

# COMOX LAKE BLUFFS ECOLOGICAL RESERVE

## PURPOSE STATEMENT

March 2003

Approved by:



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Date: March 25/03



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Date: Mar. 31/03

## COMOX LAKE BLUFFS ECOLOGICAL RESERVE Purpose Statement

Ecological reserves are areas selected to preserve representative and special natural ecosystems, plant and animal species, features and phenomena. The key goal of ecological reserves is to contribute to the maintenance of biological diversity and the protection of genetic materials. All consumptive resource uses and the use of motorized vehicles are prohibited. Research and educational activities may be carried out but only under permit.

### Primary Role

The **primary** role of Comox Lake Bluffs Ecological Reserve is to protect a unique ecosystem and unusual botanical phenomena. The ecological reserve contains bluffs and shallow soils with an assemblage of regionally rare plants and communities. Although much of the sites has been logged, it has high levels of biodiversity with several species at the limits of their range and unusual dry open-site plant communities in the Coastal Western Hemlock zone, such as Douglas-fir (shore pine) /arbutus /manzanita /bearberry and Douglas fir (shore pine) /arbutus /Rocky Mountain juniper. The least moonwort, a blue-listed plant, is found here.

### Management Issues

Known Management Issue	Response
Lack of knowledge of natural values	➤ Encourage research of rare elements.
Recreational use of the ecological reserve (Used extensively for mountain biking, running, camping, horseback riding, dirt biking, and beach use)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Pursue park designation on the portion of the ER that is suitable and used for recreation purposes.</li> <li>➤ Maintain the bluffs as ecological reserve.</li> <li>➤ Continue conducting BRIM.</li> <li>➤ Designate mountain bike paths in appropriate areas and remove trails in sensitive locations. Encourage local user groups to participate in trail maintenance and in protection of the natural values.</li> <li>➤ Increase public awareness the ecological reserve.</li> </ul>
Adjacency issues -- logging has occurred right up to the north boundary increasing ease of access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Review forest development plans to ensure adjacency concerns such as increased access, visual impacts, and windthrow are addressed.</li> <li>➤ Undertake restoration work when resources allow.</li> </ul>

### Conservation

- |                                   |                                     |  |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| Representation<br>- ecosection    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Minimal contribution of 0.88% to the overall representation of the Nanaimo Lowlands Ecosection (NAL), which is under represented and has only 1.4% protected provincially  |
| - biogeoclimatic subzone/variant  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Minimal contribution of 0.48% to the overall representation of CWHxm1, which is under represented in the protected areas system with only 2.1% of its area being protected |
| Special Features                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Several species at the limits of their range; unusual plant communities and sensitive ecosystems, exposed rocky bluffs   |
| Rare/Endangered Values            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Blue-listed plant least moonwort which is rare in southwestern BC  |
| Scientific/Research Opportunities | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Research of rare plant species   |

### Recreation

- |   |                                     |   |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|
| Representation<br>backcountry<br>destination<br>travel corridor<br>local recreation | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Not Applicable  |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Not Applicable  |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Not Applicable  |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Local recreation such as camping, swimming and trail/beach use occurs and is not appropriate in ecological reserves |
| Special Opportunities   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Not Applicable  |
| Education/Interpretation Opportunities  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Potential for school stewardship/outreach program   |

### Cultural Heritage

- |                 |                                     |   |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Representation  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Logging history, First Nations values unknown |
| Special Feature | <input type="checkbox"/>            | None known at this time                       |

### Other Management Considerations

- |                                      |                                     |  |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| Other Designations                   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Not Applicable   |
| Relationship to other PAs            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Part of a system of ecological reserves established in BC to protect special places and features for research and education purposes |
| Co-operative Management Arrangements | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Not applicable   |

- Partnerships  Not Applicable
- Vulnerability  Recreation use on bluffs, adjacent logging
- Relationship to other Strategies  Not Applicable

**Area:** 47 hectares

**Date of establishment:** April 30, 1996