

# Gulf Islands National Park Reserve Management Plan Newsletter #3



PARKS CANADA

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Parks Canada is using a multi-phase planning process to develop the first management plan for the park. This newsletter provides a short **introduction and highlights “What We Heard”** in Phase 1 consultations.

## Where We’re At

The following outlines the various consultation phases, anticipated timelines, and their focus.

Phase 1 (COMPLETED) The focus was on gathering ideas and suggestions to update the park vision, update the overall management principles, and establish 15-year objectives for strategic areas of focus.

Phase 2 (Spring 2012) The focus will be on setting realistic 5-year targets and priority actions and setting policy direction relating to administration and operations and partnering and public engagement.

Phase 3 (Fall-Winter 2012/13) The focus will be largely on park zoning and monitoring.

Phase 4 (Summer-Fall 2013) this phase will consist of a public review and comment period—allowing people to consider the draft Management Plan as a whole document.

Thereafter, the Management Plan will be finalized.

## The Phase 1 Process

In order to provide information to and gather ideas from the public, including Coast Salish First Nations, 5 open houses, 2 information booths, 11 meetings and/or presentations, and 2 workshops were held and information was sent to 270 people on the management planning email list. Lots of ideas were received.

## The Park Vision

A vision for Gulf Islands National Park Reserve was developed and approved through the Interim Management Guidelines process (2006). It is now time to review and update the vision.

The vision serves as a reference for all decision-making. It should paint a picture of what the **desired state is for the park in 15 year’s time**. It should help people understand what is significant about the park, its special character and how we will be working together to achieve our goals for this special place.

Generally, people were asked what they value about **the park and what they’d like** the park to be like in 15-20 years. Example visions, from other national parks, were provided to prompt ideas and to gauge preferences.

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## What We Heard About the Vision

Some of the common themes and ideas/words expressed include:

- Protection of the natural environment and improvement to the ecological integrity (keep it natural, awe-inspiring, endangered ecosystems, beauty, undisturbed, land/sea connection, maintain diversity)
- Opportunities to enjoy nature in ways that respect sensitive nature of environment (connecting with nature, trails, kayaking, birding, watching wildlife, camping, access to the waterfront, easier access/parking)
- Presentation of culture/history (**First Nations'** long connections to the area, more respect for the First Nations , rich multi-cultural heritage, **today's island culture, specific places were** noted such as Roesland and Georgina Point)
- More interpretive information, provided in varied and interesting ways (more interpretive programs, information and opportunities relating to First Nations, interpretive signs, brochures and guides, leadership in education).
- First Nations related (continued use of traditional resources—hunting, fishing, harvesting, medicines, protection of ancestral sites in the park and greater involvement in management for mutual benefit)
- Continued liaison and integration with communities (continued integration of local community and park needs, locals are benefiting from park, continue local island liaison committees)
- Continued land acquisition and connection with a broader marine conservation area.



Sidney Spit  
Parks Canada/Christian J. Stewart

## What We Heard About Management Principles

Management principles are sometimes referred **to as values or “touchstones” that guide** management and are used as filters for decision-making.

The Interim Management Guidelines included nine management principles. Through the consultation process, an updated set of six principles were proposed. People were asked: if they were the park superintendent, what overall values or principles would they set to guide decision-making and operations. They were also asked if they agreed with the updated principles.

Generally, people agreed with the current and updated principles. Specific suggestions for management principles were combined into the following themes. Information in brackets highlights the types of comments made in these categories:

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## What We Heard About Management Principles

- Protection/Level of Service (as first priority, need to balance nature preservation and human use, desire to keep it as natural as possible, enhance visitor use yet protect natural values, slow, careful development of limited opportunities for people to see that natural world here, allow users to access the park in an environmentally positive way)
- Communication/Collaboration (consultation with communities, communication is critical, input by stakeholders, public participation, engage neighbours and educate them about stewardship, Parks Canada should consult face to face with First Nations Chiefs and Councils, recognize and use traditional knowledge, explain to people what you heard from them)
- Integrity (transparency, timely delivery of projects, good communications, to preserve and protect this fragile region)
- Other (maintain your excellent staff, read Dr. Suess's **"The Lorax"**, **acquisition of pertinent lands available now and never again**).

Given the comments received a set of 12 management principles will be included in the draft management plan for consideration. They are:

1. Decisions are consistent with the national park mandate (resource conservation, enjoyment and education) and the vision for GINPR.
2. Recognizing the sensitivity of the ecosystems in the Strait of Georgia Lowlands Natural Region, Parks Canada strives to improve ecosystem integrity and limit negative impacts.



Princess Margaret Trail, Portland Island  
Parks Canada/Christian J. Stewart

3. Visitor opportunities and facilities are peak- season focused, moderately rustic, **and generally "green" in nature.** Connecting with nature in quiet, peaceful ways is the primary focus. Connecting with cultural heritage is a second focus and will be undertaken in targeted locations, through targeted actions.
4. Major park projects include a public/ visitor awareness/education component.
5. Parks Canada provides specific mechanisms and opportunities for Coast Salish First Nations to collaborate in the planning and management of the park reserve and to incorporate Traditional Ecological Knowledge, First Nations interests, and input.

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## What We Heard About Management Principles

6. The Park Advisory Board (PAB) is consulted for advice on strategic matters relating to the planning and operation of the park reserve.
7. In order to ensure transparency, Parks Canada makes efforts to build and maintain positive relationships with stakeholders and the public and provides regular updates on park operations and the on-going implementation of the Management Plan.
8. If significant changes to management or park services are proposed, public consultation is undertaken and interests and input are considered before decisions are made.
9. Parks Canada provides opportunities for the public to be engaged in planning processes and key projects and if significant changes to management or park services are proposed, public consultation is undertaken and interests and input are considered before decisions are made.
10. Park administration, operations and programs demonstrate leadership and sustainability, including use of “green” practices where feasible.
11. Collaborative arrangements are used to advance mutual goals.
12. Parks Canada uses science, research, traditional and expert knowledge to support evidence-based and social-based decision-making.



Winter Cove, Saturna Island  
Parks Canada/Christian J. Stewart

## What We Heard About Priorities

In Phase 1, a list of approximately 30 identified management needs and opportunities was provided for comment. Given that it may be difficult to address all 30, people were asked to identify which they considered as the 2-3 most important ones to start with in each category.

The following summarizes the major themes that we heard.

Under Ecological Integrity,

- Removal of exotic/invasive species
- Restoring ecosystems
- Stewardship and working together
- Marine Planning & Management
- Monitoring

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## What We Heard About Priorities

Under Cultural Heritage Management,

- Working with First Nations to protect First Nations cultural sites
- Protecting Newcomer heritage
- Culture-related education
- Cultural Resource Management Strategy

Under Visitor Experience,

- Interpretation/Visitor Centre
- Trails
- Camping
- Gateways
- Locations for special events/large events
- Expanded/New opportunities
- Level of Service/Affordability

Under Working Together,

- Collaborating with First Nations
- Volunteers
- Stakeholder/Public engagement
- Outreach education

These provided a starting point for considering draft 15-year objectives.



Bald eagle  
Parks Canada/Christian J. Stewart

## What We Heard About 15-Year Objectives

**Objectives are meant to set the main ‘aims’ or ‘intent’ that Parks Canada should work toward** over the 15 year timeframe. Further, they should be broad enough that management needs and public desires can naturally flow from them.

Identifying strategic objectives that will endure for 15 years is a challenging task. While some people provided specific recommendations for 15-year objectives, others suggested specific desired outcomes.

Examples of suggestions received include:

### Restoring Ecological Integrity

- Introduce programming that proactively enhances the abundance of native fauna.
- Use science and monitoring to identify areas for targeted management actions and to assess effectiveness of those actions.
- Ecological restoration demonstration sites are established and used as a key tool for education and visitor experience.

### Managing Cultural Heritage

- Complete a Cultural Resource Management Strategy to ensure protection of key sites and structures.
- A sustainable program exists for cultural resource management and related interpretive opportunities.
- Continue to have partnering arrangements for cultural heritage rehabilitation.



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## What We Heard About 15-Year Objectives

### Enhancing Visitor Experience

- Explore and implement opportunities that address the needs and desires of changing demographic user groups to enhance visitor experiences.
- Work with schools to engage children and increase appreciation of nature/parks.
- Culture-related tourism is provided by Coast Salish First Nations in partnership with Parks Canada.

### Working Together

- Continue to facilitate communications between First Nations, local and provincial governments, local stakeholders, and park users.
- Parks Canada and Coast Salish First Nations are working together like family—we support each other and respect each other.
- GINPR is a Centre for Excellence for protected area research by universities, local communities, and others and collaboration creates greater success.
- A long-term volunteer program is in place and helping build support for the park.

### Other

- Complete the land acquisition program with existing, committed funding.
- Continue to engage interest-based groups in the delivery of complementary services or management of facilities through volunteer or partnering agreements.
- Park users understand the impacts of their use

The Planning Team is reviewing the many comments received to see if underlying themes can be established. Broad objectives will be drafted over the next month or two. In some cases comments received may be used in developing 5-year targets and/or actions in the next phase of the planning process.

## Next Steps

After the Planning Team has had more time to work on a draft vision and 15-year objectives, another newsletter will be developed to highlight **where we're heading. Expect newsletter #4 in early 2012.**

Phase 2 will begin in 2012...check the park website regularly for new information (use the **"Management Planning" feature button on the home page.**)



View from Pender Island  
Parks Canada/Christian J. Stewart