



Ecodistrict Profile

Ecological Landscape Analysis Summary Ecodistrict 910: **Parrsboro Shore**

An objective of ecosystem-based management is to manage landscapes in as close to a natural state as possible. The intent of this approach is to promote biodiversity, sustain ecological processes and support the long-term production of goods and services. Each of the province's 38 ecodistricts is an ecological landscape with distinctive patterns of physical features. (Definitions of underlined terms are included in the print and electronic glossary.)

This Ecological Landscape Analysis (ELA) provides detailed information on the forest and timber resources of the various landscape components of Parrsboro Shore Ecodistrict 910. The ELA also provides brief summaries of other land values, such as minerals, energy and geology, water resources, parks and protected areas, wildlife and wildlife habitat.

The Parrsboro Shore Ecodistrict curls around the north shore of the Minas Basin, from Economy Mountain in the east and continuing west to Sand River and Chignecto Bay.

This ecodistrict can be characterized as a series of small rolling hills dissected by steep banks of rivers and streams flowing from the Cobequid mountains. There are also several smooth outwash plains, such as the lands around Parrsboro and Advocate.



Coastal plains with farmlands, forest and rolling hills of red spruce forests and cultivated wild blueberry fields are typical features of this ecodistrict.

Overall elevation seldom exceeds 125 metres, but the rapid descent to sea level creates the impression of a more significant rise. The local climate is significantly affected by the proximity to the cold waters of the Bay of Fundy. Summer temperatures are cool and fog is a common occurrence even though hot and humid conditions may exist a short distance away, in places such as Truro.

The area of the ecodistrict is about 41,000 hectares. Private land ownership accounts for 81.5% and 16.3% is under provincial Crown management. Most of the remaining lands are in transportation corridors and inland waters.

The exposed basalt cliffs in Cape d'Or are important habitat for several rare species of arctic-alpine plants.

Eighty-one percent of the Parrsboro Shore Ecodistrict is forested. Coastal forests of white spruce and red spruce skirt the headlands along the Minas Basin and slopes of Cape Chignecto, but the forests quickly revert to shade-tolerant hardwoods and softwoods a short distance from the shore. Red spruce is the dominant softwood and will be associated with hemlock and white pine on the lower slopes and hummocky lands. Forests of tolerant hardwoods, such as beech, yellow birch, and sugar maple, are associated with well-drained soils, usually occurring on the slopes of hills and hummocky terrain.

Numerous corridor systems follow the main river valleys and provide linkages to the adjacent Cobequid Hills and the Cumberland Hills ecodistricts. The forests within most of these corridors, notably Fox River at Port Greville, Farrells River at Parrsboro and Bass River of Five Islands and East River at Five Islands, have been significantly altered by human land use, settlement, farming, transportation systems, utility corridors, and forestry.



Rugged coastlines and extensive forests of red spruce provide a wilderness destination for hikers at the Cape Chignecto Provincial Park.

Landscapes are large areas that function as ecological systems and respond to a variety of influences. Landscapes are composed of smaller ecosystems, known as elements. These elements are described by their physical features – such as soil and landform – and ecological features, such as climax forest type. These characteristics help determine vegetation development.

Element descriptions promote an understanding of historical vegetation patterns and the effects of current disturbances. This landscape analysis identified and mapped nine key landscape elements – one dominant matrix element, seven smaller patch elements, and a corridor element – in Parrsboro Shore.

Tolerant Mixedwood Hills is the matrix element, representing 38.5% of the ecodistrict. This element naturally supports a climax forest of shade-tolerant hardwoods, such as sugar maple, yellow birch, and beech on the upper slopes. Red spruce dominates on the middle and lower slopes, the current forest reflects the impacts of harvesting. Much of the area is early successional forests.

Red and Black Spruce Hummocks, the largest patch element, is mainly located in four large areas in Birch Hill, West Bay, Greenhill, and Five Islands. The softwood covertime of red and black spruce and balsam fir dominates, covering more than half of the element. The other patch elements, in order of size, are **Tolerant Mixedwood Slopes**, **Red and Black Spruce Flats**, **Spruce Pine Hummocks**, **Red Spruce Hummocks**, **Wetlands**, and **Salt Marsh**. *The ecodistrict also contains a tiny Coastal Beach element.*

In **Valley Corridors**, a linear element associated with major watercourses, conversion to other uses exceeds 50% due to activities such as farming, road systems, and harvesting.