

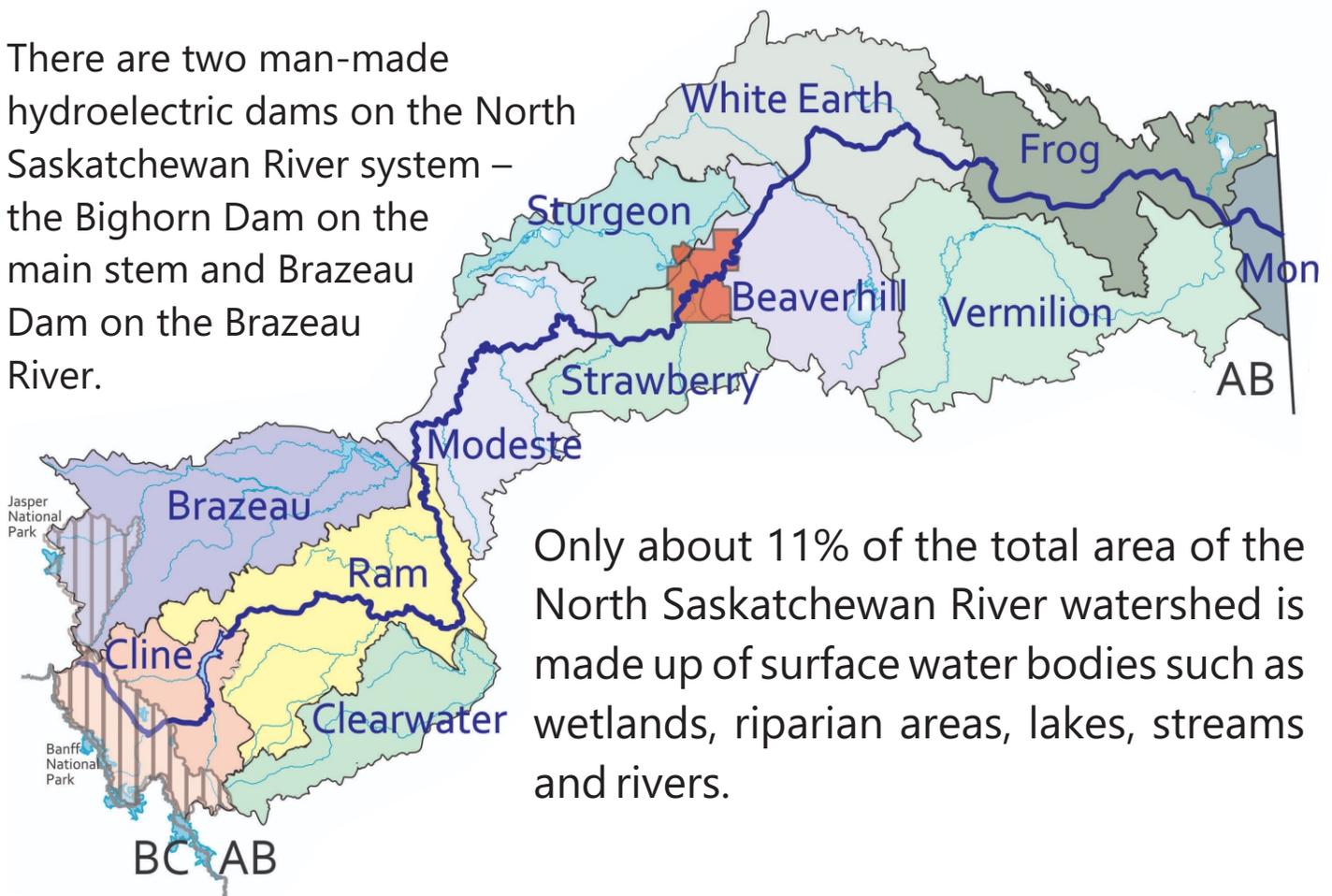
A watershed is an area of land that carries water after rain falls and snow melts through the soil, groundwater, wetlands, lakes and streams, making its way into rivers and eventually an ocean.

We all live in a watershed. How we treat our land can impact the health of our watershed.

The North Saskatchewan River watershed, one of seven major watersheds in Alberta, is a large and very diverse drainage area.

The North Saskatchewan River watershed covers over 57,000 km<sup>2</sup> of land within Alberta's borders.

There are two man-made hydroelectric dams on the North Saskatchewan River system – the Bighorn Dam on the main stem and Brazeau Dam on the Brazeau River.

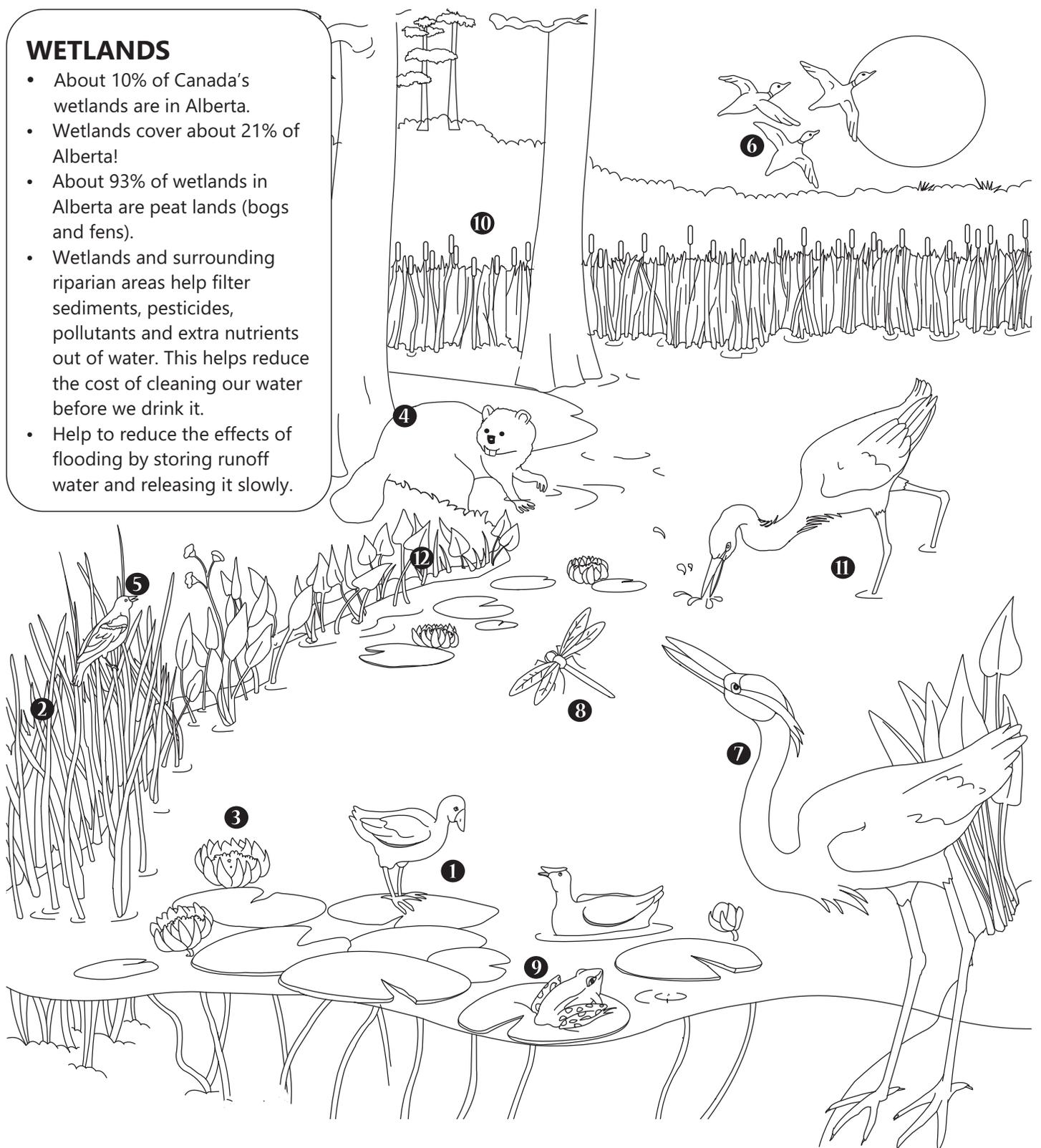


Only about 11% of the total area of the North Saskatchewan River watershed is made up of surface water bodies such as wetlands, riparian areas, lakes, streams and rivers.

# The North Saskatchewan River watershed in Alberta

## WETLANDS

- About 10% of Canada's wetlands are in Alberta.
- Wetlands cover about 21% of Alberta!
- About 93% of wetlands in Alberta are peat lands (bogs and fens).
- Wetlands and surrounding riparian areas help filter sediments, pesticides, pollutants and extra nutrients out of water. This helps reduce the cost of cleaning our water before we drink it.
- Help to reduce the effects of flooding by storing runoff water and releasing it slowly.



1. Coot (mud hen), 2. Bulrush, 3. Waterlily, 4. Beaver,
5. Red-winged blackbird, 6. Mallard duck, 7. Great Blue Heron,
8. Dragonfly, 9. Leopard Frog, 10. Cattails, 11. Snowy Egret
12. Arrowhead

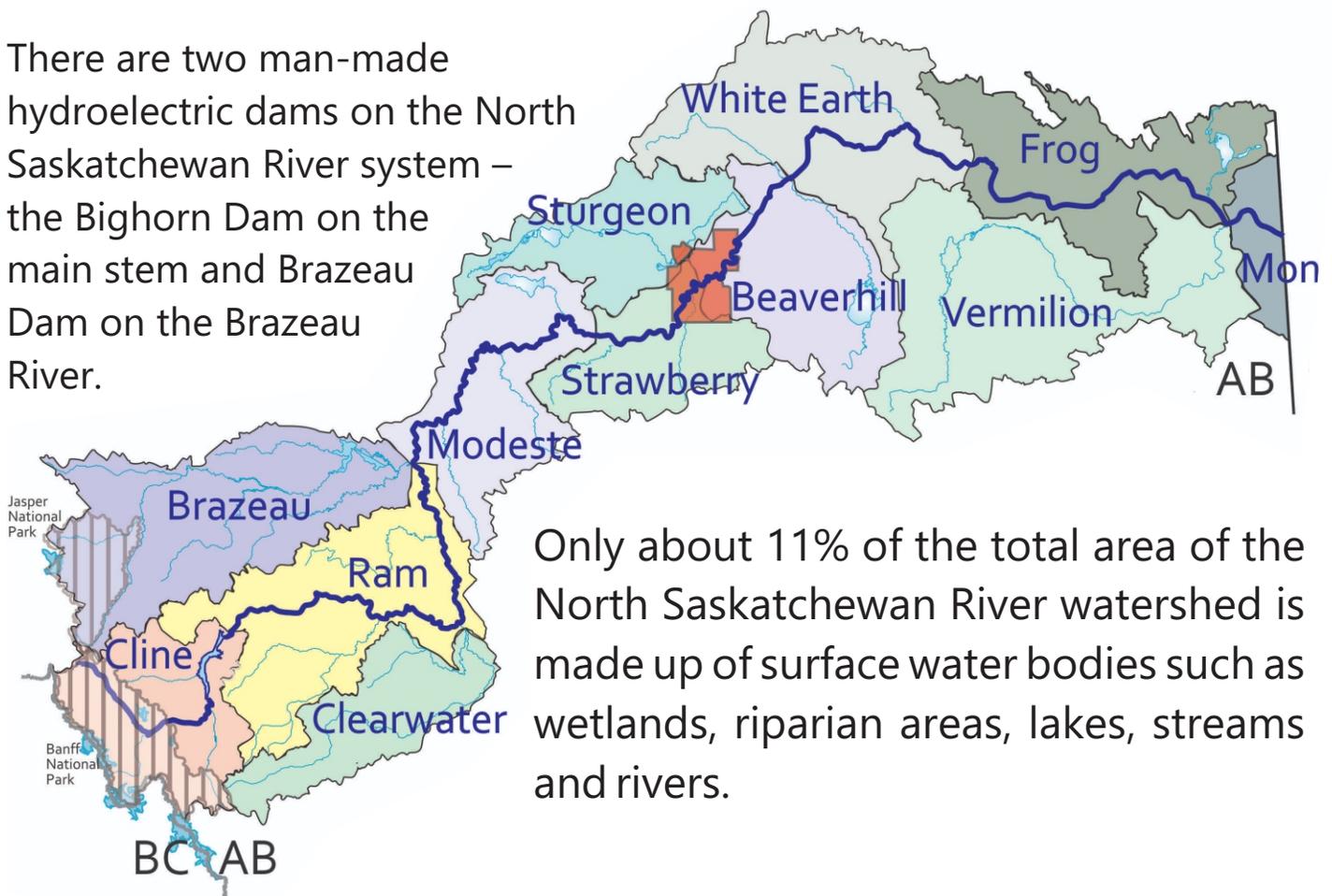
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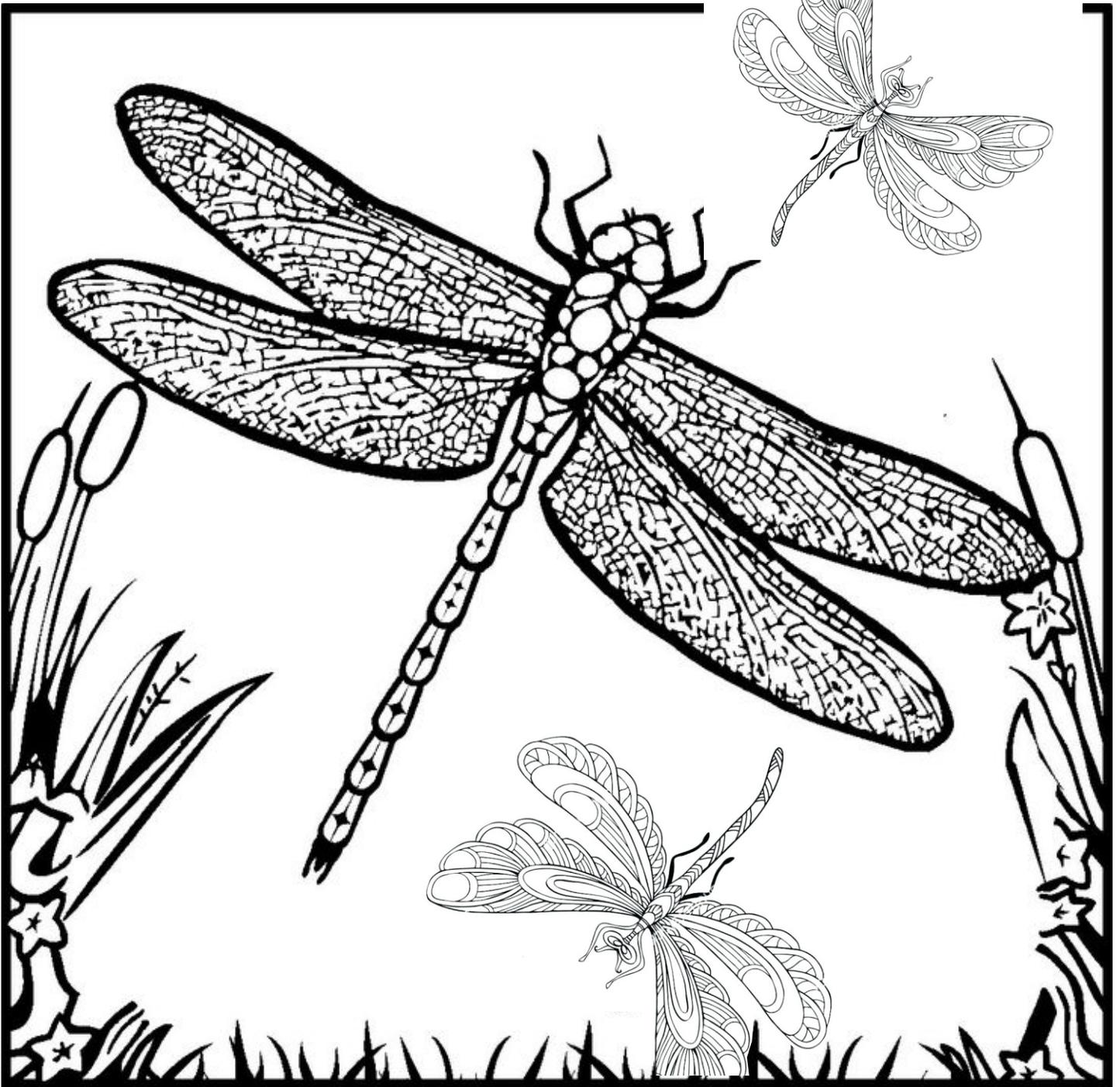
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**Dragonflies** live all over our watershed. They don't sting or bite. They don't carry diseases or germs. They have bright colours and an amazing way of flying. Dragonflies live near ponds, lakes and streams.

They spend most of their life under water as babies. We call the babies, larva. The dragonfly larva eat water insects, tiny fish and even tadpoles. When they leave the water, their hard exoskeleton cracks to let them out as adults. Their wings harden and they fly around where we can see them.

[www.nswa.ab.ca](http://www.nswa.ab.ca)

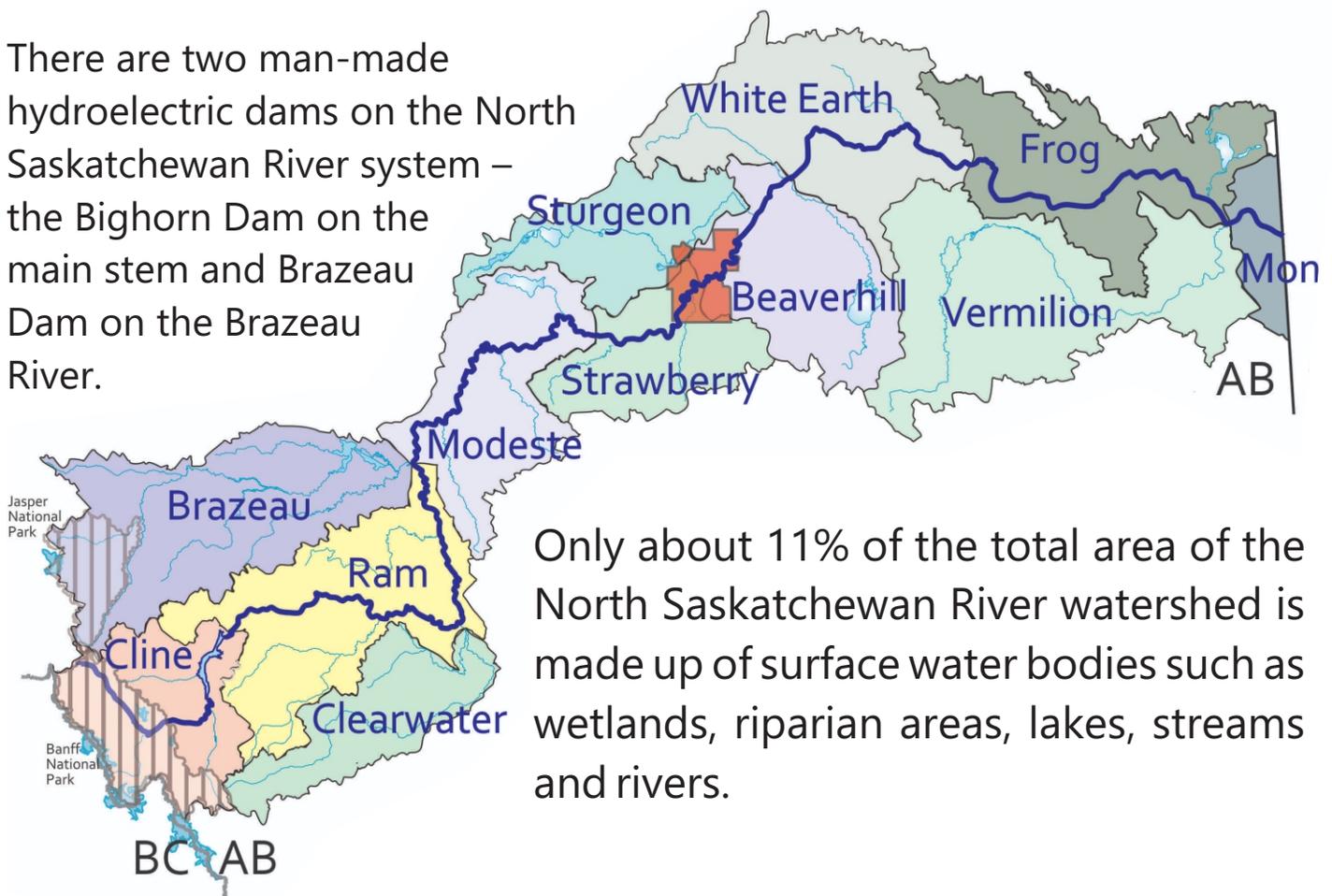
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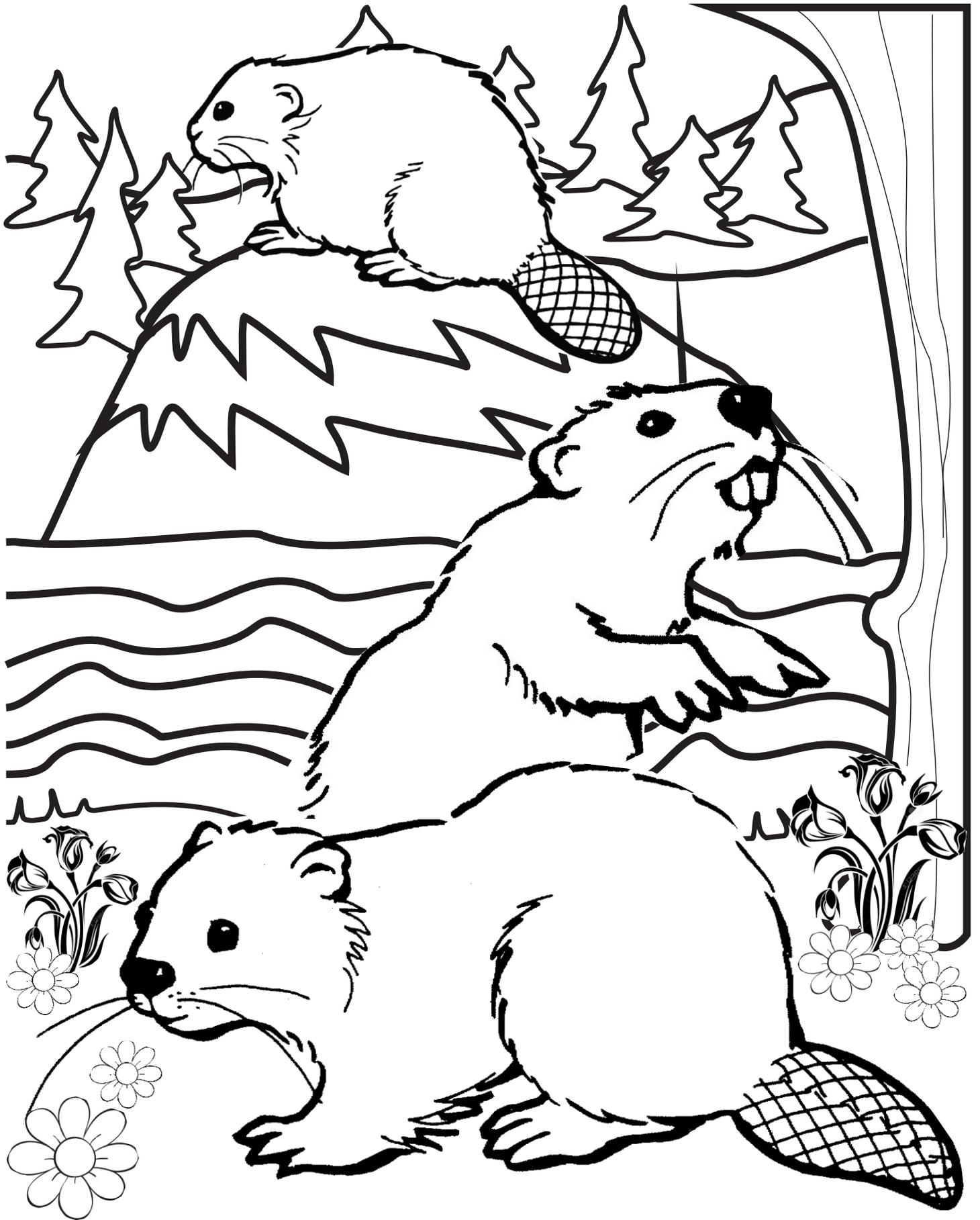
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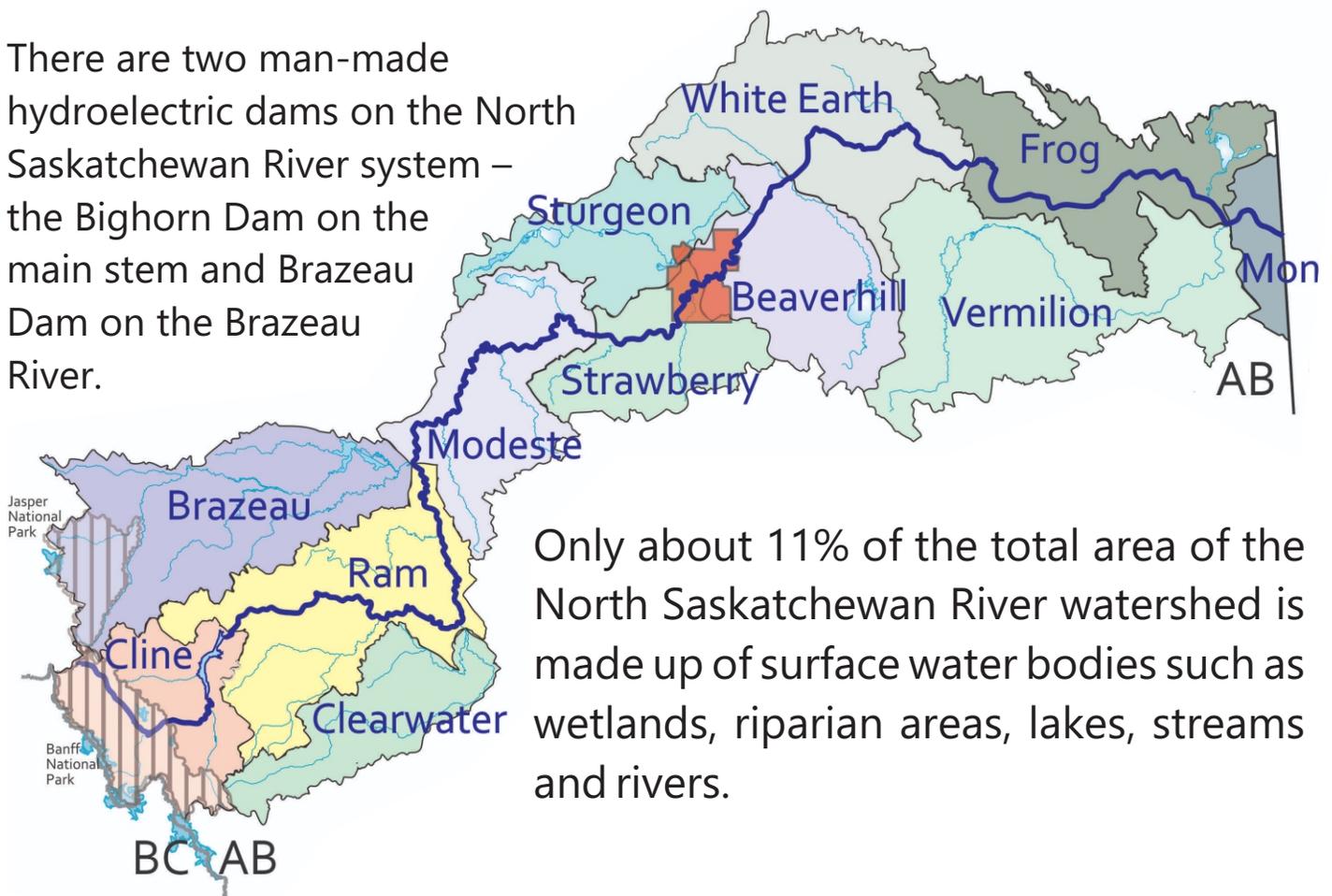
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# Wetlands

*from pages 10 & 11 in the Atlas of the North Saskatchewan River Watershed in Alberta*

Wetlands are areas of permanently or seasonally saturated soils that support growth of aquatic plants. Wetlands may include shallow open water, bogs, fens, marshes, prairie potholes and northern muskegs.

Wetlands are called “nature's kidneys” because they act as natural physical and biological filtering systems. Wetlands can trap and remove bacteria, nutrients, sediments and metals. They also have carbon storage capabilities.

More than 200 bird species (including 45 species of waterfowl) and over 50 species of mammals depend on wetlands for food and habitat.

