Uranium

MANITOBA CRITICAL MINERALS

Uranium is used as fuel to generate electricity in nuclear power plants and is also used in medical and military applications; in its depleted form, it is used in applications requiring materials of high density and hardness. Because of its unique chemical properties, economic deposits of uranium were formed in a broad spectrum of geodynamic settings through geological time, in part controlled by changes in the oxygen content of the atmosphere.

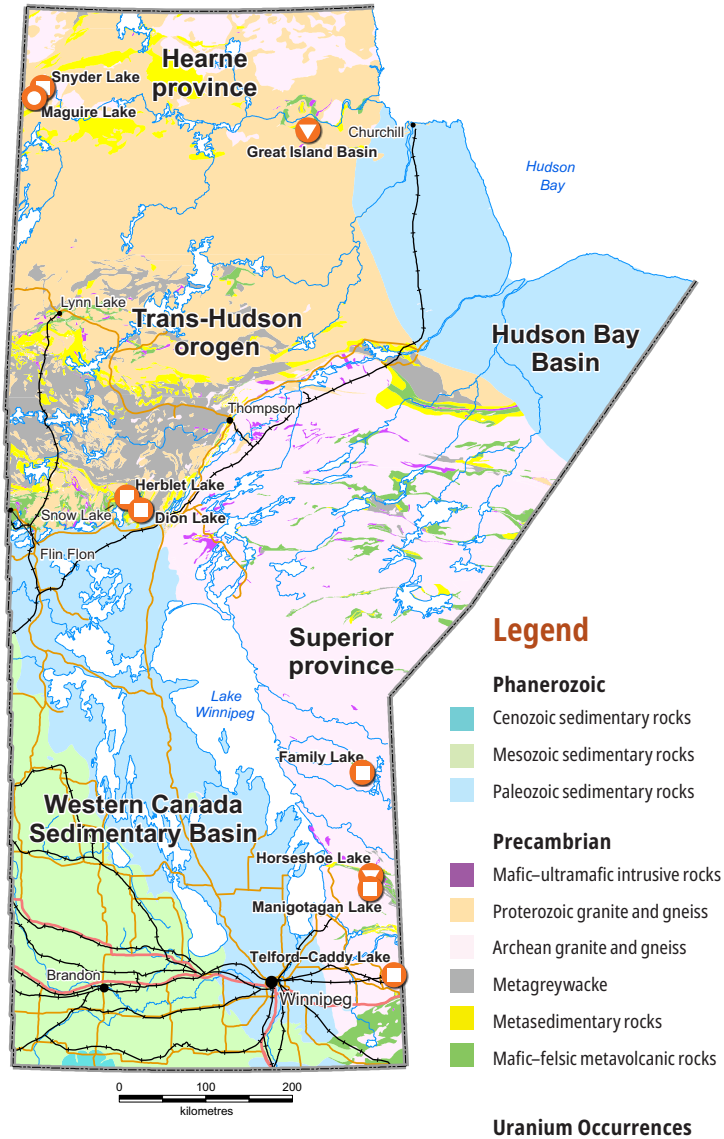

Figure 1: Geological map of Manitoba showing locations of uranium occurrences.

Legend

Phanerozoic
- Cenozoic sedimentary rocks
- Mesozoic sedimentary rocks
- Paleozoic sedimentary rocks

Precambrian
- Mafic–ultramafic intrusive rocks
- Proterozoic granite and gneiss
- Archean granite and gneiss
- Metagreywacke
- Metasedimentary rocks
- Mafic–felsic metavolcanic rocks

Uranium Occurrences
- Unconformity-related
- Paleoplacer
- Leucogranite/pegmatite

In Manitoba, rocks ranging in age from Archean to Paleoproterozoic have potential to host a number of different types of uranium deposits related to sedimentary, diagenetic hydrothermal, metamorphic and magmatic processes.

The **Manitoba Geological Survey** is committed through thematic geoscience studies and mapping at the district scale to improve the understanding of uranium metallogeny in the province.

Igneous Deposits

Uranium preferentially enters and remains in the melt phase during partial melting and magmatic differentiation, resulting in its accumulation in a variety of late fractionated magmas. Of particular interest are granitic rocks formed by melting of uranium-rich crustal sediments: such melts produced the uraniferous granitoid pluton that hosts the world-class Rössing deposit in Namibia, Africa. In Manitoba, extensive thermotectonism during the Archean and Paleoproterozoic resulted in varying degrees of partial melting and local pegmatite emplacement. Examples of uraniferous pegmatite and leucogranite are found at Snyder Lake in the Wollaston domain, Dion and Herblet lakes in the Flin Flon domain, in the Telford–Caddy Lake area of the Winnipeg River domain and at Manigotagan Lake in the English River domain.

Figure 2:
Uraninite-bearing pegmatite from 'Pitchblende ridge' near Snyder Lake, northwestern Manitoba.

Figure 3:
Uranium- and gold-bearing quartz-pebble conglomerate from the Great Island Basin.

Manitoba

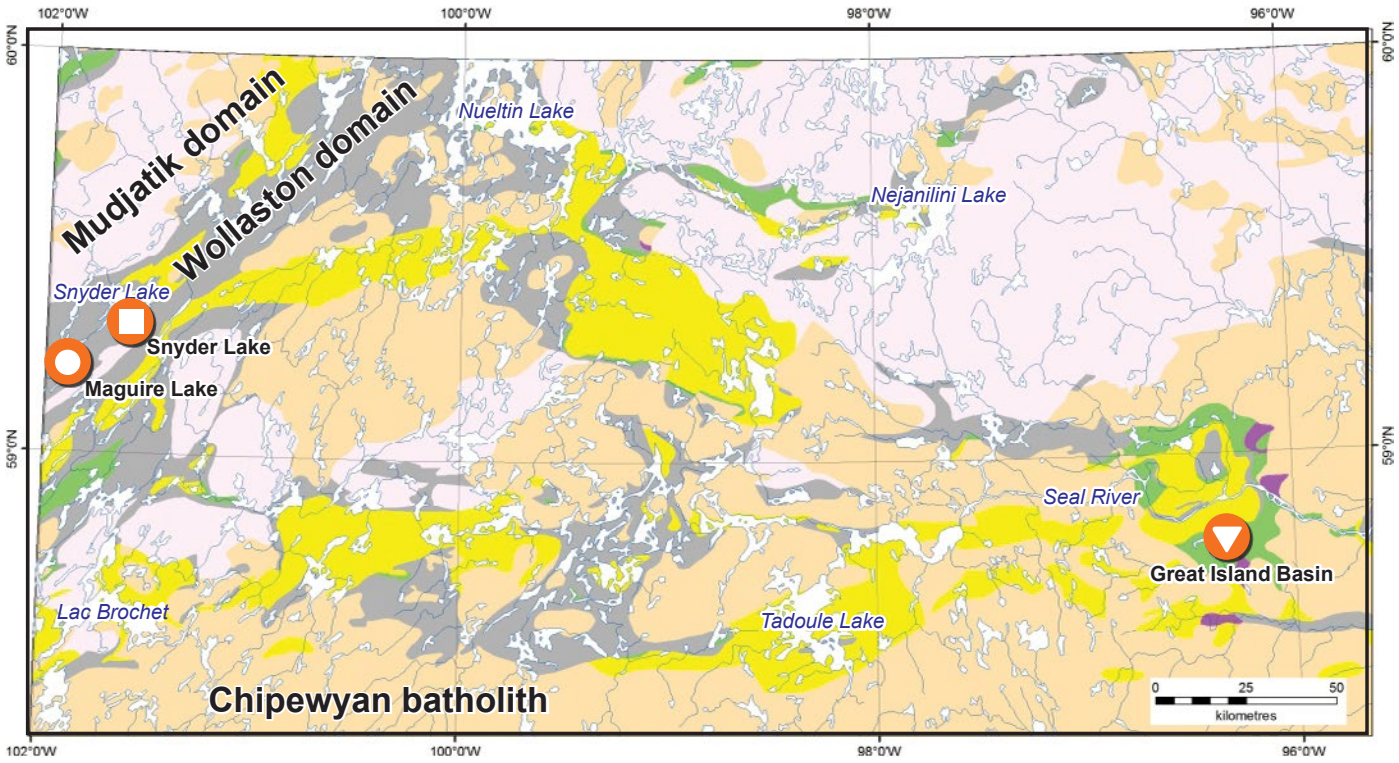

Figure 4: Geological map of the Wollaston–Mudjatik extension into northwestern Manitoba. The Athabasca Basin is located approximately 135 km southwest of Maguire Lake.

Paleoplacer Deposits

Uranium- and gold-bearing quartz-pebble conglomerates such as those of the Huronian Supergroup in the Blind River–Elliot Lake district, Ontario and the Witwatersrand Basin, South Africa make up approximately six per cent of the world's known uranium resources. The typical grades of these deposits are low (<0.15% U_3O_8), but they are often of large tonnage and contain significant gold as byproduct. Detrital grains of uraninite and gold were concentrated in alluvial fans and braided streams by sedimentary processes prior to the rise of atmospheric oxygen. In Manitoba, both the Hearne and Superior provinces host this deposit type. Occurrences of this type are found in the Great Island area of the Hearne province and in the Rice Lake area of the Superior province, where uranium and gold occur in quartz-pebble conglomerates that unconformably overlie Archean volcanic rocks.

Basement-hosted Unconformity-related Deposits

Potential for high-grade, basement-hosted uranium deposits may extend well beyond the present limits of the Athabasca basin. In northwestern Manitoba, reactivated structures along the highly prospective boundary between the Wollaston and Mudjatik domains represent the key region for this mineralization style. Work at Maguire Lake in Manitoba corroborates this model, with outcrop and boulder grab samples having uranium grades up to 9.5% and 65% U_3O_8, respectively. Such high uranium grades are only known to occur in unconformity-related deposits.

Manitoba is home to world-class deposits and high mineral potential in extensive underexplored terrains.

Learn more at **manitoba.ca/minerals**

Contact Information

Manitoba Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation
360-1395 Ellice Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3G 3P2
Phone: **204-945-1119**; toll free: **1-800-223-5215**
Email: **minesinfo@gov.mb.ca**