

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES

This Radioactivity Map of the Athabasca Basin Region is one of a set of eight 1:1 000 000 regional compilation maps that include three measured variables (potassium (K), equivalent uranium (eU) and equivalent thorium (Th)) and five derived products. The derived products include the natural air-absorbed dose rate calculated from a linear combination of K, eU, and Th; the ratios eU/K, eU/Th, and Th/K; and the three radioactive element maps (Boone et al., 1997). This set of maps was produced using data from the digital archives of the Radiation Geophysics Section from airborne surveys conducted between 1974 and 2005. The surveys were flown by the Geological Survey of Canada (GSC) and contracted aircraft, using federal, provincial, and joint federal-provincial government funding. Most were originally published as 1:1 000 000 colour interval maps (Carson et al., 2002a, 2002b, 2002c) and as 1:250 000 or 1:50 000 line contour or colour interval maps and stacked profiles, as GSC Open Files or Geophysical Series Maps.

Data was collected using 50 litres of sodium iodide detectors, at a nominal terrain clearance of 120 metres along flight lines spaced at between 5000 and 400 metres intervals. The location of these surveys flown with flight lines spaced 500 metres or less apart are indicated on the map. These surveys exhibit a higher frequency colour texture. The closer line spacing allows increased spatial resolution of radioactive element signatures, supporting more detailed interpretation.

Potassium is measured directly from the 1460 keV gamma ray photons emitted by ⁴⁰K. Uranium and thorium, however, are determined indirectly from gamma ray photons emitted by daughter products (214Pb and 208Tl), respectively, assuming equilibrium between daughter and parent isotopes. For this reason, gamma ray spectrometric measurements of uranium and thorium are referred to as equivalent uranium (eU) and equivalent thorium (eTh). Standard energy windows were used to record the gamma ray counts. These are 1370–1570 keV for potassium, 1600–1800 keV for uranium, 2410–2810 keV for thorium and 400–2810 keV for total radioactivity. Several corrections are applied to the raw window counts prior to conversion to standard concentration units, including system dead time, background activity from cosmic radiation, the aircraft and atmospheric radon decay products, spectral scattering in the ground, air and detectors, deviations of altitude from the planned terrain clearance, and temperature and pressure variations.

These maps depict radioactivity originating from the upper 30 cm of the earth's surface. The influence of varying amounts of topsoil, cover-crocks, vegetation, soil moisture, and surface water results in measured concentrations that are usually lower than underlying bedrock concentrations.

Throughout the diverse lithotectonic terranes surveyed, the geochemical information provided by variations in potassium, uranium, and thorium concentrations presented in a colour contour format supports mapping of bedrock surface geology and tectonic expression, at regional and local scales (Shives et al., 1995). More detailed interpretation is encouraged through the use of the original line data, available from the Geological Survey of Canada. In areas with this or discontinuous drift cover, the radioactive element patterns provide direct evidence to bedrock geological mapping, depicting both macroscopic lithological variations and cryptic compositional variations (Shives et al., 1995). In areas covered by thick (5 and/or greater) glacial, glaciolacustrine or other recent glacial deposits the radioactive element patterns may delineate the types of surficial materials but will reflect local bedrock compositions to a lesser degree or not at all. Shives et al. (1995, 1997) note that radioactive element patterns offer valuable direct and indirect exploration guides for a variety of mineral commodities. Direct applications include the search for radioactive mineral deposits where uranium and thorium are the primary target, or where one or more of the radioactive elements are present as an associated trace element. Gamma ray spectrometry can also provide valuable indirect applications for mineral exploration where one or more of the radioactive elements are either enriched or depleted as a result of alteration associated with mineralization.

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REFERENCES

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2002b: Athabasca Gamma Ray Spectrometry Compilation Series, Wollaston Lake, Saskatchewan; Geological Survey of Canada, Open File 4253, scale 1:1 000 000.

2002c: Athabasca Gamma Ray Spectrometry Compilation Series, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan; Geological Survey of Canada, Open File 4251, scale 1:1 000 000.

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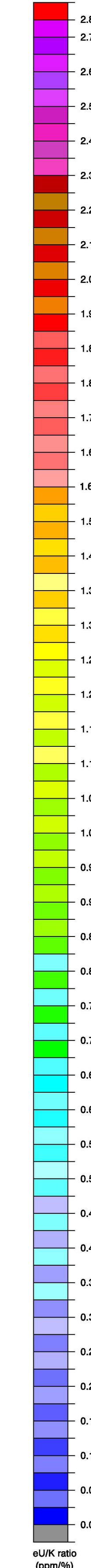
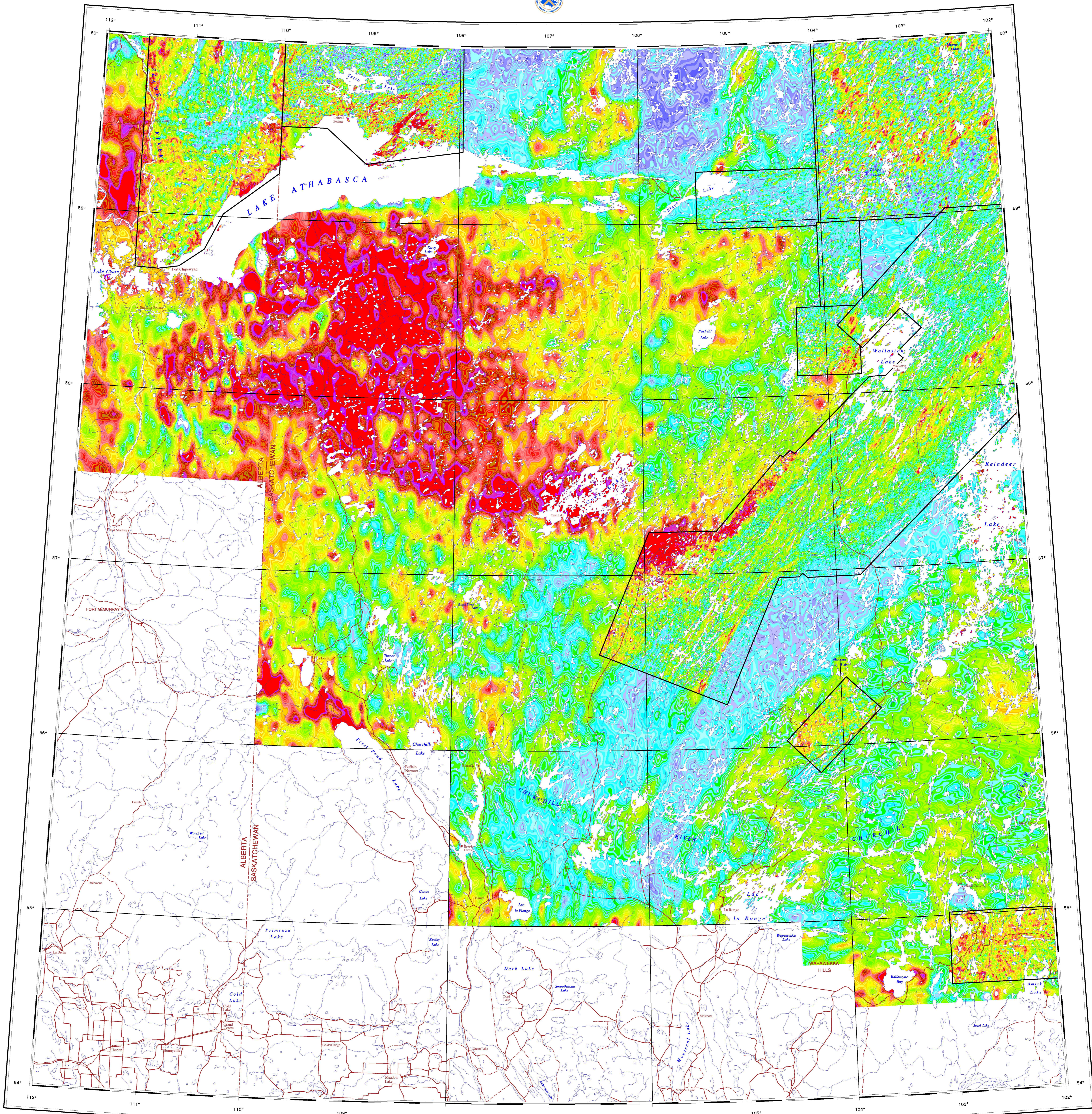
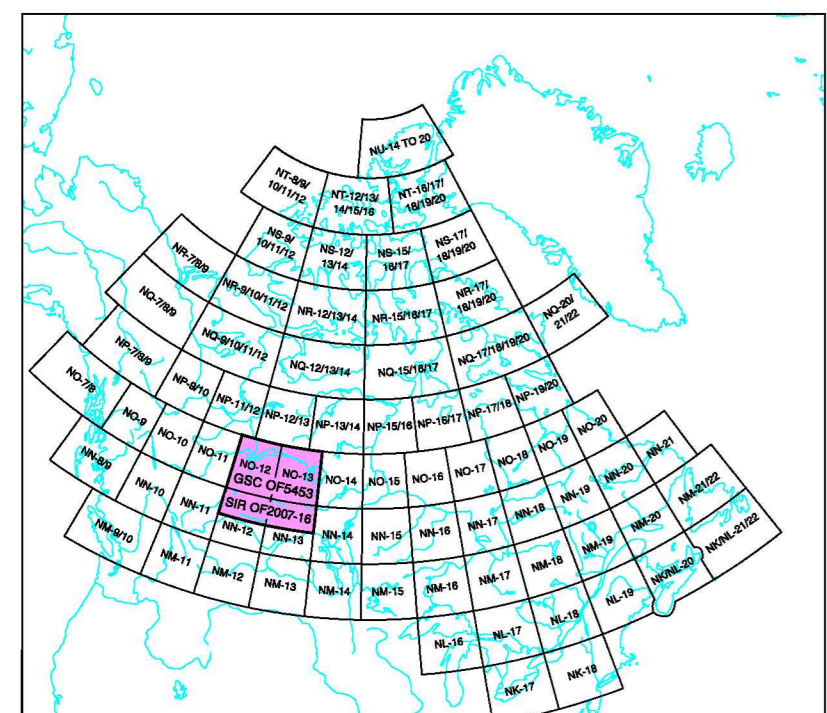
Geophysical compilation by J.M. Carson, P.B. Holman, K.L. Ford, J.A. Grant, and R.B.K. Shives

Digital cartography by B. Blanchard Pilon, Data Dissemination Division (DDD)

This map was produced from processes that conform to the Scientific and Technical Publishing Services Subdivision (STPS) Quality Management System, registered to the ISO 9001:2000 standard

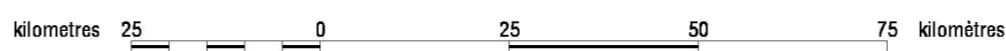
Any revisions or additional geological information known to the user would be welcomed by the Geological Survey of Canada

Digital base map at the scale of 1:1 000 000 from the Digital Chart of the World (DCW) from Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI), with modifications by DDD



GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF CANADA OPEN FILE 5453
SASKATCHEWAN INDUSTRY AND RESOURCES OPEN FILE 2007-16
**EQUIVALENT URANIUM/POTASSIUM
RADIOACTIVITY MAP OF THE ATHABASCA BASIN REGION**
SASKATCHEWAN-ALBERTA

Scale 1:1 000 000/Echelle 1/1 000 000



Lambert Conformal Conic Projection
Standard Parallels 55°N and 59°N
North American Datum 1983
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Projection conique conforme de Lambert
Parallèles d'échelle conservés: 55° N et 59° N
Système de référence géodésique nord-américain, 1983
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