

# COUGAR CANYON ECOLOGICAL RESERVE

## PURPOSE STATEMENT

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Approved by:



Drew Carmichael  
Regional Manager  
Environmental Stewardship Division

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Nancy Wilkin  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Environmental Stewardship Division

Date: March 31, 2005

# COUGAR CANYON ECOLOGICAL RESERVE

## Purpose Statement

The 553 hectare Cougar Canyon Ecological Reserve is located on the east side of Kalamalka Lake, about 13 km south of Vernon. The ecological reserve is part of a block of protected areas which includes Kalamalka Lake Provincial Park and Kalamalka Lake Protected Area. The ecological reserve is bounded on 3 sides by the protected area with private land lying on its southern boundary. A locally popular rock climbing area in the protected area is located adjacent to the northern boundary of the ecological reserve.

The major physical feature of the ecological reserve is a narrow, relatively straight, sometimes canyon-like valley the length of the ecological reserve. This appears to be a structural fault further eroded by glacial meltwater. A chain of six elongated lakes, two of which have three basins separated by wetlands, lie in the canyon bottom.

The nearest motor vehicle access is via a short dirt road off Cosens Bay road that leads to the climbing area. A rough trail, established by the naturalists before climbing began, passes through the climbing area and extends south through the ecological reserve where it ends on private property. Little use of the trail occurs beyond the climbing area. Non-motorized visitors can get glimpses of the ecological reserve from the rough Fortis power-line road which runs along the top of the western side of the canyon in the protected area. The steepness of the canyon discourages visitation of the ecological reserve from the road.

The ecological reserve receives very little use. The bottom of the canyon is some distance from the climbing area and is heavily vegetated making access difficult. The ecological reserve has limited suitable climbing terrain and the local climbing club discourages climbers from using the reserve.

### Primary Role

The **primary role** of Cougar Canyon Ecological Reserve is to protect a portion of the Interior Douglas-fir ecosystem, its chain of 11 small water bodies and associated wetlands and associated plants and animals. The steep walled canyon creates a cooler, wetter climate resulting in thick vegetation over much of the canyon bottom. The ecological reserve is restricted to scientific and educational purposes related to reserve management only.

Representative values are low. Known rare species include the blue-listed painted turtle and western yellow-bellied racer.

<b>Known Management Issues</b>	<b>Response</b>
<p>Higher levels of visitor use of the ecological reserve could have a serious impact on its vegetative values. The amount of use it gets will depend on how the climbing area in the adjacent protected area is developed and managed and the effort made to discourage inappropriate uses and/or increased numbers of people from using the ecological reserve.</p>	<p>Ensure trail and road development in the climbing area does not result in improved access to the ecological reserve; the portion of the trail leading to the ecological reserve should be closed and rehabilitated.</p> <p>Work with the local climbers and other possible users to develop an information package that informs potential users of their impacts and discourages their use of the ecological reserve.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an information shelter at the climbing area</li> <li>• Maintain ecological reserve boundary signs</li> </ul> <p>Encourage the south end private land owner and Fortis to continue to keep their roads gated and locked to discourage public access.</p>
<p>Cattle water at the south end of the most southerly lake. No fencing is in place to prevent cattle movement into the ecological reserve, resulting in damage to the lake edge within the ecological reserve.</p>	<p>Work with the private land owner to eliminate cattle use of the ecological reserve. Establish a fence to prevent cattle entering the reserve. Monitor the fencing when established and repair as needed.</p>

## CONSERVATION

### Representation

- ecosection

Northern Okanagan Basin – This ecosection is only moderately represented in the protected areas system (4.75%). Cougar Canyon Ecological Reserve makes a minimal contribution (4.2%) to the protected areas system representation of this ecosection.

Northern Okanagan Highland – This ecosection is only moderately represented in the protected areas system (4.04%). Cougar Canyon Ecological Reserve makes an insignificant contribution (0.01%) to the protected areas system representation of this ecosection.

- biogeoclimatic subzone/variant

IDF<sub>xh1</sub> – This ecosystem unit is moderately represented in the protected areas system (6.85%). Cougar Canyon Ecological Reserve makes a minimal contribution (3.13%) to the overall protected area system representation of this subzone/variant.  
IDF<sub>mw1</sub> – This ecosystem unit is moderately represented in the protected areas system (4.51%). Cougar Canyon Ecological Reserve makes an insignificant contribution (0.5%) to the overall protected areas system representation of this subzone/variant.

### Special Feature

### Rare/Endangered Values

Blue-listed painted turtle and western yellow-bellied racer

### Scientific/Research Opportunities

## RECREATION

### Representation:

- backcountry
- destination
- travel corridor
- local recreation

### Special Opportunities

### Education/Interpretation Opportunities

## **CULTURAL HERITAGE**

**Representation**

**Special Feature**

## **OTHER MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

**Other Designations**

**Relationship to Other PAs**

Part of a protected area complex including Kalamalka Lake Park and Kalamalka Lake Protected Area. Relatively inaccessible area with wetland values.

**Co-operative Management Arrangements**

**Partnerships**

**Vulnerability**

**Relationship to Other Strategies**

**Area:** 553 hectares

**Date of establishment:** December 10, 1981