

50th Anniversary of the Ecological Reserve Act

By Louise Beinhauer, LOG Editor

While the 50th anniversary of the proclamation of the *Ecological Reserves Act* was on April 2, 2021, the Friends of Ecological Reserves have planned numerous ways to celebrate this auspicious milestone throughout the year.

First of all, thanks to the work of several individuals, on April 2, 2021 a formal proclamation of the ER Act was made by Janet Austin, the Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia and the counter signer for the Great Seal, David Eby, Attorney General and Minister Responsible for Housing.

This special edition of the LOG looks at the mystery around the name of the Act as well as reprinting the original; an in depth look at the "father" of Ecological Reserves, Dr. Vladimir Krajina and the history of the *Ecological Reserves Act*, provided by FER board member Jenny Feick in an article which was previously published in the Victoria Natural History publication *The Naturalist*; a timeline from 1971 until the present day; as well as some information and photos from some of the first 29 Ecological Reserves.

We are also hosting an Annual General Meeting on May 4th which will feature several of the key players in the early years of Ecological Reserves. The storytelling event will be held virtually via Zoom (**see details on back cover**).

FER, with the help of the iNaturalist Program will be conducting a Bioblitz throughout the year ending in October, with a goal of achieving 50,000 observations in many Ecological Reserves.

Finally, we are in the midst of producing a video with a myriad of information and incredible photography from the macro to the panoramic from various Ecological Reserves in British Columbia (**see story page 13**).

We truly wish that we could have had a big get together in person to celebrate this anniversary, but alas, not this year. Perhaps we can be persuaded to organize a 51st anniversary party next summer!

I hope you enjoy this special edition of the LOG. We will also publish again later in the summer with more updates and celebration news.

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

The Log

50th Anniversary Edition

The LOG is published two 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 Summer 2021 issue of *The Log* is June 14, 2021.

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Canada Province of British Columbia A Proclamation

ELIZABETH THE SECOND, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom, Canada and Her other Realms and Territories, Queen, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith

To all to whom these presents shall come – Greeting

WHEREAS ecological reserves are established to protect rare species, special features of biological and geological importance, and representative examples of natural ecosystems in British Columbia for scientific study and educational purposes, and

WHEREAS as a key component of British Columbia's protected areas system, ecological reserves are established to maintain biological diversity and protect genetic materials, and

WHEREAS with the *Ecological Reserves Act* coming into force on April 2, 1971, British Columbia became the first province in Canada to give permanent protected status to ecological reserves, and

WHEREAS this year marks the 50th anniversary of the *Ecological Reserves Act*, and

WHEREAS Ecological Reserves Day is an opportunity to recognize the valuable contributions of First Nations, Indigenous and environmental organizations, public stakeholders, government agencies and industry representatives to the stewardship of ecological reserves in British Columbia;

NOW KNOW YE THAT We do by these presents proclaim and declare that April 2, 2021, shall be known as

"Ecological Reserves Day"

in the Province of British Columbia.

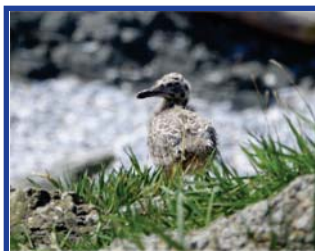
IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, We have caused these Our Letters to be made Patent and the Great Seal of Our Province of British Columbia to be hereunto affixed.

WITNESS, The Honourable Janet Austin, Lieutenant Governor of Our Province of British Columbia, in Our City of Victoria, in Our Province, this first day of April, two thousand twenty-one and in the seventieth year of Our Reign.

BY COMMAND.

Attorney General and
Minister Responsible for Housing
(counter signature for the Great Seal)

Lieutenant Governor



ER #1 – Cleland Island
Seabird colony supporting
over eleven species of
seabirds including the Large
white-headed gull (*Genus*
Larus) seen here in a photo
by Amaya Black.

Will the Real *Ecological Reserves Act* Please Stand Up!

By Louise Beinhauer and Jenny Feick

While reading the wording on the Proclamation on Page 2, I wondered why the Act was called the *Ecological Reserves Act* and not the *Ecological Reserve Act* as stated on the most current version of the Act listed on the BC Laws website:

(https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/00_96103_01). The subtle difference in the word “Reserve” was bugging me.

The more versions of the act that I looked at on line, the more I was convinced that the name Reserve had no “s” on the end of it. There were many small differences made over the years, but why had the Province of British Columbia’s Proclamation spelled the name of the Act with an “s” on the end of the word Reserve? Well, the answer was – they were right! The copy of the original *Ecological Reserves Act* as reprinted below and on the next page shows that the name Reserve ends with an “s”.

How the name of the Act evolved over the years and why the subtle name change, would require more time than I have at the moment to try to figure out. Maybe

somebody else reading this would love to solve the mystery. If you do, drop me a line.

FER hopes that further refinement to the ER Act and regulations will be made to increase its effectiveness, making it easier for rangers and conservation officers to enforce by being able to issue tickets with fines and other administrative penalties for violations of the Act and regulations. Currently, the ER Act requires an onerous burden of proof to be placed on the BC government (evidence must be brought into court proceedings) to prove beyond a doubt that an individual or corporation has violated the regulations. ER wardens report that they see many violations of the regulations take place without repercussions, resulting in persistent internal and external threats to the integrity of ERs.

FER has discussed this situation with BC Parks who have assured FER that they agree that improvements to address this issue need to be done. They are working on scheduling these changes in the legislative agenda for

Ecological Reserves Act

[Assented to 2nd April, 1971.]

- Preamble.** WHEREAS the Province of British Columbia is favoured with a wide variation of climate and topography resulting in a multiplicity of biogeoclimatic zones:
And whereas it is considered highly desirable in the public interest to set aside and reserve areas of Crown land representative of distinctive ecosystems for present and future scientific study:
And whereas it is the intention of this Legislature that one hundred such areas be selected and reserved for this purpose by the end of the year 1975:
Now, therefore, Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of British Columbia, enacts as follows: –
- Interpretation.** 1. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,
(a) “disposition” means and includes every act of the Crown whereby Crown land, mines, minerals, coal, petroleum, natural gas, timber and water, or any right, title, interest or estate therein are granted, disposed of or affected, or by which the Crown divests itself of or creates a right, title, interest or estate in, or permits the use of land, mines, minerals, coal, petroleum, natural gas, timber and water;
(b) “ecology” means the study of the interrelations between man, or other animals, or plants and their environment, and “ecological” has a similar meaning;
(c) “ecosystem” means a complete system composed of man, other animals and plants in a defined area, together with the soil and climate comprising their habitat in that area;
(d) “environment” means all the external conditions or influences under which man, animals and plants live or are developed;
(e) “habitat” means that kind of place or situation in which a man, animal or a plant lives;
(f) “minister” means the Minister of Lands, Forests, and Water Resources.
- Purpose.** 2. The purpose of this Act is to reserve Crown land for ecological purposes, including
(a) areas suitable for scientific research and educational purposes associated with studies in productivity and other aspects of the natural environment;



ER #2 – East Redonda Island
Represents elevational transect in the coastal forests of the Gulf Islands. (Photo of Giant Vetch (*Vicia gigantea*) by I. Gibson.



ER #3 – Soap Lake
Conserves an alkaline lake, its associated flora and fauna, and representative ecosystems of the Interior Douglas-fir Zone.

- (b) areas that are representative examples of natural ecosystems within the Province;
- (c) areas that serve as examples of ecosystems that have been modified by man and that offer an opportunity to study the recovery of the natural ecosystem from modification;
- (d) areas where rare or endangered native plants and animals in their natural habitat may be preserved; and
- (e) areas that contain unique and rare examples of botanical, zoological or geological phenomena.

Lieutenant Governor to establish reserves.

3. The Lieutenant Governor in Council may, by notice signed by the minister and published in the Gazette, establish ecological reserves of Crown land.

Lieutenant Governor to cancel or amend reserves.

4. The Lieutenant Governor in Council may, by notice signed by the minister and published in the Gazette, add to, cancel in its entirety or delete any portion of an ecological reserve established under section 3.

Ecological reserves not available for disposition under any other Acts.

5. On the coming into force of this Act, any area thereafter established as an ecological reserve under this Act shall be immediately withdrawn and reserved from any further disposition that might otherwise be granted under the provisions of any Act or law in force in the Province, including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, dispositions under the *Land Act*, *Forest Act*, *Grazing Act*, *Water Act*, *Mineral Act*, *Placer-mining Act*, *Coal Act*, *Petroleum and Natural Gas Act*, 1965, *Water Resources Act* or *Mines Rights-of-way Act*.

Nature conservancy as ecological reserve.

6. A nature conservancy, or any portion thereof, now or hereafter designated as such under the *Park Act* may, notwithstanding that Act, be established as an ecological reserve under this Act.

Regulations.

7. For the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this Act according to their intent, the Lieutenant-Governor in Council may make such regulations and orders as are ancillary thereto and not inconsistent therewith and as are considered necessary or advisable; and every regulation or order made under this section shall be deemed part of the Act and has the force of law; and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, may make regulations

- (a) respecting the control, restriction, or prohibition of any kind of use, development or occupation of the land or of any of the natural resources in an ecological reserve;
- (b) respecting the control, restriction or prohibition of the exercise of power granted by any other Act or regulation by a minister, department of the Government, or agent of the Crown specified in the regulations;
- (c) respecting the control, restriction or prohibition of the dumping, deposit or emission within an ecological reserve of any substance; and
- (d) respecting, generally, any other matter or thing necessary or incidental to the protection of an ecological reserve.

**Adminis-
tration.**

8. Land established as an ecological reserve under this Act, shall, subject to the regulations and orders made under this Act, be under the jurisdiction of and shall be administered by the minister.

Advisers.

9. The minister may appoint a person or persons to advise him respecting any matter relating to the establishment and administration of ecological reserves, and a person appointed under this section shall have the duties prescribed by the minister and shall be subject to the regulations made under this Act.

Other Acts.

10. This Act, and any regulation or order made under this Act, applies to every ecological reserve, notwithstanding any other Act or regulation.

Never Underestimate the Power of One:

Dr. Vladimir Krajina and B.C.'s Ecological Reserves

By Jenny L. Feick, PhD

Vladimir Krajina, the man who became the father of B.C.'s ecological reserve system, was born in January 1905 in what is now the Czech Republic. Having been persecuted by both far right fascists during WWII and extreme left communists afterward, Krajina with his wife and family made their way to Canada in 1949 where the University of British Columbia had offered him a two-year position as "special lecturer" in the Department of Botany.

That initial appointment in 1949 debuted Krajina's 24 years teaching plant ecology at UBC. In 1958, he was made full professor. In the UBC's Department of Botany's 1993 Memorial to Dr. Krajina, it states that "His knowledge of plants, their distribution and ecology was encyclopedic, his field trips were hectic, and his slide shows were legendary". At UBC, he supervised 25 doctoral and nine Master's students, many of whom became well-known ecologists in their own right. He and his graduate students mentored and influenced many others who made significant contributions to the fields of botany, ecology, forestry, biodiversity conservation and protected areas management. After retiring in 1973, Dr. Krajina continued his scientific work as professor emeritus. His academic achievements were recognized through numerous awards and honours.

Dr. Krajina's major contribution to Canadian botany was to develop the ecologically-based system of vegetation classification (Biogeoclimatic Ecosystem or BEC Zones). For some 40 years, Dr. Krajina and his many students investigated the botanical diversity of the province, systematizing the relationship between plant communities, soils and climatic regimes into the BEC zones that are today the foundation for any regional natural history study. More significantly, Krajina's BEC classification provided the framework to support ecologically-sound forest, range and wildlife management practices in B.C. The BC Ministry of



Dr. Krajina collecting a *Boletus* fungi along the road to Babine Lake in 1973. (Photo by Jim Pojar)

Forests adopted the BEC system in 1976 and it still informs natural resource management. The current BEC database and classification provides immense value as a baseline ecological condition to assess the effects of climate change. BEC provides a framework that integrates the essential ecosystem components required for understanding what grows where and how well, and thus will remain essential as our climate changes.

In addition, Krajina used his considerable political expertise and charisma in the successful campaign to establish a new type of protected area, one devoted to biodiversity conservation, scientific study, and monitoring environmental change, the ecological reserve. Starting in the 1950s amid a logging boom, Krajina advocated protecting B.C.'s diverse natural ecological gene pool in "nature museum" sites. On November 25, 1965, Krajina, an official from the provincial museum, and other academics met with Ray Williston, then Minister of Lands, Forests and Water Resources. They convinced him that creating such reserves would support Canada's upcoming Centennial and its commitment to participate in the International Biological Program (IBP). The following year, the Terrestrial Communities Subcommittee of the Canadian Committee of the IBP, comprised of

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elected government officials, civil servants, and academics, refined the concept of ecological reserves and laid the basis for survey work to inform establishment of ecological reserves across B.C. Encouraged by Krajina and other scientists, Williston and W.K. Kiernan, the Minister of Recreation and Conservation, agreed in 1968 to form an Ecological Reserve Committee to advise on the selection of potential reserve sites. Krajina served as the co-chair. In the Provincial Legislature in 1969, Minister Williston declared that these proposed reserves would “represent specific examples of biogeoclimatic zones of the Province. Their reservation will ensure that the present and future requirements of ecologists for biological study will be satisfied for all time”.

Early in 1971, during the Throne debate at the Legislature in Victoria, Minister Williston presented the multi-year study results and announced “that an Ecological Reserves Bill would be presented during the upcoming session of the legislature”, the second session of the 29th Parliament. The *Ecological Reserves Act* was introduced on the afternoon of March 17, 1971. At the second reading of the Bill, Williston announced, “it is our hope to establish at least one hundred ecological reserves in the Province. They are being handled, basically, as a study function with the cooperation of the Lands Branch, but most of the study work is being carried out by the University of British Columbia, at the present time, and Dr. V. Krajina is the person who has been largely responsible for developing the programme



The Honourable R. Williston, Minister of Lands, Forests and Water Resources, introduced the bill to create the *Ecological Reserve Act* into the BC Legislature in the spring session of 1971 where it soon received Royal Assent on April 2. (Photo by B. Davies, from Ray Williston fonds, UNBC Special Collections and Archives. #2000.13.1.39)



Dr. Krajina and two foresters from CANFOR in June 1974 during his first visit to the site where the tallest Douglas fir tree on Vancouver Island grew at 96 metres in height, later lost to a Nimpkish River flood. This area finally became the Nimpkish River ER (#118) in 1998. (Photo by Hans Roemer)

which we have at the moment.” Following spirited debate, where the Honourable Member for Surrey said that he saw ecological reserves as potential “living laboratories”, the BC Legislature unanimously voted to pass the Act with the goal of establishing at least 100 ecological reserves by 1980.

During the debate, several Opposition members expressed concerns about the need to better enshrine the protection of ecological reserves, e.g., “The one thing that I feel is missing in the Act, Mr. Speaker, in closing the remarks on second reading, is that we feel that these ecological reserves are so important that, once established, they should only be changed by an act of the Legislature and not by ministerial decree.” The Honourable Member for Kootenay and others remarked that it seemed odd to have the Act in the Lands, Forests, and Water Resources Department rather than the Department of Recreation and Conservation. The Honourable Member for Dewdney observed, “In my opinion, this bill will be hailed as one of the great landmarks in environment and ecology of our country... I’m sure this bill will be a standard for the rest of Canada and perhaps for the continent.” (Tuesday March 23, 1971 afternoon sitting, 1971 Legislative Session: 2nd Session, 29th Parliament, *HANSARD*). The Act received Royal Assent on April 2, 1971, bringing it into law.

Passage of the *Ecological Reserves Act* led to the

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establishment of the ecological reserves system in B.C. On May 2, 1971, the Government of B.C. issued the initial Order-in-Council under the Act to establish the first 29 ERs. By 1980, 101 ecological reserves were created, 66% of the 154 that were eventually designated. In 1973, the BC government established Ecological Reserve # 45 at Port Chanal on the west coast of Graham Island in Haida Gwaii, one of the largest reserves in the province, naming it the Vladimir J. Krajina Ecological Reserve in his honour. Regulations under the Act were brought into force on April 28, 1975 by which time Krajina “told a botany seminar at UBC that there were now 59 reserves covering 104,073 acres, while 235 proposals have been presented to the [provincial] government so far”.

Implementation of Krajina’s ecological reserve concept provided a legacy with multiple benefits in biodiversity conservation, environmental monitoring, scientific research in diverse fields, and environmental education. The system was studied and adopted not only in other provinces in Canada but also elsewhere in the world, including Western Australia.

Krajina’s frequently repeated goal was to protect one per cent of B.C.’s land area in ecological reserves. By the time Dr Krajina passed away on June 1, 1993, B.C. had over 130 ecological reserves, protecting 160,000 ha, one-tenth of his goal. Sadly, progress slowed following his death.

With 88.7 million ha of Crown land in B.C., one per cent would equal 887,000 ha. According to the BC government’s published records, the amount set aside in the entire protected areas system, including ecological reserves, comprises 13.4 million ha, which is 14.2 % of the B.C. land base (Government of British Columbia 2011, p 43). Additional legal constraints on timber harvesting provide additional protection leading some provincial government officials to conclude that 17% of B.C.’s Crown land is protected (Bawtinheimer, pers comm, May 26, 2020). As of February 2021, the 148 ecological reserves still under B.C.’s jurisdiction protect 112,112 ha. Small in size, the land and marine foreshore area in B.C.’s ecological reserves



V.J. Krajina at Haida Gwaii bog. (Photo from the FER website)

comprises just 0.13% of the Crown land base. To reach Krajina’s goal of one percent will require the setting aside of an additional 774,888 ha in ecological reserves.

The 50th anniversary of the *Ecological Reserves Act* provides an opportunity to reflect on Dr. Krajina’s legacy, and to resume efforts to achieve his conservation vision. Impetus for such action was bolstered when on September 28th, 2020 Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced Canada’s commitment to protect 25% of the country’s lands and waters by 2025, and 30% by 2030. Provincially, it will help to implement the recommendations of the 2020 Old-Growth Strategic Review Panel Report and support the efforts of First Nations in adding Indigenous protected and conserved areas.

An official proclamation was made on April 2nd (see page 2) to commemorate Dr Vladimir Krajina and the 50th anniversary of the *Ecological Reserves Act*. You can do your part to honour Dr. Krajina’s work to initiate B.C.’s ecological reserve system by asking your MLA and other key elected officials to add additional ecological reserves to fill gaps in the system, enhance the stewardship of the existing 148 ecological reserves, and ensure all ecological reserves have volunteer wardens and management plans. If you would like to assist the Friends of Ecological Reserves (FER) in supporting Dr Krajina’s vision by commemorating the 50th anniversary of the *Ecological Reserves Act*, you can find

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more information at <https://ecoreserves.bc.ca/> and contact FER at ecoreserves@hotmail.com.

Footnotes:

¹ See <https://www.botany.ubc.ca/people/vladimir-krajina>

² Including Charles Bell, Marc A. M. Bell, L.D. Cordes, Bruce E.C. Fraser, Karel Klinka, Richard Revel, R. T. Ogilvie, and M. K. Wali.

³ Including Adolf Ceska, Allen Banner, Charlie Beil Bob Green, Sybille Haeussler, Andrew Harcombe, Ted Lea, Will MacKenzie, Andy MacKinnon, Del Meidinger, John Parminter, Jim Pojar, Hans Roemer, Sandra Thomson and Rick Trowbridge.

⁴ Among the many awards and honours that Dr Krajina received were the George Lawson Medal, from the Canadian Botanical Association (1972), the Order of Canada (1981), and the Order of the White Lion from the Czech Republic (1990). On October 7, 2002, a plaque commemorating Professor Vladimir Krajina was unveiled in the Charles University Botanical Garden in Prague. Issue 64 of the Czech Botanical Society journal *Preslia*, was dedicated to Dr. Krajina, and contains a comprehensive botanical bibliography.

⁵ Wali, M. K. 1988. "Reflections on the life, work, and times of Vladimir Joseph Krajina", *Can. J. Bot.* 66: 2605-2619, p 2614.

⁶ Wali, Mohan K. and Jim Pojar. 2016. "The Legacy of Vladimir J. Krajina and Contributions to UBC Botany", *Conference: Centennial of the University of British Columbia in 2015*, p 14.

⁷ Drabek, J. 2012, *Vladimir Krajina: World War II Hero and Ecology*

Pioneer, Ronsdale Press, Vancouver, B.C., p. 149.

⁸ 9,174 ha, comprised of 8,057 ha of upland and 1,117 ha of foreshore

⁹ The page devoted to the Vladimir J. Krajina ER (#45) on the Friends of Ecological Reserves (FER) website contains not only information about this ecologically amazing reserve, but also additional information on the life of Dr Krajina. See https://ecoreserves.bc.ca/portfolio_item/045-vladimir-j-krajina/.

¹⁰ Drabek 2012, p 151.

¹¹ The number quoted is 131 ERs in Ceska, Adolf et al, "A Tribute to Vladimir Krajina", *The Log, Newsletter of the Friends of Ecological Reserves*, Fall 1993. Accessed online at <https://ecoreserves.bc.ca/2012/03/12/contributions-of-vladimir-krajina-to-ecological-reserves-in-bc/>. BC Parks records indicate that 134 ERs had been established by the end of 1993.

¹² See https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/natural-resource-use/land-water-use/crown-land/crown_land_indicators_statistics_report.pdf.

¹³ In the mid-2000s, the BC government transferred six ERs to other government agencies. Five ERs went to Parks Canada. Three ERs in the Skeena Region went to Gwaii Hannas National Park Reserve, #44 - East Copper/Jeffrey/ Rankine Islands, #95 - Anthony Island, and #96 - Kerouard Islands; and two in the West Coast Region went to Gulf Islands National Park Reserve, #121 - Brackman Island and #15 - Saturna Island. ER #74 (UBC Endowment Lands/Pacific Spirit) in the South Coast Region went to Metro Vancouver Regional Parks. The BC government transferred 521 ha of land to other agencies with the six ERs it gave away.

¹⁴ See <https://bcparks.ca/about/park-designations.html#ers>.



The Vladimir Krajina (Port Chanal) Ecological Reserve. (Photo taken in 2006 by Will MacKenzie)

50th Anniversary of the *Ecological Reserves Act* – A Timeline







Zoom Out – Zoom In: A Celebration of 50 Years of BC Parks Ecological Reserves

By Garry Fletcher

At the AGM of the Friends of Ecological Reserves in January, we showed a video done by Jamie Frith, a grade twelve student from Duncan, using UAV (drone) footage from Cathedral Grove.

Jamie volunteered to help us out with a project we want to do to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Ecological Reserves, and now we have arranged an MOU with BC Parks to carry out this project. We will call it *Zoom out – Zoom In: A Celebration of 50 Years of BC Parks Ecological Reserves in British Columbia*.

We want to present representative examples of different ecosystems in the Ecological Reserves of B.C. from a new perspective rarely seen by most people. Video images from a distance, from aside, through and from above will be done by the use of a DJI Mavic Air 2 UAV drone. Closeups at a level usually not observed will be done by macrophotography, another skill contributed by



Jamie Frith launches his DJI Mavic Air 2 UAV drone, spring 2021. (Photo by Garry Fletcher)

Jamie, with special care to not disturb any flora and fauna present in the reserves. The project will be limited to southern Vancouver Island because of BC Health Ministry required travel restrictions.

The video will emphasize the non-recreational role of Ecological Reserves and the role of Ecological Reserve wardens in serving as the eyes and ears for protection of these valued ecosystems.

It is essential to have war-

dens active for all reserves. The introduction of younger volunteer wardens to the system will help play a valuable role in assuring that the ecological integrity of Ecological Reserves is maintained in perpetuity.

Recordings of conversations with wardens will be used in the parts of the videos referring to their reserves.

So check on the FER website, and by late summer we should have the video on line.



ER #4 – Lasqueti Island
Represents shoreline forest with Rocky Mountain junipers. Grey reindeer lichen (*Cladonia rangiferina*) photo by Garry Fletcher.



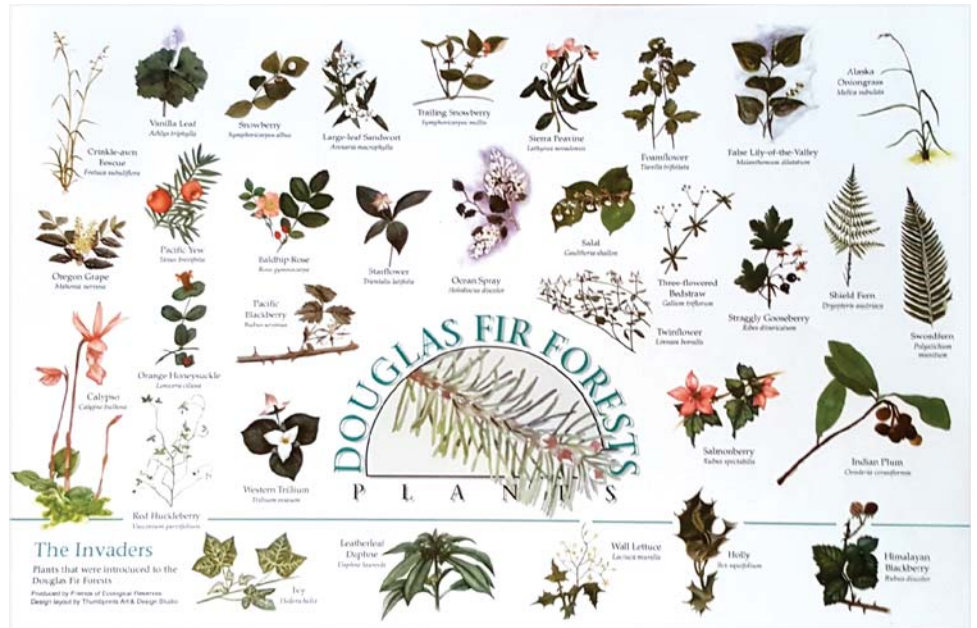
ER #5 – Lily Pad Lake
Protects undisturbed highland forest (Photo by Garry Fletcher).

A Feast for the Eyes

By Mary Rannie

A testament to the passion for nature of a small group of wildlife artists and naturalists is the series of four beautiful, eye-catching wildflower placemats that Friends of Ecological Reserves has been offering to the public for over 20 years. Have you ever wondered how these remarkable items that you see advertised in *The LOG* newsletter came into being? As I spoke on the phone to some of the contributing artists, the early days of FER came back to me. Peggy Frank, Trudy Chatwin, Briony Penn, Lynne Milnes, a few of the Board members of the nascent group, were my heroes. In my role as recording secretary of FER, I found their inspired dedication to protecting B.C.'s natural heritage tremendously uplifting and fun to share.

The idea of a colourful placemat – colour printing had become more affordable – came up at one of the monthly meetings in the latter half of the 1990s. “Why not use some the membership funds to create placemats featuring B.C.’s endangered habitats?” someone mused. “We could sell them in nature stores, garden clubs, tourist shops, and to natural history societies. The funds generated could be used for research projects in ERs.” Four areas in B.C. were identified: Garry Oak Meadows, Douglas Fir Forests, Interior Grasslands, and Alpine regions. (Two others including Wetlands were to come later). The contributing artists were enticed to Mike and Val Fenger’s beautifully situated cabin on Hornby Island to work on the *Garry Oak Meadows* over a long weekend in early spring.



The artists had been friends outside the Board but as Peggy and Trudy said, “It was a bonding experience. We worked around a big table or nearby, using live specimens or photographs from flower books.” Dogs and children ran around everywhere and Peggy remembers how creative and funny the kids were: “They gave us a gymnastics show and at one point, the smallest of the six children started to yell ‘No, no, not that again’ as she was tossed into the air by the other five!”

The second mat, *Douglas Fir Forests*, followed a year later and then came the third. The artists booked B&Bs in Penticton in 1998 and attended the 1st Meadowlark Festival while working on the *Interior Grasslands*. Fenwick Lansdowne created his Western Meadowlark for the festival and agreed to have it placed in the center of the placemat. Peggy Frank, known for her illustrations of B.C.’s grasses, worked on grasses, among other plants. (As a former President

of FER, and contributor to all four placemats, she received a print of Lansdowne’s meadowlark when she retired from the board in 2005.) The black and white reverse sides were sketched by Briony Penn (the first three) and Donald Gunn (the fourth). All but this last, *Alpine Flowers*, included a few non-native species, the *Invaders*. Design Layout for the first two was donated by Thumbprints Art and Design Studio; for the last two, by Jane Francis Design. A Wetlands placemat and Sub-Boreal Spruce mat did not make it beyond the idea stage.

“We were doing what we could, something small,” Peggy told me. “The placemats were done with love and respect and this comes through in them. Many of the contributors taught art and were artists for a living, but all donated their time.” It was a time when the Gulf Island ferry would actually

Continued on page 14



delay a departure for a late-arriving Salt Spring Islander, me, to make it home.” She remembers field trips, to the Honeymoon Bay ER, for example, established to protect pink fawn lily (*Erythronium revolutum*). A parking lot across the road threatened it and FER was able to calm down the concern of the community. “We were lay people, just trying to protect habitat, like ever-beleaguered old growth. “It was quite a time,” Briony Penn told

me. “We consulted wardens and locals to identify areas of interest and the problems they faced.” The placemats, while not about specific ecological reserves, highlighted the fragility of the ecosystems that the *Ecological Reserves Act* proclaimed to protect. They are fabulous tools to enhance the hiking experience, for education and outdoor classrooms, as well as for indoor tables and walls.

A list of the artists includes the core contributors to the four placemats as well as those who gathered in Penticton. They appear on *Interior Grasslands* as follows: Alison Watt, Karen Uldall-Ekman, George Traicheff, Peggy Sowden, Briony Penn, Fenwick Lansdowne, Ethel Hewson, Evelyn Hamilton, Dave Fraser, Peggy Frank, Donald Gunn and Trudy Carson. Thank you!



ER #6 – Buck Hills Road
Protects a stand of older western larch.
Spruce grouse (*Falicipennis canadensis*)
photo by Garry Fletcher.



ER #8 – Clayhurst
Protects eroding bluffs of Peace River parklands.
Common wood-nymph (*Cercyonis pegala*) photo by Kristen Miskelly.

FRIENDS OF ECOLOGICAL RESERVES MEMBERSHIP FORM

Box 8477 Stn Central, Victoria, BC V8W 3S1

☐ Renewal for 2019 ☐ Renewal for 2020 ☐ New membership

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Friends of Ecological Reserves AGM

May 4, 2021

7:30 - 9:30 pm

The Friends of Ecological Reserves (FER) will be holding a special Annual General Meeting on Wednesday, May 4th via Zoom teleconferencing. **Please see below for Zoom login information.**

In case you missed it, the year 2021 is a special one for us! It's the 50th anniversary of the passing of the *Ecological Reserves Act* and the creation of the first Ecological Reserves in British Columbia.

We are continuing our search for new FER Board members. At our previous AGM at the end of January, we were fortunate enough to welcome two new Board members, Kate McKeown and Diane Morin who unfortunately had to drop out after a few months. We would like to thank her for her contributions during that time.

Starting at 7:30 pm, our storytellers will be: name, name, name.

The Board of the Friends of Ecological Reserves is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting

Topic: Storytellers of the history of the making of B.C.'s Ecological Reserves.

Time: May 4, 2021 07:30 PM Pacific Time

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85448701306?pwd=ZHFFZGRQVU1oSHBSCSW9lbDdiaFFndz09>

Meeting ID: 854 4870 1306

Passcode: 092322

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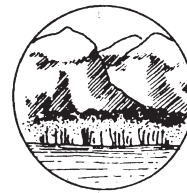
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Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/keHXJKrVTO>

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