

BC's Coast Region: Species & Ecosystems of Conservation

Western Red Cedar / Common Snowberry (*Thuja plicata* / *Symphocarpus albus*)

Global: GNR, Provincial: S2, BC List: Red, BEC: CDFmm/07



Common Snowberry



Vanilla Leaf

Notes: This narrow (linear), but very productive, species-rich community is restricted to floodplains flanking suitably large sediment-bearing rivers or streams. Dominant canopy species are red alder with big-leaf maple and western redcedar. Salmonberry and common snowberry are prominent in the shrub layer. The characteristically moist and rich soils support a diverse herb layer. As an indicator of the productive fluvial soils, coastal leafy moss is often dominant in the moderately developed moss layer.

Description

This high bench floodplain community has a tree layer dominated by red alder with variable minor amounts of bigleaf maple and western redcedar. Black cottonwood may also be present. The moderately developed shrub layer features salmonberry and common snowberry, with variable lower coverage of coastal red elderberry, devil's club and stink current. Piggy-back plant, sword fern and vanilla-leaf are prominent in the variably developed herb layer. Other groundcover species include: star-flowered false Solomon's-seal, blue wildrye, lady fern, three-leaved foamflower, false lily-of-the-valley and mountain sweet-cicely. The moss layer is moderately developed with coastal leafy moss, palm tree moss and Oregon beaked-moss on rich, moist microsites characterized by moder and mull humus soils.

Threats

The decline of this floodplain community is due to extensive past timber harvesting as well as grazing. The land and water resources are highly valued for rural and urban development. The larger geographic area is predominantly private land, where protective measures for red listed plant communities are unfortunately very limited. All areas continue to experience development pressures. Presently as little as 0.5% of the CDFmm subzone remains as mature or old forest stage in British Columbia. Livestock grazing and ungulate browsing are considered threats. It is also susceptible to invasive species, especially after clearing.

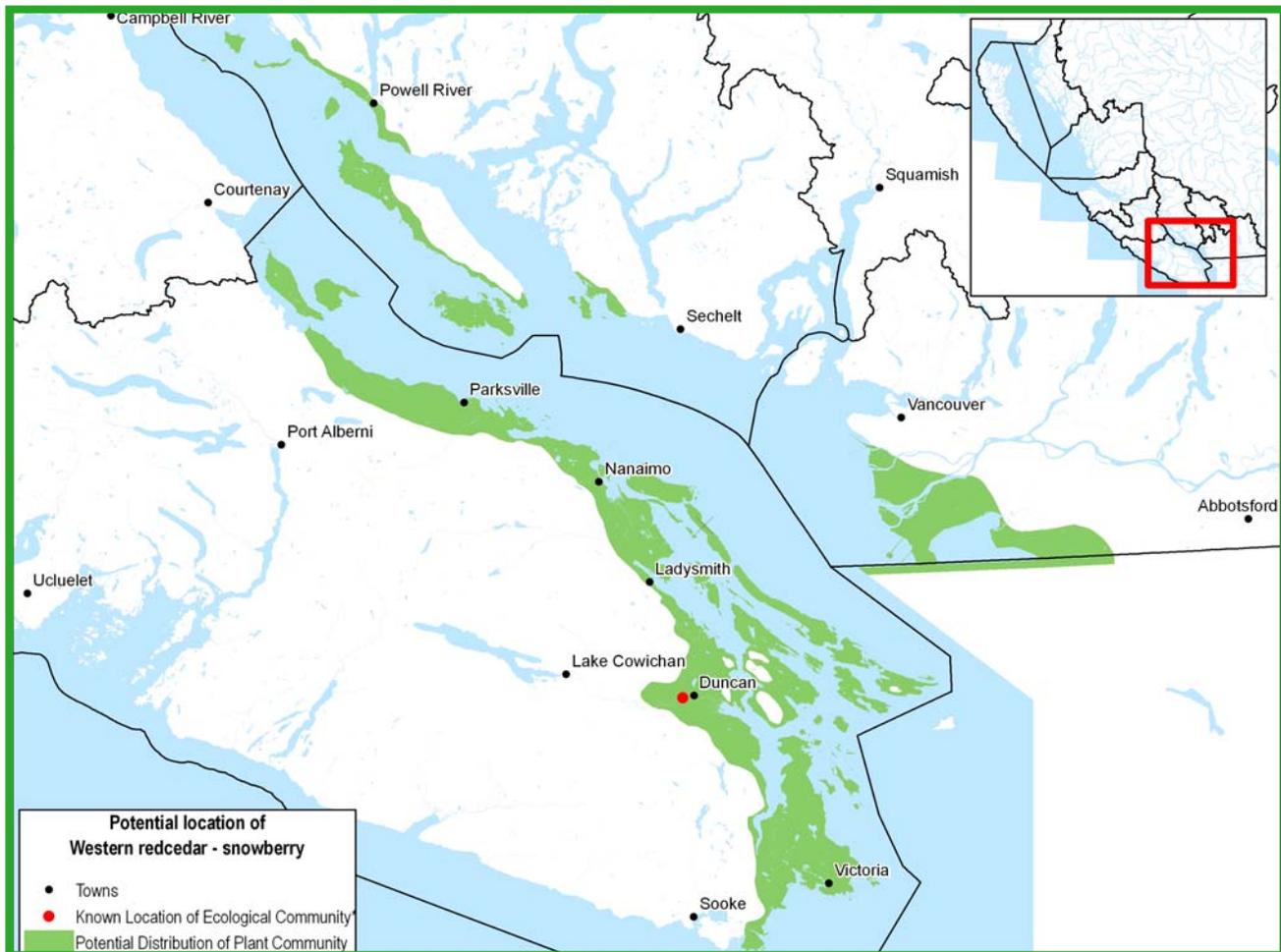
Conservation & Management Objectives

BC's Conservation Framework (CF) action plan sets out three goals that can be used to form the basis for conservation planning for BC's at risk plant communities: Contribute to global efforts for species and ecosystem conservation; Prevent species and ecosystems from becoming at risk; and maintain the diversity of native species and ecosystems.

Specific activities should include: Ecosystem protection, planning (including developing or updating recovery plans), promotion of private land stewardship and compiling or updating status reports (trends, threats, ecological function and processes, successional pathways, identification of information gaps etc.).

Distribution

Classified as the CDFmm/07 site series, this plant community is found on high bench flood plains with well drained fluvial soils and a predominantly rich nutrient regime. This plant community is associated with suitably large streams or rivers on south-eastern Vancouver Island as far north as between Parksville and Courtenay. Potentially also found within western parts of White Rock and the Fraser River delta, and the Sunshine Coast from Halfmoon Bay area northward to Powell River - Lund.



Content for this Factsheet has been derived from the following sources

B.C. Conservation Data Centre. 2010 [internet]. Ecological Community Summary: Western Red Cedar / Common Snowberry. BC MoE.
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Prepared by: Warren Warttig, Interfor and Alex Inselberg for the South Coast Conservation Program (SCCP) in partnership with: International Forest Products (Interfor), Capacity Forestry (CapFor) and the BC Ministry of Environment (BC MoE), E-Flora and E-Fauna the Electronic Atlas of the Flora and Fauna of BC, Species at Risk & Local Government: A Primer for BC. Funding for this factsheet was made possible through the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI): <http://www.sfiprogram.org/>

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