

**INTRODUCTION**

The Elkhorn Mountains Volcanics (EMV) and Boulder Batholith record Mesozoic magmatism concurrent with fold-thrust belt shortening in southwestern Montana (fig. 1). (Rutland and others, 1989; Lageson and others, 2001). Batholith rocks include their volcanic carapace, the EMV, and together provide an uncommon exposure of a continental magma system (e.g., Lipman, 1984). The Emery mining district lies on the northwest flank of the Boulder Batholith (fig. 1), where precious metal ore deposits occur in high- and low-angle polymetamorphic vein systems hosted by EMV basalt-andesite lavas.

**Previous Mapping**  
Observations from six studies (fig. 1) are used in the current map compilation. Pardee and Schradler (1933) published a geologic map of the Emery mining district that showed the prominent veins, mines, and prospects in Late Cretaceous basalt-andesite lavas. Robertson (1953) added complete mineralogical descriptions of the basalt-andesite lava sequence and mapped lava flow breccias, faults, veins, mines, and mine workings in greater detail. Ruppel (1961) conducted reconnaissance mapping of the Deer Lodge 15 quadrangle and Ruppel (1963) also produced a map of the adjacent Basin 15 quadrangle (fig. 1). Derkey and others (1993) mapped and compiled the Deer Lodge 15 quadrangle and focused on Tertiary-Quaternary sediments. Scarberry (2016a) mapped the Sugarloaf Mountain 7.5 quadrangle and divided EMV igneous sequences based on their proximity to source vents.

**UNIT DESCRIPTIONS**

**Sediments**  
**Qal Alluvium (Holocene-Pleistocene)**—Well-sorted gravel, sand, silt, and clay along modern streams and floodplains. Includes fan deposits adjacent to stream channels, talus slope debris, colluvium, and landslides. Thickness is variable but less than 10 m.  
**Qp Pediment surfaces (Pleistocene)**—Grain-supported, 1 to 3-m-thick layers of sediment that are well exposed. The sediment layers are poorly to moderately stratified and sorted, and unconsolidated. Derkey and others (1993) described three pediment surfaces above the modern river level (oldest to youngest): (1) subrounded to rounded, cobble- to boulder-size clasts that occur 165–200 m above the modern river level; (2) subrounded to rounded, boulder-, cobble-, and pebble-size clasts that occur 135–200 m above the modern river level, and (3) boulder-, cobble-, and pebble-size clasts that occur 24–35 m above the modern river level.  
**Qg Glacial deposits (Pleistocene)**—Till and outwash gravels formed during the Bull Lake and Pineclade glaciations of the Rocky Mountains (Derkey and others, 1993). Till is not stratified, unconsolidated, and poorly sorted rock and soil deposits that contain subangular to rounded, clastic siltstone and claystone. Includes grayish brown and clay-rich matrix. Clasts consist mainly of Cretaceous and Tertiary igneous rocks plucked from the highlands surrounding Baggs Creek and Cottonwood Creek, where scarp channels are carved into the landscape (fig. 2, photo A). Outwash gravels occur at 10–20 m above the modern floodplain. Includes small (<1 km) and isolated rock-glacier moraines that occur at 2,080–2,130 m above mean sea level (Scarberry, 2016a).  
**Ts Basin sediments (Tertiary)**—Stratified, cross-bedded or thickly bedded, lenticular, poorly to moderately lithified, light gray to light brown, predominantly poorly sorted, massive sandy or silty mudstone with blocky fracture and grayish orange to very pale-orange color. Includes very poorly to moderately sorted sand to boulder conglomerate beds as much as 10 m thick composed of basalt, rhyolite, granite, and siltstone clasts (P. Yakovlev, written comm., 2017). Includes bentonite and ash beds that are continuous up to several kilometers (Berg and Hargrave, 2004). The unit is tens of meters thick in the map area and approaches a total thickness of 3 km in the middle of the Deer Lodge Valley (Berg and Hargrave, 2004).

**Bedrock**  
**Middle Eocene Volcanics**  
**Tr Rhyolite (Tertiary)**—Light to medium gray or pink, flow-banded rhyolite that contains 5–10 percent plagioclase and quartz phenocrysts that are 1–2 mm long set in a fine-grained groundmass (Derkey and others, 1993). The unit correlates with spherulitic and lithophysal rhyolite flows, units Tr and Trp, described by Ruppel (1963) and Mossiff (2015), respectively. A radiochronometric age from the base of the 400 to 500-m-thick flow sequence near Avon (fig. 1) yielded an age of 40.8 Ma (U-Pb on zircon; Mossiff, 2015).

**Late Cretaceous Igneous Rocks**  
**Boulder Batholith (cross-section only)**  
 The Boulder Batholith is not exposed in the map region but is shown in the cross-section with the EMV sequence in the northern part of the Sugarloaf Mountain 7.5 quadrangle between the batholith and the EMV may be interpreted as essentially concordant in the region, and Ruppel (1961, 1963) believed that the batholith exhibits a laccolith-like geometry. Emplacement of the batholith into the EMV may have produced flexural pathways for mineralizing fluids, and it's likely that the roof of the batholith lies at shallow depth beneath the Emery mining district (Robertson, 1953).

**Kg Granite and aplite (Late Cretaceous)**—Massive, jointed granite outcrops that form the principal pluton, by volume, of the Boulder Batholith. Coarse, medium, and fine varieties occur and exhibit normal-zoned plagioclase (45–50%), orthoclase (20–30%), and quartz (5–10%) (Berg and Hargrave, 2004). Contains accessory amounts of sphene, apatite, magnetite, and rare zircon (Weeks, 1974). The Butte Granite has an age of 76.28 ± 0.12 Ma (SHRIMP-RG U-Pb on zircon) (Martin and Dilles, 2000). Aplite forms light tan, sheet-like outcrops that appear bedded in places but lack volcanic or sedimentary structures. The rock is typically fine-grained with sugary and equigranular texture, although moderately coarse varieties occur. Minerals include 10% biotite and near equal amounts of quartz and feldspar. Includes small masses of pegmatitic rocks that may contain radiating tourmaline crystals, potassium feldspar, and plagioclase. Aplite on the west side of the Boulder Batholith, north of Butte, is 7.48 ± 0.6 Ma (LA-ICP-MS, U-Pb on zircon; M. Schmitz, Boise State University, written comm., 2016).

**Kca Gabro-Diorite intrusions (Late Cretaceous)**—Isolated and brecciated bodies that cross-cut contacts locally in the northern part of the Sugarloaf Mountain 7.5 quadrangle (Derkey and others, 1993). Intrusions form a series of aligned rock towers mantled by lava flow breccia near Sugarloaf Mountain (Scarberry, 2016a). In part, they represent intrusive equivalents to the basalt-andesite lava sequence (Kema and most, if not all, of the intrusions pre-date rocks of the Boulder Batholith (Kg). A diorite intrusion located approximately 8.5 km south of Cottonwood Creek (fig. 1 inset; KCS-13-12; 46.28729N, -112.59713W) has a U-Pb weighted mean age of 79.8 ± 2.0 Ma (LA-ICP-MS on zircon, 95% confidence).

**Elkhorn Mountains Volcanics (EMV)**  
 The EMV cover 25,000 km<sup>2</sup> along the flanks, and top, of the Boulder Batholith north of Butte (fig. 1). The volcanic deposits formed a 4.6-km-thick volcanic plateau in the region during the height of volcanic activity (Smolens, 1966). Regional studies describe lower, middle, and upper EMV sequences (table 1). The lower EMV sequence is primarily basalt-andesite lavas, and dacite porphyry lavas and dome complexes. The middle EMV sequence consists of several large-volume rhyolitic ignimbrites (Scarberry and others, 2016), and the upper sequence contains volcanoclastic sediments and dome-laid volcanic deposits.

**Middle Member**

**Kemr Rhyolite ignimbrite (Late Cretaceous)**—Multiple pulses of explosive rhyolite volcanism are recorded by these deposits. The base of the sequence crops out near the head of the middle fork of Cottonwood Creek, where it consists of approximately 20 m of coarse-bedded volcanoclastic, clast-supported sediment that grades upward from sand to conglomerate beds (Scarberry, 2016a). Volcanoclastic sands show evidence of fluvial reworking of lower EMV lavas (fig. 3A) prior to emplacement of the ignimbrites. Scarberry (2016a) groups the ignimbrite deposits into two sequences: (1) The lower sequence is gray to green, welded, ash-flow tuff and tuff breccia that is recognized by conspicuous secondary textures and minerals, including silicified breccia, purple and green oxides, and patches of disseminated sulfide mineralization. A sample of the lower sequence collected approximately 7 km south of Cottonwood Creek (fig. 1 inset; KCS-13-44; 46.2829N, -112.5284W) has a U-Pb weighted mean age of 77.4 ± 1.7 Ma (LA-ICP-MS on zircon, 95% confidence). Maroon vitrophyre that crops out southeast of Sugarloaf Mountain is at least 15 m thick and may separate deposits of the upper and lower sequences. (2) The upper ignimbrite or ignimbrites, are a massive, medium to dark gray, cliff-forming sequence of ash-flow tuff. These deposits are recognized by abundant 0.5 to 2.0-mm-long plagioclase phenocrysts, polyhedral rip-up clasts, and flame (fig. 2, photos B and C) and vitroclasts that are 1–5 cm long. Pebble-sized, rip-up clasts of porphyritic basalt-andesite lavas (Kema), granite (Kg), and metasedimentary rocks (Kms) occur. An exposure of the upper tuff sequence just south of Cottonwood Creek (see map plate, KCS-13-28) has a U-Pb weighted mean age of 78.5 ± 2.2 Ma (LA-ICP-MS on zircon, 95% confidence). The total thickness of the rhyolite ignimbrite sequence decreases markedly in the map region, from 900 m (2,953 ft) near Sugarloaf Mountain (Scarberry, 2016a) to less than a few meters thick in the Emery mining district (Robertson, 1953).

**Lower Member**

**Kema Basalt-andesite fissure breccia, flow breccia, and lava flows (Late Cretaceous)**—Lava flow breccias forms massive, blocky, subrounded boulder outcrops that are continuous for over 2 km. The breccia is a dull brown in outcrop and fresh surfaces are blue-gray with apatitic texture. The rock contains 60–70% plagioclase microclasts, minute pyroxenes, and some amphibole. Pyroxene and amphibole are strongly altered to chlorite. A northeast-trending ridge of fissure breccia (fig. 2, photo D) surrounds intrusions (Kd) southwest of Sugarloaf Mountain (Scarberry, 2016a). The following description of the basalt-andesite lava sequence is derived from Robertson (1953) unless otherwise noted. Basalt-andesite lavas and breccia host ores in the Emery mining district. Basalt lavas may occur lower in the sequence and andesite lavas higher (Al-Khirshab, 1982). Collectively the lava flows are a dark greenish-gray rock containing white amygdaloids (fig. 2, photos E and F) and generally characterized by small white phenocrysts of feldspar (Pardee and Schradler, 1933). Discrete textural and mineralogical varieties occur and include feldspar-pyroxene basalt, pyroxene basalt, amygdaloidal basalt, and andesite. Feldspar-pyroxene basalt occurs relatively low in the sequence, overlies breccia, and contains approximately 25 percent 2 to 4-mm-long phenocrysts of labradorite (16%), clinoptilactite (6%), and augite (5%). Pyroxene basalt contains 1 to 2-mm-long labradorite 0.5 mm long or smaller olivine (fig. 3B). 2 to 4-mm-long diopside, and 2-mm-long augite phenocrysts with accessory magnetite. Amygdaloid zones are common at the contact between individual flows of both the feldspar-pyroxene basalt and pyroxene basalt sequences. The amount of amygdaloidal material varies from a small percentage to about half the rock. Amygdaloids consist of spherical to irregular shaped, sand to fist-size mixtures of chalcedonic quartz, chlorite, hematite, chlorite, and epidote. Red andesite lavas contain plagioclase, carbonized amphibole, and pyroxene phenocrysts. The conspicuous red color of the andesite lava is due to oxidation of iron minerals to hematite that appears to cement mineral grains in the groundmass. The estimated total thickness of the lava sequence, including breccia, ranges from approximately 400 m (Scarberry, 2016a) to 600 m (Robertson, 1953; Derkey and others, 1993). North of Cottonwood Creek the unit coincides with a magnetic anomaly (fig. 4; cross-section). Borehole logs from Al-Khirshab (1982) suggest that the basalt-andesite sequence is more than 1 km thick underlying the Emery mining district.

**Kms Metamorphosed sedimentary rocks (Late and Early Cretaceous)**—Light tan to gray, silicified and dense, amorphous to aplastic metamorphic rock. Includes contact metamorphosed silicic tuff that resembles chert described by Derkey and others (1993). The protolith was likely siliceous mudstone and sandstone of the middle siliceous unit of the Colorado Formation (Ruppel, 1963), equivalent to the Frontier and Mowry Formations described by Vukic (2011). The unit approaches ~120 m (~390 ft) in total thickness.

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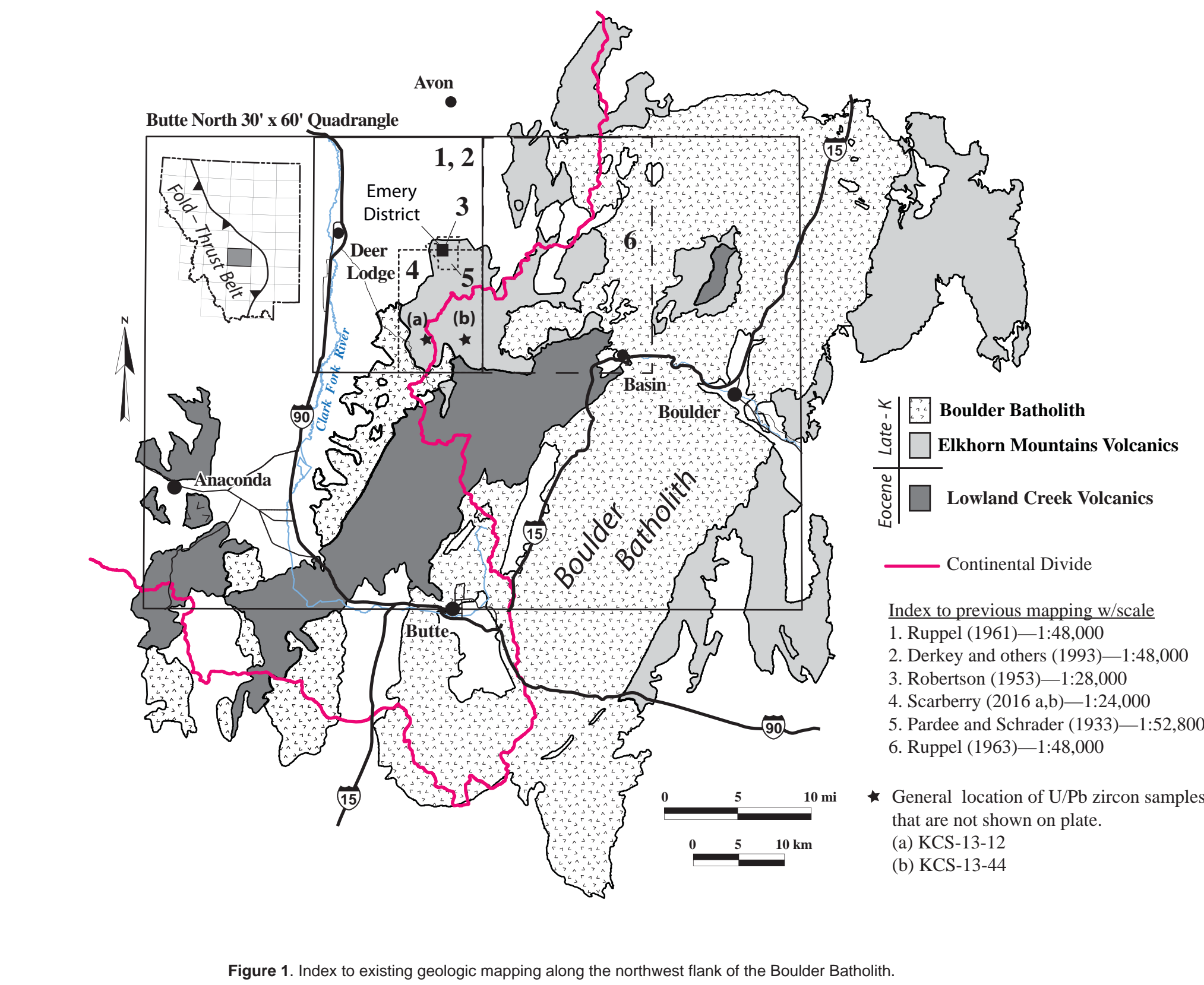
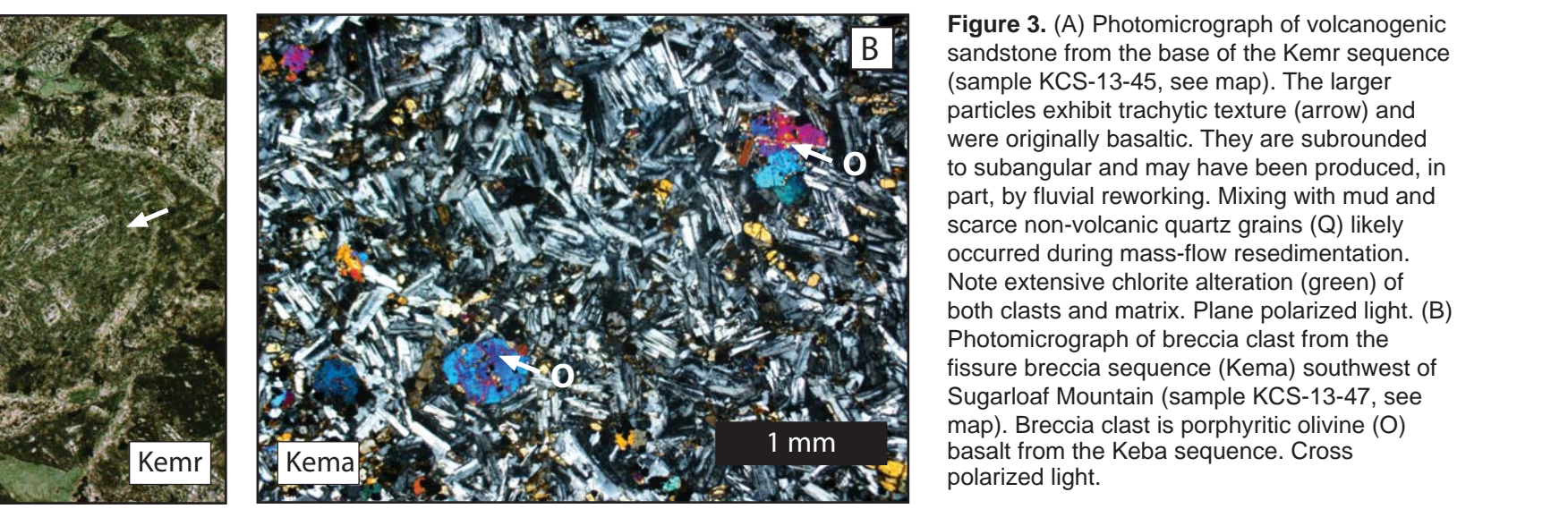
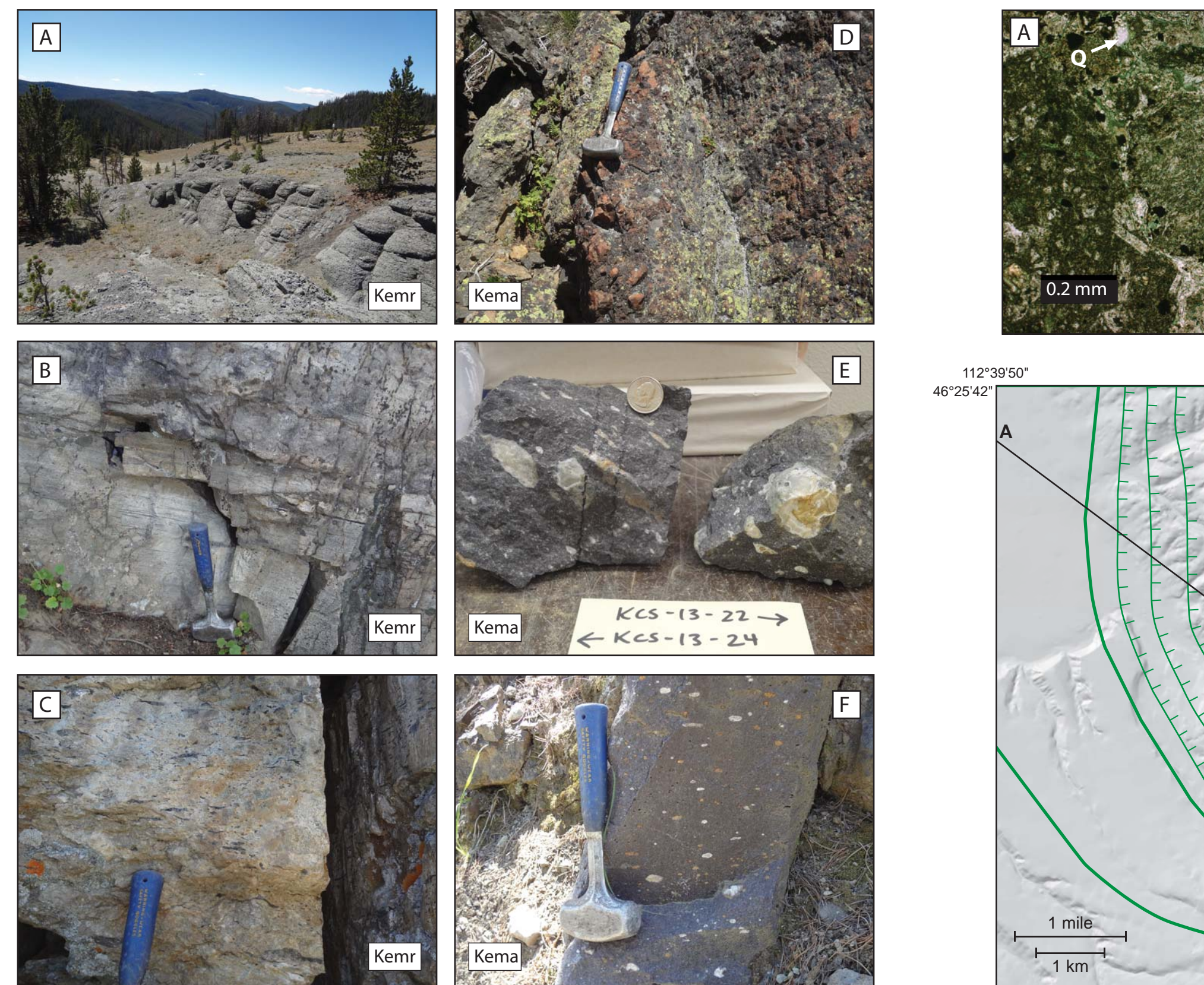
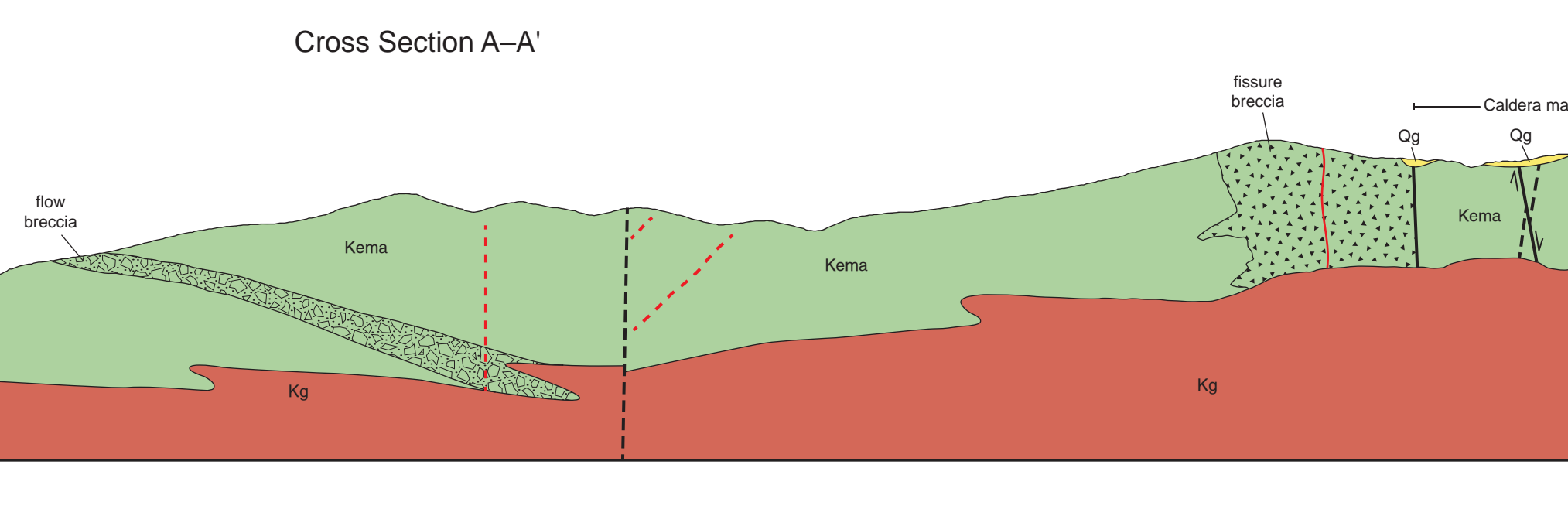
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**Figure 1.** Index to existing geologic mapping along the northwest flank of the Boulder Batholith. Geology after Vukic and others (2007).

**Figure 2.** (A) Glacial scour channel in ignimbrite near the top of the Kemr sequence located less than half a kilometer east of Sugarloaf Mountain. (B) Flattened pumice near the center of the Kemr sequence. Note the width to length ratio of the flattened pumice is approximately 1:100. (C) Less compacted, wispy pumice fragments, or flame, towards the top of the Kemr sequence east of Sugarloaf Mountain. (D) Fissure breccia in the Kema sequence southwest of Sugarloaf Mountain. (E) Hand specimen of large, irregularly shaped amygdaloids, from the Kema sequence. (F) Almond-shaped amygdaloids in outcrop from the Kema sequence.