

President's Report

By Mike Fenger

Thanks to all of you readers, subscribers, wardens and supporters of Friends of Ecological Reserves. Here is a short executive summary of what has occurred over the course of a year.

A year ago FER wished for a higher profile for Ecological Reserves and increased public awareness and understanding of ERs as part of celebrating the Parks Centennial year. Our wish came true. The year 2011 was a milestone year for both Ecological Reserves and Friends of Ecological Reserves. There are many positive changes to report and yet enough challenges for the up-coming year too.

Our six proposed centennial projects were approved, funded, and are now complete. These projects focused primarily on extension and communications and were: 1) a free standing floor banner which is suitable for open houses, showing the location and purpose of Ecological Reserves ;

2) a new and easier to manage web site; 3) an Ecological Reserves map to replace the out of print BC Parks map; 4) video taped interviews with Ecological Reserve Elders who built and managed the Ecological Reserves system; 5) leadership in a workshop as part of the BC Parks organized Parks and Protected Areas Research Forum which was held at the University of BC and featured a discussion on the challenges of "managing" or not "managing" Ecological Reserves; and 6) a review of Parks' files to find existing research done in ERs and any reports thereof not publically available. More details on how these projects support the FER strategic goals as well as our other activities are included below.

Goal 1. Support for the ER Wardens Program.

- We thank Bev Ramey for her invitation to FER to attend the well-organized field trip to Fraser River ecological

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Visit our website at:
www.ecoreserves.bc.ca



The Log

Spring/Summer 2012

The LOG is published 2 times a year by the Friends of Ecological Reserves to promote the establishment, management and maintenance of Ecological Reserves in British Columbia. *The LOG* is distributed to members, volunteer wardens, affiliates, supporters, government, friends and the enquiring public.

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Friends. Articles for publication are invited. The deadline for submissions for the Autumn/Winter issue of *The LOG* is October, 2012.

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President's Report (Cont'd.)

reserve and we thank Garry Fletcher from the FER board for attending and getting this field trip report on the new website (see Fall Log <http://ecoreserves.bc.ca/2011/10/07/er-warden-field-day-bc-parks-staff-and-wardens-reconnect/>) and <http://ecoreserves.bc.ca/category/wardenmeetings/>.

- Together with Parks staff Judy Millar and Tory Stevens, FER Board members Tom Gillespie, Garry Fletcher and Mike Fenger continue to maintain and update the ER wardens list. This is not without its challenges as Parks Regional Areas supervisors add or change ER wardens and FER is not necessarily informed. The names of the ER wardens appear on the revised website under each of the ER profiles. **Area Supervisors and wardens please let us know if changes are needed and the wardens we have listed are not the ones you meet with.**
- We want to thank Tom Gillespie for his many years as the FER web master as well as for the many other roles that he undertook over the years.
- Thanks also to Garry Fletcher who, with his experience as web master for Race Rocks, led FER towards a significantly improved website capable of sharing data. Due to the amount of activity building and adding the web pages, Garry has summarized and thanked many of you who provided time, images and reports to him or who he has

helped master the art of adding these yourself. (see boxed item on page 13)

- ER wardens and Area Supervisors take note please visit new website <http://ecoreserves.bc.ca/> and if you have not done so already, use it to add information and help to build and add to the ER legacy. We are hoping to receive reports and images and sense that many reports only make it to the Area Supervisors offices. FER would like to build and host the permanent ER-specific web record system on the FER website. We need a lot of cooperation to achieve this.

Goal 2. Support Studies in ERs

- The Research Legacy project (#6 on page 1) helped us to capture some of the existing and completed research in ERs. Some research reports were on the BC Parks ER website but not as many as Parks had in their files. FER found over 200 ER-related research reports and have almost completed the considerable task of adding these to ER profiles on the new website. Thanks to Parks staff, Tory Stevens, Jaime Hilbert, Mona Holley and Bill Munn for assistance in accessing Parks reports at the Jutland Road Parks file room. Research papers not in electronic format were scanned to PDFs (Portable Document Format).
- The FER-lead panel at the Parks and Protected Areas

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A Trip to Eagle Heights

By Stephen Ruttan

For the past several years members of the Friends' board have been visiting ecological reserves on Vancouver Island. In the process we have been getting to know better the protected areas close to home. This year we did something different. We went to visit an area that has long been considered a prime candidate for protection.

Eagle Heights, a hilly area several kilometres west of Shawnigan Lake, has some unusual ecological qualities. For a start, it has some small areas of south facing pocket grasslands. Hans Roemer and Adolf and Oluna Ceska, in a paper written in 2003, point out that these grasslands "are the richest in number of native grass species found on Vancouver Island". They are also unusually free of introduced species. There are several red and blue listed species in the Eagle Heights area. Also, there is a variety of different kinds of forest, with some old-growth at the top of the Heights. Geologically it is also interesting, with some areas of karst limestone.

On May 20th a group of ten gathered at the Helmcken park-and-ride. Adolf and Oluna Ceska were our leaders. Also on the trip were Michael Brinsmead, Mike Fenger, Garry and Helen Fletcher, Marilyn and Phil Lambert, Wynne Miles, and Stephen Ruttan. We drove up to Shawnigan Lake, and then a few kilometres west until we



L to R: Marilyn Lambert, Adolf and Oluna Ceska

reached Burnt Bridge on the Koksilah River. At this point we were in Koksilah River Provincial Park. This stretches along the Koksilah River for a few kilometres. Eagle Heights was just opposite us, the hill above the west bank of the river.

We began our hike by crossing Burnt Bridge, and hiking north on the logging road on the west side of the river. After a few minutes we came to a dry stream bed, and then hiked up a trail beside it. It was along this trail a few years ago that Adolf discovered a population of *Orobanche pinorum* (pine broomrape). The only time this had been collected in B.C. before was on the Cowichan River in 1914. Until Adolf rediscovered it, it was thought to be extinct in B.C. While we were beside this stream bank we saw some dead stalks of this plant. It flowers later in the summer.

Slightly above us was a clearcut area, that had been cut a few years ago. Many people had been trying to protect this area; the idea was to have a protected area that started from the boundary of the Koksilah River Park and went right up to the top of Eagle Heights. This would have saved a population of the very rare *Piperia candida* (white lip rein orchid), which was in the now clearcut area. But the powers that be ignored this, and let it be logged.

This clearcut area is below the pocket grasslands area that we were now headed up to. We went back down to the road, and continued north. Along the way there were extensive populations of vanilla leaf and sword fern in the young forest. After about fifteen minutes we came to a trail. This trail is a short scramble up to the pocket

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Clump of mushrooms on a fallen log identified by Oluna Ceska as *Kuehneromyces vernalis*

"A Trip to Eagle Heights" continued from page 3

meadows. Along this trail we could see a few *Calypso bulbosa* (fairyslipper) in its final stages. Earlier in the spring this is an area often rich in calypsos.

After about ten minutes we came to the open areas. This is where Adolf, Wynne, and others discovered some interesting plants. It was rich in ferns, such as *Aspidotis densa*, *Woodsia scopulina*, *Pentagramma triangularis*, and *Polystichum imbricans*. There were some well known wild flowers there, such as *Zygadenus venenosus* (death camas), *Delphinium menziesii* (Menzies' larkspur), and *Fritillaria lanceolata* (chocolate lily). They also discovered a rare violet, *Viola howellii*. We also searched for *Githopsis specularioides* (common bluecup), a red listed plant which has been seen in these

meadows (by Adolf, Oluna, and others). We had no luck today though.

We had lunch in the meadows, and continued to explore. There was *Bryum miniatum*, a red moss which was on a wet rock. A *Mimulus* (monkeyflower) was up there, whose classification is uncertain at this moment. Also there was *Saxifraga rufidula* (rusty-haired saxifrage). We then started to head back down the hill. Along the way we saw *Acmispon parviflorus* (small-flowered birds-foot trefoil). Also there was the grass Roemer's fescue (*Festuca idahoensis* ssp. *roemerii*), named after its discoverer, Hans Roemer.

We got back to our cars in the early afternoon. Adolf and Oluna had one more item to show us. We drove north from Shownigan Lake on the road to Cobble Hill. We turned off on a road called Northgate, which

CALENDAR

2012 - Conservation Connection

September 28, 2012

Habitat Acquisition Trust holds Conservation Connection every year at Royal Roads University. Watch their website for further information.

<http://www.hat.bc.ca/>

became a private road. Oluna had worked in this area before. They showed us an example of *Viola adunca* (early blue violet). This is much more common than *Viola howellii*, which is similar to it; by seeing it you could tell the difference between the two.

This ended our trip for the day. And it would be nice to report that there might be the possibility of protection. Unfortunately that doesn't look likely. The area is three quarters owned by a logging company, and a quarter is Crown land. Governments are showing no inclination to buy up private land for protection these days. The best hope is for benign neglect. Around the grassland areas the forests are not of much commercial value. Hopefully it is not in a company's interest to do any logging. The same, though, could not be said for the old-growth at the top of Eagle Heights. So maybe we can push for protection. It would be nice if some of the original dream for this area could become a reality.

Elders' Interviews - Featuring Louise Goulet

Interviewer Mike Fenger

This interview was videographed by Ray Painchaud at Louise Goulet's home in Oak Bay, Victoria November 4, 2011.

Mike Fenger (MF): I am here with Louise Goulet who has a long association with Ecological Reserves and we want to hear some of the tales from the historical vault and some of Louise's impressions of the ER program and maybe some insights into the future. We want to start however with how Louise became interested in conservation and the natural environment. Louise welcome and thank you very much.

Louise Goulet (LG): You are welcome. Conservation for me goes back as far as I can remember, as a kid in streams collecting tadpoles, at the edge of the sea, in the forests, collections of rocks, collections of plants and that for me is really why I became a biologist. For me the natural environment is really a passion. When I did my PhD it was on animal behaviour. My entire life I have worked on something that I was passionate about and I considered myself fortunate for that. The ER Program was so exciting. I was living in Vancouver at that time when I said to my husband we are moving. I made application for the job and much to my surprise I got it.

MF: What year was that?

LG: That was 1985.

MF: And the ER program had been running for some time at time?

LG: Well the program started in 1971 and had Bristol Foster as the fellow in charge; but by the time I got there I don't think there had been anybody in charge for about two years. Bristol had left and the



ER Elder Louise Goulet

program was kind of in limbo. At that time, the program was with BC Lands. A decision was made to fill that position again and I applied and got it. Very quickly after that, the program was moved from BC Lands to BC Parks.

MF: I want to go back just a little bit to where you got your schooling. Did you do your university in B.C.?

LG: My undergraduate degree is from Laval University, where I did my Bachelors in Biology. Then I went straight into PhD also in Biology at Simon Fraser University; but all my field work was in Alberta. I wanted to work on the relationship between animal behaviour and population dynamics. I went through the list of animals and choose Richardson's ground squirrels, which hibernate several months of the year. Not only were the squirrels very visible above ground in the short grass prairie, but they are only active between March and July.

MF: We have you starting in Quebec and coming slowly westward and so how did you end up from field work in

Alberta to living full time in B.C.?

LG: Well I did my PhD at Simon Fraser and I mean if you are a wildlife biologist where would you want to be if not in B.C.? I did wildlife surveys for several years mostly in the North, first on Hudson Bay (Quebec) and then in northern BC, the Mackenzie Delta, looking for bears, muskrats, waterfowl, ungulates, vegetation, etc.

MF: So let's get back to 1985 and the ER program when you joined the program. What were the goals of the program at that time?

LG: The goals of the program were the ones dictated by legislation, which was to protect areas for long-term research and as benchmark areas for genetic diversity. We were setting aside two types of areas: some that were representative of what we had in BC and those that were special, with outstanding features. What I thought was interesting about ERs is that they also included geologic features. When I came on board there were hundreds of ER proposals that had been part of

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the International Biological Program; there was a wealth of biological information already available. Of these, there were dozens of proposals that were already queued up for establishment if we could get approval for them.

MF: And you were managing that approval process in government?

LG: As the coordinator of that program inside of BC Parks, I was responsible for the establishment of new reserves and for ensuring that they were protected – the volunteer warden program was invaluable for that last objective. I was also responsible for program outreach both inside and outside government. I made a very conscious effort to have an active outreach program to make sure that more people knew about the program.

MF: There was a staff of two?

LG: Yes two staff [Dr. Hans Roemer and John Pinder-Moss]. But I managed to add another staff, Mona Holley who is still with BC Parks. Of the few people that are left at BC Parks, Mona is probably the one that knows the most about the ER program. She started as a volunteer to help us create a filing system for the ER program. There was at least fifteen feet deep of paper and no filing system! So she started going through the information and as I developed more understanding of the program I articulated a whole structure for filing information. That system is still there and that means that anybody can access it as it is in an organized fashion for the program as a whole and for each reserve.

MF: You must have enjoyed some successes while you were with ERs. I see behind us is an image of the Duke of Edinburgh ER.

LG: That ER has some significance for me. To create protected areas you had to be creative. Well lo and behold, I was asked to be on a committee to select a gift from



Chocolate lily (*Fritillaria lanceolata*) and spotted coralroot (*Corallorhiza maculata* ssp. *maculata*).

Prince Philip who was coming to visit B.C. Everyone was discussing paintings, books and sculptures. I said what about an Ecological Reserve? He is a well known birder. There are about ½ million seabirds that nest on the Tree, Pine and Storm Islands off the NE coast of Vancouver Island. This ER proposal had been approved by all the agencies but in order to designate an area you need political will. Somebody needs to grab that rope and pull it in. This was difficult to do for the ER program, but this reserve became a designated reserve as a gift for Prince Philip so I thought why not name it the Duke of Edinburgh ER.

Later on we were told in no uncertain terms by the BC House representative in London that no one is allowed to use his name for such a purpose, and especially not without his permission. Still, we had a new reserve. There were quite a few like that where there was an opportunity that presented itself [for example for Trial Islands, a *Times Colonist* reporter that was very keen on getting that area protected], but you had to move very rapidly. Being with BC Parks

made things more difficult for the program. While the program was with BC Lands and with the ER Committee active with Dr. Krajina involved, it was easier. The program had more public profile and BC Lands was able to put a land reserve on a proposal right away because they controlled Crown land. Being in BC Parks, we were one more step removed and Parks had their own park priorities as well. So you really had to use anything that just came up to be able to put an ER proposal forward and to get it designated.

MF: And so you mentioned Trial Island was one of those and were there other fond memories that you have?

LG: You were talking about success when I was with the ER program. I was with the ER program for about six years as program coordinator, being in charge of systems planning (adding new reserves) and the management of the reserves [primarily through the ER volunteer warden program]. When I became Manager of Planning for BC Parks (which I did for 10 years), I was responsible for overseeing the

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designation of all protected areas, including ERs. So in all, I was involved with ERs for 15-16 years. But it was in two very different roles obviously. While Manager of Planning with Mike Harcourt in charge, we could not go fast enough to designate new protected areas – about 500 areas and over 6 million hectares in five years! When the Liberal government came in, I moved to Parks Canada to help with the proposed national park in the Gulf Islands. Looking back on the things that were achieved in terms of ERs, while I was ER coordinator, we managed to designate among others the Haley Lake ER [with the Vancouver Island marmots], Nimpkish Island [with the tallest Douglas-firs in Canada], and the Tashish and Khutzamateen Rivers estuaries. But the Khutzamateen, a long standing ER proposal, was actually established as a provincial park because of First Nations concerns. Another success was several ERs being designated in the T'sitika River valley. I was provincial co-chair of the Johnstone Strait Killer Whale Committee [Dr. Mike Bigg from DFO was federal co-chair]. As part of that process, we assembled all main stakeholders, including commercial fisherman who had a bearing and potential impact on the whales at Robson Bight. After working about two years we came out with 37 consensus recommendations, which were all approved by both the Federal and Provincial governments. As a result of this work, at the provincial level the T'sitika Estuary was closed to the public and five more reserves totalling almost 1,200 ha were created in the T'sitika valley. For me personally, that was quite a coup. Another success was the consolidation of the ER program. From 1971 till about 1981, things were very busy with creating new reserves. There was little time to do anything else, hence the general lack of organized documentation for the program. So



Fairyslipper (*Calypso bulbosa*).

we produced a Guide to ERs in BC, which was for a wide audience such as for libraries and interest groups and so on; this publication is now available on the Internet. We also developed policies and formats for ER Management Statements because it is not enough to know what an ER is all about, you have to protect it appropriately. Hans Roemer produced management statements for all the ERs. We wanted to make sure [especially when you have new staff on] that there would be no picnic tables or toilets in ERs. We did a

whole ER Systems Plan to select and prioritize new ERs, working with the ministries of Forests and Environment to design the system infrastructure. We spelled out what needed to be in the ER system, what was in it already and what was missing. We also completed a list of Research Projects, a list of Research Reports and Publications. All of this showed the value of the program to whoever chose to look at it. There were also a lot of other outreach

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Purple Martins Come Home

By Richard Watts

Excerpted from May 3, 2012 edition of the *Times Colonist*



Purple martins are the largest of the swallows in Canada. (Photo courtesy of Mike Yip)

The spring return of the purple martin to Victoria marks an environmental success story, a species rebound for a bird whose B.C. numbers were near zero only decades ago.

Volunteers have posted nest boxes in various locations, including Royal Roads University and the Gorge Waterway, to permit successful breeding of the purple martin, North America's largest swallow.

In late April, the first reports of purple martins returning to the Gorge Waterway started coming in, said Ann Nightingale, co-president of the Victoria Natural History Society.

"It's a good-news story," said Nightingale. "Because of the nest boxes, we now have about 800 breeding pairs."

As recently as 1985, observers were reporting fewer than 10 breeding pairs of purple martins in all of B.C.

Nightingale said the removal of dead trees from lakeshores and oceanfronts meant the loss of important nesting sites for the purple martin. At the same time, starlings and house sparrows, both cavity-nesting species introduced from Europe, out-compete purple martins for nesting holes.

So bird lovers began attempts to bring the purple martin back by installing nest boxes in likely habitats. First was the 1985 installation of nest boxes on pilings at Cowichan Bay. When these proved successful, more were installed in other spots on Vancouver Island the Lower Mainland.

Recovery was slow for the first few years, but seemed to take off beginning in the early 1990s. Nesting colonies are now reported as far north as Campbell River, and also in the

Lower Mainland and Puget Sound.

The purple martin is the largest swallow found in Canada, about 20 centimetres long. The adult male is dark, glossy purple above and below and charcoal black on his wings and tail. The female is dark blue/grey on her back and grey-brown on the throat, breast and flanks.

The purple martin has a pretty and cheerful song, especially its morning "dawn song," making it popular with bird lovers, said Nightingale.

The bird lives on insects, which it catches in flight, earning it a name as a natural controller of mosquitoes. Viewers can often catch sight of purple martins as they swoop and bank over water or meadows, where their flight is unobstructed.

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activities. I traveled for over two years with an ER slide show we had created; we made copies of this slide show for all of the regional and districts offices, and ER volunteer wardens could borrow this slide show (this was an incredible program), again to make the circle much bigger and to have more people understand and support the ER program. I also made it my job inside the system to get people and BC Parks staff on board. I gave an ER presentation to three different ministers and even made a presentation to Cabinet to raise the profile of the Program in a very positive manner. I will never forget talking to Minister Tony Brummet who was the Minister of Environment, Lands and Parks. I met him at a social function and I introduced myself. I asked him if he knew that BC has the best ER Program in Canada. He said no I didn't know that; you had better come to see me to tell me more. So I really made it my job to tell people the positive aspects of the ER program. It was really my job to speak for that program. However, all of this outreach, consolidation of the Program and documentation of the ERs also made it possible for BC Parks to decentralize the Program in 1990. Because we now had all of the ER information and policy direction readily available, it was possible to delegate most ER functions (except designation) to the Parks Regions and Districts. It was very hard for me to let go as it was for Hans and John. It was a most rewarding job. But I also realized that if I did my new job right, we could have so many more people now supporting the ER program. So as Manager of Park/ER Planning, I made sure I still "carried" the ER program forward. I was involved from the very start with helping to develop both the marine and protected areas strategies. I made it my job to make sure that ERs were in there. ERs were also included in the Land and Resource Management



Mike Fenger and Adolf Ceska at Eagle Heights Ridge

Planning process, which after the ER program was decentralized, became the process to identify and recommend new potential ERs. Hundreds of new protected areas, including ERs, came out of that process. It was still my job and that of my staff to prepare all the cabinet documents necessary to get final approval to designate new ERs (as well as parks).

MF: Were there a number of ERs established during the LRMP process?

LG: Yes, nineteen. There were about 8,300 ha included in these 19 stand alone reserves. But many more ER proposals were also included in new provincial parks. They were not designated as ERs because of First Nations concerns. I did some asking before this interview to get the final tally. But it was a bit of short notice. I will however make it my job to retrieve the full information and pass it on: How many ER proposals were included in other types of protected areas, in particular parks?

MF: I think we will take you up on that offer.

LG: Yes.

MF: Do you have insight into the concerns of the First Nations and why a Park would be an acceptable designation but an ER designation would not be?

LG: It has a lot to do with land

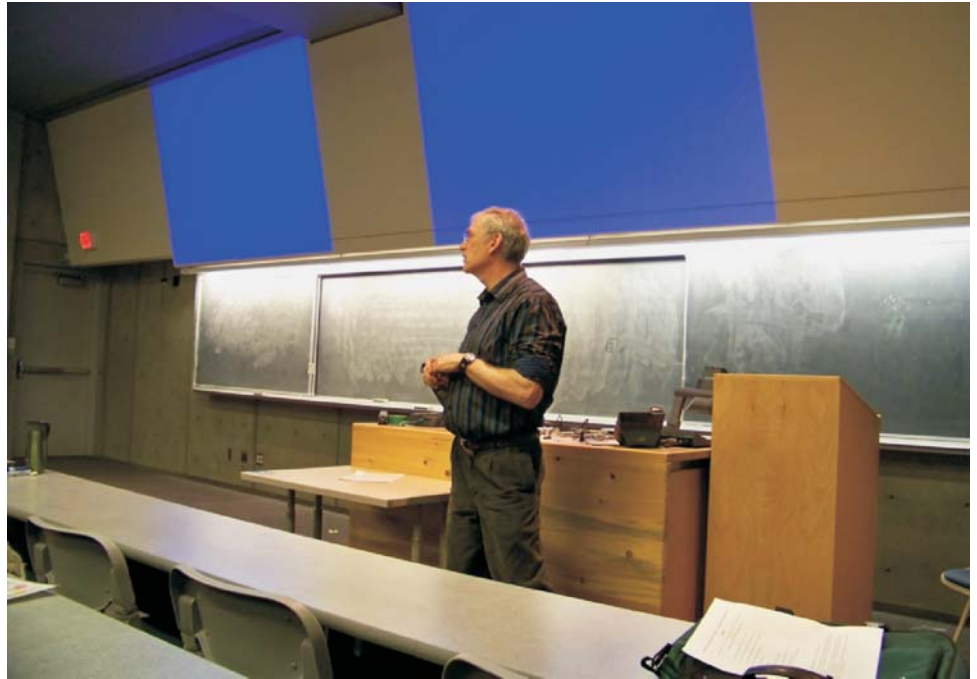
claims. If an ER is to be located within an active land claim area, within First Nations traditional territory, it cannot be used by them in any way as it precludes any resource use, even for traditional uses. Creating an ER would de facto remove an area from their land claim, before it has even been settled. ERs are also often the most diverse and productive areas in terms of flora and fauna, so obviously they were concerned that such areas not be removed from their land claim areas. ERs are in quotes "for the birds"; you cannot go to hunt there or do resource extraction for profit. So right away it meant that those areas were closed to them. [This is not the case in Provincial Park where First Nations traditional uses can be allowed] This is why First Nations could not support Ecological Reserves. I do not think there is a lack of concern about conservation values; there is a concern about their own rights and getting those rights to be recognized.

MF: That is a good insight for Friends as things have definitely changed with regard to First Nations consultation in the last 15 to 20 years. I wonder are there some things that you

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Research Forum was a good means to connect with others in the Research Community and also use the new ER Banner Stand to communicate and extend general knowledge of ERs. The issue of complexity and disincentives of current research permits was again raised and we know that Parks management is aware of this and working towards streamlining data collection in ERs.

- At the Research Forum, FER learned that Parks is committed to a Long Term Ecological Monitoring program and that this is planned to include citizen science, meaning that ER wardens can participate in longer term monitoring if they wish. Some field testing has been completed with some ER wardens since that December forum. ER wardens reading this – if you want to know more about what is being planned, contact your Parks Area Supervisor. Wardens who were involved in field testing sampling protocols and locating permanent sample plots, please share your images and reports with FER and we will post these on the web pages designated for your reserves.
- FER developed and sent a survey/questionnaire to teaching and research staff at University of Victoria to learn what they know about Ecological Reserves. This study is being led by University of Victoria student Elyse Matthews with help from the FER board. Elyse has completed the Ethics Review



Mike Fenger, President of FER presenting the annual report at the March AGM

and the questionnaire has been sent to sixty staff and researchers. The need to reach out to the university research community was in part prompted by the large role that the universities had in conducting research in ERs in the 1970s and 1980s and to help us understand why this has declined and how it could be improved in the future.

Goal 3. Support Development of a Resilient Science-Based ER System

- There is a Federal government commitment to expand Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) by up to 10 percent. FER was involved with both the Race Rocks and Scott Island consultation processes both now complete and we are waiting to hear from the Federal government as consultations continue with First Nations and others.
- The message to those working

to build the Marine ERs from the Friends of Ecological Reserves has been communicated to Living Oceans Society (CPAWS) and the advisory groups working on the emerging network of Marine Protected Areas. This message is that Marine Protected Areas need to build out from the marine ERs and other Provincial Parks to protect the oceanic portion that is not currently protected by the Province.

- A field trip was made to Eagle Heights, a proposed ER near Victoria. (See article in this LOG on page 3.)
- **The new ER map** has information and images on the types of ERs, i.e., grassland, marine, springs, forested, alpine, etc. as well as text on threats to the ERs. There is also a map of the province showing ER locations, numbers, names, main purpose,

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Saxifrage rufidula rosette

"President's Report...." continued from page 10

access-restrictions if applicable and where ERs are located in context of existing Protected Area System. Also shown is currently unroaded areas of BC inside and outside of Protected Areas. This map is a major extension and communications tool and is now at the printers.

- We can celebrate the addition of 22.3 hectares of waterfront to Mount Maxwell ER (see press release) <http://ecoreserves.bc.ca/2012/02/18/6702/>

Goal 4. Raise Awareness of the Value of Ecological Reserves

- The re-design of the FER web site and the improvements in the program used to manage the site have transformed it into a major communications tool for ERs. The web committee of Tom Gillispie, Garry Fletcher, Fred Beinhauer and Mike Fenger met with the website consultant to design and populate this new and more flexible website. Please use the

new resource <http://ecoreserves.bc.ca/>. In comparison to the old site it is possible for a number of people to add and change information. Wardens take note this can be your filing system.

- We successfully produced two issues of the newsletter the LOG.
- FER interviewed, videoed and transcribed the interviews with ten of the ER elders. A very huge thanks to Ray Painchaud who video taped the ten interviews as well as the UBC research forum. The transcripts provide historic insights to ERs as well as provide suggestions for what the future may bring. Elders interviews are located in the 'special people section' and thanks are due to each of them for sharing their knowledge. <http://ecoreserves.bc.ca/category/people/> We are featuring one in this edition of the LOG as well.
- We again hosted a public speaker for our annual general meeting and this time we

were able to draw from our newest board member. So thanks to Rick Page for an absolutely wonderful evening learning about "Caribou, Wolves and Conflict in Society". This lecture was jam-packed with biology and had incredible audio-visual illustrations to support a topic Rick knows well.

Goal 5. Sustain a nurturing and effective organization

- The make-up of the Board remains the same. Thanks to all those on the Board who continue to give of their time and ideas to keep this venerable group going. We do take the summer and Christmas months off. Thanks also to Habitat Acquisition Trust (HATs) for the use of their board room. FER remains a small ENGO with no regular staff.
- A summer barbeque was hosted by Garry and Helen Fletcher and we look forward to another.
- Many of the Board enjoyed a trip to Eagle Ridge, a proposed ER, and we were treated to deep understanding of botany by our guides Adolf and Oluna Ceska.
- We have added strength in bookkeeping and shifted some of the responsibility carried for so many years by Tom Gillispie to Michael Brinsmead, who, though not on the Board, does attend our meetings, deposits funds and makes sure we pay our bills. Thanks Michael. Tom continues to provide sage advice but has a lightened load and the work Tom has provided for so

Continued on page 12

long is now more evenly spread across the Board.

- It would be much harder to carry out our work if not for the continued support and help that we get from Parks staff. Truly a great year and we did celebrate.

The path ahead in 2012 will be discussed at the monthly Board meetings but may include some of the following:

Goal 1. Support for the ER Wardens Program

- Work with BC Parks to continue to increase the number of ER wardens with the goal to have at least one warden in all ERs. We will need to arrive at a process that allows FER and Area Supervisors to maintain a current wardens' list.
- Discuss the concept of ER wardens as part of Federal Parks and to keep ERs as special research benchmarks and continue to build on the research legacy already in place. The six ERs transferred to Federal Parks and Metro Vancouver do appear on the ER map and remain on the FER website though they are gone from the provincial ER site. FER has kept these in public and institutional view because we believe that the baseline research done on these reserves should not be lost and the new managers need to be encouraged to continue the goals of protection, education and research started by Ecological Reserves.
- Explore more fully, wardens training and data collection within the LTEM program initiated by Parks and assist

with permanent sample plot establishment.

- Encourage regional ER and Area Supervisor meetings to build stronger relationships between government and volunteers.
- Work with the new volunteer coordinator currently being hired by Parks.
- Other activities to be decided.

Goal 2. Support studies in ERs

- Advocate for a change and streamlining of research permits in ERs especially for non-destructive sampling type projects.
- Gather and share on line all existing research that may be in regional offices.
- Complete the questionnaire developed for University of Victoria researchers and teaching staff on knowledge and willingness to conduct studies in ERs.
- Others to be decided.

Goal 3. Support development of a resilient science-based ER system

- Work with larger conservation organization with similar goals of improving marine and terrestrial protected areas.
- Make widely available to the public the new Ecological

Reserves map when it returns from the printers.

- FER is scheduled to make an oral presentation of the Northern Gateway hearings when the panel is in Victoria. Our message to the panel will focus on risk to marine and fresh water aquatic ecosystems, their need to acknowledge there is no demonstrated or proven means to remove toxic substances from these ecosystems. There will be long term cascading cumulative ecological effects affecting ERs and the greater ecosystems. The herring spawn in Prince William Sound Alaska 20 years after the Exxon Valdez oil spill has not recovered and compensation claims remain deadlocked and restoration work has stopped.
- Others to be decided.

Goal 4. Raise awareness of the value of Ecological Reserves

- Support Elyse Matthews in her analysis to ER questionnaire sent to University Victoria professors
- Continue our newsletter the LOG and our Annual General meetings and public lecture series.

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Update on Long Term Ecological Monitoring

Protocols are being tested for major biomes alpine, forests, intertidal, grasslands, and wetlands. Permanent sample sites are being established in Parks, Protected Areas, Conservancies and Ecological Reserves with a concept of periodic re-inventory. The data management is planned to be accessible on a government website. Data collection is being tailored to hand-held devices and automated WiFi input. Data storage is being developed with the help of the Knowledge Management Branch in government. Volunteers to help collect data periodically are part of this vision

- Maintain the web site and add reports and images as these are made available and encourage wider use by wardens and Area Supervisors.
- Others to be decided.

Goal 5. Sustain a nurturing and effective organization

- Increase membership and build a larger operating budget.
- FER intends to remain volunteer run and not acquire staff.
- Add new members to the FER Board.
- Continue to plan our field trips to ERs and to have a sense of fun in the course of volunteering.
- Others to be decided.



Howell's violet (*Viola howellii*).

The New FER Website

An up-date of activities by Garry Fletcher

Thanks to the warden contributors: John Coffrey (Mara Meadows ER) and Art Carson have taken up the challenge and learned to install their own images and warden reports. Laurie Rockwell has provided reports every few months for field trips he regularly makes to Trout Creek ER. Art Carson has provided gallery images for four ecological reserves, Bednesti Lake, Sunbeam Creek, Mount Tinsdale, Adrian DeGroot has provided images on his own ER, Det San, as well as Skeena River, Annie Coulter contributed images on Gilnockie Creek, and Anna Roberts now retired as a warden has contributed a volume of archival reports and two packages of 35mm slides on her three reserves, Doc English Bluffs ER, Cardiff Mountain ER, and Westwick Lake. We hope to get increased participation of wardens in helping us to update the website.

Thanks also to the other individuals who have contributed freely of their images from their Flickr or Panoramio websites. Six people in particular have provided access to their picture galleries for use as index icons on many ER portfolios. Ryan Batten and Ian Cumming for native plant images, and Ryan Murphy, Raisa Mirza and Adam Harding for marine ER images. Rosemary Taylor has provided images of UBC Endowment lands and the Fraser River Islands Field trip.

Thanks to Federal Parks staff Todd Golumbia and Patrick Bartier who we have provided excellent cooperation on behalf of Parks Canada as they have helped to track down archival information on reserves now absorbed into Parks Canada. Todd Golumbia for references on Saturna and Brackman Islands, now in the Gulf Islands National Park Reserve, and Patrick Bartier for reports on the former BC Ecological Reserves in Gwaii Hanaas National Park Reserve: Jeffrey, East Copper and Rankine Islands, Kerouard and Anthony Islands.

We in FER would like to continue to carry these reserves in our records as they had valuable baseline studies done in the early years of Ecological Reserves. We are aware that Environment Canada can really decide what becomes of these reserves, as the province has no more influence on their use, but if in any way there is a chance for a long term commitment to maintain them in the spirit of conservation, research and education, it would be a worthwhile lasting legacy. We also believe it is necessary in the event of other ERs being absorbed into Parks Canada, that a plan should be undertaken to designate a special reserve status which promotes the same values for which the Provincial Ecological Reserves were established. We are pleased to note that the Pacific Spirit Regional Park which contains the former UBC Endowment lands continues to recognize with its signage ER #74.

Go to the new FER site and check out the additions and the <http://ecoreserves.bc.ca/acknowledgements/> section.

The purple martin's other claim to fame is its communal nesting habits.

In eastern North America, people have encouraged the birds with large, elaborate, condo-style bird houses, featuring multiple nesting holes in one birdhouse. But in western North America, the resident subspecies prefers more room surrounding a single nest box.

Tom Gillespie of Victoria has built and installed hundreds of nest boxes, all of them constructed according to a Vancouver Island design, inspired by the need to be attractive to purple martins, while deterring house sparrows and starlings.

The next box is long, instead of cube-shaped, with a small, rectangular opening that is generally, although not always, too tight for starlings.

Another local innovation is a wire mesh awning over the front of the nest box. That stops predation from gulls, who have learned to sit on top and pluck out the nestlings when they poke out their heads while awaiting the parents.

Ironically, Gillespie said he has learned one breeding pair of starlings in a colony is not all bad. Starlings will tolerate purple martins nesting nearby, but fight off any other starlings that encroach.

House (or English) sparrows, on the other hand, will quickly overwhelm an entire colony of nest boxes, often encouraged and assisted by humans who set out feeders



Tom Gillespie's nesting boxes have a wire awning to prevent gulls from preying on the baby birds. (photo by Bruce Stotesbury, *Times Colonist*)

or sprinkle food for them. "House sparrows just go in and take over," said Gillespie.

He said many of the nesting colonies are now overseen by volunteers who act as stewards, erecting the nest boxes and cleaning them out after the nesting season.

Banding efforts are also underway to identify the birds and provide more information to scientists about the purple martin's migratory and nesting habits.

For now, purple martins appear to be nesting almost entirely over marine habitat. But it's expected as numbers grow and populations stabilize, they will find their way back to freshwater lakes and rivers and even meadows in the area.

Nightingale said the nest-box efforts and stewardship programs have been controversial with some wildlife biologists and officials, who insist a wildlife species should be able to make it on its own, without human assistance or interference.

But Nightingale sees the efforts simply as an acknowledgment of past sins, such as habitat destruction and introduction of foreign species. The work is also built on the premise that people are part of the environment, not just onlookers.

"And it's fun," she said. "It's nice to know that we can actually correct some things sometimes."

For information about purple martins in B.C., the stewardship and recovery program, including plans for constructing nest boxes, go to the website of the Georgia Basin Ecological Assessment and Restoration Society at: georgiabasin.ca. Click on purple martins and follow the links.

Visit our website at:
www.ecoreserves.bc.ca



found particularly challenging in the process of establishing ERs or in running this program? How was it working for BC Parks?

LG: As a biologist, I always worked with men and that was a challenge. But working for BC Parks as a woman was quite a challenge. I found that even the Ministry of Forests was more progressive than BC Parks! I was the only woman manager involved in a park core program; all other woman managers were involved in administration or human resources. There were also challenges particular to the ER Program. It became even more difficult once the ER program was decentralized to the park regions and districts without any money; that did not go over very well. I remember going to a reception before a regional meeting to which I was giving a presentation. I made it through the door to the reception and within seconds my hair was streaming backward [because someone was yelling at me]. I was the lightning rod for field staff frustration on this issue. But this being said, it turned out to be an advantage because I developed a very personal relationship with a lot of people in BC Parks and was able to change their minds about the ER Program. But that certainly was a challenge. The access to Cabinet for approval of ER proposals was also very difficult. We were a small program within BC Parks itself; we had to learn to hitch our "ER wagon" to a lot of things to make it through. But the most serious thing was the lack of money for the program, which is still there to this day. The ER program came with very little funding and it stayed that way. Eventually that funding disappeared when the program was decentralized.

MF: And when was this decentralization to regions?



Left: pine broomrape *Orobancha pinorum* (dried state). Above: naked broomrape *Orobancha uniflora*.

LG: At the end of 1990. In 1991 [as Manager of Park/ER Planning], I was responsible for producing documents for Parks Plans for the '90s, then participated in the development and implementation of the provincial Protected Areas Strategy and Land Use Planning Process. So I was involved with all of that and made sure the ER Program was part of these initiatives. But there was no specific money left at that time for ERs.

MF: So when ER management was decentralized you went to a strategic Parks Planning role?

LG: Yes at BC Parks, and working with other agencies as well. The Protected Areas Strategy was initiated at BC Parks. Most of the materials produced by BC Parks on parks and ER ecosystems planning became part of the overall Protected Areas Strategy and were used as part of the Land Use Planning Process in terms of selecting new protected areas. BC Parks is the one agency that [initiated and] carried this protected areas planning process through.

MF: I would like get some insight on management of natural processes in ERs. There are 148 of them and some of them are quite small and insects, fire and natural succession influence them. Can you remem-

ber the management approach to them?

LG: I will share one of my basic frustrations. We consolidated the ER program, we developed a System Plan. But the one thing we still had to do when the ER Program was decentralized was to develop some ER management policy. The ER regulations say what you can and cannot do under an ER permit for research activities, but not for agency management. After six years with the program, I realized that not all ERs are created equal. From my point of view, they require a different management approach. (1) In the representative reserves, yes let natural processes run their course; this is part of what nature is all about and you will be able to see what is happening in an ER. Another objective of the ER legislation is also to monitor the recovery of areas that had been modified.

(2) But there are also some reserves that are very special. When you spend a million dollars to acquire the tallest Douglas-fir on Nimpkish Island, you don't want these trees to burn; you want to keep them. Or when you have very special features like basalt columns, Vancouver Island marmots or Garry Oak wildflower meadows,

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you take action to protect these features if you have to. There are also 13 very special ERs that are closed to the public because they have really fragile values. All other ERs are open to the public.

(3) Finally, there are reserves where the public is very aware of the values in those reserves and where they will go there whether you like it or not – for example Robson Bight with the killer whales, the previous UBC ER (now part of regional park) or Mt. Tzuhalem with wild flower meadows. I feel those reserves have the potential to become flagship reserves for the whole ER program. How do you keep the public on side with a Program where you want to keep things just the way they are, where recreation is to be kept at a minimal level and where activities should only be education and research? [Or where you may not even be able to go]. I feel we have 2 or 3 reserves which could be used for this role, where you use them to educate the public about the ER system at large.

But these reserves should be designated at a different level so you can get the funding to manage them properly. For example, for Robson Bight with its killer whales, one of our recommendations was to have a visitor program there in the summer months. And the money (\$100,000 per year) was allocated just to do that. So you allocate money to manage intensely. But what you manage is not the resource itself (in this case, killer whales) but rather the people who want to use the ER. In the marine environment in particular, you don't manage fish; you manage fishermen.

At the time the ER Program was decentralized, I was poised to start having open discussions and debate about those ideas I had [on how to manage different types of ERs]. I know that recently there was



Large-leaved avens (*Geum macrophyllum*).

some controversy about Mount Tzuhalem and the removal of Douglas-firs from that reserve. I thought what an opportunity to really open that door, bring all the points of view forward and put them around the table to rehash this very thing. There is a real need for answers [in terms of how we manage ERs].

MF: We are hosting a panel discussion at the Parks and Protected Areas research Forum shortly and we want to probe that question a little bit deeper and hope to come up with some recommendations.

LG: Make sure that you involve all the people that need to be involved. Developing a consensus among a narrow group of people and then trying to sell it to everybody else is not always the best way to go.

MF: What about invasive species like broom?

LG: Absolutely, remove invasive species like broom. They do not belong here in any way, shape or manner. But it can be a hard one because it takes so much money and so much effort; but again you can look at a problem as an opportunity. At Mount Tzuhalem, the Cowitchan Valley Naturalists removed broom for fifteen years. This reserve is now outstanding; I cannot think of a more beautiful wildflower meadow in Canada. And

this is a way to validate the reserve with the public and to involve them. And yes, let's remove these things. But it needs to be controlled. A lot of damage can be done by people of good will but with little knowledge. You need a balance.

MF: We are getting to the point where we try to think ahead. It's been 20 years since the ER program was decentralized and it sounds like you have kept up. Do you have any advice to Parks staff that now manage ERs and what would that be?

LG: Right now is a very difficult time to be dealing with ERs because you have to look at the political process. None of our two political parties have any interest right now in taking on the environment. ERs are a non-issue for them; they are looking at the short term. There is very little chance to put this on the agenda at this time. After the next election, there may be an opportunity once the new government gets its footing. We can try again. But BC Parks has never had so little staff or money. Just to tell you, when I was at BC Parks there were 65 people at HQ; now there is something like 28 if that and I don't think there are actually that many. They have not only cut staff, but they have cut functions and roles as well. Before, we [BC Parks] were more or less

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the masters of our own fate. We could decide to put a new Park or ER forward; you could take that to the Minister and make a case. Or if it involved more than one ministry, you could go to Cabinet. Now the Ministry of Environment is much more involved. There is a lot of positive coming out of that because of the knowledge these people have, but on the other hand Parks are now in an even bigger pool and with bigger agendas to try and drive protected areas through. What is so sad is that we had invited the Wildlife Branch to be part of Parks Plan for the '90s for their Wildlife Management Areas, but they did not think it would benefit them [they did not participate]. I don't know if they have benefitted in any big way of all the Protected Areas discussions [that took place over the last 10 to 20 years]. To try and push the Parks and Protected Areas through a much bigger staff and agenda is just about impossible. But there is a positive, ERs are now legislated rather than designated by Order-in-Council (OIC). This is something that happened as part of the Land Use Planning Process and the Protected Areas Strategy. We wrote protected area legislation rather than just Parks legislation. ERs are embedded in that and when they are designated they are designated in law not as an OIC that can be rescinded at the stroke of a pen.

MF: So to establish an ER or decommission an ER it has to go to the legislature?

LG: When I took the ER program over, ERs were designated by OIC. There was pressure in some areas to cancel some ERs and it could be done at Cabinet. But as far as I know, there has never been a single ER that has been cancelled. Three of them were included in Gwaii Haanas National Park; two in the new Gulf Islands National Park, [and one in the new GVRD regional



Polystichum close sp.

park at UBC]. But there has never been an ER that has been cancelled.

MF: I am not sure about that.

LG: You find me the specifics.

MF: We will save that discussion for later on. Your advice to government is what?

LG: They have a treasure trove in the Protected Areas System in B.C. and they will come to recognize that. It means so much in terms of tourism to the parks, in terms of valuable genetic material. As the world is destroyed more and more, unfortunately, these areas will become more and more precious. We don't have the money to manage all PAs now but they cannot be touched easily because of the legislative aspect of this. Permissible uses in PAs are regulated, and non-permissible uses are excluded. Why would government want a fight now? It has been relatively quiet in terms of the environmental agenda these past few years. Why would they want to stir up a hornets nest? But it is not a happy situation. We will have another day to fight. We can do something while we wait. I was looking at the strategic objectives pursued by the Friends and I would like to turn these on their head. I do not know if they are in order of priority. The first objective is to support the protection and management of the ER system; it is BC

Parks' job to do this. The Friends of ER can help maintain a volunteer ER wardens' program, but you still need money for that. The second objective is to promote the study and use of ERs for research. A third objective is to develop a resilient network of ERs that are scientifically supported. I am all for these objectives but again it takes money.

The Friends' fourth objective is to raise awareness of the value of ERs with targeted groups. If it is again a matter of the converted talking to the converted, you will not achieve anything. You need to step outside that box to involve the public at large. (This is why I was thinking of educational reserves to help achieve this objective, involving the public without getting the ERs destroyed). The Friends' last objective is to sustain and nurture an effective organization to manage ERs. Again, isn't this BC Parks' job? If you have public awareness, you can have political will. If you have political will, then there is a chance to get more money to BC Parks. So that way, they can protect and manage the ER system and you can study to your heart's content. It is almost like starting from zero, when the parks system was created. We need to create a *raison d'être* for the PA system. We need to involve the kids in terms of constituency and stake-

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holders. A lot of people that are 40+, they are either old environmentalists or they are not. Right behind us however are very few people who care to protect the environment (their first priority is the economy). You also look at the influx of Asian people, with different values. The Chinese population for example has a lot of sway. But try to explain to a Korean why they can't collect barnacles in some of the ERs? It is beyond them that there is a good food source that we are not using. So there is a need to extend outreach to those groups that will matter the most, not only to those that mattered the most in the past. A lot of work has been done by environmental groups but now we need to talk to kids, to talk to new immigrants, in fact we need to talk to everybody.

MF: That is very good advice. We are nearing the end of what I have wanted to ask. This has been very informative and for sharing some of the wealth of experience that you have had with the ER reserves program and thank you for sharing even a little snippet of it.

LG: I care deeply for this program; it is a beautiful program. We have at least 60%, probably 70% of the entire seabird nesting habitat along the BC coast protected in ERs. We have things that are so beautiful and so unique. We need passionate spokespersons to speak for the program. I am sure pleased that you are doing this process now and maybe the day will come when the broad public and politicians will support the ER system.

MF: Louise thank you so much and we hope we can capture a few pictures from these publications that you have laid out.

LG: This is what I am involved with now; the Garry Oak Recovery Team. I was the Executive Director for the Garry Oak Team. One of the conclusions I reached as a conserva-

Ecological Reserves of British Columbia



The Friends of Ecological Reserves new ER map will be available soon. This full colour map shows the location of all the Ecological Reserves in British Columbia, and it provides a summary of information on the main purpose of the ER and any access restriction if applicable. The map has information and images on the types of ERs, i.e., grassland, marine, springs, forested, alpine, etc. as well as text on threats to the ERs.

Please visit our website (<http://ecoreserves.bc.ca>) in August for more information on ordering copies of this new map; or complete and mail the order form on page 19 of this LOG.

tionist is you can either beat your head against the wall and it will eventually go square; or you can do something positive. I always have lots of passion and energy. I thought there is not much to be achieved in yelling at the wilderness right now and I redirected that energy to something else that I can do.

MF: So you transitioned to restoring Garry Oak?

LG: I was Executive Director for GOERT [for almost 3 years]. I managed to get the Garry Oak Gardeners' Handbook published to provide the opportunity to reach a broader public. Since I left GOERT, I have been developing a native plant garden; now I have

over 200 species there. My garden is open to people who want to learn. I am also working with some horticulturists and landscape contractors on how to protect Garry Oak. Once I am too old to manage my garden, I want some young people who can manage it for me. We have to think in terms of recruitment and succession planning and that goes for both Ecological Reserves and Garry Oak because people like you and I are no longer in the system and it is a bit frightening.

MF: Thank you so much Louise.

LG: You are welcome.

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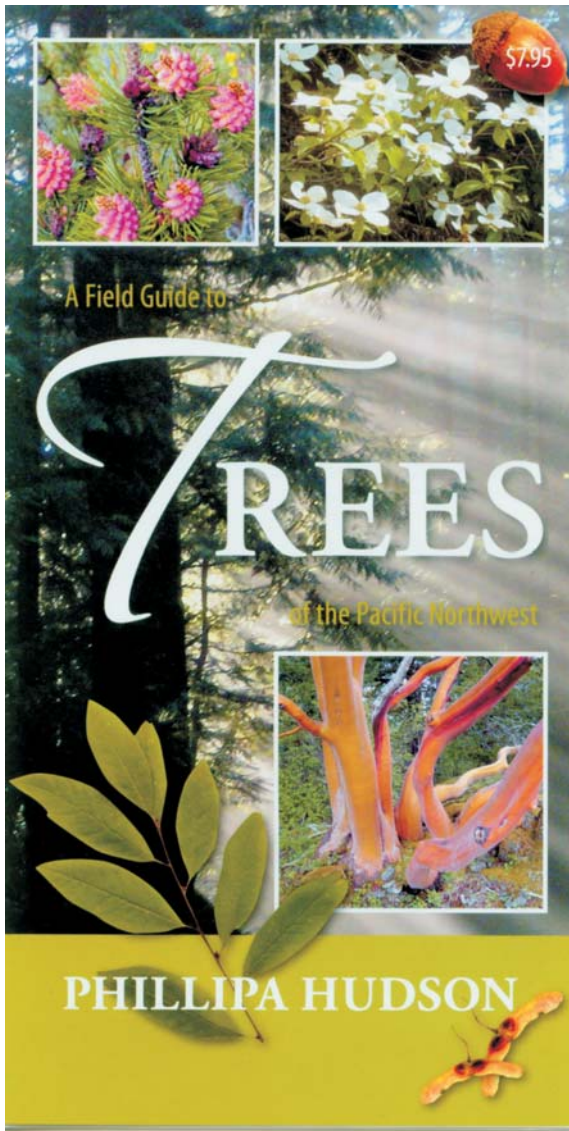
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Pamphlet-style Field Guide



Phillipa Hudson has created a simple and practical method of tree identification in *A Field Guide to Trees of the Pacific Northwest*. This handy and durable field guide is water resistant and offers valuable information. Outdoor enthusiasts can now easily identify 26 native trees commonly found between Alaska and Oregon.

The guide provides common and Latin names, accompanied by colour photographs of characteristic features such as bark, leaves or needles, flowers, cones, seeds and fruit. This, combined with information on each tree's range and an illustration of its silhouette, makes it easy to distinguish a shore pine from a western white pine or a trembling aspen from a paper birch.

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The Log



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