

Western Hemlock/Velvet-leaved Blueberry– Falsebox

Tsuga heterophylla / *Vaccinium myrtilloides* - *Paxistima myrsinites*

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Disclaimer: *Very little information is currently available for this rare plant community. This species account was primarily developed using plant identification guidebooks and Dennis Lloyd biogeoclimatic zone classifications.*

Conservation Status

Included in Section 7 Notice: No

Designated as Identified Wildlife: No

Federally Designated (COSEWIC): No

Species identified in Kamloops, Lillooet or Merritt SFMP: **Yes (Kamloops)**

Description

- Wet cool forest community dominated by mature stands of western hemlock.
- Found only in the ICHwk1/03 zone.
- The well-developed shrub layer is dominated by velvet-leaved blueberry and falsebox.
- Velvet-leaved blueberry is a low deciduous shrub 10-40cm tall that grows in dense colonies. The branches are velvety especially when young. Fruit: small blue berries with heavy pale-blue bloom. Flowers are cylindrically bell-shaped with greenish-white or pink tinged pedals.
- Falsebox is an evergreen shrub with reddish-brown stems that grows to approximately 20-100cm in height. The fragrant four pedal flowers are purplish or pink and occur all along the branches either solitarily or in groups.
- NOTE: This is a rare plant community with limited distribution.



Velvet-leaved blueberry.
Photo: Jamie Fenneman



Falsebox

Forest Districts

Arrow Boundary, Central Cariboo, Columbia, **Headwaters, Kamloops**, Kootenay, Okanagan Shuswap

BEC Zones

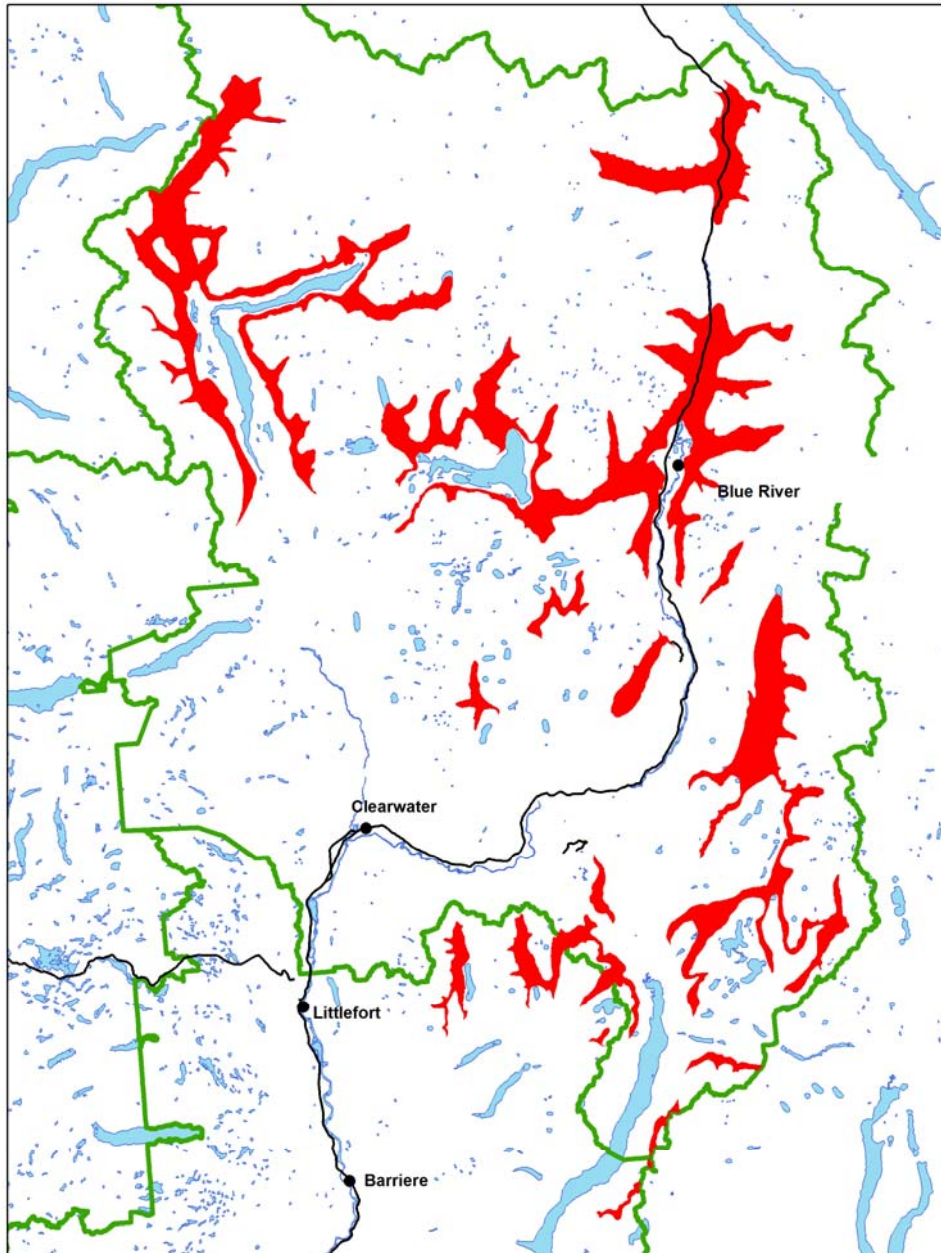
ICHwk1/03

Elevation

The ICHwk1 occupies valley bottoms that range in elevation from 500-1,000m and on slopes above the ICHmw1, mw2 and mw3. It extends to the ESSF boundary at about 1,400-1,450 m on north aspects and 1450-1,500 m on south aspects. In a few instances the ICHwk1 occurs below the ICHvk1 in which case the elevation break varies from 800 to 1,300m.

Important Habitat Features

Very little information is available for this plant community. Please refer to the following map for the location of the BEC zone where this plant community may be found.



Location of ICHwk1 in the Kamloops TSA

Additional Information

- This plant community is geographically very restricted. No known locations available from the Conservation Data Centre. Please refer to plant guidebooks such as *Plants of the Southern Interior British Columbia and the Inland Northwest* (Lone Pine Press, 463pp) for assistance with the identification of individual species comprising this community.
- The ICHwk1 generally occurs above the ICHmw at the end of several valleys in the Cariboo, Monashee and Selkirk Mountains. It occurs at mid-elevations and in the valley

bottoms of Scotch Creek and the Clearwater, upper North Thompson, Shuswap, Adams and Seymour River drainages. In the former Nelson Forest Region it occurs from valley bottoms to mid slopes in the upper Duncan, Incomapleux, Illecillewaet and Gold Rivers. It also occurs adjacent to the Mica Reservoir north of Smith Creek and the Columbia River drainage north of the Arrow Lakes.

Management Recommendations

The following management recommendations are generalized due to the limited information available for this plant community.

Where this plant community is found:

- Retain a qualified plant ecologist (Registered Professional Biologist) to confirm the presence of the plant community and determine the extent of the local population.
- Establish a no harvest buffer zone and a management zone large enough to maintain ecological site conditions associated with this plant community, including undisturbed forest structure, substrate, and associated microclimate. The size of this buffer will vary based on specific site conditions and should be determined by the qualified plant ecologist (Registered Professional Biologist).
- In the no harvest buffer zone:
 - Do not build roads or trails.
 - Do not harvest or salvage except to support restoration measures with silvicultural treatments that are recommended by a qualified plant ecologist (Registered Professional Biologist).
 - Do not remove non-timber forest products.
 - Do not use pesticides.
- Minimize impacts to vegetation, soils, and hydrology when operating in the management zone adjacent to this plant community, particularly during road development and maintenance.
- Prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species.
- Allow for the processes of litter accumulation, renewal, and microbiotic crust development.
- Maintain a diversity of natural disturbance regimes.

References

Lloyd, D.A, K. Angove, G.D. Hope, and C. Thompson. 1990. A Guide to Site Identification and Interpretation for the Kamloops Forest Region. Ecosystems Research Branch. 399pp.

Lloyd, D., M. Ryan, N. Brand, M. Doney, V. Larson, and J. MacDonald. 2005. Site Classification for 52 Biogeoclimatic Units in the Southern Interior Forest Region. Draft. BC Ministry of Forests. Available online at: ftp://ftp.for.gov.bc.ca/RSI/external!/publish/Dennis_Lloyd_BEC_Materials

Ministry of Forests and Range. 2006. Biogeoclimatic Ecosystem Classification Program. Accessed online from <http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hre/becweb/>

Parish, Roberta, Ray Coupe and Dennis Lloyd. 1996. Plants of Southern Interior British Columbia and the Inland Northwest. Lone Pine Publishing, Vancouver, BC. 463pp.