

Heiltsuk, Kitasoo/Xai'Xais,  
Nuxalk and Wuikinuxv Nations &  
Province of British Columbia

# CENTRAL COAST MARINE PLAN OVERVIEW

2015

## Central Coast Marine Plan Overview

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Layout and Design: Pink Sheep Media





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Photo by Ken Cripps



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## PLAN VISION

Connections between the land, the sea and the people are valued. Healthy marine ecosystems support human wellbeing, sustainable community prosperity and cultural resilience for future generations. The governance and management promoted by the Central Coast Marine Plan is collaborative, effective, transparent and integrated across jurisdictions, First Nations territories and international boundaries. Management incorporates evolving information and adapts to changing social, technological and environmental conditions.



Photo by Doug Neasloss



## PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The purpose of the Central Coast Marine Plan is to identify acceptable marine uses that support sustainable communities while protecting and, where necessary, restoring marine ecosystems.

The Plan was prepared as part of the Marine Planning Partnership for the North Pacific Coast (MaPP) initiative, whose partners are the provincial government and 18 member First Nations, represented by three First Nations organizations: the Coastal First Nations–Great Bear Initiative, the North Coast–Skeena First Nations Stewardship Society and the Nanwakolas Council. As part of the MaPP initiative, Marine Plans were developed for four sub-regions: Central Coast, Haida Gwaii, North Coast and North Vancouver Island. Together, these Plans provide an integrated ecosystem-based approach to management of ocean resources on the north Pacific coast.



Photo by Ian McAllister

## PLAN AREA

The Central Coast Plan Area is a region of profound beauty, significant ecological diversity and remarkable cultural richness. It is characterized by hundreds of islands, exposed rocky headlands, nearshore kelp forests and the shelf waters of Queen Charlotte Sound. Within the Plan Area, the exposed outer coast meets an intricate shoreline that is cut by narrow channels and steep-walled fjords that contain large estuaries, calm inlets and pocket coves. This complex marine environment sustains First Nations cultures, links remote communities and provides employment, recreation and spiritual benefits to First Nations and other local inhabitants.

The Central Coast Plan Area extends from Laredo Channel and the northern tip of Aristazabal Island in the north to the southern limit of Rivers Inlet and Calvert Island (Figure 1). Bella Coola, Bella Bella, Ocean Falls, Wuikinuxv, Shearwater and Klemtu are the largest communities in the Plan Area, which supports an overall population of approximately 3,500. Close to two-thirds of area residents are of Heiltsuk, Kitasoo/Xai'Xais, Nuxalk or Wuikinuxv ancestry.

Management and utilization of abundant marine resources on the Central Coast, particularly salmon, supported ancient civilizations and allowed rich and complex cultures and societies to develop. Historically abundant salmon, herring and eulachon populations were once the cornerstone of trade between coastal and inland First Nations in the region, and an important economic driver for First Nations and local communities. Groundfish such as rockfish, halibut, sablefish, sole and pacific cod, and invertebrates such as geoduck, sea cucumber, sea urchin, dungeness crab and prawn have been managed and harvested for many generations by the Central Coast Nations and today are important to the modern commercial fishing industry.

The Plan Area is also home to numerous marine birds and marine mammals. The adjacent terrestrial area has become well-known as the Great Bear Rainforest. Here, many terrestrial animals forage extensively in the intertidal zone of the Plan Area and create a vital link between the land and the sea.

Over the last century, Central Coast economies relied primarily on commercial logging and fishing industries. While these industries are still critical, local economies are becoming more diversified with a recent focus on aquaculture, tourism and other service sectors.

Traditional and cultural resources are the underpinning of Heiltsuk, Kitasoo/Xai'Xais, Nuxalk and Wuikinuxv civilizations.

Traditional and cultural resources encompass the geographic features, water, fish, wildlife and plants that comprise the landscape and seascape, cultural areas and cultural sites. Central Coast Nations societal structures and economic systems are based on traditional and cultural resources within territories and are reflected in origin stories, dances, tribal grouping and oral traditions.

Traditional and cultural resources of particular cultural importance to all four Central Coast Nations include eulachon, salmon, abalone and herring.

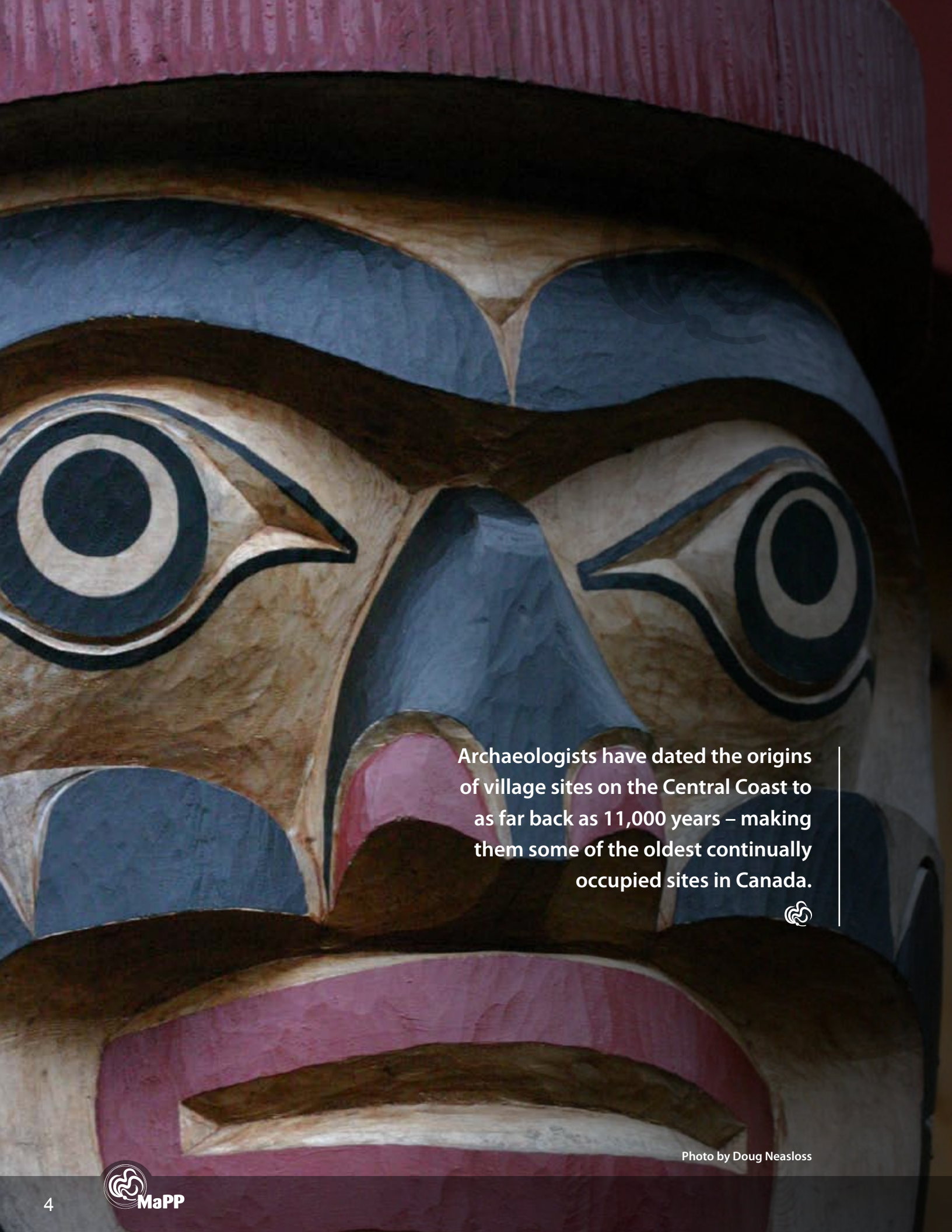






Photo by Doug Neasloss





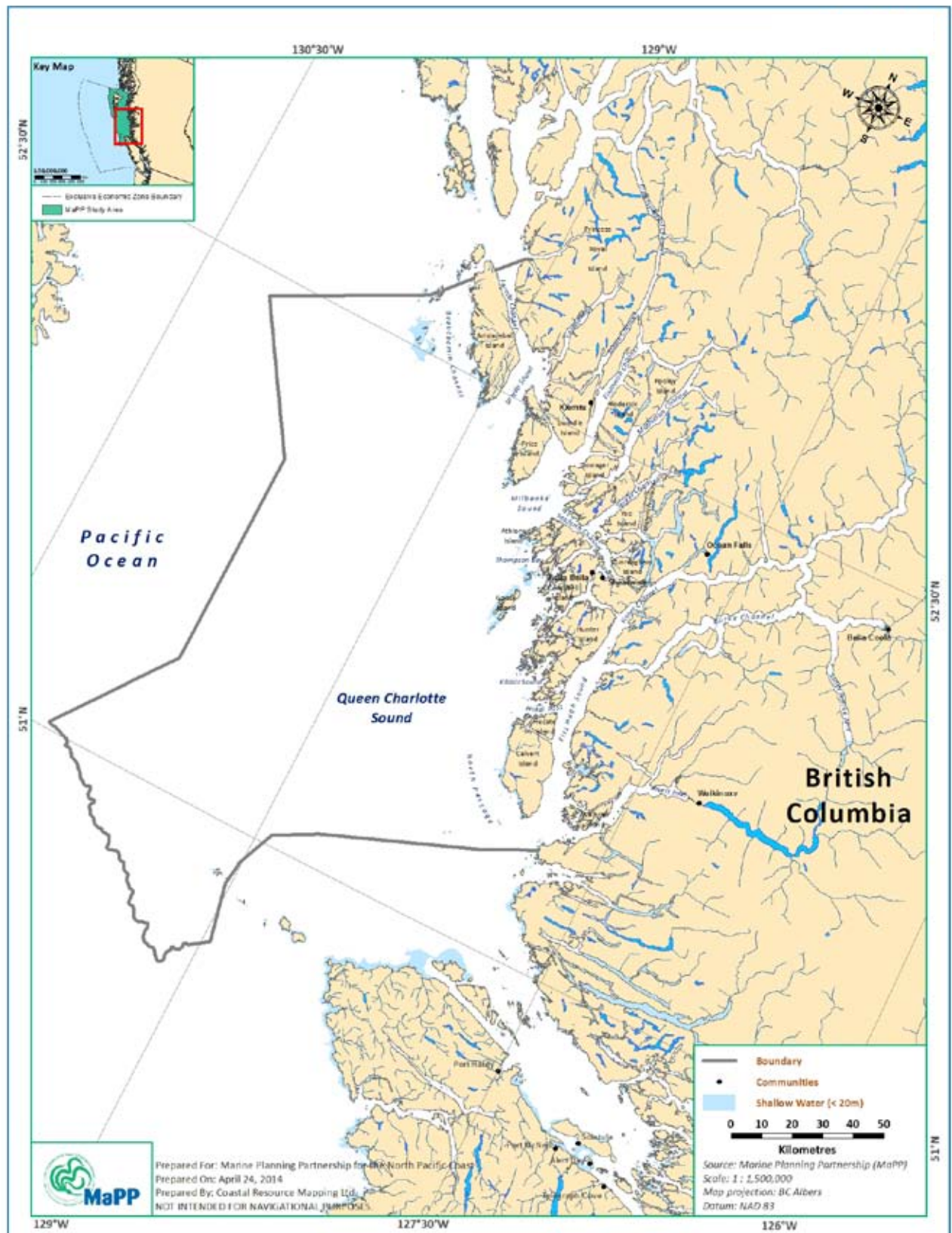
Archaeologists have dated the origins of village sites on the Central Coast to as far back as 11,000 years – making them some of the oldest continually occupied sites in Canada.



Photo by Doug Neasloss



### Figure 1. Central Coast Plan Area





## SCOPE AND JURISDICTION

The Central Coast Marine Plan focuses on the marine areas and uses in the foreshore (intertidal zone), coastal “inland waters”, and the lands covered by these waters. It considers the uses, plans, zones, tenures and legal designations that are in place on the land adjacent to marine areas and the seabed, but does not propose specific management objectives for private lands or uplands. The Plan does not make recommendations on matters that the Province of British Columbia (BC) believes are solely within federal jurisdiction. The Central Coast Marine Plan covers a major portion of the territories of the Heiltsuk, Kitasoo/Xai’Xais, Nuxalk and Wuikinuxv Nations. These First Nations assert aboriginal title and rights, including ownership, jurisdiction and management over the lands, waters and resources, including the marine spaces, throughout their respective territories.



Photo by Doug Neasloss

## PLANNING APPROACH

The Central Coast Marine Plan was developed jointly by the Province of BC and the Heiltsuk, Kitasoo/Xai'Xais, Nuxalk and Wuikinuxv Nations, with input from communities, stakeholders, local governments, and the broader public. The Plan brings together science, Aboriginal traditional knowledge, and local knowledge. Key information and direction was provided by First Nations strategic marine use plans, and provincial mandate, planning and policy documents. Other sources of information included Crown reports and publications, academic literature, sector publications and feedback, and discussions with experts.

A Central Coast Marine Plan Advisory Committee (MPAC) was established to provide advice and feedback on the development of the Plan. A Science Advisory Committee provided scientific and technical knowledge and feedback, as requested, on MaPP products and reports. Members of this Committee had expertise in a range of disciplines, including biological sciences, socio-economics, traditional knowledge, and marine ecological modelling. A Science Coordinator ensured the quality of products and tools used throughout the planning process.

The MaPP planning process used a marine ecosystem-based management (EBM) approach, which is an adaptive approach to managing human activities that seeks to ensure the coexistence of healthy, fully functioning ecosystems and human communities. The MaPP marine EBM framework contains three equally important elements: ecological integrity, human well-being, and governance and collaborative management. The principles of EBM are very similar to the principles and ethics which inform resource management and enhancement by Central Coast Nations now and for thousands of years.

The Marine Plan Advisory Committee was comprised of members from a range of backgrounds, including those with expertise in coastal forestry, commercial tourism, marine conservation, finfish aquaculture, shellfish aquaculture, local government, public recreation, recreational fishing services, renewable energy, commercial fisheries, and academia.



Ecosystem-based management (EBM) aligns with what the Heiltsuk, Kitasoo/Xai'Xais, Nuxalk, and Wuikinuxv have practiced for thousands of years and continue to practice. These traditional resource management and enhancement practices contributed to rich and diverse cultures and societies.

Central Coast Nations' laws and principles such as respect for the natural world, balance and intergenerational equity, intergenerational knowledge transfer and the act of reciprocity each align with principles of modern-day EBM.



## KEY ISSUES, CONCERNS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The marine environment, First Nations, and other local communities on the Central Coast face a range of threats, issues, challenges and opportunities. Topics of interest include ocean health, regional economic diversification, climate change and ocean acidification, protection of cultural and archaeological resources, and the marine fisheries economy. Collaborative marine planning provides an opportunity to respond to these challenges and opportunities in a more holistic and integrated manner. The Plan presents strategies for increasing the benefits that we derive from ocean resources in a responsible and respectful manner, while protecting and restoring ecosystems, economies and social and cultural structures important to local inhabitants.

The Plan includes strategies to help improve the economic outlook for various sectors, including shellfish aquaculture, seafood processing, marine tourism, alternative energy and coastal forestry.



Photo by Ken Cripps



# MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

**Chapter 5** of the Central Coast Marine Plan sets out objectives and strategies for achieving healthier oceans, stronger marine economies and improved cultural and social outcomes in the Plan Area. This chapter provides management direction for the following 14 topics:

- » Governance
- » Monitoring and Enforcement
- » Economy and Communities
- » Protection
- » Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation
- » Cumulative Effects
- » Pollution
- » Tenured Activities
- » Marine Based Renewable Energy
- » Aquaculture
- » Forestry Operations
- » Traditional, Cultural and Heritage Resources
- » Tourism and Recreation
- » Marine Fisheries Economy



Photo by Ian McAllister

# MARINE SPATIAL PLAN

**Chapter 6** of the Central Coast Marine Plan provides additional management direction through spatial zoning. Marine zoning is intended to inform decision makers and proponents of recommended uses and activities within the jurisdictional mandate and authority of the provincial and First Nations governments. The designation of marine space into discrete zones is a common component of integrated ocean and marine planning. This practice is consistent with strategic land use planning in BC, which allocates space to specific zones to help alleviate competition and conflict and/or identify priority uses and values. As part of the Central Coast marine planning process, the Heiltsuk, Kitasoo/Xai'Xais, Nuxalk and Wuikinuxv Nations and the Province of BC developed three types of zones: a General Management Zone, Special Management Zone, and Protection Management Zone. The three zone types are shown in Figure 2.<sup>1</sup>

- » **General Management Zone (GMZ)** (78.65 percent of Plan Area) – allocates space for a wide range of public, private and community marine uses and activities that are governed or managed using an EBM framework.
- » **Special Management Zone (SMZ)** (3.43 percent of Plan Area) – allocates space for high priority and/or high potential marine uses and activities that require specific environmental conditions or locations. The SMZ includes three categories:
  - **Aquaculture SMZ** (0.95 percent of Plan Area) – place an emphasis on development of the aquaculture industry, as appropriate.
  - **Recreation and Tourism SMZ** (0.31 percent of Plan Area) – place an emphasis on recreation and tourism activities and uses.
  - **Renewable Energy SMZ** (2.17 percent of Plan Area) – place an emphasis on the growth and development of the renewable energy industry.
- » **Protection Management Zone (PMZ)** (17.53 percent of Plan Area)<sup>2</sup> – allocates space primarily for conservation purposes or objectives, and may provide a basis for protecting localized conservation values. A range of management objectives for PMZs are recommended and expressed through use of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Protected Area Management Categories. Interpretation of the IUCN Categories in the PMZ area description tables and zoning maps does not imply management direction for uses and activities outside of provincial regulatory authority. Figure 2 shows the delineation of the Protection Management Zones into high (IUCN Ib, II) and medium (IUCN IV) protection categories.

Each zone has an accompanying “Recommended Uses and Activities Table” that identifies marine uses and activities that are considered Acceptable (A), Conditionally Acceptable (C), or Not Acceptable (N) within the zone. Uses and activities that are Conditionally Acceptable are subject to additional management requirements (conditional statements). The conditional statements are listed below the Recommended Uses and Activities Tables for each spatial planning group. Marine activities are defined in **Appendix B** of the Central Coast Marine Plan.

1 Five areas that cover a total of 0.23% of the Plan Area have not been assigned a zone type. A variety of ecological, economic, cultural and social values will be considered through more detailed planning for these zones (see Strategy 3.3 in Section 5.8 of the Plan).

2 Two zones from the North Coast Marine Plan extend into the Central Coast Plan Area and allocate an additional 0.17 percent of the Plan Area as Protection Management Zones.



Figure 2. Central Coast Marine Spatial Plan Zone Types

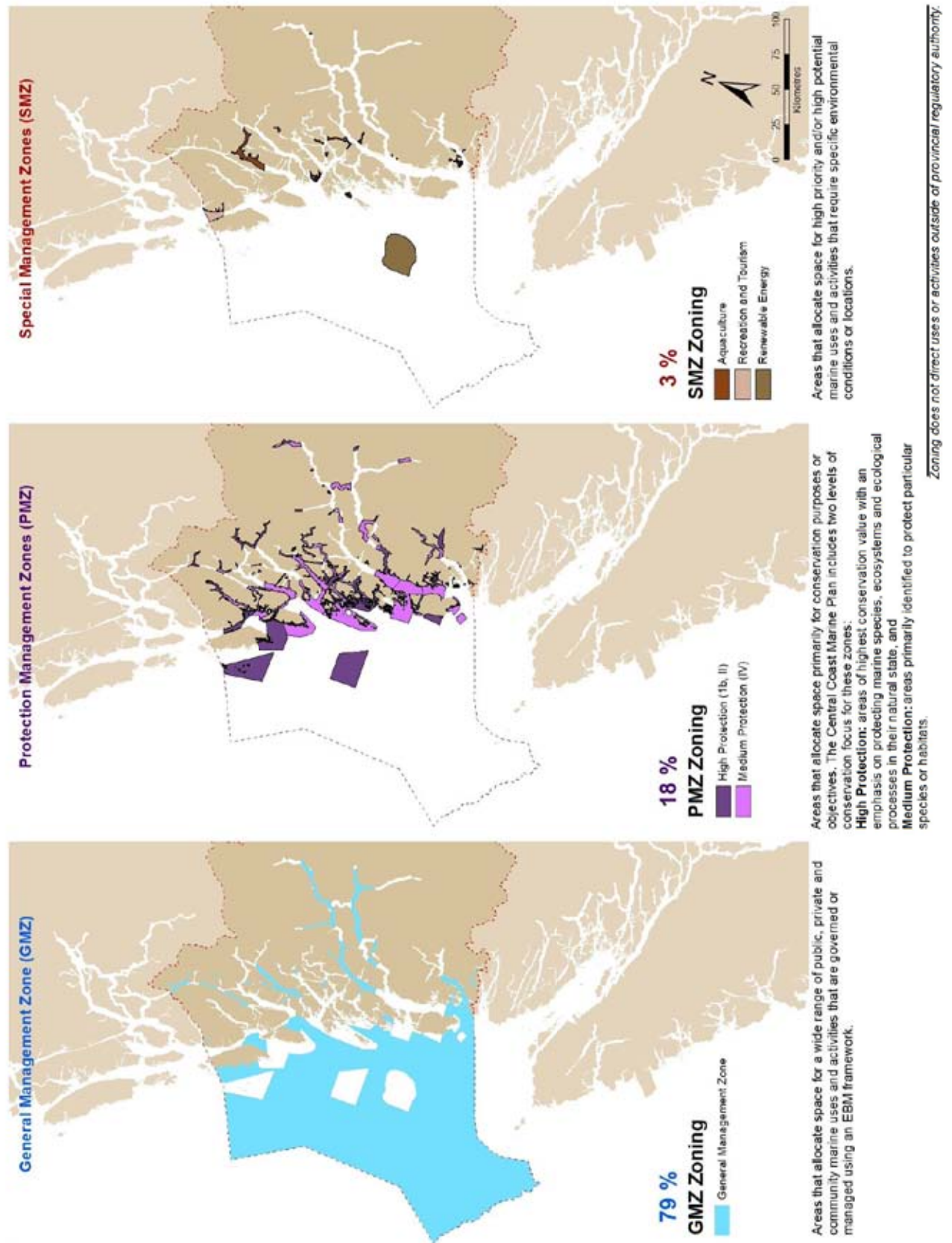
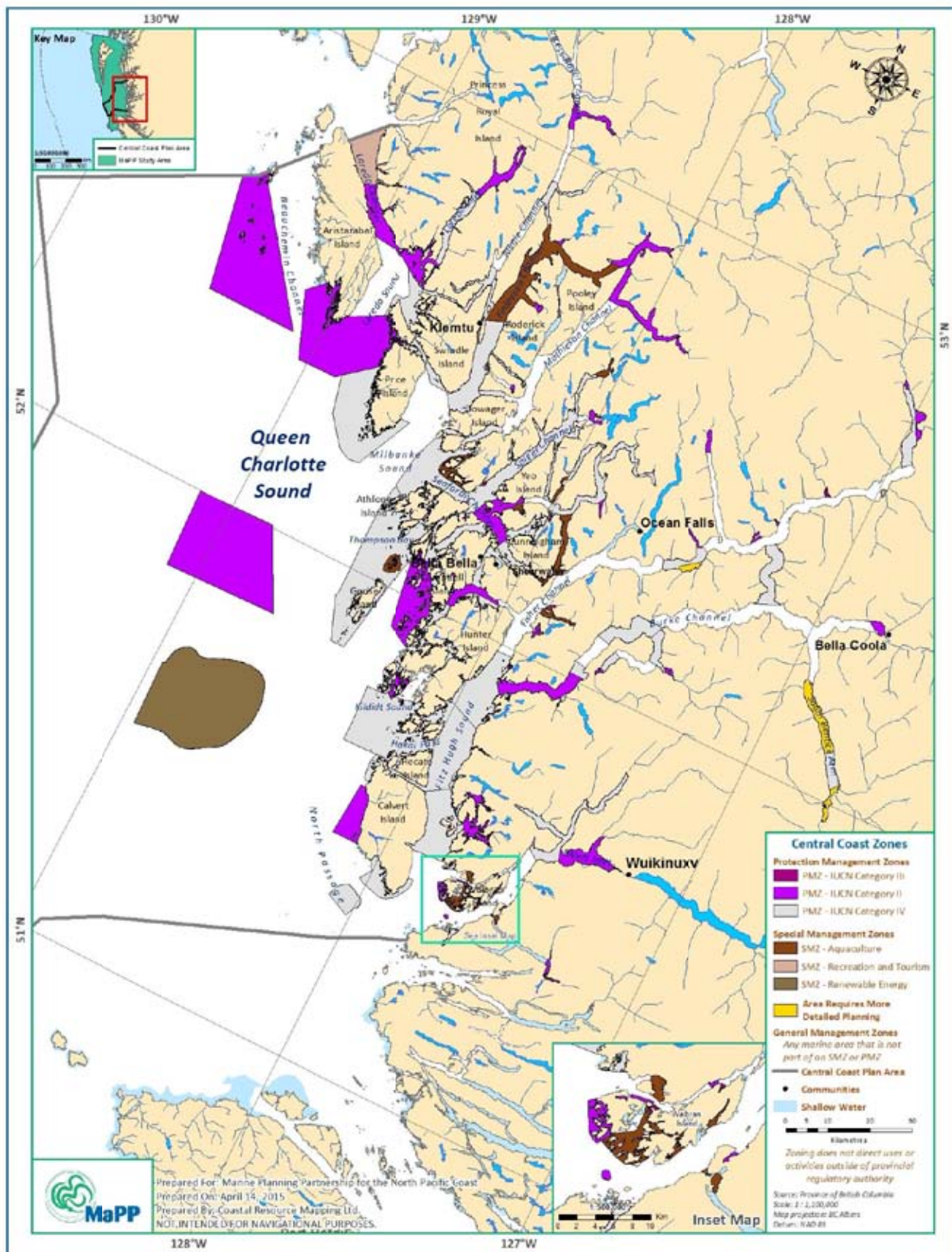




Figure 3. Central Coast Marine Spatial Plan





## Central Coast Marine Spatial Plan: Profile of Group 1

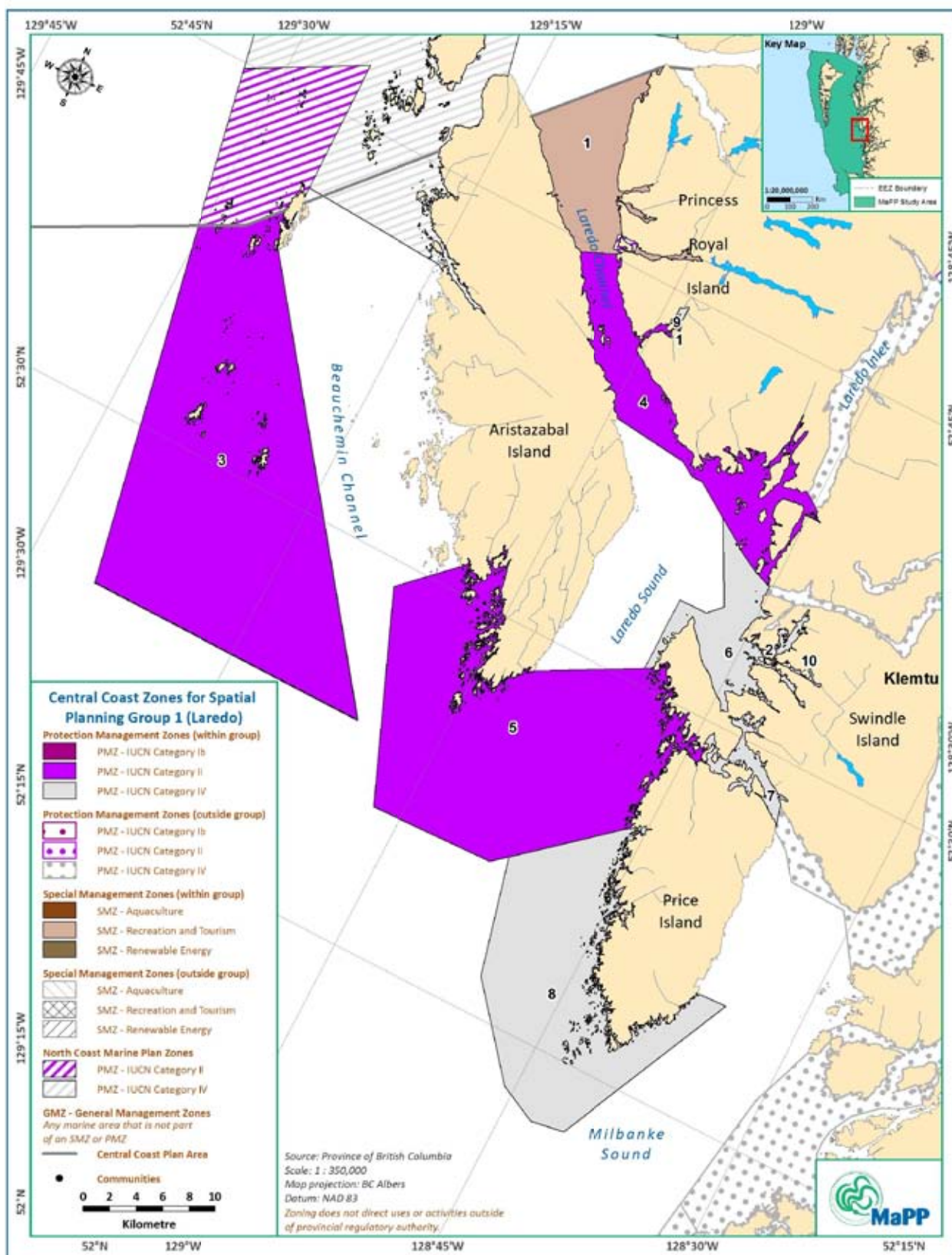
The Central Coast Plan Area was organized into 12 spatial planning groups, based on geography, in order to better display the management zones. A map of the zones in spatial planning group 1 (Figure 4), along with the Recommended Uses and Activities Table and conditional statements for PMZ 5 (Table 2) are included in this overview for illustrative purposes. Maps of other areas and associated Recommended Uses and Activities Tables can be found in [Chapter 6](#) of the Plan or on MaPP's Marine Planning Portal. All spatial recommendations in the Plan provide policy guidance intended to inform the decision making process regarding uses and activities in the areas identified.

To support data compilation and analysis, MaPP developed the “Marine Planning Portal” using the SeaSketch application. The Portal is an online mapping and data viewing tool that allows users to view and analyze more than 250 data layers together to learn more about the north Pacific coast. The Central Coast Marine Spatial Plan can be viewed on the Portal at <http://www.seasketch.org/projects>.



Photo by Julie Carpenter

Figure 4. Central Coast Spatial Planning Group 1 (Laredo)





**Table 2. Group 1 (Laredo) Recommended Uses and Activities Table for Protection Management Zone 5**

Protection Management Zone 5		
Category	Marine Uses and Activities	Recommendation
Aquaculture	Bottom Culture Aquaculture Siting – Plants, Shellfish, Other Invertebrates	N
	Off-Bottom Aquaculture Siting – Plants, Shellfish, Other Invertebrates	N
	Off-Bottom Aquaculture Siting – Finfish	N
Energy	Renewable Energy Generation	N
Industry	Forestry Operations – Log Handling and Storage	N
	Forestry Operations – Helicopter Log Drop Sites	C <sup>6</sup>
	Mining Operations	N
Infrastructure	Commercial and Recreational Anchorages*	C <sup>3</sup>
	Float Homes	N
	Floating Lodges	N
	Level 1 Docks, Wharves and Facilities	C <sup>6</sup>
	Level 2 Docks, Wharves and Facilities	N
Recreation and Tourism	Commercial Recreation and Tourism	C <sup>8</sup>
	Public Recreation and Tourism	C <sup>8</sup>
Research	Research	C <sup>5</sup>
Utilities	Linear Utilities	C <sup>6</sup>
	Point Source Utilities	N
<p><i>Where a use/activity is outside provincial regulatory authority, the approval of that use/activity is subject to the decision-making process(es) of the responsible authorities. Absence does not imply that the use/activity was not considered or evaluated or is of no interest. The reader should contact the appropriate management authority(ies) for direction on uses/activities in such circumstances. Zoning does not direct uses or activities outside of provincial regulatory authority.</i></p>		
<p>*Anchorage restrictions do not apply to commercial towboat reserves and provincially designated boat havens, nor do they apply to vessels in distress or other emergency situations.</p>		
<b>Key:</b>		
Uses and activities are considered to be ‘acceptable’ subject to applicable laws, policy and relevant agreements. Acceptability of any use/activities does not guarantee that a use/activity will be approved.		A
Uses and activities are considered to be ‘conditionally acceptable’ subject to applicable laws, policy and relevant agreements, and provided they are consistent with (adhere to) the plan conditions. Conditional acceptability of any use/activities does not guarantee that a use/activity will be approved.		C
Uses and activities are considered to be ‘not acceptable’ and should not be approved.		N
<p>The aboriginal and treaty rights of the Heiltsuk, Kitasoo/Xai’Xais, Nuxalk and Wuikinuxv Nations, to manage and harvest fish and other Marine Resources (i.e., marine plants and animals), as recognized and affirmed under section 35(1) of the <i>Constitution Act, 1982</i>, and developed in the common law, continue and are not restricted by this Plan.</p>		
<p><b>Note:</b> The Plan does not, in any way, alter or limit the exercise of aboriginal title and rights of each of the Central Coast Nations or alter the Province of British Columbia and First Nations consultation obligations specified in agreements or the common law.</p>		
<p><b>Conditional Statements:</b></p> <p>C<sup>3</sup>: Disturbance of sensitive or critical features and habitat should be avoided; site limitations will be identified in an approved Protection Management Plan.</p> <p>C<sup>5</sup>: Only research activities that will not disturb sensitive or critical features and habitats are acceptable.</p> <p>C<sup>6</sup>: Should be compatible with conservation objectives of the Protection Management Zone; site limitations will be identified in an approved Protection Management Plan.</p> <p>C<sup>8</sup>: Cultural sites may require particular conditions; site limitations will be identified in an approved Protection Management Plan.</p>		
<p><b>Additional Considerations:</b></p> <p>Ecological and species values might be impacted by commercial fisheries, recreational fishing activity, transportation and temporary port vessel anchorage.</p>		

# PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

The goal is to implement all objectives and strategies in the Central Coast Marine Plan, as funding and other resources permit. While all of the strategies are important elements of an EBM approach for Central Coast waters, the Province of BC and the Heiltsuk, Kitasoo/Xai'Xais, Nuxalk and Wuikinuxv Nations identified a number of key outcomes (Table 3) and priority actions to implement the Plan. Continued collaboration and integration will be essential as work progresses on all Plan strategies.

**Table 3. Key Outcomes**

Topic	Key Outcomes
<b>Governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Governance relationships are strengthened.</li> <li>» Governance structures are developed and adequately resourced.</li> </ul>
<b>Monitoring and Enforcement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» More effective and inclusive monitoring and enforcement.</li> <li>» Improved data collection and management.</li> </ul>
<b>Economy and Communities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Infrastructure development supports economic growth.</li> </ul>
<b>Protection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Important ecological and cultural components in the Plan Area are protected.</li> </ul>
<b>Cumulative Effects Assessment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Increased effectiveness in addressing cumulative effects.</li> </ul>
<b>Pollution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Ecological impacts of marine pollution are minimized.</li> <li>» Improved capacity to respond to marine accidents and spills.</li> </ul>
<b>Tenured Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Improved communication and understanding between First Nations and tenure holders.</li> <li>» Tenure impacts and conflicts between users are reduced.</li> <li>» Ecological and cultural impacts of tenured activities are reduced.</li> <li>» Financial viability of shellfish and marine plant aquaculture is improved.</li> <li>» First Nation and local economic benefits from aquaculture initiatives are increased.</li> </ul>
<b>Traditional, Cultural and Heritage Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Protection of cultural and archaeological sites is enhanced.</li> <li>» Increased awareness and understanding of First Nations cultural beliefs and values.</li> </ul>
<b>Tourism and Recreation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Increased First Nations and local benefits and opportunities for marine and coastal tourism development.</li> </ul>
<b>Marine Fisheries Economy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Reduced ecological and cultural impacts from sport fishing lodges/untenured vessels.</li> <li>» Increased enhancement and restoration for fish populations and habitats.</li> <li>» Increased opportunities in the fisheries economy.</li> </ul>

Plan performance will be measured through implementation monitoring, effectiveness monitoring, and EBM monitoring. Plan evaluation and review will be ongoing throughout implementation and is considered a crucial element to successfully achieving plan outcomes. Where improved knowledge or monitoring results indicate that different strategies or management approaches would be better suited to achieving objectives and strategies, the Province of BC and the Heiltsuk, Kitasoo/Xai'Xais, Nuxalk and Wuikinuxv Nations are committed to being responsive to those needs. This adaptive approach will allow for improved management and responsible stewardship over both the short and long term.



Photo by Julie Carpenter





Kitasoo/Xai'Xais  
Nation



Wuikinuxv  
Nation



Heiltsuk  
Nation



Nuxalk  
Nation



## WHERE TO GO FOR MORE INFORMATION

The Marine Planning Partnership:  
<http://mappocean.org/>

MaPP's Marine Planning Portal (using  
the Seasketch application):  
<http://www.seasketch.org/projects/>