

WESTWICK LAKE ECOLOGICAL RESERVE

PURPOSE STATEMENT

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Approved by:


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Date: 


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WESTWICK LAKE ECOLOGICAL RESERVE
Purpose Statement

Westwick Lake Ecological Reserve comprises uplands on both sides of Westwick Lake, a shallow, slightly saline, elongated lake lying in a shallow northwest-southeast trending valley on the Fraser Plateau. The ecological reserve is about one-third grassland and two-thirds forest. Continuous grassland tracts occur in the block north of the lake and in the southeast corner between the road and lake. Typical moderately grazed grasslands are dominated by needle-and-thread grass, bluebunch wheatgrass and northern bedstraw; heavily grazed sites by pussytoes and bluegrasses. Saline areas near the lake support an alkaligrass-foxtail barley association.

A Douglas-fir-pinegrass-kinnikinnick association covers much of the upland, but smaller areas of aspen-lodgepole pine and white spruce forest are present. Pinegrass and kinnikinnick also dominate the understory in the latter types. Common plants in grassy forest openings include sticky geranium, death-camas, field chickweed, small-flowered penstemon and lemonweed.

A wide variety of waterfowl utilize Westwick Lake, some of which undoubtedly depend upon upland sites in the reserve for nesting, either dense shrub-herb cover (dabbling ducks) or holes in trees (bufflehead; goldeneye). Several species of shorebirds are present seasonally. A diversity of terrestrial birds has been noted, including hole-nesting species like swallows, woodpeckers, kestrels, nuthatches and chickadees.

Primary Role

The **primary** role of Westwick Lake Ecological Reserve is to protect a moist, spruce dominated ecosystem of forest and grasslands which is rare in the IDFXm biogeoclimatic subzone. Also captures an example of alkaline, aquatic habitats and wetlands typical of the Chilcotin Basin Ecoregion. Both the Cariboo Basin Ecoregion and the IDFXm variant are underrepresented in the protected areas system.

Secondary Role

The **secondary** role of Westwick Lake Ecological Reserve is to capture a “type locality” for the long-term study of insect communities. The area is also a valuable wetland for a wide variety of waterfowl and songbird species.

| Known Management Issues | Response |
|--|---|
| Cattle utilizing area | Monitor damage to fenceline from falling trees and other sources and maintain and repair when necessary. |
| The current boundary does not include any of the lake. | Pursue adding that part of the lake between the two blocks of land presently comprising the ecological reserve. |

CONSERVATION

Representation

- ecosection
- biogeoclimatic subzone/variant

- Minimal contribution (~27 hectares to the very poorly represented Cariboo Basin Ecosection (1.12%). Westwick Lake's contribution is negligible (only 0.27% of the overall protected areas representation of this ecosection). Other small protected areas in this ecosection include Moose Valley, Flat Lake, Big Bar Lake, Chasm, Lac La Hache, Cariboo Nature and Loon Lake parks and the Chasm Ecological Reserve.
- ~27 hectares of IDFXm. 6.85% of this subzone is currently protected. Westwick Lake's contribution is negligible (only 0.17% of the overall protected areas representation of this subzone). Other protected areas in this subzone include Bull Canyon and Junction Sheep Range parks and Big Creek Ecological Reserve. The vast majority of the area in this subzone is protected in the Churn Creek Protected Area.

Special Feature

- Unique, moist, spruce dominated ecosystem rare in the IDFXm. Small alkaline lake which is actually not in the ecological reserve.

Rare/Endangered Values

- None noted from inventory work completed to date.

Scientific/Research Opportunities

- Long term study of aquatic insects by UBC researchers and students. Area is important as a "type locality" for these insects.

RECREATION

Representation:

- backcountry n/a
- destination n/a
- travel corridor n/a
- local recreation n/a

Special Opportunities

-

Education/Interpretation Opportunities

- Closest protected area to Williams Lake. Some opportunities for field trips and other low impact extension activities.

CULTURAL HERITAGE

Representation

-

Special Feature Nothing noted

OTHER MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Other Designations n/a

Relationship to Other PAs

Co-operative Management Arrangements

Partnerships Potential for working with Williams Lake Field Naturalists.

Vulnerability Med- High. Bisected by road, some from grazing of domestic cattle that slip through fences, hunting in fall, surrounded by private land. The ecological reserve consists of 2 blocks of land on opposite sides of the lake.

Relationship to Other Strategies n/a

Area: 27 ha

Date of Establishment: April 6, 1972