

LOCAL GOVERNMENT:

RDOS Electoral Area E

***Keeping Nature in Our Future – A Biodiversity Strategy* identifies where there are opportunities to conserve biodiversity throughout the South Okanagan and Similkameen.**

As part of the Strategy, this primer provides specific findings and opportunities for Electoral Area E. **It should be used in conjunction with the Area E Conservation Opportunities Maps, and the Regional Relative Biodiversity map** which identify:

- Sensitive ecosystems ranked in importance for conservation ('Conservation Ranking'),
- Sensitive ecosystems already included in Environmentally Sensitive or Watercourse Development Permit Areas, Conservation Lands or Dedicated Open Spaces;
- Linkages among natural areas for wildlife ("Habitat Connectivity"); and,
- Areas of greatest ecological and biodiversity significance ("Relative Biodiversity").

The natural environment of Electoral Area E, Naramata, offers many unique physical features as such as Okanagan Lake, and the silt benches. The sensitive ecosystems include grasslands, riparian areas, forest, wetlands, shallow-soiled rock outcrops and ridges. It is the close proximity of these diverse habitats that contribute to a wide diversity of species, both common and rare, that are found within Electoral Area E. In response to the increasing threats to, and rarity of, native plants, wildlife, and ecosystems, the RDOS has developed Environmentally Sensitive and Watercourse Development Permit Areas.

Conservation Ranking

Maps show the ecosystems that are of more importance to conserve. The maps highlight where important, rare and sensitive ecosystems have already been identified in development permit areas, or designated as dedicated conservation lands, open spaces, parks and protected areas. It is recommended that the areas ranked high and very high for conservation be used to update the Environmentally Sensitive Development Permit areas.

Relative Biodiversity

Maps show the areas of greatest ecological and biodiversity significance, essentially "hotspots". This mapping provides a more comprehensive picture of important areas for nature - starting with important ecosystems (conservation ranking) and adding information such as special features (eg. wetlands), selected important species habitat and known locations, habitat size, and distance to roads. These maps will be useful for parks, neighbourhood and site planning.

Habitat Connectivity

Habitat connectivity describes the degree to which ecosystems and habitat for wildlife are linked to one another to form an interconnected network across the land. This network provides opportunities for wildlife movement through habitat corridors. Breaking these linkages results in habitat fragmentation thereby reducing biodiversity, ecosystem functions and the ability for species to fulfill their needs for food, shelter, and reproduction.

Highlights for Biodiversity Conservation

Conservation Ranking- Areas of Important Sensitive Ecosystems

- About 49% of Electoral Area E's land base contains ecosystems ranked high or very high.
- 37 % of these highly sensitive ecosystems are within the Environmentally Sensitive and Watercourse Development Permit Areas.
- 17.5% has been designated as Open Space or protected as Conservation Lands through parks or zoning.

Relative Biodiversity – Areas of Greatest Ecological or Biodiversity Significance

- Almost 17% of Area E is has a very high or high relative biodiversity.
- Compared to the rest of the RDOS, Area E contains 4% of the very high and 4% of the high relative biodiversity.
- Almost 50% of very high relative biodiversity areas are found in the valley bottoms which are only about a quarter of the RDOS land base.

Connectivity – linkages between natural areas and corridors for wildlife

- North south travel corridors on the east side of Okanagan Lake are being pushed towards higher elevations due to agricultural and urban development.
- The Rural Growth area of Naramata has an opportunity to increase density at an appropriate scale in the community centre. However, expansion up the hillsides to the east it pushing connectivity into higher elevations, and starting to create sprawl.
- At the northernmost end of Area E, Okanagan Mountain Park acts as an important habitat and ecosystem refuge, despite recent fires.
- Small streams running east to west are important corridors through Electoral Area E , especially through Naramata. Protection, restoration and enhancement, as has been done with Naramata Creek, is one way of maintaining corridors.

Current Tools and new Opportunities for Conservation

Official Community Plan Bylaws

Watercourse Development Permit Areas requires landowners to apply for a permit before subdividing, construction, or altering the land within a riparian area (e.g. 30m from stream top of bank). This development permit area is specifically designed to comply with the provincial Riparian Areas Regulation, under the provincial Fish Protection Act.

- Opportunities exist for improving WDP guidelines and policies based on implementation experience to date.
- The RDOS should continue to support joint lake foreshore inventory and classification initiatives.
- The RDOS should also re-initiate stream mapping to improve base maps and to ensure that only appropriate lands are being flagged for WDPs.

Environmentally Sensitive Development Permit Areas requires landowners to apply for a permit before subdividing, construction, or altering the land that contains sensitive ecosystems. The

purpose of this development permit is for protection of sensitive ecosystems and rare and endangered plants, plant communities and wildlife. Development within an ESDP area usually requires an Environmental Assessment conducted by qualified environmental professional with experience working with local ecosystems.

- Conservation rank high and very high lands should be used to update ESDP areas. Where there are gaps in the connectivity of these areas, medium rank lands should also be added to ESDP areas as opportunities for restoration and enhancements.
- Opportunities exist for improving ESDP guidelines and policies based on implementation experience to date.

Zoning Bylaw

Riparian Assessment Areas, Setbacks for Buildings, Structures and Areas for Farm uses, and Floodplain regulations are all used to regulate land use around water.

Cluster Development is allowed in certain circumstances with the intention that new development can “cluster” on a portion of the new properties away from sensitive ecosystems. See *Keeping Nature in our Future* for more ideas on effective clustering.

Subdivision Bylaw

Subdivisions in rural areas are ultimately approved by an independent approving officer in the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure. There is an obligation for the approving officer to consider the environment and public interest in decision making. The RDOS also has requirements for subdivision services and development permits with some subdivisions. Based on the OCP, the RDOS can also provide information in the public interest as part of their referrals to the subdivision approving officer.

Opportunities for Biodiversity Conservation

In addition to the Strategic Directions made in section 4.1 of *Keeping Nature in our Future*, consider the following opportunities for action for Area E:

- Focus active long range and development planning in valley bottoms and associated areas that are limiting for nature.
- Use future land use maps in OCP reviews to signal where conservation or less detrimental land uses are more appropriate than the current OCP and zoning designations.
- Seek opportunities for enhancement of lower elevation north south travel corridors.
- Reduce expansion up the hillsides of Naramata to the east to maintain connectivity and habitat.
- Concentrate development within Naramata.
- Maintain and enhance connectivity to Okanagan Mountain Park through bylaws.
- Support restoration and enhancement of small streams running east to west.

Electoral Area E

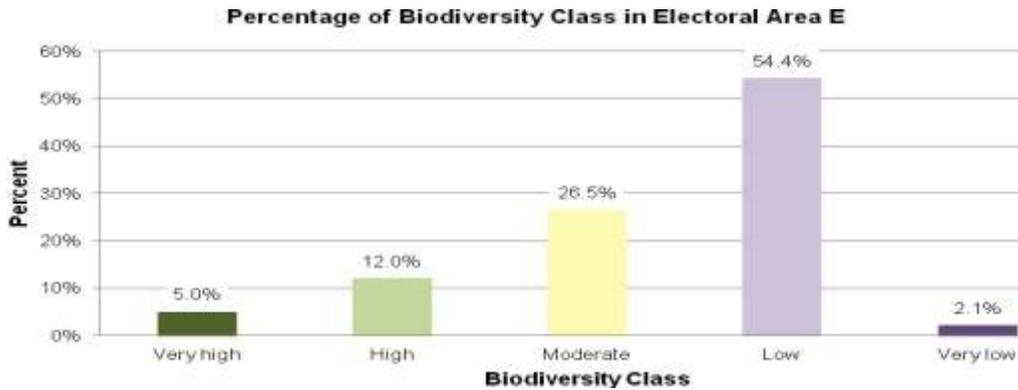
Biodiversity Class Summary

Electoral Area E Biodiversity

Biodiversity class	Area (ha)	% of Electoral Area E
Very high	2,423	5.0%
High	5,803	12.0%
Moderate	12,824	26.5%
Low	26,287	54.4%
Very low	1,018	2.1%
No data	6	0.0%
Total	48,360	

Electoral Area E land base 48,360

(excludes large lakes >50ha)

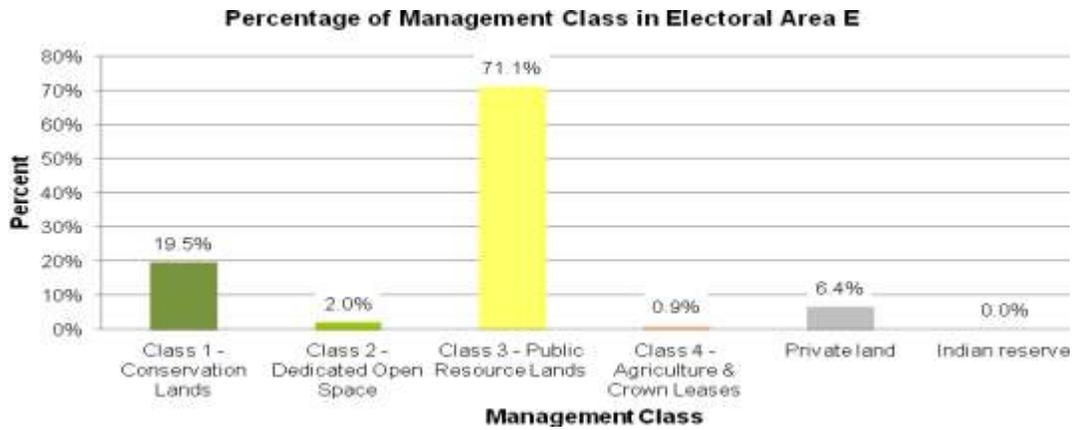


Management Class Summary

Electoral Area E Management Class

Management class	Area (ha)	% of Electoral Area E
Class 1 - Conservation Lands	9,436	19.5%
Class 2 - Dedicated Open Space	952	2.0%
Class 3 - Public Resource Lands	34,376	71.1%
Class 4 - Agriculture & Crown Leases	451	0.9%
Private land	3,100	6.4%
Indian reserve	0	0.0%
Undefined	45	0.1%
Total	48,360	

*area statistics exclude large lakes (>50ha)



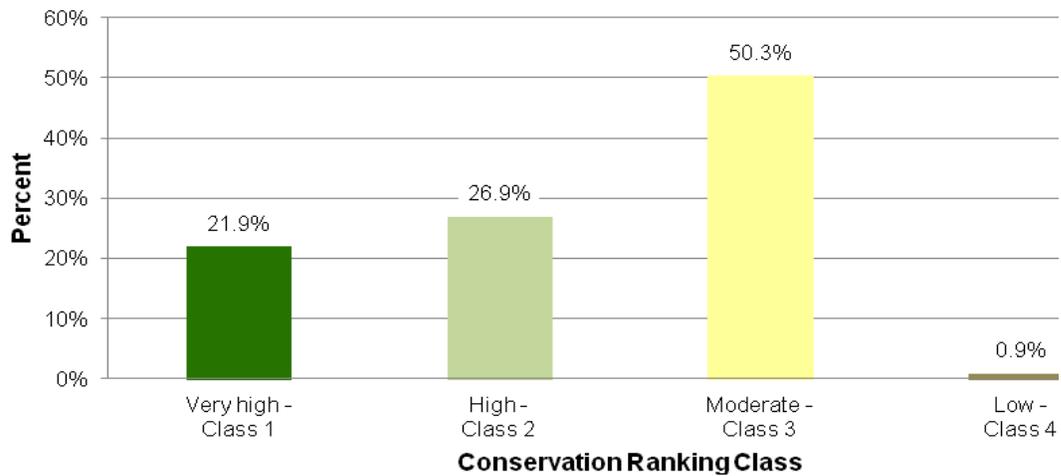
Conservation Ranking Summary

Electoral Area E Conservation Ranking

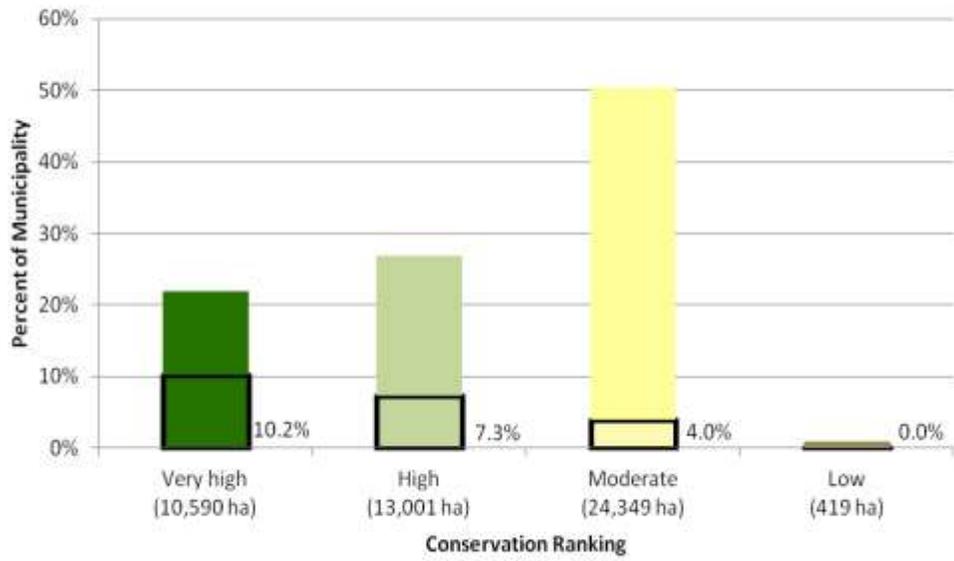
Conservation Ranking	Area (ha)	% of Electoral Area E
Low - Class 4	419	0.9%
Moderate - Class 3	24,349	50.3%
High - Class 2	13,001	26.9%
Very high - Class 1	10,590	21.9%
Total	48,360	

*area statistics exclude large lakes (>50ha)

Percentage of Conservation Ranking Class in Electoral Area E

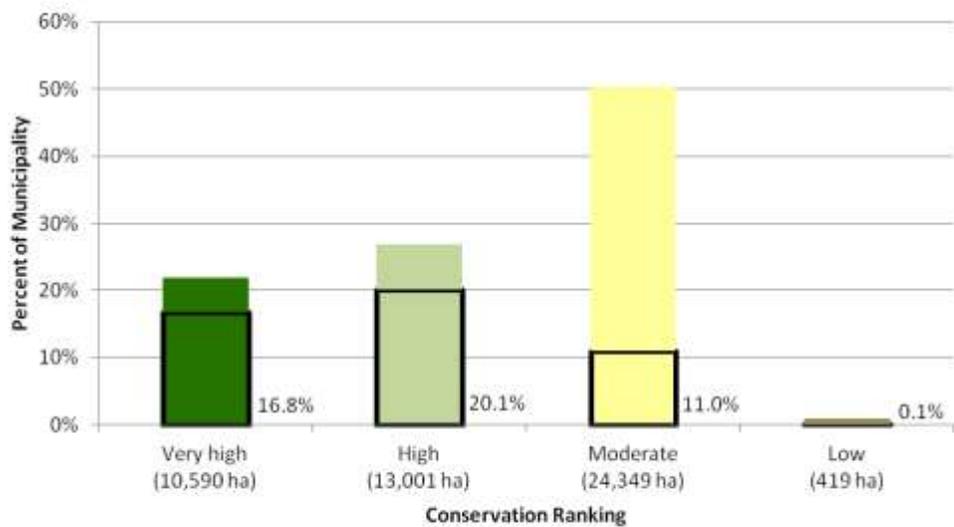


Percentage of Conservation Rankings, Conservation Lands, and Dedicated Open Space in Electoral Area E



■ % of Electoral Area in Conservation Lands or Dedicated Open Space

Percentage of Conservation Rankings and ESDPAs in Electoral Area E



■ % of Electoral Area within ESDPA