

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PAS MAP SHEET AREA, 63F

The area covered by The Pas map sheet comprises about 5700 square miles, or 3,650,150 acres, between 53° and 54° north latitude and 100° and 102° west longitude. About 86 percent of the area lies in west-central Manitoba, and the rest is in east-central Saskatchewan.

The area lies entirely within the Manitoba Lowlands physiographic region. All of the area was glaciated in the Pleistocene Period and covered by the waters of glacial Lake Agassiz. The bedrock formations underlying this area are mainly Silurian and Devonian limestones of Paleozoic age. Some Lower Cretaceous sandstones and shales of Mesozoic age occur in the southwest. This area comprises two distinct physiographic subdivisions based on surficial deposits and topographic patterns. The gently undulating to undulating till deposits of the Interlake - Westlake plain; and the smooth, nearly level floodplain deposits of the Saskatchewan Delta in the northern half of the area.

The Interlake - Westlake plain can be divided into the Moose Lake - Cedar Lake plain, the Overflowing River plain, and The Pas moraine.

The Moose Lake - Cedar Lake plain, composed of till and rock outcrops, extends across the northern edge of the area to Moose Lake and then southeastward along the northeast shore of Cedar Lake.

The Overflowing River plain, which is in the southwestern part of the area, is a very gently sloping till region covered by thick organic deposits as a result of the high water table. Scattered deposits of medium and fine textured till occur. The Santon and Overflowing rivers drain eastward into Lake Winnipegosis.

The Pas moraine is composed dominantly of medium textured till overlain in many places by thin organic deposits. It extends from the western side of Clearwater Lake, south to the town of The Pas, and eastward in a broad arc to the southeastern part of the area.

The Saskatchewan Delta is bounded by till and rock outcrops of the Interlake - Westlake plain. The Pas moraine bisects the Saskatchewan Delta into upper and lower sections. The Upper Saskatchewan Delta is bounded by the Moose Lake - Cedar Lake plain on the north and The Pas moraine on the east. A region of well-drained till runs westward from the moraine in the west-central part of the area and forms the southern boundary of the Upper Saskatchewan Delta. The Carrot and Pasquia rivers drain the Upper Saskatchewan Delta into the Saskatchewan River.

At the town of The Pas, the Saskatchewan River cuts through the moraine and forms the Lower Saskatchewan Delta, which drains into the Cedar Lake Reservoir. The Lower Saskatchewan Delta is bounded on the north and east by the Moose Lake - Cedar Lake plain and on the west by The Pas moraine.

The Lower Saskatchewan Delta occupies about 30 percent of the region east of the moraine. Cedar Lake Reservoir occupies about 50 percent of the region, and about 20 percent is made up of till deposits in the southeastern part of the area. The Pas moraine forms the divide between Cedar Lake and Lake Winnipegosis.

The Saskatchewan Delta is a flat to gently undulating plain sloping gently to the east. Several small drumlinoid hillocks of calcareous, fine to medium textured till occur throughout the Saskatchewan Delta. Most of the glacial till is buried under lacustrine and floodplain deposits. Deposition of fine to medium sediments occurred during the long intervals when the delta was covered by Lake Agassiz. When this part of Lake Agassiz drained, it became the lower reach of the Saskatchewan River system, which is characterized by stream meandering and delta formation. Floodplain deposits are up to 25 feet in some locations and are mainly composed of weakly to moderately calcareous sand, silt, and clay. Much of the delta is poorly drained and subject to annual flooding. Accumulations of peat are common, but vary in depth because of annual flooding and recent fires. Much of the Lower Saskatchewan Delta has become inundated as a result of the recent use of Cedar Lake as a reservoir for hydroelectric power.

The glacial till of The Pas moraine, the Moose Lake - Cedar Lake plain, and the Overflowing River plain is dominantly calcareous medium textured stony material. Local areas of moderately to strongly calcareous medium textured till, Lake Agassiz beach materials consist of poorly to well sorted, strongly calcareous sand and gravel. The organic deposits are composed of forest, sphagnum, and fen peats.

Except in the Saskatchewan Delta, the land is covered by coniferous forest. White spruce (*Picea glauca*) characterizes the better-drained sites, whereas black spruce (*P. mariana*) predominates on the poorly drained sites. Black spruce and tamarack (*Larix laricina*) are the dominant tree species in bogs.

Extensive fires throughout The Pas area have prevented the establishment of the black spruce climax forest. As a result, mature, well-developed stands with thick feathermoss carpets are rare.

The main species successional to fire on well-drained sites are trembling aspen (*Populus tremuloides*), jack pine (*Pinus banksiana*), and white birch (*Betula papyrifera*). The secondary successional species on these sites are white or black spruce. White spruce is the secondary successional species on south-facing slopes, around lakeshores, and on the well-drained alluvial deposits throughout the Saskatchewan Delta. Trembling aspen and black spruce are the successional species on imperfectly to poorly drained sites.

Bogs and fens occur throughout the area. Vegetation varies from black spruce bogs, which are characterized by a continuous forest of stunted trees with a dense undergrowth of ericaceous shrubs and mosses, to sedge fens.

Bogs occur in depressions where the main source of water is precipitation; here, acid conditions prevail. Black spruce and tamarack are the characteristic tree cover, and bog birch (*Betula glandulosa* var. *glandulifera*), willows (*Salix* spp.), Labrador-tea (*Ledum groenlandicum*) and baked-appleberry (*Rubus chamaemorus*) dominate the shrub understory. Forbs include horsetails (*Equisetum* spp.) and willow herbs (*Epilobium* spp.), and grow in association with dominant sedges (*Carex* spp.) and reed bent grass (*Calamagrostis* spp.) on a carpet of mosses (*Sphagnum* spp., *Hylocomium splendens*, and *Pleurozium schreberi*).

Fens receive their water from mineral soils. Therefore, an abundant supply of nutrients is available to nourish a rich flora. In the Saskatchewan Delta, fens usually lack sphagnum and often have a dense shrub cover, which includes especially willows and bog birch. Sedges and rushes (*Juncus* spp.) dominate the ground cover. Tamarack is the dominant tree species in fens outside the Saskatchewan Delta. Fens with dense tamarack stands have thick sphagnum moss ground cover.

Marsches occur on the poorly drained mineral deposits throughout the Saskatchewan Delta. The dominant species are sedges, rushes, reed grass (*Phragmites communis*), bulrushes (*Scirpus* spp.), and cattail (*Typha latifolia*).

### CLIMATE

The climate of the area is continental subhumid, characterized by warm, short summers and very cold, long winters. The average yearly precipitation at The Pas is 17 inches, about three-quarters of which falls as rain during the growing season. The mean annual temperature, based on records of more than 40 years at The Pas, is 32° F. July, the warmest month has a mean monthly temperature of 65° F., and January, the coldest month, has a mean monthly temperature of -5° F.

The mean date of the last spring frost occurs on May 31, but varies from May 7 to July 12, whereas the mean date of the first fall frost occurs on September 9, and varies from August 8 to October 11. The area has a growing season of 154 to 165 days and an average of 100 frost-free days a year.

The short growing season (2000 to 2250 degree-days) is offset to some extent by the longer photoperiod in northern latitudes. This is reflected in the rapid growth of hay and pasture crops and the rapid development and delayed maturity of cereal crops in the area.

Low-lying regions have a shorter frost-free period, but they generally have a longer growing season than more elevated regions. This is partly because of the high humidity. The humidity often results in fog formation and cloud cover in the fall on the Saskatchewan Delta and the southern fringe of Cedar Lake.

### SOILS AND AGRICULTURAL CAPABILITY

The soils of the area are within two climatically significant zones. Zone II, characterized by Chernozem-Brunisol soils, comprises the Saskatchewan Delta and a small part of the extreme southwest. Organic, Gleysolic, and Regosolic soils predominate in this zone. The rest of the area is within Zone III, a Brunisol-Luvisolic-Organic zone, whose upper boundary is directly north of The Pas area. Climatic conditions in this zone vary from mild in the southern part of the area to severe in the northern part. The dominant soils in Zone III are Organic, Luvisolic, and Brunisol soils.

Organic soils comprise about 40 percent of the area. Fibrisols and Mesisols are dominant and have developed from forest, sphagnum, and fen deposits. Fibrisols, developed from sphagnum peat, consist mainly of relatively undecomposed organic material. Mesisols are in an intermediate stage of decomposition. The organic material of Mesisols in the area is either fen or forest peat or a combination of these. Organic soils are denoted as Class 0 for agricultural capability.

Gleysolic soils comprise about 10 percent of the area. These soils are saturated with water for part or all of the year, unless they are artificially drained. Gleysols are the dominant Gleysolic soils in the area. They are characterized by a very thin, dark surface mineral horizon high in organic matter, which is usually overlain by less than 16 inches of fen or forest peat. Gleysols have developed on all parent materials in the upper part of their profile. Agricultural capability for Gleysols in the area ranges from Classes 3 to Class 6, with the main limitation being wetness. Sites rated Classes 3 and 4 usually reflect man-made improvements in drainage.

Regosolic soils comprise less than 5 percent of the area. Only the Regosol Great Group has been identified to date. Regosols are well and imperfectly drained soils that have little or no horizon development. Regosols in the area occur mainly in the Saskatchewan Delta along stream channels and are dominantly imperfectly drained. They are usually light colored and have developed on fine sandy loam to clay textured, moderately calcareous sediments with a high productivity potential. Agricultural capabilities range from Classes 2 to 4, with the main limitations being wetness, poor structure, and salinity.

Brunisolic soils comprise about 10 percent of the area; Eutric Brunisols are dominant. These are well to imperfectly drained soils that in their natural state have organic surface horizons underlain by a thin leached horizon and a brownish mellowed horizon. Eutric Brunisols predominate on extremely calcareous, stony, medium textured glacial till deposits. These soils range from Classes 3 to Class 6 in agricultural capability, and are mainly limited by stoniness and wetness.

Luvisolic soils occur in less than 3 percent of the area. These well to imperfectly drained Gray Luvisols are characterized by organic surface horizons, light-colored eluvial horizons, and brownish illuvial horizons in which clay is the main accumulation product. Gray Luvisols are found on the thick, fine-textured, moderately calcareous till deposits throughout the area and also occur as minor associates of the Eutric Brunisols on the medium textured, high-lime tills. The agricultural capability of the Gray Luvisols in the area ranges from Classes 3 to 6. The main limitations are wetness, poor structure, and salinity.

Within the area, a combination of climate and land development problems significantly restrict agriculture. Before inundation by Cedar Lake, the possibilities of agricultural development of 360,000 acres in the Lower Saskatchewan Delta were studied. However, Rahls Island, which comprises about 7000 acres east of The Pas, is the only other reclaimed arable land.

The Pas has become a trading center for the Pasquia and Rahls Island farming settlements, which are significant as the largest northern farming settlements in Manitoba. The recently constructed forestry complex at The Pas has resulted in an influx of people and has also provided employment for many of the native people.

The Canadian National Railway links The Pas with the northern communities of Flin Flon, Snow Lake, Lynn Lake, Thompson, and Churchill. Highway No. 10 links The Pas with mining areas in the north and with the farming communities of Swan River and Dauphin to the south. A secondary road west of The Pas extends through the Pasquia settlement and joins Saskatchewan Provincial Road No. 109. About 18 miles north of Overflowing River, a hydro access trail branches off Highway No. 10 and runs southeast along The Pas moraine to join Highway 6 to Grand Rapids. The airfield at Guy Hill and the floatplane base at Grace Lake provide air service to remote communities in northern Manitoba.

Potential for agriculture is confined mainly to the Saskatchewan Delta. The main factor limiting agricultural development throughout the area is the lack of adequate drainage. Outside the Saskatchewan Delta, good agricultural land occurs in such small units that even grazing would be impractical. A moderately adverse climate is a further limitation to the development of these soils. The largest continuous acreages of high-capability agricultural land occur in the Pasquia and Rahls Island settlements. Therefore, agricultural reclamation should be limited to these regions. Inundation of the Lower Saskatchewan Delta by the Cedar Lake Reservoir as well as the discontinuous distribution of good farmland along the river levees makes future large-scale reclamation projects unfeasible.

In their natural environment, Organic and Brunisolic soils are not suitable for agriculture because of wetness and stoniness respectively.

Gleysols in the delta can be improved to Class 3, however, wetness remains a limitation. Forage crops would probably be best suited to these soils.

Regosols are stone-free and ideal for vegetable, root, and hay crops. In general, these soils occur on sites that require diking and drainage to protect them from seasonal flooding. The largest regions of these soils that have been reclaimed in Manitoba are found in the Pasquia region and on Rahls Island.

Luvisols are well suited to the production of grasses and legumes and could support coarse grains if adequately fertilized.

In the Saskatchewan Delta, where drainage has been improved, mixed farming stock raising enterprises are common. Late spring plantings and subsequent late fall harvests as well as high production costs and low returns per acre have resulted in very poor net incomes for grain farmers. Farm labor costs are high because of competition with alternate job opportunities in the area. Consequently, owners of small and medium-sized farms have turned to off-farm employment to subsidize their farm incomes. The high incidence of nonresident landowners has resulted in only partial utilization of farm potential. Even on highly capitalized units where many operators work full time, there is a poor return on investment.

The Pasquia and Rahls Island settlements have a total of 146 farmers. Rapeseed, hay, wheat, barley, flax, and oats are the main crops, however, summerfallow occupies the greatest single acreage.

Total livestock on farms are about 2600 beef cattle, 510 dairy cattle, 1700 hogs, and 265 sheep. There are about 4700 laying hens and a commercial flock of 12000 birds.

Improved drainage may decrease crop losses, but the short growing season and the adverse effect of high fall precipitation will continue to limit grain farming. Mixed farming, dairying, and root crop production offer the greatest potential for the Delta region, particularly because of the proximity of the region to rapidly expanding mining communities such as Flin Flon, Thompson, and Lynn Lake.

**Capability classification by B. T. Heal, Manitoba Department of Mines, Resources and Environmental Management, and K. W. Ayres, Canada Department of Agriculture, 1969.**

**Description by B. T. Heal and G. C. Jenkins, Manitoba Department of Mines, Resources and Environmental Management, and Dr. G. J. Beke and K. W. Ayres, Canada Department of Agriculture, 1969.**

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## DESCRIPTION DU TERRITOIRE DE LA FEUILLE DE THE PAS - 63F

Le territoire représenté sur la feuille de The Pas occupe une superficie approximative de 5 700 milles carrés ou de 3 650 150 acres, entre 53 et 54° de latitude nord et 100 et 102° de longitude ouest. Environ 86% du territoire se trouvent dans le centre-ouest du Manitoba et le reste dans le centre-est de la Saskatchewan.

Tout le territoire appartient à la région structurale des basses terres du Manitoba. Il a subi la glaciation au pléistocène et les eaux du lac glaciaire Agassiz sont l'ont recouvert. Les principales formations rocheuses sur lesquelles il repose sont des calcaires paléoziques siluriens et dévonien. Des grès et des schistes argileux mésozoïques du crétacé inférieur apparaissent dans le sud-ouest. Compte tenu des formations meubles et de l'allure topographique, on distingue sur le territoire deux subdivisions structurales: les dépôts de till ondulés ou légèrement ondulés de la plaine Interlake-Westlake et les dépôts presque sans relief de la plaine d'inondation du delta de la Saskatchewan, dans la moitié septentrionale.

La plaine Interlake-Westlake comprend les subdivisions suivantes: la plaine du lac Moose et du lac Cedar, la plaine de la rivière Overflowing et la moraine de The Pas.

La plaine du lac Moose et du lac Cedar, composée de till et d'affleurements rocheux, traverse la bordure septentrionale du territoire et rejoint le lac Moose avant de bifurquer vers le sud-est en longeant la rive nord-est du lac Cedar.

La plaine de la rivière Overflowing, qui occupe le sud-ouest du territoire, est une région de till en pente très douce recouverte de dépôts organiques épais dont la présence s'explique par la hauteur de niveau hydrostatique. Des dépôts de till de texture moyenne et fine apparaissent ici et là. Les rivières Santon et Overflowing qui coulent vers l'est et se jetent dans le lac Winnipegosis drainent le territoire.

La moraine de The Pas est surtout constituée de till de texture moyenne recouvert, par endroits, de dépôts organiques minces. Elle s'étend de la rive occidentale du lac Clearwater à la ville de The Pas, au sud, puis se dirige vers l'est en décrit un grand arc jusque dans le sud-est du territoire.

Les dépôts de till et les affleurements rocheux de la plaine Interlake-Westlake limitent le delta de la Saskatchewan. La moraine de The Pas partage le delta en deux sections: supérieure et inférieure. Les plaines du lac Moose et du lac Cedar au nord ainsi que le moraine de The Pas à l'est limitent la partie supérieure du delta de la Saskatchewan. Dans le centre-ouest du territoire, une région de till bien drainé s'étend vers l'ouest à partir de la moraine et sert de frontière méridionale à la section supérieure du delta de la Saskatchewan. Les rivières Carrot et Pasquia, qui se jettent dans la rivière Saskatchewan, drainent la partie supérieure du delta de la Saskatchewan.

A The Pas, la rivière Saskatchewan traverse la moraine et forme la partie inférieure du delta de la Saskatchewan dont les eaux de drainage se jettent dans le réservoir du lac Cedar. Au nord et à l'est les plaines du lac Moose et du lac Cedar, et à l'ouest, la moraine de The Pas limitent la région du bas-delta de la rivière Saskatchewan.

Le bas-delta de la Saskatchewan occupe environ 30% de la région située à l'est de la moraine. Le réservoir du lac des Cèdres occupe environ 50% de cette même région et, dans le sud-est, des dépôts de till en recouvre environ 20%. La moraine de The Pas sert de ligne de partage des eaux entre le bassin du lac Cedar et celui du lac Winnipegosis.

Le delta de la Saskatchewan est une plaine unie où légèrement ondulée qui s'incline doucement vers l'est. Plusieurs petits monticules en forme de drumlins constitués de till calcaire de texture fine ou moyenne apparaissent à travers tout le delta de la Saskatchewan. La majorité des dépôts de till glaciaire sont ensevelis sous des dépôts lacustres et des dépôts de plaines alluviale. Les sédiments de texture fine et moyenne ont été mis en place pendant que le lac Agassiz occupait le delta. Lorsque cette partie du lac Agassiz s'est retirée, elle forma la section la plus basse du réseau de la rivière Saskatchewan qui caractérise de nombreux méandres et qui présente l'allure d'un delta. Les alluvions, à certains endroits, atteignent jusqu'à 25 pi d'épaisseur et sont surtout constituées de sables, de limons et d'argiles peu ou modérément calcaires. Une grande partie du delta est mal drainée et susceptible d'être inondée chaque année. Les accumulations de tourbe sont communes mais les inondations annuelles et des incendies récents en font varier l'épaisseur. L'utilisation récente du lac Cedar comme réservoir pour la fabrication d'énergie hydro-électrique a entraîné l'inondation de la majeure partie du bas-delta de la Saskatchewan.

La majeure partie du till glaciaire de la moraine de The Pas, des plaines du lac Moose, du lac Cedar et de la rivière Overflowing est un matériau calcaire, pierreux et de texture moyenne. Un till de texture fine, modérément ou fortement calcaire est associé, par endroits, au till extrêmement calcaire de texture moyenne. Les matériaux de plage du lac Agassiz comprennent des sables et des graviers fortement calcaires peu ou bien stratifiés. Les dépôts organiques sont composés de tourbes de forêt, de tourbe de sphagnum et de tourbe de tourbière basse.

Sauf dans le delta de la Saskatchewan, le terrain est recouvert d'une forêt conférifière. L'épinette blanche (*Picea glauca*) caractérise les endroits les mieux drainés tandis que l'épinette noire et le mélèze laricina (*Larix laricina*) sont les espèces dominantes dans les marécages.

Dans la région de The Pas, d'importants incendies de forêt ont empêché l'apparition de la forêt climax d'épinette noire. Les peuplements bien développés parvus à maturité et associés à un tapis d'hypnum sont donc rares.

Après un incendie de forêt, les principales essences qui colonisent les stations bien drainées sont le peuplier faux-tremble (*Populus tremuloides*), le pin gris (*Pinus banksiana*) et le bouleau blanc (*Betula papyrifera*). Viennent ensuite l'épinette blanche ou l'épinette noire. Dans tout le delta de la Saskatchewan, l'épinette blanche apparaît en second lieu sur les versants exposés au sud, autour des lacs et sur les alluvions bien drainées. Le peuplier faux-tremble et l'épinette noire apparaissent en second lieu dans les endroits imparfaitement ou mal drainés.

Il y a des marécages et des tourbières à travers tout le territoire. Les paysages, sur le plan de la végétation, varient des marécages à épinette noire qui caractérise un couvert continu d'arbres rabougris associé à un sous-bois d'épicéas et de mousseux, aux tourbières à