



BOWEN ISLAND OCP UPDATE

Bowen Island features significant areas of undeveloped Crown Land, parkland, ecological reserve, formal and informal hiking trails and numerous beaches. According to ecosystems mapping conducted by the Islands Trust, Bowen Island contains a variety of natural ecosystems including:

- Mature forests;
- Old growth forests (in the southwest and northwest coastal areas) supporting a rich community of wildlife, plant and invertebrate species;
- Wetlands (adjacent to lakes) which provide critical habitats for many rare species and plant communities and play an important role in maintaining water quality via biofiltration and regulating rainfall run-off;
- Lacustrine (freshwater) ecosystems; and
- Cliff ecosystems.

Mature forests comprise the vast majority of Bowen Island's natural ecosystems and include stands of coniferous and mixed coniferous-deciduous trees between 80 and 250 years old¹. Bowen Island is characterized by the Coastal Western Hemlock Biogeoclimatic zone with Western hemlock being the most common forest cover species followed by Western red cedar and Douglas-fir. Typical understorey vegetation includes Salal, Dull Oregon Grape and Red Huckleberry. In the wetter maritime subzone, mosses are typical often consisting of Oregon beaked moss, Step Moss and Lanky Moss. The south part of the island and crown islets immediately off-shore contain elements that are characteristic of the coastal Douglas-Fir Biogeoclimatic Zone.²

Significant parkland and natural areas include Crippen Regional Park (Metro Vancouver), Mount Collins and Mt. Gardner (Crown land), Headwaters and Quarry Parks (municipal), Fairy Fen Nature Reserve (Islands Trust Fund), and the Apodaca Provincial Park, and the Ecological Reserve (provincial designation). Many of these areas include extensive trail networks, rights-of-ways, public beach and shore access areas and linear parks. Approximately 22% of the Bowen Island landscape has been modified to accommodate human uses such as buildings, roadways, agriculture, a golf course and community recreation areas³. The modified landscape is generally characterized as "rural ecosystems" where human developments are interspersed with forests.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Potential threats to Bowen's natural ecosystems include pressure from development and recreational use. Older forest ecosystems are particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts.⁴

How can development occur in a manner that is sensitive to Bowen's natural ecosystems?

^{1,3} Islands Trust Ecosystem Map — Bowen Island. www.islandstrust.bc.ca/lup/map/ecosystem.cfm.

² The Crown Lands of Bowen Island: An Inventory and Assessment of Resources and Values. Dunster & Associates Environmental Consultants Ltd., 2000.

⁴ Sensitive Ecosystems Inventory: Bowen-Gambier Areas. BC Ministry of Environment. www.env.gov.bc.ca/sei/bowen/index.html.

Bowen Island Municipality: Sensitive Ecosystems

- CB - Coastal Bluff
- HT - Terrestrial Herbaceous
- OF - Old Forest
- RI - Riparian
- SG - Older Second Growth Forest
- SV - Sparsely Vegetated
- WD - Woodland
- WN - Wetland



Data Source: Bowen Island Municipality GIS (July 2009)

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