

# **LOCAL GOVERNMENT:**

## ***VILLAGE OF KEREMEOS***

***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 Keremeos. **It should be used in conjunction with the Village of Keremeos 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 Keremeos offers many unique physical features (sagebrush slopes and the Similkameen River) and sensitive ecosystems (grassland slopes, mature forest, wetland and riparian areas). It is the juxtaposition of these diverse habitats that contribute to a wide diversity of species, both common and rare, that are found within the Municipal boundaries.

### **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***

- 14% of Keremeos' land base contains ecosystems ranked high or very high in importance for conservation.
- None of these sensitive ecosystems are within Environmentally Sensitive and Watercourse Development Permit areas.
- 3% of these highly important and sensitive ecosystems have been designated as Open Space or Conservation Lands through parks or zoning.

### ***Relative Biodiversity – Areas of Greatest Ecological or Biodiversity Significance***

- Less than 6% of Keremeos has a very high or high relative biodiversity, but because of the rarity and risk to the unique habitats and the species they support, it is vital to manage them carefully.
- 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***

- The developed portion of Keremeos is an obstacle to movement for some wildlife, although the Similkameen River still is a corridor.
- A unique local wildlife corridor runs through the Village containing sagebrush steppe grassland and vital habitat for species at risk.

## ***Current Tools and new Opportunities for Conservation***

### ***Official Community Plan Bylaws***

The OCP provides some general policy on environmentally sensitive areas.

- Watercourse Development Permits should be added to the OCP for the Similkameen River.

### ***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 Keremeos:

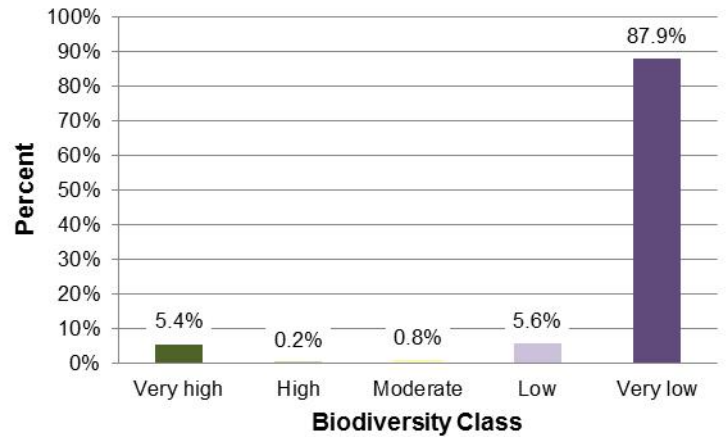
- Maintain and enhance setbacks, wetlands and native vegetation along the Similkameen River corridor as it is an important wildlife corridor through Keremeos. Incorporate this into parks planning.
- Look for opportunities to maintain the wildlife corridor in the village through education, Development Permits, or covenants.

## Keremeos

### Biodiversity Class Summary

Biodiversity class	Area (ha)*	% of Keremeos
Very high	12	5.4%
High	0	0.2%
Moderate	2	0.8%
Low	12	5.6%
Very low	193	87.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>219</b>	

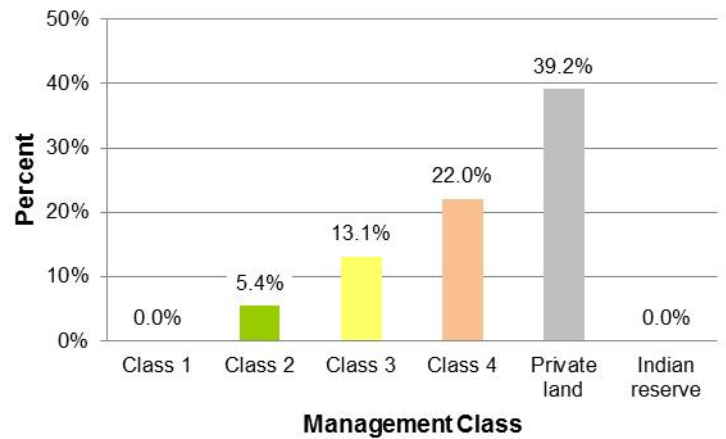
\*area statistics exclude large lakes (>50ha)



### Management Class Summary

Management class	Area (ha)*	% of Keremeos
Class 1 - Conservation Lands	0	0.0%
Class 2 - Dedicated Open Space	12	5.4%
Class 3 - Public Resource Lands	29	13.1%
Class 4 - Agriculture & Crown Leases	48	22.0%
Private land	86	39.2%
Indian reserve	0	0.0%
Undefined	44	20.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>219</b>	

\*area statistics exclude large lakes (>50ha)



### Conservation Ranking Summary

Conservation ranking	Area (ha)*	% of Keremeos
Very high - Class 1	23	10.3%
High - Class 2	7	3.2%
Moderate - Class 3	48	22.0%
Low - Class 4	141	64.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>219</b>	

\*area statistics exclude large lakes (>50ha)

