

Gwaii Haanas National Marine Conservation Area Reserve and Haida Heritage Site

Interim Management Plan and Zoning Plan

MAY 2010

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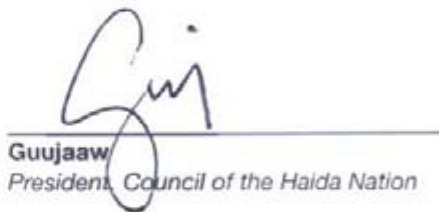
Interim Management Plan and Zoning Plan

FOR HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN IN RIGHT OF
CANADA:

A blue ink signature of Jim Prentice, consisting of a large, stylized 'J' and 'P' followed by a horizontal line.

The Honourable Jim Prentice
Minister of the Environment

FOR THE COUNCIL OF THE HAIDA NATION:

A black ink signature of Guujaaw, featuring a large, stylized 'G' and 'W' followed by a horizontal line.

Guujaaw
President, Council of the Haida Nation

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The Honourable Gail Shea
Minister of Fisheries and Oceans

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April Churchill
Vice President, Council of the Haida Nation

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Gwaii Haanas is one of the world's great ecological and cultural treasures. The Haida Nation and the Government of Canada will manage in partnership the marine area surrounding the pre-existing Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve and Haida Heritage Site (hereafter referred to as "Gwaii Haanas Land Area"), through the establishment of Gwaii Haanas National Marine Conservation Area Reserve and Haida Heritage Site (hereafter referred to as "Gwaii Haanas Marine Area").

The establishment of the Gwaii Haanas Marine Area represents a rare achievement – the integrated conservation of land and sea-from mountain top to deep-sea. The designation of Gwaii Haanas Marine Area complements the Haida Nation's prior commitment to protect the lands and waters of the area as a Haida Heritage Site (1985), as well as the commitment

made by the Government of Canada to protect the lands and waters of the archipelago (1988). The establishment of the national marine conservation area reserve also represents an important milestone under both the *Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act* and the *Oceans Act* towards the protection and long-term health of the earth's oceans, demonstrating leadership in integrated oceans management.

The Government of Canada and the Haida Nation will continue to work co-operatively towards the conservation and sustainable use of these rich waters. This partnership was created through the signing of the Gwaii Haanas Marine Agreement (January, 2010). The Government of Canada and the Haida Nation will work collaboratively with those who care about and benefit from the diverse natural and cultural resources and spiritual values of the Gwaii Haanas Marine Area.

1.1 VISION

The Gwaii Haanas marine area is known as one of the world's ecological and cultural treasures, where there are endless opportunities to learn about and experience the seamless connection of the sea, land and people. Co-operatively managed by the council of the Haida Nation and the Government of Canada, Gwaii Haanas is a recognized leader in integrated and adaptive management, ensuring that protection, conservation and sustainable use opportunities are mutually achieved.

Managed with innovation and foresight, the natural beauty and rich biodiversity of Gwaii Haanas exists for future generations. Ensuring the long-term health of this unique marine environment has contributed to the social, cultural and economic well being of island communities. The natural magnificence of gwaii haanas and its rich, living haida culture provides exceptional learning and enjoyment opportunities for visitors and reaffirms our place in the ecosystem.

1.2 PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE INTERIM MANAGEMENT PLAN

This interim management plan describes how the Government of Canada and the Haida Nation will co-operatively manage the Gwaii Haanas Marine Area, outlines preliminary management priorities and describes how the parties will work with partner groups and stakeholders such as coastal and island communities, tour operators, commercial and recreational fishing sectors, academia and the Canadian public.

The plan establishes guiding principles, management objectives, and a suite of implementation strategies and actions to guide work priorities that will be advanced after establishment, leading towards the development of a comprehensive management plan for the marine area, within five years of establishment. Thereafter, the management plan will be reviewed on an ongoing five-year basis. The interim management plan, combined with the Gwaii Haanas Marine Agreement, will guide the transition from establishment phase to full operations, according to the following components:

- Guiding Principles;
- Management Objectives; and
- Implementation Strategies and Actions.

1.3 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

This interim management plan is founded on the following guiding principles:

Showing Respect

Successful management of the Gwaii Haanas Marine Area can only be achieved through respect, both for one another and for all living things.

Working Together

Inclusiveness, acknowledging a diverse range of ideas, integrating programs and sharing responsibility for planning and management are fundamental.

Balancing Protection and Ecologically Sustainable Use

Management will respect a range of environmental, social, economic and cultural values to achieve protection and sustainable use.

Fostering Innovation

Due to the dynamic nature of marine ecosystems, adaptive management approaches are required to respond to change through a combination of traditional, modified and innovative methods.

Demonstrating Accountability

It is important that we be accountable for our actions. Accountability will be demonstrated through appropriate on-going monitoring and transparent reporting.



Alabaster Nudibranch © M. Hiebert



Eastern coastline of Gwaii Haanas © Parks Canada/N. Irving

Parks Canada is committed to establishing a system of national marine conservation areas that is representative of the full range of Canada's marine environments. The Gwaii Haanas Marine Area surrounds the Gwaii Haanas Land Area, protecting nearly 5,000 square kilometres (1,500 kilometres of land and 3,500 kilometres of seas - from mountain top to deep-sea (see Map 1).

2.1 GEOGRAPHIC CONTEXT

Gwaii Haanas comprises the southern portion of Haida Gwaii (Queen Charlotte Islands), an archipelago located approximately 100 kilometres off the north coast of British Columbia. Gwaii Haanas is a remote marine wilderness accessible only by boat or by seaplane, encompassing many islands, including a large portion of Moresby Island.

2.2 BIOLOGICAL CONTEXT

The Gwaii Haanas Marine Area represents two of Parks Canada's 29 Natural Marine Regions - Queen Charlotte Shelf to the west and Hecate Strait to the east. Under the waters of the Hecate Strait lie contours of a former tundra-like plain, with meandering rivers, lakes and beach terraces -- a landscape drowned when sea levels rose after the last ice age. Off the west coast, narrow continental shelf abruptly slopes to over 2,500 metres depth. This is

an area of many transitions-- deep-sea to continental slope to shallow shelf to rugged islands--creating great biological richness. The Gwaii Haanas Marine Area supports some of the most abundant and diverse marine communities found in temperate waters world-wide. Nearly 3,500 marine species (including some species-at-risk) have been identified around Haida Gwaii, and this number will grow greatly as our maritime understanding improves. This biodiversity has long supported the Haida's traditional harvest of marine resources, various commercial and recreational fisheries and coastal communities.

2.3 CULTURAL CONTEXT

Haida culture reflects the integral relationship of the people of Haida Gwaii to the land and sea. The coast of Haida Gwaii is archaeologically rich, revealing over 12,000 years of human occupation. The Gwaii Haanas Land Area alone has over 600 identified coastal archaeological sites and many of these are of great importance, culturally and spiritually to the Haida Nation. Some village sites are National Historic Sites and SGang Gwaay is one of Canada's fourteen UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Upland archaeological sites throughout the Gwaii Haanas Land Area recount an extensive history of Haida life as well as reflecting the post-contact history of European settlement associated with early



MAP 1: Gwaii Haanas National Marine Conservation Area Reserve and Haida Heritage Site.

industrial forestry, mining, fishing and marine transport. In the Gwaii Haanas Marine Area, artifacts excavated from the local seabed tell of Haida habitation at the mouths of ancient rivers now blanketed by the sea.

2.4 SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE USE

Hundreds of generations of Haida have been nourished by the natural abundance of Haida Gwaii. Ingenuity and resource richness enabled the development of a complex society. Before the 19th century disease epidemics, there were some twenty permanent villages and many seasonal habitation sites spread throughout Haida Gwaii, including Gwaii Haanas, supporting thousands of people. Permanent and seasonal village sites were typically chosen for fresh water access, food gathering and defense. Traditional Haida subsistence, such as hunting, gathering, food preparation and feasting, are essential cultural and spiritual activities, and are protected under the Canadian Constitution.

The cultural and natural features of the Gwaii Haanas Marine Area also support a range of tourism opportunities which provide important cultural, social and economic benefits to the people of Haida Gwaii, British Columbia, Canada and beyond. Marine and weather conditions limit the visitor season to the months from May to October, when seas are calmer. Within this period, Gwaii Haanas receives about 2,000 visitors each year, most of whom travel with licensed tour operators by kayak, motor vessel, or sailboat. Unguided visitors register individually for trip permits. All visitors receive an orientation to the area, its unique flora and fauna, and the cultural features found there. Approximately 12,000 people visit the Haida Heritage Centre at Kaay Llnagaay each year. The Centre is located in the easily accessed village of Skidegate. Visitors to the Centre have the opportunity to experience Gwaii Haanas through interpretive programs year-round, including guided beach walks, seabird and archaeology presentations, and an activity matching tidepool creatures with their Haida names.

The waters surrounding Haida Gwaii currently support over twenty fisheries, for a wide variety of finfish and invertebrate species. Commercially caught finfish include halibut, sablefish, rockfish, herring and salmon. Invertebrates fished in these waters include geoduck clam, sea urchin and Dungeness crab. The level of take and the fishing seasons vary between fisheries as do the fishing methods, such as net, hook and line, and diving. Commercial fisheries are generally licensed by species or gear type and fishing licenses are limited in the numbers issued annually by Fisheries and Oceans Canada for each license category. Many fisheries have specific catch limits (quotas) or are managed with controlled fishing periods and areas. Specific fishing requirements are described as license conditions and include, for example, catch reporting and in-season monitoring. All procedures are outlined within annual Integrated Fishery Management Plans for each fishery.

Licensed recreational fishing also occurs within the Gwaii Haanas Marine Area, although to a lesser extent than around central and northern Haida Gwaii due to the remote nature of Gwaii Haanas. Recreational fishing is an important experience for many visitors to Gwaii Haanas, and indeed for residents and visitors all around Haida Gwaii.

2.5 PROJECT HISTORY

Efforts related to establishing the Gwaii Haanas Marine Area date from the 1980s. In particular, the designation of the Haida Heritage Site brought national and international attention to logging in the southern Moresby Island area, especially Lyell Island. Key commitments include the following:

- **Haida Gwaii Watchmen Program (1981)**
Initiated by the Skidegate Band Council for guardianship of southern Haida cultural sites from inappropriate uses and theft of artifacts.

- **Haida Heritage Site (1985)**
Declared by the Haida Nation for the cultural and ecological protection of the lands and waters of the southern Moresby Island area.
- **South Moresby Agreement (1988)**
A formal commitment between the Government of Canada and Province of British Columbia to establish both land and marine protected areas in Gwaii Haanas.
- **Gwaii Haanas Agreement (1993)**
A landmark commitment between the Government of Canada and the Haida Nation to co-operatively plan, operate, manage and use the Gwaii Haanas Land Area. This agreement created the Canada-Haida Archipelago Management Board and re-confirmed the 1988 commitment to protect the waters around Gwaii Haanas.
- **Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act (2002)**
Government of Canada legislation enabling establishment of national marine conservation areas.
- **Gwaii Haanas Marine Agreement (2010)**
An agreement between the Government of Canada and the Haida Nation to share in the planning, operations, management and use of the Gwaii Haanas Marine Area. The Archipelago Management Board will expand to include Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

Government of Canada and the Haida Nation will work closely with the Province of British Columbia, fishing and marine transportation sectors, local communities, tourism representatives, academia, non-governmental organizations and citizens to achieve a collective vision for the Gwaii Haanas Marine Area. The overall management approach is to foster integration and cooperation at all levels.

The establishment of the Gwaii Haanas Marine Area is a major contribution towards achieving key commitments identified in the *Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act* (2002), Canada's Oceans Strategy (2002) and the Federal Marine Protected Areas Strategy (2005).

The *Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act*, administered by Parks Canada Agency, serves to guide the establishment of a network of marine conservation areas that protect and conserve Canada's marine areas for the benefit, education, and enjoyment of the people of Canada and the world. Canada's Oceans Strategy, led by Fisheries and Oceans Canada, establishes overarching policy direction for oceans management. The Oceans Strategy prescribes an integrated approach to management and serves to coordinate oceans and fisheries management programs, based on an ecosystem approach. The Strategy highlights that effective oceans management is a collective societal responsibility. The Federal Marine Protected Areas Strategy serves to guide and coordinate efforts of federal agencies in support of the establishment of various marine protected area designations, collectively serving in the protection of Canada's oceans and key marine ecosystem features.

2.6 LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CONTEXT

The commitment by the Government of Canada and the Haida Nation to formally partner in the planning, operations, management and use of Gwaii Haanas, as described in the Gwaii Haanas Marine Agreement (2010), serves as the foundation for all subsequent work. The work priorities undertaken by the parties are further guided and supported by federal laws, regulations and policies, and the Constitution of the Haida Nation. In addition, the

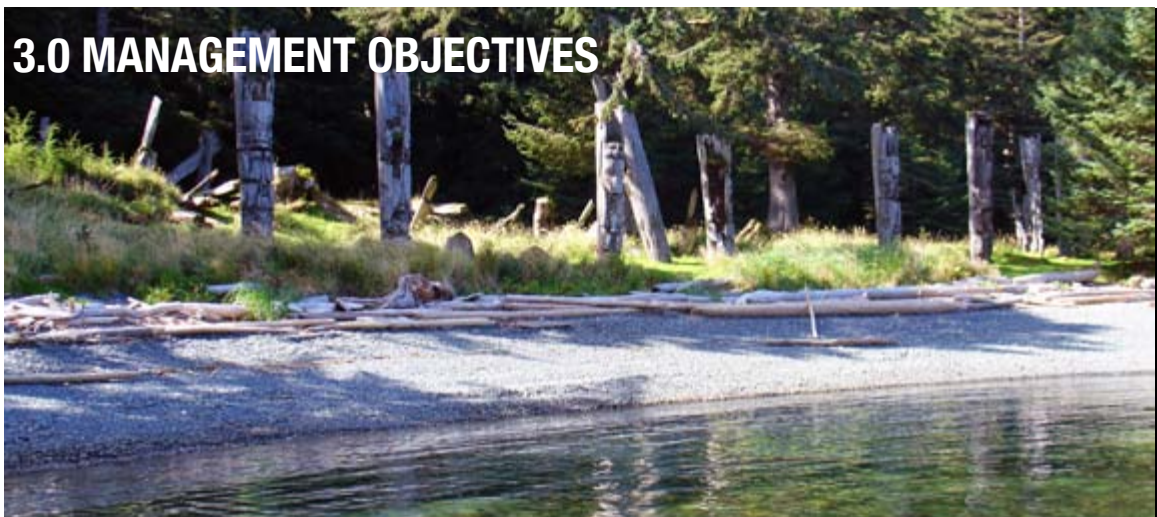
Management of the Gwaii Haanas Marine Area will be guided by terms outlined in the *Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act*, although other legislation will apply, such as the *Fisheries Act*, *Oceans Act*, *Species at Risk Act* and the *Canada Shipping Act*. This necessitates close working partnerships with Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Transport Canada on matters relating to their respective management jurisdiction. Further,

management direction established for the Gwaii Haanas Marine Area will integrate with other marine and coastal planning initiatives unfolding at various local and regional scales. These include the Haida Nation's Marine Use Planning process (initiated in 2006), the cooperatively managed (Canada-Haida) Bowie Seamount Marine Protected Area (Sgaan Kinghlas) established in 2008 under the *Oceans Act* and Fisheries and Oceans Canada's regional planning initiative for the north coast (Pacific North Coast Integrated Management Area) launched in 2009 as an *Oceans Act* initiative.



Island and intertidal, Richardson Inlet

© Parks Canada/N. Irving



SGang Gwaay © Parks Canada/N. Irving

The Gwaii Haanas Marine Area will be managed by the Government of Canada and the Haida Nation consistent with the guiding principles introduced in Section 1.3 and based upon the following management objectives:

Objective 1:
Establish and implement effective collaboration for planning and management.

Objective 2:
Protect, conserve and restore marine biodiversity and ecosystems.

Objective 3:
Sustain the continuity of Haida culture and protect features of spiritual and cultural importance.

Objective 4:
Promote ecologically sustainable uses of marine resources.

Objective 5:
Advance understanding of biodiversity and ecosystem functions, natural and social sciences, cultural resource values and sustainable uses.

Objective 6:
Enhance awareness and understanding, among local and national audiences, of the natural and cultural heritage.

Objective 7:
Foster meaningful connections for all Canadians, and provide opportunities for memorable visitor experiences.



Fishing boats, Queen Charlotte Harbour

© Parks Canada/N. Irving



Diver in Bull Kelp © M. Hiebert

The strategies outlined below articulate broad approaches that will be advanced during the initial term following establishment. These are not exhaustive or definitive in identifying specific activities, but rather will guide development of annual operational work-plans. Some strategies and actions will be initiated and completed within the first five-year period following establishment, others will be significantly advanced through this period, while others will be ongoing in nature. Ecosystem objectives and annual work plans will be developed through the Archipelago Management Board.

Activities listed under one management objective may aid achievement of other related objectives. For example, fisheries management measures and zoning commitments, when developed in an integrated manner, can achieve conservation of biodiversity, culture resource protection and ecologically sustainable use objectives concurrently. This integrated approach will also be necessary when implementing education, awareness and visitor experience objectives. Planning and management must be transparent and inclusive, benefit from advice of experts and stakeholders and adhere to high technical standards.

4.1 COLLABORATION IN PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

Objective 1: Establish and implement effective collaboration for planning and management.

The success of the Gwaii Haanas Land Area management is founded upon cooperation. Establishment of the Gwaii Haanas Marine Area presents an opportunity to further enhance collaboration and cooperation. The Gwaii Haanas Marine Agreement expands the role of the pre-existing Archipelago Management Board to include direct and focused involvement of Fisheries and Oceans Canada. Collectively, Parks Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Haida Nation will cooperatively advance management priorities and programs relating to the protection, conservation and sustainable use of the Gwaii Haanas Marine Area.

Ecosystem, socio-economic and cultural objectives will be developed by the parties to guide planning, management and decision-making, including advice relating to the management of fisheries within the marine area. As well, the parties will work closely with other marine and coastal planning initiatives such as the Haida Marine Use and Pacific

North Coast Integrated Management Area (PNCIMA) planning processes. Work priorities will also be advanced through the Canada - British Columbia Oceans Coordinating Committee.

Recognizing the range of marine uses and perspectives that exist, stakeholders and other interested parties will be engaged in ongoing discussions relating to planning and management. In planning and developing management measures that may impact existing fisheries in the Gwaii Haanas Marine Area, the Archipelago Management Board will consult through existing integrated fishery planning and advisory processes. Inclusivity, transparency and efficiency will guide ongoing collaboration.

The following strategies and actions will be undertaken to support this objective:

- Expand the pre-existing Archipelago Management Board to include Fisheries and Oceans Canada.
- Establish a Marine Advisory Committee to provide advice to the Archipelago Management Board and respective Ministers on the formulation, review and implementation of proposed management objectives and related management measures, and the development of a comprehensive management plan.
- Identify, formalize, and develop linkages to existing stakeholder, integrated planning and advisory processes and provide additional opportunities for engagement, consultation and information sharing.
- Develop and implement integrated and coordinated management programs relating to regulatory enforcement, marine research, search and rescue, environmental emergency response, education and outreach.
- Integrate marine planning and management with that of other agencies and planning initiatives.

4.2 CONSERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEMS

Objective 2: Protect, conserve and restore marine biodiversity and ecosystems.

The Gwaii Haanas Marine Area supports a diversity of species and habitats that depend on productive ecosystems. Ensuring that representative ecosystems, rare and unique features and sensitive elements of ecosystems are protected are core management priorities. Ecological restoration and maintenance of important ecosystem functions, processes and species interactions are also a priority. Emphasis will be placed on supporting the recovery of species-at risk, along with their critical habitat, and the restoration of species that have been traditional food sources to the Haida. Protecting special and rare features and conserving representative ecosystems helps sustain biodiversity and population characteristics such as appropriate size and age classes. This enhances the resilience necessary for ecosystems to recover from natural and human induced disturbances and change. Protected areas can also serve as nursery or rearing areas fostering recruitment or productivity, thereby enhancing opportunities for sustainable use.

Conservation work will integrate with existing Fisheries and Oceans Canada policies and initiatives including the precautionary approach, offsetting fishing impacts to sensitive benthic habitats and ecosystem considerations of managing forage fish. Protecting select areas, implementing priority management measures and developing a longer term protection plan and monitoring framework will be lead priorities. The development of a full suite of ecosystem objectives will be an initial focus of the Archipelago Management Board as this will serve to guide planning and decision making.

The following strategies and actions will be undertaken to support this objective:

- Establish a full suite of ecosystem objectives and indicators to guide planning and management.

- Identify areas for enhanced protection and directed management measures to achieve ecosystem objectives, such as:
 - *protection of special features, rare or sensitive elements of ecosystems;*
 - *maintaining biodiversity and ecosystem resilience;*
 - *manage for and mitigating threats to biodiversity and ecosystem functions; and*
 - *restoring species-at-risk and critical habitat features.*
- Implement, monitor and enforce zones of protection.

4.3 SUSTAINING HAIDA CULTURE

Objective 3: Sustain the continuity of Haida culture and protect features of spiritual and cultural importance.

Sustaining Haida culture and traditional use activities is a clear priority for the Haida Nation, and to upholding the management partnership itself. Also important will be opportunities for new Haida marine businesses, ongoing support for the Haida Gwaii Watchmen Program, maintaining links with Haida traditional knowledge gathering projects and education of Haida youth in traditional life-ways, such as at Swan Bay Rediscovery Camp.

Gwaii Haanas' waters include sites of significant spiritual and cultural importance to the Haida Nation, and indeed to all Canadians. Maritime sites include shipwrecks, submerged fish weirs, hundreds of coastal middens and other types of archaeological sites, some of which extend back 12,000 years. Work has begun on these sites, but much remains to be done to fully describe and protect these valuable attributes of the cultural seascape. Haida leadership in all aspects of traditional knowledge gathering will be critically important.

The following strategies and actions will be undertaken to support this objective:

- Develop cultural objectives to guide planning and management.
- Assess existing cultural resource conservation programs and activities.
- Identify areas for enhanced protection or application of specific measures to achieve cultural objectives such as:
 - *protecting important spiritual and archaeological sites; and*
 - *maintaining areas for traditional harvest and ceremonial use.*
- Develop and implement programs and management approaches to achieve cultural objectives. Among other actions this will include:
 - *researching, investigating and monitoring sites of archaeological importance; and*
 - *gathering and mapping traditional knowledge, with particular focus to Haida Elders.*
- Support the Haida Gwaii Watchman Program.

4.4 ECOLOGICALLY SUSTAINABLE USES

Objective 4: Promote ecologically sustainable uses of marine resources.

Gwaii Haanas' ecosystems have supported Haida communities for millennia. Today, they also support commercial and recreational fisheries and a range of ecotourism and visitor experiences that, in turn, support local and regional businesses. This range of sustainable use activities provides important and valuable cultural, social and economic benefits to the people of Haida Gwaii, other coastal communities, British Columbia, Canada and beyond.

The *Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act* explicitly provides for the ecologically sustainable use of renewable resources within marine conservation areas and prohibits the extraction of non-renewable resources such as minerals or petroleum. Sustainability promotes human activities that maintain the integrity of basic ecological interactions and do not compromise the structure and function of ecosystems, submerged lands and the water column. Seasonal and/or spatial management through zoning and other measures will enable coexistence of uses and protection within the Gwaii Haanas Marine Area. Commercial and recreational fishing, eco-tourism, public visitation from local communities, research and education activities that are conducted in an ecologically sustainable manner will be promoted.

An integrated management approach is needed that fosters socio-economic opportunities consistent with the ecosystem, cultural and research objectives. It will be necessary to gain a better understanding of socio-economic benefits of existing and potential activities, determine whether activities are ecologically sustainable and provide opportunities for input from all stakeholders through consultation.

The following strategies and actions will be undertaken to support this objective:

- Establish socio-economic objectives and indicators for resource uses.
- Ensure sustainable use activities are conducted in a manner and scale that is consistent with the ecosystem, socio-economic and cultural objectives.
- Develop and implement management approaches consistent with the ecosystem, socio-economic and cultural objectives.

4.5 RESEARCH AND MONITORING

Objective 5: Advance understanding of biodiversity and ecosystem functions, natural

and social science, cultural resource values and sustainable uses.

The Gwaii Haanas land and sea conservation continuum will be a benchmark for scientific and cultural understanding. Already in hand is over twenty years of research undertaken by Parks Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Haida Nation often in partnerships with other government agencies, and academia. This work is a foundation for building knowledge of local lands, seas and their interactions. Efforts have focused on establishing an understanding of physical, biological and social science, cultural resource values and Haida traditional knowledge. Achievements to date include accounting for almost 3,500 species in the marine area, a detailed evaluation of shoreline characteristics and analysis of over a decade of visitor demographics. Major progress has been made in understanding the archaeology of human occupation and mapping traditional Haida resource uses and place names. There has also been much recent seabed mapping in collaboration with the Canadian Hydrographic Service.

Developing sound ecosystem-based adaptive management programs will require a continued commitment to expanding our knowledge base of the biological systems and cultural resource values of the area. In support of this, we must continue to expand our knowledge base through research into ecosystems and their attendant processes, the documentation of Haida traditional knowledge, the analysis of visitor preferences and the review of management practices that are undertaken. A high standard of technical evaluation and peer review will be applied to the work undertaken in Gwaii Haanas. Peer review will aid inclusiveness, as diversity of experts and perspectives enhances rigor and objectivity. Finally, advice provided to decision-makers will adhere fully to federal government principles and guidelines.

Identifying benchmark sites for research and monitoring will advance understanding of biodiversity, ecosystem functions and species interactions. This management focus will

support identification of conservation priorities and best-management practices locally, nationally and internationally. Several key monitoring initiatives are already underway at present, including assessing near-shore ecosystems, measuring effects of climate-related sea level changes on shorelines, and examining predator-prey relationships and their effect on kelp-forest ecosystem dynamics. Also important will be a framework for monitoring and evaluation of the footprint of all human activities so that management can be evaluated, results reported, and adapted accordingly.

The benefits derived from this work are not limited to management of the Gwaii Haanas Marine Area - what is learned can be more broadly applied to marine planning and management. Research and monitoring programs will be collaborative in structure and approach and could, in turn, aid development of agreements, standards, protocols and data sharing.

The following strategies and actions will be undertaken to support this objective:

- Coordinate and advance research and monitoring.
- Obtain and apply peer-reviewed biological and social science advice.
- Create monitoring and reporting programs to aid ongoing ecosystem-based, adaptive management.
- Evaluate existing visitor services and education and awareness programs to aid in ongoing efforts to ensure a diverse range of programs and services are offered.
- Identify key areas, ecosystem features and processes to serve as long-term monitoring sites.
- Foster research and partnering opportunities.

- Nurture Haida technical involvement in monitoring and assessment of ecosystem objectives.

4.6 AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING

Objective 6: Enhance awareness and understanding, among local and national audiences, of the natural and cultural heritage.

The Gwaii Haanas Marine Area will build upon two decades of dedicated work to build awareness and understanding of the Gwaii Haanas Land Area, through Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve and Haida Heritage Site operations, education and outreach programs. Through these efforts, Gwaii Haanas is recognized locally, nationally and internationally for its exceptional biodiversity and cultural values, heritage sites and cooperative approach to planning, operations, management and use. While Gwaii Haanas is well-known nationally and abroad, segments of the Canadian population remain unaware of the land and marine area. Establishing the Gwaii Haanas Marine Area creates an opportunity to reach out to Canadians to foster greater awareness of the significance of marine conservation and management.

Establishment of the Gwaii Haanas Marine Area will stimulate the need for increased public outreach appropriate for an integrated land and sea conservation area of national and global significance. An assessment of existing outreach and education programs and services will be a priority and such work will ensure that future programs and investments effectively reach a variety of audiences locally, regionally, nationally and beyond. Continuing to work with partners, such as the Haida Heritage Centre at Kaay Llnagaay, Haida Gwaii Watchmen program, the Vancouver Aquarium, commercial media and local School District 50, as well as forging new partnerships, will ensure that local and national audiences receive unparalleled learning opportunities.

The following strategies and actions will be undertaken to support this objective:

- Review existing Gwaii Haanas outreach and education programs to identify priority areas for further programming, and identify opportunities to coordinate efforts with other programs and agencies.
- Develop targeted marine science, cultural and stewardship focused learning opportunities and materials using the best public outreach education tools to meet the needs of the target audience.

4.7 VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Objective 7: Foster meaningful connections with all Canadians and provide opportunities for memorable visitor experiences.

Renowned for its coastal and forest ecosystems, distinct flora and fauna and Haida heritage, the Gwaii Haanas Land Area offers unique opportunities for visitors to connect with nature and experience the Haida world. With the establishment of the Gwaii Haanas Marine Area, there will be increased awareness nationally and internationally and corresponding increased demand to visit. With the opening of the Haida Heritage Centre at Kaay Lnagaay in Skidegate (2007), there are great opportunities to expand visitor programs and potential to explore new ways to share Gwaii Haanas through 'virtual' programs.

A priority following establishment will be to develop a detailed understanding of existing visitor segments to Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve. This work will assist with the identification of new or underdeveloped opportunities for targeting visitor audiences. With a clear understanding of who is coming to Gwaii Haanas and who might come, an assessment of existing programs and products can be undertaken to clarify where visitor needs are being met, where adaptations are necessary or where new offerings should be created. New and expanded visitor programs will be advanced through partnering arrangements with existing groups and programs such as the Haida Heritage Centre at Kaay Lnagaay, the Haida Gwaii Watchmen Program, the Gwaii Haanas Tour Operators

Association and other tourism-focused groups. This collaborative approach aims to maximize cultural, social and economic benefits for tourism businesses, organizations and visitors alike.

The following strategies and actions will be undertaken to support this objective:

- Review existing national park reserve programs and services to identify gaps in the marine related offer to targeted current and potential visitors.
- Work with tourism partners to develop products or programs that enhance opportunities for visitors to connect with Gwaii Haanas and highlight the Agency's integrated work in the areas of protection, education and visitor experience. These new programs will reflect protection, education and visitor experience elements like the existing Haida Gwaii Watchmen program currently does.
- Work with partners and partner agencies to identify opportunities to coordinate visitor program and service efforts.
- Enhance existing off-site visitor programs and services offered via on-line means and through local partner sites, programs and venues.



Sunset, Juan Perez Sound © Parks Canada/N. Irving

5.0 ZONING



Fishing boats, Queen Charlotte Harbour © Parks Canada/N. Irving

The protection of natural self-regulating marine ecosystems is important for the maintenance of biological diversity. In addition to the protection of marine ecosystems and cultural resource values, the *Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act* provides opportunities, through the zoning of marine conservation areas for the ecological sustainable use of marine resources for the lasting benefit of coastal communities.

5.1 ZONING REQUIREMENTS OF THE CANADA NATIONAL MARINE CONSERVATION AREAS ACT

The development of an initial zoning plan is a formal requirement of the *Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act*. Recognizing the complexity of uses, user groups and management considerations, the zoning commitments made at establishment will be modest in scope.

5.2 DESCRIPTION OF INITIAL PROTECTED AREAS

The areas presented in the Interim Zoning Plan protect an initial sample of key areas of high biophysical diversity, special, rare and sensitive ecosystem elements, and areas of cultural significance. Six key areas, amounting to 3% of the Gwaii Haanas Marine area, have been selected for protection. Commercial and recreational extraction (fishing and harvesting) will not be permitted in these areas and

following establishment, other activities will be further evaluated to determine if further restrictions in these areas are warranted. The remaining regions within Gwaii Haanas (97% of the total protected area) will permit varying opportunities for fishing, recreation and others activities to continue so long as they are conducted in a manner that is consistent with the management goals and ecosystem objectives for the area.

Approximately 14% of the waters within the Gwaii Haanas marine boundary are presently designated as a Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA) by Fisheries and Oceans Canada. RCAs aim to protect a variety of rockfish species, and rockfish habitat, through the restriction of a variety of commercial and recreational fisheries and gear types. These areas do not prohibit all fisheries and gear types, only those that directly target rockfish species, as well as those that have high levels of bycatch. Of the 14% of the waters that are presently set aside as RCAs, a small portion of these areas will be upgraded to full closures (<1% of the total area); the remaining areas will remain as RCAs for the present time.

Through effective zoning and management measures, the abundant and rich heritage resources (ecological and cultural) in Gwaii Haanas will be protected for present and future generations, while minimizing displacement or impact to existing resource users. Highlights of

each of the protected areas are briefly described below. Please refer to Appendix A (following page) for a map which depicts the location and extent of the candidate areas for full protection.

the advancement of this work and development of a comprehensive zoning plan, post establishment.

- **Burnaby Narrows:** A biophysical hotspot which supports one of the most abundant, diverse and colourful intertidal communities found in temperate waters anywhere in the world.
- **Louscoone, Flamingo and Gowgaia Estuaries:** These highly productive and biologically rich estuarine ecosystems act as important nutrient and energy interfaces between the land and the sea.
- **Cape Saint James:** Unique oceanographic area characterized by strong tidal mixing which exerts a huge impact on primary and secondary productivity of surrounding waters.
- **SGang Gwaay:** Important Haida village site protected by the Haida Nation and Parks Canada, recognized by UNESCO as a world heritage site. The site commemorates the living culture of the Haida people and their relationship to the land and the sea.



Eastern coastline of Gwaii Haanas © Parks Canada/N. Irving

5.3 FUTURE ZONING CONSIDERATIONS

The Interim Zoning Plan serves as a starting point for further work that will be advanced by the parties following establishment, leading to the creation of a comprehensive zoning plan. The Government of Canada and the Haida Nation will continue to work closely with fishing sector groups, other stakeholders and the public to advance this work more fully over the five year period following establishment, leading to the development of a comprehensive management plan and zoning concept, as required by the *Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act*. The strategies outlined in Section 4 of this Interim Management Plan identify the approaches that will be pursued in support of



Clown Nudibranch © M. Hiebert

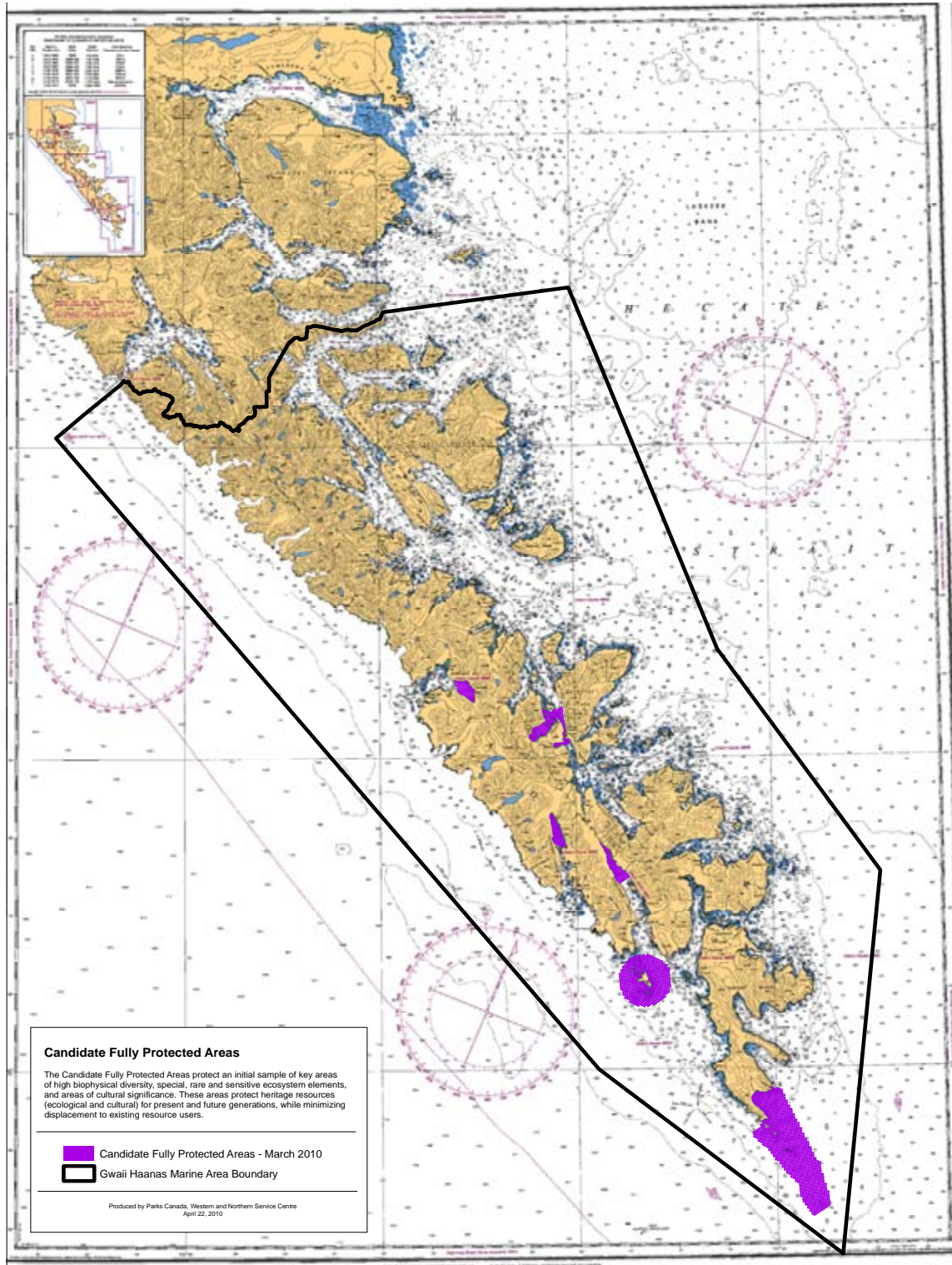
In closing, the establishment of the Gwaii Haanas Marine Area comes at a time of promising changes in marine planning and management at local, regional and national levels. This Interim Management Plan describes how the Government of Canada and the Haida Nation will work cooperatively to manage the Gwaii Haanas Marine Area and to steadily advance the collective vision of the partners.

The Government of Canada and the Haida Nation will cooperatively manage all of the land and marine protected areas that make up Gwaii Haanas while engaging other government partners, marine industry sectors, local communities, academia, non-governmental organizations and citizens to achieve a collective conservation and use vision. This vision embodies sustainable uses while maintaining ecosystem structure and function, facilitating visitor experiences and fostering understanding among Canadians about marine conservation. The vision also hinges upon sustaining the continuity of Haida culture, such as promoting Haida business development and respecting Haida traditional knowledge, subsistence uses and spirituality in managing the integrated land and sea conservation continuum.



Recreational fishing, Ellen Island © Parks Canada/N. Irving

APPENDIX A: Fully Protected Areas



APPENDIX B: Existing DFO Closures and Study Sites

