

Sensitive and Terrestrial Ecosystems Labels



Sensitive Ecosystems Inventory of the Sunshine Coast and Adjacent Islands

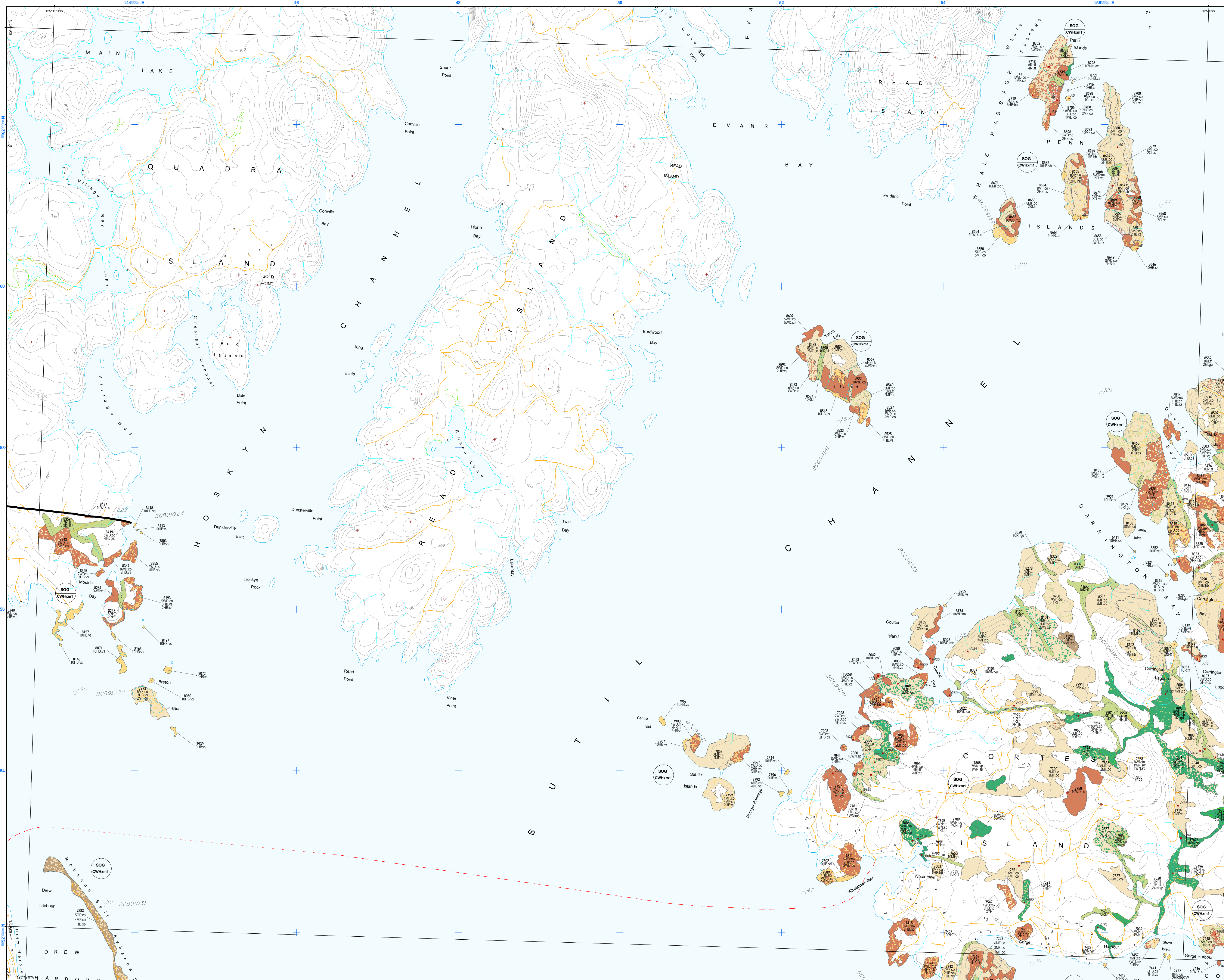


Table with 2 columns: Sensitive and Terrestrial Ecosystems Label, Structural Stages 1-7. Includes descriptions for each stage and a legend for the label components.

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.

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.

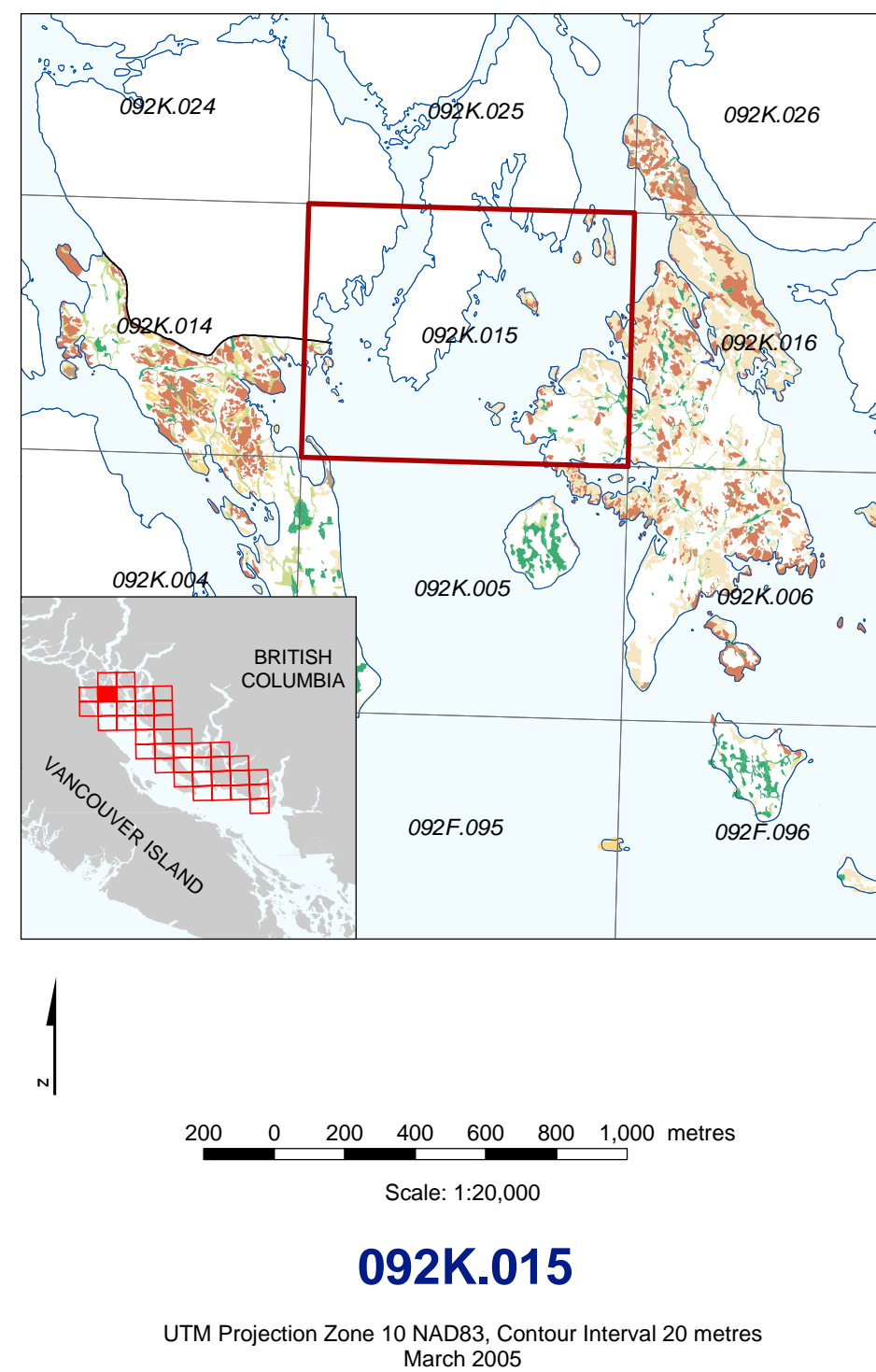
Plan and implement all development activities in a manner that will not adversely affect or disturb the sensitive ecosystem.

A 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.

Field photos used were from between 1994 and 1999, most are at 1:10,000 scale, some at 1:16,000 scale.

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



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 forests, 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 bedrock outcrops.
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.
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.
Cliffs (CL): Very steep slope, often exposed bedrock, may include steep sided sand bluffs, 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.
Ecosystem Components: The cartographic product uses 3rd Density to indicate where more than one ecosystem class is mapped in a polygon.
Biogeoclimatic Units: CDFM Coastal Douglas-fir Moist Marine Subzone, CWHM1 Coastal Western Hemlock Eastern Valley 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, QJF Outer Fjordland Ecosystem, SPR Southern Pacific Ranges Ecosystem.
Map Symbols: Polygon Boundary, Biogeoclimatic Boundary, Ecosystem Boundary, Study Area Boundary, Roads, 20m contours, Additional streams, Intermittent/Seasonal Stream, Drainage Route, Field sample point, Flight line, Air photo centre.