

Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology
A Department of Montana Tech of The University of Montana

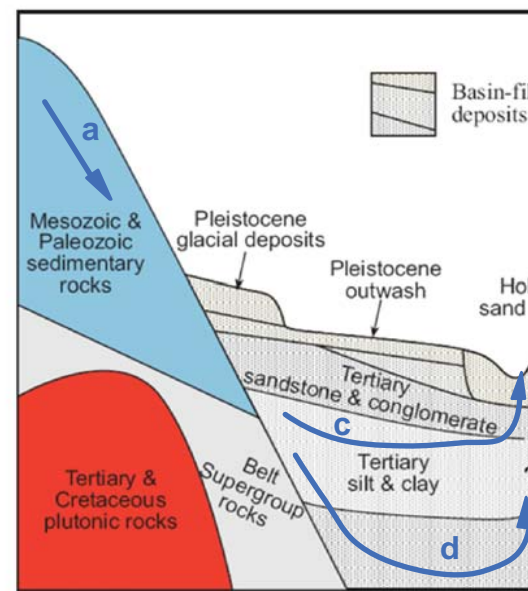
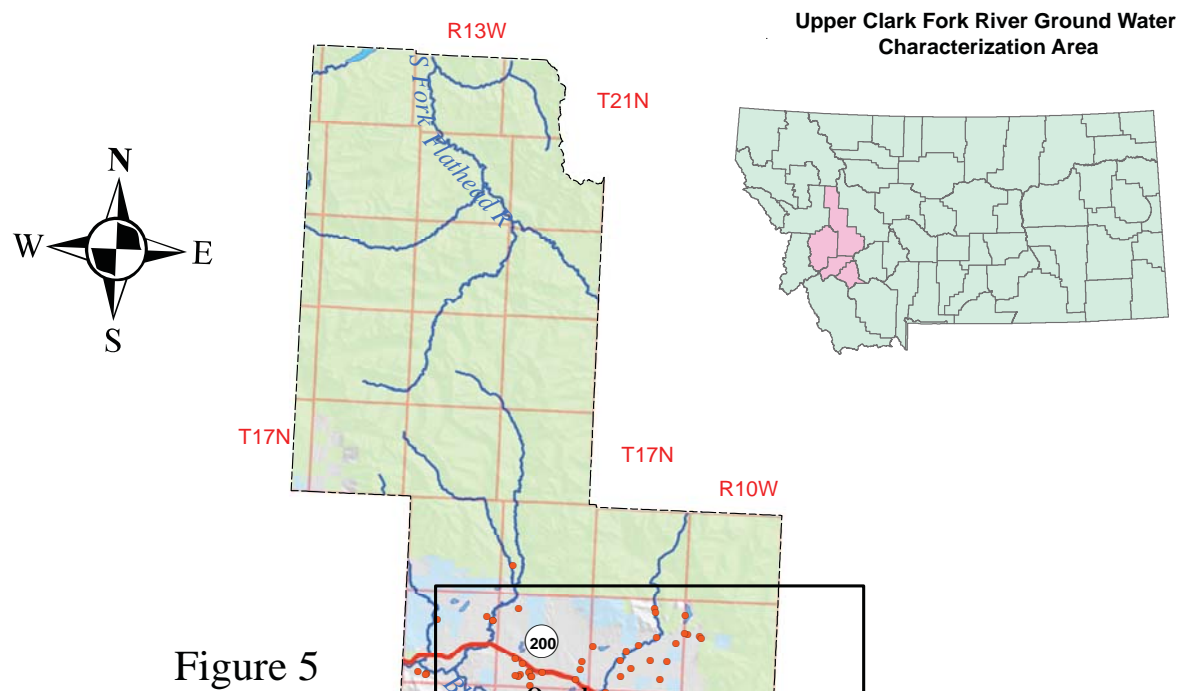
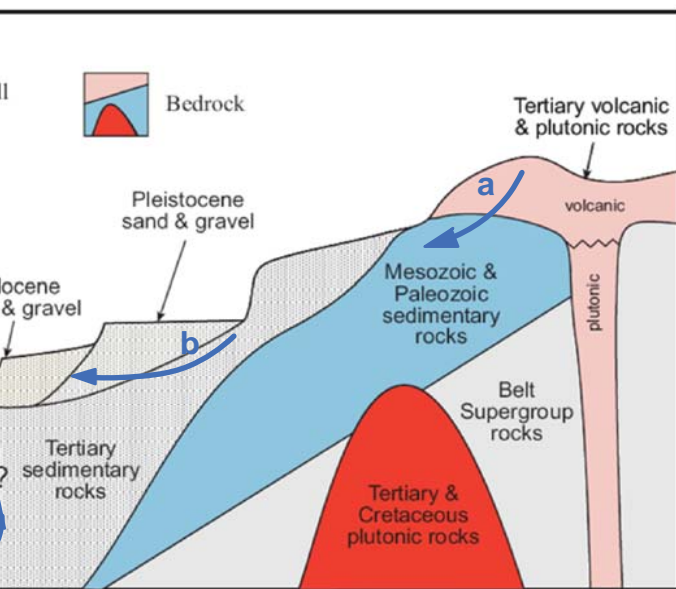
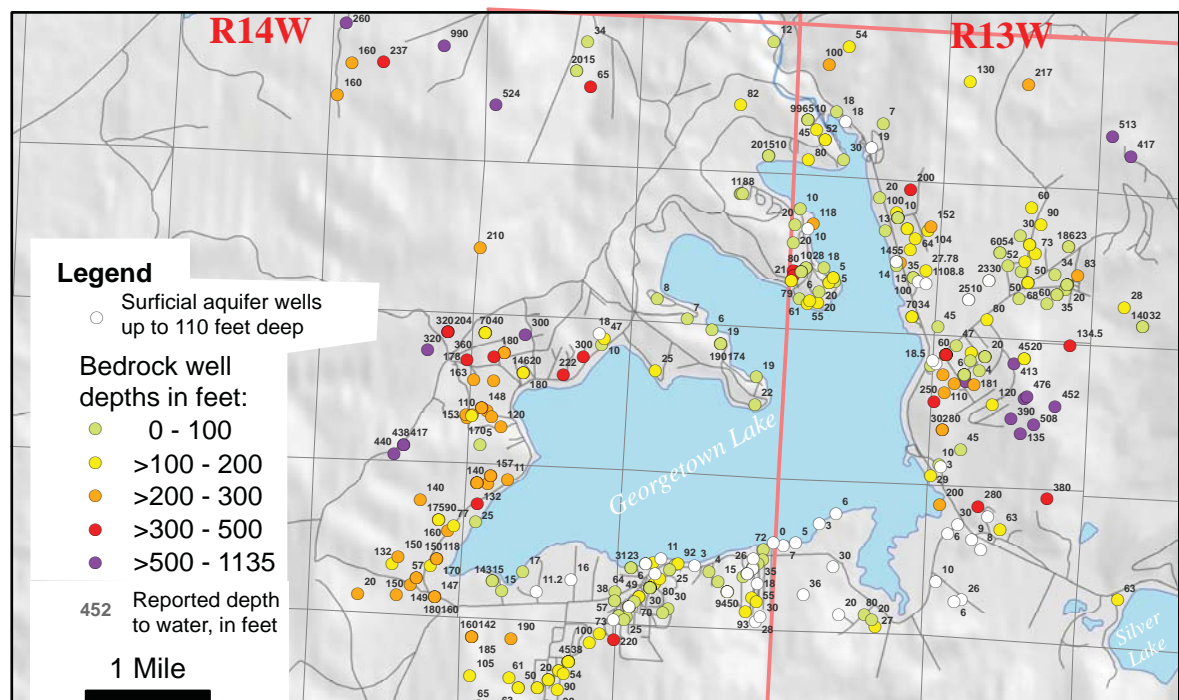
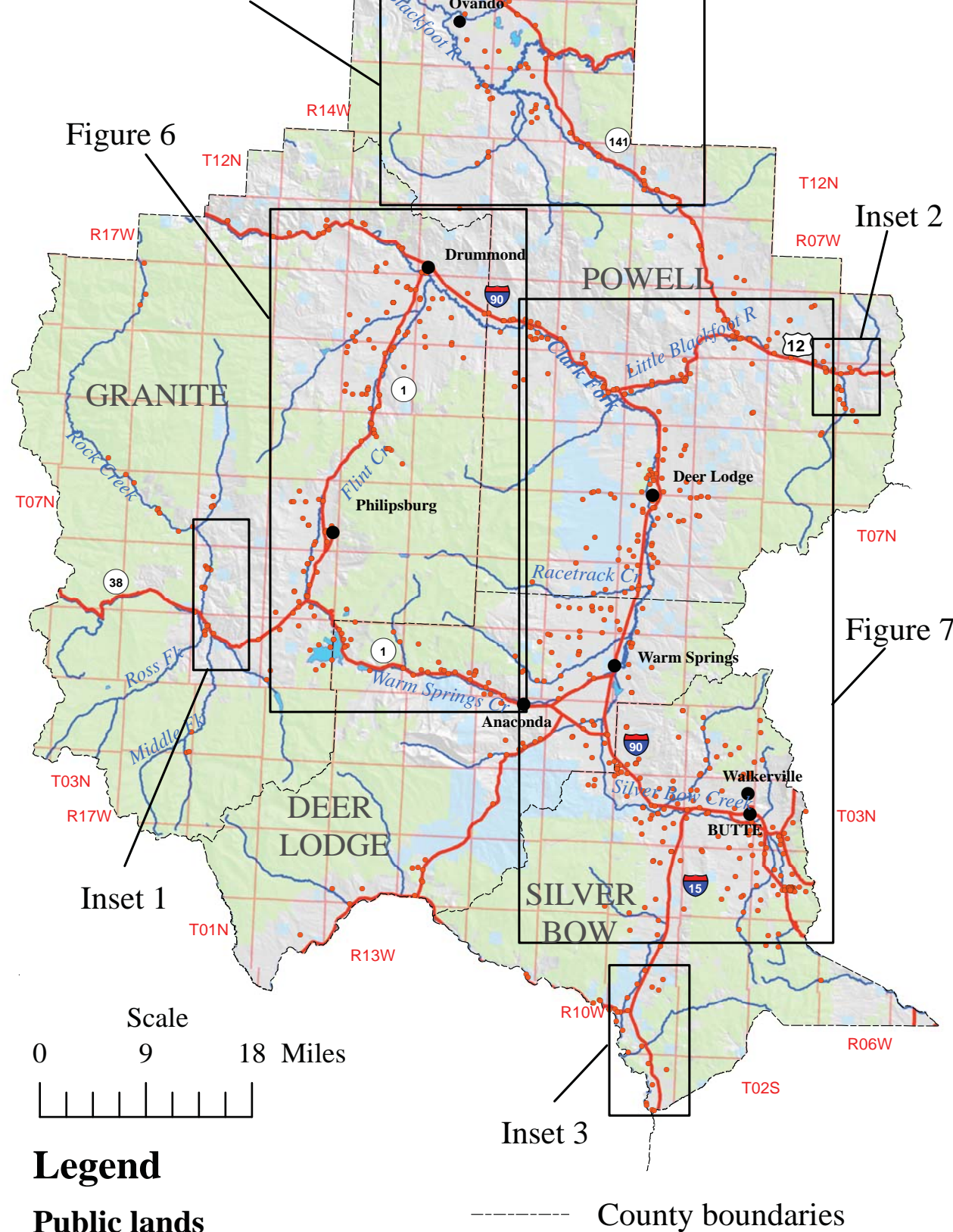


Figure 2. Diagrammatic cross section of bedrock and basin fill (from Carstarph)



an illustrating stratigraphic relationships between
 en and others, 2004). The groundwater-flow paths





(blue arrows) added here illustrate examples of (a) deep, (b) shallow, and (c) intermediate

Each intermontane basin is a somewhat (1996). Depending on thickness and layering, and deep groundwater flow components (1) flow infiltration, direct precipitation, and stratigraphy may create numerous stacked

On a basin scale, the layered sediment exceeding vertical permeability, and the single hydrogeologic unit. Typically, inter areas at their downstream ends where less be manifested as springs, marshes, and gain

Unconsolidated surficial sediments associated generally coarse-grained and, where sufficient are generally recharged from direct precipitation

Groundwater levels fluctuate in response to occurring at annual, diurnal, seasonal, or monthly level changes in any particular well dependent pumping), and the aquifer's hydrologic processes seasonal and surficial water-level influences

Within the study area, many wells display irrigation activity beginning in about mid-irrigation ditches and canals and applied irrigation source of groundwater recharge. In these areas the irrigation season, stay elevated with after the irrigation season; at some sites the

Methods

The maps on this plate were constructed from level measurements and estimated water level guide the contouring, as were potentiometric Phillipsburg valleys (Voeller and Warren, Lake (Roberts and Warren, 2001), the Deer several areas along the Big Hole River (measurements were collected between the Assessment Program (GWAP); the data set and 19 spring altitudes (Carstarphen and determined with hand-held or survey-grade

...mples of how groundwater flows through (a) bedrock
...iate, and (d) deep paths through basin-fill aquifers.

isolated groundwater flow system (Kendy and Tresch,
...ng of the basin fill, there may be shallow, intermediate,
...fig. 2). Recharge occurs from irrigation practices, stream
...adjacent bedrock units. The layered Tertiary basin-fill
...water-bearing zones at any particular location.

ts generally result in horizontal permeability greatly
...entire basin fill and surrounding bedrock often act as a
...rmontane basins have discernible groundwater discharge
...permeable bedrock forces water upward to the surface to
...ning-stream reaches.

lated with either modern streams or glacial features are
...ciently thick and saturated, make excellent aquifers. They
...tation, irrigation practices, and surface water.

to a wide variety of natural and anthropogenic influences
...multi-year frequencies (Freeze and Cherry, 1979). Water-
...on sources and types of recharge, discharge (including
...properties. Deep wells, somewhat removed from short-term
...es, tend to best reflect long-term climate.

ay water-level changes clearly associated with seasonal
...-April and lasting through the end of September. Leaky
...rrigation water not utilized by crops can be a significant
...areas, water levels tend to rise dramatically at the start of
...some irregularities during summer months, and decline
...e decline continues until the next irrigation cycle begins.

by hand-contouring a combination of inventoried water-
...vels from driller's logs. Topographic maps were used to
...etric maps from previous studies in the Drummond and
...1997), the Kleinschmidt Flat northeast of Kleinschmidt
...er Lodge Valley (Konizeski and others, 1968), and in
...Marvin and Voeller, 2000). The inventoried water-level
...February 2000 and July 2002 by the Ground Water
...set included 779 measured water-level altitudes in wells
...d others, 2004). Locations of inventoried sites were
...de GPS units and are accurate to within 50 ft (15 m).

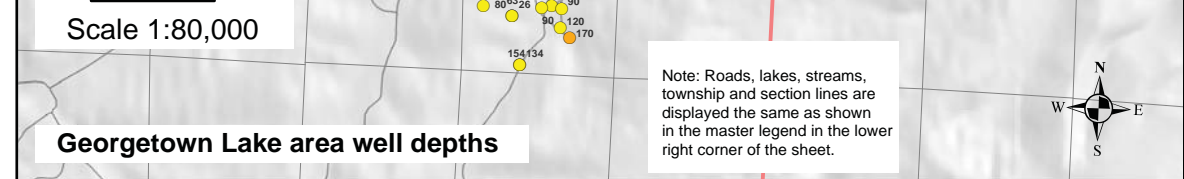


Figure 4. Georgetown Lake area well depths in Township 5 North, Ranges 13 and 14 West.

Descriptions of selected areas

Georgetown Lake

The Georgetown Lake area is shown in figure 4 and in the lower-left part of figure 6. This area contains more than 400 well records, about 67 percent of which have been drilled since 1990. Figure 4 displays the locations of wells reportedly completed in surficial unconsolidated aquifers, generally sand and gravel materials (white circles), and the depth ranges of bedrock wells by color. Static water-level depths are labeled throughout the figure. There are many surficial aquifer and shallow bedrock wells along certain edges of the lake. Deep wells are prevalent along the west shore and east of the lake. The lake altitude on the USGS 1:24,000 topographic map is 6,378 ft, nearly the same as the 6,383-ft mean groundwater-level altitude reported for bedrock wells within about 1.25 miles of the lake (all altitudes are reported as feet above mean sea level). Groundwater-level altitudes in this area range from 6,095 to more than 6,700 ft. About half of the bedrock wells have water-level altitudes within about 50 ft of the lake level, in the range of 6,330 to 6,430 ft. The configuration of the potentiometric surface (fig. 6) indicates that on the northeast and southeast sides regional groundwater flow is toward the lake. The median reported well yield is 18 gpm, with the majority of reported yields ranging from 5 to 40 gpm.

Blackfoot River and Nevada Creek area

The Blackfoot River and Nevada Creek area is shown in figure 5. Much of the valley floor is covered with unconsolidated glacial till. The till typically consists of clay with varying amounts of sand, gravel, and boulders. Till often contains many somewhat separate and disjointed water-bearing zones rather than acting as a single, unified aquifer. Consequently, water levels and well depths are more variable than those observed in coarse, more homogeneous materials.

Kleinschmidt Flat, northeast of Kleinschmidt Lake (fig. 5), is a coarse-grained outwash plain of thick sand, gravel, and conglomerate; the deposits are reportedly cemented at many localities. The outwash aquifer is bounded by relatively impermeable bedrock or till on all sides. Water enters the aquifer as direct losses from the North Fork Blackfoot River and its tributaries at the upper end of the flat, as well as from irrigation losses and direct infiltration of precipitation and snowmelt (Roberts and Waren, 2001). Groundwater levels at the upper, northeast end of Kleinschmidt Flat fluctuate seasonally as much as 45 ft. These fluctuations diminish downgradient toward the discharge area marked by many springs and spring creeks. In the discharge zone, groundwater levels are relatively stable, changing only a few feet annually.

Ellet Creek Basin, Drummond and Bluff Lake Valley

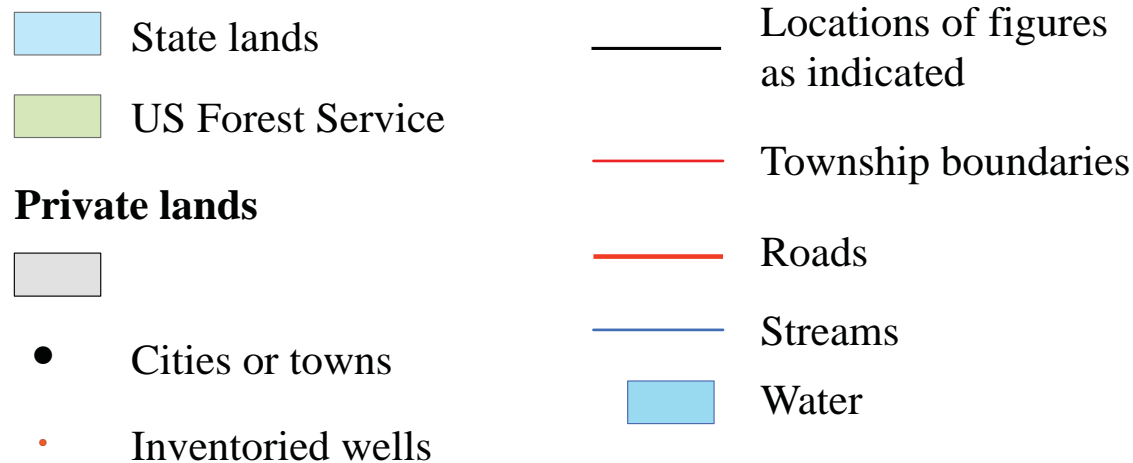


Figure 1. Study area map with land ownership information and key to the locations of selected figures.

Potentiometric Surface Map of Basin Fill and Selected Bedrock Aquifers: Deer Lodge, Granite, Powell, and Silver Bow Counties, Montana

By

Kirk B. Warren and John I. LaFave

Author's Note: This map is part of the Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology (MBMG) Ground Water Assessment Atlas for the Upper Clark Fork River Area. It is intended to stand alone and describe a single hydrogeologic aspect of the study area, although many of the area's hydrogeologic features are interrelated. For an integrated view of the hydrogeology of the Upper Clark Fork River Area, the reader is referred to other maps and reports of Montana Ground Water Assessment Atlas 5.

Introduction

This map portrays potentiometric surfaces for surficial unconsolidated, basin-fill, and bedrock aquifers at selected locations within the Upper Clark Fork River Ground Water Characterization Area. Figure 1 shows the study area, principal geographic and cultural features, and the extents of maps in figures 5, 6 and 7, and insets 1, 2, and 3.

A potentiometric surface represents the altitude to which water levels will rise in wells completed in an aquifer. In the study area, most wells are completed within the surficial unconsolidated alluvial and Tertiary basin-fill deposits or in fractured rock on the valley margins. The potentiometric surfaces depicted here are based on water levels in wells of the most common

Land-surface altitudes at inventoried well 1:24,000 topographic maps and are generated from 100-foot contour intervals). These inventoried data include potentiometric contours. The well locations are shown on the maps: yellow circles for larger symbols on the maps: yellow circles for Tertiary basin-fill wells, and green squares for

The inventoried data set was supplemented with driller's logs at 5,810 sites. The estimated water levels were sparse, and helped confirm the measured data were sparse, and helped confirm the accuracy of the estimated groundwater levels. The reported water level was subtracted from the ground surface altitude to determine the groundwater altitude. Because of uncertainty in the accuracy of the estimated groundwater levels, Wells with estimated groundwater levels are

Between 2000 and 2003, monthly water levels were provided to provide insight regarding seasonal fluctuations. A star on the maps. Selected hydrographs are shown in figure 7, with the border color of the hydrograph indicating when the well is completed: yellow for surficial unconsolidated, and red for bedrock. The hydrographs depict the variation in seasonal groundwater fluctuations across the

Geologic maps including the state geologic map (Montana Assessment Atlas 5, Map 2 (Smith, 2009)) and the geologic map (Berg and Hargrave, 2004) were used to determine the area, most of the wells (46%) are completed in fractured-bedrock aquifers, and

Reported information on driller's logs was used to determine the surficial unconsolidated, Tertiary basin-fill, and bedrock aquifers (fig. 3a). The median well yield is 100 gpm. Of the 2,169 surficial aquifer wells with reported yields, the median yield for Tertiary aquifer wells exceeded 500 gpm, and the median yield for bedrock aquifer wells was 100 gpm. Median reported well depths for the surficial unconsolidated aquifers, 105 ft; Tertiary basin-fill aquifers, 105 ft; and bedrock aquifers, 105 ft.

depths at any particular location. In general, the potentiometric surface is a subdued representation of the regional topography; the highest groundwater altitudes coincide with the regional topographic highs and the lowest altitudes with the regional topographic lows. Lateral groundwater movement will be in a direction perpendicular to potentiometric contours from higher to lower altitudes.

The maps are based on about 800 measured water-level and spring altitudes gathered during site visits between February 2000 and July 2002. In addition, data from previous groundwater investigations and reports were used where they provided additional detail; reported water levels from driller's well logs and water rights applications were used where measured data were sparse. All the water-level data used to compile this map are available from the MBMG's Ground Water Information Center (GWIC).

Geologic setting

The geologic setting of the Upper Clark Fork River Ground Water Characterization Area is described in detail in Montana Ground Water Assessment Atlas 5, Map 2 (Smith, 2009). The area consists of bedrock-cored mountains that separate large valleys. The valleys are connected by distinct canyons along major streams. Smith (2009) defines three principal categories of geologic materials: surficial unconsolidated sediments, Tertiary sedimentary rocks, and bedrock.

On this plate, areas indicated as bedrock combine many types of consolidated rock. See Smith (2009) for a more complete discussion of the geologic setting and detail on bedrock geology. Bedrock forms most of the mountainous parts of the study area and is also present beneath the basin fill. Within the mountainous areas, there are mapped and unmapped surficial unconsolidated, glacial, and stream-deposited sediments of limited extent.

During the Tertiary period (about 65 to 2.6 million years ago), large, wide valleys in western Montana, such as the Deer Lodge Valley, were structurally down dropped relative to surrounding mountains, and filled with hundreds to thousands of feet of Tertiary and younger sediments (Smith, 2009). Tertiary sediments are typically layered, poorly consolidated deposits that include clay, silt, sand, gravel, conglomerate, shale, sandstone, and volcanic ash; they may include minor amounts of limestone, coal, and volcanic rock. Typically the materials are more consolidated at depth, and if consolidated, are often fractured.

Unconsolidated surficial sediments in the floodplains and under terraces along modern streams typically include sand, gravel, silt, and lesser amounts of clay; in some areas the deposits are glacially deposited till (gravelly clay, silt, sand, and boulders) and outwash (sand and gravel). These surficial deposits are typically less than 70 ft thick, but in a few places, notably in the Blackfoot River and Nevada Creek valleys (fig. 5), the till and outwash may be more than 200 ft thick.

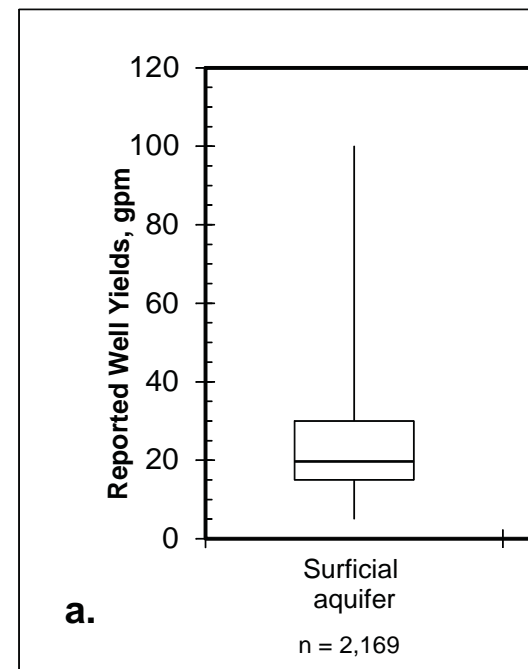
Within the intermontane basins, basin-fill aquifers are saturated Tertiary sedimentary rocks and unconsolidated surficial sediments that can deliver water to wells. Basin-fill aquifers are bounded along the valley margins by fractured bedrock aquifers. Figure 2 is a diagrammatic cross section

depths is illustrated in figure 3b. The lower wells reflect variable fracture densities and

Map use

Contours on potentiometric surface maps provide information about the direction and rate of groundwater flow. Groundwater generally flows from higher to lower altitudes. An estimate of the depth to water from the potentiometric-surface altitude from the map is obtained by noting the depths to water reported on nearby wells. The number of records for any area can be obtained from the map. The contour interval on the contoured potentiometric surface is expected to be within \pm 10 ft of any given point, or \pm the contour interval. The contour interval on the contoured potentiometric surface is 100 ft.

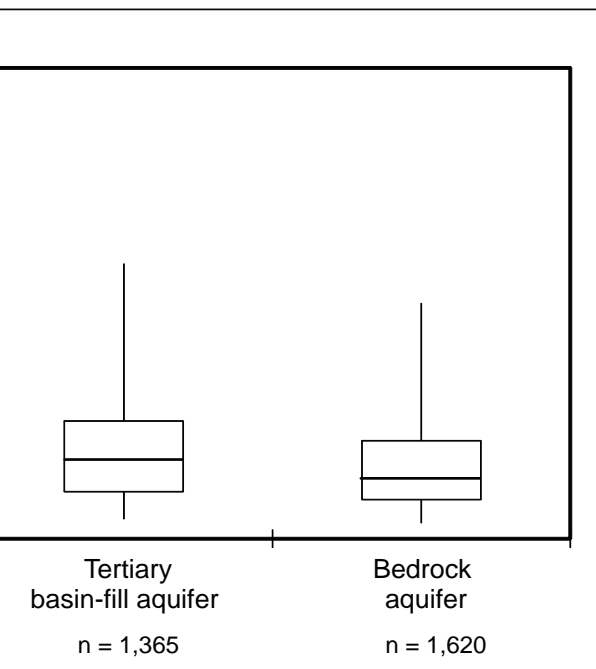
Map accuracy is affected by data distribution and errors in interpretation. Points at which data are collected are unevenly distributed and map accuracy is greater near the center of groundwater fluctuations approach or extend beyond the margins of observed water-level fluctuations. Seasonal variations in water-level changes in areas with seasonal water-level changes in areas with seasonal water-level changes in areas with others (1968), Voeller and Waren (1997), and LaFave (2008).



er well yields and wide range in well depths for bedrock permeabilities in bedrock aquifers.

provide estimated directions of the horizontal component ally moves perpendicular to the contours, from higher to ppth to groundwater can be made by subtracting a and-surface altitude at a desired location, or by simply arby existing well records. For more information, well n the GWIC website (<http://mbmgwic.mtech.edu/>). The ted to be accurate to +/- one-half the contour interval at l where the contours are dashed. For example, where the accuracy is expected to be +/- 50 ft at any given point.

on, field measurement errors, accuracy of well locations, hich water levels have been measured are distributed ear points of measurement. In some areas, seasonal xceed 20 ft (see hydrographs for selected wells for ations). Large seasonal fluctuations in water levels may a groundwater flow direction. Additional details about h supplemental contours is provided in Konizeski and Marvin and Voeller (2000), Roberts and Warren (2001),



Summit Valley are sandy with poor soil development due to their granitic source material, so mobile ions like nitrate readily move through the sediment and into the groundwater (LaFave, 2008). The lack of irrigation development in the Summit Valley is reflected by small seasonal fluctuations in local hydrographs. Apparent downward water-level trends shown in Summit Valley hydrographs are related to dry climate during the study period.

Geothermal features

Warm and hot springs are present in the Deer Lodge Valley, to the northwest along the Clark Fork River, and also near Avon (Sonderegger and Bergantino, 1981). The warm springs have temperatures in the range of about 70 to 80 degrees Fahrenheit, while hot springs at Gregson, about 5 miles south of Opportunity and at Warm Springs are 158 and 172 degrees Fahrenheit, respectively. Wells between 300 and 600 ft deep at Gregson provide hot water to Fairmont Hot Springs resort. The Deer Lodge Valley, the Clark Fork Valley in Granite and Powell Counties, and the valley of the Little Blackfoot River are all mapped as areas expected to contain geothermal resources suitable for direct heat applications (Sonderegger and Bergantino, 1981).

Data sources

Base layers of physiography, hydrology, and cultural features were derived from Geographic Information System coverages available at the Montana State Library Natural Resource Information System, Helena, Montana (<http://nr.is.mt.gov/>).

Acknowledgments

This work was supported by the Ground Water Characterization Program at the Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology. Information extracted from the Ground Water Information Center database by the database manager, Luke Buckley. The map and text were improved by reviewers Thomas Patton, John Metesh, Jake Kandelin, and Jim Stimson. Edited by Susan Barth.

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along the valley margins by fractured-bedrock aquifers. Figure 2 is a diagrammatic cross section showing general relationships between bedrock aquifers and basin-fill materials, and general groundwater flow paths.

Hydrogeologic setting

Precipitation is more abundant in the surrounding mountainous areas than in the inset valleys. Water, seasonally stored and released from mountain snowpack, contributes substantially to spring and summer stream flow. The greatest water use in the Upper Clark Fork River Area is irrigated agriculture. Most of the irrigated acreage is located in the valley bottoms where precipitation is less than in the mountains, but where the growing season is longer.

Mountainous areas surrounding the valleys are typically underlain by consolidated bedrock, such as granite, basalt, meta-sedimentary quartzites, and argillites (Smith, 2009). Permeability in these rocks is through interconnected fractures that typically become less connected with depth (Freeze and Cherry, 1979). Bayuk (1989) noted that specific yields in Belt Supergroup bedrock southwest of Missoula, Montana, decreased by a factor of four at depths greater than 250 ft.

Water that infiltrates into the fractured bedrock in the mountains percolates downward and then moves laterally outward from the mountains to the valleys as permeability allows. The lateral movement of water from the mountains to the valleys is a source of recharge to basin-fill aquifers, and can provide baseflow to streams or appear as springs.

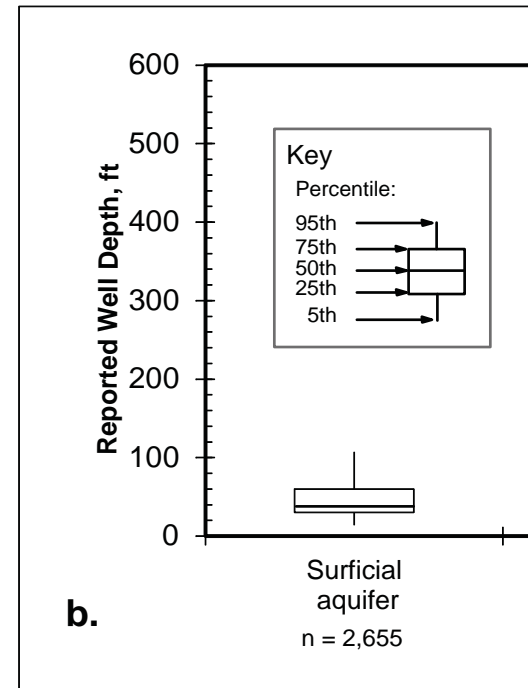
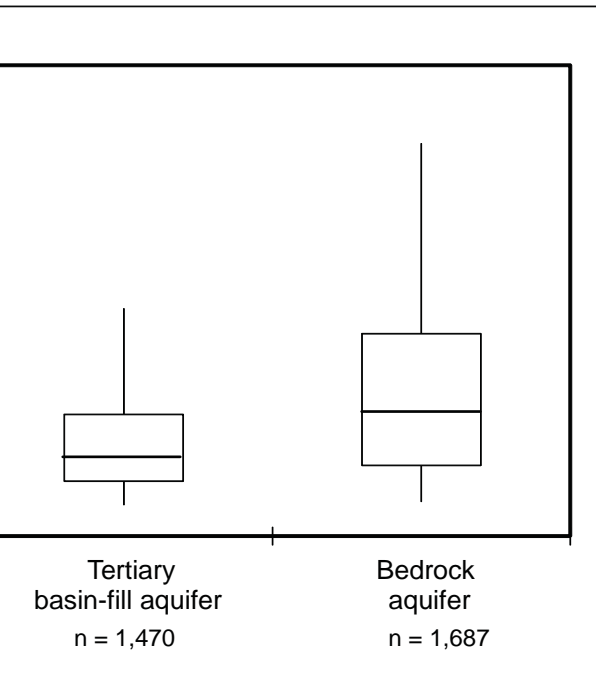


Figure 3. Distribution of (a) well yield, unconsolidated, Tertiary basin-fill, and



s, and (b) well depths: among surficial
bedrock aquifers.

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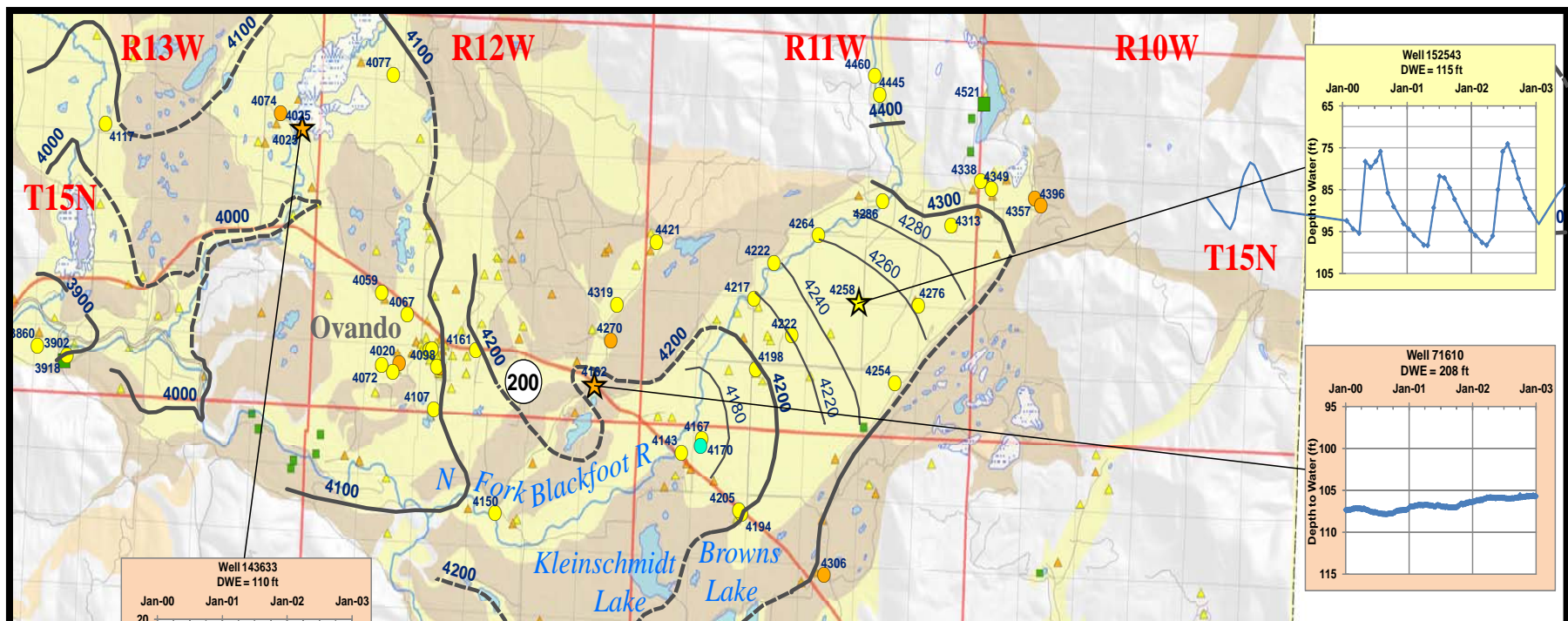
Roberts, M., and Waren, K., 2001, North Fork Blackfoot River hydrologic study: Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation Report WR-3.C.2.NFB, 38 p.

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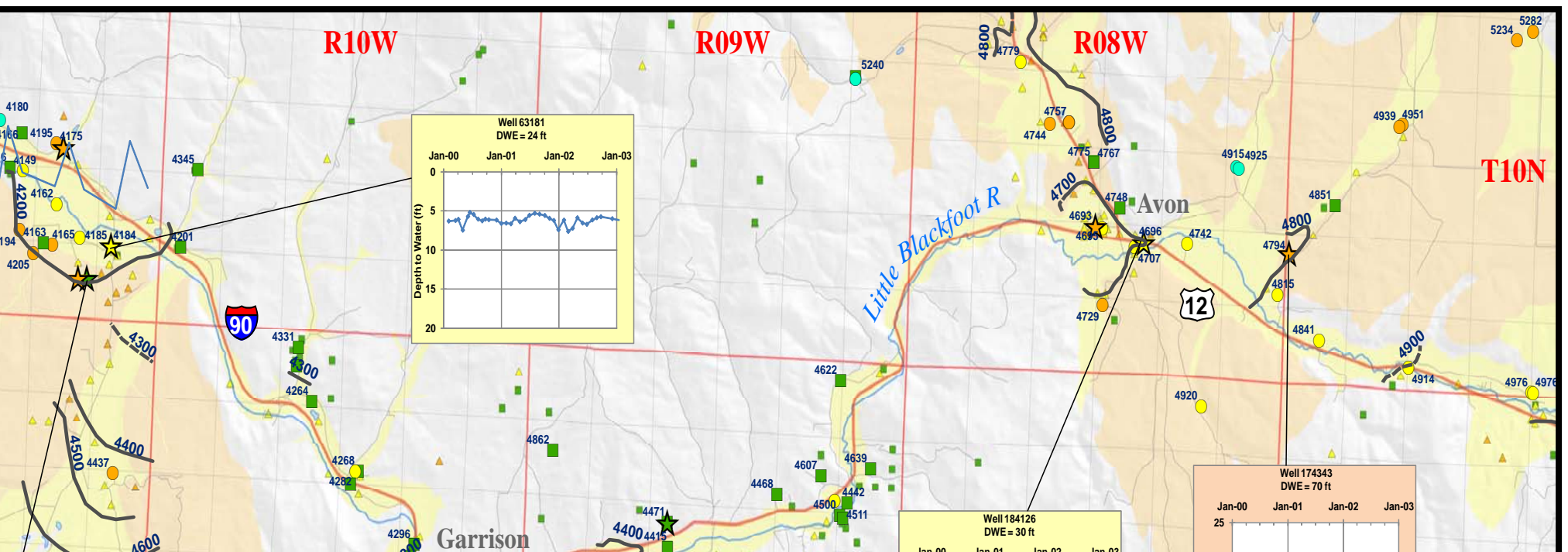
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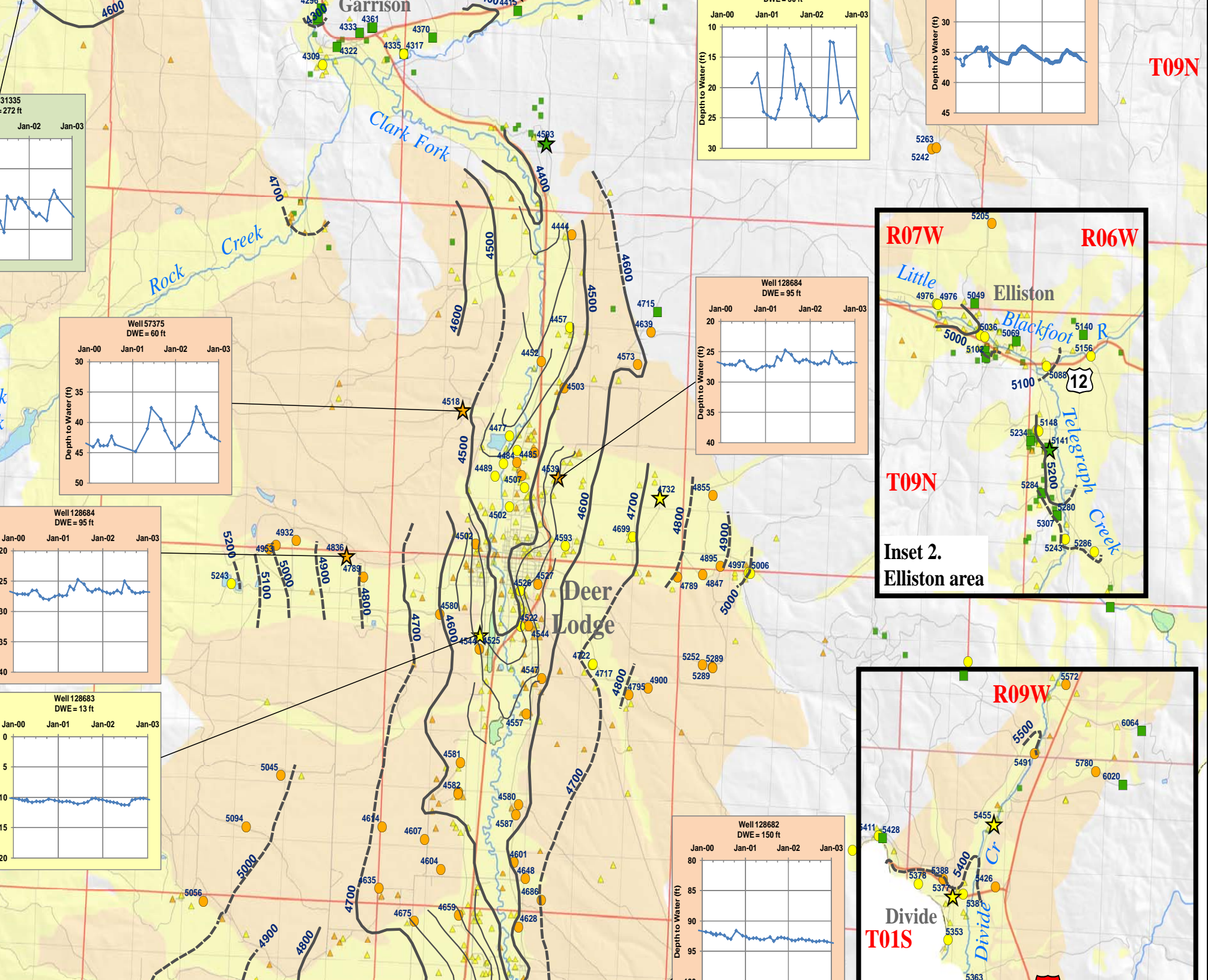
Voeller, T., and Waren, K., 1997, Flint Creek return flow study: Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology Open-File Report 364, 116 p.

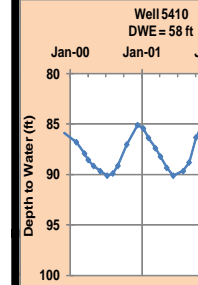
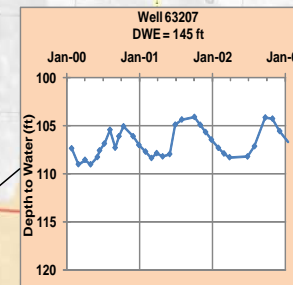
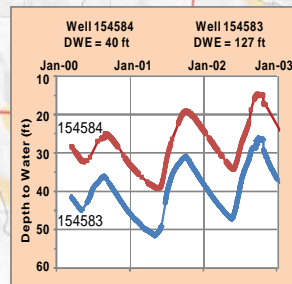
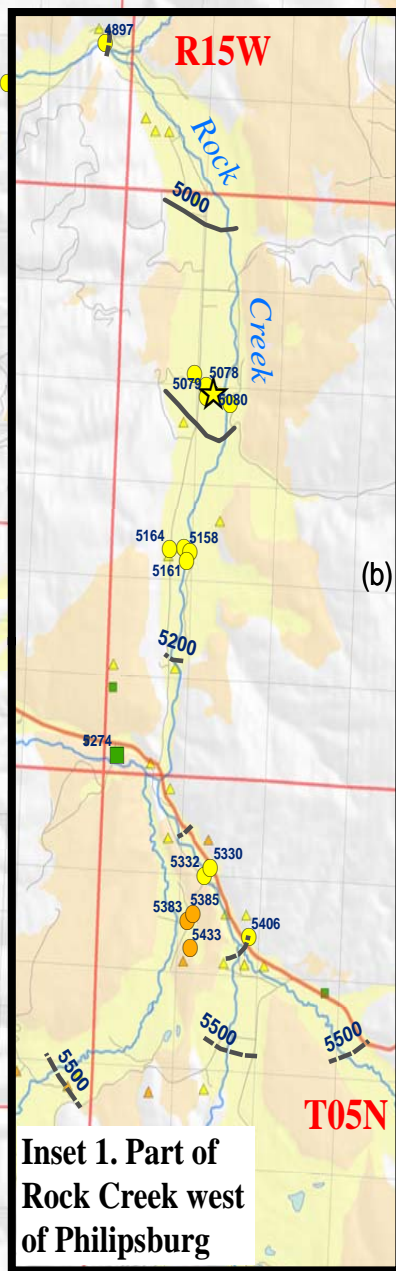
Vuke, S.M., Porter, K.W., Lonn, J.D., and Lopez, D.A., 2007, Geologic Map of Montana: Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology Geologic Map 62A, 73 p., 2 sheets, 1:500,000.



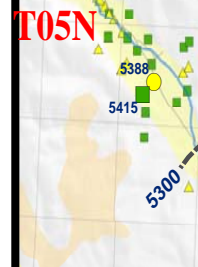
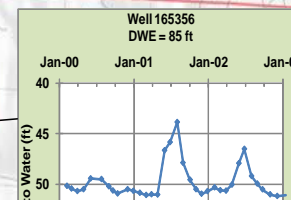
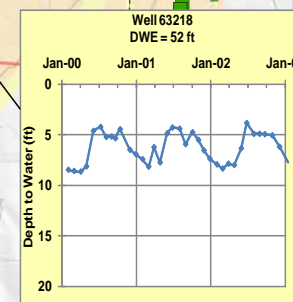
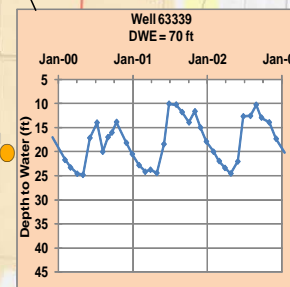
Montana Ground Water Assessment Atlas 5, Map 3 July 2011





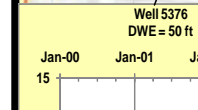


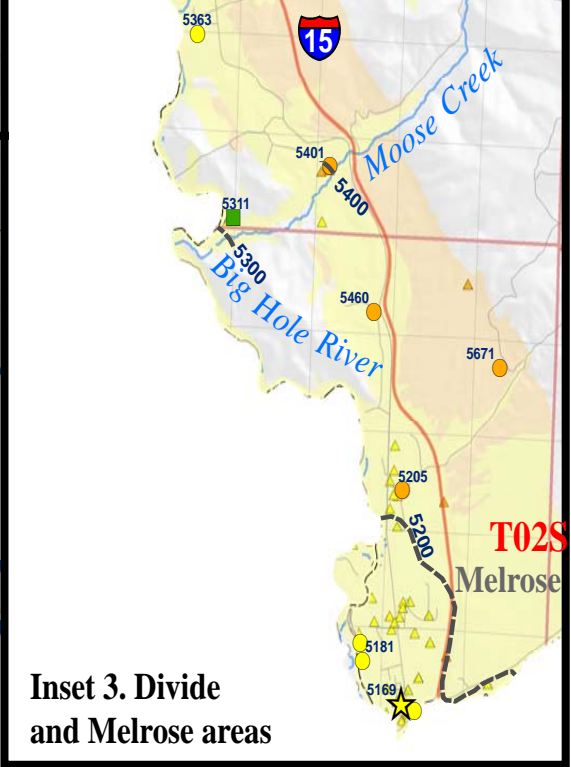
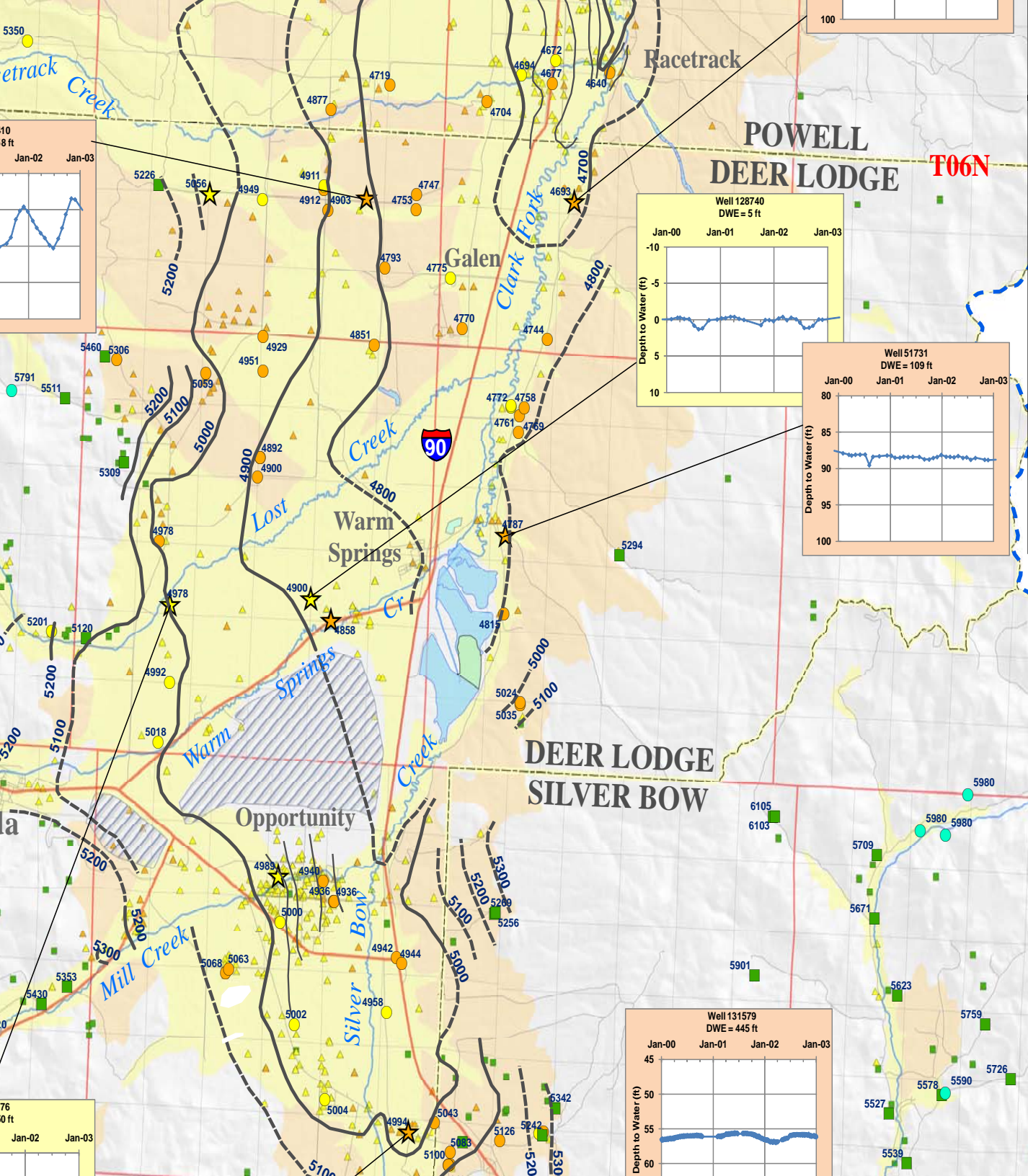
(b)



Anaconda

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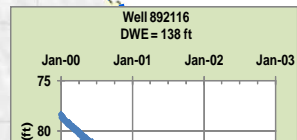
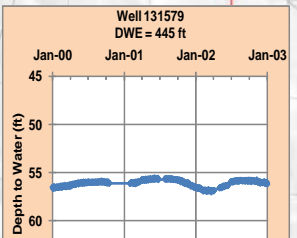
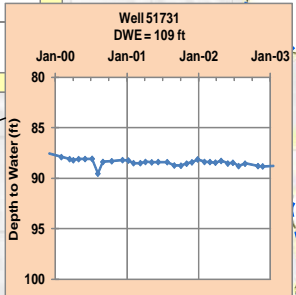
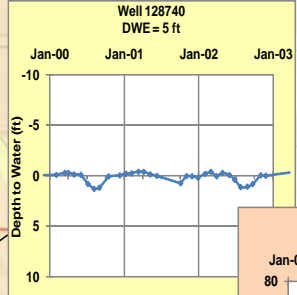


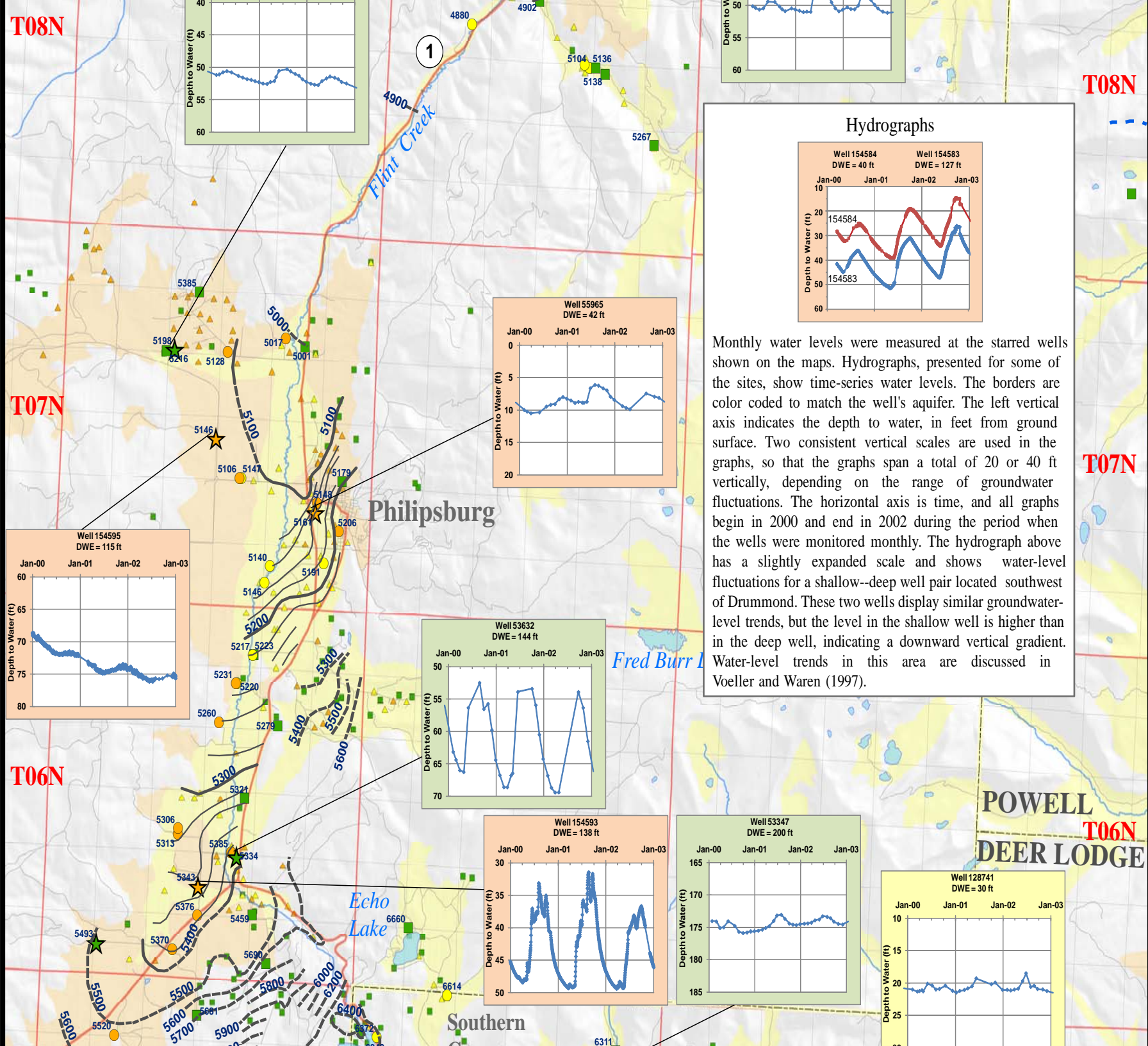


Inset 3. Divide and Melrose areas

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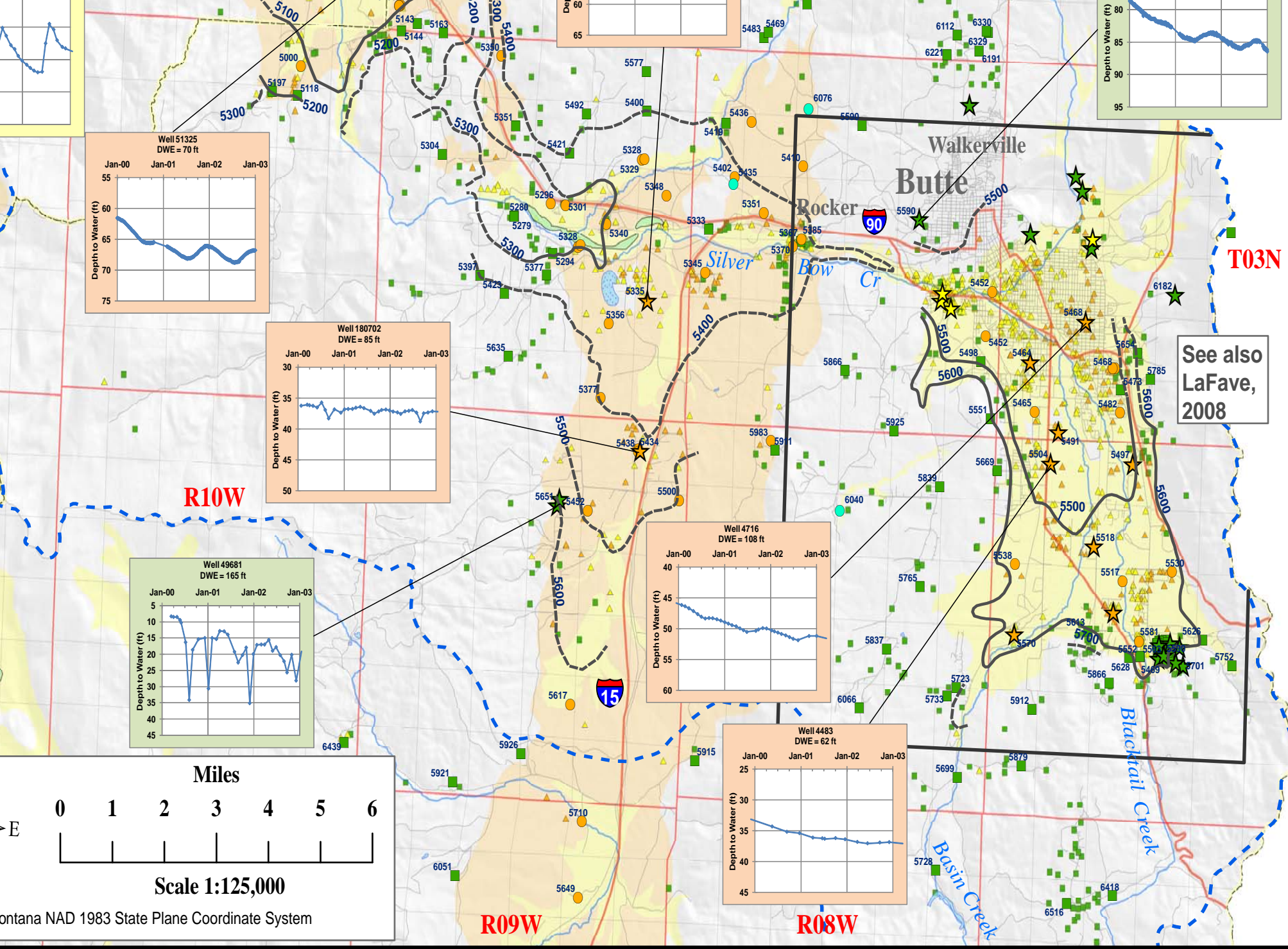




Monthly water levels were measured at the starred wells shown on the maps. Hydrographs, presented for some of the sites, show time-series water levels. The borders are color coded to match the well's aquifer. The left vertical axis indicates the depth to water, in feet from ground surface. Two consistent vertical scales are used in the graphs, so that the graphs span a total of 20 or 40 ft vertically, depending on the range of groundwater fluctuations. The horizontal axis is time, and all graphs begin in 2000 and end in 2002 during the period when the wells were monitored monthly. The hydrograph above has a slightly expanded scale and shows water-level fluctuations for a shallow-deep well pair located southwest of Drummond. These two wells display similar groundwater-level trends, but the level in the shallow well is higher than in the deep well, indicating a downward vertical gradient. Water-level trends in this area are discussed in Voeller and Waren (1997).



Figure 7. Deer Lodge



Lodge and Summit Valleys.

Spring sites

Inventoried spring locations

Water

Water well si

Inventoried sites with measured static water-level altitudes, in feet above mean sea level

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- 5421
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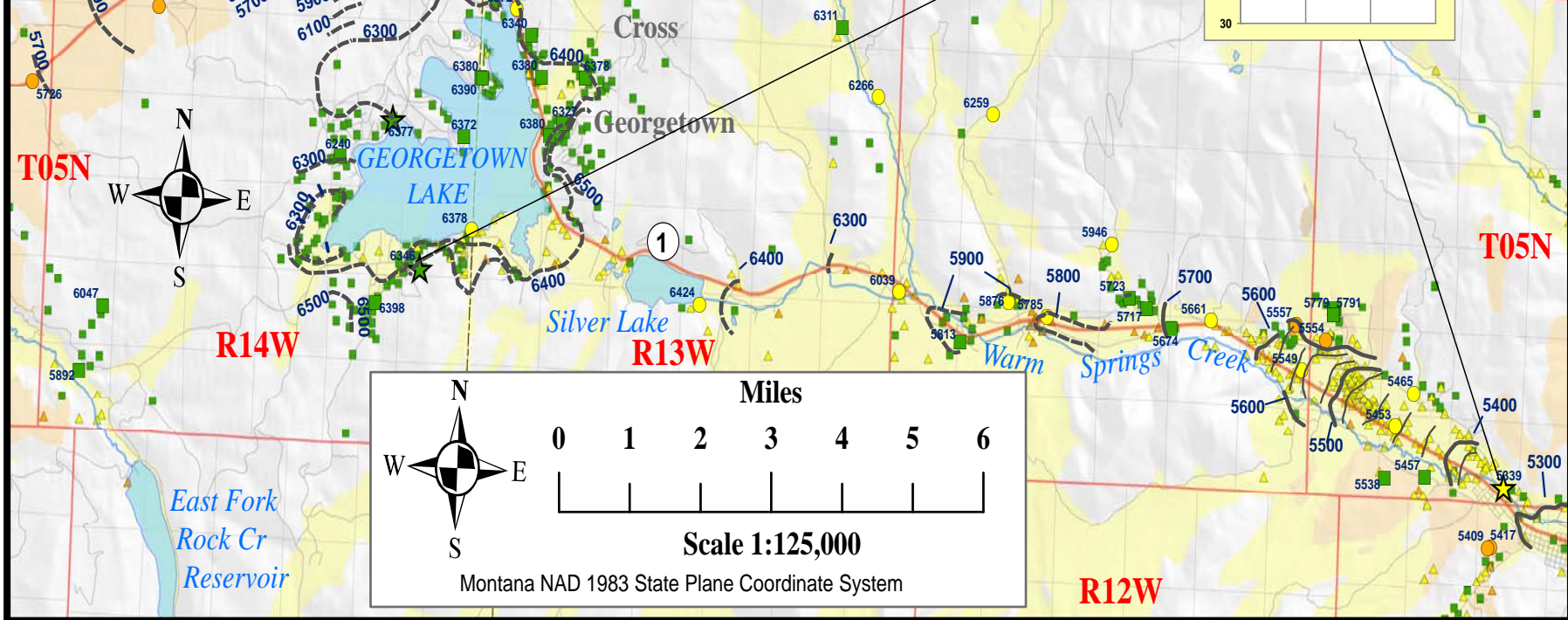
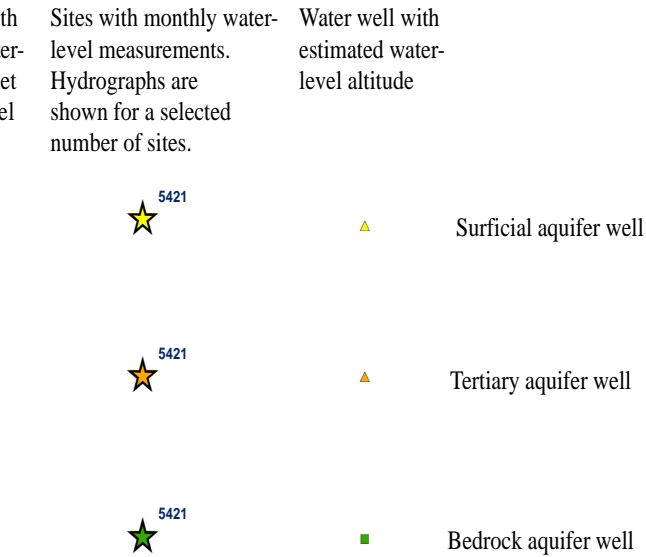


Figure 6. Drummond and Philipsburg Valleys and Georgetown Lake.

sites



Geology

