

Site Name: **Mount Butte**

Site Type: **Natural Area**

Status: Protective Notation (PNT)

Subtype: TPR - Conservation

PASite ID (Map Ref #): 378

O.C. No. (Land Ref. Manual): N/A

Site # (Parks Website): N/A

Reserved Area: 323.09 ha. (798.36 ac.)

Designated Area: 0.00 ha. (0.00 ac.)

Total Area: 386.63 ha. (955.36 ac.)

Additional Protected Areas: see OC area

Lat/Long Co-ordinates: 52 59.07 N, 114 14.24 W

Natural Region: Boreal

Natural Subregion(s): Central Mixedwood

IUCN Classification: IV

Operated By:

Info Phone:

Steward(s) Aug2002:

Steward(s) Aug2003:

Steward(s) Dec2011: yes

**Petroleum & Natural Gas Surface
Access Aug2002:**

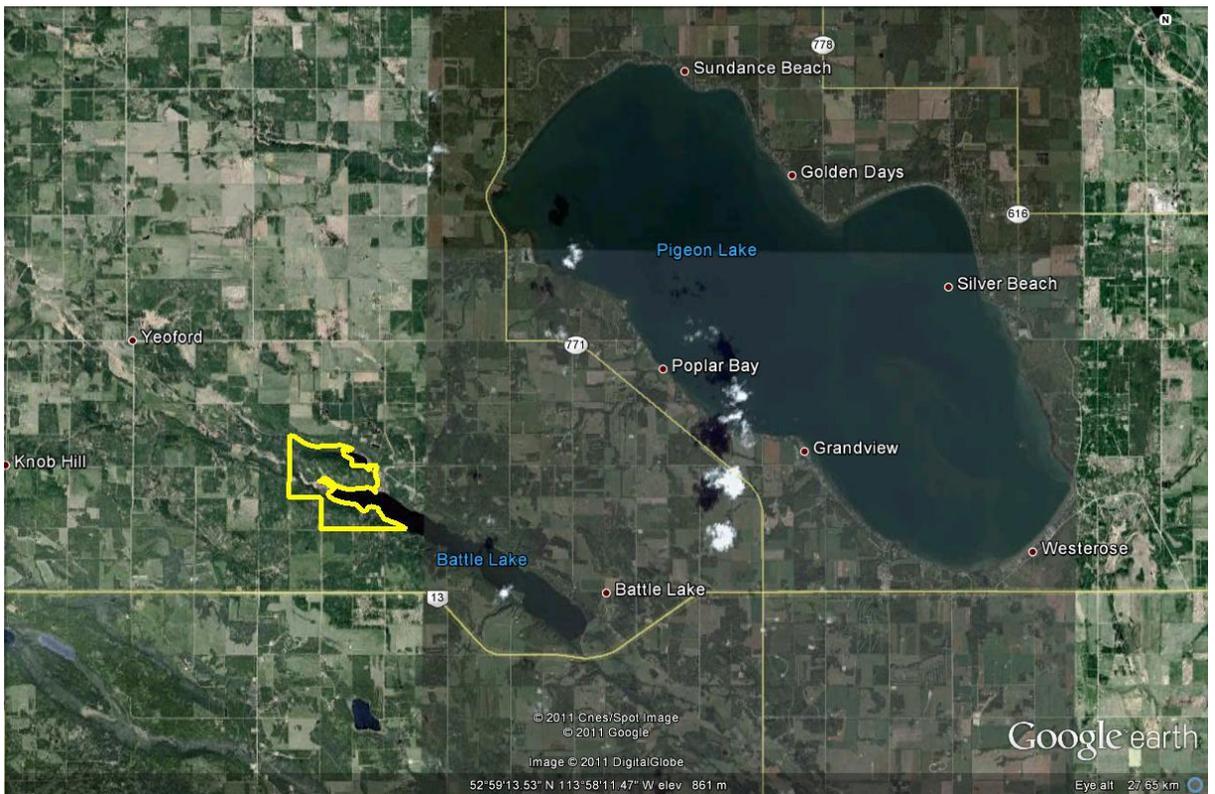
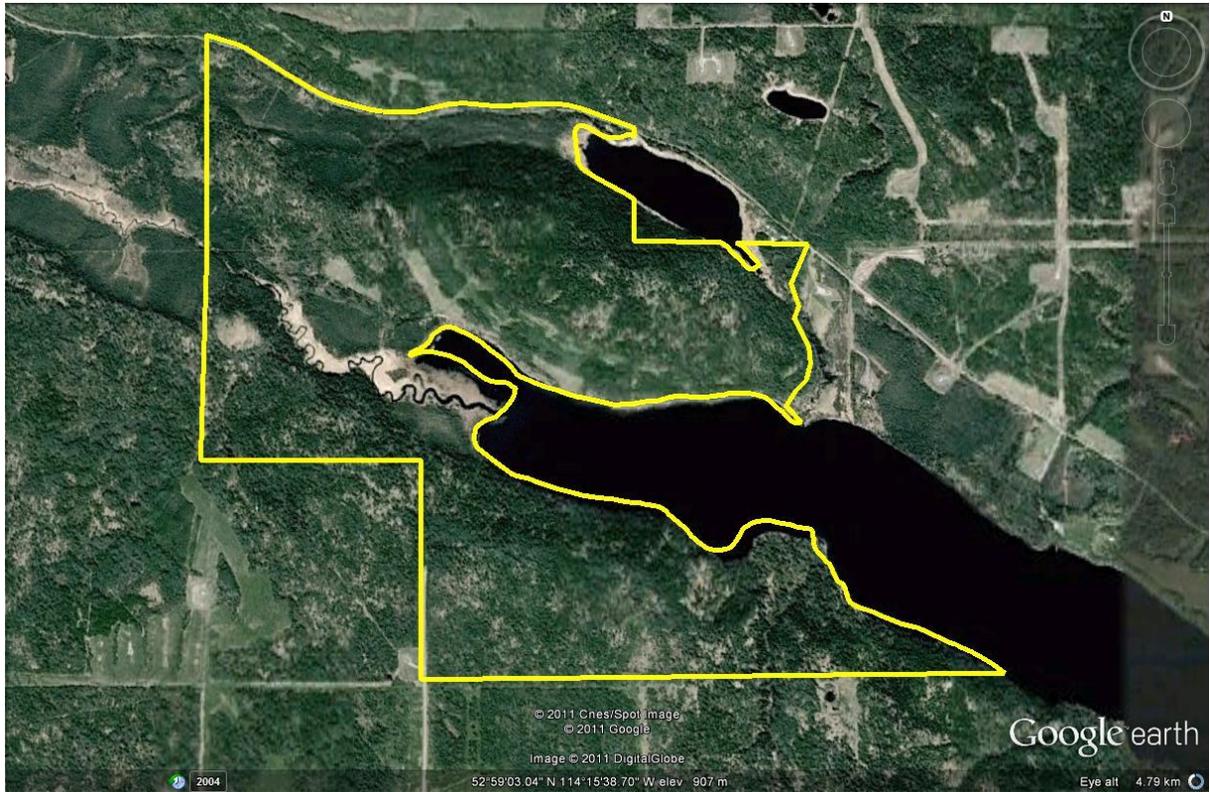
Day Use Site(s):

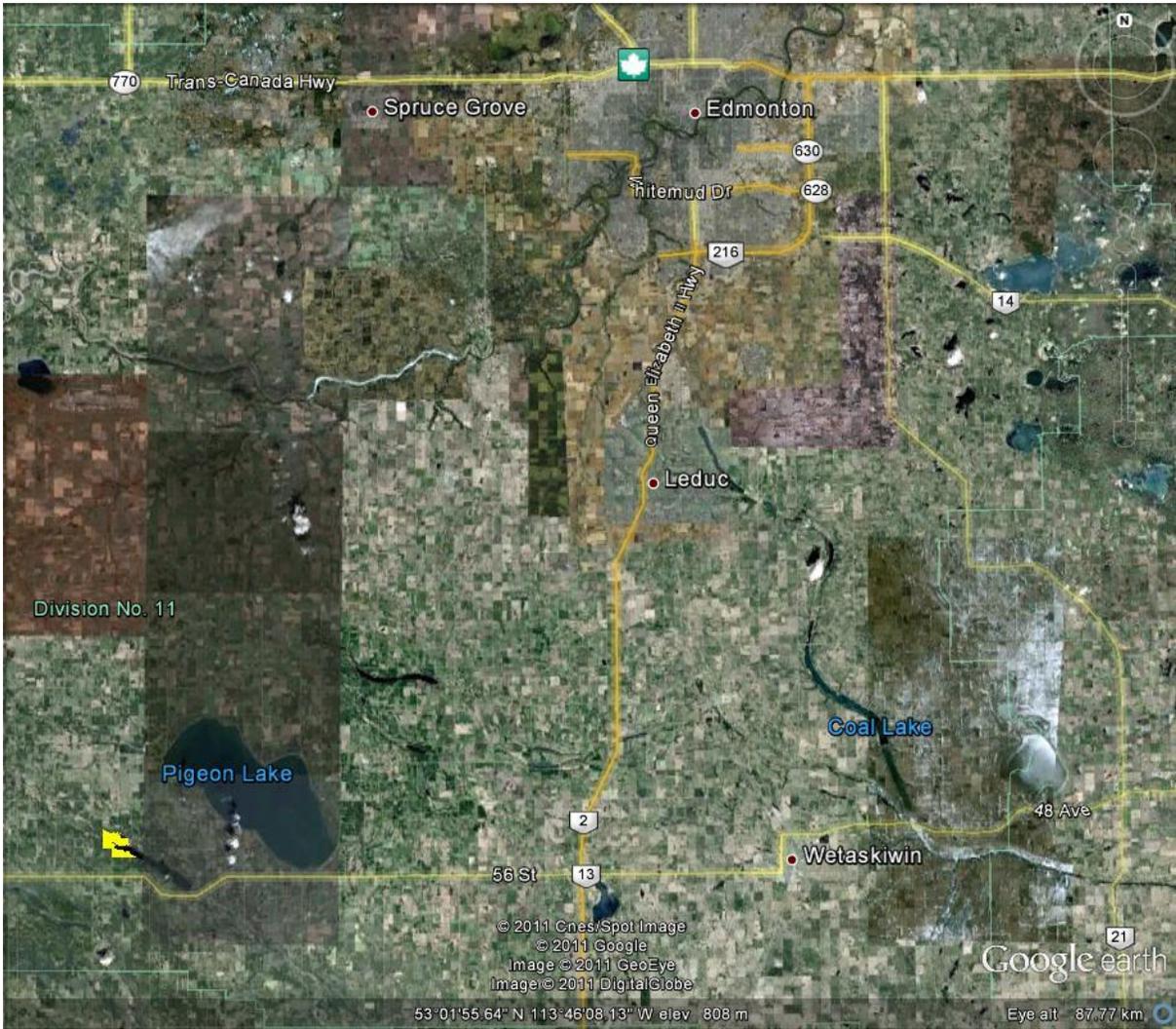
Recreation Activities:

Access:

Notes:

Images:





Field Trip to Mount Butte PNT in August 2015

On August 22, 2015, 19 people, including SAPAA, Edmonton Nature Club and Edmonton Native Plant Group members plus other interested hikers, met at the Battle Lake Park (a municipal campground operated by the County of Wetaskiwin) for a SAPAA field trip. The trip was organized by John Woitenko and Hubert Taube (SAPAA) and hosted by Dave Doze (Battle Lake Natural Area Preservation Society; BLNAPS).



Battle Lake with Mt. Butte in the background

The Mt. Butte Natural Area (NA) covers some 798 acres (323 ha) at the western end of Battle Lake, about 7 miles west of the southern tip of Pigeon Lake. Of this area 157 acres are protected under Order-in-Council and the rest are reserved (PNT) lands. Mt. Butte ‘peak’ itself, the area we visited, is in the northwest quarter of Section 21, Township 46, Range 2, West of the 5th Meridian.

We began by exploring the short (0.5 km) trail along the shore of Battle Lake at the Battle Lake municipal campground. Even though much of this area is disturbed, we saw a great variety of plant and bird life (see the lists on the SAPAA website). Next we stopped at the park picnic area for lunch treats, including Patsy Cotterill’s delicious banana bread, which vanished in seconds, and an opportunity for group photos. After lunch, the group drove to the access point for the hike to the top of Mt. Butte about 10 km northwest of the campground.

Here Dave Doze provided insight into the human history (land acquisition, designation as a natural area, preservation efforts) as well as the geology and ecology of the site. Particularly noteworthy was the fact that three ecozones (parkland, boreal forest and foothills) meet here and contribute to the richness of the landscape and biota. BLNAPS members expend considerable effort to maintain the natural integrity of the area, and to block intrusion by ATVs, an all-too-common problem in Alberta’s Natural Areas.



A mixed group of naturalists

The height of land known as Mt. Butte lies between Moyer's Lake and the north end of Battle Lake. This 110 m high 'mountain' is a remnant of table lands above the Battle River Valley after it was carved out during the previous ice age(s). The hike up Mt. Butte is quite steep and heavily wooded. Altogether, 11 participants made it to the top and were rewarded with magnificent views of the Upper Battle River meandering to the northwest and Battle Lake to the southeast.



Upper Battle River Valley

On the way up, we followed the trail facing towards Battle Lake and on the way down we took the trail closer to Moyer's Lake. Some of the group got disoriented (i.e. lost) on the steep descent to the north, so pay careful attention to orientation if you undertake this hike!



Trail junctions can be confusing in new areas

After the main group returned to the foot of Mt Butte about 4 p.m., a smaller group continued up the road to the area northwest of Moyer's Lake to view the extensive trail damage caused by uncontrolled ATV usage. BLNAPS is to be commended for its efforts to manage access and use of this area, helping to preserve this treasure of ecological richness for future generations.



Colorful twisted stalk berries & coralroot capsules

All in all, it was a very successful trip, with 39 bird species and 116 plants species observed. The trip began auspiciously, when 5 partridges crossed 99 Street in Edmonton just in front of the carpool-ing convoy leaving the Wildbird General Store. During the day, we discovered many interesting plants, including a small patch of balsam fir (quite a rare occurrence in this part of Alberta), several patches of stiff-clubmoss, a clump of spotted coralroot, and an extensive patch of bee balm/wild bergamot at the mountain top. The bird and plant species lists, recorded by Emily Gorda and Patsy Cotterill respectively, can be found on our website (sapaastewards.com) under 'Natural Areas' in the 'Protected Areas' section - 'Mt Butte NA PNT'.

Hubert Taube - text and photos