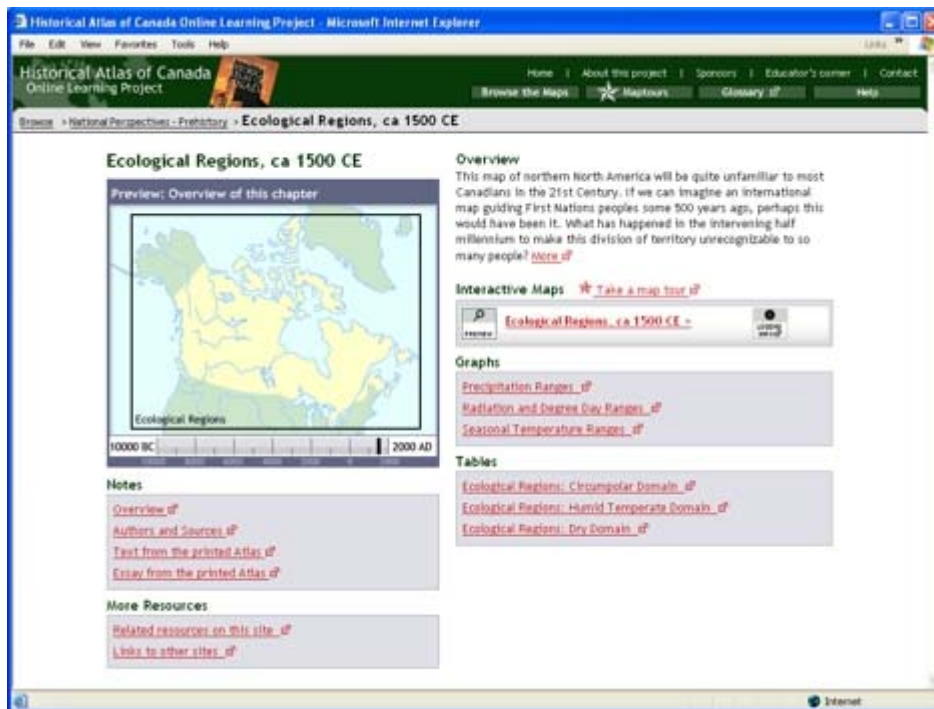


Canada's Ecological Regions ca 1500 CE

This map of northern North America will be quite unfamiliar to most Canadians in the 21st Century. If we can imagine an international map guiding First Nations peoples some 500 years ago, perhaps this would have been it. What has happened in the intervening half millennium to make this division of territory unrecognizable to so many people?

To start this Maptour, navigate to the chapter page for: [Ecological Regions, ca 1500 CE](#)
[Browse > National Perspectives - Prehistory > Ecological Regions, ca 1500 CE](#)



Canada in a North American Context



Try This:

- Open the interactive map "Ecological Regions, ca 1500 CE."



Notice ...

- Canada's ecological zones describe a great sweeping arc southeastward from Alaska, around Hudson Bay, and out to Newfoundland.



Try This:

- Open the interactive map " EDIT Name of interactive map "
- Under LAYER CONTROLS, turn on the checkbox for "Modern Geography."



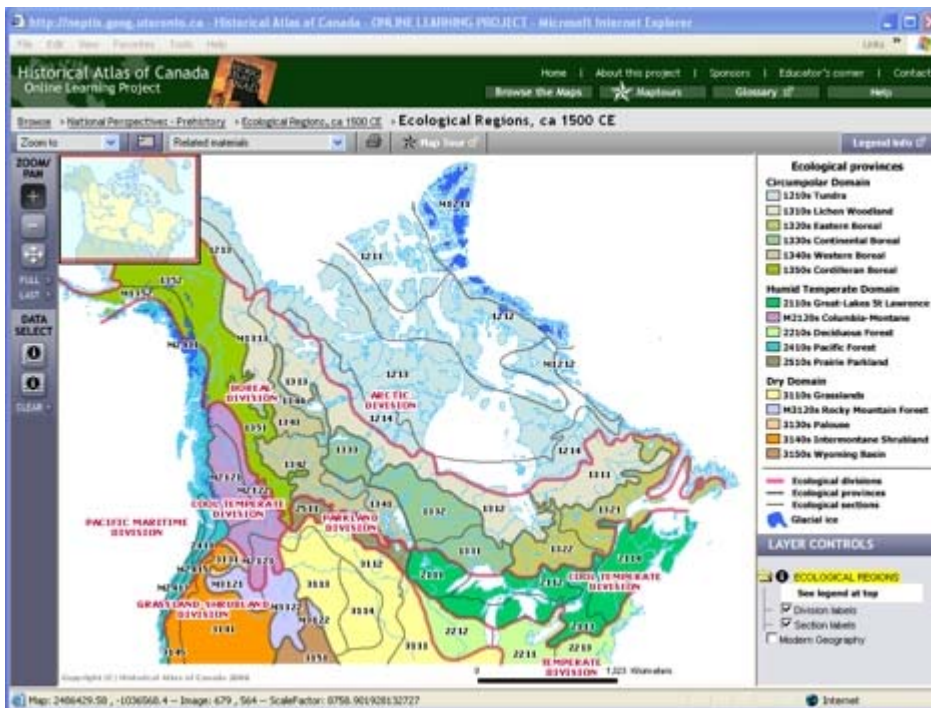
Notice ...

- Modern political jurisdictions bear little or no relationship to ecological zones of five centuries ago.



Consider!

- Space, rather than the characteristics of that space, has motivated the political subdivision of the continent in recent centuries.



Landforms, Flora, and Fauna



Try This:

- Under LAYER CONTROLS, turn off the checkbox for “Modern Geography.”
- On the ZOOM/PAN toolbar, click on the Zoom in button and use it on the map to zoom in near the number 1213 (north of Hudson Bay).
- Click on the "Related Materials" drop-down menu and select *Tables - “Circumpolar Domain.”*
- In the “Descriptions of Ecological Regions” box, scroll down to entries numbered 1212 and 1213.



Notice ...

- Canada’s ecological landscape is a nesting of smaller, more specialized zones set within larger, more general ones. Zone 1212 lies within 1210, which in turn lies within 1200, itself within 1000.
- Ecologists have developed a language of headings to describe this hierarchy: domain, division, province, section. (These are defined at the bottom of the box.)
- “Ecological” provinces are not to be confused with “political” provinces.
- Cultural (that is, human) elements are part of our understanding of “ecology.”



Consider!

- Zone 1213, commonly known as “the barren lands” by early explorers, is aptly named. At another time, check the chapter “Exploration to Mid-19th Century.”
- The ecological diversity of Canada is immense, but well documented.
- This map carries information as of five centuries ago, and one should not assume that the ecology of the 21st century is exactly the same.

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the 'Historical Atlas of Canada Online Learning Project'. The main content area is titled 'Ecological Regions, ca 1500 CE' and includes a map of Canada on the left and a detailed text box on the right. The text box is titled '1000 CIRCUMPOLAR DOMAIN' and lists several ecological divisions and provinces, including the 1200 Arctic Division, 1210 Tundra Province, and 1211 High Arctic Section. A legend on the right side of the page lists various ecological provinces and domains with corresponding color-coded boxes. The browser's address bar shows the URL 'http://heqits.gmg.utoronto.ca/...'. The page also features navigation links like 'Home', 'About this project', and 'Sponsors' at the top.

Seasonal Temperature Patterns



Try This:

- Click on the "Related Materials" drop-down menu and select the *Graph* - "Seasonal Temperature Ranges."



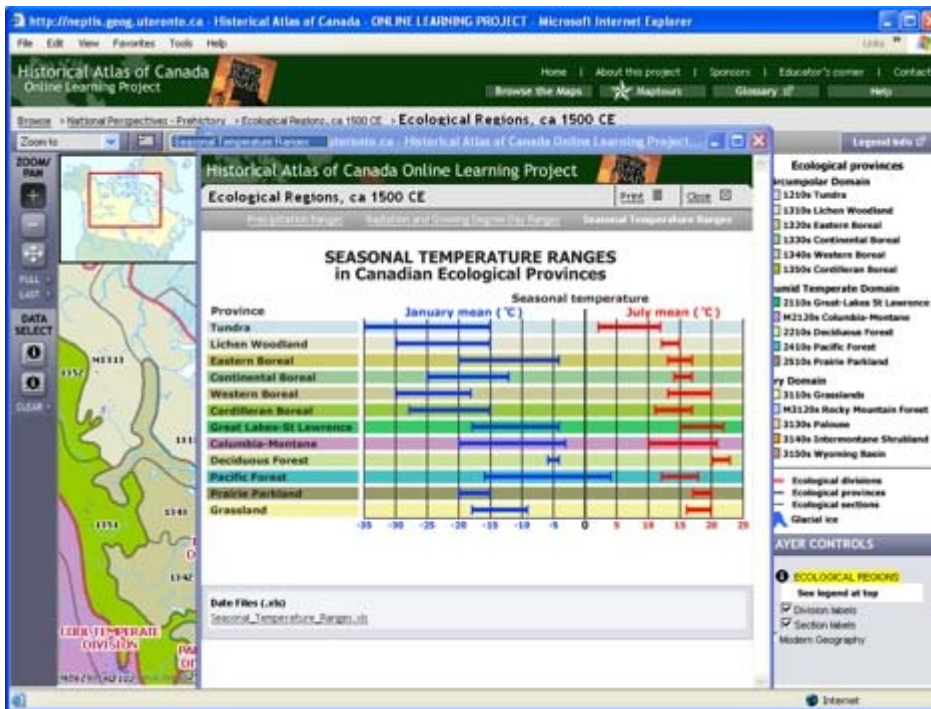
Notice ...

- Five centuries ago, winter monthly mean temperatures were far more variable than summer monthly mean temperatures.
- The Pacific Forest was the only ecological province that, some winters, experienced a January average temperature above freezing.



Consider!

- The Canadian territory offered strong climatic challenges to living in a pre-industrial age.
- The significance of temperature has diminished in Canadians' mind for several centuries, but is once again becoming important in the 21st century as Canadians ponder "climate change."



Looking at Saskatchewan



Try This:

- Close the pop-up box for "Seasonal Temperature Ranges."
- Keep open the interactive map "Ecological Regions, ca 1500 CE."
- Under LAYER CONTROLS, turn on the checkbox for "Modern Geography."
- Click on the "Zoom to" drop-down menu and select "Saskatchewan."



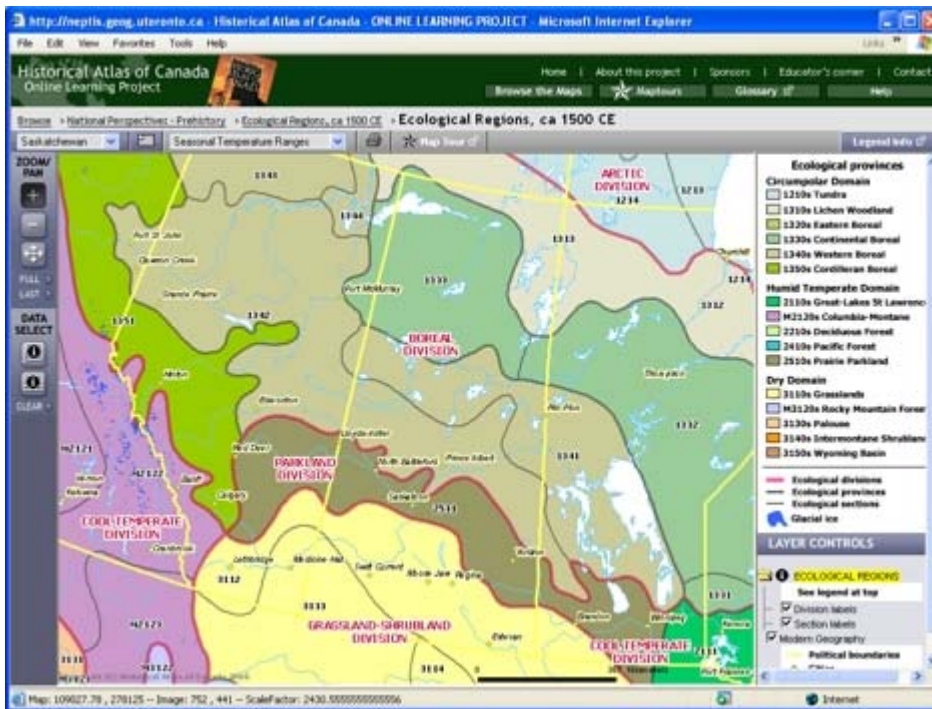
Notice ...

- The major urban places in Saskatchewan lie south of the Boreal regions.
- The grassland portion of Saskatchewan covered only about one-quarter of the area that later became known as a "prairie" province.



Consider!

- Popular perception of Canada's Prairie Provinces does not agree well with the reality of the ecological zones in which they were established.
- At another time, check the "Prairie Parkland" belt, a rich resource and settlement region frequently showing up in other chapters in this atlas, including "Exploration to Mid-19th Century."



Looking at British Columbia



Try This:

- Click on the "Zoom to" drop-down menu and select "British Columbia."



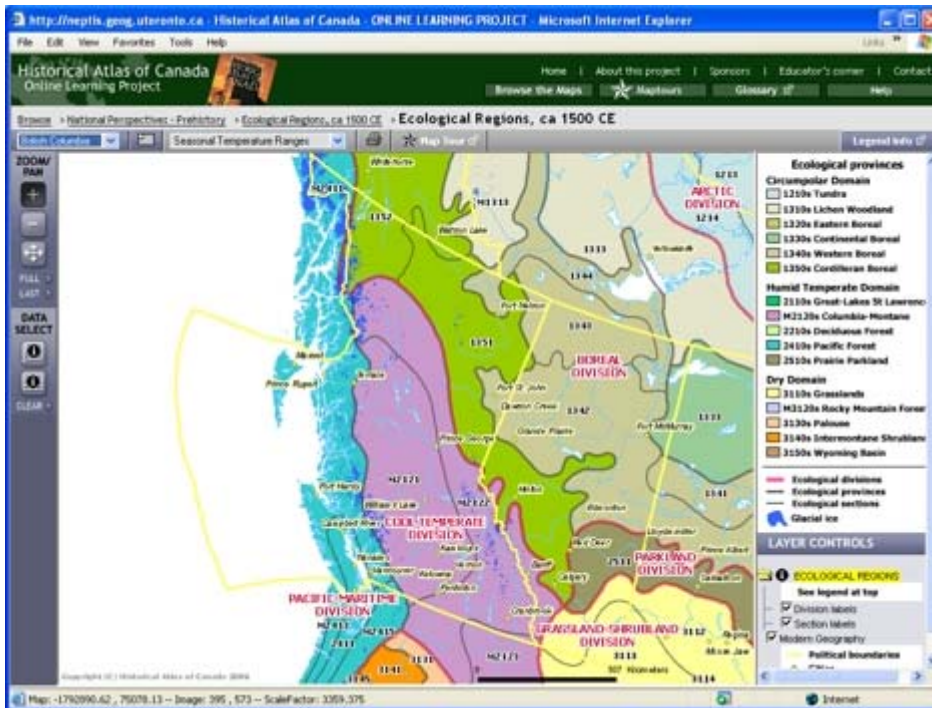
Notice ...

- The Alaska Panhandle boundary line with British Columbia follows the transition from the Pacific Forest province to the Cordilleran Boreal province.
- The southern half of the British Columbia - Alberta provincial border matches closely the boundary between the Cool Temperate and Boreal Divisions.



Consider!

- Ecological rules may prevail, even in the face of simple geometry, for establishing political boundary lines in remote areas.



Looking at Where You Live



Try This:

- Keep open the map "Ecological Regions ca 1500 CE."
 - On the ZOOM/PAN toolbar, click on "FULL" to zoom out to all of Canada.
 - Under LAYER CONTROLS, turn on the checkboxes for "Modern Geography" and "Section Labels;" turn off "Division Labels."
 - Use the Zoom in tool to zoom in as closely as possible to the city, town or rural area where you live.
 - On the DATA SELECT toolbar, click on the Identify tool and then click on the map at the place where you live.
-



Notice ...

- A box opens, giving you the ecological description of the region where you live: Domain, Division, (Ecological) Province, Section.
-



Try This:

- Close the pop-up box.
 - On the DATA SELECT toolbar, click on the Table tool and then use the cursor on the map to drag a rectangle over several ecological regions.
-



Notice ...

- A table box opens, naming all the ecological subdivisions in your selected sample.
 - The boundaries of the selected ecological subdivisions are individually highlighted on the map. (You may have to drag the table box aside to see your chosen area.)
-



Consider!

- Chances are high that you would have a greater struggle to live off your local land today than First Nations peoples would have had five centuries ago.
-

These are just a few of the questions that these maps and data can address
If you have ideas for other questions, please use our [Feedback](#) page to send them in,
and they may be posted on the website in the future.

http://neptis.gcg.utoronto.ca - Historical Atlas of Canada - ONLINE LEARNING PROJECT - Microsoft Internet Explorer

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British Columbia Seasonal Temperature Ranges

Historical Atlas of Canada Online Learning Project

Ecological Regions, ca 1500 CE

Descriptions of Ecological Regions

2000 HUMID TEMPERATE DOMAIN
 Dominated by maritime Pacific or tropical air masses at least in summer; mean July temperature 10-24°C; 900-2000 degree-days in growing season; mean annual precipitation 300 to over 2000 mm with maxima at various seasons; evaporation from small lakes 200-600 mm per year

2100 COOL TEMPERATE DIVISION
 Mountainous west dominated by maritime Pacific air with winter precipitation maximum. From the Great Lakes eastward (southern boundary approximated) the mean winter position of Pacific air mass; net annual radiation 24-56 W m⁻². Podzols and turvods. Glaciers and permafrost local in western mountains. Conifers dominate western forests; conifers and hardwoods form eastern mixed forest.

2110 GREAT LAKES-ST. LAWRENCE FOREST PROVINCE

SOILS Humic-ferric podzols, grey-brown and grey turvods

VEGETATION Mixed deciduous and coniferous forest

FAUNA Mammals In north Moose and snowshoe hare. In 2112 White-tailed deer, wapiti, and woodchuck. In 2113 Wooded Black bear, beaver, porcupine

Birds Scissor-tail Pigeon, pigeon, black duck, sandhill crane, Canada goose. Proven Spruce and ruffed grouse. Transient Waterfowl

Fish Staple (productivity 70-175). Freshwater Trout, whitefish, sucker, sauger, walleye, eel, burbot, catfish, salmon, sturgeon, rainbow smelt, pike, muskellunge, perch, bass, drum. Anadromous Herring, cod, smelt, haddock, river hake, mackerel, flounder, halibut, capelin

2114 SPRUCE-FIR-MAPLE SECTION

LANDFORMS Uplands, lowlands, mountains, highlands, hills, broad, rolling, locally rugged; elevation 0-1000 m, average 400 m. Till, lake deposits. Fresh water 2%, wetlands 2%

VEGETATION Sugar maple, yellow birch, red spruce, balsam fir, hemlock, white pine

Map: 2005305.78 - 275177.38 - Image: 273 - 322 - ScaleFactor: 1568.2069433292935