



Skeena Region BEC Update

Regional Research Ecologist
(Vacant)



Background

- BEC mapping and site classification are fundamental to many forestry, planning, conservation, and environmental assessment initiatives.
- Due to staff cutbacks there is currently no regional research ecologist and so support and extension of the classification will be minimal. However several initiatives in the region may result in the presentation of BEC changes in future years.
 - A cumulative impacts assessment project in the southern Cassiar subunit may drive a process for new and revised BEC classifications to support ecosystem mapping and interpretations in this area.
- The most current version of BEC mapping is version 8, released in January 2012 and available on GeoBC and BECWeb - <http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hre/becweb/>. Users should check this site for updates each year or use the GeoBC (LRDW) website for the "official" version.
 - *BGC ver 8 contains mapping updates to the Kalum District and the Cassiar Subunit. These areas have been rescaled and are now tied to a 1:20k TRIM base. Some new BGCs have been recognized and hardlines changed for some units.*
- In the Skeena region, the most recent site series classifications are LMH 26 – Banner et al 1993. However, LMH 65 published in 2011 presents a revision to the entire Boreal White and Black Spruce (BWBS) zone and classifications presented therein should replace those from LMH 26. <http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfd/pubs/Docs/Lmh/Lmh65.htm>
- Over the next 1- 3 years, new classifications may be presented for BGCs found in the Cassiar TSA for which no current classifications exist. BGCs for which no classification exists are largely designated as 'un' subzones on the maps.
- This update provides a summary of current and proposed changes to BEC in the Skeena Region.

Changes to Kalum District (DKA)

- New BGC linework has been included in BGC ver. 8. The majority of changes are the result of map rescaling from 1:600k to 1:20k base maps. Linework changes are based largely on a series of over flights and the inclusion of some edits suggested from historic ecosystem mapping.
- TFL mapping from the Kitlope north indicates there are coastal valleys with subalpine fir in valley bottoms but no yellowcedar, which may justify the addition of another CWHvm variant or BGC phase.
- There are several proposed new BGCs for the north Kalum district.
 - An ESSFun occurs above the ICHvc and wc and was historically mapped as ESSFwv. However in this region of extremely high snowfall, the classification for the ESSFwv clearly does not accurately describe site units. Tentatively, this ESSF would be designated as the very wet, very cold ESSFwv and would occur above the ICHvc and wc and along the coast transition in some portions of the Cassiar TSA.
 - Extensive areas of mixed Hm and BI forest occur in the north Kalum district and are currently mapped as MHmm2 or ESSFwv. It is likely these mixed species areas represent a new BGC tentatively identified as moist subarctic Mountain Hemlock (MHms).
 - Parkland subzones have now been mapped for ESSF and MH zones.
- Draft revised seral and grassland associations for the ICHmc2 and CWHws2 have been created but are not scheduled for publishing until a regional ecologist is hired.

Changes to Nadina (DND)

- Draft revised seral and grassland associations for the SBSdk have been created but are not scheduled for publishing until a regional ecologist is hired.

- Draft classifications for the alpine and parkland have been created and will be published as part of a provincial alpine classification.
- The classification of the ESSFmk is based on limited data but has several ecosystems designated as provincially rare and mountain caribou management areas. Further sampling and classification updates should be carried out.

Changes to Skeena-Stikine (DSS)

Cassiar Subunit

- New BGC linework has been included in BGC ver. 8 for the Cassiar TSA. The majority of changes are the result of map rescaling from 1:600k to 1:20k base maps. Linework changes are based largely on a series of over flights and the inclusion of some edits suggested from historic ecosystem mapping.
- LMH 65 published in 2011 presents a revision to entire Boreal White and Black Spruce (BWBS) zone replaces information on this zone presented in LMH 26.
<http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfd/pubs/Docs/Lmh/Lmh65.htm>
- Several BGCs changed designation in the Cassiar. The BWBSdk1 is now BWBSdk, the BWBSdk2 is now the BWBSmk.
- There are several proposed new BGCs for the Cassiar TSA.
 - An ESSFun occurs above the ICHvc and wc and was historically mapped as ESSFwv. However in this region of extremely high snowfall, the classification for the ESSFwv unit clearly does not describe site units from this area. Tentatively this ESSF would be designated as the ESSFvv and would occur above the ICHvc and wc and other new units of the coast transition in the Cassiar TSA as far north as the Taku.
 - Extensive areas of mixed Hm and BI forest occur in the north Kalum district and are currently mapped as MHmm2 or ESSFwv. It is likely the at this mixed species areas represent a new BGC tentatively identified as moist subarctic Mountain Hemlock (MHms).
 - Areas historically mapped as SBSun have been split into areas designated as SBSmc2 and a snowbelt SBSun which can tentatively be designated as very wet very cold SBS (SBSvv). The areas identified as SBSmc2 will likely represent a different variant of the SBSmc with lower productivity and a lack of certain species indicators but this is the closest classification currently available.
 - The SWBun remains in BGC ver8. Some new data from Ministry sampling and ecosystem mapping projects may allow creation of a classification and BGC designation for a portion of the SWB in the Cassiar TSA.
 - Parkland and scrub zone units have been mapped out in BGC ver. 8.
- It is likely that the BWBS at lower elevations between Telegraph Creek/Glenora and Atlin represent very dry subzones of the BWBS but there is insufficient sampling at this point to allow classification and remapping. There also appears to be a moister, cooler "montane" BWBS subzone at higher elevations in some of these northwestern drainages that requires further sampling.

Kispiox Subunit

- Mapping of ICHmc1a enclaves required.
- Draft revised seral and grassland associations for the ICHmc2 have been created but are not scheduled for publishing until a regional ecologist is hired.

Bulkley Subunit

- Draft revised seral and grassland associations for the SBSdk and ICHmc2 have been created but are not scheduled for publishing until a regional ecologist is hired.