

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

### Western Red Cedar / Devil's Club (*Thuja plicata* / *Oplopanax horridus*)

Global: G2G4, Provincial: S1S2, BC List: Red, BEC: CWHds/07 Including CWHds1/07 & CWHds2/07

Identified Wildlife Ecological community



Oak Fern



Lanky Moss

Notes: The presence of Douglas-fir in the overstory is a characteristic of the southern variant (CWHds1) and is a reflection of fire history. Although not limited to the central variant (CWHds2), Sitka spruce appears to be more prevalent there. This is one of the most productive forest ecosystems in the dry subarctic Coast-Interior climatic transition area. The moderately developed shrub layer features devil's club. This community was never extensive and is considered to be high value grizzly bear habitat.

#### Description

This mature to old forest small patch community (5-50 ha) has a moderately open canopy dominated by western redcedar, western hemlock, Douglas-fir (in the CWHds1), and Sitka spruce (in the CWHds2). Bigleaf maple and red alder are often present in the canopy of the CWHds1/07. Devil's club is characteristically the leading species in the moderately developed and diverse shrub layer. The moderately well developed herb layer includes spiny wood fern and queen's cup as well as rich-site indicators such as oak fern, lady fern, clasping twistedstock and three-leaved foamflower. Common mosses include step moss, electrified cat's-tail moss, coastal leafy moss and lanky moss.

#### Threats

Decline is due to past timber harvesting of productive valley bottoms and lower slopes. Agricultural, rural and urban development in the Fraser Valley, Pemberton Valley, and Bella Coola Valley has also impacted this ecological community. All areas continue to have development pressures.

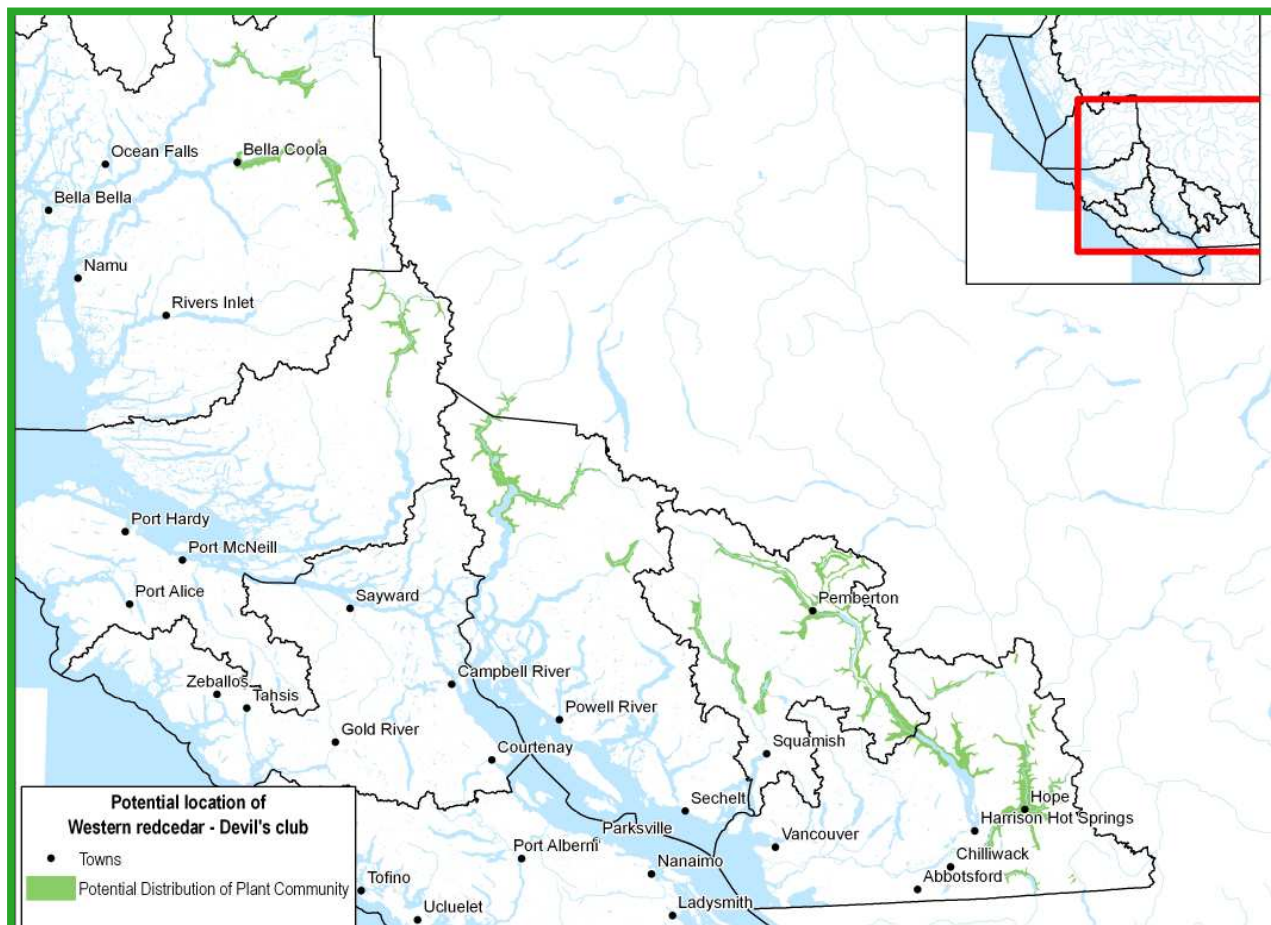
#### Conservation & Management Objectives

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 Western Red Cedar / Devil's Club *Thuja plicata* / *Oplopanax horridus* 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 productive community is classified as the CWHds/07 site association. It is found on moderately well-drained soils with rich to very rich, and hygric to sub-hygric conditions. Sites range from near sea level to approximately 650 m asl, on lower slope to level positions. The soil parent materials are variable, including fluvial, colluvial, and sometimes morainal deposits. When on lower slopes this community may be associated with fluvial or the lower edge of colluvial fans. The CWHds1/07 is found in drainages of the upper Fraser River east and north of Chilliwack, as well as in the eastern portion of the Coast Mountains from upper Harrison Lake to the Homathko River. The CWHds2/07 is restricted to areas north of the head of Knight Inlet, especially in upper Klinaklini, and Bella Coola, Talchako and Dean Valleys.



Content for this Factsheet has been derived from the following sources

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 Pojar, J., S. Flynn and C. Cadrin. Accounts and Measures for Managing Identified Wildlife. V 2004. [Internet]. Western Red Cedar / Devil's Club *Thuja plicata* / *Oplopanax horridus* ecological community BC Ministry of Forests and Range.

**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/>

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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