M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

ENVIRONMENTALLY SIGNIFICANT AREAS IN THE OLDMAN RIVER REGION



VOLUME I
NATURAL FEATURES



ENVIRONMENTALLY SIGNIFICANT AREAS IN THE OLDMAN RIVER REGION

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF PINCHER CREEK

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

VOLUME I

1.0 INTRODUCTION 1

2.0 DATA COLLECTION METHODS 5

2.1 Aerial Photograph Interpretation 5

2.2 Literature Review 6

2.3 Interviews 6

2.4 Field Surveys 6

3.0 OVERVIEW OF NATURAL FEATURES 7

3.1 The Physical Setting 7

3.1.1 Porcupine Hills 7
3.1.2 Rocky Mountain Foothills 7
3.1.3 Great Plains 8

3.2 The Living Component 8

3.2.1 Grassland Habitats 9
3.2.2 Parkland Habitats 10
3.2.3 Rocky Mountain Habitats 10

4.0 EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTALLY SIGNIFICANT AREAS 13

4.1 Criteria for Environmentally Significant Areas 13

4.2 Level of Significance 14

4.3 Areas with Major Physical Constraints 16

5.0 MANAGEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTALLY SIGNIFICANT AREAS 17

5.1 Guiding Principles 17

5.2 Site Management Plans 18

5.3 Specific Management Considerations 19

5.3.1 Significant Natural Landscapes 19
5.3.2 Significant Wildlife Habitats 19
5.3.3 Key Fish Habitats 21
5.3.4 Other Considerations for Areas of Biological Importance 22
5.3.5 Significant Geological Sites 23
5.3.6 Areas with Major Physical Constraints 23

6.0 DATA GAPS 25

7.0 FUTURE RESEARCH 27

8.0 REFERENCES 29

9.0 ENVIRONMENTALLY SIGNIFICANT AREA CHECKSHEETS 35

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Environmentally Significant Natural Areas (ESA's) are important, useful and often sensitive features of the landscape. They provide long-term benefits to our society by maintaining essential ecological processes and by providing useful products. Large portions of many of Alberta's natural landscapes have been converted to other uses. Surface mining, forestry, agricultural, industrial and urban developments will continue to put pressure on the remaining natural areas. The identification and management of important natural areas is a valuable addition to the traditional socio-economic factors which have largely determined land use planning in the past. The social and economic benefits which ESA's and other natural areas provide are major and are just beginning to be recognized (Butler 1983; Power 1985; Wallis 1983 and 1985).

A few of the functions and uses of natural ESA's are defined by Eagles (1984):

1. Protection of gene pools for future use, including reclamation of disturbed lands, breeding of genes into commercial species or development of new commercial products such as antibiotics.
2. Protection of rare or endangered species and their habitat.
3. Provision of travel corridors and resting places for migratory species.
4. Preservation of mature, stable climax ecosystems with their constitutent complete ecological complexity.
5. Providing benchmarks against which man-altered areas can be compared.
6. Conservation of large blocks of habitat for species that require extensive areas for breeding and survival.
7. Conservation of representative samples of different plant and animal habitats characteristic of each natural region.
8. Maintenance of habitat for wildlife and plants that require undisturbed natural areas.
9. Research areas for earth and life science studies.
10. Sources of groundwater recharge, low stream flow supplementation, flood peak reduction and headwater protection for hydrological systems.
11. Filtration and cleaning of air and water flows.
12. Conservation of soil and protection from erosion.
13. Protection of significant geological features.
14. Identification of lands with severe development constraints such as those on floodplains, steep and unstable slopes, or permanent wetlands.
15. Provision of areas for public education of resources and their management.
16. Maintenance of aesthetically pleasing environments.
17. Provision of commercial products such as outdoor recreation.

Cottonwood Consultants Ltd. was contracted by the Resource Evaluation and Planning Division of Alberta Forestry, Lands and Wildlife to undertake a study of Environmentally Significant Natural Areas in a portion of the Oldman River Region. The primary purpose of the study was to develop an information base that would be useful in planning exercises in the area. Concurrently, a study funded by the Oldman River Regional Planning Commission identified culturally significant sites and areas with high paleontological (fossil) potential (see Volume II of this report).

The study area included the rural portions of the Counties of Warner and Lethbridge and the Municipal Districts of Cardston and Pincher Creek. The objectives of the study were:

1. To provide an inventory of environmentally significant areas of regional, provincial, national or international importance.
2. To evaluate the relative sensitivity of sites classed as environmentally significiant areas.
3. To develop management strategies for environmentally significant areas.

Areas considered environmentally significant included:

1. "Hazard" lands and areas which are unsuitable for development in their natural state such as floodplains, permanent wetlands, and steep and unstable slopes; or which pose severe constraints on types of development such as areas of artesian flow and aeolian surficial deposits.
2. Areas which perform a vital environmental, ecological or hydrological function such as acquifer recharge.
3. Areas which contain unique geological or physiographic features.
4. Areas which contain significant, rare or endangered species.
5. Areas which are unique habitats with limited representation in the region or are a small remnant of once large habitats which have virtually disappeared.
6. Areas which contain an unusual diversity of plant and/or animal communities due to a variety of geomorphological features and microclimatic effects.
7. Areas which contain large and relatively undisturbed habitats and provide sheltered habitat for species which are intolerant of human disturbance.
8. Areas which contain plants, animals or land forms which are unusual or of regional, provincial or national significance.
9. Areas which provide an important linking function and permit the movement of wildlife over considerable distance.

Several means of data presentation are used. The report is organized so that the user can get an overview of the major biophysical resources, management considerations, and future study needs as well as more detailed information on each environmentally significant area.

Areas of cultural significance are presented in a separate volume in summary, tabularized, and map form. Areas of sensitivity based on fossil (paleontological) potential are outlined on a separate map. Where site specific paleontological information is well-known, this information has been incorporated into the descriptions of environmentally significant natural areas.

Each of the environmentally significant natural areas is described in outline form so the reader can, at a glance, determine the following:

1. name of the area
2. location
3. major biophysical features which characterize the area
4. level of significance (regional, provincial, national, international)
5. background for determining level of significance
6. management considerations
7. references which will provide more scientific or detailed information should the user require it

Illustrations and a map are used to further portray each site.

Original references or copies have been provided to the client in file form, indexed by author and date for easier retrieval. In addition, a set of colour slides illustrating the natural sites is provided for each County or Municipal District.

To facilitate use by planners, the number of map types has been kept to a minimum:

1. environmentally significant areas (natural)
2. areas with major physical constraints
3. culturally significant areas (historical and archeological)
4. areas of paleontological sensitivity

Where available, more detailed locational data for sites within each significant area is provided in background reference material or in area descriptions.

2.0 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

2.1 Aerial Photograph Interpretation

2.2 Literature Review

2.3 Interviews

2.4 Field Surveys

2.0 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Researchers involved in the natural history portion of the study included Cliff Wallis, Cleve Wershler, Ray Wershler, John Godfrey, Cheryl Bradley and Dave Spalding. Their research backgrounds included the fields of botany, zoology, and geology.

The following methods of collecting environmental data were employed:

1. Aerial photograph interpretation.
2. Reviews of published and unpublished information in government files and reports, scientific and popular publications, and consultant reports.
3. Interviews with experts and other knowledgeable persons.
4. Extensive field surveys.

2.1 AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH INTERPRETATION

Aerial photographs of the study area were evaluated at the beginning of the project. Complete 1981 and 1982 coverage in black and white was available at a scale of 1:60,000. Colour coverage from 1984 and 1985 was available at a scale of 1:20,000 or 1:30,000 for southern and western portions of the study area.

Cultivated or otherwise intensively disturbed lands were noted on 1:50,000 scale National Topographic System base maps. Natural sites less than 160 acres in extent were not mapped unless there were readily identifiable major features. In areas of native vegetation, more detailed evaluations of the landscape and habitat features were made. Specifically, the following types of areas were searched for:

1. areas of vegetation diversity
2. major rock outcrops
3. major spring/seepage areas
4. sand dune areas
5. extensive riparian woodland and shrubbery
6. lightly grazed grasslands
7. extensive areas of foothills aspen parkland
8. extensive areas of foothills grassland
9. areas with interesting or unusual landscape features
10. major marshes and wetlands
11. major stands of old-growth forest

The next step involved interpretation of bedrock geology and surficial geology maps. Major features noted included:

1. wind deposits
2. outwash sands and gravels
3. drumlin fields
4. eskers and kames
5. bedrock outcrops
6. unglaciated areas
7. alluvial fans

Representative field study sites were identified to enable reconnaissance of as many of the geological features and natural habitats as possible. In addition, the natural condition of some areas was unclear from aerial photographs. Where these fell within larger natural landscapes, they were targeted for field checking.

2.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Alberta Fish and Wildlife reports, files and key area maps were surveyed in the Lethbridge regional office and in the non-game section in the Edmonton head office. Canadian Wildlife Service, Alberta Forestry, Lands and Wildlife (including the Natural Areas Program), Alberta Environment, Alberta Culture and Alberta Recreation and Parks reports were also reviewed.

Numerous natural history articles, reports and books were also surveyed and relevant information was noted for further field checking and for incorporation into the final report.

2.3 INTERVIEWS

Government personnel were interviewed during and after the literature review sessions at the various agency offices. In addition to these interviews, several non-government specialists with specific knowledge were contacted and their contributions are gratefully acknowledged:

D. Borneuf - Hydrogeology
M. Stark and C. Weir - Wildlife
R. Barendregt and C. Beaty - Geology
J. Kuijt and J. Packer - Rare Plants
C. Bradley - Fisheries

In addition, local residents and naturalists were interviewed and provided valuable insights into current and historic aspects of the life and landscapes.

2.4 FIELD SURVEYS

Field surveys were carried out to check boundaries of natural areas, and to confirm the significance of potential sites identified from aerial photograph interpretation, literature reviews and interviews.

Field work was undertaken in several stages from late May to late January, with the majority occurring from June through early September. Breeding bird surveys were completed by mid-July. Rare plant surveys were undertaken throughout the growing season and were based on a knowledge of rare plant habitats and phenology. Limited winter surveys of ungulate wintering areas were undertaken in late January. Geological and landscape information was collected throughout the snow-free portion of the study period.

Photographs were taken of most sites and field notes were taken, noting the major characteristics and plants, animals and interesting geological or landscape features observed. Field site evaluations involved a subjective evaluation based on professional judgement and a limited amount of formalized data collection. Field evaluations were later reviewed taking into account information available from literature reviews and interviews.

3.0 OVERVIEW OF NATURAL FEATURES

3.1 The Physical Setting

3.1.1 Porcupine Hills
3.1.2 Rocky Mountain Foothills
3.1.3 Great Plains

3.2 The Living Component

3.2.1 Grassland Habitats
3.2.2 Parkland Habitats
3.2.3 Rocky Mountain Habitats

3.0 OVERVIEW OF NATURAL FEATURES

The study area lies in one of the most diverse parts of Alberta and includes a wide variety of plains and mountain landscapes and habitats. The following is a summary of the major physical landscapes and natural regions of each of the administrative districts in the study area:

M.D. of Pincher Creek

Physical Landscapes – Rocky Mountains, Foothills, Porcupine Hills, Great Plains
Natural Regions – Montane, Foothills Parkland, Foothills Grassland, Mixed Grassland (minor component)

M.D. of Cardston

Physical Landscapes – Foothills, Great Plains
Natural Regions – Foothills Parkland, Foothills Grassland, Mixed Grassland (minor component), Montane (minor component)

County of Warner

Physical Landscape – Great Plains
Natural Regions – Foothills Grassland, Mixed Grassland

County of Lethbridge

Physical Landscape – Great Plains
Natural Region – Mixed Grassland

3.1 THE PHYSICAL SETTING

The physical setting is described in some detail by Beaty (1975) and numerous geological reports. Southwestern Alberta can be divided into three major physical landscapes:

1. Porcupine Hills which, while similar in elevation and gross form, lack the extensive folding and faulting of the Foothills and are structurally distinct.
2. Rocky Mountain Foothills which are characterized by intensively folded and faulted terrain with high ridges.
3. Great Plains which are underlain by essentially flat-lying rocks which have been modified extensively by glacial action and are dissected by major river valleys and glacial spillways.

3.1.1 Porcupine Hills

The Porcupine Hills rise abruptly from the plains to over 1600 m. The lower southwest and south slopes and a tiny portion of the unglaciated plateau occur in the northwest part of the study area. The Porcupine Hills are directly underlain by the thick cross-bedded sandstones of the Tertiary Porcupine Hills Formation which do not have the extensive folding of Foothills strata.

3.1.2 Rocky Mountain Foothills

The Rocky Mountain Foothills in this part of Alberta are greatly compressed in an east-west direction and are no more than 25 km in width. The ridges generally trend in a northwest-southeast direction with drainage occurring in the intervening valleys. A notable exception is the Whaleback area where the ridges are aligned north-south. Elevations are in the 1300 to 1800 m range. The region is dissected by numerous stream valleys draining into the St. Mary, Belly, Waterton, Castle, Crowsnest and Oldman Rivers.

Closer to the Front Ranges, the bedrock geology of the Foothills becomes very complex, characterized by extensive thrusting and faulting of numerous distinctive formations. The bedrock is comprised of sandstones and shales of the Belly River, Wapiabi, Bighorn, Blackstone and Crowsnest Formations of Upper Cretaceous age. A few areas of Lower Cretaceous shales and sandstones are found along the western fringe. These belong to the Blairmore Group and Kootenay Formation.

Because of the abundance of steep ridges in the Foothills, exposed bedrock and colluvium (slope deposits formed from eroding materials) characterize much of these uplands. In the valleys and along the lower slopes, the surficial deposits are the result of both continental and Cordilleran glaciation, the former most prevalent closer to the Plains and the latter most prevalent westward nearer the Rocky Mountains. Large rocks, some up to 10 m in length, form a distinctive line of glacial erratics stretching from the Whaleback area south and east into the plains areas on Milk River Ridge.

One high elevation area remains unglaciated -- Mokowan Butte in the M.D. of Cardston.

3.1.3 Great Plains

The Great Plains are quite distinct from the other units. While large areas are essentially level, there are significant areas of strongly rolling topography and major highlands on the Milk River Ridge and the lower slopes of the Sweetgrass Hills. Elevations range from 875 m along the eastern boundary of the study area to 1400 m on the highest portions of the Milk River Ridge.

While the Foothills, Porcupine Hills and Rocky Mountains strongly exhibit their bedrock characteristics at the surface, the Plains owe their surface character primarily to events surrounding glaciation. These surficial features include: a variety of moraines, glacial lake basins, meltwater channels and spillways, dune fields, eskers and kames, drumlinized terrain, and outwash plains.

Unglaciated areas, capped by Tertiary gravels, are found on the southwestern part of the Milk River Ridge in the M.D. of Cardston. These features are rare on the plains in Canada.

Along the stream valleys of the Milk, Oldman and Little Bow Rivers, and along glacial spillways such as Verdigris, Chin, Middle and Etzikom, there are local areas of eroded bedrock some of which have a characteristic "badlands" appearance. A number of these spillway channels are very distinctive and include some of the best examples in Alberta. Massive slumping is found along portions of the Oldman River in the County of Lethbridge. Spectactular areas of eroded sandstone rock formations are found in the Writing-on-Stone area in the County of Warner.

The Plains region is underlain by Tertiary and Cretaceous, marine and non-marine, sandstones and shales of the Belly River, Willow Creek, Oldman, Bearpaw, Blood Reserve, St. Mary, Foremost, Milk River, and Pakowki Formations. These outcrop along the major stream valleys. A small area of marine sandstone and shale of the Alberta Group outcrops on the lower slopes of the Sweetgrass Hills in the County of Warner. Some type geological sections (Blood Reserve, Milk River, Oldman Formations) have been described from the study area and significant fossil sites, including type collection localities, are also known.

3.2 THE LIVING COMPONENT

The study area includes representation from the following natural regions:

Grassland Natural Region – Foothills and Mixed Grassland Sections

Parkland Natural Region – Foothills Section

Rocky Mountain Natural Region – Montane Section

The general vegetation and wildlife of the western portion of the study area is described in some detail by Kuchar (1973) and Wallis (1980).

3.2.1 Grassland Habitats

The dry Mixed Grassland occurs in the Great Plains region and at lower elevations along the Oldman River valley part way into the Foothills. Spear grasses (Stipa spp.) and wheat grasses (Agropyron spp.) predominate. Plant and animal species in Mixed Grasslands have adapted to a variety of grazing regimes ranging from light to extremely heavy (Wallis 1982). Detailed descriptions of Mixed Grassland vegetation can be found in Coupland (1950).

Inhabitants of these dry grasslands include typical Mixed Grassland plants and animals. Some areas are important habitat for Antelope and provide feeding areas for rare or threatened birds of prey like the Ferruginous Hawk and Burrowing Owl. Rare plants and animals tend to concentrate in sand plains and sane dunes, badlands, and along the rims of valleys and coulees.

Along the eastern flank of the Foothills, the lower slopes of the Sweetgrass Hills, and on the summit of the Milk River Ridge, Mixed Grassland gives way to lusher Foothills Grassland which is dominated by fescue grasses (Festuca spp.) and oat grasses (Danthonia spp.). Foothills Grasslands are forb rich and have some of the best spring flower displays in Alberta. More detailed descriptions of this vegetation type can be found in Moss and Campbell (1947). Native plants and animals in Foothills Grasslands appear more adapted to lighter grazing regimes than those lifeforms found in the Mixed Grasslands. The uncommon Baird's Sparrow is found in some of the lightly grazed level grasslands of the Milk River Ridge. A number of sites are also key Mule Deer, White-tailed Deer and Sharp-tailed Grouse habitat. Rare plants are most prevalent in unglaciated areas of the Milk River Ridge and in moister swales and creeksides where native plant species still predominate.

Wetlands are locally numerous, especially in areas of rolling topography such as the hummocky moraine areas west of the Milk River Ridge in the Kimball area and on the Palmer Ranch between the Waterton and Belly Rivers. Most large water bodies are man-made or man-maintained, the largest of which are the Waterton, St. Mary, and Milk River Ridge Reservoirs. Permanent wetlands are more numerous in the Foothills Grasslands than in the Mixed Grasslands. Those of the Mixed Grasslands tend to be more alkaline and temporary. Many of these wetlands are important for waterfowl production and migration and support a variety of marsh birds. A few sites provide important shorebird habitat.

Riverside (riparian) woodlands are confined to the major streams -- extensive woodlands are very localized. Plains cottonwood (Populus deltoides) dominates further out onto the Plains in the Mixed Grassland region and is found along portions of the Oldman River near Lethbridge and along the Milk River near Writing-on-Stone Provincial Park.

The narrow-leaved cottonwood (Populus angustifolia) forests along the St. Mary, Belly, Waterton and Oldman Rivers are unique in Canada. They are ideally suited to compete in the gravelly sites of fast river environments with their rapidly shifting channels which are characteristic of southwestern Alberta's rivers. Riparian areas are typically diverse with habitats ranging from newly-forming sand and gravel bars to low and tall shrub thickets, grassland, open-growth cottonwoods, cottonwoods with a dense shrub understory, and abandoned channel wetlands. These habitats are dependent on major flood events for renewal. More detailed descriptions of these plant communities can be found in Shaw (1976).

Riparian habitats are some of the most productive breeding bird habitats in the semi-arid plains. About three-quarters of birds occurring in Alberta's Grassland region use riparian habitats for some portion of their life cycle (Wallis 1982). Some uncommon birds like Black-headed Grosbeaks are found in these habitats. Colonies of Great Blue Herons nest in a few of the riparian woodlands.

Other valley habitats such as badland outcrops and eroded banks are important for birds of prey including the threatened Ferruginous Hawk. The diverse valley environments also support significant deer populations.

Streams flowing through parts of the Foothills Grassland are important for sport fish (see description under Rocky Mountain Habitats). While more widely distributed fish species characterize the Mixed Grassland rivers and reservoirs, several rare fish are found in the Milk River drainage. These include Finescale Dace, Silvery Minnow, Brassy Minnow, Stonecat and Mottled Sculpin. The last species has also been found in the upper portions of the St. Mary's River.

Significant areas of Mixed Grassland still persist in the County of Warner along portions of the Milk River, however, most of the native Mixed Grassland vegetation has been converted to cropland.

Sizeable areas of Foothills Grassland are found in the County of Warner and M.D. of Cardston on the higher portions of the Milk River Ridge and in the Carway area. These are some of the most extensive areas of this grassland type in Canada (Coupland 1973).

There is locally heavy grazing in the grasslands. Heavy grazing is the major disturbance in riparian habitats -- few areas of ungrazed or lightly grazed riparian vegetation remain.

3.2.2 Parkland Habitats

Very thin bands of Foothills Parkland form the transition between the Montane woodlands and the Foothills Grasslands. Aspen (Populus tremuloides) is the dominant tree with balsam poplar (Populus balsamifera) occurring on wetter sites. The grassland of the Foothills Parkland is dominated by Foothills Grassland species. Detailed descriptions of the vegetation can be found in Lynch (1955). The change from grassland to coniferous forest occurs over distances as small as a kilometre and seldom occurs over distances greater than a few kilometres.

Both the Foothills Parkland and Foothills Grassland are considerably different from their Central Parkland and Northern Fescue Grassland counterparts in central Alberta. The southwestern Alberta vegetation types are considerably richer and have many significant species of plants. A substantial number are either rare in Alberta or rare in Canada. The woodlands and wetland complexes support a diversity of birdlife including uncommon birds like the Black-headed Grosbeak. Some areas are important Mule Deer, White-tailed Deer and Elk habitat.

Wetlands, especially permanent ones, are relatively common in this region compared to the Mixed Grassland. A handful of these support breeding populations of rare Trumpeter Swans.

Few sizeable areas of Foothills Parkland remain. Most have been "improved" for pasturage or converted into hay or cropland. Introduced grasses such as brome (Bromus inermis) and timothy (Phleum pratense) have been seeded into or have invaded many of the natural grasslands in this region.

Streams flowing through this region are important for sport fish (see description under Rocky Mountain Habitats).

3.2.3 Rocky Mountain Habitats

Habitats typical of the Montane section of the Rocky Mountain Natural Region are prevalent in the Porcupine Hills and along the Foothills. There is a mosaic of coniferous and deciduous woodland, willow shrubbery, moist grasslands, and dry ridges. Open stands of Douglas fir (Pseudotsuga menziesii) and lodgepole pine (Pinus contorta) characterize the forests. Spruce (Picea spp.) only occurs on the wettest and most sheltered sites. Limber pine (Pinus flexilis) is common on the drier ridges. Grasslands are most common on the south and west-facing slopes while deciduous woodlands occur on deeper soils along the valleys. Grasslands and deciduous woodlands support many of the species found in the Foothills Grassland and Foothills Parkland. Wetlands are quite localized in the Montane region. More detailed descriptions of montane vegetation types can be found in Moss (1944).

There is a high potential for uncommon plants and animals throughout this region. Montane and other habitats in southwestern Alberta support a large portion of rare species. Some are confined to a handful of very specific sites while others occur more widely.

The diverse vegetation provides key habitat for Mule Deer, White-tailed Deer, Elk, Moose and, at higher elevations along the edge of the Rocky Mountains, Bighorn Sheep. Some of Alberta's largest wintering populations of Elk are found in the Montane zone in the M.D. of Pincher Creek.

Many of the streams flowing out of the mountains are important habitats for sport fish. Several species of exotic trout have been introduced successfully into southwestern streams running through the Montane, Foothills Parkland, and Foothills Grassland regions. Native Cutthroat Trout and Mountain Whitefish are also characteristic of these streams and the upper Milk River. Cold, clear water, high levels of dissolved oxygen, abundant food, and clean gravel for spawning make these streams productive. The Oldman river system above Brocket provides some of the best stream angling in Alberta and is rated a provincially important sport fishery. Spawning occurs throughout this section of the Oldman River and its tributaries, wherever there is adequate water and a clean gravel substrate.

With the exception of some cultivation along valleys and some minor logging operations, much of the Rocky Mountain habitat in the study area remains intact. The principal disturbances within the natural habitats include roads, gas wells and pipelines, and locally heavy cattle grazing.

4.0 EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTALLY SIGNIFICANT AREAS

4.1 Criteria for Environmentally Significant Areas

4.2 Level of Significance

4.3 Areas with Major Physical Constraints

4.0 EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTALLY SIGNIFICANT AREAS

Eagles (1984) stresses the need to have a standardized set of criteria for evaluating Environmentally Significant Areas (ESA's). These criteria fulfill several functions:

1. They allow a relatively systematic comparison of different sites and allow ranking schemes to be developed.
2. They help to outline the importance of sites to decision makers.
3. They stimulate research efforts towards refinement of definitions and concepts of significance.
4. They help to ensure similar approaches in other jurisdictions.
5. They aid in the process of boundary delineation as only those features that fulfill the criteria are included.

4.1 CRITERIA FOR ENVIRONMENTALLY SIGNIFICANT AREAS

Under the terms of reference, areas which had the following attributes were to be considered for this study:

1. "Hazard" lands and areas which are unsuitable for development in their natural state such as floodplains, permanent wetlands, and steep and unstable slopes; or which pose severe constraints on types of development such as areas of artesian flow and aeolian surficial deposits.
2. Areas which perform a vital environmental, ecological or hydrological function such as acquifer recharge.
3. Areas which contain rare or unique geological or physiographic features.
4. Areas which contain significant, rare or endangered plant or animal species.
5. Areas which are unique habitats with limited representation in the region or are a small remnant of once large habitats which have virtually disappeared.
6. Areas which contain an unusual diversity of plant and/or animal communities due to a variety of geomorphological features and microclimatic effects.
7. Areas which contain large and relatively undisturbed habitats and provide sheltered habitat for species which are intolerant of human disturbance.
8. Areas which provide an important linking function and permit the movement of wildlife over considerable distances, including migration corridors and migratory stopover points.

To the above, the following criteria were added based on a review of Eagles (1984) and the criteria established for the Calgary Region ESA's (Calgary Regional Planning Commission 1983):

9. Areas that are excellent representatives of one or more ecosystems or landscapes that characterize a natural region.
10. Areas with intrinsic appeal due to widespread community interest or the presence of highly valued features or species such as game species or sport fish.
11. Areas with lengthy histories of scientific research.

Size played some role throughout the evaluation. Areas were not initially rejected because of size, however, in the final analysis, some areas were only considered of local significance if they were relatively small areas and several larger areas of the same feature were available elsewhere in the region.

As most of the areas have experienced some degree of disturbance (roads, oil and gas development, pipelines, grazing, logging), sites were not eliminated unless the natural vegetation cover had been completely removed. Several key areas designated on Alberta Fish and Wildlife maps are now cultivated. These include some waterfowl production areas which have been drained. Such sites have not been shown as ESA's, however, some have good potential for wetland restoration and development. Except for small inclusions, cultivated lands included in Fish and Wildlife's key ungulate areas have not been shown as ESA's in this study. This distinction is made as cultivated lands are abundant and increasing whereas natural habitats are most restricted and decreasing in areal extent.

Although they have been used in other jurisdictions, aesthetic factors were not used as a primary criteria for evaluating sites in the study area. However, many of the diverse landscapes and habitat areas are aesthetically pleasing to many people and add to the value of the ESA's. All areas with regionally, provincially or nationally significant, aesthetically pleasing natural landscapes have been identified as ESA's based on other criteria.

4.2 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

Evaluating areas in terms of their level of significance requires considerable knowledge of significant features outside the jurisdiction under study. In some cases, this is facilitated by lists of rare, threatened and endangered species (Wershler 1985; Wallis 1977; and Packer and Bradley 1984) or evaluations of natural ecosystem complexes or landscapes (Coupland 1973; Cottonwood Consultants 1983) which are available at provincial, national and international levels. In some fields, notably geology, there have been very few studies which summarize the significance or distribution of features. In these cases, professional judgement by several researchers has been used to determine the level of significance. The history of assigning significance levels shows that areas are generally underrated. As more information and methods of evaluation become available, then levels of significance can be altered accordingly.

With the exception of "hazard" lands, ESA's in the study area were further subdivided on the following basis:

Significance Level	Criteria
Regional	Features which are of limited distribution or are the best examples of a feature in the Oldman River Region.
Provincial	Features which are limited in distribution at a provincial level or which are the best examples of a feature in Alberta.
National	Features which are limited in distribution in Canada or which are the best or only representatives at a national level.
International	Features which are unique in the world.

Map 1 shows the locations of Nationally, Provincially and Regionally Significant Sites in the Municipal District of Pincher Creek.

Included in the areas of regional significance are:

1. Extensive areas of native grassland.
2. Key areas for Mule Deer, White-tailed Deer, Elk, Bighorn Sheep, Antelope, Moose, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Great Blue Herons and colonial nesting waterfowl.*
3. Production and staging areas, including man-made reservoirs, for waterfowl or shorebirds.*
4. Nesting and feeding areas for birds of prey.

M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

ENVIRONMENTALLY SIGNIFICANT AREAS

MAP 1

5. Diverse areas of natural habitat.
6. Habitats which support significant populations of plants or animals which are rare in the Oldman River Region.
7. Landforms, landscapes or geological features which are rare in the Oldman River Region.
8. Landforms, landscapes or geological features which remain in a natural state and which are the best examples of their types in the Oldman River Region.
9. Areas which perform a significant aquifer recharge function.

***Note:**
Where sufficient information is available, some of these areas have been upgraded in significant level.

Included in the areas of provincial significance are:

1. Relatively undisturbed and sizeable remnants of natural habitats which, elsewhere in Alberta, have mostly been disturbed by grazing or logging.
2. Habitats which support significant populations of plants or animals which are rare in Alberta.
3. Landforms, landscapes or geological features which are rare in Alberta.
4. Landforms, landscapes or geological features which remain in a natural state and which are the best examples of their types in Alberta.
5. Native plant communities or habitat assemblages which are the best examples of their type in Alberta.
6. Rivers which are among the best sport fish production streams in Alberta.
7. Critical overwintering areas for significant populations of snakes.

Included in the areas of national significance are:

1. Areas which support some of the largest or only populations of rare plants or animals in Canada.
2. Relatively undisturbed and sizeable remnants of natural habitats which, elsewhere in Canada, have mostly been disturbed by grazing or logging.
3. Habitats for significant populations of plants or animals which are rare in Canada.
4. Landforms, landscapes or geological features which are rare in Canada.
5. Landforms, landscapes or geological features which are the best examples of their types in Canada.
6. Rivers which are among the best sport fish production streams in Canada.
7. Areas which support significant populations of threatened wildlife.
8. Areas which support natural habitat types which are rare in Canada.

Included in the areas of international significance are:

1. Areas which are type collection localities for fossils, plants or animals.
2. Areas which are type localities for descriptions of geological formations.

"Significant populations" of rare plants or animals generally refers to populations which are self-sustaining. Occurrences of individuals or single nest sites are not considered significant unless they are one of very few localities for the species.

Areas of local significance are not presented on the maps. These are areas which may be important in a limited part of the Oldman River Region but which do not have sufficient biophysical resources to allow consideration at the regional level.

4.3 AREAS WITH MAJOR PHYSICAL CONSTRAINTS

Areas with major physical constraints or "hazard" lands include lands with the following characteristics:

1. floodplains
2. steep and unstable slopes
3. permanent wetlands
4. aeolian (often sand dune) areas
5. areas of artesian flow

Map 2 shows the locations of various types of "hazard" lands in the Municipal District of Pincher Creek.

There is a history of significant flooding along the major rivers in the study area. All streams with mountain headwaters and those which are known to have experienced major flooding have been identified on the map showing areas with major physical constraints.

There are many steep slopes in the study area, however, not all are particularly hazardous. Because of non-environmental considerations, it is likely that the steepness of slope will limit development in most of these areas. Slopes identified as "hazards" in this study are both steep and unstable. Many of these occur on unconsolidated glacial lake deposits along the major river valleys in areas where recent slumping is apparent.

Permanent wetlands are unsuitable for the majority of developments.

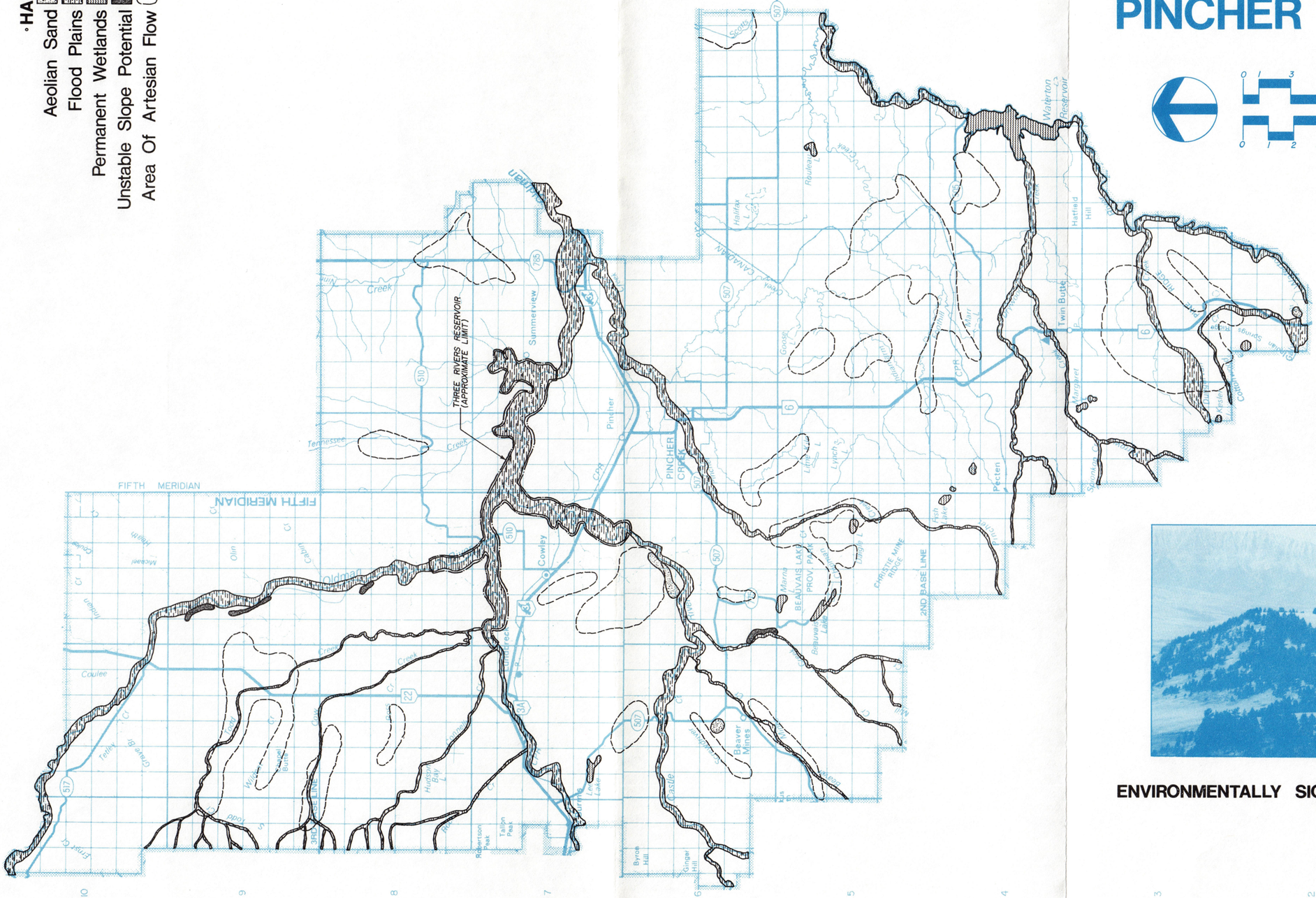
Aeolian (dune sand) areas have been identified from surficial geology maps (Stalker 1955, 1958, 1961, 1962, 1965; Harrison 1976; and Shetson 1980). Due to the ease with which soils on these sites can be eroded, significant problems could arise should the natural vegetation be removed.

Areas of artesian flow have been identified from hydrogeology maps (Ozoray and Lytviak 1974; Tokarsky 1974; and Borneuf 1976). These are subsurface features which can create major and costly problems during construction or excavation, particularly if they are in low-lying areas.

M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

HAZARD

- Aeolian Sand
- Flood Plains
- Permanent Wetlands
- Unstable Slope Potential
- Area Of Artesian Flow



0 1 3 5 km 10 15

0 1 2 3 mi 5 8



ENVIRONMENTALLY SIGNIFICANT AREAS

MAP 2

5.0 MANAGEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTALLY SIGNIFICANT AREAS

5.1 Guiding Principles

5.2 Site Management Plans

5.3 Specific Management Considerations

5.3.1 Significant Natural Landscapes
5.3.2 Significant Wildlife Habitats
5.3.3 Key Fish Habitats
5.3.4 Other Considerations for Areas of Biological Importance
5.3.5 Significant Geological Sites
5.3.6 Areas with Major Physical Constraints

5.0 MANAGEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTALLY SIGNIFICANT AREAS

The appropriate management of Environmentally Significant Areas (ESA's) is one essential component of a general environmental management strategy. Considering the extent of these resources and the compatibility of many existing land uses, it would neither be feasible nor desirable to achieve conservation goals through direct government ownership and control.

The various administrative agencies can provide assistance in the conservation of these sites through Integrated Plans, General Municipal Plans, Area Structure Plans, Area Redevelopment Plans and Land Use By-laws. However, many land use practices, especially those on private lands, are not regulated at any level of government. Success in meeting objectives for ESA's on these lands can only be achieved through cooperative approaches with private landowners. Administrative agencies can provide support in these situations through information programs and acting as sources of resource information.

Key elements of ESA management include:

1. The integration of ESA conservation into existing administrative structures.
2. The maintenance of an environmental data base.
3. The development of administrative staff expertise in environmental management.
4. The use of environmental education to foster public awareness.

Effective ESA management will ensure the long-term maintenance of the area's features. Intensive manipulation may be necessary in a few instances but the most frequent management activity will probably be to guard against negative impacts. The specific management approaches to each ESA should be based on the requirements and sensitivities of the area's features.

5.1 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Some guiding management principles have been set forth by Eagles (1984):

1. No major development should be permitted in ESA's due to detrimental impact on physical constraints.
2. Certain developments may be carried out subject to environmental impact analysis and appropriate mitigation if no feasible alternatives are available.
3. Long-term resource protection and management (and therefore long-term economic benefits) should have priority over short-term economic gains which result in the loss of future options.
4. Recognition of a site as an ESA does not imply that it will be purchased by a public agency or that it is open for public use.
5. Maintaining an environmental data bank is useful.
6. In-depth studies may be necessary in those areas that are subject to development threats in the near future. Proactive actions are preferable to reactive ones.
7. Further precision in delineating boundaries of ESA's can be obtained by more detailed field surveys. Environmental impact assessments can provide data that are useful for detailed boundary delineation, comparison of alternatives, assessment of long-term consequences, and development of management plans.
8. Buffers may be necessary but cannot be designed until the proposed activity is known and its impacts assessed.

9. Information dissemination is an important feature. Agencies and individuals cannot fully assist with site management if documentation is lacking. Publish ESA maps and supporting data so that all interested and involved parties, especially landowners, can be made aware of the features, their significance and management considerations.
10. ESA's should appear as a land-use designation in official plans and zoning by-laws, and not as an overriding development control over a variety of land use designations.
11. Appropriate procedures and staff must be available to ensure effective implementation and supervision of policies, plans and regulations.
12. Regulations, by-laws and policies should permit innovative approaches, including management agreements with owners of ESA's.

Some legal considerations have also been outlined by Eagles (1984):

1. A balance must be made between the land development rights of the landowner and the ecological common property rights of the public.
2. It is necessary to shift proposed incompatible uses out of ESA's.
3. An attempt should be made to allow private economic land use while limiting negative environmental impact. This is preferable to outright activity prohibition. The amount of restriction should not be greater than necessary.
4. ESA management should be integrated with other resource management efforts such as recreation, forestry and agriculture.
5. Regulation should be applied fairly and equally in private as well as government activities.
6. Local policy plans should contain broadly-based resource management policies as well as specific ESA policies.
7. Adjacent administrative districts should be encouraged to develop similar programmes to ensure consistency across jurisdictions.

5.2 SITE MANAGEMENT PLANS

Ultimately, it may be desirable to develop site management plans for each ESA. The first step is to determine management objectives such as protecting ecological diversity, maintaining or enhancing populations of rare species, increasing habitat diversity, commercial product exploitation and water level manipulation. Next, a detailed biophysical inventory of the ESA and adjacent lands should be carried out, and the current level and type of human impact should be documented. Based on this, management priorities for each feature (e.g. landform, process, species, habitat type) can be established including:

- level of alteration allowed or encouraged
- preferred amount of resource extraction
- methods of reducing harmful uses
- manipulative methods (e.g. burning, cutting, damming, grazing)
- protective methods (e.g. fencing, education, wardens)

Once the management priorities have been defined, then the various interested parties should cooperate in developing suitable arrangements to manage each site. Through simple techniques of encouragement, provision of information, and legal agreements, many management objectives can be met provided landowners are sympathetic.

5.3 SPECIFIC MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

In the Calgary Region ESA study several recommendations with respect to management of the major types of ESA's were made (Calgary Regional Planning Commission 1983). For natural sites, major types included significant natural landscapes, significant wildlife habitats, key fish habitats, and other areas of biological importance. To these we have added significant geological sites.

More detailed discussions of fire, grazing, off-road vehicle use and buffer zones with respect to the management of "natural areas" can be found in Bradley (1984).

5.3.1 Significant Natural Landscapes

Residential developments, extraction activities, transportation and utilities corridors, and cultivation are not compatible with the maintenance of the natural character of significant landscapes. The subdivision of a natural landscape into a number of parcels undermines ecological processes in the area. Properly sited individual dwellings may not greatly affect an area's overall character.

Highway commercial development, trailer parks, most commercial campgrounds, amusement attractions, all forms of non-extractive industrial development and intensive forms of agriculture, such as feedlots, poultry farms and nurseries are also considered incompatible with maintaining significant natural landscapes.

Commercial land uses such as guest ranches and destination resorts, which seek to conserve a large component of the natural landscape, may be quite appropriate provided that development and siting proceed in an environmentally responsive manner.

In some cases, buffer zones adjacent to significant natural landscapes may be needed to help screen these areas from adjacent residential, agricultural or industrial activities. Examples include the location of upland residences sufficiently far away from edges of significant natural valleys so that they are not visible from valley bottom positions. This will also provide the added benefit of avoiding soil stability problems which are encountered in several valley situations.

Recreation is often an important activity in natural landscapes. The effect on terrain, vegetation and wildlife can be significant. Some of the problems include garbage and human waste disposal and damage caused by all-terrain vehicles, illegal hunting and vandalism. While most land management and administrative agencies have limited powers in recreation management, they can help by:

1. Providing forums for landowners and recreationists to discuss their concerns and cooperate in formulating solutions such as designed access sites and designated travel routes.
2. Monitoring or coordinating the monitoring of recreational use in ESA's.
3. Providing funds for basic facilities and improvements, such as fencing and signage, which would help maintain environmental quality in ESA's on which landowners are permitting public access.

5.3.2 Significant Wildlife Habitats

Many of the management considerations discussed for natural landscapes would also benefit significant wildlife habitats. Alberta Fish and Wildlife maintains and updates its key area maps on a regular basis and keeps some of this information confidential. Potential changes in land use in ESA's should be discussed with Fish and Wildlife to determine any additional considerations beyond those expressed in this document. Some of the major wildlife management approaches are outlined below.

Riverside (riparian) woodland and shrub habitats are extremely important for deer and many species of migrating and nesting birds. Because of heavy grazing, water storage projects, cultivation of bottomlands, and stream flow regulation, these habitats have become some of the most threatened ecosystems in arid and semi-arid regions of the world (Johnson et al 1985; Boldt et al 1978; Tubbs 1980). Bradley and Smith (1986) suggest that, without adequate consideration, these habitats may become extinct by the end of the next century. Regeneration of these habitats is dependent upon major flood events. Channelization and stream flow regulation can have serious negative impacts on ecosystem survival. Water storage projects and cultivation are not compatible with maintenance of these habitats. Gravel operations and road-building can be mitigated to prevent large-scale negative changes in riparian habitats.

Heavy grazing, particularly during early stages of cottonwood development, has been cited as a major cause of habitat loss in other jurisdictions (Gjersing n.d.; Smith and Flake 1981). High livestock densities associated with many rest-rotation systems may cause more damage to woody vegetation than other grazing systems. Complete rest for degraded riparian areas from livestock grazing may be required (Platts 1978) to re-establish healthy native plant communities. Severson and Boldt (1978) suggest that winter use of these habitats is less detrimental than use in other seasons. Kusler (1985) provides a model statute for riparian habitat management.

Big game species such as Bighorn Sheep, Elk, Mule Deer, Moose, White-tailed Deer and Antelope are highly valued species. Protection of critical wintering ranges and protecting animals from disturbance while on those ranges are important management considerations. Certain resource activities may be compatible in certain seasons but not during others. In many instances, the best methods of conserving big game habitat are to maintain natural habitat through native rangeland ranching operations or other non-intensive land uses.

Controlled burning should be considered in certain areas which have been protected from fire for so long that the habitat quality has deteriorated because of tree invasion in grasslands and shrubbery or because of stagnation of shrub growth.

Range improvement should be balanced with more laissez-faire attitudes. Large-scale brush removal may benefit one species like Elk but may be detrimental to other species like Moose and a variety of songbirds.

Prior to large-scale logging in this century, forests were influenced by fire, disease and insect infestations. Despite this, certain stands made it to the old-growth stage and higher elevation stands in protected sites may have remained largely untouched for thousands of years. Individual trees or groups of trees died out but the newly opened canopy provided opportunities for the establishment of young trees. Several wildlife species like the Pileated Woodpecker evolved with these older stands and their survival is dependent on them. On the other hand, some species like the Lewis' Woodpecker prefer recently burned woodlands and their populations appear to have declined with fire suppression programs. Maintenance of a variety of forest types including burned-over areas and old-growth forest is important to retaining wildlife diversity (Meehan et al 1984).

Significant waterfowl and marsh bird production areas are very local in the Oldman River Region. Currently dry water bodies, if not cultivated, could once again be productive during wet years. Wetland conservation involves maintaining existing water regimes; operating man-made water-bodies with waterfowl, colonial birds and marsh habitats in mind; protecting wetlands, including dry lake beds, from encroachment by non-compatible land uses such as cultivation; and protection of adjacent shoreline and upland vegetation where it still exists.

Perhaps the most significant consideration is to allow natural water flows to enter the wetland basins and augment these where water is removed for other purposes. Drainage, in-filling and cultivation of wetlands are clearly not compatible with wetland maintenance. Moreover, adjacent shorelines and uplands are important to nesting waterfowl and certain land use activities may have to be curtailed at least on a seasonal basis if wetland productivity is to be maintained. Cultivation to the edge of significant wetlands should be discouraged.

Water storage projects may provide additional wetland habitat, however, impacts on existing marsh systems should be assessed. In some cases, valuable habitat for rare shorebirds may be flooded out to produce duck species which may already be common in the area.

Certain colonial nesting birds such as gulls and highly localized species like the Double-crested Cormorant and American White Pelican are able to nest on man-made lakes provided islands are made available. Water levels during the nesting season cannot flood the islands if nesting is to be successful.

Several birds of prey, including the threatened Ferruginous Hawk, are sensitive to human activities especially during early stages of the nesting season. As in the case of some of the big game species, it may be necessary to curtail certain activities on a seasonal basis to ensure successful nesting and rearing of young. Additionally, maintenance of adjacent uplands in natural cover is necessary in providing an ample supply of prey species.

A variety of grazing regimes in native grasslands is essential to maintaining the full complement of native animals (Wallis 1982). Some uncommon or threatened birds like the McCown's Longspur, Ferruginous Hawk and Burrowing Owl thrive in heavily grazed Mixed Grasslands while others like the Baird's Sparrow and Grasshopper Sparrow require ungrazed or lightly grazed areas (Kantrud and Kologiski 1982). Species in the Mixed Grassland are adapted to a wider variety of grazing intensities than those of the Foothills Grassland. Foothills Grassland birds show a distinct preference for ungrazed and moderately or lightly grazed areas.

Conservation of diverse bird populations in the Foothills Parkland sites will require maintaining the mosaic of grassland, woodland and wetlands which currently exists. Controlled burning or small-scale brush removal may be necessary to retard encroachment of woody vegetation into grasslands. Bird habitats are enhanced by beaver activity and protection of beaver ponds within ESA's serves two important purposes: deep water bodies are maintained, and diverse edge habitats are created at the water's edge, through clearing of adjacent woodlands and by supporting growth of nearby shrublands.

Overwintering areas (hibernacula) for Bull Snakes and Prairie Rattlesnakes are very locally distributed in Alberta and the availability of these sites is a major limiting factor in their life cycles. Excavation of hibernacula, cultivation of adjacent lands and large-scale elimination of snakes will result in the loss of these local populations.

5.3.3 Key Fish Habitats

The management of key fish habitats is more problematical than management of other ESA's. Fish migrate extensively within the drainage system. While certain reaches may be more significant than others, land uses well outside those areas may have profound impacts on them. While direct conservation and protection of spawning habitat may be helpful in the most significant reaches, it is important to promote sound planning management practices throughout the drainage basins. These are essential to the maintenance of fish migration routes and water quality and quantity. Detailed information on current impacts and water management considerations for fish can be found in Longmore and Stenton (1981) and Platts (1978; 1979). The following is a summary of their major findings.

Logging, agriculture and former stripmining activities have resulted in increased runoff and channel erosion in tributary streams throughout the Oldman drainage above Brocket. Elsewhere in the study area, abstraction of water for irrigation has significantly reduced flows and agricultural activities have resulted in a significant deterioration of the water quality. This has greatly reduced fish habitat along some streams.

Water quality and quantity are affected by forestry operations, sewage disposal, storm sewer runoff, runoff from agricultural land and feedlots, water abstraction for domestic and agricultural use, stream regulation and water storage, and disruption of streambeds by channelization, diking, seismic line crossings, and construction of bridges and pipelines. Clearcutting watersheds removes protective vegetation from streambanks and enhances spring flooding and channel erosion. Cattle can trample streambanks, making them unstable and susceptible to erosion and also cause local pollution and eutrophication.

Nutrient loading of streams and rivers because of municipal sewage or feedlot waste disposal combined with seasonally low flows can substantially affect water quality. Residues from fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides and a number of other toxins find their way into waterbodies via storm sewers and runoff from agricultural lands and feedlots. While there is little direct action that can be taken in many of these instances, major pollution sources such as feedlots should be located away from watercourses. There is evidence in some areas of nutrient loading exceeding the maximum acceptable levels for adequate protection of fisheries and aquatic life. Monitoring of existing operations would help to more fully determine the extent of any current problems.

Reduced flows from diversion of water for other uses results in higher water temperatures, lower dissolved oxygen levels and a reduced ability of the streams to assimilate waste. Flow augmentation may be necessary to counteract the negative effects. Stabilization of water flows by impoundment structures may increase overall stream productivity but may have adverse effects on riparian habitats if peak floods are controlled (see previous section).

Impoundment structures such as weirs and dams act as barriers to fish movement, thereby reducing the viability of populations which are dependent on a variety of reaches in the drainage basin. The potential impact of any in-stream barrier requires careful consideration. Fish often migrate long distances to spawn in headwater streams. Improperly designed weirs, road crossings, or man-made channel constrictions in small tributary streams may have significant impacts on important downstream fisheries. Design of fish passage facilities into these structures can significantly reduce impacts.

Significant spawning habitats must be protected from major inputs of silt which can cause the loss of viability in developing eggs. Trout and some of the rarer fish like Silvery Minnows are particularly vulnerable to siltation. Land use and construction practices adjacent to spawning streams should be carefully considered. Maintaining a buffer zone of natural vegetation along streambanks is helpful in controlling runoff problems. Fencing streambanks from cattle use can significantly increase stream productivity. Sewer outfalls and other direct input sources of toxins or effluent should not be located in spawning streams. The deposition of material on the bed or banks of spawning streams should be prohibited.

5.3.4 Other Considerations for Areas of Biological Importance

Specific management guidelines should be drawn up for rare and endangered plant and animal species. Where known, these have been cited in the wildlife and fish management sections and in the area descriptions. The management and monitoring of most rare and endangered plants and animals is still in its infancy. As knowledge increases, management techniques will improve.

Major concerns already identified in the study area include:

1. Invasion of moist native grasslands in the Foothills Parkland and Foothills Grassland by non-native species such as timothy and brome may be crowding out rare plant species.
2. Stabilization of active blowouts at the Turin Dunes could ultimately eliminate or further reduce populations of rare plants.

3. While heavy grazing may be beneficial to several upland Mixed Grassland plants, it may reduce or eliminate populations of rarer plants along stream valleys and wetlands in the Mixed Grassland and generally decrease the plants which are characteristic of Foothills Grassland, Foothills Parkland and Montane regions.

4. Large blocks of habitat are generally preferable to small parcels in that native plants and animals are better able to withstand the direct and indirect effects of adjacent land uses over the longer term (Graul 1980).

5.3.5 Significant Geological Sites

All geological sites identified in this study are most significant in their undisturbed state. With the exception of intensive developments such as mining, sand and gravel extraction, and flooding by water storage projects, most current land uses are compatible with maintenance of geological features. Some significant glacial erratics have been lost due to agricultural development and highway construction (Stalker n.d.). Recreational users sometimes vandalize features but these instances are relatively limited in scope.

5.3.6 Areas with Major Physical Constraints

Extreme care should be taken when considering developments in areas which have major physical constraints:

1. floodplains
2. steep and unstable slopes
3. permanent wetlands
4. aeolian deposits
5. artesian flow areas

Several floods in this region have had major impacts (Warner 1973). Particularly hard hit have been the Oldman River, Castle River, Belly River, Waterton River, St. Mary River, Drywood Creek, Lee Creek and Milk River.

In addition to the usual cautions related to siting permanent structures in floodplains, planners should be aware that the alluvial gravels found along most stream valleys act locally as major aquifers (D. Borneuf, Alberta Research Council, personal communication). Even though they may be situated well-back from the modern floodplain, septic tanks and other sources of pollution such as feedlots situated on these areas can contaminate large areas of precious groundwater supplies in a short period of time.

The slopes identified on the maps are both steep and unstable with active slumping occurring in many areas. It should be noted that because of the map scales, it was impossible to delineate some minor areas on the maps. Developments should be sited well-back from these slopes. Additional moisture from irrigation amplifies any problems which may exist under natural conditions and this should be taken into account when locating permanent structures.

Aeolian deposits are very susceptible to erosion should the natural cover be removed. In addition, improperly constructed irrigation canals in aeolian areas can create salinization problems by allowing salts to be carried further during spring runoff. One of the best management strategies for these areas is to leave them in native rangeland.

Areas of artesian flow pose several constraints for construction and excavation, especially where these occur in low-lying areas. Water well drilling in such areas tends to be ineffective and extremely costly.

Groundwater is a precious resource in the arid plains. Improperly cased wells drilled into Milk River Formation sandstone have caused leekage into other formations with a resulting drop in water levels and increase in salinity. Some wells which used to be flowing at the surface are now almost 100 m below ground (Meyboom 1960; D. Borneuf, personal communication).

Most upland areas are important to local groundwater flows as they serve as groundwater recharge sites. Summerfallowing and cultivation of upland sites can lead to salinization of soils at lower elevations. Disposal or placement of toxic materials and wastes in regionally significant recharge areas like uplands in the Sweetgrass Hills, Milk River Ridge and the Foothills could result in contamination of large areas of precious groundwater supplies. Researchers at the Alberta Research Council provide excellent advice with respect to precious groundwater supplies.

6.0 DATA GAPS

6.0 DATA GAPS

The most well-studied resources are the hydrological (Cherry et al 1972) and geological features, although significant paleontological resources probably still remain undiscovered.

The most conspicuously lacking information is with respect to the site specific distribution of rare plants and animals. While the critical habitats for some species such as birds of prey are reasonably well-documented, only patchy research has been undertaken on smaller mammals, songbirds, reptiles, amphibians, non-sport fish, invertebrates, and plants.

We are, however, confident that all rare species known for the study area are represented in habitats which have been incorporated into Environmentally Significant Areas (ESA's) for other reasons. While minor areas of rare plant and animal habitats may still not be defined, the most significant concentrations of rare plants and animals should be accounted for by this study. The details of rare plant and animal distribution within most of the ESA's are not known. Although areas of potential habitat could be extracted from existing data, further field studies are required to accurately define the specific distribution of rare plants and animals.

Considerably more work is needed at regional, provincial and national levels to assess the significance of sites for lower plants and animals.

7.0 FUTURE RESEARCH

7.0 FUTURE RESEARCH

More detailed studies should be undertaken in areas which are considered a priority either because of their high significance levels or because of planned developments. Suggestions for the type of information to be gathered and the level of detail are provided in the Environmentally Significant Area Checksheet which follows. A map of each site showing the principal biological and landform features should also be prepared.

Further research into the interactions of groundwater and surface water bodies such as lakes and smaller wetlands would contribute greatly to the management of significant water bodies.

An ongoing program of data acquisition and storage will build upon the basic information provided by this study. The cooperation of the Oldman River Regional Planning Commission, agencies at all levels of government, landowners, researchers and naturalists would greatly enhance the type and amount of information collected. Initial studies should be directed to further identification of sites of rare, threatened or endangered plants and animals. Integration with other studies such as the Alberta Bird Atlas project would also be helpful.

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8.0 REFERENCES

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9.0 ENVIRONMENTALLY SIGNIFICANT AREA CHECKSHEETS

9.0 ENVIRONMENTALLY SIGNIFICANT AREA CHECKSHEETS

Results of the inventory of Environmentally Significant Areas in the Municipal District of Pincher Creek are presented on the following checksheets.

Preceding the detailed checksheets is an overview of the Environmentally Significant Areas arranged by level of significance (regional, provincial, national or international). Included in this summary are brief outlines of the major features for each Environmentally Significant Area.

The more detailed Environmentally Significant Area checksheets are arranged in alphabetical order. A map and photograph accompany each ESA description along with details of the site location, major features, other biophysical features, level of significance, criteria for significance rating, major management considerations, and pertinent references.

OVERVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTALLY SIGNIFICANT AREAS M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT SITES

Site Name	Major Features
BEAVER MINES	Diverse Montane Ridge and Valley Habitats Key Habitat for a Variety of Ungulates
BYRON HILL	Diverse Montane Habitats Key Habitat for a Variety of Ungulates Rare Plants
CROWLODGE SLOUGHS	Productive Wetlands
CROWSNEST RIDGES	Diverse Montane Habitats Key Ungulate Habitat Drumlins
DAIGLE LAKE	Disjunct Population of Yellow Pond Lilies Productive Wetland for Diving Ducks
DRYWOOD/YARROW	Diverse Breeding Bird Habitat Key Deer Habitat Rare Plants Productive Fishery Pleistocene Geological Sections Buried Soils
DUNGARVAN-COTTONWOOD	Diverse Breeding Bird Habitat Key Ungulate Habitat
FISH LAKE	Waterfowl Staging and Production Area Diving Ducks and Grebes
FOOTHILLS CREEK WETLANDS	Major Waterfowl Production Area
GLACIER PARK RIDGES	Diverse Montane Habitats Key Ungulate Habitat Large Glacial Erratics

LIVINGSTONE RANGE	Key Mountain Sheep Habitat Magnetite Deposits
LOWER CASTLE RIVER	Diverse Major Stream Valley Key Deer Habitat Productive Fishery
LOWER PINCHER CREEK	Diverse Valley Habitats Key Deer Habitat Productive Fishery
LOWER WATERTON RIVER	Diverse Riparian Habitats Lightly Grazed Foothills Grassland Excellent Bedrock Exposures
MILL CREEK	Diverse Valley Habitats Key Deer Habitat Excellent Geological Section
MILL CREEK RIDGES	Diverse Montane Ridges and Valleys Key Habitat for a Variety of Ungulates
NORTH BEAUVAIS RIDGES	Picturesque Montane Ridges Key Ungulate Habitat
ROCK - COW CREEK WETLANDS	Beaver Pond and Wetland Complex Diverse Breeding Bird Habitat Waterfowl Production Key Moose Habitat
SPIONKOP RIDGE	Key Mountain Sheep and Deer Habitat Rare Plants
SUMMERVIEW	Montane Grassland and Limber Pine Ridges Nesting Prairie Falcons
TODD CREEK	Key Moose Habitat
UPPER CASTLE RIVER	Diverse Major Stream Valley Key Habitat for a Variety of Ungulates Excellent Geological Sections
UPPER WATERTON RIVER	Riparian Habitats

PROVINCIALLY SIGNIFICANT SITES

Site Name	**Major Features**
BEAUVAIS LAKE PROVINCIAL PARK	Ungrazed, Diverse Montane Habitats Uncommon Birds and Plants Key Ungulate Habitat
CHAPEL BUTTE	Massive Sandstone Rock Outcrop Montane Ridge System Nesting Area for Prairie Falcons Key Deer Habitat Major Anticline Formation

CLOUDY RIDGE	Lightly Grazed Montane Habitats Key Elk Habitat Rare Plants
CONNELLY CREEK RIDGES	Extensive Limber Pine Stands Key Deer Habitat
DUNGARVAN WETLANDS	Major Beaver Pond and Wetland Complex Diverse Breeding Bird Habitat Uncommon Birds and Plants Key Ungulate Habitat Large Alluvial Fan
HORSESHOE LAKE	Nesting Area for Trumpeter Swans
KYLO HILL - MOUNT BACKUS	High Montane Ridges Rare Plants Key Ungulate Habitat
LYNCH LAKES	Lightly Grazed Foothills Parkland Diversity of Breeding Bird Habitats
MARGARET LAKE	Diverse Foothills Parkland and Wetland Uncommon Plants Nesting Area for Trumpeter Swans Key Elk Habitat
OLDMAN RIVER - PORCUPINE HILLS	Diverse Breeding Bird Habitats Prime Quality Trout Fishery
PINE RIDGE	Diverse Foothills Parkland Uncommon Plants Kames and Drumlins
PORCUPINE HILLS	Massive Sandstone Outcrops Diverse Montane Ridges Unglaciated Uplands Key Ungulate Habitat Nesting Rare and Threatened Birds of Prey
TODD CREEK RIDGE	Lightly Grazed, Diverse Montane Habitats Intriguing Sandstone Rock Formations Key Ungulate Habitat

NATIONALLY OR INTERNATIONALLY SIGNIFICANT SITES

Site Name	**Major Features**
CROWSNEST RIVER	Premium Quality Trout Fishery Extensive Wetland Seepage Key Deer Habitat Excellent Geological Sections Well-preserved River Terraces Lundbreck Falls

OLDMAN RIVER - BROCKET	Major Narrow-leaved Cottonwood Stands Diverse Breeding Bird Habitats Rare Plants Hoodoo Cliffs Excellent Pleistocene Geological Sections Key Deer Habitat Nesting Prairie Falcons Productive Fishery
WHALEBACK	Concentration of Features Spectacular Whaleback Ridge Diverse Montane Valley and Ridge Habitats Superior Trout Stream Rare Plants Nesting Birds of Prey Key Habitat for a Variety of Ungulates Well-preserved Stream Terraces Large Glacial Erratics Excellent Geological Sections

ENVIRONMENTALLY SIGNIFICANT AREA CHECKSHEETS (Format)

Name: Short name which readily identifies the site.

Location: Describe the general location, Section, Township, Range, Meridian, or UTM coordinates Map the area on 1:50,000 map or aerial photograph.

Significant Features: Only those features which are significant should be described here; generaly biophysical descriptions should be provided in an overview report and major biophysical units should be outlined on maps. Significant features to be described include:

Wildlife (Rare Mammals, Birds, Reptiles, Amphibians, Fish, Invertebrates)

Wildlife Habitats (diverse or productive areas)

Rare Plants

Vegetation (representative or excellent examples of plant communities)

Landforms and Geological Features (unusual or uncommon types as well as excellent examples of the feature)

Hydrological Features (major springs and seepage areas)

Level of Significance: regional, provincial, national, international (see Section 4.0 of this report)

Criteria: Criteria used in determining significance should be well-defined (see Section 4.0 of this report).

Management Considerations: Describe current land uses and potential impacts of current or proposed land uses and any management strategies which may be useful in maintaining the significant features.

References: Any references which describe biophysical resources in further detail or which provide insight into management or significance of the resources.

BEAUVAIS LAKE PROVINCIAL PARK

M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SCALE - 1:125,000

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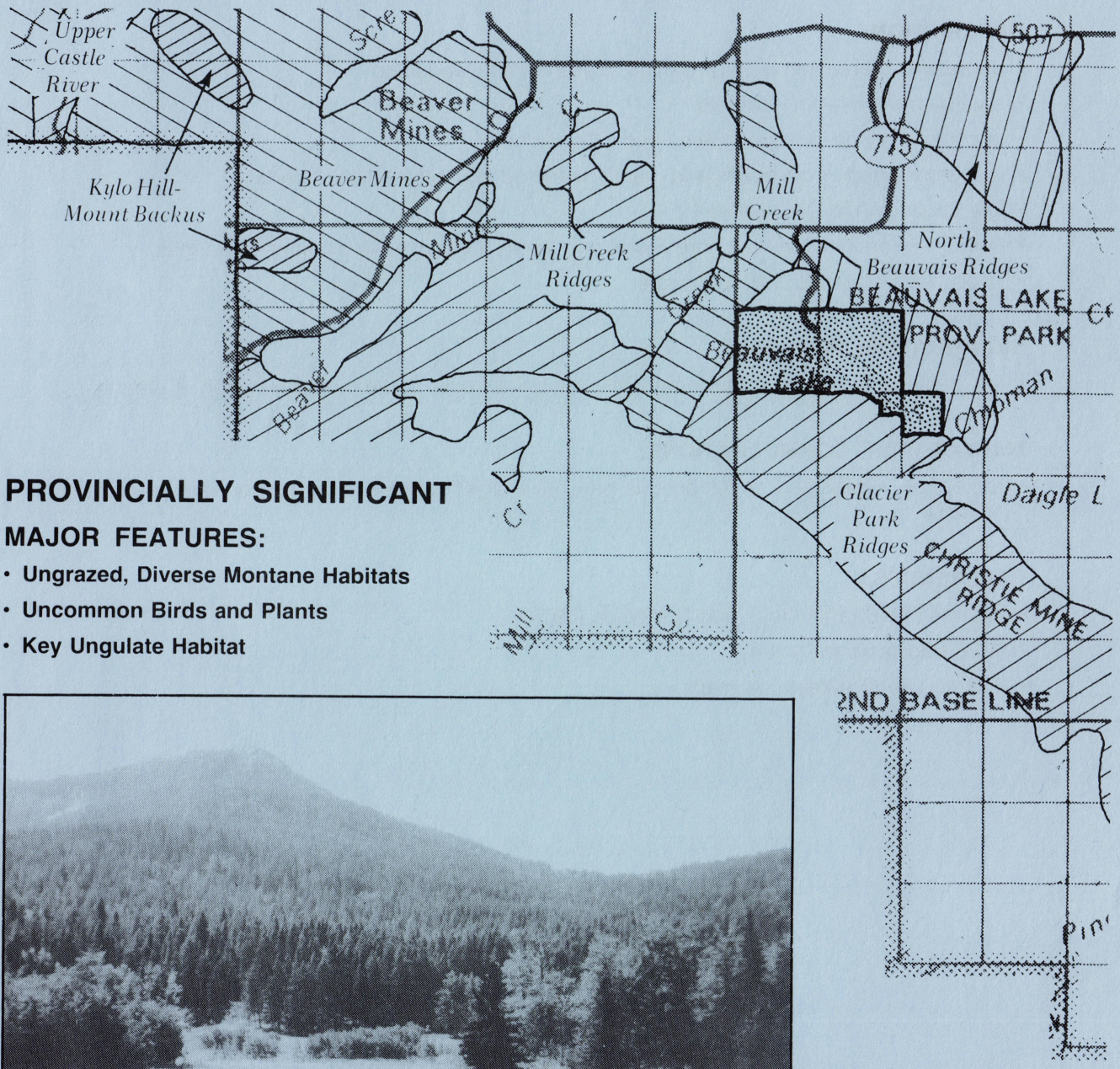

PROVINCIALLY SIGNIFICANT

MAJOR FEATURES:

- **Ungrazed, Diverse Montane Habitats**
- **Uncommon Birds and Plants**
- **Key Ungulate Habitat**

BEAUVAIS LAKE PROVINCIAL PARK
M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SITE LOCATION:

- 16 km southwest of Pincher Creek
- Sections 29, 30 and NW21 - Tp. 5 - Rge. 1 - W5

DESCRIPTION:

- ungrazed diverse montane grassland, wetlands and woodland
- diverse breeding bird habitats
- uncommon birds including Hammond's Flycatcher
- numerous uncommon plants and plants restricted to southwestern Alberta
- key Elk and Mule Deer habitat
- one of few areas where Leopard Frogs and Spotted Frogs have overlapping ranges
- deep water marshes and open water

SIGNIFICANCE: Provincial

- few areas of ungrazed upland and wetland habitats exist in the montane region of Alberta

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS:

- recreation activity and developments can have significant local impacts on rare plants and animals

REFERENCES:

- Woerns (1978) and Crack and Danielson (1974)
- 1986 field program notes
- Fish and Wildlife key area maps

BEAVER MINES

M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SCALE - 1:125,000

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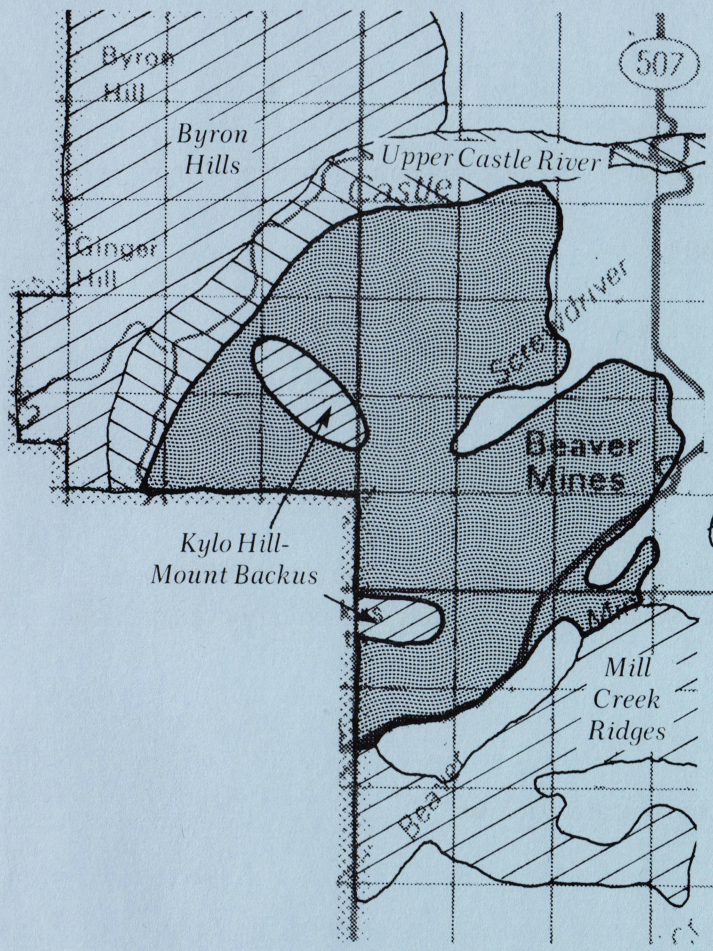


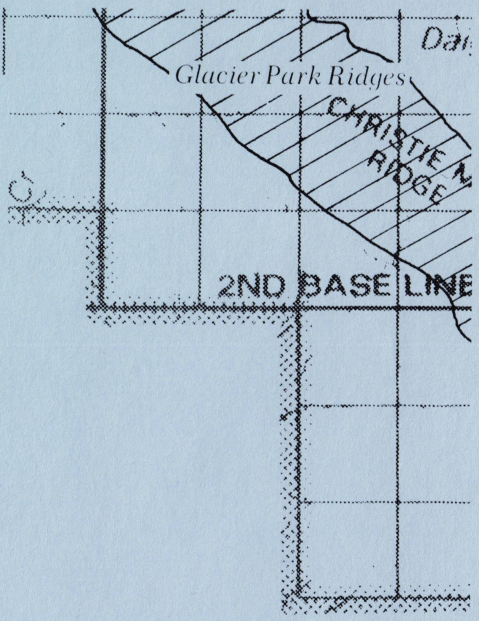




REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT

MAJOR FEATURES:

- **Diverse Montane Ridge and Valley Habitats**
- **Key Habitat for a Variety of Ungulates**





BEAVER MINES
M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SITE LOCATION:

- ridges between Beaver Mines Creek and Castle River west of Hwy. 507
- Tp. 5 and 6 - Rge. 2 and 3 - W5

DESCRIPTION:

- diverse montane ridges
- wetlands and riparian woodland and shrubbery
- key White-tailed Deer habitat along Beaver Mines Creek and along the northeastern edge of this unit
- key Moose habitat along the northern edge
- key Mule Deer and Elk habitat
- some fish production along Beaver Mines Creek

SIGNIFICANCE: Regional

- key ungulate habitats and fish production areas are localized in the region

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS:

- heavy grazing reduces the suitability of these habitats for a variety of native plants and animals
- stream pollution from subsurface or surface sources and erosion and siltation can have significant impacts on fisheries

REFERENCES:

- Fish and Wildlife key area maps
- C. Bradley, Trout Unlimited (personal communication) for fish

BYRON HILL
M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SCALE - 1:125,000

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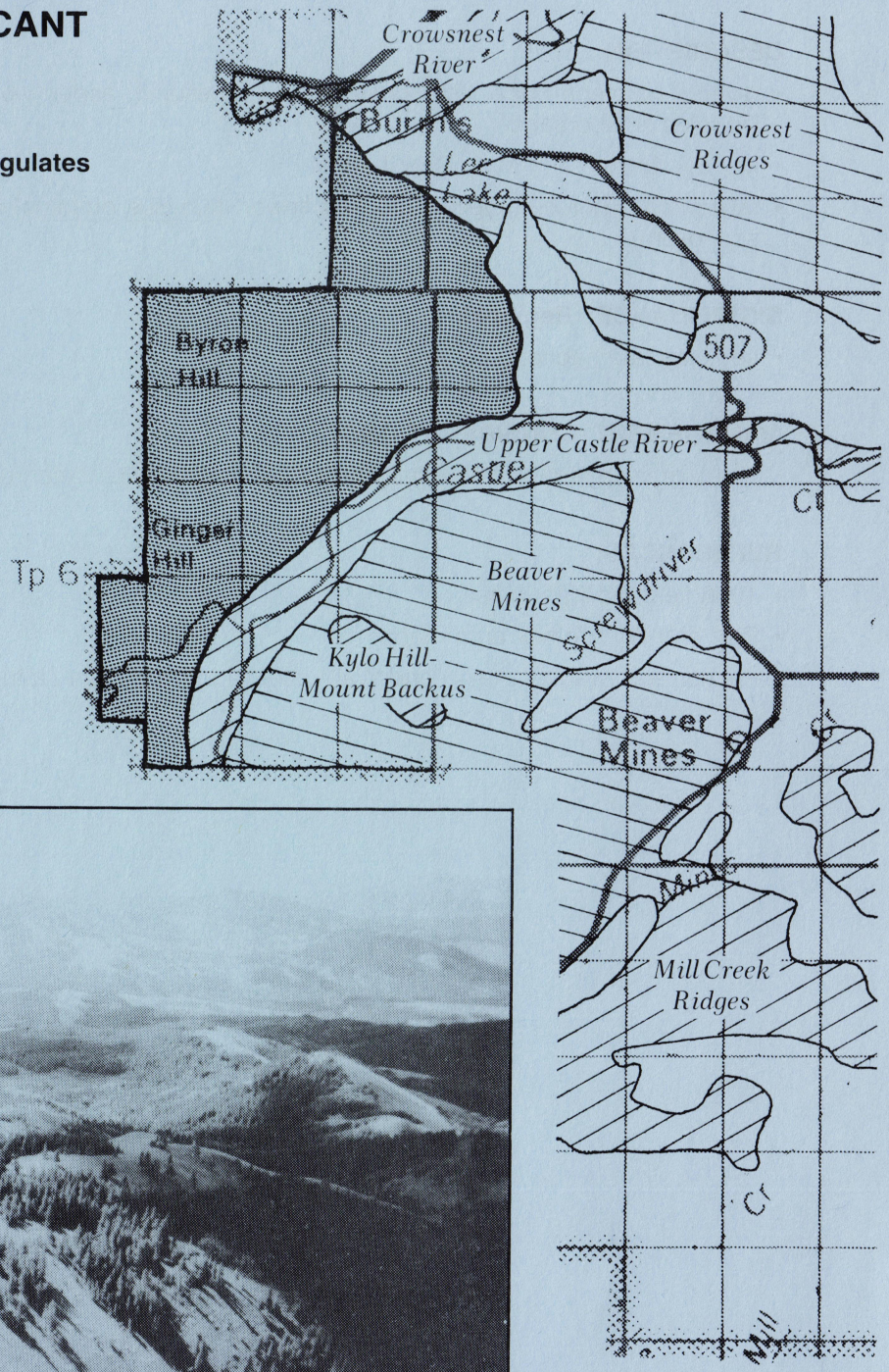
0 1 mi 2 3 5

REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT

MAJOR FEATURES:

- Diverse Montane Habitats
- Key Habitat for a Variety of Ungulates
- Rare Plants





BYRON HILL
M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SITE LOCATION:

- 25 km west of Pincher Creek; ridges of Byron and Ginger Hills
- Tp. 6 and 7 - Rge. 2 and 3 - W5

DESCRIPTION:

- diverse montane ridge with lightly grazed grassland, aspen woods and lodgepole pine and Douglas fir woodland
- key Elk, Moose and Mule Deer habitat
- rare plants, including yellow monkey flower (Mimulus guttatus) and mountain thistle (Cirsium scariosum)

SIGNIFICANCE: Regional

- key ungulate habitats are localized in the region

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS:

- heavy grazing reduces the suitability of these habitats for a variety of native plants and animals

REFERENCES:

- 1986 field program notes
- Fish and Wildlife key area maps
- Packer and Bradley (1984) and Wallis (1986) for rare plant status

CHAPEL BUTTE
M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SCALE - 1:125,000

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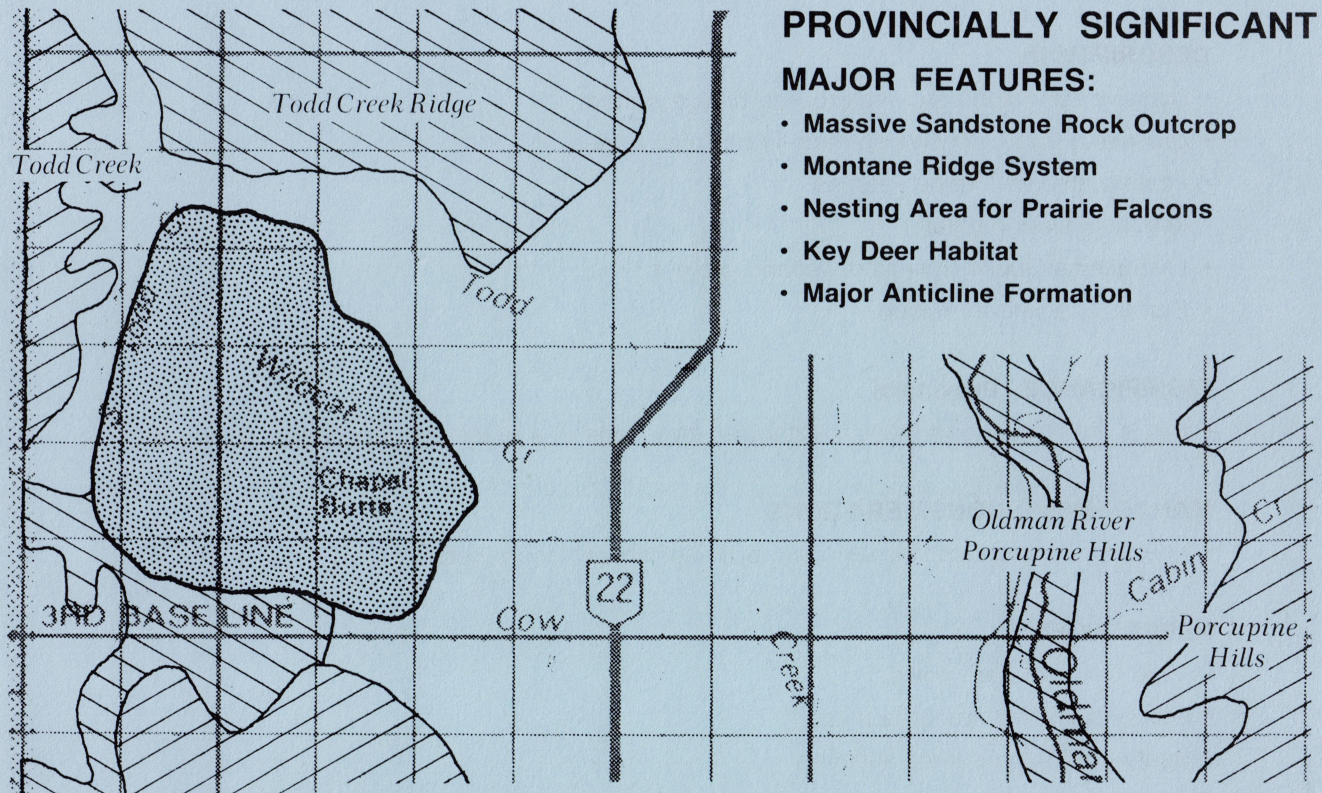

PROVINCIALLY SIGNIFICANT

MAJOR FEATURES:

- Massive Sandstone Rock Outcrop
- Montane Ridge System
- Nesting Area for Prairie Falcons
- Key Deer Habitat
- Major Anticline Formation



CHAPEL BUTTE
M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SITE LOCATION:

- 16 km NNW of Lundbreck
- Tp. 9 - Rge. 2 and 3 - W5

DESCRIPTION:

- massive sandstone rock outcrop and ridge system
- grassland and extensive stunted limber pine ridges
- nesting area for Prairie Falcons
- key Mule Deer habitat
- Livingstone Ducks Unlimited wetland project
- Burmis anticline formation

SIGNIFICANCE: Provincial

- this is the largest and most spectacular rock ridge in a grassland landscape in Alberta

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS:

- heavy grazing reduces the suitability of these habitats for a variety of native plants and animals

REFERENCES:

- 1986 field program notes
- Fish and Wildlife key area maps
- Beaty (1975) for Burmis anticline

CLOUDY RIDGE

M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SCALE - 1:125,000

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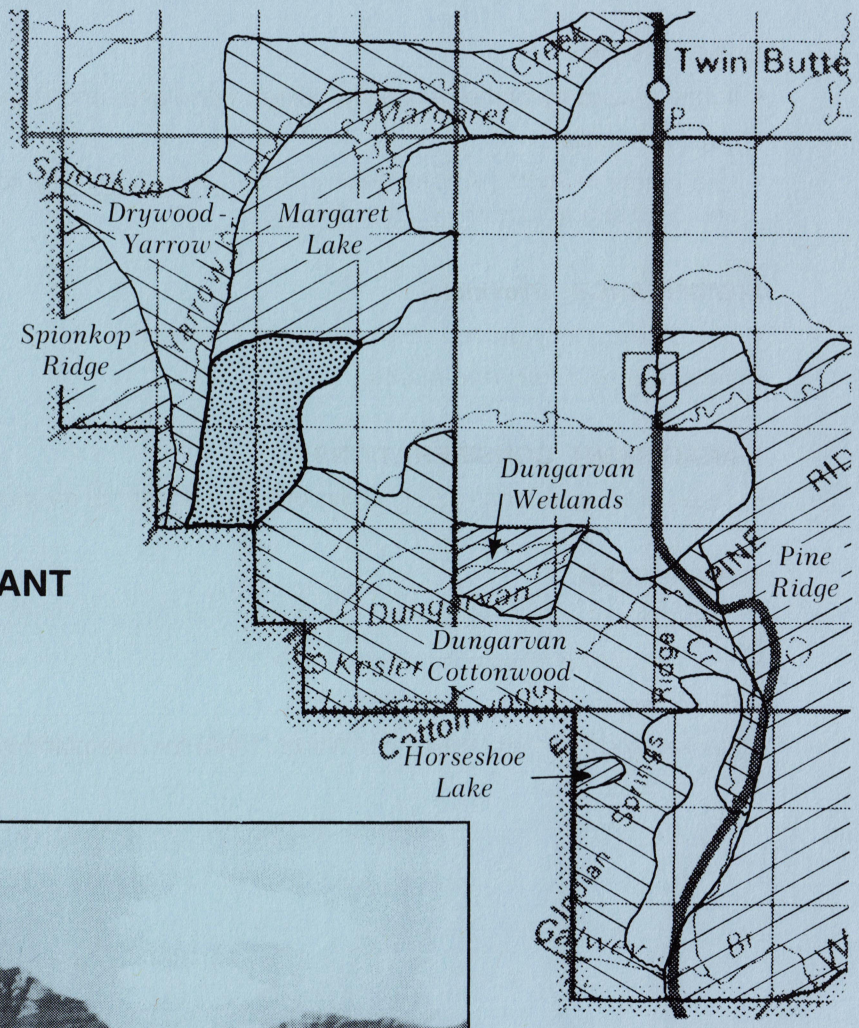

PROVINCIALLY SIGNIFICANT

MAJOR FEATURES:

- **Lightly Grazed Montane Habitats**
- **Key Elk Habitat**
- **Rare Plants**



R 29

CLOUDY RIDGE
M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SITE LOCATION:

- just north of northern tip of Waterton Lakes National Park
- Tp. 3 - Rge. 30 - W4

DESCRIPTION:

- lightly grazed montane grassland, aspen woodland, and Douglas fir ridge
- key Elk habitat
- rare plants including Alaska onion grass (Melica subulata), tall trisetum (Trisetum canescens) and bearded fescue (Festuca subulata)

SIGNIFICANCE: Provincial

- one of few lightly grazed montane areas in Alberta
- several provincially rare plants

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS:

- heavy grazing reduces the suitability of these habitats for a variety of native plants and animals

REFERENCES:

- 1986 field program notes
- Fish and Wildlife key area maps
- Cottonwood Consultants (1983)
- Packer and Bradley (1984) and Wallis (1986) for rare plant status

CONNELLY CREEK RIDGES

M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SCALE - 1:125,000

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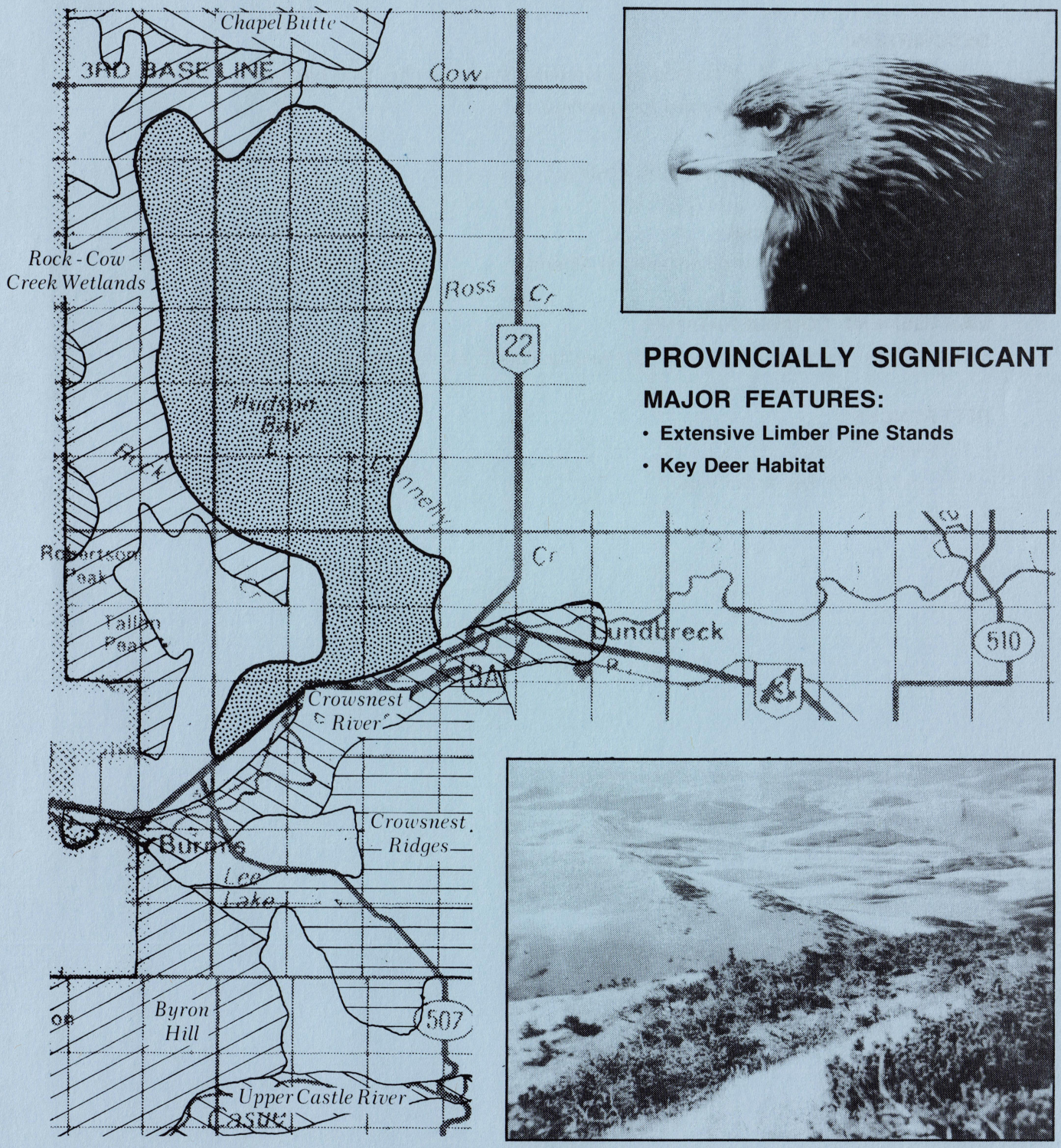

PROVINCIALLY SIGNIFICANT

MAJOR FEATURES:

- **Extensive Limber Pine Stands**
- **Key Deer Habitat**

CONNELLY CREEK RIDGES
M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SITE LOCATION:

- 10 km north of Burmis
- Tp. 7 and 8 - Rge. 2 and 3 - W5

DESCRIPTION:

- dry montane ridges with grassland and extensive stunted limber pine habitats
- some small ponds are productive for waterfowl
- key Mule Deer habitat
- Golden Eagle feeding area, possibly nesting

SIGNIFICANCE: Provincial

- the most extensive limber pine stands in Alberta

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS:

- heavy grazing reduces the suitability of these habitats for a variety of native plants and animals

REFERENCES:

- 1986 field program notes
- Fish and Wildlife key area maps

CROWLODGE SLOUGHS

M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SCALE - 1:125,000

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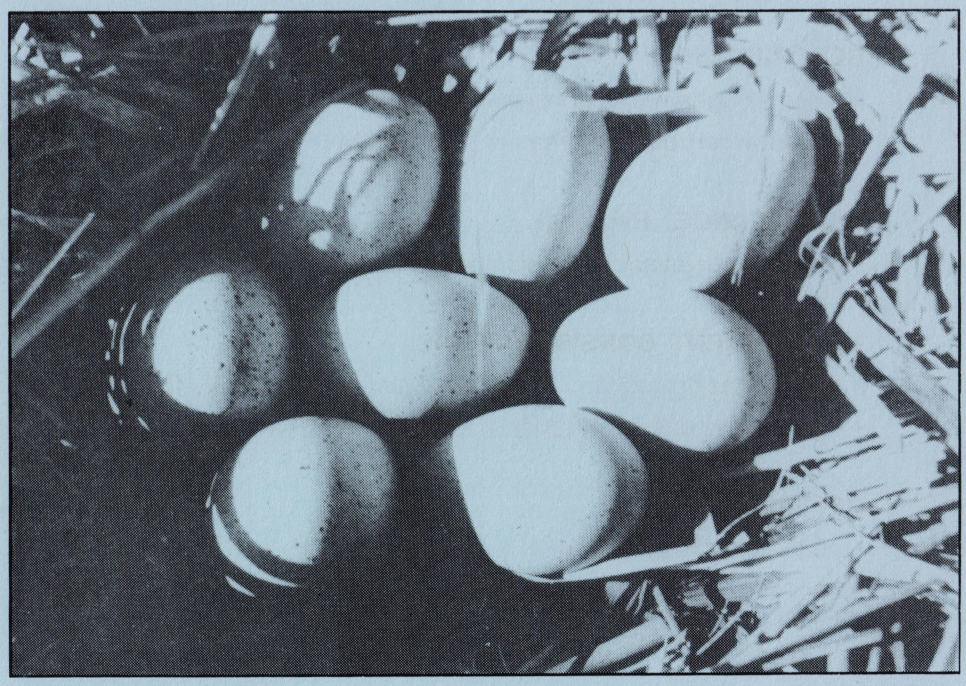

REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT

MAJOR FEATURES:

- **Productive Wetlands**

CROWLODGE SLOUGHS
M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SITE LOCATION:

- 15 km ESE of Pincher Creek
- southwest corner of Tp. 6 - Rge. 28 - W4

DESCRIPTION:

- large sloughs with extensive marshes
- waterfowl production areas in some years

SIGNIFICANCE: Regional

- productive wetlands are local in the region

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS:

- heavy grazing reduces the suitability of these habitats for a variety of waterfowl
- maintaining uncultivated land adjacent these wetlands will keep productivity high

REFERENCES:

- 1986 field program notes
- Fish and Wildlife key area maps

CROWSNEST RIDGES

M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SCALE - 1:125,000

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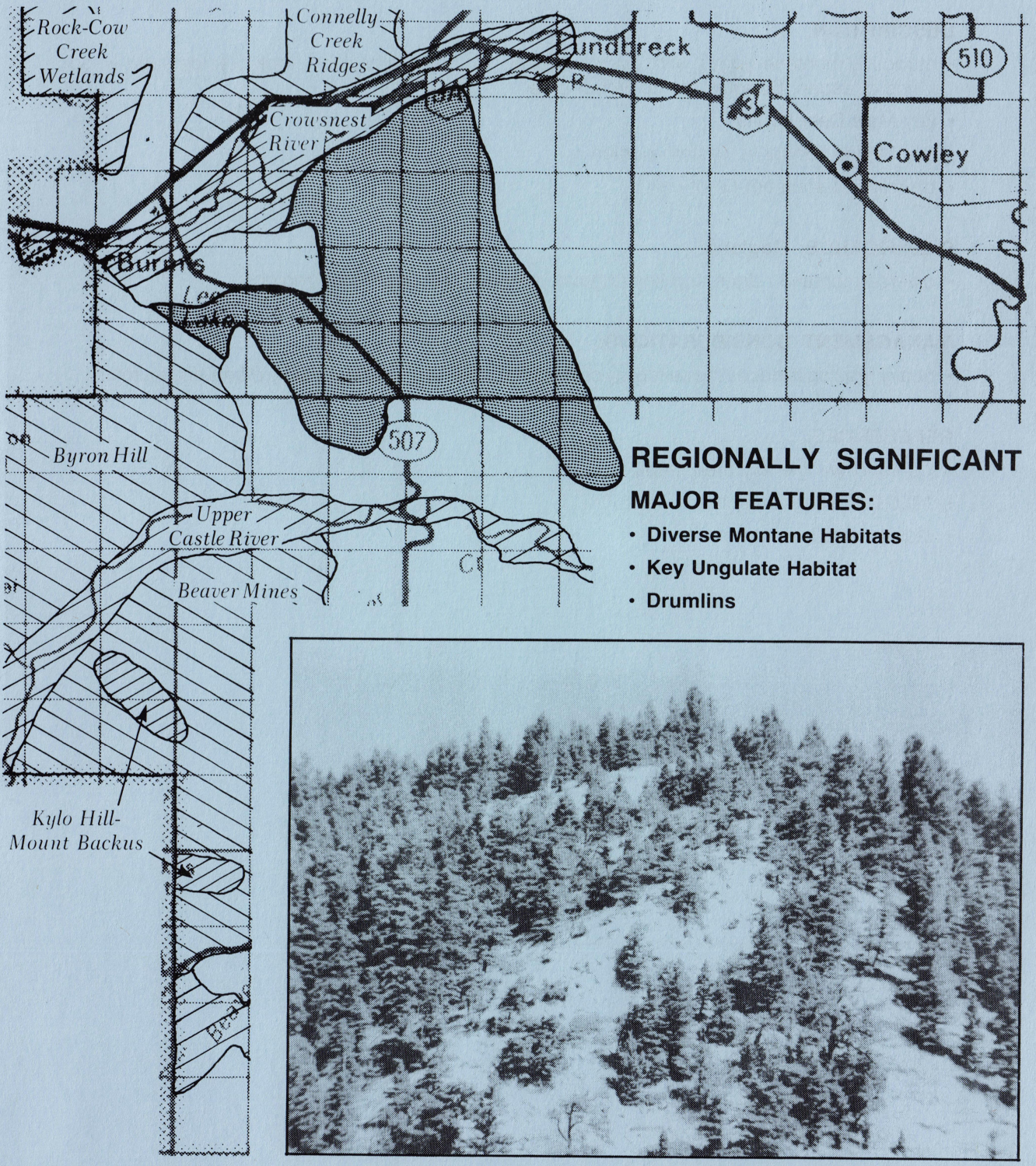


REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT

MAJOR FEATURES:

- **Diverse Montane Habitats**
- **Key Ungulate Habitat**
- **Drumlins**

CROWSNEST RIDGES
M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SITE LOCATION:

- ridges south of Crowsnest River valley, from southwest of Lundbreck to Lees Lake
- Tp. 6 and 7 - Rge. 2 - W5

DESCRIPTION:

- attractive montane ridges with diverse habitats including grassland, rock outcrops and woodlands of aspen, Douglas fir and limber pine
- key Mule Deer habitat
- key Moose habitat in western portion
- drumlins at southern tip of unit

SIGNIFICANCE: Regional

- diverse montane ridges and key ungulate habitats are local in the region

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS:

- heavy grazing reduces the suitability of these habitats for a variety of native plants and animals

REFERENCES:

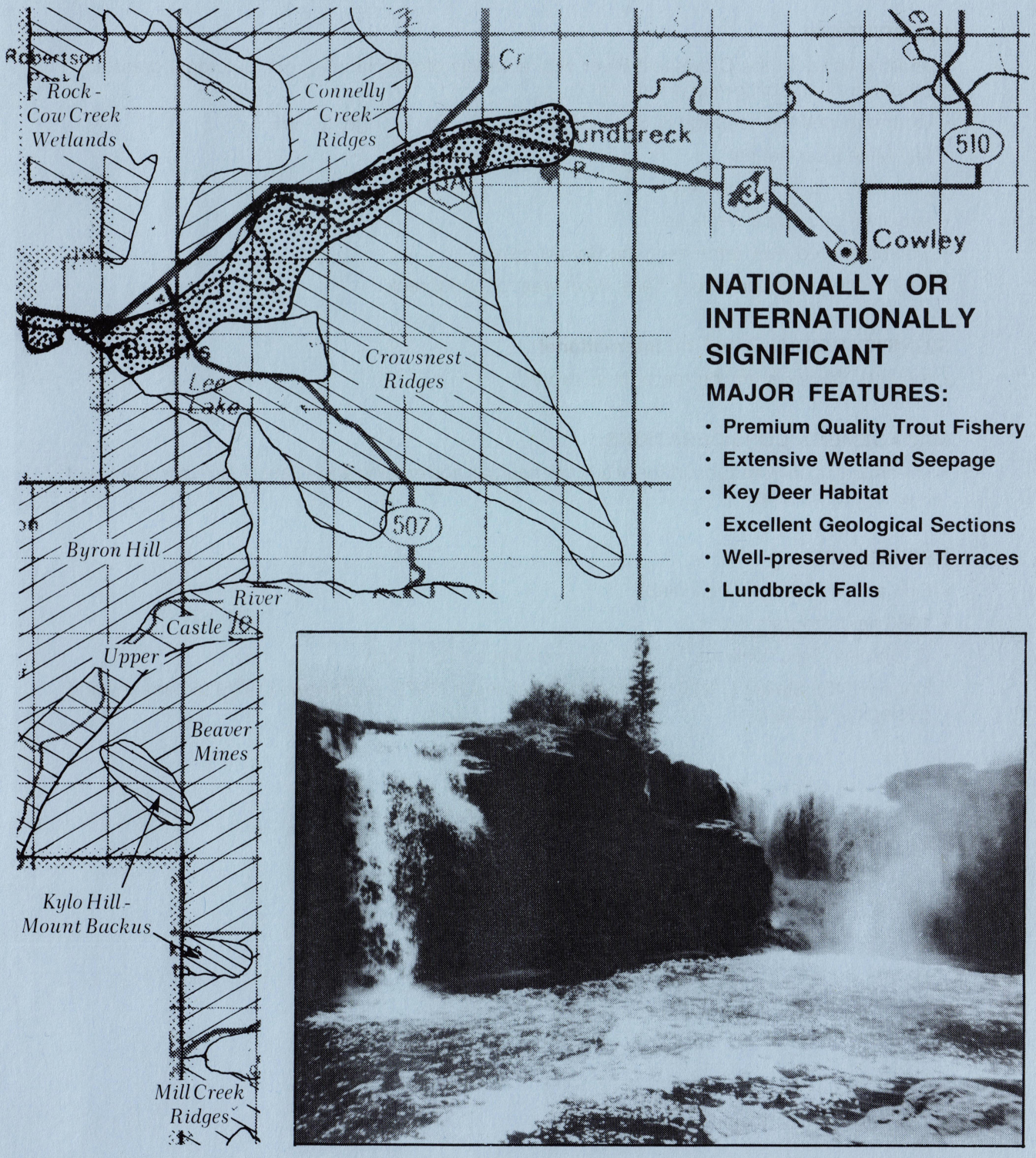
- Fish and Wildlife key area maps
- 1986 field program notes
- Stalker (1962) for drumlins

CROWSNEST RIVER
M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SCALE - 1:125,000

0 1 km 3 5 7

0 1 mi 2 3 5



NATIONALLY OR INTERNATIONALLY SIGNIFICANT

MAJOR FEATURES:

- Premium Quality Trout Fishery
- Extensive Wetland Seepage
- Key Deer Habitat
- Excellent Geological Sections
- Well-preserved River Terraces
- Lundbreck Falls

CROWSNEST RIVER
M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SITE LOCATION:

- Crowsnest River valley between Lundbreck Falls and Cow Creek
- Tp. 7 - Rge. 2 and 3 - W5

DESCRIPTION:

- shallow valley of the Crowsnest River with a variety of spectacular rock outcrops, grassland, shrubbery and coniferous woodland
- extensive wetland seepage in Sections 35 and 36 - Tp. 7 - Rge. 2 - W5
- key Mule Deer habitat
- premium quality trout fishery
- excellent geological sections
- well-preserved river terraces in the Burmis area
- small waterfall at Lundbreck Falls, 3 km west of Lundbreck

SIGNIFICANCE: National or International

- the trout fishery is among the best anywhere

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS:

- stream pollution from subsurface or surface sources and erosion and siltation can have significant impacts on fisheries

REFERENCES:

- Fish and Wildlife key area maps
- 1986 field program notes
- C. Bradley, Trout Unlimited (personal communication) for fish
- Hage (1945), Stalker (1963), Rutter and Christiansen (1972) and Shawa (1975) for terraces and geological sections

DAIGLE LAKE

M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SCALE - 1:125,000

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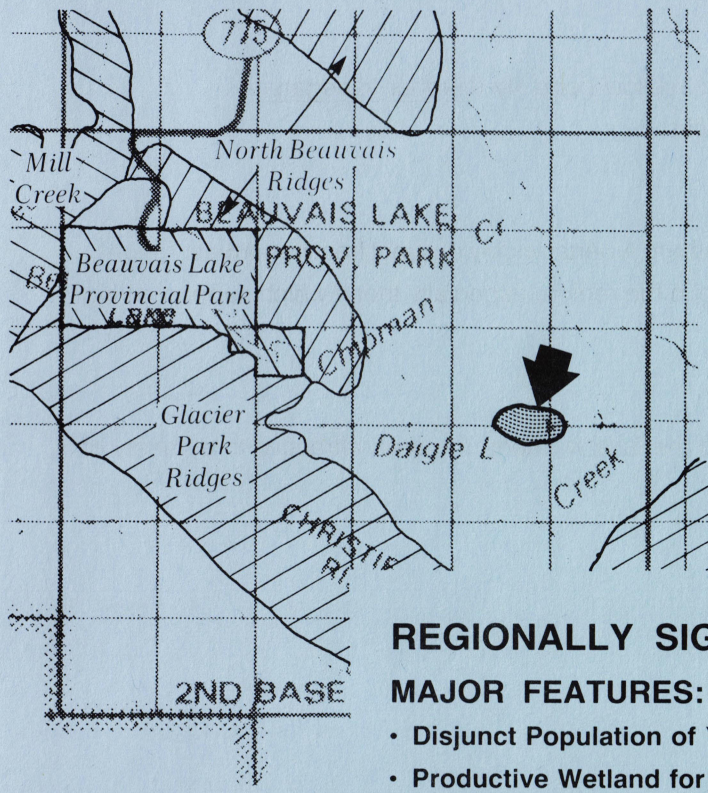
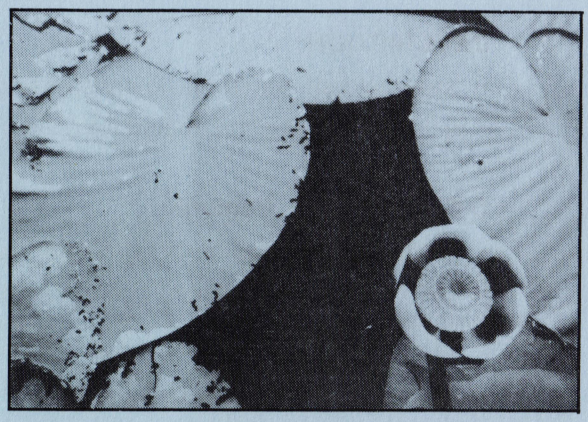
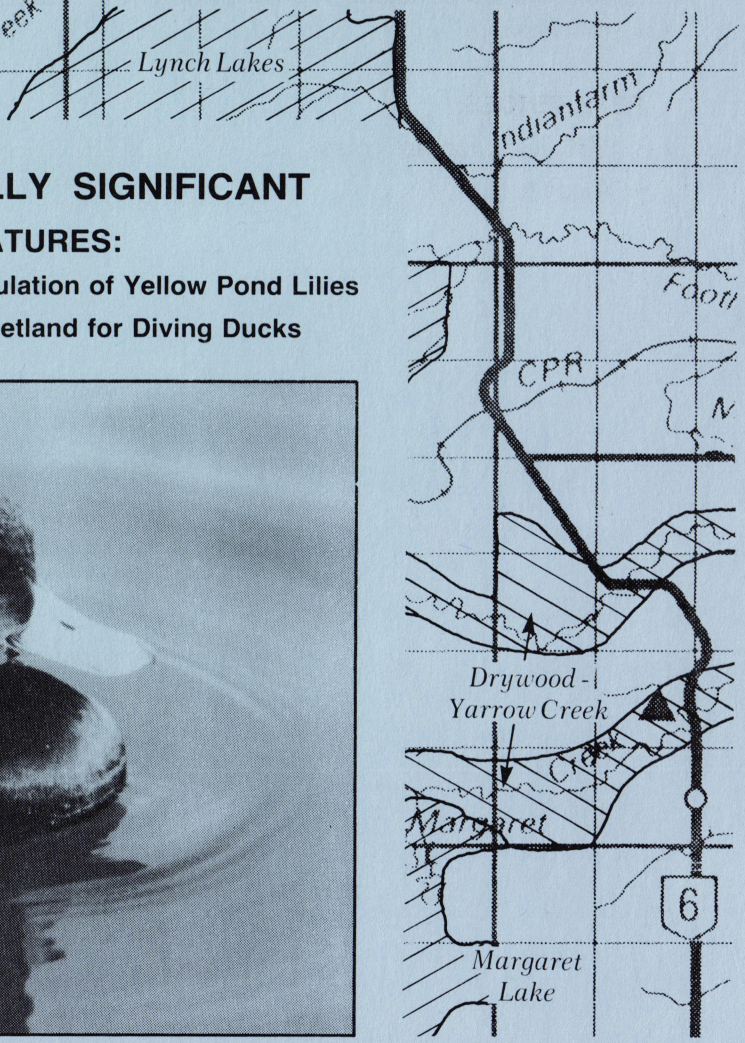
0 1 mi 2 3 5



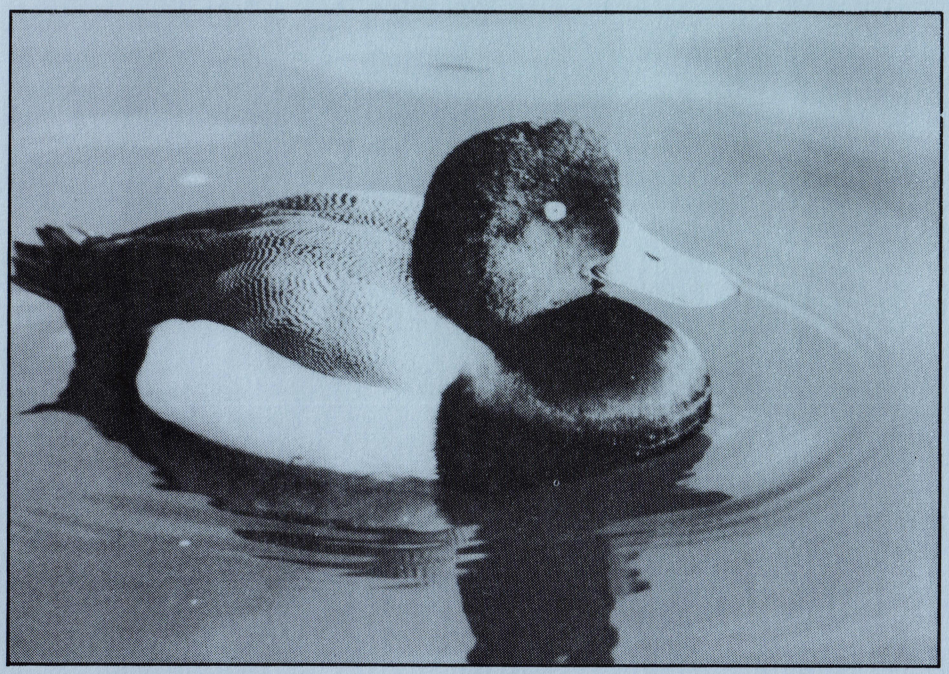




REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT

MAJOR FEATURES:

- **Disjunct Population of Yellow Pond Lilies**
- **Productive Wetland for Diving Ducks**



DAIGLE LAKE
M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SITE LOCATION:

- 13 km SSW of Pincher Creek
- Sections 14 and 23 - Tp. 5 - Rge. 1 - W5

DESCRIPTION:

- large bulrush marsh and extensive beds of yellow pond lily (Nuphar variegatum)
- waterfowl production, including diving ducks

SIGNIFICANCE: Regional

- the only known location for pond lilies in southern Alberta; widely disjunct from its northern range
- deep waterfowl production ponds are rare in the region, especially those which support diving ducks

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS:

- maintenance of natural vegetation around the lake will keep the area attractive to a variety of waterfowl

REFERENCES:

- 1986 field program notes
- Moss (1983)

DRYWOOD-YARROW

M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SCALE - 1:125,000

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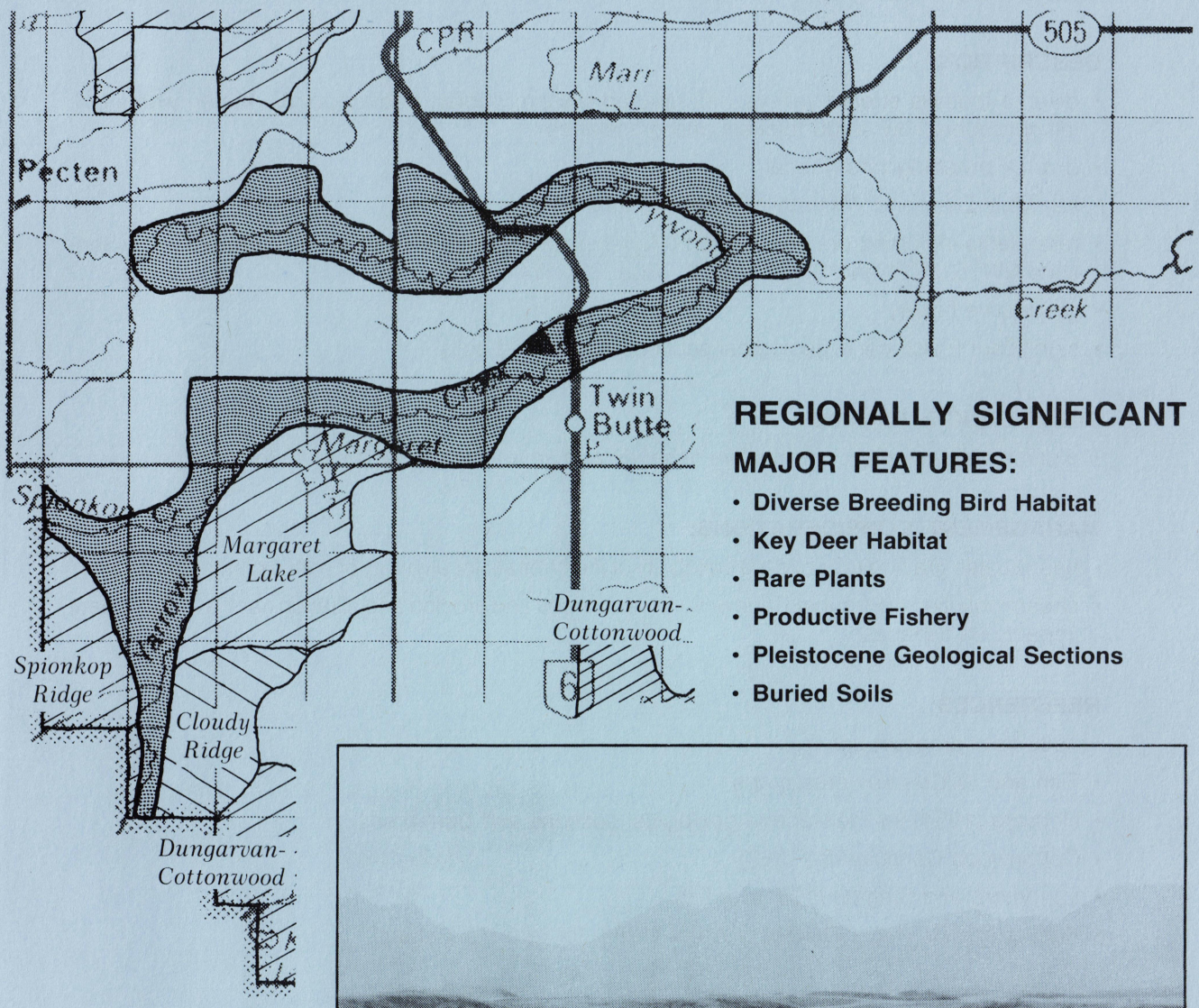

REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT

MAJOR FEATURES:

- Diverse Breeding Bird Habitat
- Key Deer Habitat
- Rare Plants
- Productive Fishery
- Pleistocene Geological Sections
- Buried Soils



DRYWOOD-YARROW
M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SITE LOCATION:

- Drywood and Yarrow Creeks from their confluence upstream almost to Pecten on Drywood Creek and to Forest Reserve Boundary on Yarrow Creek
- Tp. 3 and 4 - Rge. 29 and 30 - W4

DESCRIPTION:

- diverse foothills stream valleys with riparian balsam poplar, beaver ponds, aspen woodland, tall shrubbery, low shrub thickets and grasslands
- diverse breeding bird habitat
- key Mule Deer and White-tailed Deer habitats
- rare plants including prairie lungwort (Mertensia lanceolata) along Upper Yarrow Creek in Sections NW15, SE21 and SW22 - Tp. 3 - Rge. 30 - W4
- productive fishery
- significant Pleistocene geological sections and buried soils

SIGNIFICANCE: Regional

- diverse stream valleys, productive fisheries and key ungulate habitats are local in the region

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS:

- heavy cattle grazing reduces the suitability of the habitats for a variety of native plants and wildlife
- stream pollution from subsurface or surface sources and erosion and siltation can have significant impacts on fisheries

REFERENCES:

- 1986 field program notes
- Fish and Wildlife key area maps
- Horberg (1954) for Pleistocene geological sections and buried soil
- Cottonwood Consultants (1983)
- Longmore and Stenton (1981) for fish
- Packer and Bradley (1984) and Wallis (1986) for rare plant status

DUNGARVAN-COTTONWOOD

M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SCALE - 1:125,000

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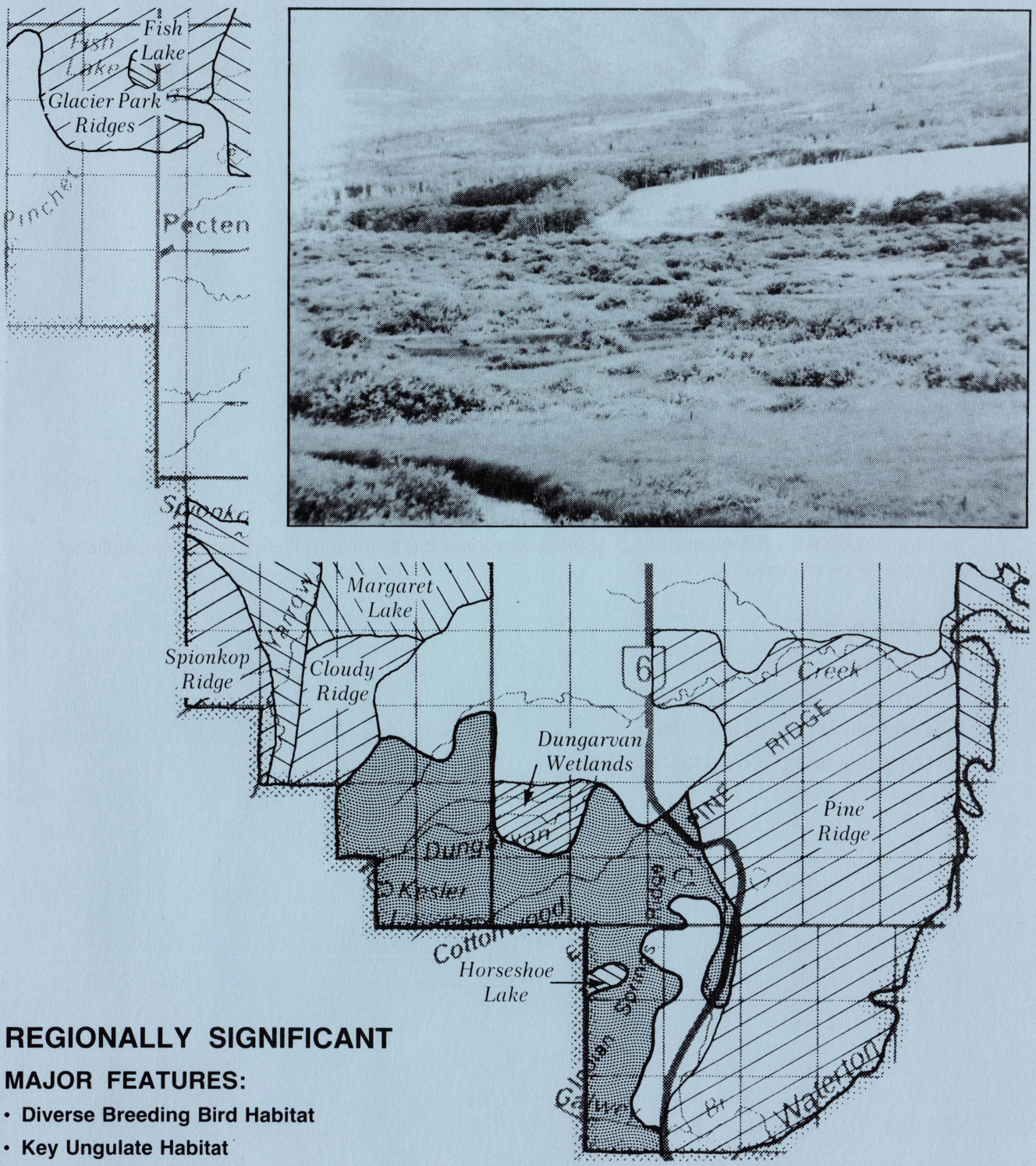

REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT

MAJOR FEATURES:

- Diverse Breeding Bird Habitat
- Key Ungulate Habitat

DUNGARVAN-COTTONWOOD
M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SITE LOCATION:

- north of northeast corner of Waterton Lakes National Park, Highway 6 west to Cloudy Ridge
- Tp. 2 and 3 - Rge. 29 and 30 - W4

DESCRIPTION:

- variety of montane habitats including coniferous forest, aspen woodland, willow shrubbery and grassland
- extensive sedge and willow meadows along Cottonwood Creek
- diverse breeding bird habitat
- lightly grazed in some areas
- key Moose and Elk habitat
- some fish production

SIGNIFICANCE: Regional

- few lightly grazed extensive shrub wetlands are found in the region
- key ungulate habitats are local in the region

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS:

- heavy grazing reduces the suitability of the area for wildlife
- clearing and cultivation eliminate many native plants and animals
- stream pollution from subsurface or surface sources and erosion and siltation can have significant impacts on fisheries

REFERENCES:

- 1986 field program notes
- Fish and Wildlife key area maps
- Cottonwood Consultants (1983)
- Longmore and Stenton (1981) for fish

DUNGARVAN WETLANDS

M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SCALE - 1:125,000

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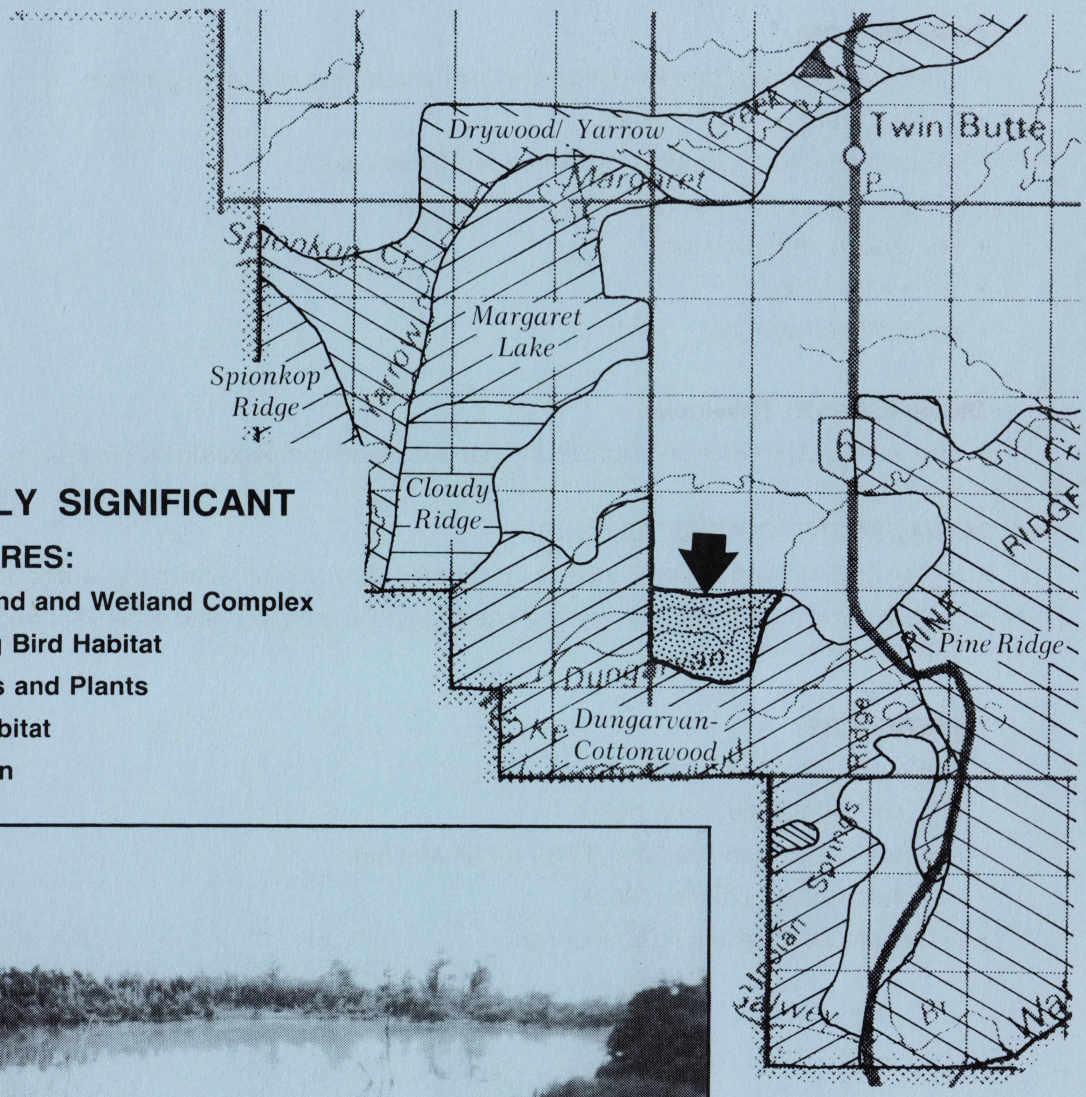

PROVINCIALLY SIGNIFICANT

MAJOR FEATURES:

- Major Beaver Pond and Wetland Complex
- Diverse Breeding Bird Habitat
- Uncommon Birds and Plants
- Key Ungulate Habitat
- Large Alluvial Fan



R 29

DUNGARVAN WETLANDS
M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SITE LOCATION:

- between Dungarvan Creek and Cottonwood Creek west of Highway 6
- Section 7 and 8 - Tp. 3 - Rge. 29 - W4

DESCRIPTION:

- extensive marshes, beaver ponds and lush aspen and poplar woodlands
- diverse breeding bird habitat
- uncommon birds, including Black-headed Grosbeaks
- several uncommon plants in lush aspen woods
- key Moose and Elk habitat
- large alluvial fan
- some fish production

SIGNIFICANCE: Provincial

- one of the most diverse and significant beaver wetland complexes in the southern part of Alberta

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS:

- limited grazing and maintenance of the beaver activity will maintain the wetland diversity
- stream pollution for subsurface or surface sources and erosion and siltation can have significant impacts on fisheries

REFERENCES:

- 1986 field program notes
- Fish and Wildlife key area maps
- Horberg (1954) and Harrison (1976) for alluvial fan
- Cottonwood Consultants (1983)
- Longmore and Stenton (1981) for fish

FISH LAKE

M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SCALE - 1:125,000

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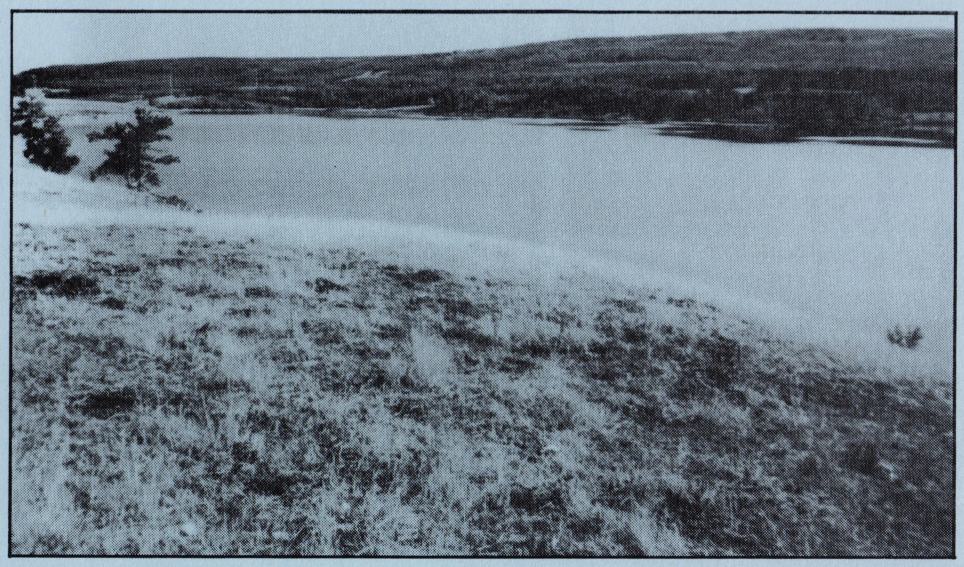

REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT

MAJOR FEATURES:

- Waterfowl Staging and Production Area
- Diving Ducks and Grebes

FISH LAKE
M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SITE LOCATION:

- 3 km NNW of Pecten
- Section 36 - Tp. 5 - Rge. 1 - W5

DESCRIPTION:

- lake with some bulrush marsh development
- waterfowl staging and production area, for diving ducks and grebes as well as puddle ducks

SIGNIFICANCE: Regional

- productive wetlands are local in the region, especially those which support diving ducks and grebes

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS:

- maintenance of surrounding natural vegetation will keep the area attractive to a variety of waterfowl

REFERENCES:

- 1986 field program notes
- Fish and Wildlife key area maps

FOOTHILLS CREEK WETLANDS

M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SCALE - 1:125,000

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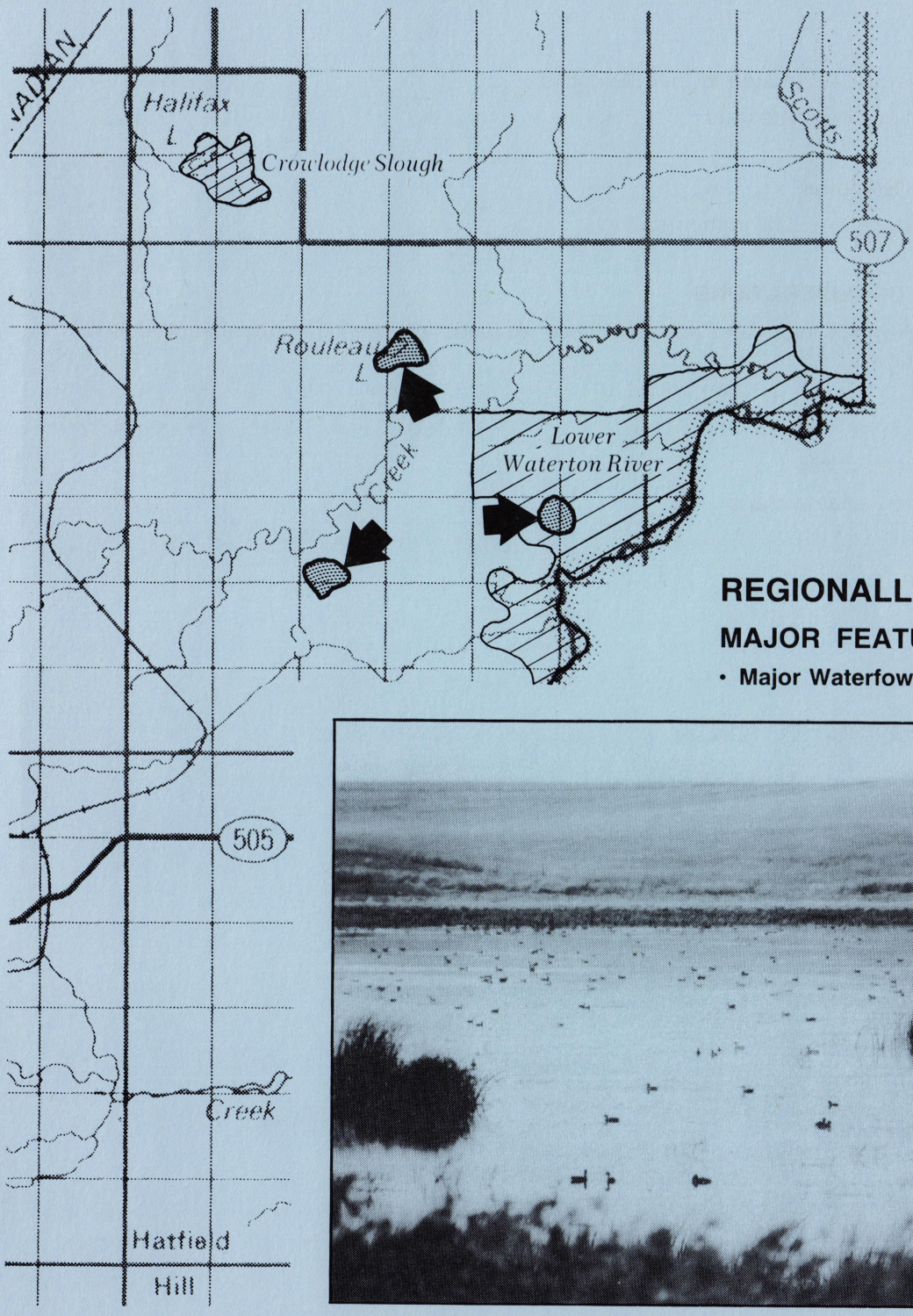

REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT

MAJOR FEATURES:

- **Major Waterfowl Production Area**

FOOTHILLS CREEK WETLANDS
M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SITE LOCATION:

- Rouleau Lake, pond east of Foothills Creek and Bone Lake Ducks Unlimited wetland project
- Tp. 5 - Rge. 28 - W4

DESCRIPTION:

- major waterfowl production area for puddle ducks
- some use by migrating shorebirds

SIGNIFICANCE: Regional

- productive wetlands are local in the region

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS:

- maintenance of uncultivated land adjacent these wetlands will keep the area attractive for a variety of waterfowl

REFERENCES:

- 1986 field program notes
- Fish and Wildlife key area maps

GLACIER PARK RIDGES

M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SCALE - 1:125,000

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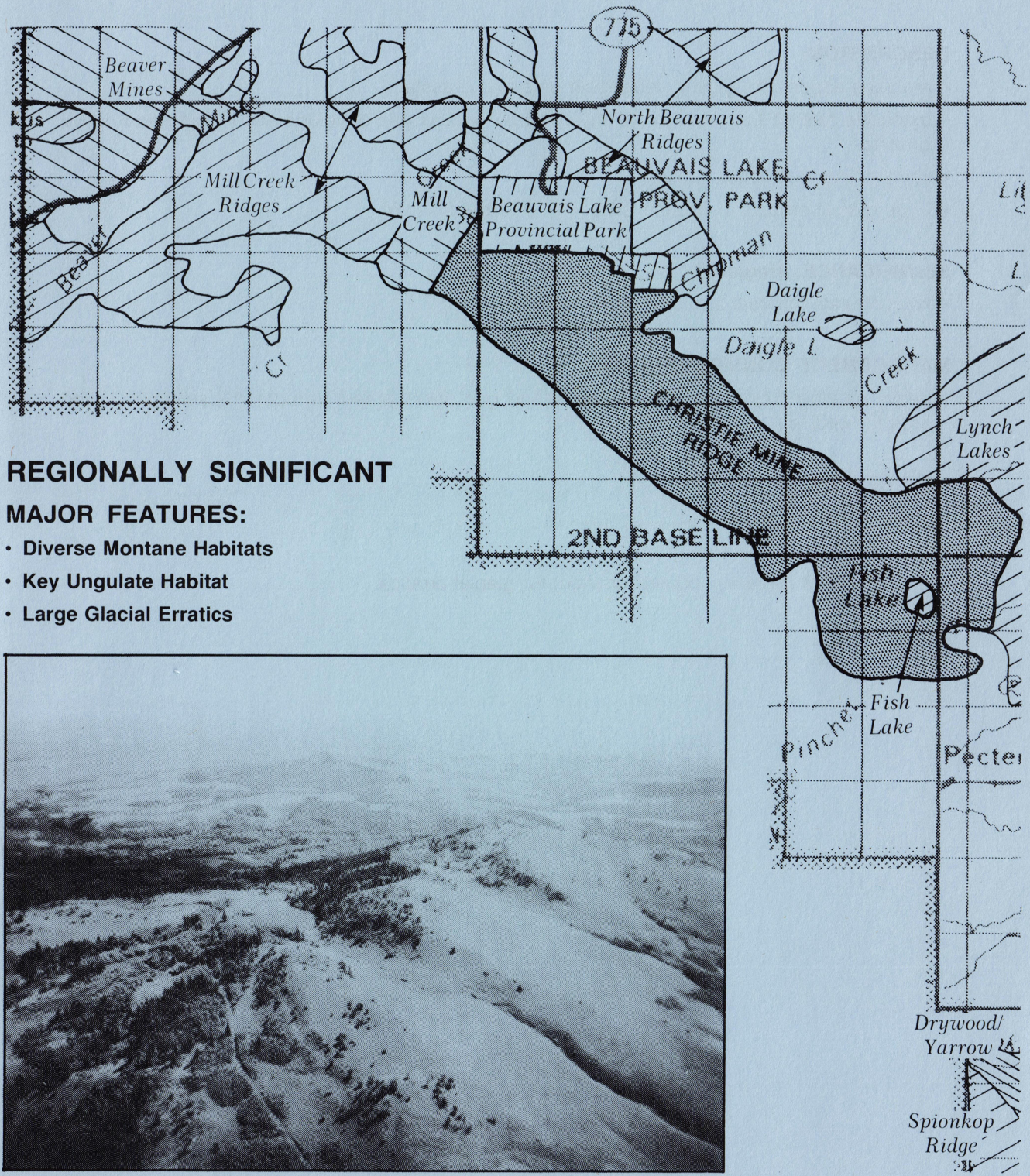

REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT

MAJOR FEATURES:

- **Diverse Montane Habitats**
- **Key Ungulate Habitat**
- **Large Glacial Erratics**

GLACIER PARK RIDGES
M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SITE LOCATION:

- foothills ridges between Gladstone Creek and Fish Lake
- Tp. 4 and 5 - Rge. 1 and 2 - W5

DESCRIPTION:

- montane aspen, Douglas fir, lodgepole pine and grassland
- extensive habitat but extensively disturbed by oil and gas development, logging and heavy grazing
- key Elk and Mule Deer habitat
- large glacial erratics in Section SW6 - Tp. 5 - Rge. 30 - W4

SIGNIFICANCE: Regional

- key ungulate habitats are local in the region

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS:

- heavy grazing, logging and intensive oil and gas development reduces the suitability of the area for wildlife

REFERENCES:

- 1986 field program notes
- Fish and Wildlife key area maps
- R. Barendregt (personal communication) for glacial erratics

HORSESHOE LAKE

M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SCALE - 1:125,000

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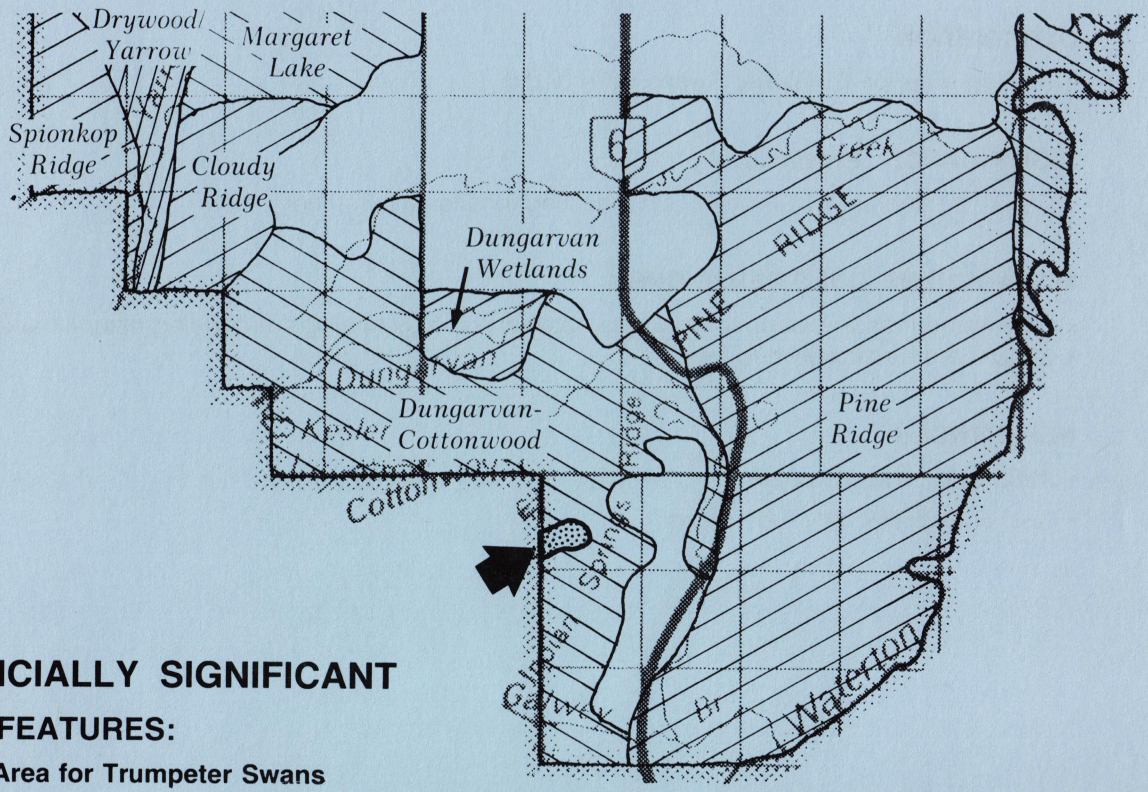
0 1 mi 2 3 5



PROVINCIALLY SIGNIFICANT

MAJOR FEATURES:

- **Nesting Area for Trumpeter Swans**



HORSESHOE LAKE
M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SITE LOCATION:

- 16 km NNE of Waterton townsite along Waterton Lakes National Park boundary
- Section 31 - Tp. 2 - Rge. 29 - W4

DESCRIPTION:

- nesting area for Trumpeter Swans (rare birds)

SIGNIFICANCE: Provincial

- one of a handful of Trumpeter Swan nesting locations in southern Alberta

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS:

- minimizing human disturbance during nesting and maintaining surrounding natural habitat will keep the area attractive to swans

REFERENCES:

- 1986 field program notes
- Fish and Wildlife key area maps

KYLO HILL-MOUNT BACKUS

M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SCALE - 1:125,000

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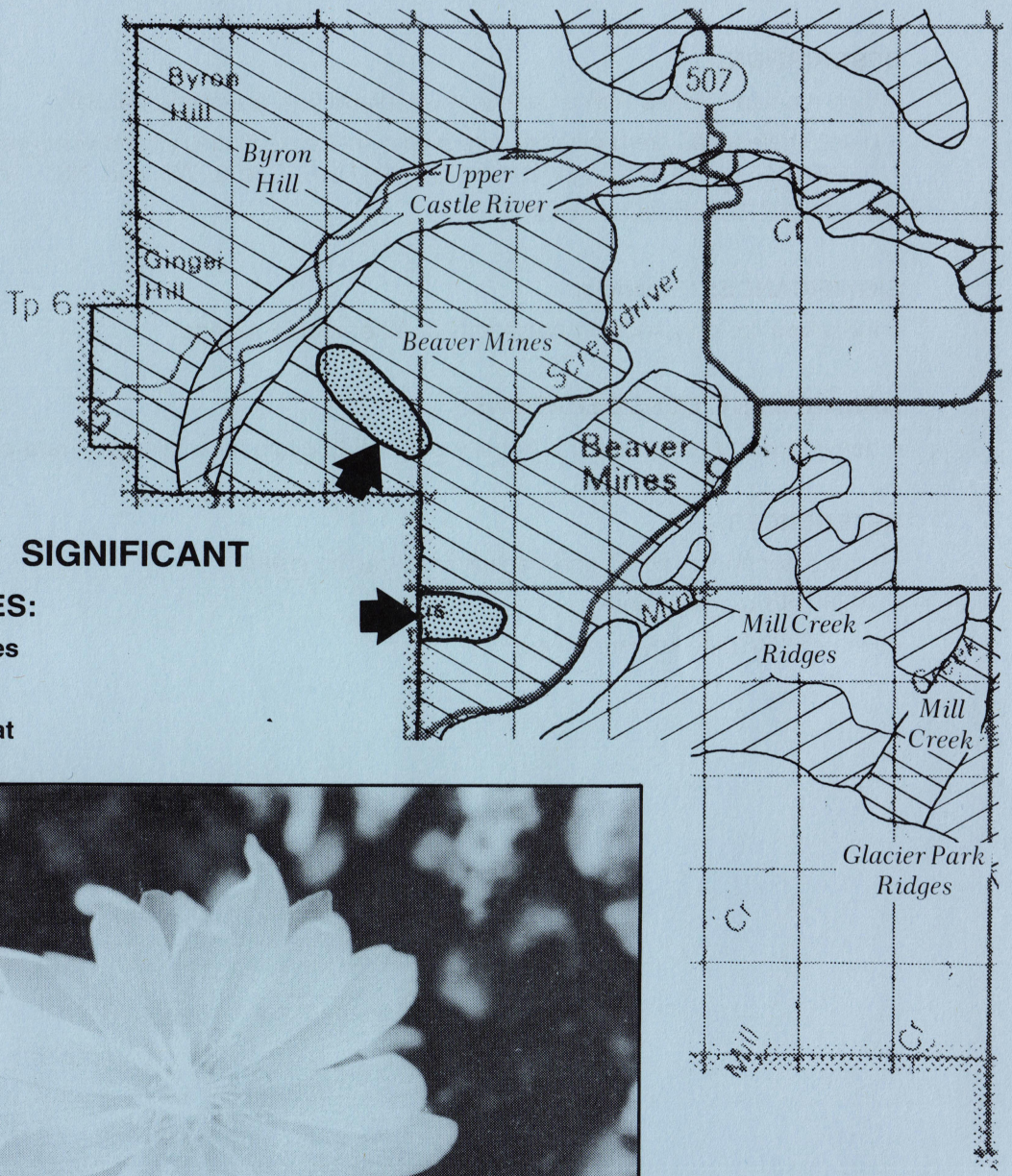

PROVINCIALLY SIGNIFICANT

MAJOR FEATURES:

- High Montane Ridges
- Rare Plants
- Key Ungulate Habitat



KYLO HILL-MOUNT BACKUS
M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SITE LOCATION:

- ridges between the Castle River and Beaver Mines Creek west and southwest of the town of Beaver Mines
- Tp. 5 and 6 - Rge. 2 and 3 - W5

DESCRIPTION:

- high montane ridges with a variety of woodland and grassland habitats
- black shale areas are habitat for rare plants, including Nuttall's sandwort (Arenaria nuttallii) and bitter-root (Lewisia rediviva) in Sections NE12 - Tp. 6 - Rge. 3 - W5 and N31 - Tp. 5 - Rge. 2 - W5
- key Mule Deer and Elk habitat

SIGNIFICANCE: Provincial

- these are the only known populations of bitter-root in Alberta

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS:

- heavy grazing reduces the suitability of these habitats for wildlife and rare plants

REFERENCES:

- Kuijt & Michener (1985) and Packer and Bradley (1984)
- 1986 field program notes
- Fish and Wildlife key area maps

LIVINGSTONE RANGE

M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SCALE - 1:125,000

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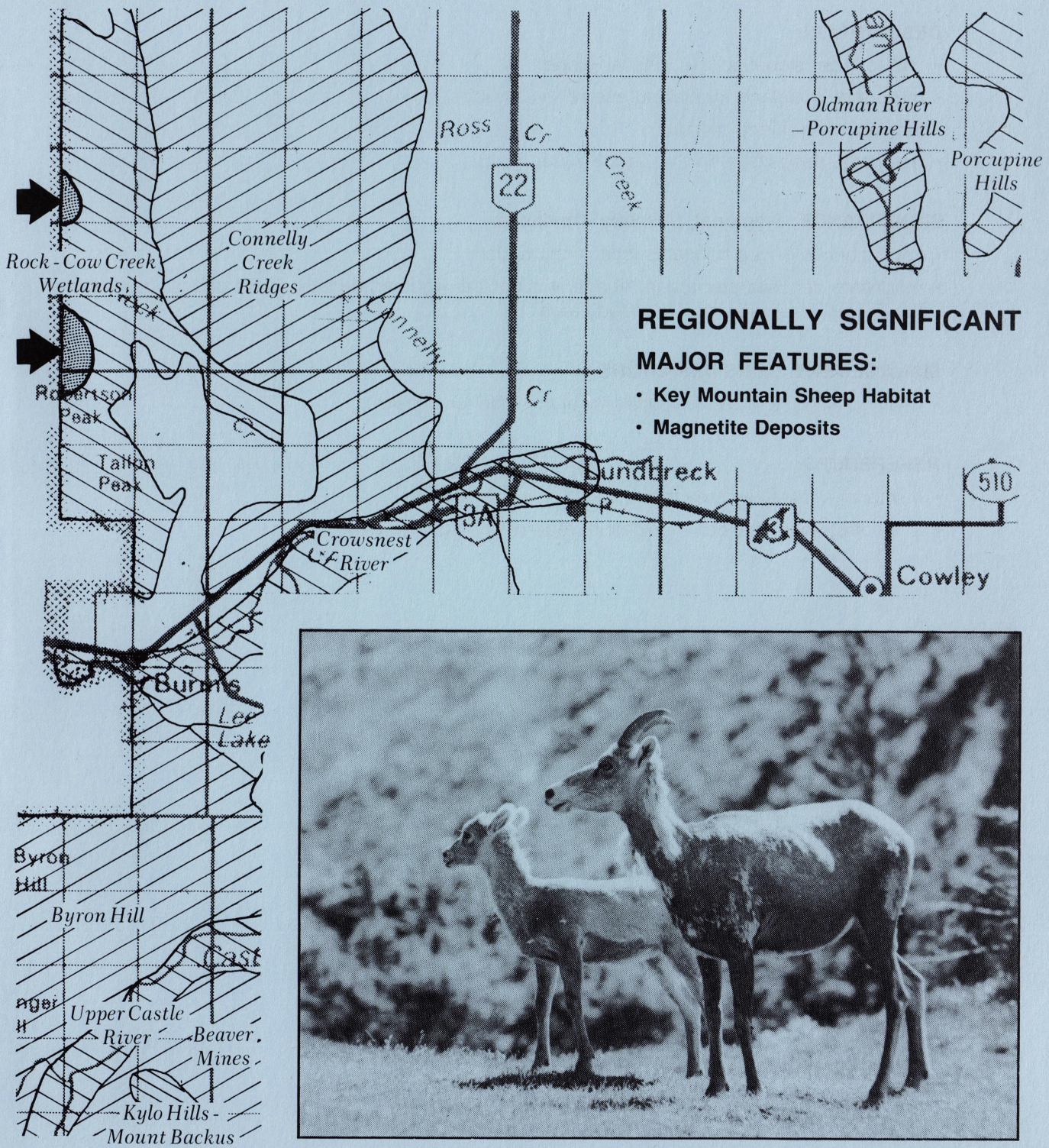

REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT

MAJOR FEATURES:

- **Key Mountain Sheep Habitat**
- **Magnetite Deposits**

LIVINGSTONE RANGE
M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SITE LOCATION:

- eastern side Livingstone Range north of Burmis
- Tp. 7 and 8 - Rge. 3 - W5

DESCRIPTION:

- mid to lower slopes of Livingstone Range
- mixture of woodland, grassland and willow shrubbery
- key Mountain Sheep habitat
- magnetite deposits in Tp. 7 - Rge. 3 - W5

SIGNIFICANCE: Regional, possibly Provincial

- key Mountain Sheep habitat is local in the region
- magnetite deposits are rare in Alberta; it is unclear whether the bulk of this deposit lies within the Forest Reserve west of the study area

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS:

- heavy grazing reduces the suitability of the area for wildlife

REFERENCES:

- Fish and Wildlife key area maps
- J. Godfrey (personal communication) regarding magnetite deposit

LOWER CASTLE RIVER

M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SCALE - 1:125,000

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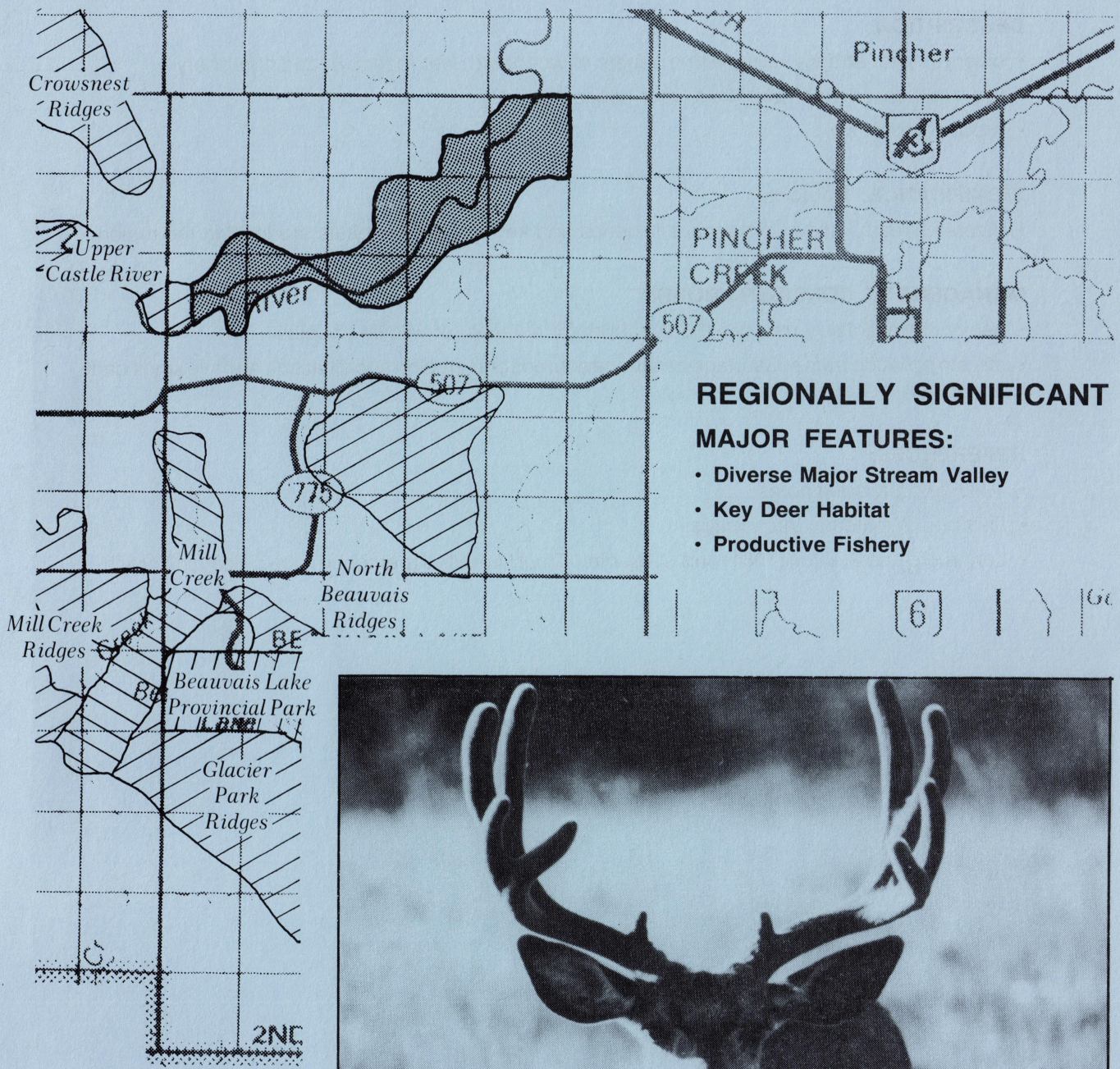

REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT

MAJOR FEATURES:

- Diverse Major Stream Valley
- Key Deer Habitat
- Productive Fishery

LOWER CASTLE RIVER
M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SITE LOCATION:

- Castle River from Mill Creek to proposed Three Rivers Reservoir
- Tp. 6 - Rge. 1 - W5

DESCRIPTION:

- diverse major stream valley with a variety of woodland, wet meadow, and shrubbery
- key White-tailed Deer and Mule Deer habitat
- productive fishery

SIGNIFICANCE: Regional

- diverse stream valleys, productive fisheries and key ungulate habitats are local in the region

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS:

- heavy cattle grazing reduces the suitability for a variety of wildlife species
- stream pollution from subsurface or surface sources and erosion and siltation can have significant impacts on fisheries

REFERENCES:

- 1986 field program notes
- Fish and Wildlife key area maps
- Longmore and Stenton (1981) and C. Bradley, Trout Unlimited (personal communication) for fish

LOWER PINCHER CREEK

M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SCALE - 1:125,000

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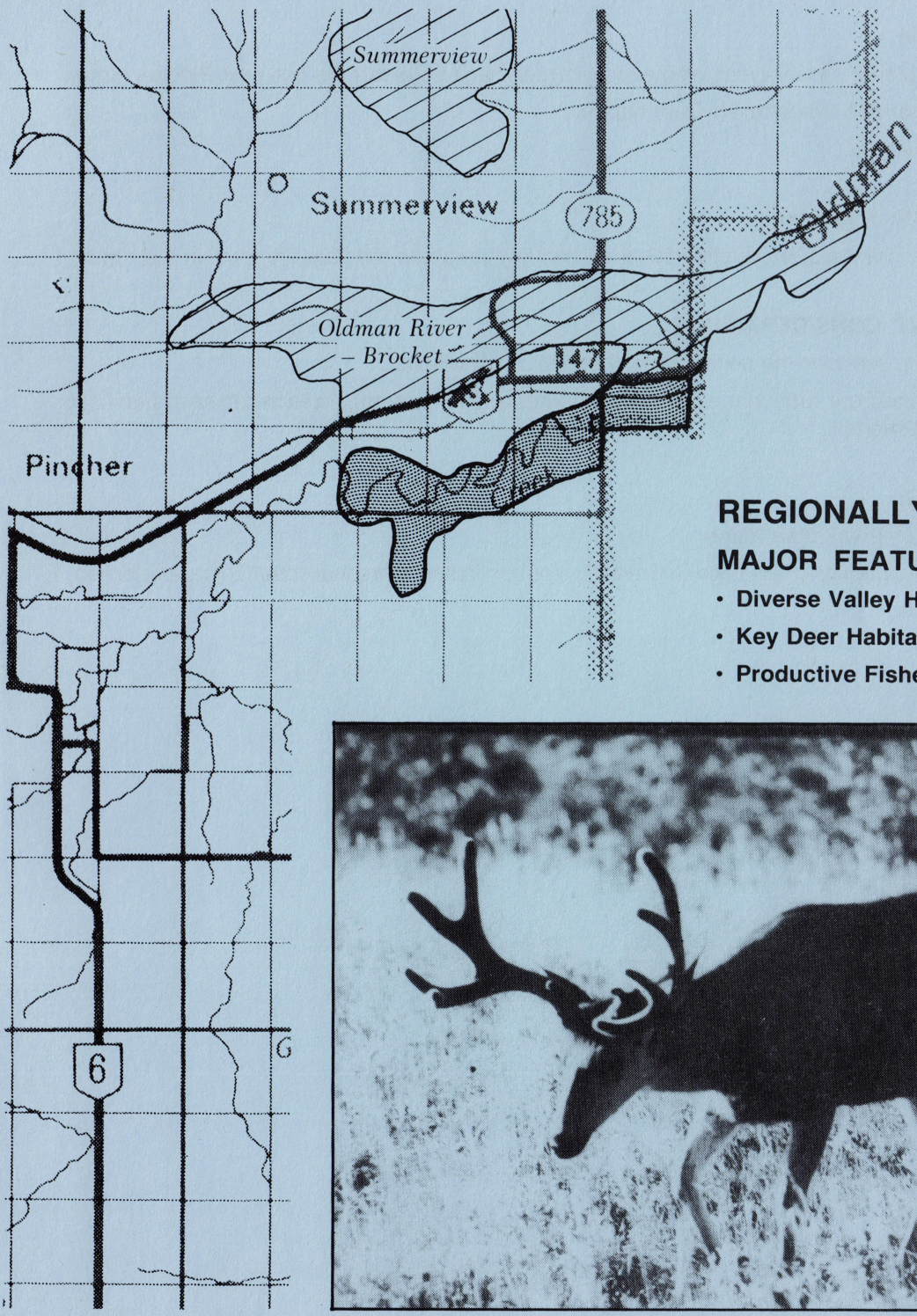


REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT

MAJOR FEATURES:

- Diverse Valley Habitats
- Key Deer Habitat
- Productive Fishery

LOWER PINCHER CREEK
M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SITE LOCATION:

- Pincher Creek valley below Pincher Creek townsite to Oldman River junction
- Tp. 7 - Rge. 29 - W4

DESCRIPTION:

- diverse woodland, shrub, grass and exposed rock habitats along the valley of Pincher Creek
- key Mule Deer and White-tailed Deer habitat
- productive fishery

SIGNIFICANCE: Regional

- diverse valley habitats, productive fisheries and key ungulate habitats are local in the region

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS:

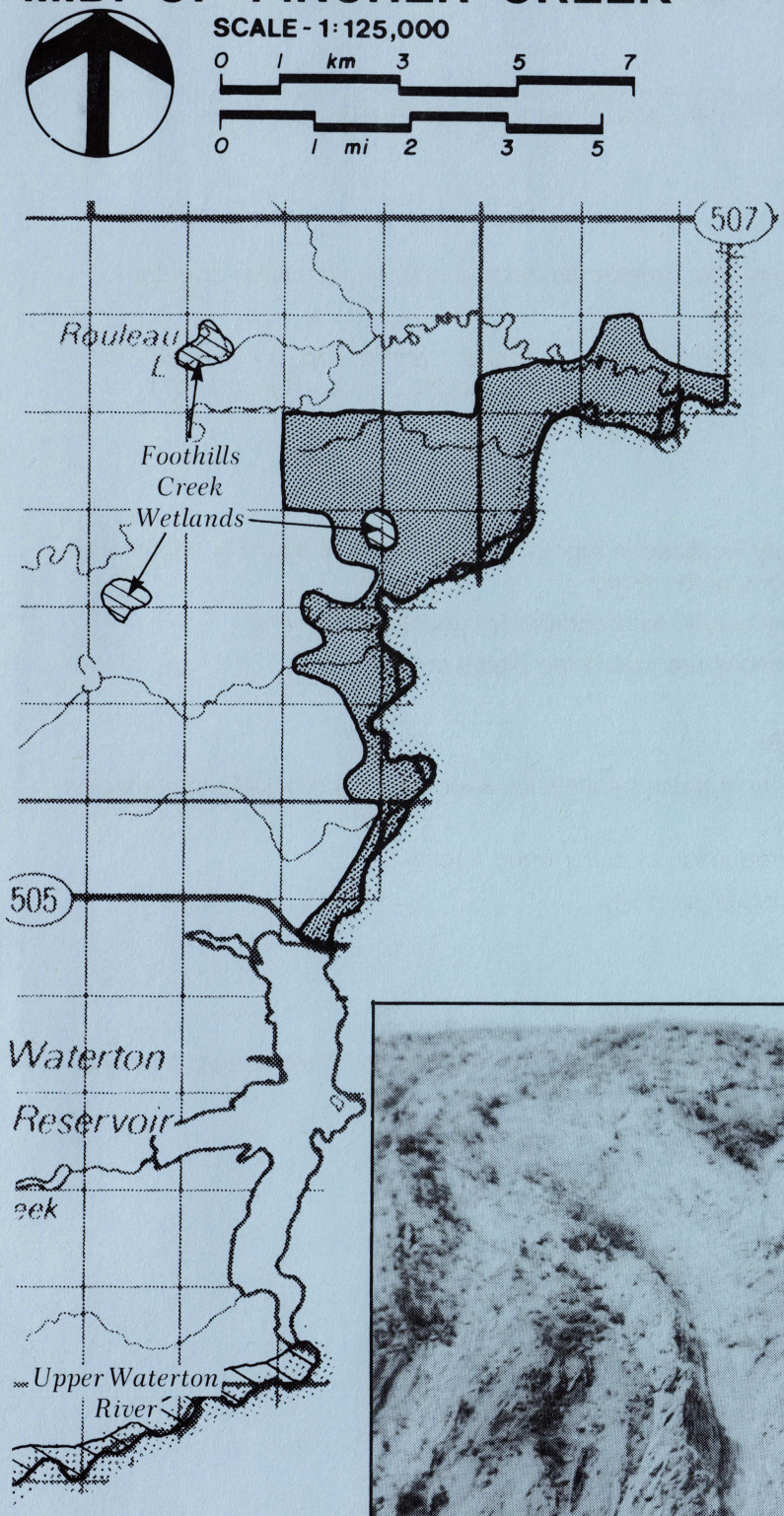
- heavy grazing reduces the suitability of these sites for wildlife
- stream pollution from subsurface or surface sources and erosion and siltation can have significant impacts on fisheries

REFERENCES:

- Fish and Wildlife key area maps
- Longmore and Stenton (1981) and C. Bradley, Trout Unlimited (personal communication) for fish

LOWER WATERTON RIVER

M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK



REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT

MAJOR FEATURES:

- Diverse Riparian Habitats
- Lightly Grazed Foothills Grassland
- Excellent Bedrock Exposures



LOWER WATERTON RIVER
M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SITE LOCATION:

- valley of Waterton River from Waterton dam downstream to junction with Belly River
- Tp. 5 - Rge. 27 and 28 - W4

DESCRIPTION:

- diverse riparian woodland, shrubbery and grasslands along a narrow river valley corridor
- lightly grazed foothills fescue grassland
- excellent bedrock exposures from Waterton dam to Sections 1 and 2 - Tp. 5 - Rge. 28 - W4; folded rocks in anticline and syncline formations in Section NE26 - Tp. 4 - Rge. 28 - W4
- extends into M.D. of Cardston east of the Waterton River

SIGNIFICANCE: Regional

- productive riparian habitats are very localized in Alberta and are some of the most threatened habitats in arid and semi-arid regions of the world
- natural habitat along the river valley serves as a corridor for wildlife movement
- folded syncline and anticline formations are rare in the plains area

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS:

- heavy grazing reduces the suitability of these habitats for a wide variety of wildlife and affects the regeneration of cottonwoods
- altered stream flow affects the reproduction of cottonwood forests
- clearing and cultivation eliminate habitat diversity

REFERENCES:

- 1986 field program notes
- Bradley and Smith (1986) and Smith and Flake (1981) for impacts of altered stream flow and grazing on cottonwood systems

LYNCH LAKES

M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SCALE - 1:125,000

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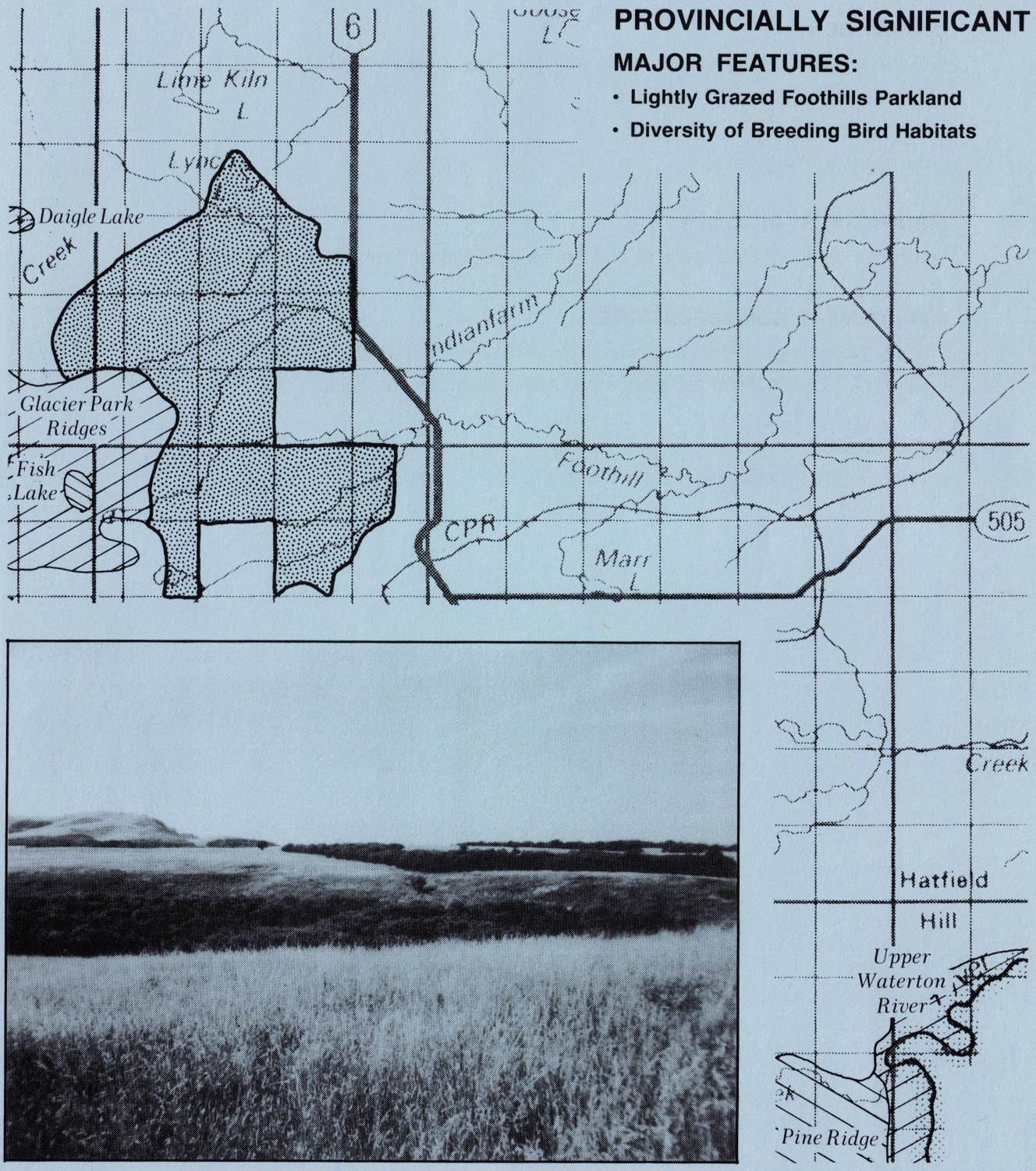

PROVINCIALLY SIGNIFICANT

MAJOR FEATURES:

- Lightly Grazed Foothills Parkland
- Diversity of Breeding Bird Habitats

LYNCH LAKES
M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SITE LOCATION:

- 15 km south of Pincher Creek
- Tp. 4 and 5 - Rge. 30 - W4

DESCRIPTION:

- extensive willow and aspen foothills parkland with some wetlands
- diversity of breeding bird habitats
- moderate potential for rare plants
- parts are lightly grazed

SIGNIFICANCE: Provincial

- very few lightly grazed areas of diverse foothills parkland remain in Alberta

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS:

- heavy grazing reduces the suitability of these habitats for a variety of native plants and animals
- clearing and cultivation eliminate many native plants and animals

REFERENCES:

- 1986 field program notes

MARGARET LAKE

M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SCALE - 1:125,000

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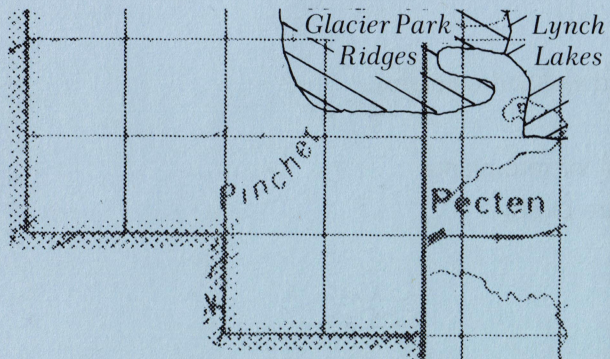
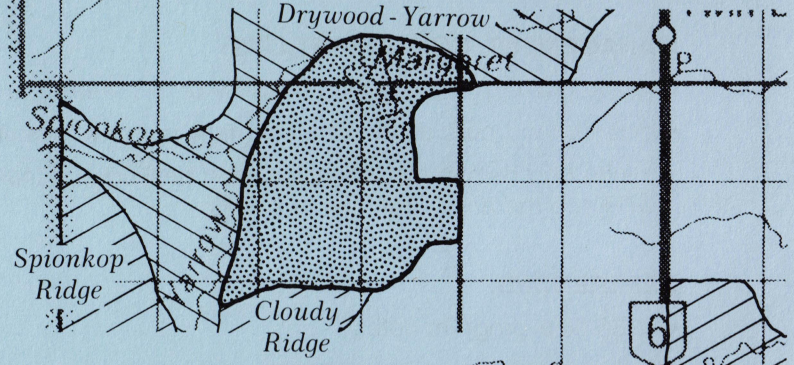




PROVINCIALLY SIGNIFICANT

MAJOR FEATURES:

- Diverse Foothills Parkland and Wetland
- Uncommon Plants
- Nesting Area for Trumpeter Swans
- Key Elk Habitat





MARGARET LAKE
M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SITE LOCATION:

- 5 km west of Twin Butte
- Tp. 3 and 4 - Rge. 30 - W4

DESCRIPTION:

- extensive aspen foothills parkland and wetland complex
- diverse breeding bird habitats
- uncommon plants; moderate potential for rare plants
- nesting area for Trumpeter Swans (rare birds)
- key Elk habitat

SIGNIFICANCE: Provincial

- few extensive areas of diverse foothills parkland remain in Alberta
- one of a handful of nesting areas for Trumpeter Swans in southern Alberta

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS:

- heavy grazing reduces the suitability of this area for a variety of native plants and wildlife
- clearing and cultivation eliminate many native plants and animals
- minimizing human disturbance during nesting and maintaining the surrounding natural habitat will keep the area attractive to swans

REFERENCES:

- 1986 field program notes
- Fish and Wildlife key area maps
- Mr. Fitzpatrick, local lessee, personal communication

MILL CREEK

M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SCALE - 1:125,000

0 1 km 3 5 7

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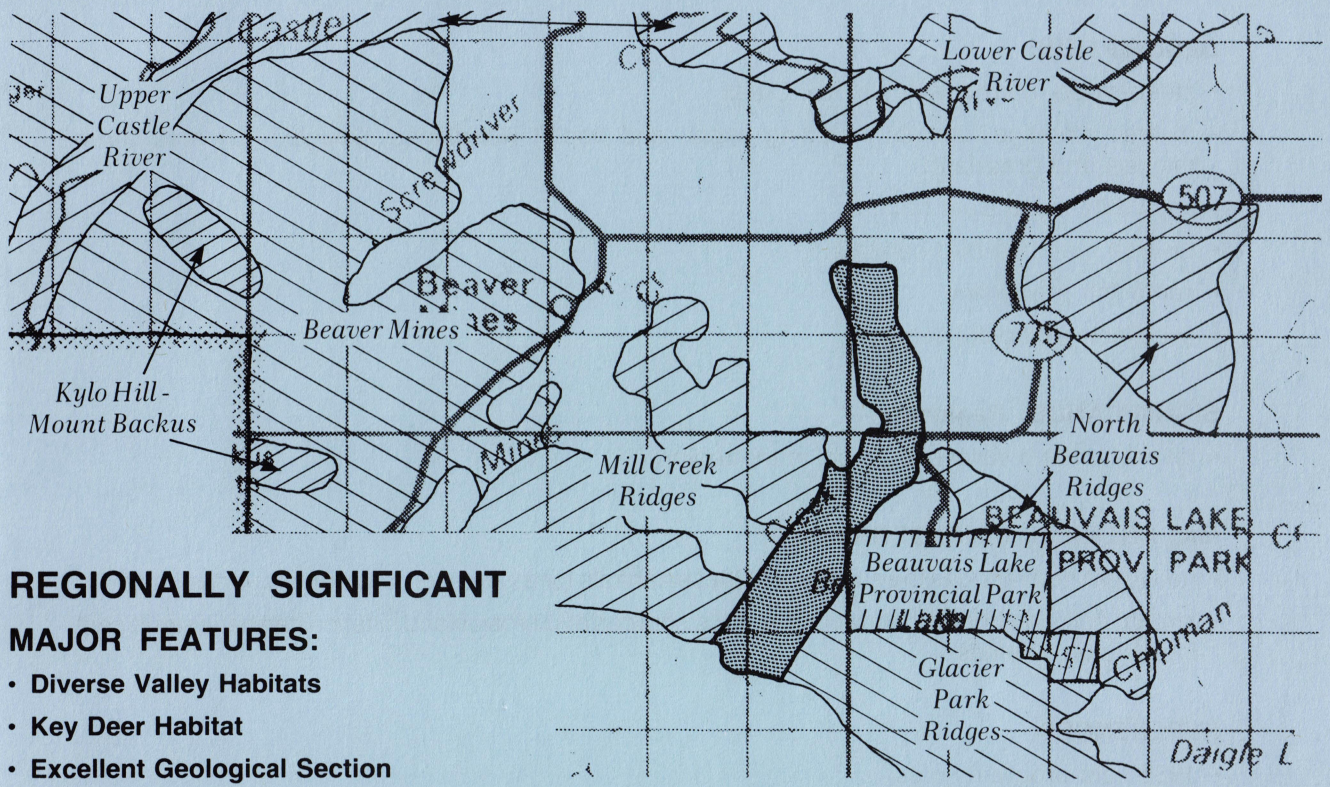

REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT

MAJOR FEATURES:

- **Diverse Valley Habitats**
- **Key Deer Habitat**
- **Excellent Geological Section**



MILL CREEK
M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SITE LOCATION:

- Mill Creek valley from junction with Whitney Creek downstream to Hwy. 507
- Tp. 5 and 6 - Rge. 2 and 3 - W5

DESCRIPTION:

- steep-sided, narrow valley of Mill Creek
- diverse montane habitats including aspen and poplar woodlands, Douglas fir forest, shrub thickets and grassland
- key White-tailed Deer habitat
- diverse breeding bird habitats
- some fish production
- excellent geological section

SIGNIFICANCE: Regional

- diverse stream valleys are local in the region

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS:

- heavy grazing reduces the suitability of these habitats for a variety of native plants and animals
- stream pollution from subsurface or surface sources and erosion and siltation can have significant impacts on fisheries

REFERENCES:

- 1986 field program notes
- Fish and Wildlife key area maps
- C. Bradley, Trout Unlimited (personal communication) for fish
- Hage (1943) for geology

MILL CREEK RIDGES

M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SCALE - 1:125,000

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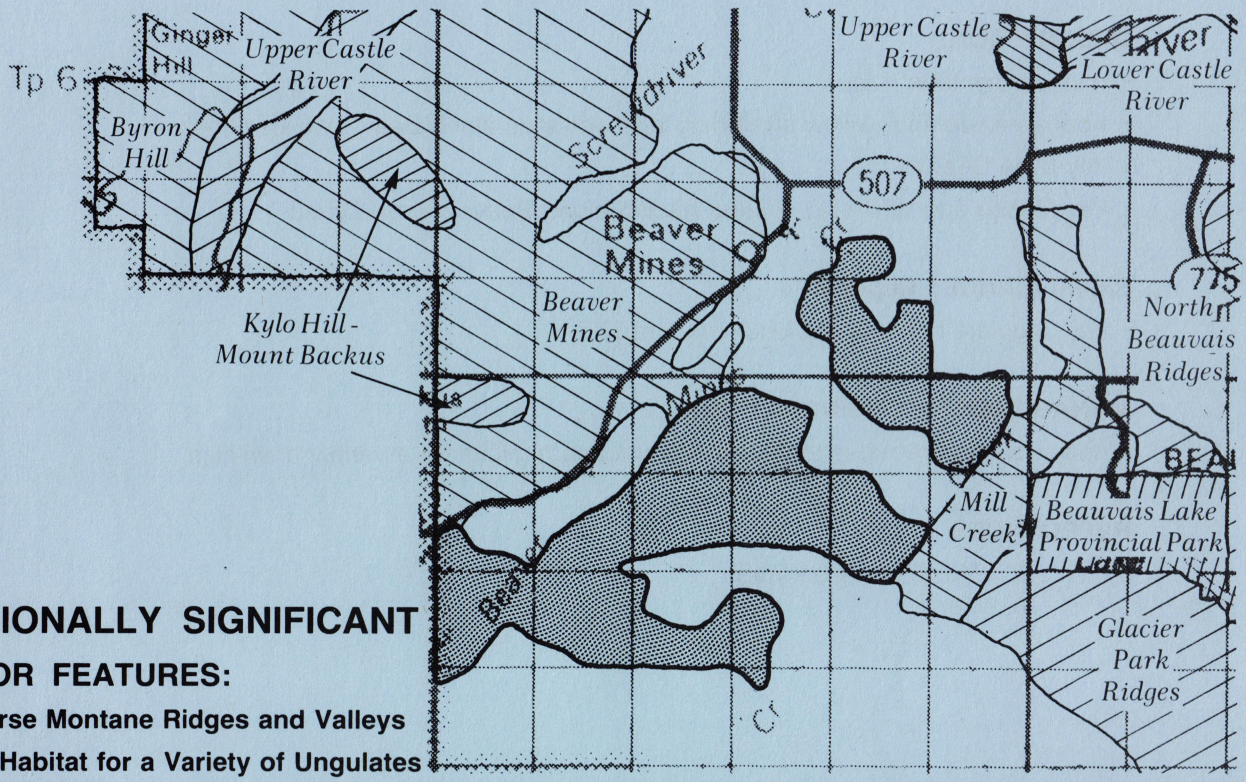

REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT

MAJOR FEATURES:

- **Diverse Montane Ridges and Valleys**
- **Key Habitat for a Variety of Ungulates**



MILL CREEK RIDGES
M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SITE LOCATION:

- ridges between Mill Creek and Beaver Mines Creek south of Highway 507
- Tp. 5 and 6 - Rge. 2 - W5

DESCRIPTION:

- diverse montane ridges
- riparian woodland, willow shrubbery and wetlands along Beaver Mines Creek
- key Mule Deer habitat
- key Moose and White-tailed Deer habitat along Beaver Mines Creek

SIGNIFICANCE: Regional

- key ungulate habitats are local in the region

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS:

- heavy grazing reduces the suitability of these habitats for a variety of wildlife

REFERENCES:

- Fish and Wildlife key area maps

NORTH BEAUVAIS RIDGES

M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SCALE - 1:125,000

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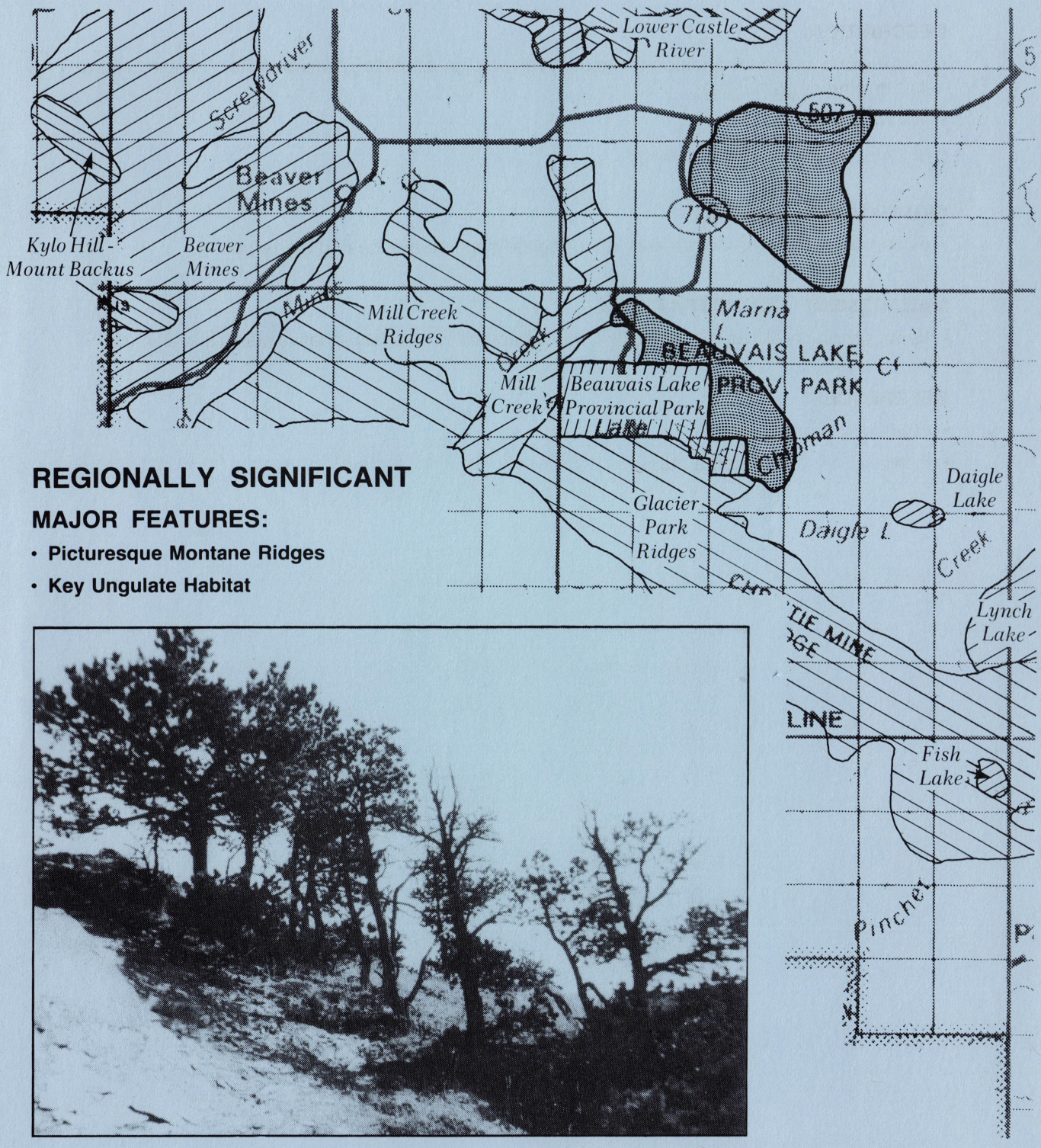

REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT

MAJOR FEATURES:

- **Picturesque Montane Ridges**
- **Key Ungulate Habitat**

NORTH BEAUVAIS RIDGES
M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SITE LOCATION:

- 12 km southwest of Pincher Creek, south of Highway 507 and east of Highway 775
- Tp. 5 and 6 - Rge. 1 - W5

DESCRIPTION:

- picturesque montane sandstone ridges with diverse grassland and woodland including extensive limber pine ridge habitats
- key Mule Deer habitat
- key Elk habitat on southern ridge

SIGNIFICANCE: Regional

- extensive limber pine ridges and key ungulate habitats are local in the region

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS:

- heavy grazing reduces the suitability of these habitats for a variety of native plants and animals

REFERENCES:

- 1986 field program notes
- Fish and Wildlife key area maps

OLDMAN RIVER-BROCKET

M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SCALE - 1:125,000

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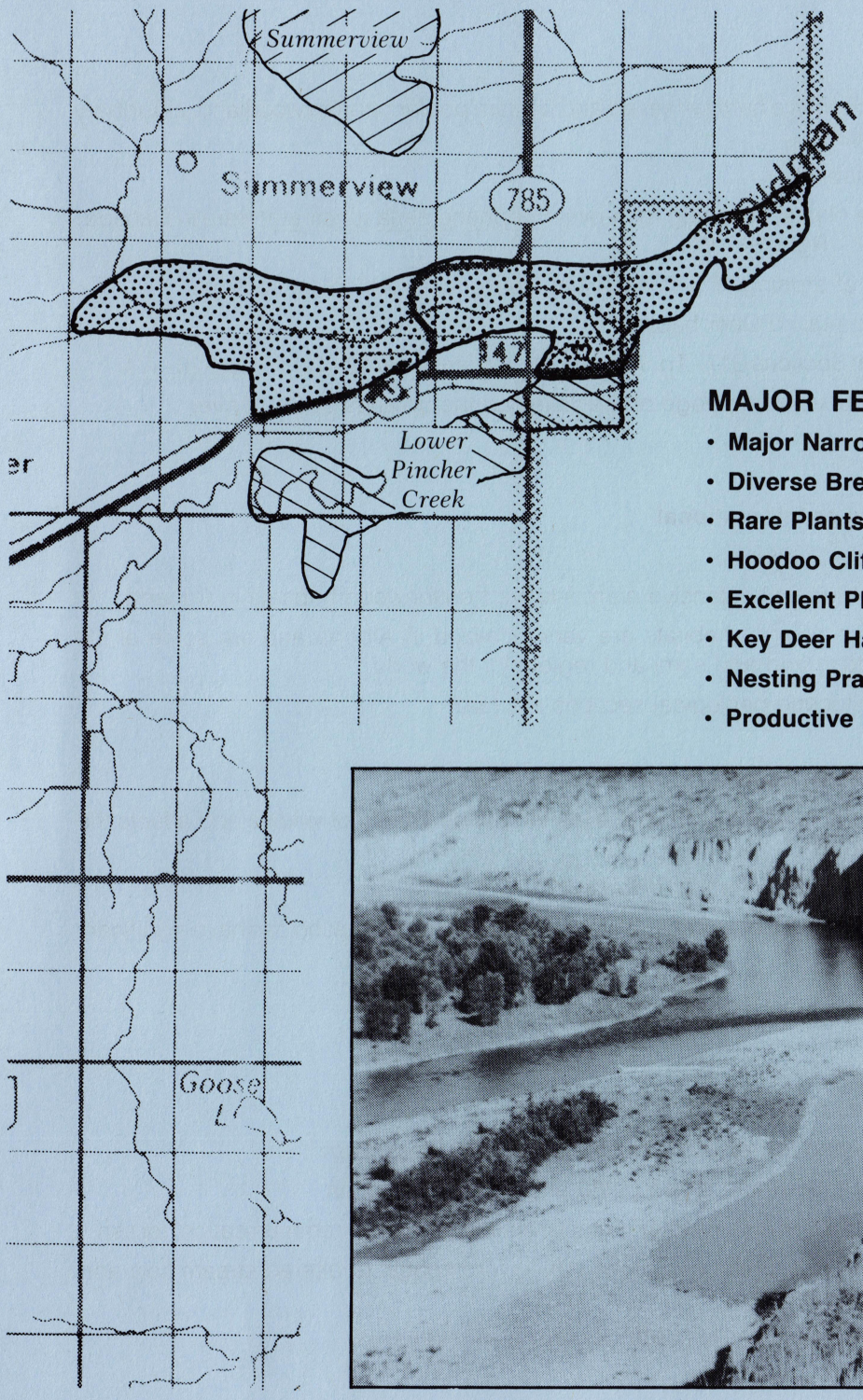

NATIONALLY OR INTERNATIONALLY SIGNIFICANT

MAJOR FEATURES:

- Major Narrow-leaved Cottonwood Stands
- Diverse Breeding Bird Habitats
- Rare Plants
- Hoodoo Cliffs
- Excellent Pleistocene Geological Sections
- Key Deer Habitat
- Nesting Prairie Falcons
- Productive Fishery

OLDMAN RIVER-BROCKET
M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SITE LOCATION:

- Oldman River valley and remnant native grasslands on upland east of the proposed Three Rivers dam site to the boundary of the Peigan Indian Reserve
- Tp. 7 - Rge. 28 and 29 - W4

DESCRIPTION:

- part of Canada's most extensive narrow-leaved and balsam poplar riparian woodland, shrubbery and moist channel habitats
- diverse breeding bird habitat
- eroding slopes with rare plants, including rush-pink (Stephanomeria runcinata) (rare in Canada) in Section NW13 - Tp. 7 - Rge. 29 - W4
- extensive hoodoo cliffs of eroding till with excellent Pleistocene geological sections
- key Mule Deer and White-tailed Deer habitat
- nesting Prairie Falcons in Sections S17 - Tp. 7 - Rge. 29 - W4 and NW18 - Tp. 7 - Rge. 28 - W4
- minor vegetated sand dunes at the edge of the valley on the uplands south of river
- productive fishery

SIGNIFICANCE: National or International

- concentration of significant features
- these represent part of the most extensive narrow-leaved cottonwood habitats in Canada
- extensive and productive riparian habitats are very localized in Alberta and are some of the most threatened habitats in arid and semi-arid regions of the world
- relatively complete Pleistocene geological sections are rare

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS:

- heavy grazing reduces the suitability of these sites for a wide variety of wildlife and affects the regeneration of cottonwoods
- clearing and cultivation eliminate habitat diversity
- stream pollution from subsurface or surface sources and erosion and siltation can have significant impacts on fisheries

REFERENCES:

- 1986 field program notes
- Fish and Wildlife key area maps
- Stalker (1957 and 1963) and Rutter and Christiansen (1972) for geology
- Cottonwood Consultants (1983) and Wallis (1980 and 1987) for riparian
- Longmore and Stenton (1981) and C. Bradley, Trout Unlimited (personal communication) for fish
- Bradley and Smith (1986) and Smith and Flake (1981) for impacts of altered stream flow and grazing on cottonwood systems
- Packer and Bradley (1984) and Wallis (1986) for rare plant status

OLDMAN RIVER-PORCUPINE HILLS

M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SCALE - 1:125,000

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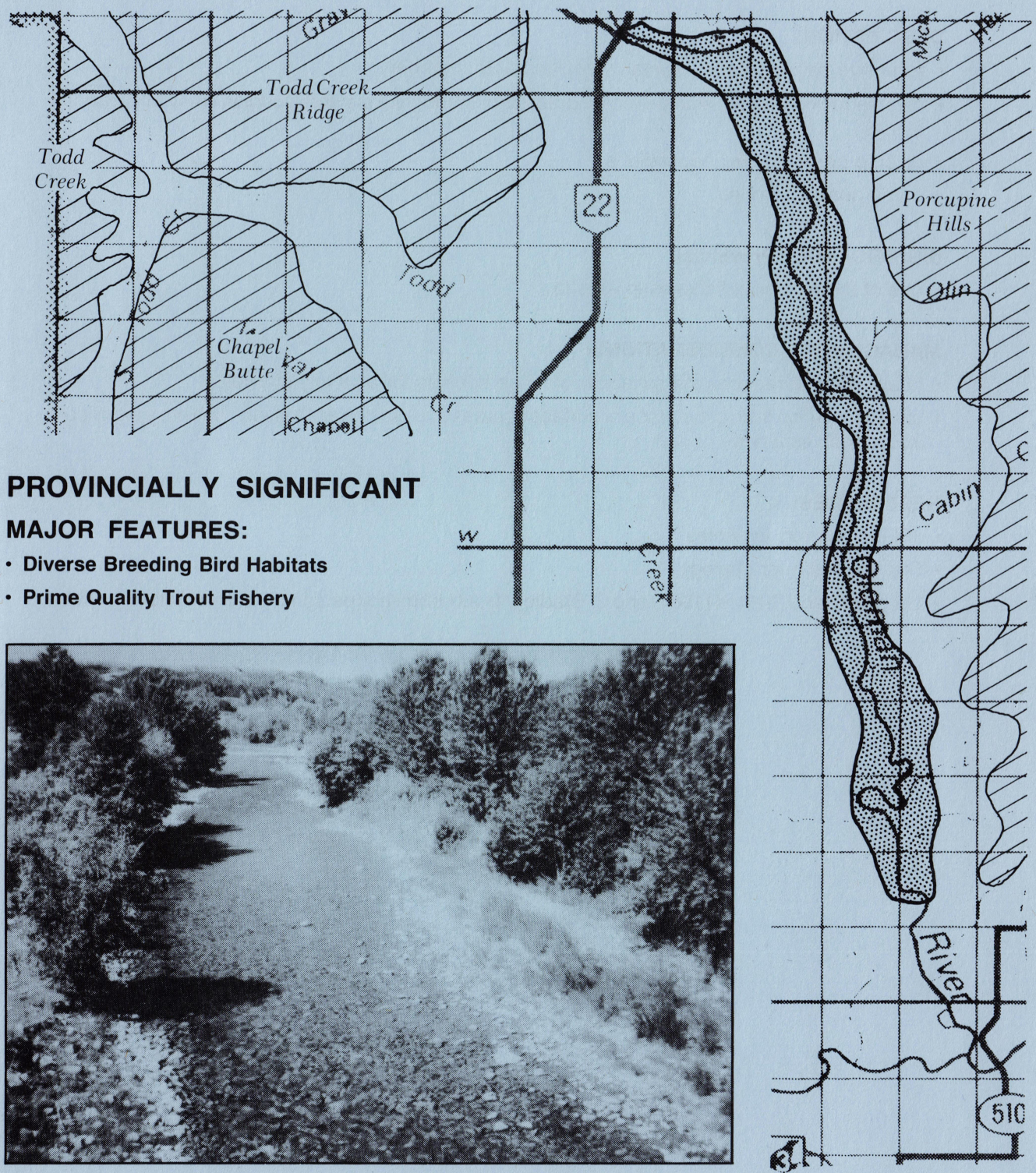

PROVINCIALLY SIGNIFICANT

MAJOR FEATURES:

- **Diverse Breeding Bird Habitats**
- **Prime Quality Trout Fishery**

OLDMAN RIVER-PORCUPINE HILLS
M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SITE LOCATION:

- valley of the Oldman River from the proposed Three Rivers Reservoir upstream to Hwy. 22
- Tp. 8, 9 and 10, Rge. 2 - W5

DESCRIPTION:

- extensive balsam poplar riparian woodland and shrubbery
- diverse rock outcrops, slump blocks, grassland, shrub thickets and Douglas fir woodland along slopes
- diverse breeding bird populations
- prime quality fisheries

SIGNIFICANCE: Provincial

- one of the best trout fisheries in Alberta

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS:

- heavy grazing reduces the suitability of these habitats for a variety of wildlife
- stream pollution from subsurface or surface sources and erosion and siltation can have significant impacts on fisheries

REFERENCES:

- 1986 field program notes
- Stalker (1963) for geology
- Longmore and Stenton (1981) and C. Bradley, Trout Unlimited (personal communication) for fish

PINE RIDGE

M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SCALE - 1:125,000

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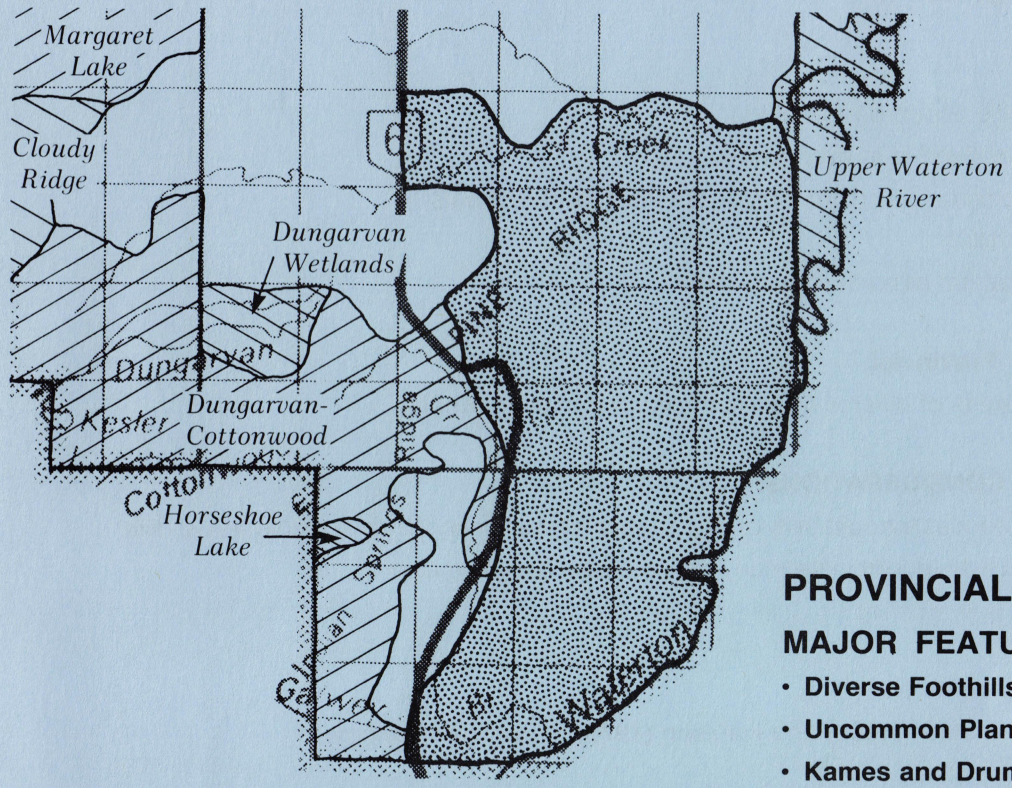
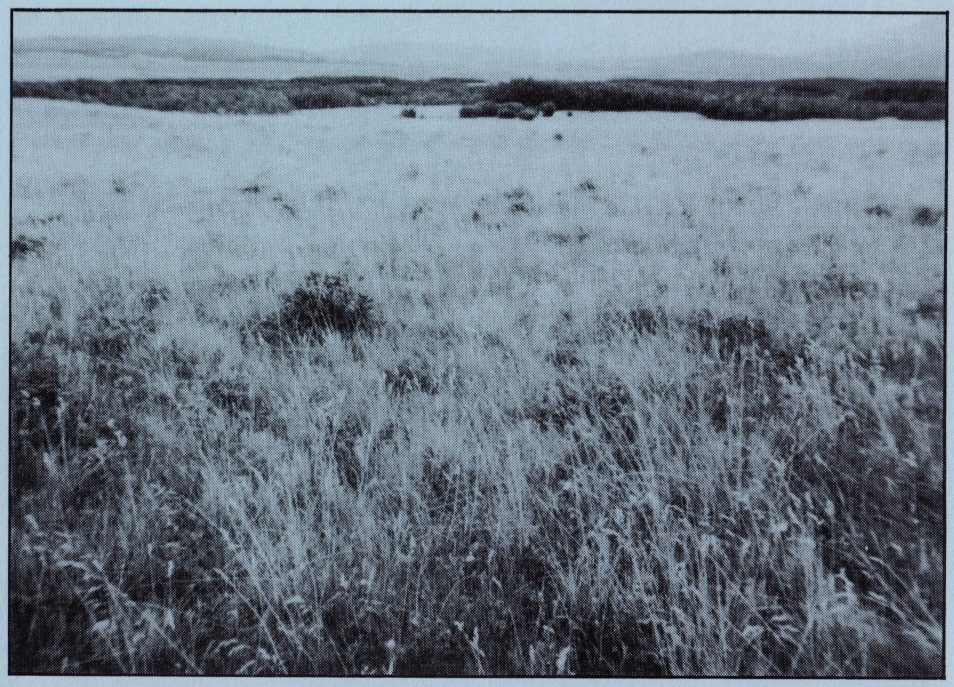


PROVINCIALLY SIGNIFICANT

MAJOR FEATURES:

- Diverse Foothills Parkland
- Uncommon Plants
- Kames and Drumlins



PINE RIDGE
M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SITE LOCATION:

- area between the Waterton River and Highway 6, from Waterton National Park north to Dungarvan Creek
- Tp. 2 and 3 - Rge. 29 - W4

DESCRIPTION:

- extensive foothills aspen parkland
- some of the grassland is in excellent condition
- numerous uncommon plants; moderate potential for rare plants
- kames and drumlins
- some key Elk habitat at northwestern edge

SIGNIFICANCE: Provincial

- few extensive areas of diverse foothills parkland remain in Alberta

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS:

- heavy grazing reduces the suitability of these habitats for a variety of native plants and wildlife
- clearing and cultivation eliminate many native plants and animals

REFERENCES:

- 1986 field program notes
- Stalker (1958), Shetsen (1980) and Harrison (1976) for surficial geology
- Cottonwood Consultants (1983)
- Fish and Wildlife key area maps

PORCUPINE HILLS
M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SCALE - 1:125,000

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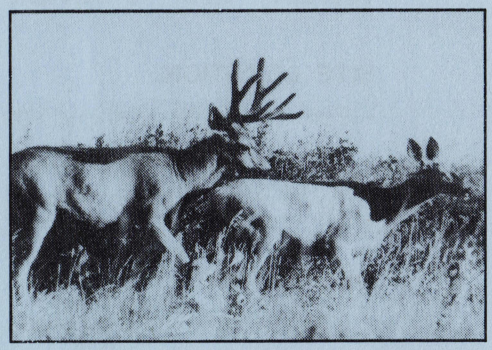

PROVINCIALLY SIGNIFICANT

MAJOR FEATURES:

- Massive Sandstone Outcrops
- Diverse Montane Ridges
- Unglaciated Uplands
- Key Ungulate Habitat
- Nesting Rare and Threatened Birds of Prey



PORCUPINE HILLS
M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SITE LOCATION:

- Porcupine Hills west and south of Peigan Indian Reserve and Forest Reserve
- ridges along southwest side of Porcupine Hills
- Tp. 8 - Rge. 29 and 30 - W4 and Tp. 8, 9 and 10 - Rge. 1 - W5

DESCRIPTION:

- massive sandstone outcrops
- diverse montane ridges with fescue grassland, and Douglas fir, limber pine, lodgepole pine and aspen woodland
- diversity of breeding bird species
- highest elevations were unglaciated (Sections 1, 12, 13, and 36 - Tp. 9 - Rge 1 - W5, and Section 1 - Tp. 10 - Rge. 1 - W5)
- key Mule Deer and Elk habitat
- nesting Prairie Falcons in Sections NW11 and SE34 - Tp. 8 - Rge. 1 - W5
- nesting Ferruginous Hawks (a threatened species) in Section NW11 - Tp. 8 - Rge. 1 - W5
- Hammond Ducks Unlimited wetland project
- several lightly grazed areas

SIGNIFICANCE: Provincial

- unglaciated areas on the plains are rare
- extensive and diverse montane habitats are rare in Alberta

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS:

- heavy grazing reduces the suitability of these habitats for a variety of native plants and wildlife

REFERENCES:

- Fish and Wildlife key area maps
- 1986 field program notes
- Stalker (1962) for geology

ROCK-COW CREEK WETLANDS

M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SCALE - 1:125,000

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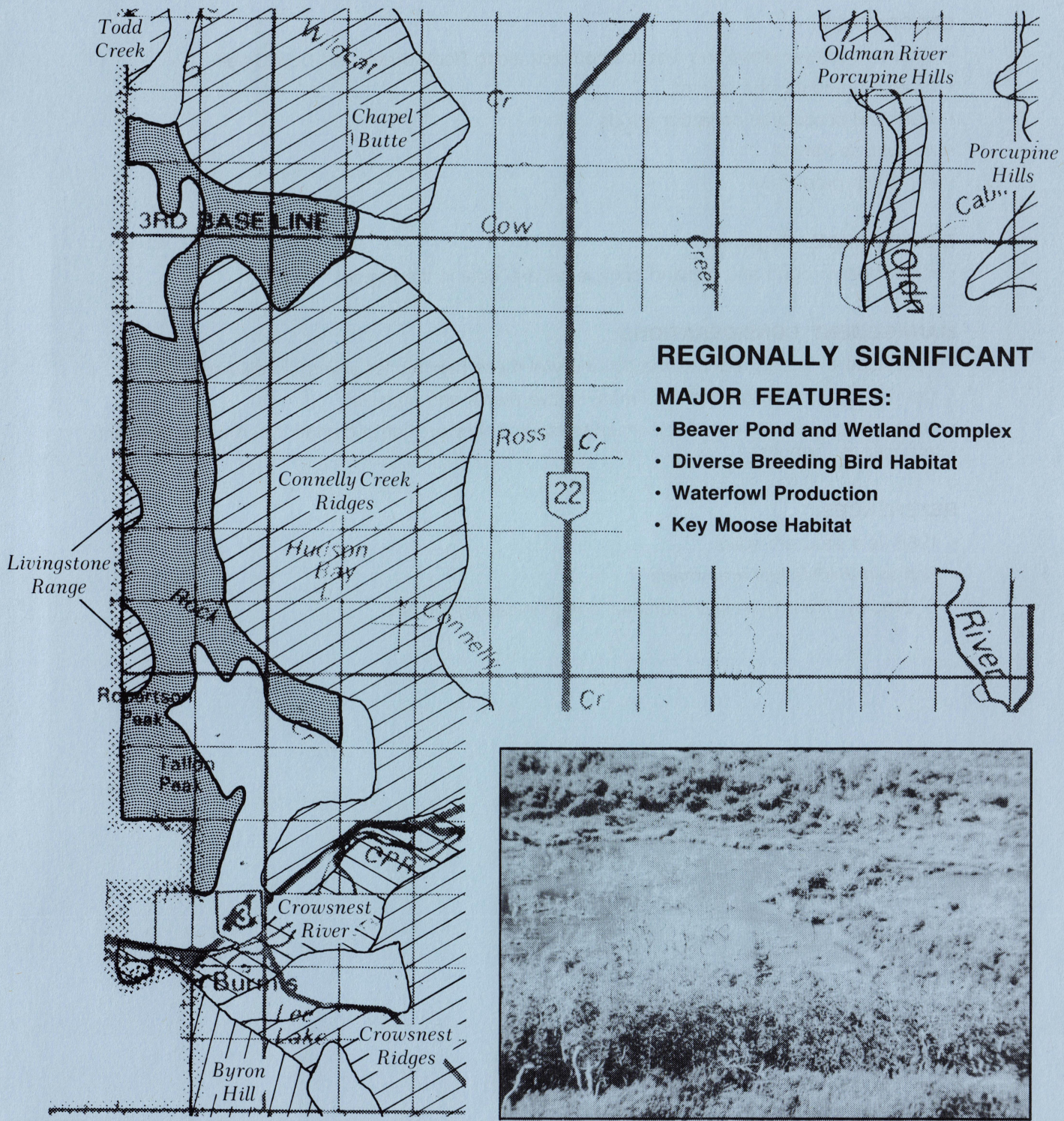

REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT

MAJOR FEATURES:

- **Beaver Pond and Wetland Complex**
- **Diverse Breeding Bird Habitat**
- **Waterfowl Production**
- **Key Moose Habitat**

ROCK-COW CREEK WETLANDS
M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SITE LOCATION:

- 16 km north of Burmis
- principally in Tp. 8 - Rge. 3 - W5

DESCRIPTION:

- extensive beaver pond and wetland complex along Rock Creek and Cow Creek
- diverse breeding bird habitat
- waterfowl production on larger ponds
- key Moose habitat
- some fish production

SIGNIFICANCE: Regional

- major beaver pond and wetland complexes are local in the region

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS:

- heavy cattle grazing reduces the suitability of these habitats for several wildlife species
- clearing and cultivation eliminate many native plants and animals
- stream pollution from subsurface or surface sources and erosion and siltation can have significant impacts on fisheries

REFERENCES:

- 1986 field program notes
- Fish and Wildlife key area maps
- C. Bradley, Trout Unlimited (personal communication) for fish

SPIONKOP RIDGE

M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SCALE - 1:125,000

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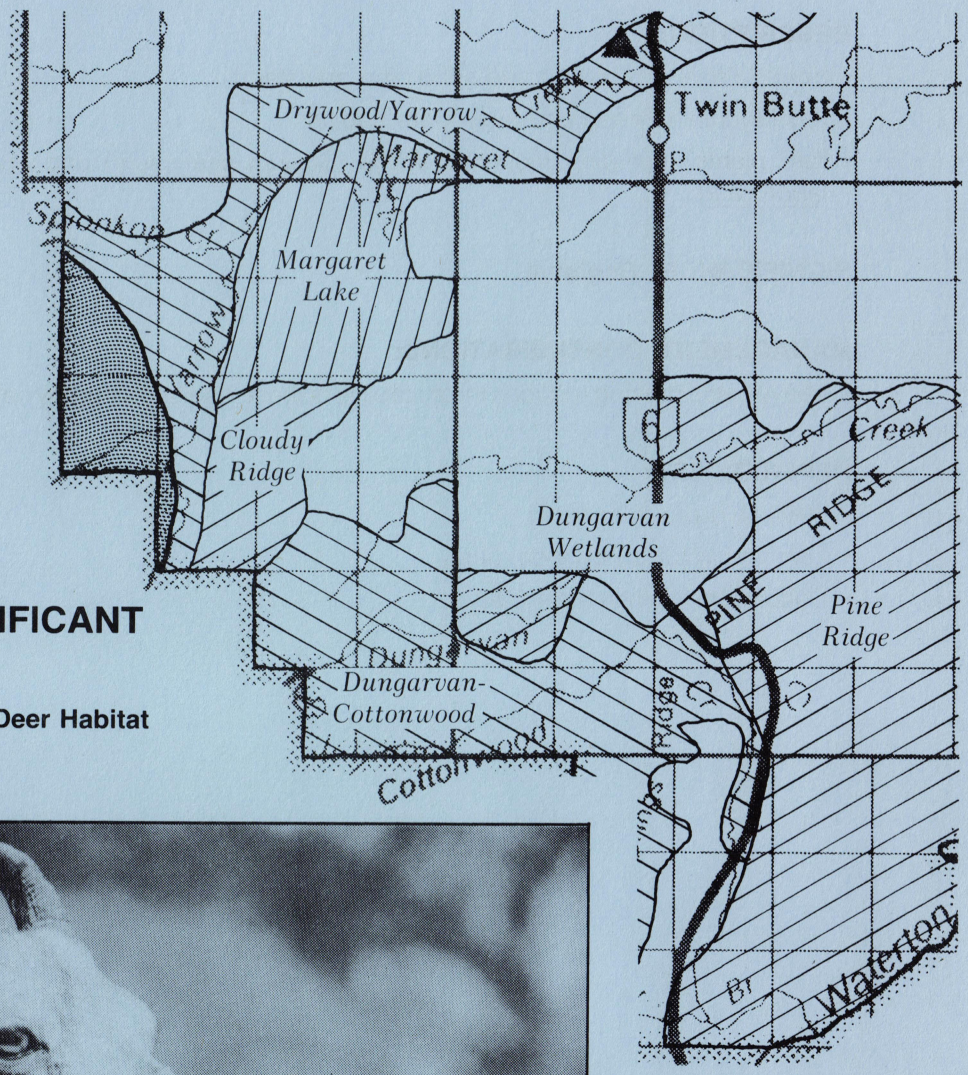

REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT

MAJOR FEATURES:

- **Key Mountain Sheep and Deer Habitat**
- **Rare Plants**



R 29

SPIONKOP RIDGE
M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SITE LOCATION:

- just northwest of the northernmost tip of Waterton Lakes National Park
- Tp. 3 - Rge. 30 - W4

DESCRIPTION:

- mixing zone of montane and subalpine grassland
- key Mountain Sheep and Mule Deer habitat
- rare plants, including mountain thistle (Cirsium scariosum) and prairie lungwort (Mertensia lanceolata)

SIGNIFICANCE: Regional

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS:

- heavy cattle grazing reduces the suitability of these habitats for many native plants and animals

REFERENCES:

- 1986 field program notes
- Fish and Wildlife key area maps
- Cottonwood Consultants (1983)

SUMMERVIEW

M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SCALE - 1:125,000

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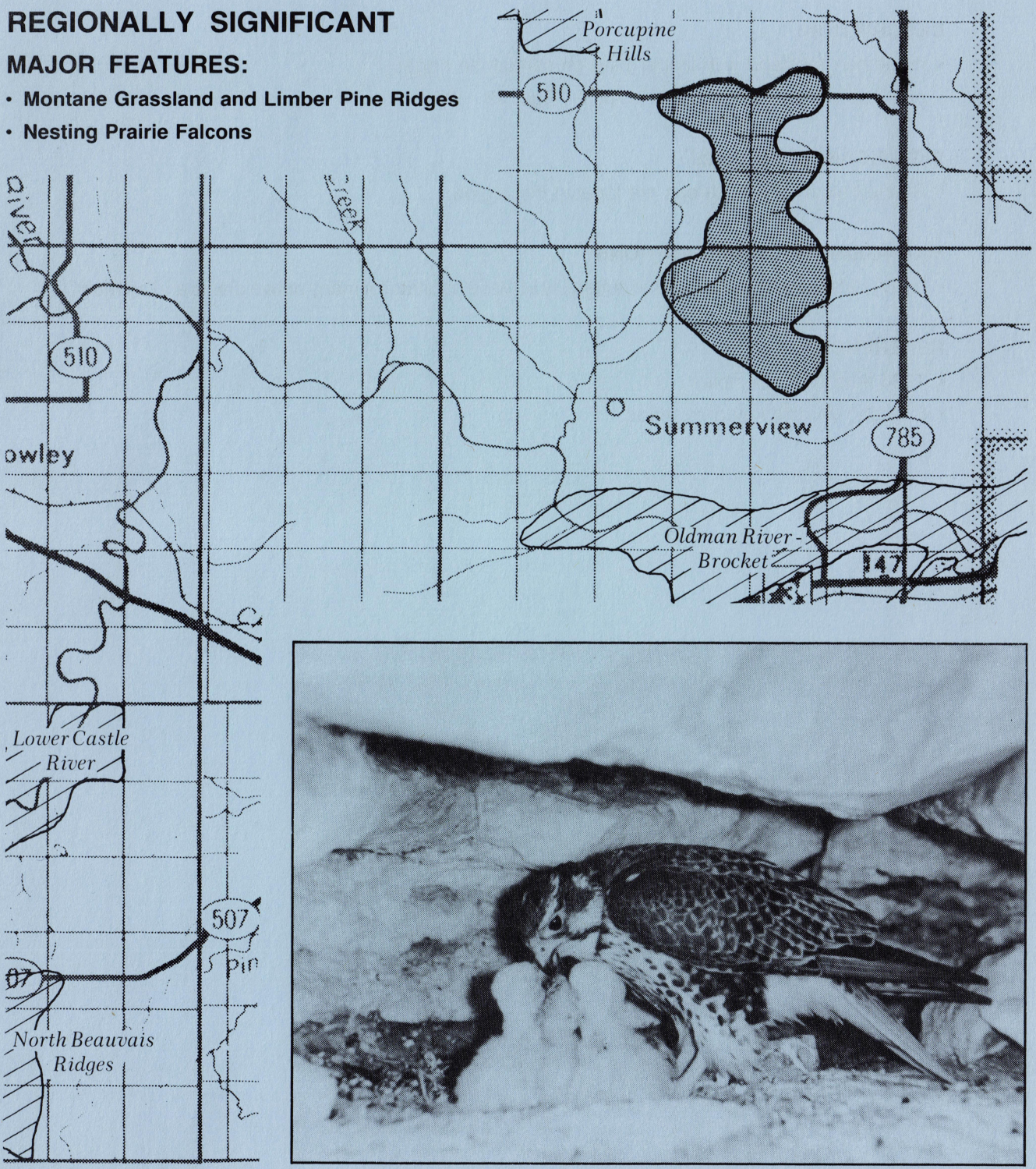
REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT

MAJOR FEATURES:

- Montane Grassland and Limber Pine Ridges
- Nesting Prairie Falcons



SUMMERVIEW
M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SITE LOCATION:

- 8 km northwest of Brocket
- Tp. 7 and 8 - Rge. 29 - W4

DESCRIPTION:

- montane grassland with limber pine on sandstone ridges
- nesting Prairie Falcons in E27 - Tp. 7 - Rge. 29 - W4

SIGNIFICANCE: Regional

- Prairie Falcon nesting areas are local in the region

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS:

- heavy cattle grazing reduces the suitability of these habitats for many native plants and animals

REFERENCES:

- 1986 field program notes
- Fish and Wildlife key area maps

TODD CREEK

M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SCALE - 1:125,000

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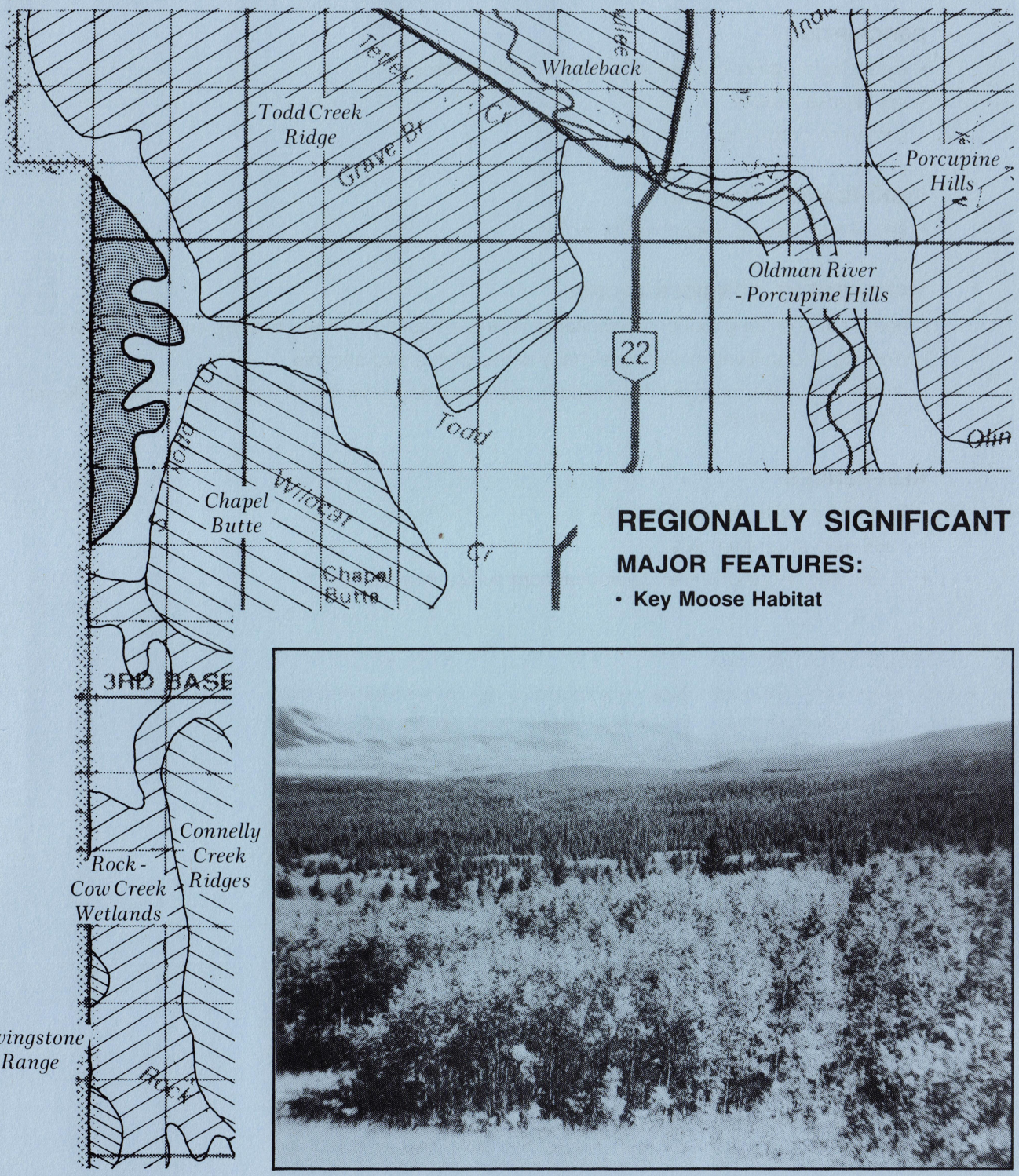

REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT

MAJOR FEATURES:

- **Key Moose Habitat**

TODD CREEK
M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SITE LOCATION:

- west of South Todd Creek on lower slopes of Livingstone Range
- Tp. 9 and 10 - Rge. 3 - W5

DESCRIPTION:

- extensive moist willow and aspen with small streams
- key Moose habitat
- some fish production

SIGNIFICANCE: Regional

- key Moose habitat is local in the region

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS:

- heavy cattle grazing reduces the suitability of these habitats for many native plants and animals
- clearing and cultivation eliminate many native plants and animals
- stream pollution from subsurface or surface sources and erosion and siltation can have significant impacts on fisheries

REFERENCES:

- Fish and Wildlife key area maps
- 1986 field program notes
- C. Bradley, Trout Unlimited (personal communication) for fish

TODD CREEK RIDGE

M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SCALE - 1:125,000

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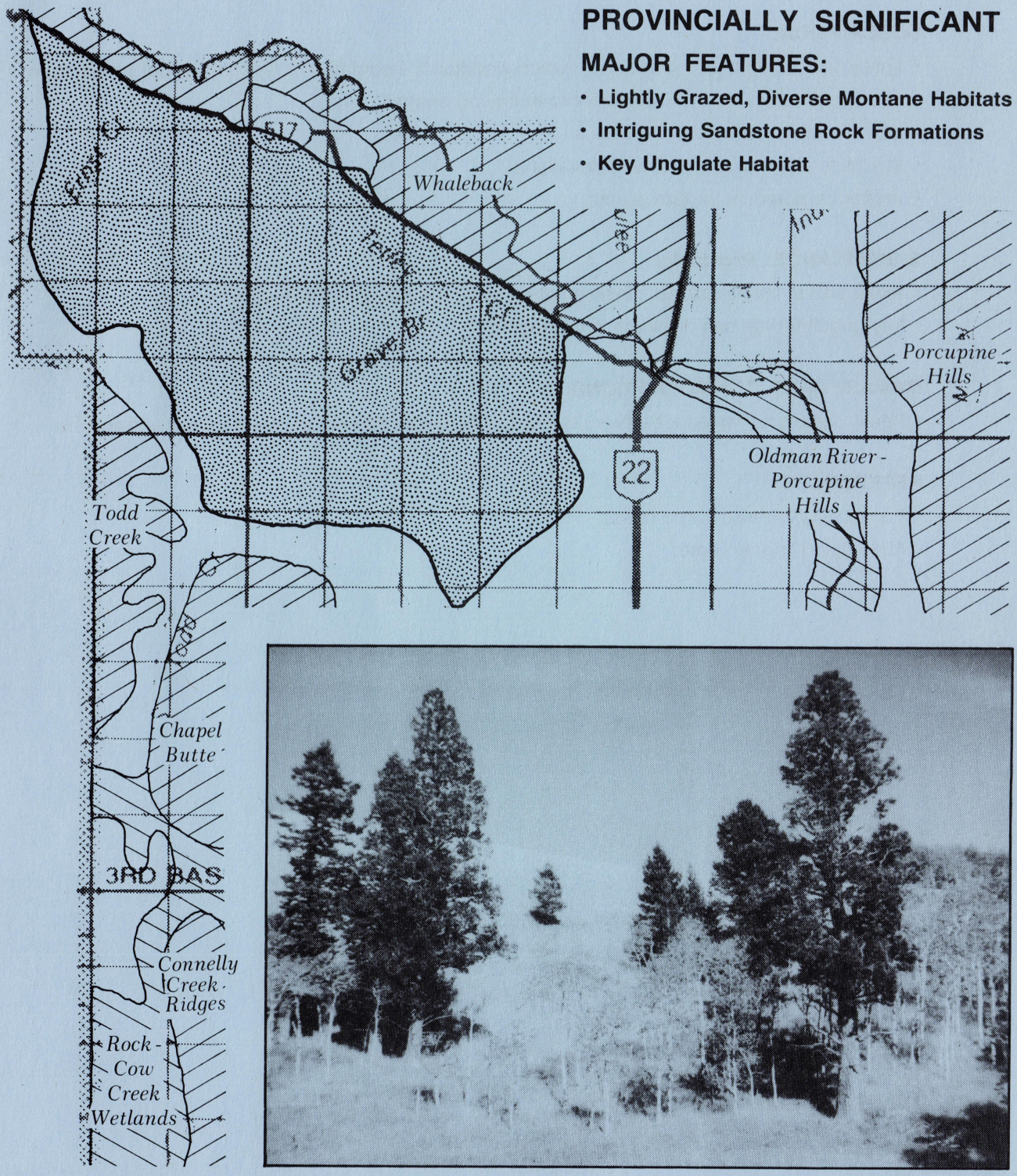

PROVINCIALLY SIGNIFICANT

MAJOR FEATURES:

- Lightly Grazed, Diverse Montane Habitats
- Intriguing Sandstone Rock Formations
- Key Ungulate Habitat

TODD CREEK RIDGE
M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SITE LOCATION:

- just east of Forest Reserve boundary south of Highway 517
- Tp. 9 and 10 - Rge. 2 and 3 - W5

DESCRIPTION:

- lightly grazed montane grassland, aspen woodland, Douglas fir forest and limber pine ridges
- sandstone rock outcrops, eroded into intriguing shapes
- key Elk habitat at higher elevations
- key Mule Deer habitat at lower elevations
- moderate potential for rare plants

SIGNIFICANCE: Provincial

- few areas of lightly grazed, diverse montane ridges occur in Alberta
- key ungulate habitats are local in the region

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS:

- heavy cattle grazing reduces the suitability of these habitats for many native plants and animals

REFERENCES:

- Fish and Wildlife key area maps
- 1986 field program notes

UPPER CASTLE RIVER
M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SCALE - 1:125,000

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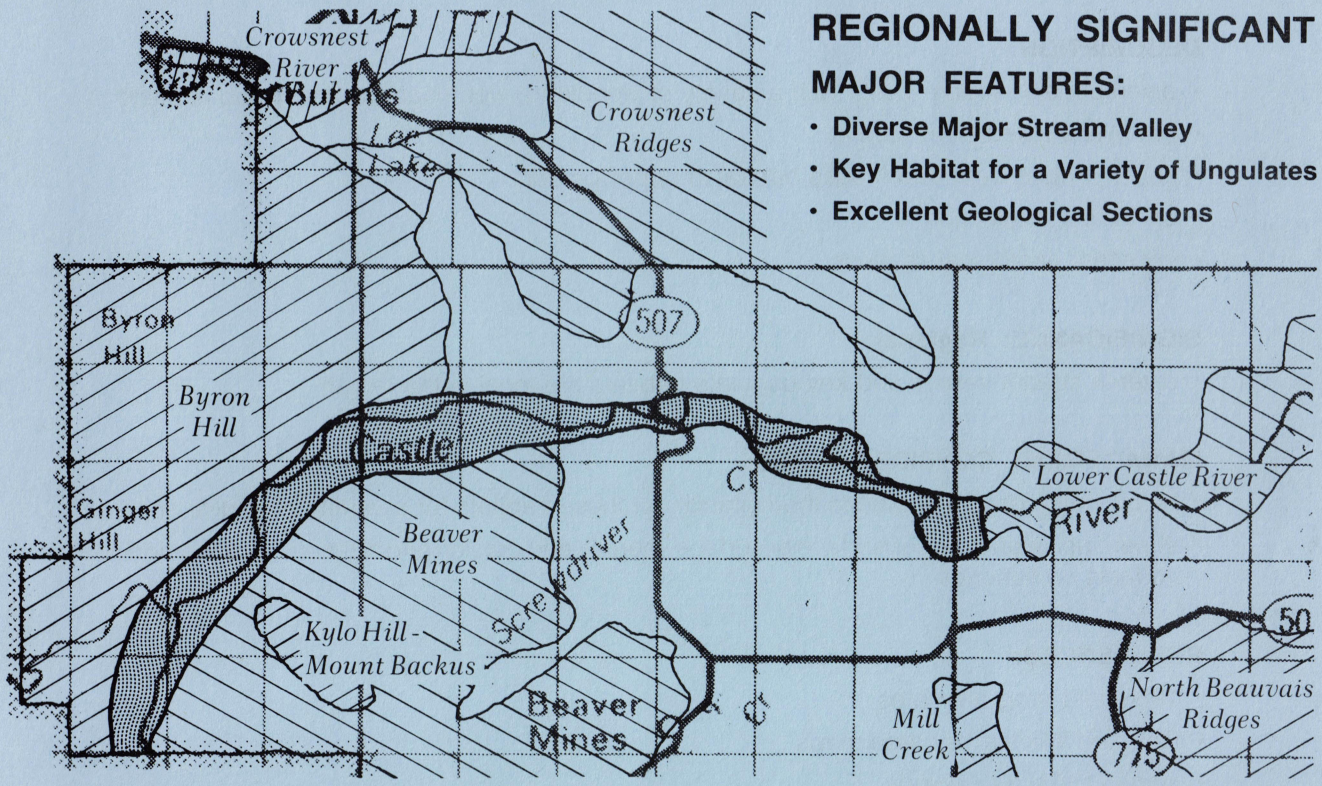
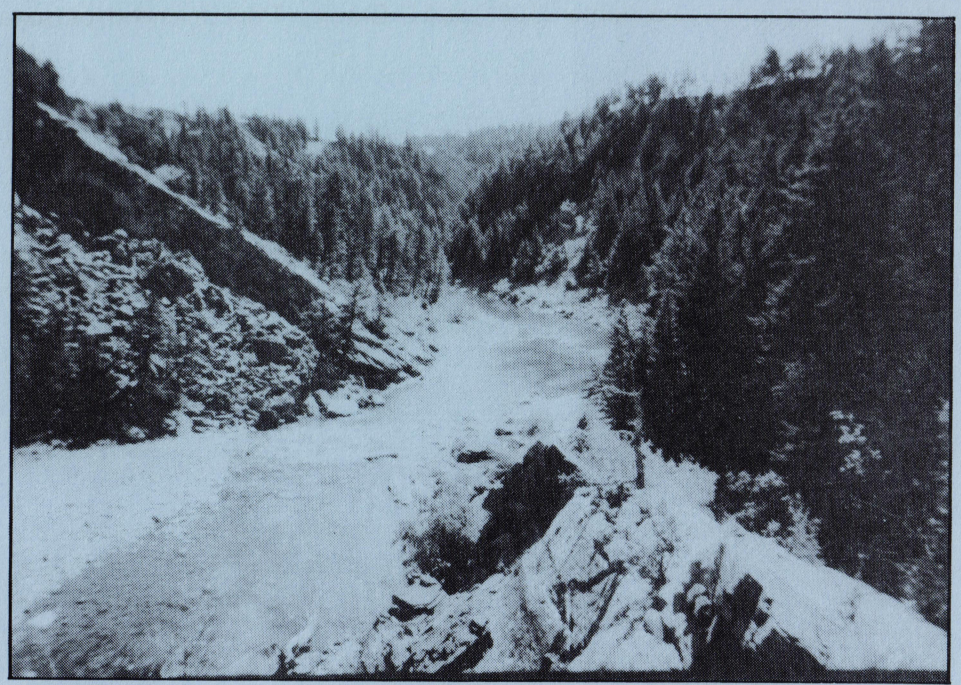


REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT

MAJOR FEATURES:

- **Diverse Major Stream Valley**
- **Key Habitat for a Variety of Ungulates**
- **Excellent Geological Sections**



UPPER CASTLE RIVER
M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SITE LOCATION:

- Castle River from the forest reserve boundary east to Mill Creek
- Tp. 6 - Rge. 2 and 3 - W5

DESCRIPTION:

- diverse major stream valley with a variety of woodland, wet meadow, and shrub habitats
- key White-tailed Deer habitat
- key Elk, Mule Deer and Moose habitat in upper portion
- some fish production
- excellent geological sections

SIGNIFICANCE: Regional

- diverse stream valleys and key ungulate habitats are local in the region

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS:

- heavy cattle grazing reduces the suitability of these habitats for a variety of wildlife species
- stream pollution from subsurface or surface sources and erosion and siltation can have significant impacts on fisheries

REFERENCES:

- 1986 field program notes
- Fish and Wildlife key area maps
- Hage (1943) for geology
- Longmore and Stenton (1981) and C. Bradley, Trout Unlimited (personal communication) for fish

UPPER WATERTON RIVER

M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SCALE - 1:125,000

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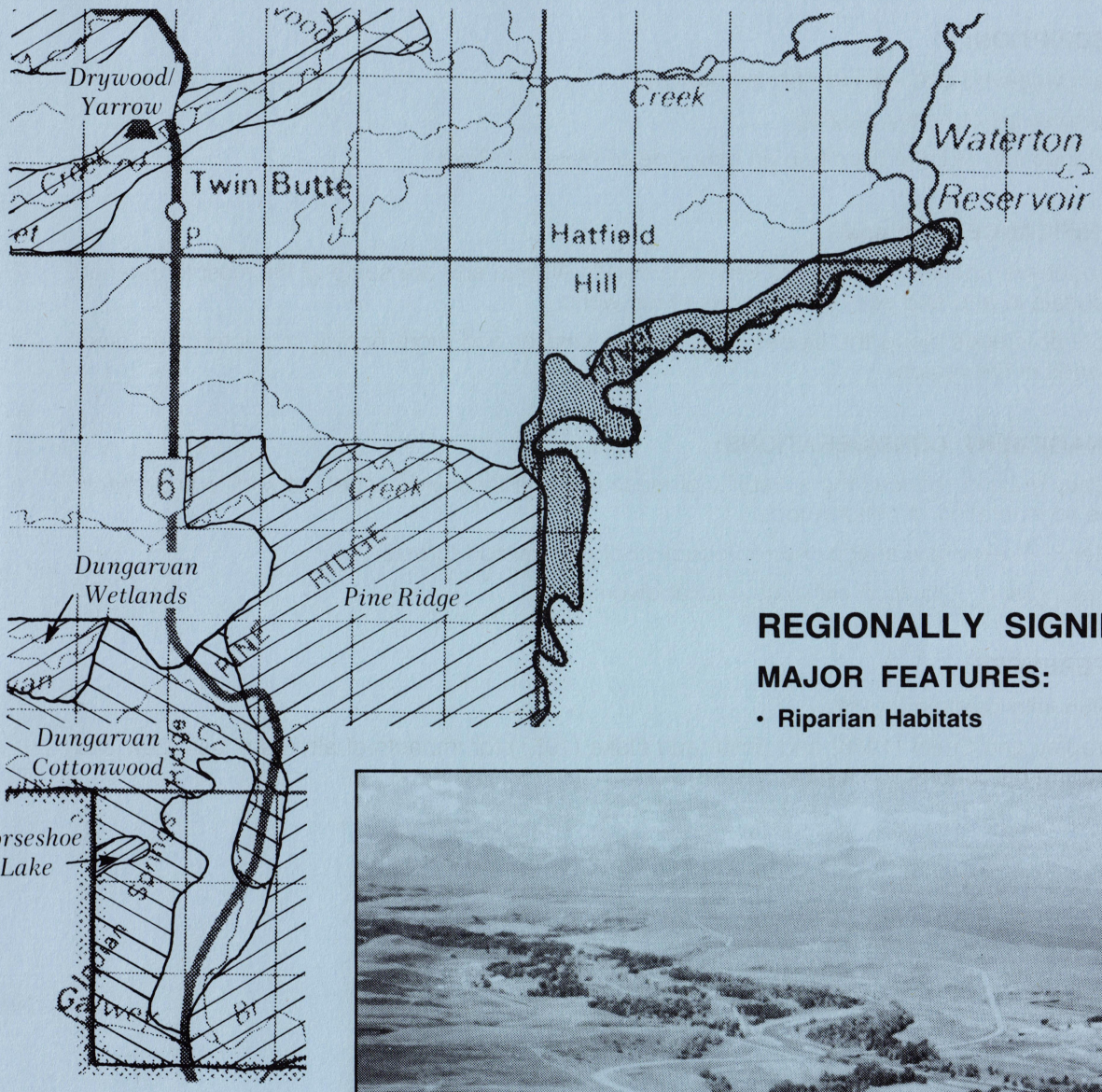
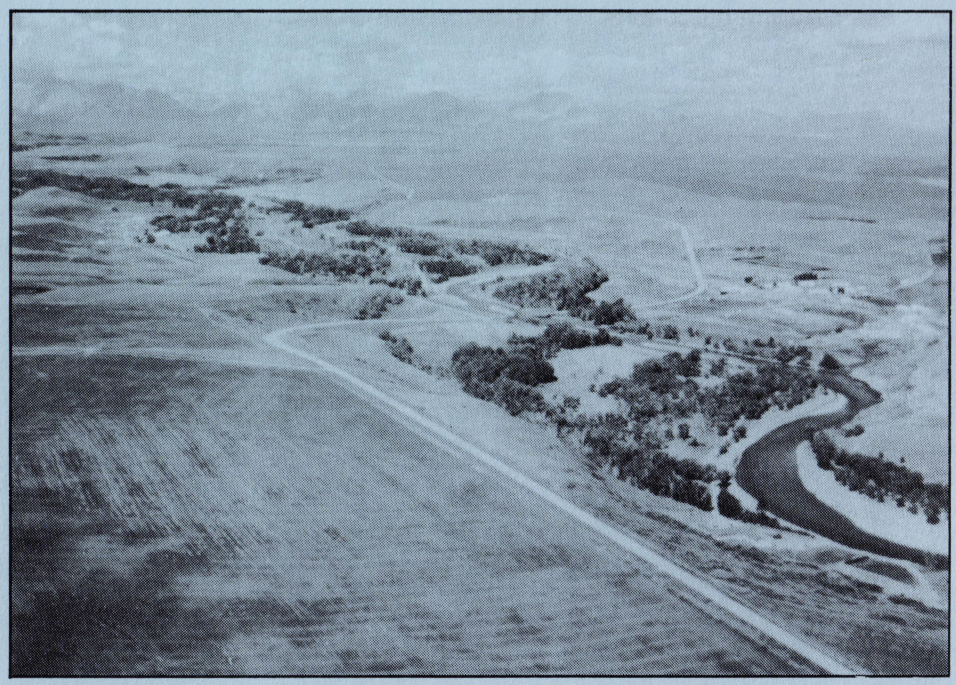


REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT

MAJOR FEATURES:

- **Riparian Habitats**



UPPER WATERTON RIVER
M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SITE LOCATION:

- from Waterton Reservoir upstream to Dungarvan Creek
- Tp. 3 - Rge. 28 - W4

DESCRIPTION:

- narrow-leaved cottonwood riparian habitats
- some areas of heavy grazing
- extends into M.D. of Cardston on east side of Waterton River

SIGNIFICANCE: Regional

- productive riparian habitats are very localized in Alberta and are some of the most threatened habitats in arid and semi-arid regions of the world
- riparian stands along the Upper Waterton are smaller and more heavily impacted than other stands in the region

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS:

- heavy grazing reduces the suitability of these habitats for a wide variety of wildlife and affects the regeneration of cottonwoods
- altered stream flow affects the reproduction of cottonwood forests
- clearing and cultivation eliminate habitat diversity

REFERENCES:

- 1986 field program notes
- Bradley and Smith (1986) and Smith and Flake (1981) for impacts of altered stream flow and grazing on cottonwood forests

WHALEBACK

M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SCALE - 1:125,000

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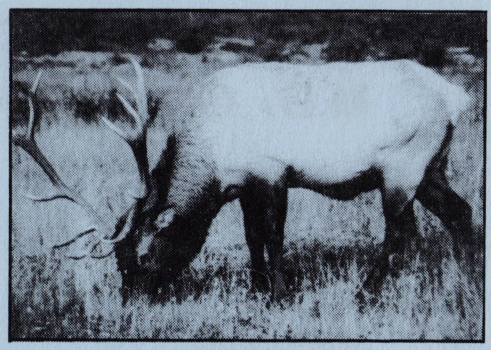
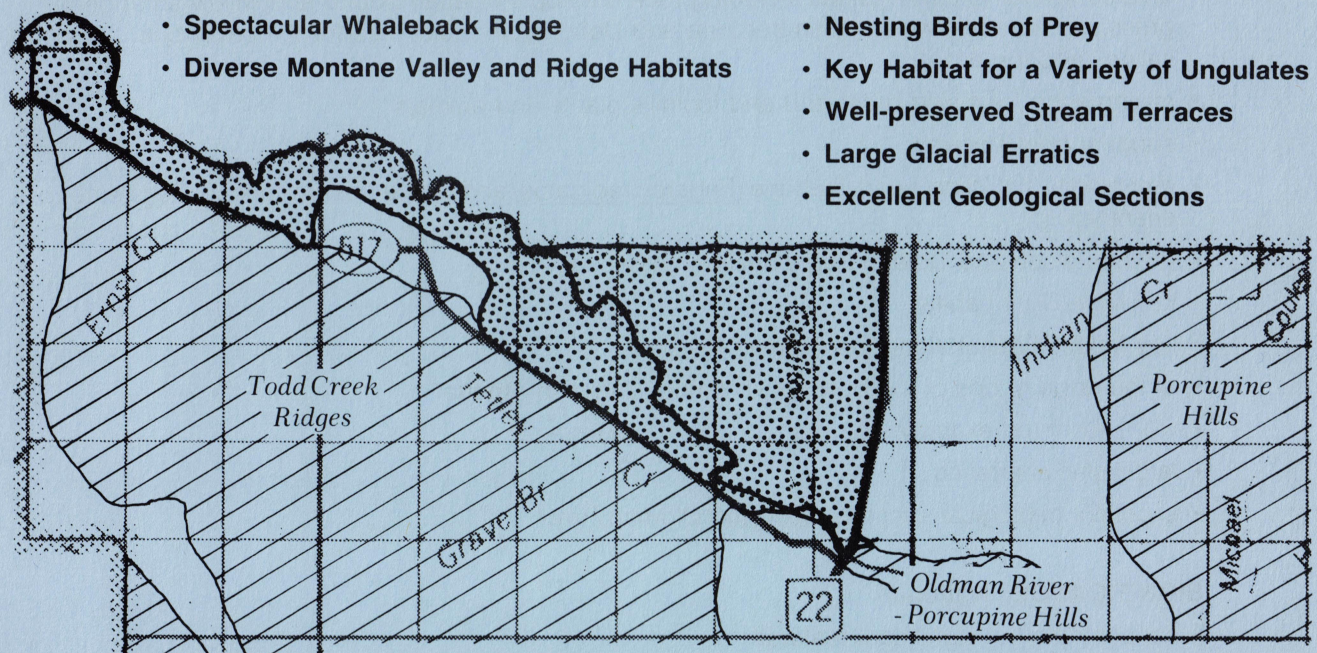
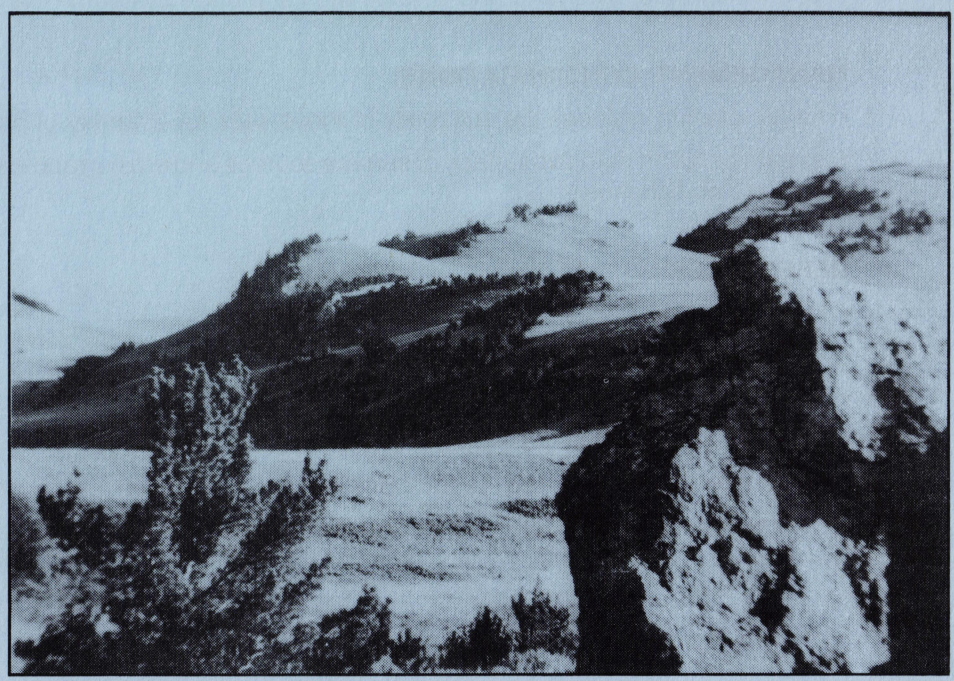


NATIONALLY SIGNIFICANT

MAJOR FEATURES:

- Concentration of Features
- Spectacular Whaleback Ridge
- Diverse Montane Valley and Ridge Habitats
- Superior Trout Stream
- Rare Plants
- Nesting Birds of Prey
- Key Habitat for a Variety of Ungulates
- Well-preserved Stream Terraces
- Large Glacial Erratics
- Excellent Geological Sections





WHALEBACK
M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

SITE LOCATION:

- 25 km north of Lundbreck
- Tp. 10 - Rge. 2 and 3 - W5

DESCRIPTION:

- southern tip of the spectacular Whaleback Ridge system
- diverse breeding bird habitats including rock outcrops, riparian poplar and willow shrubbery, grassland terraces, montane limber pine and Douglas fir, moist meadows, beaver ponds and saline seepage areas
- mixing zone for mixed grassland and foothills plants and animals
- superior trout stream
- rare plants, including dwarf fleabane (Erigeron radicatus) and crested beard-tongue (Penstemon eriantherus)
- Prairie Falcon and Golden Eagle nesting sites
- key Mule Deer habitat
- key Moose habitat along the Oldman River
- at the edge of one of the best Elk wintering ranges in Alberta
- well-preserved examples of abandoned stream terraces
- large glacial erratics
- excellent geological sections along the Oldman River

SIGNIFICANCE: National

- concentration of significant features
- part of the most extensive and diverse montane ridge system in Canada

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS:

- heavy grazing reduces the suitability of these sites for a variety of native plants and animals
- stream pollution from subsurface or surface sources and erosion and siltation can have significant impacts on fisheries

REFERENCES:

- Fish and Wildlife key area maps
- 1986 field program notes
- Wallis (1980) and Cottonwood Consultants (1983)
- Douglas (1950), Beaty (1975), and Shawa (1975) for geology
- Longmore and Stenton (1981) and C. Bradley, Trout Unlimited (personal communication) for fish
- Packer and Bradley (1984) and Wallis (1986) for rare plant status

VOLUME II
HISTORICAL RESOURCES



OLDMAN RIVER REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

HISTORICAL RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND PRELIMINARY INVENTORY AND ASSESSMENT

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

VOLUME II

Page

1.0 METHODS 1

1.1 Paleontological Resources 1

1.2 Prehistoric Resources 1

1.3 Historic Resources 1

2.0 OVERVIEW 3

2.1 The Fossil Record 3

2.2 Native History 3

2.3 White History 4

2.3.1 Whoop-up Country 4

2.3.2 The Ranching Frontier 4

2.3.3 Agriculture, Irrigation and Other Industries 5

3.0 SIGNIFICANT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES 7

3.1 Prehistoric Campsites 7

3.2 Bison Kills 7

3.3 Tipi Ring Sites 8

3.4 "Spiritual" Stone Features 9

3.4.1 Cairns 9

3.4.2 Stone Mosaics, "Boulder Pavements" and Effigies 9

3.4.3 Medicine Wheels 9

3.5 Rock Art Sites 9

3.6 Priority Areas 9

3.7 Recommendations 10

4.0 SIGNIFICANT HISTORIC SITES 17

4.1 THEME: Fur Trade 17

4.2 THEME: Transition from a Nomadic Economy 17
SUBTHEME: Missions

4.3 SUBTHEME: The Maintenance of Law and Order 17

4.4 THEME: Ranching 18
SUBTHEME: Ranching as the Basis of the Southern Alberta Economy

4.5 THEME: Settlement 18

4.6 THEME: Resource Development 19

4.7 Priority Areas 19

4.8 Recommendations 19

5.0 CRITERIA FOR REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT FOSSIL SITES 23

5.1 Bedrock - Paleontological Remains 23

5.1.1 Plants and Invertebrates 23

5.1.2 Marine Vertebrates, Dinosaurs, and Mammals 23

5.2 Unconsolidated Sediments-Gravels, Etc. 24

Page

6.0 CRITERIA FOR REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES 25

6.1 Environmental Parameters 25

6.1.1 Landform/Location 25

6.1.2 Water Bodies 26

6.2 Internal Site Parameters 27

6.2.1 Site Contents 27

6.2.2 Site Stratigraphy 28

6.2.3 Site Dating 29

6.2.4 Site Paleoenvironmental Data 30

6.2.5 Site Uniqueness 30

6.2.6 Site Integrity 30

6.2.7 Site Size 30

6.3 Additional Criteria - Bison Kills 30

6.4 Additional Criteria - Stone Feature Sites 31

7.0 CRITERIA FOR REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT HISTORIC SITES 33

8.0 REFERENCES 35

9.0 MAJOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL AREA CHECKSHEETS 37

1.0 METHODS

1.1 Paleontological Resources
1.2 Prehistoric Resources
1.3 Historic Resources

1.0 METHODS

1.1 PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Fossil finds have been made in the Oldman River Region. Those of regional, provincial and national/international significance are relatively uncommon. These finds are published in various reports and have not been summarized in the geological literature. A search of this literature was not undertaken for this study, rather the "Paleontological Sensitivity Map" published by Alberta Culture 1:3,000,000 based on the known or probable outcrop of fossiliferous bedrock, was utilized for mapping purposes.

1.2 PREHISTORIC RESOURCES

An archaeological site inventory file is maintained by the Archaeological Survey of Alberta (Alberta Culture). This paper-based file consists of individual site records of sites found and reported upon by archaeologists working in the area. Site recording began with the Glenbow Foundation in 1956, continued with the University of Calgary in 1963, and after passage of the Alberta Historical Resources Act in 1973, became a responsibility of the Archaeological Survey of Alberta. All archaeological work in Alberta is carried out under Permit, a requirement of which is filing of site inventory forms.

The data base for the Oldman River Region study area consists of some 2000 sites, many of which were recorded by student archaeologists as part of thesis projects working out of the University of Calgary prior to passage of the Act. Regional surveys were undertaken by these persons of portions of the Milk River (Grasspointner 1980), Belly (Quigg 1974) and St. Mary River (Perry 1974). These data provide a relatively complete inventory of those archaeological sites in the areas covered, which were visible on the ground or exposed in road and stream cuts. Unrecorded buried sites which lacked any exposure exist in these areas.

The only "regional" studies in recent years have been of the Burmis-Lundbreck Corridor (Reeves 1974; Connolly and Gee 1975; Ronaghan 1985). Recording of other archaeological sites has resulted from random recording/reports, or studies required under the Historical Resources Act. The latter have been based primarily on linear developments outside of the city and towns -- highways, powerlines, pipelines and well sites; and proposed coal mines. Results of studies associated with the planned Oldman River Dam and proposed Milk River Dam are not included as neither are complete at this time.

On a regional level, the data base is both extremely variable, and grossly underrepresentative where the previously mentioned, river valley-oriented inventories have been carried out.

The Archaeological Survey of Alberta site files were searched. Those sites which appeared to be of at least regional significance were extracted and mapped, either individually or where the density is very high as a group. Because of the widely disparate and varying data base, these represent only a portion of sites of regional significance within the Oldman River Region.

1.3 HISTORIC RESOURCES

Historic site inventory searches were limited to a search of Alberta Culture's Historic Sites Service files in Edmonton. The inventory forms have not yet been ranked by significance or theme, and comprise an eclectic number of structures and sites. This inventory is most cursory. It is only a representative sample of historic sites in the Region. Four historic site inventories were also consulted. An inventory of NWMP outposts in southern Alberta (Gardner 1975) compiled in 1974, an inventory of Whiskey Posts in southern Alberta (Kennedy and Reeves 1984), the Fort Macleod-Porcupine Hills Preliminary Preservation Plan (Reeves 1985) and a survey of major historic ranches (Tatro 1974). All deal with regionally/nationally important historic period sites and, in the case of the NWMP and Whiskey Posts, are comprehensive in both field inventory, archival searches and site assessment.

2.0 OVERVIEW

2.1 The Fossil Record

2.2 Native History

2.3 White History

2.3.1 Whoop-up Country
2.3.2 The Ranching Frontier
2.3.3 Agriculture, Irrigation and Other Industries

2.0 OVERVIEW

2.1 THE FOSSIL RECORD

Fossils in the Oldman River Region consist of the remains of plants and animals dating from more than 120,000,000 to less than 10,000 years in age. Shells, corals and other marine fossils of Paleozoic and more recent age occur in the limestone formations of the Front Ranges of the Rocky Mountains. Fresh water and marine fossils of Late Cretaceous Age (ca. 60,000,000 years ago) are in the Foothills and Plains to the east. Bears Paw shale along the St. Mary River, near Magrath, is an important collecting locale for marine invertebrates -- "ammonites". Scattered dinosaur fossils occur in some of these beds. No major dinosaur collecting locales occur within the Region, although some very significant finds have been made - for example, a Tyrannosaurus rex from the Oldman River north of Cowley. Just slightly later in time is the Paleocene-aged Porcupine Hills formation which contains rare fossils of small mammals.

The most recent fossils date to the Ice Age and more recent times -- mammoth, horse, camel and bison, which occur in gravel terrace fills along the river valleys. They date as recently as 10,000 years ago. Few finds have been made in the area. More recent fossils consist of bone beds, "natural tràps" in springs and wetlands where various mammals died.

2.2 NATIVE HISTORY

The Oldman River Region encompasses the Alberta Plains, Foothills and Front Ranges of the Rocky Mountains. Our mild winter climate made it a favored wintering range for Plains and Mountain bison, which, combined with high overall productivity, resulted in a large wintering native population, represented in most recent times by the Peigan on the Plains and the Kootenay in the Mountains. Prehistoric sites, some dating back 12,000 years in age, are extremely common, reflecting the significance of the region as a settlement locale. The region has the highest site density in Alberta. Campsites situated on terraces in sheltered stream valleys, as well as on the prairie level, are very common. Many contain stone tipi rings, used to hold down the tipi. Bison kills, "pounds" where the animals were trapped in a corral, or jumps where they were run off a cliff occur; Head-Smashed-In is a site of world significance. Rare ceremonial/religious sites, stone "medicine wheels", cairns, and other features of stone occur, as do pictographs and petroglyphs. Writing-On-Stone, for example, is of international significance.

Sites are not uniformly distributed over the landscape. Many occur in certain locales, generally where tributary streams join the main valley or special areas, for example the Little Bow-Oldman or Milk River, Writing-On-Stone and Crowsnest Pass areas. Crowsnest is of international significance. Highland areas characterized by diverse terrain, the Milk River Ridge for example, also contain a significantly large number of sites, even though very few have ever been recorded.

The Region straddles the "Ice Free Corridor" of the Eastern Slopes, a route along which man may first have migrated into the new world some 30,000 or more years ago. Evidence of these Early peoples may someday be found in deeply buried sites covered by later glacial ice or lakes, as in caves and rock shelters. The first recognized people are those known as "Clovis" who, armed with spears, hunted mammoths and other large animals during the closing centuries of the last Ice Age. Surface finds of their distinctive spear points have been found in a number of locales. Following Clovis were a series of spear hunting cultures, one of whom known as Cody dates ca., 8500-7500 years. They were the first highly specialized bison hunters of the Plains and occupied the lands during a time when the climate, while droughtier than today, resulted in expanded grasslands and bison herds. A significant site of their culture lies in the M.D. of Taber, near Chin Coulee. A sudden climatic reversal occurred around 8500 years ago and Cody disappeared. They were too specialized. An older culture present in the mountains replaced them.

Around 7500 years ago the climate again became droughtier. A new bison hunting culture known as Mummy Cave appeared, utilizing the throwing spear. They occupied both the Plains and Mountains until 5000 years ago, when the climate again reversed itself. Their culture underwent considerable change as new peoples -- known as "McKean" spread out from the Colorado Rockies, occupying the plains but not the mountains. There the older people persisted. One thousand (1000 B.C.) marks a major change in the prehistoric settlement patterns and population in the area. At this time the bison hunting culture reached its historic form. Sites from then on are more common, camps and settlement more intensive than before.

Cultures continued to change through time. Around A.D. 100 the bow and arrow appears, associated with a culture known as Avonlea which obtained the weapon from people in the Interior of B.C. Pottery from the east also appears at this time. These people -- the ancestors of the Kootenay and Peigan, were superb bison hunters and technologists, producing the best stone work in 8000 years. Around 1000 years ago their culture changed to that characterizing the prehistoric Peigan and Kootenay, both distinct in character and location.

2.3 WHITE HISTORY

2.3.1 Whoop-up Country

Although not a vitally productive area within the scope of the western fur trade, the southern Alberta Plains were absorbed into the control of more rapacious commercial enterprises, such as the gold explorations, the Whiskey trade, and the Fort Benton merchant interests. This period of Alberta's history witnessed the debauchery and dissolution of the native population through whiskey and rivalry, and saw the near-complete extinction of the once vast bison herds for the hides which comprised the currency of Whoop-up country trade.

Confederation in 1867 and the desire to connect the crown colonies of the Pacific coast with Upper and Lower Canada necessitated a revised attitude towards the vast Northwest, which had, during earlier scientific expeditions, been described as a dry, infertile area not suitable for settlement. Its potential for natural resource development to supply the markets of eastern Canada was tremendous. The transcontinental railway, a major undertaking of the early 1880s, brought a new focus to the undeveloped lands of the Northwest. The railway required settlement and industry to create western markets with transportation needs, and coal to fuel its engines. Much of the early agrarian settlement of southern Alberta was due to the concerted colonizing efforts of both the Canadian Pacific Railway, the Alberta Railway and Irrigation Co. and other interests of the Galt family and their arrangements with the Mormon Church.

2.3.2 The Ranching Frontier

For 25 years before the entrenchment of farming as the mainstay of early Alberta economy, the foothills and short grass plains were the domain of the great ranches, which formed a unique and significant stage in the development and settlement of the Canadian west.

In 1881, the government passed an order-in-council which made it possible for one man or company to lease up to 100,000 acres at one cent per acre per year. This enabled the foundation of the famed bonanza ranches, many of which were situated within the Oldman River Region. The second Cochrane Ranch, located in the M.D. of Cardston, was the first large scale ranching entity. Other well-known big ranches include the Alberta, Oxley and Walrond. By 1904, the attitude of the Canadian Government began to change towards the west. In seeking to fulfill its vision of a settled, industrial west, it encouraged the taking up of lands for farming purposes. Farming, fencing and railway branch line construction were in direct conflict with the open range procedures used by the large ranches, and a bitter struggle to preserve cattlemen's interests ensued. The severe winter of 1906-1907 in which thousands of head of cattle were lost can be seen as the death blow to the era of big ranches in Alberta. The open range was abandoned in favour of isolated semi-arid areas, and mixed farming was dropped in favour of cash grain farming.

2.3.3 Agriculture, Irrigation and Other Industries

By the conclusion of the large ranching era, the major population centers in southern Alberta had been established, with Lethbridge as the major trade and service center. The foothills remained largely a ranching area while the prairie lands were quickly taken up by homesteaders for farming purposes, encouraged by the construction of branch lines by Alberta Railway and Irrigation Company, which actively encouraged colonization of its railway land grants. The Alberta Railway and Irrigation Company, working with the Mormon Church, was instrumental in establishing the St. Mary's Irrigation System. It was the greatest incentive to attract settlers to the drier short-grass prairies.

St. Mary's was the first large-scale works in the province. Many of the workings associated with these and other early irrigation systems are now gone (e.g. the Lethbridge Northern). Some structures such as the Kimball Headworks remain. (A systematic inventory of these remains to be done.)

Accompanying settlement and farming were the vital resource exploitation industries such as coal mining (on both an individual, farm-related level, and company organized level), lumbering, quarrying, and later the oil and gas industries, which were intricately involved in development of the area. The Shell Waterton sour gas field is of international renown. The Crowsnest Pass coal fields are of national significance.

3.0 SIGNIFICANT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

3.1 Prehistoric Campsites

3.2 Bison Kills

3.3 Tipi Ring Sites

3.4 "Spiritual" Stone Features

3.4.1 Cairns

3.4.2 Stone Mosaics, "Boulder Pavements" and Effigies

3.4.3 Medicine Wheels

3.5 Rock Art Sites

3.6 Priority Areas

3.7 Recommendations

3.0 SIGNIFICANT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

The artifacts prehistoric peoples left behind, the structures they made and the locales or "sites" they utilized are all part of a larger regionally oriented land use pattern. It can be broken into various themes relating to man's use of the land.

3.1 PREHISTORIC CAMPSITES

Prehistoric campsites are the focal point of Native peoples' activities. Their contents vary depending upon the site location, activities that went on, the number of people who used the site, at what season, the age of the site, the culture that used it, and whether it was a favored locale reoccupied through time.

A campsite may be a very large and repeatedly occupied site, generally located in a stream or river bottoms. Alternatively, it may be a small site representing a one time occupation, often situated on the prairie overlooking a stream or around a small slough. A campsite may be an integral part of a bison kill, to which the carcasses were hauled for processing. The site may contain a wide variety of tools, fire cracked rock from cooking fires, and various cultural features, hearths, storage pits and the like.

Campsites are by far the most common site of potential regional significance in the Oldman River Region (as compared to isolated, lost or discarded artifacts which occur all over the landscape). Many of the prairie camps in plowed fields represent former tipi ring sites. The majority of campsites of regional significance are stream valley camps. These include major campsites at the junction of the Little Bow and Oldman (the Ross Site - a designated Provincial Historic Resource) and in the valleys of the St. Mary, Belly, Crowsnest and Milk. While some on small streams may date back as early as 10,000 years, most are relatively recent, dating within the last 5000 years. Most of the earlier alluvial fills in the valleys eroded out between 7000 and 5000 years ago.

3.2 BISON KILLS

Bison kills consist of the remains of a number of animals which were captured by use of cooperative group hunting, driving and trapping techniques.

The kill may be a single event - only five or so animals, trapped in a snow drift, pond, or bog - represented by scattered butchered bones, appearing as a "bone bed" with few if any tools left behind. In contrast are large bison kills, characterized by thick bone beds of many animals taken in a single drive or repeated drives through the fall/winter/spring, over one or a number of years.

The numbers and kinds of stone tools found in a kill vary considerably depending on the intensity, repetitiveness, the kind of kill, and the activities which went on. Processing and meat stripping may occur on site, or the quarters and sides butchered out and removed to a nearby processing camp.

Bison kills are divided into a variety of "types" based on the kind of trap employed.

- **Jumps** - where the animals were jumped over a cliff usually 8-10 m high, and maimed or killed in the fall. These sites are often large, complex and repeatedly used. They are of provincial significance.
- **Pounds** - where the animals were driven into a "corral" constructed below a hill, or in a valley where the animals would not see the entrance until upon it. These sites are often relatively large and repeatedly used and of regional or provincial significance.

- **Surrounds** - where the animals were surrounded by encircling a small herd with a wall of hand-held hides and killing the animals as they milled about. This technique was often used on the open plains. Most are single events. They vary in their significance.

- **Natural Traps** - where the animals were driven into box canyons, snow drifts, steep sided arroyos, springs, seeps, bogs, lakes, rivers, or onto ice in winter. The natural features served as the trap. Some of these sites, particularly where a small number of animals were taken, are difficult to differentiate from ambush/confrontation hunting at water holes and fords. Most of these kills are small single events. They vary in significance depending upon size, age, preservation etc. Old sites are rare and provincially significant.

Associated with the kills, particularly the pounds and jumps, are processing campsites, and gathering basins. The processing camps are generally found immediately adjacent to the kill. Here the bison carcasses were taken and processed into stripped and dried meat and various cuts for immediate consumption, robes, tipi hides, leather, sinew, horn and bone tools, hoof glue, tallow and fat for lamps, etc. A processing camp is characterized by large quantities of butchered bone, fire cracked rock, bone boiling, pits, hearths, and a limited variety and number of stone tools. Activities were directed towards processing the animals and their products for use at other times.

Processing camps associate with the large fall/winter/spring kills used when the bison were in their wintering and calving range. At other seasons, including midwinter, when large drives were not possible because of the dispersal of the herds, the pattern is one of small drives (e.g. snow drift kills), butchering on site, meat stripping and return of the meat to a midwinter base campsite, which is characterized by limited amounts of butchered bone, a variety of small tools related to maintenance activities -- hide, tools, clothing, etc., as well as hearths and other habitation features.

Large processing and base campsites, while they vary in significance depending on age, preservation, artifact yield, content, etc. are generally of regional significance.

Gathering basins are the areas from which the bison were gathered and driven toward the kill. They may contain drive lanes, marked by lines of stone piles or cairns through which the bison were driven. Few exist because of agricultural activities. All are of regional or provincial significance.

A number of bison kills have been recorded in the Oldman River Region, including major bison jumps: the Head-Smashed-In Provincial Historic Resource Site and World Heritage; the Pincher Creek Jump and the Shafer Jump on Beaver Creek in the Porcupine Hills. These are some of the major jumps in the province; their distribution centers around the Porcupine Hills. The Oldman-Southern Porcupine Hills has the highest bison jump density in Alberta, and possibly the world.

In addition there are many smaller bison kills and traps, some of which are exposed and preserved. Others lie buried below ground. Many have been lost over the years in the stream valleys through lateral stream erosion. Consequently they are now uncommon and are regionally significant sites.

3.3 TIPI RING SITES

Tipi ring sites are campsites with stone rings which range from 2-8 m in diameter and were used to hold down tipi covers. Hearths often occur within and various stone features outside -- small cairns or "rock piles".

The tipi ring sites within the Oldman River Region occur in the Plains and Foothills. They are not found in the forested mountains and foothills valleys. They range in size from small clusters of three to five rings, for example, in the Milk River Ridge overlooking the Milk River to sites of over 100 rings on the Oldman and Milk Rivers. In the larger more complex sites, other stone constructions -- large cairns, medicine wheels, rocklines and effigies -- occur.

The smaller sites generally represent a single encampment of a group of related families, while the large ones represent both "tribal gatherings" as well as repeated use of a favorite camping locale. The large complex sites are "rare". They occur both on the Oldman and Milk Rivers. Some are of regional and provincial significance.

3.4 "SPIRITUAL" STONE FEATURES

A number of stone structures exist, most of which are spiritual constructions associated with religious activities. Those present in the Oldman River Region include:

3.4.1 Cairns

Large cairns, up to 4 m in diameter and 1 m high, may represent burial cairns, constructions associated with religious activities, or "trail shrines". Constructed as early as 5500 years ago, their original purpose is lost, but they were apparently revered as a "holy" place, with offerings left on and in it as recently as 100 years ago. Large cairns are very rare, as many have been destroyed. Some appear to have been reused as farmers' rock piles for rocks pulled from plowed fields. They are of provincial significance.

3.4.2 Stone Mosaics, "Boulder Pavements" and Effigies

Geometric or abstract designs, stylized human and animal figures or symbols have been found constructed from boulders and cobbles. Some tell stories and were used to record events as recently as the 1870s by the Blackfoot. They are uncommon and may occur as an isolated site or part of a larger complex. All are of regional or provincial significance.

3.4.3 Medicine Wheels

Medicine wheels, large stone circles with spokes radiating out to the rim from a central cairn, are rare features, often found on prominent hill tops, or as part of large stone features sites. They vary considerably in their size and complexity. Some were initially built as early as 5500 years ago. They are of provincial significance. Two sites were recorded in this inventory, one on the Oldman, west of Monarch, and the well known Sundial Butte.

3.5 ROCK ART SITES

Rock art sites in the Oldman River Region consist of pictographs -- sites characterized by painted designs, located on sandstone outcrops or glacial erratics and petroglyphs -- carved or incised designs. The sites are rare and of provincial significance. Those recorded include the Writing-On-Stone, a designated Provincial Historic Resource, and glacial erratics in the M.D. of Willow Creek.

3.6 PRIORITY AREAS

The Oldman River Region, as based on the present incomplete inventory data, contains both individual prehistoric sites of regional and provincial value, as well as provincially significant settlement areas. The latter include the Crowsnest Pass, Oldman, Milk, Belly and St. Mary, where particularly high densities of prehistoric sites have been found and the Milk River Ridge which lacks any regional archaeological surveys.

3.7 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Oldman River Region contains a significant set of prehistoric sites of interest to both the scientific community and general public. General policies and guidelines should be developed to maximize the conservation of these sites for their eventual study and interpretation to the public.

Prehistoric sites vary considerably in value, and only those of outstanding value merit avoidance and preservation when in conflict with planned development. While most impacts can be mitigated by detailed archaeological studies, these are of considerable cost to the developer, and the physical site is still lost. Often sites can be avoided if their presence and value are known early in the planning process and if effective mechanisms can be established on a regional and municipal level to maximize on site conservation through early inventory and identification of sites and their incorporation in parks, recreational areas, and environmental municipal reserves.

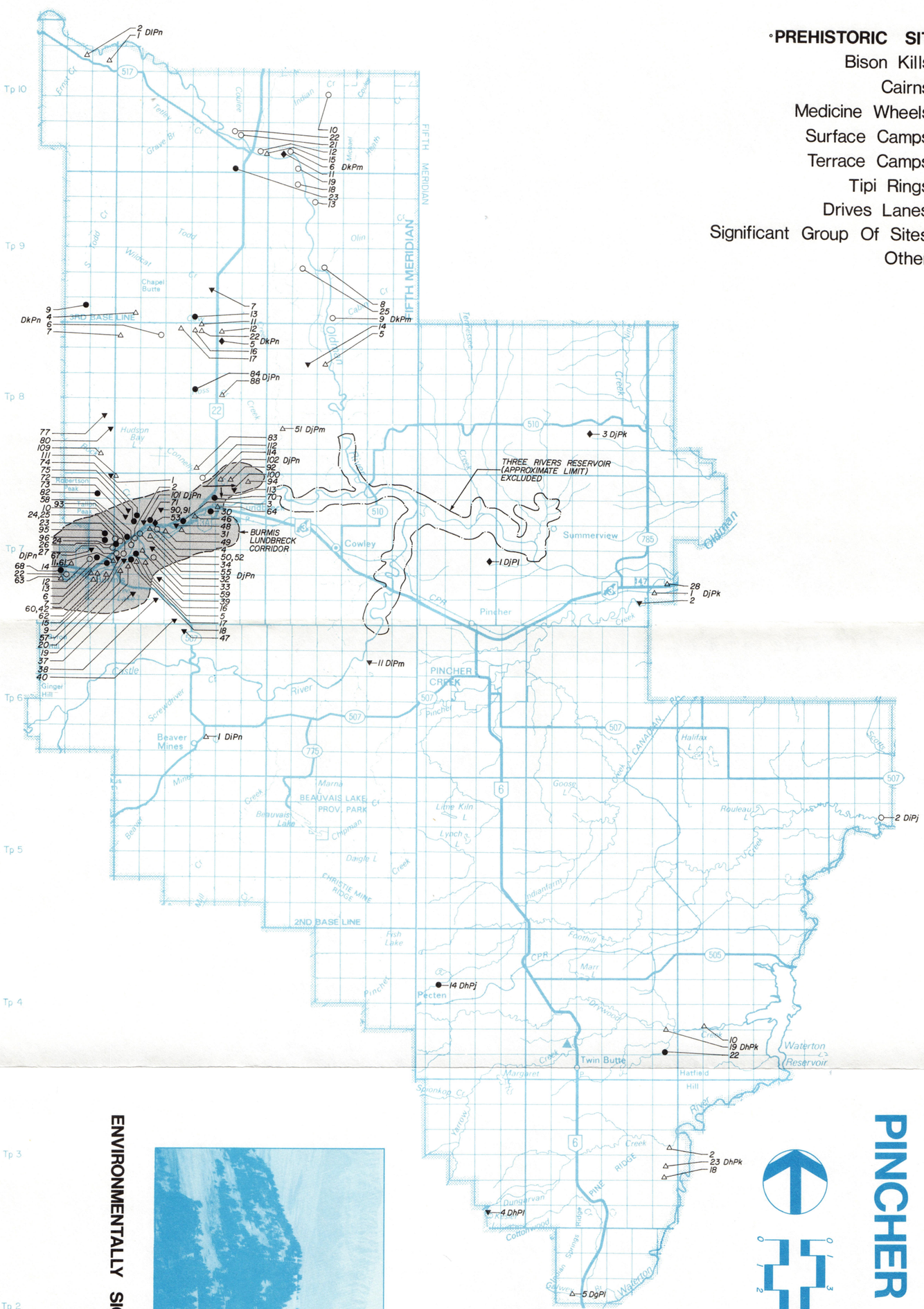
Municipal planning documents should address these concerns, and by-laws be considered to provide zoning mechanisms which will enhance both the conservation of archaeological sites in place, minimize potential conflicts with planned development and impact, both in terms of loss of the significant prehistoric sites and costs to mitigate these impacts, as may be required by the Alberta Historical Resources Act.

Inventories should be made to provide a data base which can be used early in the planning process, minimizing potential conflicts later in development. This is particularly important for all areas associated with stream valleys -- the focal prehistoric settlement locales.

Prehistoric settlement focuses on the river and stream valleys and flood plains which are also the focus of settlement today. Gravel extraction and house sites, for example, are often the locations of campsites, tipi rings, and ceremonial stone features. Opportunities exist to develop both general management plans and guidelines for known and potential archaeological sites within these areas -- sites which may be adversely affected by planned development, as well as direct control where development permits are required from the municipality for a planned development.

At a municipal level agricultural activities are the major source of impact and loss of prehistoric sites on a regional level. While little or no opportunity exists under existing legislation to control these activities, systematic inventories should be made of the unbroken grazing and range lands extant in the Oldman River Region to ensure stone feature sites in these areas are documented and those of particular significance studied, in the event that changing agricultural land use practices may eventually destroy them.

Map 3 shows the locations of Prehistoric Sites in the Municipal District of Pincher Creek. A detailed guide to this inventory of Archaeological Sites is provided in Tables 1-6.



M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

ENVIRONMENTALLY SIGNIFICANT AREAS

MAP 3

TABLE 1
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES — PINCHER CREEK

REGISTRATION NUMBER	CAMP		BISON KILL		STONE FEATURES							SI	Comments
	TR	PR	Trap	Jump	TP	CN	EF	WH	CA	PG	Other		
DgPl-5	X											M	
DhPj-14						X						L	
DhPk-2	X											M	
DhPk-10	X											L	
DhPk-18	X											L	
DhPk-19	X											L	
DhPk-22						X						L	
DhPk-23	X											L	
DhPl-4		X										L	
DiPj-2					X							M	
DiPn-1	X											U	
DjPk-1	X											H	Kenney Site PHR
DjPk-2		X										L	
DjPk-3				X								M	
DjPk-28	X											M	
DjPl-1				X								H	
DjPn-3					X							L	
DjPn-4					X							M	
DjPn-5						X						H	
DjPn-6						X						M	
DjPn-7	X											H	

TR – Terrace
PR – Prairie
TP – Tipi Rings
CN – Cairn
EF – Effigy
WH – Wheel
CA – Cairn Alignment
PG – Pictographs
SI – Significance

TABLE 2
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES — PINCHER CREEK

REGISTRATION NUMBER	CAMP		BISON KILL		STONE FEATURES							SI	Comments
	TR	PR	Trap	Jump	TP	CN	EF	WH	CA	PG	Other		
DjPn-10					X							M	
DjPn-11	X											H	
DjPn-12					X							M	
DjPn-13						X						L	
DjPn-14	X											H	
DjPn-15	X											H	
DjPn-16	X											M	
DjPn-17	X											M	
DjPn-18						X						M	
DjPn-19	X											H	
DjPn-20	X											M	
DjPn-22					X							M	
DjPn-23					X							L	
DjPn-24						X						L	
DjPn-25					X							L	
DjPn-26					X							L	
DjPn-27					X							M	
DjPn-30						X						L	
DjPn-31	X											M	
DjPn-32		X										L	
DjPn-33					X							M	

TR – Terrace
PR – Prairie
TP – Tipi Rings
CN – Cairn
EF – Effigy
WH – Wheel
CA – Cairn Alignment
PG – Pictographs
SI – Significance

TABLE 3
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES — PINCHER CREEK

REGISTRATION NUMBER	CAMP		BISON KILL		STONE FEATURES							SI	Comments
	TR	PR	Trap	Jump	TP	CN	EF	WH	CA	PG	Other		
DjPn-34	X											M	
DjPn-37		X										M	
DjPn-38		X										M	
DjPn-39		X										L	
DjPn-40		X										M	
DjPn-42					X							H	
DjPn-46					X							L	
DjPn-47	X											H	
DjPn-48		X										M	
DjPn-49	X											L	
DjPn-50	X											H	
DjPn-52	X											M	
DjPn-53				X								M	
DjPn-55					X							M	
DjPn-57		X										M	
DjPn-58					X							M	
DjPn-59	X											M	
DjPn-60	X											M	
DjPn-61	X											L	
DjPn-62	X											M	
DjPn-63	X											M	

TR – Terrace
PR – Prairie
TP – Tipi Rings
CN – Cairn
EF – Effigy
WH – Wheel
CA – Cairn Alignment
PG – Pictographs
SI – Significance

TABLE 4
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES — PINCHER CREEK

REGISTRATION NUMBER	CAMP		BISON KILL		STONE FEATURES							SI	Comments
	TR	PR	Trap	Jump	TP	CN	EF	WH	CA	PG	Other		
DjPn-64	X											L	
DjPn-67		X										M	
DjPn-68						X						L	
DjPn-70						X						H	
DjPn-71						X						L	
DjPn-72		X										M	
DjPn-73		X										L	
DjPn-74						X						L	
DjPn-75						X						H	
DjPn-77		X										L	
DjPn-80		X										L	
DjPn-82	X											H	
DjPn-83	X											M	
DjPn-84						X						L	
DjPn-88	X											H	
DjPn-90	X											M	
DjPn-91	X											M	
DjPn-93						X						H	
DjPn-94	X											H	
DjPn-95						X						H	
DjPn-96				X								L	

TR – Terrace
PR – Prairie
TP – Tipi Rings
CN – Cairn
EF – Effigy
WH – Wheel
CA – Cairn Alignment
PG – Pictographs
SI – Significance

TABLE 5
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES — PINCHER CREEK

REGISTRATION NUMBER	CAMP		BISON KILL		STONE FEATURES							SI	Comments
	TR	PR	Trap	Jump	TP	CN	EF	WH	CA	PG	Other		
DjPn-100		X										M	
DjPn-101		X										L	
DjPn-102	X											M	
DjPn-109	X											M	
DjPn-111	X											M	
DjPn-112					X							L	
DjPn-113											X	M	DL
DjPn-114											X	M	DL
DkPm-5	X											H	
DkPm-6					X							M	
DkPm-8					X							L	
DkPm-9					X							L	
DkPm-10	X			X								H	
DkPm-12					X							M	
DkPm-13					X							L	
DkPm-14		X										L	
DkPm-15	X											H	
DkPm-18					X							M	
DkPm-19					X							M	
DkPm-21					X							L	
DkPm-22					X							H	

TR – Terrace
PR – Prairie
TP – Tipi Rings
CN – Cairn
EF – Effigy
WH – Wheel
CA – Cairn Alignment
PG – Pictographs
SI – Significance

TABLE 6
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES — PINCHER CREEK

REGISTRATION NUMBER	CAMP		BISON KILL		STONE FEATURES							SI	Comments
	TR	PR	Trap	Jump	TP	CN	EF	WH	CA	PG	Other		
DkPm-23						X						N	
DkPm-25					X							L	
DkPn-4	X											M	
DkPn-5				X								H	
DkPn-6					X							L	
DkPn-7		X										M	
DkPn-8	X											M	
DkPn-9						X						H	
DkPn-11	X											H	
DkPn-12	X											L	
DkPn-13						X						L	
DkPn-16	X											L	
DkPn-17	X											L	
DkPn-22	X											M	
DlPn-1	X											M	
DlPn-2	X											M	

TR – Terrace
PR – Prairie
TP – Tipi Rings
CN – Cairn
EF – Effigy
WH – Wheel
CA – Cairn Alignment
PG – Pictographs
SI – Significance

4.0 SIGNIFICANT HISTORIC SITES

4.1 Theme: Fur Trade

4.2 Theme: Transition from a Nomadic Economy
Subtheme: Missions

4.3 Subtheme: The Maintenance of Law and Order

4.4 Theme: Ranching
Subtheme: Ranching as the Basis of the Southern Alberta Economy

4.5 Theme: Settlement

4.6 Theme: Resource Development

4.7 Priority Areas

4.8 Recommendations

4.0 SIGNIFICANT HISTORIC SITES

In an attempt to deal in a systematic fashion with a burgeoning quantity of data on the province's historic resources, with the intent to provide for their protection and commemoration, an Alberta Culture Task Force produced the Master Plan, Prehistoric and Historic Resources in 1980. The Plan is organized thematically on an event/date pattern, and attempts to incorporate the major themes of relevance to Alberta history. We have employed the Historic Sites Service structure for the Oldman River study, since it highlights the significant themes and events occurring in the study area. Historic Sites Service identifies 1925 as a general cut-off date for its inventory. We extend this date another 15-20 years (i.e. World War II), should a site represent a unique or first occurrence in a region, even though the represented activity has taken place elsewhere at an earlier date.

4.1 THEME: FUR TRADE

The southern short grass areas of the northwest, in what eventually became the Province of Alberta, were not directly involved in the fur trade ventures so active in the north. This was due largely to two reasons: the rapid depletion of the limited fur resources along southern waterways, and the hostile nature of the Blackfoot towards both whites and other native groups. This situation accounted for the eventual closure of most forts established in the south.

In 1832, the Hudson's Bay Company established Peigan Post on the Bow River to create a southern terminus with which to compete against James Kipp's successful trading post on the Marias River. Peigan Post was to replace Rocky Mountain House as the focal point of trade with the Peigans, but as the latter were unable to reach the post after their defeat by the Peigan, trade was poor. The Post was abandoned in 1834 in favour of reopening Rocky Mountain House, which was maintained until 1875, at which point a Hudson's Bay Company post was erected on the east side of the Bow, opposite the Northwest Mounted Police Fort Calgary.

The fur trade is very poorly represented by sites in the Oldman River Region, as most related thematic resources are trails, historic viewpoints or temporary camp spots at which few physical remains exist.

4.2 THEME: TRANSITIONS FROM A NOMADIC ECONOMY

SUBTHEME: MISSIONS

The proselytizing efforts of Roman Catholic, Methodist and Anglican missionaries in the mid to late nineteenth century wrought profound changes upon native culture and economy. Much of the pioneering missionary work involved itinerant travel to the widely dispersed native peoples, although a few small but important missions had been established throughout the province in order to provide the native community with a sound Christian education. The Roman Catholic mission at Lac St. Anne, the Methodist mission at Victoria and the Anglican mission of St. Savior's at Dunvegan are examples of the religious commitment to effecting a permanent change to the nomadic way of life. Within the Oldman River Region are the first missions to be established on or adjacent to the Peigan and Blood reserves.

4.3 SUBTHEME: THE MAINTENANCE OF LAW AND ORDER

The incorporation of liquor into native lifeways, the ravages of disease, loss of the buffalo and the incursion of the white man onto native lands proved disastrous to maintenance of Indian culture. In an attempt to deal with the dislocated native group, the Canadian government initiated the Treaty system which concentrated the native peoples on reserves. Schools were established to train the Indians in sedentary farming practices. Industrial schools were built on and off the reserves, to which children would be sent, thus further severing them from traditional ways and beliefs.

The administration of treaty signings and the enforcement of law and order not only on the reserves but throughout Alberta was the responsibility of the Northwest Mounted Police, one of the most important components in the growth and development of the Canadian Northwest. The Northwest Mounted Police were formed in 1873 in response to fears regarding a potential Indian and Metis uprising across the west. This potential situation had arisen from years of degenerate, corrupt dealings with the Indians by the whiskey traders, who plied the former with liquor in return for hides and furs. The whiskey traders operated from strategically located posts across Southern Alberta. The most significant of these posts lie within the study area -- e.g. Fort Whoop-up, Standoff and Kipp. They are provincially significant.

The numerous and varied responsibilities handled by the Northwest Mounted Police were carried out through an efficient hierarchical administrative network comprised in descending order of Divisional Headquarters, District Headquarters, Subdistrict Headquarters, local detachments and horseback patrols ("Flying Patrol"). Some of the outposts in the study area are St. Mary, Standoff and Writing-On-Stone. They are provincially significant.

4.4 THEME: RANCHING

SUBTHEME: RANCHING AS THE BASIS OF THE SOUTHERN ALBERTA ECONOMY

By 1879, the near extinction of the buffalo had reduced the native population to starvation. Thus, nucleus breeding herds were established by the Federal Government at Fort Macleod and Calgary to provide beef for the Indian Reserves. This new incentive to an ensured market, combined with the stability and security afforded by the presence of the Northwest Mounted Police, who had arrived in southern Alberta in 1874, ensured the successful growth and development of ranching in southern Alberta. The Northwest Mounted Police played a vital role in the Alberta ranching frontier. Many policemen turned rancher upon retiring from the force. Additionally, they formed the core social milieu of the Canadian ranching community, which gave it a distinctive Anglo-Canadian character, as differentiated from the American ranching frontier.

The "Bonanza Ranches" were quickly established in the 1880s, aided by the establishment of the "closed lease" form of land tenure, which allowed for huge tracts of grazing land. One man or company was allowed to lease up to 100,000 acres at one cent per year, according to an order-in-council passed by the federal government in 1881. The Cochrane, Alberta and Waldrond are some of the large ranches established at this time.

The days of the Bonanza Ranches were short-lived, for in 1896 the newly elected Laurier government cancelled the closed lease system. By 1904, the Canadian Government sought to fulfill its vision of a settled industrial west, and encouraged the taking up of lands for farming purposes. When the government also began to dispose of the region's water reservations, which had formerly been specially allotted to the ranching industry, the latter seriously began to wane. Other serious considerations, such as avid branch line construction which segmented the once open ranges, and competition from other countries in marketing of beef, saw an end to the Bonanza Ranches. Although ranching certainly played an important part in the Alberta economy after 1910, it never regained the status achieved during the days of the Bonanza Ranches. Smaller ranches relating to this theme occur thoughout the study area.

4.5 THEME: SETTLEMENT

With growing realization of the potential of the northwest, serious attempts were made in the 1880s and 1890s to settle the region and incorporate farming as a major activity. The era of rapid railway construction began at this time, and most prevalent at the turn of the century, considerably aided the influx of settlers to Alberta. The Northwest Coal and Navigation Railway had reached Lethbridge by 1883, the Calgary-Lethbridge line was completed in the 1890s, and the Crowsnest Branch in 1897.

Large colonization companies, some connected with the railways, were established. Irrigation companies, such as the Alberta Railway and Irrigation Company, also enticed settlers to drier, less arable portions of southern Alberta.

The nature of settlement in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, was largely in concentrated blocks along railway lines. Many of the settlers during this period had immigrated to southern Alberta in large numbers from the United Stated and tended to settle together in groups, a factor which fostered and maintained distinct ethnic communities within the province. The Mormon communities of the M.D. of Cardston are the most important example.

4.6 THEME: RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Once again, the railways were the vital catalyst which spurred settlement and development of natural resources. Aided by branch lines which allowed access to undeveloped regions, settlers quickly took up most available agricultural land by the turn of the century. The exploitation of Alberta's great prairie and mountain coal resources was also intricately tied up with the expansion of railway networks and early settlement in the province's history.

Once the methods of dry land farming and irrigation had been introduced, agricultural production increased at a rapid rate. Advances in new technology and agronomy were displayed in the unique experimental farms, which were often established by the railway companies and situated close to main routes of travel where potential settlers could be influenced. The lumber and clay industries, closely allied with the expansion of settlement, first provided only local and regional demands before becoming important production units with provincial and larger markets.

The oil and gas industry became prominent after World War II, and composed a second period of economic growth for the province. The Pincher Creek area is one of the most significant locales of sour gas resource development in the province.

4.7 PRIORITY AREAS

Priority areas cannot be thoroughly outlined at this level of assessment without complete evaluation information. However, those areas exhibiting definite historic integrity and cohesiveness of theme are worthy for notice as priority areas; for example, the Cardston and district sites, Crowsnest Pass historic groupings, abandoned sites with no present active protection, and historic sites threatened by erosion and vandalism.

4.8 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Oldman River Region contains a significant set of historic sites relating to the exploration, settlement, economic growth and development of the region. The sites vary widely in size, condition, and significance. Some merit preservation protection and interpretive development, while others if in conflict with planned development require detailed study to mitigate development impacts. Often historic sites can be preserved in place if their presence is known early in the planning process, and mechanisms can be established on a regional and municipal level. By-laws should be considered which will provide effective zoning and control mechanisms to enhance in place conservation of historic sites which may be adversely affected by proposed development.

It cannot be stressed too highly that this present document be taken as a most preliminary overview inventory only; the assessment level is too low to allow for evaluation as to the overall significance of a particular site in relation to:

(1) Regional Criteria

(2) Provincial Criteria

The inventory has identified some sites; the recommended action would be to continue a follow-up study that incorporates field assessment, structured in accord with the stages of overall regional and municipal planning.

The most notable theme inventory gaps are:

(1) Early Ranches and Farmsteads

(2) St. Mary and Other Irrigation Works

(3) Ethnic and Religious Settlements

Map 4 shows the locations of Historic Sites in the Municipal District of Pincher Creek. A detailed guide to this inventory of Historic Sites is provided in Table 7.

M.D. OF PINCHER CREEK

PALEONTOLOGICAL SENSITIVITY ZONES

- High
- Medium
- Low
- Probable

HISTORIC

- NWMP
- Whiskey Posts
- Ranches/Homesteads
- Quarry/Mine
- Other

0 1 3 5 km 10 15

0 1 2 3 mi 5 8

ENVIRONMENTALLY SIGNIFICANT AREAS

MAP 4

TABLE 7

HISTORIC SITES – PINCHER CREEK

Registration No.	Whiskey Post	Homestead	Farmstead	Ranch	Stopping House	NWMP Post	School	Church	Cemetery	Townsite	Agricultural	Coal Mines	Lime Kilns	Sandstone Quarry	Brickyard	Oil/Gas	Irrigation	Significance	Reference
1						X Kootenay												H	Gardner 1975
2	X				X Lees													L	Kennedy & Reeves 1984
3				X Buffalo														L	Reeves p.o.
4				X Lower Waldrond														H	Reeves 1985
5										Brocket Quarry				X PHR				H	H.S.S. Files
6										Pincher Quarry				X				L	Reeves p.o.
7				X Maunsell														H	Tetro 1974
8				X Upper Waldrond														L	Tetro 1974
9				X Alberta														M	Tetro 1974
10				X Heaton														H	H.S.S. Files
11				X Dezall														M	H.S.S. Files
12				X														M	H.S.S. Files
13					X Massacre Butte Historic Event													M	H.S.S. Files

5.0 CRITERIA FOR REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT FOSSIL SITES

5.1 Bedrock - Paleontological Remains

5.1.1 Plants and Invertebrates

5.1.2 Marine Vertebrates, Dinosaurs, and Mammals

5.2 Unconsolidated Sediments-Gravels, etc.

5.0 CRITERIA FOR REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT FOSSIL SITES

Paleontological resources consist of the remains of past plants and animals. These include the fossil shells and corals (invertebrates) of Paleozoic Age (120,000,000+ years in age) exposed in the limestone formations of the Rocky Mountains; the plants and dinosaurs (vertebrates) of Upper Cretaceous age (80,000,000 years) such as those found in the formations along the Red Deer River; primitive mammals such as those found in the Paskapoo Formations of Paleocene Age (60,000,000 years ago) and the ice age mammals - mammoth, horse, camel, bison of the glacial ages, as recent as 10,000 years ago, found in gravel deposits along river valleys.

Fossil finds vary considerably in their value and significance, depending on their rarity/uniqueness, representativeness, preservation-completeness, and concentration of remains in a locale. Another important consideration is whether they are in "primary context" -- i.e. where the animals originally died and all or most of the skeleton is preserved; or in "secondary context" -- moved after death and redeposited in other sediments in another locale.

Map 4 shows the locations of Paleontological Zones of Low, Medium and High Sensitivity in the Municipal District of Pincher Creek.

In general, complete or near complete vertebrate skeletons of any age (except most of those of the last 10,000 years, which are bison), are very rare/unique finds, and considered to be of provincial significance. Scattered elements of particularly rare species, because of their preservation or rare occurrence, are of provincial significance, for example, the Porcupine Hills mammals.

In contrast, scattered broken elements of more common species, for example the Duckbill Dinosaurs of Upper Cretaceous Age or fossil clamshells, could be of local significance; a section, where an invertebrate fossil species was first described, of provincial and possibly international significance, even though the fossil remains are not particularly common at that locale; a good collecting locality for this fossil but not the type section might only be of regional significance.

Significance for paleontological remains can only be established on a site specific basis. The following is a first approximation.

5.1 BEDROCK – PALEONTOLOGICAL REMAINS

Fossils found in the bedrock formations of the Plains, Foothills and Mountains in either primary or secondary contexts.

5.1.1 Plants and Invertebrates

Type sections, major collecting locales - provincial or national significance. Minor collecting locales (others of higher value elsewhere in Province) - regional; scattered remains - local.

5.1.2 Marine Vertebrates, Dinosaurs, and Mammals

	Significance
Primary, deposit skeletal remains - (skeleton relatively complete and representative, or rare/new species). Type localities and major collecting localities.	Provincial or National
Primary, deposit scattered skeletal remains, and minor collecting locales.	Regional
Scattered, isolated and broken secondary deposited elements.	Local

5.2 UNCONSOLIDATED SEDIMENTS-GRAVELS ETC.

Pleistocene and Holocene Vertebrates

	Significance
Primary skeletons or parts of rare species - other than bison.	Provincial or National
Complete/broken elements of rare/unique species in secondary deposits.	Provincial or National
Primary skeletons and parts of common species (Bison).	Regional or Provincial
Partial skeletons and secondary deposited elements of common species (Bison).	Local

7.0 CRITERIA FOR REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT HISTORIC SITES

	Weighted Values
Kill only	1
Kill and camp	2
Kill, camp and gathering basin (plowed)	3
Kill, camp and gathering basin (intact)	6

6.4 ADDITIONAL CRITERIA – STONE FEATURE SITES

Weighted values are generally indicative of the range, and can/should be expanded.

TIPI RINGS

Number of Rings	Weighted Values
1 ring	1
2 - 3 cluster	2
4 - 10 cluster	3
10 - 20	4
20 - 50	5
50 - 100	6
100 +	7

Definition of Rings	Weighted Values
Poorly defined	0
Variable definition	1
Good definition	2

Internal Features	Weighted Values
Absent	0
Present	1

CAIRNS

Size of Cairns	Weighted Values
Small ca. 1 m single tier	1
Moderate ca. 1-2 m stacked	4
Large ca. 2 m + stacked	10

Number of Cairns	Weighted Values
1	1
2 - 3	2
4 - 6	3
6 +	4

Definition	Weighted Values
Well defined - not vandalized	2
Partially vandalized	1
Destroyed	– 1

RARE/UNIQUE STONE FEATURES

	Weighted Values
Medicine wheel	10
Stone circles	10
Effigies	10
Mosaics	10
Drive lanes	10
Stone lines	5
Stone walls	10
Stone arcs	5
Vision quests	10

Rock Art Sites

Portable	**Weighted Values**
Rib stones	10
Petroglyph boulders	10

Non-Portable - pictograph, petroglyph	**Weighted Values**
Single	5
Multiple	10

Definition	**Weighted Values**
Faded/vandalized	1
Good	3
Excellent	5

Earth Features

	Weighted Values
Earth mounds	10
Pits	10
Trails	5
Earth lodge	10
Pit house	10

6.2.2.4 STRATIGRAPHIC QUALITY

The quality of the stratigraphy to resolve various events/use episodes through time.

	Weighted Values
Undifferentiated	1
Moderate	2
Good	3
Excellent	4

6.2.2.5 DEPTH OF DEPOSITS

The maximum observable depth of the campsite/kill deposits.

	Weighted Values
Greater than 10 cm	1
30 - 50 cm	2
50 cm - 1 m	3
1 - 2 m	4
2 - 3 m	5
3 m +	6

6.2.2.6 USE FREQUENCY

The number of times that different individual events are represented in the site.

	Weighted Values
Low	1
Moderate	2
Intense	3

6.2.2.7 CULTURAL PHASES

Number of different cultural groups represented at the site.

	Weighted Values
One	1
Two... three	2, 3, etc.

6.2.3 Site Dating

Presence of materials which will allow chronological/cultural placement of the site.

	Weighted Values
Potential time diagnostic tool types	1
Known time diagnostic tool type	2
Datable obsidian	3
Datable organics	4
Diversity of datable materials	5

6.2.4 Site Paleoenvironmental Data

	Weighted Values
Presence of geological sediments	1
Presence of soils	2
Presence of sediments/soils	3

6.2.5 Site Uniqueness

The uniqueness or rarity of the site in age or type within the study region in comparison to all other sites.

	Weighted Values
Moderately rare - less than 25%	1
Extremely rare - less than 10%	2
Unique	3

6.2.6 Site Integrity

The integrity/preservation of the site. (NOTE: Need to further factor, plowed versus other land uses).

	Weighted Values
Destroyed - greater than 75%	0
50 - 75%	1
25 - 50%	2
Less than 25%	3
Intact	4

6.2.7 Site Size

The overall size of the site.

	Weighted Values
Less than 10 sq. m	1
10 - 20 sq. m	2
20 - 50 sq. m	3
50 - 100 sq. m	4
100 - 250 sq. m	5
250 - 500 sq. m	6
500 - 1000 sq. m	7
1000 - 2000 sq m	8
2000 sq. m +	9

6.3 ADDITIONAL CRITERIA – BISON KILLS

In addition to the variables listed earlier which are applicable to kills as well as campsites, lithic scatters and isolated finds, etc. there are certain criteria which are of value for ranking/comparison within a group. The principal of these is the association of the various elements of a bison kill -- kill, campsite and gathering basin.

(d) Spring – Weighted Value 4

Spring located in varying kinds of lands, may be moraines, seeps, etc. If less than 100 m +.5 bonus point.

(e) Flowing Water - Permanent – Weighted Value 5

Permanent streams/rivers which flow year round. If less than 100 m +.5 bonus point.

(f) Flowing Water - Intermittent – Weighted Value 1

Small water courses which have water on a seasonal basis only. If less than 100 m +.2 bonus points.

6.2 INTERNAL SITE PARAMETERS

A number of parameters inherent in the site provide the major evaluative criteria to assess significance. Sites exposed in plowed fields may rank higher in this category because of visibility. They must be examined separately from buried sites.

6.2.1 Site Contents

The artifacts and other data contained within the site.

6.2.1.1 SITE CONTENTS – Lithics

The numbers and diversities of chipped stone artifacts within a site.

	Weighted Values
Stone artifacts present	1
Formed tool present	2
More than one class of tools	3
More than five formed tools	4

If exotic or unusual artifacts are found, a bonus of +1 point is added.

6.2.1.2 SITE CONTENT – Faunal Remains

The presence of preserved faunal materials has important implications for scientific interpretive potential.

	Weighted Values
Faunal materials present	1
Diagnostic (species)	2
Diversity elements	3
Diversity element/species	4

6.2.1.3 SITE CONTENT – Fire Broken Rock

Fire brocken rock is both a chronological and activity type indicator.

	Weighted Values
Present - small amount	1
Present - large amount	2

6.2.1.4 SITE CONTENT – Activity Areas

	Weighted Values
Activity areas definable	1
Activity/functional areas	2

Indicates areas can be defined by artifact scatters and differential distributions/associations of tools.

6.2.1.5 SITE CONTENT – Features

	Weighted Values
Hearth/feature present	1
More than one type/number (others can be added as required)	2

6.2.1.6 SITE CONTENT – Trade/Lithic Procurement

The kinds of lithic materials in the site.

	Weighted Values
Local microcrystalline only	1
Local cryptocrystalline only	2
Local microcrystalline and cryptocrystalline	2.5
Exotic non-local – one	3
Exotic non-local – 2 or more	4

6.2.2 Site Stratigraphy

The resolution of the internal stratigraphy of the site both vertically and horizontally.

6.2.2.1 NUMBER OF OCCUPATIONS

	Weighted Values
Stratified (1/2 one occupation)	1
Vertical/horizontal separation	2

6.2.2.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE OCCUPATIONS

	Weighted Values
Thin discontinuous	1
Discontinuous	2
Continuous - dense	3

6.2.2.3 STRATIGRAPHIC COMPLEXITY

	Weighted Values
Simple	1
Moderate	2
High	3

6.0 CRITERIA FOR REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

Two basic criteria were used to establish prehistoric significance in the Oldman River Region: the scientific value of the site and the rareness/uniqueness of the site within the study area.

Scientific values relate to the kind and quality of information (artifacts, butchered bones, and features) a site contains which are of value in understanding prehistoric Native peoples' land use and culture history. In most cases, while a site must be excavated to assess these values, generally one can observe enough from the surface to determine what the potential is. Sites judged to be of scientific significance include relatively small sites, which because of their age are worth studying. As one goes back in time fewer sites are preserved. Consequently, an older site may contain less information than a recent site of the same type -- e.g. a small bison kill, but would be of greater significance because there are so few left.

Small sites also provide information on culture patterns, and while most are of local significance; some, again because of their age, are regionally significant. Some kinds of sites are simply very rare; for example, pictographs and ceremonial sites -- medicine wheels, because very few were ever made or used. They may not contain a great deal of information or be in a good state of repair, but are still significant as a representative of a rare find.

Uniqueness/rarity must also be considered in relationship to the patterns of agricultural land use, which have resulted in massive loss of the most common kinds of site -- tipi rings -- through breaking and plowing of the prairies and terraces. Relatively few of these sites remain today, and those that do are of enhanced value, even though the scientific information they contain, relating to past land use and culture history is extremely variable. Tipi rings represent a single family occupation and are the closest archaeologists can come to excavating a single event.

The following are scientific criteria and weightings, proposed for the study area. These criteria are generally applicable to isolated finds, lithic scatters, campsites, workshops, quarries, bison kills, and some of them to stone feature sites. In a matrix, the sites constitute the rows and the criteria the columns, which are summed by row and squared to increase the value dispersal. Care must be taken to avoid comparing apples and oranges -- i.e. different site types, as each major group must be compared only within itself.

6.1 ENVIRONMENTAL PARAMETERS

6.1.1 Landform/Location

The nature of the landform associated with the site in part reflects the activities at the site.

6.1.1.1 PRAIRIE EDGE – Weighted Value 3

Sites overlooking river/stream valleys, generally within less than 100 m of edge. Often have buried deposits because of cliff top deposition - if less than 100 m + 0.5 bonus point to score.

6.1.1.2 HUMMOCKY MORAINE – Weighted Value 4

Sites in hummocky moraine, depending on their location, may contain deeply stratified deposits. Locational variation is significant -- base of hummock + 0.5 bonus point.

6.1.1.3 HILL TOPS/RIDGE CRESTS – Weighted Value 2

Sites on top of these features often associate with diverse activities - game watching, ceremonial, camp, defense, workshops; stone features may or may not occur. If the site is in a swale or depositional situation + 0.5 bonus.

6.1.1.4 GLACIAL TILL/LAKE PLAINS - FLAT LANDS – Weighted Value 1

Sites associated with uniform landscapes tend to be small isolates, unless a water body is present, although one can get surrounds/kills. May get stratified dune deposits if the site is associated with lacustrine/aeolian deposits + 1 bonus point.

6.1.1.5 STREAM/RIVER VALLEY – Weighted Value 4

The preferred habitat locales for sites. Internal ranking involves stream classes/landforms.

Major River – +3 bonus points
Minor River – +2 bonus points
Major Stream – +3 bonus points
Minor Stream – +2 bonus points
Erosional Gulley/Coulee – +1 bonus point

Nested within these categories are a subset of land forms:

(a) Elevated Benchland

Generally glacial – +.1 bonus point.

(b) Elevated Terrace

Generally glacial/gravel fill – +.2 bonus point.

(c) Lower Terrace

Post glacial – +.5 bonus point.

(i) Gravel fill
(ii) Silt fill – +.1 bonus point

(d) Slump Block

(i) Colluvial fill – +.1 bonus point
(ii) Erosional – –.1 bonus point

6.1.2 Water Bodies

The second environmental variable which is significant is the relationship of the site to present/past water bodies. (One problem is the prediction of past water body locations.) The following categories will be considered.

(a) Lake – Weighted Value 4

Large standing permanent body of potable water, nesting habitat and fish. If site is less than 100 m distant +.5 bonus point.

(b) Kettle/Slough – Weighted Value 3

Small body of water which holds water all year. If less than 100 m distant +.5 bonus point.

(c) Seasonal Slough/Pond – Weighted Value 2

Small water body which generally dries up every year or on a larger cycle - not reliable water source except in certain seasons. If less than 100 m +.5 bonus point.

6.0 CRITERIA FOR REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

6.1 Environmental Parameters

6.1.1 Landform/Location
6.1.2 Water Bodies

6.2 Internal Site Parameters

6.2.1 Site Contents
6.2.2 Site Stratigraphy
6.2.3 Site Dating
6.2.4 Site Paleoenvironmental Data
6.2.5 Site Uniqueness
6.2.6 Site Integrity
6.2.7 Site Size

6.3 Additional Criteria - Bison Kills

6.4 Additional Criteria - Stone Feature Sites

7.0 CRITERIA FOR REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT HISTORIC SITES

A number of criteria evaluation systems for historic resource significance identification and ranking are now in use across Canada.

In Alberta, there is a separate format within federal (i.e. Parks Canada) and provincial (Historic Sites Service) levels of government and both Calgary and Edmonton have developed evaluation systems for their own use.

The Historic Sites Service evaluation ranking is aimed at determining a site's qualifications for inclusion as a Provincial or Registered Historic Resource, and is numerically ranked for such purpose. It is, however, heavily weighted towards urban, standing structures.

The City of Calgary's "A Handbook for Evaluating Calgary's Heritage Resources" is a flexible system which was a result of a review of procedures used in cities across North America. It also is heavily weighted towards the urban context.

The proliferation of endless numbers of evaluation systems on a project-per-project basis is not a desirable scenario, and one that should be avoided here if at all possible, if the existing systems took into account the rural or non-standing structure situation. An evaluation checklist has thus been compiled, utilizing information from the City of Calgary, Historic Sites Service and British Columbia Guidelines for Heritage Resource Impact Assessment, and suitably amended to incorporate the rural landscape and appropriate historic themes. A multi-dimensional scaling system is currently being used in evaluating historic period sites in the Oldman River Dam Project area. Designed with the above in mind, it will be generally applicable to the Oldman River Region and should be utilized in developing regional criteria.

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9.0 MAJOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL AREA CHECKSHEETS

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SITE NUMBER:

LOCALITY NAME: Burmis-Lundbreck Corridor

COUNTY/MUNICIPAL DISTRICT: Pincher Creek

SITE LOCATION:

General: Valley of Crowsnest River from head of Oldman River Dam, west to Municipality of Crowsnest, including Lees Lake.

Specific: Portions of 7-2-5 and 7-3-5.

MAP NO:

DESCRIPTION: High density of terrace campsites, tipi rings, cairns and bison kills on terraces and banks of Crowsnest River and on shores of Lees Lake.

SIGNIFICANCE:

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS:

REFERENCES:

COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS: