

TROUT CREEK

ER #7

ORIGINAL PURPOSE To conserve representative semi-arid vegetation dominated by ponderosa pine, bunchgrass and Douglas-fir in the southern interior of B.C.

OVERVIEW

Date established:	4 May 1971	Location:	SW of Summerland
ORC #:	3007		49°33'N
Map number:	82 E/12E		119°42'W

Latitude:
Longitude:

Total Area:	75 ha	Elevation:	540-850 m
Land:	75 ha		

Access: Access by road from Summerland.

Biogeoclimatic Zones:	Ponderosa Pine (PP)
Biogeoclimatic Variant:	PPxh1 Okanagan Very Dry Hot
Ecosection:	Northern Okanagan Basin
Region:	Okanagan
Management Area:	Central Okanagan

COMPOSITION

Physical: The deep narrow Trout Creek canyon borders the west and south sides of this reserve. The reserve comprises nearly flat benches with lacustrine soils cut by small gullies, as well as several lava rock outcroppings and talus slopes. Slope exposure is largely to the south and southwest.

Biological: Ponderosa pine dominates three of the four plant communities reported. In descending order of frequency, they are: ponderosa pine-bluebunch wheatgrass with occasional rabbitbrush on terraces and slopes; ponderosa pine-Douglas-fir-Saskatoon (not listed in the CDC) on talus slopes; and a small amount of Douglas-fir-ponderosa pine-pinegrass. Wallace's selaginella characterizes a community of scattered herbs on rocky outcrops.

Some of the interesting dryland plants are prickly-pear cactus, bitterroot, hoary false yarrow, Columbia goldenweed, scarlet gilia, prickly phlox and narrow-leaved brickellia.

Mourning Dove, Gray Flycatcher, Vesper Sparrow, White-breasted and Pygmy Nuthatch, Cassin's finch, Dusky Grouse and Townsend's Solitaire nest here while interesting sightings include Golden Eagle, Rock Wren, White-throated Swift and Chipping Sparrow. A variety of other dry forest birds are present. Common mammals include Mule Deer, Coyotes, Black Bears and Chipmunks. The lack of water on the reserve limits the variety and number of mammals.

The Western Terrestrial Garter Snake ssp. *vagrans*, Common Garter Snake, Racer, Northern Rubber Boa, Gopher Snake and Western Rattlesnake have

been found in this semi-arid parkland of ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir, ranking it as an important site in terms of reptile diversity.

MANAGEMENT CONCERNS

SIGNIFICANT SPECIES	BC LIST STATUS	COSEWIC STATUS	CF PRIORITY
Columbian goldenweed			4
The Dalles milk-vetch	Red listed		2
narrow-leaved brickellia	Blue listed		3
Gopher Snake, ssp. <i>deserticola</i>	Blue listed	Threatened (2002)	2
Western Rattlesnake	Blue listed	Threatened (2004)	2
Gray Flycatcher	Blue listed	Not At Risk (1992)	2

THREATS

Climate Change: The IPCC projects the encroachment of invasive species to increase in many North American areas due to their ability to thrive in a multitude of environments, supplanting other native species. Possible changes in natural disturbance regimes, such as forest-fires and beetle infestation could shift the ecosystem's successional progression, creating favourable habitat for invasive pioneer species. These synergisms, like most processes, are hypothetical and complex and an inevitable outcome is impossible to predict.

Non-native species: Aggressive invasive weeds such as knapweed, sulphur cinquefoil and Dalmation toadflax. Biological control has had a significant impact on knapweed and toadflax growth.

Recreation: Fencing has almost completely stopped damage by ATVs and motor bikes.

RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

One M.Sc. thesis on vegetation and two reports on snakes and fencing are available as background. A five year study on leaf litter decomposition and nitrogen release 1992-1997 was undertaken by Cindy Prescott of the Faculty of Forestry, UBC.

SCIENTIFIC NAMES OF SPECIES MENTIONED IN THE TROUT CREEK ER ACCOUNT

Flora

bitterroot (*Lewisia rediviva*)
brickellia, narrow-leaved (*Brickellia oblongifolia*)
cactus, prickly-pear (*Opuntia fragilis*)
cinquefoil, sulphur (*Potentilla recta*)
Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*)
gilia, scarlet (*Ipomopsis aggregata* var. *aggregata*)
goldenweed, Columbia (*Pyrrocoma carthamoides* ssp. *carthamoides*)
knapweed, (*Centaurea* sp.)
milk-vetch, The Dalles (*Astragalus sclerocaruis*)
phlox, prickly (*Linanthus pungens*)
pine, ponderosa (*Pinus ponderosa*)
pinegrass (*Calamagrostis rubescens*)
rabbit-brush, green (*Chrysothamnus viscidiflorus* var. *lanceolatus*)
Saskatoon (*Amelanchier alnifolia*)
selaginella, Wallace's (*Selaginella wallacei*)
toadflax, Dalmatian (*Linaria genistifolia* spp. *dalmatica*)
wheatgrass, bluebunch (*Pseudoroegneria spicata*)
yarrow, hoary false (*Chaenactis douglasii* var. *douglasii*)

Fauna

Bear, American Black (*Ursus americanus*)
Boa, Northern Rubber (*Charina bottae*)
Chipmunk (*Neotamias* spp.)
Coyote (*Canis latrans*)
Deer, Mule (*Odocoileus hemionus*)
Dove, Mourning (*Zenaida macroura*)
Eagle, Golden (*Aquila chrysaetos*)
Finch, Cassin's (*Carpodacus cassinii*)
Flycatcher, Gray (*Empidonax wrightii*)
Nuthatch, Pygmy (*Sitta pygmaea*)
Nuthatch, White-breasted (*Sitta carolinensis*)
Racer (*Coluber constrictor*)
Rattlesnake, Western (*Crotalus oreganus*)
Snake, Common Garter (*Thamnophis sirtalis*)
Snake, Gopher *deserticola* subspecies (*Pituophis catenifer deserticola*)
Snake, Western Terrestrial Garter *vagrans* subspecies (*Thamnophis elegans vagrans*)
Solitaire, Townsend's (*Myadestes townsendi*)
Sparrow, Chipping (*Spizella passerina*)
Sparrow, Vesper (*Pooecetes gramineus*)
Swift, White-throated (*Aeronautes saxatalis*)
Wren, Rock (*Salpinctes obsoletus*)