



FRIENDS OF ECOLOGICAL RESERVES

P.O. Box 8477 Stn Central,
Victoria, BC V8W 3S1 <http://ecoreserves.bc.ca/>

Friends of Ecological Reserves Strategic Plan 2023- 2025

Mission

‘Friends of Ecological Reserves’ (FER) is a group of concerned citizens/volunteers whose purpose is to advocate for and promote the Ecological Reserve System, and the role that a robust system of Ecological Reserves (ERs) can achieve for the conservation and protection of natural ecosystems and their biodiversity, particularly within the context of climate change and the cumulative effects of resource development.

Purpose of the Ecological Reserve (ER) System

The purpose of the ER System is to safeguard sufficient numbers of representative, unique, fragile, and/or significant elements of BC’s natural biodiversity, ecosystems, and traditional features, and to mitigate the loss of BC’s biodiversity by climate change and resource use.

The ER system, in concert with other aspects of BC’s protected areas system and resource management regime, strengthens the protection of natural ecosystems as sites for monitoring, study, and research. Once established, ERs provide natural benchmarks for education and research; protection of cultural features; and refugia for genetic materials.

Friends of Ecological Reserves (FER) Values

Ecological Integrity – FER upholds the sustainability and stewardship of biodiversity and ecosystem integrity.

Selfless Service – FER contributes its members’ time and expertise to advocate for the ER System and the benefits it provides to all British Columbians. FER supports volunteers dedicated to stewardship of specific ERs.

Wardens — FER values the donation of time, energy, knowledge and passion, which wardens bring to supporting ecological conservation in ERs.

Knowledge – FER values scientific and traditional Indigenous sources of knowledge about ecosystems. We foster evidence-based, scientific research, and traditional ecological knowledge studies in ERs. We act as a knowledge repository, maintain meticulous records on ERs, and provide this as a resource on our website.

Respect – FER respects nature and the knowledge we gain from the wisdom of Indigenous and other elders.

Youth – FER values the energy, skills, academic training, and expertise of youth as well as their perspectives and approaches to problem-solving. We strive to encourage their involvement in our organization.



Collaboration – FER takes a collaborative approach to issues and strives to work in partnership with other initiatives, organizations, and governments to accomplish our goals.

Indigenous Peoples – FER seeks the guidance of, and collaboration with, Indigenous peoples in all aspects of our work. This includes hands-on learning, conservation of traditional ecological knowledge, stewardship/guardianship of ERs, and the expansion of the ER system to protect Indigenous cultural and ecological values.

Focus – FER undertakes targeted and focused actions, based on our organization’s resources and priorities.

Goals, Objectives and Desired Results

Background

- The BC government has committed to increase protected areas to 30% of BC’s lands by the year 2030. FER advocates that a significant portion of natural area protection be designated as ERs. An expanded ER system would protect the full range of natural and rare ecosystems and endemic species, including Indigenous cultural values. We support the design of an ER system that mitigates loss of species and biodiversity due to climate change and resource use.
- Ecological Reserves have the highest legal level of conservation protection.

GOAL 1. Promote/advocate for a world class Ecological Protection System for BC

Objectives

1.1 Support implementation of the international, national and provincial mandate to protect 30% of terrestrial and inland water, and of coastal and marine areas by 2030.

1.2 Provide strong support for development and expansion of a resilient ER system, to protect British Columbia’s natural areas.

1.3 Promote a transparent and clear process with established criteria and procedures to propose, assess, and establish new ERs, expand or modify existing ERs parks conservation areas, wildlife protection areas etc.

1.4 Join with and bring together other organizations working to protect 30% of BC with new ERs expanded or modified ERs, parks, conservation areas, wildlife protection areas, etc.

1.5 Build public understanding and support for an ER system as an integral element of a world-class protected areas system to sustain biodiversity, including a focus on priorities that avert species and ecosystem losses.

1.6 Increase Provincial and First Nations governments and local citizens awareness of gaps in the ER system, and support for the establishment of additional ERs to address ecological gaps.

1.7 Seek funding for priority projects.



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Results

- A world class system to protect 30% of nature by setting aside protected areas using ecological reserves and conservancies by 2030.

GOAL 2. Promote/advocate for effective management and oversight of ERs

Objectives

- 2.1 Develop a strong, vital stewardship program including Volunteer Wardens, Indigenous Guardians, and Knowledge Keepers in all ERs.
- 2.2 Support a strong Provincial government/First Nations presence in ERs, including effective compliance and enforcement, particularly where the reserves or their features are at risk.
- 2.3 Periodic public reporting on condition and risks to each ER.

Results

- A strong, vital stewardship program including Volunteer Wardens, Indigenous Guardians and Knowledge Keepers in all ERs.
- Timely and appropriate monitoring and assessment of each ER to identify trends, risks, and threats in order to inform management decisions. This would include a systematic inventory in all ERs to allow for future comparisons, and would support reporting on the state of the ER system as a whole.

GOAL 3. Promote/advocate the monitoring and study of ecology and biodiversity in ERs

Objectives

- 3.1 Develop strong connections with academic institutions, researchers, and students to inventory ERs. Seek funding for research projects in ERs which produce peer-reviewed, scientific reports.
- 3.2 Promote the use of knowledge, information, and data to all levels of government and the community to advance the protection and conservation of 30% of BC's natural areas.
- 3.3 Seek support for climate change monitoring, long-term vegetation, and species monitoring sites as new ERs.
- 3.4 Promote land use practices outside of ERs across the broader landscapes so that they are consistent with sustaining species outside and between protected areas.
- 3.5 Promote outreach to all levels of government to foster the use of knowledge, information, and data from ERs to advance the protection and conservation of nature.

Results

- Full utilization of the ER system by academic institutions, researchers, students and citizen scientists.
- Credible, respected scientific documentation and peer review of research in ERs.



GOAL 4. Explain the Benefits of the ER System – Raise awareness and understanding and acceptance of the role of ERs for biodiversity conservation

Objectives

- 4.1 Seek First Nations support for existing ERs in their territories and clarifying that ERs are consistent with their traditional uses.
- 4.2 Support traditional ecological knowledge studies and hands-on learning in existing ERs, with collaborative efforts to protect Indigenous ecological and cultural values within new and expanded ER System as determined by and in consultation with Indigenous peoples.
- 4.3 Contact adjacent tenure holders to ERs to ensure they are aware of the purpose and importance of ERs and to seek their support for effective protection and stewardship to reduce risks to these reserves.
- 4.4 Continue to expand promotion of ecological reserves by means of the FER website, the newsletter “the Log”, and by preparing articles for the press, journals and other media means.

Results

- Partnerships with environmental non-government organizations (ENGOS), Indigenous peoples and neighbours of ERs, youth, students and researchers to advance biological understanding of the purpose of ERs.

GOAL 5. Sustain a nurturing and effective volunteer organization focused on the ER system and its role in sustaining BC’s biodiversity

Objectives

- 5.1 Promote a multi-generational membership base that includes stewards of ERs across BC; students, researchers and traditional knowledge keepers; and others with an interest in nature and sustaining biological diversity+.
- 5.2 Seek funding opportunities from all possible sources to better advance FER goals.
- 5.3 Support a diverse, skilled, knowledgeable, and growing volunteer base and when possible, paid expertise to support projects related to FER goals.
- 5.4 Work in conjunction with BC parks to recruit Wardens for ERs lacking guardianship by individuals or groups, in accordance with the qualifications established by BC Parks.

Results

- An energetic Board of Directors with a range of expertise related to ERs, including ecosystems science, governance, communications, fundraising, and organizational management.
- Strategic partnerships with like-minded organizations to strengthen FER capacity and advance shared goals.