

Other Important Ecosystems

MATURE FOREST

What is Mature Forest?

Mature Forest ecosystems are dry to moist forests dominated by conifer or deciduous tree species over 80 years old. Understorey becomes well-developed and canopy opens up, but moss layer remains thin. Mature Forests often lack large snags, fallen logs and other large woody debris of older stands.

Where are Mature Forests located?

Mature forest ecosystems are not specific to terrain or elevation and are found in various areas throughout the Islands. Mature forests range from 8-15% of most island landscapes.

Associated Species

Animals

Crossbills, finches, Pine Siskins, bats, woodpeckers, Douglas squirrel

Plants

Douglas-fir, grand fir, Oregon grape, salal, bigleaf maple, red alder, sword fern, fairy-slipper, salmonberry, devil's club, lady fern, foamflower, vanilla-leaf



Why are Mature Forests important?

Mature Forests contain rare and endangered ecological communities and are future Old Forests. Within 20-30 years, many Mature Forests will sustain a high diversity of plant and animal species. Where it borders sensitive ecosystems, Mature Forest acts as a protective buffer and increases landscape connectivity and species movement.

How can we protect Mature Forests?

Careful management is important to maintain rare mature forest ecosystems, both for their species diversity and as buffers to adjacent sensitive ecosystems. It is important to allow them to develop into Old Forest.

- Limit development within or adjacent to older Mature Forest stands
- Minimize edge effects by maintaining large patches of forest rather than isolated trees
- Restrict recreational, livestock and pet access, especially during nesting and breeding seasons
- Actively control invasive species
- Allow natural disturbances to occur



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