

# SAN JUAN RIVER ESTUARY ECOLOGICAL RESERVE

## PURPOSE STATEMENT

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Approved by:



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Date: August 8/03



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## SAN JUAN RIVER ESTUARY 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 San Juan River Estuary Ecological Reserve is to serve as a benchmark for forest research and to protect early seral floodplain plant communities. This 79-hectare ecological reserve protects a portion of one of the large river deltas on the southwest coast of Vancouver Island. The reserve protects many sensitive plant species, including the tooth-leaved monkey flower, (*Mimulus dentatus*) which is endangered (red-listed) and only occurs in British Columbia in Canada. The San Juan River is an important salmon spawning river on the west coast of Vancouver Island and the delta represents a special habitat that is used by black bears for feeding during the autumn salmon spawning run and by bald eagles, mink and river otters. This area also preserves important wild habitat for animals such as Roosevelt elk.

### Management Issues

Known Management Issue	Response
Limited knowledge of natural and cultural values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Undertake field assessment of ecological reserve including surveys for rare plant, special features and sensitive areas.</li> <li>➤ Inventory cultural values and traditional use activities in consultation with First Nations.</li> <li>➤ Assess reserve for historical homestead and agricultural activity.</li> </ul>
Loss of rare species may be lost due to shifting river banks, high water levels and log dams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Revisit the management of the log jams and the effect on the rare species. Place management priority on rare plants as opposed to the log jams.</li> </ul>
Uncertainty around the actual boundary and implications of adjacent forest development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Define ecological reserve boundary through official plan process and provide forest companies with information.</li> </ul>
Impact of recreation use (camping, kayaking, canoeing etc.) on ecological reserves values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Develop a monitoring program and work with warden, DFO and Fish and Wildlife Science and Allocation staff to monitor recreational impacts.</li> <li>➤ Work with recreation groups to inform and educate about the ecological reserve and its values and to achieve user compliance to protect ecological values.</li> </ul>
Role of the ecological reserve in the protected areas system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Review status of the protected area as an ecological reserve or as a park (identified in Capital Regional District Parks Master Plan).</li> </ul>

### Conservation

- Representation  
- ecosection  San Juan River Estuary Ecological Reserve contributes very minimally (0.03%) to the representation of the Windward Island Mountain Ecosection of which 17.42% is protected provincially.
- biogeoclimatic subzone/variant  San Juan River Estuary Ecological Reserve contributes very minimally ( 0.02%) to the representation of the CWHvm1 variant which is under protected provincially at 7%.  
  
San Juan River Estuary Ecological Reserve also contributes very minimally (0.04%) to the representation of the CWHvh1 variant which has 19.34% protected provincially.
- Special Features  Estuary habitat, log jams of significant size provide unique habitat complexes . Conservation Data Center classifies the site as high in rarity, scarcity, and uniqueness.
- Rare/Endangered Values  *Red-listed:* tooth-leaved monkey flower and paintbrush owl-clover.  
*Blue-listed* Smith's fairybells, angled bitter-cress, and nodding semaphore-grass.
- Scientific/Research Opportunities  Estuarine ecology, plant surveys, amphibian/reptilian study potential

### Recreation

- Representation  
backcountry  Not Applicable  
destination  Not Applicable  
travel corridor  Not Applicable  
local recreation  Ecological reserves are not meant for outdoor recreation; however, there is canoe/kayak access along the river. Work with other agencies and recreation groups to monitor impacts and inform and educate about impacts.
- Special Opportunities  None known at this time
- Education/Interpretation Opportunities  None known at this time

### Cultural Heritage

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