

MAR 19680094: FORT VERMILION

Received date: Dec 31, 1968

Public release date: Jan 01, 1970

DISCLAIMER

By accessing and using the Alberta Energy website to download or otherwise obtain a scanned mineral assessment report, you ("User") agree to be bound by the following terms and conditions:

- a) Each scanned mineral assessment report that is downloaded or otherwise obtained from Alberta Energy is provided "AS IS", with no warranties or representations of any kind whatsoever from Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Alberta, as represented by the Minister of Energy ("Minister"), expressed or implied, including, but not limited to, no warranties or other representations from the Minister, regarding the content, accuracy, reliability, use or results from the use of or the integrity, completeness, quality or legibility of each such scanned mineral assessment report;
- b) To the fullest extent permitted by applicable laws, the Minister hereby expressly disclaims, and is released from, liability and responsibility for all warranties and conditions, expressed or implied, in relation to each scanned mineral assessment report shown or displayed on the Alberta Energy website including but not limited to warranties as to the satisfactory quality of or the fitness of the scanned mineral assessment report for a particular purpose and warranties as to the non-infringement or other non-violation of the proprietary rights held by any third party in respect of the scanned mineral assessment report;
- c) To the fullest extent permitted by applicable law, the Minister, and the Minister's employees and agents, exclude and disclaim liability to the User for losses and damages of whatsoever nature and howsoever arising including, without limitation, any direct, indirect, special, consequential, punitive or incidental damages, loss of use, loss of data, loss caused by a virus, loss of income or profit, claims of third parties, even if Alberta Energy have been advised of the possibility of such damages or losses, arising out of or in connection with the use of the Alberta Energy website, including the accessing or downloading of the scanned mineral assessment report and the use for any purpose of the scanned mineral assessment report so downloaded or retrieved.
- d) User agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the Minister, and the Minister's employees and agents against and from any and all third party claims, losses, liabilities, demands, actions or proceedings related to the downloading, distribution, transmissions, storage, redistribution, reproduction or exploitation of each scanned mineral assessment report obtained by the User from Alberta Energy.

19680094

ECONOMIC MINERALS
FILE REPORT No.
S-AF-105(2)

GEOLOGIC FIELD WORK and DRILLING PROGRAM

TO EVALUATE

SULPHUR PROSPECTING PERMIT 105

FORT VERMILION AREA, ALBERTA

Prepared By

V. ZAY SMITH ASSOCIATES LTD.

Calgary, Alberta

July, 1968

INDEXING DOCUMENT NO. 700462

V. ZAY SMITH ASSOCIATES LTD.

CONTENTS

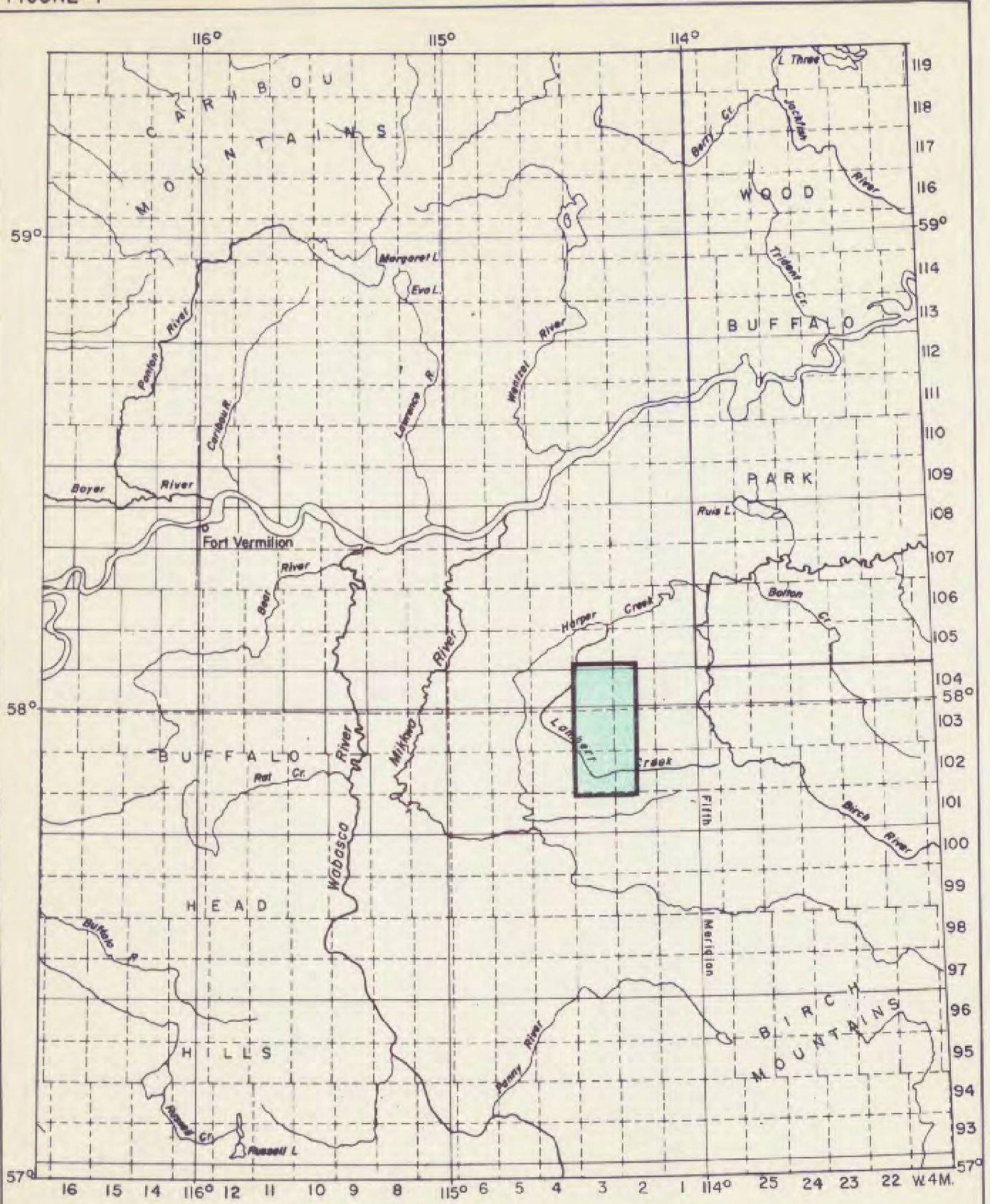
	Page
INTRODUCTION	1
Purpose of the Field Work and Drilling	3
Field Work and Drilling Equipment	3
Location and Accessibility	3
REGIONAL GEOLOGIC SETTING	4
Physiography	4
Stratigraphy	4
Structure	6
CHARACTERISTICS and ORIGIN of SULPHUR	7
SULPHUR OCCURRENCES In the FORT VERMILION AREA, ALBERTA	8
Sulphurous Springs Permit 105	9
CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS	11
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY	13

ILLUSTRATIONS

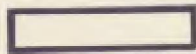
Figure 1 Location Map, Fort Vermillion Area (Facing Page 1)

Air Photomosaics, showing areal geology and
 terrain analysis (In Pocket)

FIGURE 1



FORT VERMILION AREA, ALBERTA
LOCATION MAP



Boundary of photomosaic covering Permit 105

GEOLOGIC FIELD WORK and DRILLING PROGRAM

TO EVALUATE

SULPHUR PROSPECTING PERMIT 105

FORT VERMILION AREA, ALBERTA

INTRODUCTION

Geologic field work and the drilling of a number of shallow auger holes in the Fort Vermilion area of Alberta has been undertaken in an attempt to evaluate several Sulphur Prospecting Permits and the reported discovery of elemental sulphur at or near the surface in the general vicinity. Reports of such a discovery began circulating in western Canada during the late summer of 1967. The location of the discovery was initially unknown. However, as more information became available, the area of interest appeared to center about the Fort Vermilion region of north-central Alberta. At the end of 1967 approximately 60 Sulphur Prospecting Permits had been issued in the Fort Vermilion area. The stampede continued and by May some 192 permits had been issued covering more than 6,500,000 acres.

Little hard factual information on the reported discovery of sulphur has been released to the public. Much of the information has been derived through rumours and innuendo. However, it has been established that Bow Valley Industries Ltd. acquired an option on Sulphur Prospecting Permits 8, 9 and 10 from

J. J. O'Connor of Calgary. Permit No. 8 is often referred to as the "discovery permit". Published reports and descriptions of exploratory work on Permits 8, 9 and 10, in some cases based on information released by the operators, have appeared periodically in Oilweek, Nickle's Daily Oil Bulletin and the Northern Miner. A review of this information suggests that native sulphur occurs at or near the surface at several localities on Permit 8 and appears to be associated with flat-lying beds. Several pits and 200 auger holes drilled to a depth of 9 feet have outlined a sulphur deposit over an area measuring 1,400 feet by 1,400 feet and closing off only one side of the deposit. The thickness of the deposit has not yet been established. Assay results have indicated a sulphur content ranging up to 90%. However, high grade areas appear small and may not be economically feasible for exploitation under present production techniques.

Elsewhere in the Fort Vermilion area the presence of sulphur at or near the surface has been known for sometime. The Indians were probably the first to have been aware of the presence of sulphur associated with a great number of gassy, salty, cool water springs that are known at several localities along Lambert and Harper Creeks in Tps. 105 and 106, R. 3 W5. Moreover, sulphur occurrences at other localities in the Fort Vermilion area are indicated where Cretaceous strata are interpreted to form bedrock.

Accordingly, geologic field investigations and a drilling program were undertaken in the early summer of 1968 to evaluate several Sulphur Prospecting Permits in the area east and generally southeast of Fort Vermilion. The V. Zay Smith Associates Ltd. field party was equipped with a light-weight, portable auger for the drilling of shallow bore holes. Transportation was provided by a 3-place helicopter capable of carrying the portable drill.

A photomosaic covering the permit area and surrounding terrain accompanies this report. It shows areal geology and a terrain analysis and also permit boundaries and surface features such as areas of muskeg, exposures, sites where bore holes were drilled and field stations visited.

Purpose of the Field Work and Drilling

The main objective of the field work and drilling program was to evaluate Sulphur Prospecting Permits of participating permit holders. The field effort was planned to include the examination and sampling of any rock exposures, surficial deposits, seeps, springs and surface anomalies and the drilling of a number of shallow bore holes. An average of three or four auger holes were drilled on each permit with light-weight portable drilling equipment.

Field Work and Drilling Equipment

Field geology was undertaken in May and June of 1968 by a V. Zay Smith Associates Ltd. field party consisting of two geologists and supporting personnel. Work was done from Fort Vermilion with transportation being provided by a Bell helicopter chartered from Associated Helicopters, Edmonton. J. F. Conrad served as party chief.

A light-weight, portable power auger was used to drill shallow bore holes at several localities in the Fort Vermilion area. The drill was transported by helicopter and is referred to as the Haynes auger. The drill is capable of drilling to a depth of 9 feet and is comparable in size to a gasoline driven power lawn-mower. The average depth of the holes drilled is between 4 and 5 feet. The locations of bore holes are shown on the accompanying photomosaic.

Location and Accessibility

The Fort Vermilion area is located in north-central Alberta about 250 miles north of Edmonton. The area is reasonably accessible. An all-weather gravel road extends from the Mackenzie Highway at High Level east to the settlement of Fort Vermilion on the Peace River. An eastern Extension of this road is under construction through Wood Buffalo Park to Fort Smith in the Northwest Territories. Scheduled commercial airline service is available for Fort Vermilion from Peace River by way of High Level each day. Access to remote areas in the summertime is best provided by helicopter.

REGIONAL GEOLOGIC SETTING

Physiography

The Fort Vermilion area forms part of the Interior Plains of northern Alberta and contains landscapes of two main types. These are a low-lying plain or broad valley in which the Peace River flows and a series of plateaus which rise abruptly above the plains.

Elevations in the gently rolling plain range from about 775 feet along Peace River to more than 2,000 feet in the higher plateaus. Much of the land surface stands at elevations between 800 and 1,500 feet above sea level and is remarkably flat and featureless. The plain is characterized by numerous swamps, muskeg, bogs and abundant tree cover.

The plateau areas rise abruptly above the plain with crestal elevations between 2,500 feet and 3,100 feet above sea level.

The Fort Vermilion area was subjected to multiple continental glaciation in Pleistocene time. Ice appears to have advanced in a general southwesterly direction. Glacial lakes developed during the ice retreat probably as a result of ice damming. At one time glacial lakes lapped against the lower flanks of the plateaus.

Stratigraphy

Consolidated sediments in the Fort Vermilion area consist of Devonian clastics, carbonates and evaporites. This assemblage is overlain unconformably by Cretaceous shales and sandstones. The Devonian section ranges in thickness from about 3,500 feet in the southwest to some 2,200 feet in the northeast. Much of this thinning is due to truncation on the sub-Cretaceous unconformity. The rate of truncation is about 15 to 20 feet per mile. Cretaceous rocks attain a thickness of about 2,200 feet in the Caribou Mountains and Buffalo Head Hills.

A detailed discussion of stratigraphy is beyond the scope of this report. Several accounts are available in the literature (see Selected Bibliography). The basal unit of the stratigraphic section rests on Precambrian rock and is composed mainly of thick deposits of anhydrite and salt with some important clastics and marine carbonates. The succession is Middle and/or Lower Devonian in age. It has been separated into the following units: the "redbeds" and the Chinchaga, Keg River, Muskeg, Watt Mountain and Slave Point Formations. The overlying unit is a marine fine-clastic succession of Upper Devonian age. It consists of green calcareous shale. It is succeeded by a third subdivision which is also Upper Devonian in age. This unit is dominantly carbonate, made up of the limestones and dolomites of the Mikkwa and overlying Grosmont Formations. The Grosmont Formation is reefoid and probably biostromal in places. The Mikkwa and Grosmont Formations are exposed on the shores of Peace River at Vermilion Rapids and Vermion Falls. The Mikkwa limestones are also exposed along Harper Creek in Tp. 106, R. 2 W5M. The fourth subdivision of the stratigraphic succession is made of shales and sandstones of Cretaceous age.

The Mikkwa and Grosmont Formations are exposed on the south shore of the Peace River from Vermilion Rapids downstream to the settlement of Little Red River. The lower limestone member of the Mikkwa Formation exposed there consists of some 30 feet of limestones, gray, partly argillaceous, locally dolomitic and aphanitic. The beds contain bulbous stromatoporoids up to 12 inches in diameter and colonial corals including *Cladopora*(?). The overlying upper limestone member of the Mikkwa Formation is about 55 feet thick and is made up of limestone, brownish-grey with purplish mottling, nodular and thin-bedded to locally massive with abundant colonial corals and brachiopods including Alveolites and Atrypa.

Approximately 60 feet of dolomites of the Grosmont Formation are exposed along the Peace River above and below Vermilion Rapids. The beds are characterized by vuggy, petroliferous, finely-crystalline dolomites with poorly preserved stromatoporoids, colonial corals and brachiopods.

Shales and minor sandstone beds of Cretaceous age are believed to underlie the plateau areas near Fort Vermilion. The beds form part of the Loon River (Spirit River, Clearwater) Formation and are believed to be characterized mainly by black and dark-grey shales.

Structure

The Fort Vermilion area lies in the Interior Plains structural province where beds are generally undisturbed. Paleozoic strata dip to the southwest at 20 to 25 feet per mile. The eroded Paleozoic surface dips southwest gently at about 10 feet per mile. The overlying Cretaceous beds dip very gently to the southwest at rates from 5 to 10 feet per mile. High-angle faults are anticipated in the sedimentary section and are probably related to basement trends. Other structures probably include gentle tectonic features, compaction folds over reefs or irregularities on unconformities and solution collapse phenomena.

Several distinctive alignments were observed on air photographs during the evaluation. They are indicated on the accompanying mosaic by heavy lines labelled DA. They are marked by straight stream segments and topographic, vegetational and/or tonal alignments. They may indicate faults or fractures.

CHARACTERISTICS and ORIGIN of SULPHUR

Sulphur is frequently recognized by and associated with its bright sulphur-yellow color. However, it can be straw and honey-yellow, yellow-brown, yellow-grey and in fact, greenish and reddish. Pure sulphur is relatively light and brittle. It is a nonconductor of electricity and a poor conductor of heat. Sulphur melts at 108° C and burns at 270°C with a bluish flame yielding sulphur dioxide gas. It is insoluble in water and is not acted on by acids, but is soluble in carbon disulphide.

Elemental sulphur originates in various ways. It is frequently associated with volcanic activity and occurs in gases emanating from fumaroles. Sulphur is deposited directly by sublimation or by the incomplete oxidation of hydrogen sulphide gas. Sulphur may also be associated with thermal spring waters and derived either from volcanic sources or by the reduction of sulphates, especially gypsum, which is aided by certain bacterial action. Sulphur may also be formed by decomposition by metallic sulphides. Sulphur is produced by the living action of some bacteria. Some believe sulphur can originate from cold ground waters carrying sulphate and hydrogen sulphide through certain geo-electro-chemical processes.

According to Parks (1959) there are two main types of native sulphur. One type is associated with volcanic activity where elemental sulphur is formed from the mutual action of hydrogen sulphide and sulphur dioxide which occur in volcanic gases. A nonvolcanic origin is indicated for some deposits of native sulphur which appear to have been liberated from gypsum with the reducing action of bituminous matter found associated with gypsum. Calcium sulphide is probably formed from the calcium sulphate. The action of water and carbon dioxide on the sulphide forms elemental sulphur, calcium carbonate and hydrogen sulphide. Parks reports that hydrogen sulphide and its oxidation products are found in the waters of many sulphurous springs.

Sulphurous water springs and associated gas seeps in the Fort Vermilion area would appear to be of the type described above by Parks and thus may have gypsum as a source for the elemental sulphur.

SULPHUR OCCURRENCES
in the
FORT VERMILION AREA, ALBERTA

The presence of sulphur at or near the surface in the Fort Vermilion area has been known for many years. The Indians were probably the first to be aware of the presence of sulphur associated with a number of gassy, salty, cool-water springs such as those of the Harper-Lambert Creeks area. Several occurrences of burning sulphurous shales are known in the Buffalo Head Hills south and southeast of Fort Vermilion. These localities have also been known for sometime by the native population due to the smoke and sulphurous vapors which they emit.

Discovery Permit

The most publicized occurrence of sulphur in the Fort Vermilion area is located on Sulphur Prospecting Permit No. 8 in Tp. 110, R. 5 W5M. This is often referred to as the "discovery permit" and is located in a flat-lying mainly tree-covered plain locally marked by muskeg. In the December 18, 1967 issue of Oilweek magazine it is reported that the "surface deposit about 40 miles northeast of Fort Vermilion was burning in a large pit-like area". The report stated that more than 150 shallow auger holes were drilled to a maximum depth of 9 feet in an area covering approximately 1/4 section (160 acres). The shallow holes define the limit of the deposit on one side. Assays of samples from the area reportedly show sulphur content ranging from 35% to 89% with no serious impurities. The deposit is covered with overburden clay and gravel ranging from approximately 6 inches to 2 feet in thickness. The bottom of the deposit was reportedly not reached by the holes drilled.

Sulphur Springs

The local population in the Fort Vermilion area have referred for years to Harper Creek as "stinking river" because it is polluted along part of its course due to the emanation of gassy, sulphurous, salty waters. The springs are located in Tps. 105 and 106, R.3, W5M. It is believed that elemental sulphur may have been brought to the surface by the gassy, sulphurous water springs.

The locations of several springs presumed to be associated with sulphur deposits can be recognized on air photographs in the Harper-Lambert Creeks area. These appear as very light-toned patches and are essentially devoid of vegetation. Some appear associated with small muskegs or bogs. Similarly appearing features termed anomalies have been identified on the accompanying photomosaic. They are unusual features which appear to have some characteristics similar to suspected sulphurous springs.

Reports of other sulphur occurrences in the Fort Vermilion area have not been accompanied by information describing their nature or location. Consequently, they cannot be verified from available published information. Inferences indicate that they may be located in areas where Cretaceous strata form bedrock.

Permit 105

No significant sulphur concentrations were observed at the surface or in the bore holes drilled in Permit 105. A low-level helicopter reconnaissance of the permit reveals it is extensively covered by areas of muskeg and trees. Bedrock exposures are absent. As shown on the accompanying mosaic, a series of three shallow bore holes was drilled at each of two field stations (46C and 47C). At each of these localities one hole was drilled to a depth of 6 feet and two holes were drilled to a depth of 3 feet. Brownish clay or clay and gravel was encountered in all bore holes. The deposits extend from immediately below the soil cover to the total depth drilled.

A sample from Haynes auger hole H-49 at station 46C was analyzed for sulphur content and contains 0.4% sulphur.

No exposures of bedrock are known within the permit. Permit 105 contains several sub-circular, treeless areas interpreted from air photographs as possible inactive springs. They have similar airphoto characteristics to sulphurous springs in the Harper-Lambert Creeks area. They appear as very light-toned patches and are characteristically treeless. Some are apparently associated with small muskegs or bogs. It is believed that some of these anomalies may be dormant springs possibly with associated sulphur deposits. They are indicated on the accompanying mosaic with appropriate symbols as defined in the legend.

CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

With the presently available meagre information concerning the occurrence and origin of surficial sulphur deposits in the Fort Vermilion area, it can be concluded that some surficial occurrences of sulphur are apparently precipitated from sulphurous water springs and gas seeps such as those in the Harper-Lambert Creeks area. It is believed that this process may have been more or less continuous for a long period of time and has varied as to geographic location. The sulphurous waters and associated gas may originate from porous zones in Upper Devonian carbonates of the Grosmont and Mikkwa Formations and may rise to the surface along faults and fractures.

Alternately Middle Devonian carbonates and evaporites of the Elk Point Group may also be source beds. Waters that have access to the evaporites of the Elk Point Group could contain large amounts of calcium sulphate. One can visualize sulphur deposits forming at the bedrock surface over an extensive area. As one spring became clogged and choked, other gassy springs could have broken through elsewhere. Thus, a thin patchy but fairly extensive deposit of elemental sulphur may have formed at the bedrock surface.

According to Parks (1954) elemental sulphur and hydrogen sulphide are associated with many sulphurous water springs and may have their origin from gypsum. Parks reports that native sulphur appears to have been liberated from gypsum with the reducing action of bituminous matter sometimes found associated with gypsum. Calcium is probably formed from the calcium sulphate. The subsequent action of water and carbon dioxide on the sulphide forms elemental sulphur, calcium carbonate and hydrogen sulphide. Parks reports that hydrogen and its oxidation products are found in the waters of many sulphurous springs. Thus, the sulphurous water springs and associated gas seeps in the Fort Vermilion area would appear to be of the type described by Parks as having gypsum as a source for the elemental sulphur.

The anomalies of Permit 105 and many other anomalies in the Fort Vermilion area were investigated during the field work either by foot-traverse or by low-level helicopter reconnaissance. No associated sulphur accumulations were observed at the surface. However, several of the anomalies mapped in the Lambert-Harper Creeks area were confirmed as sulphurous springs. Elsewhere in the Fort Vermilion area, as in Permit 105 the anomalies investigated are typical muskeg areas or bogs and do not lend themselves to the drilling of shallow bore holes during the summer months. It is believed that some of the anomalies may have developed over dormant sulphurous springs. If so, exploration of these features can best be accomplished by a winter drilling program when the land surface is frozen.

It should be emphasized that a large area is involved in Permit 105. Concentrations of sulphur were not observed at the surface but may occur at depth with no apparent surface indication. Additional exploration should include a winter drilling program, with drillsites located so as to evaluate anomalies and possible springs indicated on the mosaics and also other areas inaccessible during the summer months. Moreover, consideration should be given to developing and employing geochemical and geophysical techniques to locate subsurface sulphur deposits.

Respectfully submitted,

V. ZAY SMITH ASSOCIATES LTD.


George M. Collins,

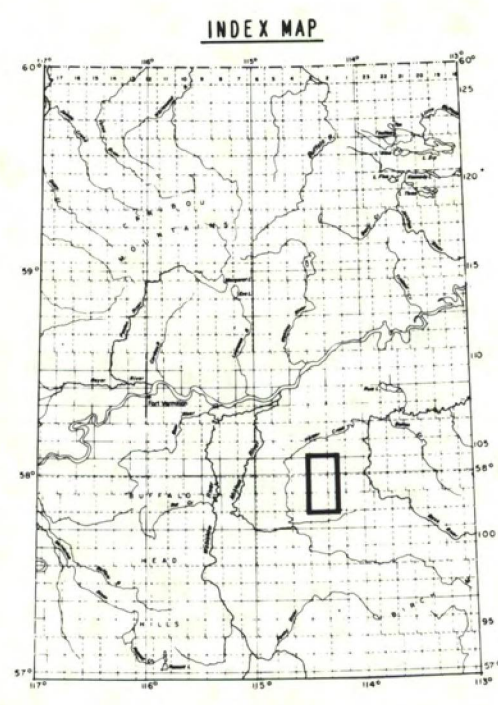
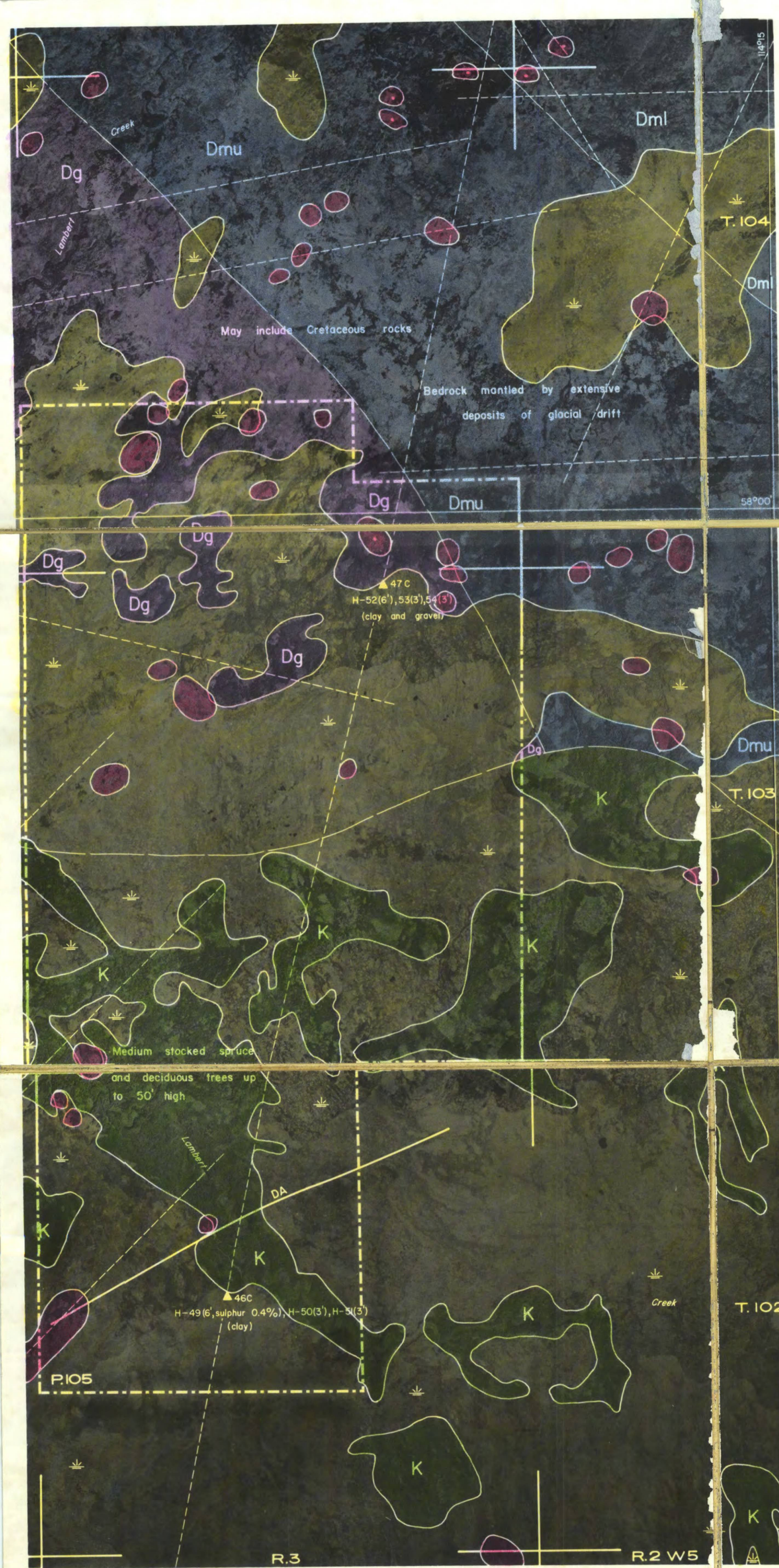
P. Geol.


J. F. Conrad

Senior Geologist

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- BELYEA, Helen R., 1952, "Notes on the Devonian System of the North-Central Plains of Alberta", Geol. Surv. Canada, Paper 52-27.
- BELYEA, Helen R., 1956, "Grosmont Formation in the Loon Lake Area", Jour. Alta. Soc. Petrol. Geol. Vol. IV, No. 3, pp. 66 to 69.
- GEOLOGICAL SURVEY of CANADA, Map 1161A, Hay River, Alberta.
- LAW, J., 1955, "Geology of Northwestern Alberta and Adjacent Areas", Bull. Amer. Assoc. of Petrol. Geol. Vol. 39, No. 10, pp. 1927 to 1974.
- MCCROSSAN, R.G., et al, 1964, "Geological History of Western Canada", Alberta Society of Petroleum Geologists.
- NORRIS, A.W., 1963, "Devonian Stratigraphy of Northeastern Alberta and Northwestern Saskatchewan", Geol. Surv. Canada, Mem. 313.
- PARKS, G.D., 1959 (editor), "Mellors Modern Inorganic Chemistry", Longman Pub. Co.



LEGEND

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| FORMATIONS | | GEOLOGICAL SYMBOLS | |
| CRETACEOUS | K Loon River and younger; shale and sandstone. | | Active gassy sulphurous salt water spring associated with surficial sulphur deposit. |
| | Du Upper Devonian undivided; (may be Cretaceous) | | Possible active or inactive spring; interpreted from air photographs. No associated sulphur observed during field work. |
| | Dg Grosmont: dolomite. | | Surficial anomaly interpreted from air photographs. No associated sulphur observed during field work. |
| UPPER DEVONIAN | Dmu Milkwa, upper member: limestone and shale. | | Field observed dip; V. Zay Smith Associates, 1968. |
| | Dml Milkwa, lower member: limestone. | | Field observed published dip. |
| | Ds Shale unit: calcareous shale. | | Horizontal bedding. |
| | | | Gentle dip based on geomorphic evidence. |
| | | | Field observed. |
| | | | Distinct alignment. |
| | | | Glacial lineation indicating direction of ice movement. |
| | | | Shore line. |
| | | | Formational contact. |
| | | | Bedrock outcrop. |
| | | | Exposure of surficial deposits. |
| | | | Field station number, may be outcrop or site of auger hole. |
| | | | Auger hole drilled with Haynes portable power drill. |
| | | | Auger hole drilled with Winkle portable power drill. |
| CULTURAL AND TERRAIN SYMBOLS | | | |
| | | | Road or trail |
| | | | Town |
| | | | Village or settlement |
| | | | Exploratory well; dry and abandoned |
| | | | Muskeg, swamp, bog and wet low lying land area; usually covered by low bush. Accessibility difficult when not frozen during winter months. |
| | | | Permit outline |

AIR PHOTOMOSAIC
 SHOWING
 AREAL GEOLOGY AND TERRAIN ANALYSIS
 OF
SULPHUR PROSPECTING
PERMIT 105
 IN THE
FORT VERMILION AREA
 ALBERTA

SCALE: 1 INCH TO 1 MILE
 Prepared by
 V. ZAY SMITH ASSOCIATES LTD.
 CALGARY, ALBERTA
 1968

19680094
 Map No. 1