

BC's Coast Region: Species & Ecosystems of Conservation
Ecological community: Red Alder / Skunk Cabbage (*Alnus rubra* / *Lysichiton americanus*) Global: GNR, Provincial: S2, BC List: Red, BEC: CDFmm/11



Notes: The canopy is dominated by western redcedar and or red alder. Trees and shrubs grow primarily on elevated micro-sites. The leading shrub layer species is often salmonberry. In the herb layer skunk cabbage and lady fern are the most prominent. This ecological community is dependent on specific wetland soils.

Description

This mature to old open forest community is dominated by western redcedar and or a deciduous hardwood (usually red alder). The canopy can include small amounts of bigleaf maple and western hemlock. Trees and shrubs tend to be restricted to elevated micro-sites to survive saturated conditions. The shrub layer features salmonberry, often accompanied by Indian-plum and coastal red elderberry. The herb layer is characteristically a lush growth of skunk cabbage and lady fern. The moss layer is moderately well developed, featuring slender beaked-moss palm tree moss.

Threats

The decline of this ecological community is due to extensive past timber harvesting as well as intensive agriculture (drainage) and rural or urban development (filling) within a relatively small area. 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.

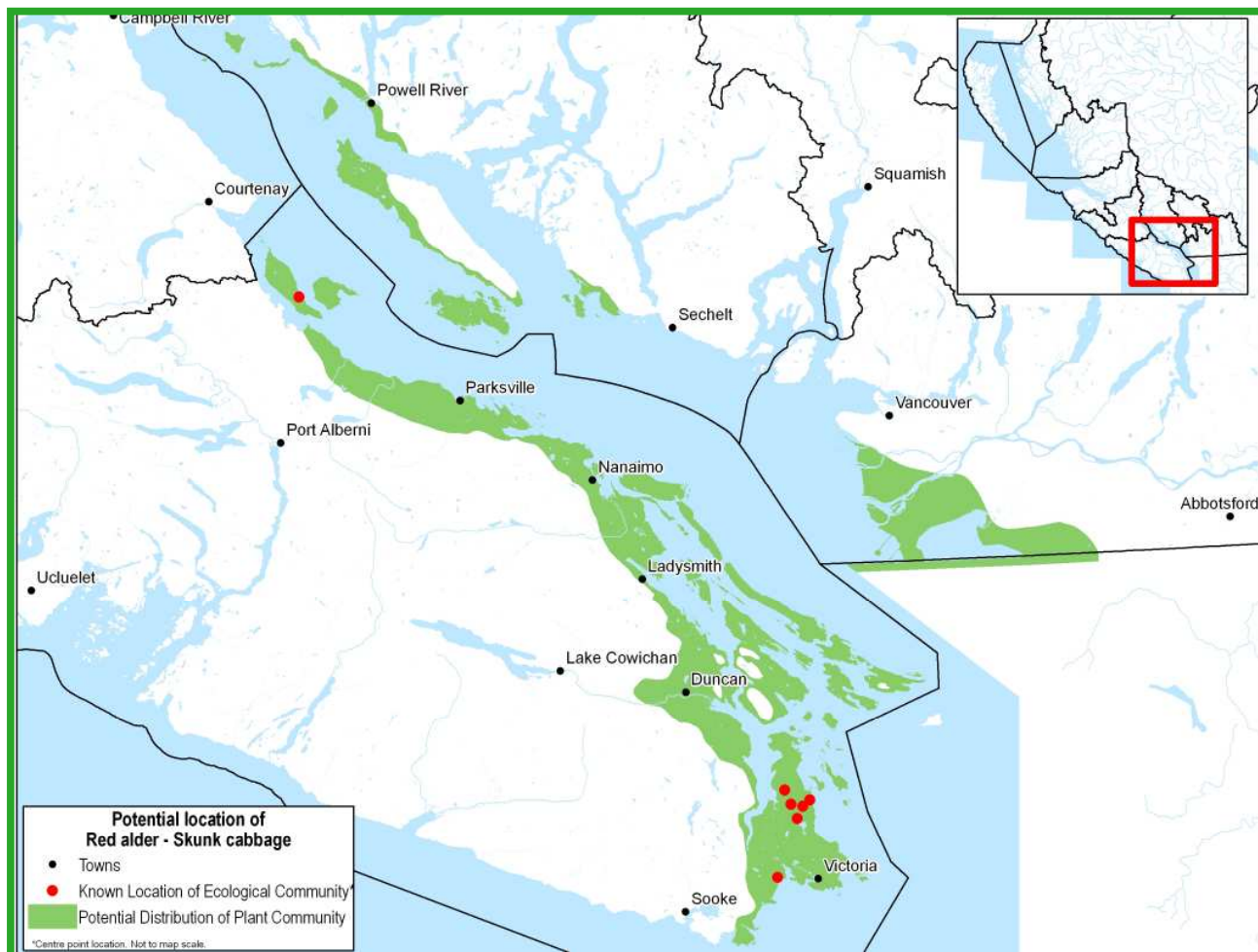
Conservation & Management Objectives

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

This wetland community, classified as the CDFmm/11 site series, is associated with nutritionally rich to very rich depressional or low-gradient seepage sites within the CDFmm subzone. Potentially found on south-eastern Vancouver Island from its most southerly tip northward to between Courtenay and Parksville. This includes the southern Gulf Islands, in addition to Denman, Hornby, Lasquiti, Thormanby, Harwood, Savary, and Hemando Islands, as well as western Texada Island, and the outer extremities of the Sunshine Coast from Halfmoon Bay area northward to the Powell River - Lund area. It may also be found within the western reaches of the Fraser River delta and White Rock.



Content for this Factsheet has been derived from the following sources

B.C. Conservation Data Centre. 2010 [internet]. Ecological Community Summary: Red alder / Skunk Cabbage. B.C. MoE
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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. Content updated August 2010.

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