

**MERIDIAN ROAD (VANDERHOOF)****ER #78****ORIGINAL PURPOSE** To retain a sample of mature Engelmann spruce – Subalpine fir forest representative of uplands within the Nechako Plateau**OVERVIEW**

<b>Date established:</b>	15 Dec. 1977	<b>Location:</b>	40 km S of Vanderhoof
<b>ORC #:</b>	3078	<b>Latitude:</b>	53°39'N
<b>Map number:</b>	93 F/9; G/12	<b>Longitude:</b>	124°01'W

<b>Total Area:</b>	262 ha	<b>Elevation:</b>	1,190-1,240 m
<b>Land:</b>	262 ha		

**Access:** Access via rough logging roads from Vanderhoof. One such road, the Meridian Road, marks the northeast boundary of the reserve.

**Biogeoclimatic Zones:** Engelmann Spruce- Subalpine Fir (ESSF); Sub-boreal Spruce (SBS)

**Biogeoclimatic Variants:** ESSF mv1 Nechako Moist Very Cold; SBS mc2 Babine Moist Cold

**Ecosection:** Nazko Upland

**Region:** Omineca

**Management Area:** Nechako

**COMPOSITION**

**Physical:** Located at the eastern edge of the Nulki Hills, a rolling upland within the Nechako Plateau, this reserve has little topographic variation. Surface slope, almost imperceptible, is to the east. Meandering unnamed streams which flow across the reserve have formed shallow valleys. These drain into the Chilako River. Except in a few sedge meadows and bogs, soils are predominantly Podzols, developed on glacial till.

**Biological:** This reserve is almost entirely covered with dense stands of mature conifers; boggy sites, mostly in the northern corner, comprise less than five percent of its total area. The forest communities are characteristic of lower elevations in the Engelmann Spruce-Subalpine Fir Zone, near its contact with the Sub-Boreal Spruce Zone. Three species of spruce (Engelmann; white; black) as well as spruce hybrids are present, and one or more species is prominent in all of the four communities that have been described here. Subalpine fir and lodgepole pine also occur.

Stands of predominantly Engelmann and white spruce, with an understory dominated by white rhododendron, five-leaved bramble, and moss cover extensive areas. Two upland communities contain mixed stands of spruce and Subalpine fir. One of these is characterized by false azalea, black huckleberry, five-leaved bramble and mosses, the other by sweet colt's-foot, oak fern, and moss. Black spruce-lodgepole pine bogs occupy small areas, and have an understory in which Labrador tea, sphagnum and other moisture-loving mosses, and cup lichens are prominent. Sedge meadows are also evident on aerial photos.

The fauna has not been surveyed, but is expected to be fairly limited due to lack of habitat diversity. This is excellent habitat, however, for those species adapted to mature coniferous forests.

#### MANAGEMENT CONCERNS

#### SIGNIFICANT SPECIES

None listed

#### THREATS

**Climate Change:** Already evident within this reserve is the increase in levels of disturbance caused by the Mountain Pine Beetle infestations. Another disturbance that may result from climate change is wildfire, due to excessive fuel loads accumulated from beetle killed pine.

**Forest health:** Disturbance by Mountain Pine Beetle.

**Transportation:** Altered hydrology within reserve may be due to adjacent industrial road.

#### RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

A survey of fauna, and assessment of the health of lodgepole pine since the MPB epidemic would be beneficial.

#### SCIENTIFIC NAMES OF SPECIES MENTIONED IN THE MERIDIAN ROAD (VANDERHOOF) ER ACCOUNT

##### Flora

azalea, false (*Menziesia ferruginea* ssp. *ferruginea*)  
 bramble, five-leaved (*Rubus pedatus*)  
 colt's-foot, sweet (*Petasites frigidus*)  
 fern, oak (*Gymnocarpium* spp.)  
 fir, subalpine (*Abies lasiocarpa* var. *lasiocarpa*)  
 huckleberry, black (*Vaccinium membranaceum*)  
 Labrador tea (*Ledum groenlandicum*)  
 lichen (*Cladonia* sp.)  
 moss, peat (*Sphagnum* spp.)  
 pine, lodgepole (*Pinus contorta* var. *latifolia*)  
 rhododendron, white-flowered (*Rhododendron albiflorum*)  
 spruce, black (*Picea mariana*)  
 spruce, Engelmann (*Picea engelmannii*)  
 spruce, hybrid white (*Picea glauca* x *engelmannii*)  
 spruce, white (*Picea glauca*)

##### Fauna

Beetle, Mountain Pine (*Dentroctonus ponderosae*)