

## BC's Coast Region: Species & Ecosystems of Conservation

### Ecological community: Douglas-fir / Dull Oregon-grape (*Pseudotsuga menziesii* / *Mahonia nervosa*)

Global: G2, Provincial: S2, BC List: Red, BEC: CDFmm/01 Identified Wildlife Ecological community



Oregon Beaked-moss



Dull Oregon-grape

Notes: This ecological community is dominated by Douglas-fir. The shrub layer is largely composed of dull Oregon-grape, salal and oceanspray. The sparse herb layer usually includes some broad-leaved starflower, sword fern and bracken fern. Normally there is a well developed moss layer including Oregon beaked-moss.

#### Description

This moderately open to closed canopy, small patch community (5-50 ha), is dominated by Douglas-fir, with some grand fir and western redcedar. Leading species in the moderate-to-dense shrub layer are dull Oregon-grape, salal, oceanspray and trailing blackberry. The sparse herb layer usually includes broad-leaved starflower, sword fern and bracken fern. The well developed moss layer features Oregon beaked-moss, electrified cat's-tail moss and step moss. Parent soil materials are morainal and occasionally colluvial or marine. The soil nutrient regime is predominantly medium to slightly poor. The soils are classified as Orthic Dystric Brunisols with silty loam to sandy loam textures.

#### Threats

Originally this ecological community was widespread in the drier, warmer portions of the Pacific Coastal formation of western North America. Its decline is due to extensive past timber harvesting as well as grazing within proximity to high density human populations. These lands are highly valued for rural and urban development, which continues to this day. This geographic area is predominantly private land, where protective measures for red listed plant communities are unfortunately very limited. All areas continue to have 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. Climate change is another aggravating factor for this community.

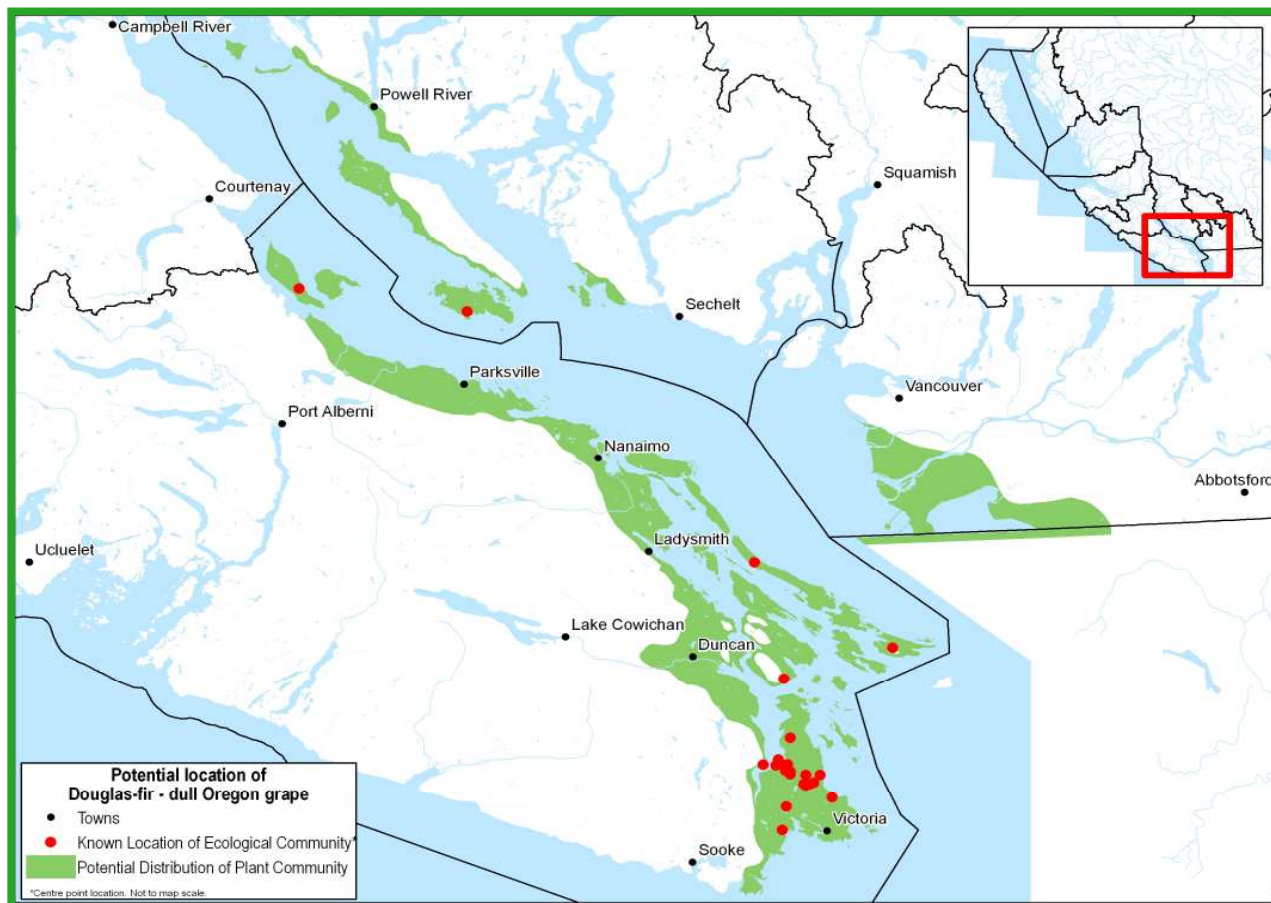
#### Conservation & Management Objectives

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. These goals should be integrated with direct conservation and management measures set out in the "Identified Wildlife Accounts and Measures for the Douglas-fir/dull Oregon-grape *Pseudotsuga menziesii*/Mahonia nervosa ecological community V 2004.

**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

This ecological community corresponds to the CDFmm/01 site series, which by definition is the zonal or intermediate ecosystem which best reflects the regional climate of the CDFmm subzone, and hence its distribution. It is low elevation (0-200 m asl), and is primarily on mid slopes (all aspects). Potentially found on south-eastern Vancouver Island from its most southerly tip northward to between Courtenay and Parksville. This includes the southern Gulf Islands as well as Denman, Hornby, Lasquiti, Thormanby, Harwood, Savary, and Hemando Islands, as well as western Texada Island, and outer extremities of the Sunshine Coast from Halfmoon Bay area northward to the Powell River - Lund area. Although western parts of the Fraser River delta and White Rock are mapped within the CDFmm subzone, the agricultural-quality soil conditions on the delta in particular would be too moist and rich for this ecological community.



Content for this Factsheet has been derived from the following sources

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 Pojar, J. S. Flynn & C. Cadrin. Accounts and Measures for Managing Identified Wildlife. V 2004. [Internet]. Douglas-fir/Dull Oregon-grape *Pseudotsuga menziesii*/Mahonia nervosa ecological community BC Ministry of Forests and Range.

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Every effort has been made to ensure content accuracy. Comments or corrections should be directed to the South Coast Conservation Program: [info@sccp.ca](mailto:info@sccp.ca). Content updated August 2010.

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