

KINGFISHER CREEK

ER #49

ORIGINAL PURPOSE To retain representative subalpine parkland in a transition area between dry and wet interior climates

OVERVIEW

Date established:	7 June 1973	Location:	14.5 km ESE of Sicamous
ORC #:	3049	Latitude:	50°48'N
Map number:	82 L/15	Longitude:	118°47'W

Total Area:	1,495 ha	Elevation:	1,175-2,135 m
Land:	1,494 ha		
Lake:	1 ha		

Access: Access to the subalpine is via 4-wheel-drive track to meadows below Mount Mara lookout tower, followed by 3 to 4 km walk to the northeast. Access to the lower portion of the reserve would be via Kingfisher Creek.

Biogeoclimatic Zones: Interior Mountain-heather Alpine (IMA); Engelmann Spruce-Subalpine Fir (ESSF); Interior Cedar Hemlock (ICH)

Biogeoclimatic Variant: IMAunp undifferentiated parkland; ESSFwc2 Northern Monashee Wet Cold; ICHvk1 Mica Very Wet Cold;

Ecosection: Shuswap Highland

Region: Okanagan

Management Area: North Okanagan

COMPOSITION

Physical: The reserve is situated on the rolling crest of the Hunters Range. This range, within the Shuswap Highland, is bounded on the north by Eagle River, east by Wap Creek and Mabel Lake, and south and west by Shuswap River. Except for a sharp ridge in its extreme southwest corner, the western half of the reserve consists of rolling terrain between the 1675 and 2000 m elevations. Kingfisher Creek valley, trending north to south, occupies most of the eastern half of the reserve. The steepest slopes in the reserve are along this valley. Kingfisher Creek empties into Shuswap River.

Biological: The major feature of interest in this reserve is an extensive area of subalpine parkland typical of the uppermost subzone of the Engelmann Spruce-Subalpine Fir Zone. This is best represented above the 1700 m elevation where it becomes open forest and the trees become increasingly stunted into windblown krummholz islands as one approaches the maximum reserve elevation of 2135 m. Meadows between the tree clumps contain many alpine plants but there are no sizeable areas of completely treeless alpine tundra. Subalpine fir is the most common tree in the parkland area. Subalpine meadow communities are dominated by such species as pink, yellow and white mountain-heathers, woolly pussytoes, partridgefoot, western pasqueflower, Brewer's and five-stamened mitreworts, and black alpine sedge. Showy wildflowers in this area include Indian paintbrush, arnicas, glacier lilies, and larkspurs.

Typical Engelmann spruce-Subalpine fir stands, with shrubs such as white

rhododendron and black huckleberry in the understory, cover most lower elevations in the reserve except for a few rock outcrops and talus slopes. A finger of Interior Cedar-Hemlock forest barely enters the reserve in Kingfisher Creek valley, below the 1370 m elevation.

The fauna has not been surveyed, although Ruby-crowned Kinglets, American Pipit, and Dark-eyed Juncos have been noted.

MANAGEMENT CONCERNS

SIGNIFICANT SPECIES	BC LIST STATUS	COSEWIC	CF PRIORITY
blunt-sepaled starwort	Blue listed		2

THREATS

Climate Change:	As temperatures continue to rise and growing degree days increase, climatic envelopes may expand, contract or shift. In this reserve, a possible outcome of altered climatic envelopes may be the extension of the timberline to higher elevations resulting in habitat changes from open subalpine parkland to more densely forested areas. This is dependent on many factors including water and nutrient availability.
Agriculture:	Cattle have been known to trespass on the subalpine portion of the reserve.
Recreation:	ATV use occurs in sensitive alpine areas and is not allowed in an ecological reserve.
Recreation:	Snowmobiling within the reserve disrupts the wildlife and is not allowed in an ecological reserve.

RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

Lists of vascular plants and bryophytes are available as background material for research. A faunal survey would be an important contribution.

SCIENTIFIC NAMES OF SPECIES MENTIONED IN THE KINGFISHER CREEK ER ACCOUNT

Flora

arnica (*Arnica* sp.)
hemlock, western (*Tsuga heterophylla*)
huckleberry, black (*Vaccinium membranaceum*)
larkspur (*Delphinium* sp.)
lily, glacier (*Erythronium grandiflorum*)
mitrewort, Brewer's (*Mitella breweri*)
mitrewort, five-stamened (*Mitella pentandra*)
mountain-heather, pink (*Phyllodoce empetriformis*)
mountain-heather, white (*Cassiope mertensiana* var. *mertensiana*)
mountain-heather, yellow (*Phyllodoce glanduliflora*)
paintbrush (*Castilleja* sp.)
partridge-foot (*Luetkea pectinata*)
pasqueflower, western (*Anemone occidentalis*)

pussytoes, woolly (*Antennaria lanata*)
redcedar, western (*Thuja plicata*)
rhododendron, white-flowered (*Rhododendron albiflorum*)
sedge, black alpine (*Carex nigricans*)
spruce, Engelmann (*Picea engelmannii*)subalpine fir
starwort, blunt-sepaled (*Stellaria obtusa*)

Fauna

Junco, Dark-eyed (*Junco hyemalis*)
Kinglet, Ruby-crowned (*Regulus calendula*)
Pipit, American (*Anthus rubescens*)