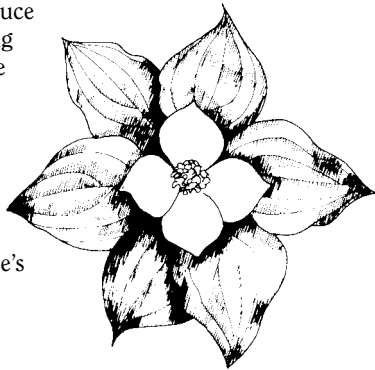


A Study in Contrasts

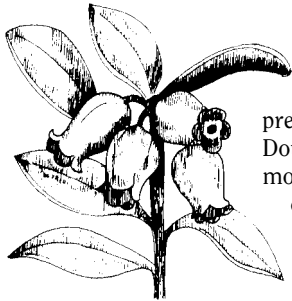
6. North Slope

Here, beneath the spruce trees, this north-facing slope retains moisture from snow and rain because it is seldom in sunlight. Willow, aspen and birch thrive in this cool shady setting over a ground cover of prince's pine and bunchberry.



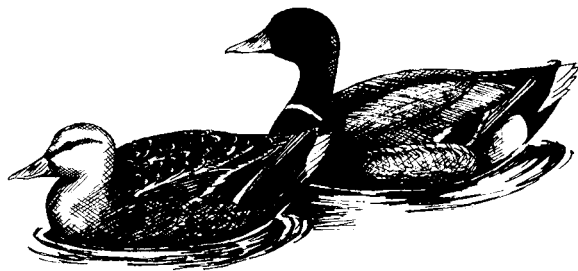
Bunchberry (*Cornus canadensis*)

7. South Slope



Kinnikinnick
(*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*)

On these sunny southern slopes, spring snow melts quickly, providing an early start for plants that prefer a warm, drier site. Large Douglas-fir, lodgepole pine and mountain alder form a more open forest cover with kinnikinnick and creeping juniper at their base.



8. A Land of Eskers

The trail has led you up a narrow ridge approximately 80 meters wide and 530 meters long – one of the many within the park's boundaries. These sinuous landforms, known as eskers, were formed when sand and gravel were deposited in the meltwater channels of a glacier that once scoured this landscape.



Continue along the ridge to the Camp Lake road or go back the way you came.

If you do not wish to keep this guide, return it to the brochure distribution box at the beginning of the trail.

For More Information

BC Parks

<http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/bcparks>



Ministry of Water, Land
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03/2003



Eskers

INTERPRETIVE TRAIL

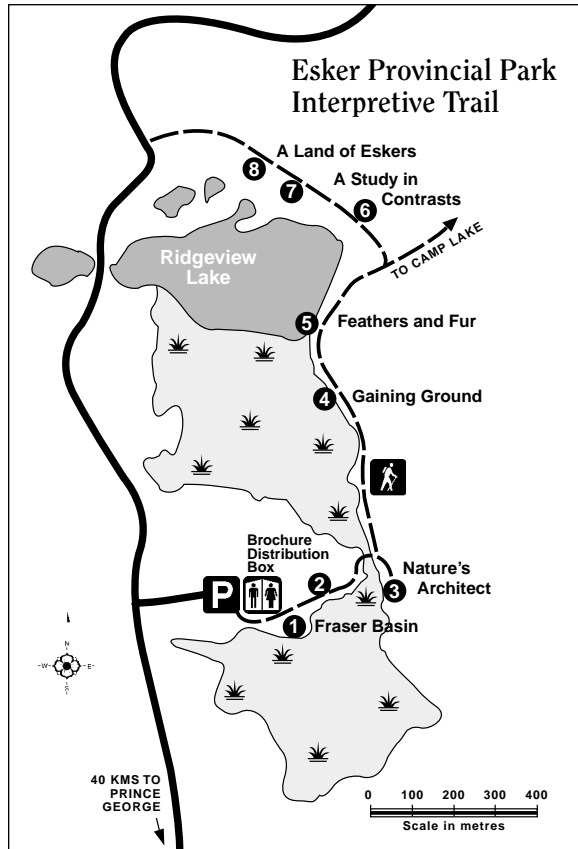


Welcome. Eskers Provincial Park encompasses about one third of the 40-kilometre-long Stuart River Eskers which stretches in a northwest to southeast orientation. Many of the ridges appear to be “braided”, an effect caused when large chunks of ice once jammed tunnels within the glaciers.

Upper Fraser

Try to imagine the ice sheet several kilometers thick that blanketed this region 10,000 years ago. Pushed by gravity and pressures from within, the glaciers inched forward scouring the earth beneath them. The landforms you will see are a product of that movement: a landscape changed forever by a tremendous, powerful force.

This process is far from over. Present-day forces continue working to modify this natural environment.



1. The Fraser Basin

Within the Interior Plateau of British Columbia lies an irregularly shaped basin of gently rolling hills and shallow lakes through which the Fraser and Nechako rivers carve their paths

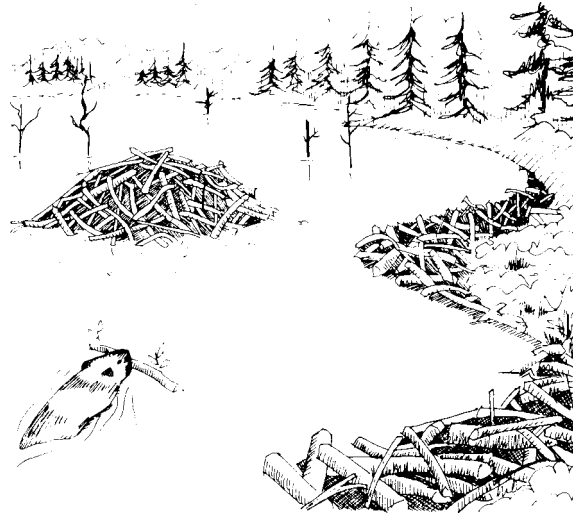
Here the summers are reasonably warm and dry with medium to heavy snowfall in winter. Glacial drift covers much of the surface of the basin supporting a mixed tree canopy common to the sub-boreal spruce forest.

The many lakes and marshes associated with this unique landscape provide an ideal habitat for a diverse array of plant and wildlife species

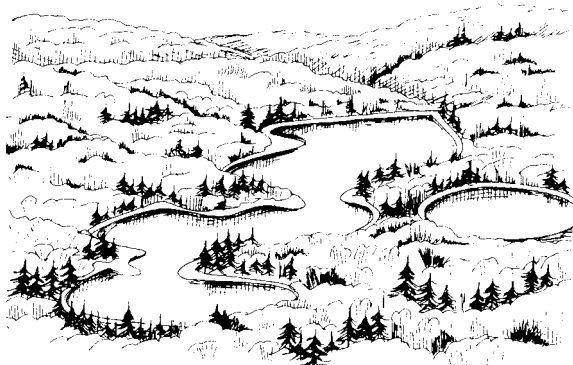
Nature's Architect

2. Beavers (*Castor canadensis*) have effectively colonized much of the wetland associated with this esker landscape. They prefer the deciduous forests which rim the edges of the lakes.

Just as the glaciers have changed the complexion of this area, the beaver also is responsible for modifying the environment. At this stop look for the "ditches" the beavers have excavated to make travel between the forest and marsh easier.

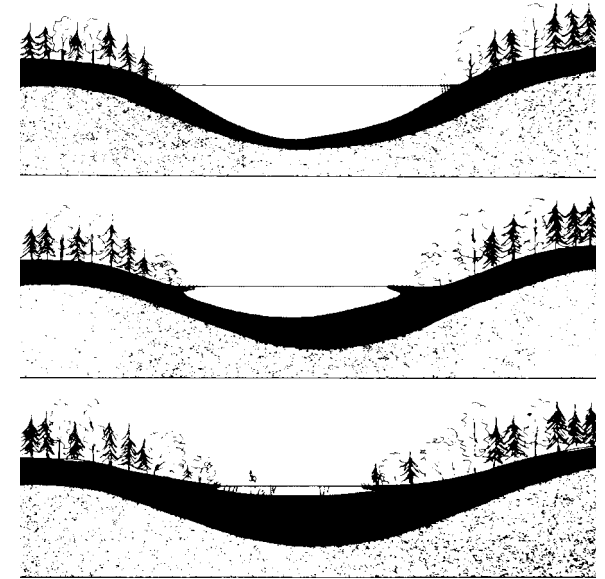


3. Other than man, few creatures can match the engineering feats of the beaver. The large pile of sticks, logs and debris is just one of the lodges built here at Pine Marsh. The pond's depth is controlled by the construction of this industrious dam. The resulting rise in water level has drowned many trees and shrubs, but has created an ideal environment for water-loving plants and creatures.



4. Gaining Ground

Before your eyes a battle is being fought between this pond and the surrounding forest. Comparison of old and new aerial photographs has shown that Ridgeview Lake is gradually being recaptured by dry land in a process known as succession. As this lake ages, eroding silt from neighbouring hillsides and decaying plant remains will settle to the bottom and eventually fill it in. The open water you see at present will continue to shrink as it is taken over by the grasses and sedges in the marshy area on the lake's southern margins.



5. Feathers and Fur

The marsh habitat originally created by the action of glaciers and modified through the activity of beaver now gives life to a host of creatures. If you pause long enough you may witness the acrobatics of a belted kingfisher as it dives headlong into the water for tadpoles and insects; or listen to the haunting call of a loon echoed across the lake. Mallards dabble in the shallows and Canada geese nest in the quiet reaches of the marsh.

In order to enhance the waterfowl populations, Ducks Unlimited has provided nesting boxes and platforms. It is hoped that bufflehead, Barrow's goldeneye, common goldeneye ducks will make use of the nesting boxes. The platforms provide sites for Canada geese and duck species such as mallard and scaup to nest. They are also good preening sites for all waterfowl species.

The area is also a favorite wintering ground for moose and home to animals such as black bear, deer, coyotes, martin and lynx.