

# Cliff Ecosystems

## DYNAMIC VERTICAL SYSTEMS

### What are Cliff Ecosystems?

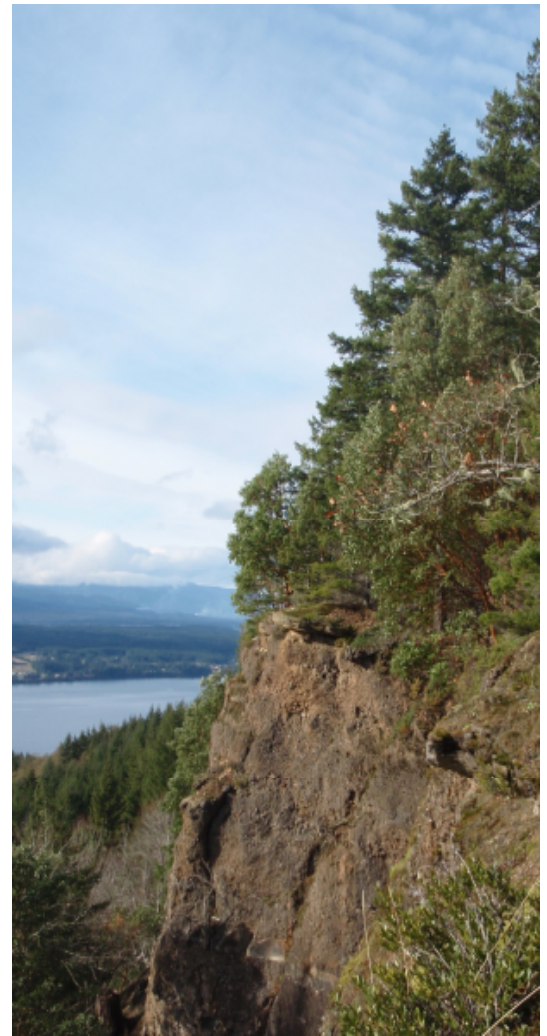
Cliff ecosystems are steep slopes, often with exposed bedrock. Very little soil accumulates in these ecosystems and only exceptionally hardy trees and plants maintain a precarious grip.

### Where are Cliff Ecosystems located?

Cliff ecosystems are regionally rare, making up less than 0.1% of the landscape in the Trust Area. Cliff ecosystems occur both inland and along coastal areas. Inland cliffs occur where mass erosion events have taken place, often where soil drainage is rapid. Coastal cliffs occur near shorelines with powerful wind, heat and wave influences.



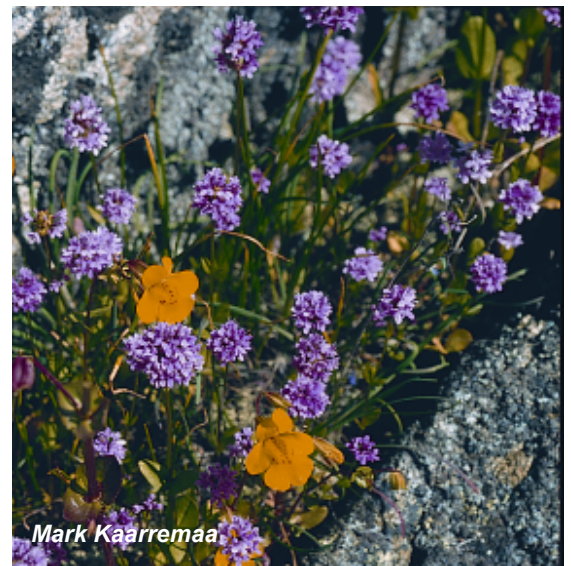
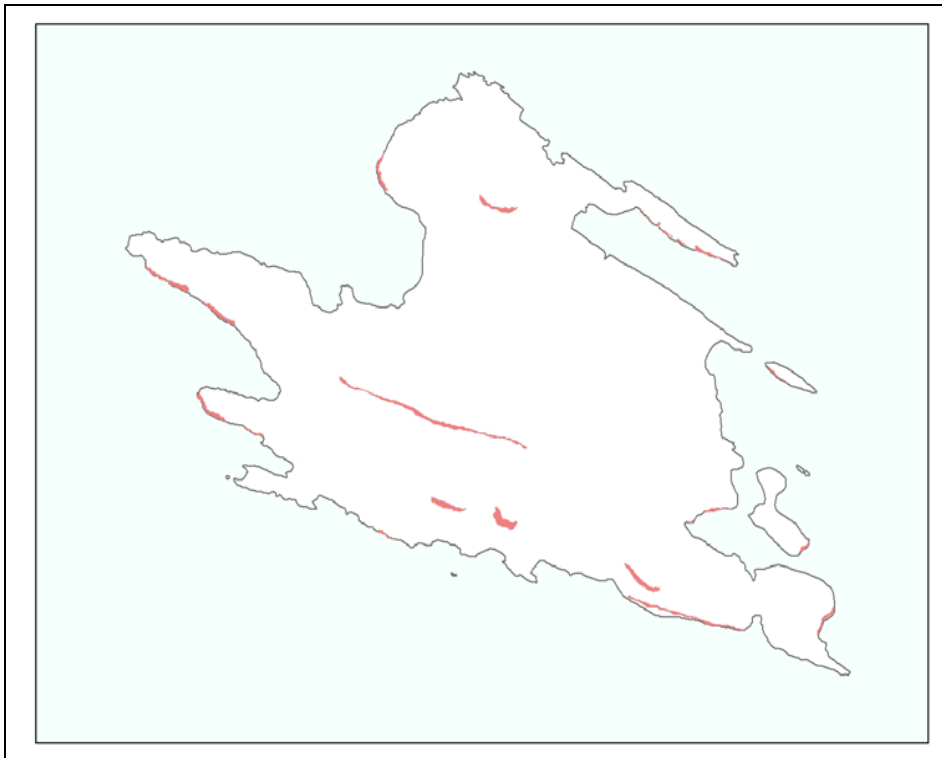
***Cliff Ecosystems make up only 0.6% of Mayne Island.***



### Why are Cliff Ecosystems important?

Cliff ledges and fissures offer isolated habitat protected from predators, making cliffs choice nesting sites for a variety of birds. Crevices are used by roosting bats, while deep crevices serve as shelter and overwintering areas for snakes and lizards. Cliffs contribute to the scenic beauty of this area, attracting visitors and boaters who may contribute to local economies. Cliffs also offer spectacular waterfront views, creating recreational opportunities on land, often leading to their degradation by development, trails and introduced species.

# Cliff Ecosystems on Mayne Island



Mark Kaarremaa

## Associated Species

### Animals

*Turkey vulture, swifts, northern alligator lizard, garter snakes*

### Plants

*Stunted Garry oak, broad-leaved stone crop, saxifrage, hoary moss, prickly pear cactus*

### Rare Species

*Sharp-tailed snake, double-crested cormorant, peregrine falcon*

## How can we protect Cliff Ecosystems?

Cliff ecosystems and the rare habitat they support need protection from soil compaction and erosion.

- Prevent disturbance of nesting or breeding areas – especially from March to August. Loud noises or venturing too close to nesting locations can cause birds to abandon eggs
- Control invasive species such as Scotch broom, while limiting disturbance to soil by leaving root systems
- Create a barrier or vegetated buffer around cliffs to limit human and domestic animal access



Islands Trust



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## For more information

*Please visit the Islands Trust website:*

[www.islandstrust.bc.ca](http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca)

*or call 1-250-405-5151 or  
1-800-663-7867 (Enquiry BC)*