

# MOUNT TUAM ECOLOGICAL RESERVE

## PURPOSE STATEMENT

October 2003

Approved by:



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Date: Oct. 20, 2003



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Date: March 31, 04

## MOUNT TUAM ECOLOGICAL RESERVE Purpose Statement

Ecological reserves are areas selected to preserve representative and special natural ecosystems, plant and animal species, features and phenomena. The key goal of ecological reserves is to contribute to the maintenance of biological diversity and the protection of genetic materials. All consumptive resource uses and the use of motorized vehicles are prohibited.

### Primary Role

The **primary** role of Mount Tuam Ecological Reserve is to conserve forest ecosystems representative of the dry subzone of the Coastal Douglas-fir biogeoclimatic zone. Overlooking Satellite Channel on the steep and rugged southeastern slopes of Mount Tuam, this 254-hectare ecological reserve protects a large area of representative Gulf Island's forest ecosystems. It comprises two parcels of land on Mount Tuam that include part of the rocky shoreline. Creeks, swamps and waterfalls incise the area of mixed second-growth Douglas-fir, arbutus and western redcedar forest. The pure stands of arbutus found on dry sites around upper elevation bedrock and near the shoreline are probably the best representation of this species in the provincial protected area system. Several plant associations, such as the vulnerable Douglas-fir/arbutus and endangered Douglas fir/Salal and western redcedar/vanilla leaf associations, are protected in this ecological reserve. About 160 species of vascular plants have been identified to date, of which 21 (13%) are rated as rare in the province but common in dry sites of the CDF zone. Fauna includes a large variety of birds, land mammals such as black-tailed deer, red squirrel and deer mouse, one species of salamander, two species of frogs and three species of garter snakes. Insects belonging to 57 families have been identified.

Additional nearby land has been acquired in partnership with the Capital Regional District (CRD), The Land Conservancy of British Columbia (TLC) as an addition to the ecological reserve, further increasing its representative and conservation values.

### Management Issues

| Known Management Issue   | Response  |
|--|---|
| Impacts from adjacent land use (residential/ commercial development, forest harvesting), recreation use, wood theft, and illegal hunting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Install signs providing the public with information on the ecological reserve, its values and the appropriate use.</li> <li>➤ Recruit a volunteer warden and develop a formalized monitoring program.</li> </ul> |
| Vehicle access through the ecological reserve and impacts on values  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Investigate the relocation of the road or closure of road to decrease access. Options include degazetting road, gating and land donation for turn around to decrease access.</li> </ul>                          |
| Lack of knowledge of cultural values and First Nations' interest in area   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Consult with First Nations to collect cultural values and traditional use information and develop a better understanding of their interests with this area.</li> </ul>   |
| High conservation values (large Garry oaks) on adjacent Crown land   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Investigate the opportunity to add Crown land to ecological reserve in order to maximize protection of key conservation values in BC</li> </ul>  |

## Conservation

|                                   |                                     |   |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Representation<br>- ecosection    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Mount Tuam Ecological Reserve contributes significantly (7.24%) to the representation of the Southern Gulf Islands Ecosection which has only 5.62% protected provincially. Mount Tuam's contribution ranks 5 <sup>th</sup> out of 36 protected areas representing this ecosection. Other major contributors include Ruckle (17.4%) and Newcastle Island provincial parks (11.5%). |
| - biogeoclimatic subzone/variant  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Mount Tuam Ecological Reserve contributes 3.02% to the representation of the CDFmm variant which has only 2.43% protected provincially. Mount Tuam's contribution ranks 9 <sup>th</sup> out of 73 protected areas representing this variant.  |
| Special Features                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Pure stands of <i>Arbutus</i> – probably the best representation of this species in the ecological reserve system   |
| Rare/Endangered Values            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <i>Red-listed</i> Douglas-fir / salal association, western redcedar / vanilla leaf association, Douglas-fir / arbutus association. <i>Red-listed</i> Howell's triteleia ( <i>Triteleia howellii</i> ) (listed as Endangered by COSEWIC), yellow montane violet (Threatened by COSEWIC).   |
| Scientific/Research Opportunities | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Plant assemblage research opportunities   |

## Recreation

|  |                                     |   |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| Representation                         | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Not Applicable                                      |
| backcountry                            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Not Applicable                                      |
| destination                            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Not Applicable                                      |
| travel corridor                        | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Not Applicable                                      |
| local recreation                       | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Not Applicable                                      |
| Special Opportunities                  | <input type="checkbox"/>            | None known at this time                             |
| Education/Interpretation Opportunities | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Opportunity to interpret natural values of the site |

## Cultural Heritage

|                |                                     |   |
|----------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Representation | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Mount Tuam figures strongly in both Saanich and Cowichan teaching stories about the history of the coast and of prehistoric natural disasters. There is a history of mining for rhodonite, a semi-precious pink stone in this ecological reserve. |
|----------------|-------------------------------------|---|

Special Feature  None known at this time

### Other Management Considerations

Other Designations  Not Applicable

Relationship to other PAs  Part of a system of protected areas on Salt Spring Island; and part of a system of ecological reserves in BC.

Co-operative Management Arrangements

Partnerships  SW Salt Spring Island Conservancy, The Land Conservancy, Capital Regional District and Nature Trust and Pacific Marine Heritage Legacy to protect adjacent lands

Vulnerability  Adjacency issues (logging, development), human caused fires, wood theft, vegetation collection, illegal hunting, unauthorized off road vehicle use of ecological reserve

Relationship to other Strategies  CRD Park Management Strategy, Islands Trust Community Plan and future planning for SW Salt Spring Island (Southwest Saltspring Island Conservation Strategy)

**Area:** 254 hectares

**Date of establishment:** May 4, 1971