

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE CORMORANT LAKE MAP SHEET AREA, 63K

The area covered by the Cormorant Lake map sheet comprises 5570 square miles between 54° and 55° north latitude and 100° and 102° west longitude. The area lies in west-central Manitoba, except for a small part that lies in Saskatchewan. About 40 percent of the area is organic soil, 17 percent mineral soil, 23 percent water, and 20 percent exposed bedrock.

The area was glaciated during the late Wisconsin stage. When the glacier retreated, Lake Agassiz covered the entire area except for a small island west of Flin Flon.

The area is comprised of two physiographic regions of nearly equal size, the Precambrian Shield in the north and the Manitoba Lowland in the south. The Manitoba Lowland, underlain by Ordovician dolomitic limestone, has a flat to undulating topography with elevations ranging from 840 to 1100 feet above sea level. The Pas Moraine, situated at the west end of Clearwater Lake, is the most prominent glacial feature rising 100 feet above the surrounding landscape. East-west oriented drumlins occur on The Pas Moraine and in the southeastern part of the area. Thin rubby till covers bedrock plateaus and thick calcareous till blankets the slopes and flats. Lacustrine clay is found generally in low-lying sites below the 1000-foot contour in the west and below the 900-foot contour in the east. Peats occur in depressions throughout the region. Discontinuous permafrost occurs in peats throughout, but is more prevalent in the eastern part of the area. Drainage is provided by the Goose, Sturgeon-weir, and Saskatchewan rivers.

The Precambrian Shield, which has elevations between 885 and 1200 feet above sea level, is dominated by Precambrian volcanic, gneissic, and granitic bedrock. Volcanic and gneissic bedrock form strongly rolling to hilly topography, whereas the granitic material forms a more gentle topography with rounded hills. Shallow till occurs on knolls, whereas deeper till and lacustrine clays are found in the valleys. Discontinuous permafrost occurs in peat throughout this region. This region is drained by the Grass River.

The area is covered predominantly by coniferous forest. Some mixed woods can be found in the western part of the area and in the region surrounding Reed Lake. Muskeg vegetation dominates the southern and central parts of the area. Black spruce (*Picea mariana*) is the climax species for the entire area although fire has prohibited establishment of climax forest on most sites.

Coniferous forests on Organic soils range from dense stands of black spruce to sparse stands of tamarack (*Larix laricina*). Dominant shrubs associated with black spruce forest are dwarf birch (*Betula glandulosa*) and Labrador-tea (*Ledum groenlandicum*). Dominant forbs include horsetails (*Equisetum spp.*) and willowherbs (*Epilobium spp.*). Sphagnum mosses (*Sphagnum spp.*) and feathermosses (*Hyalocladia splendens* and *Pleurozium schreberi*) constitute the ground cover.

Black spruce and white spruce (*Picea glauca*) are the dominant species on lacustrine and till deposits. Jack pine (*Pinus banksiana*) and trembling aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) occur as fire successional species. Alders (*Alnus spp.*) are the dominant shrub. Jack pine dominates the tree species on exposed bedrock with alders and junipers (*Juniperus spp.*) constituting the shrub understory.

Mixed wood forests generally occur on the well-drained clays and tills, adjacent to lakes and rivers. Vegetation consists of varying combinations of black spruce, white spruce, trembling aspen, jack pine, balsam fir (*Abies balsamea*), white birch (*Betula papyrifera*), and balsam poplar (*Populus balsamifera*). Willows (*Salix spp.*), alders, high bush-cranberry (*Viburnum trilobum*), saskatoon (*Amelanchier alnifolia*), red-fruited choke cherry (*Prunus virginiana*), red-osier dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera*), and roses (*Rosa spp.*) make up the understory. Forbs include willowherbs and bunchberry (*Cornus canadensis*).

Open fens with a cover of sedges (*Carex spp.*), rushes (*Juncus spp.*), and feathermosses (*Drepanocladus spp.*) occur throughout the area. Elevated ridges in the fens have stunted tamarack and black spruce cover.

Sedges, grasses (*Bromus spp.* and *Calamagrostis spp.*), and lichens (*Cladonia spp.*) occur throughout the area.

### CLIMATE

The area has a continental humid climate characterized by short, warm summers and long, cold winters. The mean date of the last spring frost is May 31 and the mean date of the first fall frost is September 5, which provides a frost-free period of 95 to 100 days. The short growing season, 2000 degree-days, is somewhat counteracted by the long hours of sunlight at northern latitudes.

January, the coldest month, has a mean monthly temperature of -8°F and July, the warmest month, has a mean monthly temperature of 65°F. The mean annual temperature is 31°F. This cool climate marks the beginning of discontinuous permafrost in central Manitoba.

Annual precipitation is 18 inches, 60 percent of which falls during the growing season.

The vicinity surrounding Wanless is affected by a definite microclimate. The mean date of the last spring frost is June 24 and the mean date of the first fall frost is August 22. This limits the frost-free period to 60 days.

### SOILS AND AGRICULTURAL CAPABILITY

Three climatic subregions are recognized in the area. Subregion I Ch is bounded by Root, Rocky, and Bignell lakes; the part of the region between Clearwater and Moose lakes is characterized by Gleysolic, Brunisolic, and Organic soils. Organic and Gleysolic soils are dominant. The southwest region, bounded by Athapapuskow and Goose lakes in the north and The Pas Moraine in the east, and the southeast corner of the area form subregion II Ch. The soils in this region in order of dominance are Organic, Brunisolic, Luvisolic, and Gleysolic. Subregion III Ch covers the rest of the area and is characterized by Brunisolic, Luvisolic, and discontinuous Cryic Organic soils. Dominant soils in this subregion are Organics, Luvisols, Gleysols, and Brunisols with discontinuous permafrost occurring in the Organics. The boundary between subregions I Ch and II Ch in the southwest and subregion III Ch, which covers the rest of the area, coincides approximately with the southern boundary of the discontinuous permafrost zone. Thus, climatic conditions are moderate in the southwestern part of the area and become more severe in the north. This is clearly indicated by the occurrence of permafrost in the organic soils.

Organic soils, most of which are Mesisols and Fibrisols, comprise about 50 percent of the area. Mesisols are associated with very poorly drained peat, derived from sedges, mosses, and some tamarack plant materials, and with poorly drained forest peat, derived from black spruce, tamarack, ericaceous shrubs and feathermosses. Fibrisols are mainly associated with poorly drained sphagnum peat, derived primarily from sphagnum mosses, and composed of fairly undecomposed material. Permafrost occurs on about 5 percent of the organic soils. These perennially frozen, Cryic Organic soils are mainly associated with forest and sphagnum peat materials and are elevated above the water level in the form of palsas or peat plateaus. Disturbance of the vegetative cover and insulating peat layer, however, causes the permafrost to melt with subsequent collapsing of the mounds. Organic soils in this area have not been rated for agricultural capability and are designated by the letter "O" on the map.

Brunisolic soils comprise 15 percent of the area and are well to imperfectly drained soils that have organic surface horizons underlain by a thin leached horizon and a brownish-colored horizon that is base saturated. These soils have developed on extremely calcareous medium textured till and sandy deposits, as well as on acid Precambrian sandy loam till. These soils are rated Classes 5 and 6 for agriculture and the main limitations are coarse texture, stoniness, low fertility, wetness, and shallow depth to bedrock.

Luvisolic soils comprise 5 percent of the area and are dominantly Gray Luvisols. They are well to imperfectly drained soils, which have organic surface horizons, light-colored eluvial horizons, and brownish-colored illuvial horizons in which clay is the main accumulation product. Gray Luvisols are found dominantly on the fine textured lacustrine deposits and are rated Classes 4 and 5 for agriculture; the main limitations are soil structure and wetness.

Gleysolic soils comprise 5 percent of the area and are saturated with water for all or part of the year. They are characterized by a very thin, dark, surface mineral horizon, which is high in organic matter, and may be overlain by less than 16 inches of moderately decomposed fen or forest peat. Gleysolic soils have developed on all parent materials occurring in the area. The agricultural capability of Gleysolic soils is rated Classes 5 and 6 and the main limitation is wetness.

Bedrock outcrops comprise 25 percent of the area and are of Precambrian granitic and basaltic origin and Ordovician dolomite limestone. The bedrock outcrops have less than 4 inches of extremely stony surface materials and are frequently associated with the thin Brunisolic soils. Bedrock outcrops are unimportant for agriculture and are rated Class 7R.

### SETTLEMENT AND LAND USE

The area was originally inhabited by the Cree Indians who derived a living from hunting and fishing. In the 1690s, Henry Kelsey and Peter Pond established a fur trade route through the area by way of the Sturgeon-weir and Grass river systems. Cranberry Portage formed an important link in this route.

Mining has been the main industry that opened up the area. Gold was discovered at Flin Flon in 1915. The railroad connected Flin Flon to the south in 1928 and a smelter began operation in 1930. Copper, zinc, gold, and silver are processed at Flin Flon. Snow Lake was founded in 1945. Copper, lead, and zinc are mined at Snow Lake and surrounding mines, and shipped to Flin Flon to be processed.

Tourism has provided the area with a prosperous secondary industry. Many lodges and provincial campsites are located in the Clearwater and Grass River provincial parks. Large lakes such as Athapapuskow, Reed, and Clearwater provide excellent sport fishing.

A large forestry complex with a base camp at Cranberry Portage commenced operation in December, 1969. The timber is transported to the Churchill Forest Industries complex at The Pas, located 15 miles south of the area.

The Wanless district was opened for homesteading for farming in the early 1930s.

At present there are two towns and three villages in the area. Flin Flon has a population of 9307, Creighton has a population of 1857, Snow Lake has a population of 1349, and Cranberry Portage and Cormorant have populations of 618 and 342 respectively.

Two trunk lines of the Canadian National Railways service the area from the south. The Hudson Bay trunk line runs through the southeast corner and services Cormorant. The other trunk line has three branches that service the northern half of the area. Road access to the area from the south is provided by Provincial Highway 10, which terminates at Flin Flon. Provincial Highways 106 and 167 extend from Flin Flon into Saskatchewan. Provincial Road 391 runs from Simonhouse through to the eastern edge of the area. Provincial Road 392 runs north from 391 to service Snow Lake. An airport is situated at Bakers Narrows.

Potential for agriculture of the area is restricted to the well to imperfectly drained clays. There has been some agricultural development in the Wanless and Sturgeon Landing regions. The limited frost-free period restricts the range of crops that can be grown. At Wanless, alfalfa for seed was grown from 1951 to 1967 with limited success. A fruit and vegetable enterprise has had reasonably good success, but early frost is a problem. Cultivation of organic soils is impractical because of high costs of drainage and incidence of permafrost. Frost hazard is prevalent on all soils throughout the area.

The surface horizons of the soils in the area are deficient in plant nutrients. Decomposition of organic matter and mineralization is slower at this northern latitude so that fertilizer requirements are higher than on comparable soils in more southerly regions. Management problems related to poor structure persist on these soils. Forage crops will do much to improve the tilth, and with proper levels of fertilization, good crops of forages can be grown.

Much of the organic layer on clay soils has been lost by fire. In order to improve tilth and fertility, the organic layer must be preserved during land clearing and worked into the soil.

Demands for agricultural produce by an increasing population in the north may make development of the land for agriculture feasible. The production of vegetables, bush fruits, and potatoes is promising. Other potential agricultural enterprises in the area include beef and dairy cattle, forage, barley for feed, and forage seed. Crop production in the area will be expensive because of the high costs of land clearing and fertilizer requirements essential for high yields and good quality produce.

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## DESCRIPTION DU TERRITOIRE DE LA FEUILLE CORMORANT LAKE, 63K

Le territoire représenté sur la feuille de Cormorant Lake occupe une superficie de 5570 milles carrés entre 54° et 55° de latitude nord et 100° et 102° de longitude ouest. Le territoire se trouve dans le centre-ouest du Manitoba à l'exception d'une petite partie située en Saskatchewan. Les sols organiques occupent environ 40% du territoire, les sols minéraux, 17%, les nappes d'eau, 23% et les affleurements rocheux, 20%.

Le territoire a subi la glaciation vers la fin de la phase wisconsienne. Au fur et à mesure du retrait du glacier, le lac Agassiz a envahi tout le territoire à l'exception d'un îlot situé à l'ouest de Flin Flon.

Le territoire se partage presqu'également entre deux régions structurales: le Bouclier précamalien au nord et les basses terres du Manitoba au sud. Les basses terres du Manitoba reposent sur des calcaires dolomitiques ordoviciens; leur topographie est tantôt unie, tantôt ondulée et l'altitude y varie de 840 à 1 100 pi. La moraine de Le pas, située à l'extrémité ouest du lac Clearwater, est le principal élément de relief d'origine glaciaire; il domine d'une centaine de pieds les terres environnantes. Il y a des drumlins de direction est-ouest sur la moraine de Le Pas et dans le sud-est du territoire. Une mince couche de till caillouteux recouvre les plateaux rocheux et un till calcaire épais masque les pentes et les plaines. L'argile lacustre apparaît habituellement dans les endroits bas, en-dessous de 1 000 pi dans l'est et en-dessous de 900 dans l'est. Il y a de la tourbe dans les dépressions à travers tout le territoire. Sur tout le territoire, la tourbe peut renfermer du pergélisol discontinu mais on en trouve plus souvent dans l'est du territoire. Les rivières Goose, Sturgeon-weir, et Saskatchewan drainent le territoire.

Les roches granitiques, gneissiques et volcaniques précamériennes dominent dans la région du Bouclier précamrien où l'altitude varie de 885 à 1 200 pi. Les secteurs de roche volcanique et gneissique présentent une topographie fortement vallonnée ou un relief de collines tandis que les secteurs granitiques ont un relief plus doux et renferment des collines arrondies. Un till mince recouvre les buttes tandis que, dans les vallées, on trouve des argiles lacustres et des couches de till plus épaisse. Les tourbes de cette région renferment du pergélisol discontinu. La rivière Grass draine cette région.

La forêt de conifères domine sur le territoire. On trouve des peuplements mélangés dans l'ouest et autour du lac Reed. Une végétation de marécage domine dans le centre et le sud du territoire. L'épinette noire (*Picea mariana*) est l'essence de la forêt climax sur tout le territoire bien que les incendies de forêt aient presque partout empêché l'épanouissement de cette forêt.

Sur les sols organiques, les forêts de conifères vont des peuplements denses d'épinette noire aux peuplements clairsemés de mélèze laricin (*Larix laricina*). Les espèces dominantes d'arbisseaux associées à la forêt d'épinette noire sont le bouleau glanduleux (*Betula glandulosa*) et le thé du Labrador (*Ledum groenlandicum*). Les espèces dominantes d'herbes comprennent les prés (*Equisetum spp.*) et les épilobées (*Epilobium spp.*). Des sphagnes (*Sphagnum spp.*) et des hypnes (*Hylocomium splendens* et *Pleurozium schreberi*) forment le tapis végétal.

L'épinette noire et l'épinette blanche (*Picea glauca*) dominent sur le till et les dépôts lacustres. Le pin gris (*Pinus banksiana*) et le peuplier faux-tremble (*Populus tremuloides*) envahissent les régions ravagées par le feu. Les aulnes (*Alnus spp.*) sont les arbisseaux dominants. Le pin gris domine sur les affleurements rocheux associés à un sous-bois d'aulnes et de genévrier (*Juniperus spp.*).

Des forêts mélangées croissent habituellement sur les argiles et les tills bien drainés, dans le voisinage des lacs et des rivières. Divers peuplements d'épinette noire, épinette blanche, peuplier faux-tremble, pin gris, sapin baumier (*Abies balsamea*), bouleau blanc (*Betula papyrifera*) et peuplier baumier (*Populus balsamifera*) constituent la végétation. Le sous-bois est formé de saules (*Salix spp.*), d'aulnes, de virome trilobé (*Viburnum trilobum*), d'amélanchier à feuilles d'aulne (*Amelanchier alnifolia*), de cerisier de Virginie (*Prunus virginiana*), de cornouiller stolonifère (*Cornus stolonifera*) et de rosier (*Rosa spp.*). Les herbes présentes comprennent des épilobées et le quatre-temps (*Cornus canadensis*).

Il y a, à travers tout le territoire, dans «fens» non boisés portant un couvert de carex (*Carex spp.*), de juncs (*Juncus spp.*) et d'hypnes (*Drepanocladus spp.*). Dans les «fens», du mélèze laricin et de l'épinette noire rabougris croissent sur les tourbeux surélevés.

Il y a des carex, des graminées (*Bromus spp.* et *Calamagrostis spp.*) et des lichens (*Cladonia spp.*) à travers tout le territoire.

### CLIMAT

Le territoire possède un climat continental humide: étés courts et chauds et longs hivers froids. Au printemps, le dernier gel se produit en moyenne le 31 mai et, à l'automne, le 1er premier gel arrive en moyenne le 5 septembre ce qui donne une période sans gel de 95 à 100 jours. La longueur du jour sous ces latitudes septentrionales compense un peu pour la brièveté de la saison végétative, laquelle compte seulement 2 000 degrés-jours. En janvier, le mois le plus froid, la température moyenne est de -8°F et, en juillet, le mois le plus chaud, elle est de 65. La température annuelle moyenne est de 31. Ce climat frais marque le début de la zone de pergélisol discontinu dans le centre du Manitoba.

La précipitation annuelle est de 18 po; 60% de cette précipitation tombent pendant la saison végétative.

Il existe, dans le voisinage de Wanless, un microclimat bien défini. Au printemps, le dernier gel automnal se produit en moyenne le 24 juin et la première gel automnal le 22 août. La période sans gel ne dure donc que 60 jours.

### SOLS ET POSSIBILITÉS AGRICOLES

Le territoire se partage entre trois sous-régions climatiques. La sous-région I Ch qui limite les lacs Root, Rocky et Bignell; la partie de cette région, située entre les lacs Clearwater et Moose renferme des sols gleysoliques, brunisoliques et organiques. Les sols organiques et gleysoliques prédominent. La région sud-ouest, qui limite les lacs Athapapuskow et Goose dans le nord et la moraine de Le Pas à l'est, ainsi que le coin sud-est du territoire forment la sous-région II Ch. Les sols de cette région, par ordre d'importance, sont les sols organiques, des brunisols, des luvisols et des gleysols. La sous-région III Ch comprend le reste du territoire; des brunisols, luvisols ainsi que des sols organiques cryiques discontinus la caractérisent. Les sols dominants dans cette sous-région sont les sols organiques, les luvisols, les gleysols et les brunisols; dans les sols organiques, on peut trouver du pergélisol discontinu. La limite entre les sous-régions I Ch et II Ch dans le sud-ouest et la sous-région III Ch, qui occupe le reste du territoire, coïncide à peu près avec la limite méridionale de la zone de pergélisol discontinu. Les conditions climatiques sont donc modérément rigoureuses dans le sud-ouest du territoire et le deviennent de plus en plus dans le nord. Ceci se traduit de toute évidence par la présence de pergélisol dans les sols organiques.

Les sols organiques, dont la plupart sont des mésisols et des fibrisols, occupent environ 5