

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE WINNIPEG MAP SHEET AREA, 62H

The area covered by the Winnipeg map sheet comprises 6220 square miles in southeastern Manitoba between 49° and 50° north latitude and 96° and 98° west longitude. Less than one percent of the area consists of water bodies, which are mainly meandering creeks and rivers. A few small, shallow lakes are located in organic regions in the east.

The area lies within two broad subdivisions of the Manitoba Lowland physiographic region: the Red River Plain or Central Lowland Area, and the Southeast Section or Southeastern Lake Terrace.

The Red River Plain extends from the western boundary of the area to east of the Red River and is located between the 750-foot and 850-foot contours. Most of this landscape unit is occupied by an extensive, fairly level lacustrine clay plain. A more gradual increase in elevation above the 900-foot contour in the extreme southwest reflects the proximity of the Manitoba Escarpment, which is at the 1000-foot contour.

The Southeastern Lake terrace is located above the 850-foot contour. The highest elevation is 1300 feet above sea level. The relief is variable. The topography is mostly undulating to rolling or a broad swell and swale surface expression.

The underlying bedrock consists of sedimentary rocks of Paleozoic and Mesozoic age. The eastern half of the area is underlain by nearly level Ordovician limestone, dolomite, sandstone, and shale. Silurian dolomite occurs in a small region west of Winnipeg and north of the Assiniboine River. Jurassic dolomitic limestone, red shale, and gypsum occur in the central part of the area and extend to the northwest. Strata of Upper and Lower Cretaceous shale, limestone, bentonite, and sandstone occur in the southwest.

The area lies within the Nelson River drainage division of Manitoba. The Red River, which flows north into Lake Winnipeg, provides the main drainage; its tributaries, the Roseau, Marsh, Rat, and Seine rivers, connect from the east to drain the adjacent river plain and part of the eastern lake terrace. Rivière aux Marais, Rivière Sale, the Plum and Morris rivers, and the more historically significant Assiniboine River join the Red River on the west side to drain the broad, nearly level plain. Many small creeks draining the adjacent western Manitoba Escarpment flow into the rivers located west of the Red River. The Whitemouth and Winnipeg rivers provide drainage in the northeast, and eventually flow into Lake Winnipeg. Before settlement, the Red River plain was poorly drained, but extensive drainage systems have made large tracts of land more suitable for agriculture.

A checkerboard network of secondary gravelled roads provides good access to the agricultural regions for transportation of goods and servicing. Major highways and roads connect rural communities to the city of Winnipeg, which is the economic, cultural, and political hub of the province and provides a complete range of services required by the surrounding rural population. The population of Winnipeg is about 500,000, whereas the surrounding rural population in the map sheet area is 75,000. Fewer roads occur in the east, where there is less farmland. The area is also well serviced by the Canadian National and Canadian Pacific railways.

In 1812, Lord Selkirk and his settlers arrived after settling and farming the fertile land adjacent to the Assiniboine and Red Rivers. The early settlers grew provisions for fur brigades. Red River carts, steamboats, and the construction of a railway in 1873 from Emerson to Winnipeg provided transportation for immigrants. Main rail lines connecting Eastern Canada with Manitoba were completed between 1880 and 1900. During this period, railroad construction and the increasing number of settlers required substantial volumes of lumber, ties, poles, and squared timber. Red pine, white spruce, jack pine, cedar, and white pine were logged. Logs were driven by water and transported by railroad to the Winnipeg sawmills. Overcutting, fires, and land clearing have almost wiped out white pine growth further east and, to a lesser extent, red pine, cedar, and white spruce, which are found sporadically in the eastern part of the area. A demand for pulpwood in 1920 and the construction of a pulp mill at Pine Falls in 1927 increased logging activity in the east. Since then, forestry operations in the eastern upland have been an important industry. The adjacent lowlands to the west remain one of the top grain-producing regions in Canada.

CLIMATE

Climate is one of the main factors influencing the establishment and distribution of native trees in the area. The area has a boreal-temperate climate, which ranges from dry subhumid in the western half to normal subhumid and moist subhumid in the east. Short, warm summers and long, cold winters are characteristic. A wide seasonal and daily temperature range occurs. The July mean temperature is 66°F to 68°F from east to west. The January mean temperature ranges from 10°F to 12°F below zero to the north to 18°F to 20°F in the east. The mean annual minimum temperature is below -40°F. The mean frost-free period increases from less than 90 days in the east to more than 120 days in the west. The average annual precipitation increases from 19.5 inches in the west to 22 inches in the east. The average precipitation during the growing season from May to September is 13 inches. The potential evapotranspiration is about 22 inches in the eastern upland and about 23 inches in the central lowland. Well-drained sites under forest cover usually have a shortage of soil moisture during parts of the growing season. The higher rainfall and lower temperatures of the eastern upland provide an ecological region more suitable for tree growth than the lowland to the west.

LANDFORMS

The entire area was glaciated during the Wisconsin glacial period. The final ice advance came from the north and northwest, where limestone bedrock was scoured by the glacier and deposited in the form of calcarous till and glaciocluvial outwash. The till is more than 250 feet deep in some locations. Glacial Lake Agassiz covered most of the area 12,500 to 7500 years ago. Lacustrine sediments were deposited in the Red River basin during this 5000-year period. The lacustrine deposits vary in depth from a few feet to 60 feet in the Red River basin.

A gradual increase in elevation of about 2 feet a mile occurs from the Red River west to the Manitoba Escarpment and east toward the Southeastern Lake Terrace. Relief in the form of elongated, low, north-south trending ridges separated by shallow, poorly drained depressions are the only pronounced surface features. The surficial material varies from heavy clay to clay loam. Drainage is generally impeded by the heavy-textured soil.

Thick layers of glacial till were deposited in the east by the continental ice sheet along the eastern margin of glacial Lake Agassiz. This till was later modified by water as the ice front retreated, and was covered by lacustrine sediments in depositional locations.

A unique landform commonly referred to as the Bedford Hills, and known locally as Cypress Mountain, is located in the west-central part of the area and partially extends into the adjoining map sheet area. It is a recessional-interlobate moraine 1300 feet high composed mainly of till with occasional granitic boulders. It has been affected by water and wind to form a well-drained plateau with occasionally stabilized dunes. Several ancient beaches of glacial Lake Agassiz are distinguishable on the west, north, and east slopes of this plateau.

Another significant land feature, known locally as Birds Hill, is a kame or esker-like deposit of sands and gravels located northeast of Winnipeg.

Organic soils have developed on a third of the Southeastern Lake Terrace on very poorly drained sites. They overlie varying depths and textures of mineral soil.

FOREST ECOLOGY

There are three ecologically significant regions in the area. Region 55d (Boreal-temperate, dry subhumid) covers the western half of the area. The chief plant communities in the past were tall prairie grass and poorly drained sedge meadows, which remained stable as a result of grazing by large herds of buffalo and the incidence of fires started by Indians during religious ceremonies or by lightning. Settlers and agricultural development forced the buffalo herds and Indians out of the grassland region and the occurrence of fires and natural grazing was greatly reduced. This contributed to the gradual invasion of trembling aspen, balsam poplar, and willows. These species are presently confined to less arable or poorly drained locations and occupy less than 5 percent of the Red River Plain. Oak occurs on moderately well-drained upland sites and in association with white elm, green ash, Manitoba maple, and basswood, which grow along rivers and creeks. Conifers have been planted in shelterbelts near farmyards, but growth is poor. Cottonwood was planted in the Altona, Winkler, and Morden vicinities in the southwest by Mennonite settlers and thrives well on the fine sandy deltaic deposits. Heights of 75 feet have been attained by this species on heavier-textured sites throughout the Red River Plain. The past grassland vegetative history accounts for the formation of Chemoszem soils throughout the level plain.

Region 55n (Boreal-temperate, moist subhumid) is located in the east-central part of the area. This region has more tree cover than in the western lowlands. A mixed deciduous-coniferous forest predominates on the Brunisolic and Luvisolic soils. As a pioneer species, trembling aspen is most abundant because of past logging activities and forest fires. The stable forest community would be a white spruce-trembling aspen mixture on fresh to moist sites presently occupied by trembling aspen. The optimum sites for white spruce are moist to fresh, deep clay loams. Balsam poplar grows on moist to slightly wet mineral soils in association with willow and moisture-tolerant plants and also in pure stands or mixed with trembling aspen and white spruce. Black spruce and tamarack grow mainly on poorly drained organic soils in mixed or pure stands, depending upon the nutrient status and drainage conditions. Tamarack usually occurs alone on wetter microtopographic organic sites and tolerates seasonally saturated conditions. Pure stands of black spruce are common on ombrotrophic bogs, and thrifly stands prevail on transitional bogs where some enrichment by mineral water occurs. Black spruce is found on imperfectly drained mineral soil in mixtures with trembling aspen, white spruce, and jack pine. Balsam fir grows best on very moist loams, usually as a shade-tolerant understory. White cedar grows on the better-drained, nutrient-rich fringes of organic soils, often mixed with black spruce. It is also found on very moist mineral soils, where there is seepage water. Jack pine grows mainly in pure stands or well to rapidly drained sandy till, outwash, and ancient beach deposits. Thrifly stands of jack pine occasionally occur on imperfectly drained sandy loams and sandy soils. Usually these stands are an early successional stage after a forest fire and understoreys of white and black spruce are common. White birch occurs on a wide range of sites, but is most frequently found as an early succession species on dry sites.

Willow and alder grow on moist and poorly drained mineral and organic soils that are subject to periodic inundation by standing or flowing water. White elm, green ash, and Manitoba maple occasionally grow along river channels. Bur oak is not common.

Since 1926, millions of trees have been planted on sites where fires or cutting have eliminated a seed source and where land cleared for agriculture has been abandoned. The lack of natural regeneration on dry sandy sites has been supplemented by planting jack pine and red pine. Drought has caused high mortality in young plantations and has also affected mature trees on very dry, coarse textured soils. On fresher, more productive soils, vegetation competition hinders survival of white spruce plantations. Reforestation is being carried on to produce protection forests on sites that would normally remain devoid of trees. Forest access roads and fire guards have greatly assisted in suppressing forest fires and provide easy access for forest management.

LAND CAPABILITY FOR FORESTRY

Regional climate is the main limitation to forestry. Variations in the length of the growing season, and the amount of precipitation and evapotranspiration limit the natural occurrence of conifers in region 55n and more so in region 55d.

Class 3, which is the highest capability rating in the area, occurs occasionally in region 55d on fertile alluvial soils along river channels, where deciduous trees attain good heights and volume. Near the eastern boundary of the area, in region 55n, Class 3 occurs on sites of fresh to moist loamy textured Gray Luvisol soils, where white spruce attains optimum growth.

Class 4 occurs mainly in region 55n on imperfectly drained, moderately calcareous tills (4*) and on moderately well to imperfectly drained, fairly impermeable lacustrine sediments (4D, 4*), which are predominantly heavy textured clays and clay loams. In region 55n, Class 4 occurs on fresh loamy soils (4W) and along river channels that are subject to spring flooding (4S). Class 4 occurs in region 55d along river channels, on deltaic, fine sandy loam deposits that have a high water table, and on imperfectly drained lacustrine clay loams.

Class 5 is the most common rating for forestry in the area although Classes 6 and 7 occur much of the time. Red River Plain organic expanses in the Southeastern Lake Terrace in region 55d Class 5 occurs on sites of more favorable relief that are imperfectly to moderately well-drained, impermeable clays and clay loams (5*) and on imperfectly drained, impermeable clay and clay loam sites that have an excess of soil moisture in the early part of the growing season (5S). Fresh and moist clay loam to sandy loam sites (5W, 5S), which may be calcareous, have been rated Class 5 in regions 55n and 55m. Well-drained, medium to coarse textured soils that are subject to periodic inundation by standing or flowing water. White elm, green ash, and Manitoba maple occasionally grow along river channels. Bur oak is not common.

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DESCRIPTION DU TERRITOIRE DE LA FEUILLE DE WINNIPEG-62H

Le territoire représenté sur la feuille de Winnipeg occupe une superficie de 6 220 milles carrés dans le sud-est du Manitoba, entre 49° et 50° de latitude nord et 96° et 98° de longitude ouest. Les nappes d'eau, pour la plupart des rivières et des ruisseaux à méandres, occupent moins de 1% de cette superficie. Dans l'est, les régions recouvertes de dépôts organiques renferment quelques petits lacs peu profonds.

Le territoire appartient à deux grandes subdivisions de la région structurale des basses terres du Manitoba: la plaine de la rivière Rouge ou la région centrale des basses terres et la section sud-orientale ou la terrasse du lac Southeastern.

La plaine de la rivière Rouge s'étend de la frontière occidentale du territoire à l'est de la rivière Rouge et l'altitude y varie entre 750 et 850 pi. Une plaine d'argile lacustrine assez unie occupe la majeure partie de cette région. L'altitude augmente graduellement jusqu'à plus de 1000 pi dans l'extrême sud-ouest qui se trouve à proximité de l'escarpement du Manitoba où l'altitude atteint 1000 pi.

La terrasse du lac Southeastern se trouve à plus de 850 pi d'altitude. Le point culminant est situé à 1300 pi. Le relief est variable. La topographie est tantôt ondulée, tantôt vallonnée ou le terrain peut n'être qu'une alternance de bosses et de dépressions.

La roche sous-jacente comprend des roches sédimentaires paléozoïques et mésozoïques. La moitié orientale du territoire repose sur des calcaires, des dolomies, des grès et des schistes argileux ordoviciens presque plats. Des dolomies siluriennes occupent un petit secteur situé à l'ouest de Winnipeg et au nord de la rivière Assiniboine. Du gypse des schistes argileux et des calcaires dolomitiques jurassiques apparaissent dans le centre du territoire et s'étendent jusque dans le nord-ouest. Dans le sud-ouest, on trouve des strates de grès, de bentonite, de calcaire et de schiste argileux du crétacé inférieur et supérieur.

Le territoire appartient, sur le plan hydrographique, à la partie du bassin du fleuve Nelson située au Manitoba. Le principal agent de drainage est la rivière Rouge qui coule vers le nord et se jette dans le lac Winnipeg; ses affluents, les rivières Roseau, Marsh, Rat et Seine, prennent naissance dans l'est et drainent la plaine voisine et une partie de la terrasse orientale du lac. Les rivières aux Marais, Sale, Plum et Morris ainsi que la rivière Assiniboine qui a joué un rôle plus important dans l'histoire, drainent la partie occidentale de la plaine qui est large et presque plate. Un grand nombre de petits ruisseaux qui drainent la région voisine de l'escarpement du Manitoba se jettent dans les rivières situées à l'ouest de la rivière Rouge. Les rivières Roseau, Marsh, Rat et Seine, prennent naissance dans l'est et drainent la plaine voisine et une partie de la terrasse orientale du lac. 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