

By Phil Cram, May 2011

Nature Calgary Bird Study Group

BIRDING OFF THE BEATEN TRACK – SOUTHWEST FROM CALGARY

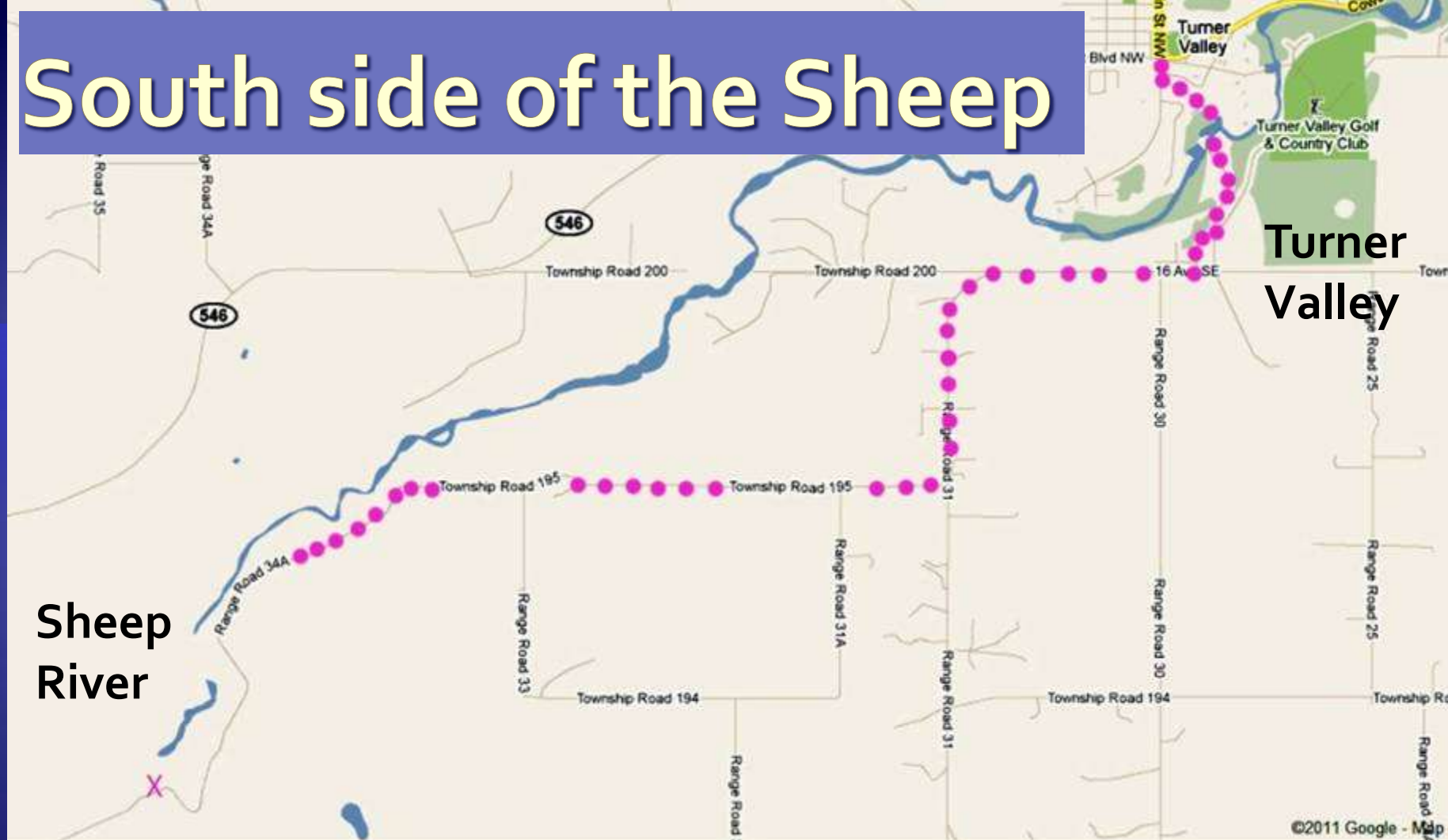
Photos by Brian Elder, Phil Cram, Rob Worona, Frank Hennessey, Bernie Diebolt, Terry Poulton

Southwest

- ◆ South side of the Sheep River
- ◆ Gorge Creek Trail
- ◆ Sibbald side roads



South side of the Sheep



- ◆ Access from Turner Valley – south on Main St., left on Decalta Dr., cross river and left on Twp Rd 200
- ◆ Road has good mix of habitats – farmland in the east, mixed forest with some good coniferous stands, wetlands in the west

South side of the Sheep

- ◆ **Cape May Warblers** just beyond the “junk yard” (where road heads west after a south heading stretch)
- ◆ This area also good for **Brown Creeper** and **Pacific Wren**
- ◆ Can be good road for owls

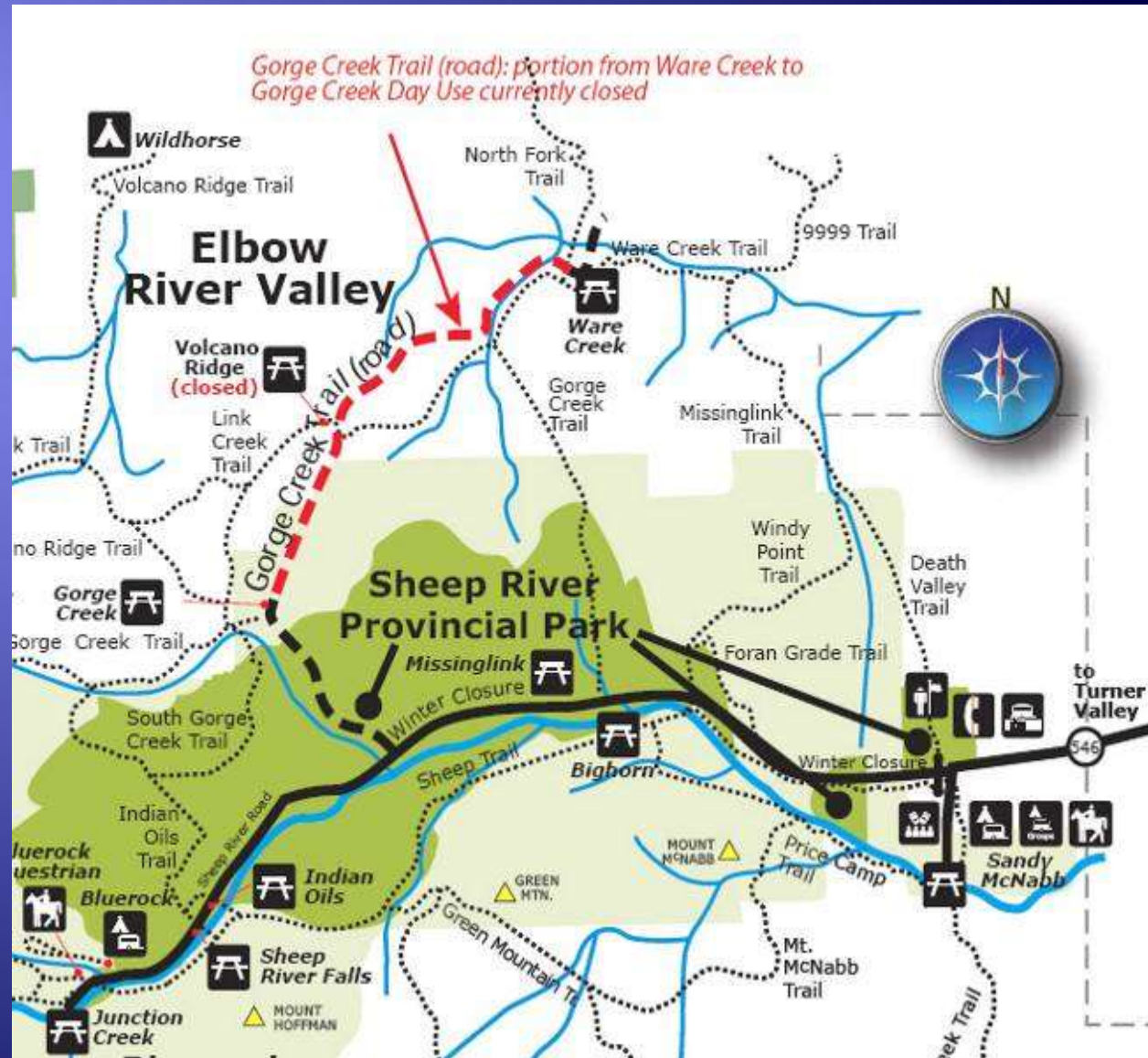


Gorge Creek Trail

North access west
from Hwy 549
where road forks
(north fork is
Mclean Creek Trail)

South access from
Hwy 546 in Sheep
River Provincial
Park

No longer a
through road for
vehicles



Gorge Creek Trail – best areas



- Walk in!
- Watch out for bears!
- Expect a good variety of empids, warblers, vireos and sparrows

- West of the (north end) closure at Ware Creek picnic area
- Good mixed forest and little people disruption
- A similar habitat exists just north of the south-end closure



Gorge Creek Trail – drivable areas

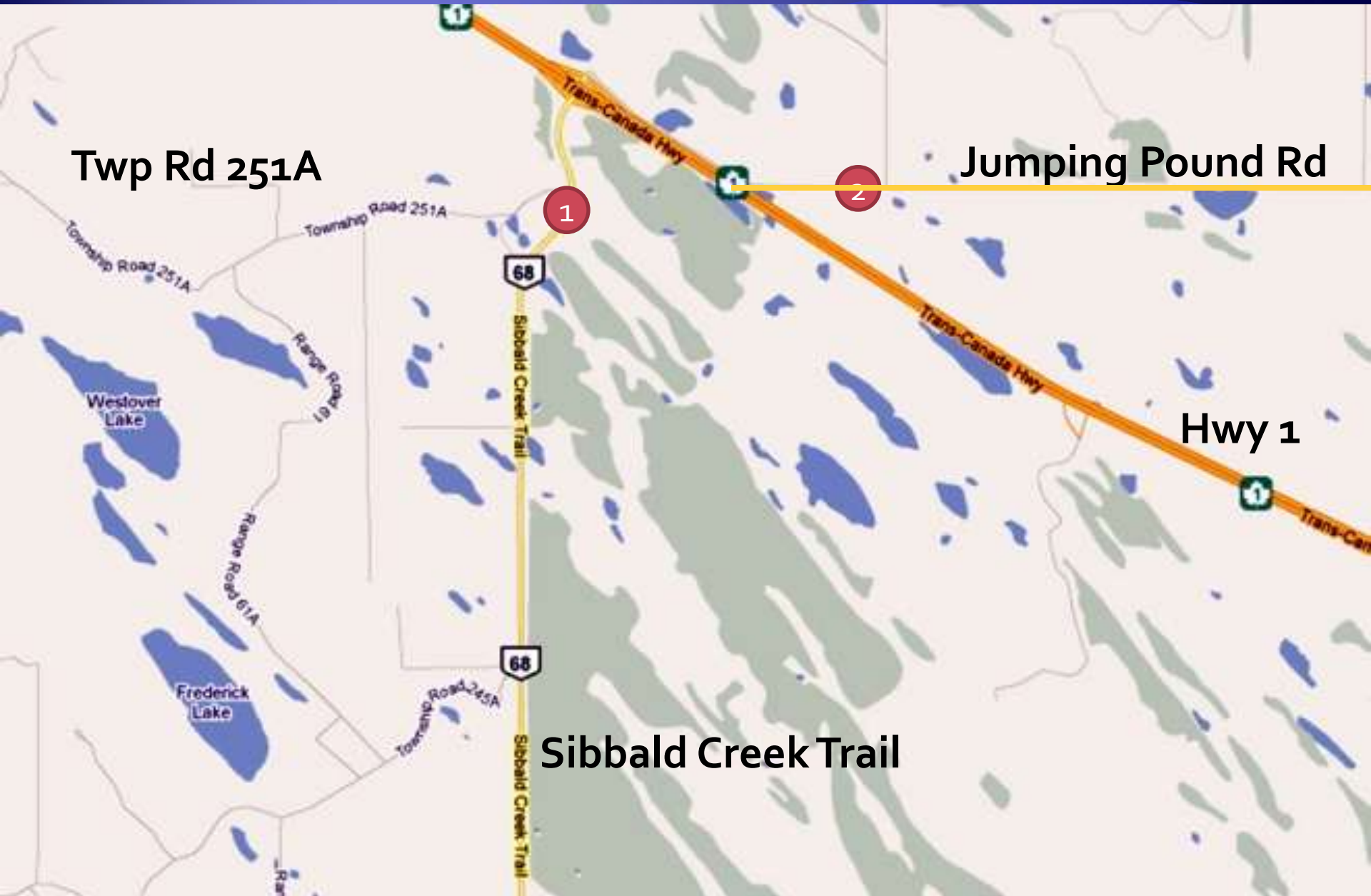
- ◆ The initial flats after the north-end bridge -pretty reliable for **Townsend's Warbler, Evening Grosbeak, Ovenbird**, all thrushes
- ◆ Just north of where the road steeply descends into the Ware Creek valley - **Townsend's Solitaire, MacGillivray's Warbler, Red Crossbill**
- ◆ the flats just north of the Ware Creek closure – **Townsend's Warbler, Western Flycatcher, Pileated Woodpecker, Pacific Wren**



Sibbald Trail Route



Sibbald side roads



Sibbald side roads

- Sloughs good for ducks such as **Hooded Merganser**
- Grassy wet areas can have a variety of sparrows such as **Swamp Sparrow**, **Le Conte's Sparrow** and **Nelson's Sparrow**
- **Virginia Rail** has been seen along **Jumping Pound Road**

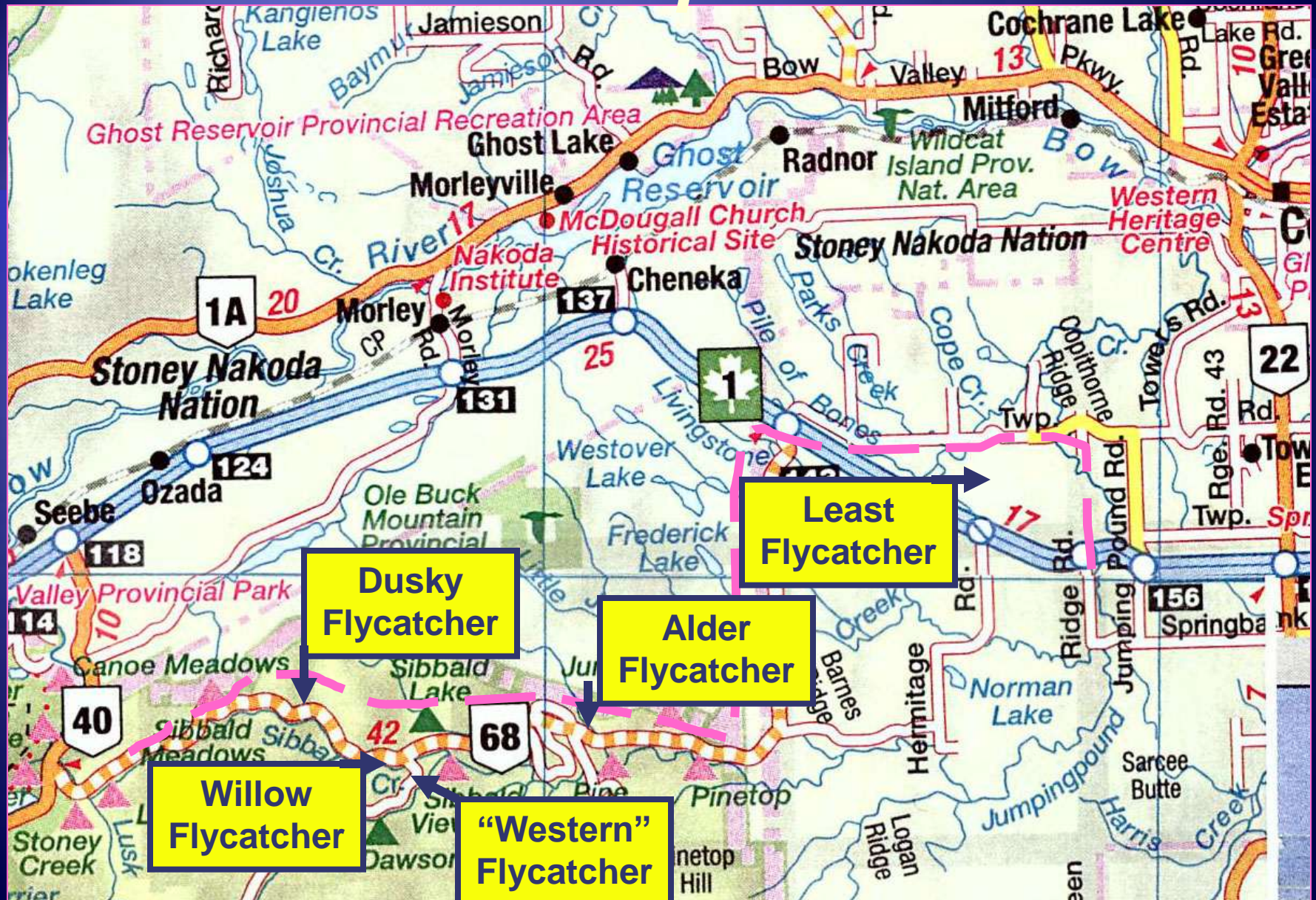


Sibbald Trail Route-*Empids*

- ◆ Least Flycatcher
- ◆ Alder Flycatcher [entrance to Forest Demo Loop]
- ◆ Willow Flycatcher [Sibbald Flats]
- ◆ Dusky Flycatcher [Crane Meadow]
- ◆ “Western” Flycatcher [Powderface Trail]

Other Flycatchers: Olive-sided Flycatcher, Western Wood-Pewee, Eastern Phoebe, Western Kingbird, Eastern Kingbird

Sibbald Trail *Empids*



Sibbald Trail - Rarities

- ◆ Field Sparrow (June 2000)
- ◆ Northern Mockingbird (c. 2003)
- ◆ Indigo Bunting (June 2003)
- ◆ Lewis's Woodpecker (May 2009)