



NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

RDCK has a rich natural heritage and a diversity of habitats and wildlife. Significant natural assets include forest, valley and riparian habitats. However, the area has a history of resource development, dams and settlement, and today there are many unprotected sensitive ecosystems with existing habitat facing fragmentation. These areas provide important habitat to wildlife and fish including species at risk.

CURRENT TRENDS

Diverse Ecosystems. Include grasslands, wetlands, dry pine forests, interior rainforests, alpine meadows and glaciers. The wetlands, streams, rivers and lakes of the Columbia River system support a rich diversity of species—over 700 species of birds, mammals, fish and reptiles have been documented.

Climate. Predominately Engelmann Spruce-Subalpine Fir and Interior Cedar-Hemlock Biogeoclimatic zones found in area.

Brilliant Headpond Shoreline Management Guidelines. Created in 2018, these guidelines are intended to protect high value aquatic habitats along shoreline areas.

Known Species at Risk. Birds, reptiles/amphibians and fish such as the Lewis Woodpecker, White Throated Swift, Western Screech Owl, White Sturgeon, Painted Turtle, Bobolink, Shorthead Sculpin, Western Skink, Great Blue Heron and Umatilla Dace.



Invasive Species Present. Aquatic and terrestrial plant and animal species are present and can have negative impacts by reducing wildlife habitat, displacing native species and degrading water quality.

Ecosystem Goods and Services. Provide quantifiable value to the community, including climate regulation and carbon storage, air and storm-water infiltration and purification, nutrient cycling and crop pollination, as well as potable water.

Park Lands. Parks in Electoral Area I include: Glade Regional Park, Brilliant Bridge Regional Park, and Kieran Galbraith Shoreacres Beach Memorial Park

WHAT DOES THE CURRENT OCP SAY?

Environmental Objectives

Preserve natural values.

Protect environmentally sensitive lands such as steep slopes, floodplains, watersheds and soils subject to erosion from land uses having major environmental impacts.

Protect all watersheds within the plan area.

Provide for the protection and enhancement of buildings and sites of historical and archaeological value.

Environmental Reserve Land Use Designation

The Board of the Regional District proposes the establishment of environmentally sensitive areas as Environmental Reserves subject to the following:

Development on private lands in sensitive watersheds shall be protected from adverse development.

All lands adjacent to within a 15 metre radius of a creek shall be designated as Environmental Reserve.

Private development acceptable on land designated Environmental Reserve include trails, interpretive signs, benches and similar types.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Opportunity to develop further tools within the OCP such as establishing environmental protection development permit areas and conservation land use designations
- Strong community values for environmental protection and stewardship
- Opportunity for cooperation and partnerships with other government agencies and not for profits
- Preserve watershed health and ecosystem network connectivity through integrated watershed management

CHALLENGES

- Ongoing growth means that communities will continue to see rural development
- Development occurs primarily in the valleys and is often confined between the watercourses (rivers or lakes) and the steep mountain slopes
- Rural lands are under multiple jurisdictions which can cause confusion on the role of protecting the natural environment

RESOURCES

Brilliant Shoreline Guidance Document (2018)

RDCK Regional Parks Strategy (2009) & Castlegar, Area I & J Recreation Master Plan (2017)

Develop with Care Guidelines (2014) & Green Bylaws Toolkit

Toward Natural Asset Management in Kootenays (2021)



Stay Involved:

<https://rdck.ca/PlanArea1>