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GEOLOGY

LA BICHE RIVER

Yukon-Northwest Territories



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Cover Illustration

View looking northeast across La Biche syncline and Kotaneelee anticline at Kotaneelee Gap toward the Liard Range, Northwest Territories. Vegetation and relief is typical of eastern La Biche River map area. Photograph by I.R. Smith. 2013-307

ABSTRACT

The La Biche River map area (NTS 95-C), Yukon and Northwest Territories occupies the Liard Plateau and the southern termination of the Franklin Mountains. It is situated between the northern Rocky Mountains to the south and the Mackenzie Mountains to the north. The area is thickly vegetated and varies from hilly in the western portion to mountainous in the east. Bedrock exposures are sparse and concentrated along streams, with a few open ridge tops in the west half and with better exposure along open ridge tops of the Beavercrow, La Biche, Kotaneelee, and Liard ranges of the east half. The area is underlain by Proterozoic to Late Cretaceous sedimentary strata, along with Neoproterozoic and Eocene intrusions. Folds and faults preserved in the area were generated during two deformational events, a Neoproterozoic event and a Late Cretaceous to Eocene Laramide deformation. Within the Kotaneelee gas field, gas has

been produced from a Devonian carbonate reservoir beneath the Mount Martin anticline.

RÉSUME

La région cartographique de La Biche (SNRC 95-C), au Yukon et dans les Territoires du Nord-Ouest, occupe le plateau de Liard et l'extrémité sud des monts Franklin. Elle est située entre la partie nord des montagnes Rocheuses au sud et les monts Mackenzie au nord. La région présente une végétation dense et sa topographie varie de vallonneuse à l'ouest à montagneuse à l'est. Les affleurements rocheux sont rares et se concentrent le long des ruisseaux, avec quelques sommets de crêtes dénudés dans la moitié ouest et de meilleures zones d'affleurements le long des sommets de crêtes dénudés des chaînons Beavercrow, La Biche, Kotaneelee et Liard dans la moitié est. Le sous-sol de la région est occupé par des roches sédimentaires s'échelonnant du Protérozoïque au Crétacé tardif, que recoupent des intrusions du Néoprotérozoïque et de l'Éocène. La région présente des plis et des failles hérités de deux épisodes de déformation, l'un remontant au Néoprotérozoïque et l'autre associé à la déformation du Laramide du Crétacé tardif à l'Éocène. Dans le champ de gaz de Kotaneelee, du gaz a été produit depuis des réservoirs carbonatés du Dévonien situés dans les profondeurs de l'anticlinal de Mount Martin.

ABOUT THE MAP

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Joint initiative of the Geological Survey of Canada and the Yukon Geological Survey, conducted under the auspices of the Central Foreland NATMAP Project.

Map projection Universal Transverse Mercator, zone 10. North American Datum 1983

Base map at the scale of 1:250 000 from Natural Resources Canada, with modifications.

Elevations in metres above mean sea level.

Magnetic declination 2014, 20°50'E, decreasing 23' annually. Readings vary from 21°10'E in the NW corner to 20°28'E in the SE corner of the map.

The Geological Survey of Canada welcomes corrections or additional information from users.

Data may include additional observations not portrayed on this map. See documentation accompanying the data.

Additional references are included in the map info document.

This publication is available for free download through GEOSCAN (http://geoscan.nrcan.gc.ca/).

Map Viewing Files

The published map is distributed as a Portable Document File (PDF), and may contain a subset of the overall geological data for legibility reasons at the publication scale.

The spatial geological data is provided in two file formats, SHP and XML, that may be imported into Geographic Information System (GIS) software for the purposes of viewing, querying, and analysis.

ABOUT THE GEOLOGY

Descriptive Notes

The geology of the La Biche River map area was previously published by Douglas (1976). Additional stratigraphic and structural observations since then have allowed for a refinement of Douglas' interpretation, presented here. Revisions to map units and stratigraphic relationships in the area have been derived from various sources (Fig. 1). Terminology for igneous rocks is derived from Rowins and Francis (1995), Harrison (1981), and Pigage (2009). Stratigraphic terms for the upper part of the sedimentary succession are taken from Stott (1982) and Leckie et al. (1991) for Cretaceous units; Gibson (1975) and MacNaughton (2002) for Triassic units; Harker (1963), Bamber et al.

(1968), and Richards (1989) for Late Devonian, Carboniferous, and Permian units. Early Permian carbonate, herein assigned to the informal Tika formation, had been correlated with the Kindle Formation of northeast British Columbia (Henderson, 1989), but Chung (1993) demonstrated that the Kindle Formation is Late Mississippian to Early Pennsylvanian, overlapping with the Mattson Formation, so the term 'Kindle Formation' is not used here.

Within lower Paleozoic strata, the La Biche River map area straddles the boundaries between the MacDonald carbonate platform to the south, the Mackenzie carbonate platform to the north and east, and the Selwyn shale basin in the northwest (Fig. 2). The resulting map-unit terminology is drawn from each of these geological regions as follows: Taylor and Mackenzie (1970), Norford et al. (1966), and Morrow (1978) describe units from the MacDonald platform; Morrow and Cook (1987), Morrow (1982), and Ludvigsen (1979) describe units from the Mackenzie platform; and Gabrielse et al. (1973), Cecile and Norford (1979), and Pyle and Barnes (2000) describe shaledominated units of the Selwyn basin. Pigage (2009) summarizes the relationships between these units within the western La Biche River area and discusses locally defined Neoproterozoic and Cambrian units (see Fig. 2).

The following discussion outlines stratigraphic features that influenced the organization of map units across the La Biche River area. Lepine and Sully formations are combined where the intervening Sikanni is not well developed; the combined interval includes Sikanni-equivalent strata. Chinkeh and Garbutt formations are combined where the Chinkeh becomes too thin to map separately. Although the Chinkeh Formation was not observed in the western part of the La Biche area, it may be present at the base of the Garbutt Formation. A pre-Cretaceous southern tilt to the region is recorded by erosionally thinned Permian and Triassic strata beneath the Cretaceous strata in the north. Exposures of Triassic strata are generally few and incomplete, but a coarseningupward trend within the combined Grayling and Toad unit was observed. The shaledominated base can be assigned to the Grayling Formation, and the sandier upper portion probably belongs in the Toad Formation. Permian units, Tika formation and Fantasque Formation, are combined because they are too thin to map separately on steep fold limbs; both become increasingly shaly and recessive westward and may be indistinguishable from each other and the base of the Triassic Graying and Toad unit. Poor exposure combined with possible facies variations is the reason for combining some or all of the members of the Mattson Formation in the western portion of the map area. Thinning of the Golata Formation in the northeast corner of the map required inclusion of the Golata with the underlying Flett Formation. Though not shown separately, the Dunedin Formation east-southeast of Larsen Lake has locally developed Manetoe facies dolomitization. Along the western edge of the map area, where quality of exposure and biostratigraphic control are poor, the Ordovician to Devonian carbonate unit may correlate with the Beaverfoot, Nonda, Muncho-McConnell, and Stone formations of the MacDonald platform to the south. The Ordovician to Silurian carbonate unit attempts to separate Beaverfoot and Nonda formation equivalents from Siluro-Devonian Muncho-McConnell and Stone formations. To the north, facies in this interval change to Road River Group of the Selwyn Basin and Headless Formation of the Mackenzie Platform. Coarse siliciclastic units in the western part of the map area, Crow Formation and the Ordovician sandstone unit, are preserved around a paleotopographic high centered on the Pool Creek syenite. In the case of the Crow Formation, it is distinct from the laterally equivalent regional unit, Rabbitkettle Formation.

Laramide deformation in the La Biche River map area is recorded as abundant folds with associated faulting; and structural style varies across the area largely as a function of the mechanical properties of the rock types at surface. In the northwest, where shaledominated lower Paleozoic units are abundant, folds are common with subordinate faulting in the carbonate units. To the southwest, faulting is more common due to the prevalence of more resistant units of lower Paleozoic carbonate and sandstone, vet topographic relief is subdued in the west. Through the south-central and eastern portions of the map area, a regular pattern of long-wavelength (10-20 km) folding dominates, with minor faulting associated with upper Paleozoic and Mesozoic siliciclastic strata. Anticlines in this region are detached within the Besa River Formation and outlined by resistant units of the Mattson Formation, forming high ridges above the treeline, whereas valleys are underlain by recessive Triassic and Cretaceous strata. The sinuosity of the Kotaneelee and La Biche ranges is a function of en échelon linking of multiple anticlinal culminations (e.g. Mount Martin and Kotaneelee anticlines). Trends of individual structures vary from northeast to northwest, in contrast to the consistent northwest trend of structures in the northern Rocky Mountains and Foothills to the south (Taylor and Stott, 1973, for example). Major features identified by Douglas (1976) are recognizable in this compilation, although higher resolution mapping, particularly in the west, has modified some structures in detail and refined the stratigraphic units. In particular, new observations do not support the previous interpretation of a significant northeast-trending fault bisecting the northwest portion of the map area – the Beaver Fault of Douglas (1976; see also Morrow and Miles, 2000). Misalignment or termination of structures north and south of the Beaver River near Gold Pay Creek are the basis for the inferred Gold Pay structure. The northwest trend is constrained by the surface structures and may reflect trends of postulated reactivated faults originating at deeper structural levels in Proterozoic or Lower Paleozoic strata. A similar origin may explain other northwest-trending structures in the map area (Toobally-Crow Fault, Caribou Thrust, and Jedhi Deh Thrust). An older deformation and intrusive event involving Proterozoic strata is recorded near the western edge of the map, represented by eastwest-trending folds involving only Proterozoic strata and the ~650 Ma Pool Creek syenite. Eccene intrusions in the western portion of the map area appear to be posttectonic.

Historical petroleum exploration in the area has concentrated on Devonian carbonate targets on anticlinal structures in the subsurface. The Kotaneelee gas field, on the east flank of Mount Martin has produced from one such target. More recent exploration, focused in the Liard Basin to the south, has targeted Devonian and Triassic organic-rich shale units exposed in this map area. Mineral showings exposed in the western portion of the map area are dominantly lead, zinc, and barium deposits concentrated in Silurian and Devonian carbonate and shale, or associated with intrusive bodies.

More detailed information regarding field observations, structural measurements, measured sections, fossil localities, radiometric ages, wells, mineral localities, and original sources can be found in the accompanying digital GIS files.

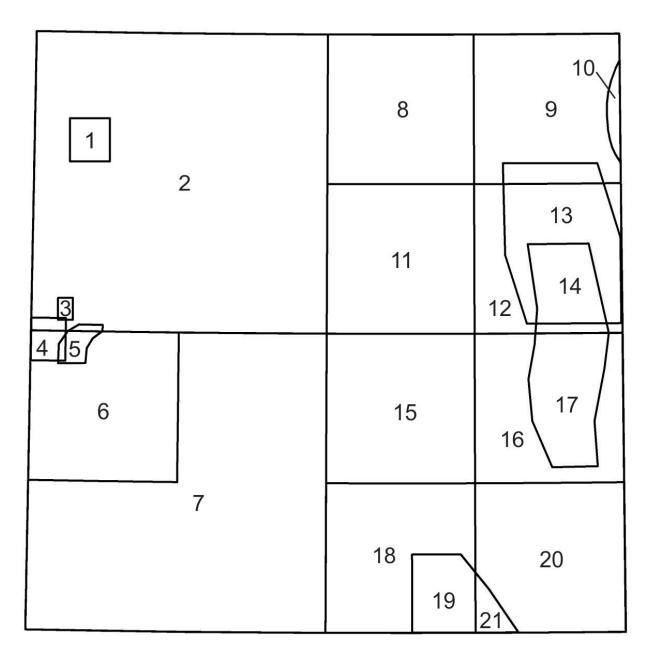


Figure 1. Key to source references for material used in this compilation. *See* accompanying cgm_0144_info.pdf document for itemized list and full references.

Key to Source References, 95C

In addition to the 1:250 000 compilation of La Biche River by Douglas (1976), the following sources were used in the compilation of this map. Numbers match those in Figure 1.

- 1 Cathro (1983a), Fallas et al. (2005)
- 2 Fallas et al. (2005)
- 3 Fallas et al. (2005), Harrison (1981)
- 4 Brady (1959), Cathro (1983b), Fallas et al. (2004), Pigage (2008)
- 5 Brady (1959), Burt (1983), Fallas et al. (2004), Pigage (2008)
- 6 Brady (1959), Fallas et al. (2004), Pigage (2008)
- 7 Brady (1959), Fallas et al. (2004)
- 8 Fallas (2003b)
- 9 Fallas et al. (2003)
- 10 Fallas et al. (2003), Hill (1978)
- 11 Khudoley (2003c)
- 12 Currie et al. (1999a), Lane and Fallas (2003b)
- 13 Currie et al. (1999a), Lane and Fallas (2003b), McDonough (1995)
- 14 Currie et al. (1999a), Lane and Fallas (2003b), Kubli (1996), McDonough (1995)
- 15 Brady (1959), Khudoley and Fallas (2006)
- 16 Brady (1959), Currie et al. (1999b), Fallas and Lane (2006)
- 17 Brady (1959), Currie et al. (1999b), Kubli (1996), Fallas and Lane (2006)
- 18 Brady (1959), Fallas and Evenchick (2006)
- 19 Brady (1959), Fallas and Evenchick (2006), Kindle (1944)
- 20 Brady (1959), Fallas (2006), Sproule (1958)
- 21 Brady (1959), Fallas (2006), Kindle (1944)

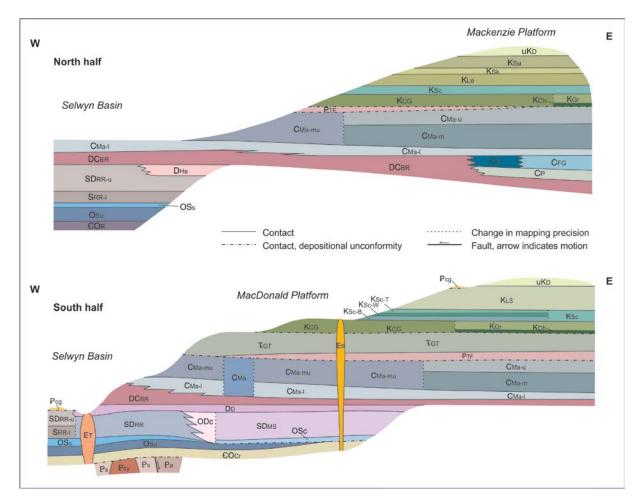


Figure 2. Schematic diagram showing stratigraphic and intrusive relationships within La Biche River map area (NTS 95-C).

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Coordinate System

Projection: Universal Transverse Mercator

Units: metres Zone: 10

Horizontal Datum: NAD83 Vertical Datum: mean sea level

Bounding Coordinates

Western longitude: 126°00'00" W Eastern longitude: 124°00'00" W Northern latitude: 61°00'00" N Southern latitude: 60°00'00" N

Data Model Information

Surface bedrock data are organized into feature classes and themes consistent with logical groupings of geological features. All field observation point data are related through the Station_ID property of the Station theme. These feature attribute names and definitions are identical in the shapefiles and the XML files.

Consult PDFs in Data folder for complete description of the feature classes, feature attributes, and attribute domains.

The Bedrock Data Model and the Bedrock Domains documents are intended to describe all bedrock features which may be compiled at the 1:50 000 scale. Therefore, some of the feature classes and feature attributes described in these documents may not be present.

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