

Assessment of possible Visual Impacts of Silvicultural Treatments on Tabor Mountain using Google Earth

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Three Silvicultural treatment units are proposed on Tabor Mountain and occur mostly within Visual Polygon 338. A small amount of block 93G098-102 also catches polygon 371.

Tabor Mountain is a regional feature that dominates the backdrop of the Prince George landscape to the east, and is viewed from many locations in and around the city. The visual sensitivity class for polygon 338 is 2 - High sensitivity to human made visual alteration. The Visual Quality Objective for this landscape is Partial Retention. A Partial Retention VQO requires that forest alterations when assessed from a significant public viewpoint, *be easy to see, small to medium in scale and natural and not rectilinear or geometric in shape.* (1.6-7% ground may be visible in perspective view.)

This document examines the potential impact of the proposed silvicultural operations on the landscape using Google Earth draped with KMZ opening shape files. Using this approach is not a substitute for a proper Visual Impact Assessment which would include field selection of the best viewpoints, proper photography and visual simulations from each viewpoint. However, it can and does provide some information on the visibility, shape and size of operations on the landscape.

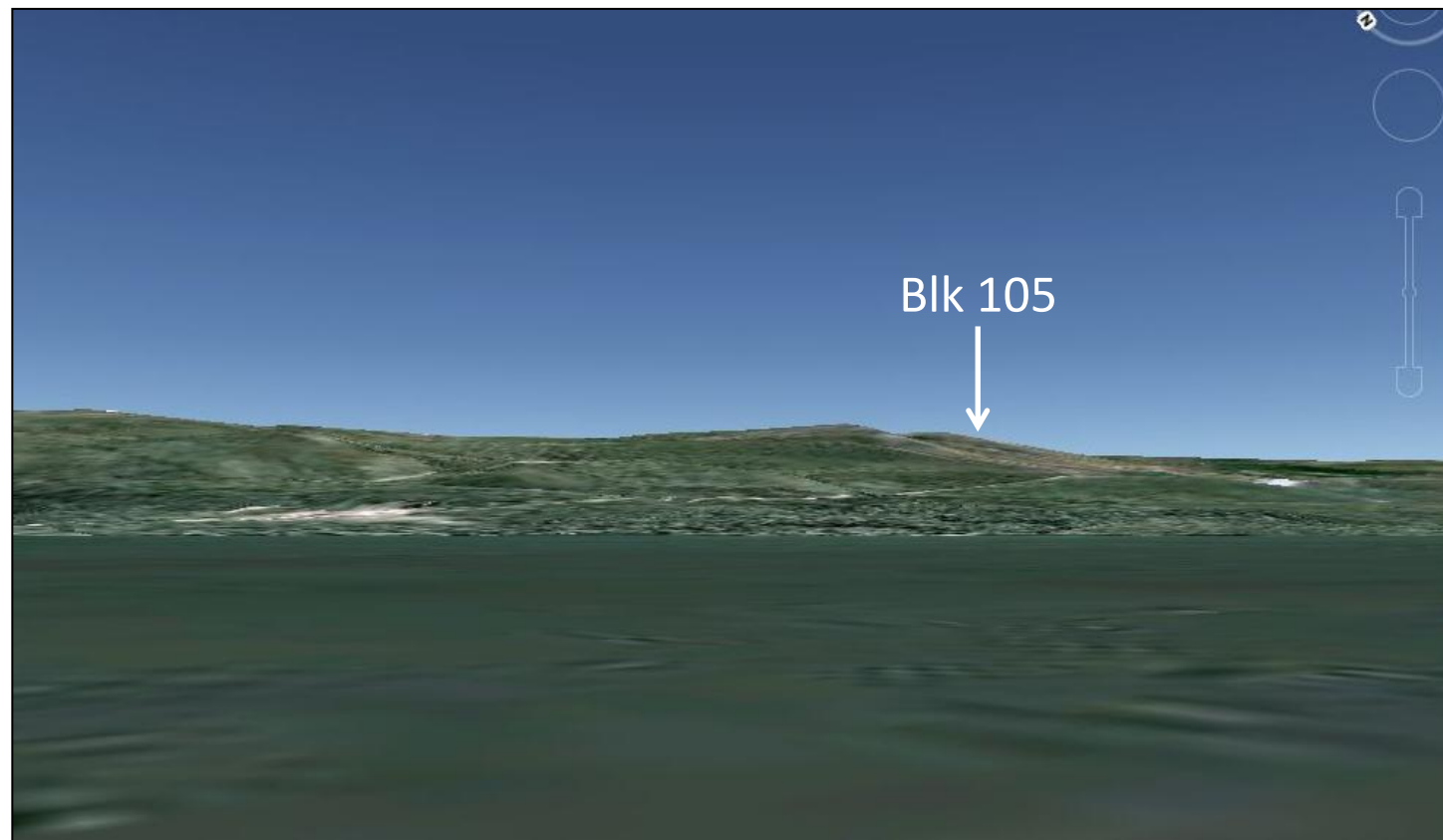
Caution: It must be recognized that Google Earth has limitations in that, as viewing distance increases, resolution and accuracy of this tool decreases. Also, KMZ shape files are 2 dimensional i.e. have no depth with which to simulate effects of tree height. This means actual outcomes on the ground could vary compared to what Google Earth can produce.

The Google Earth assessment discussed in this document examined the two largest openings from locations expected to provide the best view of the proposed treatment areas. These included: Tabor Lake (3 Viewpoints), Bonnet Hill, Prince George Airport and College Heights.

The conclusion is that Bonnet Hill potentially provides the best view of all the silvicultural treatments. Assuming the viewpoints selected for this assessment are confirmed in the field, the Partial Retention VQO should be achieved from all viewpoints selected.

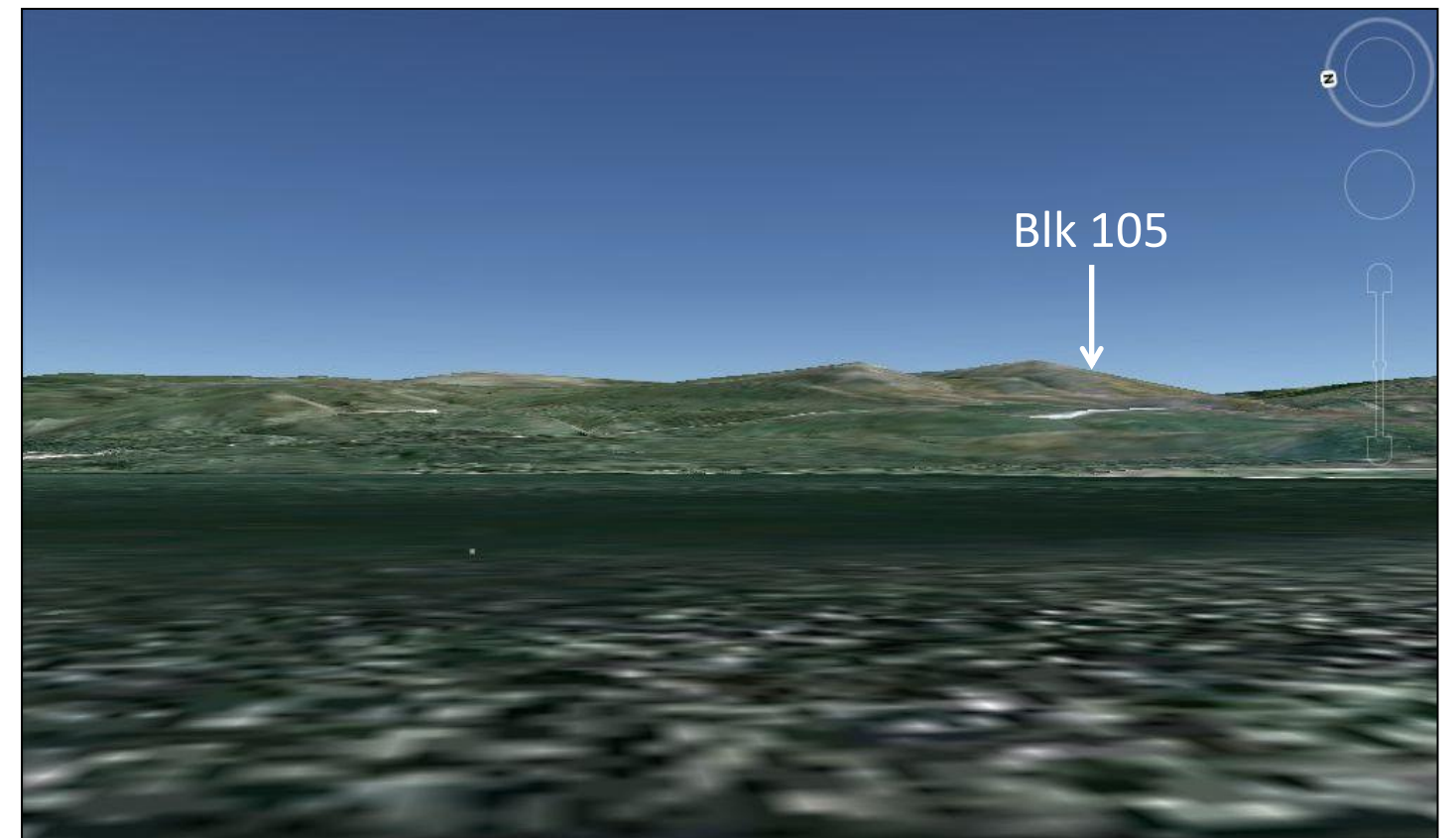
In addition to the visual values, this development should be cautious about the Sons of Norway ski trails around the rehabilitation areas. Care must be given to the existing trails system and all the work done by the volunteers over the years to maintain them.





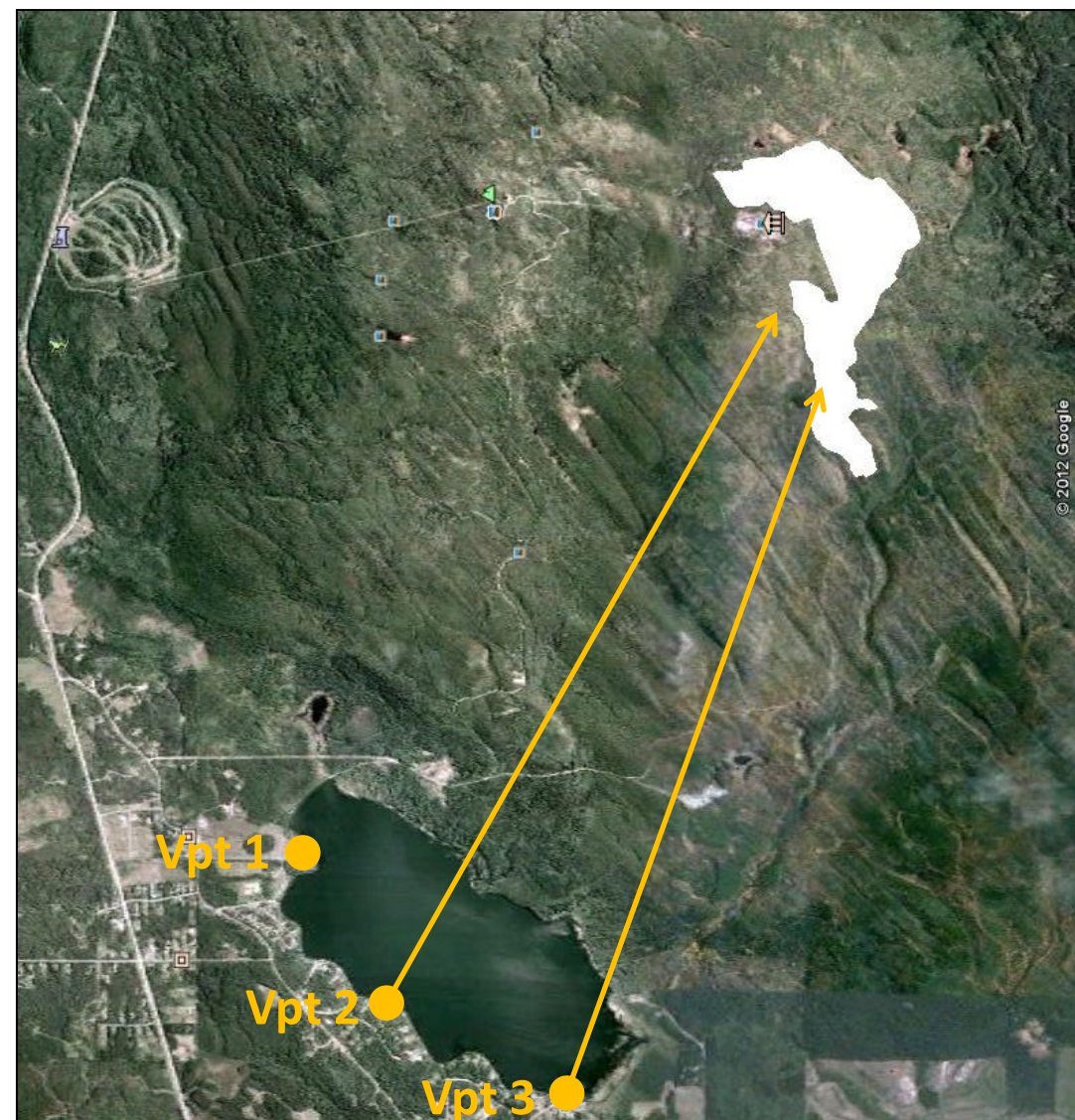
Block 93C088-105 from Viewpoint #2
Western Shore Tabor Lake

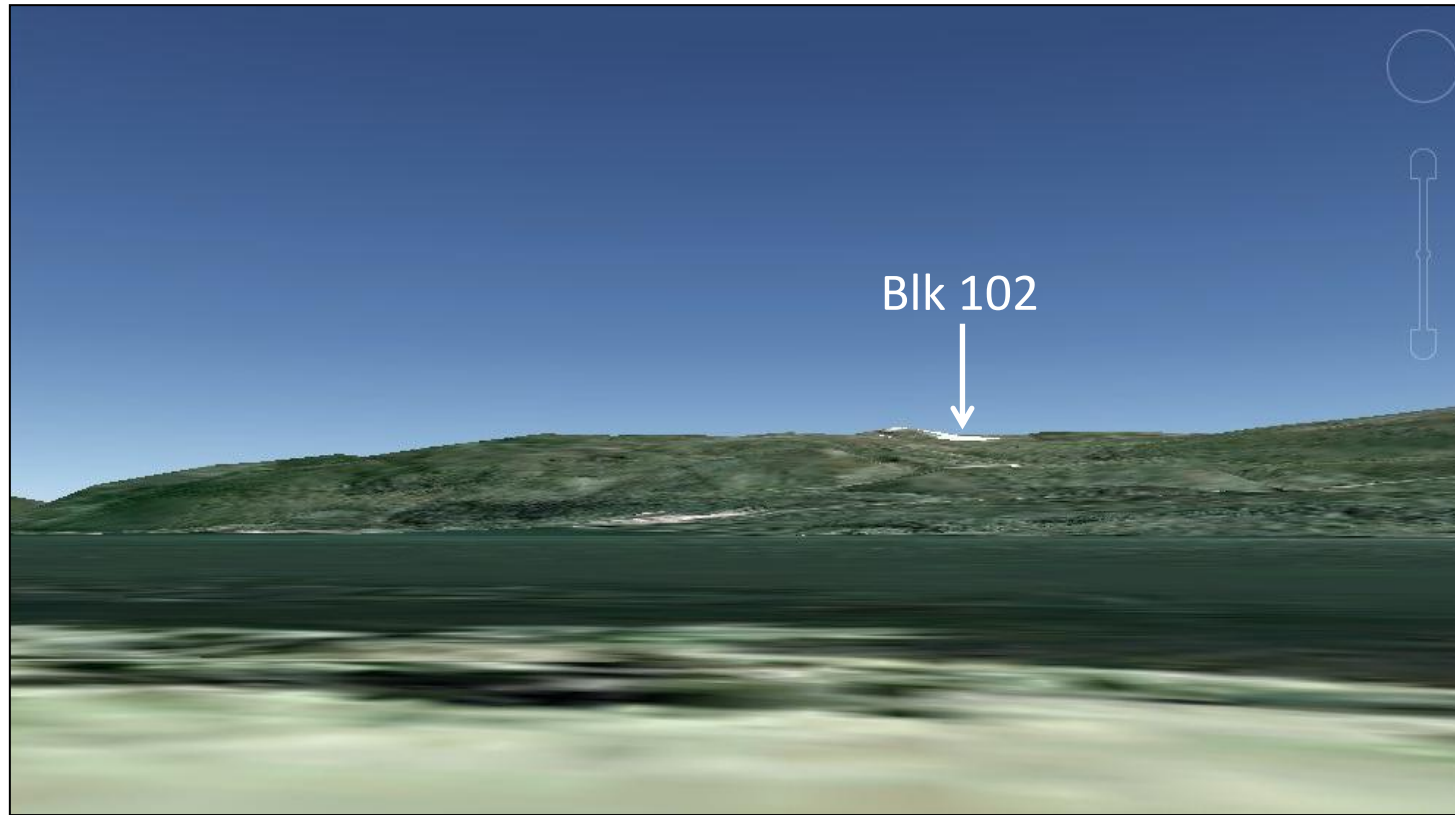
Block 93C088-105 is not visible from Viewpoint #2, the result of topographic screening.



Block 93C088-105 from Viewpoint #3
Waterdome Tabor Lake

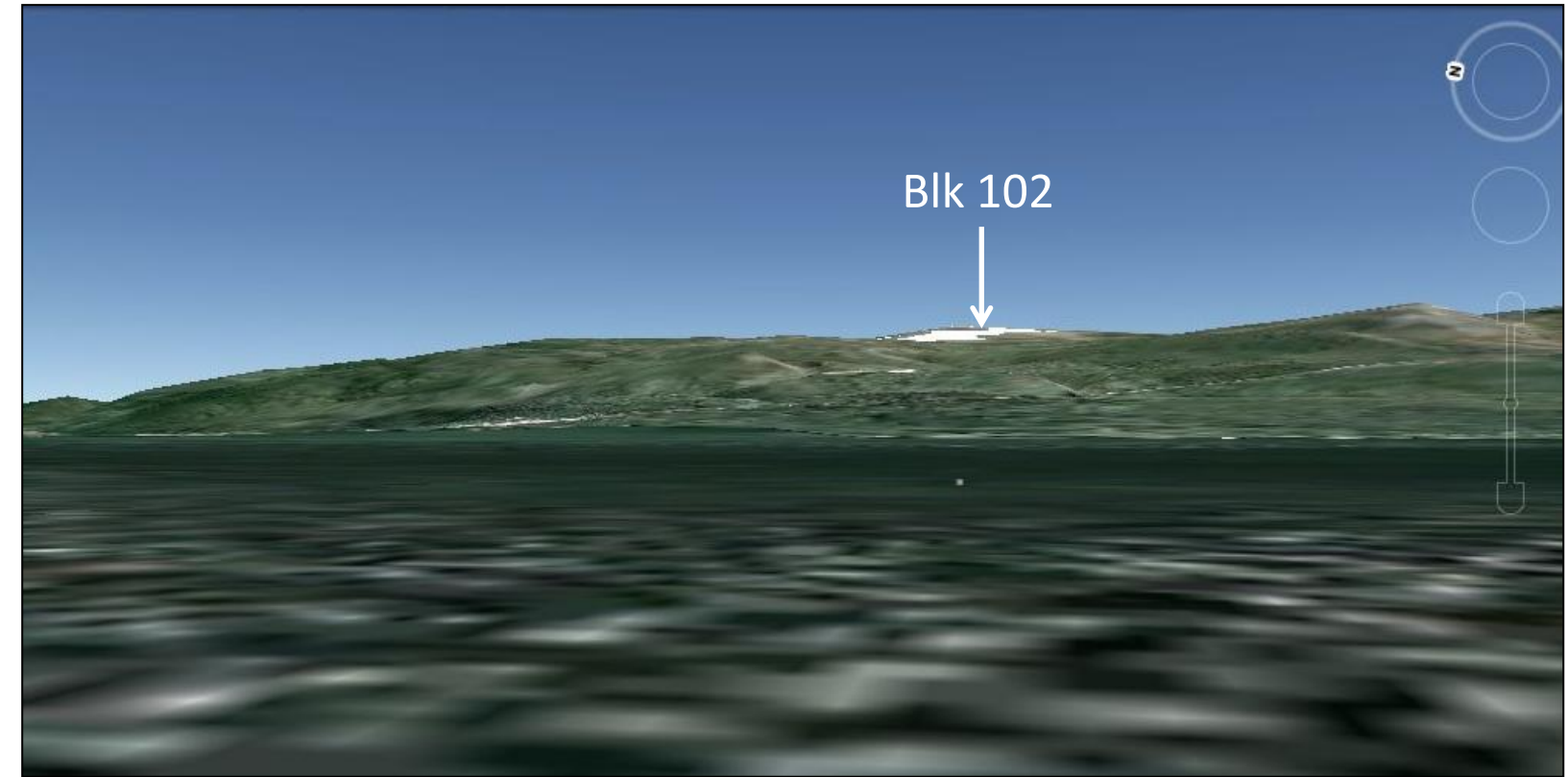
Block 93C088-105 is not visible from Viewpoint #3, the result of topographic screening.





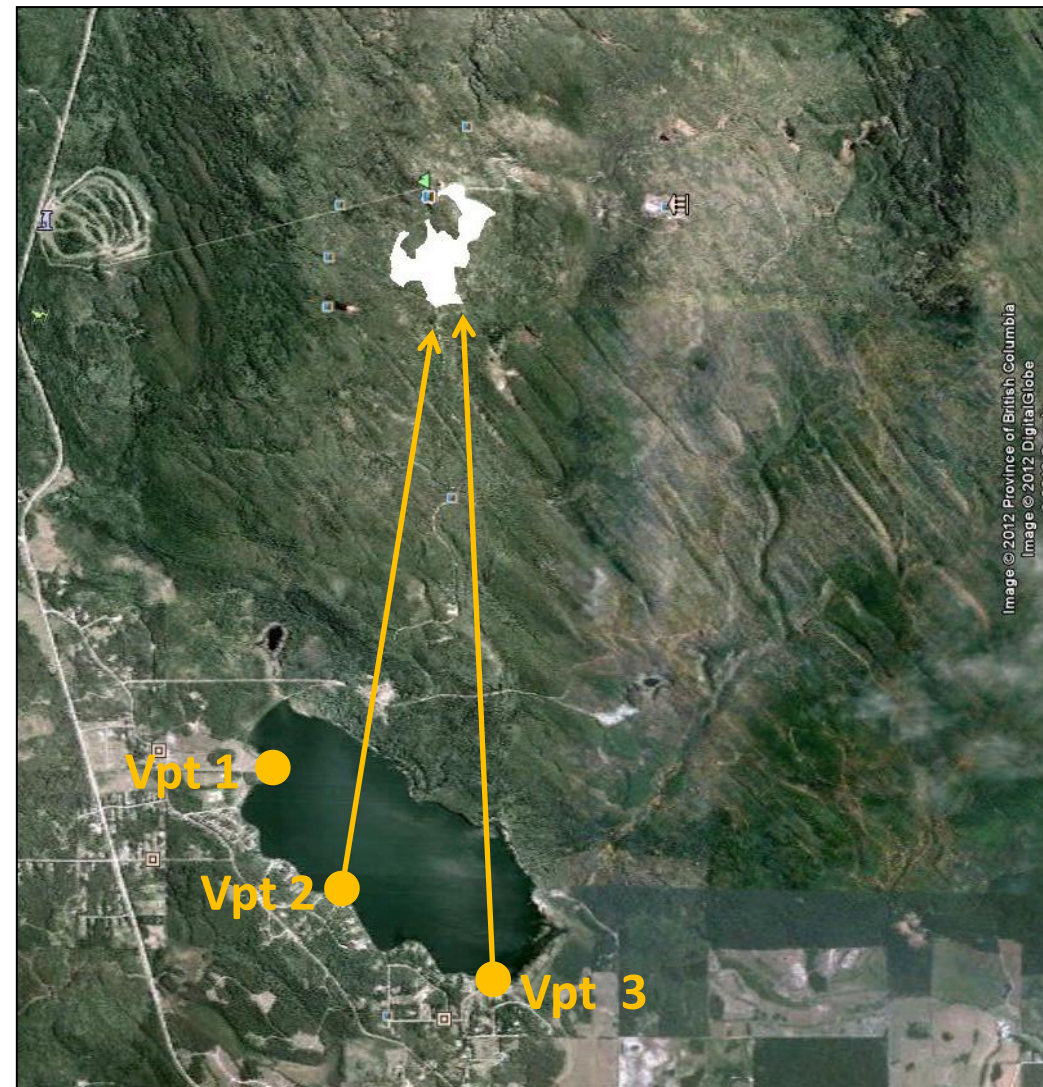
View of block 93G098-102 from Viewpoint #2 on the Western Shore of Tabor Lake.

Block 102 is difficult to see appears small in scale and is partially screened by foreground topography. The PR objective would be achieved.

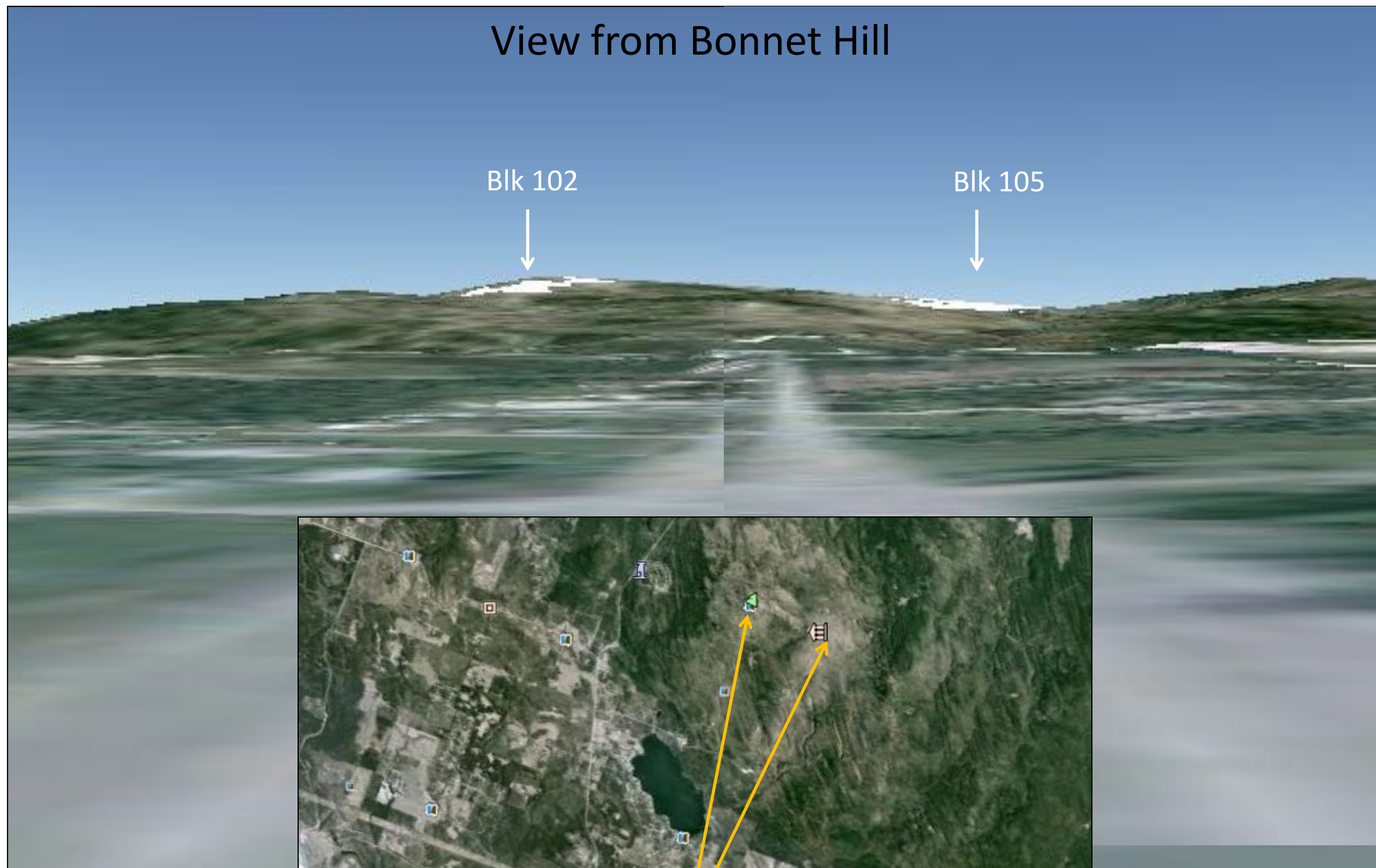


View of block 93G098-102 from Viewpoint #3 Water dome on Tabor Lake.

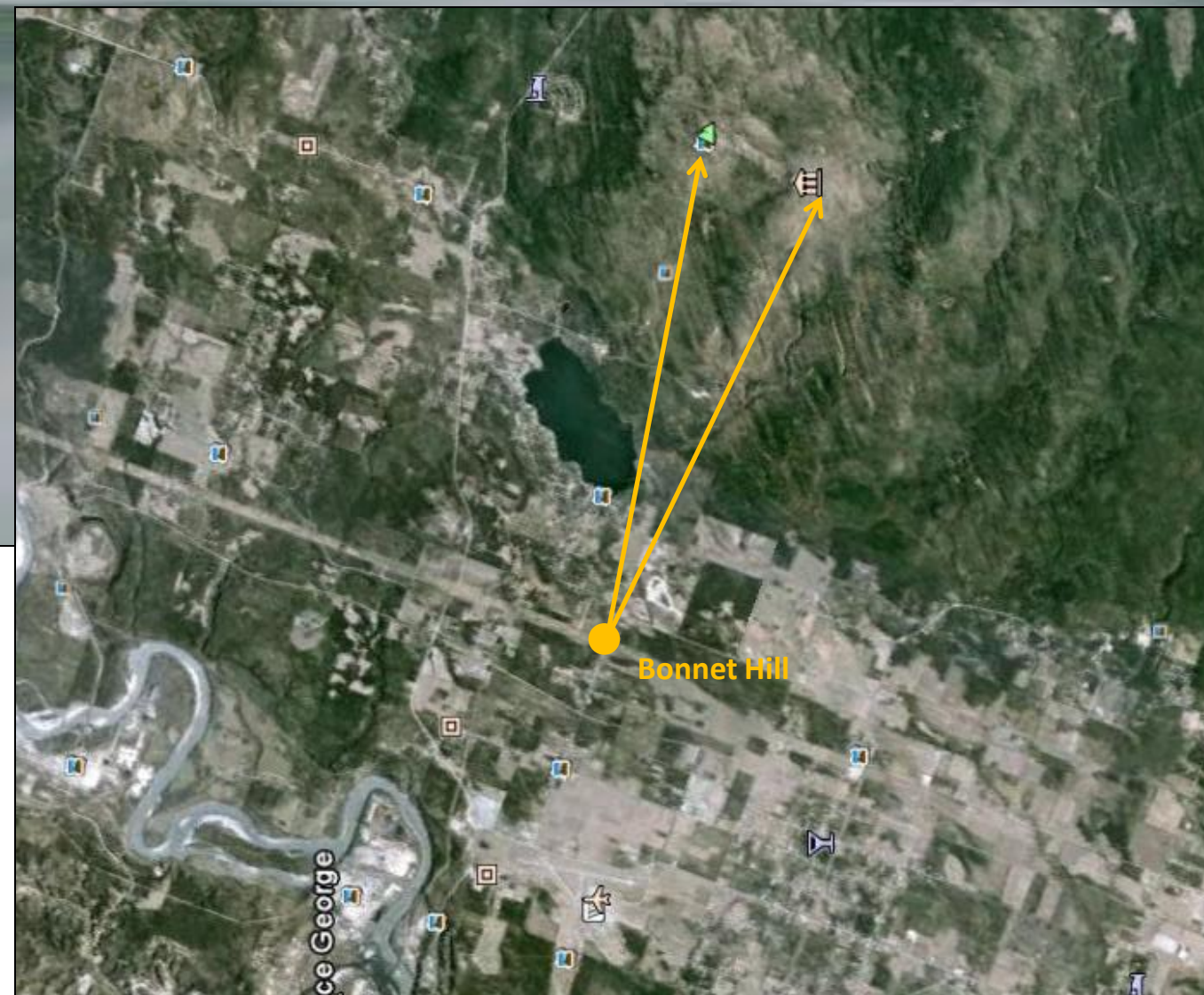
Block 102 is easy to see, but is small to medium in scale and parallels the topography of the ridgeline. The PR objective would be achieved.



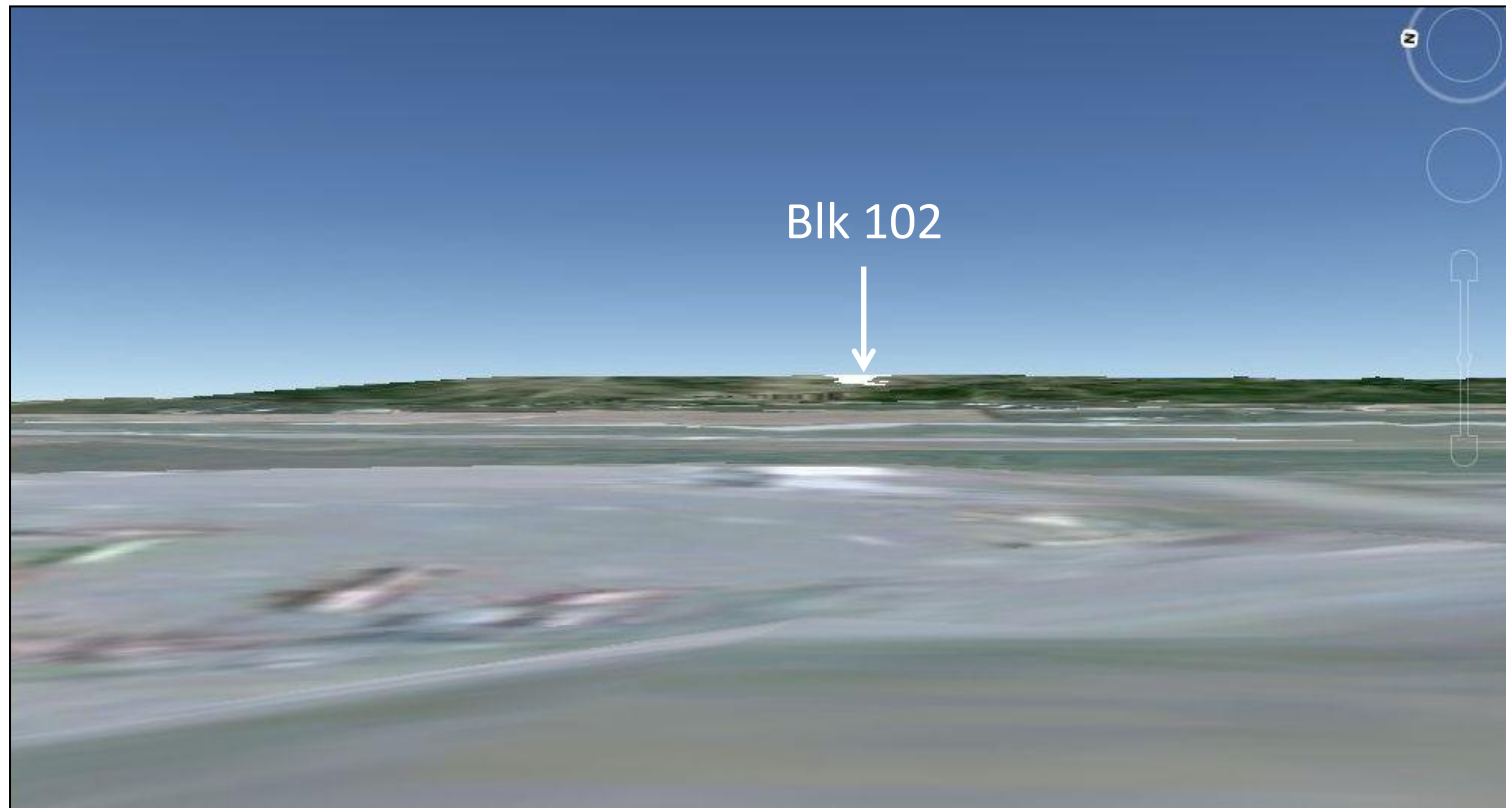
View from Bonnet Hill



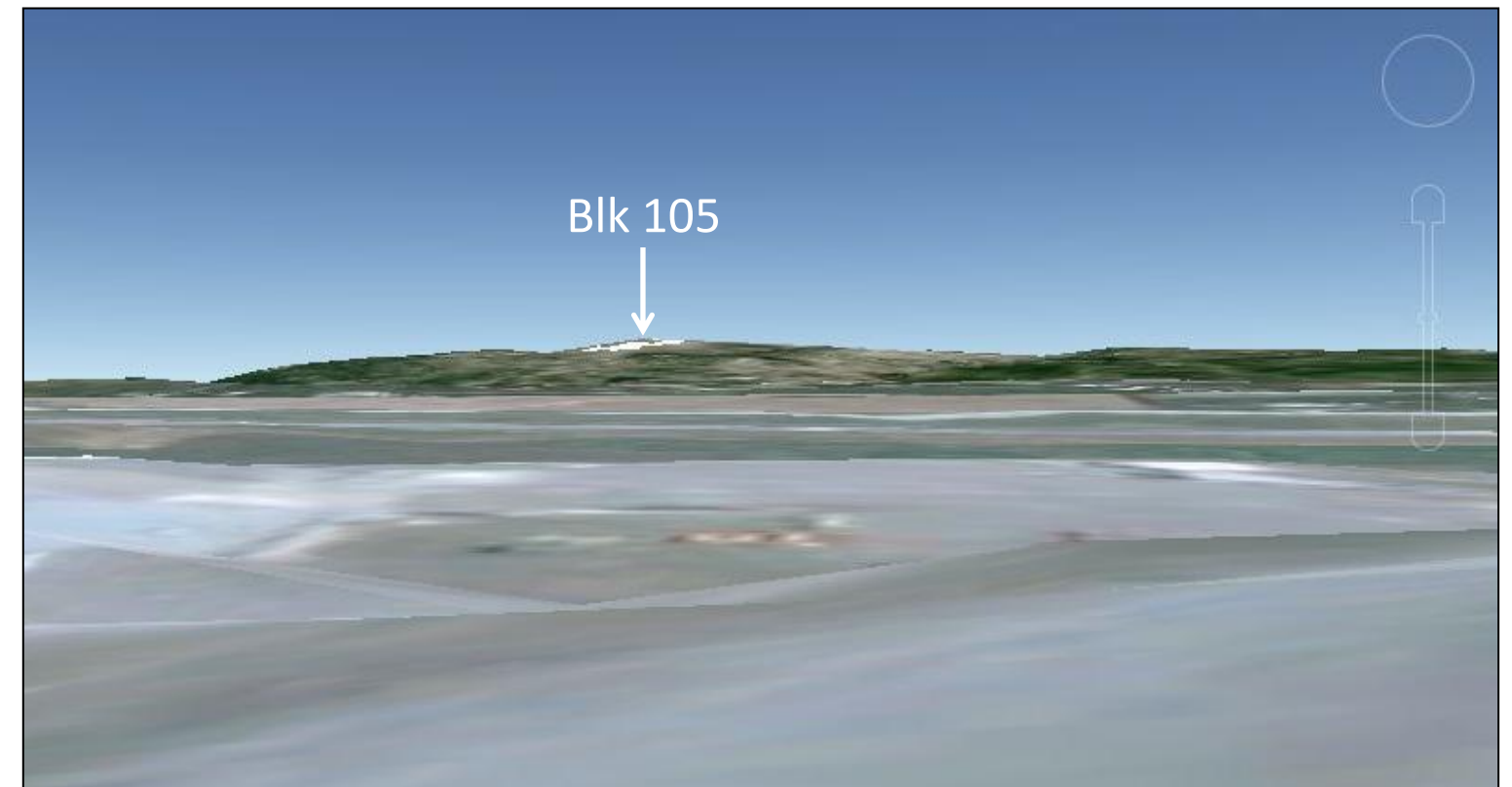
Bonnet Hill provides the best view of the proposed silvicultural treatment units. Bonnet Hill is 10 Km from the blocks.



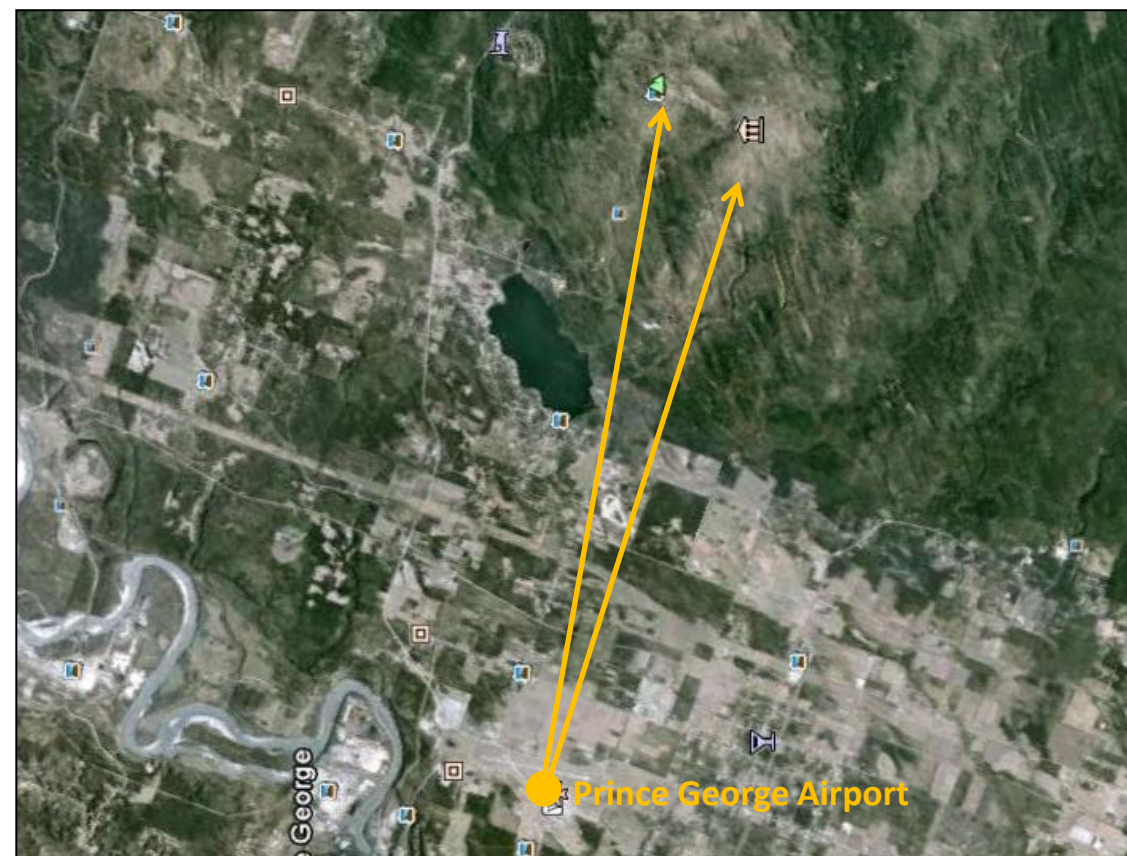
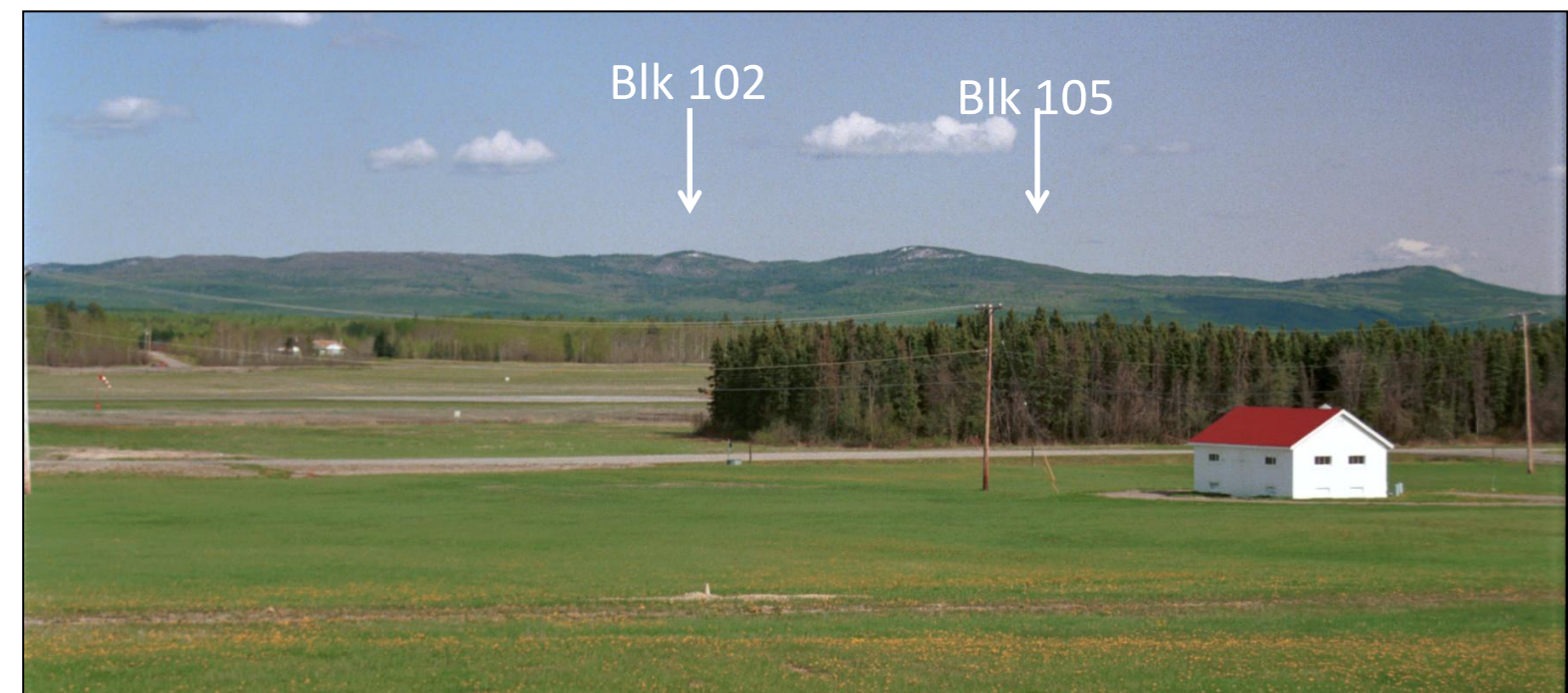
Block 102 & 105 in combination are easy to see, medium in scale and natural in appearance. The 2 visible openings combined amount to a 4% perspective alteration, near the mid-point of the range allowed for Partial Retention.



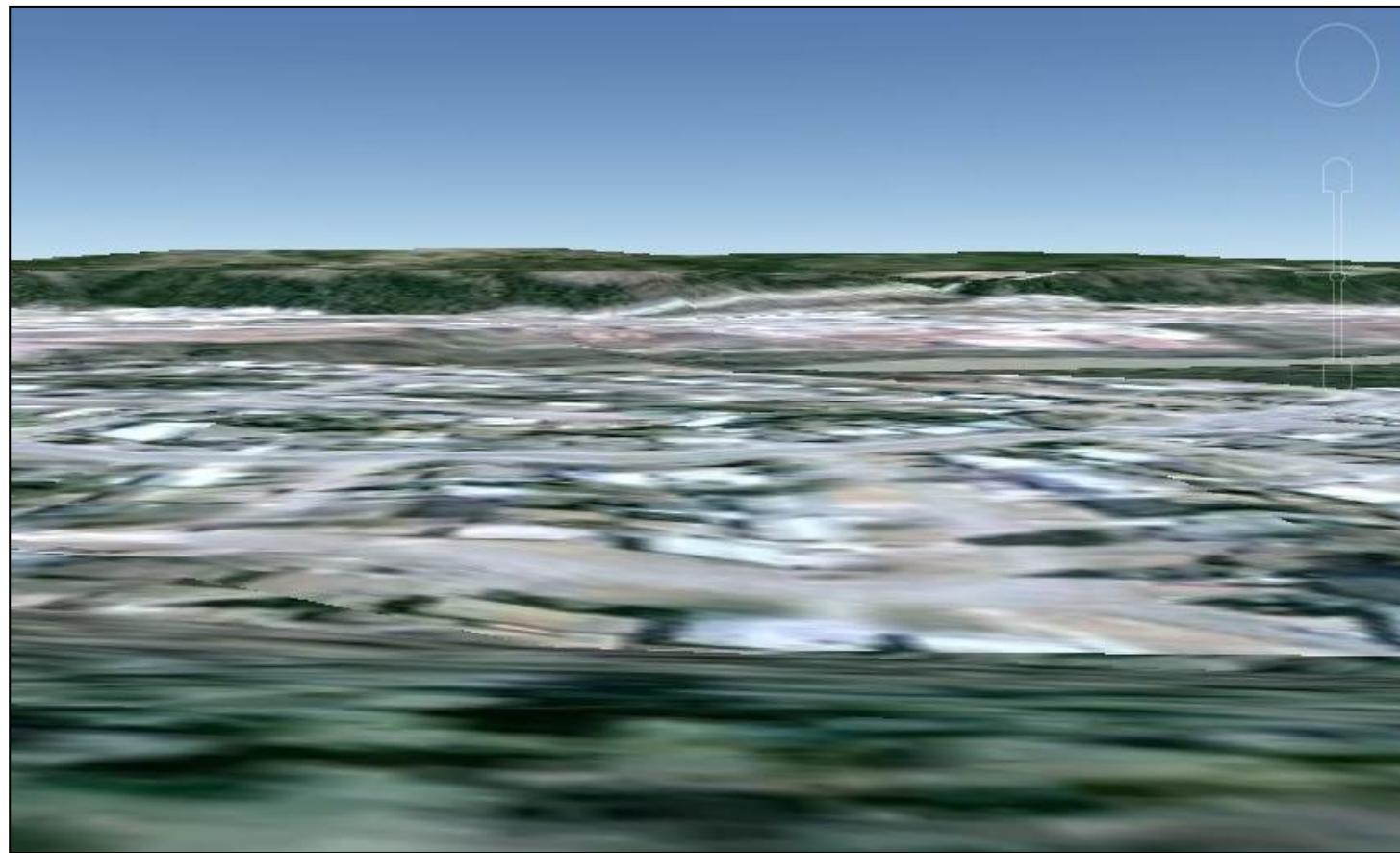
View of block 102 from Prince George Airport Departure Building. Block 102 is easy to see, small to medium in scale and is slightly rectilinear in shape. The 15 km viewing distance ameliorates the effect of geometry.



View of Block 105 from Prince George Airport Departure Building. Block 105 is easy to see, small to medium in scale and natural in appearance as it parallels the topography of the ridgeline



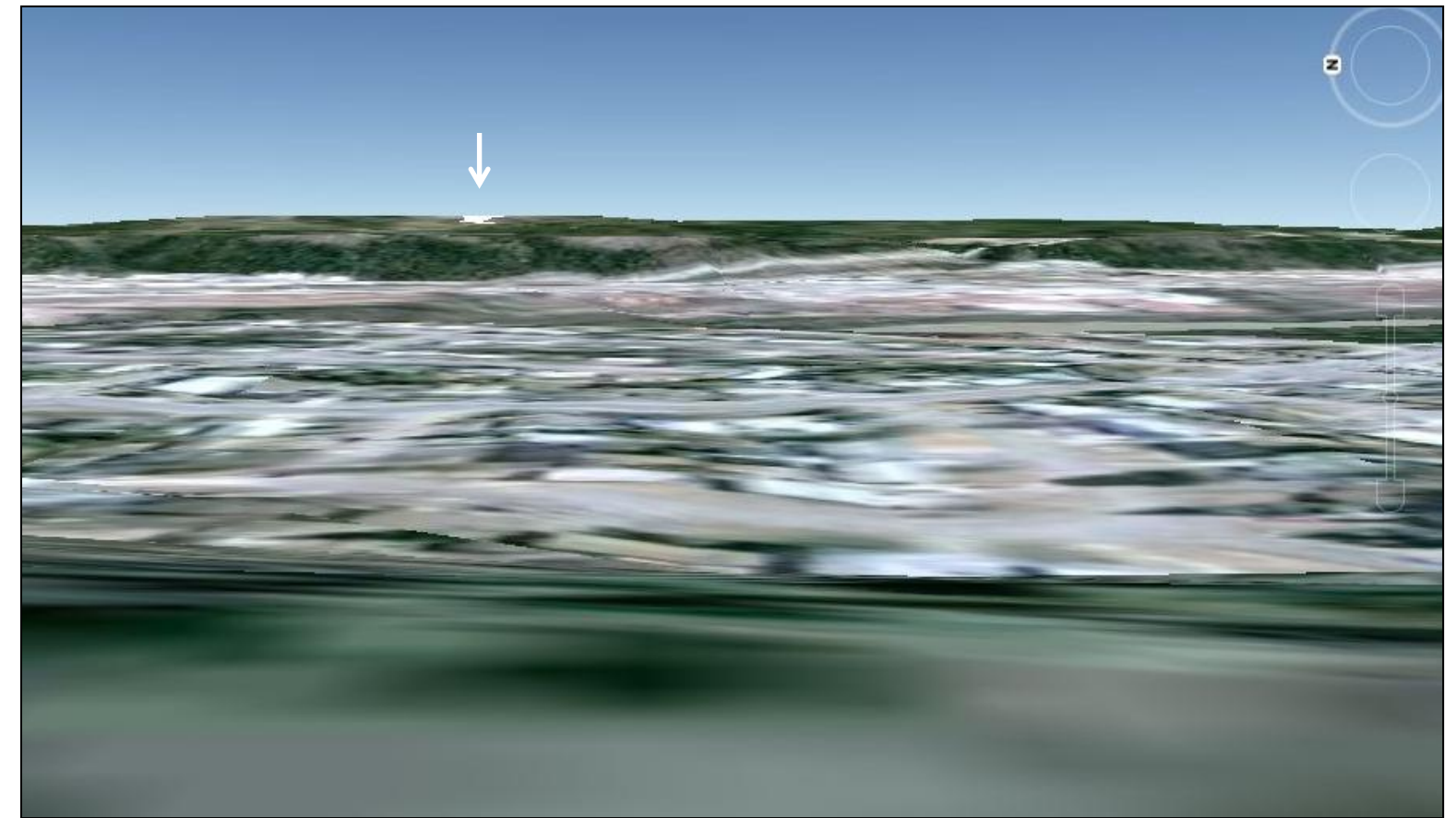
View of Tabor Mountain from Prince George Airport



Block #102 from College Heights Neighborhood Pub

Block 102 does not appear to be visible from this view point. However, it must be recognized that the reliability of the Google Earth imagery at this distance is very low.

Viewing Distance is 21 Kilometers.

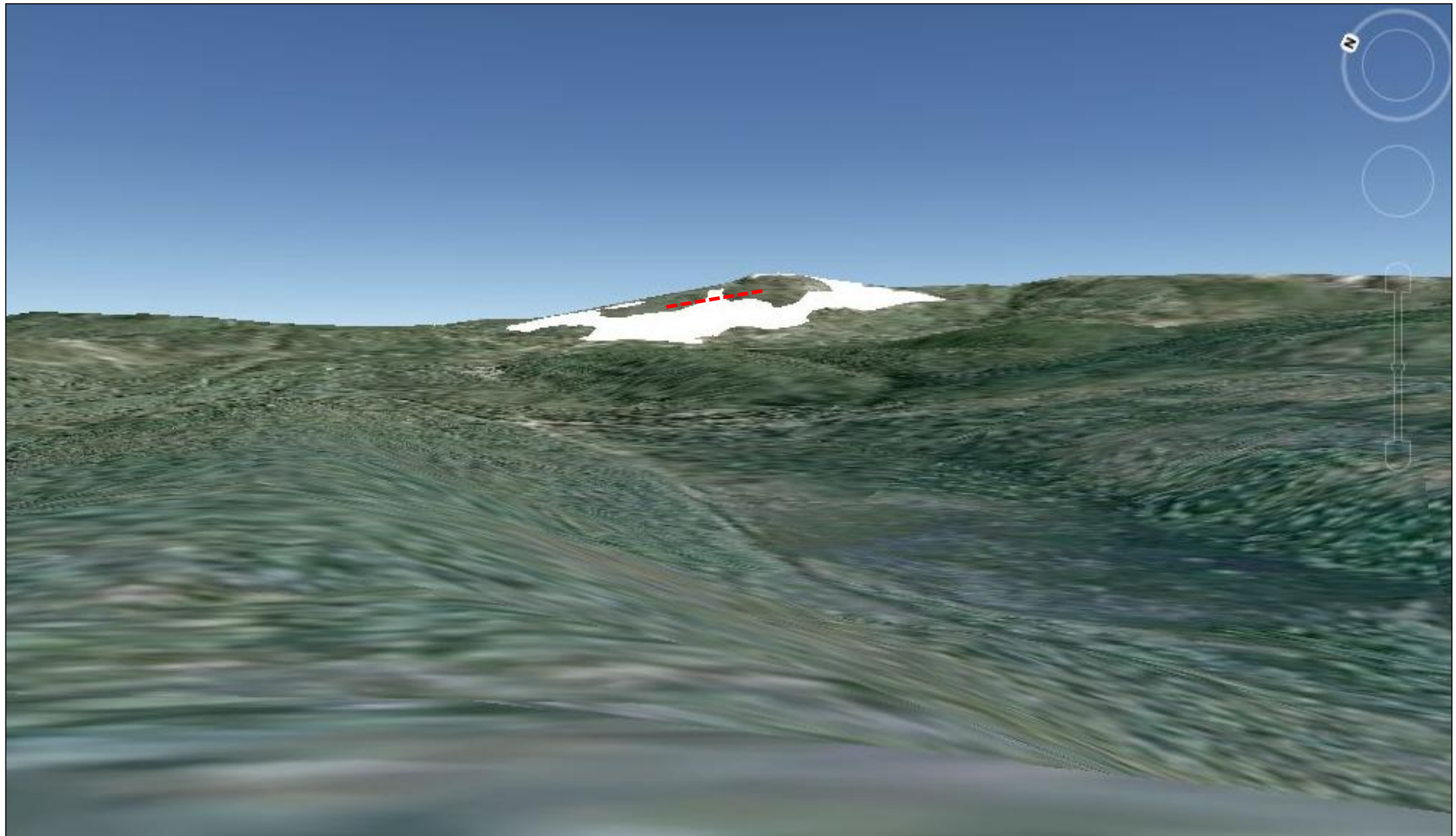


Block #105 from College Heights Neighborhood Pub

Block 105 is visible but appears very small and distant with no recognizable shape. The Google Earth imagery is heavily pixilated at this distance and is not reliable.

Viewing Distance is 21 Kilometers.





View of block 102 from Tabor Mountain Access Road.

While not a significant public viewpoint, it provides a close up view of block detail.

The shape is generally good, but eliminating the small vertical intrusion would help preserve the integrity of the peak.