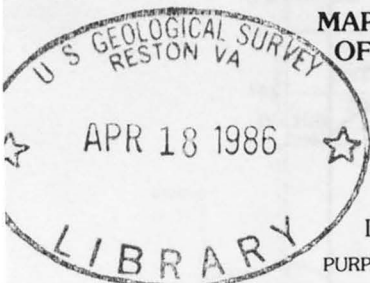


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MAPS SHOWING SELECTED GEOLOGY AND PHOSPHATE RESOURCES OF THE DIAMOND FLAT QUADRANGLE, CARIBOU COUNTY, IDAHO

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INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF INVESTIGATION

This report summarizes information on the thickness, grade, lateral continuity, phosphate resources, and ownership of phosphate-bearing units in the Meade Peak Phosphatic Shale Member of the Phosphoria Formation in the Diamond Flat quadrangle. This report is one of a series of quadrangle reports prepared by the Idaho Bureau of Mines and Geology under U.S. Geological Survey cost-sharing contract #14-08-0001-17925 to calculate phosphate resources in southeastern Idaho (fig. 1).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The project was supervised by Bill Bonnicksen of the Idaho Bureau of Mines and Geology and Peter Oberlindacher of the Bureau of Land Management. Almet provided their geologic maps and drill hole data on the understanding that this confidential information, would be used only in a regional analysis of phosphate resources. We wish to thank the College of Mines and Earth Resources and the College of Forestry, University of Idaho, for the use of their cartographic facilities.

METHODS OF INVESTIGATION

The Diamond Flat quadrangle phosphate resource maps are based on published and unpublished data from industry, State, and Federal sources.

The interpretation of the structure of the Meade Peak Phosphatic Shale Member in the subsurface is based on cross sections constructed from U.S. Geological Survey and phosphate company geologic maps, drill hole logs, and cross sections, supplemented by discussions with Bureau of Land Management and company geologists. Phosphate rock thickness and P_2O_5 assay values are used from only those drill holes and trenches whose locations can be accurately plotted for elevation and land coordinates. Structure contours and overburden isopachs on the stratigraphic top of the Meade Peak are extended 600 feet along strike from the last known exposure of the Phosphoria Formation and are extrapolated to a depth of 1,500 feet. Phosphate resources of the Meade Peak are calculated for three categories of overburden thickness: 0 to 300 feet, 300 to 600 feet, and 600 to 1,500 feet (fig. 2).

Identified phosphate resources (U.S. Bureau of Mines and U.S. Geological Survey, 1980) are computed for the upper and lower phosphate units of the Meade Peak (fig. 3). Resource tonnages were determined according to the method used by Montgomery and Cheney (1967, p. 41) and Oberlindacher and Hovland (1979, p. 7). For the Diamond Flat quadrangle, nine resource blocks (not shown on the map sheets) were constructed based on structural similarities. The volume (V) of phosphate resource in each block is calculated by multiplying the true

area of the stratigraphic top of the Meade Peak by the cumulative average thickness (t) of the upper and lower phosphate units. The true area is the planimeted map surface area (A) of each block multiplied by the secant of the average dip (d) of the Meade Peak (fig. 4):

$$(1) V = At (\sec d)$$

Resource tonnages (R) are calculated by multiplying the volume (V) of phosphate resource by the average density (ρ) of the phosphate rock:

$$(2) R = V \rho$$

An average density of 0.0787 short tons per cubic foot, derived from Oberlindacher and Hovland's (1979) average density value of 2.52 metric tons per cubic meter, is applied to convert the volume of phosphate resource (calculated in cubic feet) to short tons of phosphate resource (sheets 2 and 3).

Thickness, phosphate content, and stratigraphic position are the three factors that determine whether a sampling interval is included within the phosphate units to calculate resource tonnages. A "sampling interval" is a rock sample of known thickness and phosphate content, as derived from a drill hole or trench log. The Meade Peak is subdivided into five informally named units for this report based on Hale's (1967) subdivisions of a typical section in the upper Dry Valley area, Caribou County, Idaho (fig. 3). These units are, from bottom to top: the lower waste, the lower phosphate, the middle waste, the upper phosphate, and the upper waste. The only units considered in the resource calculations in this report were the lower and upper phosphate units (fig. 3). Isolated minor phosphorite beds in the waste units are excluded from consideration.

The following guidelines used in this report to define phosphate units are based on Montgomery and Cheney (1967), Oberlindacher and Hovland (1979), and generally accepted phosphate mining practices in southeastern Idaho:

(1) The upper and lower boundaries of the phosphate units are defined by the uppermost and lowermost sampling intervals that are 1 foot or more thick and contain at least 16 percent P_2O_5 , except where adjoining sampling intervals less than 1 foot thick with 16 or more percent P_2O_5 are added together to meet the 1-foot thickness requirement. Within a phosphate unit, all sampling intervals with 16 or more percent P_2O_5 are included in the resource calculation regardless of thickness.

(2) Within the phosphate units, sampling intervals and sequences of contiguous sampling intervals containing less than 16 percent P_2O_5 and measuring at least 2 feet thick are excluded from the resource calculation.

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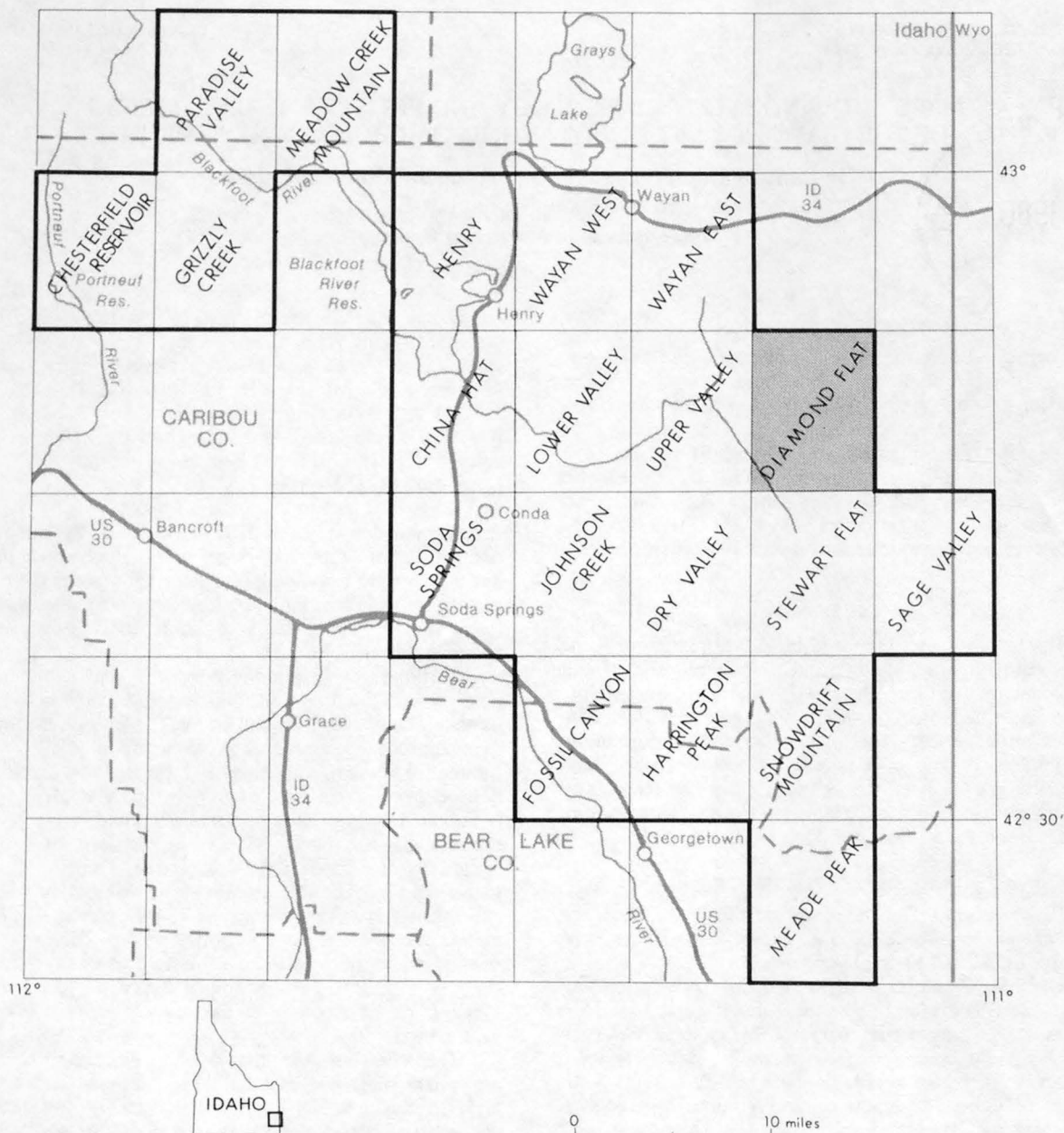


FIGURE 1.—Index map showing location of southeast Idaho phosphate area and Diamond Flat quadrangle (shaded).

(3) Within the phosphate units, isolated sampling intervals less than 2 feet thick with less than 16 percent P_2O_5 are included in the resource calculation.

The locations of titles to surface and phosphate rights were obtained for Federal lands from the U.S. Bureau of Land Management's leasable mineral and master title plats and for State lands from the Idaho Department of Lands' land plats. These sources also were used to locate Federal phosphate leases, Preference Right Lease Applications (PRLAs), Known Phosphate Leasing Areas (KPLAs), and State phosphate leases. Titles to surface and phosphate rights on private land are from both Federal and State plats. Private phosphate leases, leases on land with private title to both surface and phosphate rights, are not shown.

LOCATION AND TOPOGRAPHY

The Diamond Flat quadrangle is about 20 miles northeast of Soda Springs, Idaho (fig. 1). The quadrangle boundary includes parts of Tps. 6, 7, and 8 S., Rs. 44, 45, and 46 E., Boise Principal Meridian. The area is accessible by gravel-surfaced roads.

Major topographic features in the quadrangle include Diamond Flat, Webster Range, Diamond Peak, and Upper Valley, all of which trend northwest. Webster Range is drained to the west by Diamond Creek and its tributaries, and to the east by Stump Creek and its tributaries. Diamond Creek flows northwest into the Blackfoot River; Stump Creek flows southwest into the Salt River. The Emigrant Trail (Lander Cutoff) takes a northwesterly path across the quadrangle following Stump Creek and Terrace

Identified Phosphate Resources

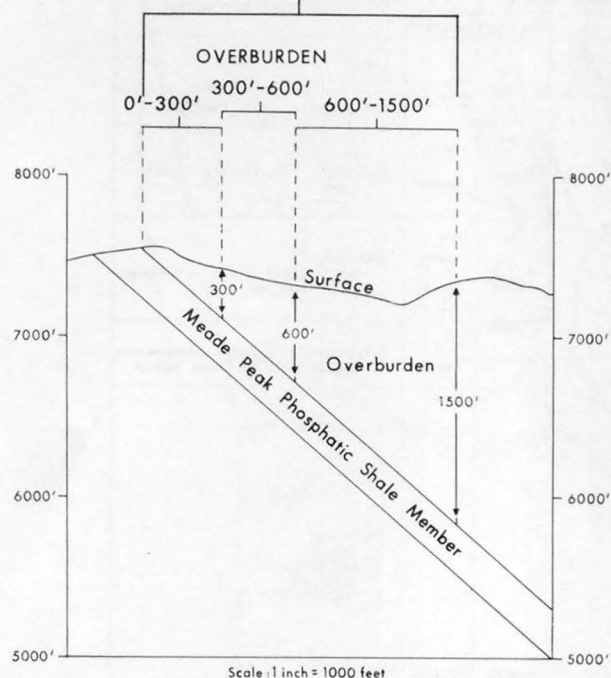


FIGURE 2.—Diagrammatic cross section showing identified phosphate resources for the Meade Peak Phosphatic Shale Member of the Phosphoria Formation.

Canyon. Elevations range from less than 6,360 feet on the southeast end of Stump Creek to 8,822 feet between Horse Creek and Webster Canyon.

FEDERAL LAND STATUS

Two combinations of titles to surface and phosphate rights occur in the Diamond Flat quadrangle as shown on sheet 3: (1) Federal phosphate on Federal surface and (2) Federal phosphate on private surface. The Federal government holds phosphate title to 100 percent and surface title to 98 percent of the land in the Diamond Flat quadrangle. As of August 1980, about one percent of the Federal phosphate title was leased.

GEOLOGY OF THE MEADE PEAK PHOSPHATIC SHALE MEMBER OF THE PHOSPHORIA FORMATION

STRATIGRAPHY

In Idaho, the Phosphoria Formation of Permian age disconformably overlies the Park City Formation of Permian age and the Wells Formation of Pennsylvanian and Permian age and is unconformably overlain by the Dinwoody Formation of Triassic age (McKelvey and others, 1959; Peterson, 1980). The Phosphoria grades northward into the Shedhorn Sandstone in south-central Montana and northwestern Wyoming, and southward and eastward into the Park City Formation in northeastern Utah and west-central Wyoming (McKelvey and others, 1959). The Park City Formation, a carbonate sequence, in turn grades eastward into the Goose Egg Formation, a red-bed evaporite sequence (McKelvey and others, 1959).

The Phosphoria Formation is subdivided into six members, four which are recognized at the type locality at

Phosphoria Gulch, Bear Lake County, Idaho (McKelvey and others, 1959). The four members are, from bottom to top: the Meade Peak Phosphatic Shale Member, the Rex Chert Member, the cherty shale member, and the Retort Phosphatic Shale Member. The other two members are the lower chert member, which is laterally continuous with the Meade Peak, and the Tosi Chert Member, which is laterally continuous with the upper part of the Retort and with the cherty shale member (McKelvey and others, 1959, p. 21). As discussed in the "Methods of Investigation" section, the Meade Peak has been subdivided into five informally named units based on lithology and P_2O_5 content (fig. 3). The two phosphate units defined by Hale (1967; fig. 3, this report) consist of interbedded phosphorite, mudstone, and limestone. The waste units consist of interbedded shale, mudstone, siltstone, and thin phosphorite beds. The base of the Meade Peak is characterized by a thin phosphorite bed containing abundant fish scales, bones, and small nodules (McKelvey and others, 1959, p. 23), known as the fish-scale marker bed (Hale, 1967). The top of the Meade Peak is not as well defined. In southeastern Idaho, the uppermost bed is either a thin, nodular phosphorite, commonly containing a gastropod resembling *Omphalotrochus*, or a thin, soft mudstone locally overlying the nodular phosphorite (McKelvey and others, 1959, p. 23).

Within the Diamond Flat quadrangle, the Meade Peak Phosphatic Shale Member crops out over a discontinuous strike length of about 1 mile. Here, the Meade Peak ranges from 136 to 216 feet in thickness, determined from selected drill hole data in the southwest corner of the quadrangle. Much of the thickness variation may be the result of weathering, deformation, and faulting. The variation does not seem to follow a systematic trend of thinning or thickening along strike; rather, the unit appears to pinch and swell locally. Similar local thickness variations occur on a smaller scale for phosphate rock in the upper and lower phosphate units of the Meade Peak. Based on available drill hole and trench data, the phosphate rock within the Meade Peak in the Diamond Flat quadrangle averages 48 feet in thickness with a weighted average of 22.9 percent P_2O_5 .

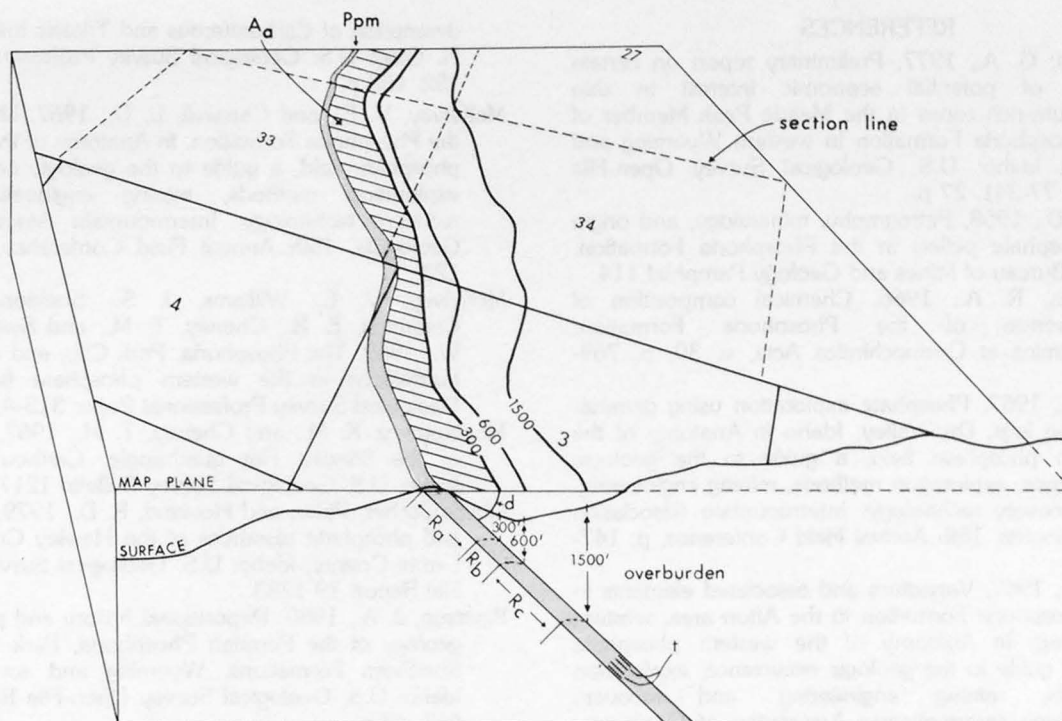
STRUCTURE

Major structures in the Diamond Flat quadrangle include the Meade thrust system (the East and West Stump Branches of the Bannock Overthrust of Mansfield, 1927), several associated folds, and a few normal faults, all of which trend north to northwest. The Phosphoria Formation crops out on the downdropped flanks of Snowdrift anticline. Fault movement has created a horst in the core of Snowdrift anticline.

Dips in the Meade Peak Phosphatic Shale Member vary from moderate at the surface to near horizontal 900 to 1,500 feet in depth on the north limb of Snowdrift anticline (sheet 1, section B-B'). On the south limb of the Snowdrift anticline, the Meade Peak dips moderately west at the surface and begins to shallow at about 1,300 feet in depth (sheet 1, section A-A').

MINERALOGY AND GEOCHEMISTRY

Altered phosphorite within the Meade Peak Phosphatic Shale Member consists, for the most part, of medium-grained, rounded pellets composed of microcrystalline apatite aggregates (Emigh, 1958; Gulbrandsen, 1966). The typical Meade Peak phosphorite



Explanation and sequence of calculations:

- (1) $V_a = A_a t (\sec d)$
 - (2) $R_a = V_a \rho$
- V_a = volume of resources under less than 300' of overburden
 A_a = measured map surface area of resources under less than 300' of overburden
 t = cumulative average thickness of the upper and lower phosphate units
 d = average dip of the Meade Peak Phosphatic Shale Member of the Phosphoria Formation
 R_a = resources under less than 300' of overburden
 R_b = resources under 300' to 600' of overburden
 R_c = resources under 600' to 1500' of overburden
 ρ = average density of phosphate rock = 0.0787 short tons per cubic foot

FIGURE 4.—Block diagram showing method of calculating phosphate resources.

averages 4 feet in thickness and 0.7 percent vanadium pentoxide, and is associated with small amounts of selenium, molybdenum, zinc, nickel, cobalt, titanium, and cadmium (Love, 1967). Through electron microprobe studies of samples from thin beds of vanadium-rich shale and mudstone in the phosphate-rich zones, Desborough (1977) found vanadium in or associated with organic material in leached samples; chromium in 10-A mica in unleached phosphate nodule samples; zinc and cadmium in sphalerite; silver associated with the organic material and not as a silver sulfide phase; selenium in pyrite; sulfur in pyrite and sphalerite, and the organic material; titanium in titanium dioxide; and molybdenum in powellite.

The Meade Peak has been altered and naturally benefited by postdepositional weathering (supergene enrichment). Unaltered phosphorite is hard, carbonaceous, calcareous to dolomitic, and lower in phosphate content, whereas the altered rock is partially consolidated, low in organic matter and carbonate minerals, and 3 to 10 percent higher in phosphate content (Hale, 1967). The

weathered-unweathered interface is believed to be highly irregular and gradational.

IDENTIFIED RESOURCES

A total of 141 million short tons of identified phosphate resources with a weighted average of 22.9 percent P_2O_5 is within the Meade Peak Phosphatic Shale Member in the Diamond Flat quadrangle: 14.9 million short tons of resources with less than 300 feet of overburden, 18.7 million short tons of resources with 300 to 600 feet of overburden, and 107 million short tons of resources with 600 to 1,500 feet of overburden. Thickness and P_2O_5 data from seven drill hole logs were used to calculate these resources. Resources are based on data from the nearest drill holes or trenches situated along the same structural feature.

¹Resources calculated to three significant figures for phosphate rock containing 16 or more percent P_2O_5 .

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