

HERITAGE FOREST, BRITISH COLUMBIA

A COMMUNITY CONSERVATION LEGACY

PROTECTED AREA (PA)

Located in Qualicum Beach, British Columbia, Heritage Forest has a rich history rooted in community collaboration and environmental preservation. Within its 20 hectares are impressive pockets of remnant old-growth trees, 500-800+ years old. The forest is a rare Coastal Douglas-fir ecosystem – the most biologically diverse, but also at-risk, forest type in BC. It supports diverse flora and fauna and represents a substantial portion of all lands in the Coastal Douglas-fir forest ecosystem that are preserved today.

In 1995, local residents learned about a plan to sell the forest and develop it as 110 building lots. This group formed the Brown Property Preservation Society (BPPS) to raise funds for the purchase of these lands. Between 1996 and 2004, hundreds of volunteers worked tirelessly to raise 68% of the funds needed to purchase these lands. The Town of Qualicum Beach contributed the balance, and the Forest was saved from development! This unique struggle to save the Forest shows what a small community can do when it works together to achieve a collective vision. Local residents had decided to

keep a distinctive piece of urban forest intact and did so, thereby preserving one of Qualicum Beach's special places. This massive volunteer effort culminated in the purchase of these lands and offered protection forever.

In 2005, the Heritage Forest Commission was formed, made up of two members of the BPPS, one from Town Council, and two community members, to act as stewards of the Forest. The Town is responsible for management and any costs involved in its upkeep. The BPPS collaborates with other local conservation groups for monitoring and restoration initiatives. This includes nest monitoring, fish population monitoring, and native plant restoration.

In 2008, the Conservation Covenant was signed jointly by the Town of Qualicum Beach, The Land Conservancy of BC and the Brown Property Preservation Society, and the name officially became the 'Heritage Forest'. The successful protection of Heritage Forest highlights the role that community stewardship and citizen science can play in countering global biodiversity loss.

HOW DO WE KNOW THAT HERITAGE FOREST IS AN PROTECTED AREA?



Does the property have a defined geographical space?

Yes! The boundaries of Heritage Forest are well identified and can be accurately placed on a map.



Is there an effective way of ensuring that biodiversity will continue to be conserved into the future?

Yes! Heritage Forest is legally protected by a conservation covenant under section 219 of the Land Title Act. The covenant's purpose is to protect, preserve, and maintain the lands in a natural state.



Is there an expectation that the biodiversity on the site will be conserved for the long term?

Yes! The conservation covenant runs with the land, meaning the legal promise of the covenant applies to the land rather than the current owner, and will affect any future owners. The covenant applies to all parts of the land in perpetuity.



Is biodiversity conservation the primary objective of the area?

Yes! Heritage Forest was purchased to protect the lands from development and maintain wildlife habitat, native vegetation, and water quality. The management plan and conservation covenant prevent harmful activities and promote public education and appreciation of the rich biodiversity.

Quick tip

If the answer to this question was "no!" the area would likely be assessed as a OECD instead of a protected area. Both types of areas are important, and both achieve biodiversity conservation.



Is biodiversity on the site conserved?

Yes! As stated in the management plan, management mechanisms will allow Heritage Forest to evolve in a natural state in accordance with conservation of biodiversity. Occupation or use of the lands that will diminish its natural state are prohibited.