

# TSITIKA MOUNTAIN

ER #122

**ORIGINAL PURPOSE** To protect representative montane and subalpine forest and bog communities

## OVERVIEW

<b>Date established:</b>	10 Aug. 1989	<b>Location:</b>	Tsitika drainage, south of Port McNeill, on northeastern Vancouver Island
<b>ORC #:</b>	3122	<b>Latitude:</b>	50°25'N
<b>Map number:</b>	92 L/7	<b>Longitude:</b>	126°35'W

<b>Total Area:</b>	554 ha	<b>Elevation:</b>	550-1,550 m
<b>Land:</b>	539 ha		
<b>Lake:</b>	15 ha		

**Access:** No road access

**Biogeoclimatic Zones:** Coastal Western Hemlock CWH); Mountain Hemlock (MH); Coastal Mountain-heather Alpine (CMA)

**Biogeoclimatic Variants:** CWHvm2 Montane Very Wet Maritime; MHmm1 Windward Moist Maritime; CMAunp Undifferentiated and Parkland

**Ecosection:** Northern Island Mountains

**Region:** Vancouver Island

**Management Area:** Cape Scott

## COMPOSITION

**Physical:** The poorly drained, level area of a boggy lake is flanked by two slopes with a major east facing slope culminating in a high ridge of volcanic rocks, and a minor west facing slope rising to a lower forested ridge. Soils are Ferro-Humic Podzols and Gleysols.

**Biological:** Lower elevations support extensive areas of subalpine fen and wet scrub forest around the lake and on gentler slopes. Subalpine forest is more prevalent on steeper slopes. Parallel strips of fen vegetation dominated by Sitka sedge, beaked sedge and cottongrass rise from the lake toward Tsitika Mountain. Numerous small ponds with yellow waterlilies and buckbean have formed in a terraced arrangement in the open areas due to high snowpack. Many alpine and subalpine species occur here at unusually low elevation. The intervening ridges of scrub forest, which alternate with the parallel fen strips, are dominated by mountain hemlock, yellow-cedar and oval-leaved blueberry combined with Indian hellebore, deer-cabbage and Sphagnum mosses. A variety of mountain hemlock-amabilis fir communities occupy better drained and higher slopes. Alpine vegetation is restricted due to rocky terrain at high elevation. Pink and white mountain heather and blue-leaved huckleberry prevail there and are also common around the open wet areas.

Mammals recorded from this area include black-tailed deer, cougar and wolf.

**MANAGEMENT CONCERNS**

<b>SIGNIFICANT SPECIES</b>	<b>BC LIST STATUS</b>	<b>COSEWIC STATUS</b>	<b>CF PRIORITY</b>
Common Goldeneye			3
Mew Gull			6

**THREATS**

<b>Climate Change:</b>	<p>Bog communities have been assessed by researchers as some of the most vulnerable ecosystems in BC. Wetland ecosystems are projected to dry up or alter due to raised temperatures and changing hydrology.</p> <p>Subalpine forests are projected to decline due to their adaptation to cool moist environments. The displacement of these communities by dry forest and/or grassland ecosystems may occur.</p>
<b>Forestry:</b>	<p>Insufficient buffer zone increases windthrow risk within reserve.</p> <p>Adjacent logging creates fringe effect and opens access to the reserve, increasing the introduction of non-native invasive species. Increased sedimentation in riparian habitats is also a result.</p>
<b>Harvest:</b>	<p>Harvesting adjacent to reserve boundaries increases risk of unauthorized harvesting within the reserve.</p>
<b>Program constraint:</b>	<p>Lack of funding for aerial inspections of park boundaries directly abutting tenured crown land and private land.</p>

**RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES**

The baseline information collected on plants in this ER are a good starting point for studies on climate change. The initial reports are available.

Ongoing studies in hydrology.

**SCIENTIFIC NAMES OF SPECIES MENTIONED IN THE TSITIKA MOUNTAIN ER ACCOUNT**

**Flora**

- blueberry, oval-leaved (*Vaccinium ovalifolium*)
- buckbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*)
- cotton-grass, narrow-leaved (*Eriophorum angustifolium*)
- deer-cabbage (*Fauria crista-galli*)
- fir, amabilis (*Abies amabilis*)
- hellebore, Indian (*Veratrum viride*)
- hemlock, mountain (*Tsuga mertensiana*)
- huckleberry, blue-leaved (*Vaccinium deliciosum*)
- moss, peat (*Sphagnum spp.*)
- mountain-heather, pink (*Phyllodoce empetriformis*)
- mountain-heather, white (*Cassiope mertensiana* var. *mertensiana*)

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sedge, beaked (*Carex utriculata*)  
sedge, Sitka (*Carex sitchensis*)  
waterlily, yellow (*Nymphaea mexicana*)  
yellow-cedar (*Chamaecyparis nootkatensis*)

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**Fauna**

Cougar (*Puma concolor*)  
Deer, Black-tailed (*Odocoileus hemionus* ssp. *hemionus*)  
Goldeneye, Common (*Bucephala clangula*)  
Gull, Mew (*Larus canus*)  
Wolf, Grey (*Canis lupus*)