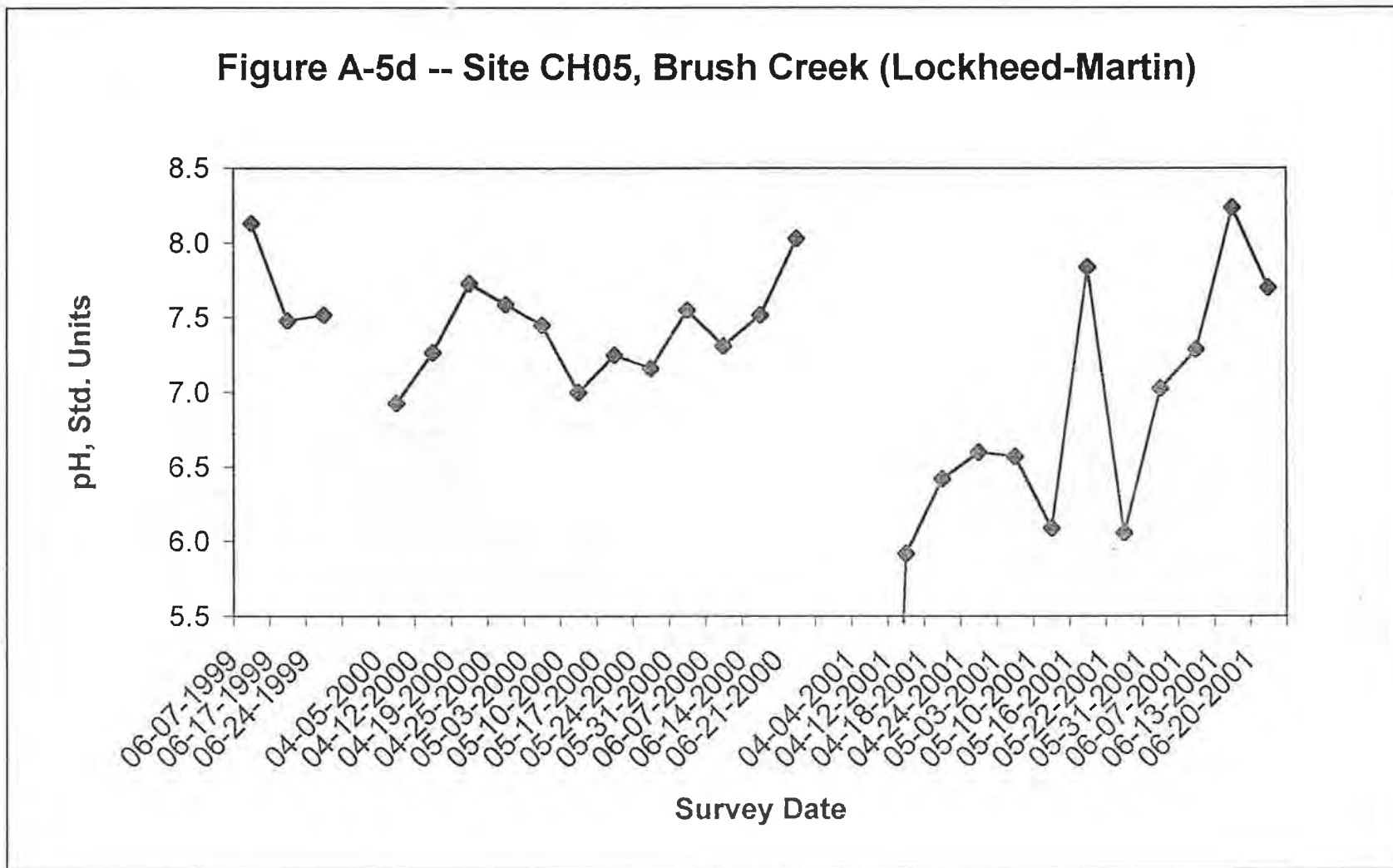


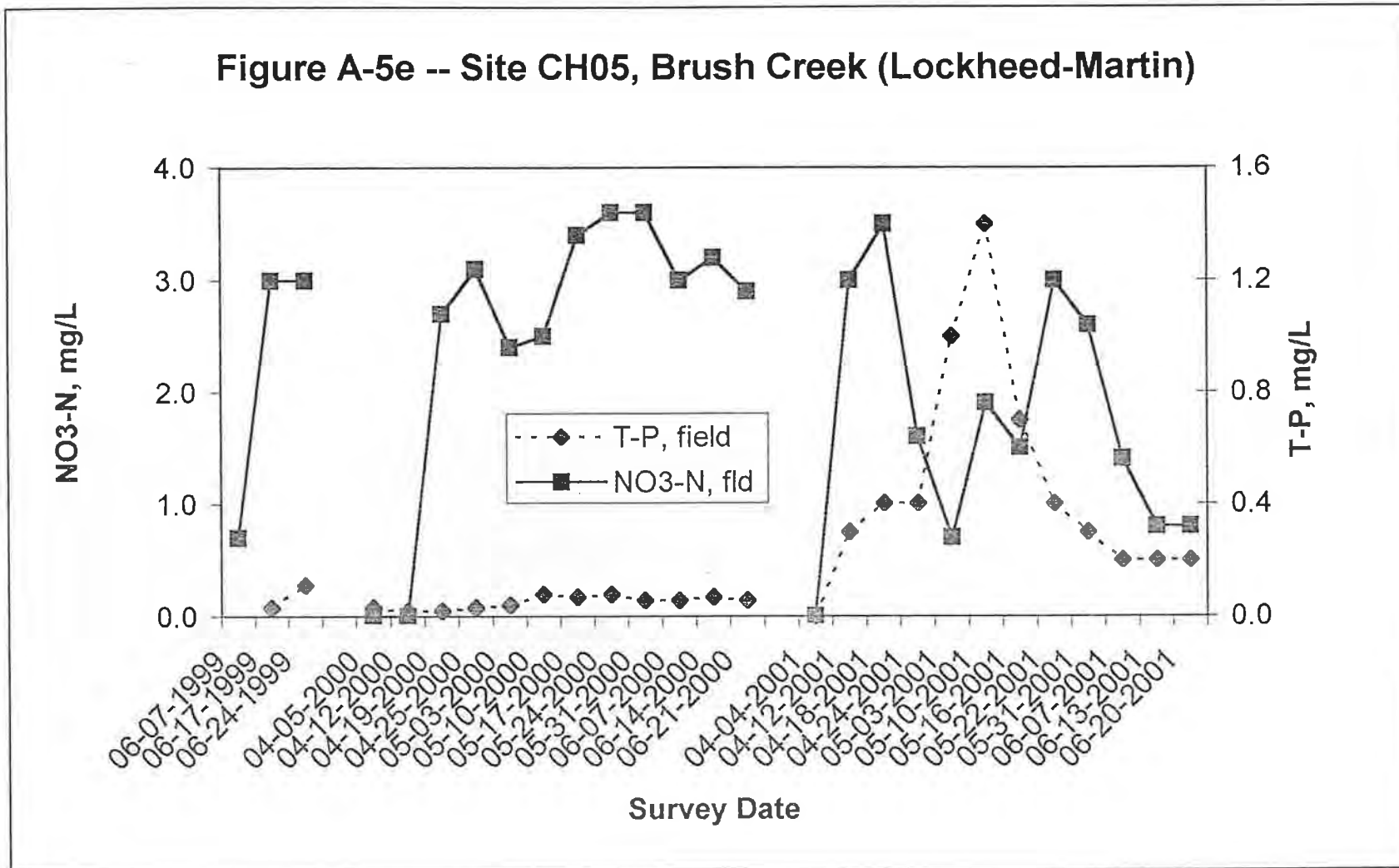


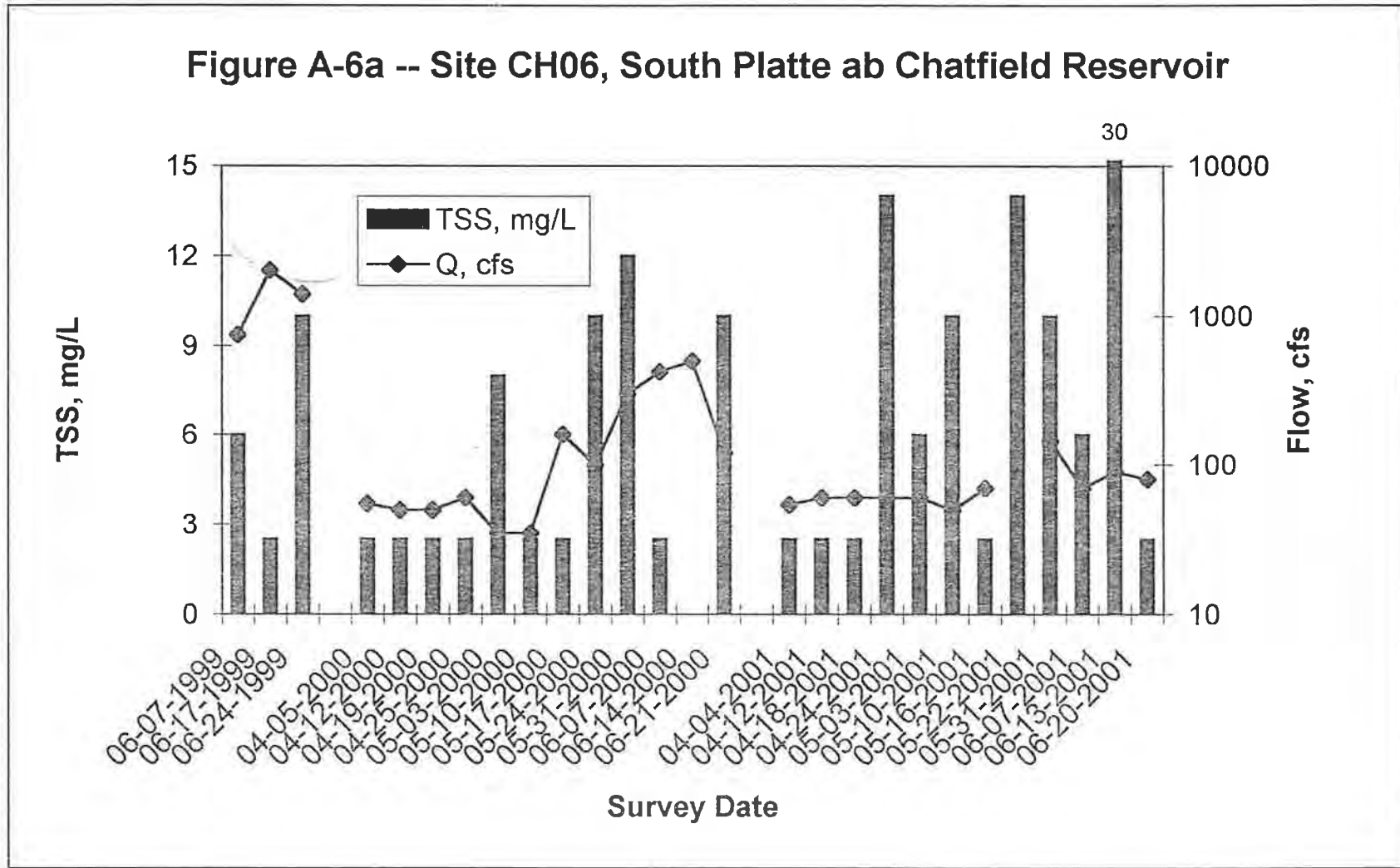


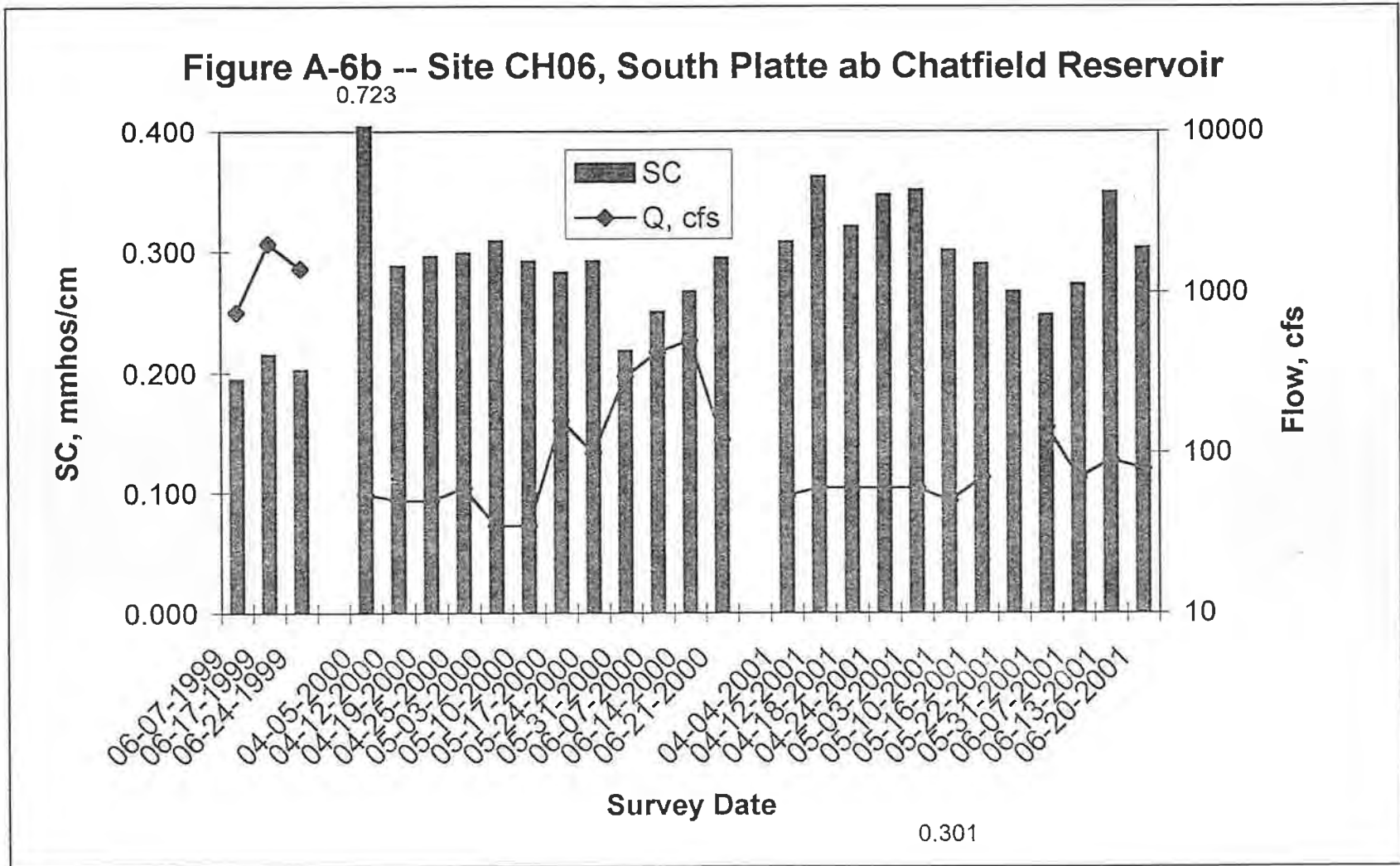


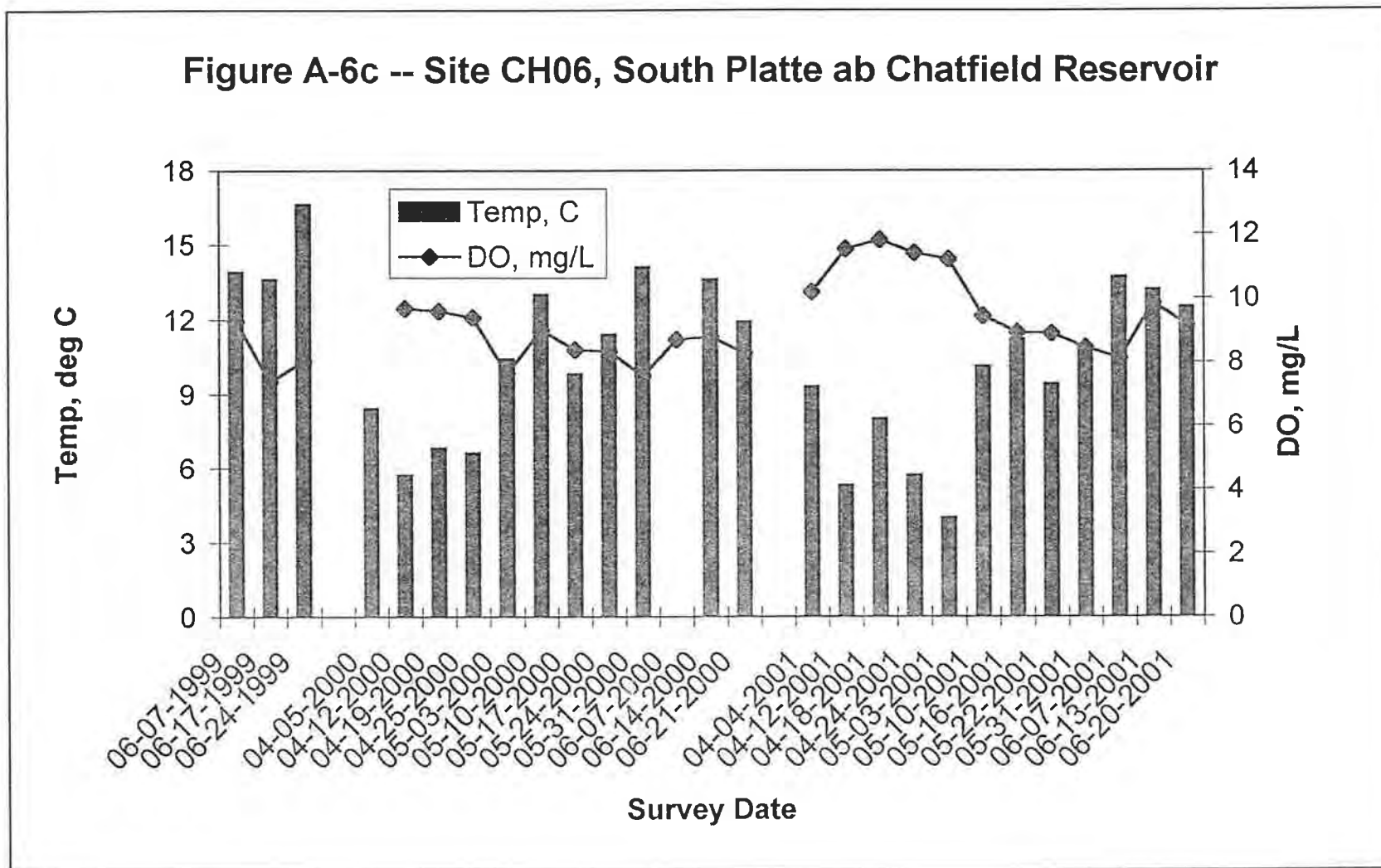


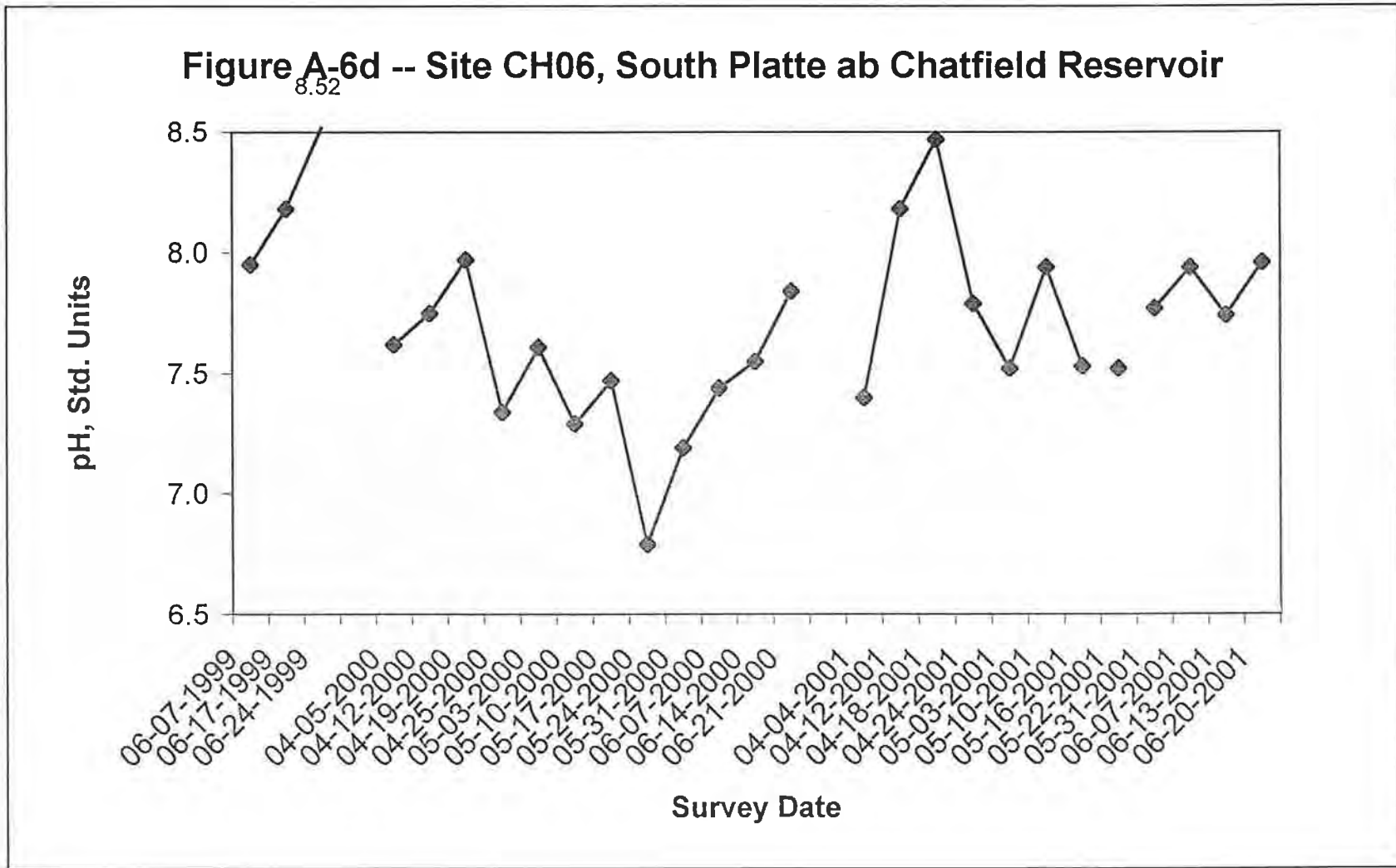


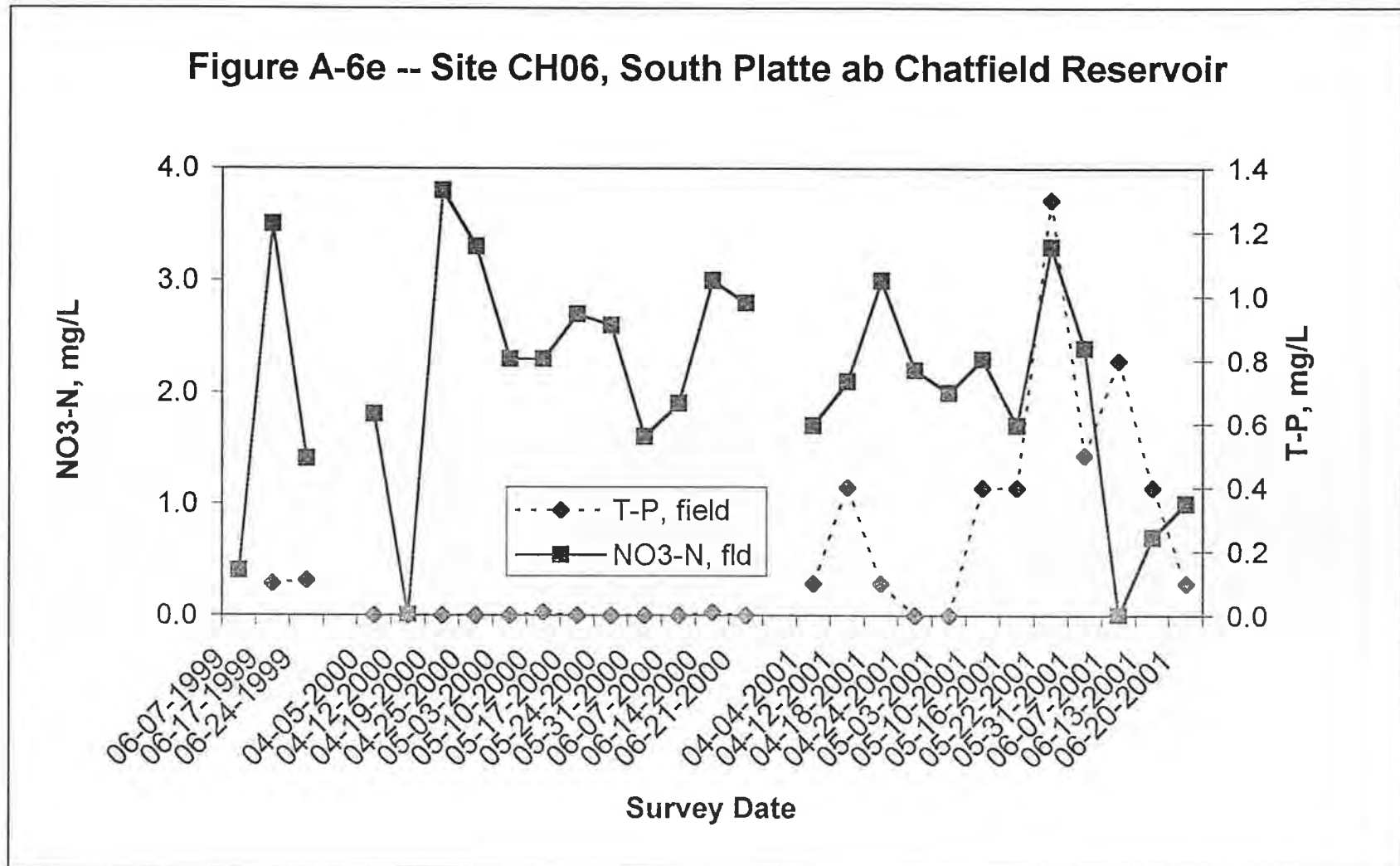


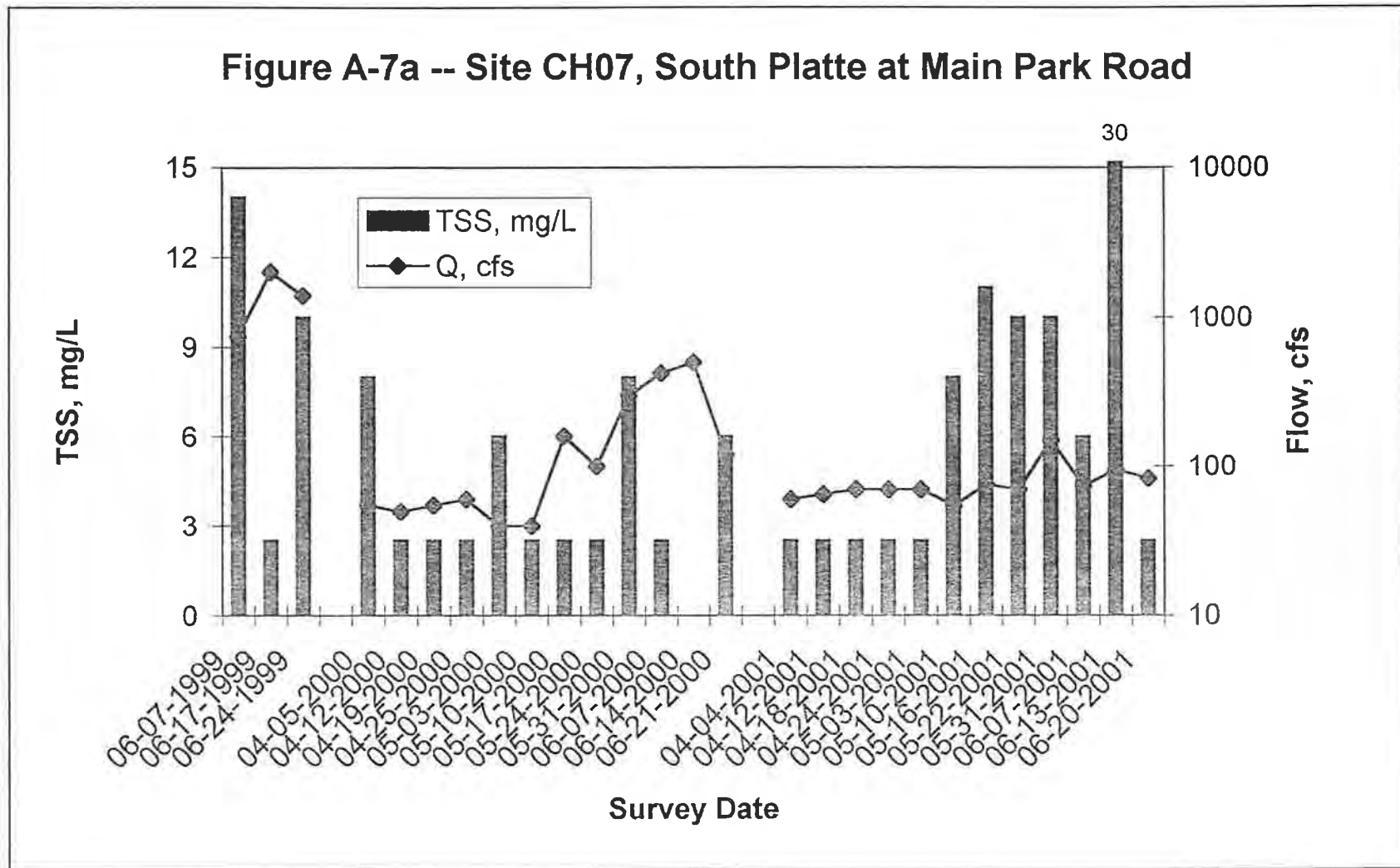


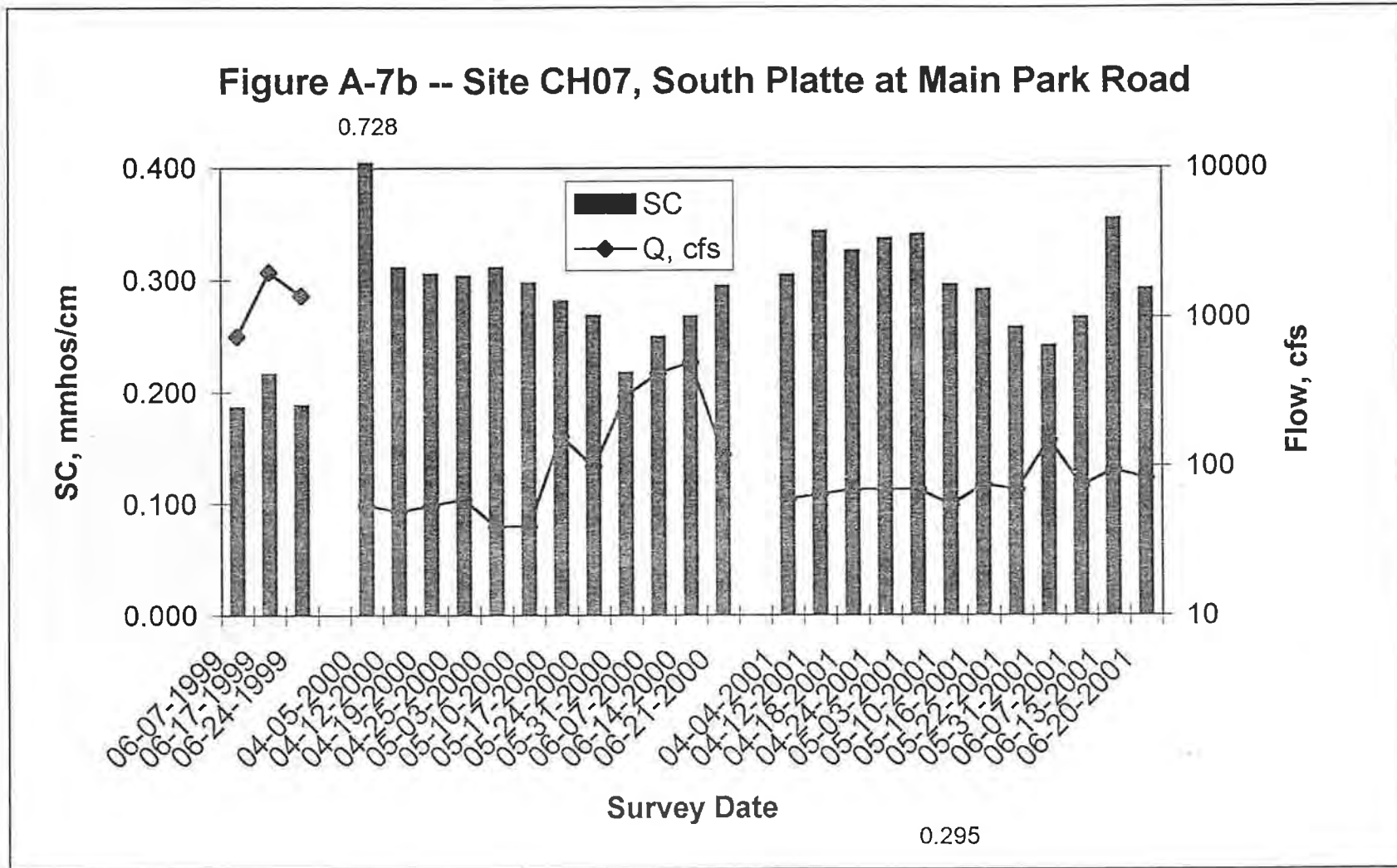


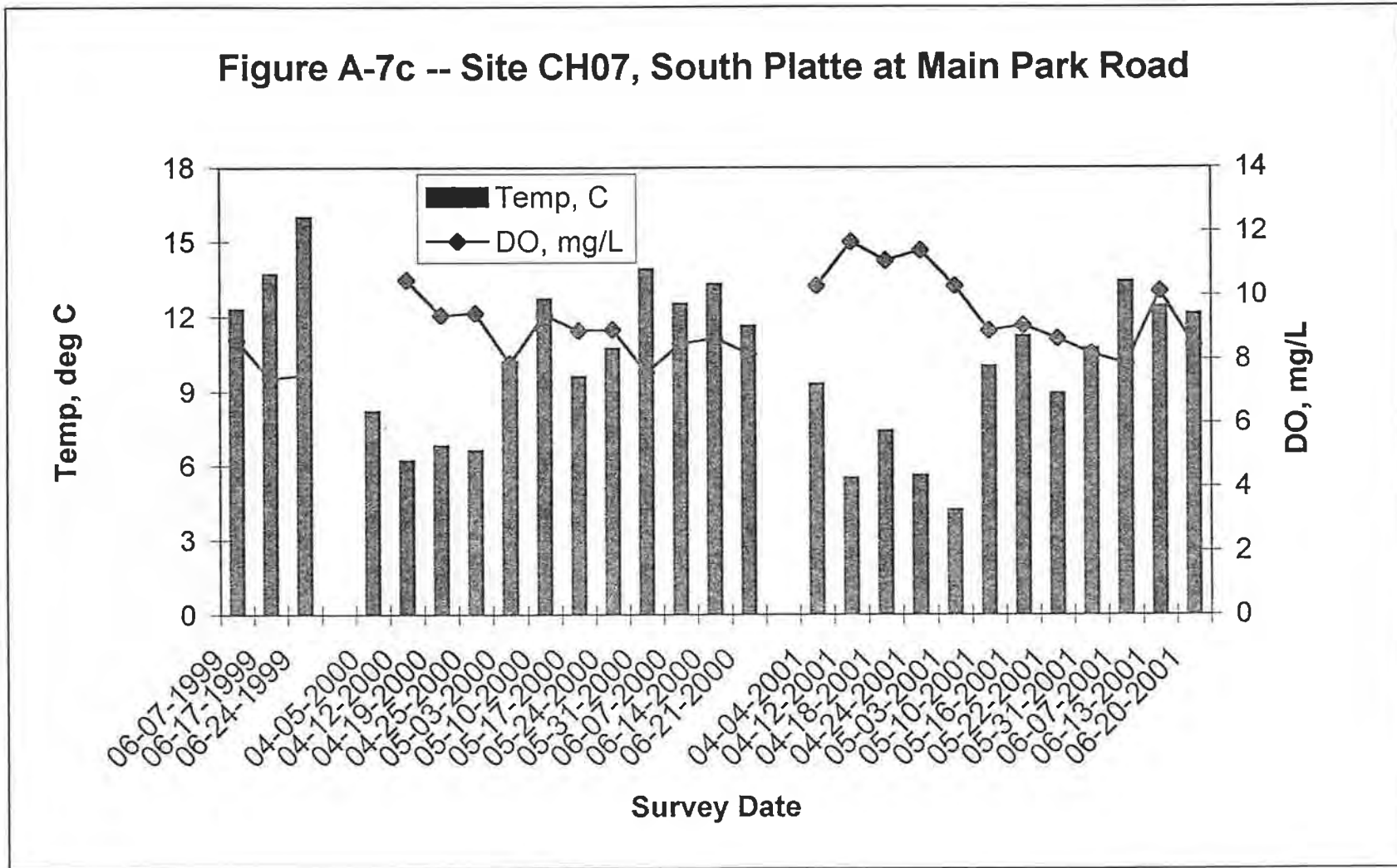


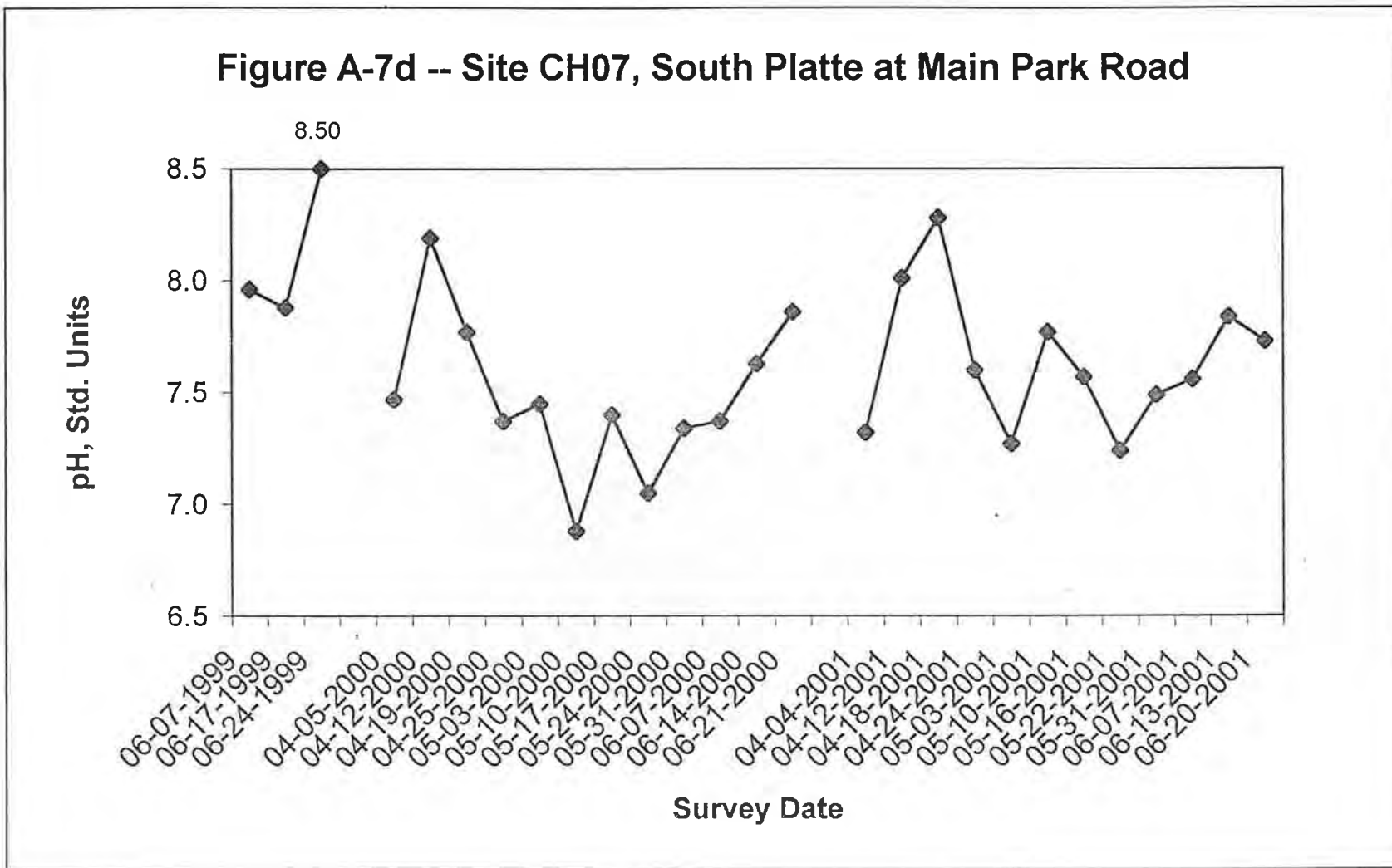


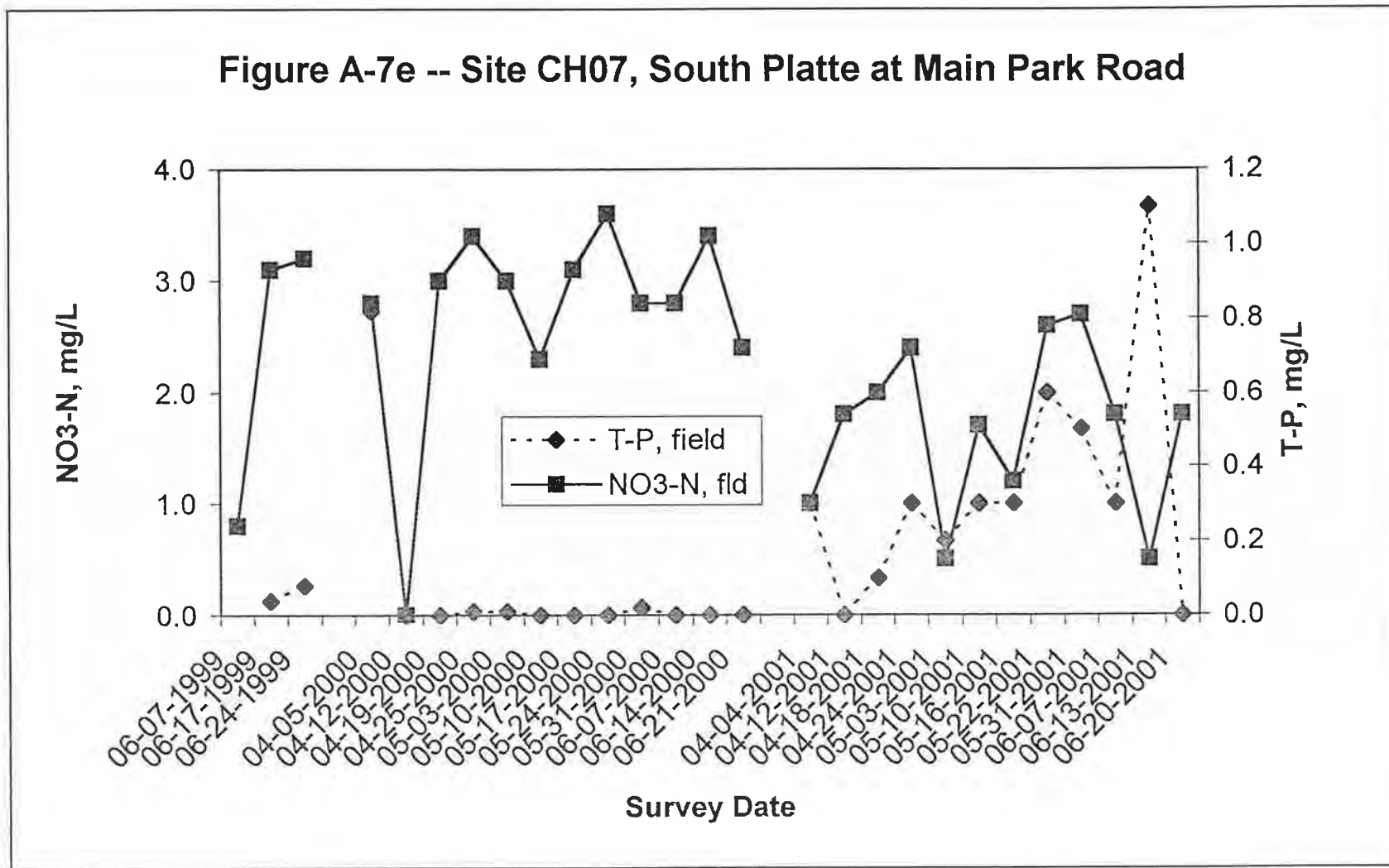


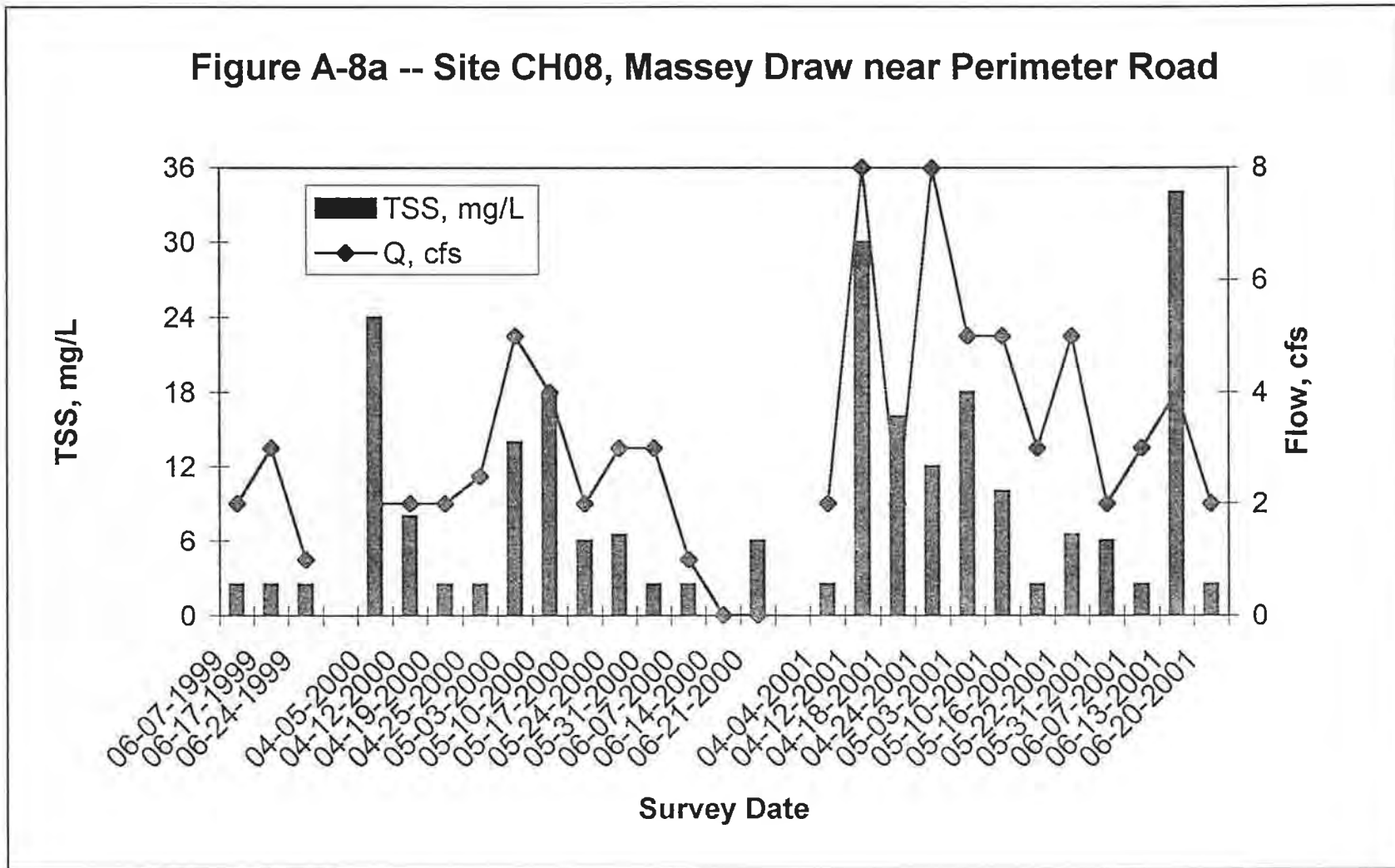


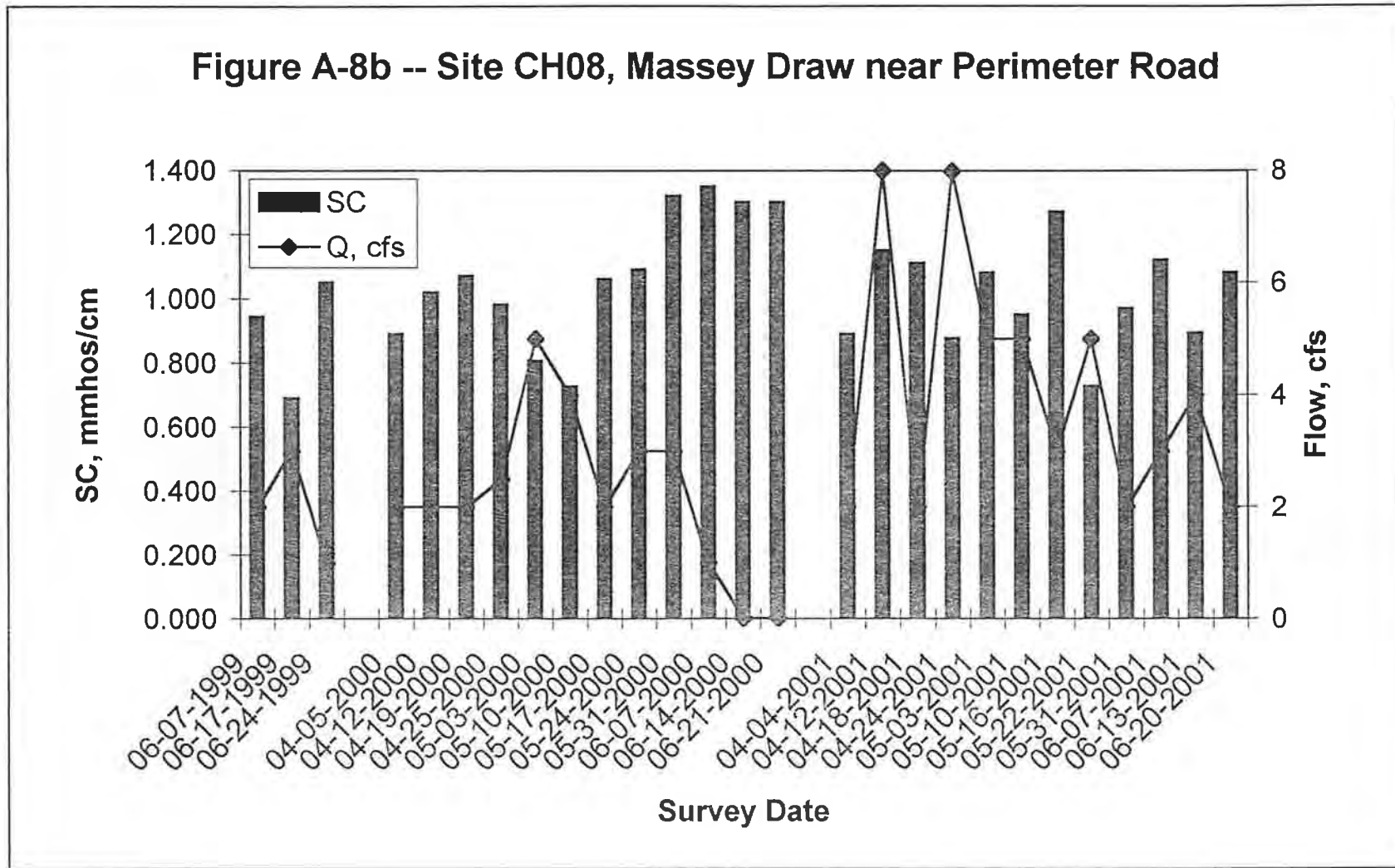


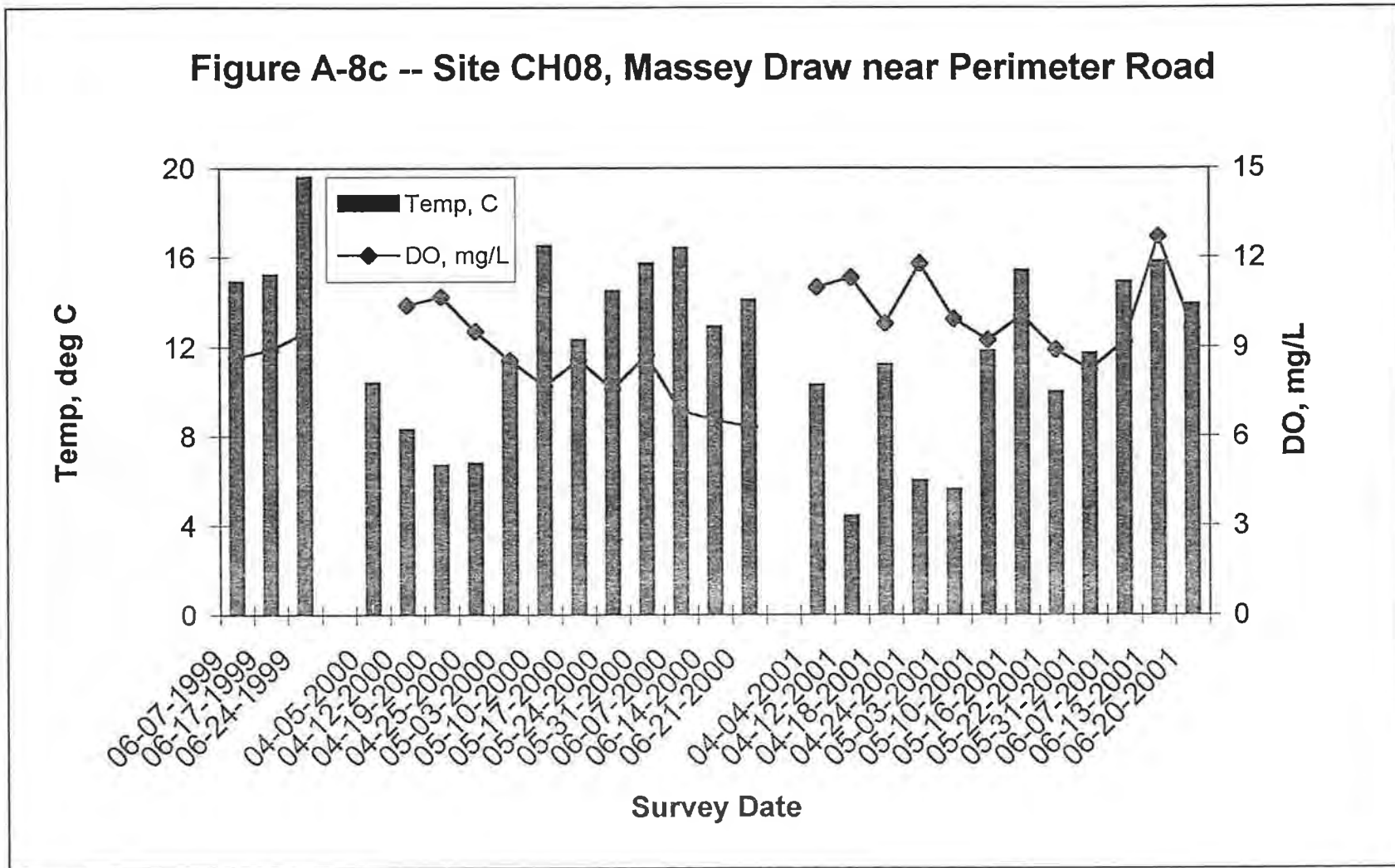


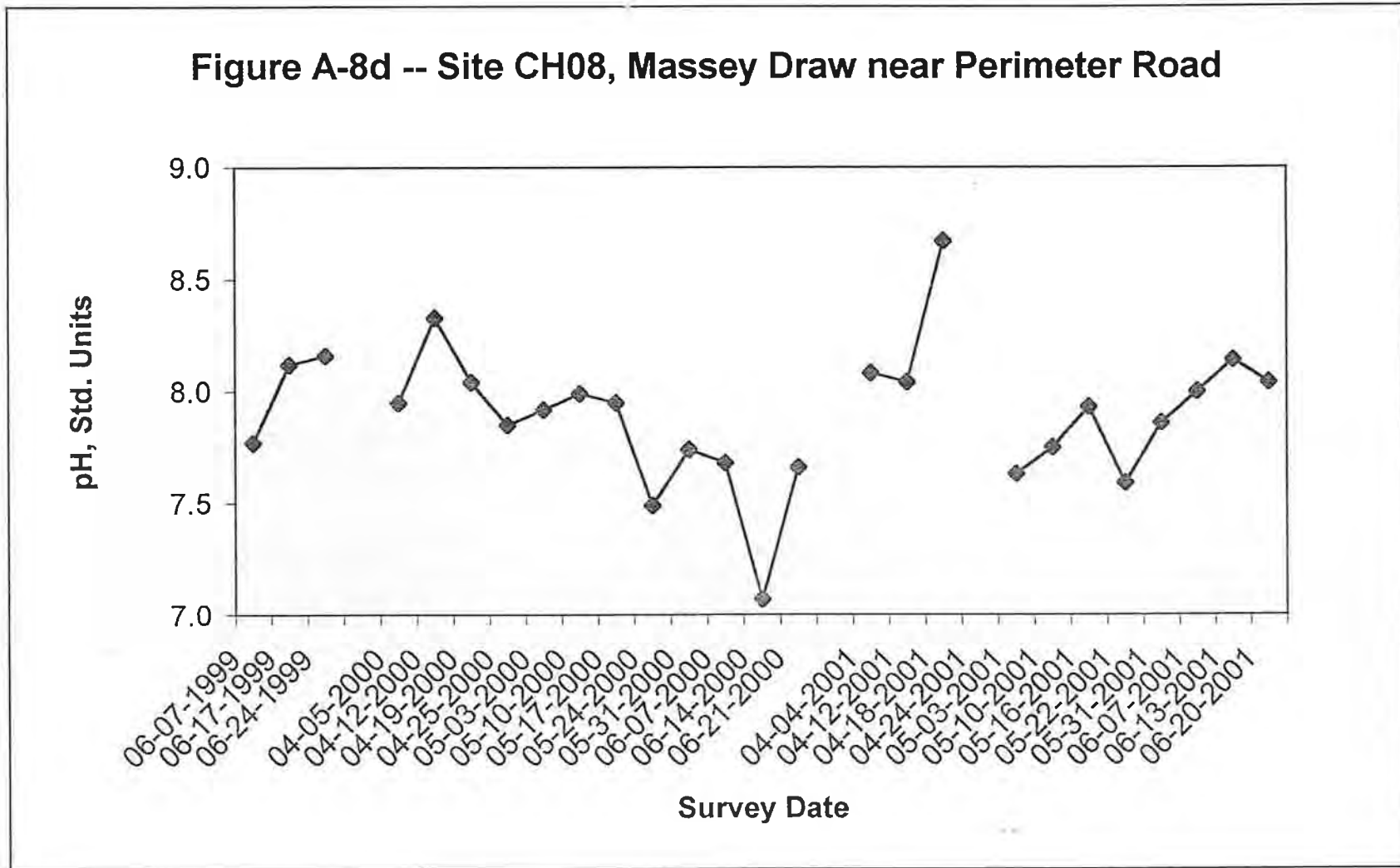


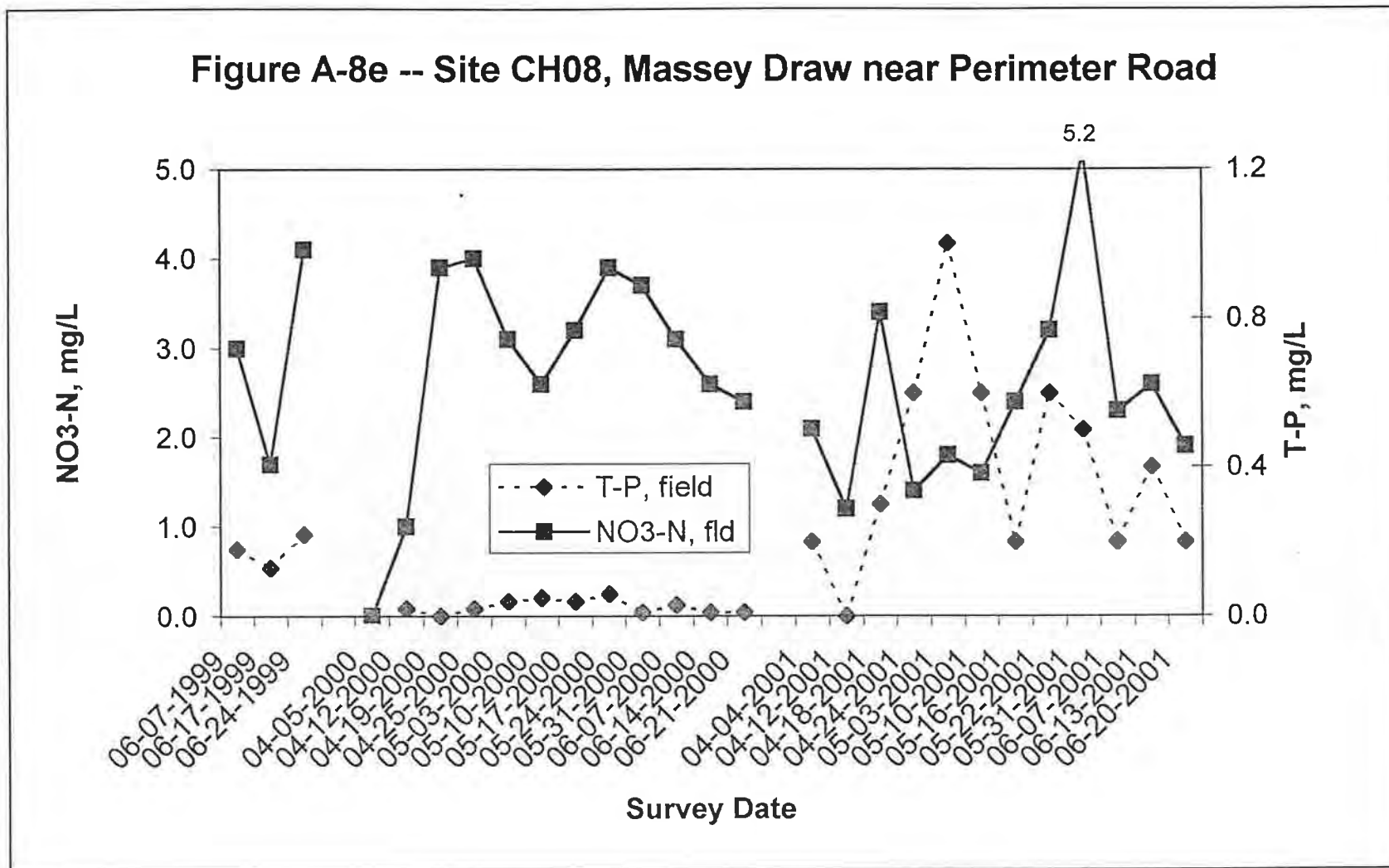


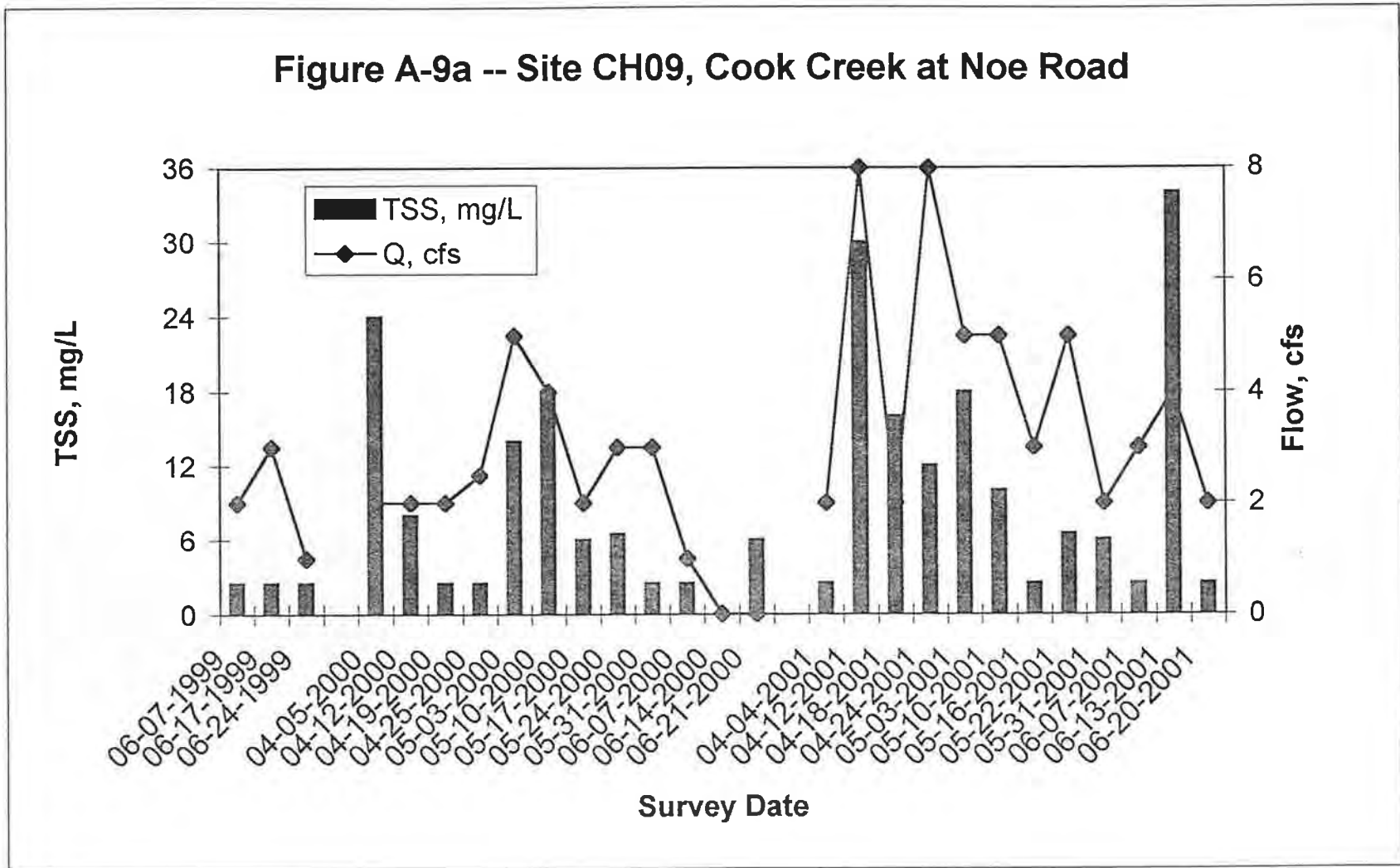












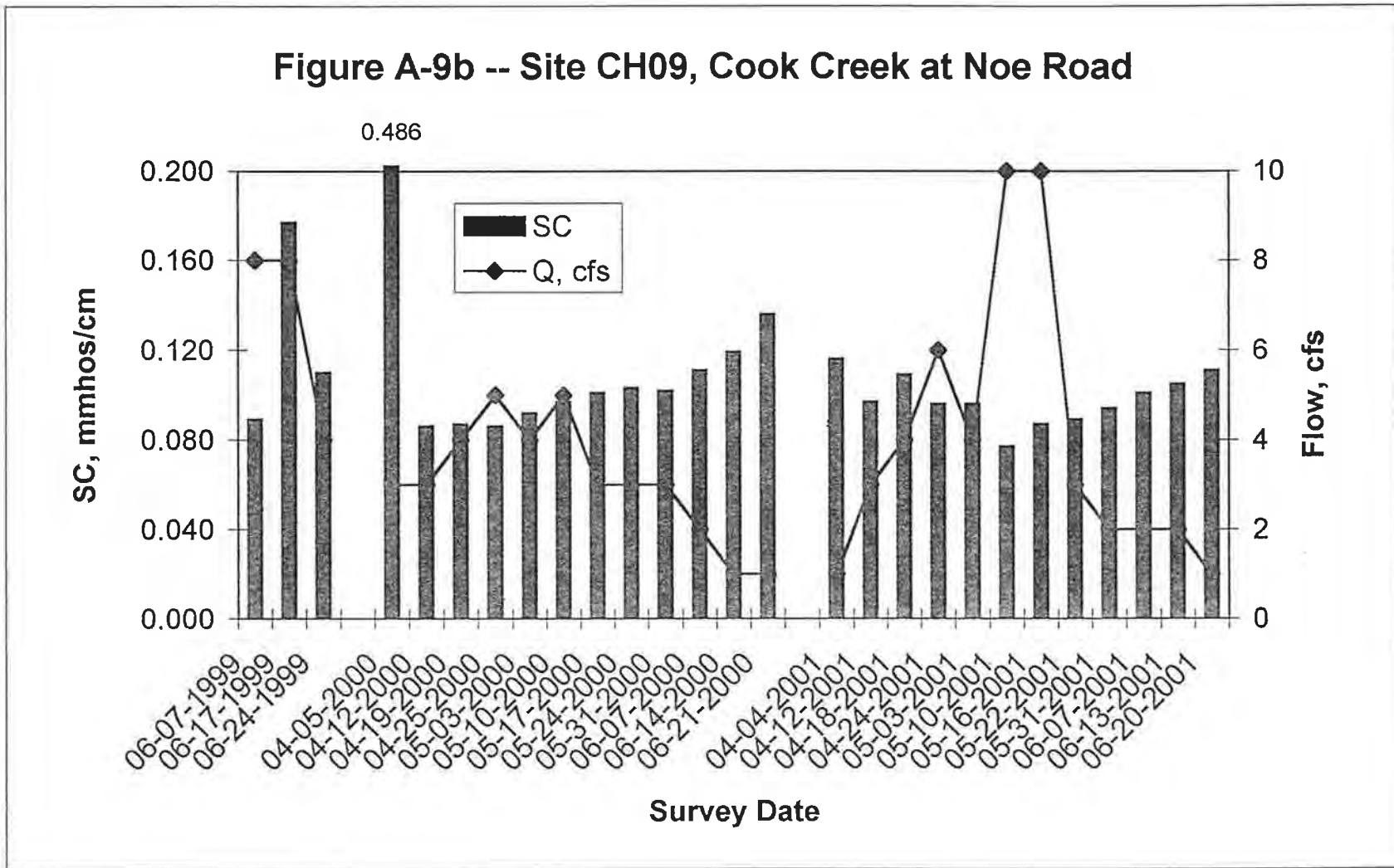
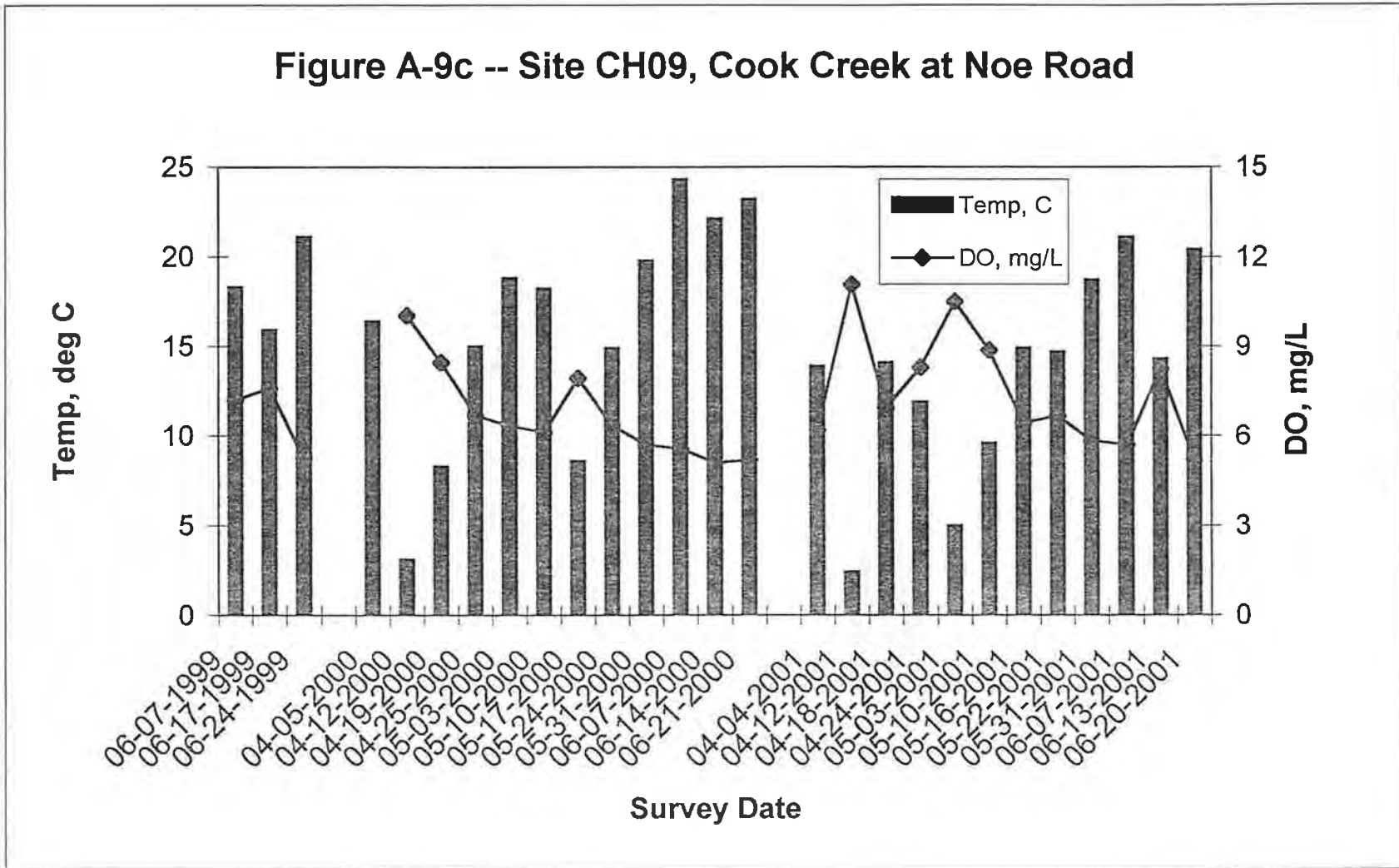
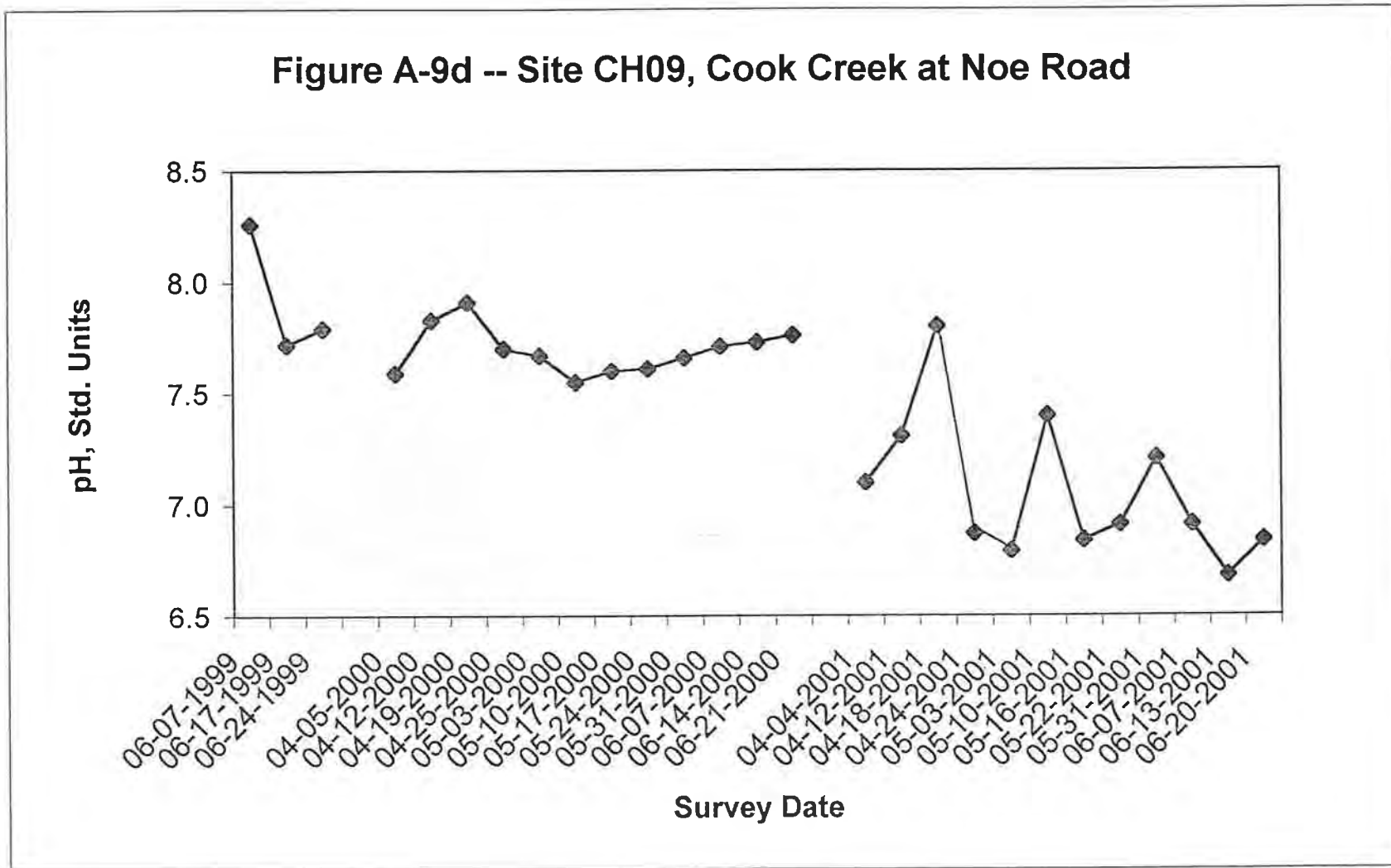
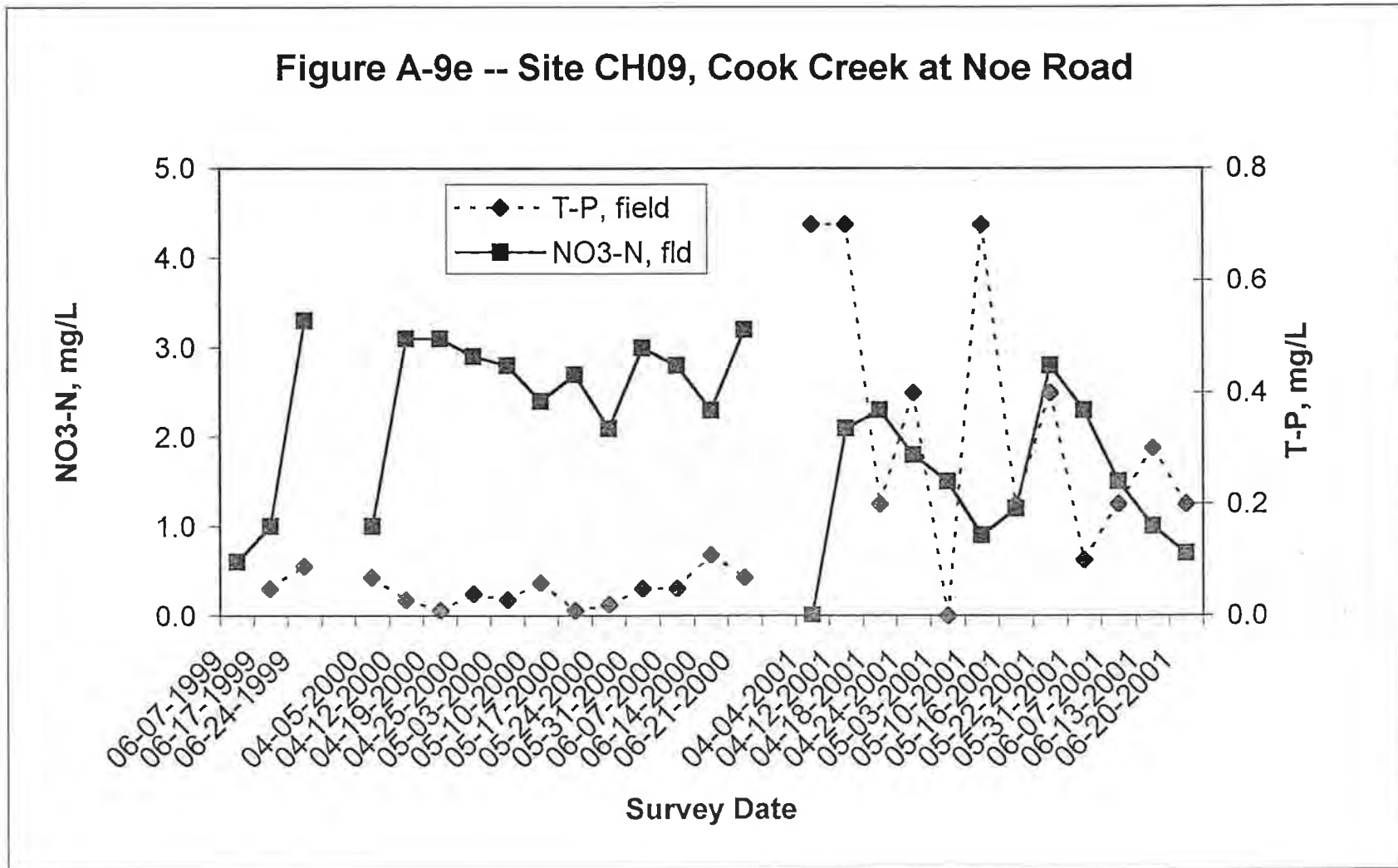
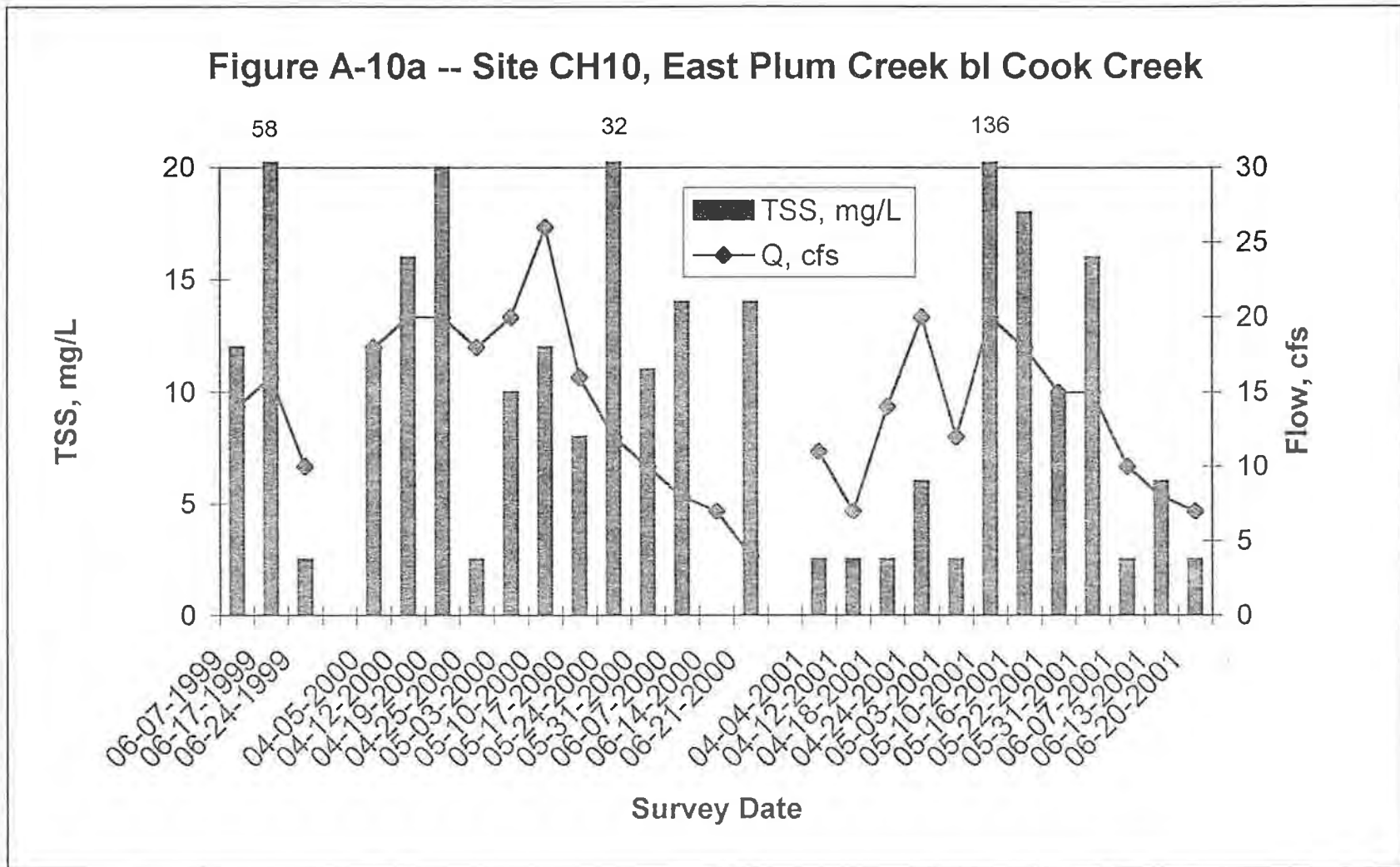


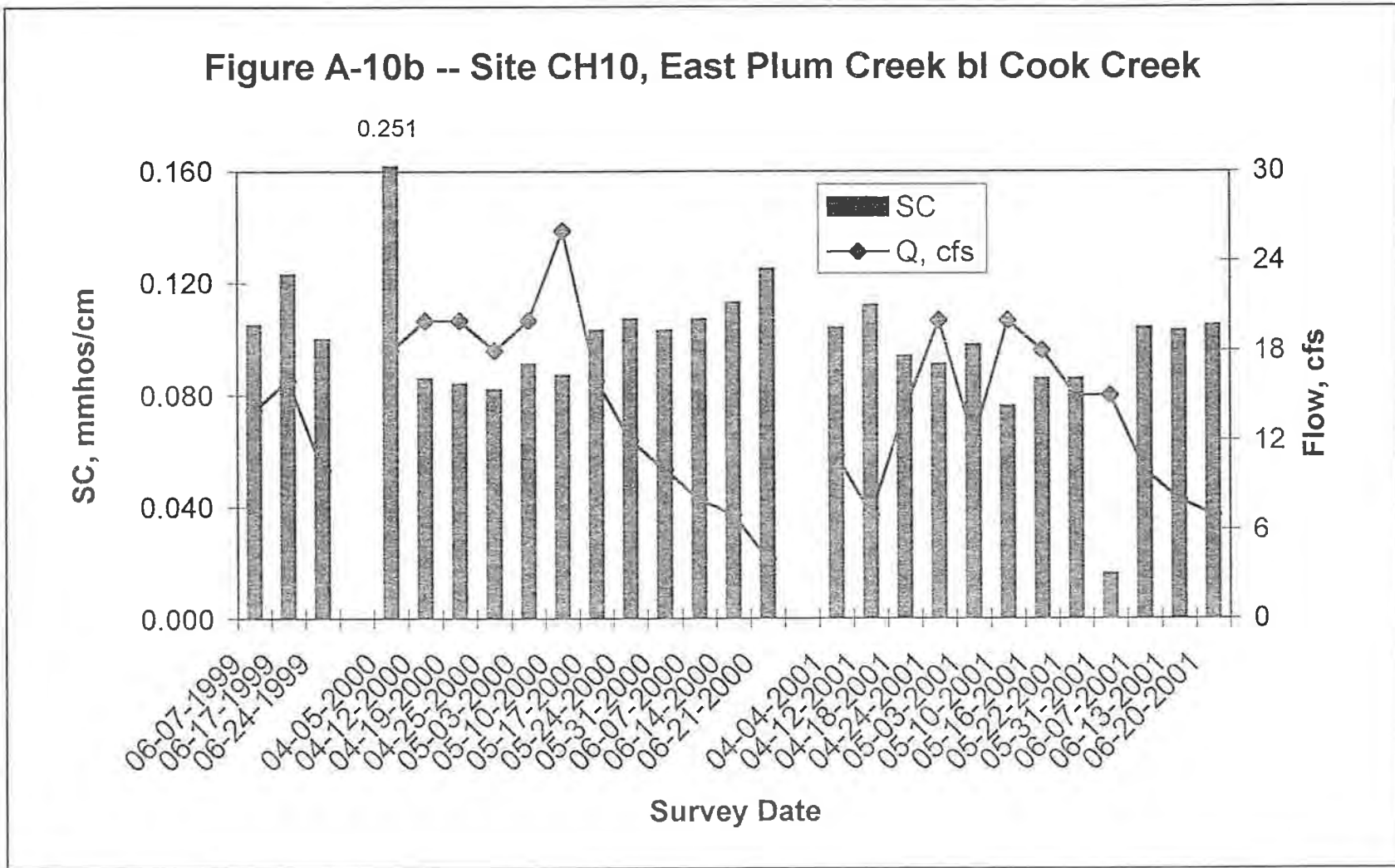
Figure A-9c -- Site CH09, Cook Creek at Noe Road

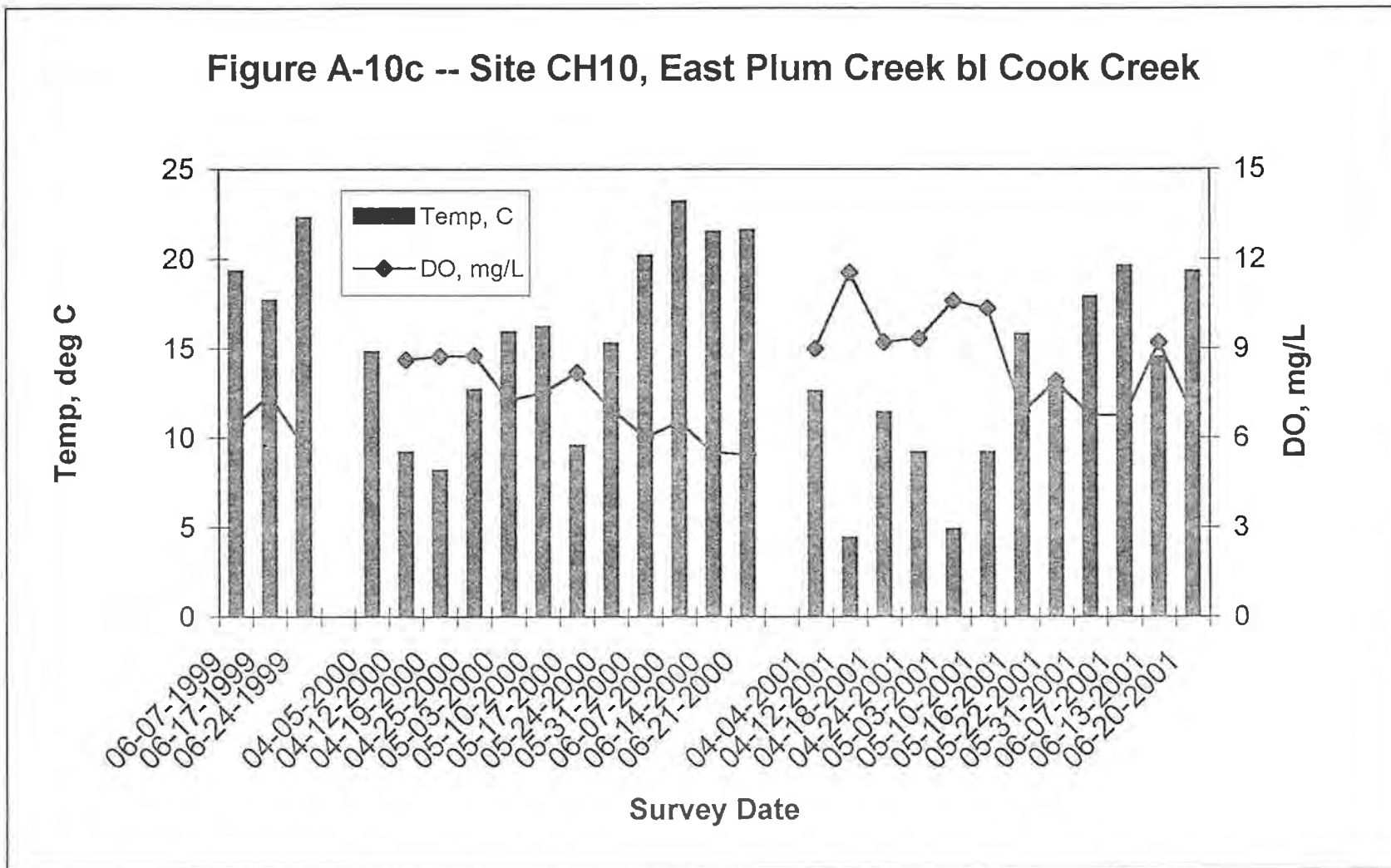


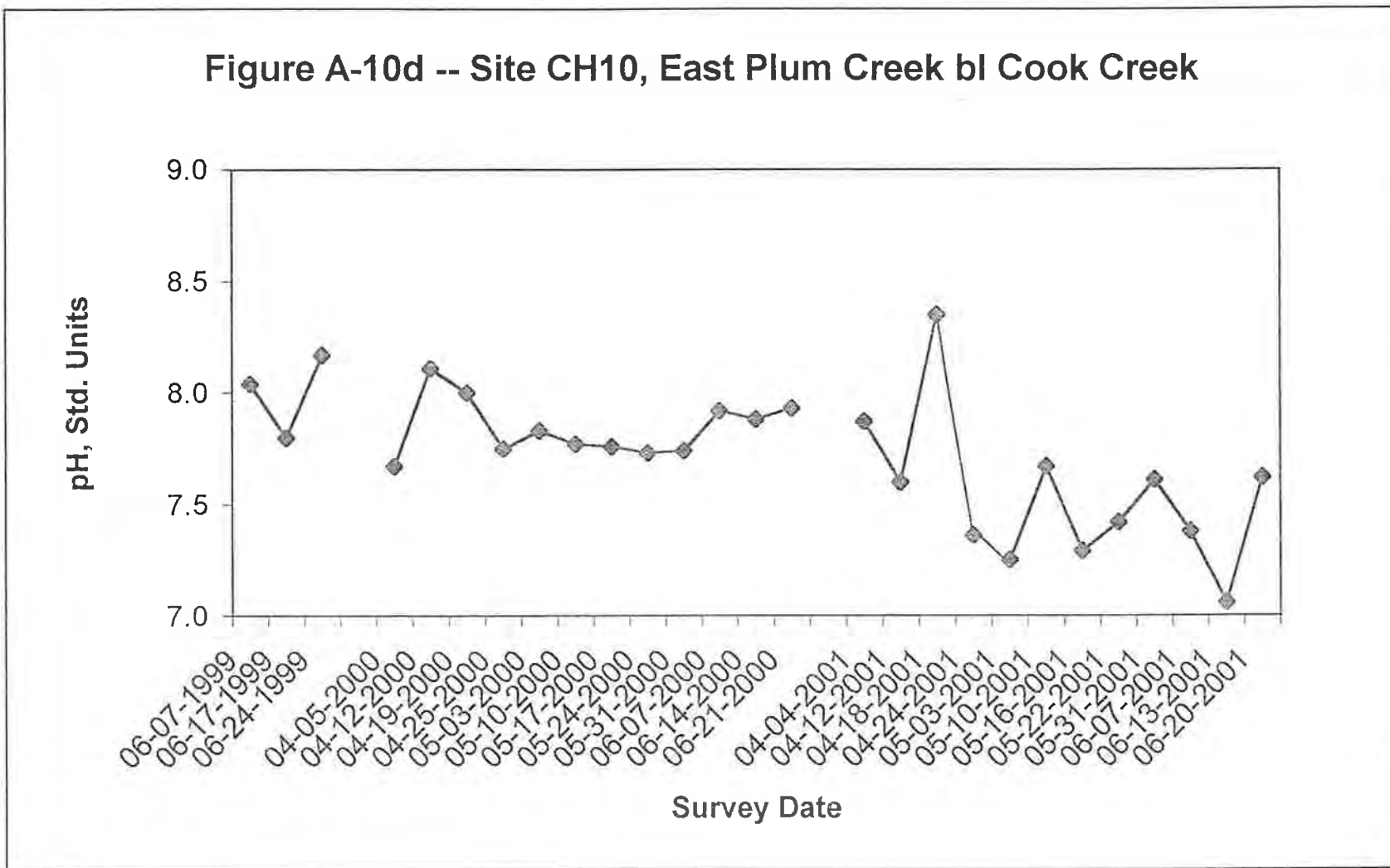


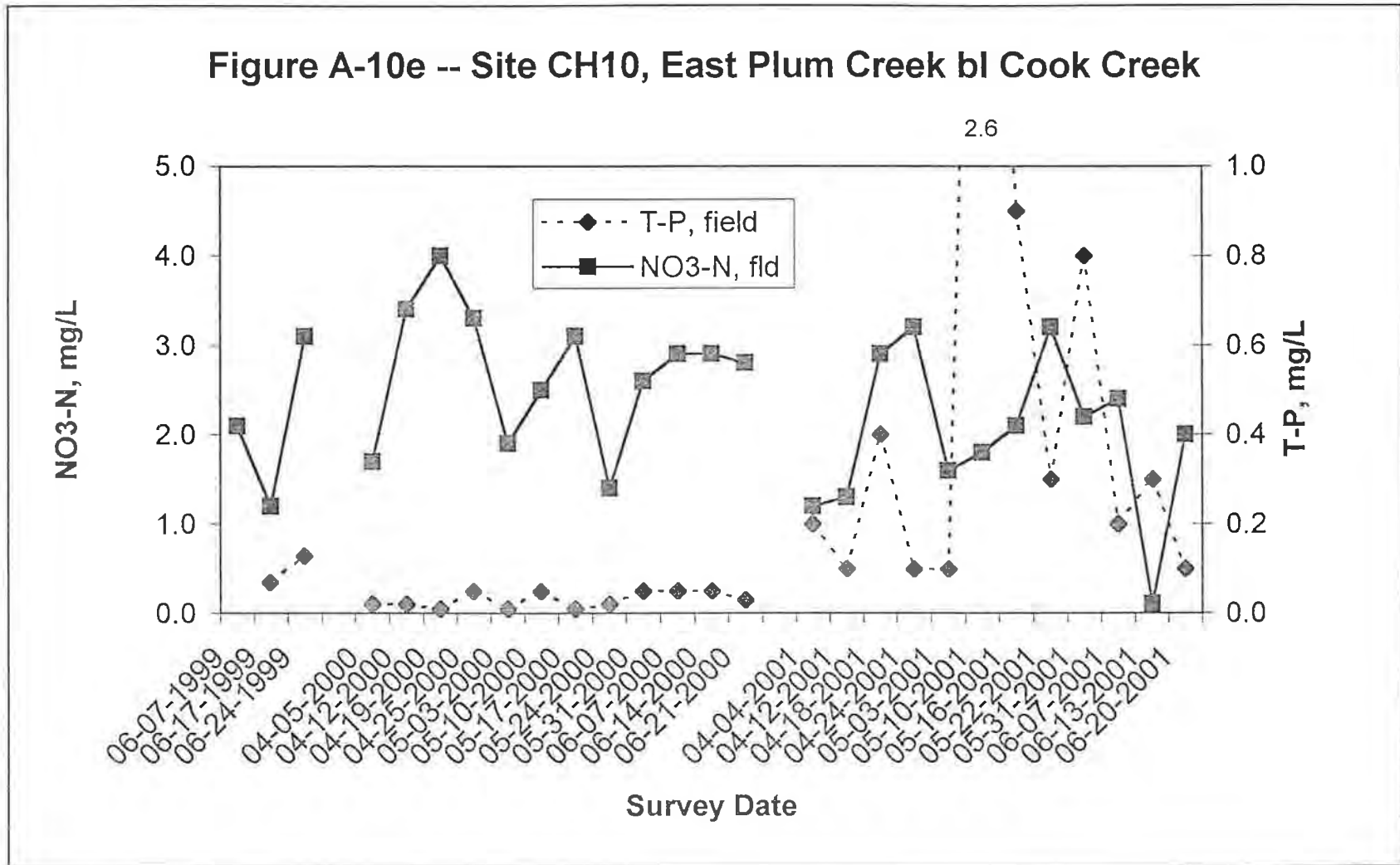


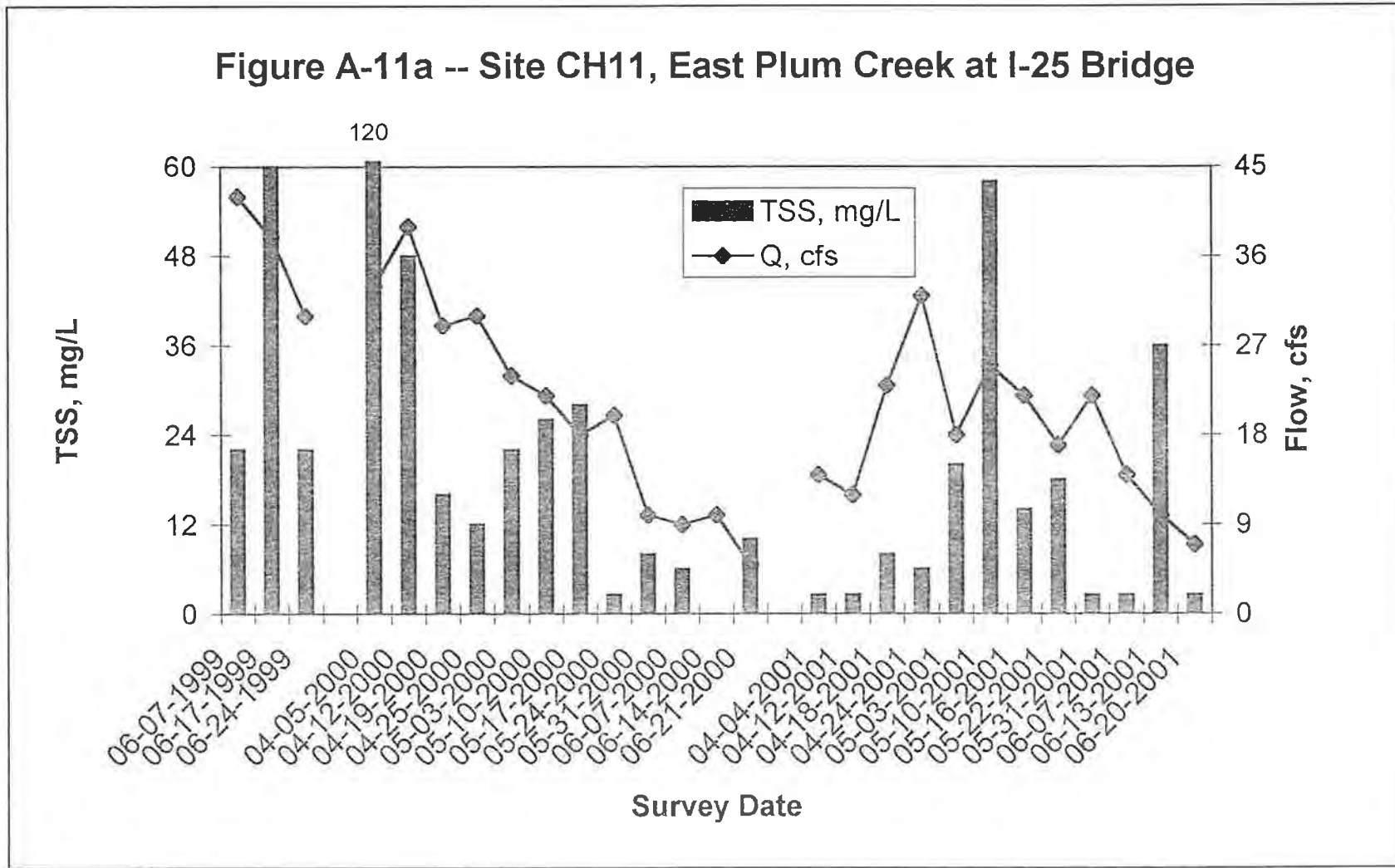


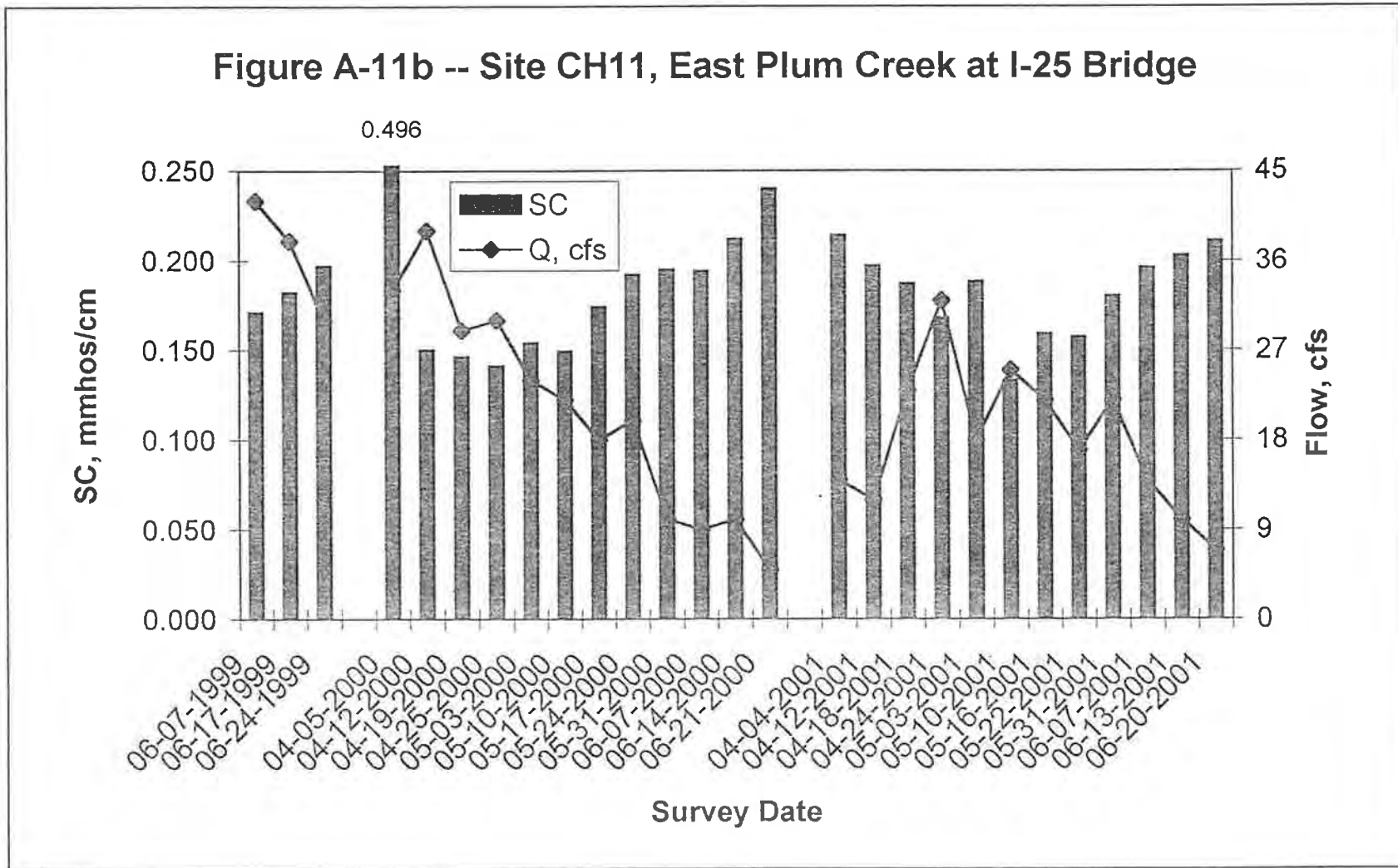


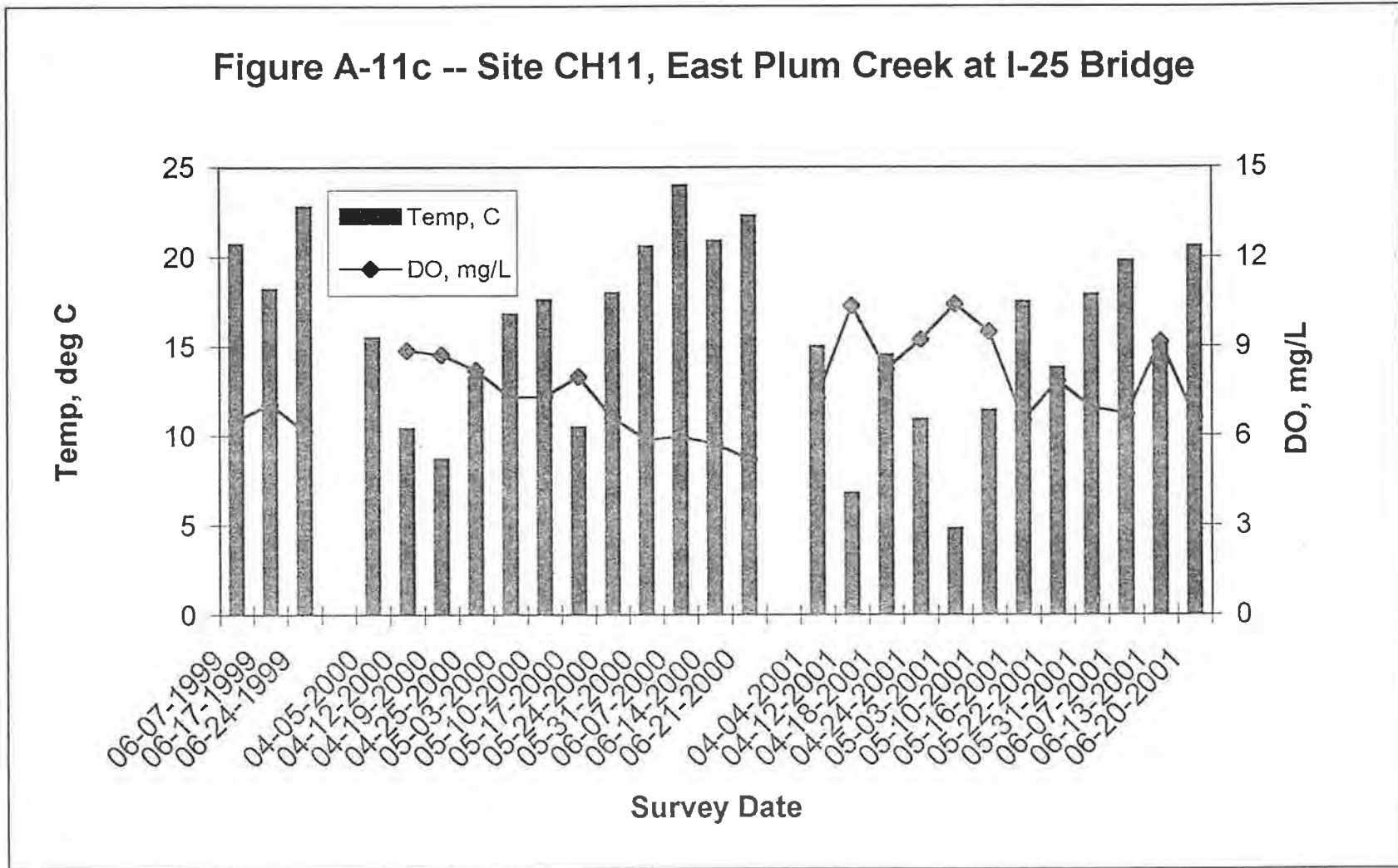


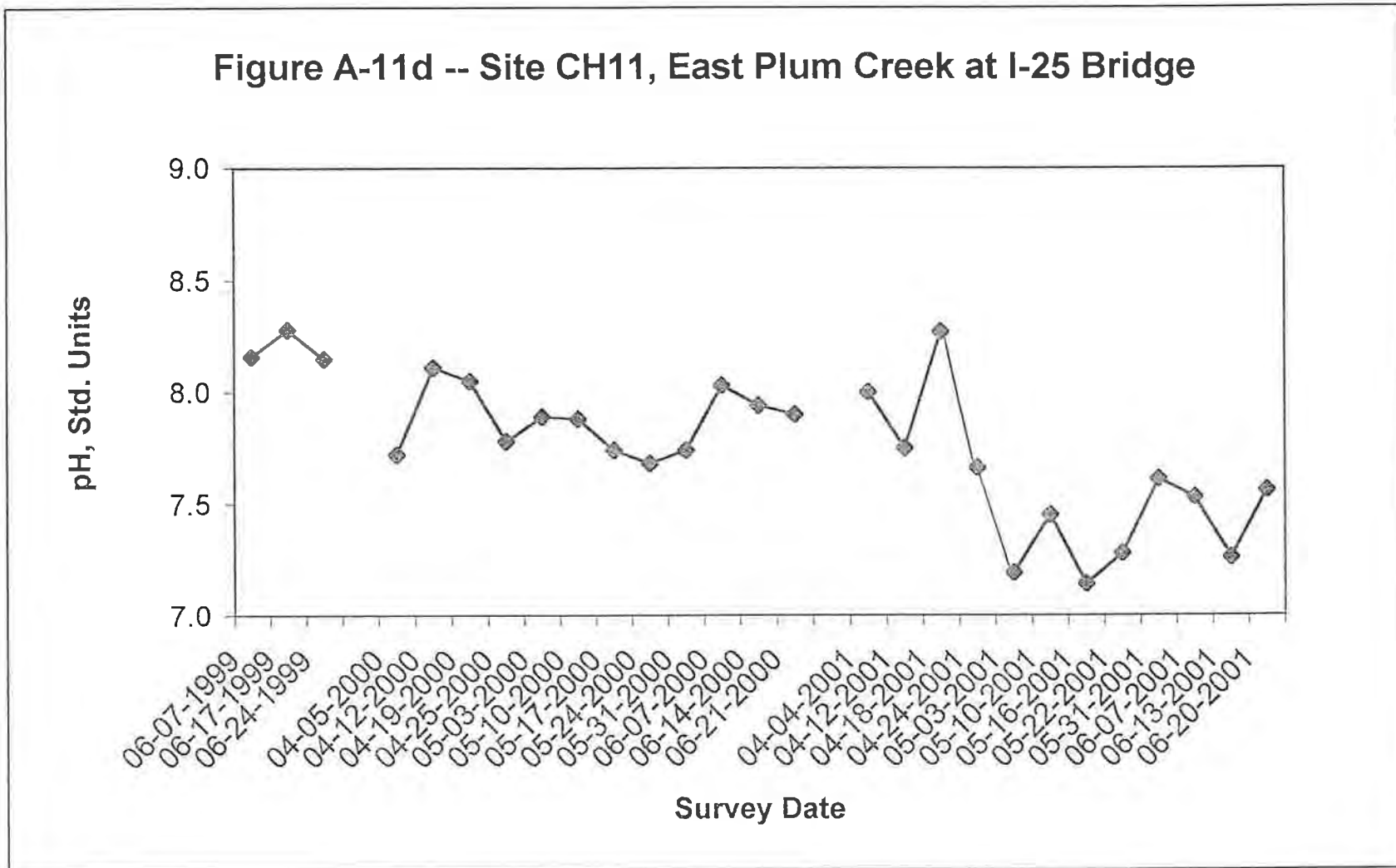


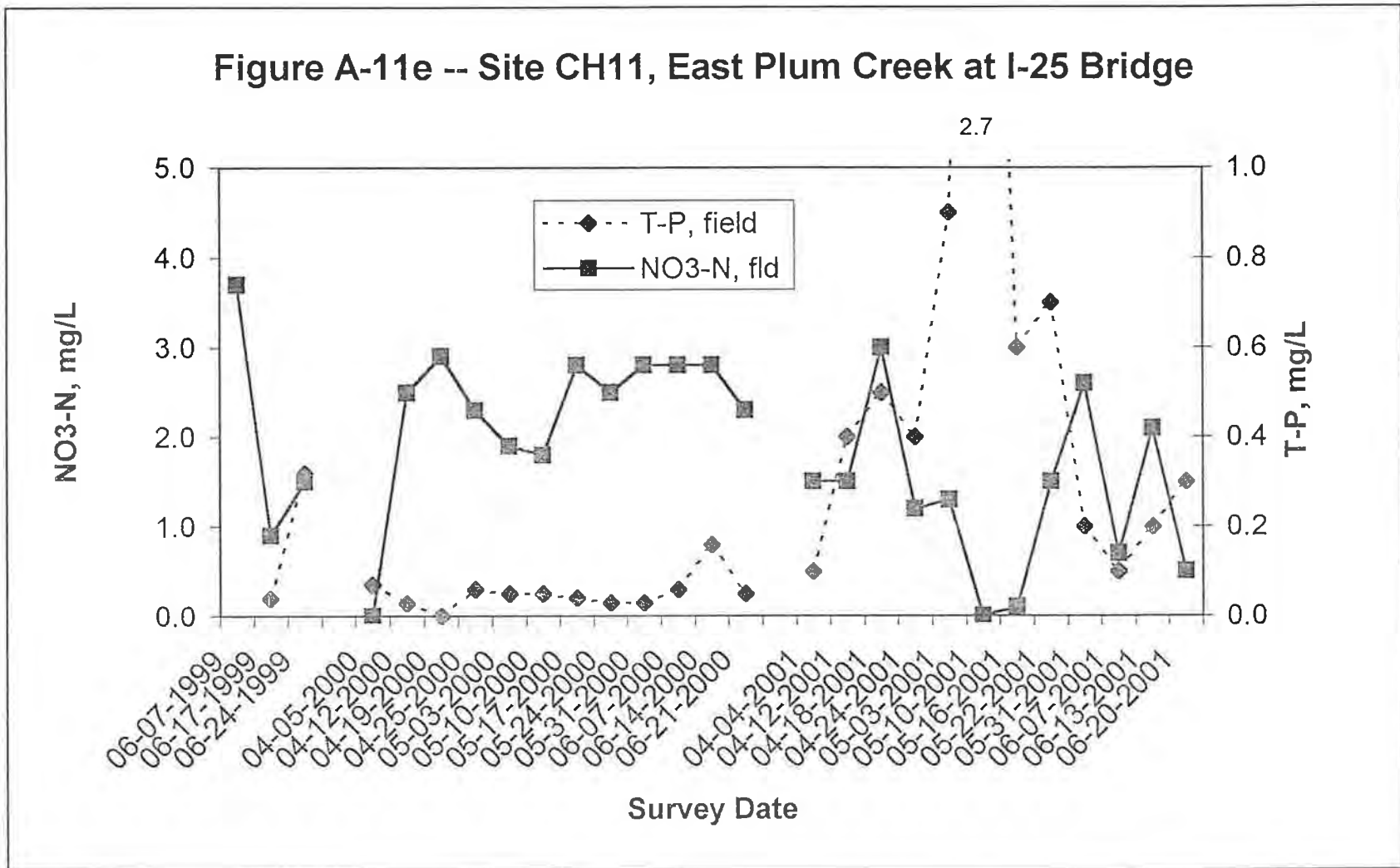


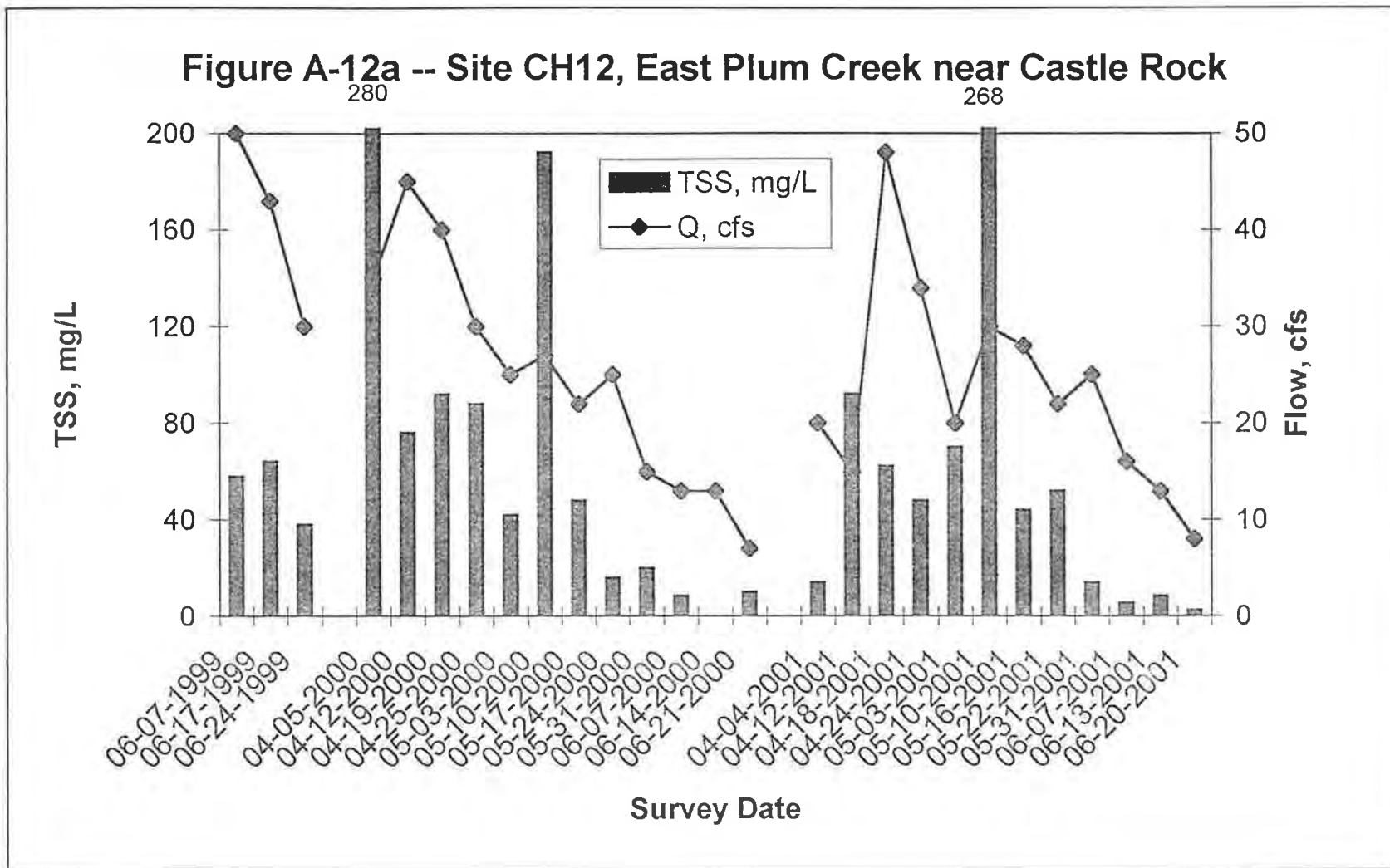


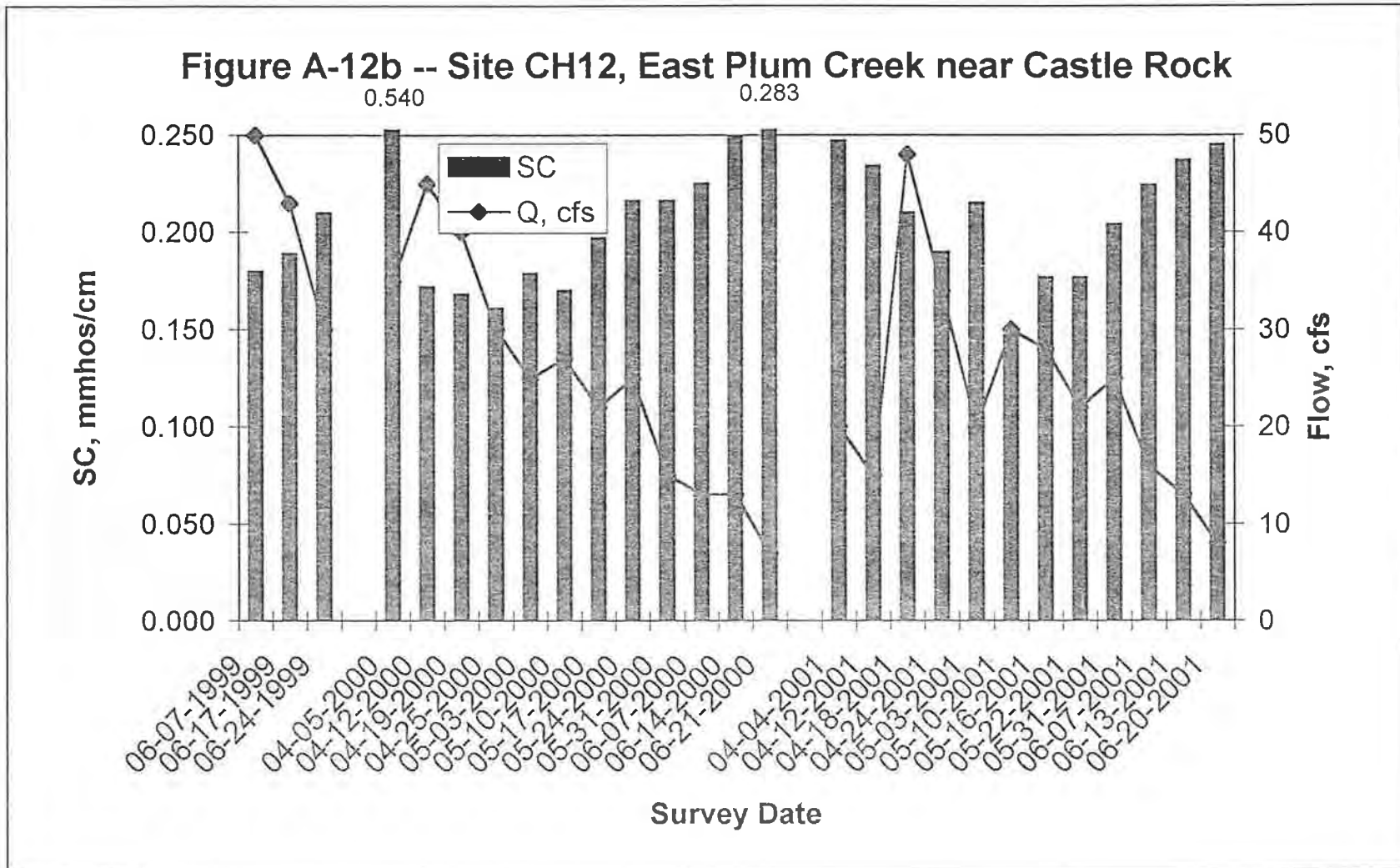


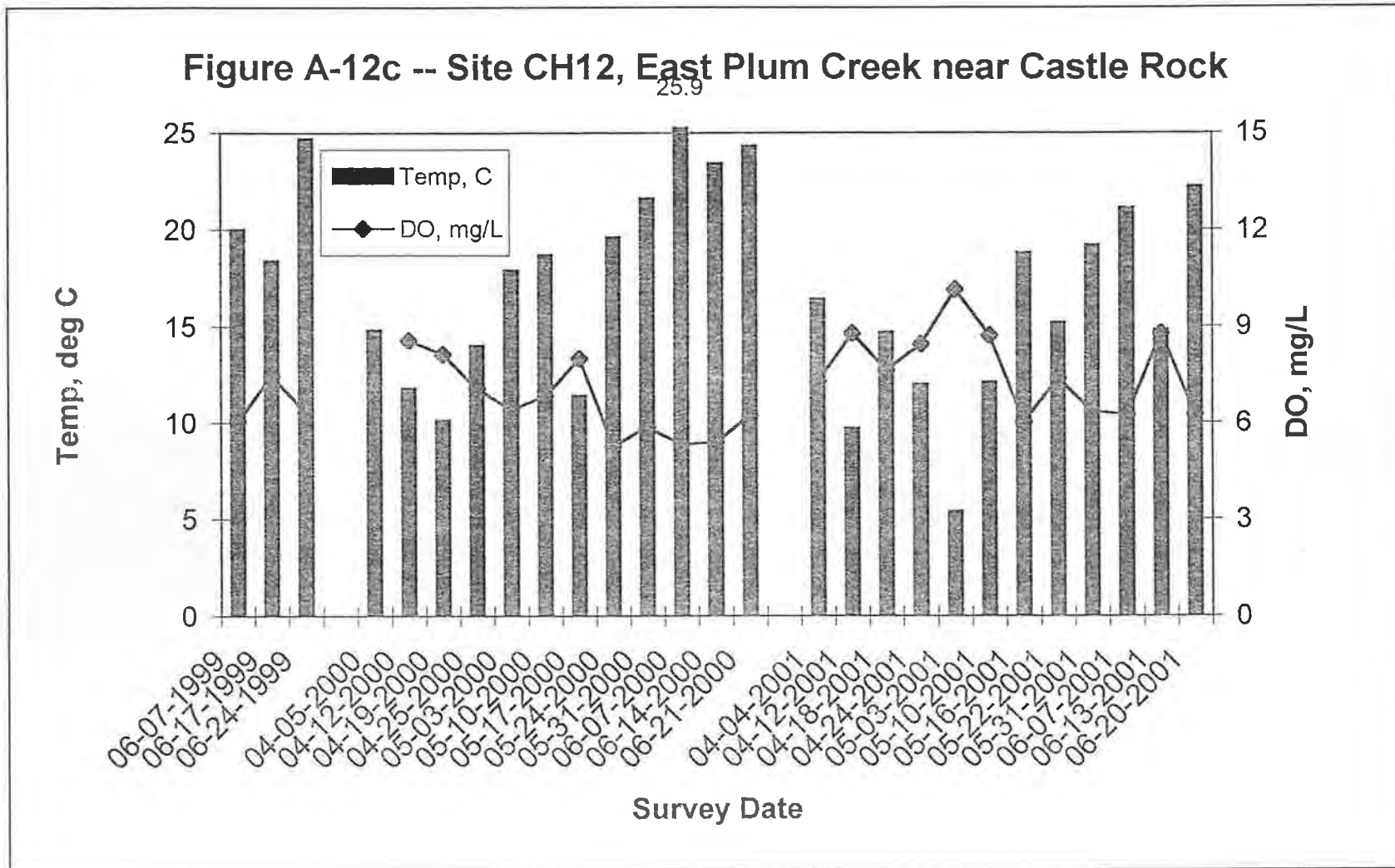


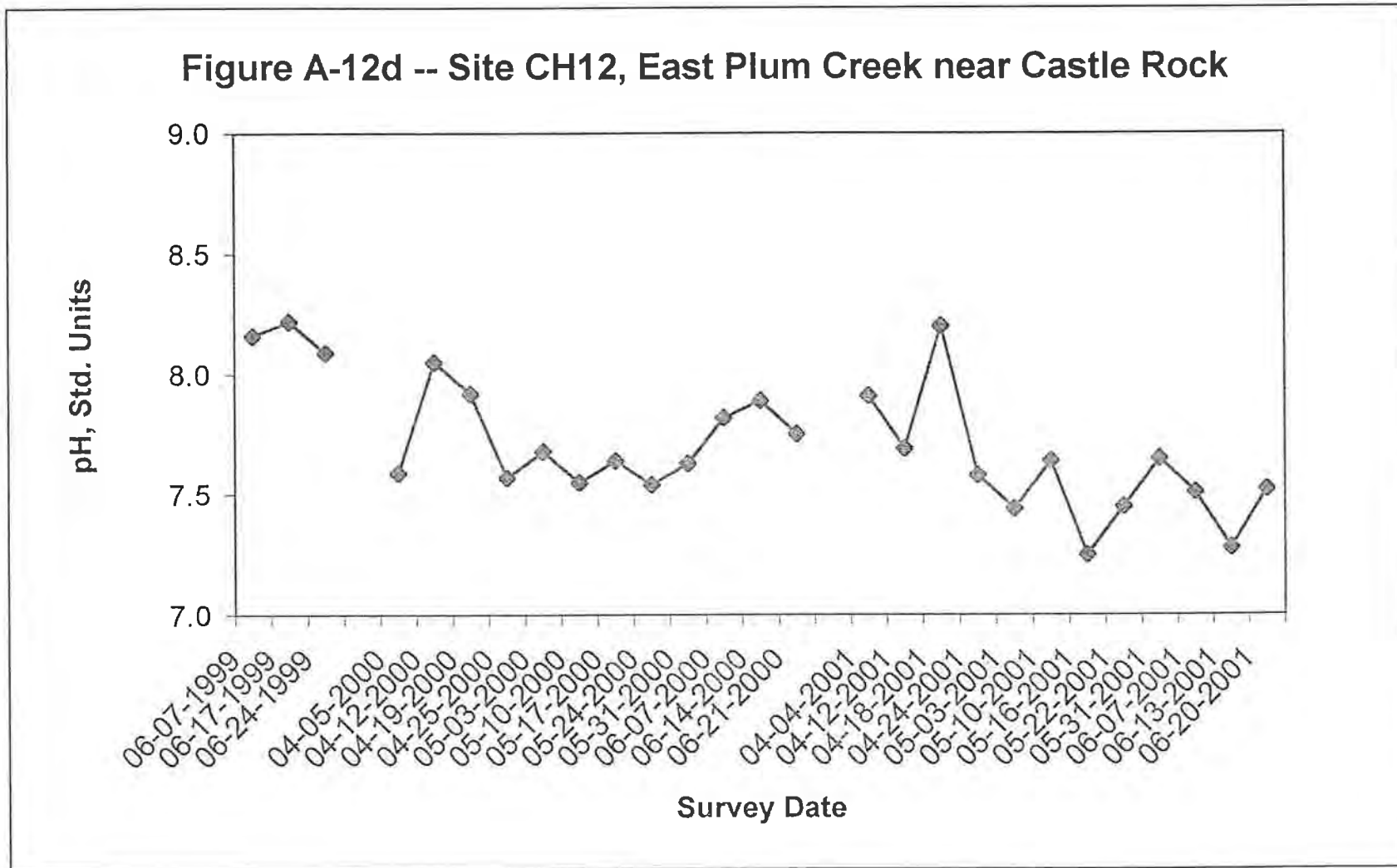


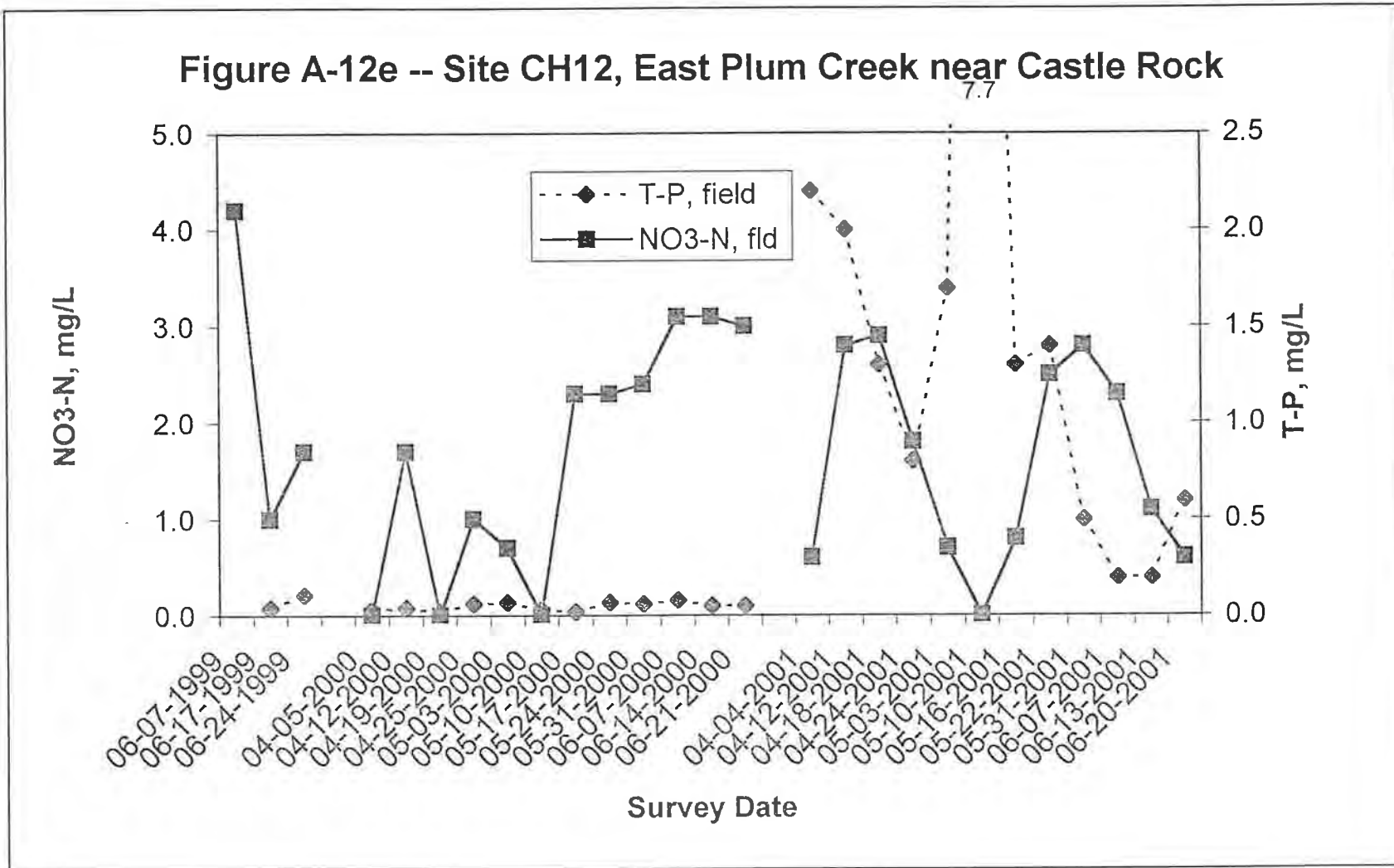


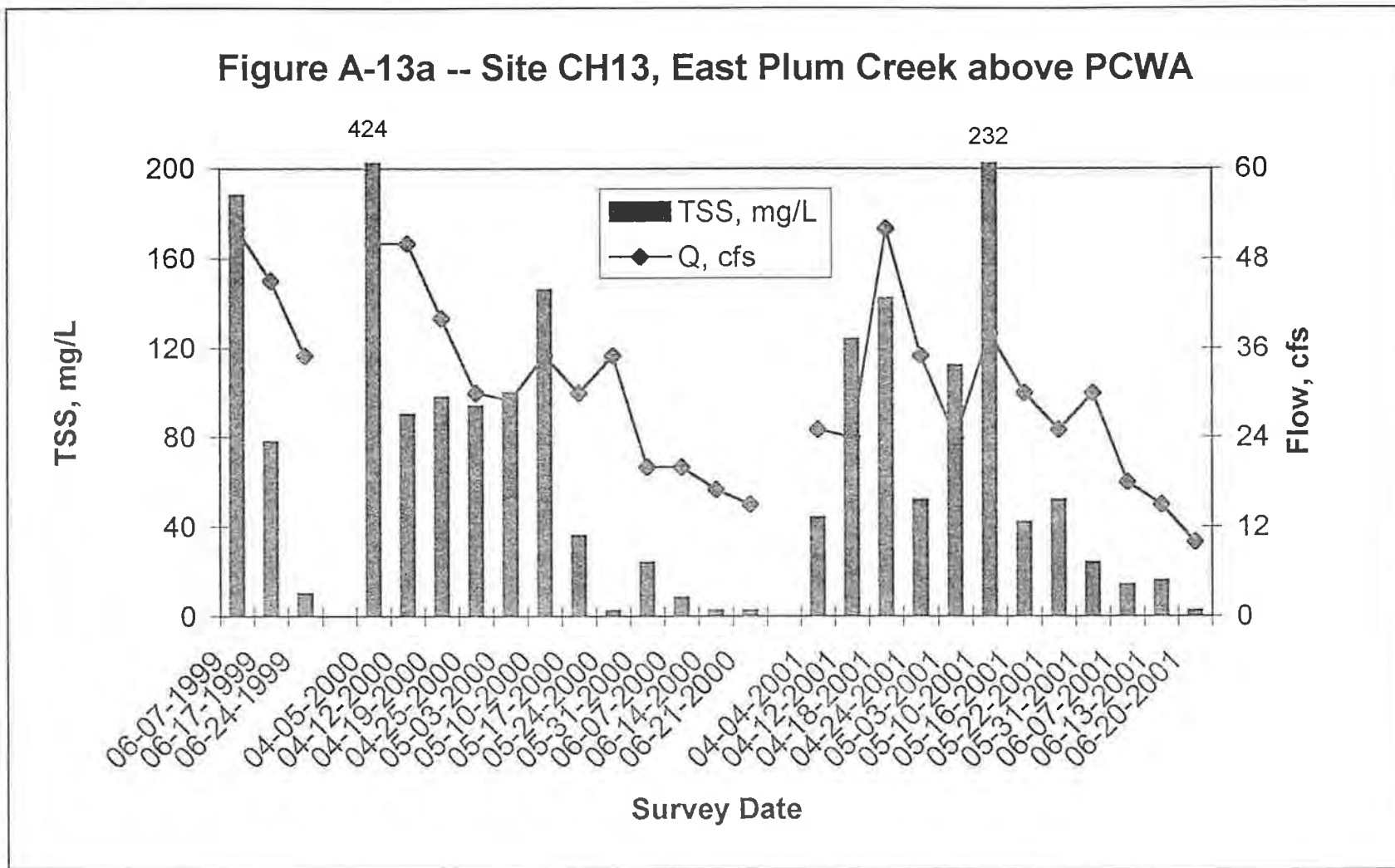


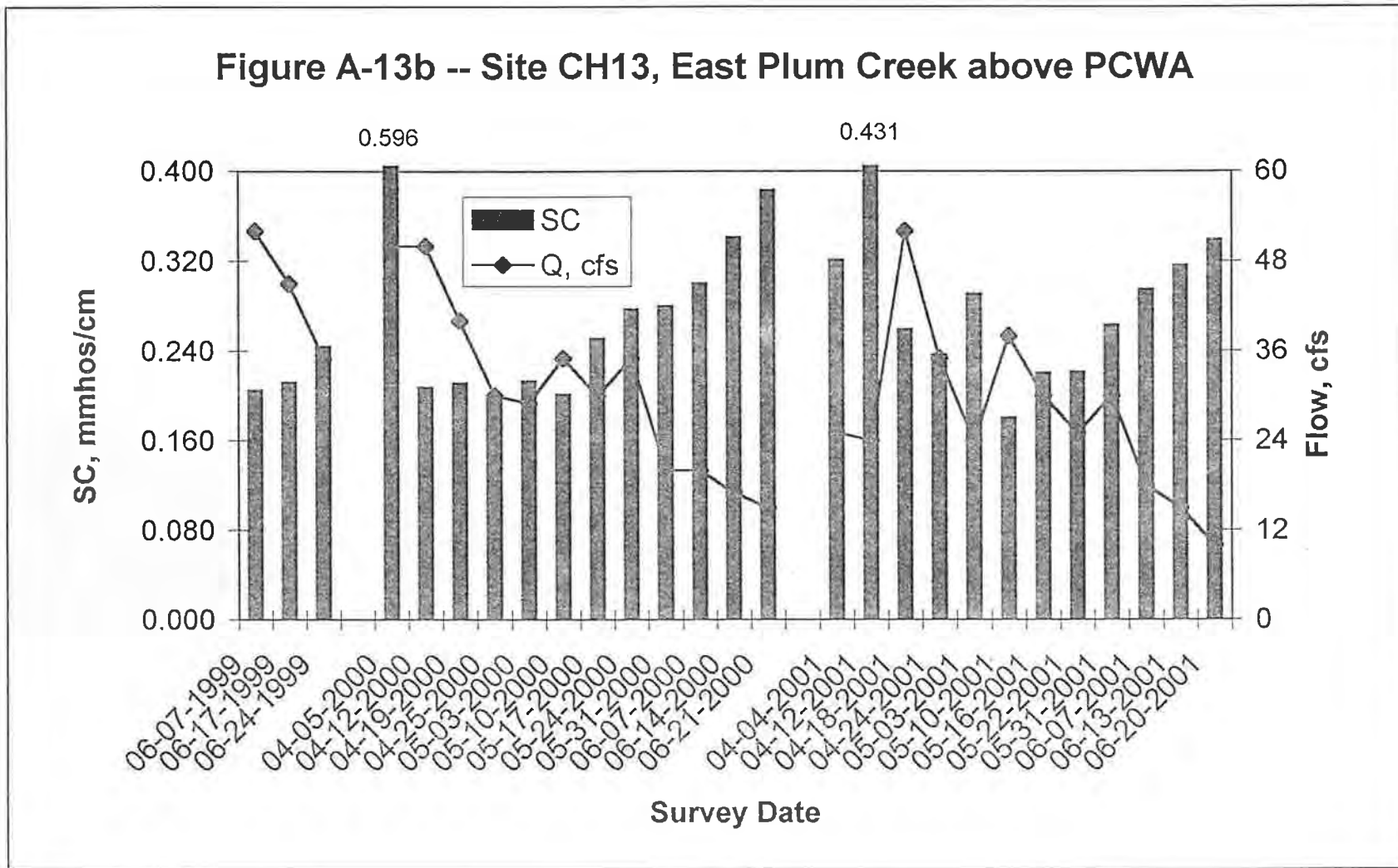


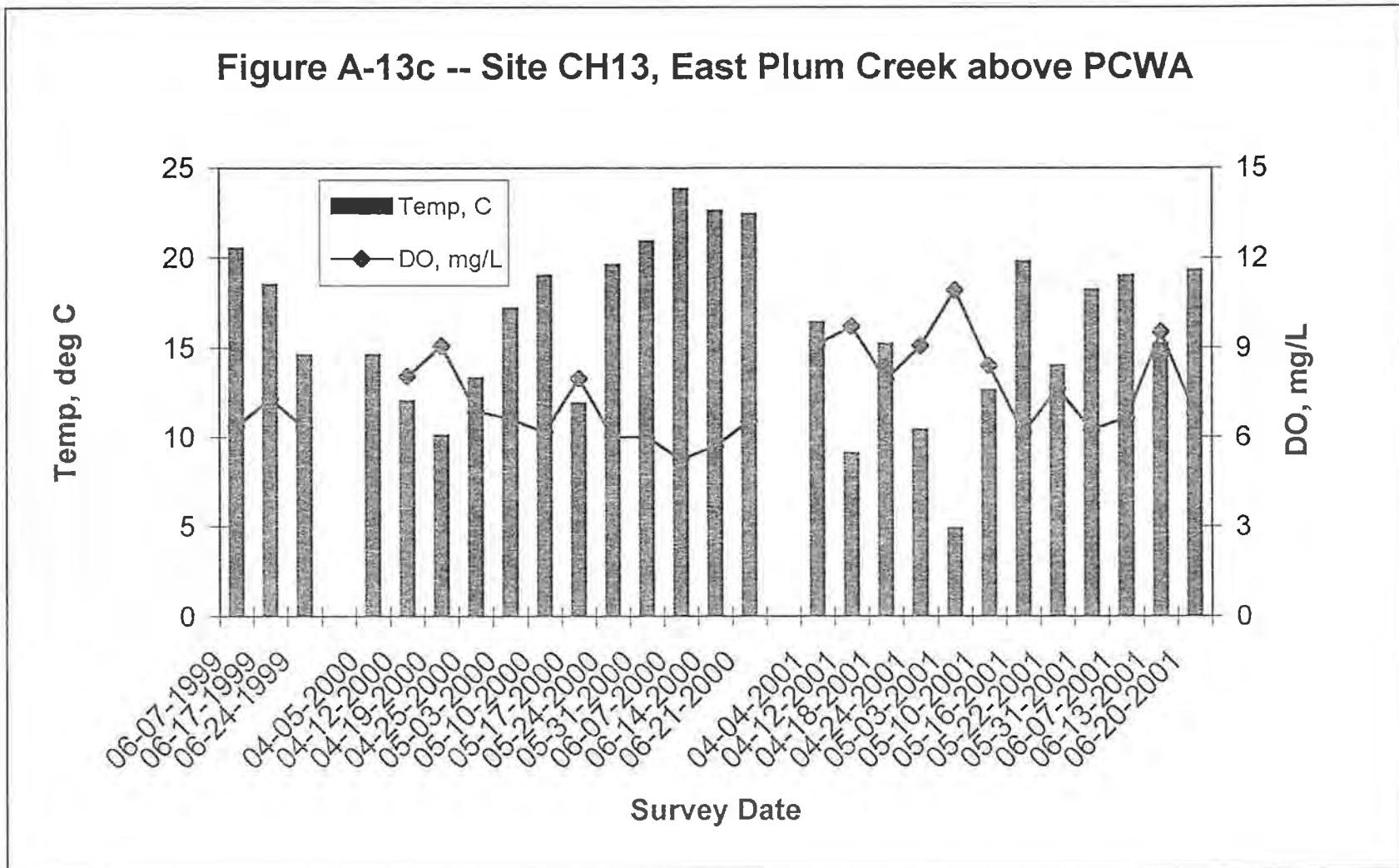


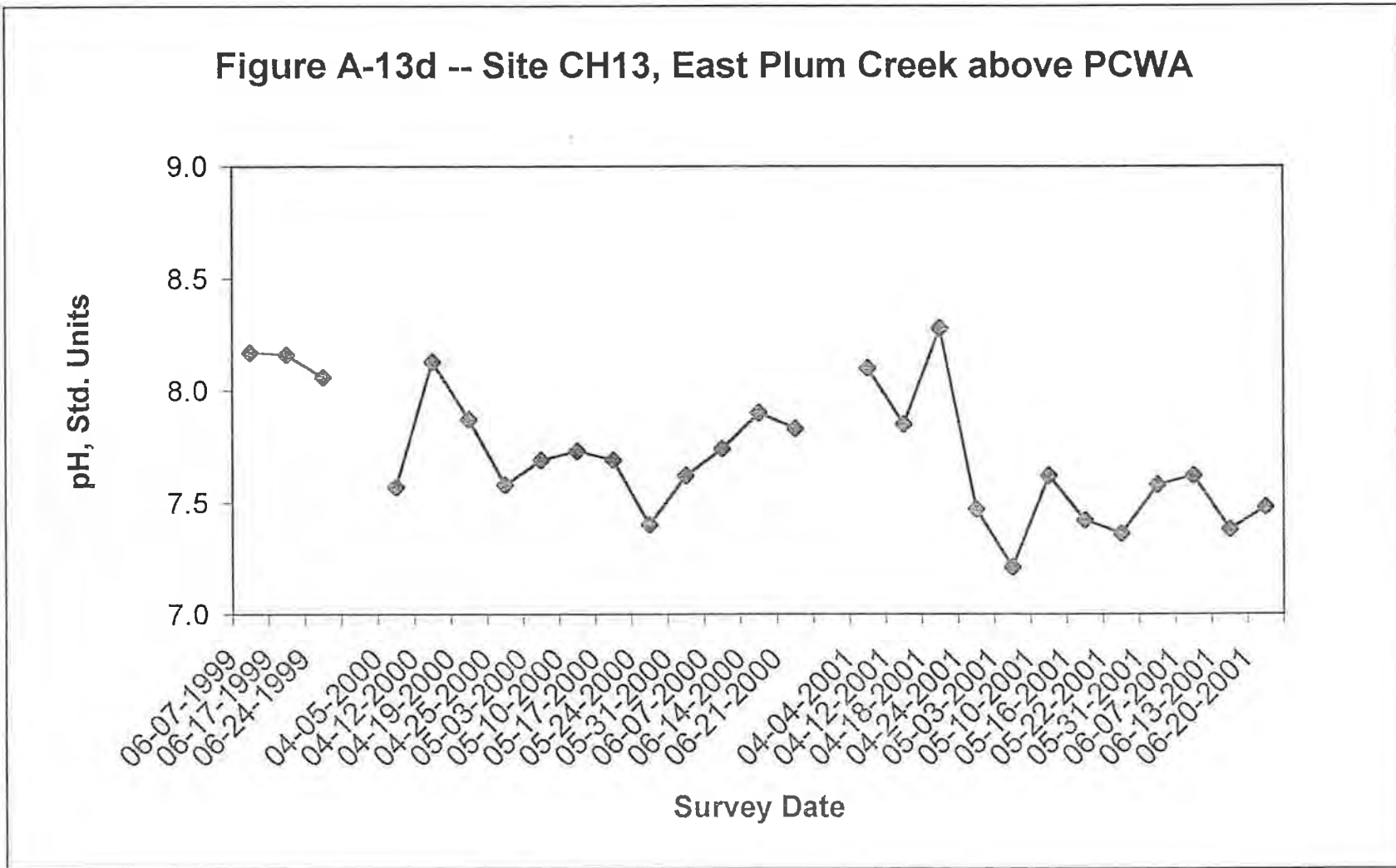


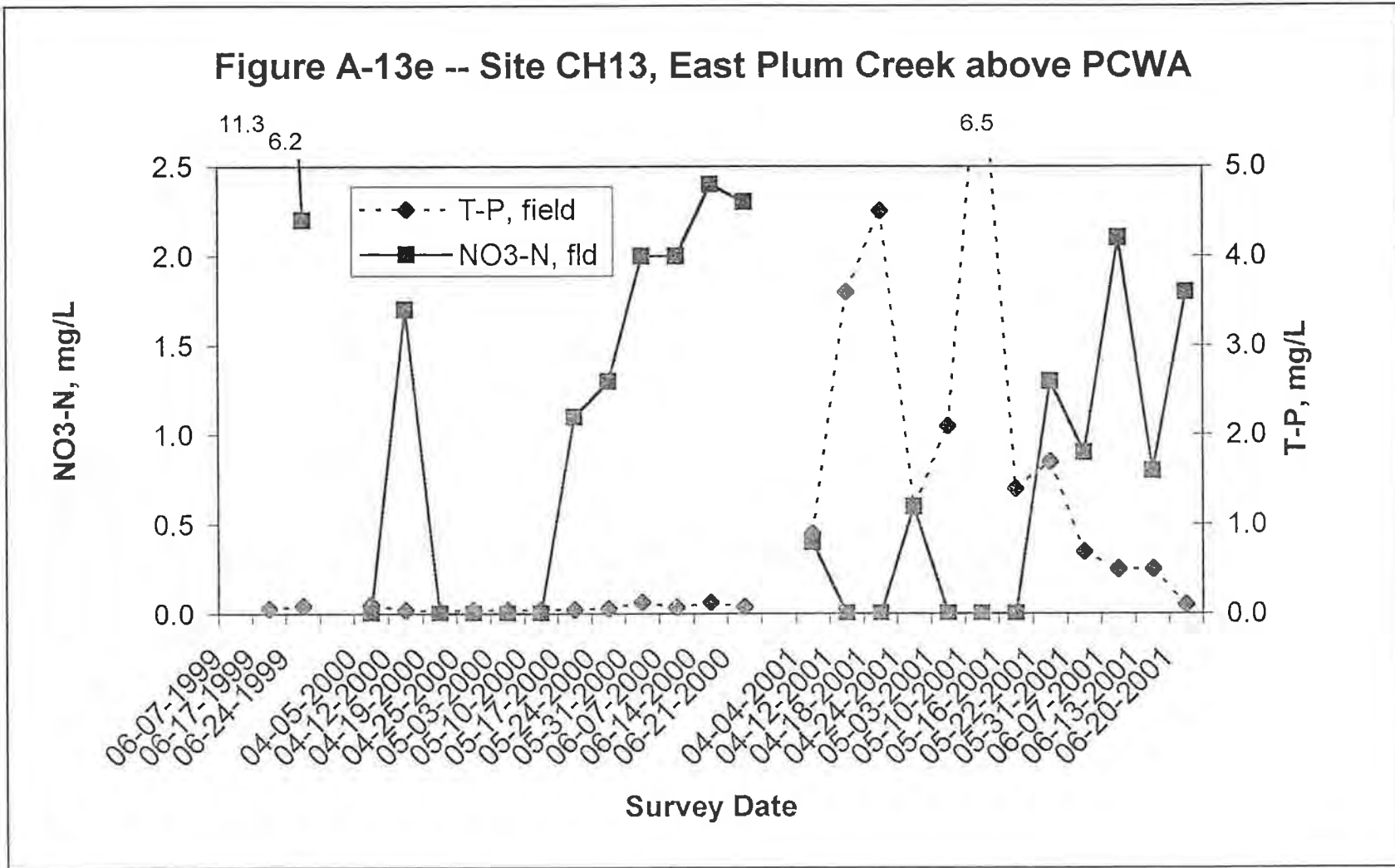


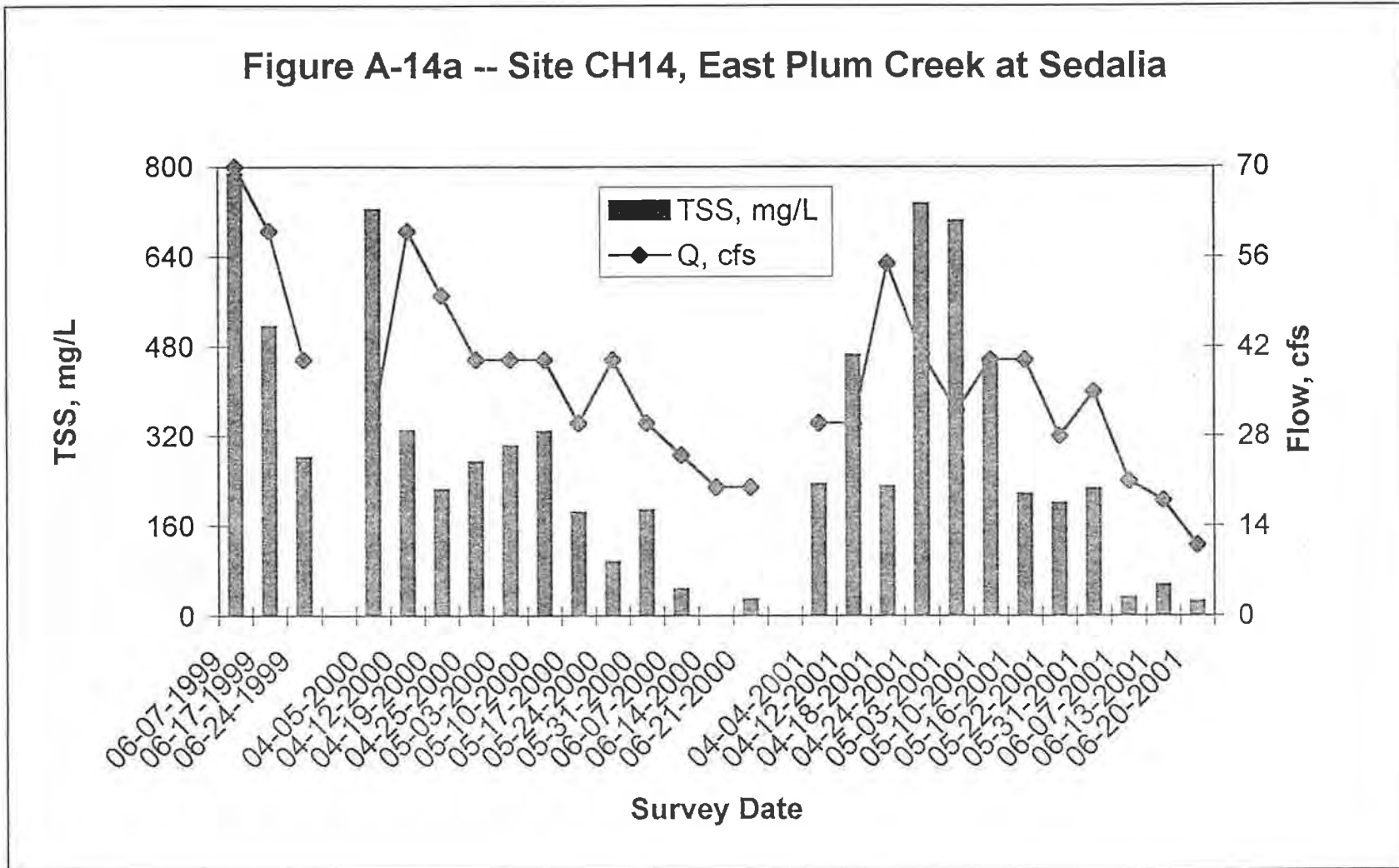


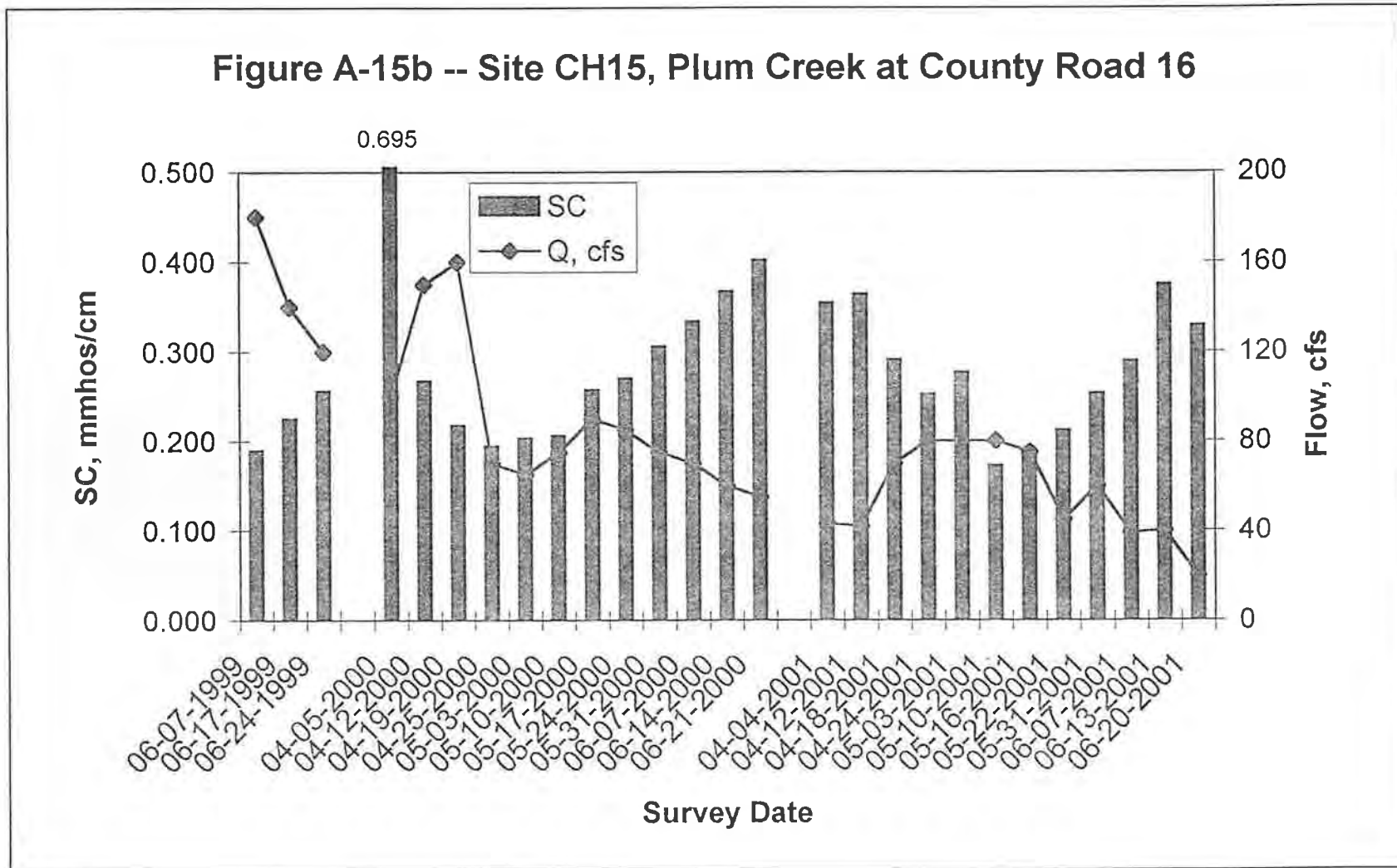


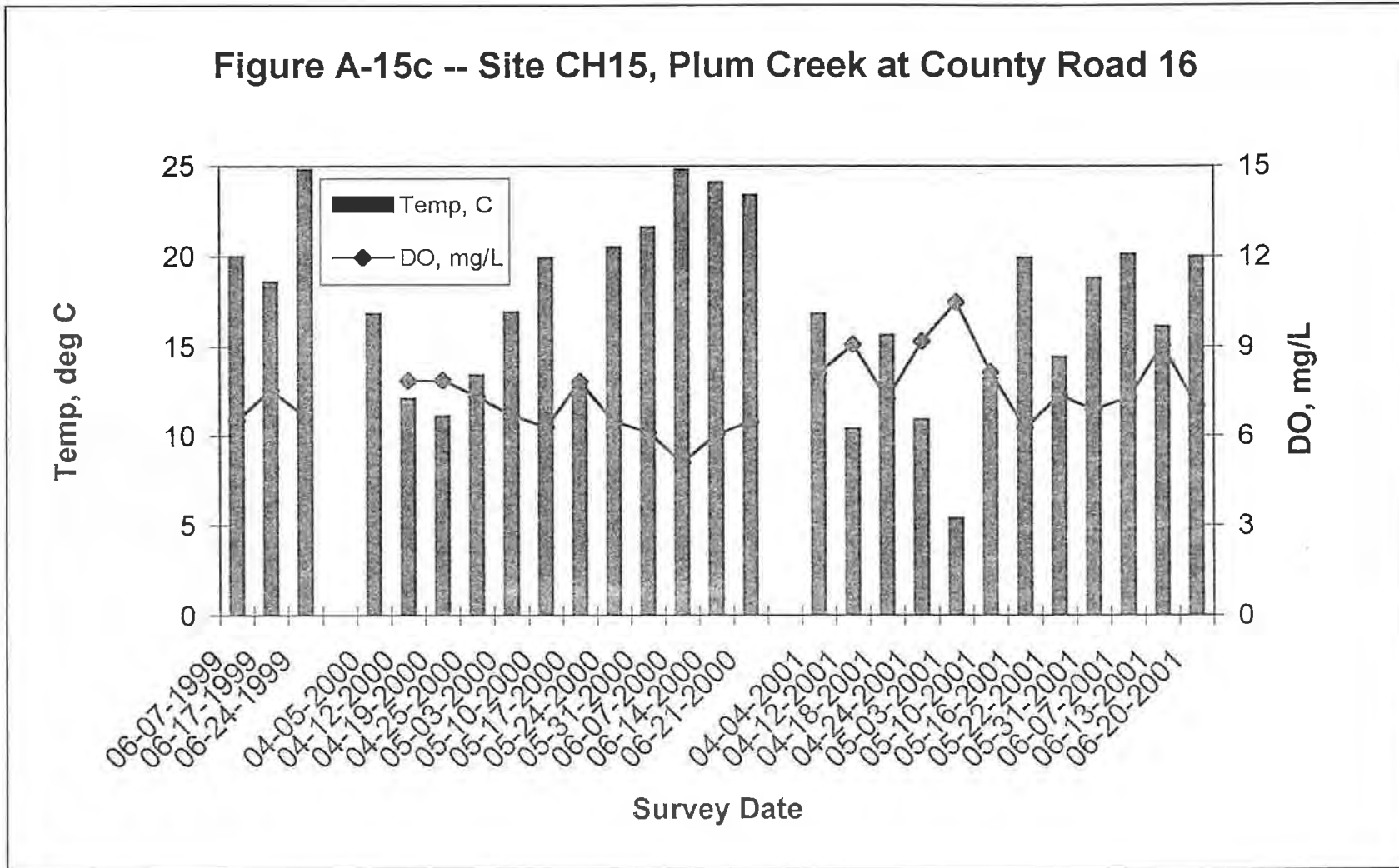


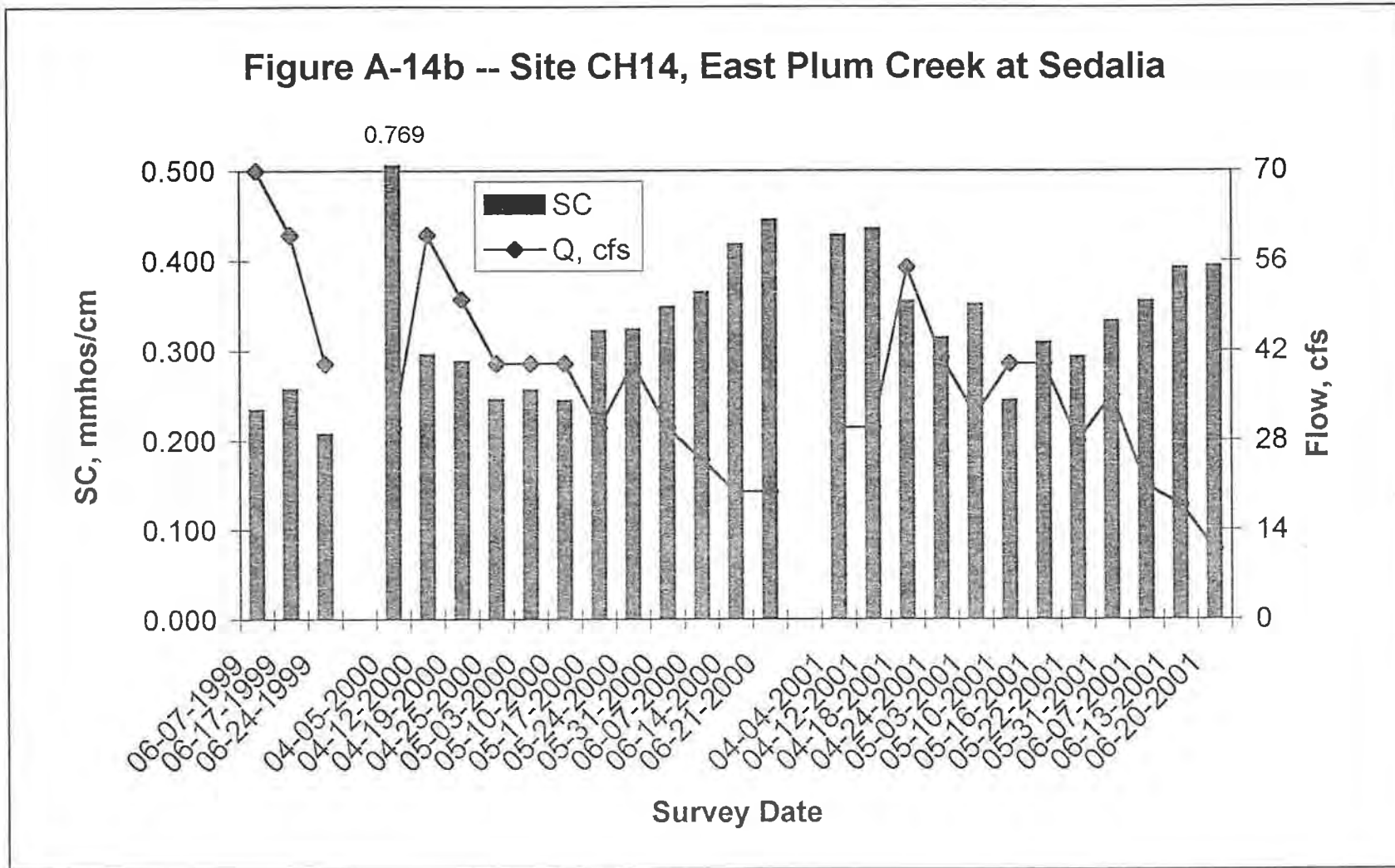


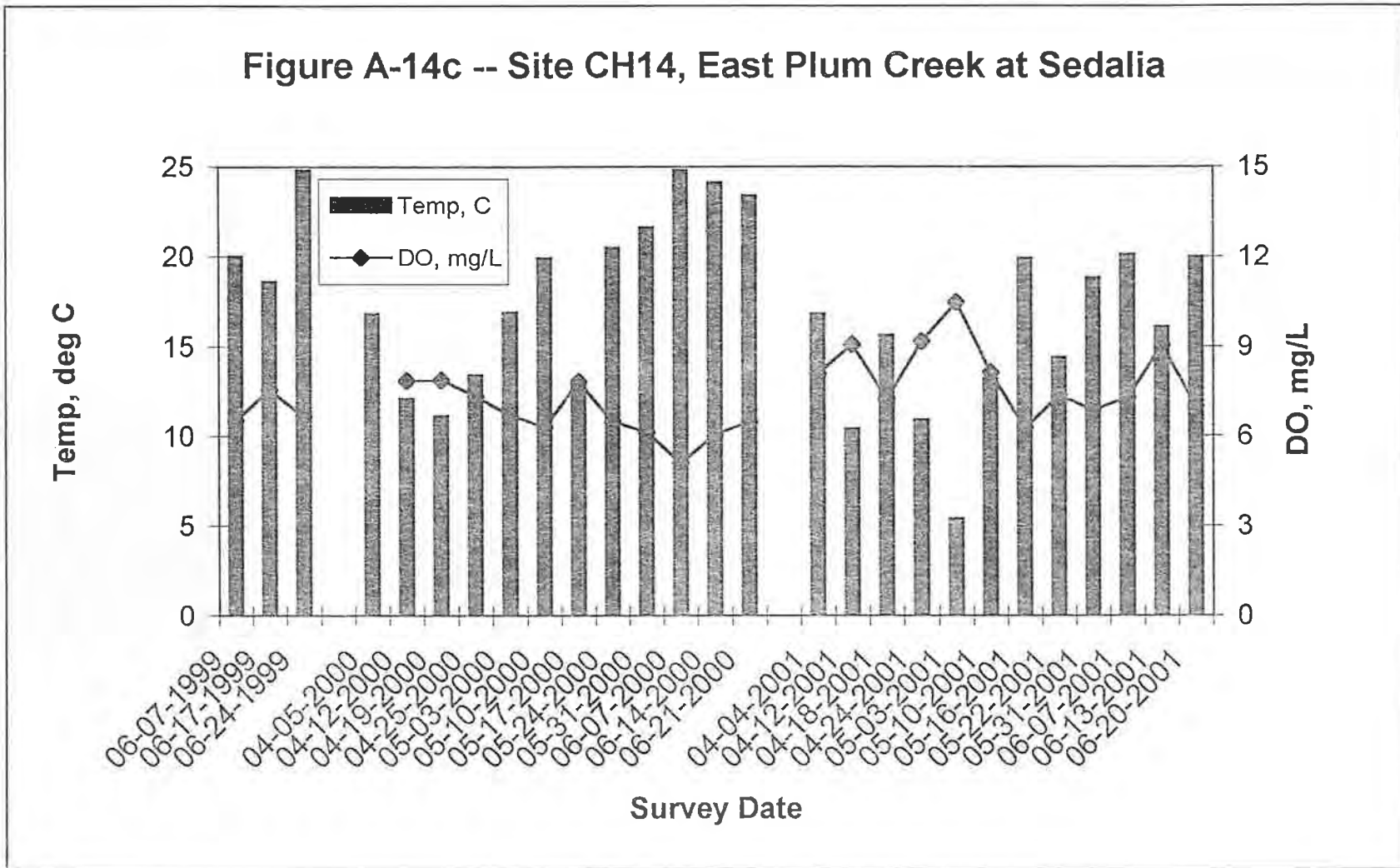


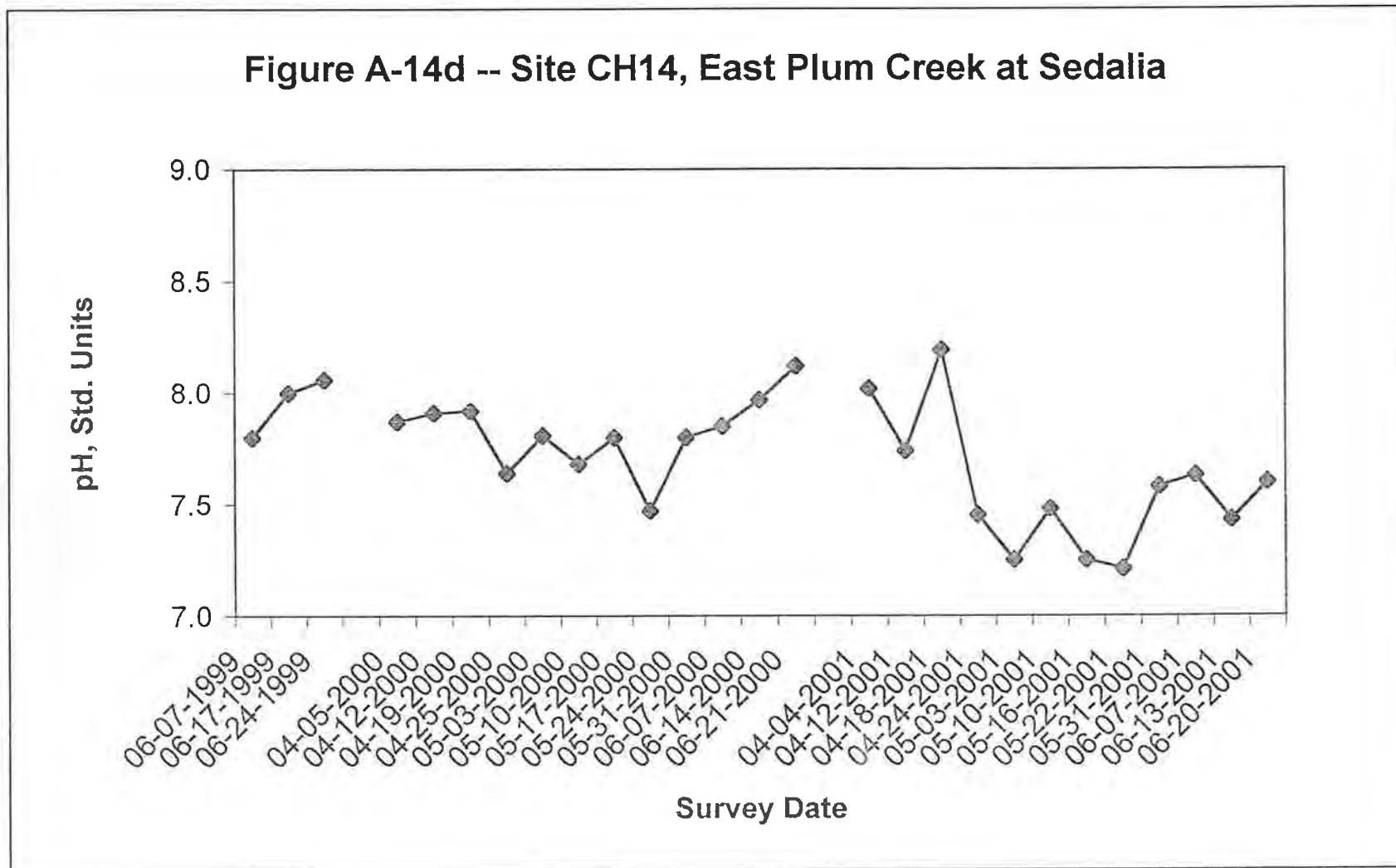


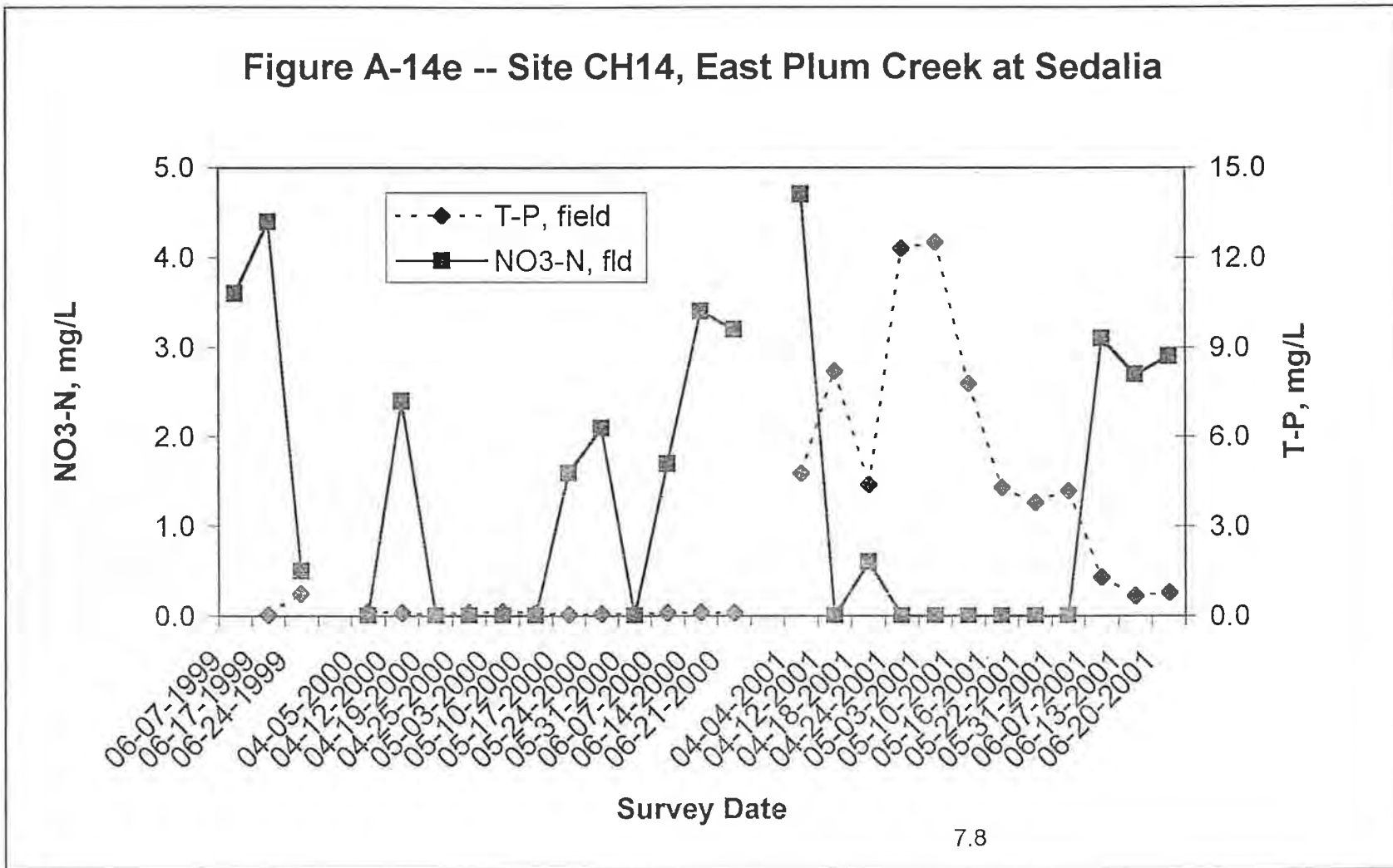


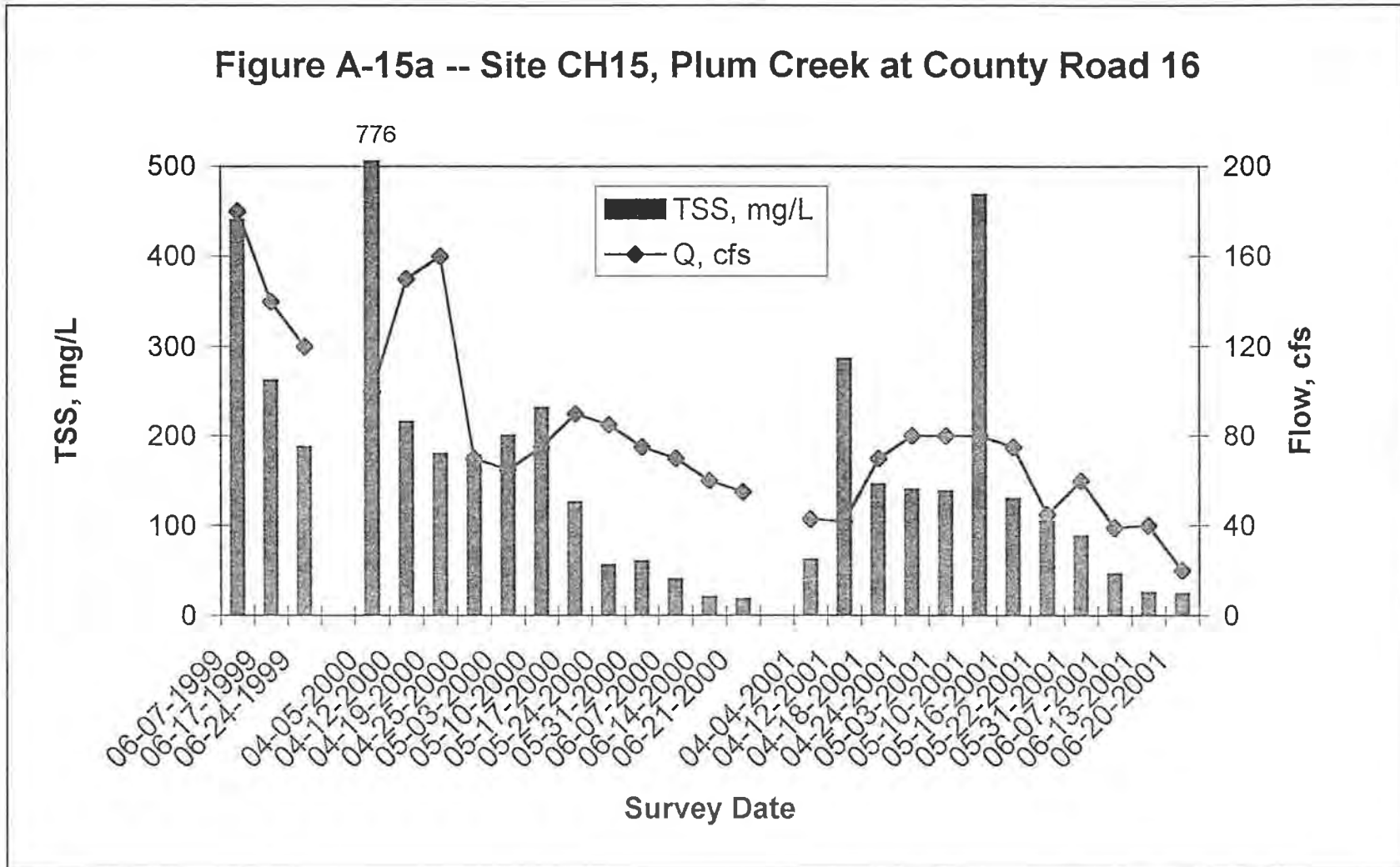


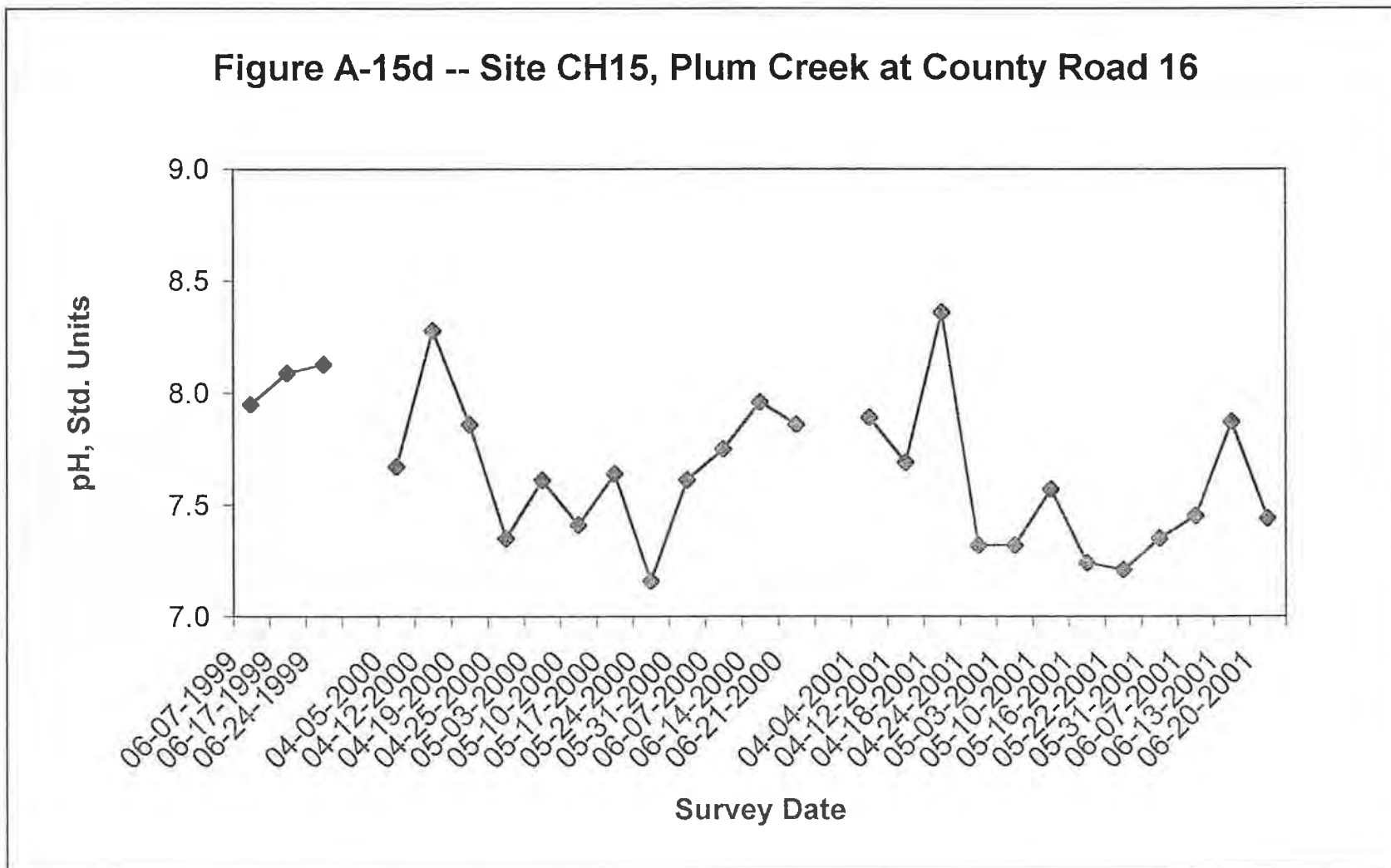


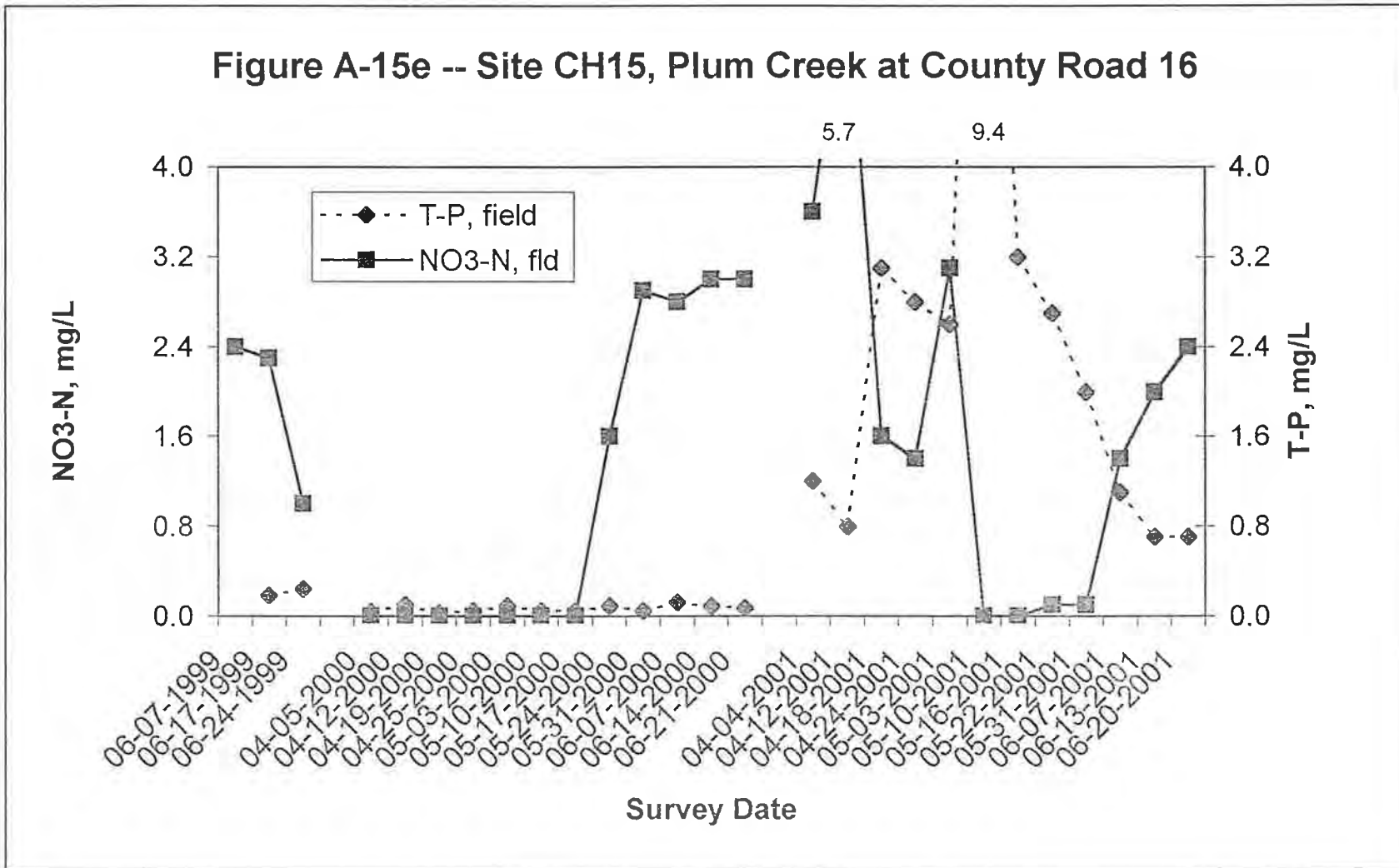


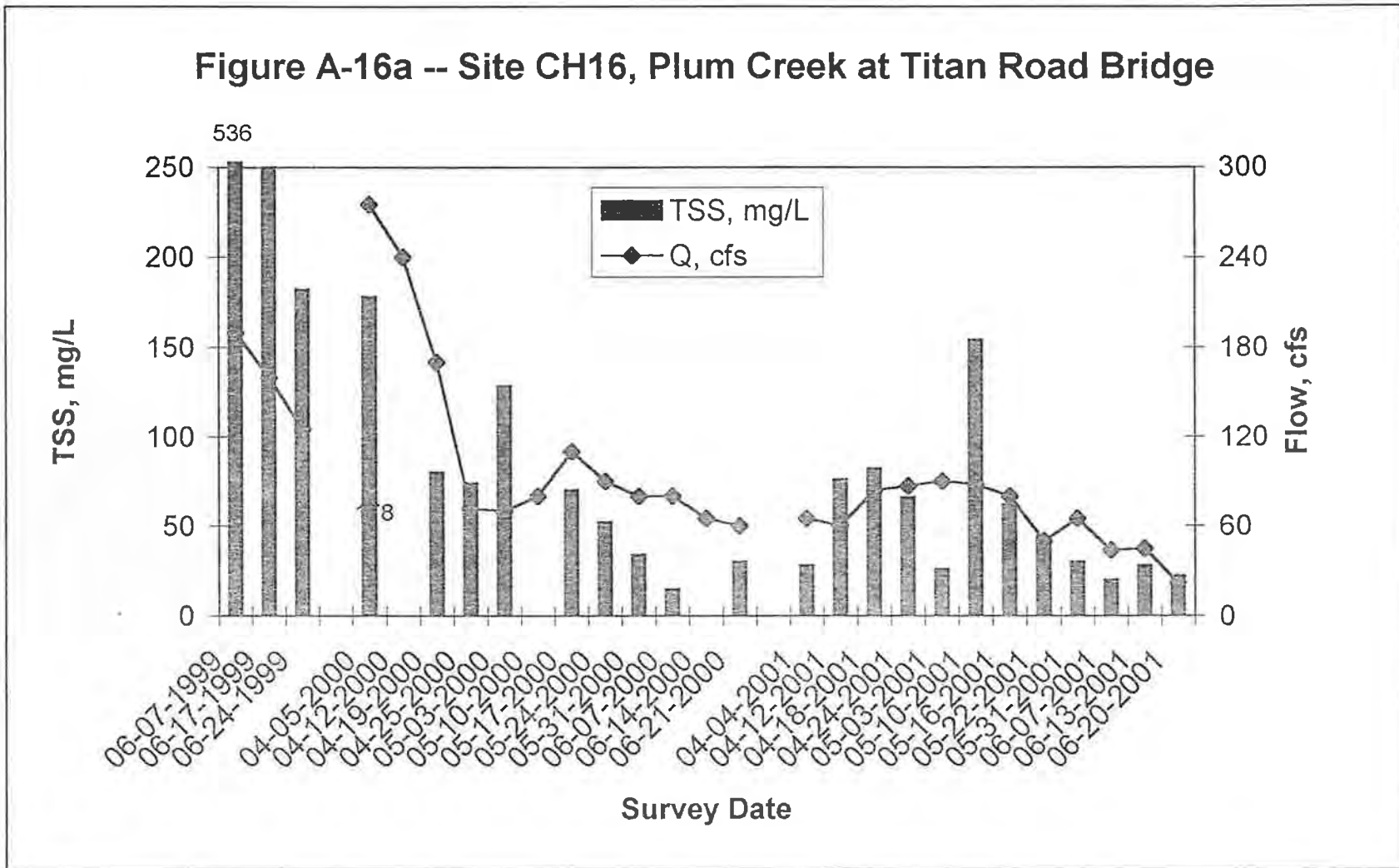


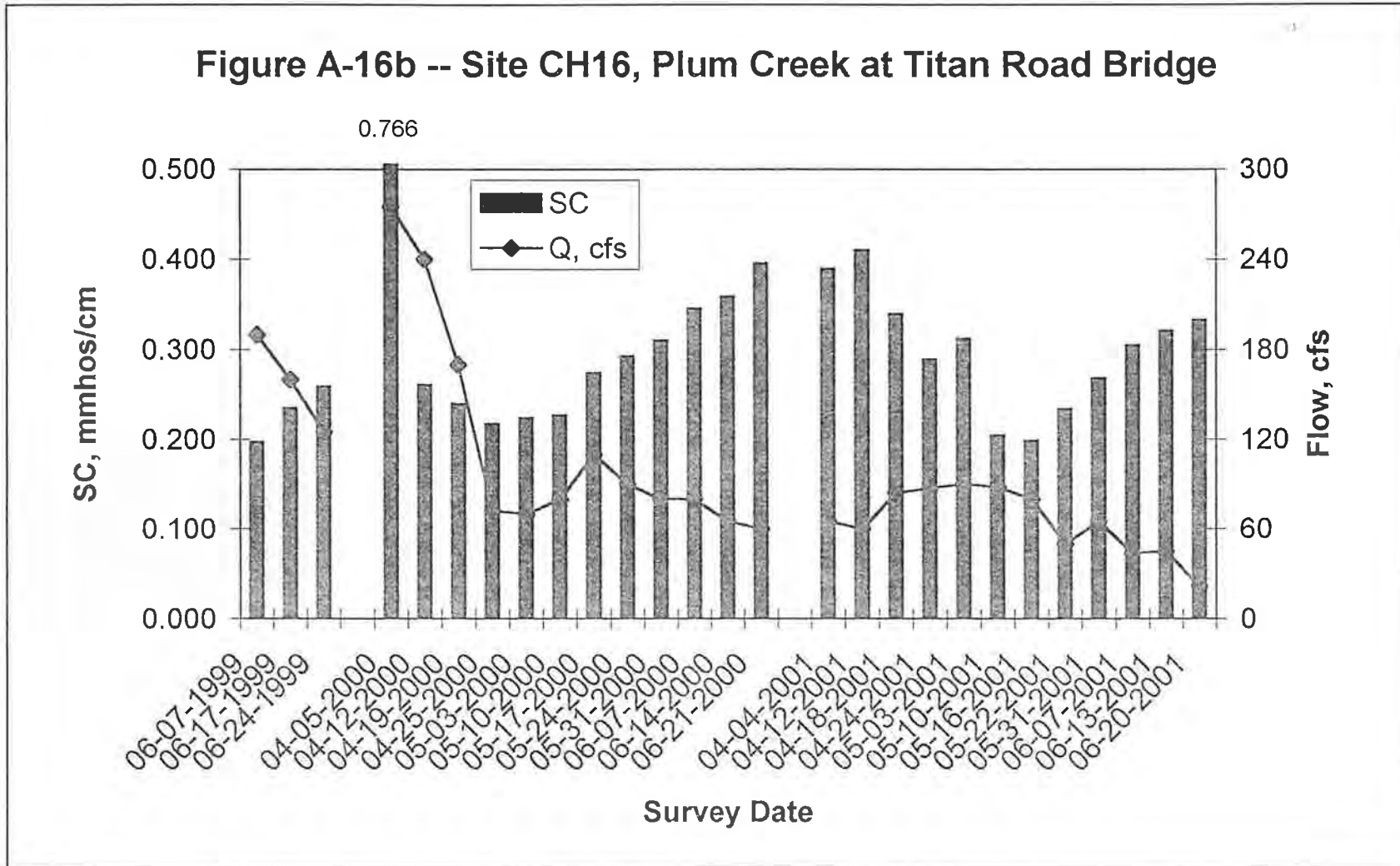


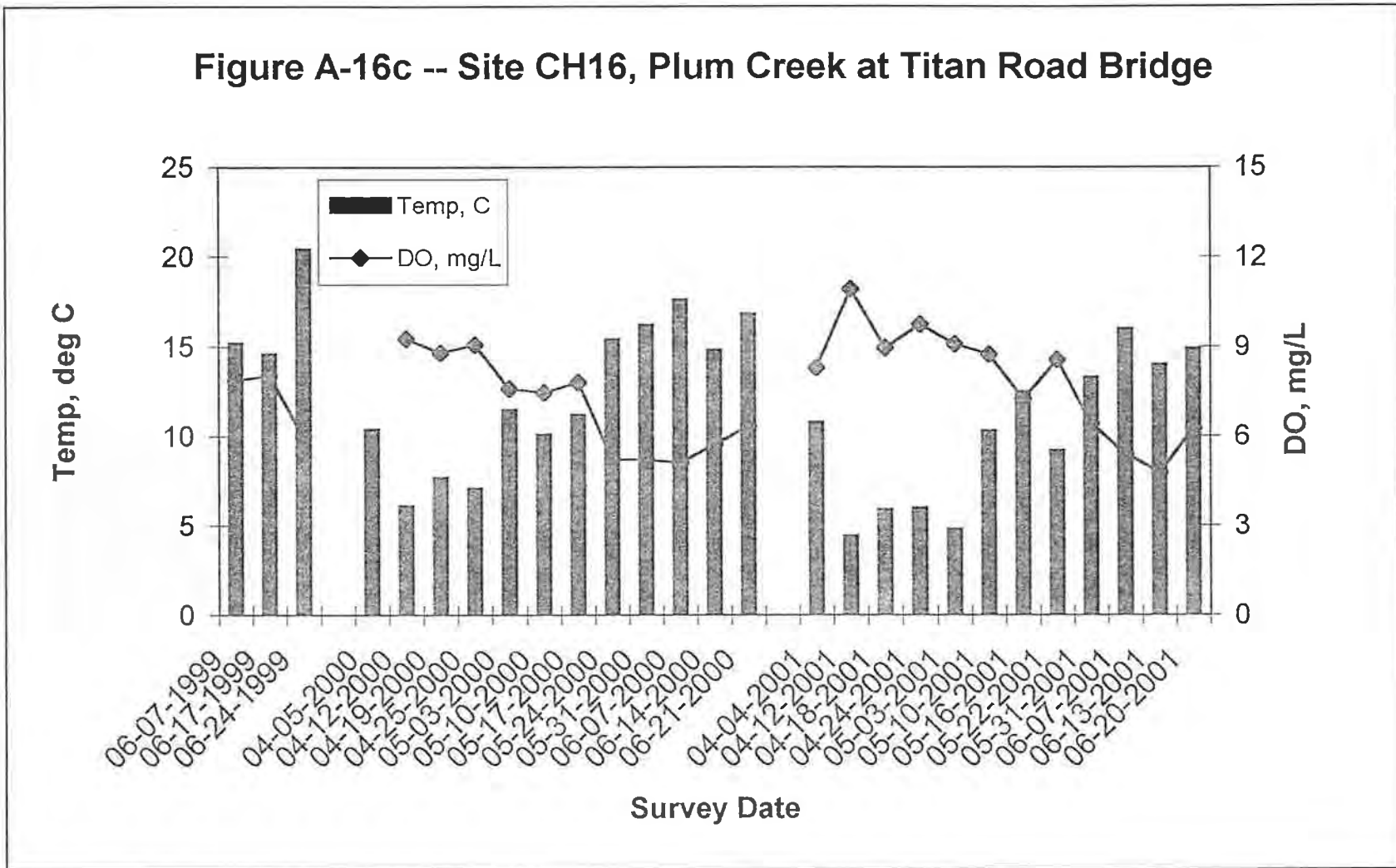


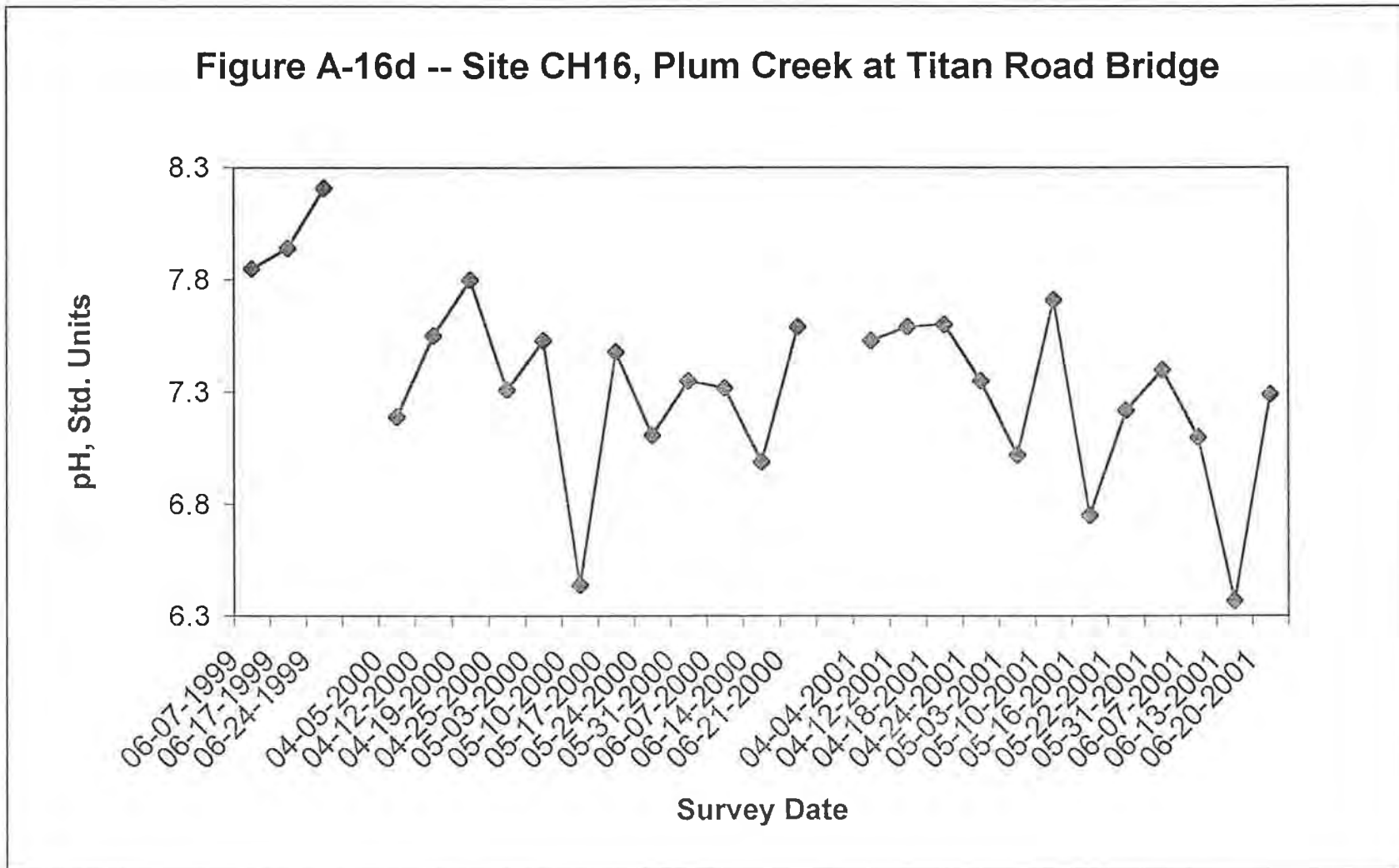


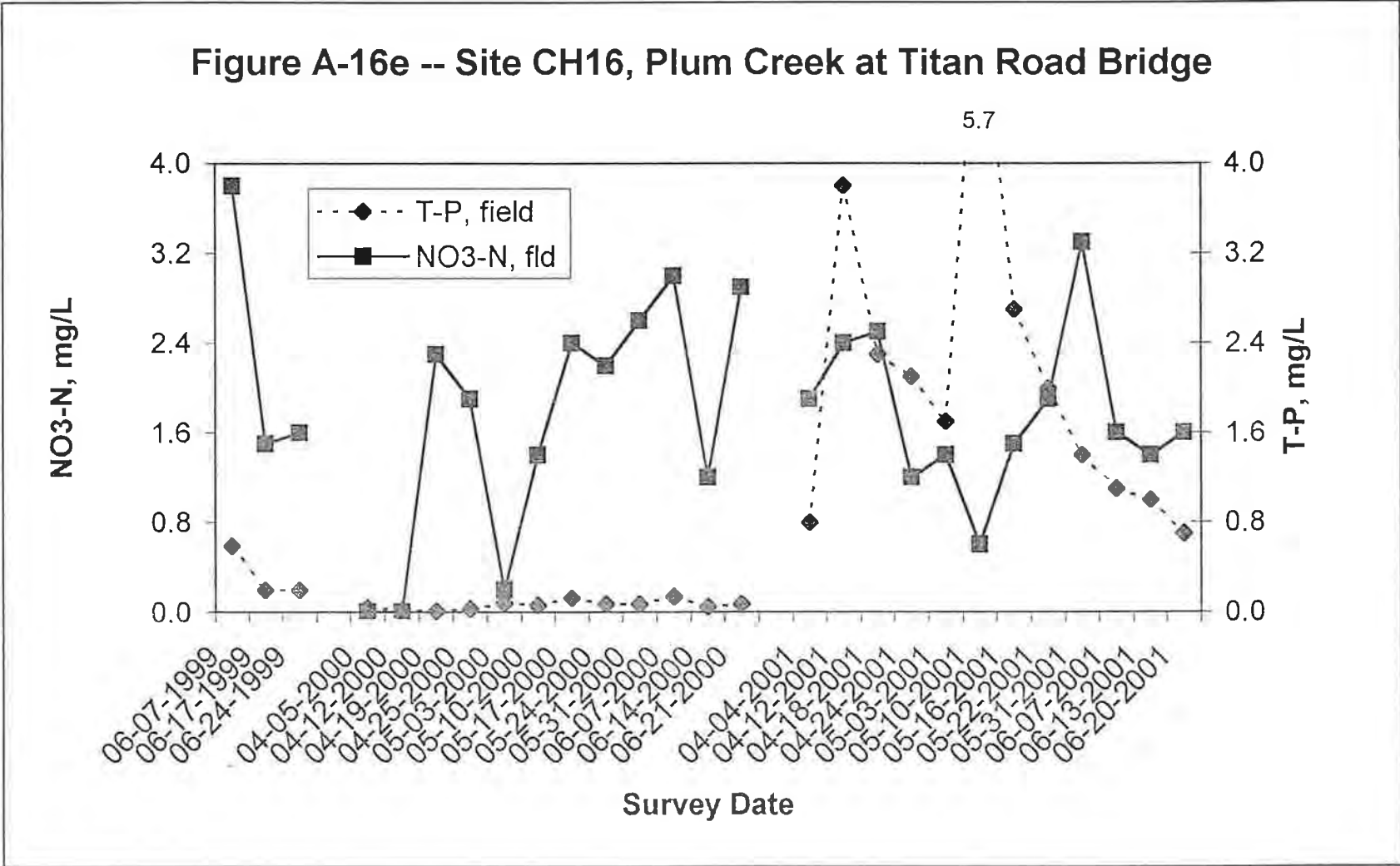


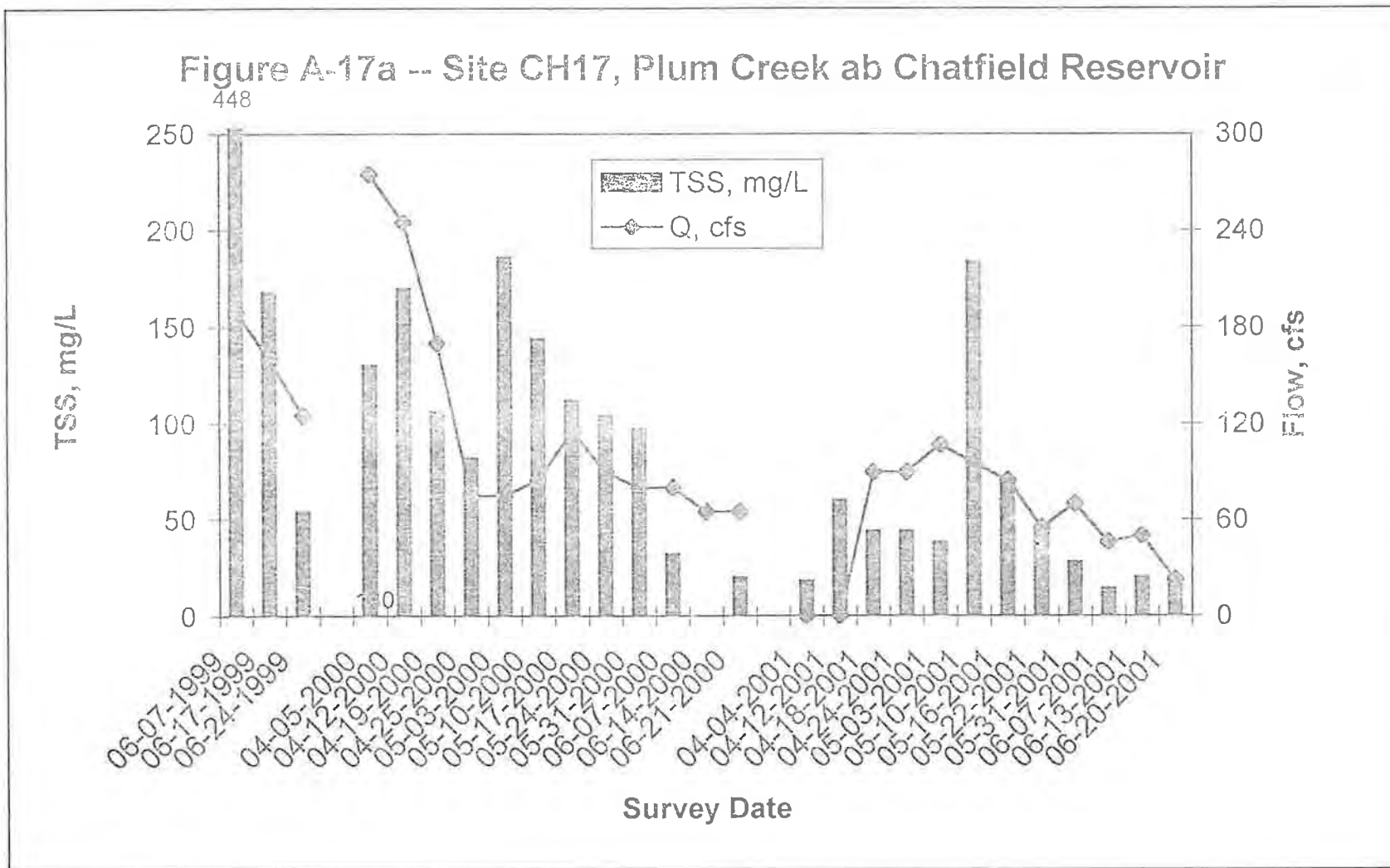


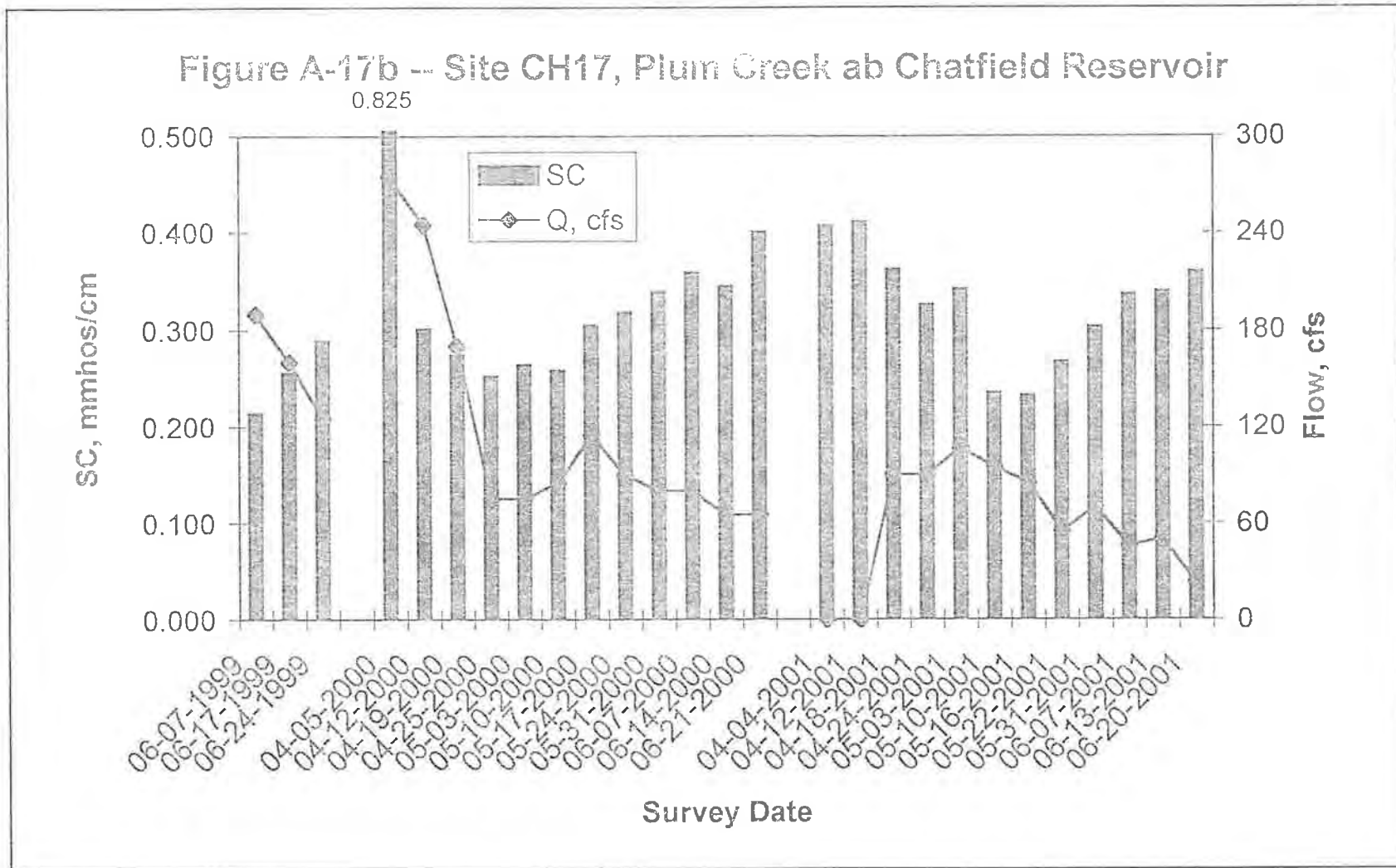


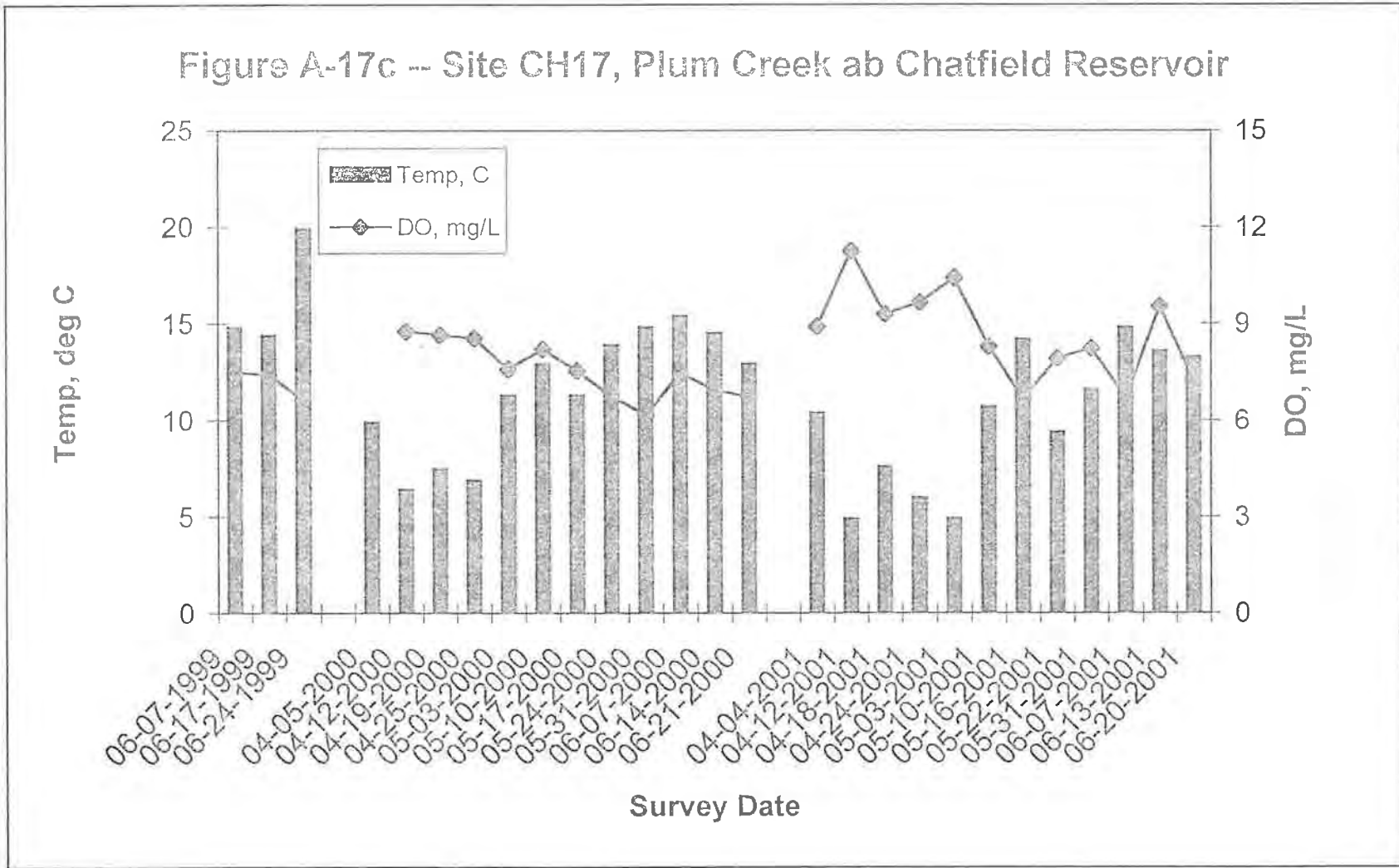


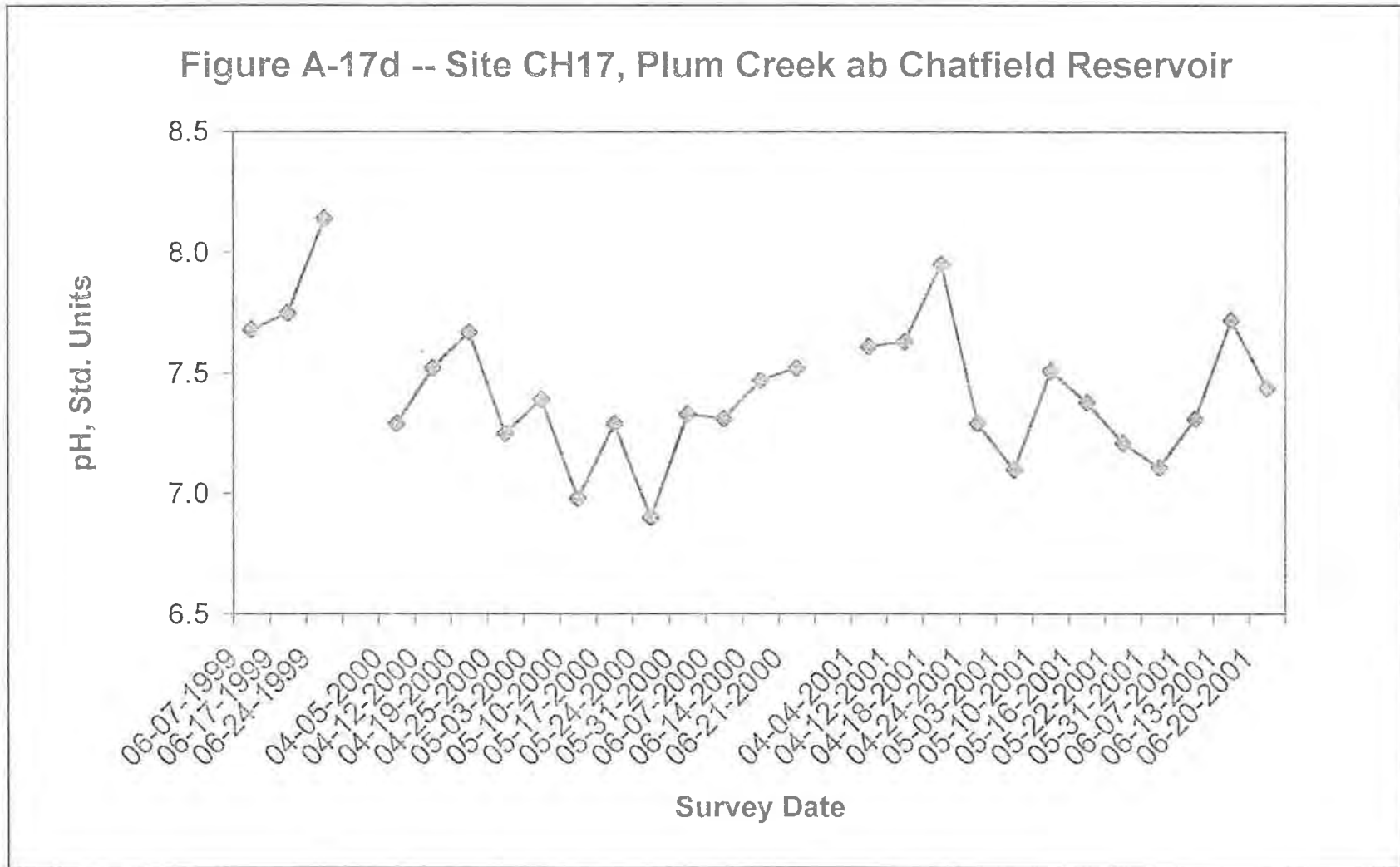












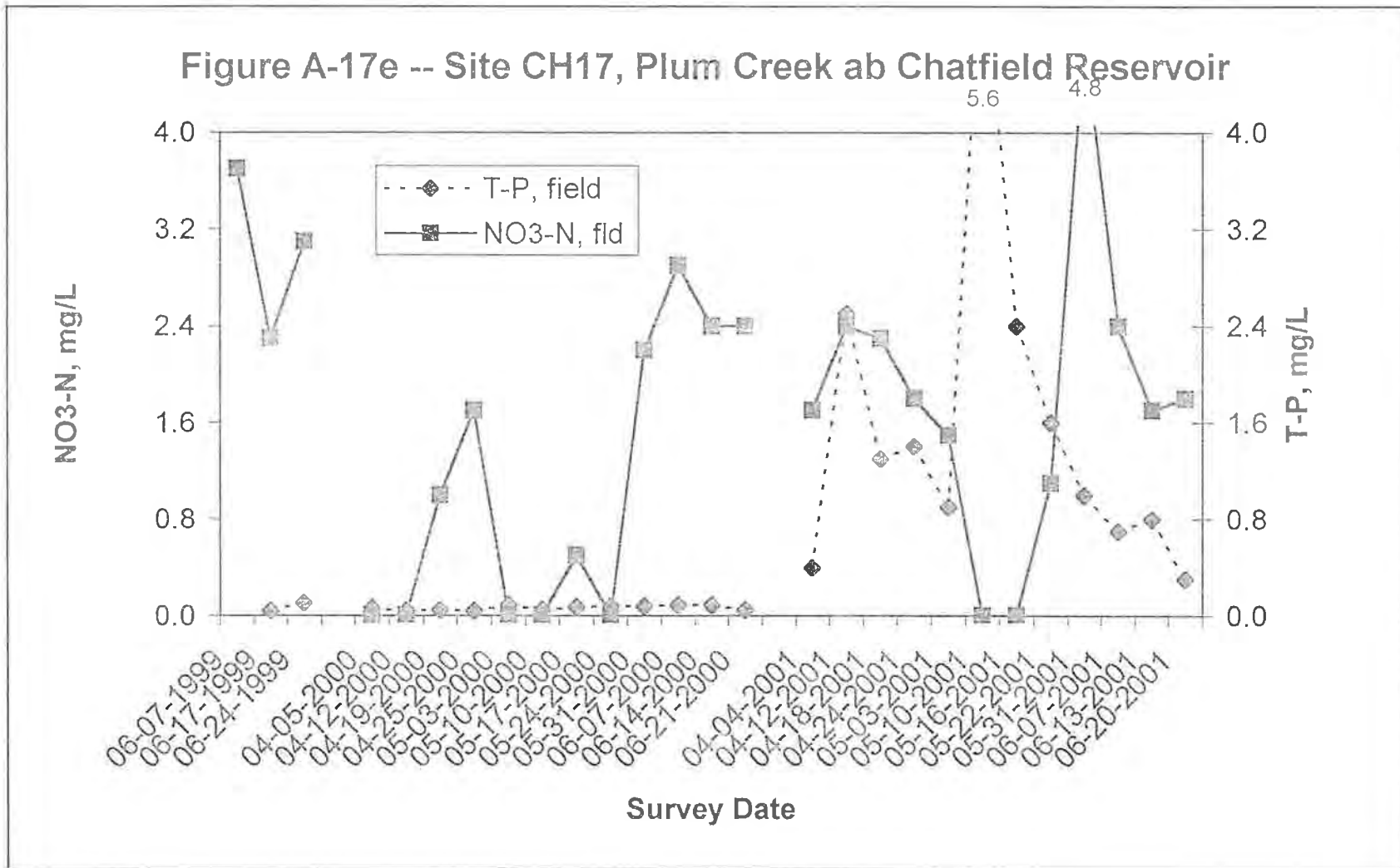


Figure A-18a -- Site CH18, Indian Creek West of Sedalia

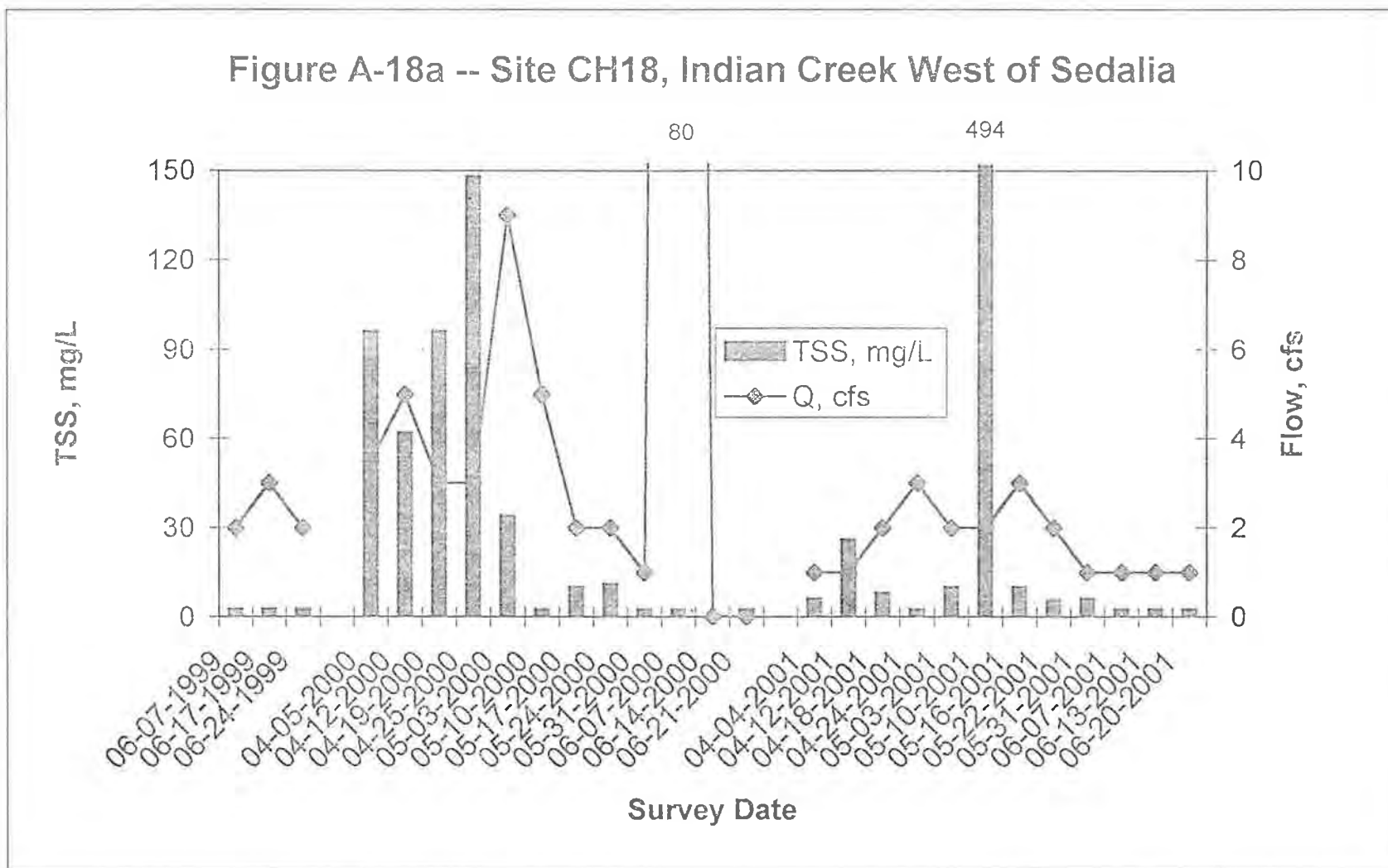


Figure A-18b -- Site CH18, Indian Creek West of Sedalia

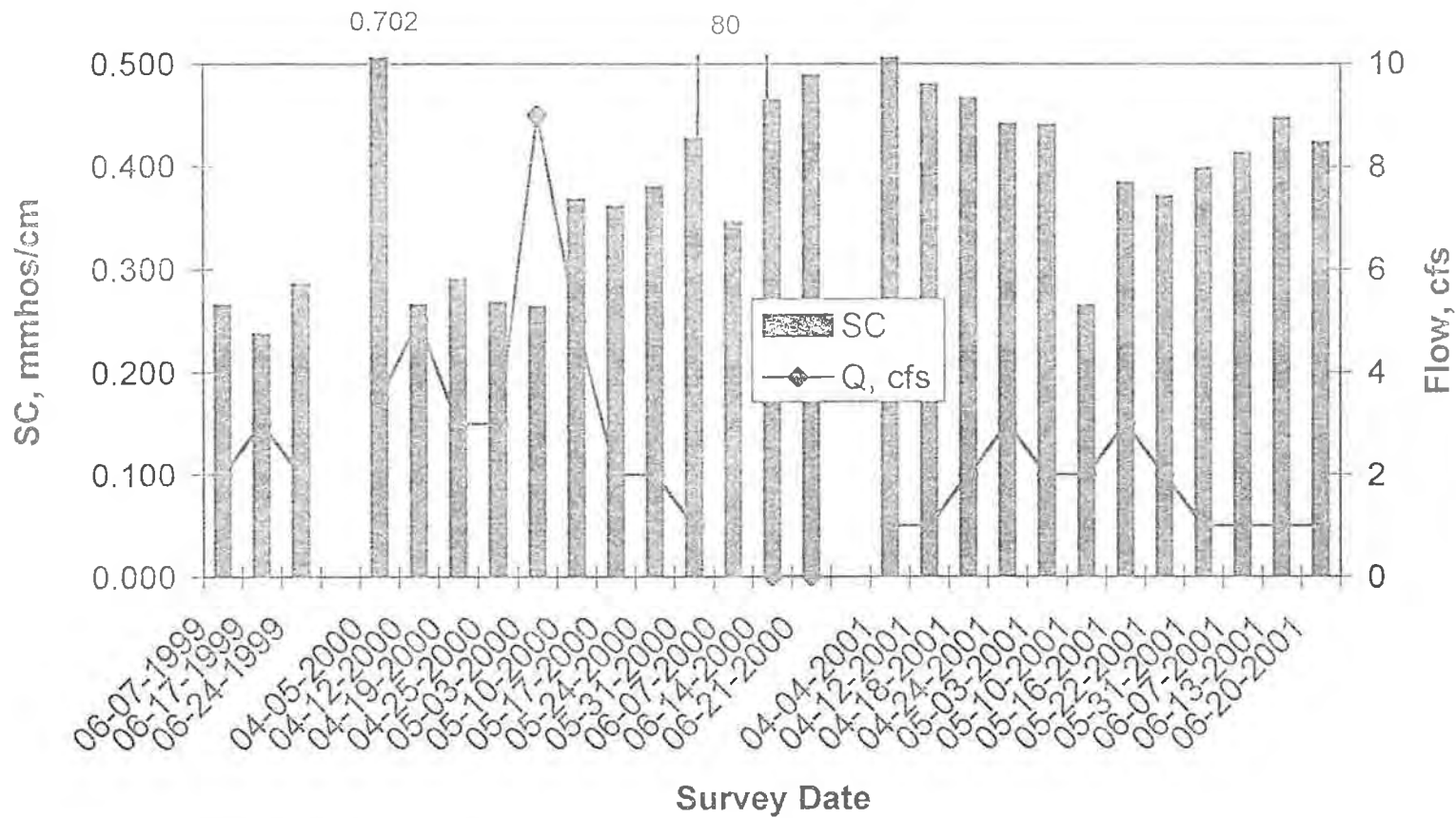


Figure A-18c -- Site CH18, Indian Creek West of Sedalia

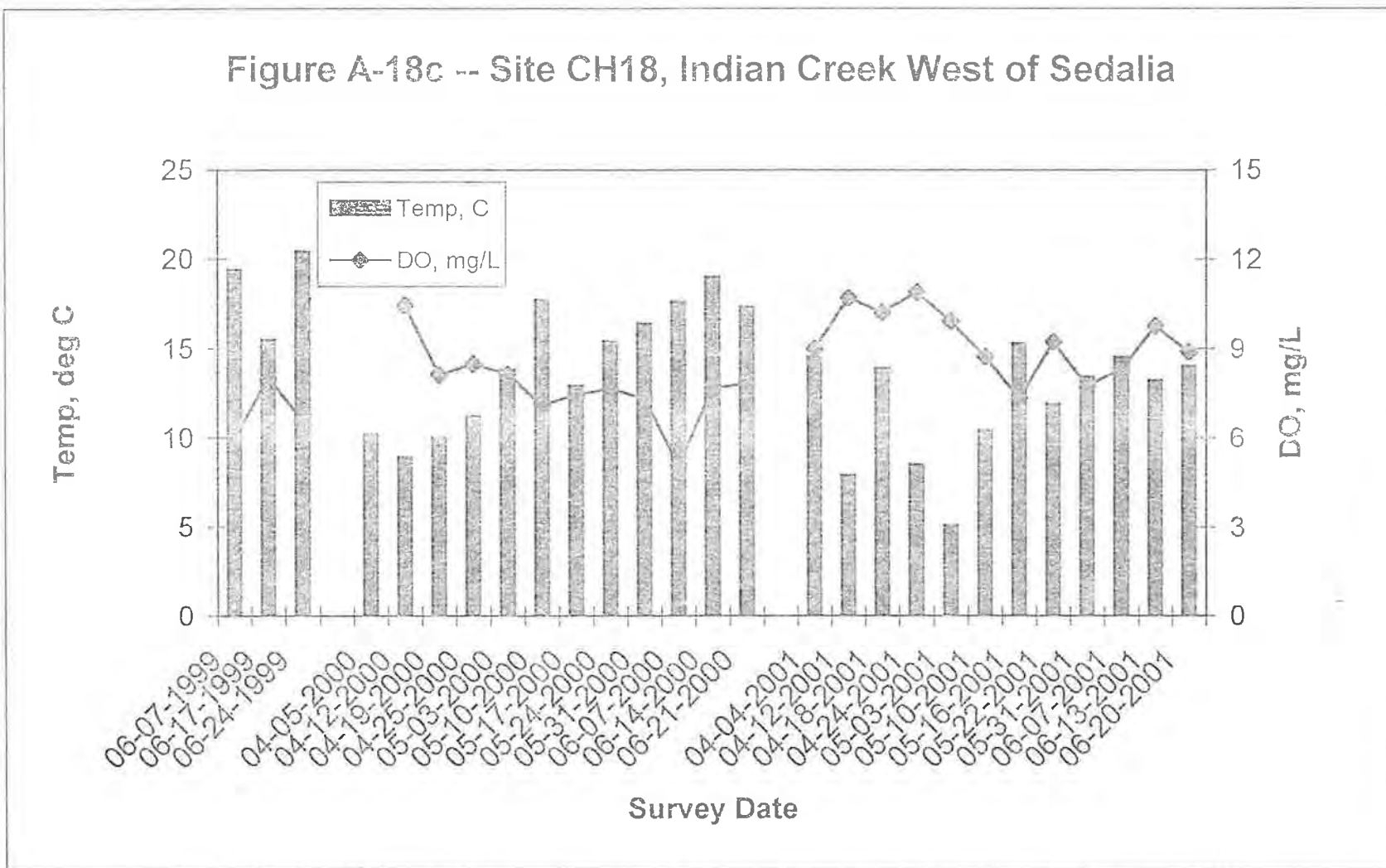


Figure A-18d -- Site CH18, Indian Creek West of Sedalia

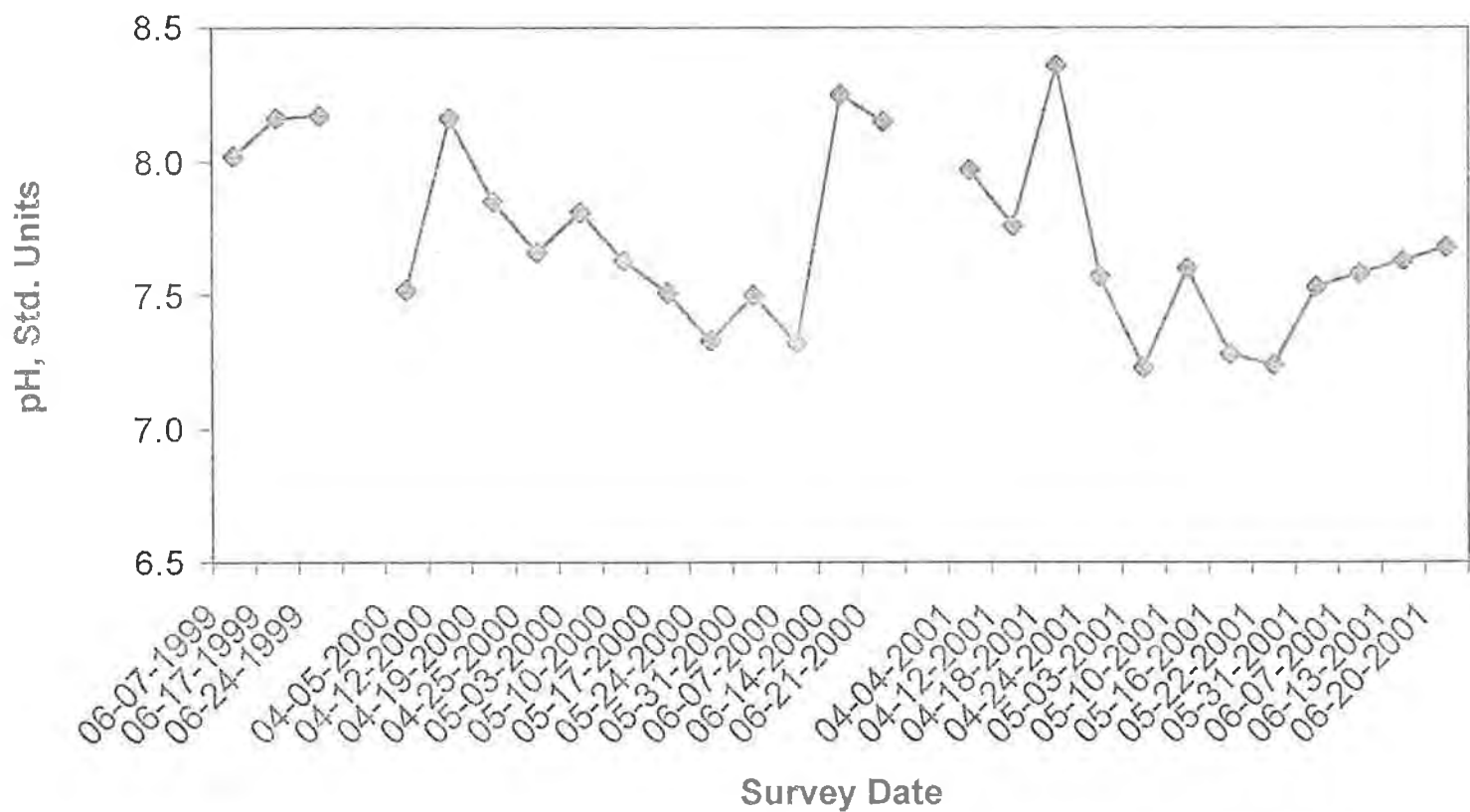


Figure A-18e -- Site CH18, Indian Creek West of Sedalia

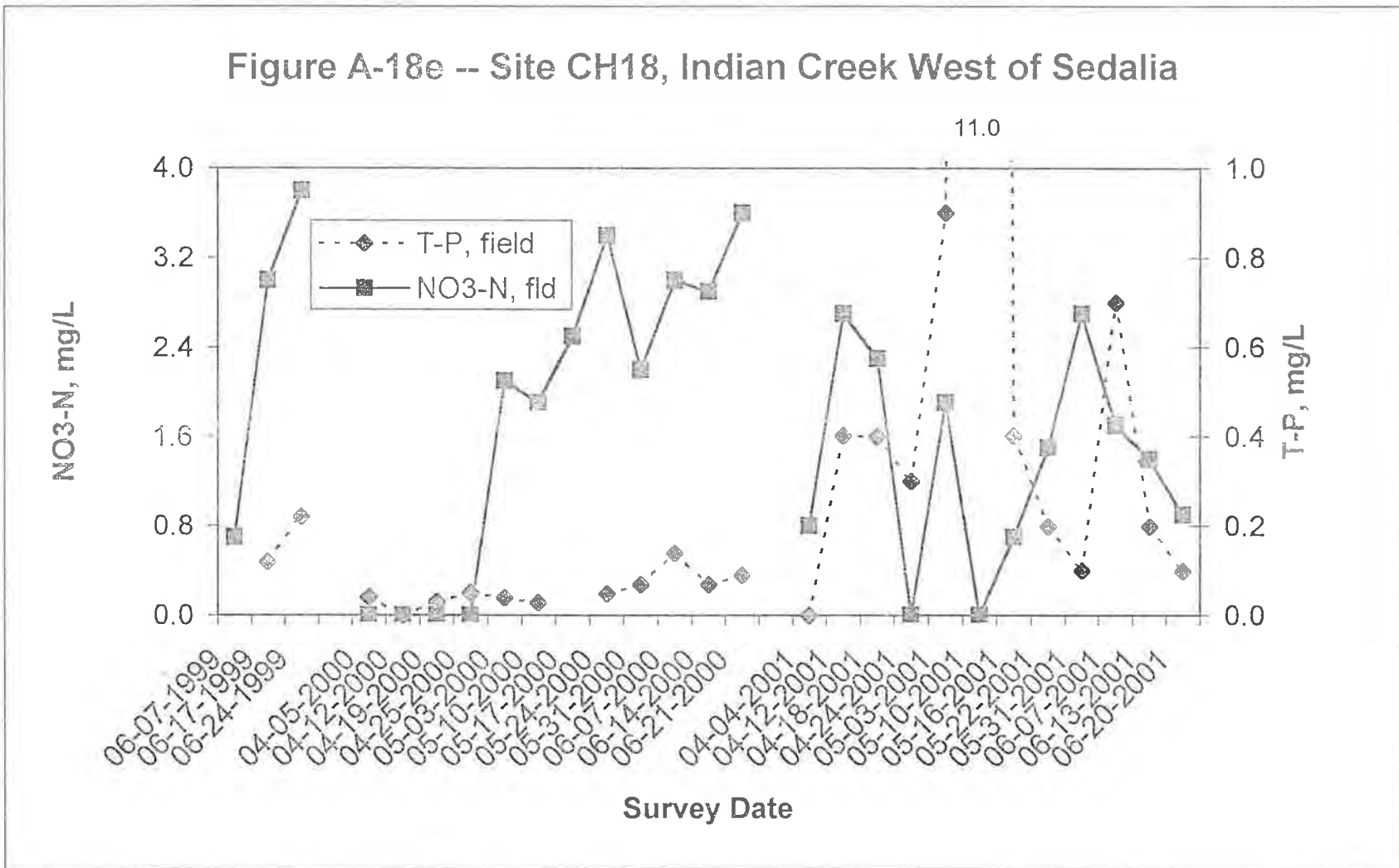
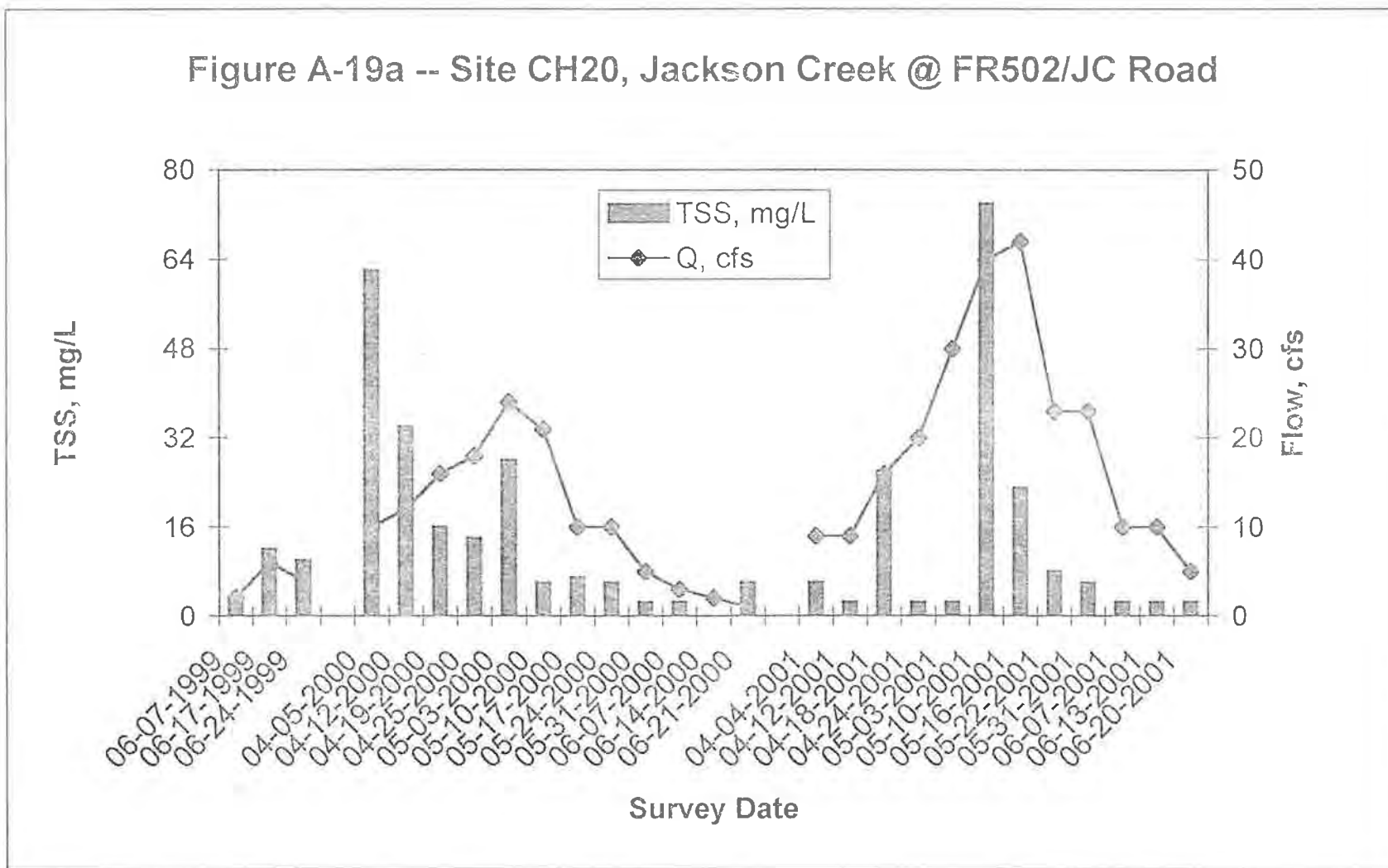
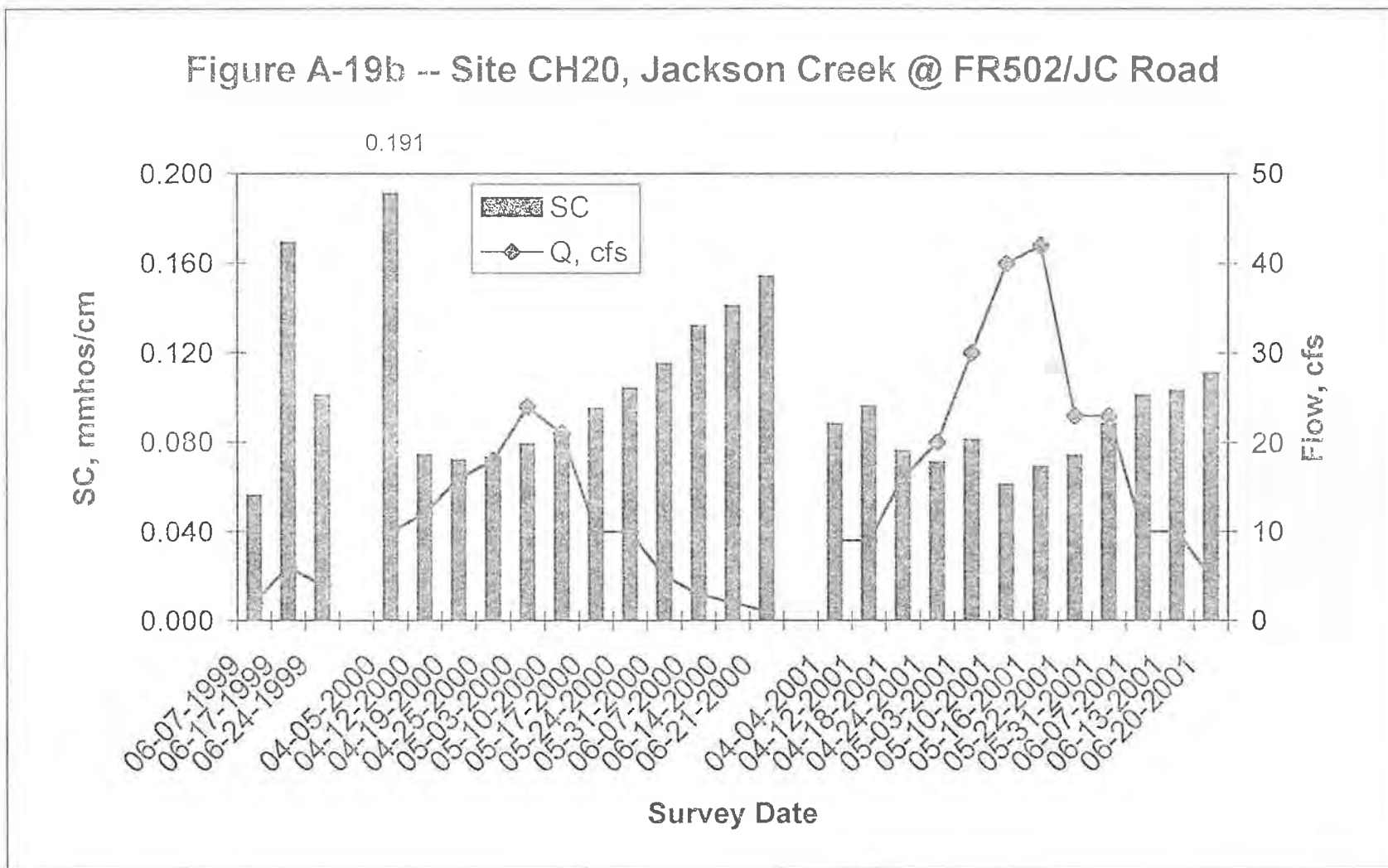
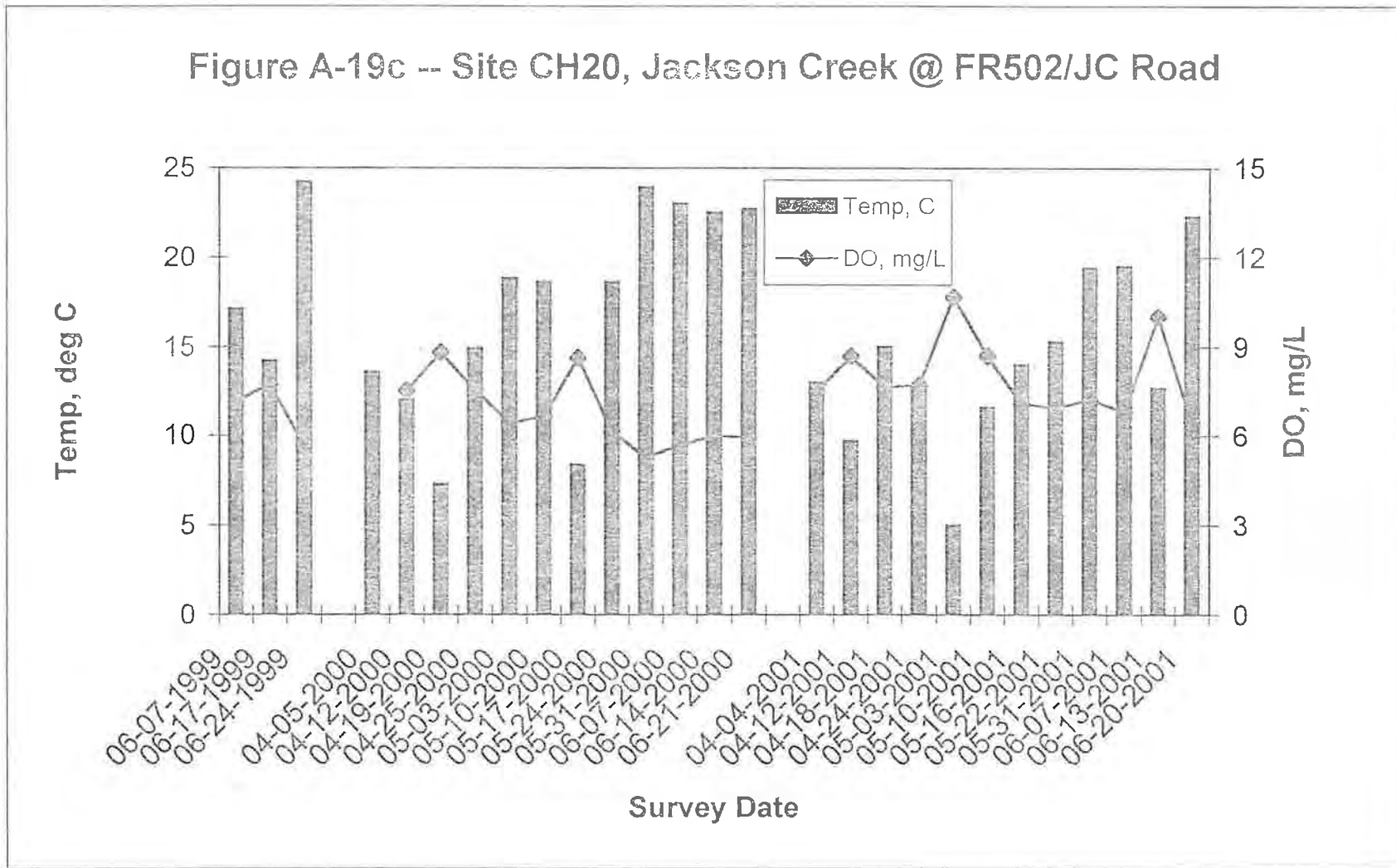
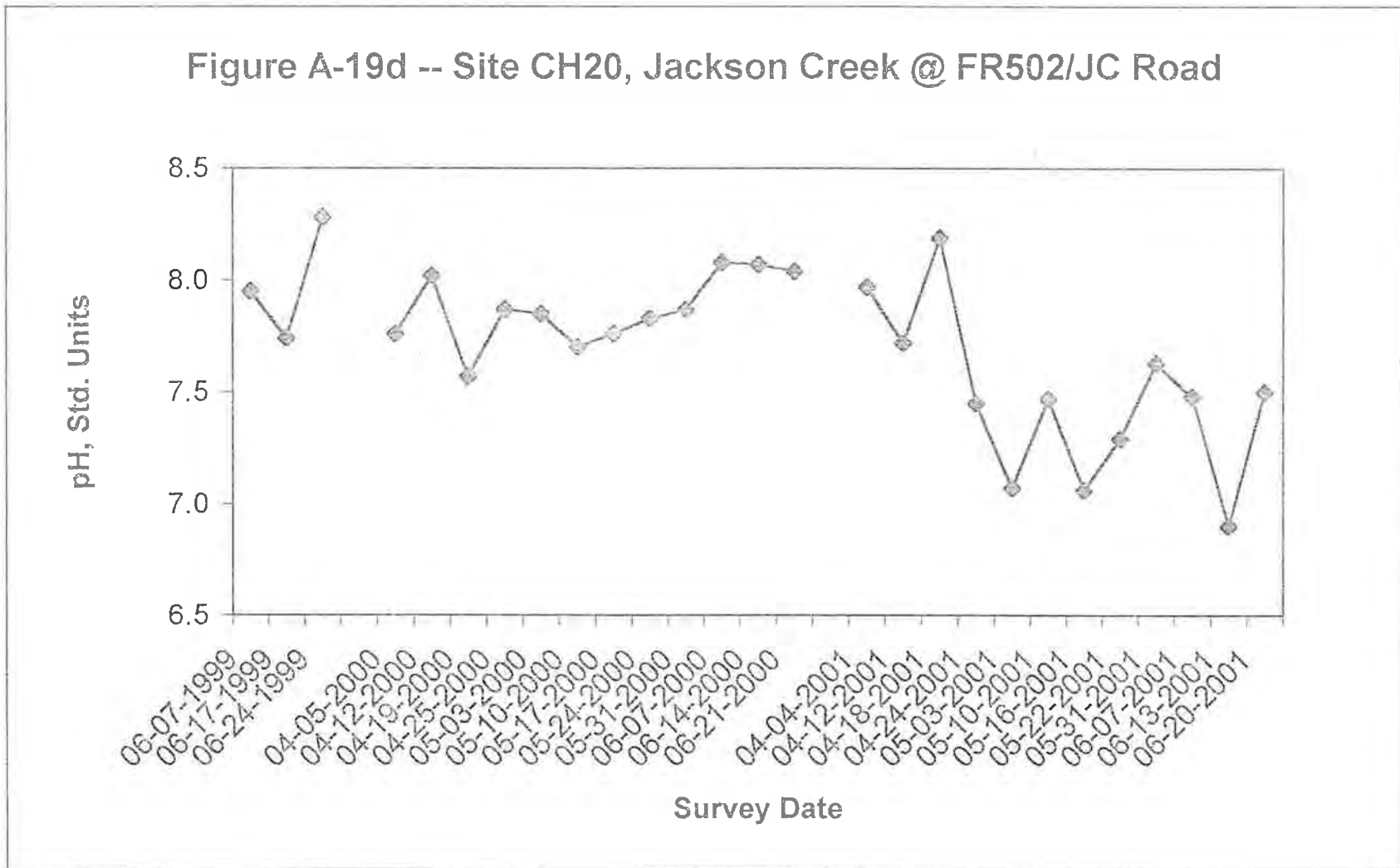


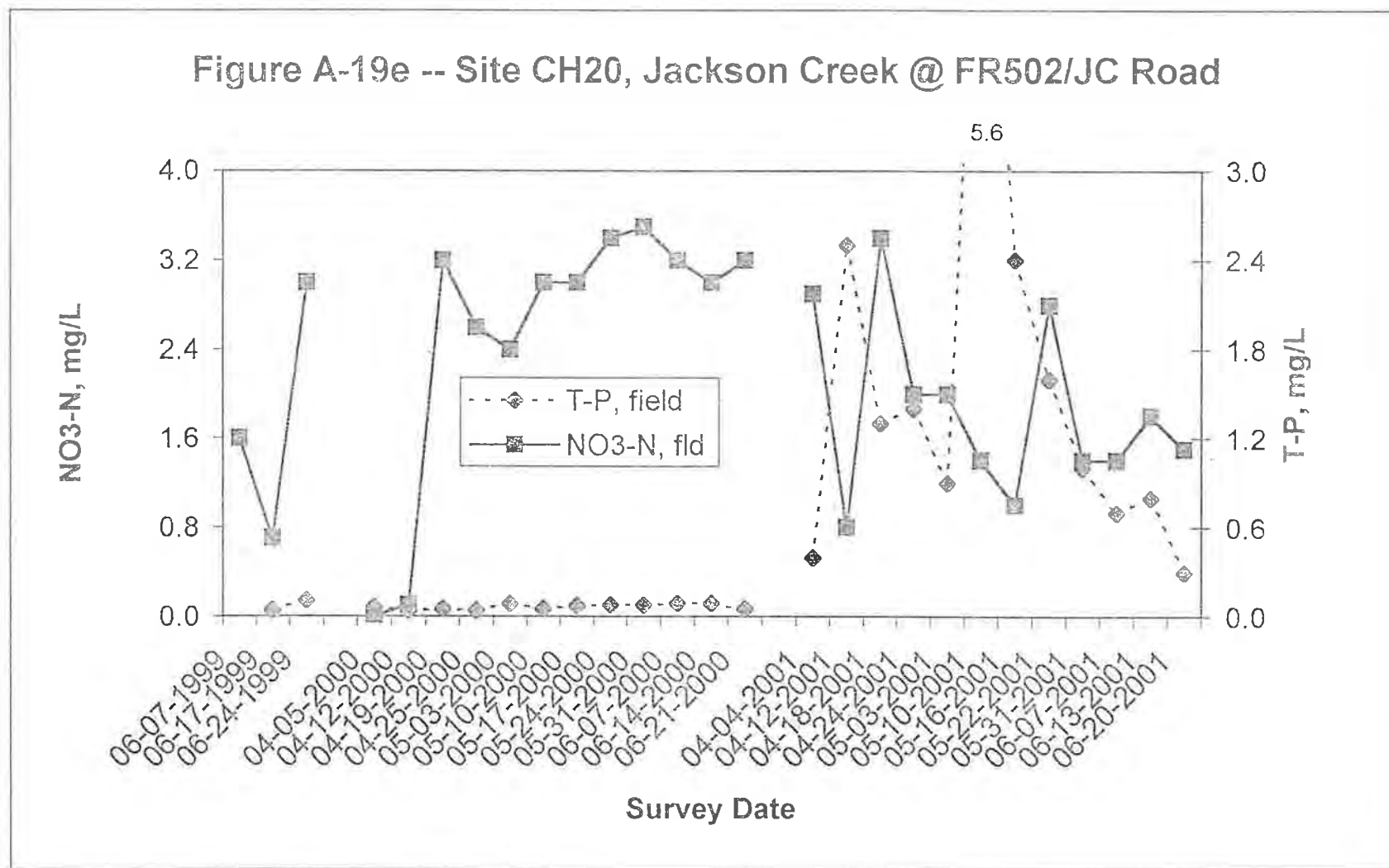
Figure A-19a -- Site CH20, Jackson Creek @ FR502/JC Road

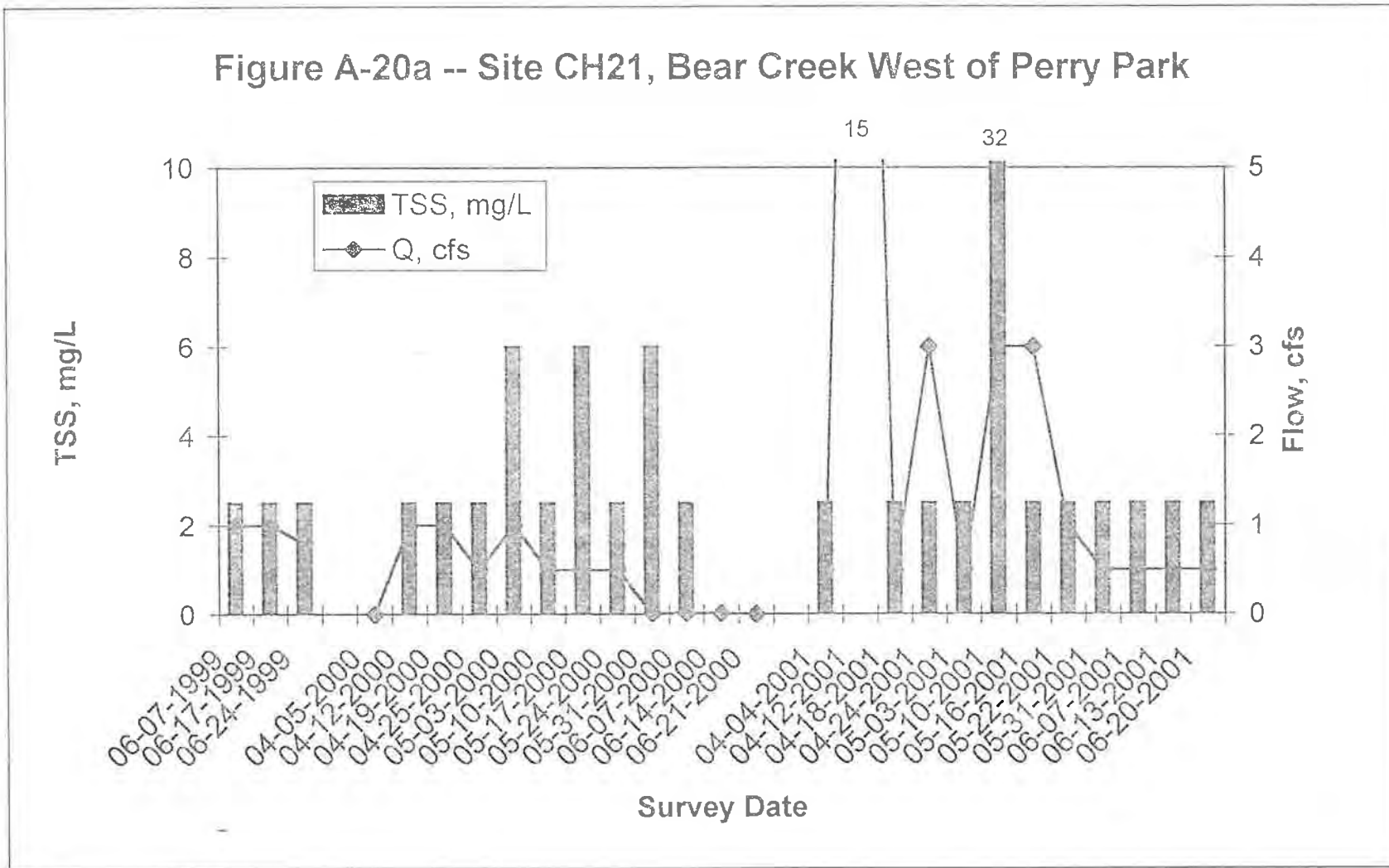


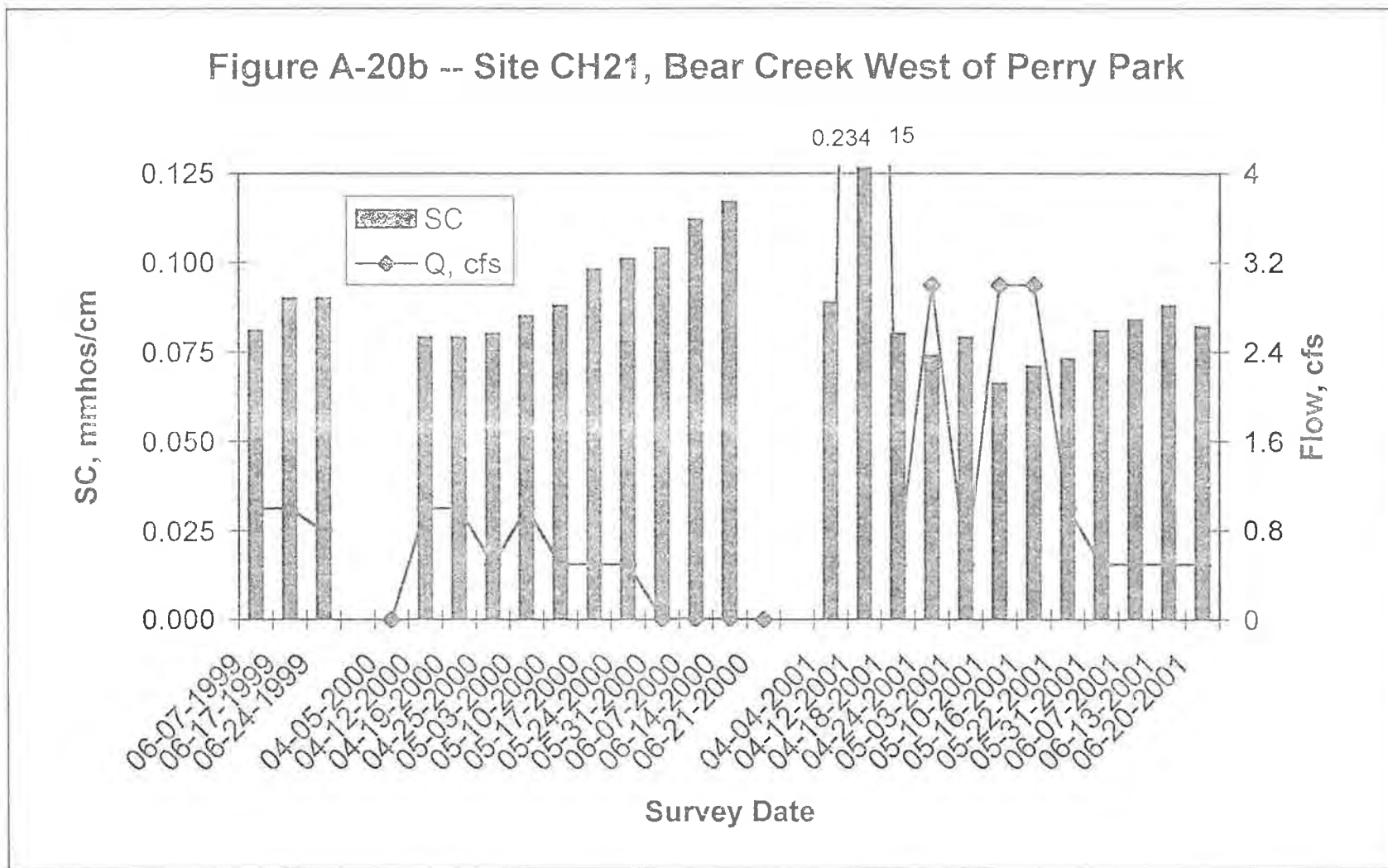












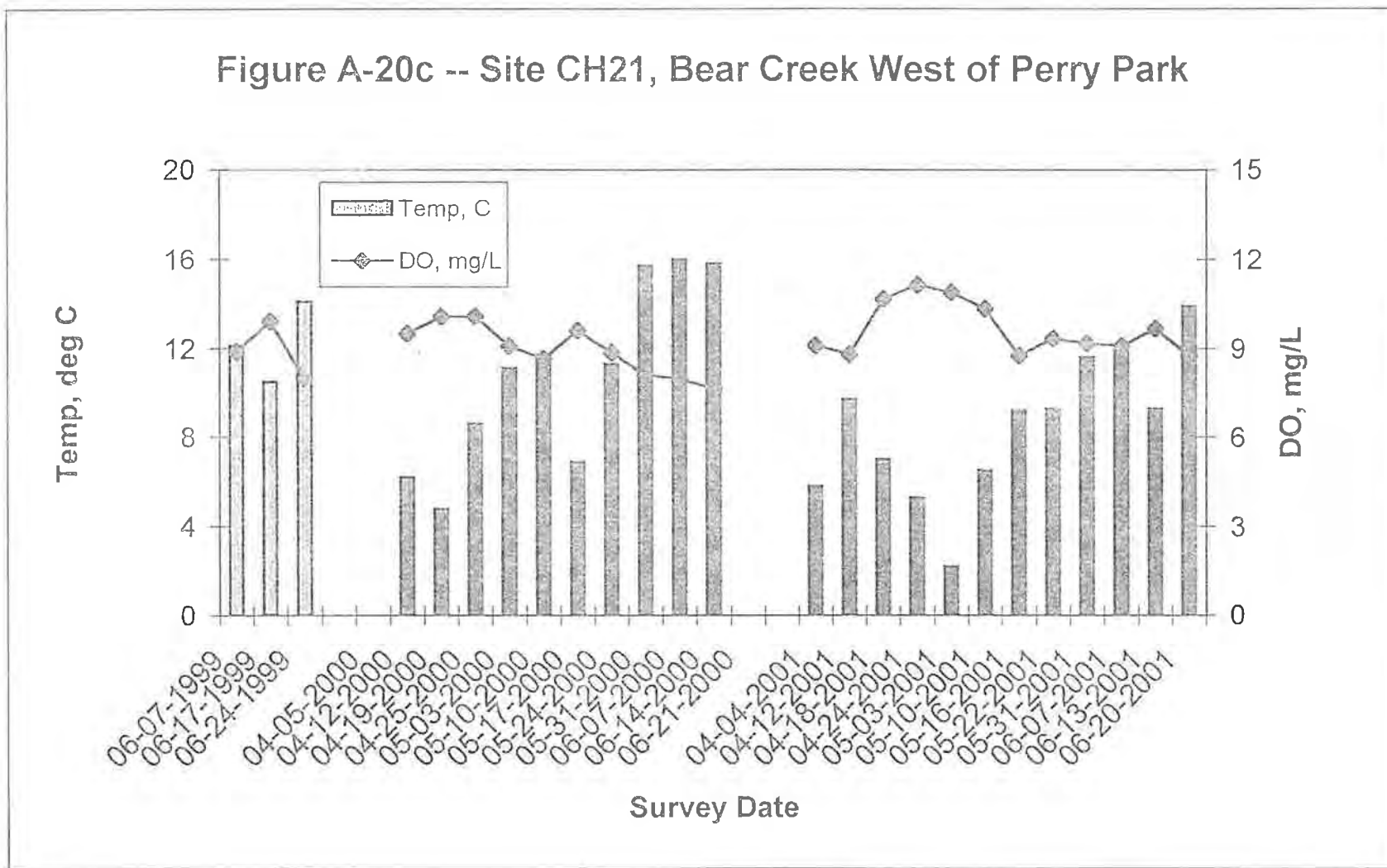


Figure A-20d -- Site CH21, Bear Creek West of Perry Park

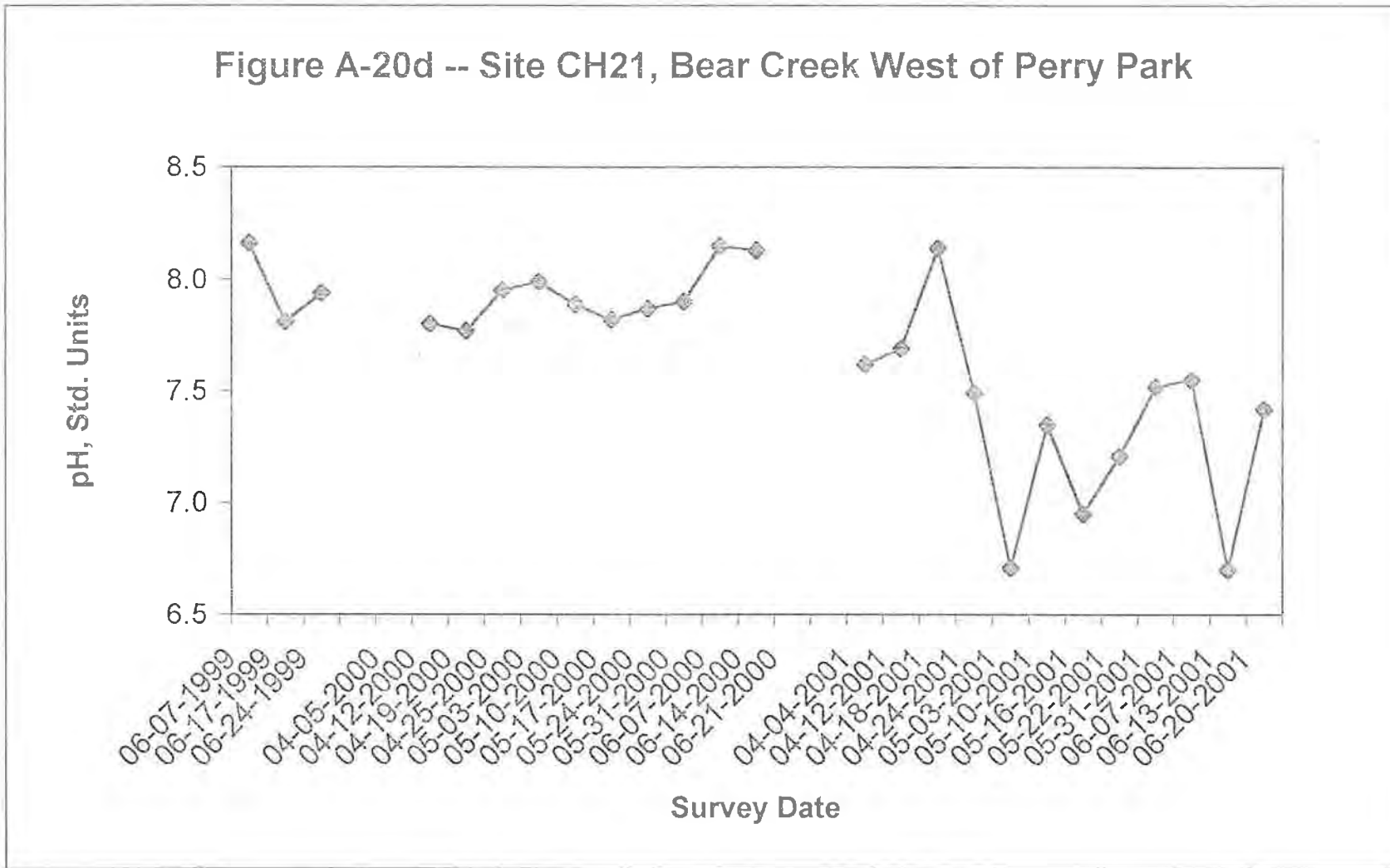
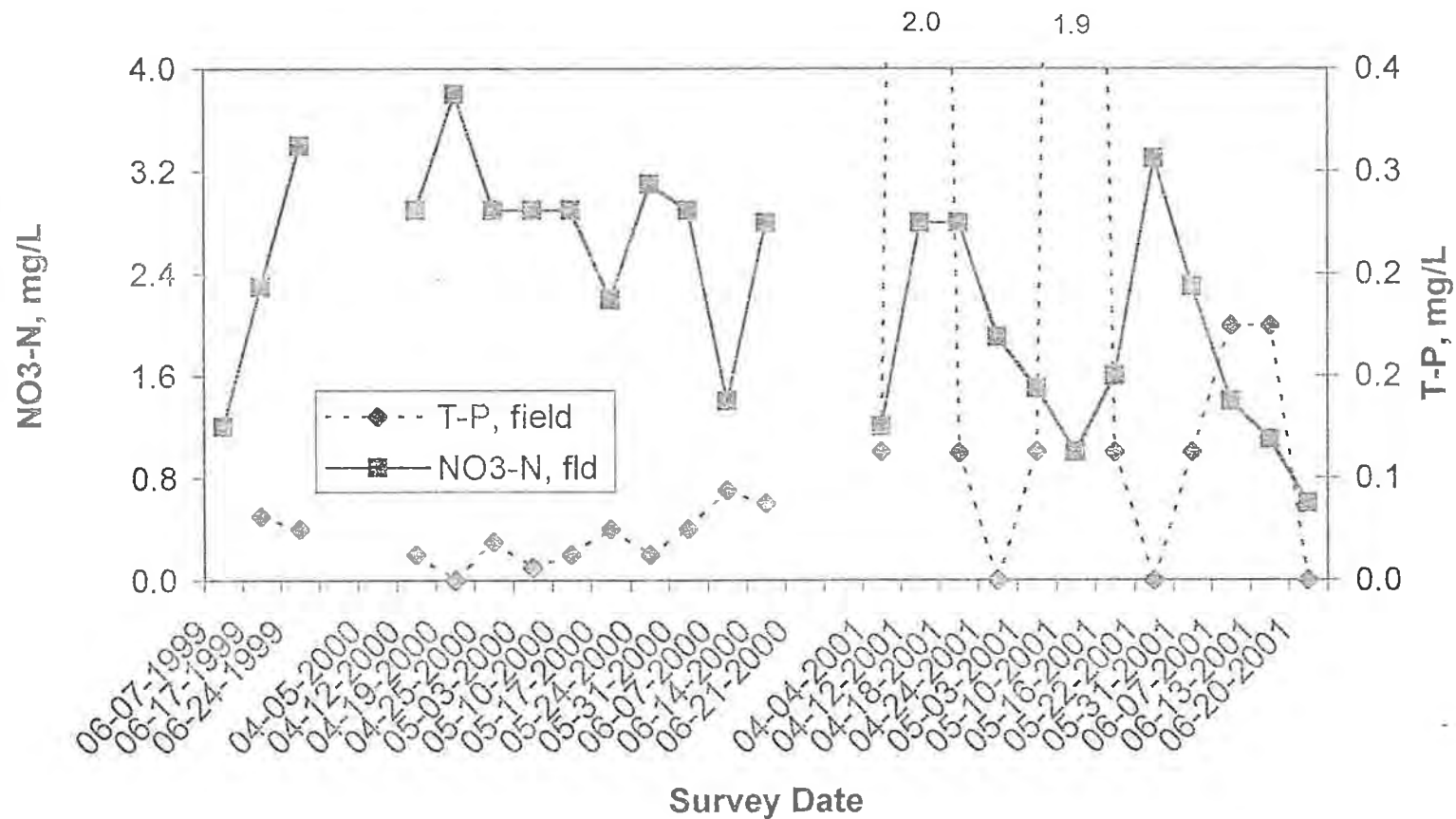
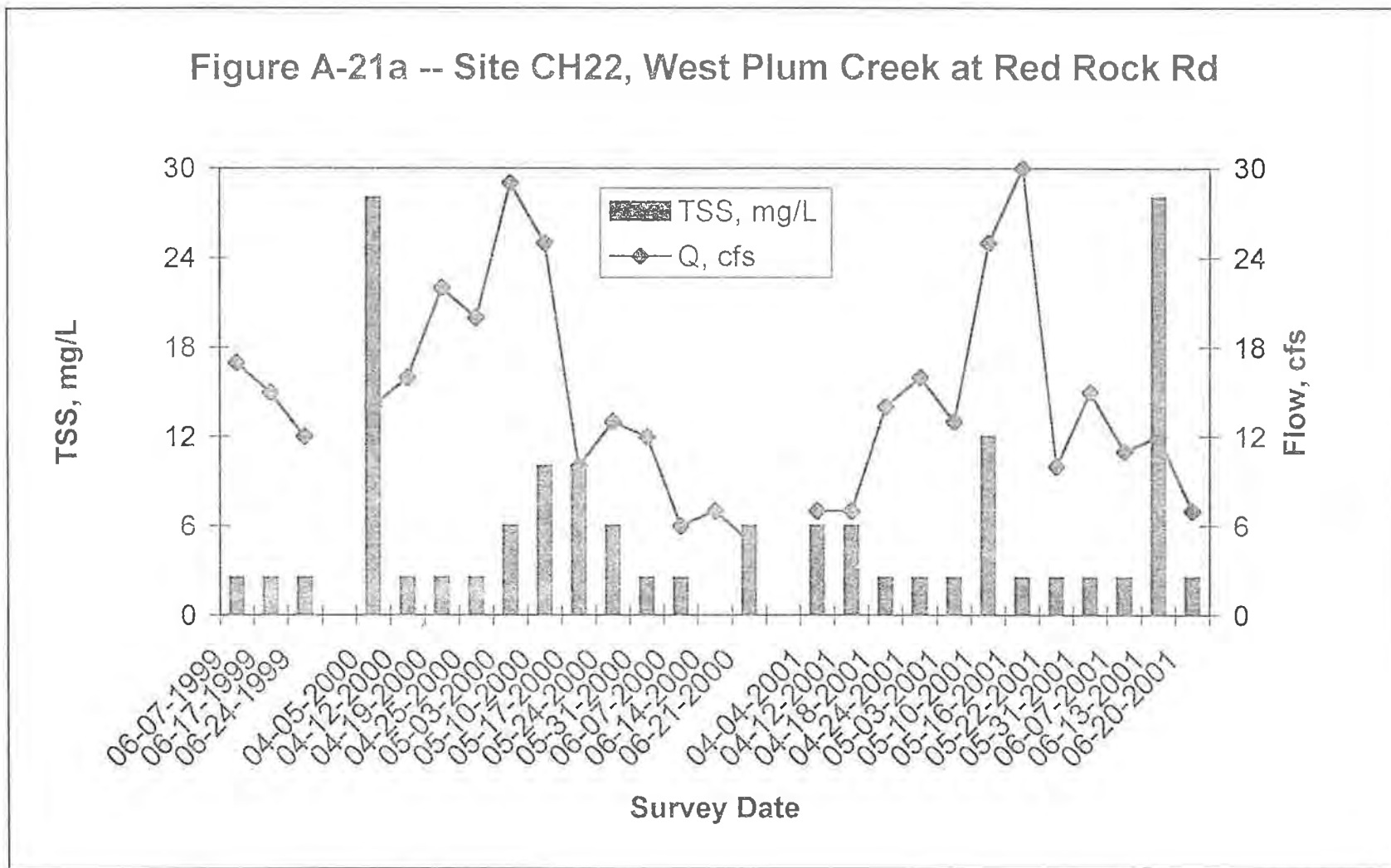


Figure A-20e -- Site CH21, Bear Creek West of Perry Park





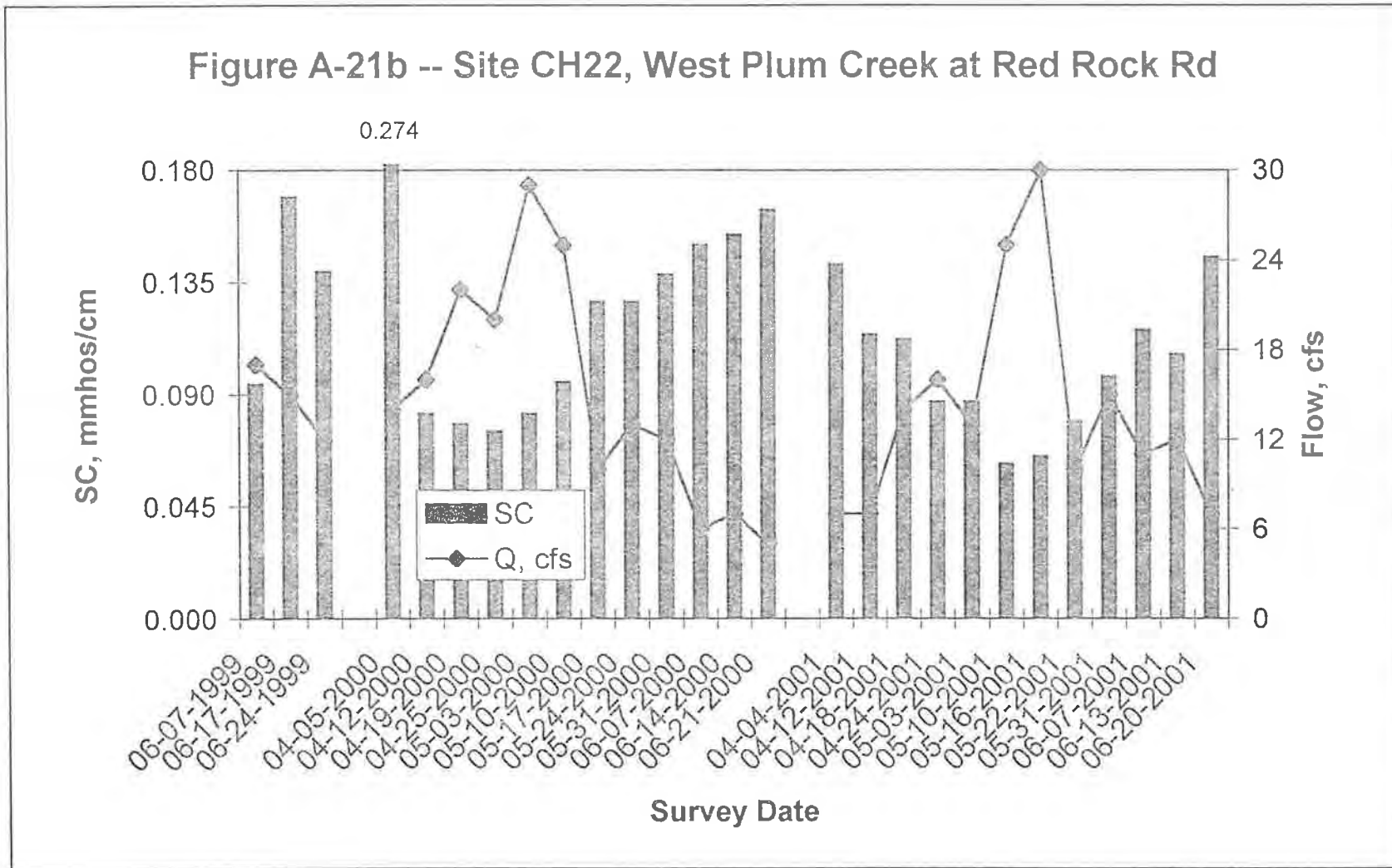
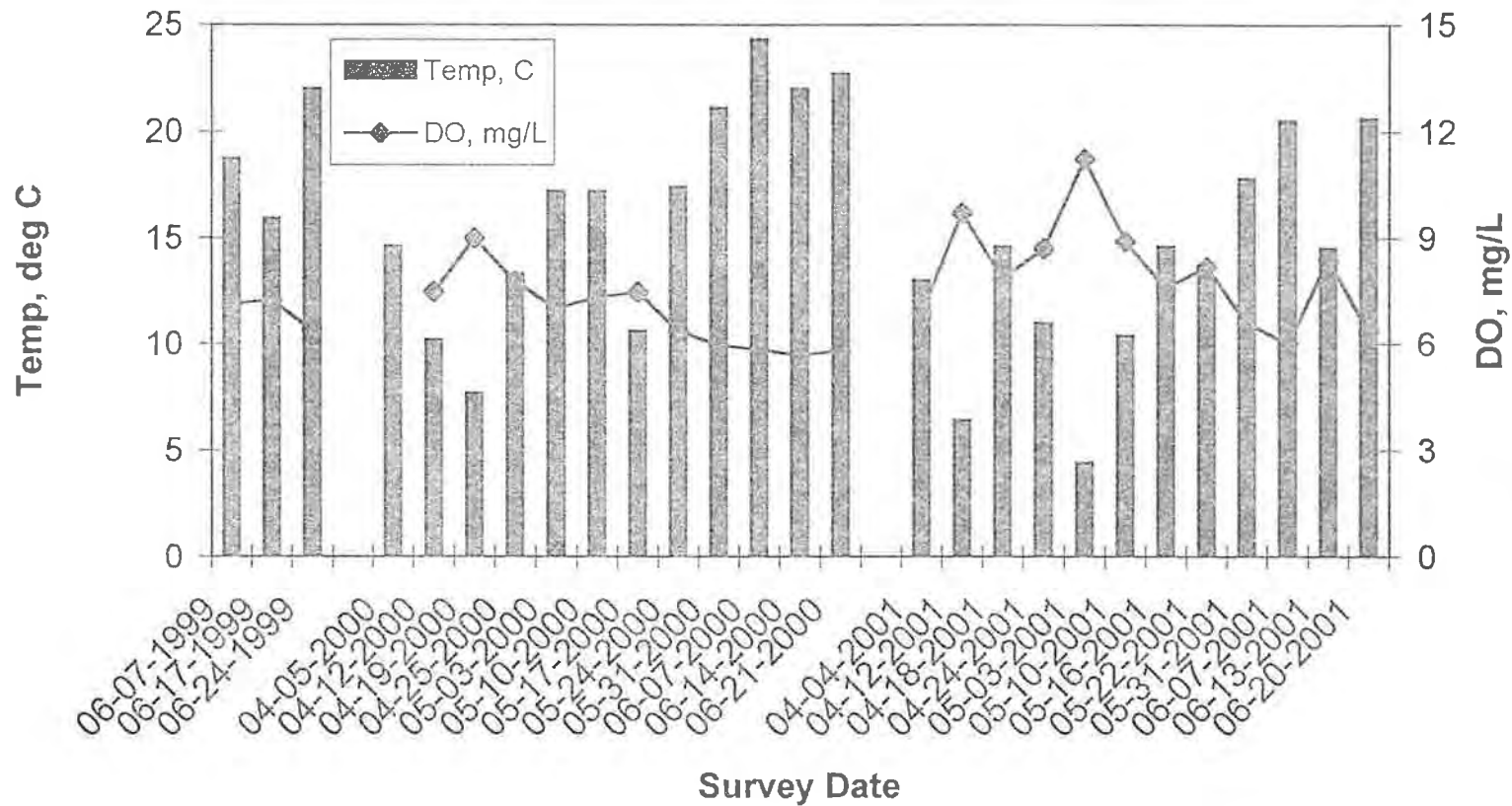
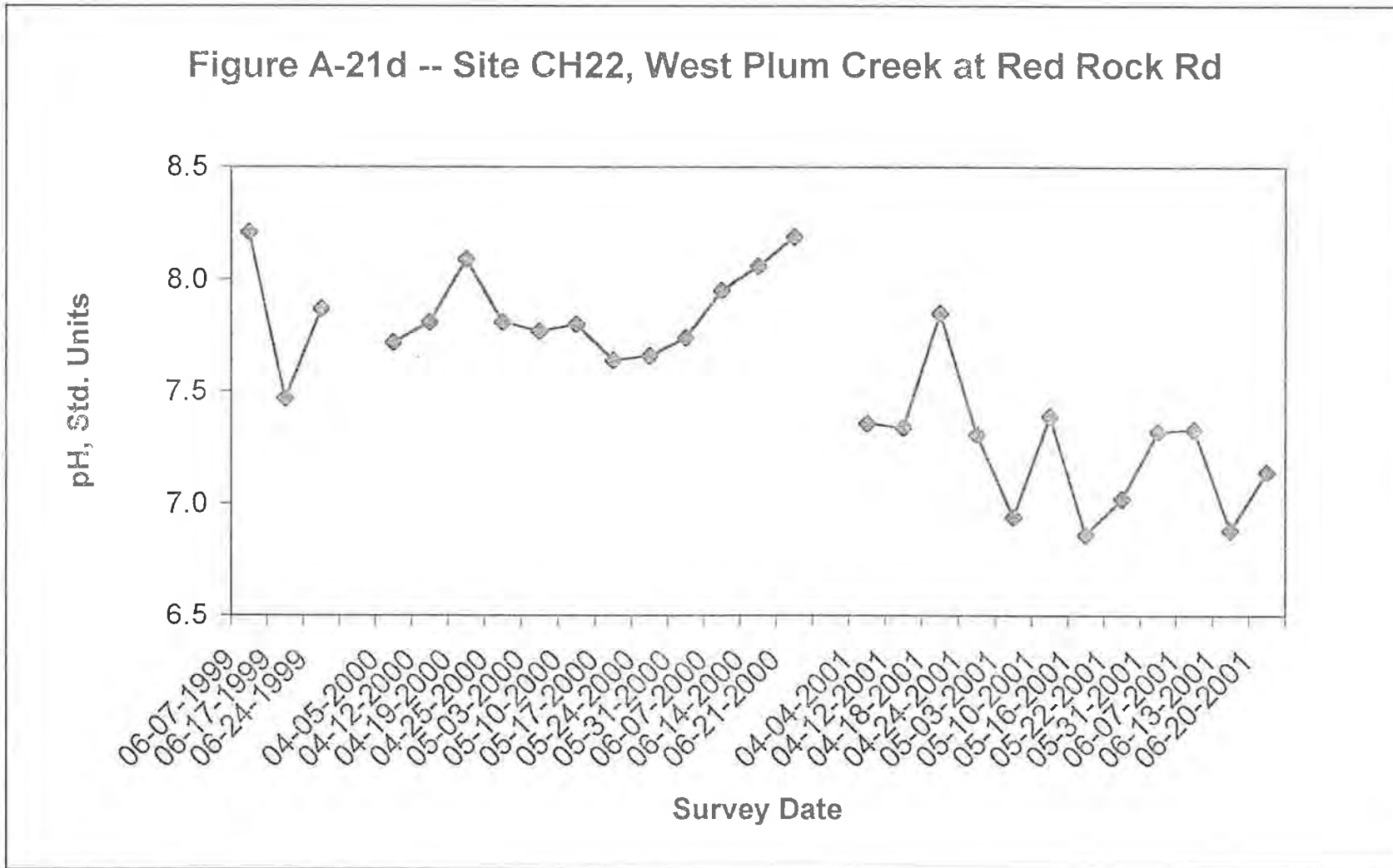
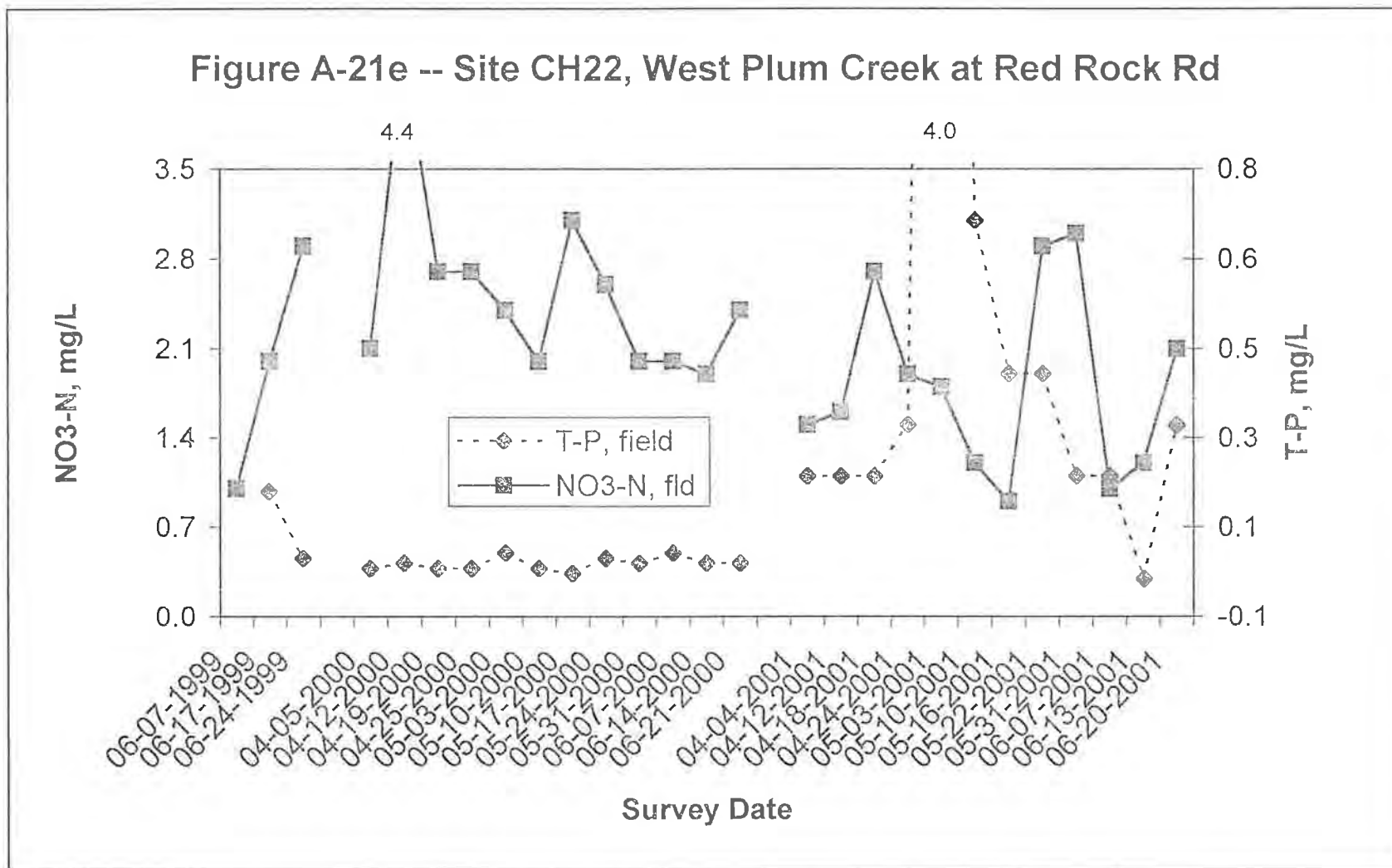
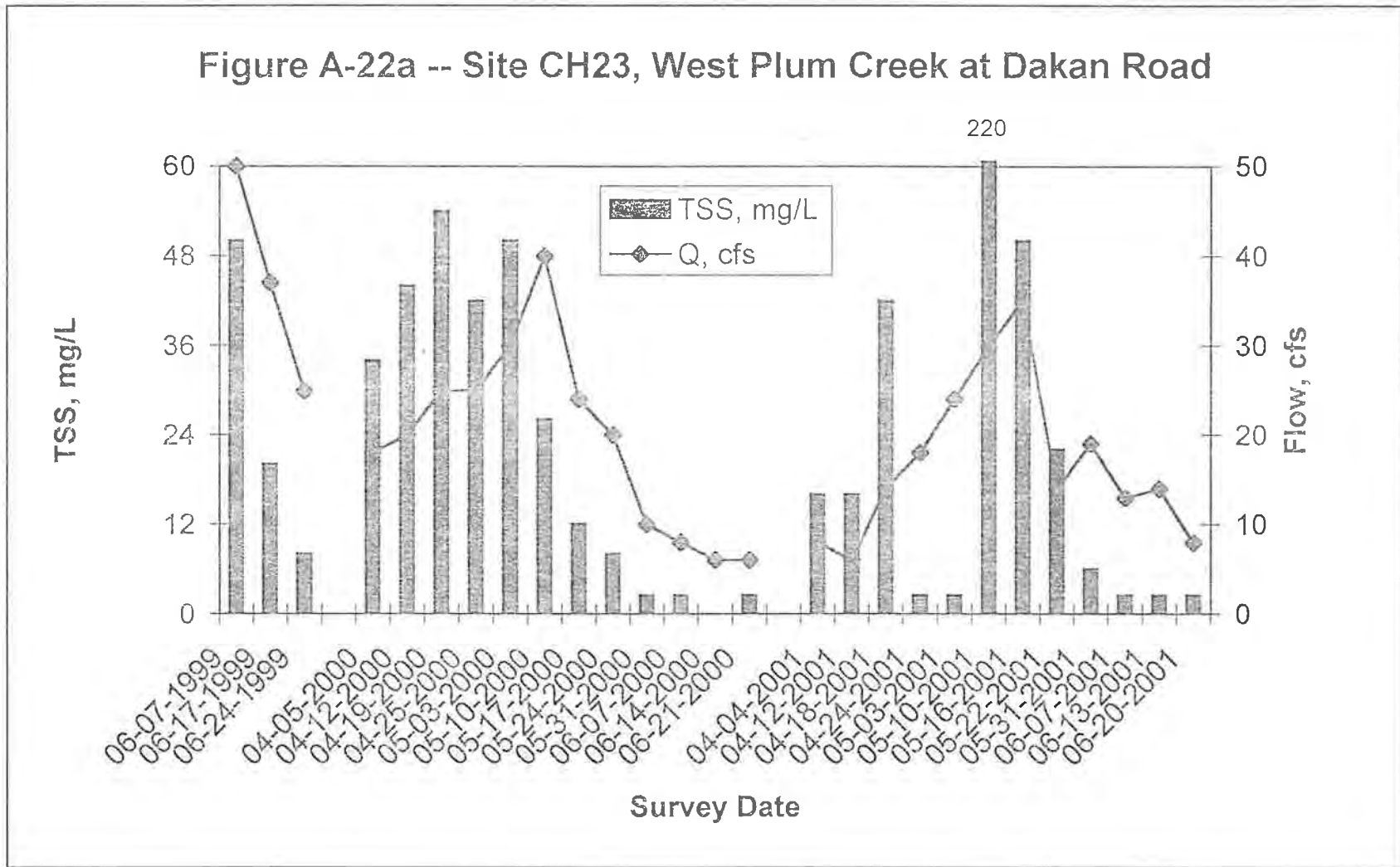


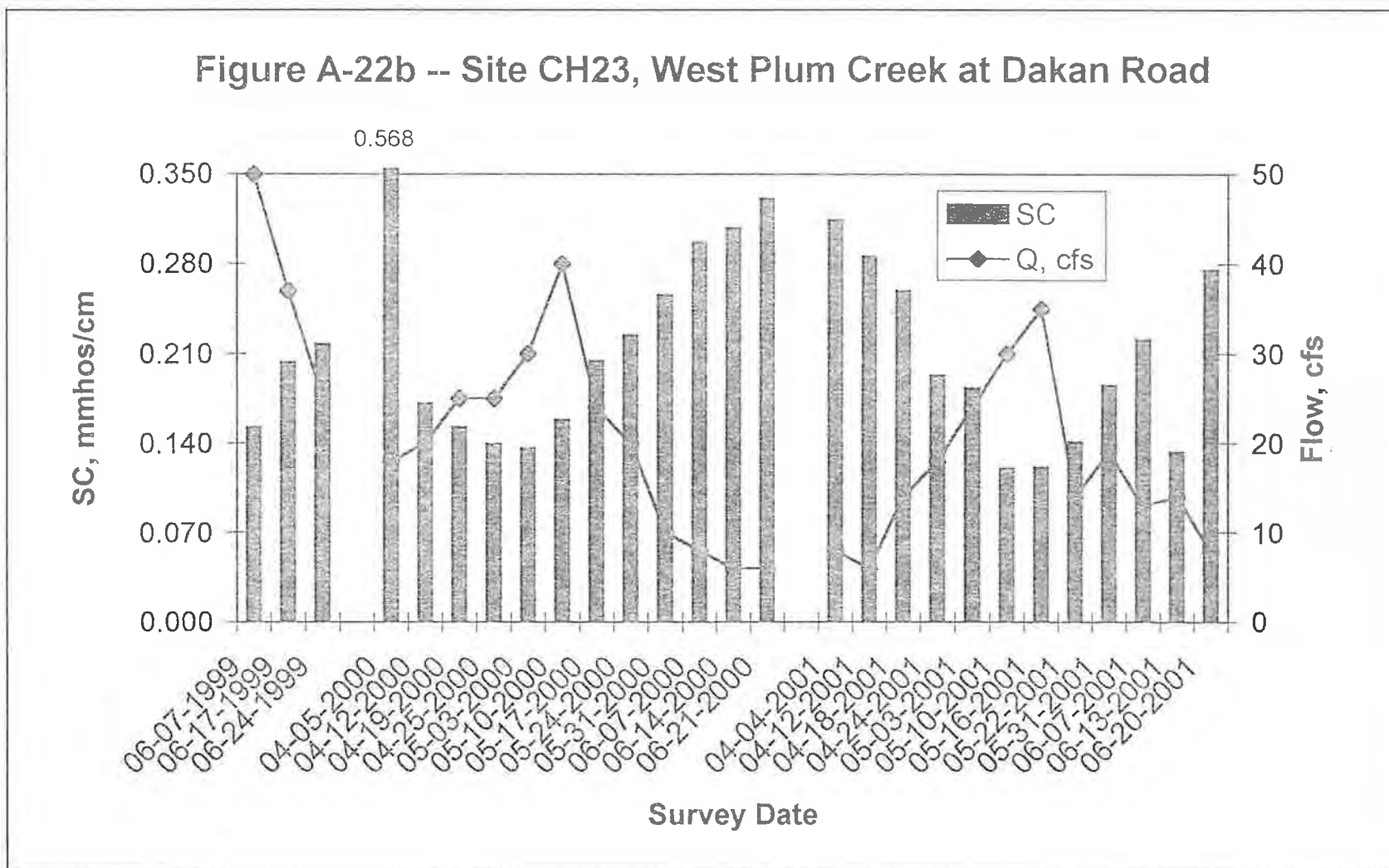
Figure A-21c -- Site CH22, West Plum Creek at Red Rock Rd

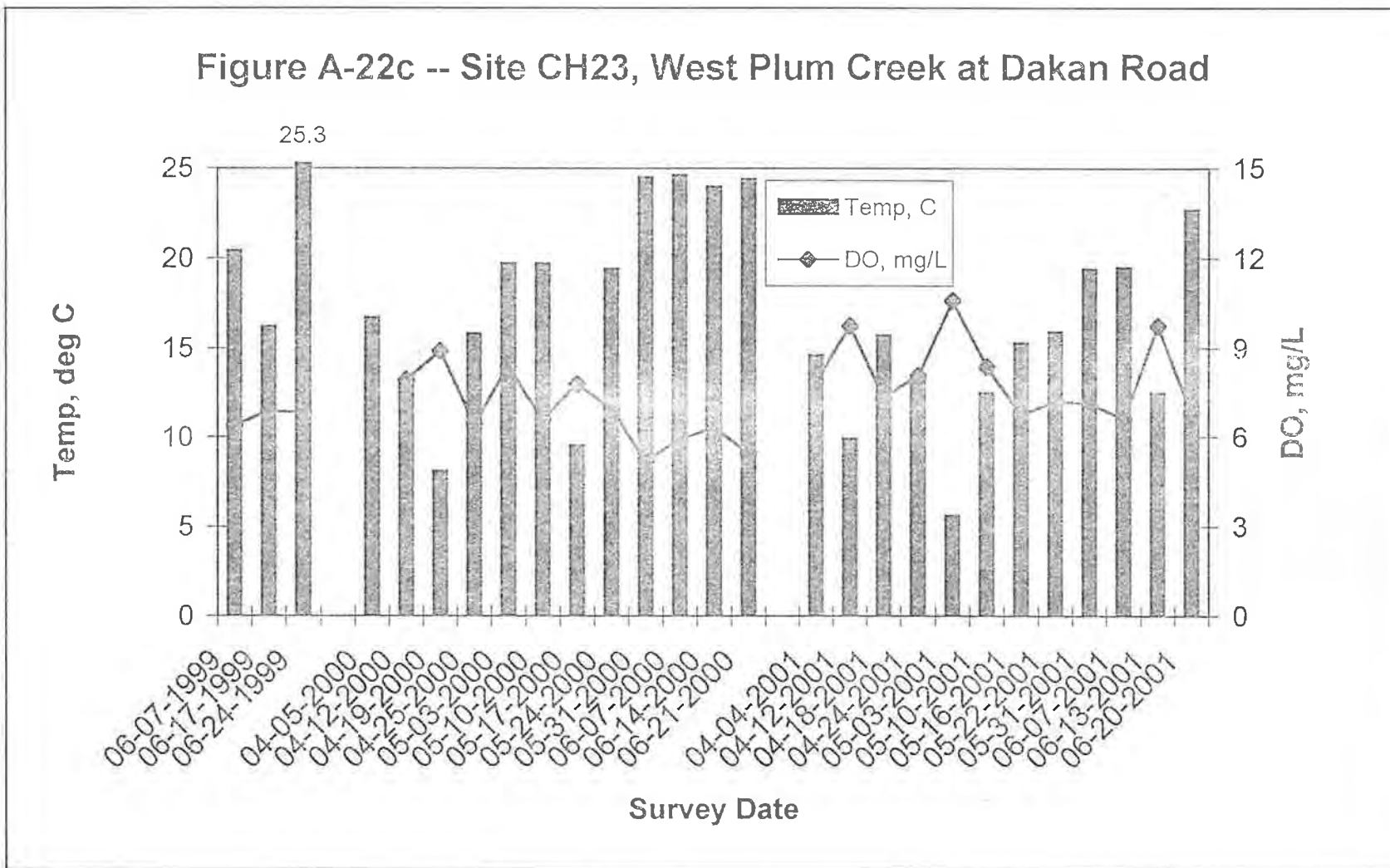


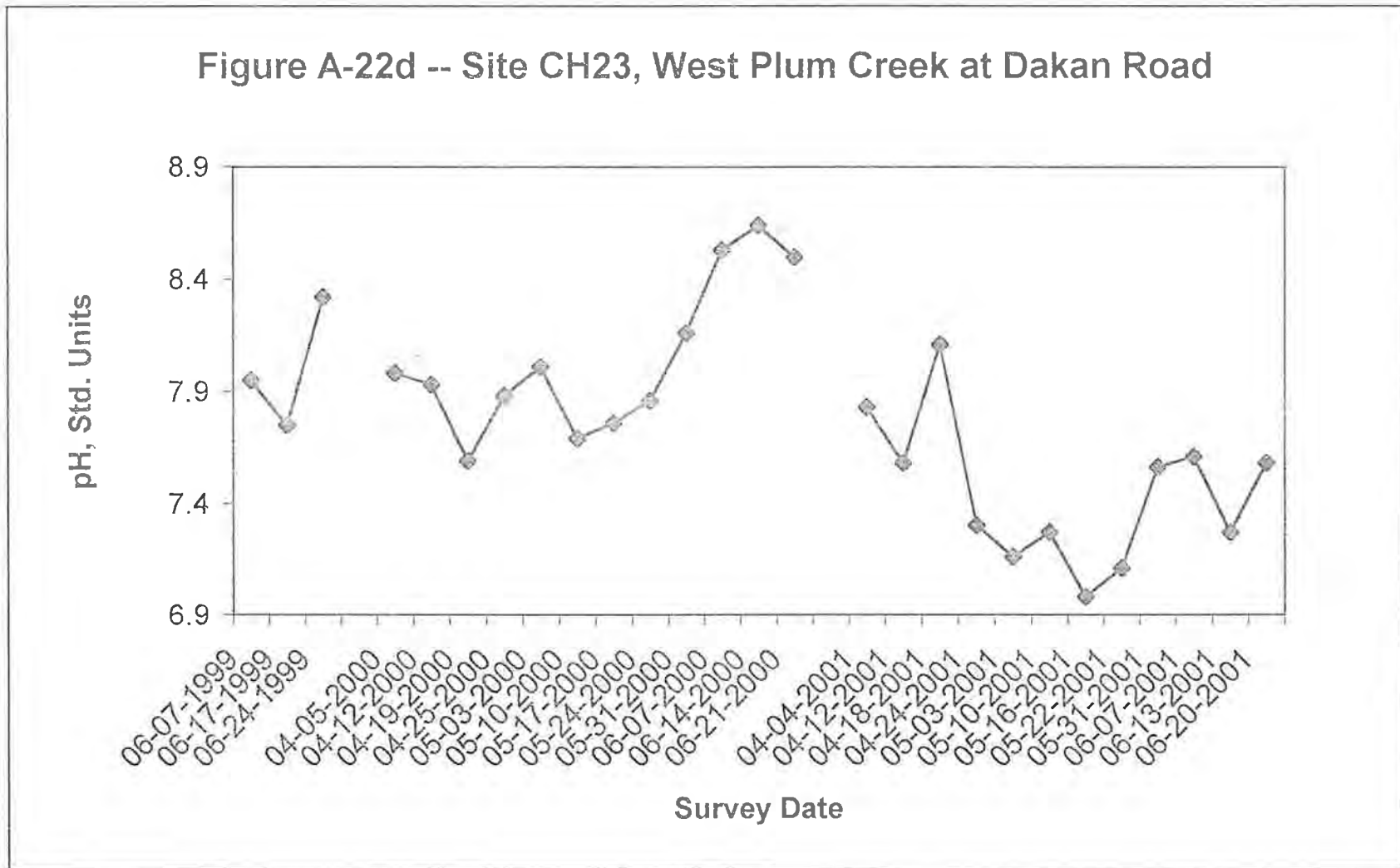


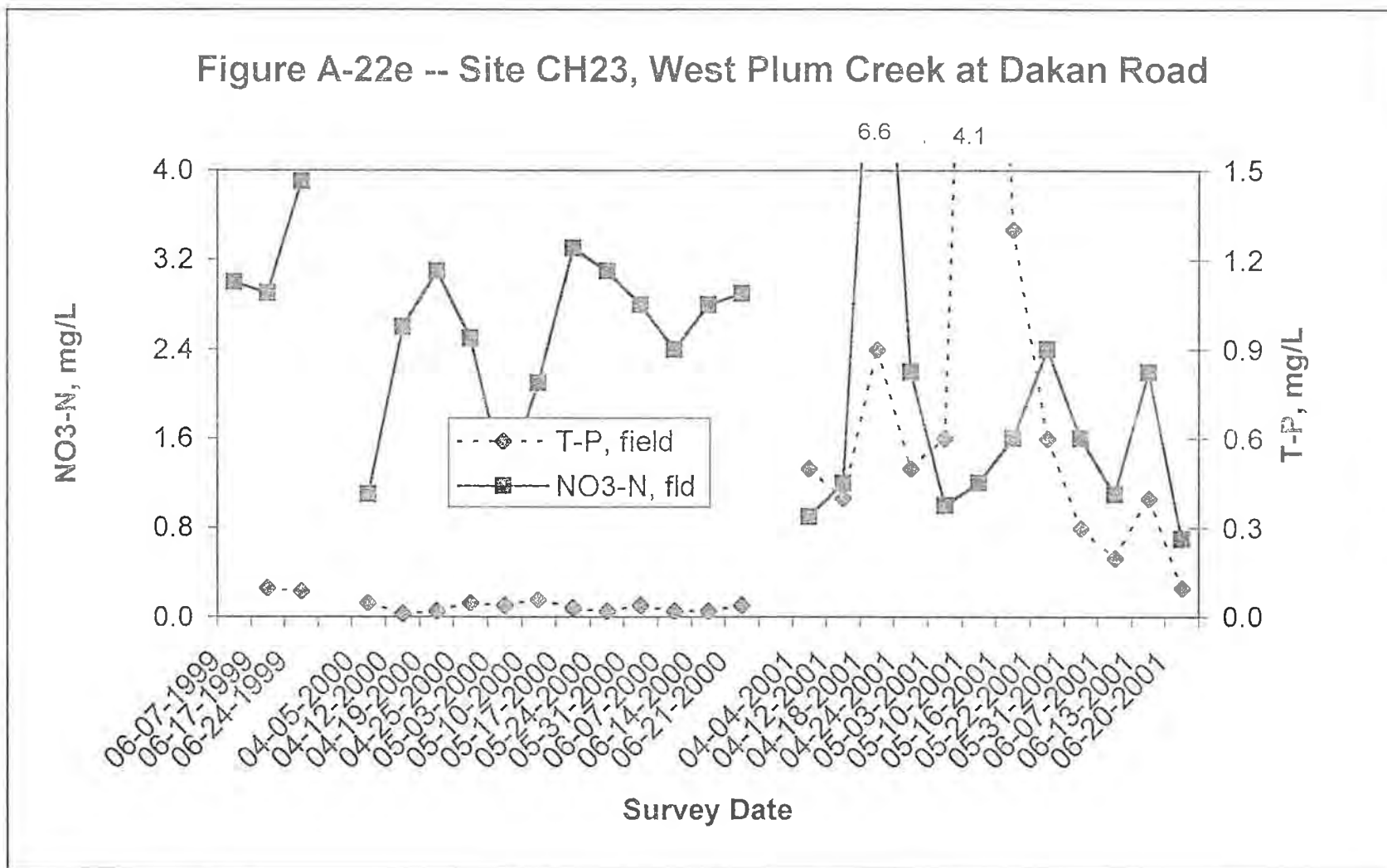


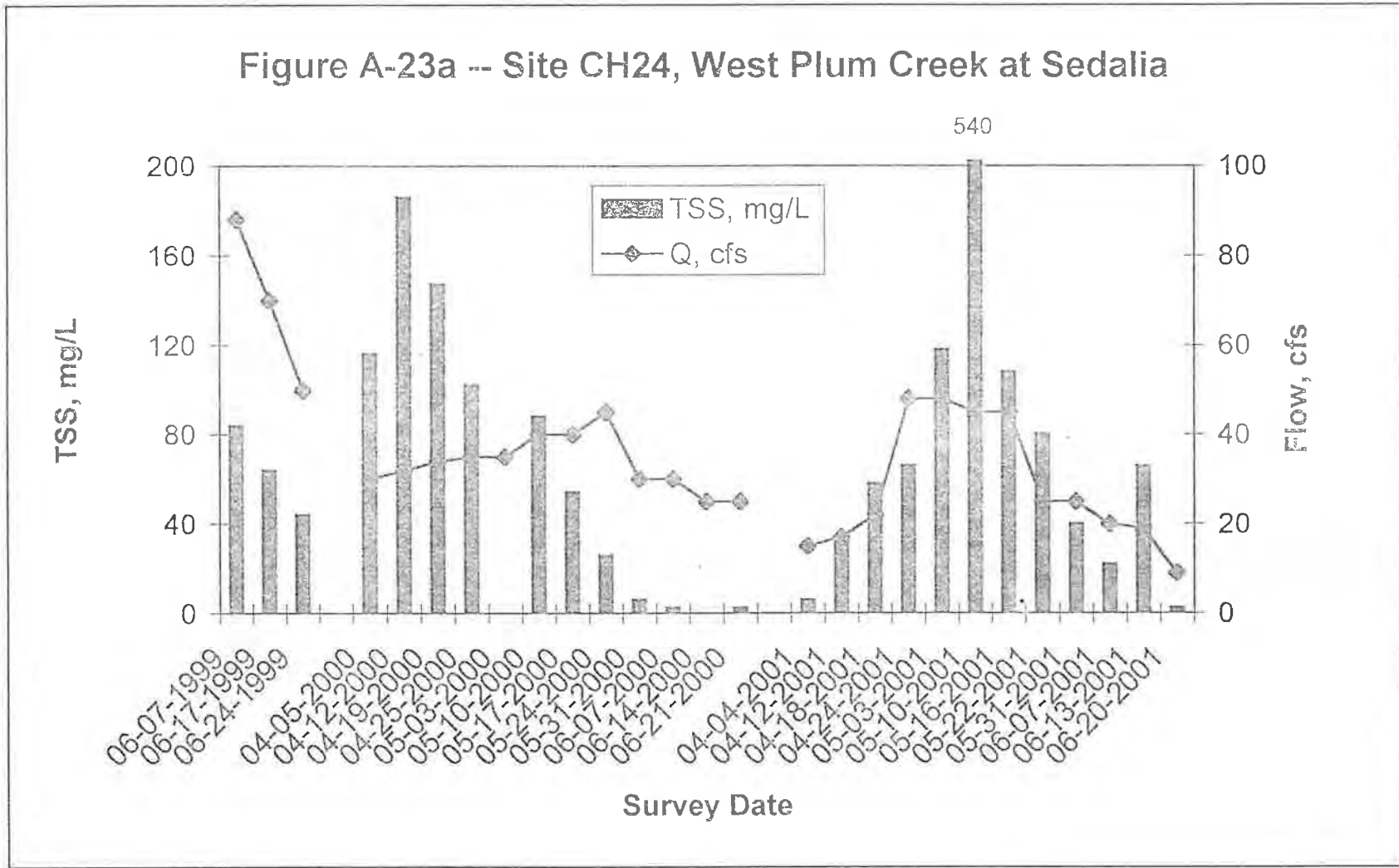












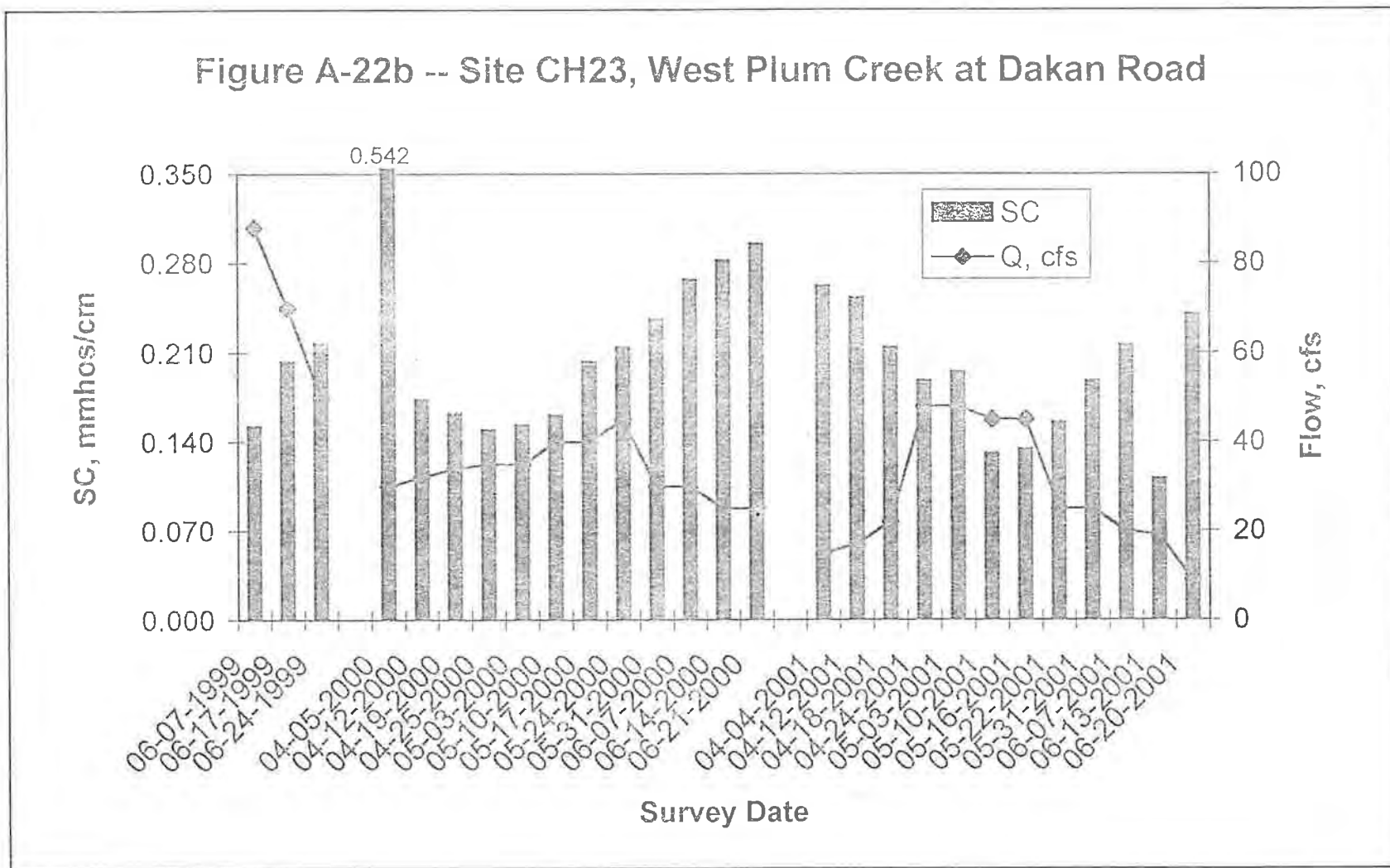
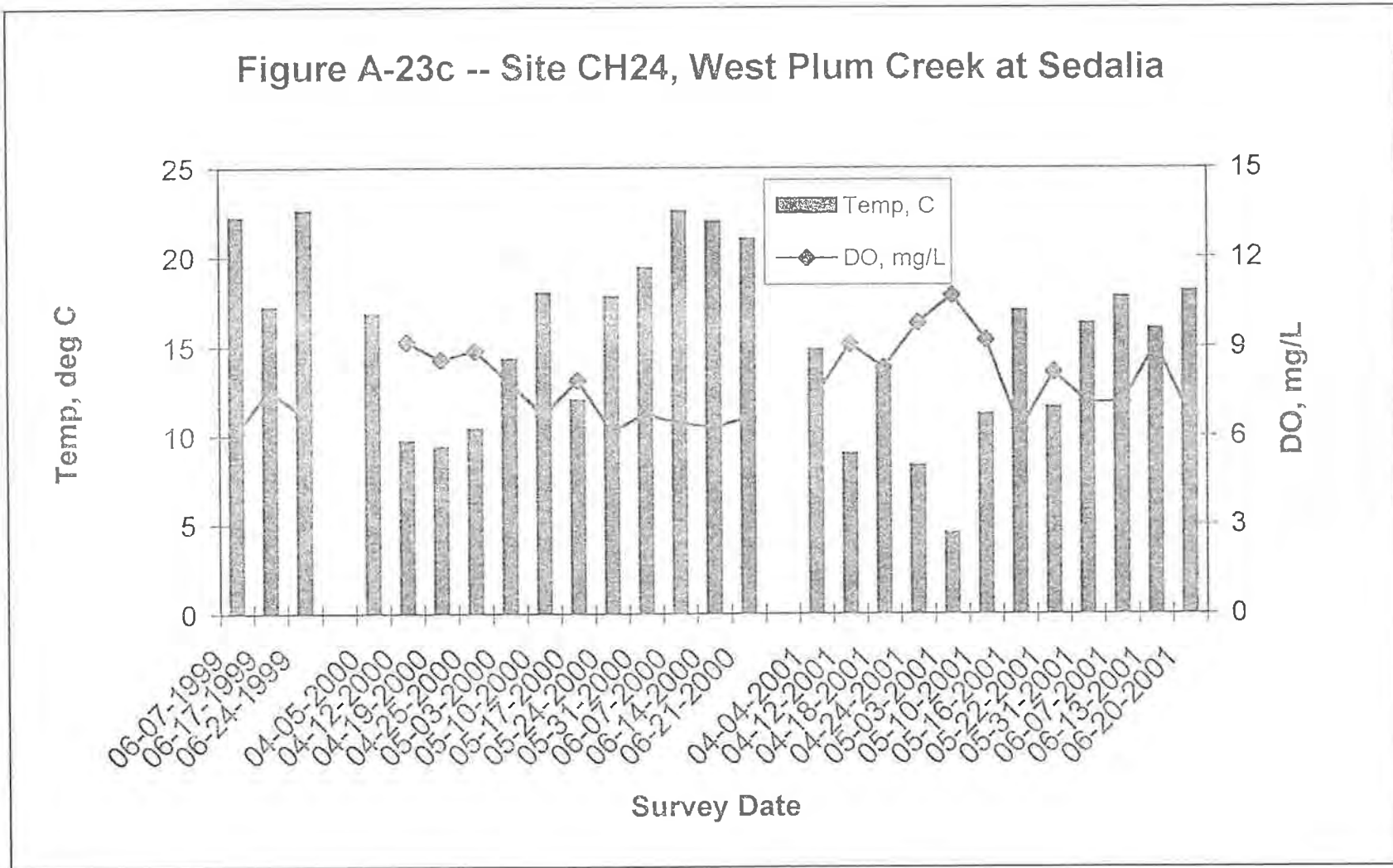


Figure A-23c -- Site CH24, West Plum Creek at Sedalia



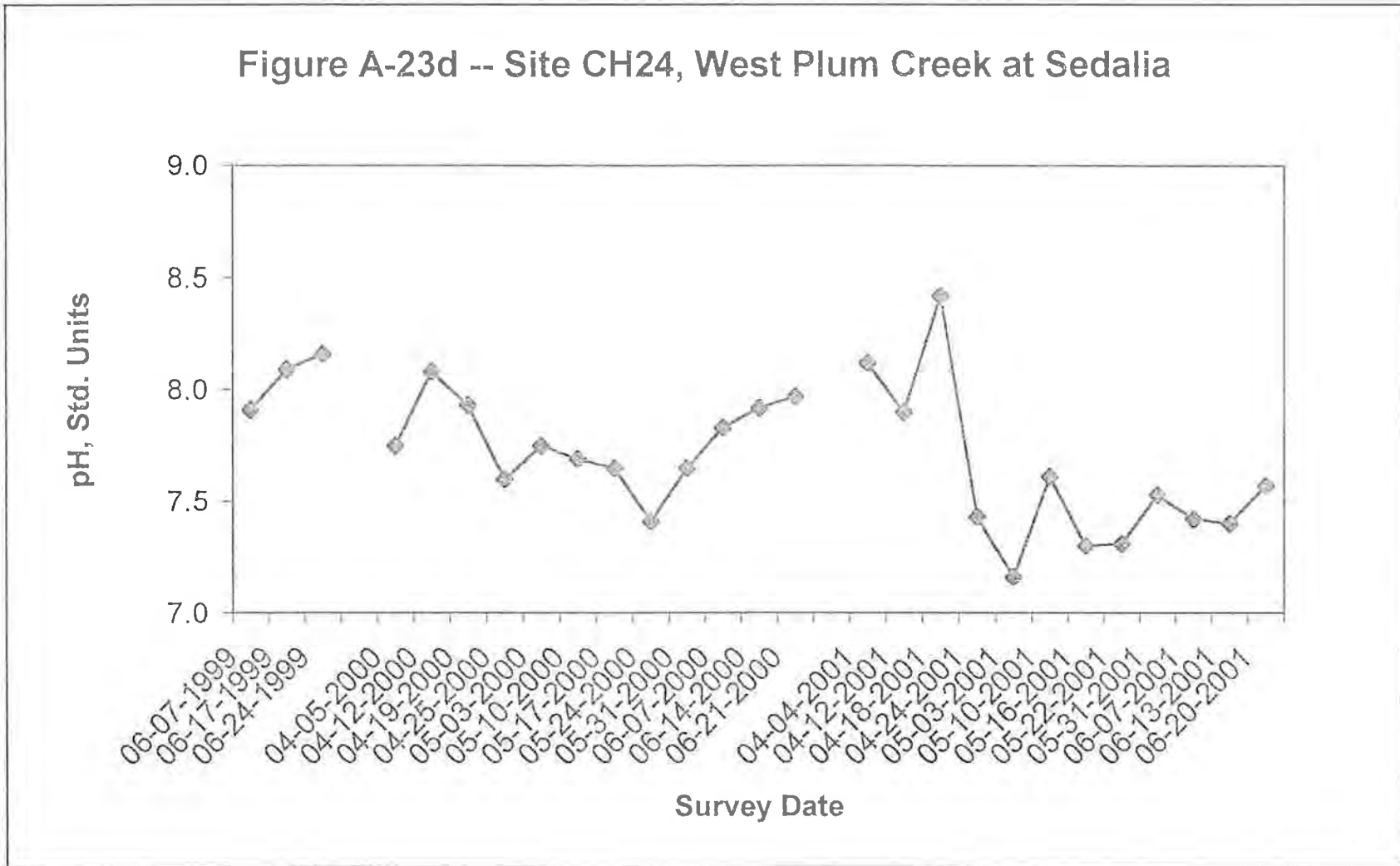
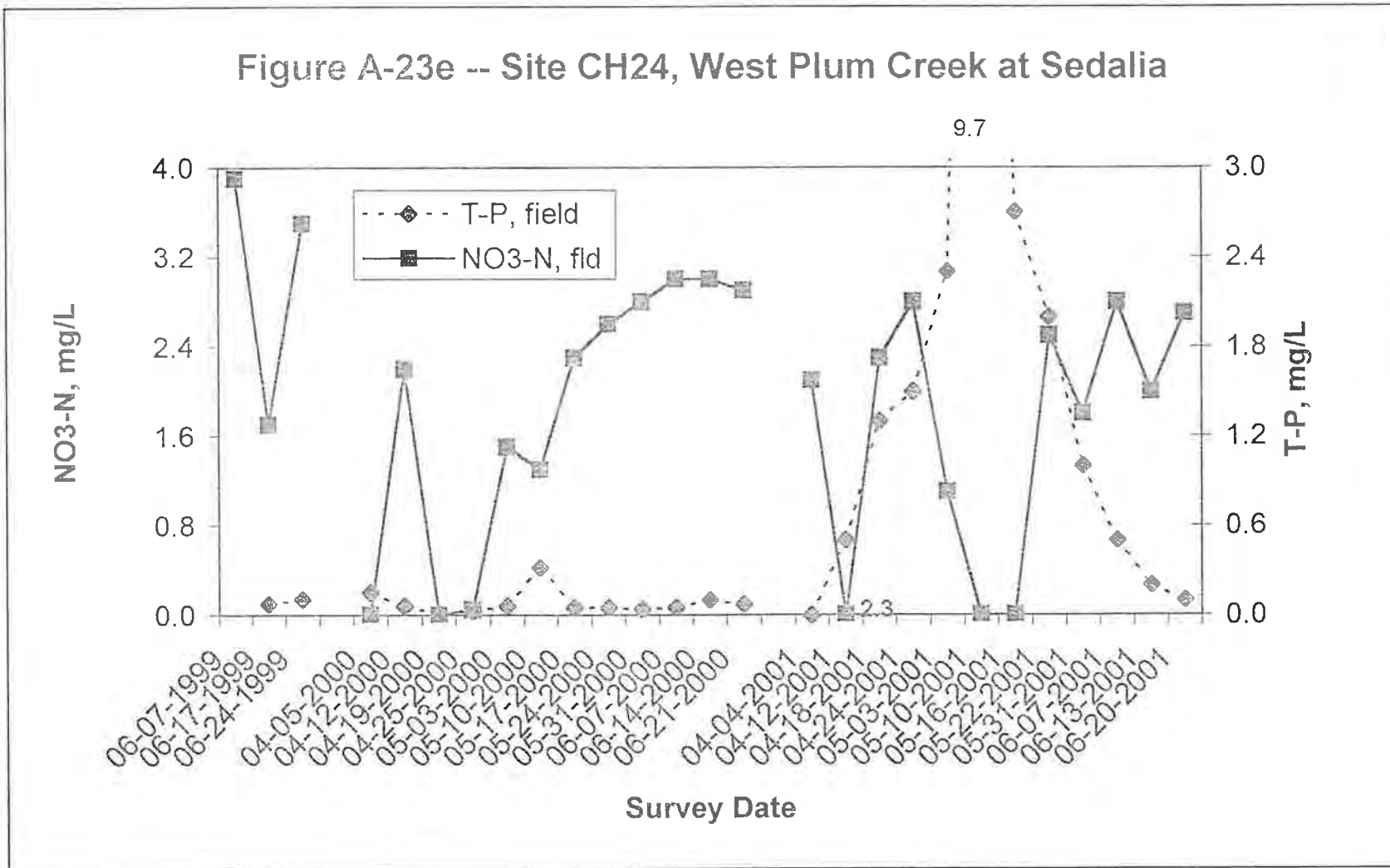


Figure A-23e -- Site CH24, West Plum Creek at Sedalia



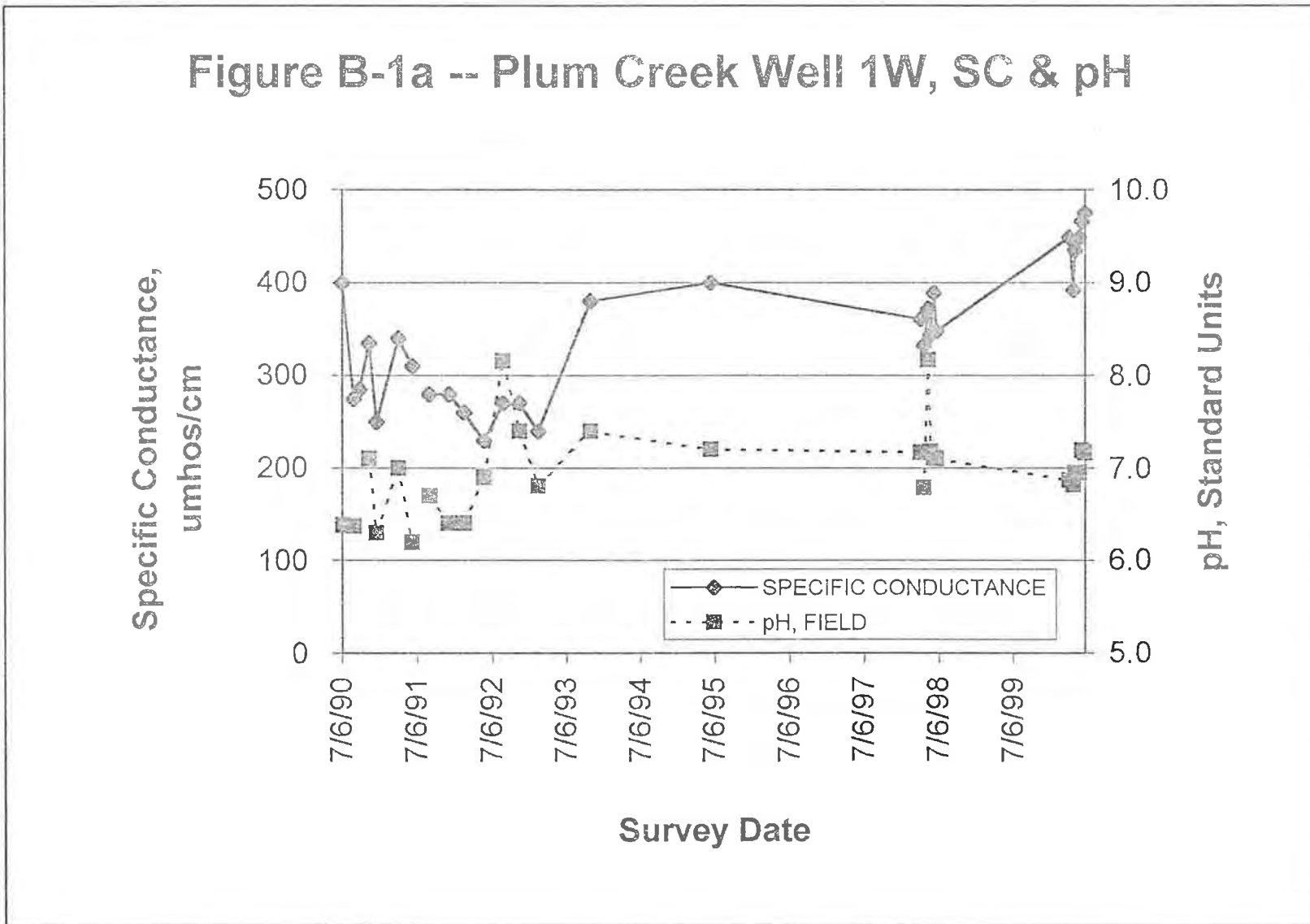
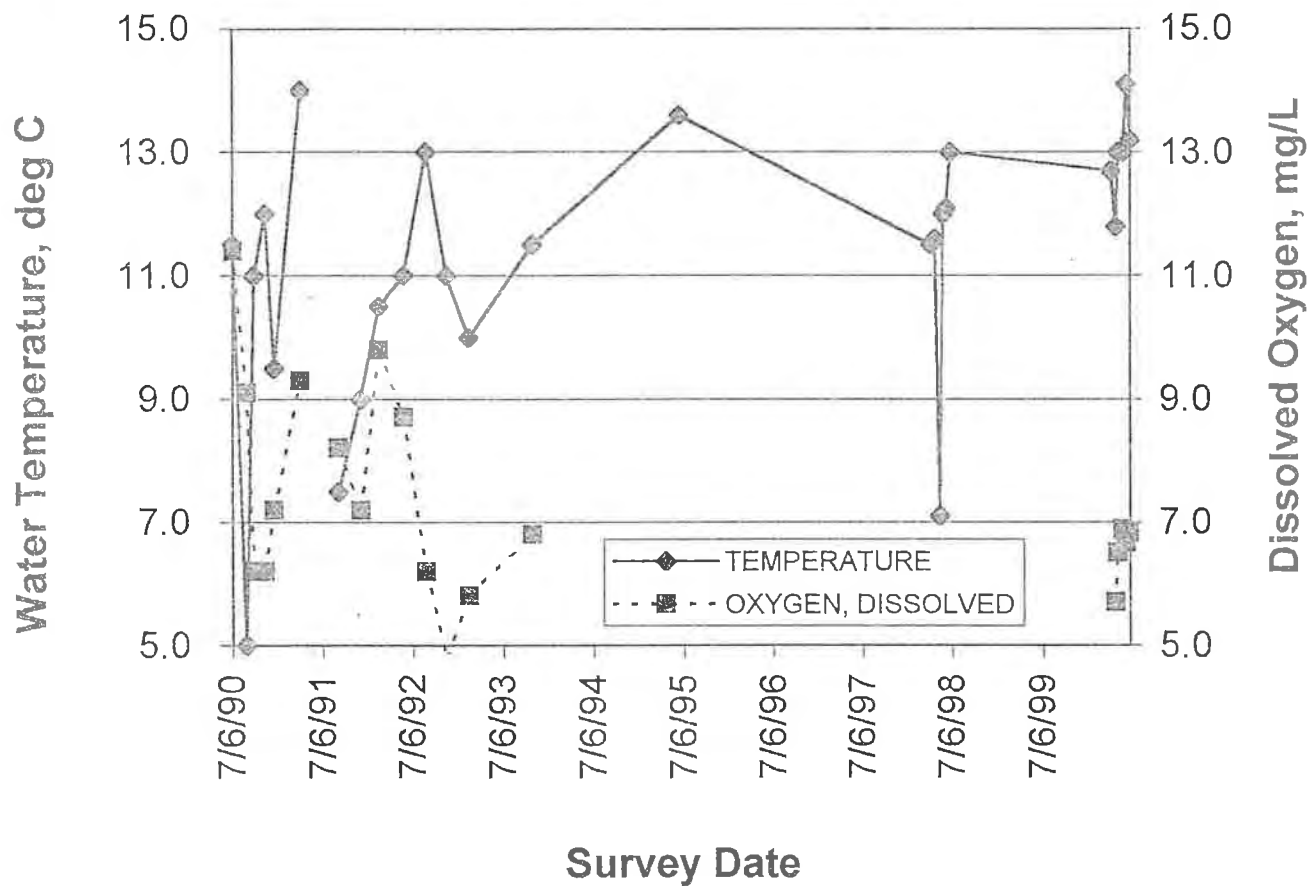
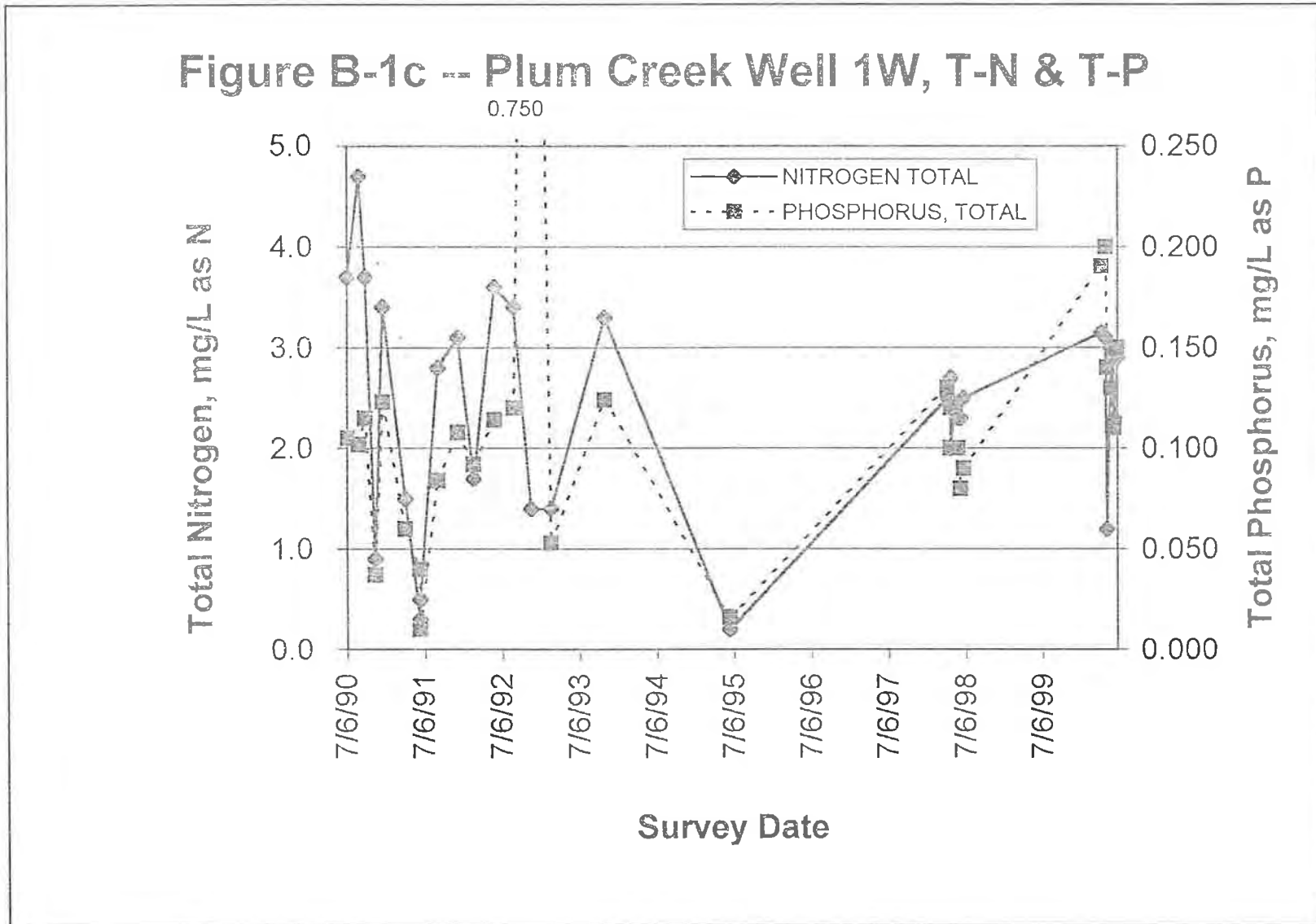
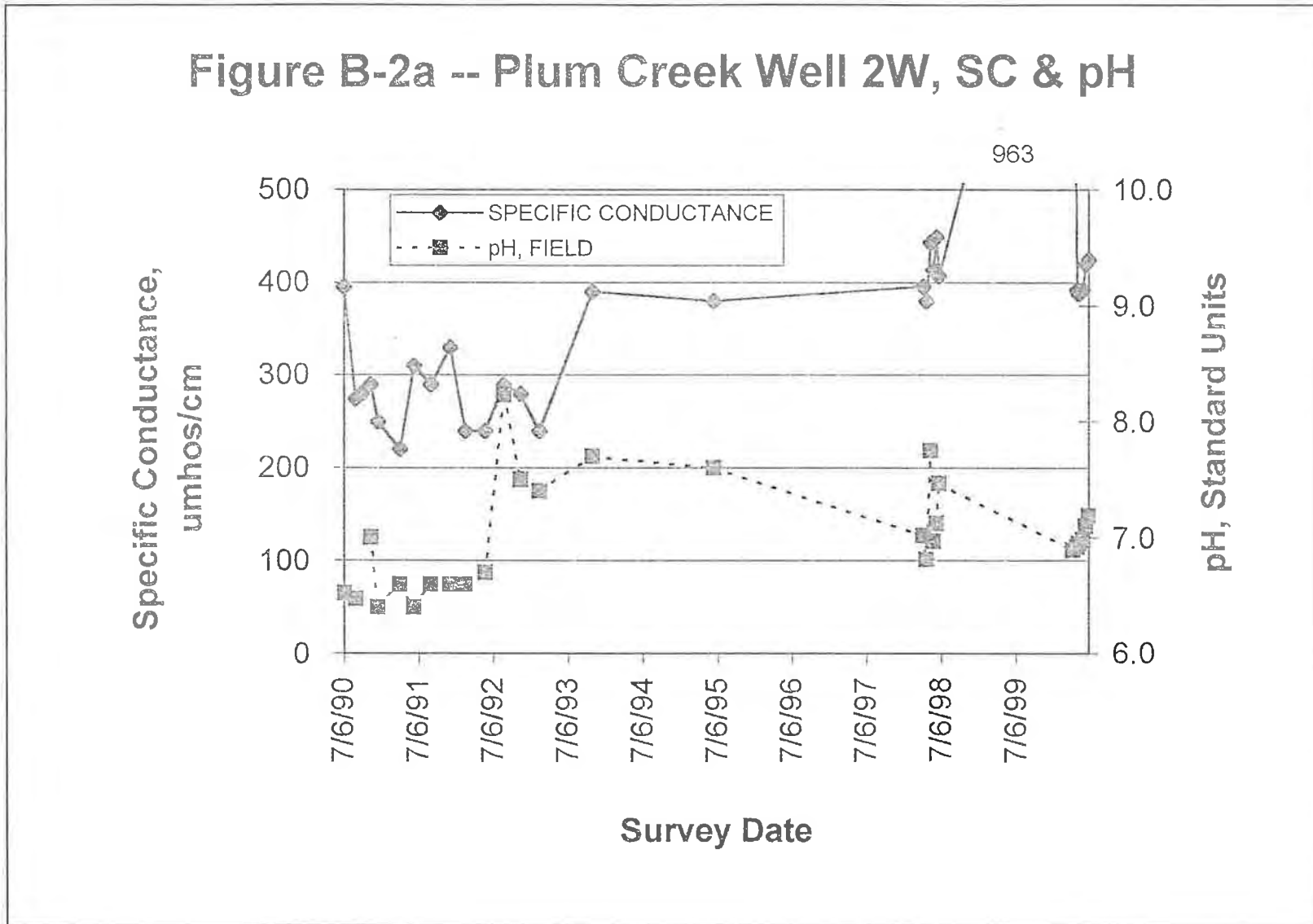
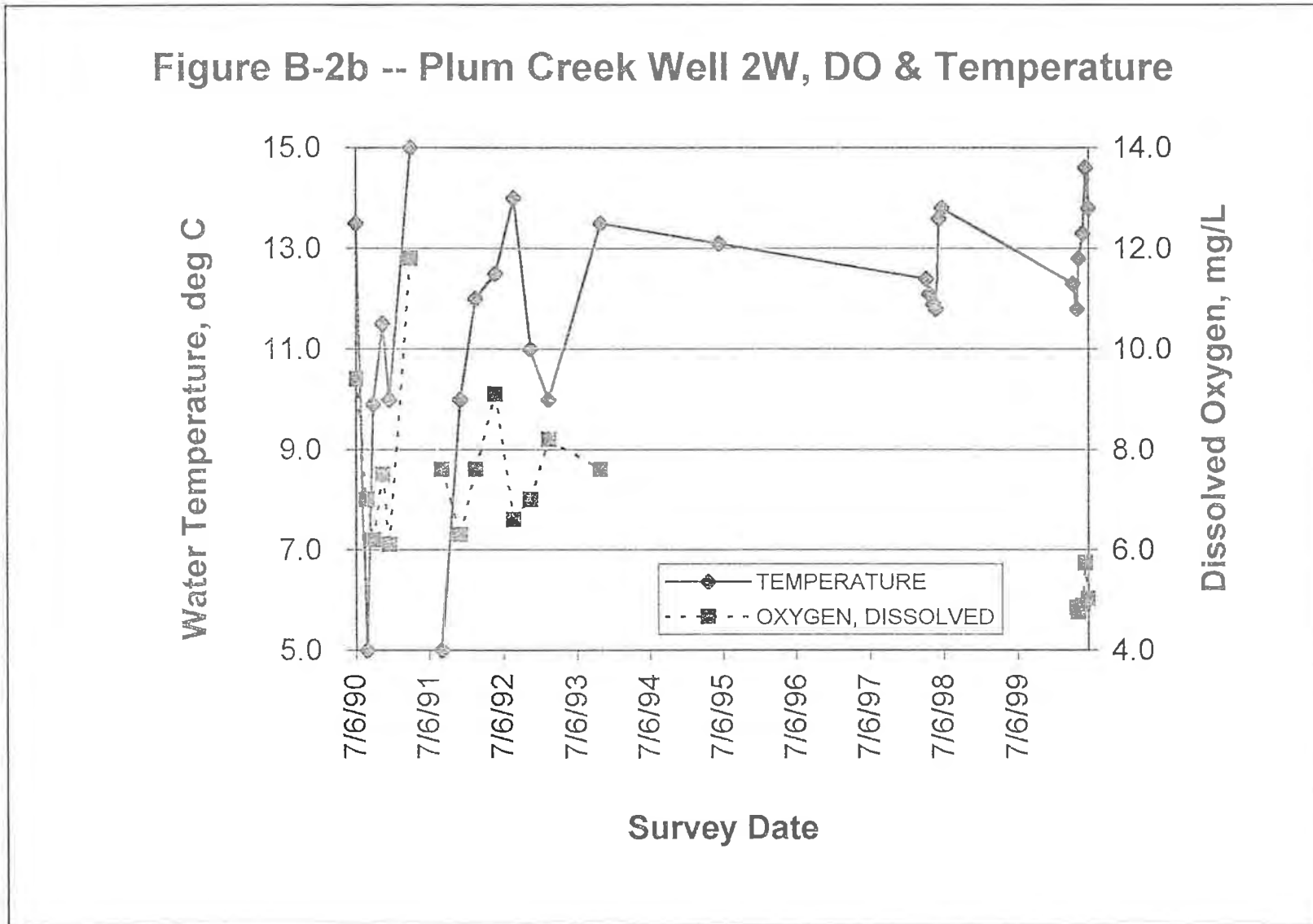


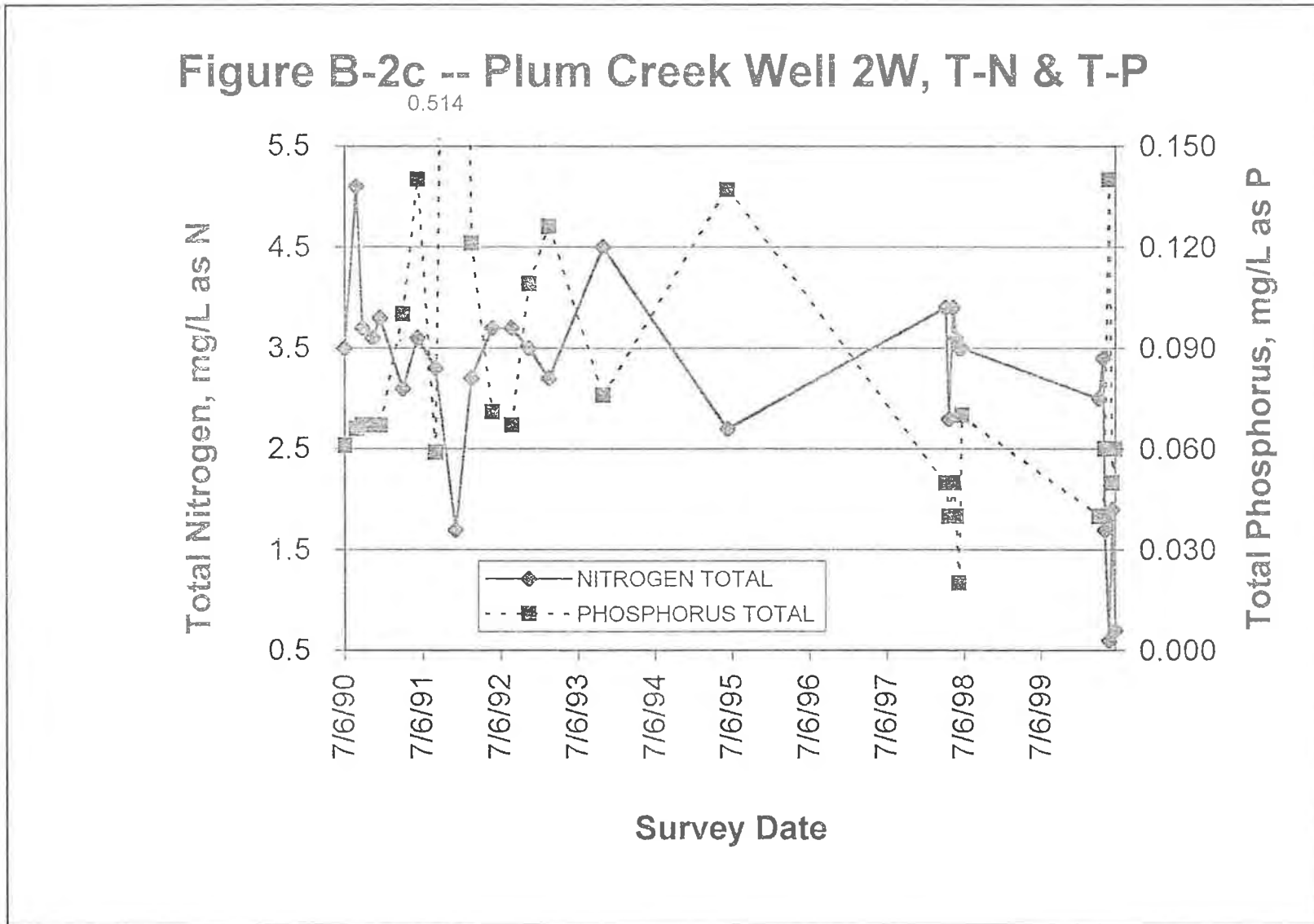
Figure B-1b -- Plum Creek Well 1W, DO & Temperature

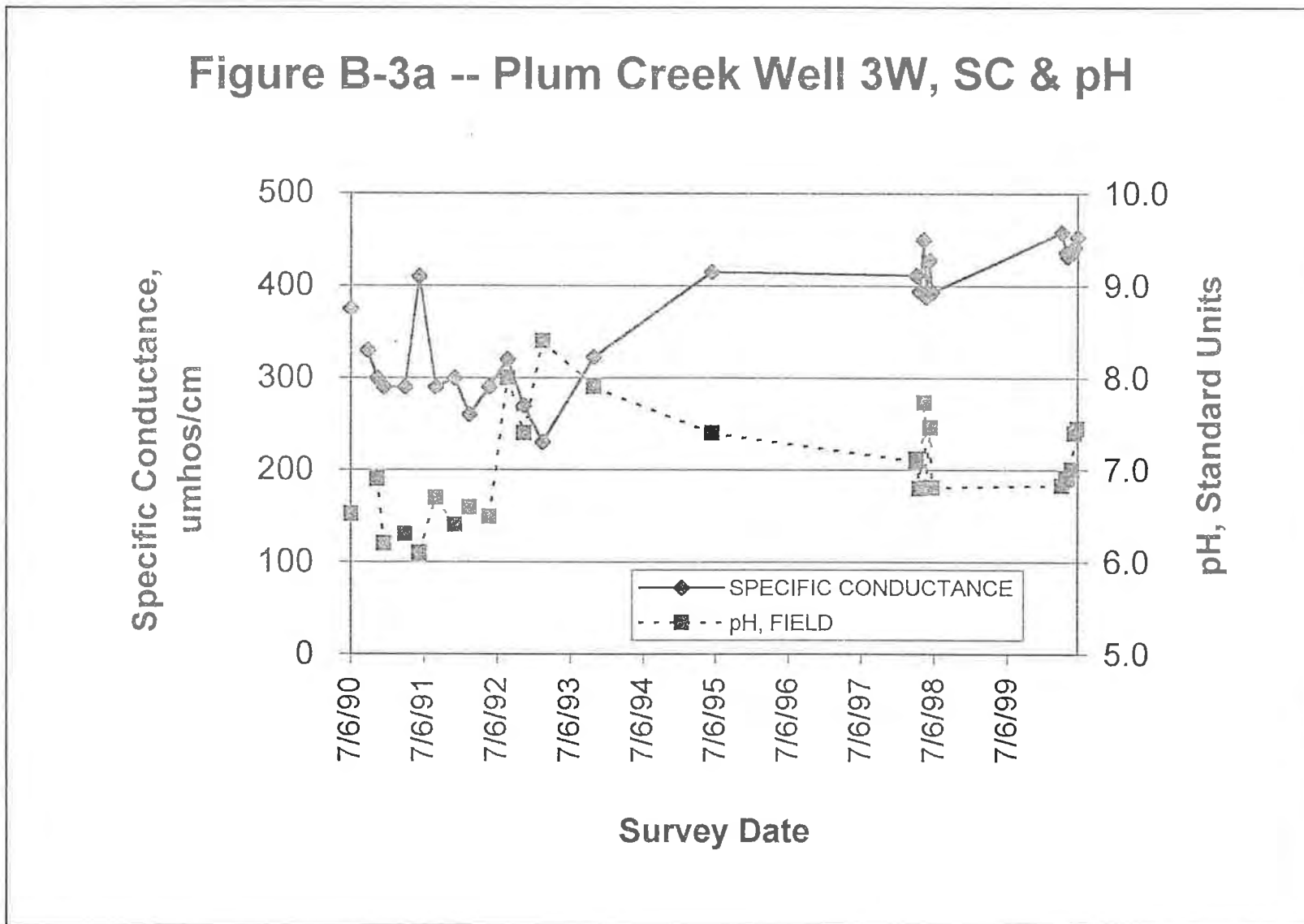


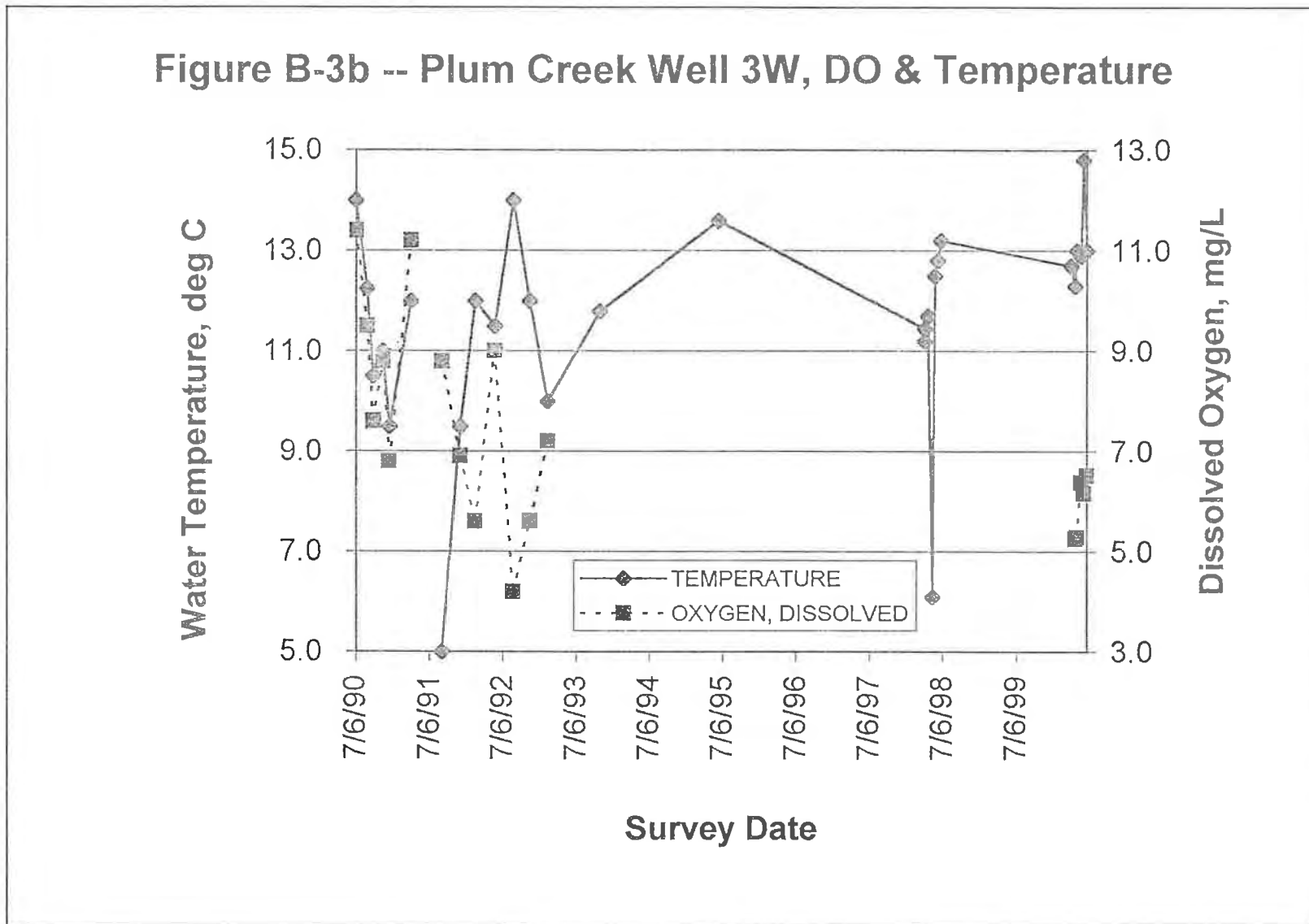


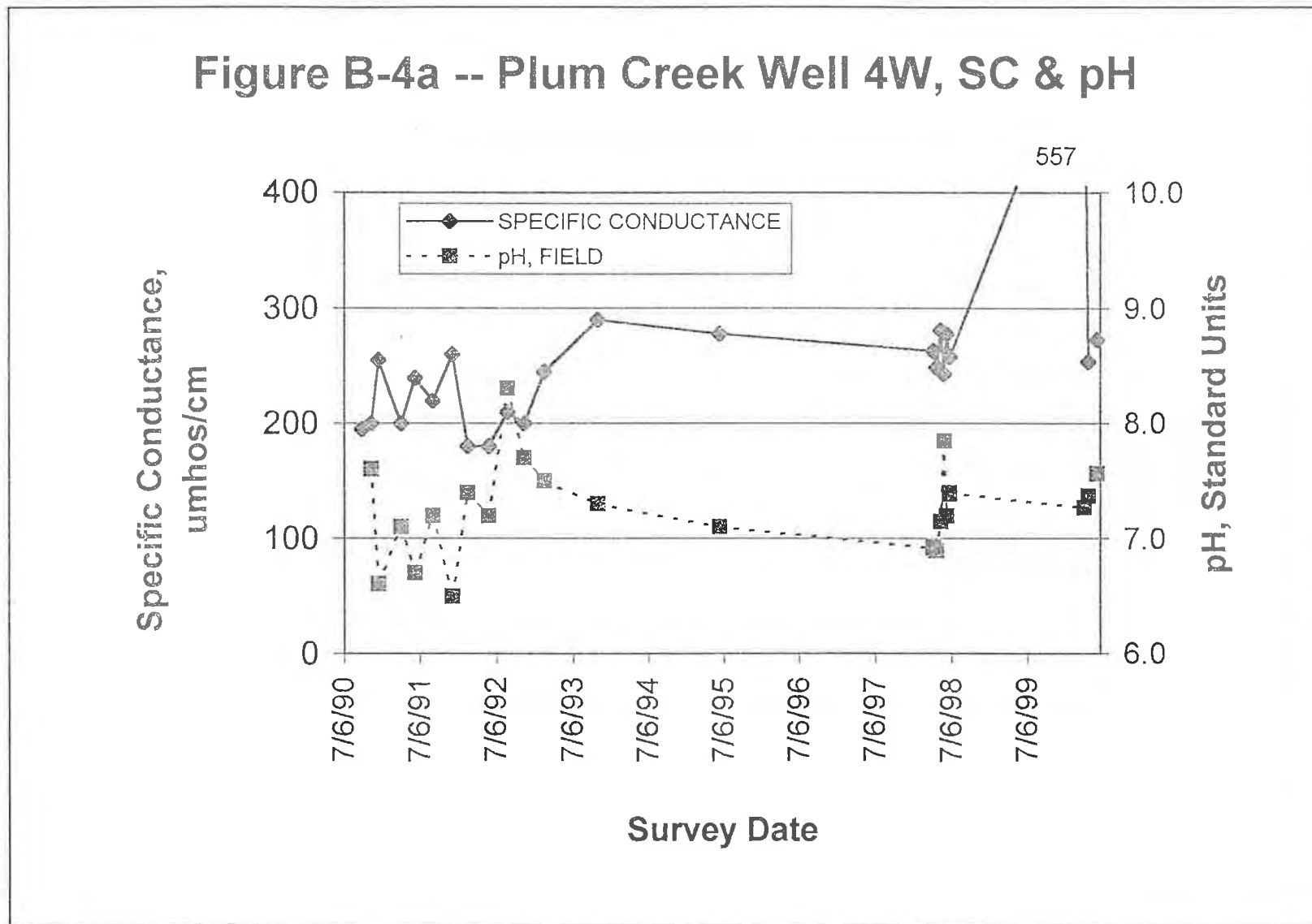












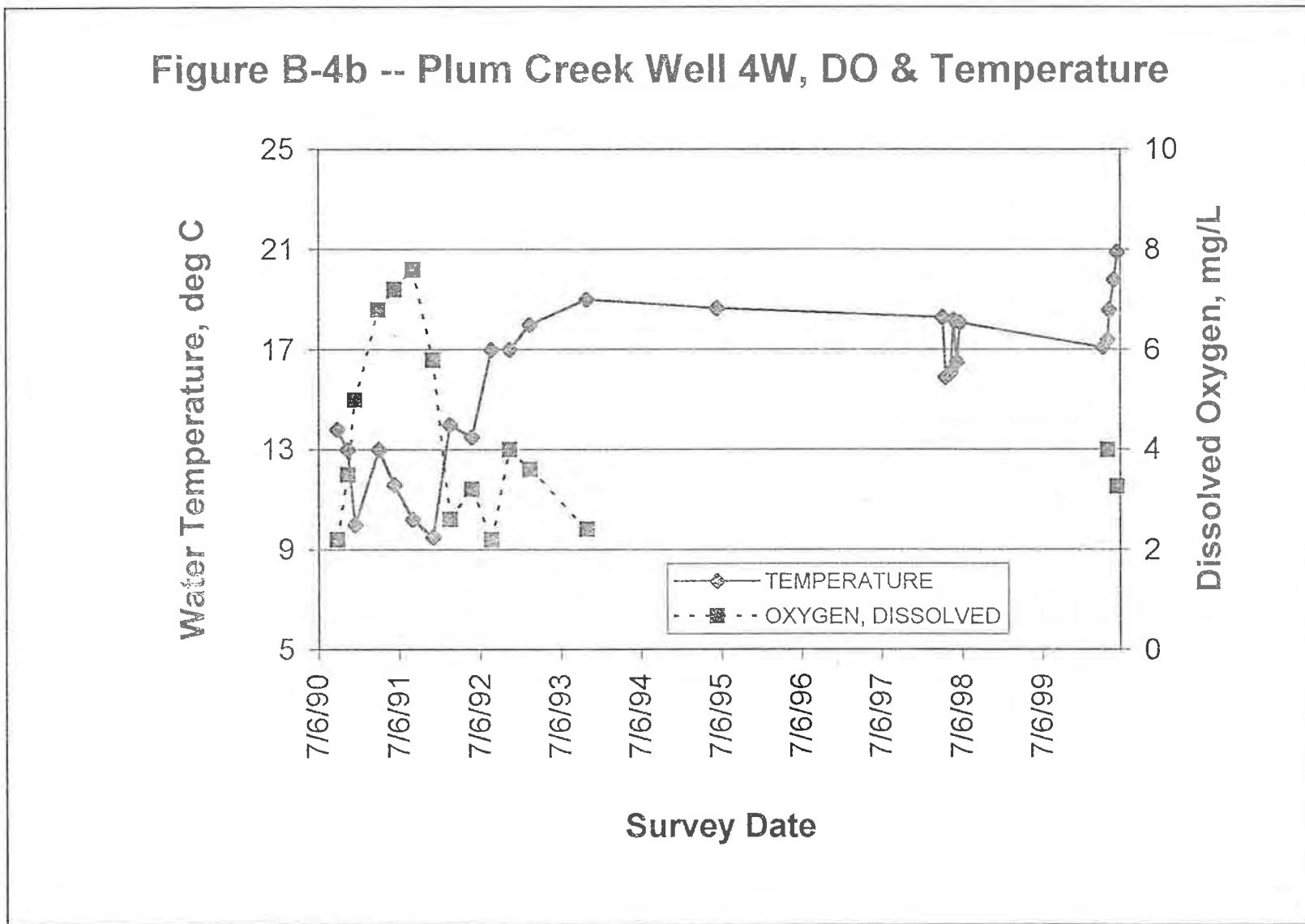
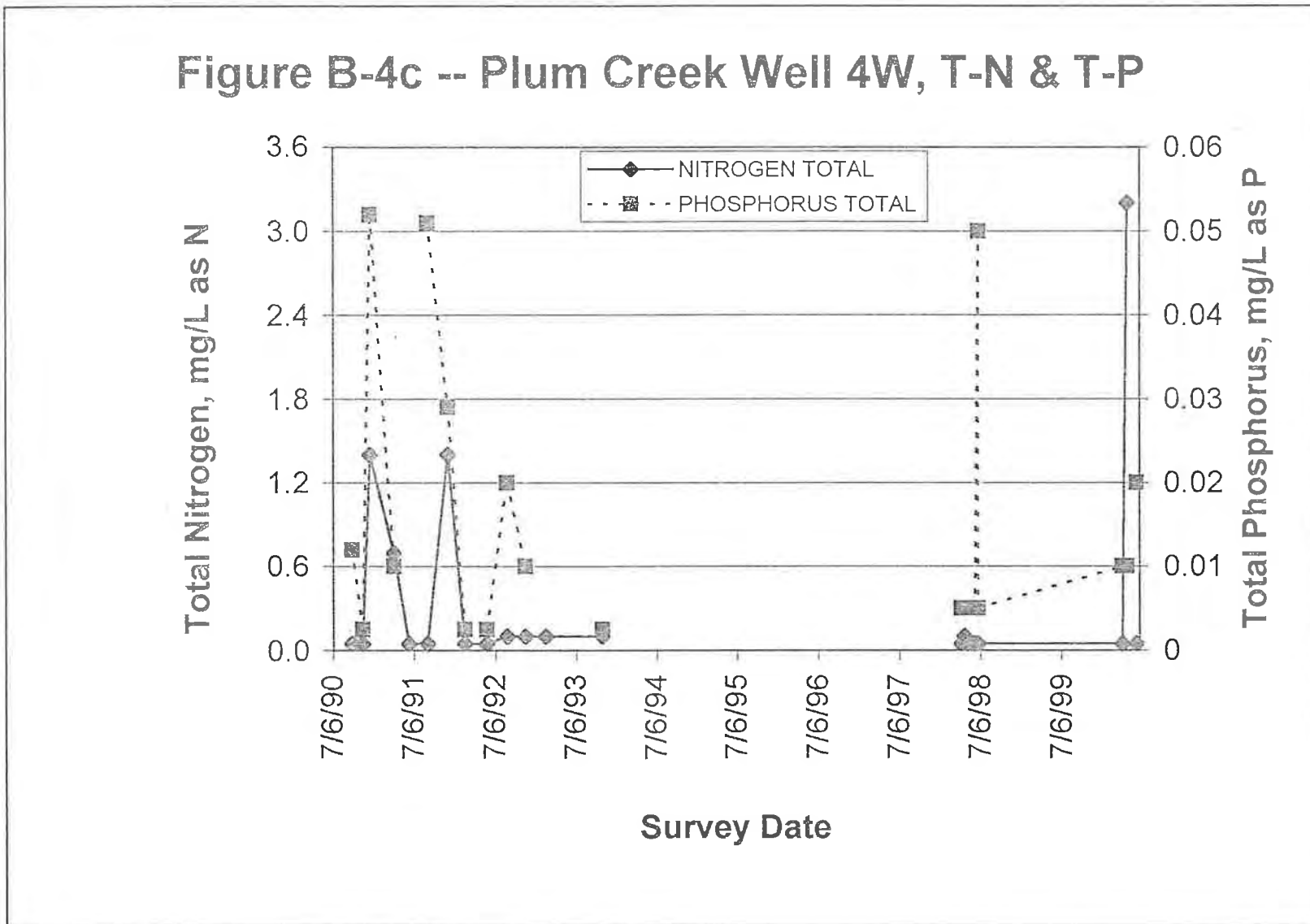
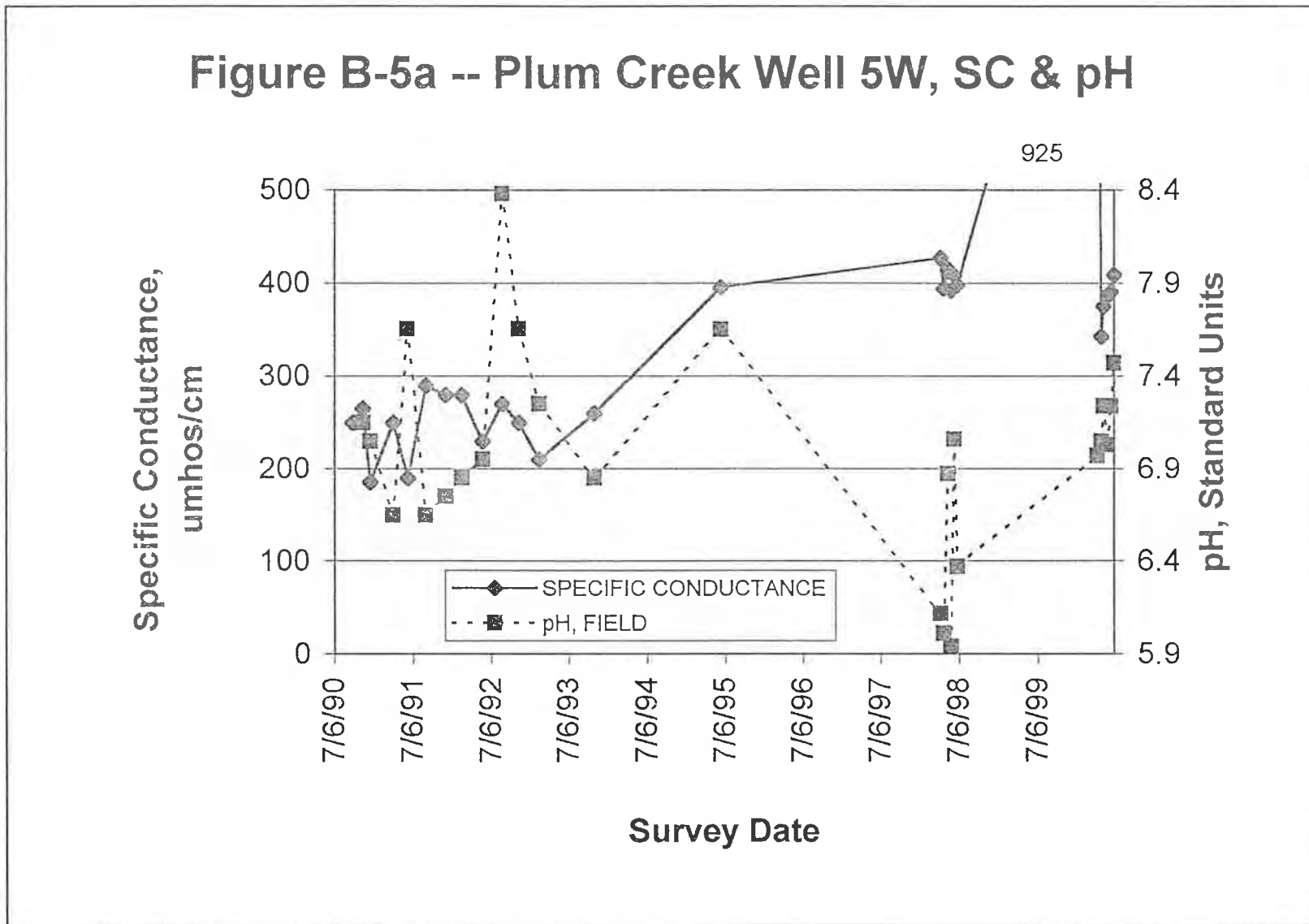
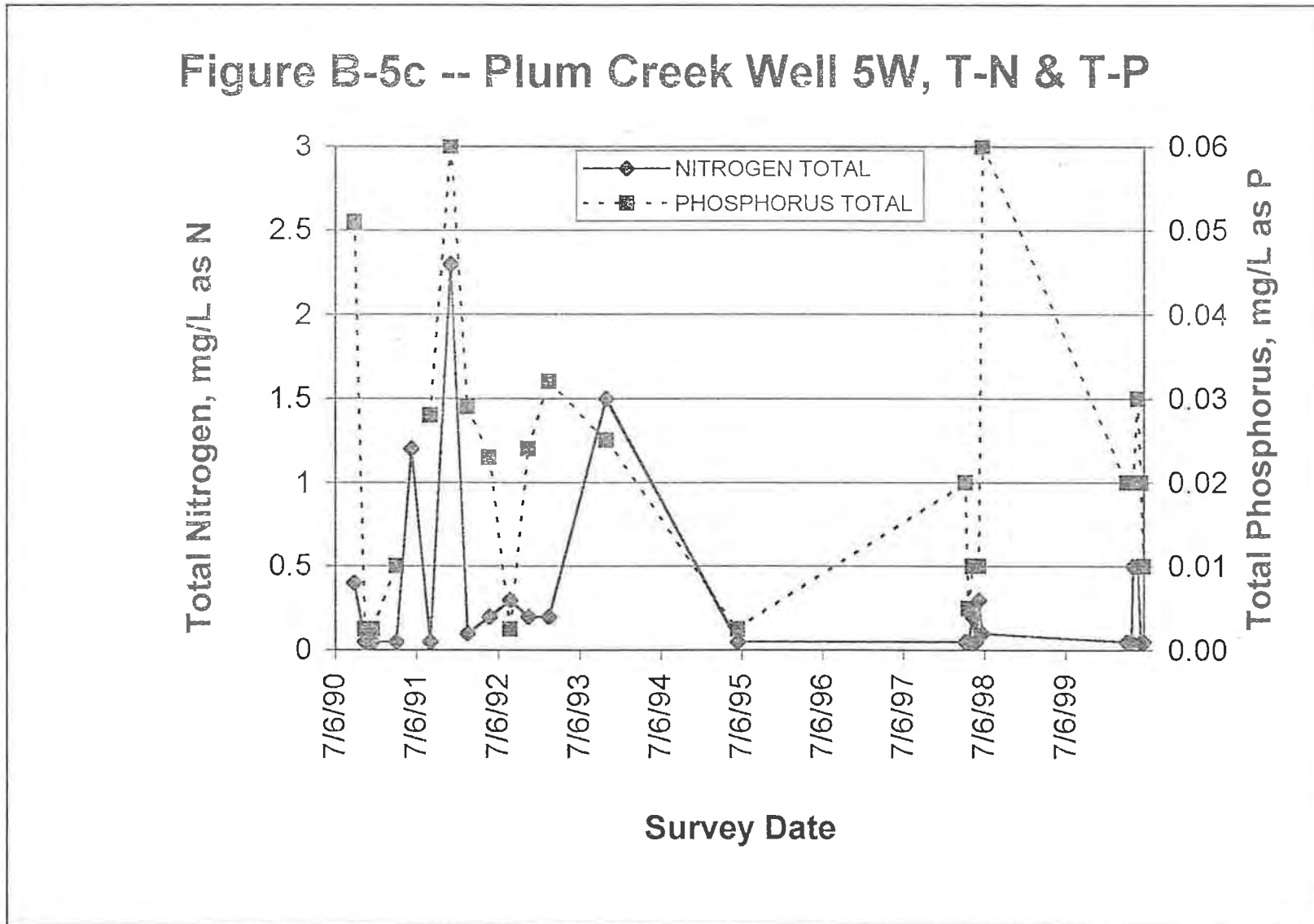


Figure B-4c -- Plum Creek Well 4W, T-N & T-P







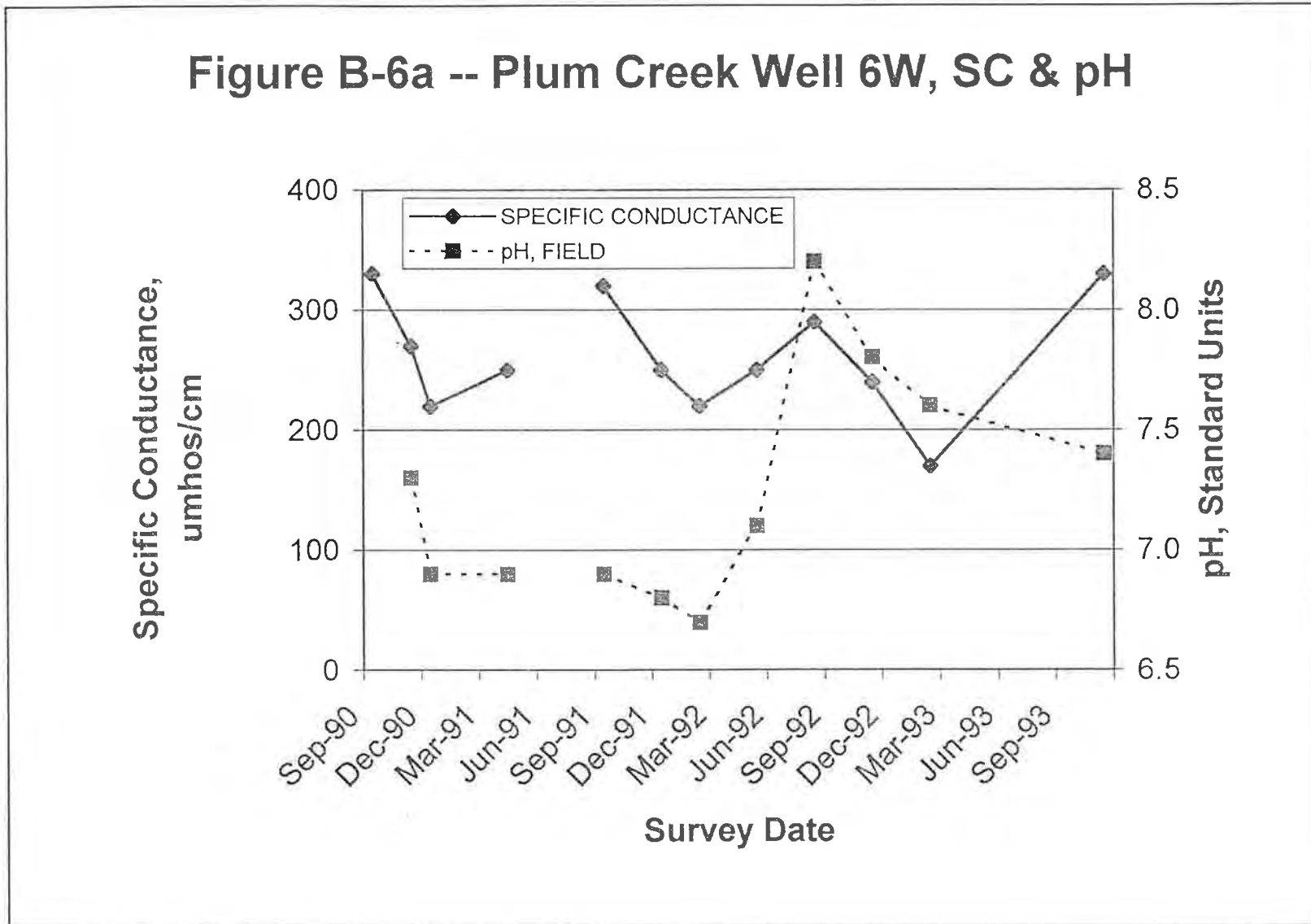


Figure B-6b -- Plum Creek Well 6W, DO & Temperature

