

Sensitive and Terrestrial Ecosystems Labels



Sensitive Ecosystems Inventory of the Sunshine Coast and Adjacent Islands

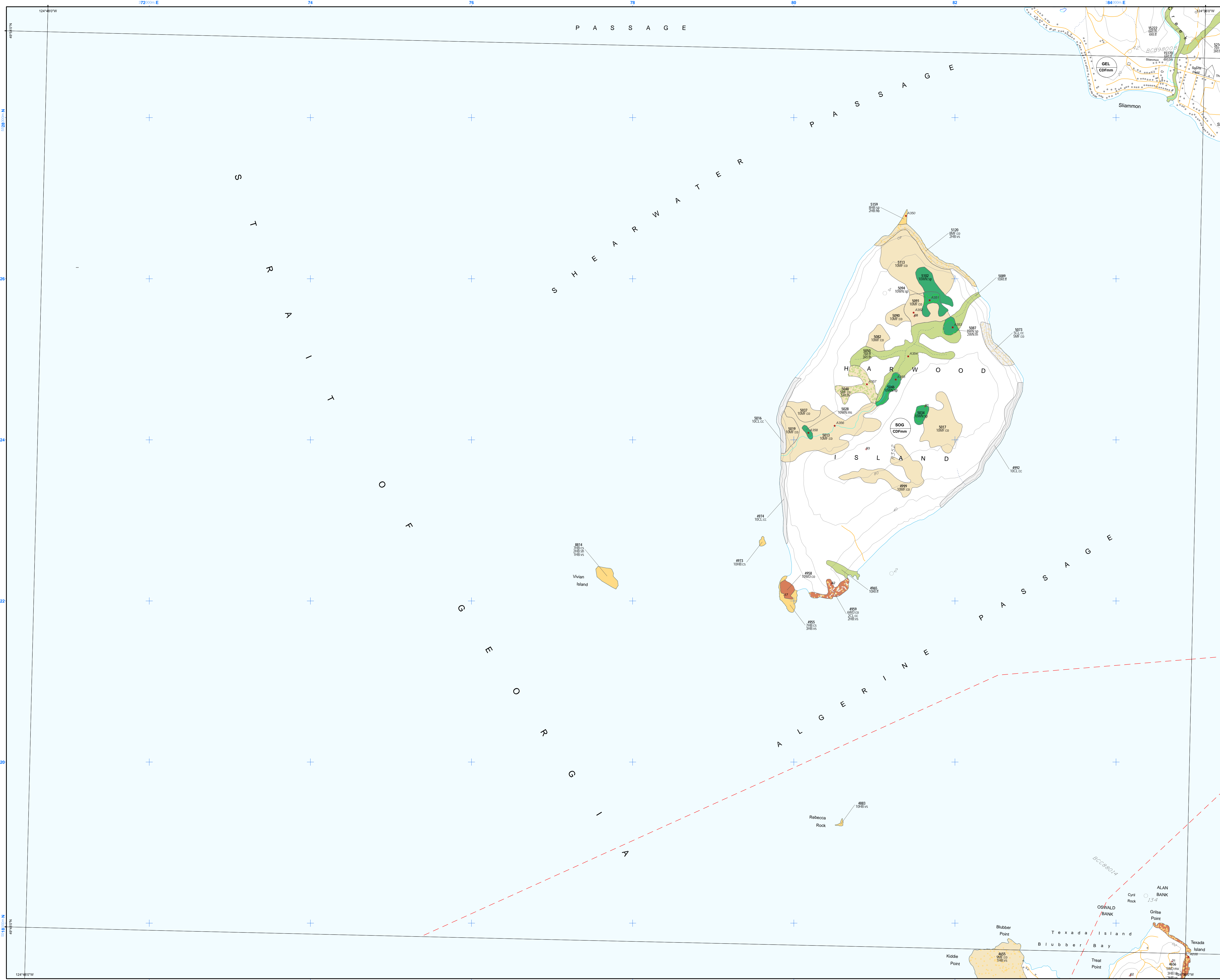


Table with 2 columns: Structural Stage 1 and Structural Stage 2. Lists various ecosystem types and their corresponding codes.

Table with 2 columns: Terrestrial Ecosystem Map Codes and Site Unit Names. Lists various ecosystem codes and their corresponding site unit names.

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 (including the adjacent islands) from Howe Sound to Desolation Sound.

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. Consult a qualified professional to interpret the ecological inventory data and work to incorporate designs that maintain the functions and values of the natural ecosystem.

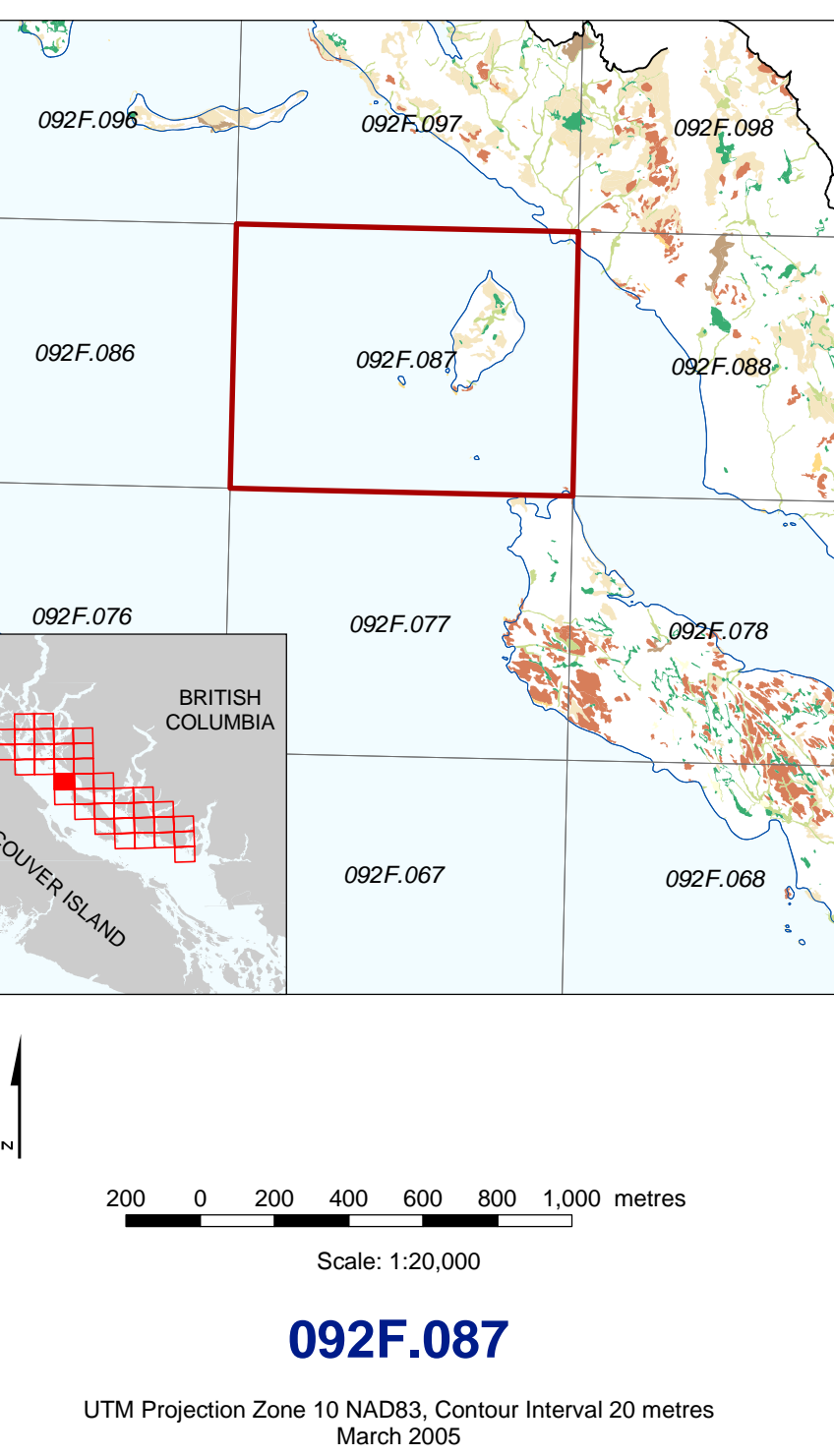
A planner: ensure that conservation is given as high a priority as other community programs such as housing, transportation, recreation, employment, public works, and community services. Encourage use of the many legal and planning tools available, such as development permit areas, tree protection by-laws, and conservation covenants to protect sensitive ecosystems.

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.

A volunteer: participate in educational programs, conservation fundraising, or in programs to remove invasive species. A scientist: use your expertise to help identify sensitive ecosystems, define sites that need to be addressed, formulate conservation plans, contribute to the development of conservation and management strategies and explain to other professionals and decision makers the importance of sensitive ecosystems.

Aerial photographs were used from between 1994 and 1999, most are at 1:10,000 scale, some at 1:116,000 scale. Due to the mapping scale, minimum polygon size is usually 1/2 hectare.

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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. Subclasses: co (conifer dominated) - greater than 75% coniferous species.

Woodland (WD): Dry open forests, generally between 10 and 30% tree cover, can be conifer dominated or mixed conifer and shrubs. Subclasses: co (conifer dominated) - greater than 75% coniferous species; ms (mixed conifer and deciduous) - a minimum of 25% cover of either group is included in the total tree cover.

Herbaceous (HB): Non-forested ecosystems less than 10% tree cover, generally with shallow soils and often with bedrock outcrops. Subclasses: nb (non-herbaceous) - central concept of the category, non-forested, less than 10% tree cover, generally shallow soils, often with exposed bedrock.

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 due to proximity to the water body. Subclasses: fl (low bench floodplain) - flooded at least every other year for moderate periods of growing season.

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. Subclasses: bg (bog) - nutrient poor wetland on organic soils (sphagnum peat), water source predominantly from precipitation.

Cliffs (CL): Very steep slopes, often exposed bedrock, may include steep sided sand bluffs, habitat for rare species. Subclasses: ec (erosional cliffs); ic (island cliffs).

Other Important Ecosystems

Other important ecosystems have high biodiversity values.

Mature Forests (MF): Usually conifer-dominated, occasionally deciduous, dry to moist forest types, structural stage 6, generally >50yrs, >25% of buffering sensitive ecosystems.

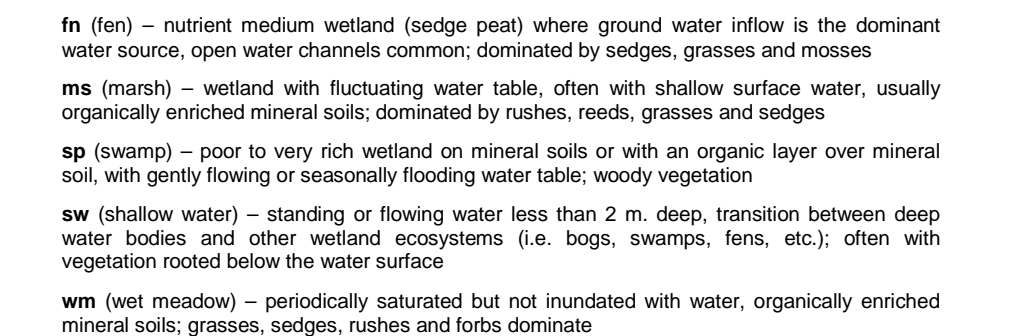
Seasonally Flooded Agricultural Fields (SF): Annually flooded cultivated fields or hay fields; important migrating and wintering waterfowl habitat.

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.

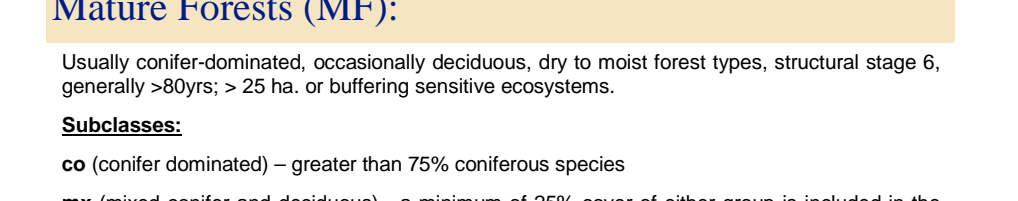
Polygon Label



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

This cartographic product uses Dot Density to indicate where more than one ecosystem class is mapped in a polygon.



Biogeoclimatic Units

- CDPfm Coastal Douglas-fir Moist Maritime Subzone
CWHm1 Coastal Western Hemlock Eastern Very Dry Maritime Variant
CWHm2 Coastal Western Hemlock Dry Maritime Subzone
CWHm3 Coastal Western Hemlock Submontane Very Wet Maritime Variant

Ecosystems

- GEL Georgia Lowlands Ecosystem
SOG Strait of Georgia Ecosystem
QUF Outer Fjordland Ecosystem
SPR Southern Pacific Ranges Ecosystem

Map Symbols

- Polygon Boundary
Biogeoclimatic Boundary
Ecosystem Boundary
Study Area Boundary