

NIMPKISH RIVER ECOLOGICAL RESERVE

PURPOSE STATEMENT

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Approved by:



Dick Heath
Regional Manager
Environmental Stewardship Division

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Nancy Wilkin
Assistant Deputy Minister
Environmental Stewardship Division

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NIMPKISH RIVER 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 Nimpkish River Ecological Reserve is to preserve an exceptional growing site that supports Canada's tallest coastal Douglas-fir forest. The majority of the Douglas-firs are estimated to be about 360 years old, but a few large-diameter specimens belong to an older generation that could be 500 to 600 years old. The trees average 1.3 m in diameter and 66 m in height, with the occasional specimen reaching 2.0 to 2.4 m in diameter and 80 to 96 m in height.

This unique, highly productive alluvial growing site on the west coast of Vancouver Island is at the confluence of several watersheds and is a benchmark for measuring coarse sediment flow. The ecological reserve is located on a small island formed by a loop of the Nimpkish River and a smaller channel that has cut off the loop. Many similar alluvial sites have been harvested and no longer support large and tall Douglas-fir forests. At this site the forest is primarily composed of Douglas-fir and western redcedar - fir dominates in terms of volume but the number of stems of western redcedar is slightly higher. The herb and moss layers are very diverse and contain many species indicative of excellent growing sites.

Secondary Role

The **secondary** role of this ecological reserve is to protect rare and endangered species. The old growth forest contains an active nesting site and serves as excellent foraging habitat for a red-listed subspecies of northern goshawk and for common ravens. Roosevelt elk, black bear, deer, beaver, and bald eagles are occasional visitors to the island forest.

Management Issues

Known Management Issue	Response
Inappropriate boundary that is based on the river, which is in continual movement	➤ Develop a new legal description based on UTM coordinates.
Erosion of banks as a result of river movement may affect natural values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Continue with formal erosion and hydrological monitoring plan and bank stabilization techniques such as rip-rapping. ➤ Implement protective measures as required. ➤ Develop vegetation management plan.
Impact of adjacent land use on ecological reserve values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Work with Ministry of Forests and industry to take ecological reserve values into consideration during forest development. ➤ Ensure boundary signs are visible.
Lack of knowledge of cultural and natural values	➤ Undertake cultural inventory and traditional use study in conjunction with First Nations.

Conservation

- Representation
- ecosection Insignificant contribution (0.022%) to the representation of the Northern Island Mountains Ecosection (NIM), which is under represented in the protected areas system at 9.12%.
- biogeoclimatic subzone/variant Size limits contribution to representation.
- Special Features Tallest Douglas-firs in Canada
- Rare/Endangered Values Nesting site for a *red-listed* northern goshawk subspecies (*Accipiter gentilis laingi*). Occasional presence of *blue-listed* Roosevelt elk.
- Scientific/Research Opportunities Old growth forests

Recreation

- Representation
backcountry Not Applicable
destination Not Applicable
travel corridor Not Applicable
local recreation Not Applicable
- Special Opportunities Not Applicable
- Education/Interpretation Opportunities Off-site interpretation of large trees

Cultural Heritage

- Representation Values unknown
- Special Feature None known at this time

Other Management Considerations

- Other Designations Not Applicable
- Relationship to other PAs Part of a system of ecological reserves in the northern end of Vancouver Island
- Co-operative Management Arrangements Not Applicable
- Partnerships A volunteer ecological warden is in place
- Vulnerability Small size limits ability to protect the natural values
- Relationship to other Strategies Not Applicable

Area: 18 hectares

Date of establishment: May 12, 1988