

ORIGINAL PURPOSE To preserve an alluvial Sitka spruce-western redcedar forest

OVERVIEW

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| Date established: | 9 July 1981 | Location: | At the mouth of Megin River, Shelter Inlet, 21 km NNW of Tofino. The reserve is encompassed by Strathcona Provincial Park |
| ORC #: | 3105 | Latitude: | 49°26'N |
| Map number: | 82 E/8 | Longitude: | 126°05'W |

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|--------------------|-------|-------------------|---------|
| Total Area: | 50 ha | Elevation: | 0-100 m |
| Land: | 50 ha | | |

Access: Access by boat from Tofino. Although access is difficult at present, the Megin River has potential for canoeing.

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| Biogeoclimatic Zone: | Coastal Western Hemlock (CWH) |
| Biogeoclimatic Variant: | CWHvm1 Submontane Very Wet Maritime |
| Ecosection: | Windward Island Mountains |
| Region: | Vancouver Island |
| Management Area: | Clayoquot |

COMPOSITION

Physical: The reserve occupies the lower kilometre of the Megin River valley, and mostly consists of level floodplain lands having alluvial surficial materials. Soils developed on these deposits are very rich regosols. The western side of the reserve encompasses valley slopes above the floodplain. The Megin River, subject to pronounced seasonal variations in flow, has a gravel-cobble bottom, extensive gravel bars along its margins, and many long pools. It has a very low gradient, dropping only 20 m along its 10 km course from Megin Lake to the sea.

Biological: Alluvial lands support old-growth Sitka spruce trees reaching 1.5 m in diameter and 60 m in height, and western redcedars up to two m in diameter and 50 m tall. Four plant communities have been described in the reserve. Tall shrub stands dominated by red alder, willows, and salmonberry occur as riparian strips between gravel bars and the adjacent forest. The large island and downstream alluvial lands support tall Sitka spruce-western redcedar stands having an understory of salmonberry, red-osier dogwood, devil's club, false bugbane, and lady fern. Slopes to the west of the river are dominated by western redcedar-western hemlock forest with an understory of shrubs such as Alaskan blueberry, red huckleberry, and evergreen huckleberry. On the ridge crest along the west boundary, the forest is dominated by western redcedar and lodgepole pine, and common understory species are salal, fern-leaved goldthread, and sphagnum mosses.

The Megin River system supports significant spawning runs of sockeye, chinook, coho, pink, and chum salmon. Chum salmon, and perhaps other species, spawn within the reserve.

MANAGEMENT CONCERNS

| SIGNIFICANT SPECIES | BC LIST STATUS | COSEWIC STATUS | CF PRIORITY |
|---------------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------|
| Chinook Salmon | | Threatened (2006) | 2 |
| Chum Salmon | | | 6 |
| Coho Salmon | | Endangered (2002) | 2 |
| Pink Salmon | | | 6 |
| Sockeye Salmon | | Endangered (2003) | 2 |

THREATS

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| Climate Change: | The wetland areas of this reserve may be at risk of drying as temperatures rise and hydrology changes. The Sitka spruce forest systems are projected to decline in area, and be replaced by coniferous forest systems adapted to warmer, drier climatic conditions. |
| Forestry: | Forestry activities may encroach on reserve boundaries and may pose risks to ecological integrity of the ecosystem due to adjacency impacts (e.g. changed hydrology, sediment management, introduction of invasive species etc.). |
| Program constraint: | Lack of knowledge of natural and cultural values makes protection difficult. |
| Recreation: | Heavy volume of boat traffic disrupts wildlife. |
| Transportation: | There is the threat of oil spill due to tanker traffic and cargo ships travelling in the shipping lane. |

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| RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES | The reserve provides a site for the study of old growth floodplain forest biology and salmon spawning. |
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SCIENTIFIC NAMES OF SPECIES MENTIONED IN THE MEGIN RIVER ER ACCOUNT

Flora

alder, red (*Alnus rubra*)
blueberry, Alaskan (*Vaccinium alaskaense*)
bugbane, false (*Trautvetteria caroliniensis*)
devil's club (*Oplopanax horridus*)
dogwood, red-osier (*Cornus stolonifera*)
fern, lady (*Athyrium filix-fernina*)
goldthread, spleen-leaved (*Coptis aspleniifolia*)
hemlock, western (*Tsuga heterophylla*)
huckleberry, evergreen (*Vaccinium ovatum*)
huckleberry, red (*Vaccinium parvifolium*)
moss, peat (*Sphagnum spp.*)
pine, lodgepole (*Pinus contorta* var. *latifolia*)
redcedar, western (*Thuja plicata*)

salal (*Gaultheria shallon*)
salmonberry (*Rubus spectabilis*)
spruce, Sitka (*Picea sitchensis*)
willow (*Salix* spp.)

Fauna

Salmon, Chinook (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*)
Salmon, Chum (*Oncorhynchus keta*)
Salmon, Coho (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*)
Salmon, Pink (*Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*)
Salmon, Sockeye (*Oncorhynchus nerka*)