



Orthorectified and Principal Component RADARSAT-1 Image Dataset for NTS 84A, Alberta

Orthorectified and Principal Component RADARSAT-1 Image Dataset for NTS 84A, Alberta

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Alberta Geological Survey

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Abstract

This report details the acquisition, characteristics and processing of the orthorectified and principal component RADARSAT-1 images for NTS map area 84A by the Alberta Geological Survey (AGS). The acquisition of the original RADARSAT-1 scene imagery was made through a Provincial Partnership Memorandum of Understanding. Original RADARSAT-1 path images (SGF) have been purchased by Alberta Sustainable Resource Development (SRD) from RADARSAT International (RSI) and then made available to AGS, based on an agreement that AGS would pay for orthorectification of the original RADARSAT-1 imagery in exchange for obtaining the value-added imagery for geological study and public distribution.

This resulted in acquisition of coverage for all of northern Alberta (north of 55 degrees north latitude) for Standard Beam Modes S1 and S7 in both ascending and descending look directions. This imagery is available at a nominal resolution of 12.5 m. Two hundred and fifty scenes have been orthorectified and, in total, cover northern Alberta (north of 55 degrees north latitude) in the four beam positions. They were tiled to 25 1:250 000 scale NTS map areas. The image file for each NTS map area contains four layers to accommodate four images from the four beam positions. These four layers were then used for principal component analysis to produce an image file for each NTS map area containing four layers holding PC1, PC2, PC3 and PC4 images. The orthorectified and principal component RADARSAT-1 dataset for NTS map area 84A is one of the 25 NTS-tiled products to be delivered to the public by AGS. It will permit users to further process and interpret the RADARSAT-1 data to obtain geoscience, environmental, forestry or other information.

1 Introduction

The Government of Alberta participated in a RADARSAT-1 pre-launch agreement that permitted the acquisition of radar imagery at a significantly reduced price. The acquisition of the RADARSAT-1 imagery was made through a Provincial Partnership Memorandum of Understanding that offered participating provinces a price of \$609 CDN per scene. This agreement tested the application of RADARSAT-1 satellite imagery for agricultural, mapping and natural resources management. Alberta Sustainable Resource Development (SRD) and the Alberta Geological Survey (AGS) participated in this agreement, and they agreed to a satellite image acquisition plan in 1999. The funding of the original RADARSAT-1 path images (SGF) was covered and managed by SRD, and it was agreed AGS would pay for orthorectification of the original RADARSAT-1 imagery in exchange for its use. AGS agreed to provide a complete set of orthorectified imagery to SRD in return. The RADARSAT-1 imagery was obtained from September to December 1999. A total of 274 scenes of RADARSAT-1 standard beam modes S1 and S7 were captured for both ascending and descending passes, covering all of northern Alberta (north of 55 degrees north latitude). This number was mistakenly reported as 280 scenes in previous reports (Grunsky, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c), due to 6 duplicate records of scenes that were found afterwards. Two hundred and fifty of the 274 scenes were orthorectified and then tiled to 25 NTS map areas (Grunsky, 2002a). The other 24 scenes were not orthorectified because they are peripheral complementary images. The image file for each NTS map area contains four layers to accommodate four images from the four beam positions. These four layers were then used for principal component analysis (PCA) to produce an image file for each NTS map area, which contains four layers with PC1, PC2, PC3 and PC4 images. Each of the four principal components of the 25 tiled NTS areas was then assembled to produce the northern Alberta mosaic of principal component images (Grunsky, 2002b). All of these value-added images are made available to the public by AGS. A detailed documentation of the acquisition and availability of these images is provided by Grunsky (2002a).

The RADARSAT-1 satellite is an active, microwave-based sensor that sends its own microwave signals down to the Earth and processes the signals it receives back. It differs from optical sensors, such as LANDSAT TM and SPOT, which are referred to as passive systems. Since the optical sensors collect data at frequencies of visible and infrared, they rely on sunlight reflected off the Earth and, as a result, are unable to collect data in darkness or poor atmospheric conditions, such as cloud cover, fog, dust, hail or smoke. RADARSAT-1's longer microwave wavelength is better suited for atmospheric penetration and can collect data regardless of the Earth's atmospheric conditions. The radar backscatter qualities are directly related to ground topography, dielectric properties and surface roughness of the terrain being imaged. As a result, RADARSAT-1 images are complementary to optical satellite images. In addition, radar can acquire multiple images to provide stereoscopic viewing.

The imagery obtained by AGS has great potential in geological studies when combined with other satellite images and existing geological data. September to December 1999, when the imagery was obtained, was a dry autumn and, thus, provided ideal conditions of no deciduous foliage and no snow. The four combinations of varying incidence angles and look directions provided four additional dimensions for highlighting differences in geomorphology, surficial and structural features and drainage. For example, Grunsky (2002c) applied the principal component images for land cover and terrain mapping, and Paganelli et al. (2003) used them for structural mapping in a portion of the northern Buffalo Head Hills area. This report describes the acquisition, characteristics and processing of the orthorectified and principal component RADARSAT-1 image dataset for NTS 84A.

2 RADARSAT-1 Standard Beam Mode Images

RADARSAT-1 was launched on November 4, 1995, as a result of a joint venture between the Canadian government, private industry and NASA (RADARSAT International (RSI), 1999). As Canada's first

Earth observation satellite, and the world's first operationally-oriented radar sensor, it provides complete global coverage with the satellite's orbit repeated every 24 days. The Arctic is imaged daily, whereas equatorial areas achieve complete coverage approximately every five days. It differs from research-oriented radar sensors, such as ERS and JERS-1, as it is the first radar sensor totally dedicated to operational applications, and it offers a variety of beam modes to meet requirements for the particular application at hand. It uses a single frequency C-Band (5.3 Ghz frequency or 5.6 cm wavelength) and has the ability to send and receive this microwave energy at a number of spatial resolutions and different incidence angles over a 500-kilometre range. RADARSAT-1's side-looking geometry greatly enhances subtle topographic features that aid in the interpretation of lineaments (RADARSAT International (RSI), 1997). RADARSAT-1 offers 35 beam positions with a viewing angle range of 10 to 60 degrees (Figure 1). The spatial resolution can vary from 8 m to 100 m (Figure 2). As a result, the RADARSAT-1 satellite is programmable so various beam modes and resolutions can be changed according to requirements.

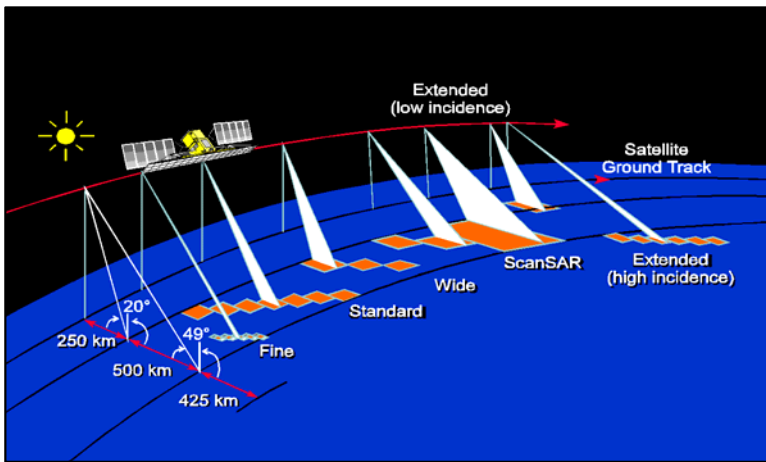


Figure 1. RADARSAT-1 beam modes (used with permission from RADARSAT International (RSI), 1997).

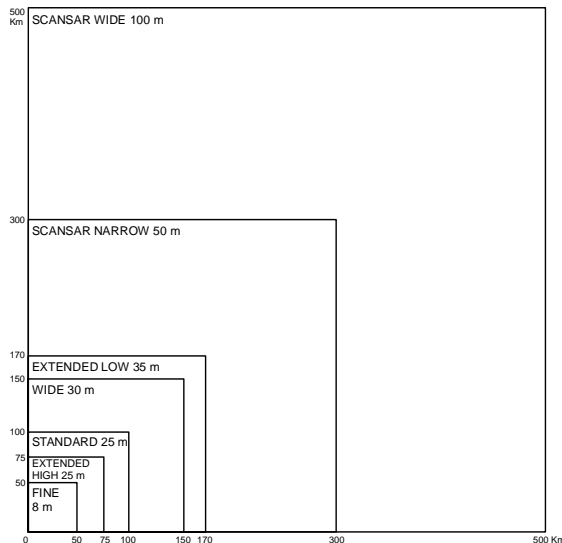


Figure 2. Coverage sizes and resolutions of RADARSAT-1 beam modes (modified after RADARSAT International (RSI), 1999).

The orthorectified and principal component RADARSAT-1 image datasets for NTS 84A contain images from two beam modes and four beam positions: Standard Beam Mode 1 ascending, Standard Beam Mode 1 descending, Standard Beam Mode 7 ascending and Standard Beam Mode 7 descending (Figure 3). It also includes four principal component images (PC1, PC2, PC3 and PC4) derived from them.

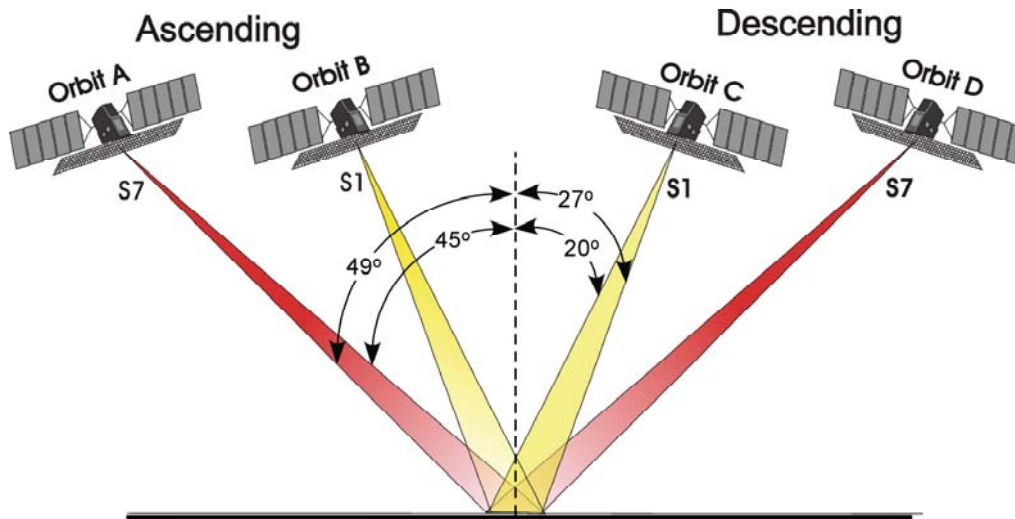


Figure 3. Multi-beam configuration of RADARSAT-1 S1 and S7 ascending/descending imagery (after Grunsky, 2002a).

3 Processes for Acquisition of the Orthorectified and Principal Component RADARSAT-1 Images for NTS 84A

The RADARSAT-1 image orthorectification, mosaic and principal component analysis were carried out by Resource GIS and Imaging Ltd. (RGI) using processing methods and software developed by RGI and proprietary to RGI. Their software and processes run within the ER Mapper processing environment.

The processes for producing the orthorectified and principal component RADARSAT-1 Image dataset for NTS 84A are:

- acquisition of the original RADARSAT-1 Standard Beam Mode path images
- orthorectification of the path images
- mosaicking of the orthorectified scene images to NTS map areas; and
- principal component analysis of the tiled NTS map area images.

Following are detailed descriptions of the original input data and steps to produce the orthorectified and principal component RADARSAT-1 images for NTS 84A.

3.1 Original RADARSAT-1 Standard Beam Mode Images

The original RADARSAT-1 image data are the path images (SGF) and have been converted to ground range and are multi-look processed. Each Standard Beam image is a composite of four looks. This composite increases the signal-to-noise ratio at the expense of the spatial resolution. The imagery is provided at a nominal resolution of 12.5 m (close to the single look spatial resolution), although the true spatial resolution of the averaged four-look image is closer to 25 m. The image is calibrated, but remains

oriented in the direction of the orbit path. The image is sampled in unsigned, 16-bit integer format and written in Committee of Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS) standard format. The projection is in UTM zone 11 or 12 with an ellipsoid of WGS84. Figure 4 shows an example of the original path images used for tiling the NTS 84A dataset. Table 1 lists the scenes that overlay the NTS 84A area. Figure 5 shows the spatial locations of the scenes overlaying NTS 84A. Many of these scenes were used for producing the NTS 84A orthorectified and principal component image datasets included on the CD.

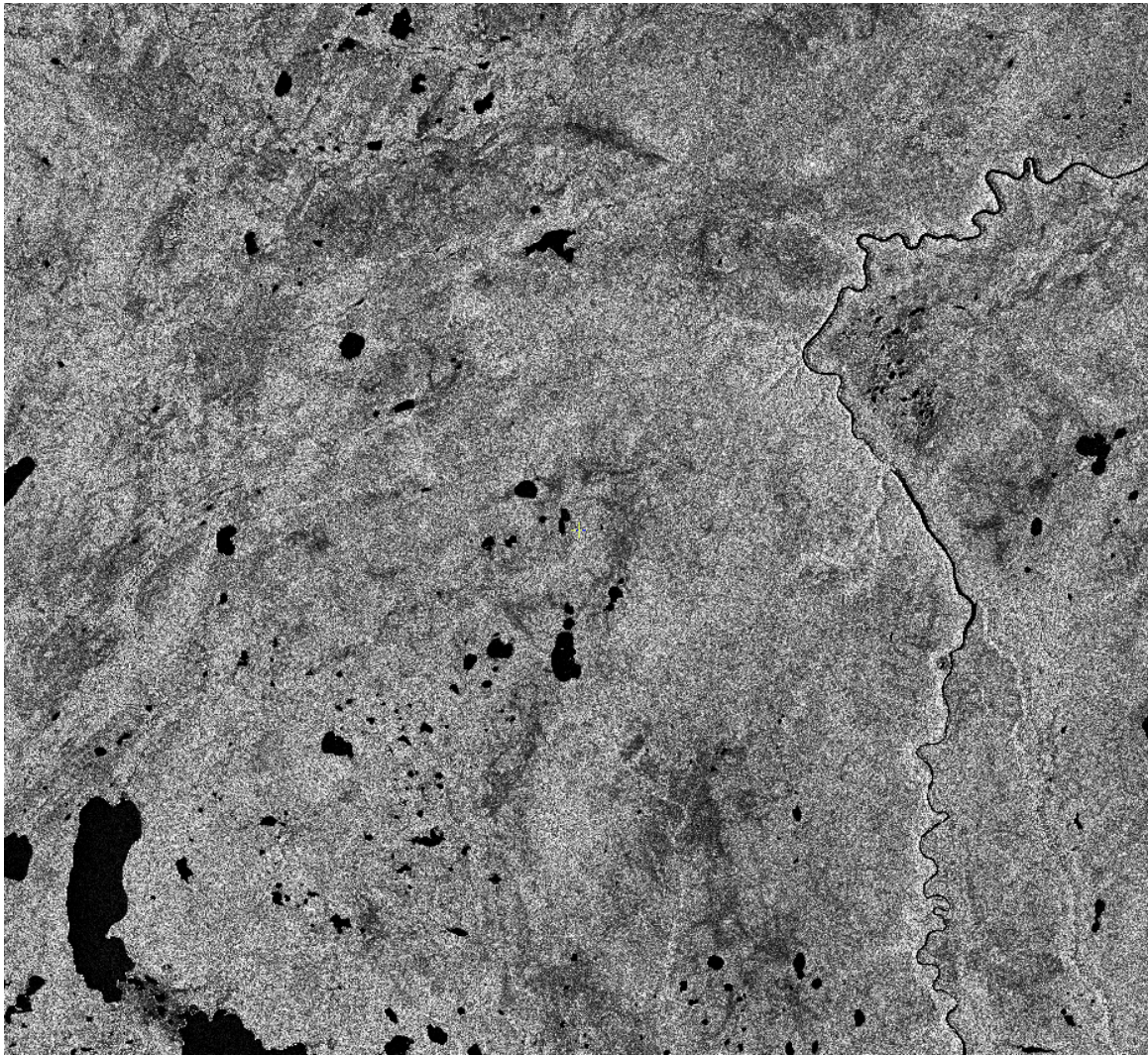


Figure 4. One of the original SGF scene images used for tiling the NTS 84A dataset: scene MO196607 of Standard Beam Mode 7 descending. RADARSAT data © Canadian Space Agency/Agence spatiale canadienne 1999, processed and distributed by RADARSAT International.

Table 1. List of the Path Images that Overlay NTS 84A

Scene ID	Beam	Path	UL_LAT	UL_LONG	UR_LAT	UR_LONG	LR_LAT	LR_LONG	LL_LAT	LL_LONG
M0197235	S1	ASC	56:30:20.23N	113:47:49.38W	56:44:50.52N	111:59:15.78W	55:46:24.65N	111:35:01.79W	55:32:07.72N	113:20:47.62W
M0196649	S1	ASC	56:31:16.85N	114:51:33.04W	56:45:47.10N	113:02:58.55W	55:50:51.39N	112:40:09.31W	55:36:33.75N	114:26:05.70W
M0195960	S1	ASC	56:33:19.98N	115:55:18.82W	56:47:51.19N	114:06:35.05W	55:52:55.20N	113:43:43.75W	55:38:36.64N	115:29:48.99W
M0195878	S1	ASC	56:25:53.81N	112:46:33.03W	56:40:34.60N	110:57:09.64W	55:45:38.82N	110:34:20.63W	55:31:10.82N	112:21:05.00W
M0197236	S1	ASC	57:19:38.31N	114:11:36.37W	57:34:20.76N	112:20:32.93W	56:39:27.40N	111:56:59.05W	56:24:58.42N	113:45:16.59W
M0196650	S1	ASC	57:20:33.57N	115:15:20.34W	57:35:16.02N	113:24:15.65W	56:40:22.71N	113:00:40.90W	56:25:53.75N	114:48:59.56W
M0195879	S1	ASC	57:15:43.80N	113:05:50.26W	57:30:23.35N	111:15:09.71W	56:35:30.32N	110:51:40.49W	56:21:04.13N	112:39:36.08W
M0199211	S1	DES	56:52:29.26N	113:10:55.71W	56:38:05.48N	111:22:44.67W	55:43:21.87N	111:48:15.27W	55:57:33.11N	113:33:48.21W
M0199210	S1	DES	57:42:18.54N	112:49:27.65W	57:27:42.44N	110:58:44.67W	56:32:42.75N	111:25:18.59W	56:47:05.35N	113:13:14.49W
M0196778	S1	DES	56:57:01.96N	115:17:32.94W	56:42:35.96N	113:29:02.45W	55:47:52.72N	113:54:38.44W	56:02:06.07N	115:40:29.97W
M0196777	S1	DES	57:46:27.99N	114:56:10.04W	57:31:49.72N	113:05:08.33W	56:37:11.19N	113:31:37.77W	56:51:35.94N	115:19:52.58W
M0196521	S1	DES	56:53:56.67N	114:16:22.19W	56:39:31.69N	112:28:02.42W	55:44:48.63N	112:53:34.88W	55:59:01.02N	114:39:16.21W
M0196520	S1	DES	57:43:27.81N	113:54:59.26W	57:28:50.71N	112:04:09.47W	56:34:11.94N	112:30:35.38W	56:48:35.57N	114:18:38.84W
M0195853	S1	DES	56:43:40.25N	112:13:51.61W	56:29:17.27N	110:26:00.34W	55:34:33.60N	110:51:22.39W	55:48:44.15N	112:36:36.77W
M0195852	S1	DES	57:33:05.83N	111:52:40.97W	57:18:30.72N	110:02:20.01W	56:23:50.68N	110:28:34.92W	56:38:12.49N	112:16:11.13W
M0199703	S7	ASC	57:27:29.14N	113:22:49.33W	57:35:51.89N	111:31:34.64W	56:41:14.12N	111:18:41.97W	56:32:50.63N	113:07:13.27W
M0199702	S7	ASC	56:38:02.57N	113:08:42.64W	56:46:25.94N	111:19:56.88W	55:51:47.17N	111:07:16.74W	55:43:22.77N	112:53:27.44W
M0199359	S7	ASC	57:26:27.91N	114:25:20.41W	57:34:50.96N	112:34:08.13W	56:40:13.21N	112:21:15.35W	56:31:49.42N	114:09:44.40W
M0199358	S7	ASC	56:36:55.68N	114:11:12.34W	56:45:19.31N	112:22:29.86W	55:50:40.96N	112:09:49.70W	55:42:16.30N	113:55:57.32W
M0198894	S7	ASC	57:29:18.25N	115:28:43.95W	57:37:40.84N	113:37:24.43W	56:43:03.07N	113:24:31.41W	56:34:39.76N	115:13:07.24W
M0198893	S7	ASC	56:39:59.89N	115:14:38.74W	56:48:23.08N	113:25:48.03W	55:53:44.73N	113:13:07.64W	55:45:20.51N	114:59:23.01W
M0198661	S7	ASC	57:23:57.35N	112:19:04.16W	57:32:19.99N	110:28:01.68W	56:37:42.19N	110:15:10.04W	56:29:18.79N	112:03:29.78W
M0200509	S7	DES	56:55:33.65N	114:52:19.34W	56:47:14.19N	113:03:26.87W	55:52:34.95N	113:18:41.91W	56:00:55.47N	115:04:58.31W
M0200508	S7	DES	57:44:55.89N	114:40:43.56W	57:36:37.08N	112:49:21.30W	56:41:59.13N	113:04:57.27W	56:50:18.70N	114:53:35.05W
M0197032	S7	DES	56:46:32.75N	112:50:45.80W	56:38:12.67N	111:02:18.80W	55:43:33.01N	111:17:30.92W	55:51:54.18N	113:03:23.28W
M0197031	S7	DES	57:35:54.84N	112:39:10.86W	57:27:35.50N	110:48:16.26W	56:32:57.11N	111:03:49.04W	56:41:17.25N	112:52:00.72W
M0196607	S7	DES	56:49:56.25N	113:53:13.86W	56:41:36.19N	112:04:37.10W	55:46:56.96N	112:19:50.56W	55:55:18.09N	114:05:52.17W
M0196606	S7	DES	57:39:17.12N	113:41:38.96W	57:30:57.72N	111:50:33.37W	56:36:19.38N	112:06:07.72W	56:44:39.55N	113:54:29.79W

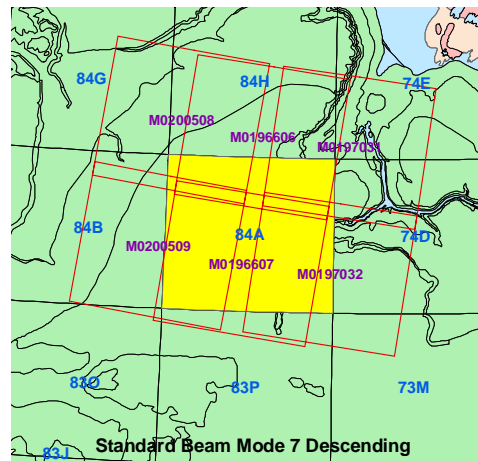
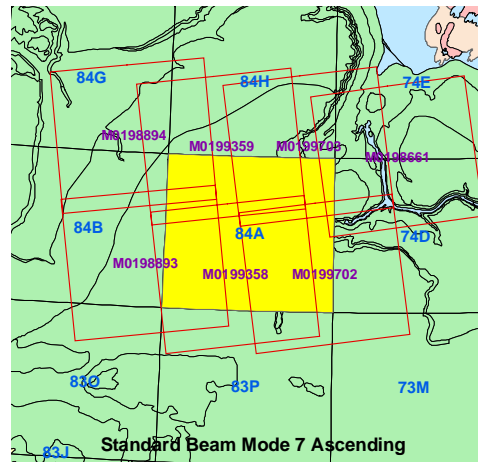
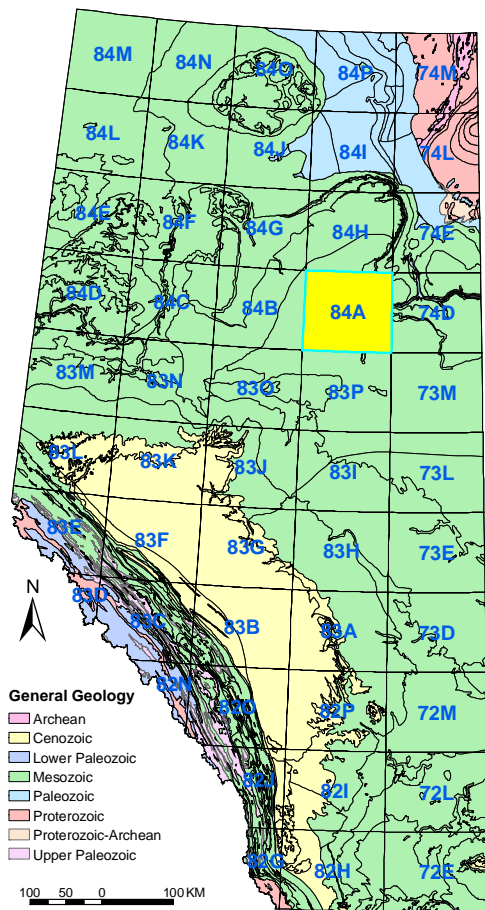
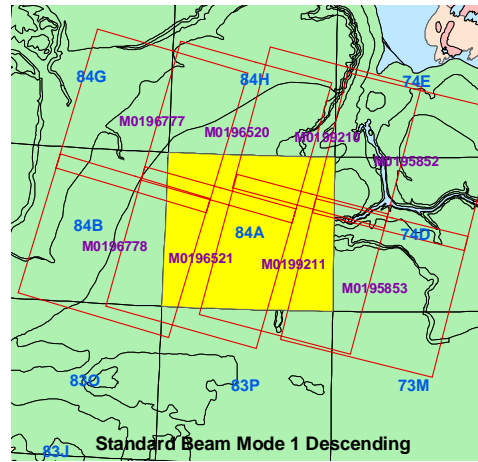
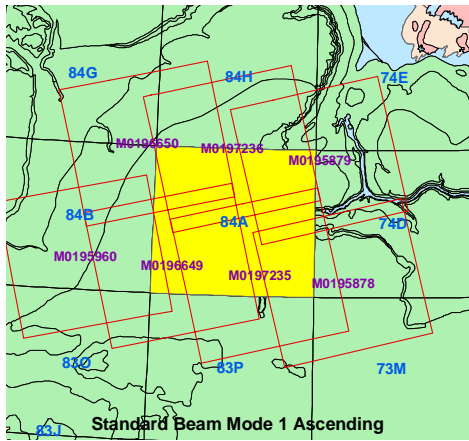


Figure 5. The scenes overlaying NTS 84A.

3.2 Orthorectification Process

The original RADARSAT-1 path images are orthorectified by RGI contracted by AGS. The individual orthorectified RADARSAT-1 images have no filtering nor any radiometric processing applied to them. Radiometrically they are identical to the original images. Orthorectification is performed using digital elevation data provided by the Resource Data Division (RDD) of the Alberta Department of Sustainable Development. The digital elevation data used has a 100 m resolution. Ground control points (GCPs) are collected from 1:20 000 Alberta Access Vectors and an Alberta mosaic of orthorectified Indian remote sensing satellite (IRS) images, which are also provided by RDD. An average GCP root mean-square error of 20 m is obtained. The image file is in ER Mapper format and projected to UTM zone 11 or 12 with a datum of NAD83. The data remain in unsigned, 16-bit integer format, and the pixel size remains at 12.5 m. Figure 6 is an example of the orthorectified images used for tiling the NTS 84A dataset.

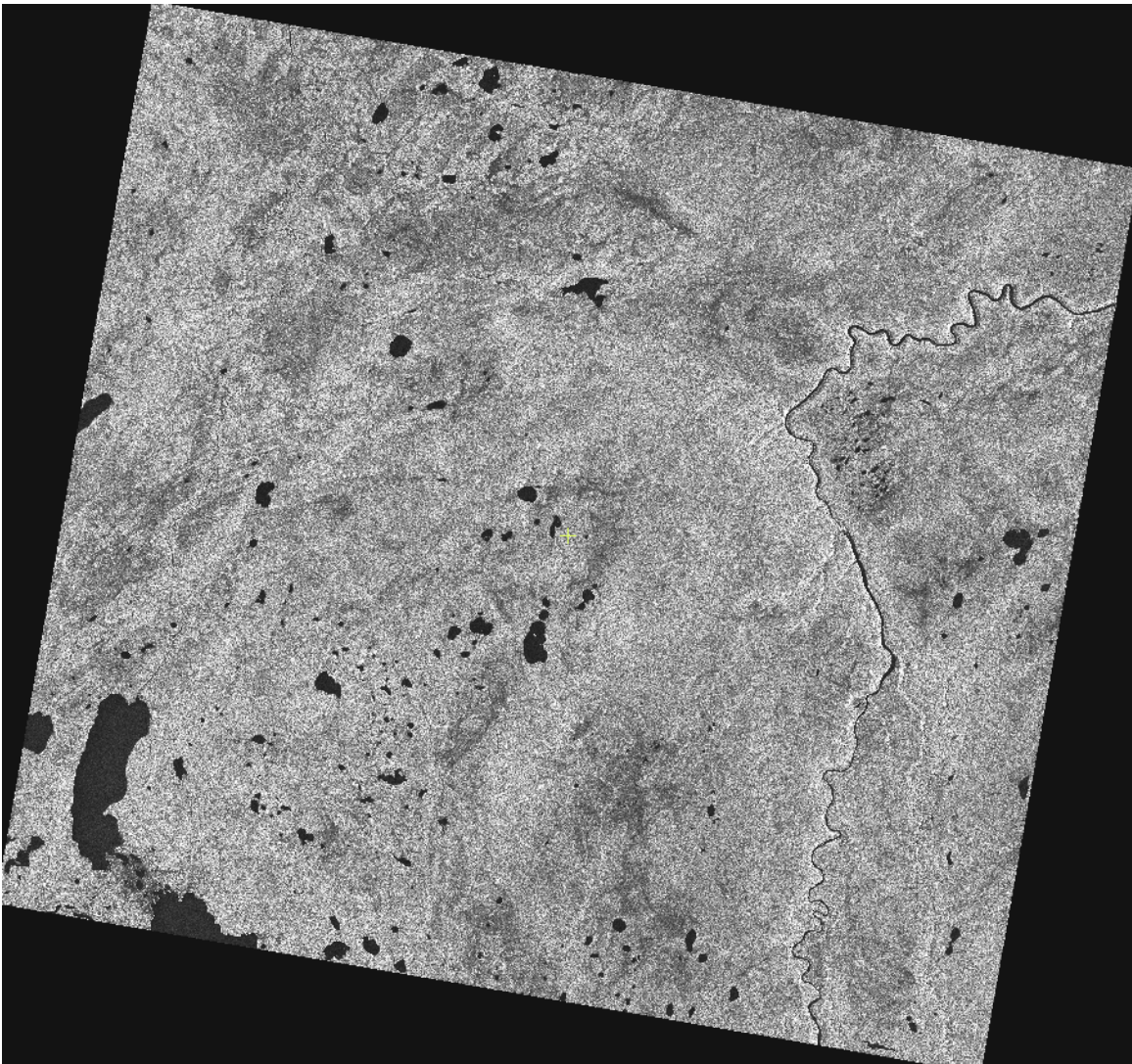


Figure 6. One of the orthorectified scene images used for tiling the NTS 84A dataset: scene MO196607 of Standard Beam Mode 7 descending.

3.3 Mosaic (Tiling) Process

The orthorectified images are tiled to 25 NTS map areas of Standard Beam Mode S1/S7 ascending/descending. For the S1 mosaics, the near-nadir sides of the images have been favoured in the mosaic process. For the S7 mosaics, the off-nadir sides of the images have been favoured. This maximizes the incidence angle difference between the S1 and S7 mosaics. Radiometric differences between adjacent images are minimized using two-dimensional, piecewise linear gain and offset adjustment functions, which are interactively adjusted to achieve an optimum balance. The balanced mosaics are then clipped to 1:250 000 NTS tiles. The NTS tile image file is in ER Mapper format and projected to UTM zone 11 or 12 with a datum of NAD83. The data are converted into unsigned, 8-bit integer format, and the pixel size remains at 12.5 m. Figure 7 is a pseudocolour composite of the orthorectified and tiled NTS 84A image dataset.

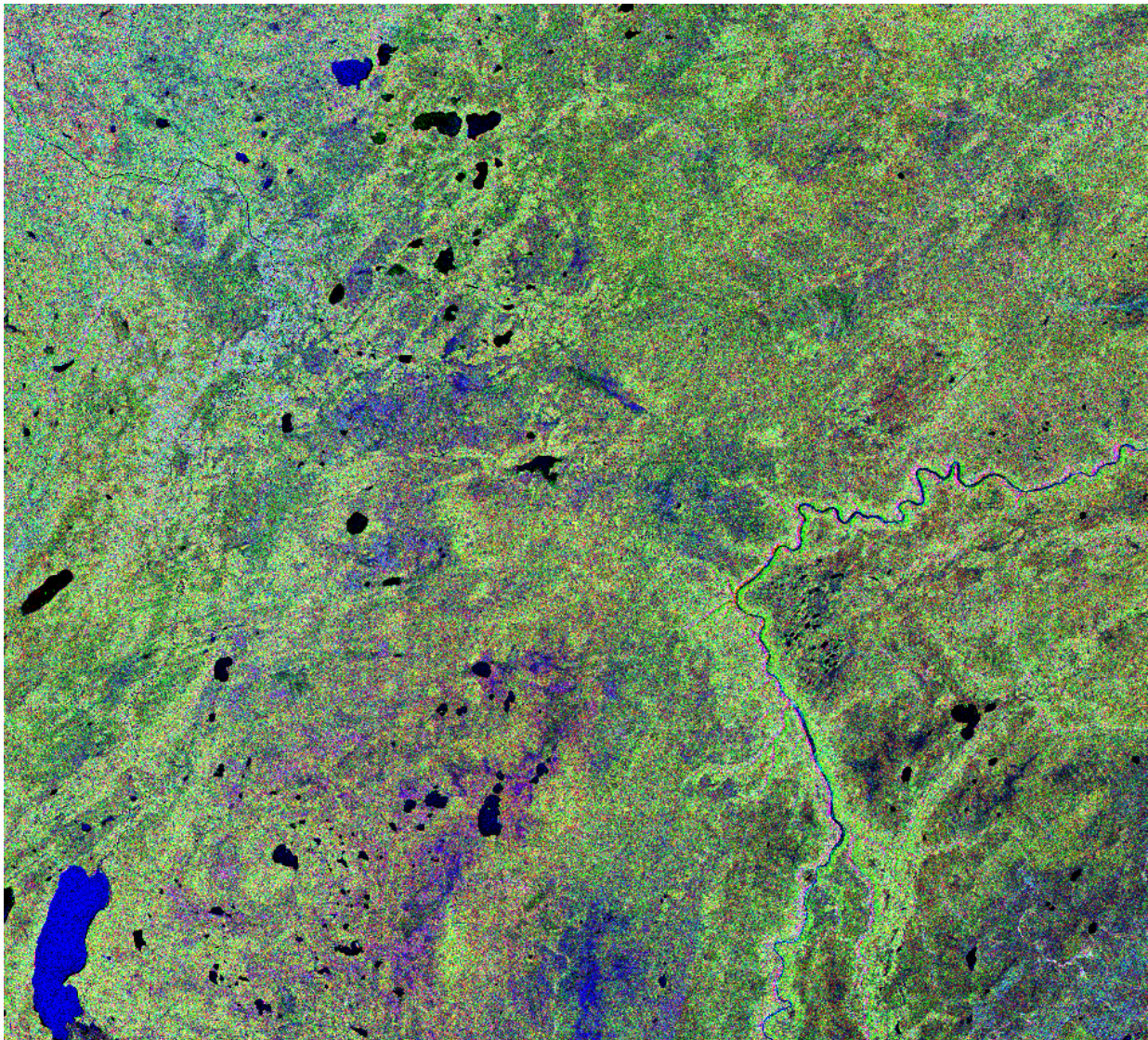


Figure 7. Pseudocolour composite of orthorectified NTS 84A image dataset of Standard Beam Mode S1/S7 ascending/descending beam positions (RGB=S7d, S7a, S1d).

3.4 Principal Component Analysis

NTS images of four beam positions (S1 ascending/descending and S7 ascending/descending) for the same NTS map area are used as input channels for principal component analysis (PCA). This results in 25 PCA image datasets; each contains four layers for the PC1, PC2, PC3 and PC4 images for the same NTS map area. During the PCA, the S7 ascending image is used to mask the lakes so as to remove the lakes from the calculation of the covariance eigenvectors. The S1 ascending image is multiplied by 1.35, and the S1 descending image is multiplied by 1.60 so as to match the means of the S1 and S7 ascending/descending images. The covariance eigenvectors are determined using a 10 000 columns by 20 000 rows window of the four beam mode images. The window is located between UTM zone 12 NAD 83 coordinates 339313 E to 464319 E and 6414500 N to 6164502 N. An ER Mapper `std_dev_1.6` filter is applied to each of the four beam position images. After PCA, a value of 11 000 was added to PC3 values and 5 000 to PC4 values to bring all of the image values into the positive range. The resultant image dataset is in ER Mapper format and projected to UTM zone 11 or 12 with a datum of NAD83. The dataset was converted into unsigned, 8-bit integer format, and the pixel size remains at 12.5 m. Figure 8 is a pseudocolour composite of the principal component dataset for NTS 84A.

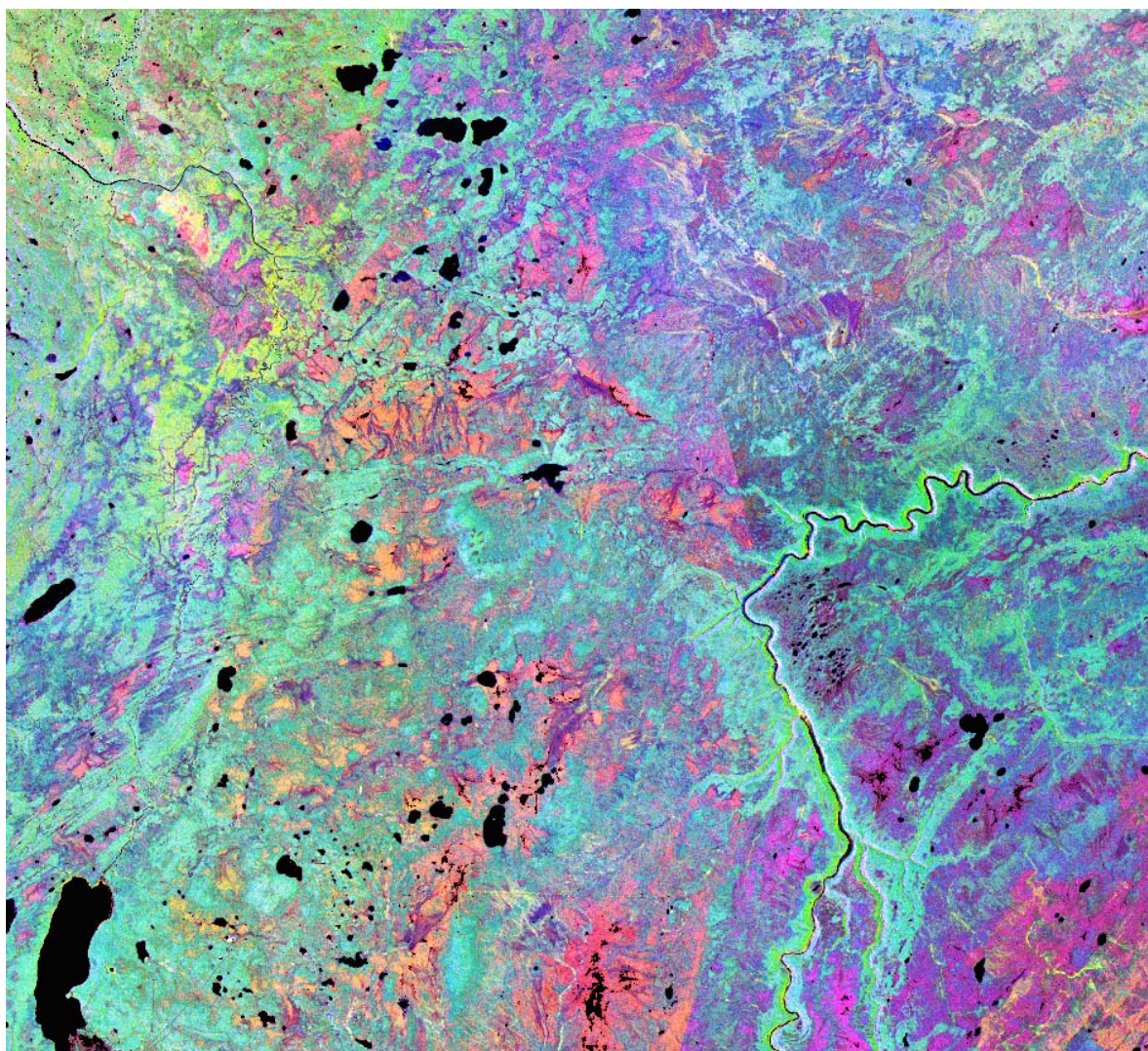


Figure 8. Pseudocolour composite of NTS 84A image dataset of principal component PC1, PC2, PC3 and PC4 (RGB=PC2, PC1, PC3).

3.5 Additional Resampled Images and Maps

For a wider scope of users, including non-GIS or inexperienced professionals to use the data, single-band images in GeoTIFF format were created from each band of the orthorectified and PCA image datasets mentioned above. This results in 8 images for each NTS map area. They are: (1) S1 ascending, (2) S1 descending, (3) S7 ascending, (4) S7 descending, (5) PC1, (6) PC2, (7) PC3 and (8) PC4 images. The GeoTIFF images are in the same projection as the orthorectified and PCA image datasets, but have been re-sampled into 27 m pixel size in order to reduce file size. They can be used with other GIS data to generate maps of specific interests to the user.

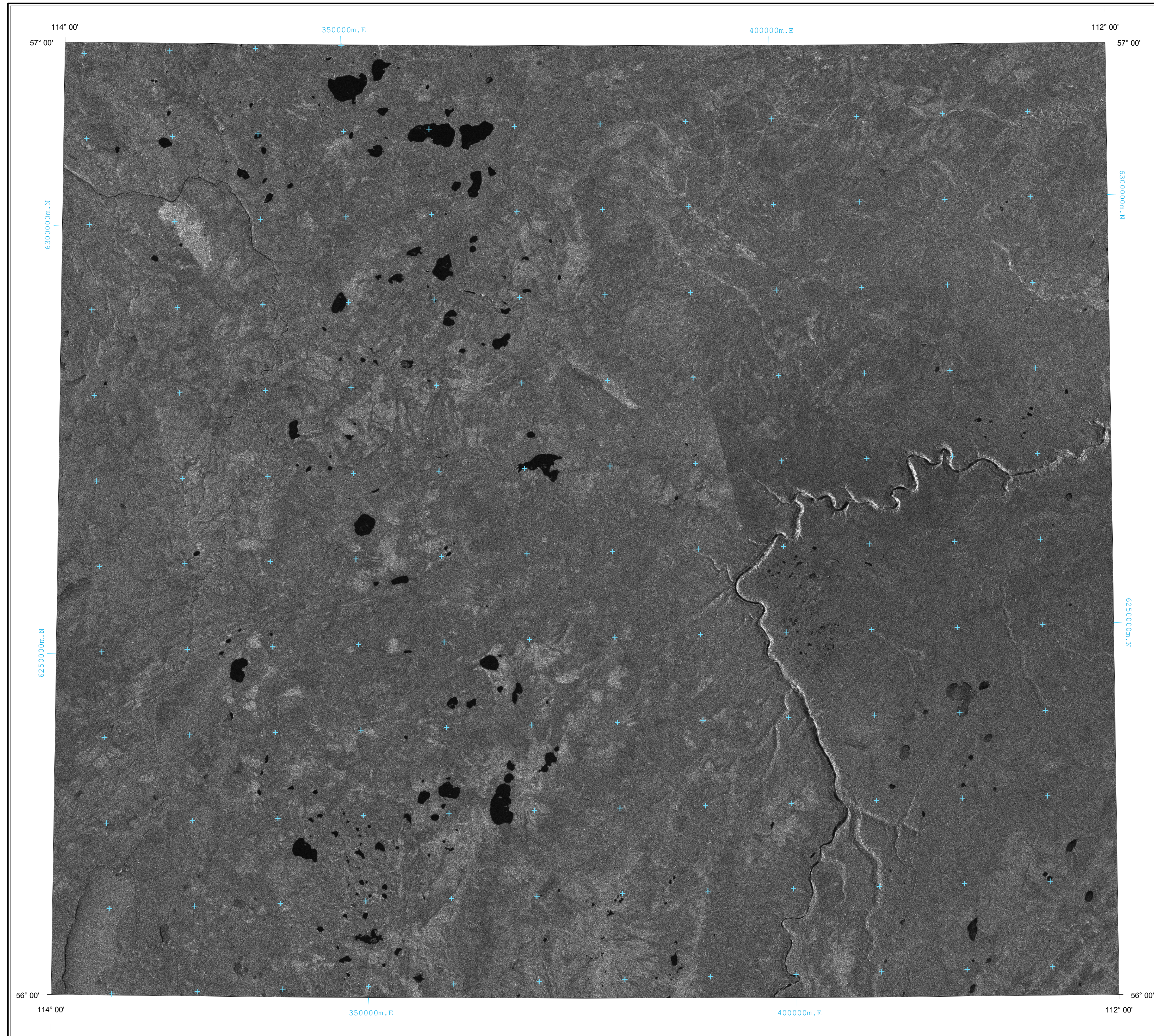
In addition, simple maps for these images were created. This results in 8 maps for each NTS map area. These maps are included on the two accompanying CDs as Figures 9 to 16. They can be printed or plotted, depending on the users' software and output capability, and each map includes some general tips for interpretation.

4 Conclusion

The image datasets for NTS 84A contain two sets of data: orthorectified RADARSAT-1 image dataset with images of four beam mode positions: S1/S7 beam modes and ascending/descending paths; and principal component image dataset containing images of PC1, PC2, PC3 and PC4, which are derived from the orthorectified image dataset. The imagery is obtained through orthorectification and mosaicking of the RADARSAT-1 path images covering NTS 84A. Additional single-band images in GeoTIFF format were also created. The various image datasets included herein can be used for a wide range of applications, including forestry, land cover classification, soil moisture mapping, hydrology, geomorphology and geology for the NTS 84A map area.

5 References

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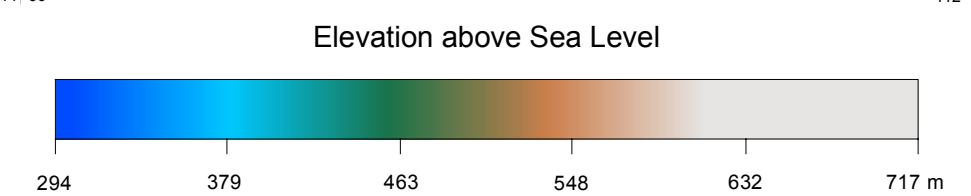
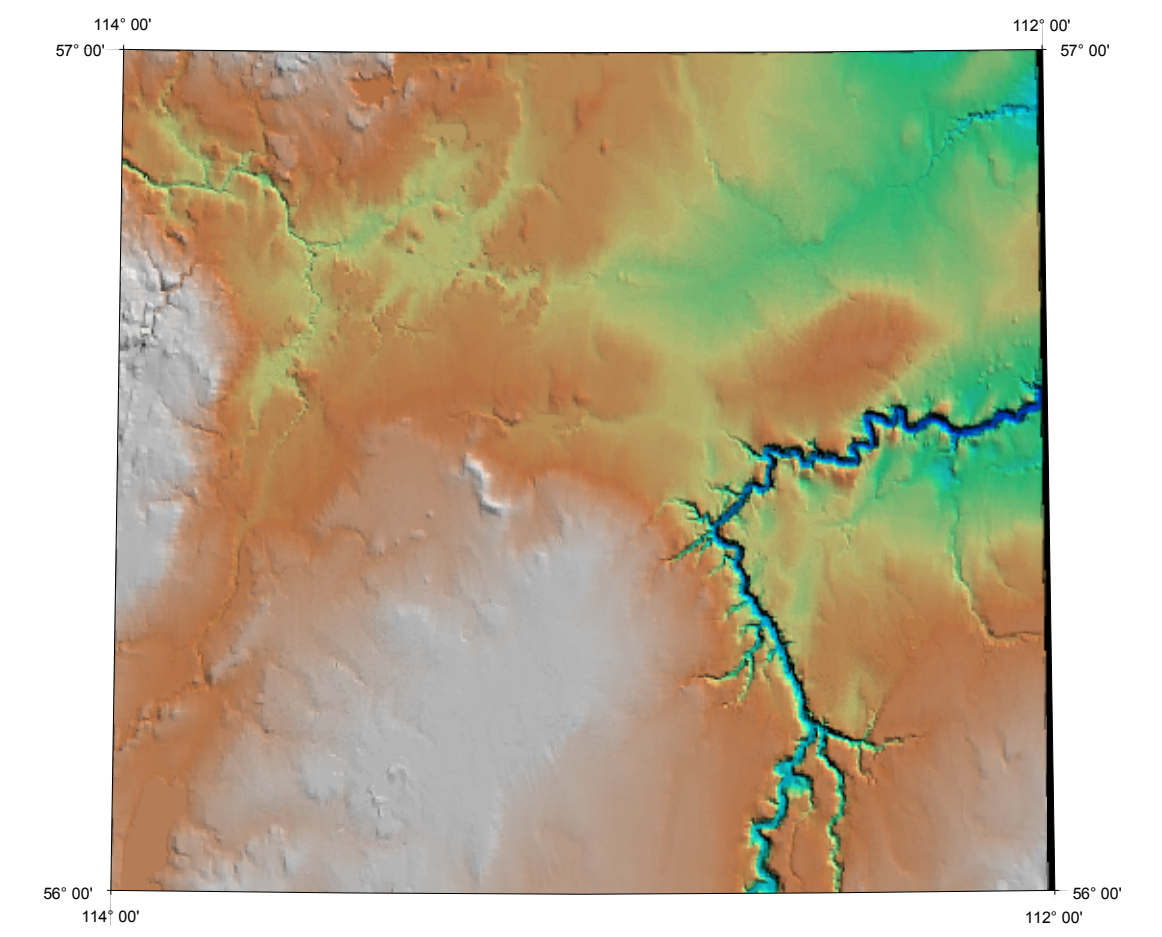
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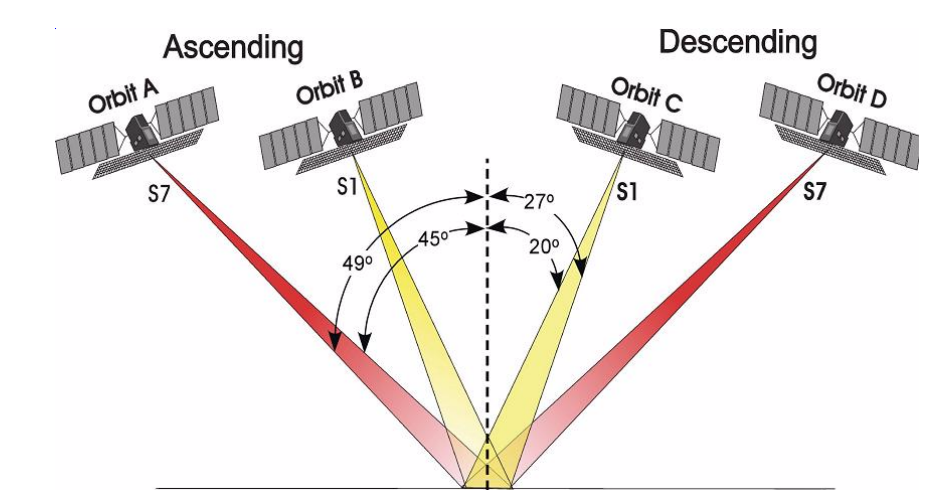
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Elevation Map for NTS 84A



Look Directions and Incident Angles of RADARSAT-1 S1 and S7 Ascending/Descending Beam Modes

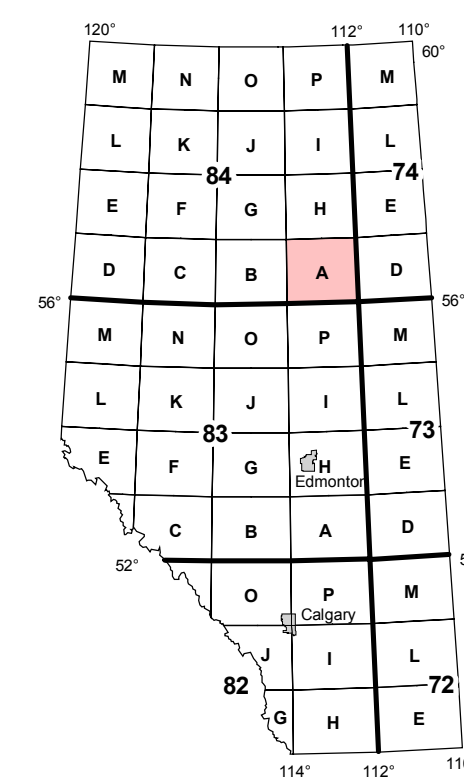
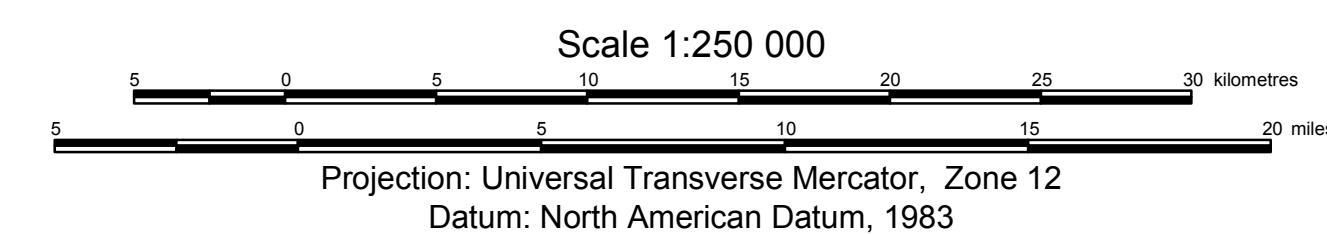


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Geo-Note 2003-20, Figure 9

RADARSAT-1 Standard Beam 1 Ascending Image for Algar, Alberta (NTS 84A)

Compilation by S. Mei, 2003

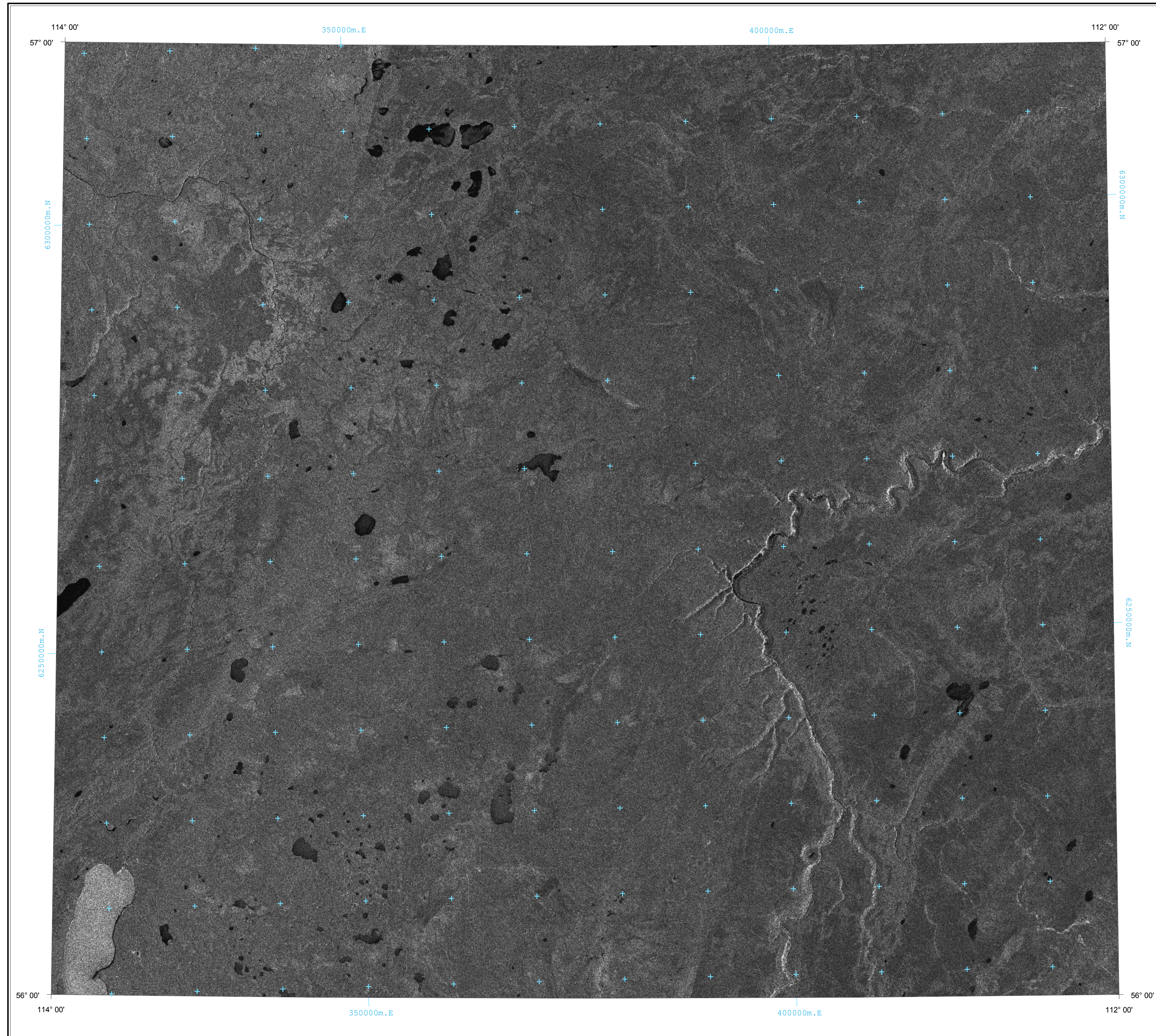


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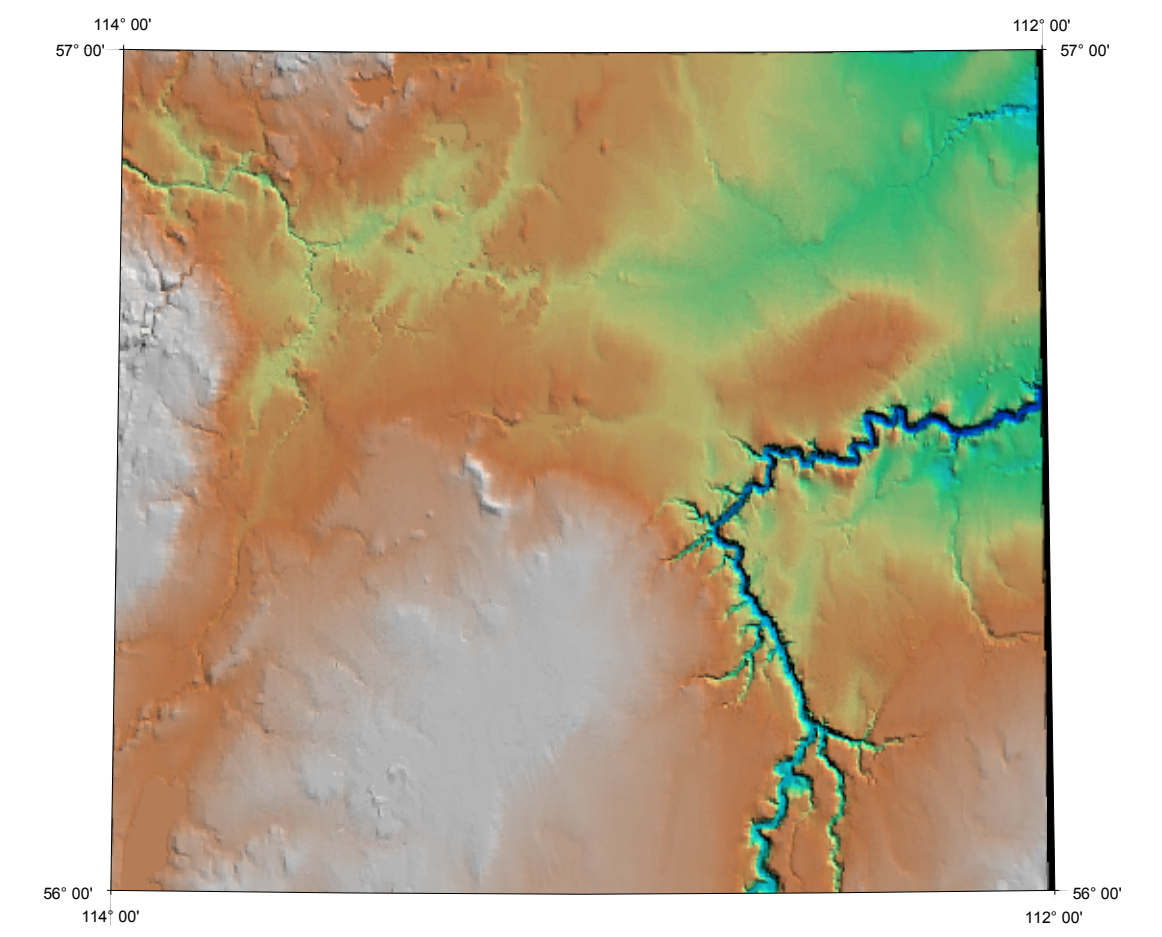
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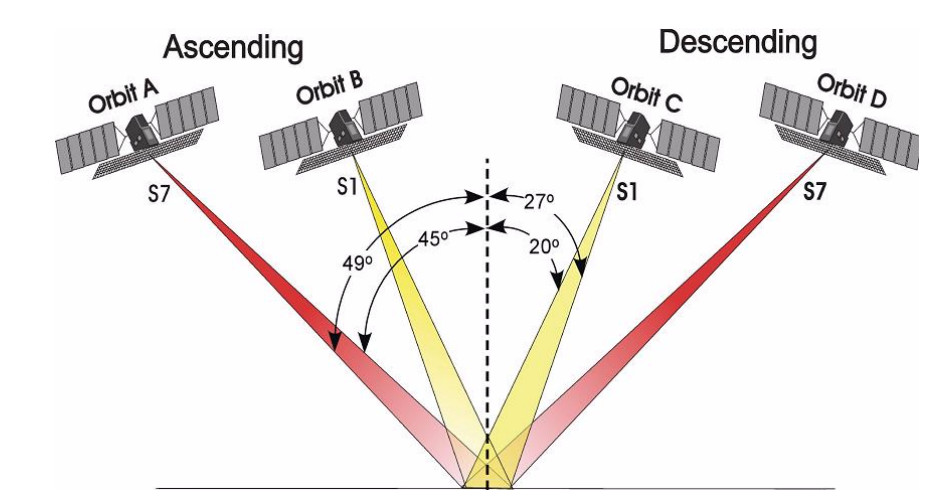
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Elevation Map for NTS 84A



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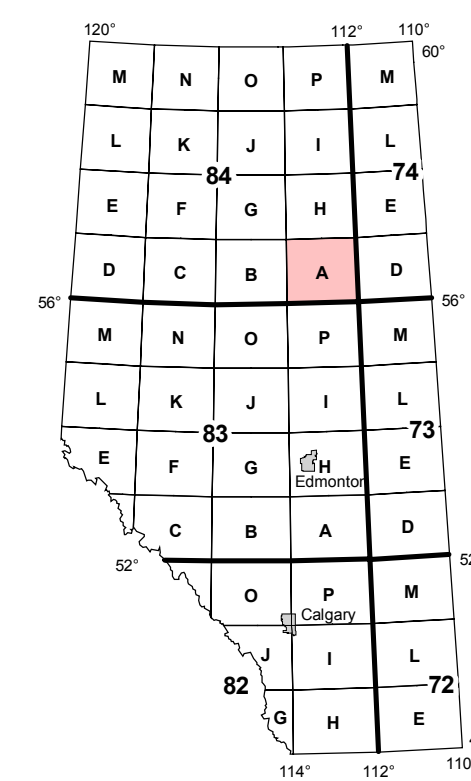
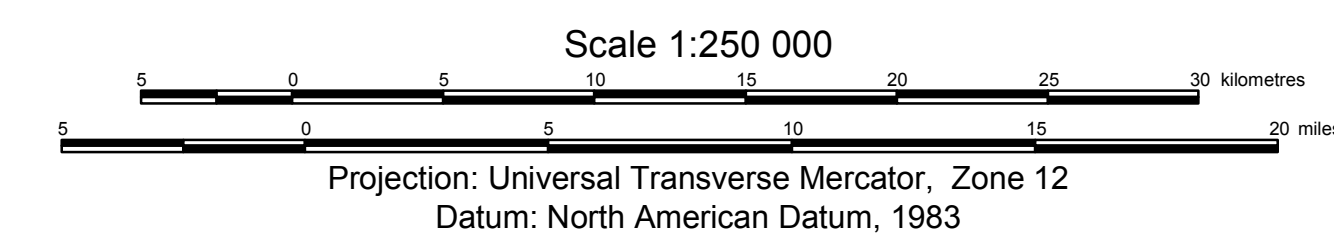


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Geo-Note 2003-20, Figure 10

RADARSAT-1 Standard Beam 1 Descending Image for Algar, Alberta (NTS 84A)

Compilation by S. Mei, 2003

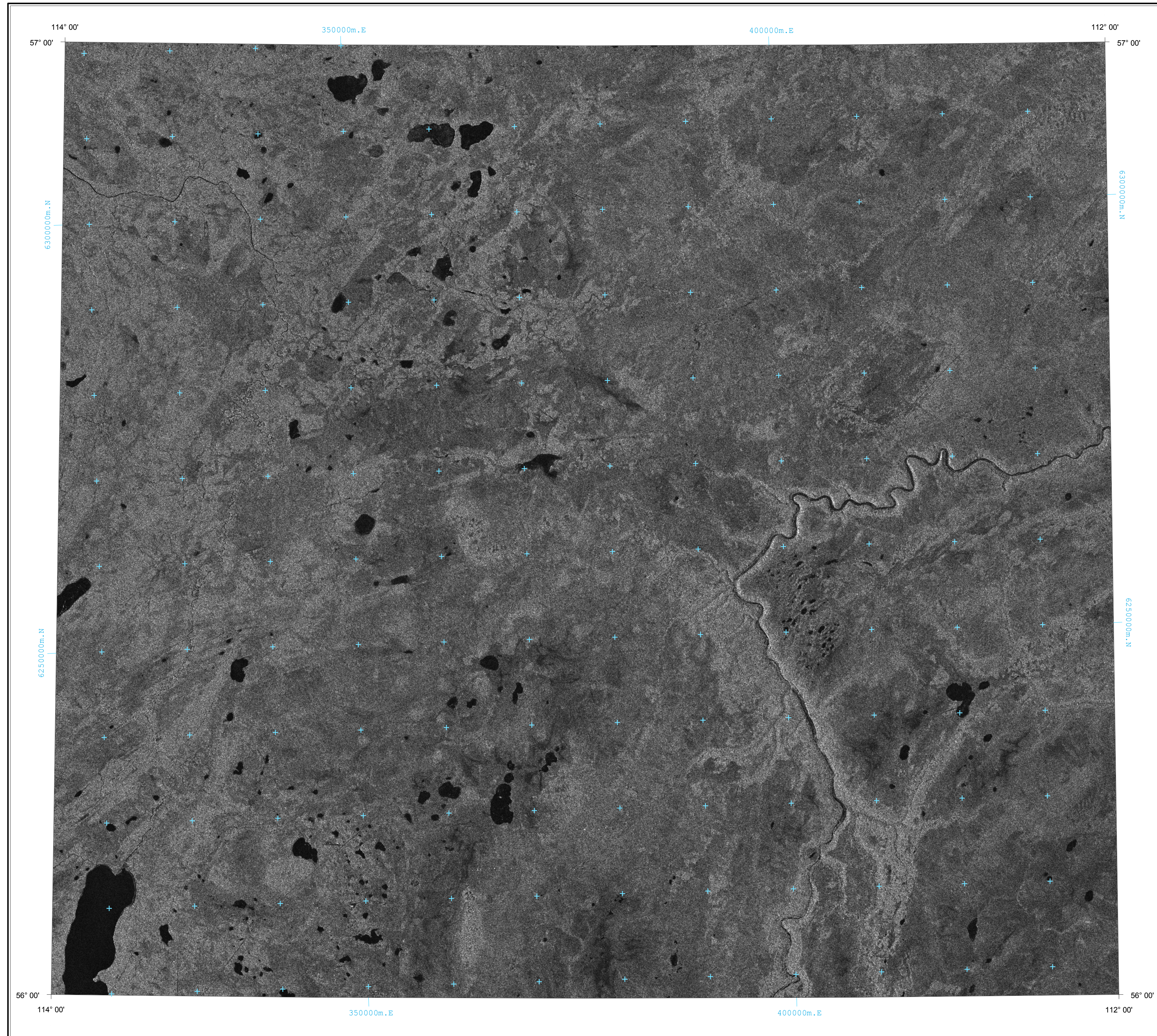


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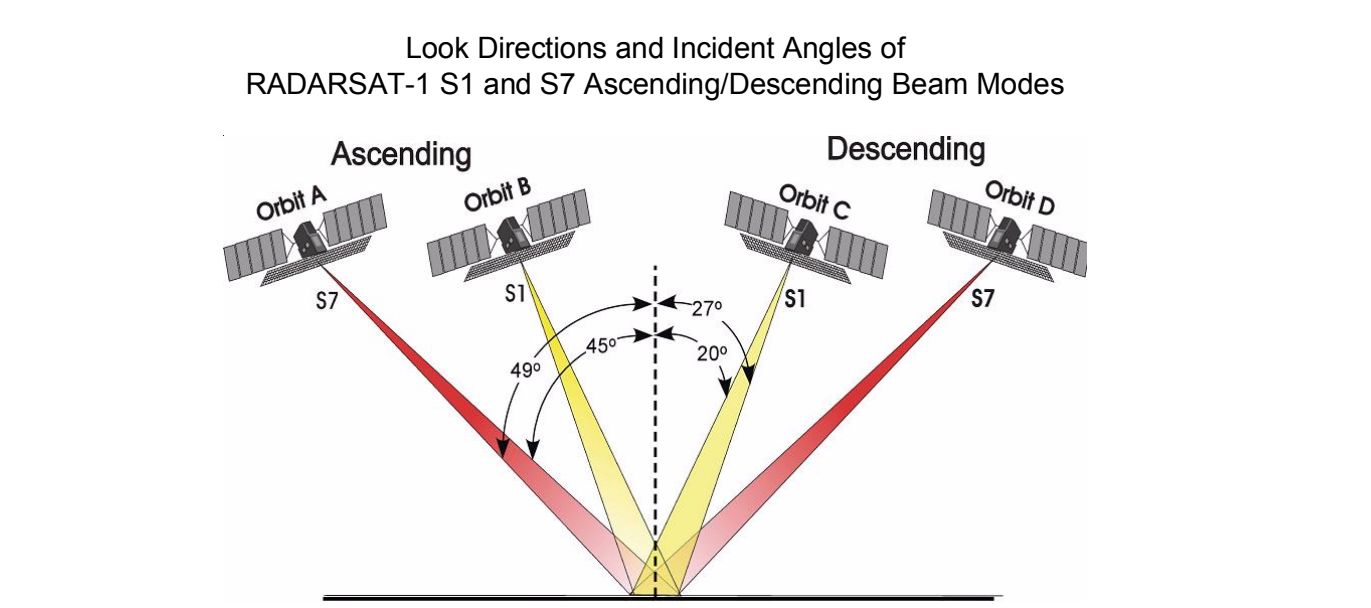
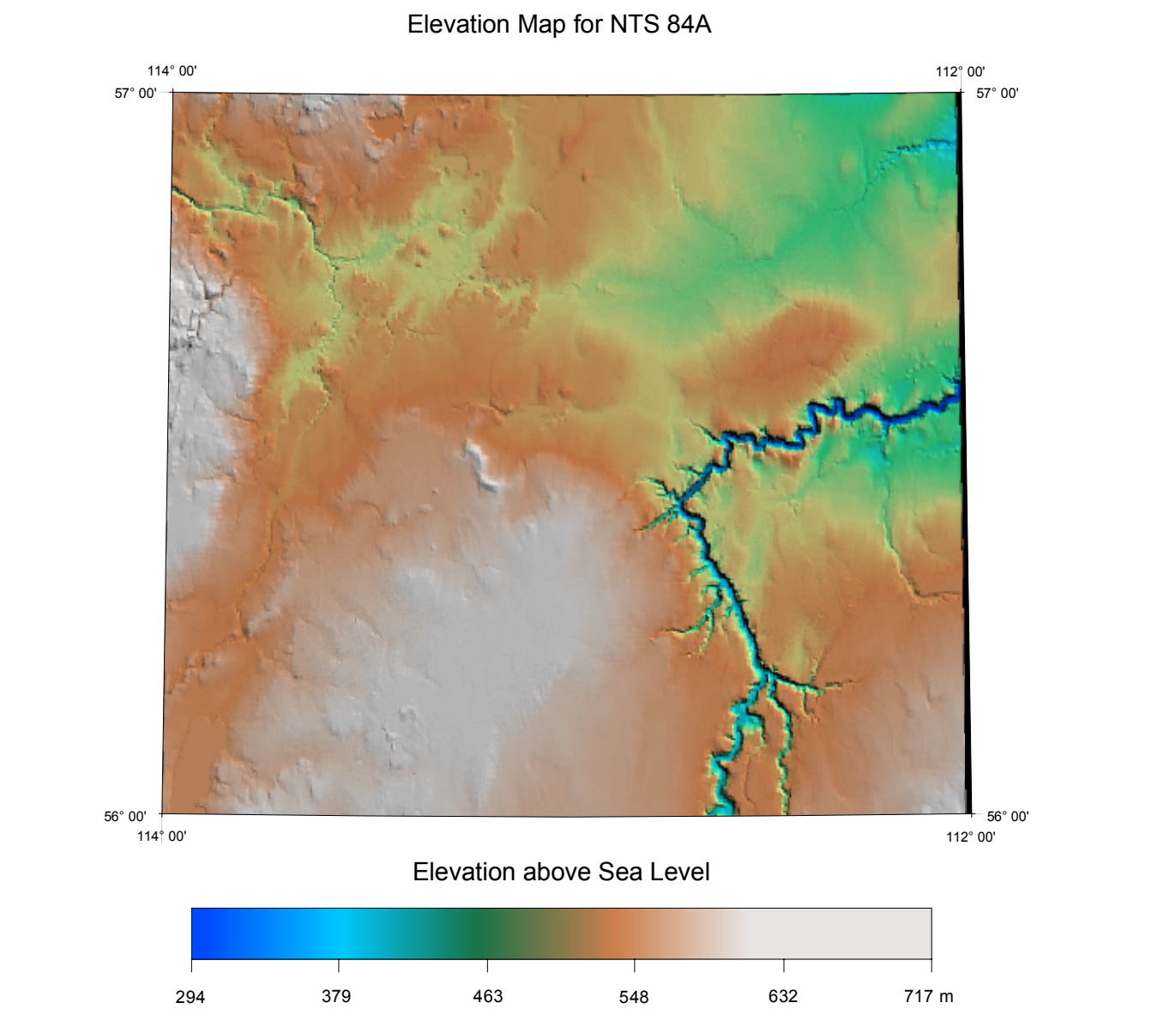
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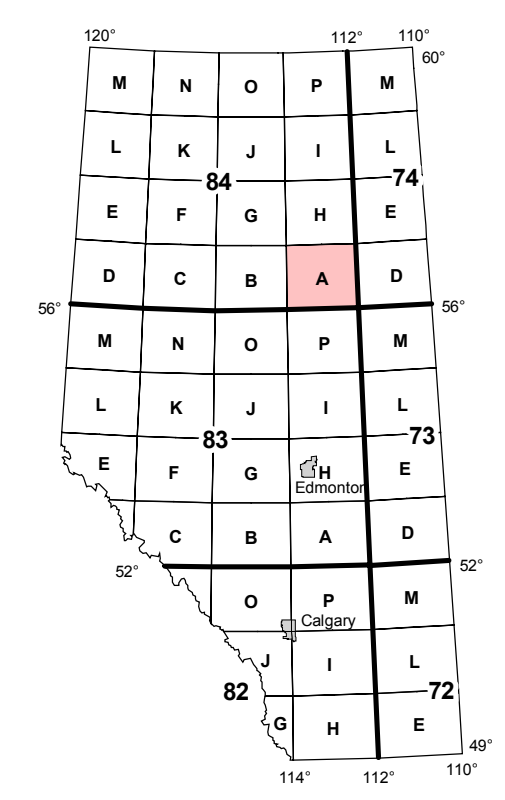
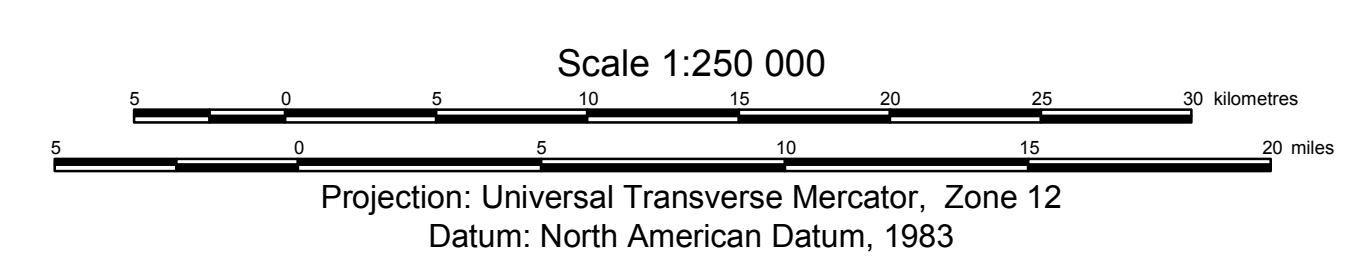
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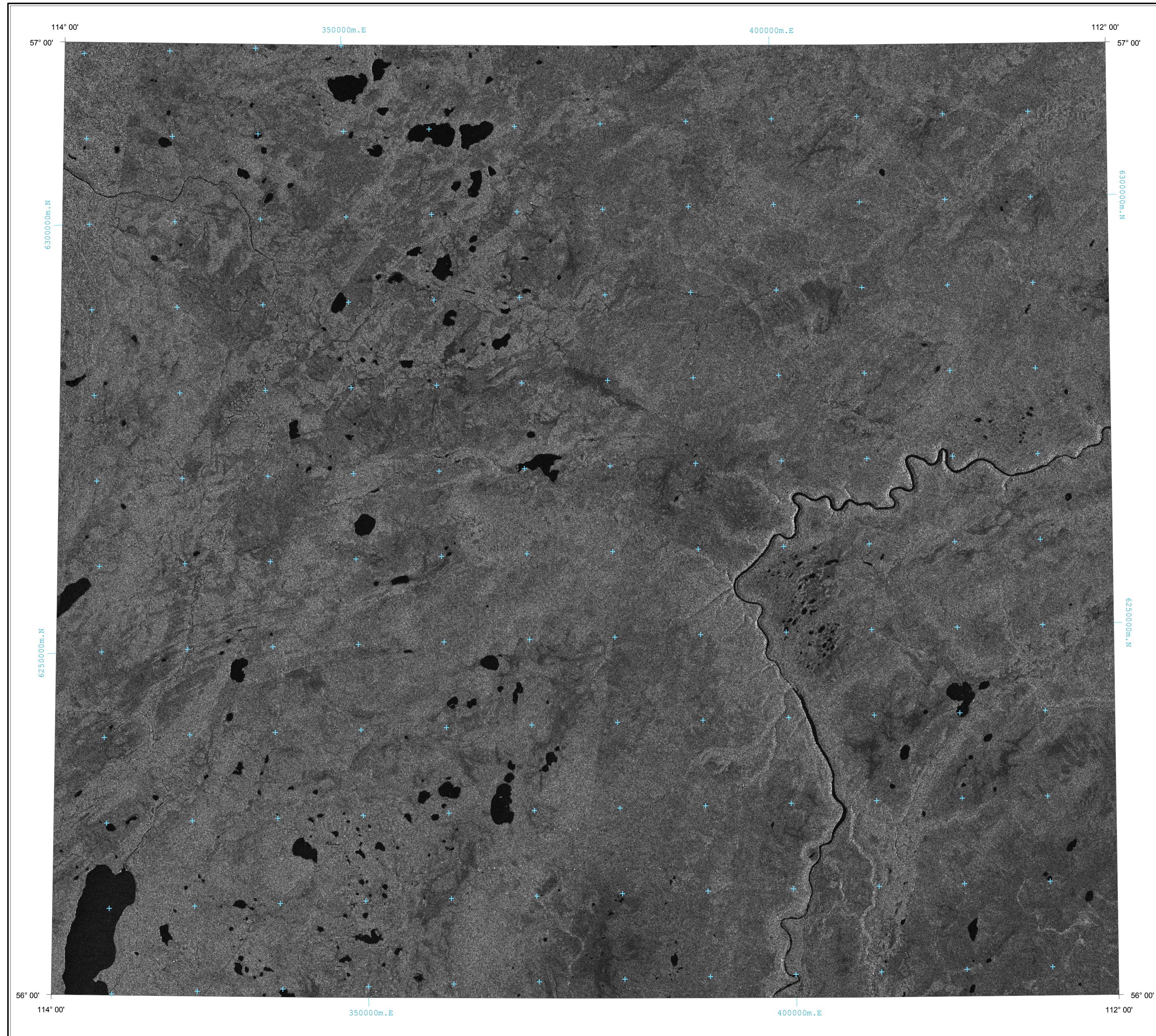
Geo-Note 2003-20, Figure 11
**RADARSAT-1 Standard Beam 7 Ascending
Image for Algar, Alberta (NTS 84A)**

Compilation by S. Mei, 2003



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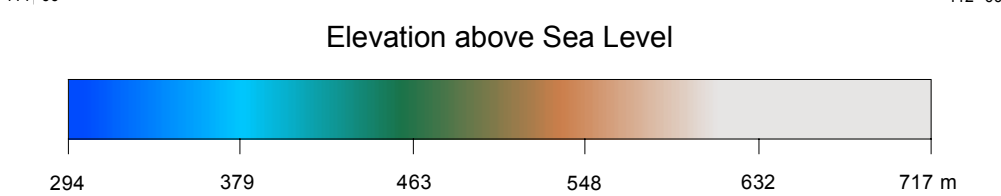
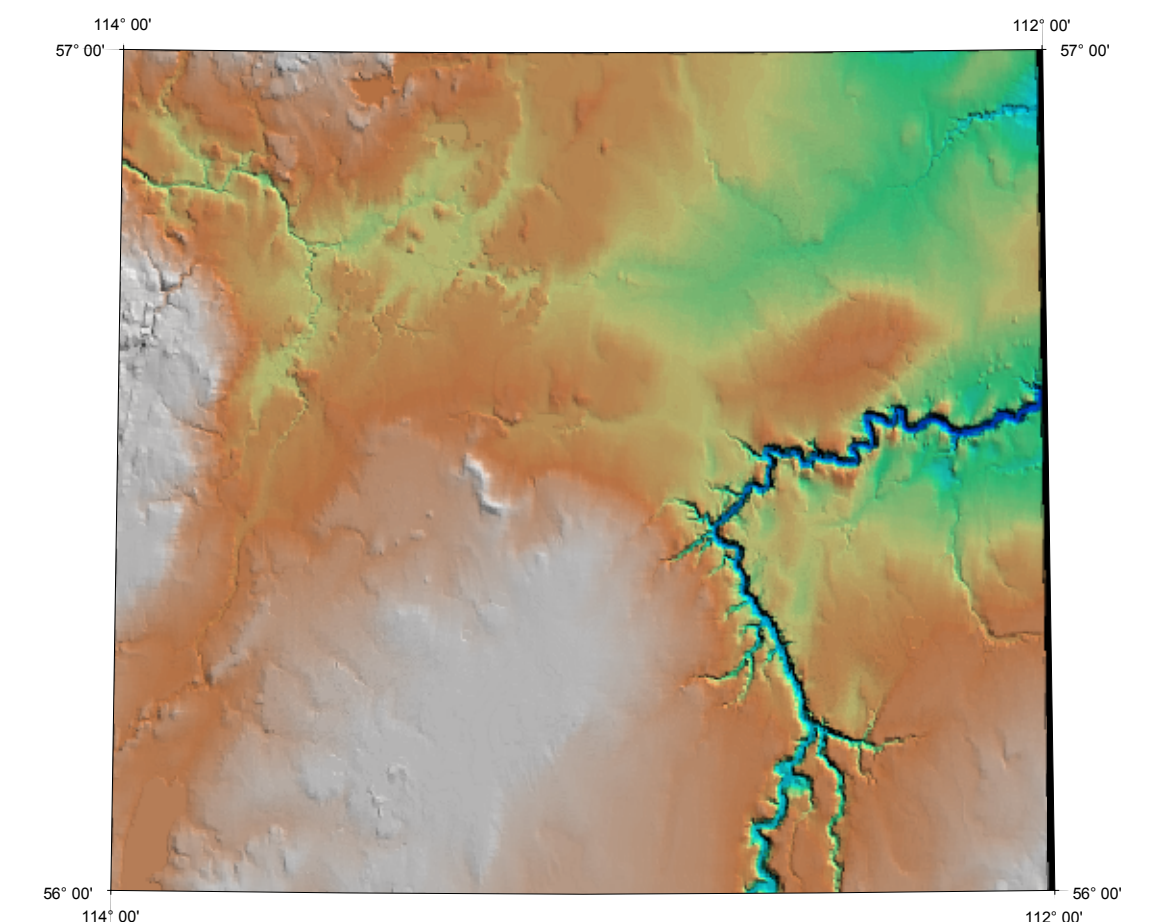
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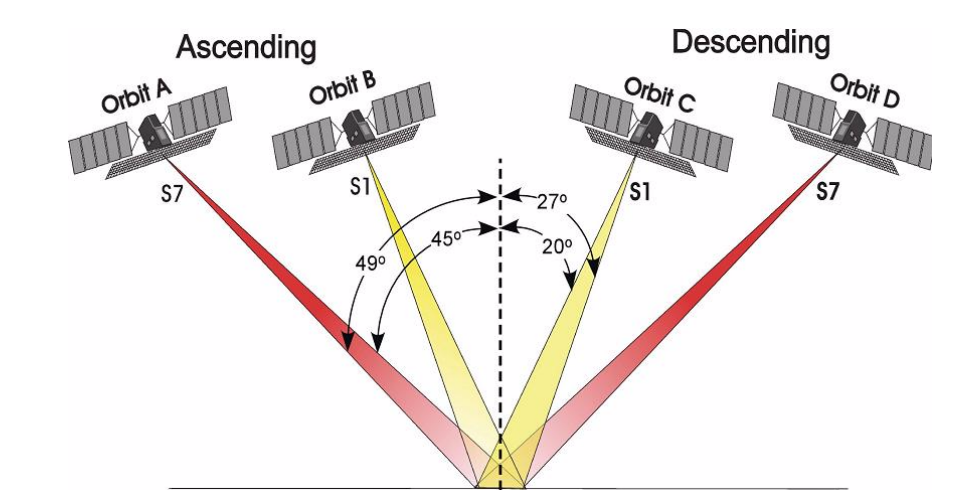
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3. Slopes facing toward the sensor are usually lighter than slopes facing away from the sensor.
4. Moist soils are usually brighter than dry soils.
5. Forest canopies generally show up with a more coarse texture than grasslands, which reflects their greater variability in surface roughness response. As well, wetlands with areas of grass or moss interspersed with trees (e.g., black spruce) can also show up as a mottled or 'salt-and-pepper' texture.
6. Canopies with higher moisture content reflect radar energy better than those with low water content; hence they appear in a lighter tone.
7. Conifer versus deciduous trees without leaves show different texture and tones under certain combination of beam mode and look direction.
8. Urban buildings, cars, fences, bridges, etc., tend to result in bright signatures.
9. In general, Standard Beam 1 images are more sensitive to soil and vegetation moisture than Standard Beam 7 images. As a result, Standard Beam 1 images tend to show more variation of tones.
10. The same terrain may appear different in tone when imaged at different incident angles and in different look directions, hence the same area may have a differing response depending on the simple map or figure evaluated.

Elevation Map for NTS 84A



Look Directions and Incident Angles of RADARSAT-1 S1 and S7 Ascending/Descending Beam Modes

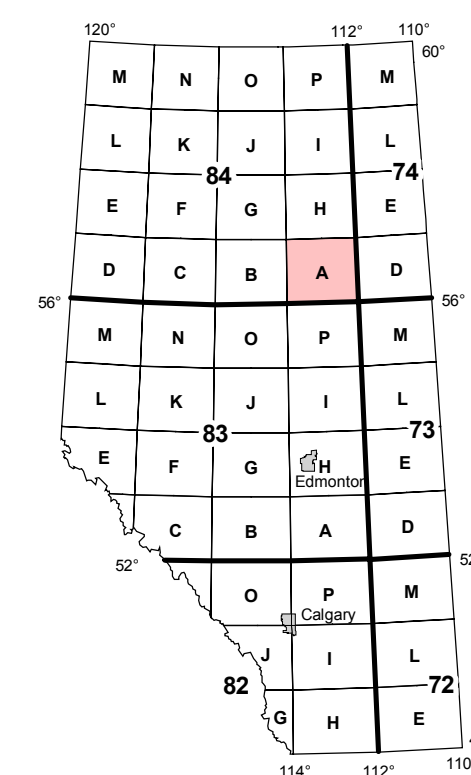
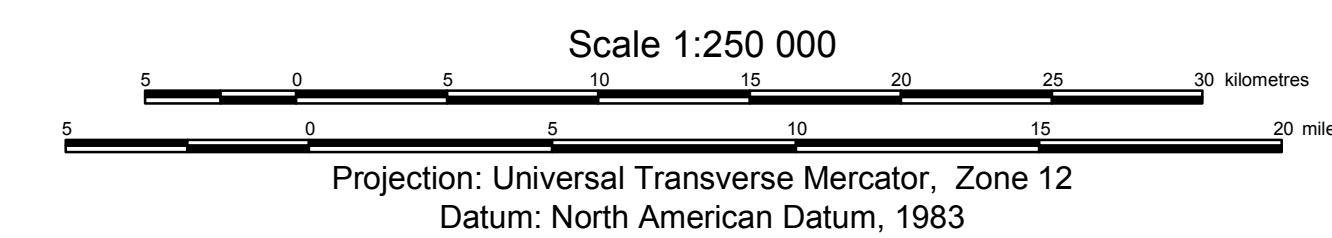


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Geo-Note 2003-20, Figure 12

RADARSAT-1 Standard Beam 7 Descending Image for Algar, Alberta (NTS 84A)

Compilation by S. Mei, 2003

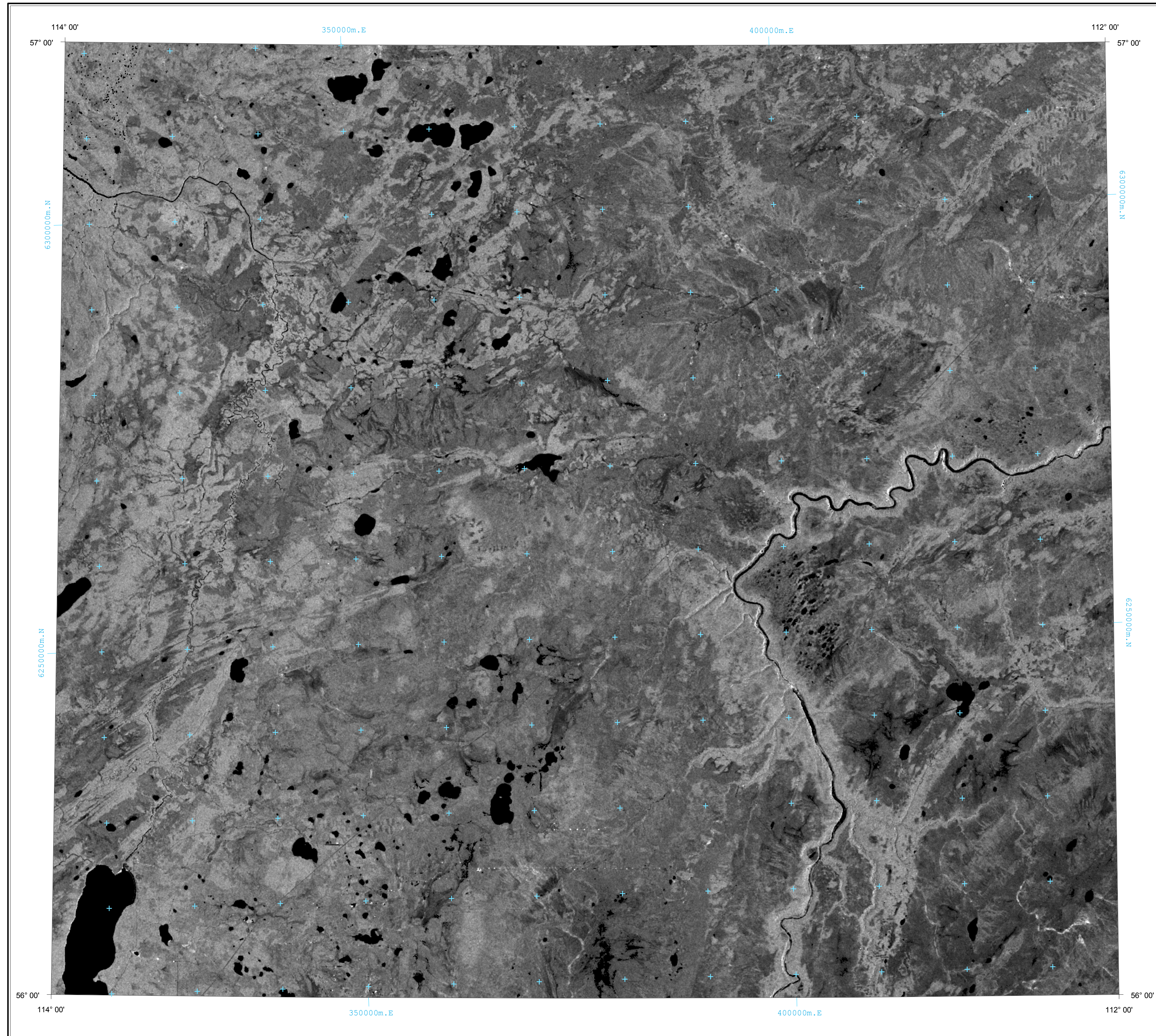


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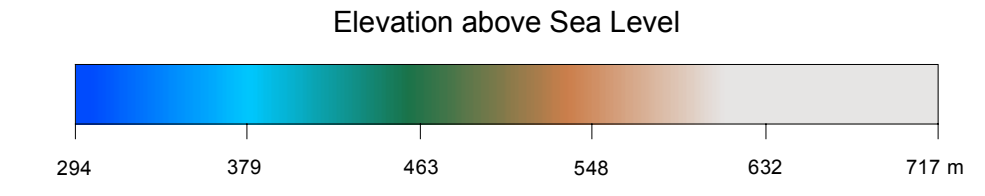
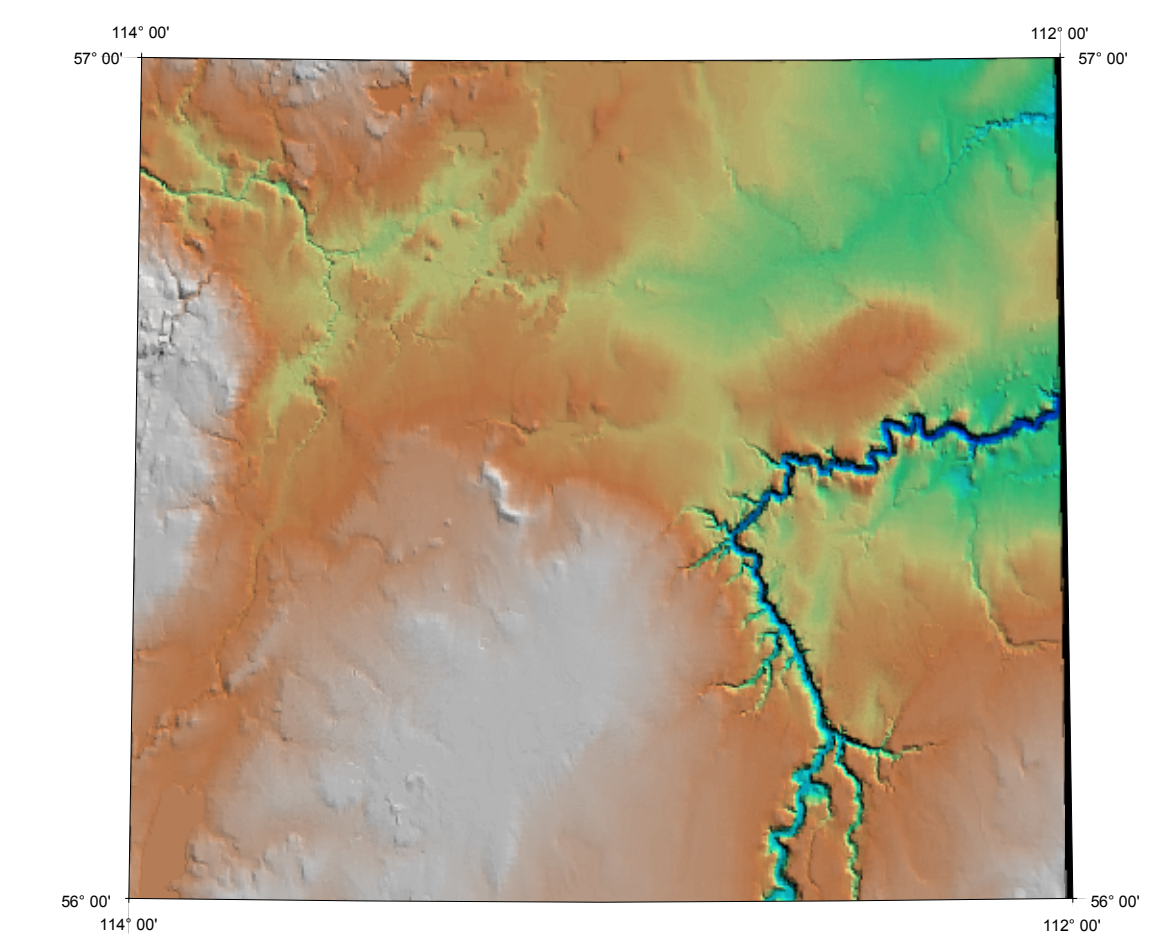
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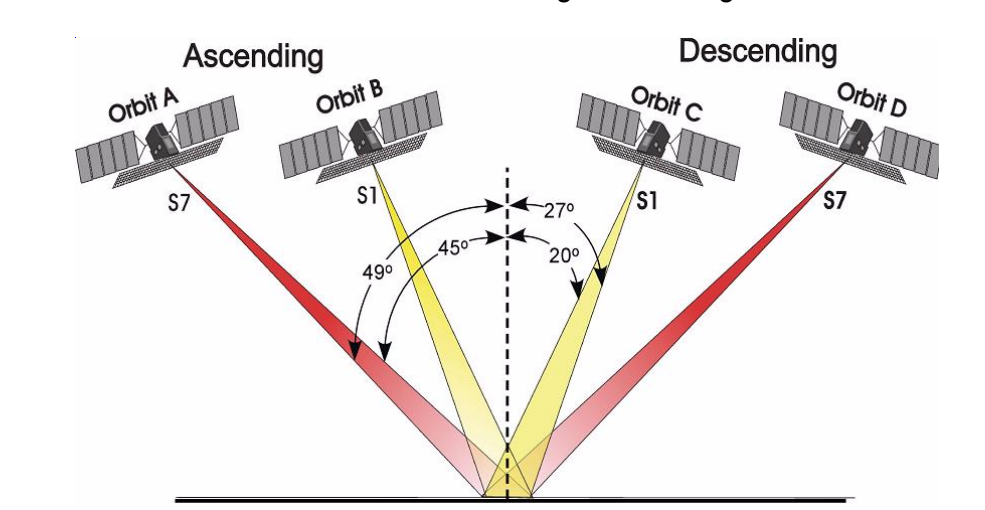
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Elevation Map for NTS 84A



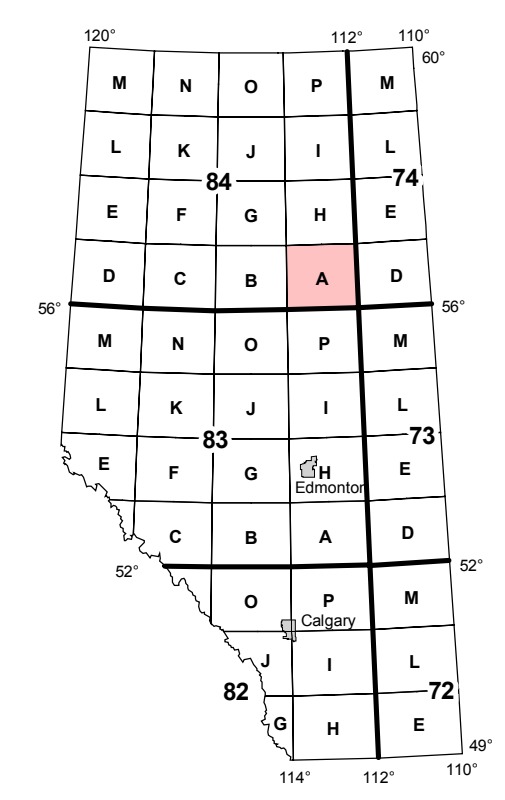
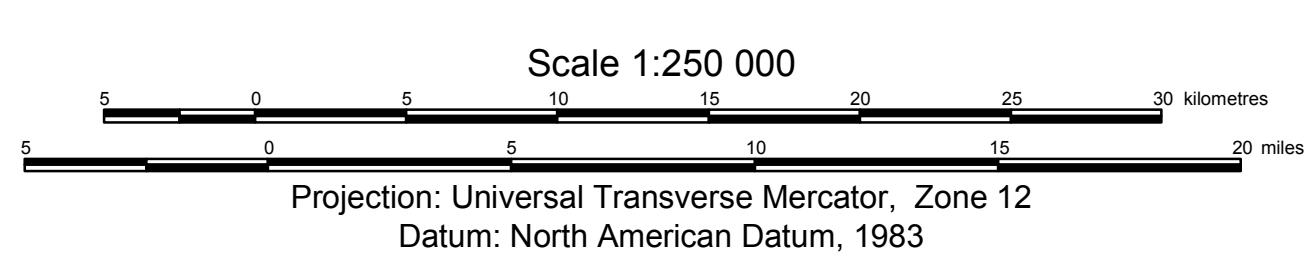
Look Directions and Incident Angles of RADARSAT-1 S1 and S7 Ascending/Descending Beam Modes



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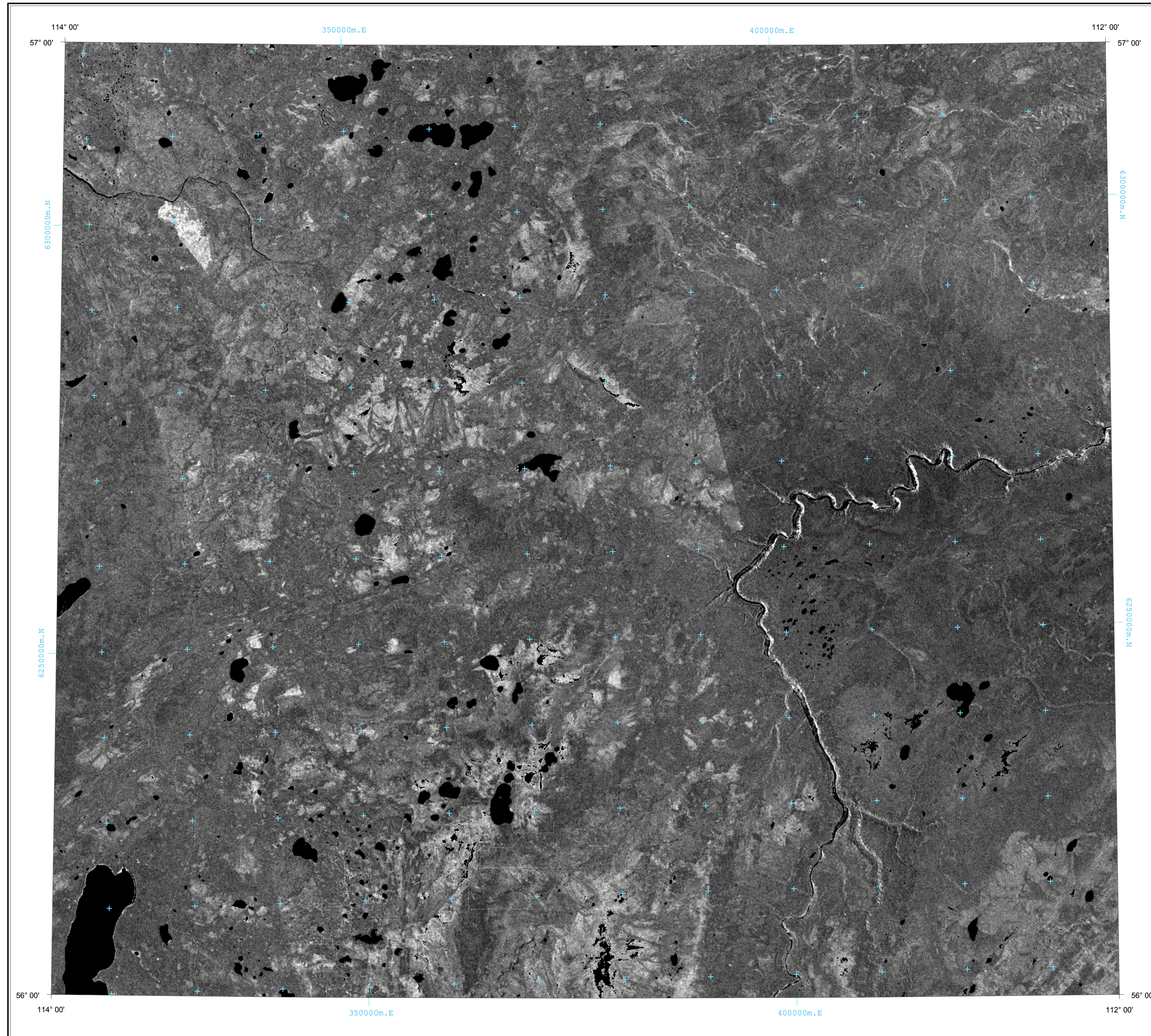
Geo-Note 2003-20, Figure 13
**RADARSAT-1 Principal Component 1
Image for Algar, Alberta (NTS 84A)**

Compilation by S. Mei, 2003



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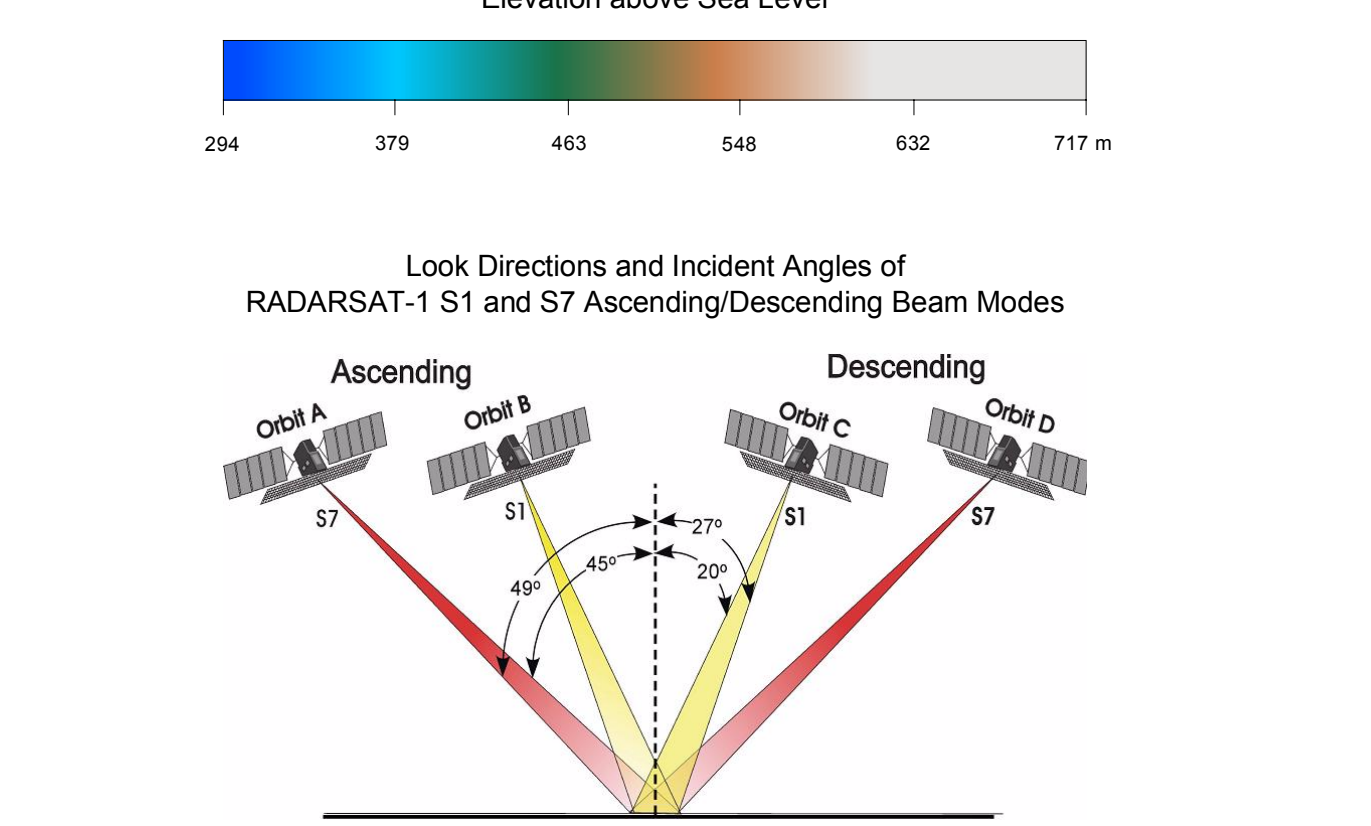
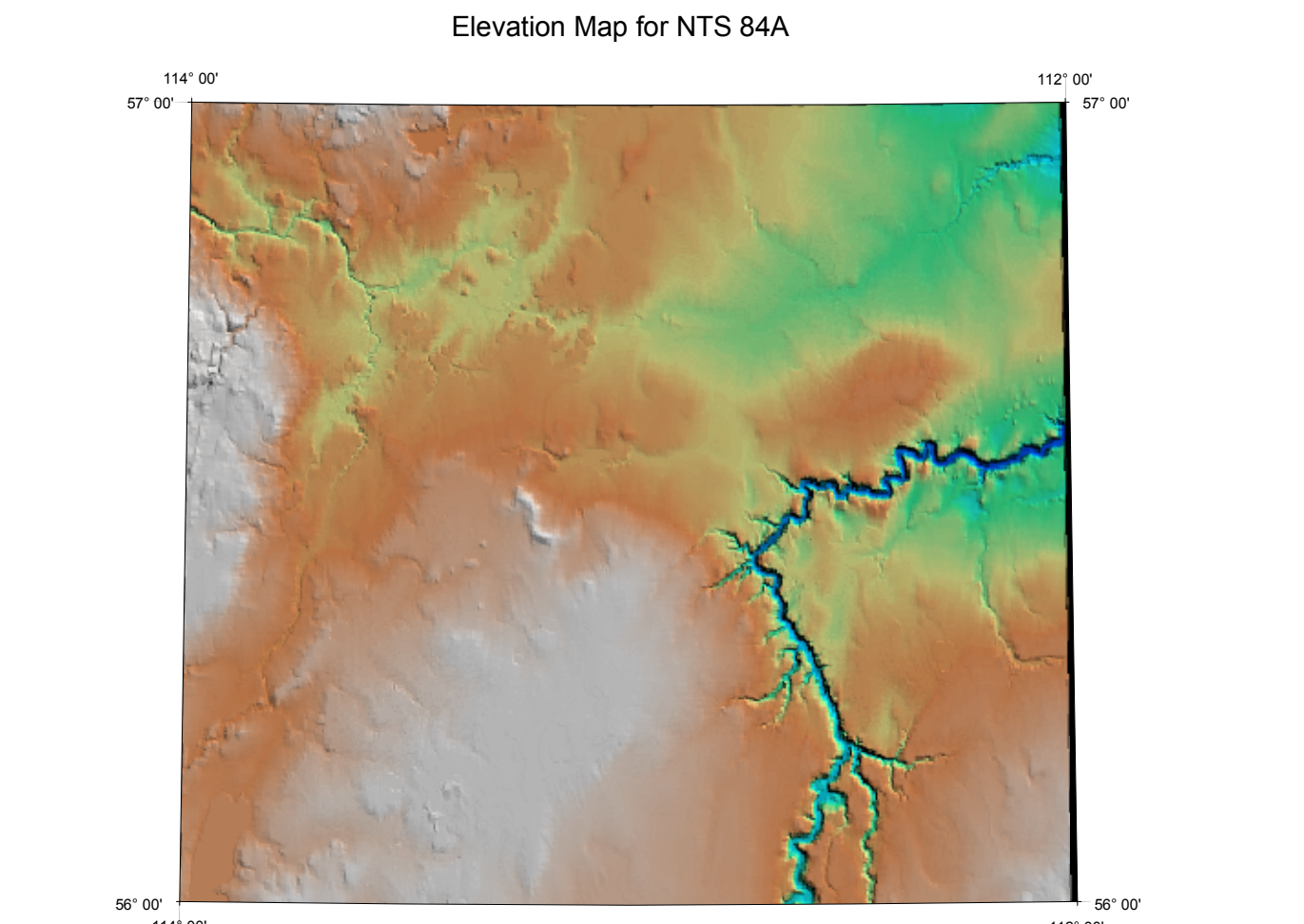
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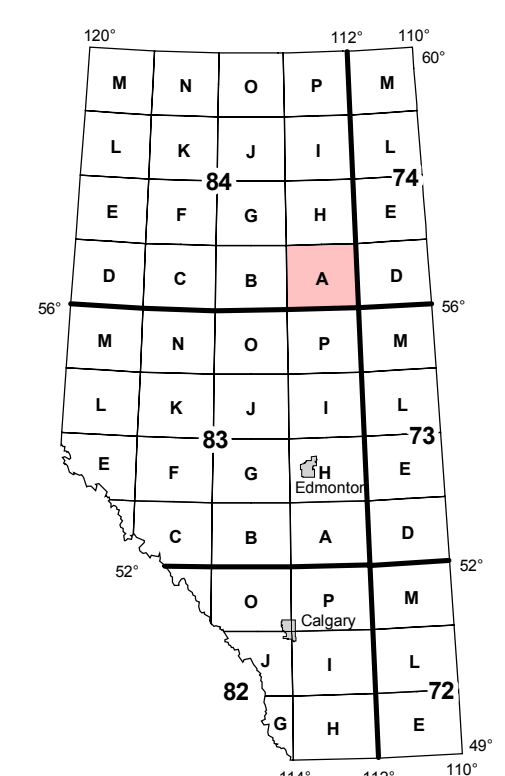
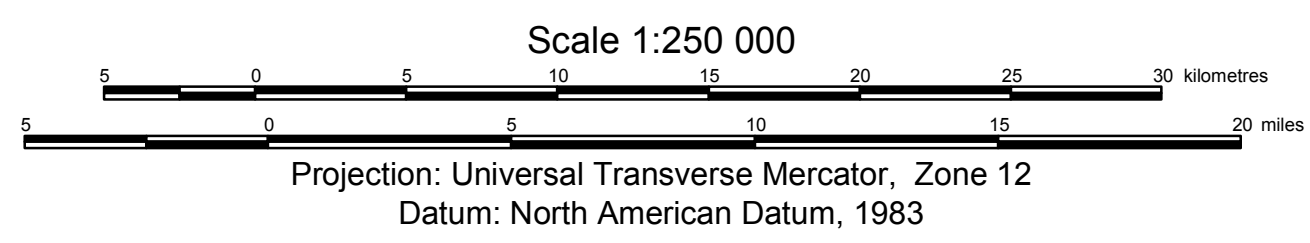
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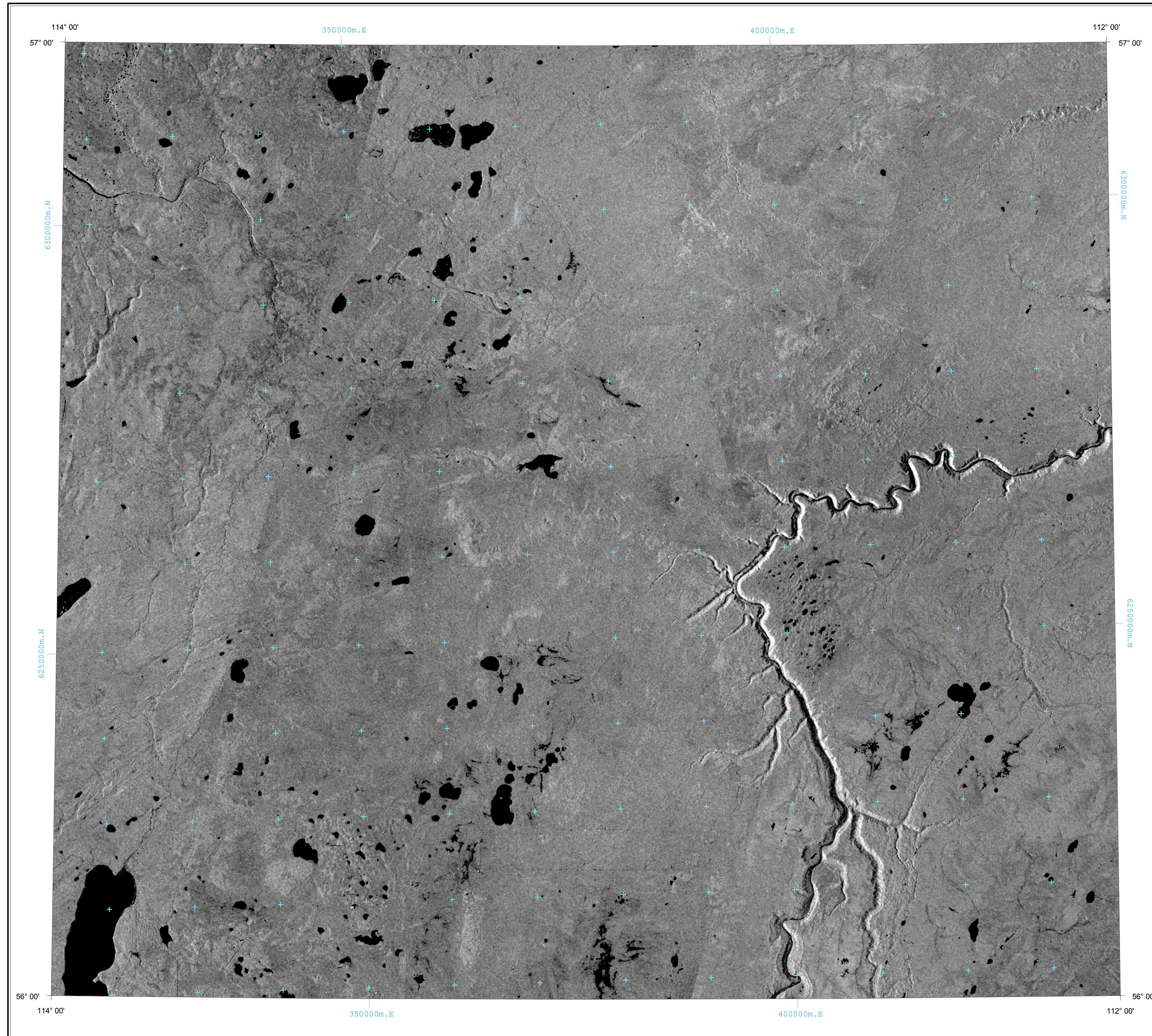
Geo-Note 2003-20, Figure 14
**RADARSAT-1 Principal Component 2
Image for Algar, Alberta (NTS 84A)**

Compilation by S. Mei, 2003



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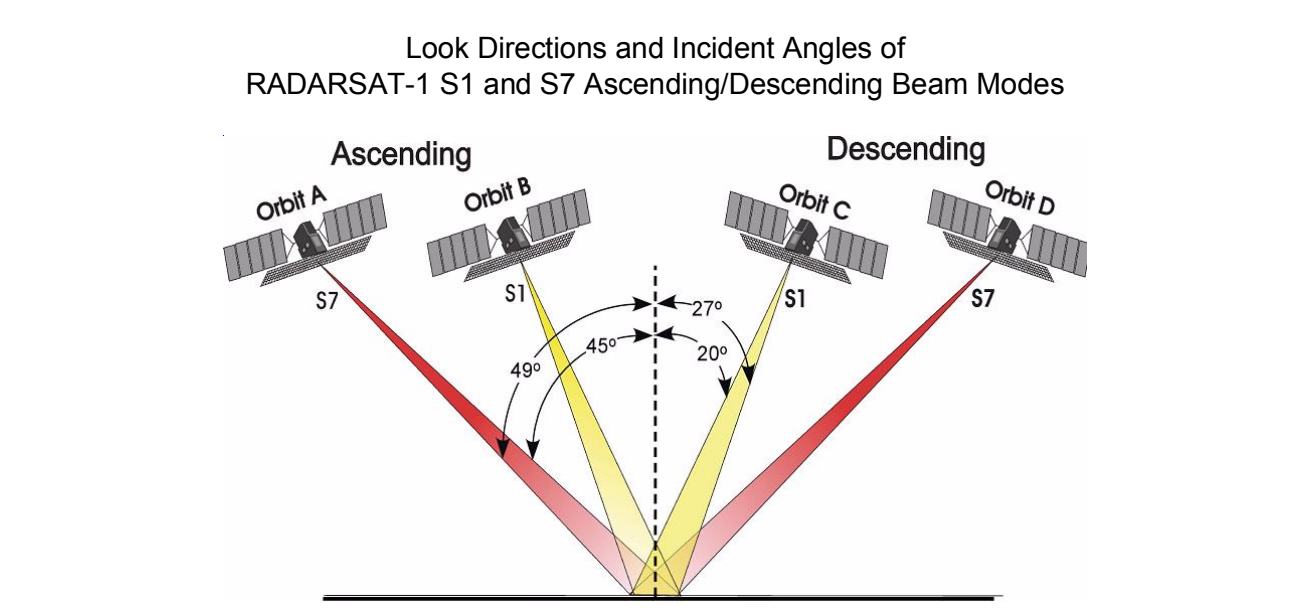
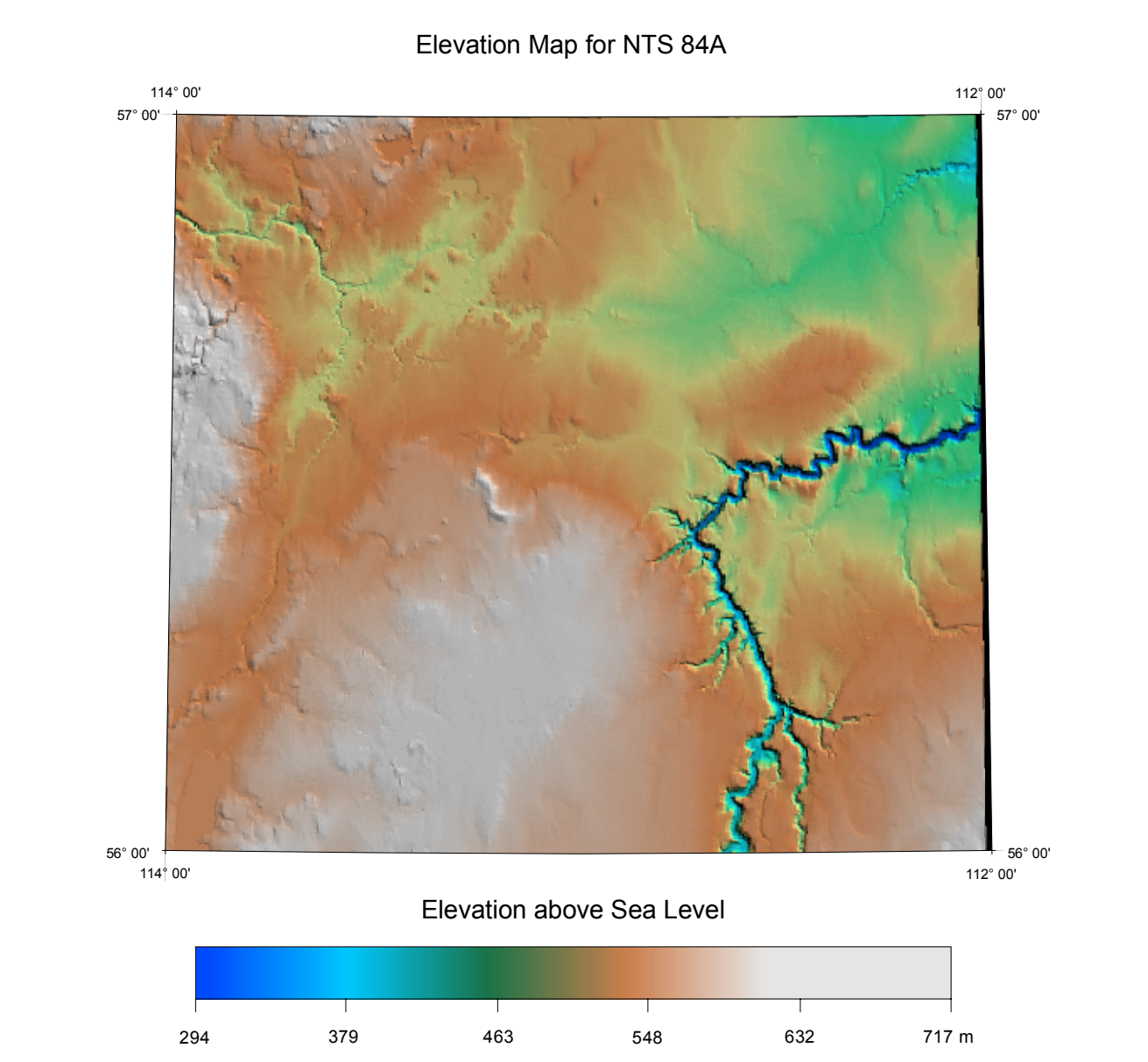
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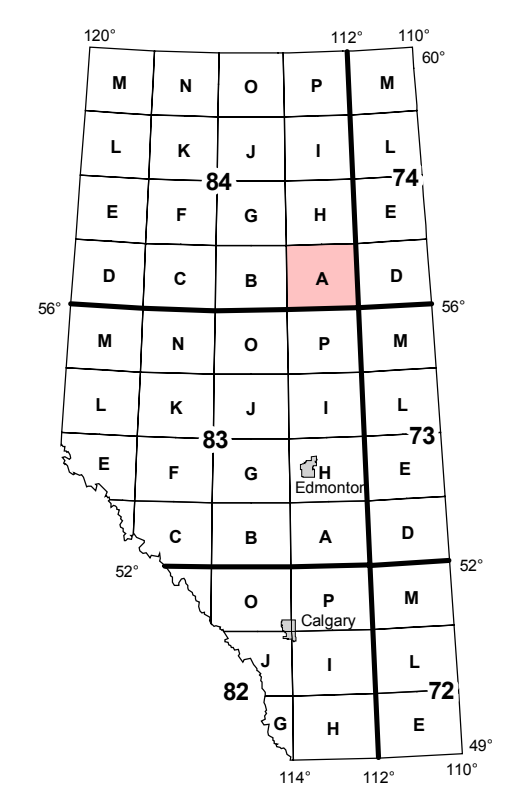
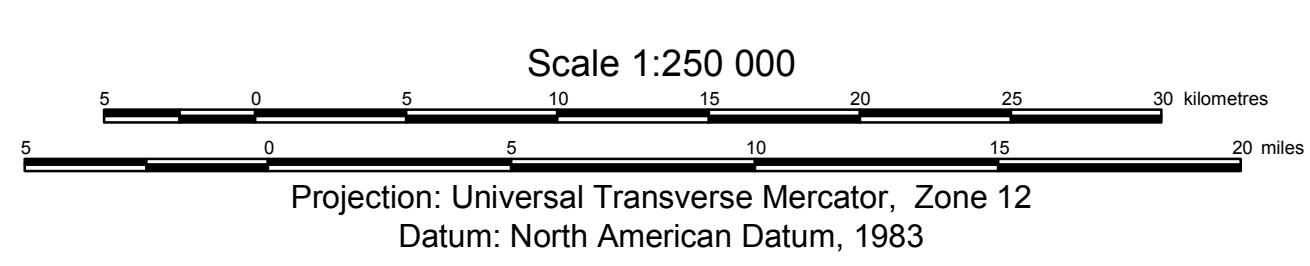
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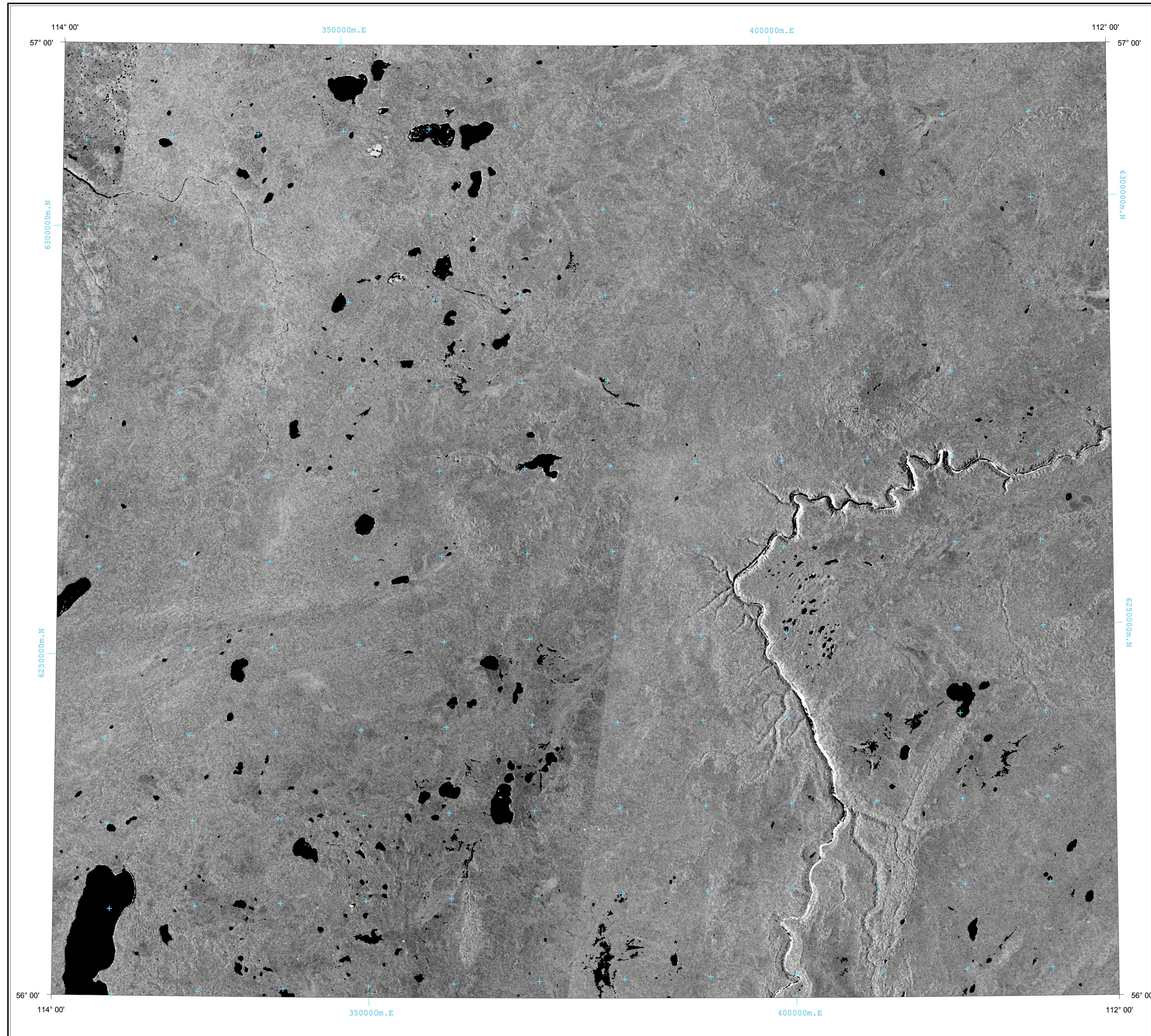
Geo-Note 2003-20, Figure 15
**RADARSAT-1 Principal Component 3
Image for Algar, Alberta (NTS 84A)**

Compilation by S. Mei, 2003



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The RADARSAT-1 satellite, launched by Canada in 1995, is an active, microwave-based sensor that sends its own microwave signals down to the Earth and processes the signals that it receives back. It differs from optical sensors, such as LANDSAT, SPOT and IRS, which collect data at visible and infrared frequencies and rely on reflected sunlight from the Earth. In addition, RADARSAT-1 employs variable beam modes (i.e., differing incidence angles, scene coverage and resolutions) and look directions (i.e., ascending or east looking and descending or west looking), hence the opportunity exists for acquiring a number of separate radar signals, which then can either be evaluated individually or combined statistically in various ways to produce additional information. The quality of the radar backscatter signal is directly related to ground topography, dielectric properties and surface roughness of the terrain being imaged. As a result, RADARSAT-1 images are well suited for mapping geological structure, geomorphology and the moisture content of vegetation or sediment surface materials to a very shallow depth.

As part of their regional mapping strategy, the Alberta Geological Survey acquired RADARSAT-1 images over northern Alberta (north of 55 degrees north latitude) with the following four beam positions: Standard Beam 1 (S1) ascending (71 scenes), S1 descending (70 scenes), Standard Beam 7 (S7) ascending (65 scenes) and S7 descending (68 scenes). The resolution of each of these datasets is about 25 m (that is, the resulting radar responses reflect or encompass a square cell that is exactly about 25 m on each side). The strategy of acquiring S1 and S7 imagery was done to contrast the radar responses based on two incidence angles and two look directions. The images were obtained in a dry autumn (September to December 1999) and, thus, provided ideal conditions of no to little deciduous foliage or snow. The acquired scene images were individually orthorectified and then tiled into 25,125,000 scale NTS map areas that cover all of northern Alberta north of latitude 55°N. This results in four RADARSAT-1 images from the four beam positions for each NTS map area (Figures 9 to 12). As well, the four Radarsat image datasets (i.e., S1A, S1D, S7A and S7D) for each NTS map area were processed using Principal Component Analysis (PCA). PCA is a statistical method that evaluates correlation among the signals from the S1A, S1D, S7A and S7D image data, and generates resultant principal component images for each NTS map area. The first four principal components for each NTS map area were then used to produce four simple PCA maps (Figures 13 to 16).

As noted above, radar backscatter is affected by vegetation type, moisture and surface roughness. It is also dependent on the incidence angle and look direction of the radar beam. With respect to vegetation, much of northern Alberta is covered by boreal forest, but there also exist farm lands, wetlands and some other settings with differing vegetation types. With respect to moisture, the response differs markedly for lakes versus land, but the radar moisture signal on land is complex because it reflects varying moisture content in both the vegetation and surface soils. With respect to surface roughness, this also is a complex response, but refers to 'roughness' at the centimetre scale, and results from a combination of both the roughness of the vegetation canopy and of the underlying ground surface terrain (i.e., averaged across the about 25 m field). As a result, surface roughness is related to the nature of the underlying geomorphology, the surficial geology and soil type, and the vegetation type, extent of vegetative coverage and canopy configuration. In turn, these factors also influence the amount of moisture in the soil, and the type of vegetation that is typically associated with the soil. As well, Principal Component Analysis of the RADARSAT-1 imagery acts to add more complexity to the interpretation process. Finally, because each tiled 1:250,000 scale map area image is a composite, usually of a few individual orthorectified RADARSAT-1 images, there can be in places a seemingly abrupt change in tone or texture; these normally occur across a linear or curvilinear boundary that reflects the join of the images. Therefore, because of these complicated interactions between the radar energy and the vegetation, moisture and surface roughness, it is difficult to provide unique interpretation methods for the eight simple maps of RADARSAT-1 imagery (Figures 9 to 16) or PCA imagery (Figures 13 to 16).

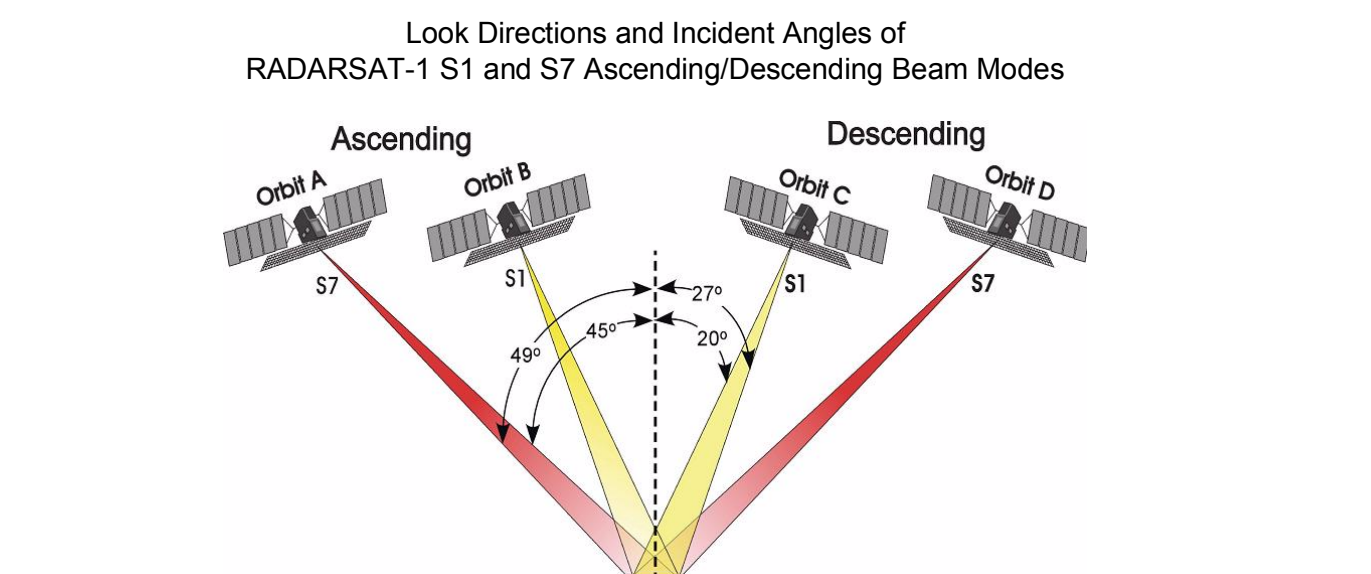
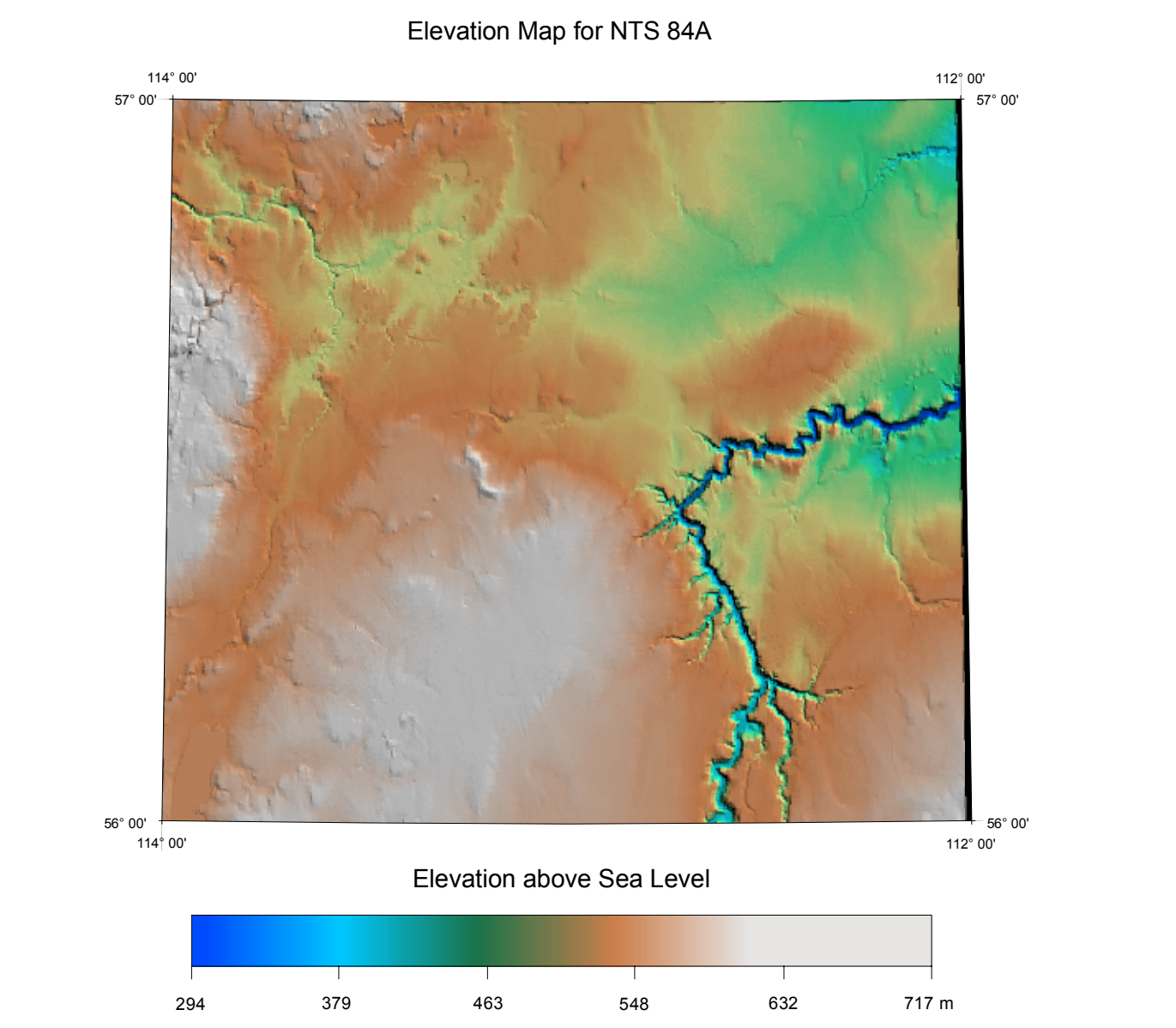
Having said this, some general tips for interpreting the Figures 13 to 16 PCA images are provided below, but these are generalizations and intended only for assisting less experienced users to browse the image or evaluate variations on the printed map.

The First Principal Component (PC1) image (Figure 13) shows a range of brightness and texture that highlights features associated with differences in vegetation type and density. Areas of closed Aspen, closed Pine, open deciduous vegetation, grasslands and exposed soil appear to have a brighter tone with variable texture. Areas of open black spruce tend to show up as mid tone to dark grey. Shrubby and grassy wetlands also appear as dark areas. In general, darker tones tend to reflect areas of increased moisture (e.g., wetlands and areas of black spruce), whereas lighter tones reflect areas of drier conditions (e.g., better drainage with pine, aspen or exposed soil).

The Second Principal Component (PC2) image (Figure 14) provides information about the degree of land cover type and vegetation density. For example, well-forested lands show up as darker tones, whereas areas of burn and grassy or barren lands show up as lighter tones. Further, open black spruce forest is characterized by darker tones; closed pine forest is displayed in mid-range tones, and areas of dunes and exposed soil show up as the lightest tones. Finally, areas dominated by grass or little vegetation or of burned forest, show up as light- to medium-grey tones.

The Third Principal Component (PC3) image (Figure 15) highlights 'surface roughness'; hence it reflects topographic effects and surface texture of the ground or vegetation canopy. In fact, the discrimination of topographic features using the PC3 image is superior to any other optical commercial satellite imagery, with similar spatial resolution. As a result, areas of drumlins, sand dunes, eskers, embankments and other prominent topographic features typically are more clearly shown on PC3 images than on the other PCA images. Further, areas of outwash, dune fields, stream alluvium and ice contact deposits usually exhibit unique textural characteristics, which can act to assist in the preliminary mapping or differentiation of surficial materials.

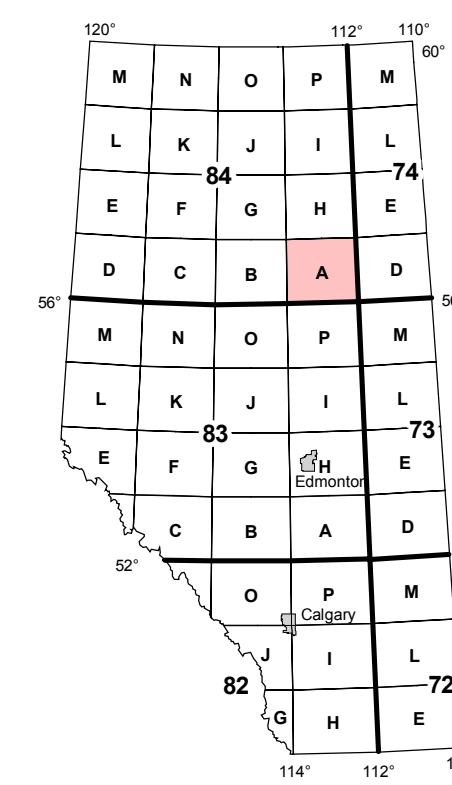
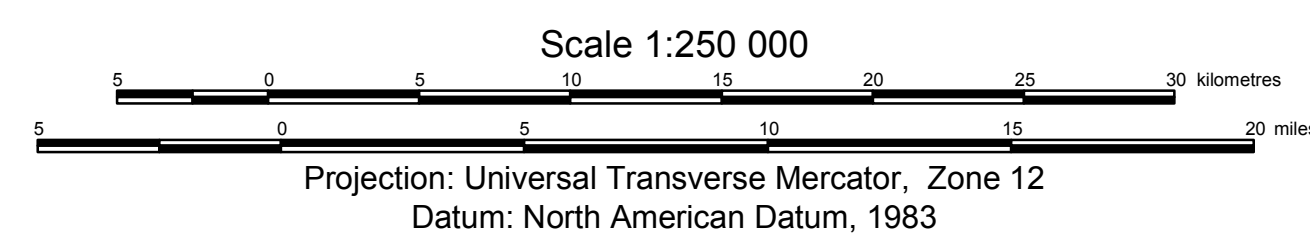
The Fourth Principal Component (PC4) image (Figure 16) shows some added differences in vegetation surface and volume scattering response that are not noted from the other three PCA images. Interestingly, open black spruce forest usually appears to display a lighter tone on PC4 images. Such differences on PC4 may reflect a combination of vegetation density and morphology.



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Geo-Note 2003-20, Figure 16
**RADARSAT-1 Principal Component 4
Image for Algar, Alberta (NTS 84A)**

Compilation by S. Mei, 2003



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