

Sensitive and Terrestrial Ecosystems Labels



Sensitive Ecosystems Inventory of the Sunshine Coast and Adjacent Islands



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

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.

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

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.

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.

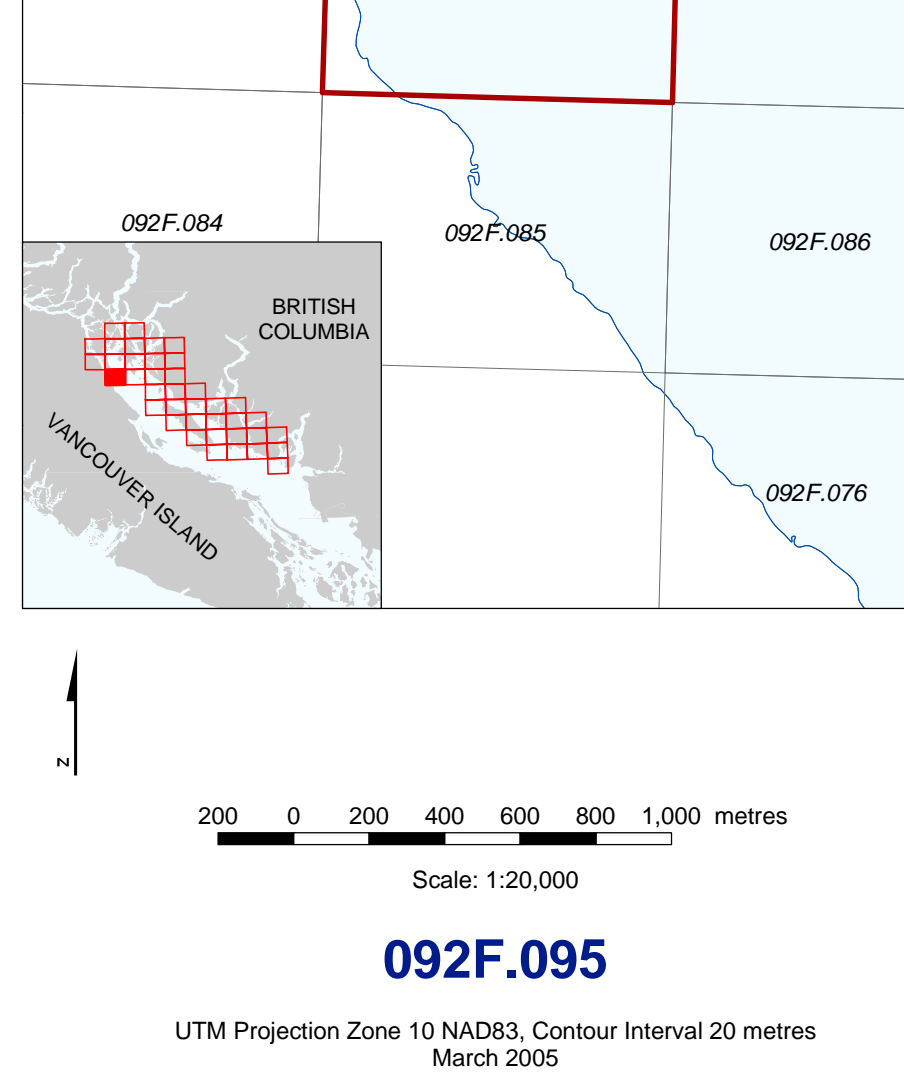
Table with 2 columns: Terrestrial Ecosystem Map Codes and Site Unit Names. Lists codes for various ecosystems and their corresponding site unit names.

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

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.

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.



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: of (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: wd (conifer dominated) - greater than 75% coniferous species.

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

Riparian (RI): Areas adjacent to water bodies (rivers, lakes, ocean, wetlands) which are influenced by factors such as erosion, sedimentation, flooding and/or subterranean irrigation due to proximity to the water body. Subclasses: ri (river) - watercourse is large enough to represent >10% of the polygon.

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: wn (wetland) - nutrient poor wetland on organic soils (sphagnum peat).

Cliffs (CL): Very steep slope, often exposed bedrock, may include steep sided sand bluffs, habitat for rare species. Subclasses: cl (steep cliff), ic (island cliff).

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

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 base colour represents the first ecosystem component. Coloured dots overlaid upon the base colour indicate a second ecosystem component.

Biogeoclimatic Units CWH1m Coastal Douglas-fir Moist Maritime Subzone, CWH1s Coastal Western Hemlock Eastern Very Dry Maritime Variant.

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, Ecosystem Boundary, Study Area Boundary, Roads, 20m contours, TRIM Streams, Additional streams, Intermittent/Periodic Stream, Drainage Route.