

ECOLOGICAL BENCH-MARKING AND BIOMONITORING FOR  
DETECTION OF AIRBORNE POLLUTANT EFFECTS ON  
VEGETATION AND SOILS

by

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ABSTRACT

Biomonitoring plots established in 1976 and 1977 were revisited in 1979 and quantified with respect to their vascular plant community of the lower stratum, lichen community of black spruce branches, and both soil and plant element contents. There was no measurable change in any of the above factors.

Several biomonitoring techniques were tested throughout the 5 year study period of this project. Although there was little measurable effect of air pollution in the area as a whole, certain techniques showed promise for long-term biomonitoring for pollution effects.

In general, there was only very limited evidence of biological responses to increased pollutant content in spite of significantly higher pollutant levels in tissues close to existing industrial developments.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Biomonitoring is a technique whereby biological samples are used both as indicators of air pollution impingement and as a measure of air pollution impact. Obviously, the state of health of any organism is the best measure of air pollution impact on that organism. In addition, biomonitoring may relate to specific processes or formations in the ecosystem. In the same manner as with the organism, the process or whole plant community response is the most effective way to assess pollutant impact to those ecosystem components.

Several plant groups, particularly mosses and lichens, have been shown to be very efficient in taking up and storing airborne pollutants (Addison and Puckett in press). If the vegetation of an area can provide a reliable and consistent measure of both the impingement and impact of a specific pollutant, the expense of establishing and maintaining high technology monitoring instrumentation can be eliminated in certain cases.

In the Athabasca Oil Sands area, there appears to be little obvious air pollution injury to the forest ecosystem as a result of Suncor operations (Addison and Baker 1979a). In spite of this, the potential for forest injury in northeastern Alberta is particularly great in view of the current and proposed expansion of oil sands extraction and processing by Syncrude Canada, Alsands, and several other oil companies and consortia (Chaapel 1974). In response to this concern, a set of biomonitoring sites was established in 1976 and 1977 in order to determine a current condition of forest vegetation in the oil sands area (Addison and Baker 1979a; Addison 1980).

The aims of this study in 1979 were to:

1. Re-examine the biomonitoring sites in an attempt to assess air pollution impact over the past 3 to 4 years; and
2. Assess the effectiveness of several techniques to detect air pollution injury to forest components.

2.        STUDY AREA

Jack pine stands at 13 locations were chosen for permanent plots (Figure 1, Table 1). Each stand was dominated by *Pinus banksiana* Lamb. and had an understory of *Cladina* lichens where possible. In all cases, the most open stand was selected to ensure the maximum exposure of all components at each location. These locations were selected in 1976 based upon winter pollutant deposition patterns, topography, and distance from both current and proposed pollutant sources in the area (Addison 1980). In addition, several sites where certain biomonitoring techniques were being tested (Figure 2; Addison and Baker 1979b) were maintained in 1979.

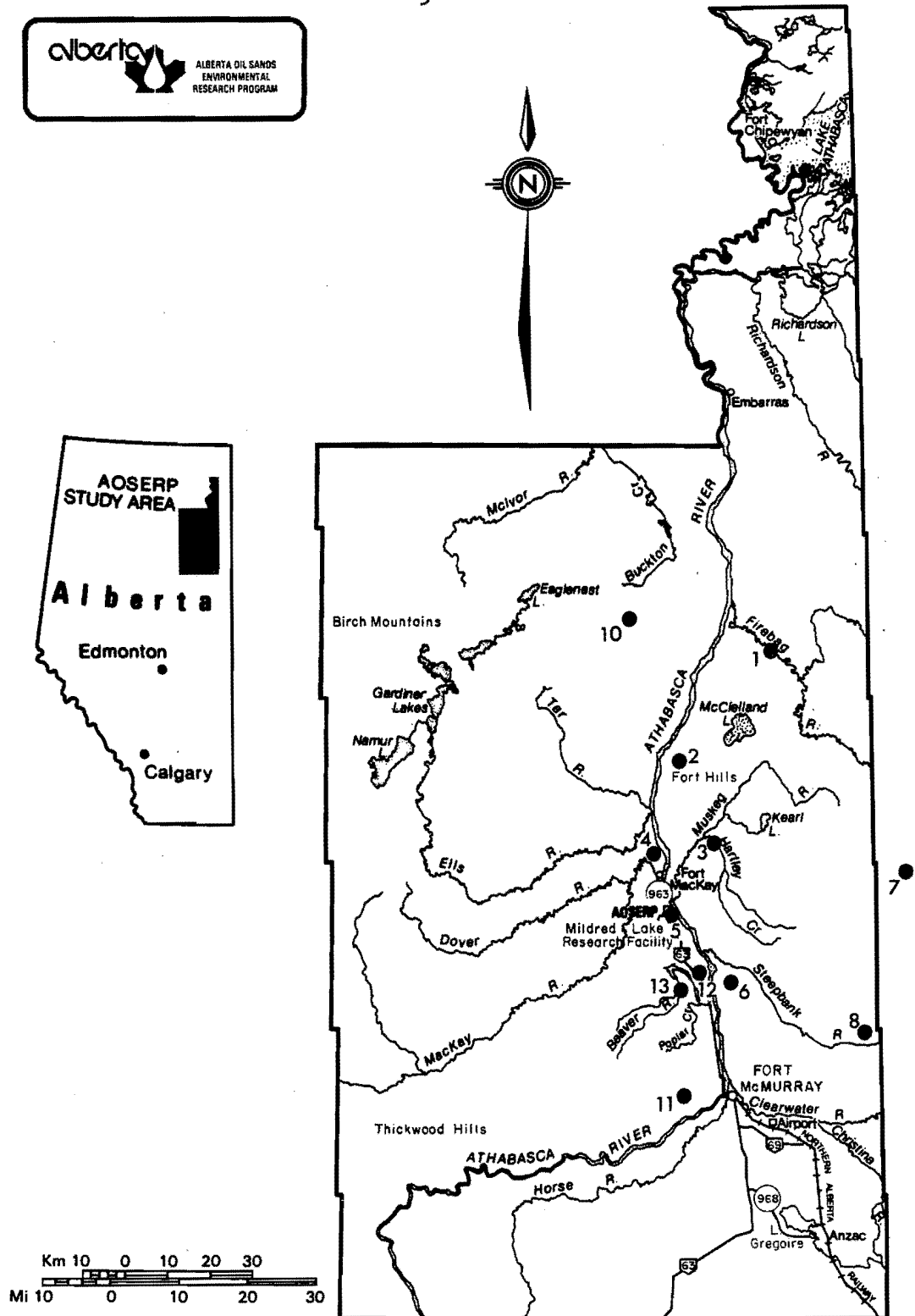


Figure 1. Location of permanent biomonitoring plots in the Athabasca Oil Sands area. For site names, see Table 1.

Table 1. Legal description of jack pine biomonitoring sites in the Athabasca Oil Sands area.

Site Number	Site Name	LSD	Sec	Twp	Range
1	Firebag River	14	02	100	8
2	Bitumount Tower	15	27	96	10
3	Hartley Creek	13	09	95	9
4	Fort MacKay	12	36	94	11
5	Mildred Lake Camp	1	19	93	10
6	Fina Airstrip	15	20	92	9
7	Muskeg Mountain	4	15	94	6
8	North Steepbank River	8	32	90	7
9	Gordon Lake	10	11	88	4
10	Birch Mountain	10-11	24	100	12
11	Thickwood Hills	4	34	89	11
12	Gradient Site A	7	14	92	10
13	Gradient Site D	11	2	92	10

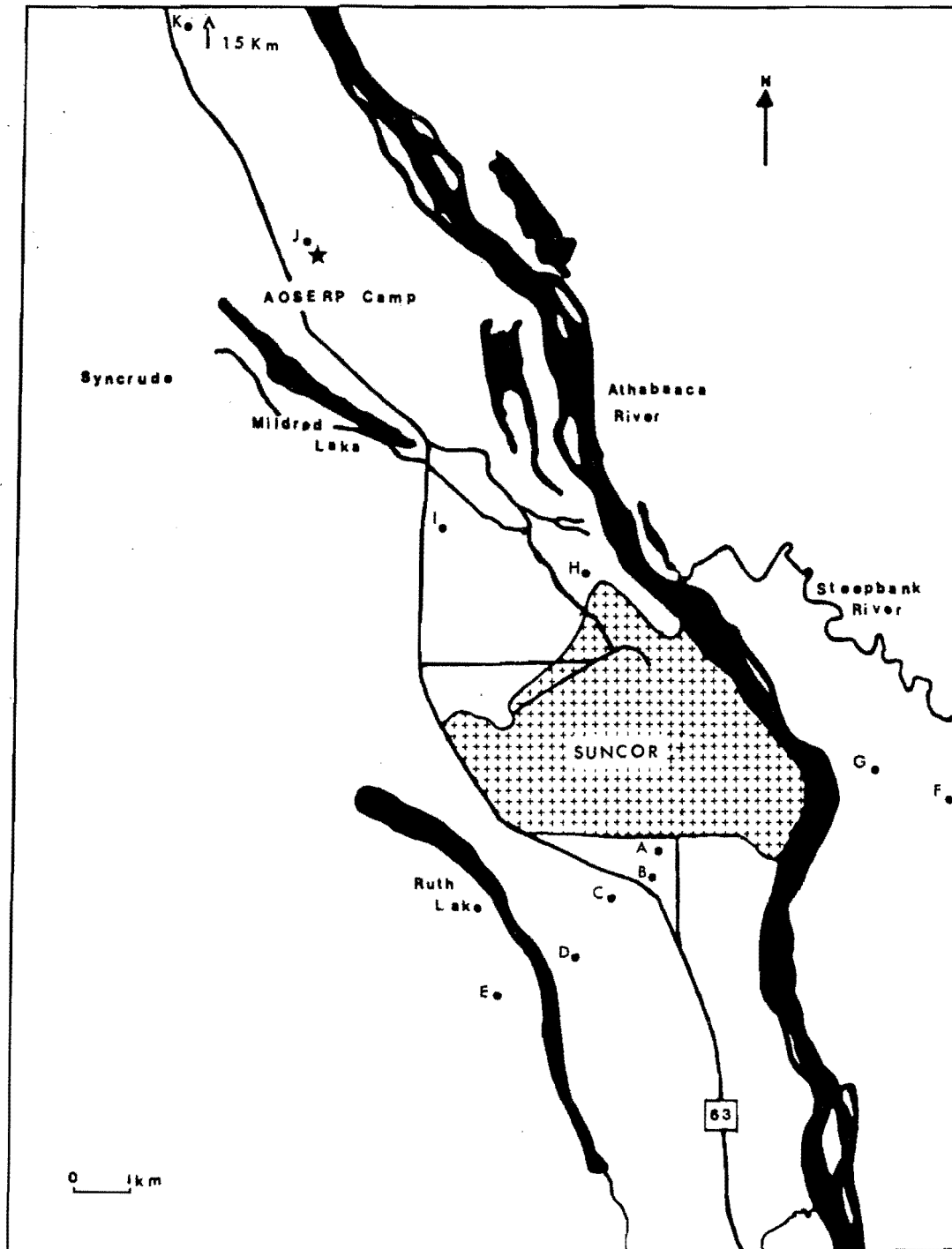


Figure 2. Location of gradient sites and other specific sites used to test biomonitoring techniques.

### 3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

#### 3.1 SITE RE-EXAMINATION

All sites examined in 1979 were quantified as described previously (Addison 1980). Quadrats used for both vascular and cryptogamic plant community descriptions were the same as used in 1976 and 1977 for the establishment of baseline conditions. Both stand density and the physical characteristics of the soil profile were assumed to have remained constant over the past 3 to 4 years. Stand age was assumed to have changed only by the years between sampling times. In addition to the relatively simple physical measurements, samples of plant and soil material were collected and analyzed in the laboratory. The species sampled, the time of collection (July), and the methods employed were identical to those in the baseline study (Addison and Baker 1979a, 1979b; Addison 1980), with the exception that the two additional element contents determined in soils were quantified using atomic absorption spectrophotometry.

#### 3.2 BIOMONITORING TECHNIQUE DEVELOPMENT

Several methods were examined and assessed with respect to their usefulness in detecting biological changes as a result of air pollution impact. Lichen transplants were established close to Suncor, and both community changes and physiological changes of selected species were examined (Addison and Baker 1979a).

The effect of air pollutants on jack pine seed viability was determined by collecting and testing seeds from mature (i.e., 35 year) trees at sites (A to E) of varying distances from Suncor operations (Figure 2). Seed germination tests were carried out in the laboratory by placing three to five replicates of 50 jack pine seeds on moist filter paper at 20°C (day) and 16°C (night) fluctuating temperatures in the light. Germination was recorded after 3 wk.

Radial increment growth of jack pine was determined at five sites (A, G, H, J, and K, Figure 2) by taking two cores from the south and west sides of from five to 10 trees at each site. The increment

for each of the previous 20 years was measured with an Addo-X Tree Ring Measuring Instrument, and the data from the two cores were averaged. Age (at 30 cm above ground) of the trees sampled was also determined since only cores that went through the centre were retained.

At a site close to the pollution source (Site A) and at one about 10 km distant (Mildred Camp), five branches from the top one-third of each of five trees were collected. The length (distance between bud scale scars in millimetres) and the number of needles were determined for each of five age classes on each branch. Tree ages at both sites were from 35 to 40 years. The content of Al, Fe, and S was also determined for each sample of needles by techniques described by Addison (1980).

The biological measurements that were selected to demonstrate plant response to air pollutants characteristic of oil sands operations were compared with physical measurements of pollutant deposition as either a gas (Huey Sulphation Plates) or in total (precipitation and fallout collectors). Methods followed Addison and Baker (1979b) with the exception that the collectors did not utilize a resin column and liquid samples were concentrated through evaporation in the laboratory. The solutions were analyzed using methods described for soil extracts by Addison and Baker (1979b).

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

##### 4.1 SITE RE-EXAMINATION

###### 4.1.1 Vascular Plant Community Description

As stated previously (Addison 1980), no distinct pattern in the 1976 stand description was evident that could be related to the distance of sites from oil sands operations. Figure 2 shows the 1979 pattern of sites superimposed on the 1976 synthesis. The four groups of sites that were related to stand density and site moisture status in 1976 (Addison 1980) were even more clearly defined in the 1979 results. In examining how similar 1979 observations were in comparison to 1976 ones, no relationship with distance or direction could be detected (Table 2). Five sites were less than 85% similar in 1979 compared with 1976, but none of these sites was within the zone of maximum impingement (Addison and Puckett 1980). In addition, the sites with the least change could not be related to distance or direction from the source. It is possible that some of the changes in cover and frequency of plant species at these sites were a result of error in placement of quadrats from one sampling time to another. Individual quadrats were mapped but not permanently marked; hence, errors in re-positioning may have been responsible for some of the changes seen in Figure 2.

In general, the examination of jack pine stands over time (1976 to 1979) provided no evidence of vegetation decline. There was, therefore, no measureable effect of the Suncor operations on the jack pine plant community in the Athabasca Oil Sands area.

###### 4.1.2 Lichen Community Description

All 11 sites where lichen communities were quantified in 1976 were re-examined in 1979 with respect to the cover of the four species groups (Table 3) described by Addison (1980). No significant differences in cover between 1976 and 1979 were found for any species group at any site, with two exceptions (Table 4). *Evernia* showed a



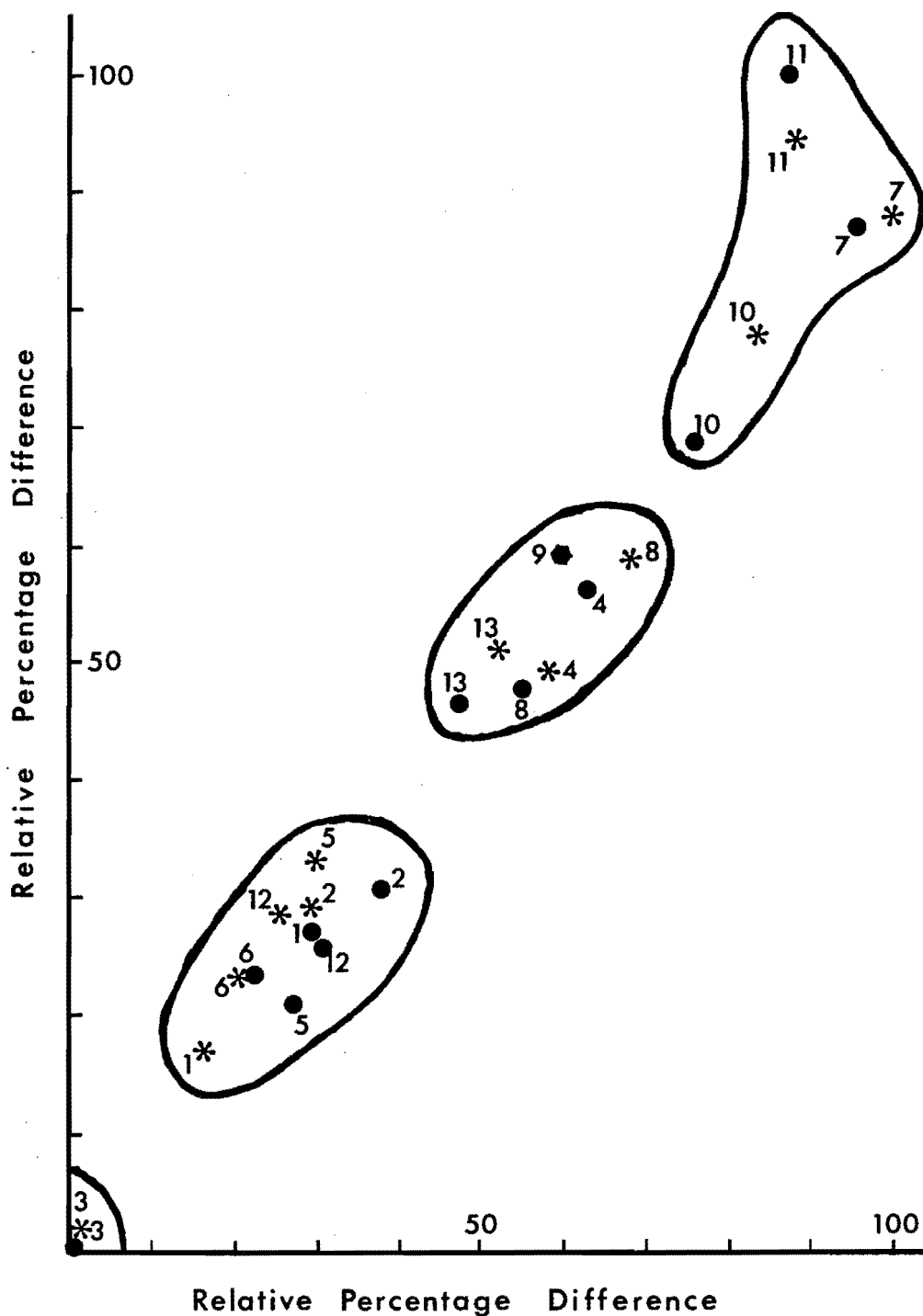


Figure 3. Bray-Curtis ordination of jack pine biomonitoring plots based on frequency-cover indices of lower stratum vascular plants 1976 (●) and 1979 (\*).

Table 2. Similarity of sites in 1976 versus 1979 from a Bray-Curtis ordination of lower stratum vascular species frequency-cover indices.

Site	Distance (km) and Direction from Suncor Inc.		Percent Similarity
Gradient Site A	2.8	SSW	89.7
Fina Airstrip	4.0	ESE	90.1
Gradient Site D	5.3	SSW	90.4
Mildred Lake Camp	10.5	NW	81.9
Fort MacKay	23.7	NNW	89.0
Hartley Creek	25.0	N	92.1
Thickwood Hills	30.0	SW	80.2
North Steepbank River	30.6	ESE	74.3
Muskeg Mountain	39.4	ENE	85.0
Bitumount Tower	39.8	N	83.4
Gordon Lake	72.8	SE	93.2
Firebag River	74.0	NNE	81.5
Birch Mountain	80.0	NNW	89.9

Table 3. Predominant macrolichens occurring on black spruce branches in the Athabasca Oil Sands area of Alberta. Group name indicates grouping used in transplant studies.

Species	Group
<i>Evernia mesomorpha</i> Nyl.	Evernia
<i>Usnea</i> spp. (tufted)	Evernia
<i>Usnea</i> spp. (pendulate)	Evernia
<i>Ramalina</i> spp.	Evernia
<i>Hypogymnia physodes</i> (L.) W. Wats.	Hypogymnia
<i>Parmelia sulcata</i> Tayl.	Hypogymnia
<i>Cetraria halei</i> W. Culb & C. Culb	Cetraria
<i>C. pinastri</i> (Scop.) S. Gray	Cetraria
<i>Bryoria glabra</i> (Mot.) Brodo & D. Hawksws	Bryoria

Table 4. Changes in cover of dominant lichen species groups at biomonitoring sites in the Athabasca Oil Sands area.

Site	Year	Evernia	Bryoria	Hypogymnia	Cetraria
1. Firebag River	1976	29.37 ± 3.50	0.35 ± 0.24	4.57 ± 0.93	2.05 ± 0.93
	1979	<u>31.77 ± 3.93</u>	<u>0.40 ± 0.30</u>	<u>5.30 ± 0.72</u>	<u>2.44 ± 0.90</u>
	Difference	2.4	0.05	0.73	0.39
3. Hartley Creek	1976	10.35 ± 4.16	0	7.01 ± 1.20	0.36 ± 0.25
	1979	<u>2.72 ± 2.42</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>8.04 ± 3.02</u>	<u>0.48 ± 0.40</u>
	Difference	-7.63 <sup>a</sup>	0	1.03	0.12
4. Fort MacKay	1976	36.53 ± 5.99	0.37 ± 0.24	5.68 ± 0.72	0.51 ± 0.26
	1979	<u>34.45 ± 5.02</u>	<u>0.08 ± 0.07</u>	<u>6.44 ± 0.92</u>	<u>1.09 ± 0.58</u>
	Difference	-2.08	-0.29 <sup>b</sup>	0.76	0.58
5. Mildred Camp	1976	44.15 ± 3.68	0.98 ± 0.35	9.09 ± 3.11	0.65 ± 0.32
	1979	<u>47.25 ± 3.12</u>	<u>0.60 ± 0.43</u>	<u>10.75 ± 1.97</u>	<u>0.87 ± 0.39</u>
	Difference	3.10	-0.38	1.66	0.22
6. Pina Airstrip	1976	10.03 ± 6.14	0.12 ± 0.15	7.22 ± 2.96	1.28 ± 1.13
	1979	<u>7.61 ± 6.54</u>	<u>0.04 ± 0.09</u>	<u>5.89 ± 2.72</u>	<u>1.51 ± 1.15</u>
	Difference	-2.42	-0.08	-1.33	0.23
8. North Steepbank River	1976	25.42 ± 5.22	0.28 ± 0.20	2.77 ± 0.67	2.28 ± 0.47
	1979	<u>22.19 ± 7.16</u>	<u>0.31 ± 0.22</u>	<u>3.35 ± 0.97</u>	<u>1.73 ± 0.40</u>
	Difference	-3.23	0.03	0.58	-0.55
9. Gordon Lake	1976	26.33 ± 4.60	0.33 ± 0.18	5.26 ± 0.72	1.38 ± 0.57
	1979	<u>23.73 ± 5.84</u>	<u>0.12 ± 0.19</u>	<u>4.87 ± 1.42</u>	<u>1.07 ± 0.53</u>
	Difference	-2.60	-0.21	-0.39	-0.31
10. Birch Mountain	1976	24.42 ± 5.49	0.34 ± 0.36	3.55 ± 0.67	0.60 ± 0.32
	1979	<u>22.87 ± 5.09</u>	<u>0.06 ± 0.10</u>	<u>3.47 ± 0.76</u>	<u>0.39 ± 0.35</u>
	Difference	-1.55	-0.28	-0.08	-0.21
11. Thickwood Hills	1976	10.57 ± 2.45	0.07 ± 0.07	3.97 ± 0.56	2.90 ± 0.72
	1979	<u>11.21 ± 4.78</u>	<u>0.12 ± 0.11</u>	<u>4.07 ± 0.70</u>	<u>2.63 ± 0.58</u>
	Difference	0.64	0.05	0.10	-0.27
Syncrude Turnoff	1976	41.52 ± 4.93	0.30 ± 0.24	8.71 ± 1.53	1.44 ± 0.45
	1979	<u>38.46 ± 5.85</u>	<u>0.29 ± 0.25</u>	<u>7.84 ± 1.94</u>	<u>1.65 ± 0.87</u>
	Difference	3.06	-0.01	0.87	0.21
Mildred Airstrip	1976	3.93 ± 2.33	0.09 ± 0.09	7.05 ± 0.91	0.23 ± 0.18
	1979	<u>2.24 ± 2.27</u>	<u>0.09 ± 0.20</u>	<u>5.83 ± 1.42</u>	<u>0.28 ± 0.27</u>
	Difference	-1.69	0	-1.22	0.05

significant ( $p < 0.01$ ) reduction in cover at Hartley Creek, and Bryoria showed a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) reduction at Fort MacKay. Whether these changes were a result of sampling or analytical errors or whether these changes represent the natural variation that can be expected with this technique is not known. Since both of these sites were well removed from the pollution source and since all but one species group at each site showed no significant change from 1976 to 1979, it is extremely unlikely that atmospheric pollutants had any role in causing these changes.

One difficulty with this technique is the natural attrition of the permanent sampling quadrats. In the first 4 years of study, eight quadrats or 7.5% of the total were lost for a variety of reasons. This indicated that, unless damaged or lost quadrats were replaced on a regular basis, the maximum period of time over which this type of study could be conducted is about 20 years. It is estimated that by that time, sufficient loss of lichen quadrats may occur so that effective analysis and interpretation of the results may not be possible.

#### 4.1.3 Element Content

4.1.3.1 Soils. No distinctive pattern could be detected in the S, Al, or Fe content of soils from the biomonitoring plots either individually (Appendix 8, Tables 16, 17, 18) or when combined into groups of varying distances from the Suncor operation (Table 5). Although the magnitude of the means of the total S, Ni, and V contents of the LFH horizon seem to show a pattern of decreasing levels with distance from Suncor (Table 5), the variability was very great. In spite of the great variability, these increases of S, Ni, and V in the LFH close to Suncor may be of significance since levels of these elements in the C horizon (parent material) were actually lower close to the pollutant source. The raised levels therefore appear to be related to pollutant deposition rather than site specific characteristics. Substantially more sampling is necessary, however, before a definite conclusion can be reached. Sulphur levels in the LFH appear to be higher than those

Table 5. Element content (ppm) of soils from the biomonitoring sites in the Athabasca Oil Sands area 1979.

Distance From Suncor (km)	Ammonium Acetate Extract (1N @ pH 4.8)					Total Digest (HNO <sub>3</sub> + HF)				
	LFH	Ahe	Ae	Bm	C	LFH	Ahe	Ae	Bm	C
<b>SULPHUR</b>										
<10	7 ±14	1	1	3	1	629 ±434	71 ±29	39	42 ±51	34 ±70
10-25	7 ±14	3 ±6	-	2 ±5	2 ±5	585 ±310	34 ±1	-	35 ±56	40 ±20
>25	8 ±4	<1 ±1	<1 ±1	1 ±1	1 ±2	542 ±200	106 ±88	57 ±47	81 ±60	94 ±72
<b>ALUMINIUM</b>										
<10	41 ±93	32 ±27	35	101 ±22	37 ±75	7 270 ±2 792	6 579 ±6 316	8 194	12 261 ±6 316	8 536 ±5 052
10-25	7 ±16	34 ±27	-	55 ±86	27 ±60	4 726 ±9 608	9 431 ±9 527	-	15 010 ±14 713	13 351 ±14 144
>25	28 ±15	67 ±56	72 ±68	130 ±105	68 ±71	7 660 ±3 467	11 799 ±11 062	14 475 ±10 316	21 207 ±10 434	18 389 ±10 756
<b>IRON</b>										
<10	20 ±51	11 ±19	16	32 ±54	8 ±16	3 512 ±2 709	2 537 ±2 618	3 354	6 815 ±6 504	5 461 ±5 382
10-25	6 ±5	29 ±58	-	16 ±18	6 ±3	2 408 ±1 889	2 832 ±2 091	-	6 503 ±5 899	7 173 ±4 092
>25	10 ±4	23 ±16	30 ±24	28 ±17	11 ±8	3 208 ±1 217	3 262 ±1 232	4 372 ±3 072	10 091 ±5 064	8 278 ±3 811
<b>VANADIUM</b>										
<10						217 ±356	25 ±26	-	26 ±14	18 ±39
10-25		NOT DETECTABLE				70 ±62	13 ±34	-	25 ±60	23 ±49
>25						35 ±10	22 ±16	25 ±8	30 ±12	28 ±16
<b>NICKEL</b>										
<10	7 ±12	1 ±1	N/D <sup>a</sup>	N/D	N/D	105 ±185	7 ±5	5	4 ±2	5 ±2
10-25	2 ±1	N/D	-	N/D	N/D	34 ±16	2 ±1	-	7 ±8	6 ±9
>25	1 ±1	1 ±1	<1	N/D	N/D	24 ±6	6 ±8	7 ±6	14 ±11	11 ±10

<sup>a</sup> N/D = Not Detectable

measured in 1976-77 (Addison 1980) whereas, in the Ah and Ahe horizons, S levels were lower in 1979. The rest of the profile appears unchanged over the 3 year period. In 1979, Ni and V were added to the elements of interest (Appendix 8, Tables 19, 20) since they are present in the industrial emissions and may be phytotoxic (Malhotra and Khan 1979; LeSueur and Puckett 1980). In addition, an ammonium acetate extract at pH 4.8 (close to the soil pH) was analyzed and will permit comparison in future years. The most apparent limitation of this approach to pollutant deposition is the amount of sampling that is required for an accurate estimate of the element content of soils. It is necessary to sample the soil in a very detailed manner since this will be the only way that an accurate estimate of the soil chemical regime can be obtained. This should be done in the very near future.

**4.1.3.2 Selected plant species.** Unlike the soils, most of the plant species sampled demonstrated decreasing levels of S, Al, and Fe with increasing distance from Suncor (Table 6). The pattern was very similar to that measured in 1976-77 (Addison 1980). It appears that for all plant species, except *Ledum groenlandicum*, leaf S content (Appendix 8, Table 21) reflects the air quantity (Table 15). Lichens and mosses seem to present a more distinct pattern of S, Al, and Fe content than did vascular plants when compared with distance from Suncor (Table 6). Vascular plants have been shown to exclude pollutants through stomatal control (Farrar et al. 1977; Caput et al. 1978) and, in fact, plant populations resistant to SO<sub>2</sub> injury have been shown to have higher stomatal resistance (Braun 1977). Feathermoss appeared to be the best pollutant deposition indicator. Dry lichens are virtually inert to pollutants (Marsh 1975) and, since boreal forest ground lichens are dry for much of the year (Rouse and Kershaw 1971), it was not surprising that lichens did not show as distinct a pollutant deposition pattern as feathermoss.

Using feathermoss as a bioindicator, the gradients in pollutant content seen in 1976-77 (Addison 1980) appear to be still present. In addition, a much more distinct maximum impingement zone

Table 6. Element content (ppm) of plant material from biomonitoring plots in the Athabasca Oil Sands area, 1979 (mean  $\pm$  95% confidence limits).

	Distance from Suncor (km) <sup>a</sup>	<i>Pinus</i> <i>banksiana</i>	<i>Picea</i> <i>glauca</i>	<i>Arctostaphylos</i> <i>uva-ursi</i>	<i>Ledum</i> <i>groenlandicum</i>	Ground Lichens	Feathermoss
SULPHUR	<10	870 $\pm$ 120	566 $\pm$ 78	564 $\pm$ 44	1060 $\pm$ 137	327 $\pm$ 43	1209 $\pm$ 146
	10-25	705 $\pm$ 83 <sup>b</sup>	604 $\pm$ 65	482 $\pm$ 63	1297 $\pm$ 143	255 $\pm$ 28	853 $\pm$ 96
	>25	653 $\pm$ 42	412 $\pm$ 52	439 $\pm$ 48	985 $\pm$ 58	154 $\pm$ 17	682 $\pm$ 50
ALUMINIUM	<10	702 $\pm$ 86	166 $\pm$ 30	308 $\pm$ 68	334 $\pm$ 52	484 $\pm$ 117	2021 $\pm$ 358
	10-25	624 $\pm$ 76	205 $\pm$ 99	237 $\pm$ 45	203 $\pm$ 37	341 $\pm$ 55	1096 $\pm$ 121
	>25	470 $\pm$ 33	48 $\pm$ 20	106 $\pm$ 24	107 $\pm$ 16	203 $\pm$ 23	730 $\pm$ 48
IRON	<10	184 $\pm$ 36	99 $\pm$ 12	153 $\pm$ 21	203 $\pm$ 17	143 $\pm$ 26	1098 $\pm$ 201
	10-25	108 $\pm$ 30	108 $\pm$ 28	164 $\pm$ 38	152 $\pm$ 27	224 $\pm$ 58	798 $\pm$ 159
	>25	60 $\pm$ 5	44 $\pm$ 5	68 $\pm$ 8	77 $\pm$ 5	107 $\pm$ 6	348 $\pm$ 22

<sup>a</sup> Three sites occurred 10 km from Suncor, three sites from 10 to 25 km, and seven sites 25 km.

<sup>b</sup> Vertical lines indicate means not significantly different ( $p < 0.05$ ) in a Student-Newman-Keuls test.



extending to about 10.5 km is evident (Appendix 8, Tables 21, 22, and 23). The levels of S, Fe, and Al in tissue do not appear to be related to the soil concentrations which supports the hypothesis that the source of these elements was the atmosphere.

## 4.2 BIOMONITORING TECHNIQUE DEVELOPMENT

### 4.2.1 Lichen Transplants

4.2.1.1 Community analysis. The dominant lichen species occurring on black spruce branches in the Athabasca Oil Sands area (Table 3) form a plant community that was similar to that on scots pine (*Pinus silvestris* L.) in Norway (Horntvedt 1975), on black spruce in Northern Ontario (Yarranton 1972), and on lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta* Loudon var. *latifolia* Engelm.) on the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains (Skorepa and Vitt 1976). Douglas and Skorepa (1976) identified several other lichen species on black spruce branches in the Athabasca Oil Sands area that were not found during this study. Even though each species (Table 3) could be recognized, the species were placed into four groups readily recognizable by a nonlichenologist.

In a relatively nonpolluted area (Fort MacKay), the lichen plots that were transplanted under conifers appeared to change in a manner similar to naturally occurring ones (Table 7). The amount of change in both the transplants (two replicates) and the natural plots (mean of 12 values) over a 3 year period was similar to that in the transplants at Site E (10 replicates) in 2 years (Table 8). The cover of all species groups in lichen transplants under aspen, on the other hand, was reduced substantially. Apparently the reduction resulted from physical damage of the quadrats by aspen branches during high wind incidents. The open microsite did not appear to be affected physically but, unlike all transplants under conifers, showed a reduction in Hypogymnia, which appears to be an effect of exposure. Although the cover of both Evernia and Bryoria groups increased more than at all other locations, no explanation for this is proposed.

Table 7. Change in cover of naturally occurring and transplanted lichen stands at Fort MacKay from 1976 to 1979. A negative sign indicates a reduction.

Habitat	Evernia	Bryoria	Hypogymnia	Cetraria
Naturally Occurring				
Black Spruce	-2.1	-0.3	+0.8	+0.6
Transplants				
Black Spruce	-0.5	-0.1	+1.2	-0.8
White Spruce	-1.4	-0.2	+1.8	+0.7
Jack Pine	+1.3	-0.5	+0.7	+0.2
Trembling Aspen	-25.1	-0.3	-4.3	-0.7
Open	+9.1	+0.7	-1.2	-0.4

Table 8. Change in cover of lichen transplants in the vicinity of Suncor in the Athabasca Oil Sands area from 1977 to 1979. A negative sign indicates a reduction.

Site	Distance from Suncor (km)	Evernia	Bryoria	Hypogymnia	Cetraria
A	2.8	-14.00	-1.05	-1.02	-2.55
C	4.2	-26.08	-0.66	+0.26	-1.53
D	5.3	- 9.33	-0.56	+0.18	-0.10
E	8.3	- 3.74	-0.20	+0.96	+0.13

In general, based upon the response of lichen transplants over a 3 year period, the environments under aspen and in the open were substantially different from those under conifers. Most micro-environments within the canopy of conifer species, however, elicited similar lichen responses with respect to survival and growth. It appears, therefore, that the concern that small changes in micro-environment may dramatically affect lichen community composition and cover on a short-term basis is unfounded. The assumption can be made that, over a 3 year period, lichen transplants positioned within the conifer canopy responded in a manner similar to those occurring naturally if not exposed to air pollutants.

The response of lichen transplants placed under black spruce close to Suncor (Table 8) was dramatically different from that at Fort MacKay (Table 7). Although the changes at Site E (8.3 km) were similar to those at Fort MacKay, all other sites had either a much greater reduction or a much smaller increase in cover by each lichen group during a 2 year period. The change in cover was significantly ( $p < 0.01$ ) correlated with distance from Suncor, but in spite of this it was not possible to demonstrate a regression coefficient that was significantly different from zero. The inability to characterize the response pattern appears to stem from the high level of variability at all sites and the unexpected magnitude of the response at Site C. Addison and Puckett (1980) indicated that Site C had the highest V concentrations in lichen tissue in the area and, in laboratory studies, V has been shown to affect lichens detrimentally at levels found in the field (LeSueur and Puckett 1980). It is proposed, therefore, that the lichen response seen in the vicinity of Suncor is the result of a complex of factors that includes several pollutants as well as natural environmental stresses.

4.2.1.2 Chemical analysis. The results of measurements of the available to total ratios of potassium and magnesium in transplanted *Evernia mesomorpha* material (Table 9) demonstrated no pattern that could be related to either the presence of air pollutants in the area

Table 9. Sulphur content (ppm) and available to total ratios for potassium and magnesium in *Evernia mesomorpha* material transplanted under jack pine canopies in May 1977 at the gradient sites in the Athabasca Oil Sands area.

Element	Site	Time of Sampling			
		May 1977	Sept. 1977	July 1978	July 1979
Potassium	A	0.29	0.24	0.35	0.38
	B	0.28	0.18	0.19	0.37
	C	0.44	0.23	0.27	0.38
	D	0.36	0.20	0.24	0.25
	E	0.31	0.18	0.15	0.17
Magnesium	A	0.22	0.28	0.43	0.46
	B	0.24	0.19	0.34	0.62
	C	0.16	0.22	0.33	0.49
	D	0.17	0.23	0.49	0.16
	E	0.18	0.14	0.28	0.12
Sulphur	A	891	1889	3064	1249
	B	624	1202	2020	1257
	C	915	1324	1700	1434
	D	931	1700	1615	1561
	E	1107	1664	1159	1238

(Addison and Puckett 1980) or to the distance from Suncor operations. During the first year, sulphur content increased in a dramatic and expected manner, but the exceptional losses in S in the second year suggest that the fluxes of S may be very great and, hence, that a measure of S content may not be a particularly good method by which to examine deposition. Variability of all measurements was great, and it is clear that in its present form the introduction of lichen material for detailed examination of S uptake or changes in lichen condition is inadequate as a biomonitoring tool. The technique, however, may be effective if more meaningful biological measurements are made and greater replication is ensured.

#### 4.2.2 Seed Germination

The jack pine seed germination rate appeared to be reduced close to the Suncor operations (Table 10). Site A had a significantly ( $p < 0.05$ ) lower germination rate than Site E, whereas the other sites were intermediate and were not significantly different from either A or E. There was also a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) correlation of seed germination rate with distance from the source. An arcsine transformation was used on percentage germination to obtain homogeneous variances before a statistical treatment. Seed germination rate did not appear to be related to tree age (Table 10).

#### 4.2.3 Tree Growth

4.2.3.1 Basal area. There did not appear to be a relationship between the cross-sectional area increment and distance from the pollutant source (Table 11). There was actually greater growth in the last 10 years relative to the previous 10 years close to Suncor than at 10 km from the source. Even though this form of self-standardization (comparing each tree's increment with itself before industrialization) can eliminate much of the site-induced variability, it appears that growth changes still need to be very large before detection is possible.

Table 10. Jack pine seed viability of trees in the vicinity of Suncor in the Athabasca Oil Sands area.

Site	Distance from Suncor (km)	Tree Age (years)	Seed Germination (%)
A	2.8	54.6	81.5
B	3.5	33.6	89.4
C	4.1	29.1	90.9
D	5.3	40.0	94.2
E	8.3	42.0	95.8

<sup>a</sup> Lines join means that are not significantly different ( $p < 0.05$ ) in a Student-Newman-Keuls test.

Table 12. Leader lengths of lateral branches of jack pine at Site A and at Mildred Camp in the Athabasca Oil Sands area (mean  $\pm$  95% confidence limits).

Age Class	Internode Length (cm)	
	Site A	Mildred Camp
Current	21.2 $\pm$ 2.2	15.8 $\pm$ 1.4 <sup>a</sup>
1 year	24.0 $\pm$ 2.5	19.3 $\pm$ 2.2
2 year	23.4 $\pm$ 2.2	17.5 $\pm$ 1.9
3 year	27.6 $\pm$ 2.5	17.9 $\pm$ 1.6
4 year	25.4 $\pm$ 2.9	21.2 $\pm$ 1.9

<sup>a</sup> There are significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) differences between sites for all age classes.



Table 13. Number of needles per internode of the lateral branches of jack pine at Site A and at Mildred Camp in the Athabasca Oil Sands area (mean  $\pm$  95% confidence limits).

Age Class	Number of Needles per Internode		
	Site A	Mildred Camp	Significance
Current	115 $\pm$ 10	104 $\pm$ 8	NS
1 year	119 $\pm$ 11	100 $\pm$ 9	p < 0.05
2 year	132 $\pm$ 13	93 $\pm$ 8	p < 0.001
3 year	58 $\pm$ 22	63 $\pm$ 13	NS
4 year	14 $\pm$ 10	22 $\pm$ 10	NS

Table 14. Precipitation analysis of biomonitoring plots in the Athabasca Oil Sands area in 1979. Values are averages of two to three replicates.

Sites	Distance (km) and Direction from Suncor	Element Concentration ( $\mu\text{g L}^{-1}$ )										
		S	Al	Fe	V	Ni	Ca	Mg	K	Na	Mn	Cu
12 Gradient Site A	2.8 SSW	4	25	27	ND <sup>a</sup>	2	198	22	13	9	2	ND
6 Fina Airstrip	4.0 ESE	4	10	7	ND	1	53	2	39	15	ND	ND
13 Gradient Site D	5.3 SSW	5	17	24	ND	1	108	9	21	2	1	ND
5 Mildred Lake Camp	10.5 NW	9	101	46	ND	3	321	29	21	30	4	8
4 Fort MacKay	23.7 NNW	6	8	12	ND	2	81	15	15	13	1	3
3 Hartley Creek	25.0 N	3	ND	25	ND	3	63	ND	22	18	1	4
11 Thickwood Hills	30.0 SW	3	9	20	ND	1	62	8	80	50	1	1
8 North Steepbank River	30.6 ESE	5	ND	8	ND	ND	27	7	ND	11	1	ND
7 Muskeg Mountain	39.4 ENE	1	30	8	ND	1	29	ND	19	8	2	ND
2 Bitumount Tower	39.8 N	3	9	37	ND	10	352	39	676	54	6	26
9 Gordon Lake	72.8 SE	7	26	21	ND	7	233	23	55	34	2	5
1 Firebag River	74.0 NNE	1	ND	107	ND	4	36	ND	63	32	1	ND
10 Birch Mountain	80.0 NNW	1	7	23	ND	1	65	3	20	17	1	3

<sup>a</sup> ND = Not Detectable

<sup>b</sup> High levels of elements not expected to be present in the environment indicate a high likelihood of sample contamination.

4.2.4.2 Sulphation plates. There were substantial differences in the S deposition to sulphation plates between sites close to Suncor and those some distance away (Table 15). Sulphur deposition was negatively but significantly ( $p < 0.05$ ) correlated with distance from the source. It appears that the  $SO_2$  concentration in the air may be the major factor controlling plant S content, since S deposition to sulphation plates was significantly correlated with jack pine, white spruce, and feathermoss tissue concentrations (Appendix 8, Table 21). It was not possible, however, to correlate S content in the LFH horizon of the soil (Appendix 8, Table 16) with gaseous S deposition (Table 15). Apparently there was little directionality to the S deposition pattern, probably because of the long averaging times of this method (5 mo). This technique appears to provide a reasonable measure of gaseous pollutant deposition and appears useful in providing a reference with which to compare biological measures of S distribution.

Table 15. Deposition of  $\text{SO}_2$  to sulphation plates at the biomonitoring sites in the Athabasca Oil Sands area, 1979. Values are averages of four measurements.

Site		Distance (km) and Direction from Suncor		Sulphur Deposition ( $\text{mg}\cdot\text{m}^{-2}\cdot\text{d}^{-1}$ )
12	Gradient Site A	2.8	SSW	2.89
6	Fina Airstrip	4.0	ESE	2.54
13	Gradient Site D	5.3	SSW	2.34
5	Mildred Lake Camp	10.5	NW	1.76
4	Fort MacKay	23.7	NNW	0.94
3	Hartley Creek	25.0	N	0.87
11	Thickwood Hills	30.0	SW	0.48
8	North Steepbank River	30.6	ESE	0.23
7	Muskeg Mountain	39.4	ENE	0.70
2	Bitumount Tower	39.8	N	0.46
9	Gordon Lake	72.8	SE	0.19
1	Firebag River	74.0	NNE	0.25
10	Birch Mountain	80.0	NNW	0.26

5.

CONCLUSIONS

1. No measureable change in either vascular plant or lichen communities could be detected between 1976 and 1979.
  2. No difference was observed in the S, Al, or Fe contents of plant material between measurements taken in 1976 versus these in 1979. In both years, however, higher levels of these elements were found close to Suncor (<10 km) than at same distance away.
  3. The LFH horizon of the soil indicated raised levels of S, V, and Ni close to the oil sands operations which were not related to the content of these elements in the mineral soil.
  4. Lichen community transplants placed close to Suncor changed substantially from 1976-79 whereas lichens placed into similar microenvironments >25 km from the source did not.
  5. Seed germination and leaf number appeared to indicate that jack pine close to a pollutant source were affected whereas both basal area increment and shoot length did not. A more detailed examination of these factors is necessary before their effectiveness as a biomonitoring tool can be assessed.
- b. Sulphur deposition to sulphation plates was correlated with distance from the pollutant source as well as with plant sulphur content. This indicates that long-term effects may indeed be highly likely, particularly if one considers metal deposition in addition to sulphur.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There should be continued involvement by the Province of Alberta in a biomonitoring network in northeastern Alberta to ensure that significant environmental damage does not occur as a result of continued oil sands development. Plant community analysis as well as both soil and plant chemical analyses should be used for long-term studies. These parameters do not fluctuate substantially from year to year and they provide an idea of the response of the entire soil-plant system. Expansion of the biomonitoring system to include other dominant forest and soil types should be attempted.
2. The specific biomonitoring techniques that have been developed in LS 3 should be refined further so that early detection of air pollution injury to forests can become a reality. Several methods show promise and effort should be expended on: (a) biochemical and physiological responses; (b) lichen transplants; and (c) growth measurements. In all cases, greater replication is necessary.
3. Because of the difficulties associated with the explanation of field pollutant responses based on either laboratory responses or tissue concentration of a single element, it is recommended that both laboratory and field studies on the influence of pollutant mixtures be initiated. This is critical if any attempt is to be made to relate plant response to the complex of industrial emissions under field conditions.
4. There is a need for development of a method to quantify both wet and dry pollutant deposition at remote sites.

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8. APPENDIX

Table 16. Sulphur content (ppm) of soils in the Athabasca oil sands area.

Sites	Distance (km) and Direction from Suncor		Ammonium Acetate Extract (1N @ pH 4.8)					Total Digest (HNO <sub>3</sub> + HF)				
			LFH	Ah + Ahe	Ae	Bm	C	LFH	Ah + Ahe	Ae	Bm	C
12 Gradient Site A	2.8	SSW	7.7	0	2.7	10.3	0	820.5	71.1	39.3	54.0	65.1
6 Fina Airstrip	4.0	ESE	11.3	2.8	-	0	3.4	588.1	82.2	-	53.7	10.0
13 Gradient Site D	5.3	SSW	0.5	0	-	0	0	478.8	58.9	-	18.4	27.0
5 Mildred Lake Camp	10.5	NW	0.3	1.5	-	0	0	545.6	33.1	-	23.3	35.6
4 Fort MacKay	23.7	NNW	8.6	2.4	-	2.7	4.0	724.8	34.1	-	21.3	49.8
3 Hartley Creek	25.0	N	10.8	5.9	-	3.4	2.7	484.6	34.1	-	61.1	35.5
11 Thickwood Hills	30.0	SW	16.0	0	0	0	0.3	743.6	181.9	135.7	13.6	39.3
8 North Steepbank River	30.6	ESE	5.6	-	0	0	5.7	587.9	-	68.2	160.9	201.5
7 Muskeg Mountain	39.4	ENE	2.8	-	0	0.8	1.9	180.5	-	60.3	156.7	125.1
2 Bitumount Tower	29.8	N	2.8	0	0	0	0	725.5	173.3	52.8	86.5	175.3
9 Gordon Lake	72.8	SE	11.3	1.9	2.1	0	0	467.2	30.6	11.0	23.3	0
1 Firebag River	74.0	NNE	7.7	1.6	-	0	0	731.2	101.6	-	108.1	95.2
10 Birch Mountain	80.0	NNW	6.7	0	0	3.2	0	361.0	41.2	15.6	15.9	19.6

Table 17. Aluminium content (ppm) of soils in the Athabasca oil sands area.

Sites	Distance (km) and Direction from Suncor		Ammonium Acetate Extract (1N @ pH 4.8)					Total Digest (HNO <sub>3</sub> + HF)				
			LFH	Ah + Ahe	Ae	Bm	C	LFH	Ah + Ahe	Ae	Bm	C
12 Gradient Site A	2.8	SSW	20	26	35	111	28	8 304	7 865	8 194	15 174	10 844
6 Fina Airstrip	4.0	ESE	18	25	-	96	71	7 433	6 695	-	10 485	7 007
13 Gradient Site D	5.3	SSW	84	44	-	96	13	6 074	5 178	-	11 126	7 757
5 Mildred Lake Camp	10.5	NW	11	47	-	73	45	4 788	7 007	-	10 131	7 007
4 Fort MacKay	23.7	NNW	11	28	-	15	0	4 312	13 852	-	21 599	18 016
3 Hartley Creek	25.0	N	0	28	-	77	37	5 078	7 433	-	13 299	15 029
11 Thickwood Hills	30.0	SW	35	128	183	142	86	12 066	25 750	28 658	31 868	35 648
8 North Steepbank River	30.6	ESE	15	-	37	30	0	10 724	-	22 421	32 993	18 473
7 Muskeg Mountain	39.4	ENE	28	-	44	366	224	7 113	-	8 416	28 536	30 503
2 Bitumont Tower	39.8	N	16	40	62	51	30	3 483	6 176	6 902	11 327	7 540
9 Gordon Lake	72.8	SE	16	23	0	94	21	4 725	3 574	3 574	7 974	4 596
1 Firebag River	74.0	NNE	23	44	-	69	25	3 939	8 305	-	8 864	11 085
10 Birch Mountain	80.0	NNW	60	100	107	157	90	11 572	15 189	16 878	26 887	20 899

Table 18. Iron Content (ppm) of soils in the Athabasca oil sands area.

Sites	Distance (km) and Direction from Suncor		Ammonium Acetate Extract (1N @ pH 4.8)					Total Digest (HNO <sub>3</sub> + HF)				
			LFH	Ah + Ahe	Ae	Bm	C	LFH	Ah + Ahe	Ae	Bm	C
12 Gradient Site A	2.8	SSW	7.6	5.2	16.1	22.1	5.0	4 708	3 742	3 354	9 231	7 275
6 Flna Alstrip	4.0	ESE	8.0	8.8	-	57.0	15.9	2 573	2 082	-	4 033	3 062
13 Gradient Site D	5.3	SSW	43.0	19.8	-	17.0	4.0	3 256	1 787	-	7 180	6 046
5 Mildred Lake Camp	10.5	NW	5.2	23.2	-	15.0	4.6	3 256	3 742	-	5 379	7 087
4 Fort MacKay	23.7	NNW	7.6	55.0	-	9.4	5.2	1 787	2 671	-	9 231	8 861
3 Hartley Creek	25.0	N	3.8	9.7	-	24.1	6.8	2 181	2 082	-	4 900	5 570
11 Thickwood Hills	30.0	SW	9.7	41.0	68.9	53.0	18.9	3 645	3 984	4 612	8 304	11 875
8 North Steepbank River	30.6	ESE	6.2	-	41.0	12.6	25.6	3 548	-	9 231	17 131	11 424
7 Muskeg Mountain	39.4	ENE	12.8	-	15.0	13.1	11.6	2 573	-	1 590	12 324	12 145
2 Bitumount Tower	39.8	N	5.8	23.6	28.0	9.2	3.8	2 082	2 866	3 839	7 650	4 226
9 Gordon Lake	72.8	SE	5.0	5.4	3.2	47.0	6.8	2 475	1 688	1 293	4 515	1 984
1 Firebag River	74.0	NNE	12.6	19.8	-	38.9	4.4	2 279	3 839	-	3 839	6 141
10 Birch Mountain	80.0	NNW	18.2	26.7	20.7	23.7	6.2	5 856	3 936	5 665	16 875	10 150

Table 19. Nickel content (ppm) of soils in the Athabasca oil sands area.

Sites	Distance (km) and Direction from Suncor		Ammonium Acetate Extract (1N @ pH 4.8)					Total Digest (HNO <sub>3</sub> + HF)				
			LFH	Ah + Ahe	Ae	Bm	C	LFH	Ah + Ahe	Ae	Bm	C
12 Gradient Site A	2.8	SSW	10	0	0	0	0	178	6	5	4	5
6 Fina Alstrip	4.0	ESE	1	1	-	0	0	29	5	-	3	4
13 Gradient Site D	5.3	SSW	9	1	-	0	0	107	9	-	5	6
5 Mildred Lake Camp	10.5	NW	2	0	-	0	0	39	2	-	3	3
4 Fort MacKay	23.7	NNW	2	0	-	0	0	37	2	-	9	10
3 Hartley Creek	25.0	N	1	0	-	0	0	27	3	-	8	5
11 Thickwood Hills	30.0	SW	1	0	1	0	0	33	10	14	13	17
8 North Steepbank River	30.6	ESE	0	-	0	0	0	13	-	9	31	31
7 Muskeg Mountain	39.4	ENE	2	-	0	0	0	28	-	2	21	12
2 Bitumount Tower	39.8	N	-	0	0	0	0	22	3	4	4	4
9 Gordon Lake	72.8	SE	0	0	0	0	0	25	0	0	0	0
1 Firebag River	74.0	NNE	0	1	-	0	0	19	1	-	2	4
10 Birch Mountain	80.0	NNW	0	0	0	0	0	25	16	14	25	10

Table 20. Vanadium content (ppm) of soils in the Athabasca oil sands area.

Sites	Distance (km) and Direction from Suncor	Ammonium Acetate Extract (1N @ pH 4.8)					Total Digest (HNO <sub>3</sub> + HF)				
		LFH	Ah + Ahe	Ae	Bm	C	LFH	Ah + Ahe	Ae	Bm	C
12 Gradlent Site A	2.8 SSW						335	27	0	27	27
6 Flna Airstrip	4.0 ESE						69	13	-	20	0
13 Gradlent Site D	5.3 SSW						228	34	-	31	27
5 Mildred Lake Camp	10.5 NW						84	13	-	0	0
4 Fort MacKay	23.7 NNW						84	27	-	48	34
3 Hartley Creek	25.0 N		NOT				41	0	-	27	34
11 Thickwood Hills	30.0 SW			DETECTABLE			41	34	27	34	41
8 North Steepbank River	30.6 ESE						27	-	34	27	27
7 Muskeg Mountain	39.4 ENE						27	-	27	48	55
2 Bitumount Tower	39.8 N						48	27	20	34	27
9 Gordon Lake	72.8 SE						24	20	13	13	0
1 Firebag River	74.0 NNE						27	0	-	13	20
10 Birch Mountain	80.0 NNW						48	27	27	41	27

Table 21. Sulphur content (ppm) of selected plant species in the Athabasca oil sands area.

Sites	Distance (km) and Direction from Suncor		Tissue Concentration					
			<i>Pinus banksiana</i>	<i>Picea glauca</i>	<i>Arctostaphylos uva-ursi</i>	<i>Ledum groenlandicum</i>	Ground Lichens	Feathermoss
12 Gradient Site A	2.8	SSW	1152 ± 127	706 ± 113	660 ± 77	1077 ± 130	412 ± 73	1250 ± 314
6 Fina Airstrip	4.0	ESE	498 ± 147	396 ± 114	494 ± 55	958 ± 84	215 ± 53	1171 ± 375
13 Gradient Site D	5.3	SSW	886 ± 88	598 ± 138	537 ± 72	1146 ± 142	353 ± 41	1204 ± 109
5 Mildred Lake Camp	10.5	NW	912 ± 152	635 ± 92	497 ± 93	1163 ± 100	322 ± 73	1149 ± 238
4 Fort MacKay	23.7	NNW	680 ± 93	492 ± 145	343 ± 116	1032 ± 133	188 ± 37	758 ± 103
3 Hartley Creek	25.0	N	777 ± 107	606 ± 150	387 ± 94	1566 ± 473	210 ± 49	881 ± 211
11 Thickwood Hills	30.0	SW	450 ± 188	683 ± 171	633 ± 165	1482 ± 379	303 ± 20	625 ± 64
8 North Steepbank River	30.6	ESE	586 ± 61	407 ± 90	450 ± 79	1145 ± 115	183 ± 43	781 ± 101
7 Muskeg Mountain	39.4	ENE	641 ± 130	-	-	853 ± 129	175 ± 47	650 ± 111
2 Bitumount Tower	39.8	N	816 ± 86	-	466 ± 124	944 ± 82	130 ± 45	767 ± 124
9 Gordon Lake	72.8	SE	649 ± 105	419 ± 95	516 ± 101	1091 ± 155	119 ± 22	798 ± 78
1 Firebag River	74.0	NNE	605 ± 112	411 ± 121	323 ± 81	831 ± 227	115 ± 46	446 ± 143
10 Birch Mountain	80.0	NNW	605 ± 112	-	-	1046 ± 66	214 ± 41	650 ± 101

Table 22. Aluminium content (ppm) of selected plant species in the Athabasca oil sands area.

Sites	Distance (km) and Direction from Suncor		Tissue Concentration					
			<i>Pinus banksiana</i>	<i>Picea glauca</i>	<i>Arctostaphylos uva-ursi</i>	<i>Ledum groenlandicum</i>	Ground Lichens	Feathermoss
12 Gradient Site A	2.8	SSW	890 ± 111	170 ± 60	471 ± 116	326 ± 137	724 ± 279	2357 ± 805
6 Fina Alstrip	4.0	ESE	693 ± 153	161 ± 51	123 ± 55	311 ± 94	293 ± 73	1083 ± 196
13 Gradient Site D	5.3	SSW	592 ± 87	182 ± 52	330 ± 62	365 ± 51	435 ± 147	2625 ± 248
5 Mildred Lake Camp	10.5	NW	954 ± 157	250 ± 56	290 ± 89	227 ± 103	477 ± 173	1370 ± 338
4 Fort MacKay	23.7	NNW	460 ± 58	157 ± 20	154 ± 60	188 ± 75	297 ± 53	1159 ± 91
3 Hartley Creek	25.0	N	567 ± 70	114 ± 24	122 ± 42	182 ± 47	257 ± 73	773 ± 231
11 Thickwood Hills	30.0	SW	511 ± 47	344 ± 492	335 ± 85	209 ± 85	332 ± 110	1081 ± 187
8 North Steepbank River	30.6	ESE	393 ± 58	83 ± 42	173 ± 55	143 ± 24	192 ± 53	866 ± 89
7 Muskeg Mountain	39.4	ENE	545 ± 54	-	-	147 ± 32	204 ± 87	820 ± 92
2 Bitumount Tower	39.8	N	408 ± 34	-	122 ± 22	135 ± 29	258 ± 55	813 ± 102
9 Gordon Lake	72.8	SE	381 ± 87	90 ± 130	92 ± 33	126 ± 40	183 ± 61	680 ± 90
1 Firebag River	74.0	NNE	578 ± 66	55 ± 27	64 ± 61	62 ± 75	233 ± 41	426 ± 45
10 Birch Mountain	80.0	NNW	516 ± 127	-	-	63 ± 19	132 ± 41	714 ± 174



Table 23. Iron content (ppm) of selected plant species in the Athabasca oil sands area.

Sites	Distance (km) and Direction from Suncor		Tissue Concentration					
			<i>Pinus banksiana</i>	<i>Picea glauca</i>	<i>Arctostaphylos uva-ursi</i>	<i>Ledum groenlandicum</i>	Ground Lichens	Feathermoss
12 Gradient Site A	2.8	SSW	295 ± 26	117 ± 25	205 ± 30	242 ± 28	170 ± 45	1542 ± 320
6 Fina Alstrip	4.0	ESE	114 ± 37	82 ± 10	91 ± 10	161 ± 27	104 ± 50	473 ± 138
13 Gradient Site D	5.3	SSW	127 ± 10	97 ± 26	163 ± 20	206 ± 13	145 ± 59	1278 ± 60
5 Mildred Lake Camp	10.5	NW	239 ± 74	248 ± 39	314 ± 66	282 ± 35	466 ± 160	1512 ± 324
4 Fort MacKay	23.7	NNW	83 ± 12	86 ± 14	98 ± 30	113 ± 15	173 ± 31	761 ± 67
3 Hartley Creek	25.0	N	56 ± 8	49 ± 3	49 ± 7	101 ± 12	108 ± 26	382 ± 91
11 Thickwood Hills	30.0	SW	55 ± 7	48 ± 10	149 ± 16	103 ± 11	150 ± 21	538 ± 80
8 North Steepbank River	30.6	ESE	65 ± 9	53 ± 11	97 ± 24	94 ± 17	111 ± 13	436 ± 41
7 Muskeg Mountain	39.4	ENE	97 ± 16	-	-	77 ± 7	102 ± 17	352 ± 41
2 Bitumount Tower	39.8	N	52 ± 5	-	49 ± 7	71 ± 3	111 ± 16	396 ± 58
9 Gordon Lake	72.8	SE	45 ± 6	36 ± 5	57 ± 13	90 ± 7	120 ± 6	332 ± 40
1 Firebag River	74.0	NNE	53 ± 7	44 ± 6	71 ± 9	69 ± 12	111 ± 13	225 ± 19
10 Birch Mountain	80.0	NNW	52 ± 11	-		59 ± 6	81 ± 14	345 ± 32

9. LIST OF AOSERP RESEARCH REPORTS

1. AOSERP First Annual Report, 1975
2. AF 4.1.1 Walleye and Goldeye Fisheries Investigations in the Peace-Athabasca Delta--1975
3. HE 1.1.1 Structure of a Traditional Baseline Data System
4. VE 2.2 A Preliminary Vegetation Survey of the Alberta Oil Sands Environmental Research Program Study Area
5. HY 3.1 The Evaluation of Wastewaters from an Oil Sand Extraction Plant
6. Housing for the North--The Stackwall System
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13. ME 2.3.1 Plume Dispersion Measurements from an Oil Sands Extraction Plant, March 1976
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15. ME 3.4 A Climatology of Low Level Air Trajectories in the Alberta Oil Sands Area
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22. Alberta Oil Sands Environmental Research Program Interim Report to 1978 covering the period April 1975 to November 1978
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25. ME 3.5.1 Review of Pollutant Transformation Processes Relevant to the Alberta Oil Sands Area

26. AF 4.5.1 Interim Report on an Intensive Study of the Fish Fauna of the Muskeg River Watershed of Northeastern Alberta
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