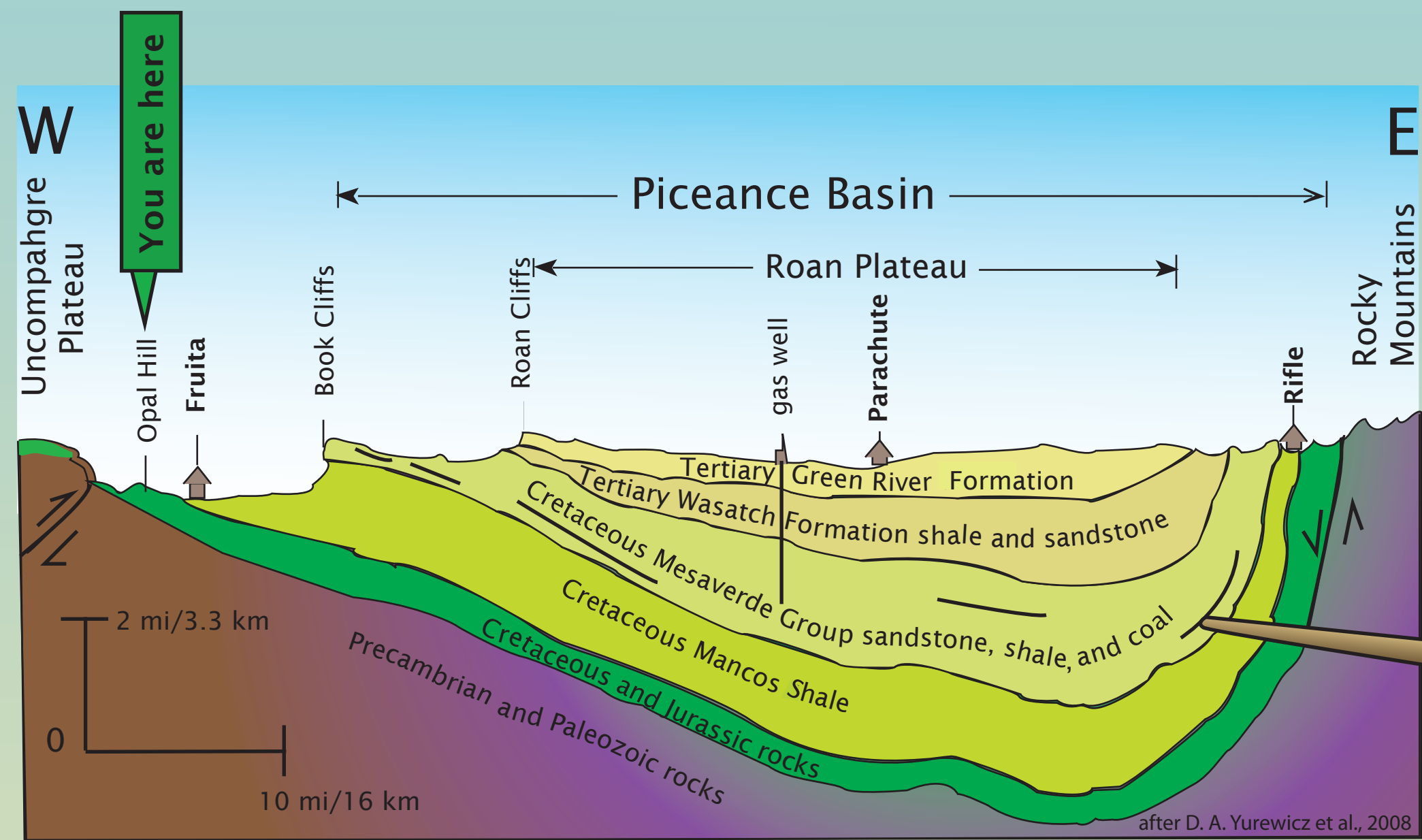
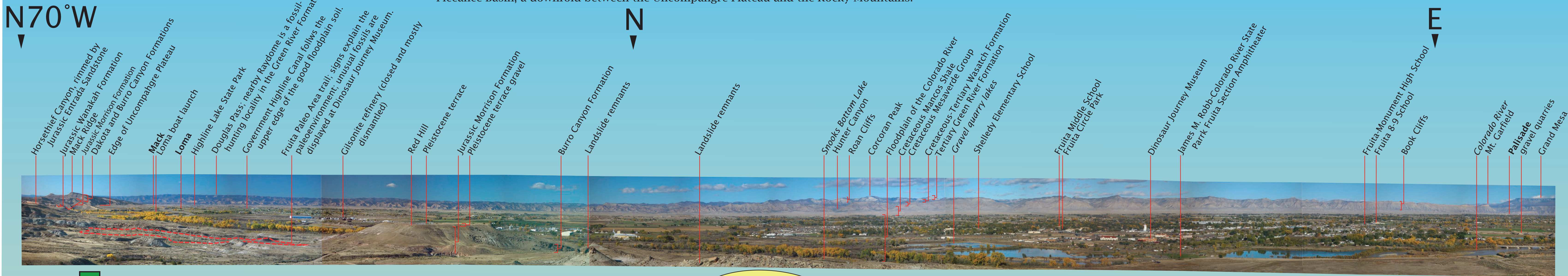


# 9. The Northern View from Opal Hill: Pale Cliffs Edge the Piceance Basin

Looking from here to the northeast, the Book Cliffs are the southwest edge of the Piceance Basin, a downfold between the Uncompahgre Plateau and the Rocky Mountains.



Cross Section of the Piceance Basin

When a mountain range is pushed up, it's pretty common for the area next to it to sink down into a basin. When the Uncompahgre Plateau and the Rockies were shoved up between 70 and 40 million years ago, the Piceance Basin sank down between them. "Piceance" has a silent c; it is pronounced "pea-ah-nce."



Coal is mined from the Mesaverde Group in what were once marshy areas behind beaches. Mesaverde layers also contain natural gas. The much higher and younger Green River Formation contains beds of oil shale settled in the bottom of a big lake.



Fish



Crayfish



Leaves



Feather



Scorpionfly



These casts of the insides of gastropod (snail) shells can be found in a few places in the Morrison Formation.

