

Haley Lake: 1987-1988

Ref. No.:

593

ECOLOGICAL RESERVES COLLECTION
GOVERNMENT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
VICTORIA, B.C.
VBV 1X4

INTERIM PROPOSAL

for the

PERMANENT HABITAT PROTECTION

of the

VANCOUVER ISLAND MARMOT

1987
15

Sierra Club of Western Canada
(Cowichan Group)

Submitted

to BC Government
Victoria, B.C.

I. CONCEPT

This interim proposal for permanent habitat protection for the Vancouver Island marmot encompasses an area starting at 3000 ft. at the point of Latitude $49^{\circ}00'48''$ N, Longitude $127^{\circ}17'30''$ W, from which it continues south to Latitude $49^{\circ}00'05''$ N where it continues by following the 3000' contour in a clockwise direction back to the starting point, thereby encompassing the peaks of Green Mountain, Gemini and Butler. This area is hereafter referred to as the Central Area.

Outside the Central Area, a line from $49^{\circ}01'10''$ N, $127^{\circ}17'15''$ W south to Latitude $49^{\circ}00'07''$ N and continuing at the 2500' contour until $48^{\circ}59'17''$ N, $124^{\circ}19'35''$ W, where it continues due west to $124^{\circ}20'12''$ and continues to follow the 2500' contour back to the starting point. This area surrounding the Central Area will be designated a Buffer Zone in which limited planned activities will be allowed.

Both the Central Area and the Buffer zone are within the Greater Nanaimo Watershed of Southern Vancouver Island.

Being that the largest percentage of Vancouver Island marmots are within the aforementioned proposed Central Area, we feel that this Central Area should be set aside for this, Canada's only endemic endangered species of mammal. This Central Area appears absolutely crucial to the survival of the species.

Although some documentation has been done of the Central Area, i.e. the Ecological Reserves Proposal #ERP237 (Haley Lake) and Green Mountain, Block 1392, we propose that this Central Area be preserved in its entirety.

II. BACKGROUND

The Vancouver Island marmot was discovered in 1910 by H.S. Swarth. In 1931 it was observed in the Central Area by Ian McTaggart Cowan and K. Racey. Sporadic sightings had been reported before and after the 1931 visit. However it was in 1973 that Douglas Herd initiated his two year master's thesis on the Behaviour of the Vancouver Island Marmot, and also in 1973 M.Finklestein and W. Darling of the Province of British Columbia Fish and Wildlife Branch included parts of Green Mountain in their survey.

The 1979 Survey and Inventory of all Vancouver Island by the Vancouver Island Marmot Preservation Committee included the Central Area. Their 1980 Intensive Core Area Study again included the Central Area.

On March 9, 1980 the Vancouver Island marmot was declared a Rare and Endangered Species (B.C. Provincial Wildlife Act, Sec.78dd)

In 1973 Crown Zellerbach and MacMillan Bloedel designated land as company reserves, Crown Zellerbach at the headwaters of Bell Creek and MacMillan Bloedel at Haley Lake. MacMillan Bloedel then further donated their land at Haley Lake to the Crown, to be turned into an Ecological Reserve for the marmots, ERP#237.

III. RATIONALE

1. No account was taken of the Vancouver Island marmot or its significance as a Rare and Endangered Species until 1968 when its plight was first considered.

2. Creation of the reserve would be extremely important to the protection of British Columbia's Number 1 Rare and Endangered Species. Use by the Vancouver Island marmot has been observed in all parts and at all levels of the Central Area.

3. A complete Vancouver Island Survey and Inventory conducted in 1979 presented to the Ministry of Environment by the Vancouver Island Marmot Preservation Committee indicated that the previously estimated low population was essentially correct.

2. 4. This area would compliment the proposed Ecological Reserve ERP#237 and the Crown Zellerbach company reserve at the head of Bell Creek and would tie in the C.P.R. land trade to the Crown encompassing Block 1392, Green Mountain.

5. It would be a serious mistake to put in access roads and allow logging within the Central Area.

6. The Central Area contains the most unique and extensive sub-alpine meadows on Southern Vancouver Island. These meadows contain prime Roosevelt elk habitat as well as many other species of flora and fauna.

7. The scarcity of this type of land reserve on Southern Vancouver Island is apparent by the total area within Ecological Reserves being a total of only 208.5 hectares at this time.

8. Due to population increase on Southern Vancouver Island causing pressure indirectly on sub-alpine areas the need is imminent at this special time to create this Central Area Reserve as soon as possible.

IV. PUBLIC USE

The primary reason for this Central Area proposal is to protect the habitat of the Vancouver Island marmot in perpetuity. When the Vancouver Island marmot habitat is acquired permanently and fully protected then limited public access could be permitted in one area, namely Green Mountain, under supervision.

The following points deserve close consideration.

1. There should be no road access to this Central Area with the exception of the Green Mountain area.
2. A well planned and defined trail into Green Mountain could be established once this whole Central Area is permanently obtained.
3. The Sno Bird Ski Club and Sno Bird Lift Society resort with its long term effects and pressure on Vancouver Island Marmot habitat at Green Mountain, Block 1392, can only have a very negative effect and influence on wildlife in this unique but fragile area.
4. The present buildings on Green Mountain (Block 1392) could be utilized for public interpretation centres for the study of the natural history of this unique sub-alpine area where non-harrassment of the marmots and other wildlife would be stressed.

Marmot
 Colonies
 Buffer
 CENTRAL AREA
 PROPOSED ECO RES
 COMPANY RELEASE
 REVERTING TO
 CROWN
 LAKES

