

SKAGIT RIVER FOREST

ER #21

ORIGINAL PURPOSE To preserve representative valley-bottom forest in an area transitional between coastal and interior climatic conditions

OVERVIEW

Date established:	4 May 1971	Location:	Skagit River valley, 38 km SE of Hope and 10 km NW of Ross Lake
ORC #:	3021	Latitude:	49°06'N
Map number:	92 H/3	Longitude:	121°07'W

Total Area:	73 ha	Elevation:	525-570 m
Land:	73 ha		

Access: Access via Silver-Skagit Road from Hope. The reserve is within the Skagit Valley Recreation Area

Biogeoclimatic Zones:	Interior Douglas-Fir (IDF)
Biogeoclimatic Variant:	IDFww Wet Warm
Ecosection:	Hozameen Range
Region:	Lower Mainland
Management Area:	South Fraser

COMPOSITION

Physical: The reserve lies in the Skagit River valley, bounded in the west by the Skagit Range and east by the Hozameen Range. Local peaks rise to the 2150 m elevation. It is primarily on the alluvial fan of Shawatum Creek, which slopes gently to the southwest. The surficial deposits are generally coarse and well-drained. Annual precipitation, about 110 cm, is intermediate between the coast and dry interior due to a partial rain-shadow caused by the Skagit Range.

Biological: Several coastal plants such as vine maple and devil's club are at their eastern limits of distribution in this valley, and several interior plants are found no further west. Douglas-fir stands here are spatially well separated from and at considerably higher elevation than most Coastal Douglas-fir forests fringing the Gulf of Georgia, suggesting that assignment to the Interior Douglas-fir Zone is appropriate even though many coastal plants occur in the valley.

Douglas-fir is the dominant tree over most of the reserve, although shrubby alluvial areas with few trees occur in the eastern half. Typical Douglas-fir woods contain some western redcedar and western white pine, have a tall shrub layer dominated by vine maple and considerable vanilla leaf in the herb layer. Other common plants are Oregon-grape, trillium, queen's cup, sweet-scented bedstraw, wild ginger, one-leaved foamflower, Hooker's fairybells and the moss *Rhytidiadelphus loreus*. In more moist sites there is a Douglas-fir-western redcedar association in which black cottonwood may occur and devil's club, lady fern and mosses of the genus *Mnium* are characteristic in the understory. Other plants in this type include spiny wood fern, oak fern, yellow violet and star-flowered false Solomon's-seal. Well drained gravelly outwash fans support kinnikinnick and falsebox.

Cultural: Transecting the reserve is the Whatcom Trail, an historic trail founded in 1858 and used by First Nations and settlers as a trade route.

MANAGEMENT CONCERNS

SIGNIFICANT SPECIES/ECOSYSTEMS	BC LIST STATUS	COSEWIC STATUS	CF PRIORITY
Douglas-fir – western redcedar – beaked hazelnut plant association	Blue listed		2
lace fern			4

THREATS

Climate Change: The unique transitional climatic characteristics represented in this reserve may shift as a result of changed hydrology and temperature as is projected for the interior of B.C. Changed conditions may favour one forest system over another, resulting in reduced diversity of representation within the reserve boundaries.

Harvest: Loss of native flora (mushrooms).

RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES This unique transitional site may be more susceptible to climate changes than the surrounding environment.

SCIENTIFIC NAMES OF SPECIES MENTIONED IN THE SKAGIT RIVER FOREST ER ACCOUNT

Flora

- bedstraw, sweet-scented (*Galium triflorum*)
- cottonwood, black (*Populus trichocarpa* ssp. *trichocarpa*)
- devil’s club (*Oplonanax horridus*)
- Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*)
- fairybells, Hooker’s (*Prosartes hookeri* var. *oregana*)
- falsebox (*Paxistima myrsinites*)
- fern, lace (*Cheilanthes gracilima*)
- fern, lady (*Athyrium filix-fernina*)
- fern, oak (*Gymnocarpium* spp.)
- fern, spiny wood (*Dryopteris expansas*)
- foamflower, one-leaved (*Tiarella unifoliata*)
- ginger, wild (*Asarum caudatum*)
- hazelnut, beaked (*Corylus cornuta*)
- kinnikinnick (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*)
- maple, vine (*Acer circinatum*)
- moss (*Mnium* spp.)
- moss, loreus goose neck (*Rhytidiadelphus loreus*)
- Oregon-grape (*Mahonia* sp.)
- pine, western white (*Pinus monticola*)
- queen's cup (*Clintonia uniflora*)
- redcedar, western (*Thuja plicata*)
- Solomon's-seal, star-flowered false (*Maianthemum stellatum*)
- trillium (*Trillium ovatum* var. *ovatum*)

vanilla-leaf (*Achlys triphylla*)
violet, trailing yellow (*Viola sempervirens*)

Fauna

None mentioned
