

Editorial

Small, Fragmented and Local Ecosystems

Krajina's biogeoclimatic zone system (for review see Beil et al, 1976) for vegetation classification is one of the foundation frameworks for management of British Columbia's forest. As with all systems, it has undergone considerable modification as more concise information and modern methods of vegetation analysis have been developed, but there is no doubt that it has provided a useful tool for those charged with planning forest harvest policy and practices. However, it is perhaps not as useful as a tool for small-scale management, because it does not work particularly well when dealing with ecosystems that are not on the successional path to the defined forest climax states.

The local, often small scale, occurrence of serpentine soils is a case in point. The paper by Lewis and Bradfield in this issue reports substantial new floristic and ecological analyses about an ecosystem that can be defined as rare, if not necessarily endangered. It is almost 25 years since Kruckeberg's paper appeared in **Davidsonia** (Kruckeberg, 1979) and the Lewis and Bradfield paper is the first of two, which we have invited, to report new developments in the study of serpentine flora and ecology. Lewis has agreed to prepare a paper, scheduled for 2004, based on his doctoral thesis research that will allow us to re-publish Kruckeberg's article and present an update.

We plan a series of papers on these 'smaller' systems, including the much-fragmented Garry Oak system on Vancouver Island, the interior temperate rainforest on the eastern side of the Cariboo region, and the many coastal marshes on the Pacific rim.

Conservation legislation in Canada, unlike that in the USA, has a strong emphasis on habitat conservation. We have an obligation to describe and document these more fragmented ecosystems so that their existence will be known, their importance understood and the enormous biological diversity,

Iain E.P. Taylor, Professor of Botany and Research Director.
UBC Botanical Garden and Centre for Plant Research.
6804 SW Marine Drive, Vancouver, BC, Canada, V6T 1Z4.
iain.taylor@ubc.ca

which has been given to the care of British Columbians, can be passed to our children's children. I hope that researchers and experts will help **Davidsonia** to assist industry, government and the public in meeting these obligations.

References

- Beil, C.E., Taylor, R.L., and Guppy, G.A., 1976. The Biogeoclimatic Zones of British Columbia. *Davidsonia* 7: 45-55
- Kruckeberg, A.R., 1979. Plant that grow on serpentine - A hard life. *Davidsonia* 10: 21-29