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The Mountain Hemlock Zone of British Columbia

Summary

This report describes in some detail both non-forested and forested ecosystems of the Mountain Hemlock (MH) zone of British Columbia. It is one of 14 technical reports intended to provide a comprehensive account of biogeoclimatic ecosystem classification (BEC) as well as some management implications for each zone in the province. These 14 zonal reports should fill the gap between the general description given in "Ecosystems of British Columbia" and the information on site identification and interpretation given in regional field guides and other research reports.

We present the vegetation, zonal, and site classification developed from the data gathered over the past 20 years by the Ecological Program Staff of the BC Forest Service throughout the whole range of the MH zone. In addition to classification, we included measures of plant diversity and similarity for delineated units and information from recent published and unpublished studies on forest dynamics, soil nutrient availability, regeneration, productivity, and dendrochronology carried out in the MH zone. Although this report contains new data and information, we consider our understanding of coastal subalpine ecosystems to be incomplete, as there are yet many questions for which there are only speculative answers.

We combined, analyzed, synthesized, and interpreted all available data on non-forested and forested coastal subalpine ecosystems that were obtained using the standard methods of sampling and analysis. The resulting classification thus integrates several local classifications. Following a brief description of methodology, we give an account of the environment of the MH zone. The pivotal sections present zonal, vegetation, and site classification. Each of the three classifications features a synopsis, diagnostic tables and description of delineated units. The following sections deal with vegetation-environment relationships and silvicultural implications.

We anticipate that this and subsequent reports (i) will provide an adequate and up-to-date account on ecosystem classification according to the BEC system and (ii) will be used as tools for further systematic ecosystem studies, ecosystem mapping, and implementation of ecosystem-specific management.

Table of Contents

1 INTRODUCTION 1

2 REGIONAL DESCRIPTION
- 2.1 LOCATION AND DISTRIBUTION 3
- 2.2 CLIMATE 4
- 2.3 PHYSIOGRAPHY AND SURFICIAL MATERIALS 5
- 2.4 SOILS AND HUMUS FORMS 6
- 2.5 VEGETATION 6
- 2.6 WILDLIFE 8
- 2.7 LAND USE 9

3 ECOSYSTEM CLASSIFICATION
- 3.1 CONCEPTS AND METHODS 11
  - Concepts of Ecosystem Classification 11
  - Ecosystem Sampling 12
  - Vegetation Classification 12
  - Similarity and Spectral Analysis 14
  - Zonal (Climatic) Classification 15
  - Site Classification 15
- 3.2 ZONAL CLASSIFICATION 17
  - Coastal Biogeoclimatic Zone 17
  - Subzones and Variants of the Mountain Hemlock Zone 20
  - Zonation and Climatic Localisms 29
- 3.3 VEGETATION CLASSIFICATION 33
  - Non-Forested Ecosystems 33
  - Forested Ecosystems 41
- 3.4 SITE CLASSIFICATION 53
  - Parkland MH Subzones 54
  - Forested MH Subzones 59

3.5 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE UNITS 69
Site Units of the Parkland MH Subzones 69
Rhizocarpon (A) site group 69
Phlox (B) site group 71
HmYc – Rhacomitrium (C) site association 72
HmBa – Mountain-heather (D) site association 73
HmBl – Mountain-heather (E) site association 74
Hm – Mountain-heather (F) site association 75
Hm – Crowberry (G) site association 76
Mountain-heather (H) site group 77
Valerian (I) site group 78
Sitka Alder (J) site group 79
Swamp Moss (K) site group 80
Showy Sedge (L) site group 81
Marsupella (M) site group 82
Several-flowered Sedge (N) site group 83
Cotton-grass (O) site group 84
Alpine Sedge (P) site group 85
Site Units of the Forested Mountain Hemlock Subzones 86
HmYc – Rhacomitrium (C) site association 86
Hm – Mountain-heather (F) site association 86
HmBa – Mountain-heather (D) site association 86
HmBl – Mountain-heather (E) site association 86
Hm – Copperbush (1) site association 87
HmBa – Blueberry (2) site association 88
HmBa – Moist Blueberry (2) site association 89
Hm – Crowberry (G) site association 90
HmSs – Blueberry (4) site association 90
HmYc – Deer-cabbage (5) site association 92
Hm – Sphagnum (6) site association 93
HmBa – Foamflower (7) site association 94
HmBl – Valerian (8) site association 95
HmSs – Reedgrass (9) site association 96
HmYc – Twistedstalk (10) site association 97
HmBa – Lady fern (11) site association 98
HmBl – Lady fern (12) site association 99
HmYc – Marsh-marigold (13) site association 100
HmYc – Skunk cabbage (14) site association 101

4 VEGETATION-ENVIRONMENT RELATIONSHIPS
4.1 STAND STRUCTURE AND FOREST DYNAMICS 103
4.2 THE INFLUENCE OF SNOW 110
4.3 REGENERATION PATTERNS 114
4.4 FOREST PRODUCTIVITY 117
4.5 HEIGHT GROWTH AND SITE INDEX MODELS FOR PACIFIC SILVER FIR 119
4.6 SOIL NUTRIENT REGIME 126
4.7 FOREST PRODUCTIVITY - SITE RELATIONSHIPS 130
4.8 RESPONSES OF TREE-RINGS OF PACIFIC SILVER FIR TO CLIMATIC VARIATIONS 134

5 RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND SILVICULTURAL IMPLICATIONS
5.1 INTRODUCTION 137
5.2 MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONAL BACKGROUND 138
5.3 THE DECISION TO HARVEST OR NOT TO HARVEST 140
5.4 THE IMPACT OF CUTTING ON TIMBER AND NON-TIMBER RESOURCES 143
5.5 STANDS PROPOSED TO BE EXCLUDED FROM HARVESTING 144
5.6 TREE SPECIES OPTIONS 153
5.7 REPRODUCTION CUTTING OPTIONS 162
5.8 REGENERATION ON DISTURBED SITES 167
5.9 NATURAL REGENERATION AFTER CLEARCUTTING: A CASE STUDY 174
5.10 SUMMARY OF MANAGEMENT ISSUES AND RESEARCH NEEDS 176

6 REFERENCES 179

Ordering Information

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Reference

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