

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PRINCE ALBERT MAP SHEET AREA, 73H

The area covered by the Prince Albert map sheet comprises 3.65 million acres in central Saskatchewan between 53° and 54° north latitude and 104° and 106° west longitude. The area lies within the Saskatchewan Plains Region of the Central Lowlands Province. There are several physiographic sections. The Waskesiu Hills and Wapawekka Hills uplands, in the northwestern and north-central parts of the area, are moderately to strongly rolling morainic uplands. The Wapawekka Hills Upland is bounded on the west by the roughly undulating till plains of the Montreal Lake Plain, and on the east by the roughly undulating to rolling till and glaciocluvial plains of the White Gull Creek Plain. The Narrow Hills, an extension of the Wapawekka Hills Upland, are a prominent steeply rolling esker, which falls off sharply to the flat-lying eroded glacial till and sandy, fluviolacustrine, alluvial, and organic terrain of the northeastern part of the Carrot River Lowland. These same lowlands, but with increasing proportions of finer textured lacustrine and glacial till soils, occupy the southeastern part of the area. The gently undulating to rolling glaciolacustrine, fluviolacustrine, and glacial till plains of the Saskatchewan River Plains occur in the southwest. The area is dissected by the Saskatchewan Valley, a deeply eroded trench containing the Saskatchewan River and its north and south branches.

Drainage is mainly to the Saskatchewan River system, except for the northwest, which lies within the Churchill River drainage basin. The Carrot, Torch, and Whitefox rivers and their tributaries drain the central and eastern regions to the Saskatchewan River. The Sturgeon, Little Red, and Garden rivers are tributaries of the Saskatchewan River in the western part of the area. There are many freshwater lakes. Candle, Emma, Bittern, and White Gull lakes occur in the northern part of the area and are large catchment basins in the drainage systems.

The native vegetation of the area consists of both grassland and forest. South of the Saskatchewan River the Aspen Grove Section of the Boreal Forest Region occurs, characterized by a parkland vegetation of medium and tall grasses interspersed with groves of trembling aspen (*Populus tremuloides*), balsam poplar (*Populus balsamifera*), and willows (*Salix spp.*). Black soils are found in this section. The region north of the Saskatchewan River is included within the Mixedwood Section of the Boreal Forest Region. Mixed woods that may include trembling aspen, white spruce (*Picea glauca*), white birch (*Betula papyrifera*), balsam fir (*Abies balsamea*), and jack pine (*Pinus banksiana*) are common on medium to fine textured, well-drained soils. Within the White Gull Creek Plain, black spruce (*Picea mariana*) and jack pine forests are found on glacial till materials. Rapidly drained coarse textured soils generally support almost pure jack pine stands. Bogs or fens usually occupy the very poorly drained depressions. Bogs are characterized by slow-growing black spruce stands with understories of Labrador-tea (*Ledum groenlandicum*), feathermosses (*Hyalomium spp.*), and sphagnum mosses (*Sphagnum spp.*). Fens have a predominantly sedge (*Carex spp.*) vegetation with a discontinuous cover of tamarack (*Larix laricina*) or swamp birch (*Betula pumila var. glandulifera*).

Most of the agriculturally settled part of the area is accessible by road and railroad. The Saskatchewan River and its north and south branches make transportation somewhat difficult, but there are bridges at Prince Albert, southeast of Prince Albert on Highway 3, and at Nipawin. Ferry service is provided at various intervening points. The forest reserves are not as easily accessible. Highways 2, 120, and 106 service forestry and recreational developments within the Northern Provincial Forest. The forest industry is centered in Prince Albert where a large pulp mill operates. Most of the forest reserve acreage within the area is leased to this company and is an important source of pulpwood. There are several recreational developments in the Northern Provincial Forest, at Emma, Anglin, and Candle lakes. Nipawin Provincial Park is located partly in the north-central part of the area.

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