# Classification Key for the Prince of Wales Existing Vegetation Map

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| **Master Key** | | | | | | |
| **Couplet** | **Vegetation Formations Key- Cover values in the key to formations are absolute and relative cover. Tree cover includes both regeneration and overstory trees, so that young stands are classified as forest. Some young regeneration stands may be also classified as shrublands if trees are less than 1.5 m tall. (*Absolute cover* is the proportion of the plot's area included in the perpendicular downward projection of the species, or "Seen from Above". *Relative cover* of a species is the proportion it composes of the total plant cover of that lifeform on the plot. Relative cover values are calculated from absolute cover values).** | | | **Lifeform Type** | | |
| **1a** | Human Modified Vegetation: where vegetation displays a characteristic of intensive human disturbance or man-made structures that will not recover to a natural habitat i.e. Rock pits, roads, human settlements, LTF's. | | | Developed | | |
| **1b** | Natural Vegetation: where vegetation may or may not display some human or other disturbance, but if disturbed, will be left to recover to a natural habitat i.e. Clearcuts, landslides. | | | 2 | | |
|  |  | | |  | | |
| **2a** | Total *absolute* tree cover is ≥ 10% | | | 4 | | |
| **2b** | Total *absolute* tree cover is < 10% | | | 3 | | |
|  |  | | |  | | |
| **3a** | Total vascular vegetation *absolute* cover is <25% and not dominated by open water | | | Barren/Sparse Vegetation | | |
| **3b** | Total vascular vegetation *absolute* cover is <25% and dominated by open water | | | Water | | |
| **3c** | Total vascular vegetation *absolute* cover is ≥ 25% | | | 6 | | |
|  |  | | |  | | |
| **4a** | Tree *relative* *cover* is ≥ 75% conifer species | | | Conifer Forest | | |
| **4b** | Tree *relative* *cover* is <75% conifer species | | | 5 | | |
|  |  | | |  | | |
| **5a** | Tree *relative* *cover* of broadleaf species is ≥75% of tree cover | | | Broadleaf Forest | | |
| **5b** | Tree *relative* *cover* of broadleaf species is <75% of tree cover | | | Mixed Forest | | |
|  |  | | |  | | |
| **6a** | Shrub *absolute cover* is ≥ 25% | | | Shrub | | |
| **6b** | Shrub *absolute cover* is <25% | | | 7 | | |
|  |  | | |  | | |
| **7a** | *Absolute cover* of herbaceous species is ≥25% (includes graminoids and/or forbs, alone or could combine with < 25% shrubs) | | | Herbaceous | | |
| **7b** | *Absolute* cover of herbaceous species is <25 (includes graminoid and/or forbs, alone or could combine with <25% shrubs) | | | Barren/Sparse Vegetation | | |
| **Couplet** | **Conifer Forest Key** | **Dominance Type** | **Map Unit** | | **Map Unit Symbol** |
| 1a | Sitka spruce with ≥ 60% *relative* canopy cover; broadleaf trees or tall shrubs with <30% *relative* canopy cover | Sitka Spruce | **Sitka Spruce** | | SS |
| 1b | Sitka spruce with ≥ 60% *relative* canopy cover, broadleaf trees or tall shrubs with ≥ 30% *relative* canopy cover | Go to Mixed Forest Key |  | |  |
| 1c | Sitka spruce with < 60% *relative* canopy cover, no broadleaf trees present | 2 |  | |  |
|  |  |  |  | |  |
| 2a | Mountain Hemlock with ≥75% *relative* canopy cover | Mountain Hemlock | **Mountain Hemlock Mix** | | MHmix |
| 2b | Mountain Hemlock with <75% *relative* canopy cover | 3 |  | |  |
|  |  |  |  | |  |
| 3a | Mountain Hemlock present with < 75% *relative* canopy cover. Sitka Spruce is present and can be codomniant. | Sitka Spruce/Mountain Hemlock | **Mountain Hemlock Mix** | | MHmix |
| 3b | Mountain Hemlock if present is < 75% *relative* canopy cover. Sitka Spruce is not present or if present, not codomniant and minor | 4 |  | |  |
|  |  |  |  | |  |
| 4a | Subalpine Fir with ≥75% *relative* canopy cover. | Subalpine Fir | **Mountain Hemlock Mix** | | MHmix |
| 4b | Subalpine Fir with <75% *relative* canopy cover. | 5 |  | |  |
|  |  |  |  | |  |
| 5a | Shorepine with ≥ 60% *relative* canopy cover | 6 |  | |  |
| 5b | Shorepine with <60% *relative* canopy cover | 7 |  | |  |
|  |  |  |  | |  |
| 6a | Trees are stunted within a peatland | Dwarf Shorepine | **Dwarf Conifer** | | DC |
| 6b | Trees are not stunted within a peatland | Shorepine | **Mixed Conifer** | | MC |
|  |  |  |  | |  |
| 7a | Red and yellow cedar are growing together and the combined *relative* canopy cover is ≥ 40% | Cedar | **Cedar** | | CE |
| 7b | Red and yellow cedar are not growing together. The *relative* canopy cover of either red or yellow is ≥ 40% | 8 |  | |  |
|  |  |  |  | |  |
|  |  |  |  | |  |
| **Couplet** | **Conifer Forest Key (cont.)** | **Dominance Type** | **Map Unit** | | **Map Unit Symbol** |
| 7c | Red or yellow cedar growing together or as a single species is <40% *relative* canopy cover | 10 |  | |  |
|  |  |  |  | |  |
| 8a | Red cedar with ≥ 40% *relative* canopy cover. | Red Cedar | **Cedar** | | CE |
| 8b | Red cedar < 40% *relative* canopy cover. | 9 |  | |  |
|  |  |  |  | |  |
| 9a | Yellow cedar ≥40% *relative* canopy cover, most trees stunted | Dwarf Yellow Cedar | **Dwarf Conifer** | | DC |
| 9b | Yellow cedar <40% *relative* canopy cover, most trees stunted | Dwarf Conifer | **Dwarf Conifer** | | DC |
| 9c | Yellow cedar ≥40 % *relative* canopy cover, most trees not stunted | Yellow Cedar | **Cedar** | | CE |
|  |  |  |  | |  |
| 10a | Western Hemlock with ≥ 75% *relative* canopy cover. | Western Hemlock | **Western Hemlock** | | WH |
| 10b | Western Hemlock with <75% *relative* canopy cover. | 11 |  | |  |
|  |  |  |  | |  |
| 11a | Western Hemlock is <75% *relative* canopy cover but is always combined with other species in various *relative* canopy covers. Stand is mid to late-seral. Not actively managed. | Mixed Conifer | **Mixed Conifer** | | MC |
| 11b | Western Hemlock is <75% *relative* canopy cover but is always combined with other species in various *relative* canopy covers. Stand is early seral. Actively managed. | 12 |  | |  |
|  |  |  |  | |  |
| 12a | Sitka Spruce and/or Western Hemlock combined equals < 90% total *relative* canopy cover. | Mixed Species | **Mixed Species** | | MS |
| 12b | Sitka Spruce and Western Hemlock combined equals ≥ 90% total *relative* canopy cover. | Spruce-Hemlock | **Spruce-Hemlock** | | SH |
| 12c | Site is none of the above forest species conditions | Unnamed Conifer | **Unnamed Conifer** | | UC |

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| **Couplet** | **Broadleaf Forest Key** | **Dominance Type** | **Map Unit** | **Map Unit Symbol** | **# of plots** |
| 1a | Alder present with ≥ 75% *relative* canopy cover. | Alder (any height) | **Red Alder** | RA | 33 plots (when combined with 8 Sitka Alder plots), red alder is along riparian areas, old roads, and units. Sitka alder is slide zones, beach fringes at high tide line (where red alder also is but red alder is taller when mature) |
| 1b | Alder present or not, with < 75% *relative* canopy cover | 2 |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2a | Cottonwood with ≥ 75% *relative* canopy cover | Cottonwood | **Cottonwood** | CW | 0 |
| 2b | Cottonwood with < 75% *relative* canopy cover | Go to Mixed Forest Key |  |  |  |

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| **Couplet** | **Mixed Forest Key** | **Dominance Type** | **Map Unit** | **Map Unit Symbol** | **# of plots 2018** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1a | Cottonwood with ≥ 25% *relative* canopy cover and together with Sitka spruce comprise ≥75% *relative* canopy cover | Sitka Spruce-Cottonwood | **Sitka Spruce-Cottonwood** | SS-CW | 0 |
| 1b | Cottonwood with <25% *relative* canopy cover and together with Sitka spruce comprise < 75% *relative* canopy cover | 2 |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2a | Red Alder with ≥25% *relative* canopy cover and together with Sitka spruce comprise ≥ 75% *relative* canopy cover | Sitka Spruce- Red Alder | **Sitka Spruce- Red Alder** | SS-RA | 18 |
| 2b | Red Alder with< 25% *relative* canopy cover and together with Sitka spruce comprise < 75% *relative* canopy cover | Undetermined mix of Hardwood and Conifer | **Undetermined mix of Hardwood and Conifer** | UHC | 3 |

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| **Couplet** | **Shrub Key** | **Dominance Type** | **Map Unit** | **Map Unit Symbol** | **# of plots 2018/notes** |
| 1a | *Relative* canopy cover of Sitka alder is ≥ 75% | Alder Shrub | **Alder Shrub** | AS | 8 plots-generally high elevation, slide tracks etc, other locations will be alder due to similarity to red alder |
| 1b | *Relative* canopy cover of Sitka alder is < 75% | 2 |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2a | *Relative* canopy cover of combined taller shrubs (≥1.5m) such as willow species, spirea, copperbush, crabapple, Elderberry, sweet gale, Sitka alder, Salmonberry, Devils club, Blueberry etc is, dominant at a site compared to low shrubs, if present (ex: heather, crowberry, bog blueberry etc) | Tall Shrubs | **Tall Shrubs** | TS | 35 plots (combined spirea, copperbush and tall shrubs-some locations may not have shrub at 1.5 m)-example Spirea, sweet gale can be shorter than 1.5 m. |
| 2b | *Relative* canopy cover of combined low and dwarf shrubs (<1.5m) is dominant at a site (ex: heather, crowberry, bog blueberry etc) compared to tall shrubs, if present. | Low Shrubs | **Low Shrubs** | LS | 32 plots in dwarf, low ericaceous and Heather DT, much of this is in higher elevations, or some peatlands |

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| **Couplet** | **Herbaceous Key** | **Dominance Type** | **Map Unit** | **Map Unit Symbol** | **# of plots 2018/notes** |
| 1a | Site is aquatic with permanent standing water present | 2 |  |  |  |
| 1b | Site is wet to mesic, with little or no standing water | 3 |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2a | Site is permanent freshwater ponds or lakes with various emergent grasses and forbs (roots below the water such as *Potemogeton* and *Nuphar*) ≥ 25% *absolute* cover (the rest is water) | Aquatic Herbaceous | **Aquatic Herbaceous** | AHB | 31 total plots in marshes, ponds, lake edges with *Nuphar, Potemageton* vegetation, but this type can be mapped spectrally photo interp |
| 2b | Site is not the above. | 3 |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3a | Site contains areas of higher water table and seasonal standing water, various non-emergent grasses, and forbs (such as buckbean, cottongrass, Sitka other sedges) dominate | Wet Herbaceous | **Wet Herbaceous** | WHB | Found on wet alpine or muskegs (buck bean often in standing water areas), upper beach meadows, including tidal influenced areas below and above mean high tide with vegetation. |
| 3b | Site *does not* contain higher water table or seasonal standing water, various non-emergent grasses, and forbs (may see *Calamagrostis*, lupine, yarrow, paintbrush) dominate | Mesic Herbaceous | **Wet Herbaceous** | WHB | *Calamagrostis* may be present, some well drained sandy upper beach areas or shallow soils, alpine herbaceous meadows |