

# BGC Units

The **CWHvh** is represented in the PRFR by just one variant, the **CWHvh2**.<sup>4</sup> The CWHvh2 occupies the outer coastal portion of the region, mainly the islands but also a fringe of mainland. It is never found more than 25 km from saltwater, and ranges in elevation from 0 to 600 m. The terrain is mostly subdued and rocky, the climate is extremely wet, and the vegetation is a mosaic of poor forest and bog, with productive forests restricted to moderate and steep slopes or floodplains. The major tree species are western redcedar, yellow-cedar, western hemlock, shore pine, Sitka spruce, and red alder. Amabilis fir is a relatively minor species. Characteristic understory species are salal, deer fern, cordilleran bunchberry, false lily-of-the-valley, fern-leaved goldthread, and skunk cabbage.

The **CWHvm** occupies the eastern portions of some coastal islands, and most of the fjordland within the the Coast Mountains, extending as far north as Portland Canal and south to the Vancouver Forest Region boundary. The elevation range is from sea level to 800 m. The CWHvm has a wet, humid, mild, oceanic climate. Plant species such as yellow-cedar, shore pine, western yew, salal, deer fern, and sword fern are present, and interior species such as subalpine fir, Roche spruce, trembling aspen, and black huckleberry are absent or rare. The CWHvm also has submontane (low-elevation) **CWHvm1** and montane (high-elevation) **CWHvm2** variants. The CWHvm1 occupies an extensive area at elevations below 400 m. The CWHvm2 occurs above and inland of the CWHvm1 (approx. 400 - 800 m) and below the MH zone. The main ecological differences between the two variants are the shorter, cooler growing season, higher snow levels, and lower ecosystem productivity and biological diversity in the CWHvm2. Yellow-cedar and mountain hemlock occur more frequently in the CWHvm2, and pipecleaner moss and leafy mosses replace step moss as the dominant moss cover. A Gardner Canal phase (**CWHvm1a**) is recognized around Kemano, and extending south along Gardner Canal to the lower Kitlope valley. It is characterized by the presence of Douglas-fir on xeric to submesic sites.

The **CWHwm** is the most northerly subzone of the CWH. It occurs primarily on the inside of the Alaska Panhandle from Portland Inlet north to the Yukon border. In the south half of the PRFR, the CWHwm is found in the North Coast Forest District only, from Stewart to the mouth of the Nass River, and in the middle and upper Khutzeymateen and Kateen drainages. Elevations range from sea level to approximately 600 m. The CWHwm is notable for its very heavy snowfall, steep, rocky terrain, and low plant species diversity. Western redcedar and yellow-cedar are infrequent, and amabilis fir is absent in this northern subzone. Western hemlock and Sitka spruce are the dominant tree species. The CWHwm

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<sup>4</sup> The CWHvh1, southern variant, is found only in the Vancouver Forest Region.