

**INTO THE DEEP BLUE**  
*Marine Ecosystem-based Management*

Coastal First Nations  
Turning Point Initiative

Our First Nations communities are leading the way in marine use planning, discussing key marine issues within our communities, and talking to our neighbours about what is important and why.

In 2002, Coastal First Nations-Turning Point Initiative (CFN-TPI) signed an agreement with Canada to develop a marine use planning process under Canada's Oceans Strategy. First Nations jointly began marine planning in 2005, along the BC coast, in an area called the Pacific North Coast Integrated Management Area (PNCIMA).

The planning process was officially agreed to by Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the Coastal First Nations and the North Coast-Skeena First Nations Stewardship Society in December 2008. The agreement creates a collaborative model for ocean governance that ensures the meaningful participation of First Nations in the development of management plans for marine use in PNCIMA.



We have always had a land and resource plan for our lands and oceans and the creatures they harbour. It lives in our heritage, in our oral history and in our everyday decisions as to where we collect our food, and where we fish and harvest our trees.

Our vision for our land and resources is based on respect and the best definition of the term "sustainable." To us this means the wealth of the forests, fish, wildlife and the complexity of all life will be here forever. It also means that we will be here forever.

*Kitasoo Land Use Plan, 2000*

## PEOPLE OF THE LAND AND SEA

Coastal First Nations have been practicing 'ecosystem-based management' of the land and sea through countless generations stretching back more than 10,000 years. Our traditional resource management and enhancement practices sustain some of the richest cultures and societies on the planet.

Respect for the land, sea, spirit world, and all living things, is at the heart of our interactions with nature. The knowledge that "everything depends on everything else" tells us that the well-being of our communities is intricately tied to the well-being of the land and sea.

It is only in recent decades that this old way has become expressed in scientific terms called ecosystem-based management (EBM). In this last century, industrial-scale extraction of land and sea resources have depleted and threatened plants, animals and the places where they live. The management decisions that led to this depletion did not adequately consider impacts on the environment and relationships between plants and animals.

EBM expresses modern recognition of the need to consider ecosystems when managing for resource use – First Nations have known this for millennia. We have been and are again at the forefront of ecosystem-based land and sea resource management in our traditional territories.



## GOALS OF ECOSYSTEM-BASED MANAGEMENT

- Maintain and restore healthy, diverse and naturally resilient ecosystems
- Sustain human use of ecosystems over generations
- Ensure people have a fair share of the benefits from the ecosystems in which they live



## INFORMED BY TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

Traditional knowledge (TK) from our elders and traditional resource harvesters plays a crucial role in informing our ecosystem-based marine planning.

Many aspects of TK, from ecological to cultural, are documented in our studies, including:

- Important places for fishing and gathering of different species
- ‘Seasonal rounds’ for specific places highlighting when different species are harvested
- Traditional ways of managing, and traditional ownership, of marine resources and areas
- Methods used in fishing, gathering and preparing foods
- Important cultural and archaeological sites
- Travel and trade routes for people, and migration routes for animals
- Spawning and rearing areas for different marine animals
- Observed changes, or trends, in species abundance and distribution over time

Traditional knowledge interviewers and marine planning staff in our communities ensure that this confidential information is used in sensitive and respectful ways.



# ETHICS AND VALUES

## PRINCIPLES OF FIRST NATIONS EBM

Ethics and values are the roots of traditional land and sea management systems. Although expressed in unique ways, First Nations ethics and values relate to scientific principles of EBM, and provide linkages between the two perspectives.

### FIRST NATIONS ETHICS AND VALUES & SCIENTIFIC PRINCIPLES

VALUES	PRINCIPLES
<b>RESPECT &amp; RESPONSIBILITY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Precautionary Approach</li><li>• Inclusive and Participatory</li></ul>
<b>BALANCE &amp; INTERCONNECTEDNESS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Long-term Sustainable Use</li><li>• Integrated Management</li></ul>
<b>INTERGENERATIONAL KNOWLEDGE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adaptive Management</li><li>• Best Information</li></ul>
<b>GIVING AND RECEIVING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Equitable Sharing</li></ul>



## RESPECT & RESPONSIBILITY

Respect is about responsibility for the natural world. Decisions err on the side of caution to reduce risks to the well-being of animals, plants, people and places. People and governments provide leadership, open communication and cooperate to achieve common goals and ensure proper accountability. Respect requires recognition of First Nations title and rights to traditional territories, including the right to continue traditional practices, activities and marine uses. We are responsible to future generations in the decisions that we make today.

## BALANCE & INTERCONNECTEDNESS

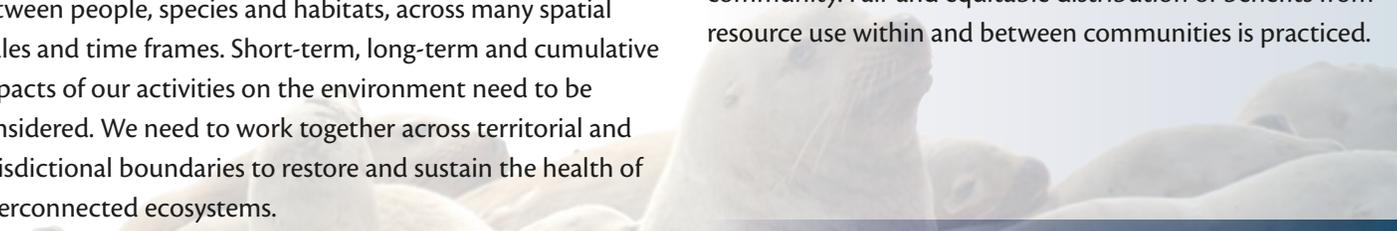
Balance is needed to sustain healthy communities within healthy ecosystems. Balance ensures fairness to future generations and sustains our cultures through time. Interconnectedness means accounting for the relationships between people, species and habitats, across many spatial scales and time frames. Short-term, long-term and cumulative impacts of our activities on the environment need to be considered. We need to work together across territorial and jurisdictional boundaries to restore and sustain the health of interconnected ecosystems.

## INTERGENERATIONAL KNOWLEDGE

Within our communities, ‘listening to your elders’ speaks to the transfer of knowledge between generations. Sharing of culture and tradition teaches the value of specific places. Adaptive management expresses a similar concept that decisions be based on learning from past experiences. Good communication and use of best available information – traditional, local and scientific – are required to inform planning and decision-making. Effective monitoring and the ability to change management directions based on results of past actions, are important elements of EBM.

## GIVING AND RECEIVING

The act of giving thanks for ‘gifts’ received, or reciprocity, acknowledges both physical and spiritual connections to the natural world. Reciprocity recognizes the inherent value of all things and speaks to shared responsibility and community. Fair and equitable distribution of benefits from resource use within and between communities is practiced.



# APPLYING EBM IN MARINE PLANNING

First Nations on the North and Central Coasts of BC and on Haida Gwaii are at different stages of defining EBM and how it will be applied in marine planning within their traditional territories. Each coastal First Nations community may express definitions of EBM in different ways.

For example, the Council of the Haida Nation has created the following working definition of EBM for marine planning: Respect is the foundation of ecosystem-based management. It acknowledges that the land, sea, air and all living things, including the human community, are interconnected and that we have the responsibility to sustain and restore balance and harmony.

EBM will be the foundation for addressing many marine issues that are being discussed at community-based marine planning tables including fisheries sustainability, conservation, habitat protection, marine-based economic development, monitoring and enforcement.



Haida culture is intertwined with all of creation in the land, sea, air and spirit worlds. Life in the sea around us is the essence of our well-being, and so our communities and culture.

Yet here, as around the world, an insatiable human appetite is depleting the oceans. Some species are diminished or gone, and many habitats are impoverished.

We know that our culture depends on the sea around us, and that the well-being of every community and Nation is at risk. It is imperative that we bring industrial marine resource use into balance with, and respect for, the well-being of life in the sea around us.

We must take steps today to achieve a future with healthy intact ecosystems that continue to sustain Haida culture, communities, and an abundant diversity of life, for generations to come.

*Haida Marine Vision, Council of the Haida Nation, 2007*



## MARINE SPATIAL PLANNING

Considering ecosystem needs and human uses in an integrated way is a critical element of EBM. Recognizing that ecosystems are places means that EBM is place-based, and therefore marine spatial planning provides a means to implement EBM. Area zoning and designation of First Nations food fishing areas, marine conservancies, and multiple use areas are some of the tools that can be successfully applied in marine area management.

**Know our land and our natural world. It is our obligation to be stewards of the land and the living things on it. Never take or kill more than you need. Something has to be left for the future. Live to the rhythm of our annual cycle. Know the weather and the habits of living things. Never mistreat animals; a similar mistreatment comes back on you double.**

*Haisla Elders, 2006*

## MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

EBM can also be applied as management guidelines to address ecological, cultural and socio-economic issues and concerns.

In marine areas, we may specify guidelines to address:

- Ecological concerns, such as ensuring the integrity of sensitive coastal habitats including eel grass meadows, kelp forests, marine bird areas and herring spawning areas;
- Cultural concerns, such as limiting activities in marine areas adjacent to cultural and archaeological sites and spiritual sites; and
- Economic considerations, such as promoting activities that are consistent with the community's visions and values and regulating human activities that negatively impact the marine environment.

## LEADING MARINE PLANNING IN OUR TRADITIONAL TERRITORIES

As we continue to lead the way in ecosystem-based marine planning and implementation within our traditional territories, we will consider the many complex relationships between people, the land and the sea.

Our responsibility is to work together to ensure ecosystem health and restoration alongside social, cultural and economic well-being for our communities – for now and generations to come.



## FIRST NATIONS PARTICIPATING IN PNCIMA MARINE USE PLANNING

Each of the Nations is working with government and stakeholders to implement their integrated land use plan for their territorial land. Similar to marine use planning, the land use plans follow the principles of EBM. EBM in the marine environment is informed by and will compliment each Nation's land use plan.

### Central Coast First Nations

- Wuikinuxv
- Heiltsuk
- Kitasoo/Xai'Xais
- Nuxalk

### North Coast First Nations

- Metlakatla
- Gitga'at
- Haisla
- Kitselas
- Kitsumkalum
- Gitxaala

### Haida Gwaii

- Haida (Council of the Haida Nation with support of Skidegate and Massett)



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Thanks to DFO Aboriginal Aquatic Resources and Ocean Management, DFO Oceans, and the Betty and Gordon Moore Foundation for continuing support of First Nations marine use planning in the PNCIMA.

### SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

The information in this publication is primarily based on two existing documents:

- PNCIMA First Nations Area Technical Teams, 2008. **Linking British Columbia Coastal First Nations and Modern Perspectives on Ecosystem-Based Management**. Unpublished report produced in support of PNCIMA First Nations marine use planning, January 2008: 16pp.
- Council of the Haida Nation, 2007. **Ecosystem-based Management – A Basis for Haida Gwaii Marine Use Planning**. Unpublished document and accompanying EBM backgrounder produced in support of Haida marine planning, November 2007: 2pp + 3pp of background.

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