

4.2 Resource Area Description

Geographically, four units closely linked to communities can be defined:

- *North Shuswap Lake Mountain Range Unit* is associated with the North Shuswap communities within electoral Area F. The geography of this area is generally characterized by the Pukeashun/Lichen/Crowfoot Fowler complex of mountains with gentle sloping alpine and sub-alpine and sharply descending side slopes. The southern boundary is the north shore of Shuswap Lake. To the west lies the high elevation Adams Plateau. Four biogeoclimatic (BEC) zones exist within this unit: Interior Douglas Fir (IDF), Interior Cedar Hemlock (ICH), Englemann Spruce-Subalpine Fir (ESSF), and Alpine Tundra (AT) zones. The IDF zone has a limited range and occupies the low elevation shores along Shuswap Lake to the west. The dominant ICH extends eastward at low elevations, followed by the ESSF and then the AT zone at the high elevations.

The road-accessible, gently sloped sub-alpine and alpine typical of the area lends itself to multi-level ski touring and snowmobiling opportunities in the winter and a range of activities in the summer. The presence of old sheep grazing roads in the Crowfoot ridge allows for ATV opportunities. The lack of steep terrain limit Cat-skiing and heli-skiing. There is a potential for conflicts between motorized and non-motorized activities.

The shoreline along the western section of the unit is populated by summer cabins and small villages. The eastern section along Seymour Arm is primarily natural.

Many of the ranges have the presence of mountain caribou at varying levels. The sensitivity of the caribou to disturbance limits commercial opportunities in the areas and during the times when they may be found.

- *Eastern Mountain Range Unit* is associated with the community of Sicamous, Malakwa, Taft, and Three Valley. The unit bordering Seymour River, Shuswap Lake, Mara Lake and the Shuswap River to the west, and is characterized by the steeper slopes and rugged mountain terrain of the Ratchford, Anstey and Jordan Ranges. There are glaciers, cirques, bowls and very steep rugged alpine terrain that transitions into moderate to steep gladed terrain into sub-alpine. An exception is the Queest Mountain area and North Jordan Range where there are moderately sloped, rolling sub-alpine and alpine areas. Three biogeoclimatic zones exist, including: ICH at low elevations, followed by ESSF, and AT zones at high elevations.

The accessibility of challenging terrain in some sections and the remote, yet ideal, ski conditions in other areas attracts a wide variety of recreationists engaging in ski touring, heli-skiing, cat-skiing and snowmobiling.

The mountain ranges of this section provide a terrain suitable for a variety of recreation activities. Constraints to commercial opportunities include some of the

area's relative remoteness, the extensive presence of Mountain Caribou in certain sections and the hazards of avalanches in steeper terrain.

This unit is noted for containing the most natural of the shorelines along Shuswap Lake, and is popular amongst houseboaters. Mabel Lake along the eastern boundary also contains extensive natural shorelines.

- The *Southwest Unit* is associated with the communities of Salmon Arm and Falkland and is characterized by the presence of gently sloping forested slopes and plateaus and agricultural valleys. Open terrain associated with small lakes, marshes, natural meadows and previous harvesting provide surface variation. The biogeoclimatic zones include the IDF, ICH and ESSF. The open terrain in the lower elevations associated with the IDF to the west lend to range opportunities such as horseback riding. The lakes provide ideal settings for camping and fishing. Hiking may be encumbered in many areas by the lack of features and marshy ground but in the winter these areas are suitable for nordic skiing and, in separate areas, snowmobiling. The northern part of this section reaches the shores of Shuswap and Mara lakes dominated by the presence of roads and rail (along Mara Lake). Private lands, and industrial sections juxtaposed by a rich marshland are some of the attributes that can be found here.

The valleys, the associated agriculture, and the roads that pass through them, provide road tour opportunities that can link communities, farms and ranches.

- The *South Shuswap Unit* is associated with the communities of Sorrento, Blind Bay, Eagle Bay and Turtle Valley. The unit includes the section surrounded by the western arms of Shuswap Lake and encompassing Aline Hill, Bastion Mountain and White Lake. It extends eastward toward the western boundary of the Study Area and south to Mount Chase, Fly Hill and Mount Tappen where it shares the boundary with the Southwest Unit where it shares many similarities.

The unit is dominated by its relationship with Shuswap Lake. Many homes are situated beside the lake, as are accommodation opportunities. Commercial opportunities in the Bastion Mountain - White Lake area are limited by lack of variable and open terrain.