

Sensitive and Terrestrial Ecosystems Labels



Sensitive Ecosystems Inventory of the Sunshine Coast and Adjacent Islands



Sensitive Ecosystems

Sensitive ecosystems are fragile and/or rare, or are ecologically important because of the diversity of species they support.

Old Forest (OF): Conifer-dominated dry to moist forest types, structural stage 7 (see table), generally >250yrs.

Woodland (WD): Dry open forest, generally between 10 and 30% tree cover, can be conifer dominated or mixed conifer and shrubs...

Herbaceous (HB): Non-forested ecosystems less than 10% tree cover, generally with shallow soils and often with nutrient rich soils...

Riparian (RI): Areas adjacent to water bodies (rivers, lakes, ocean, wetlands) which are influenced by factors such as erosion, sedimentation, flooding and/or subterranean intrusion...

Wetland (WN): Areas that are saturated or inundated with water for long enough periods of time to develop vegetation and biological activity adapted to wet environments...

Chiffs (CL): Very steep slope, often exposed bedrock, may include steep sided sand hills, habitat for rare species.

Mature Forests (MF): Usually conifer-dominated, occasionally deciduous, dry to moist forest types, structural stage 6, generally >50yrs, >20% of buffering sensitive ecosystems.

Seasonally Flooded Agricultural Fields (FS): Annually flooded cultivated fields or hay fields; important migrating and wintering waterfowl habitat.

Other Mapped Ecosystems: Other mapped ecosystems occur in mosaic with sensitive ecosystems and are not possible to delineate separately at the mapping scale.

Young Forests (YF): Limited to areas of young forest dispersed among sensitive and other important ecosystems.

Polygon Label: Indicates a field sample was completed but was not mapped.

Some polygon labels will have class and subclass repeated up to three times. This is not an error; it reflects the variability in site units and structural stages occurring within a polygon.

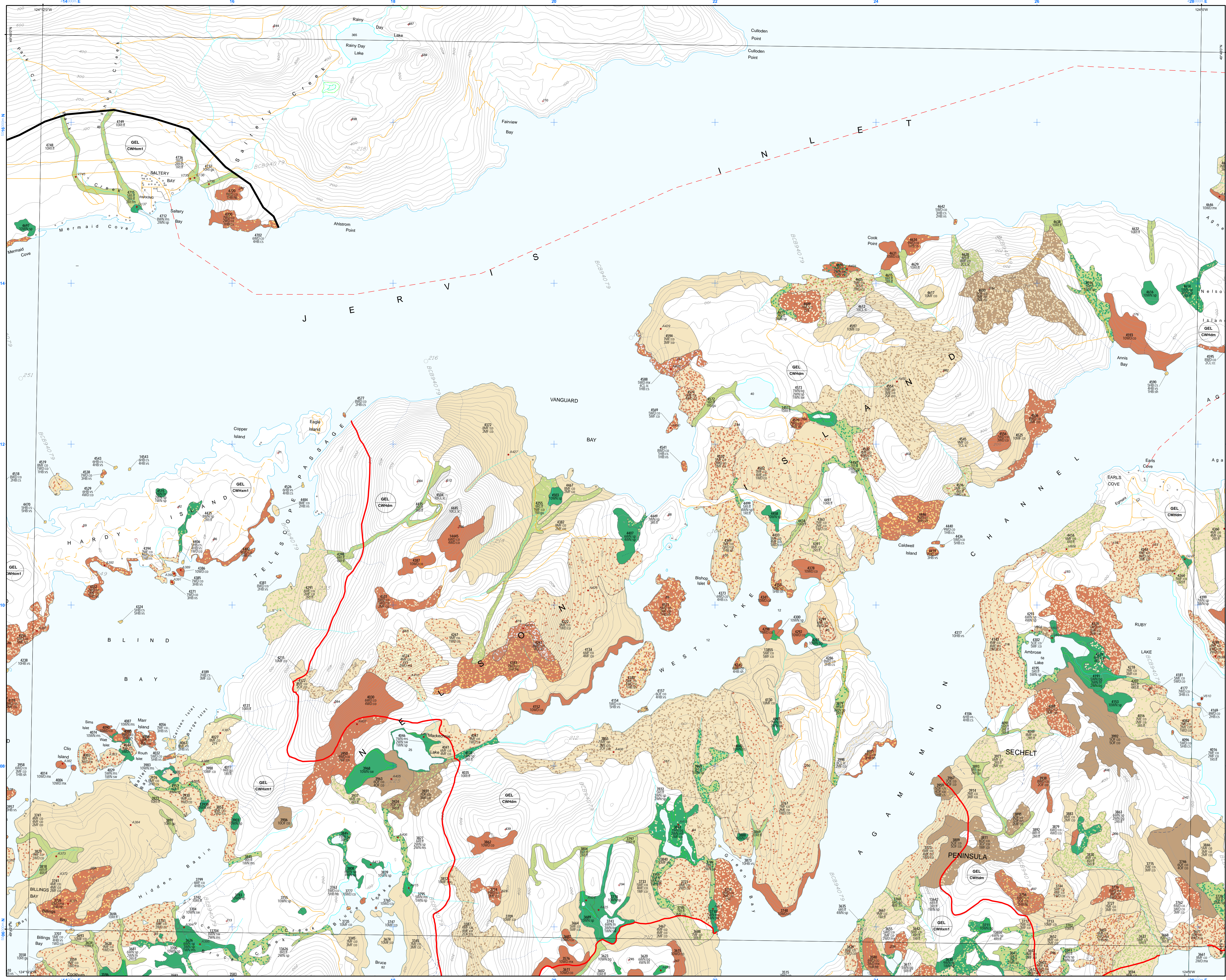
Ecosystem Components: The cartographic product uses 2nd Density to indicate where more than one ecosystem class is mapped in a polygon.

Biogeoclimatic Units: CDFM Coastal Douglas-fir Moist Maritime Subzone, CWHM1 Coastal Western Hemlock Eastern Very Dry Maritime Variant, etc.

Ecosystems: GEL Georgia Lowlands Ecosystem, SOG Strait of Georgia Ecosystem, QJF Outer Fjordland Ecosystem, SPR Southern Pacific Ranges Ecosystem.

Map Symbols: Polygon Boundary, Biogeoclimatic Boundary, Field sample point, Road, 20m contour, Additional streams, Intermittent/Perennial Stream, Drainage Route.

Table with columns for Polygon Number, SEI Class, and Site Unit Names. Lists various polygons and their corresponding ecosystem classifications.



Structural Stages table with columns for Stage, Substage, and description of vegetation structure.

What is a Sensitive Ecosystem? For the purpose of this study, an ecosystem is considered to be a portion of the landscape with relatively uniform dominant vegetation.

Rationale: Ecologically significant lands and important wildlife habitats are fast disappearing throughout the lowlands surrounding the Strait of Georgia.

Purpose: The purpose of the Sensitive Ecosystems Inventory (SEI) of the Sunshine Coast is to identify, classify and map sensitive terrestrial ecosystems along the coastal lowlands.

Methodology: The mapping methods are based on the Vancouver Island SEI project and the Resources Information Standards Committee (RISC) Standard for Terrestrial Ecosystem Mapping (TEM) in BC.

Data Limitations: The SEI is a tool to alert decision makers to the existence of sensitive ecosystems, however when land-use changes are proposed detailed site-level assessments are necessary.

What can be done to protect sensitive ecosystems? Direct and indirect impacts to these ecosystems can be avoided by: Retaining or creating vegetated buffers around sensitive ecosystems to isolate them from outside disturbance.

Plan and implement all development activities in a manner that will not adversely affect or disturb the sensitive ecosystem.

A property owner: learn more about the natural values of your land, including the location of any sensitive ecosystems. Find out how to protect, maintain, and enhance those values.

A decision-maker (such as a politician or resource manager): ensure that protection of remaining sensitive ecosystems is a priority at all levels, and support programs, plans and operational activity that will help protect sensitive ecosystems.

Acknowledgements: Environment Canada (Canadian Wildlife Service) and the B.C. Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management (MSRM).

Digitizing and Cartography: Bon Lee of Baseline Geomatics Inc. and AYS Environmental Consulting Ltd.

Scale: 1:20,000. UTM Projection Zone 10 NAD83. Contour Interval 20 metres. March 2005.

