

KLASKISH RIVER ECOLOGICAL RESERVE

PURPOSE STATEMENT

March 2003

Approved by:



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Environmental Stewardship Division

Date: March 25/03



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Date: Mar. 31/03

KLASKISH 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 role 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 Klaskish River Ecological Reserve is to protect an outstanding estuary and adjacent alluvial forest in the hypermaritime subzone of the Coastal Western Hemlock Zone. The reserve encloses the lower 1.5 kilometres of the Klaskish River, the upstream half of Klaskish Basin, alluvial lowlands associated with the river and its estuary, and valley slopes.

The main feature of the ecological reserve is the estuary of the Klaskish River which is in a near pristine state. It provides important habitat for juvenile salmonids, bald eagles, shorebirds, wintering waterfowl, including trumpeter swans, and potential habitat for the Olympia oyster (*Ostrea conchaphila*), which is the only oyster native to British Columbia and is of limited occurrence on the coast. Significant runs of chinook, pink, coho and chum salmon spawn in the Klaskish River. The ecological reserve is also utilized by black-tailed deer, black bears, and Roosevelt elk.

Klaskish River Ecological Reserve contains diverse plant communities. Marine communities in the lower intertidal zone are dominated by eelgrass and rockweed. Three saltmarsh communities have been described on the rich flats in the upper intertidal zone. Sitka spruce dominated forest stands occur in the alluvial lowlands, and old growth western hemlock -- western redcedar and western hemlock – amabilis fir associations occur in the uplands.

Management Issues

Known Management Issue	Response
Impact of proposed forest road construction and forest development on water volume and quality in the river	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Liaise with the Ministry of Forests and forest companies to ensure adjacent forest development and road location does not impact the natural values. ➤ Recruit a Volunteer Warden and develop a formal and frequent monitoring system.
Impact on marine water quality by boat sewage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Install boundary signage and information on appropriate uses in ecological reserves. ➤ Liaise with DFO and small business holders to discourage sewage discharge in the basin and to achieve an understanding of ecological reserve values.
Impact of previous bulldozer activity in the estuary on oyster habitat, extirpating it from the area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Rehabilitate habitat and reintroduce the Olympia oyster to the ecological reserve.

Conservation

Representation - ecosection	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Very minimal contribution of 0.06% to the representation of the Windward Island Mountains Ecosection, which is well represented in the protected areas system at 17.4%. Very minimal contribution of 0.05% to the representation of the Vancouver Island Shelf <i>Marine</i> Ecosection, which is under protected at 5.4%.
- biogeoclimatic subzone/variant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Minimal contribution of 0.12% to overall representation of CWHvh1, which is well represented at 19.3%
Special Features	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unlogged coastal estuary, saltmarsh, historical habitat for Olympia oyster
Rare/Endangered Values	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Habitat of Olympia oyster (rated Special Concern by COSEWIC). Potential habitat for <i>red-listed</i> sea otter and <i>blue-listed</i> gray whale and Roosevelt elk.
Scientific/Research Opportunities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Research opportunity to learn more about the Olympia oyster and possibly reintroduce it into the area

Recreation

Representation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not Applicable
backcountry destination	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not Applicable
travel corridor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not Applicable
local recreation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not Applicable
Special Opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not Applicable
Education/Interpretation Opportunities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Estuary values -- offsite

Cultural Heritage

Representation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Values unknown
Special Feature	<input type="checkbox"/>	None known at this time

Other Management Considerations

Other Designations	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not Applicable
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| Relationship to other PAs | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Part of a system of ecological reserves on Vancouver Island |
| Co-operative Management Arrangements | <input type="checkbox"/> | Not Applicable |
| Partnerships | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Vulnerability | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Vulnerable to adjacent road construction and logging, contamination by boat sewage, and shore visits encouraged by mooring buoys |
| Relationship to other Strategies | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Marine Protected Areas Strategy |

Area: 132 hectares (92 ha upland; 40 ha foreshore)

Date of establishment: July 5, 1990