

## GETTING THERE

See Topographic Maps 82 J1, J2, J7 and J8.

From Calgary:

- South on Hwy 22.
- West on Hwy 532 for 25 km.
- West on Hwy 940 (Forestry Trunk Road) for 7 km.
- North onto Plateau Mountain access road for 4 km to gated entrance. Park here.
- Vehicle access is restricted by a locked gate. Further access is only possible on foot or by bicycle.
- Note: Highway #940 is closed between December 1 and April 30.



PTARMIGAN

R. PHARIS

## SAFETY

- This brochure provides only the most basic information.
- Plan your trip carefully. Check the weather forecast. Be aware of the time you have and your capabilities.
- Be prepared for adverse weather conditions.
- Be sure to take enough water. Drinking naturally occurring water is not recommended.
- Be aware of wild animals.
- Care should be taken when crossing rivers. Be prepared to abandon your crossing if conditions are not suitable.

### DISCLAIMER

Although every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this brochure, Alberta Wilderness Association accepts no responsibility for any loss caused as a result of the reading or use of this document. None of the information here constitutes professional advice, and the reader should recognize the need to seek specific advice from suitably qualified professionals.

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## ALBERTA WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION

*Defending Wild Alberta  
Through Awareness and Action*

The Alberta Wilderness Association (AWA) is the oldest wilderness conservation group in Alberta dedicated to the completion of a protected areas network and the conservation of wilderness throughout the province.

Founded in 1965 in rural southwest Alberta by backcountry enthusiasts, ranchers and outfitters, the AWA has grown into a provincial organization. With three decades of success, we are known for our tenacity, corporate memory and integrity.

We have a provincial office and resource centre in Calgary, and active members throughout Alberta. A great deal of our work is carried out by volunteers.

AWA is a non-profit, federally registered charitable society.

## HOW CAN I BECOME INVOLVED?

- Become a member of AWA.
- Join the wilderness news listserve.
- Join WIN, the Wilderness Network to help protect wilderness.

### Volunteer:

- AWA has stewardship responsibility for a number of wilderness areas. Volunteers are needed to participate in field inspections and reporting.
- Join our conservation outreach team and participate in events and displays.
- Help out at our offices.

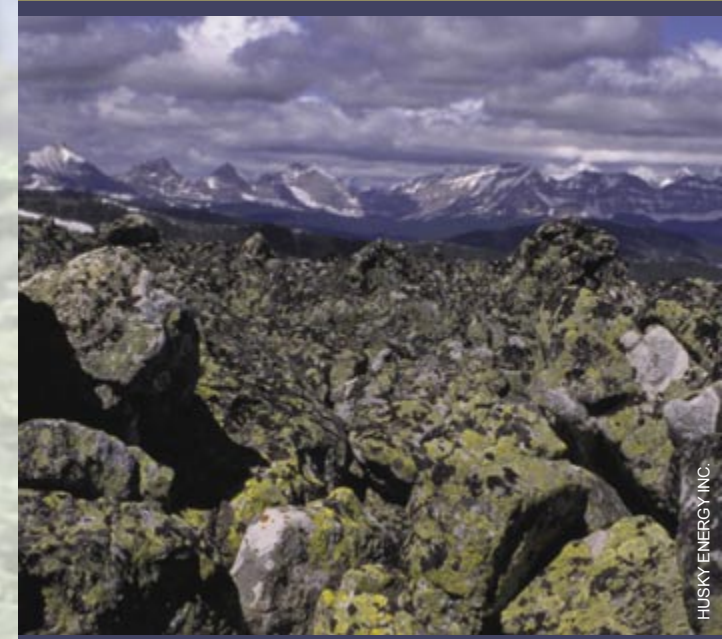
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C. BRUUN

## Plateau Mountain Ecological Reserve



HUSKY ENERGY INC.

Plateau Mountain Ecological Reserve, at the southern tip of Kananaskis Country, is like nowhere else in Alberta. Its broad wind-swept summit supports a remarkable variety of wildflowers and geological features, with stunning vistas across the mountains and foothills.



Alberta Wilderness Association

www.AlbertaWilderness.ca

**W**ILDERNESS IS . . . *Wilderness exists where large areas are characterized by the dominance of natural processes, the presence of the full complement of plant and animal communities characteristic of the region, and the absence of human constraints on nature.*  
*Alberta Wilderness Association*

## A LBERTA'S NATURAL REGIONS

Alberta has 6 natural regions which are divided into 20 subregions.



- NATURAL REGIONS**
- Boreal Forest
  - Rocky Mountains
  - Foothills
  - Canadian Shield
  - Parkland
  - Grassland
  - ★ Plateau Mountain

*"Wilderness sorts our cluttered minds and reconnects us with the part of ourselves that is stifled under the stresses of urban living."*

*Joyce Hildebrand*

## A LBERTA'S PROTECTED AREAS

Alberta's protected areas are designed to protect the beauty and diversity of our natural landscapes. A complete protected areas network should represent the full range of Alberta's natural diversity, including each region and subregion. Some natural regions (such as the Rocky Mountains) are currently well represented, but others (such as the Foothills), remain under-represented.



HOARY MARMOT

N. DOUGLAS

There are many protected area designations, offering different levels of protection. They range from highly protected wilderness landscapes to intensive-use recreation areas.



RIVER BEAUTY

R. RASMUSSEN

## P LATEAU MOUNTAIN

Plateau Mountain is located in the **Rocky Mountain** Natural Region, the most rugged in the province. This region is distinguished from the adjacent Foothills region by sharp, high peaks. Elevations rise from about 1000 m in major river valleys to 3700 m along the Continental Divide.

The Rocky Mountain Region contains three subregions: *Montane*, *Alpine* and *Subalpine*. Plateau Mountain includes parts of the *Alpine* and *Subalpine* Subregions:

- The **Alpine** Subregion includes vegetated areas and bare rock above tree line, and contains species characteristic of areas that were left free of ice during the last glaciation.
- The **Subalpine** Subregion is characterized by closed forests and lower elevations.

## P ROTECTION STATUS

Plateau Mountain was established as an **Ecological Reserve** in December 1991. Ecological Reserves are *'representative of special natural landscapes and features of the province, which are protected as examples of functioning ecosystems, as gene pools for research, and for education and heritage appreciation purposes.'*

Ecological Reserves provide limited opportunities for outdoor recreation and environmental tourism, where they are compatible with the protection objective.

## PERIGLACIAL FEATURES

**Periglacial** landscapes are associated with cold climates, active frost processes and permafrost. Testament to the immense power of water to shatter rock as it freezes and thaws, the range and quality of these periglacial features at Plateau Mountain is unmatched anywhere else in Alberta. Especially notable features are:

- Ice caves, with pillars of ice, ice sheets and crystals. These caves are closed to public access because of their fragility.
- Active permafrost, and relict permafrost to a depth of nearly 100 metres.
- Patterned ground, which includes a diverse selection of sorted stone circles, polygons and stripes, caused by a variety of periglacial processes. Cold, underground water, which is less dense than the surrounding water, rises towards the surface pushing rocks and soil with it. Larger rocks become sorted and appear at the surface.
- Felsenmeer, or 'rock sea', a layer of angular rocks caused by frost-shattering, covering a large proportion of the 14 km<sup>2</sup>, flat-topped summit.

## HISTORY

- Evidence suggests that during the last Ice Age, Plateau Mountain was a Nunatuk (an Inuit word for a mountain protruding through the ice), and remained relatively ice-free.
- Traditional activities on Plateau Mountain include hunting, trapping and wilderness travel.
- Plateau Mountain became an Ecological Reserve in 1991, due in part to a cooperative relationship between AWA and Husky Energy.
- Alberta Wilderness Association became Volunteer Steward in November 2001.



LOUSEWORT

R. RASMUSSEN



BIGHORN SHEEP

T. SNAITH



STONE STRIPES

N. DOUGLAS

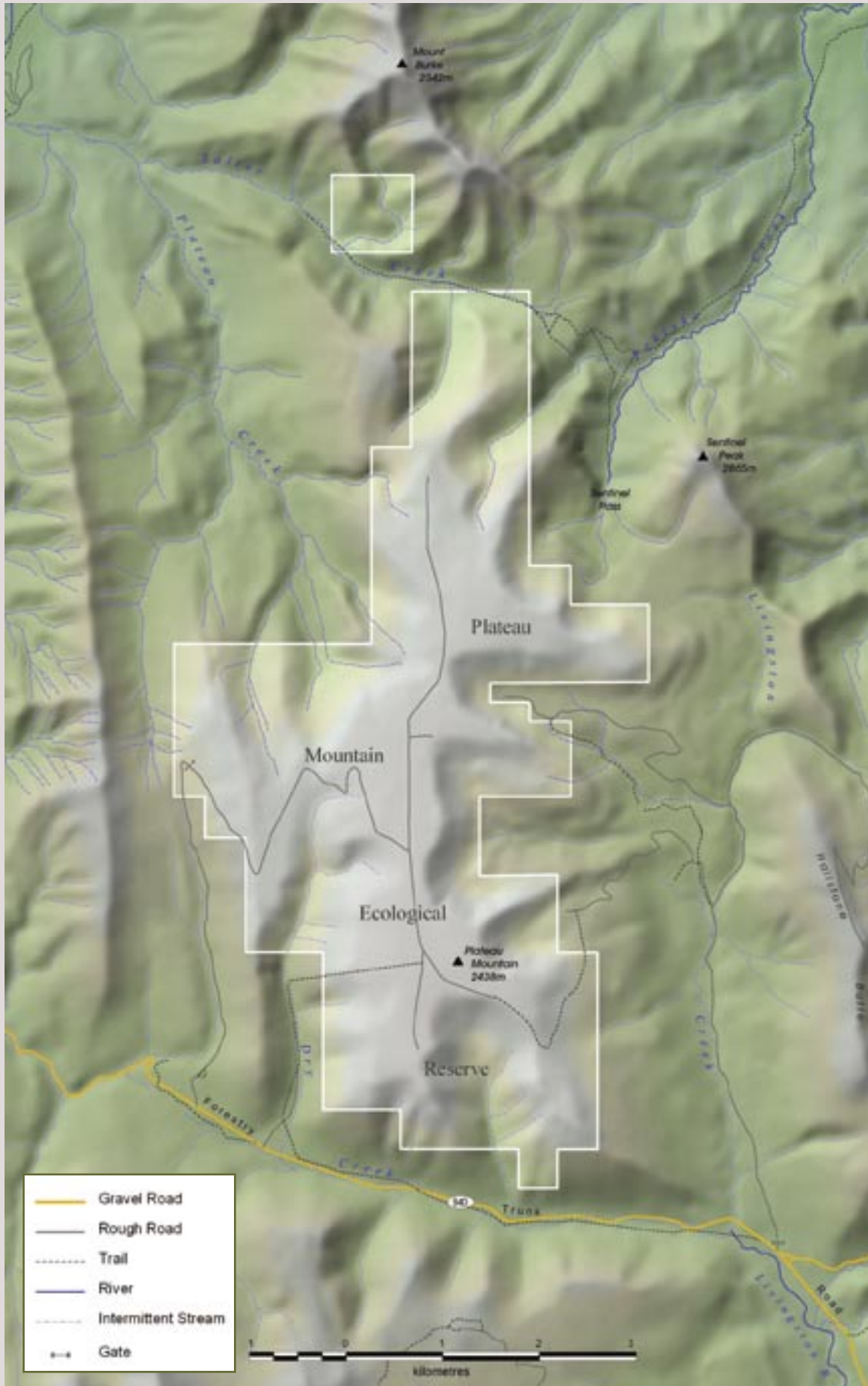


PTARMIGAN

C. WERSHLER



J. DOUGLAS



CINQUEFOIL

R. RASMUSSEN



PIKA

AWA FILES



SORTED STONE CIRCLES

N. DOUGLAS



CLARKE'S NUTCRACKER

C. WALLIS



P. WOOLF

## WILDLIFE

- A range of bird species has been recorded, including rosy finch, horned lark and white-tailed ptarmigan. Golden eagles regularly pass over the area on their spring and fall migrations along the front ranges of the Rockies.
- Plateau Mountain is home to a number of mammals typical of alpine and subalpine areas, including hoary marmot, pika and a small flock of bighorn sheep.
- More than 500 species of plant are found in or near the Reserve, including a number of rare plants such as alpine fleabane and flame-coloured lousewort.

## INDUSTRY

- Husky Energy Inc. has operated wells in the area since the 1950's. Currently there are two producing gas wells with associated facilities in the Reserve.
- To preserve the status of the Ecological Reserve, high environmental standards must be maintained.
- Special management practices address erosion, vehicle access, visual impacts, noise, public safety and wildlife.
- When the reserves from the current gas wells are used up, there will be no further oil and gas development.