

**ORIGINAL PURPOSE** Protection of warmsprings and very restricted plant communities and rare plants against recreational and other damage

#### OVERVIEW

<b>Date established:</b>	29 July 1971	<b>Location:</b>	20 km SE of Canal Flats
<b>ORC #:</b>	3026	<b>Latitude:</b>	50°02'N
<b>Map number:</b>	82 J/4	<b>Longitude:</b>	115°36'W

<b>Total Area:</b>	121 ha	<b>Elevation:</b>	1,370-1,615 m
<b>Land:</b>	121 ha		

**Access:** Access from Highway 95 via the Ram Creek Forest Service Road, which passes through the ER.

<b>Biogeoclimatic Zones:</b>	Montane Spruce (MS)
<b>Biogeoclimatic Variant:</b>	MSdk Dry Cool
<b>Ecosection:</b>	Southern Park Ranges
<b>Region:</b>	Kootenay
<b>Management Area:</b>	Purcell Lussier

#### COMPOSITION

**Physical:** A major feature of this reserve is its natural warmspring, located in Ram Creek valley near the confluence of Marmalade Creek. The reserve is located on the west side of the Hughes Range, a north-south series of jagged peaks reaching 2500 m in height. It straddles Ram Creek which flows westward to join the Lussier River. Soils are largely Brunisols on colluvial and morainal deposits derived from calcareous parent materials.

**Biological:** The most unique vegetation is immediately surrounding the warmsprings and along streambanks below the springs. It tends to develop much earlier in the spring than other vegetation only a few metres away, to be very lush, and to contain species that, in this region, are only able to survive in this unusually warm environment. Common plants in the herbaceous community at the hot springs are poison ivy, bluegrasses, and field mint. Also present are white geranium, Kalm's lobelia, Canadian butterweed, leafy aster, slender rush, and the rare sedge *Carex crawei*.

A variety of trees is present but Douglas-fir and/or lodgepole pine are dominant in most areas. Douglas-fir-trembling aspen stands in which common juniper, kinnikinnick, and pinegrass characterize the understory, occur on dry south-facing slopes, while lodgepole pine -Douglas-fir woods with understory dominants like birch-leaved spirea, soopolallie, and pinegrass occur on morainal material. Moist valley bottoms and north-facing slopes support mixed Douglas-fir-Engelmann spruce-western larch stands.

Much of the ER was burned over by wildfire in the mid 1980s. Parts of the ER have a history of forest harvesting with old skid trails and roads still evident.

Mule Deer, White-Tailed Deer, Elk, Moose, Bighorn Sheep, and their predators, including Wolf, inhabit this area. Birds noted include kinglets, Fox and Chipping Sparrows, juncos, chickadees, nuthatches, Winter Wrens, Varied Thrushes and Ruffed Grouse.

#### MANAGEMENT CONCERNS

SIGNIFICANT SPECIES	BC LIST STATUS	COSEWIC STATUS	CF PRIORITY
Vivid Dancer	Red listed		2

#### THREATS

**Climate Change:** Projected changes in temperature, hydrology and subsequent shifts in the distribution and range of various species may pose a threat to the rare and restricted plant communities protected in this reserve.

**Access:** Access to warmsprings threatens red-listed species (Vivid dancers). However, the road culvert feeds much of the habitat needed for the dragonfly.

The old access road has been deactivated due to Beaver activity. Currently access is via the Ram Creek Forest Service Road which is deteriorating and may be deactivated in the future below the ER. This would limit, but likely not eliminate, access by vehicles.

**Recreation:** Regular use of clearing as a camping site severely effects the ecosystem due to ATV use, fire damage, defecation and other forms of pollution, and results in trampling of vegetation in and around the warmsprings.

The pools were modified prior to designation as an ER, but continued disturbance of the flow of warm water is impacting natural processes.

#### SCIENTIFIC NAMES OF SPECIES MENTIONED IN THE RAM CREEK ER ACCOUNT

##### Flora

aspen, trembling (*Populus tremuloides*)  
 aster, leafy (*Aster foliaceus*)  
 bluegrass (*Poa* spp.)  
 butterweed, Canadian (*Senecio pauperculus*)  
 Douglas-fir, Rocky Mountain (*Pseudotsuga menziesii* var. *glauca*)  
 geranium, white (*Geranium richardsonii*)  
 juniper, common (*Juniperus communis*)  
 kinnikinnick (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*)  
 larch, western (*Larix occidentalis*)  
 lobelia, Kalm's (*Lobelia kalmii*)  
 mint, field (*Mentha arvensis*)

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pine, lodgepole (*Pinus contorta* var. *latifolia*)  
pinegrass (*Calamagrostis rubescens*)  
poison ivy (*Toxicodendron rydbergii*)  
rush, slender (*Juncus tenuis*)  
sedge, Crawe's (*Carex crawei*)  
soopolallie (*Shepherdia canadensis*)  
spirea, birch-leaved (*Spiraea betulifolia* ssp. *lucida*)  
spruce, Engelmann (*Picea engelmannii*)

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**Fauna**

Chickadee (*Poecile* spp.)  
Deer, Mule (*Odocoileus hemionus*)  
Deer, White-tailed (*Odocoileus virginianus*)  
Elk (*Cervus Canadensis*)  
Grouse, Ruffed (*Bonasa umbellus*)  
Junco, Dark-eyed (*Junco hyemalis*)  
Kinglet (*Regulus* sp.)  
Moose (*Alces americanus*)  
Nuthatch (*Sitta* spp.)  
Sheep, Bighorn (*Ovis canadensis*)  
Sparrow, Chipping (*Spizella passerina*)  
Sparrow, Fox (*Passerella iliaca*)  
Thrush, Varied (*Ixoreus naevius*)  
Vivid Dancer (*Argia vivida*)  
Wolf, Grey (*Canis lupus*)  
Wren, Winter (*Troglodytes troglodytes*)

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