



# Huchsduwachsdu Nuyem Jees/ Kitlope Heritage Conservancy

## Management Plan

May 2012



**Haisla Nation**

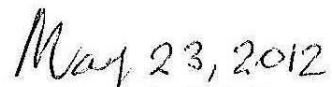


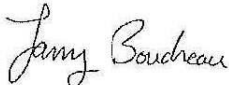


# Huchsduwachsdu Nuyem Jees/Kitlope Heritage Conservancy Management Plan


## Approved by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Haisla First Nation

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Larry Boudreau  
Regional Manager, Northern Region  
BC Parks

October 06, 2011  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Brian Bawtinheimer  
Director, Parks Planning and Management Branch  
BC Parks

September 28, 2011  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## Plan Highlights

The Huchsduwachsdu Nuyem Jeess/Kitlope Heritage Conservancy is collaboratively managed by the Haisla First Nation and the Province of British Columbia through the Kitlope Management Committee.

Henaaksiala/Haisla<sup>1</sup> cultural values and natural processes will prevail within the conservancy. In the longer term, a Henaaksiala/Haisla cultural centre, built in traditional longhouse style, will provide a place for visitors to learn how Haisla identity is unified through a spiritual connection to the Huchsduwachsdu Nuyem Jeess. The cultural centre will exhibit traditional and science-based practices. It will provide shelter, welcome and warmth for visitors to this remote watershed.

A key recommendation of the management plan is to encourage and establish research and interpretive programs that utilize traditional ecological knowledge and science-based research to contribute to understanding the ecosystems of the greater coastal area and to inform management practices. The conservancy provides a world-class learning ground for combining scientific research with traditional ecological knowledge, leading to complementary approaches to resource management.

The management plan encourages cultural and ecological tourism as well as boating, camping, hiking and fishing. A few developed trails will provide an opportunity for visitors to explore the high country as well as the landscape along the inland waters adjacent to the cultural centre.



Haisla Paddlers at Tenth Anniversary of the Decision to Protect the Kitlope

---

<sup>1</sup> Throughout the management plan there will be many references to Henaaksiala and to Haisla people. The Henaaksiala people are Haisla; however, the Henaaksiala is a specific reference to the tribe that historically occupied the Gardner Canal/Kitlope area.



# Table of Contents

<b>Plan Highlights</b> .....	<b>i</b>
<b>1.0 Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 Management Plan Purpose .....	1
1.2 Planning Area .....	1
1.3 Legislative Framework and Management Commitments .....	4
1.4 Historic Context .....	6
1.5 Relationship to Other Land Use Plans .....	7
1.6 Management Planning Process .....	8
1.7 Relationship with First Nations .....	9
1.8 Relationship with Local Government and Communities .....	10
<b>2.0 Values and Role of the Conservancy</b> .....	<b>12</b>
2.1 Significance in the Protected Areas System .....	12
2.2 Natural Heritage .....	13
2.3 Cultural Heritage .....	21
2.4 Recreation .....	22
<b>3.0 Management Direction</b> .....	<b>27</b>
3.1 Vision .....	27
3.2 Key Management Issues .....	28
3.3 Management of Natural and Cultural Values .....	29
3.4 Management of Resources Uses and Activities .....	34
3.5 Zoning .....	47
<b>4.0 Plan Implementation</b> .....	<b>50</b>
1.0 Policy Context .....	50
2.0 Implementation .....	50
3.0 Adaptive Management .....	50
<b>Appendix 1. The Kitlope Agreement 1996</b> .....	<b>52</b>
<b>Appendix 2. Contribution of the Conservancy to Ecosystem Representation in B.C.</b> .....	<b>58</b>
<b>Appendix 3. Appropriate Uses Table</b> .....	<b>59</b>
<b>Appendix 4: Guided Hunting Issues Paper</b> .....	<b>60</b>
Figure 1: Regional Context Map .....	3
Figure 2: Conservancy Map .....	5
Figure 3: Conservancy Zoning Map .....	49

# 1.0 Introduction

*To those who would approach us in friendship and harmony; who would join us in wonder and respect for this place: our laws require that we make you welcome, and share our most precious gifts with you. You are welcome here; we know that once you have seen and felt this place, you cannot leave here unmoved and unchanged.*

- Kitlope Declaration

## 1.1 Management Plan Purpose

This management plan provides guidance for the management of the ecology and natural resources within the conservancy. In doing so, the management plan gives prominence to the Haisla's spiritual, practical and historical connection with Huchsduwachsd Nuyem Jees (translated as "source of milky blue waters"). Haisla cultural values, uses and traditional ecological knowledge are respected and encouraged within the context of the area's conservation.

The purpose of a management plan is to provide clarity and transparency to the planning and management of a protected area, with the overall goal of conserving the key values for which the area was protected. The intended audience for this management plan is the Kitlope Management Committee, BC Parks, the Haisla and other area First Nations, local governments, the public and other stakeholders.

The management plan provides guidance regarding the appropriate types, levels, and locations of uses and activities within the conservancy, including recreational uses, activities and facilities. The management plan aims to ensure a balance between ecological, economic and cultural sustainability and to meet the vision and objectives for the conservancy. The management plan also considers the relationship between the conservancy and adjacent land uses.

The management plan establishes an overall framework and vision for:

- conservation of ecological and scenic/wilderness values;
- conservation of cultural values and opportunities for traditional resource uses;
- recreational activities;
- research and scientific activities; and,
- educational and promotional activities.

## 1.2 Planning Area

The Huchsduwachsd Nuyem Jees/Kitlope Heritage Conservancy (322,020 hectares) is located in northwestern British Columbia. The conservancy is at the head of Gardner Canal, approximately 50 kilometres northwest of Bella Coola and 100 kilometres southeast of Kitimaat Village (Figure 1). The conservancy comprises the entire Kitlope watershed from the glacial headwaters to the Kitlope



River estuary. The four main tributaries to the Kitlope River estuary are the Gamsby, Kapella, Kalitan and Tezwa rivers. The Tsaytis watershed is also within the boundaries of the conservancy, flowing directly into the Kitlope River estuary.

The watershed is mountainous with steep-sided valleys and dramatic domed granite peaks with cascading waterfalls. Glacial landforms and icefields are found in the headwater areas. The glacial run-off gives the rivers a milky blue colour, as reflected in the name Husduwachsdu Nuyem Jees given to the area by the Haisla, which means “source of the milky blue water”.

Due to the steepness of the terrain, low elevation areas are limited to the valley floors which are often only one to two kilometres wide. This geography, combined with heavy precipitation and run-off from snow melt, results in dramatic flooding in the early autumn that deposits large amounts of organic and inorganic material into the river system. Floods also occur in the spring during snow melt and there are long periods (up to weeks) where the entire valley floor is covered in water. Heavy flooding results in tangles of fallen trees and other large organic debris on streambanks.

The Kitlope and Tezwa rivers have braided, gravelly stream channels in their upper reaches and broad floodplains at lower elevations. Alluvial fans deposited by the rapidly flowing water are common where side valleys meet the main valley. The Kitlope River is an active gravel transporting river, fed primarily by the extremely active Gamsby River. The gravel forms migrating channels that occupy nearly the entire valley floor above Kitlope Lake. Vegetated islands occur between the channels.

Both the Kitlope and Tsaytis rivers flow into a rich and well-developed estuary at the head of Gardner Canal. Channels in the estuary are relatively stable and depositional patterns are strongly affected by the reversing tidal flow. The estuary is the ‘ecological heart’ of the watershed providing critical habitat to a wide array of fish and wildlife species. Kitlope Lake is a low elevation lake at the bottom end of the Tezwa River. It is almost tidal at its outlet, where the Tezwa and Kitlope rivers meet. Between Kitlope Lake and the estuary is a stable floodplain with meandering channels composed of river deposited sand.

Although rain falls throughout the year, most of the precipitation occurs between October and April. Kemano, a short distance away from the Kitlope estuary, records annual rainfall of 1867 mm, and snowfall of 2960 mm. Winters and summers are cool, with daily temperatures averaging  $-4.3^{\circ}\text{C}$  in January and  $+15.9^{\circ}\text{C}$  in July. The conservancy is an area of deep snow accumulation.



Figure 1: Regional Context Map

The conservancy is only accessible by boat or aircraft; there are no roads or developed trails into the area. Kitlope Lake is accessible by jet boat up the Kitlope River.

The conservancy shares its boundary with two other protected areas:

- Tweedsmuir Park to the northeast. Tweedsmuir Park is British Columbia's largest park at approximately one million hectares and is also connected to Entiako Park; and,
- Fjordland Conservancy lies along the southwest boundary. Fjordland Conservancy is 84,417 hectares in size and is also abutted along the coast by several other conservancies including K'ootz/Khutze Conservancy and Kitsoo Spirit Bear Conservancy.

The contiguous protected areas (i.e., Kitlope, Fjordland, Tweedsmuir, Entiako, K'ootz/Khutze, K'Igann/Klekane, Q'altanaas/Aaltanhash, Kitsoo Spirit Bear) provide a large area (over 2.3 million hectares) of wilderness that extends from marine coastal habitat to interior plateau (Figure 2). Along the Gardner Canal route to the conservancy are a number of small protected areas: Brim River, Owyacumish, Weewanie and Sue Channel. These protected areas provide recreational opportunities such as hot springs, fishing, camping and boating, and protect significant coastal landscapes and features. They provide stopping places of interest as well as shelter from storms.

### 1.3 Legislative Framework and Management Commitments

The Huchsduwachsdu Nuyem Jeas/Kitlope Heritage Conservancy was established in 1996 by Order-in-Council under the *Environment and Land Use Act* to protect cultural and ecological values within one of the world's largest undisturbed coastal temperate rainforest watersheds. In May of 2008, the area was established as a conservancy. The conservancy is named and described in Schedule E of the *Protected Areas of British Columbia Act*.

A conservancy is set aside for four reasons:

- (a) the protection and maintenance of their biological diversity and natural environments;
- (b) the preservation and maintenance of social, ceremonial and cultural uses of first nations;
- (c) the protection and maintenance of their recreation values; and,
- (d) to ensure that development or use of their natural resources occurs in a sustainable manner consistent with the purposes of paragraphs (a), (b) and (c).

In 1996, the Haisla First Nation and the Province of British Columbia entered into an agreement for the management and administration of the area (Appendix 1). The parties committed to working together in a spirit of mutual respect and understanding.

In order to give effect to the commitment to collaboratively manage the conservancy, the Kitlope Management Committee was established. This committee is comprised of three Haisla representatives, three provincial representatives and a mutually agreed upon chairperson. The committee works by consensus; and failing consensus, a majority vote. It deals with the majority of strategic matters that relate to the conservancy. Direction to proceed with the development of a management plan was provided by the Kitlope Management Committee in the spring of 2004.

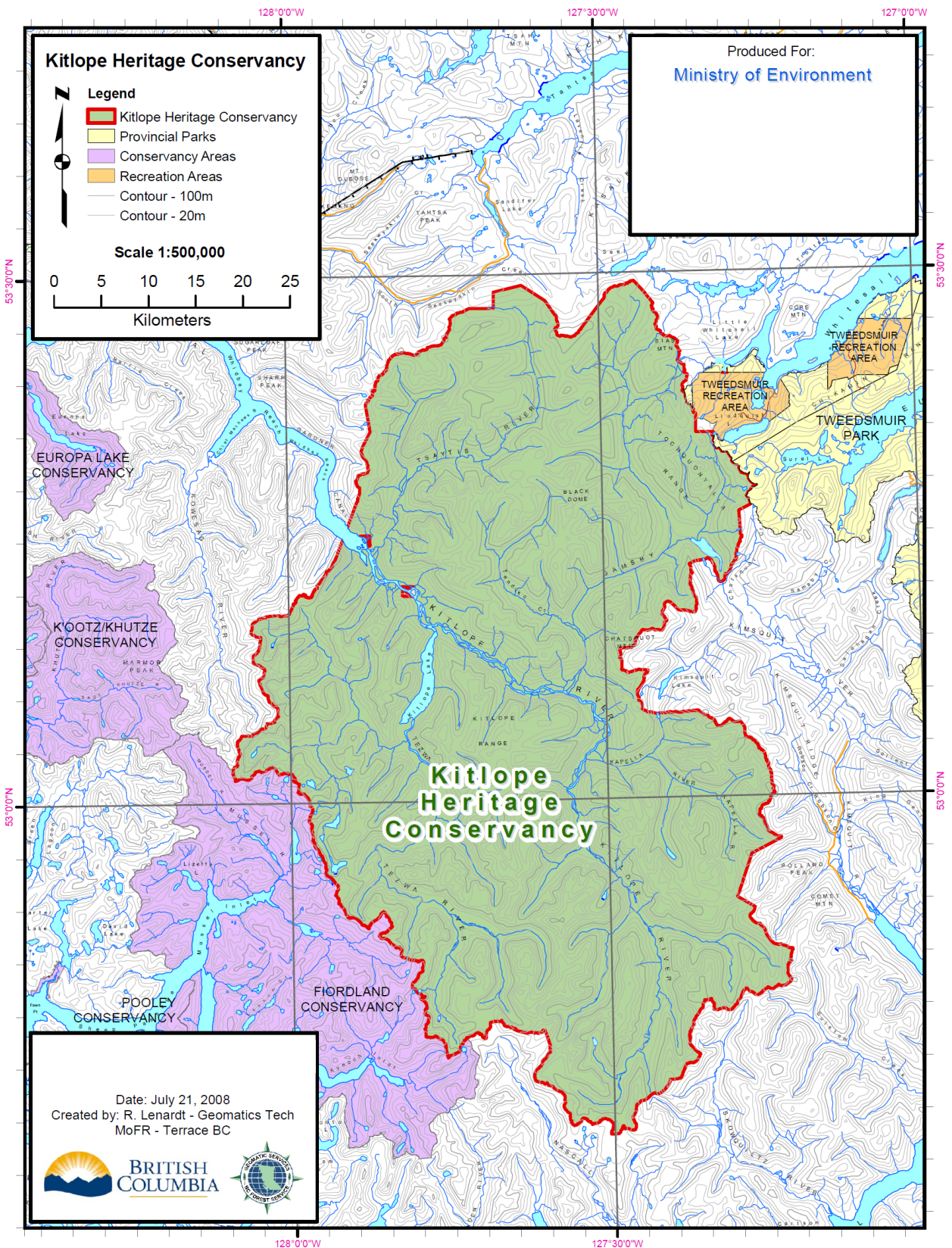


Figure 2: Conservancy Map

## 1.4 Historic Context

The conservancy is part of the ancestral Haisla territory. The conservancy provided home and sustenance for the Henaaksiala tribe, who are now joined with the Haisla Nation. The history of the Huchsduwachsdu Nuyem Jeas ecosystem is rich in stories of traditional and current uses. Haisla describe their religion, occupation and identity as being one and the same, realized through their relationship to the land. They believe, as in times past, that the land was given to them to provide stewardship for and elders point to the pristine condition of the land after many centuries of Haisla use. Through the establishment of the conservancy, this land and its stewardship has now become part of the heritage of all British Columbians.

The Kitlope watershed is located at the upper end of Gardner Canal southeast of the Haisla village of Kitamaat. The Kitlope valley was home to the Henaaksiala until about 100 years ago when many residents moved to Kemano and then to Kitamaat Village. Prior to the twentieth century, the Henaaksiala people and the Haisla people had separate territories divided east and west along the Gardner Canal at Crab River. By the middle of the twentieth century, the Henaaksiala population had declined significantly as a result of smallpox and influenza; in 1947 they formalized an agreement and amalgamated with the Haisla Nation.

Henaaksiala village sites and culturally significant landmarks remain identifiable connections to this dynamic landscape. Hunting, fishing, gathering of food and medicines, trapping and spiritual fulfilment through visiting the Kitlope remain an important and integral part of contemporary Haisla lifestyles. There are two grease trails through the area that once connected the area to the interior First Nations' territories and to the Heiltsuk further south. These trails were used to trade a wide variety goods, including foods, furs, fish and Eulachon oil.

Trade in furs and other supplies between the Henaaksiala and European traders began in the late 1700s. In the mid to late 1800s, engineers first visited the Kitlope looking for railroad routes and hydro potential. By the late 1800s, a cannery was established at Price Creek, four kilometres down Gardner Canal from the Kitlope estuary. In and around the 1920s, many Henaaksiala people worked in canneries and hand logging on the coast in areas such as Butedale, Swanson Bay and elsewhere. In 1918, a few Sitka spruce trees were harvested in the Kitlope to support the manufacture of aircraft for use in World War I.

During the late 1980s, Haisla elders were concerned that the progression of forest harvesting into the remote rainforests of the northwest coast threatened the Huchsduwachsdu Nuyem Jeas. A number of nearby watersheds had already been or were being logged. At that time, the Kitlope was, as it is today, generally undisturbed by industrial development; a place where natural processes prevailed and the food sources remained unpolluted.

In 1991, the Haisla people issued the Kitlope Declaration, a statement written to focus the concerns of the Haisla people and others on protecting the Greater Kitlope Ecosystem. The declaration drew the attention of environmental organizations who, at the time, had produced a Pacific coast

watershed inventory that identified the greater Kitlope watershed as the largest undeveloped coastal temperate rainforest remaining on the west coast of North America and in the world. The ecological and ethnobotanical values of the area were documented during two expeditions into the area by scientists in 1991 and 1993.

In 1992, the Haisla joined with Ecotrust, an organization dedicated to assisting groups to secure cultural and livelihood sustenance from natural landscapes, and began discussions with the Province about protecting the Kitlope watershed. In April 1992, the Haisla convened a workshop involving government and industry representatives to discuss future management of the area. In July 1992, the Haisla and Ecotrust published a document entitled *The Greater Kitlope Ecosystem: A Wilderness Planning Framework* which set out recommendations for the protection and subsequent management of the Kitlope.

In the early 1990s, the Haisla First Nation and Ecotrust created the Na na kila Institute as an incorporated, non-profit society. The institute, which is run by the Haisla Nation, is dedicated to the conservation, stewardship and appropriate development of ancestral lands of the Haisla Nation, with particular emphasis on the greater Kitlope ecosystem.

As an outcome of these processes - and in recognition of the unique nature of the Kitlope as the largest undeveloped coastal temperate rainforest and its importance to the Haisla First Nation - West Fraser Timber Limited voluntarily relinquished its rights to forest harvesting in the area. In August 1994, the Province and the Haisla Nation announced that the Kitlope would be fully protected and jointly managed.

In 1996, the Kitlope Agreement between the Haisla First Nation and the Province of British Columbia was signed (Appendix 1), and the area was protected.

## **1.5 Relationship to Land Use Plans**

A protected area management plan does not exist in isolation, but is linked to, and incorporates direction from, other land use planning processes.

The conservancy was identified as an area of ecological significance in the provincial Old Growth Strategy as well as in the "Parks and Wilderness for the 90s" process. The conservancy's importance as a scientific benchmark was documented by visiting scientists during the 1990s. Early discussions on the protection of the area, involving the Haisla First Nation, BC Parks, non-profit organizations such as Ecotrust, commercial operators and forest licensees, were based on a shared recognition of the global uniqueness of the area.

The conservancy is within the planning area of the Kalum Land and Resource Management Plan, which was completed in 2001. The conservancy was already designated but was factored into the land use plan negotiations.

Three other coastal land use planning processes have occurred within the past two decades that play a significant role in the protection of coastal temperate rainforest ecosystems in the general vicinity of the conservancy. These are the North and Central Coast land and resource management plans and the Haida Gwaii/Queen Charlotte Islands Land Use Plan.

## 1.6 Management Planning Process

This management plan has been prepared to guide the management of the conservancy, consistent with the purpose and goals as set out in the Kitlope Agreement, and provincial legislation and policy.

The management plan is informed by the best available traditional and scientific information relating to natural processes, cultural activities and recreational uses. The impacts of activities occurring on adjacent and associated lands have also been considered.

The process for preparing the management plan involved analysis of the conservancy's patterns of use, natural processes, cultural and recreational values, traditional ecological knowledge, desired management objectives and strategies to achieve those objectives. In developing the management plan, thought was given to Haisla First Nation policies, practices and objectives. Significant background information was assembled in a number of documents. The key background documents used were:

- The Greater Kitlope Ecosystem: A Wilderness Planning Framework (1992);
- The Huchsduwachsd Nuyem Jeas/Kitlope Heritage Conservancy Draft Background Document prepared by Grant Copeland for the Kitlope Management Committee (1997); and,
- an initial draft management plan prepared by Grant Copeland (1999).

The Kitlope Management Committee provided broad direction and consultation on this management plan. A Kitlope Management Plan Advisory Group, comprised of Ministry of Environment, Haisla, and local interests, was formed to help in the development of the management plan and to ensure appropriate First Nation, public, and stakeholder involvement during the process.

The following steps were undertaken in developing the management plan:

1. The first step in the management planning process was to draft a vision statement for the conservancy. In order to develop the vision statement, an open house was held in Kitmaat Village; letters and questionnaires were sent to stakeholders, and an advertisement was placed in the local newspaper. From the results of the open houses and questionnaires, a draft version of the vision statement was prepared and shared with the Kitlope Management Committee. With direction from the committee and from internal sessions with Haisla elders, the vision statement was refined and made available for final review as part of the next step in the management planning process.
2. The second step in the management planning process focused on identifying the known issues and concerns associated with the conservancy and its management. Information was sought by

means of a widely distributed newsletter and a series of open houses advertised in local newspapers and held in the northwest communities of Kitamaat Village, Kitimat and Terrace. Additionally, letters and newsletters were sent to stakeholders and a webpage was developed on the BC Parks' website. The webpage provided basic information on the management planning process, contained an online version of the newsletter and allowed an online questionnaire to be completed.

3. Once baseline information had been assembled, the writing of the management plan began. Drafts of the management plan were shared with the advisory group and the Kitlope Management Committee for further consultation and direction. In the event that an issue required further discussion, a detailed description of the issue was prepared, and options were identified and discussed by the management committee and the advisory group. Facility development and guide outfitting were two topics requiring additional consideration.
4. Once a draft of the management plan was complete, another set of open houses was held to solicit input on the summary of issues and options, and on the draft management plan itself. Open houses were held in Kitimat and Terrace in February and March 2007. The draft management plan was also posted to the BC Parks' website in February 2007 to solicit additional input.
5. At the same time as the open houses, the Na na kila Institute, on behalf of the Kitlope Management Plan Advisory Group and the Kitlope Management Committee, arranged for distribution of the draft management plan to Haisla band members.
6. Based on the review detailed in steps 4 and 5, revisions were made to the draft management plan.
7. In the fall of 2007, the Kitlope Management Committee reviewed the management plan and recommended approval by the Ministry of Environment and by the Haisla Nation.
8. In the spring of 2008, the Haisla Nation passed a band council resolution supporting the management plan provided that the unresolved issue related to guided hunting be addressed in the management plan.
9. In 2009 and 2010, the Ministry of Environment worked on providing direction related to outstanding issues and in 2011 the management plan received formal Ministry of Environment approval.

## **1.7 Relationship with First Nations**

The Kitlope watershed is part of the traditional Henaaksiala territory. A land claim of approximately 7,000 square kilometres was registered with the federal government in 1978 by the Haisla First Nation. The statement of intent boundaries in the claim include the entire Kitlope watershed. As of 2011, the Haisla Nation, British Columbia and Canada were in Stage 4 of the six-stage treaty negotiation process: negotiation of an agreement-in-principle.

There are two Indian Reserves located within the Kitlope watershed but outside of the conservancy (Figure 1). Indian Reserve #15, "Wekellals" is an Eulachon camp located above the Kitlope estuary and Indian Reserve #16, "Kitlope" is the village site of Miskusa on the Tsaytis River estuary. In the 1970s, a portion of Indian Reserve #15 was logged to help pay for a community centre in Kitamaat



Village. Although the reserves are outside of the conservancy, the Haisla have indicated that they would like to ensure that the use of these reserves is compatible and complementary to the management of the conservancy.

The Haisla Nation stated their intent with regard to the Kitlope watershed in their Kitlope Declaration (1991), which reads, in part:

*To those who would despoil our land: we will oppose any proposals or acts that threaten the lands, waters, and living creatures of the Kitlope. You will find us implacable, for we are protecting the very core of our existence as a people.*

*To those who would approach us in friendship and harmony; who would join us in wonder and respect for this place: our laws require that we make you welcome, and share our most precious gifts with you. You are welcome here; we know that once you have seen and felt this place, you cannot leave here unmoved and unchanged.*

In 1996, the Haisla First Nation and the Province of British Columbia entered into an agreement for the management and administration of the conservancy. In addition, the Province of British Columbia and the Haisla First Nation have committed to working together to identify commercial, economic and employment opportunities for Haisla people in ways that are consistent with the establishment and management of the conservancy.

While the Kitlope Management Committee provides strategic direction, day-to-day operations from 1996 - 2008 were conducted by the Na Na Kila Institute and BC Parks. The Na Na Kila Institute is a First Nations run incorporated, non-profit society dedicated to the conservation, stewardship and appropriate development of ancestral lands of the Haisla Nation, with particular emphasis on the greater Kitlope ecosystem. The mission of Na Na Kila is to:

- conserve and restore all resources in Haisla territory;
- promote equitable economic and social development of the Haisla community;
- promote Haisla culture and traditional knowledge; and,
- share experiences with British Columbia's coastal communities.

Since 2008, the Natural Resource Department of the Haisla Nation has provided watchmen services in the conservancy. This has enabled the Haisla Nation to support conservancy operations while supporting Haisla efforts to undertake resource management activities throughout their traditional territory.

## **1.8 Relationship with Local Government and Communities**

The conservancy is very remote with no immediate communities in the area. The nearest Haisla community is Kitmaat Village, 100 kilometres due southwest of the area by air and 125 kilometres by water. Two other communities, Hartley Bay and Bella Coola, are also within close proximity of the conservancy by air. The towns of Kitimat and Terrace/Thornhill, are the closest municipalities.

At a regional scale, the conservancy and surrounding area are within Kitimat-Stikine Regional District.

The internationally significant conservancy has provided an opportunity for these local communities to benefit as staging areas for those planning to visit the conservancy area. Communities also benefit from the opportunity to cater to tourists who seek guided opportunities for boating, kayaking, fishing and wildlife viewing in the area.

It is important to the Haisla and to the Province of British Columbia that a good relationship be fostered with the neighbouring municipalities and the regional district. Consequently, in recent years the regional district has filled one of the provincial government seats on the Kitlope Management Committee. The Haisla Nation and BC Parks have also worked to provide an opportunity for community members to provide assistance on some of the trips that are scheduled to the conservancy.

## 2.0 Values and Role of the Conservancy

The Huchsduwachsu Nuyem Jeas/Kitlope Heritage Conservancy protects the area's cultural and natural values, and provides recreation opportunities. The main roles of the conservancy are the protection of the world's largest undeveloped coastal temperate rainforest, and the protection of Haisla cultural values.

### 2.1 Significance in the Protected Areas System

The conservancy is significant to the provincial protected areas system because it:

- Plays a stabilizing spiritual role for Haisla people in that their sense of identity is integrated with a sense of permanence and a sense of place on the land;
- Protects a globally significant tract of coastal temperate rainforest. There are very few undeveloped and unroaded valleys containing coastal temperate rainforest in the world, particularly of such a large area with no history of logging or other industrial development. This ecosystem type is also relatively rare worldwide with approximately half of the world's remaining unlogged coastal temperate rainforest found on the west coast of North America;
- Protects an entire watershed over 100,000 hectares in size. This makes the watershed large enough to contain viable populations of most of the species present;
- Protects part of the third largest contiguous protected areas complex in the province (2,239,893 hectares) (Figure 2);
- Contributes 10.86 % of the Coastal Western Hemlock Biogeoclimatic Zone that is protected in British Columbia<sup>2</sup>;
- Provides ecosystem connectivity along a full gradient from coast to alpine. This protects a transition from coast to interior ecosystems, resulting in a diversity of habitat types, including:
  - the northern distribution limit of coastal Douglas-fir, which only occurs on southwest-facing slopes in the northern half of the watershed; and,
  - low elevation subalpine fir, growing in unusually close proximity to coastal tree species;
- Protects one of the few provincial protected areas with a spawning Eulachon population;
- Provides habitat for species of conservation concern: Marbled Murrelet, Tailed Frog, Keen's Long-Eared Myotis, Mountain Goat, Caribou and Grizzly Bear;
- Contains areas, including Kitlope Lake and the Kitlope River Estuary system, of high value to migratory and wintering waterfowl;
- Protects spawning habitat for all five species of Pacific Salmon;
- Protects Pacific Herring spawning at Egeria Reach and the south shore of Gardner Canal;
- Protects Caribou calving habitat in the upper Gamsby River;
- Provides a benchmark, undeveloped watershed to provide research opportunities for comparison with similar watersheds modified by developments such as logging, mining and hydroelectric development; and,
- Contributes to provincial recreation goals through the provision of a diverse range of recreational activities in a wilderness setting (e.g., angling, hiking, cultural activities)

---

<sup>2</sup> All representation figures reflect 2010 provincial representation statistics.

## 2.2 Natural Heritage

### Ecosystem Connectivity and Diversity

The size and breadth of the contiguous protected areas the conservancy is part of, totalling 2.2 million hectares, will help to maintain the long-term integrity and viability of the area's diverse ecosystems.

The protection of the whole watershed contributes to the conservation of biodiversity by providing representation of the entire transition of ecosystems from the marine shoreline to the alpine. The conservation of a complete elevational gradient of ecosystems is rare on the coast because many of the lower elevation forests have been logged due to the accessibility of large merchantable trees.

Coastal temperate forests are highly complex, both structurally and functionally. The complexity of the coastal temperate rainforest is largely a result of the low frequency of fire and other stand replacing disturbances. For the most part, forests are replaced by the death and replacement of individual trees, although large-scale disturbances such as fire, windthrow and landslides do occur on rare occasions.

The vegetation of the Kitlope consists of old-growth coastal rainforest at lower elevations, diminishing in size and changing in composition with increasing elevation to scattered subalpine stands and, eventually, alpine tundra. Mid-coast ecosystems are typically highly productive due to heavy precipitation in a climate moderated by close proximity to the Pacific Ocean. Compared to other mid-coast watersheds, the productivity of the Kitlope is tempered by the steepness of the topography, a cool climate due to cold air drainage from icefields, granitic geology resulting in poor soil nutrient levels, and periodic violent flooding of the valley bottom of the Kitlope River.

Old-growth forests cover approximately 36,000 hectares of the watershed, or just over one-tenth of the conservancy's total land area. The largest trees, measuring over 65 metres in height and 3 metres in diameter, exist in narrow strips along the river banks or in densely concentrated stands on the river floodplain. Trees are smaller above the valley bottom on the steep side slopes where the soil is thinly accumulated over bedrock. A number of the conservancy's wildlife species are reliant on old-growth for their life requirements.

The diversity of ecosystem types in the conservancy provides habitat for a large variety of wildlife species. Wildlife surveys in the early 1990s identified 120 native vertebrate species in the watershed (including amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals) and scientists have estimated that as many as 284 species might occur in the area<sup>3</sup>. The conservancy also provides the connectivity of wildlife habitats from the coast to the interior plateau, allowing unimpeded movement of wildlife between seasonal habitats and contributing to the functional integrity of large predator-prey systems.

---

<sup>3</sup> Cited in Copeland, G. 1997. *Huchsduwachsd Nuyem Jees/ Kitlope Heritage Conservancy Draft Background Document*.

## Ecosection Representation

The Kitlope watershed lies within the Coast and Mountains Ecoprovince. This ecoprovince extends from coastal Alaska to coastal Oregon and includes a long band of coastal temperate rainforest. In British Columbia, this ecoprovince includes the windward side of the Coast Mountains including Vancouver Island and Haida Gwaii. At a local scale, the entire conservancy falls within two ecosections: the Kitimat Ranges (KIR) and Kimsquit Mountains (KIM). Most of the biophysical attributes of the KIM and KIR are represented in the conservancy and the area captures the full range of biogeoclimatic zonal diversity within these ecosections. Both of these ecosections are well-represented provincially.<sup>4</sup>



Spring Lupines

### *Kitimat Ranges Ecosection (KIR)*

The KIR is characterized by the massive rounded granite mountains of the Coastal Intrusions, which average 1500 to 2500 metres in height. The land formation includes long straight valleys, fjord channels and inlets running in a northwest direction, parallel and transverse to the coastline. Valley floors are deep, and the highly dynamic nature of the river systems is made evident by recent fluvial floodplain deposits and saturated organic materials. Estuaries and tidal marshes occur at the terrestrial-marine interface. The KIR extends from north of Bella Coola to Portland Inlet and inland to the coast-interior divide.

On a provincial scale, 20.9% of the KIR is represented in protected areas. The conservancy's contribution of over half this protected area amount is very significant (Appendix 2).

### *Kimsquit Mountains Ecosection (KIM)*

The KIM occurs inland of the Kitimat Ranges. This is a rainshadow area with a mild transitional climate characterized by moist, warm summers, and cool to cold winters with relatively heavy amounts of wet snowfall. While the fjords of the Kitimat Ranges physiographic unit run east to west, many of the river valleys in the KIM lie north-south, thus the adjacent mountains provide some

---

<sup>4</sup> Gilkeson, L, L. Bonner, J. Quayle, and J. Algar. 2005. *British Columbia Coast and Marine Environment Project: 2005*. BC Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection. Victoria.

relief from the easterly flow of moist air. Those valleys also trap cold Arctic air after it has moved over this area.

On a provincial scale, 22.4% of the KIM is represented in protected areas and the conservancy significantly contributes over half of this amount (Appendix 2).

### **Biogeoclimatic Zone Representation**

There are three biogeoclimatic zones in the conservancy: Coastal Western Hemlock (CWH), Mountain Hemlock (MH) and Coastal Mountain-Heather (CMA). These zones lie at increasing elevations, with CWH at the lowest elevation, MH above and CMA at the highest elevations. Each zone is further divided into variants which have a characteristic combination of soil and climate conditions and vegetation.

The table in Appendix 2 summarises the contribution of the conservancy to ecosystem representation at a provincial scale. As the table shows, the conservancy contributes a significant proportion of the CWH and MH represented in provincial protected areas.

#### *Coastal Western Hemlock Biogeoclimatic Zone (CWH)*

The CWH occurs at the lowest forested elevations of the Kitimat Ranges from sea level to the subalpine forests of the MH. The forests of the CWH are coastal temperate rainforest, which is characterized by the presence of old-growth conifer stands with a complex structure and often including very large, old trees. Western hemlock and western redcedar are the most common tree species in the CWH in the conservancy. Amabilis fir is also common and frequently co-dominant. Non-forested wetlands and shrubby avalanche tracks are often present.

There are three variants of the CWH in the conservancy: (1) Very Wet Maritime (CWHvm); (2) Very Wet Maritime Montane (CWHvm2); and, (3) Wet Submaritime Montane (CWHws2).

- CWHvm and CWH vm2: The CWHvm and CWH vm2 occur at lower elevations in maritime climates. Sitka spruce grows along rivers and shorelines, preferring cooler, wetter conditions. Other tree species common on the valley floor include black cottonwood and red alder. These alluvial forests are the most productive in the watershed, with the most productive and extensive floodplains occurring in the lower Tezwa River. Smaller trees grow on the thinly developed soil of the steep sides of the valley above the floodplain. The lower Kitlope and Gardner Canal represent the northern distributional limit of coastal Douglas-fir, which occur as scattered large veteran trees on well-drained south and west-facing slopes in the northern half of the watershed. Yellow-cedar may also occur at lower elevations but is more frequently found in the higher elevation montane to subalpine forests of the Coastal Western Hemlock Wet Submartime biogeoclimatic zone variant.
- CWHws2: The CWHws occurs at higher elevations than the CWHvm. This montane variant of the CWHws is characterized by an impoverished understorey layer compared to the submontane variant (CWHws1). Western hemlock and western redcedar are common, as is yellow-cedar. In the upper Kitlope and Tezwa drainages (and elsewhere), subalpine fir occurs at relatively low elevations on floodplain sites as a result of cold-air drainage.

### *Mountain Hemlock Biogeoclimatic Zone (MH)*

The MH occurs above the CWH in the forested subalpine on the western slopes within the Kitimat Ranges. In the MH, mountain hemlock replaces western hemlock as the dominant tree species, occurring in conjunction with amabilis fir. The lower elevations of the MH are continuously forested except where dissected by avalanche tracks, as is often the case. The upper elevations contain clumps of trees interspersed with subalpine meadows and wetlands. The MH zone serves as an important supply of fresh water; late season melt of the deep snowpack provides fresh water to rivers, creeks and lakes.

There are two variants of MH in the conservancy: (1) moist maritime windward (MHmm1); and (2) moist maritime leeward (MHmm2):

- MHmm1: This windward variant of the MHmm is found on the western slopes of the Coast Mountains. It is characterized by the presence of yellow-cedar (mainly on seepage sites) and lack of subalpine fir, except in inland areas of cold-air ponding.
- MHmm2: This leeward variant of the MHmm is found further inland on the central and eastern slopes of the Coast Mountains. This variant is found more-or-less directly above the CWHws. It is colder and drier than the windward variant and is characterized by the absence of yellow-cedar, and the presence of inland species such as subalpine fir and black huckleberry.

### *Coastal Mountain-Heather Alpine Biogeoclimatic Zone (CMA)*

The CMA occurs at the highest elevations and is mainly composed of a matrix of unvegetated rock and alpine meadows containing short-season alpine grasslands, meadows, and scrub.

The alpine climate is cold, windy and snowy, and is characterized by low growing season temperatures and a very short frost-free period. Most of the annual precipitation falls as snow. Alpine vegetation is dominated by shrubs, herbs, mosses, liverworts and lichens. Trees only occur sparsely at lower alpine elevations in stunted or krummholz form.

### **Wildlife Values**

As a consequence of its large size, diversity and connectivity to other protected areas, the conservancy and adjacent protected areas play an important role in the conservation of large predator-prey systems.

Few wildlife inventories have been undertaken in the Kitlope aside from single season surveys of all species in 1991 and 1993 and aerial surveys of Black Bear and Grizzly Bear in 1994.

The following provides information on some of the key wildlife in the conservancy.

### *Grizzly Bear and Black Bear*

- The coastal forests of the conservancy provide forage, bedding and denning habitat for both Grizzly Bear and Black Bear.<sup>5</sup>
- Grizzly Bears are blue-listed (Special Concern) by the British Columbia Conservation Data Centre.
- Although valley bottom habitats are highly productive for Grizzly Bears, population numbers are not high. Habitat is of low capability relative to similar coastal watersheds due to the steep terrain and low ecosystem productivity due to poor soils and cold climate. Additionally, availability of habitat may be affected by periodic flooding.
- Field-verified studies of Grizzly Bear habitat and bear presence in the greater Kitlope area (which includes the Kitlope, Tsaysis and Kowesas river drainages) in 1994 estimated habitat capability at between 20 - 40 bears and a population estimate of 22 bears.
- Coastal Grizzly Bears range over a variety of habitats over the course of a year. Home ranges vary by sex and age, and whether a bear is transient or resident. In the conservancy, important spring habitat is limited to the lower reaches of major rivers or in localized tributaries on avalanche run-outs<sup>6</sup>. Large standing and downed trees provide dens for winter hibernation. Black Bears are generalists and are found in a wide range of habitats including young, deciduous forests, old-growth forests, avalanche tracks, riparian areas, estuaries and sub-alpine meadows. Large, hollow trees are critical for denning.

1994 population estimates of Black Bear, based on field surveys and habitat capability estimates, were between 109 and 139 with a population estimate of 124 bears<sup>7</sup>. Black Bear numbers in the conservancy are considered large enough to represent viable numbers for a healthy sustained population<sup>8</sup>.

#### *Ungulates*

- The forest canopy in the conservancy provides snow interception and valuable movement corridors and browse for ungulates during winter.
- Coastal Black-tailed Deer are found in the watershed, but in low abundance as habitat conditions for them are poor.
- Surveys have shown evidence of Moose wintering along lower river (tidewater) shrublands of the conservancy where annual flooding and deposition of sediment results in self-perpetuating shrub communities.
- Mountain Goats occur in rugged mountainous areas, foraging in alpine and subalpine meadows during the summer and descending to old-growth forest stands in close proximity to escape terrain in the winter. They are yellow-listed by the British Columbia Conservation Data Centre.

---

<sup>5</sup> Fuhr, B., T. Hamilton and S. Sharpe. 1994. *A Final Report on Spring and Fall Grizzly Bear and Black Bear Reconnaissance Surveys of the Kitlope Area*. Ministry of Environment, Skeena Region.

<sup>6</sup> Fuhr et al. 1994. *Op cit*.

<sup>7</sup> T. Hamilton, personal communication, based on data reported in Marshall, R. and S. Sharpe. 1995. *The 1995 Review and Draft Recommendations for Bear Management in the Kitlope Drainage and Management Unit 6-03*. Ministry of Environment, Skeena Region.

<sup>8</sup> Fuhr et al. 1994. *Op cit*.



- Caribou enter the watershed from Tweedsmuir Park. The conservancy may be the only place in British Columbia where Caribou regularly occur west of the Coast Mountains<sup>9</sup>. Northern Caribou associated with the Tweedsmuir-Entiako Caribou herd have been documented at the upper Gamsby during calving season in early summer.

#### *Small Carnivores*

- Fishers are likely to be found in the conservancy and are blue-listed by the British Columbia Conservation Data Centre.
- Wolverines are likely to be found in the conservancy and are blue-listed by the British Columbia Conservation Date Centre. Wolverine are found in subalpine and alpine areas in the summer and descend to lower elevations in the winter.

#### *Birds*

- Marbled Murrelets inhabit the coastal waters of the north Pacific most of the year, coming ashore to breed in the spring. Marbled Murrelets nest on mossy platforms or cavities on large branches in tall trees located in mature and old-growth forests. Marbled Murrelets are red-listed by the British Columbia Conservation Data Centre. They are also listed as a Schedule 1 Wildlife Species at Risk by Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) and a national recovery plan is underway as part of a federal initiative.
- Black Merlins are a relatively uncommon raptor species and the only subspecies of North American merlin found in coastal British Columbia. Black Merlins are forest-dependent, breeding in rugged terrain that contains trees for nests and open areas for hunting.

### **Freshwater Systems**

The river systems of the conservancy are highly dynamic. Highest river flows occur with the melting of the winter snowpack, and during intense fall and winter storms. Extreme fall storms result in massive floods that move large amounts of organic and inorganic materials down the valleys. Occasionally, spring floods may submerge the floodplain for several weeks.

The typical mechanism of bank erosion involves deep scouring along the outside of bends often undercutting trees and eventually creating log jams that serve as the loci for sand and gravel deposition. Log jams play an important role in the creation of, and strengthening of, sediment barriers across the heads of abandoned and reduced channels. Much of the juvenile Coho Salmon and Chinook Salmon rearing habitat is related to deposition of large woody debris.

The hydrological systems of the Kitlope have developed without large-scale human disruption, and natural processes continue to dominate. These systems make an important contribution to the nutrient base for marine life in the Gardner Canal and freshets invite spawning salmon into the river systems.

The freshwater systems of the conservancy support a relatively large Sockeye Salmon run that travels up the Kitlope River and Kitlope Lake to spawn in the Tezwa River and Kalitan Creek. Some

---

<sup>9</sup> Copeland. 1997. *Op cit.*

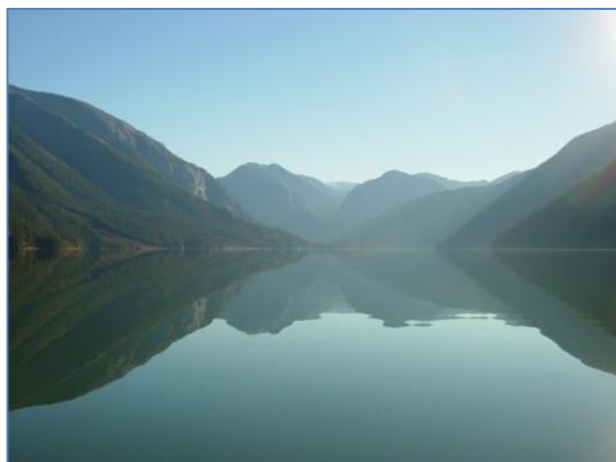
Sockeye Salmon spawn along the shores of Kitlope Lake. The other species of Pacific Salmon (Chum, Coho, Chinook, Pink) also spawn in the river systems, as do a number of species of trout and char including Dolly Varden, sea-run Cutthroat Trout and sea-run Rainbow Trout (i.e., Steelhead). There has been no evidence of Bull Trout in the conservancy, although this has not been verified by DNA studies<sup>10</sup>.

The run size of all salmon species vary considerably from year to year. Based on Ocean and Fisheries Canada (DFO) escapement data, in recent years returns of spawning salmon to the Kitlope River are lower than historical returns. Chinook, Chum and Coho escapements for the period 1990 – 2001 are less than 10% of the escapements recorded between 1950 and 1989. The returns of Sockeye Salmon and Pink Salmon are also reduced, but not to the extent of other salmon species. The Flathead Biological Station is monitoring the conservancy as part of the Salmonid Rivers Observatory Network, a project to document salmonid biodiversity and productivity in a number of undeveloped Pacific ecosystems.

The following freshwater species are blue listed by the British Columbia Conservation Data Centre: Cutthroat Trout, *clarkii* subspecies; Dolly Varden; and Coastal Tailed Frog.

Coastal Tailed Frogs are known to inhabit the small, steep headwater streams along the coast, including documented occurrences in the Kitlope. Coastal Tailed Frogs are found primarily in the CWH and MH biogeoclimatic zones, being most common in the CWHws.

A Harbour Seal population is resident at Kitlope Lake feeding on the rich supply of fish migrating into the Kitlope River.



Kitlope Lake

### **Marine-Terrestrial Interface: the Kitlope Estuary**

There are 530 hectares of marine area associated with the conservancy at the head of Gardner Canal. A dynamic intertidal zone provides sanctuary and habitat for over-wintering birds and an

---

<sup>10</sup> T. Bansak, Research Scientist, Flathead Lake Biological Station, Montana. Personal communication 2006.

abundance of tidal zone flora and fauna. The following valuable natural marine features have been noted in the conservancy:

- finfish presence: Pacific Salmon, Arctic Char, Pacific Herring, Eulachon and a number of trout species;
- invertebrate presence: crabs, shrimp and prawns;
- coastal and marine bird presence: waterfowl, Least Sandpipers and Marbled Murrelets; and,
- marine mammal presence: Killer Whales, Dall's Porpoises and Harbour Porpoises.

The Kitlope River estuary, at the interface of the marine and terrestrial environments of the conservancy, is a unique physical and biological ecosystem that provides critical habitat for several fish species, waterfowl and other birds, and a number of wildlife species<sup>11</sup>. The resulting mudflats represent a highly productive ecosystem that supports a broad range of plankton and invertebrates. The 6.5 metre tidal range at the estuary results in a diversity of ecological niches, which vary in biological composition depending on their length of exposure to saltwater.

The vegetation community in the Kitlope estuary is diverse and unique. Estuaries are often associated with rare plant communities that exist in complexes containing old seral forest and an estuary. Lyngby's sedge is the dominant plant species in the Kitlope estuary, rapidly colonizing new mudflats. This plant species, when young, is an important food for waterfowl and bears. Pacific crab apple, Pacific silverweed, northern rice root and cow parsnip are also abundant.

The estuary is also critical habitat for Black Bear and Grizzly Bear because it provides high value early spring emergent vegetation (e.g., sedge grasses) and an abundance of salmon in the summer and fall. Other animals that use the estuary and adjacent marine areas of the conservancy include Beavers, Grey Wolves, River Otters and the occasional Deer and Moose.

The estuary is also an important food source for ducks and other birds during critical periods in their life history. The Canadian Wildlife Service has identified the Kitlope estuary and Kitlope Lake for their importance to migratory and wintering waterfowl, including Trumpeter Swan and Barrow's Goldeneye. Canada Geese stage on the estuary during spring migrations and may overwinter there as well. Migrant waterfowl, sandpipers and raptors are present during the spring months.

Eulachon are a sea-going smelt that are highly prized by Haisla First Nations. Typically, Eulachon spawn in the inter-tidal portion of the rivers. Eulachon spawn in the estuary and lower Kitlope River in the spring (March – April). They migrate from the ocean to the conservancy in large schools that provide food for marine mammals and seabirds. The harvest of Eulachon is an integral part of the coastal First Nations' culture. Generations of Haisla have harvested Eulachon from the conservancy, to be used as food or rendered to grease for use locally or for trade with interior First Nations.

Currently, it is thought the Eulachon populations throughout coastal British Columbia, including in the conservancy, are in serious decline for a number of poorly understood reasons. The

---

<sup>11</sup> Information on the Kitlope estuary is primarily taken from a paper prepared for BC Parks by Brad Pollard entitled "Kitlope Marine Ecological Summary".

conservancy is the only provincial protected area which contains a watershed with a spawning Eulachon population, and does not have a history of logging or other industrial development. As this is the only Eulachon run within a protected watershed, this run is very significant.

### **Geological Features**

The conservancy includes several significant geological features:

- Gamsby Canyon – 8 kilometres long and up to 50 metres deep;
- spectacular examples of granite batholiths of the Coastal Intrusion; and,
- dramatic waterfalls.

### **Scientific Research Opportunities**

A key aspect of the conservancy is its role in providing opportunities for research and interpretive programs that utilize traditional ecological knowledge and science-based research to contribute to understanding the ecosystems of the greater coastal area, and to inform management practices.

The isolation and large size of the conservancy has buffered it from the human-induced changes experienced in many other areas. The protection of this area provides a benchmark for studying the natural dynamics and interrelationships within coastal ecosystems, and provides an opportunity for comparison with conditions in more modified landscapes. Additionally, the proximity of the conservancy to the Fiordland Conservancy and Tweedsmuir Park will allow scientists to study species and ecosystems in the full range from coast to interior. The deep experience and knowledge of the local landscape by the Haisla provides an opportunity to incorporate traditional ecological knowledge into research activities.

## **2.3 Cultural Heritage**

The conservancy is located within the traditional territory of the Henaaksiala tribe of the Haisla Nation, who have lived in the watershed and by its resources since time immemorial. The Haisla have many stories about the conservancy, and the area is of great cultural and spiritual significance to them.

The conservancy has a number of cultural heritage features, including village sites, pictographs, culturally modified trees, resource harvesting areas and legend sites. Many of these cultural heritage features have Haisla names and stories associated with them. There are two historic grease trails in the area: one that follows the main stem of the Kitlope River to the Kapella and Kimsquit rivers, and one that leads to the outer coast and Heiltsuk territory. Chief William Gladstone of the Heiltsuk has noted that the East Eight People of the Heiltsuk had a historical connection to the Kimsquit Area, and has expressed an interest in further exploration on the historical relations of the Kimsquit-Kitlope Grease Trail.

Since time immemorial, the Haisla have used the vegetation in the watershed for food, medicines, materials for weaving and building, and for spiritual purposes. Traditional resource management

approaches were used to ensure that plant materials were harvested sustainably, and that areas of harvest were maintained in a healthy and productive state.

The Haisla people maintain a living connection with the conservancy and the area continues to be used for traditional and contemporary uses. Haisla continue to harvest fish, wildlife and plant materials for food, medicines, and for other cultural and spiritual purposes. Traditional resource use by the Haisla within the conservancy includes harvesting of mammals, fish, plants, berries and materials gained from cedar and spruce trees. Rights to continue these traditional uses are stated within the Kitlope Agreement, and are guaranteed in the Canadian Constitution.

Today, as in times past, Haisla carvers still utilize western redcedar and yellow-cedar to make totem poles, canoes, masks, canoe paddles and other crafts. Bark is peeled from live trees to make rope, baskets and clothing. Spruce trees bear marks where pitch has been removed for medicine and for sealing canoes. Devils club and alder bark are used for medicine and cosmetic purposes. Cranberries from the south end of Kitlope Lake, huckleberries from the higher slopes and strawberries are staples of Haisla diet. Hunting of goats and deer occurs during the spring months along the Gardner Canal.

The Haisla harvest Eulachon at the Kemano and Kitlope rivers and it remains one of their most important community and cultural events. Kitlope Eulachon is prized for its high grease content. In pre-colonial times, grease trails along the Kitlope and Kapella rivers led to the Kimsquit Valley and Bella Coola area, and toward what is now Tweedmuir Park. Interior First Nations used these routes to trade for Eulachon oil.

A rediscovery camp was established by the Haisla Nation in the 1990s at A-Koo-U-Wa on Kitlope Lake to educate Haisla youth about their cultural heritage, however the camp has been inactive in recent years. Kitlope watchmen are an integral part of the management of the conservancy, ensuring that environmental goals are not compromised, and providing cultural tours and information about traditional knowledge to visitors to the watershed.

## **2.4 Recreation**

The conservancy represents a full range of recreation settings from sea to alpine. The Kitlope and Tezwa rivers, and Kitlope Lake are the main recreational areas. Recreational activities include: motorized boating, kayaking, canoeing, wildlife viewing, nature interpretation, angling, hunting, hiking and mountaineering.

In a typical winter there are few visitors, if any, to the conservancy. Winters in the conservancy are generally severe, with heavy snows and cold air flows down the valleys to the head of Gardner Canal. Gardner Canal often freezes, preventing boat access to the area. Support services, such as Haisla watchmen and BC Parks' rangers, are not present over the winter months.

In the years immediately preceding the designation of the conservancy, the area was well publicized and consequently there was a demand for guided trips to the conservancy. In recent years, the conservancy has received less of a profile and consequently fewer visitors. In the period 2001 - 2004, the number of recreational user days per year ranged from a high of 428 user days in 2001 to a low of 42 user days in 2004. Recreational use of the conservancy for general sightseeing, hiking, camping and angling does not require a permit. However, permits are required for commercial operators who bring guided recreational users into the conservancy.

## **Sightseeing**

The Kitlope/Tsaytis estuary area is renowned for its eel grass tidal flats, wild apples and cottonwood forests. The conservancy also protects outstanding cultural features such as Raven Eagle Clan Heritage Village Site, Eagle Raven Clan Heritage Village Site and the "Man Who Turned into Stone". These features provide for a quality recreational experience for those who journey to these remote valleys.

The scenic values of the approach to the conservancy are also part of the visitor experience. The most common way to access the Kitlope watershed is by boat up the Gardner Canal, passing landmarks like Owyacumish Bay, Brim River, Kemano Bay and Indian Reserve #3 (Chief Mathews Bay) and arriving at the conservancy anchorage near the Tsaytis River estuary. Sightseeing generally involves only short visits to the conservancy, as part of an overall tour of the area.

Bear viewing occurs as an ancillary activity to other activities such as guided fishing and hiking.

## **Angling**

Sport fishing is one of the most popular recreational activities in the conservancy. There are currently two permitted fishing guides holding licenses to guide sport fishers in the area. They access the area by motorized boat or by floatplane. The most sought after fish are Coho Salmon, Sockeye Salmon and Cutthroat Trout.

In terms of angling opportunities, the conservancy has a moderate fishery resource. This means that success rates may be lower than on similarly-sized river systems elsewhere where fish numbers are higher. The area is also remote and, consequently, the expensive access costs limit the use of the area for angling. In this context, it is not surprising that there has been a decline in the use of the area by guided anglers over the last decade. However, the pristine wilderness, cultural values and natural features of the conservancy are expected to continue to draw anglers into the future.

Over the past decade, 600 annual rod days have been issued to guided anglers but less than 10% of those days have been used. Further information on the river system, on the fisheries stock and on the area's productivity is expected to be derived from the research project being conducted as part of the Salmonid Rivers Observatory Network led by the University of Montana.



**Gps'golox Pole**

Gps'golox Pole

## **Hunting**

Moose, Deer, Mountain Goat and Black Bear are hunted in the conservancy by resident and non-resident hunters. The local guide outfitter takes clients into the area to hunt Black Bear and Mountain Goat. The majority of hunting in the conservancy by the Haisla is limited to Mountain Goat and Deer during the spring months along the Gardner Canal.

Haisla concerns about reductions in the numbers of Grizzly Bear in the area resulted in a closure to Grizzly Bear Harvest in 1995 and, out of respect and deference for the animal, the Haisla have not hunted Grizzly Bear themselves. For similar conservation reasons, the Haisla are currently not hunting Black Bear in the conservancy.

## **Hiking**

The conservancy currently has a small number of trails within the vicinity of the Kitlope estuary and Kitlope Lake, as well as undeveloped routes linking the Kitlope Valley with ridgelines to protected areas in the interior.

Two grease trails once traversed the conservancy. One of these grease trails provided a trade route to the interior First Nations through the Kimsquit and Tweedsmuir Park areas. The second trail led toward the outer coast and the Heiltsuk First Nation. There has been little to no maintenance or use of these trails over the last 100 years.

## **Commercial Recreation**

An allocation for number of commercial recreational permit days was previously set. For general guided recreational use, a limit of 1200 days is in place with a further 600 rod-days available specifically for guided angling. The initial allocation of 1200 user days was allocated to various permit holders but not all of these user days are currently being utilized.

## **Facilities**

The facilities currently in the conservancy include:

- a small cabin for angling guide purposes at the confluence of the Kapella and Kitlope rivers;
- spike camps for guide outfitting at Kalitan lakes, Ear Lake and Jug Lake;
- a ranger/watchmen cabin located on the lower Kitlope River;
- the Kemano Cabin, which is currently used for fisheries research, located on the lower Kitlope River;
- the Rediscovery Camp on Kitlope Lake; and,
- two campsites on Kitlope Lake.

## **2.5 Economic Values**

In addition to its significant role in conserving natural and cultural values, the conservancy provides economic benefits for local communities and the province. The dramatic beauty of the watershed, as well as the opportunity to experience fishing, hunting or wildlife viewing in a remote wilderness setting, draws visitors from the local area and around the world. The remoteness of the conservancy and the costs associated with accessing the area (by air or boat only) result in relatively



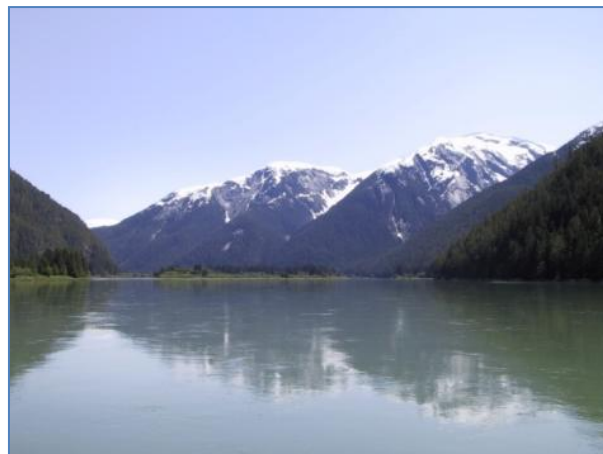
low visitation but in a high economic contribution from each visitor. Visitors from outside of the region bring dollars to northwest British Columbia communities while they are en route to, and within, the conservancy.

Ecotourism is a rapidly growing segment of British Columbia's tourism industry. In 2006, there were a small number of permitted commercial recreation operations in the conservancy. These included three operations offering guided tours, two individuals offering guided angling on a full and part-time basis (mainly for fall Coho Salmon fishing) and one guide outfitter based out of Kemano.

Scientific studies in the conservancy generate local business in services and goods. Visiting scientists and research personnel may seek local supplies and transportation or hire local people to assist with projects. In addition, their work may receive national or international attention, thereby drawing attention to the area and attracting visitors.

Haisla artists rely on undeveloped areas like the conservancy to keep alive their connection to nature. Young and old, artists gain their inspiration from these areas. The gathering of Eulachon, Pacific Salmon, berries, and the hunting of wildlife also provide economic benefits to the Kitimaat Village community by supplying the sustenance needs of the community. These activities provide spin-off benefits to retailers in Kitimat and Terrace who provide equipment and supplies such as food, gas, fishing gear, oil, and boat parts.

There are no industrial development activities occurring within the Kitlope watershed. The only tenured activities are trapping and tourism-related activities such as guided fishing, hunting, boating and kayaking.



Entering Huchsduwachsdu Nuyem Jees/Kitlope Heritage Conservancy

## 3.0 Management Direction

This management plan provides management direction for the conservancy based on known management issues. In the future, additional or different management actions may need to be considered to address emerging issues.

### 3.1 Vision

The vision statement developed for the Huchsduwachsd Nuyem Jeas/Kitlope Heritage Conservancy provides the overarching intent for the long-term care and management of the area. The vision was achieved by asking people to imagine the desired condition of the conservancy fifty years, or multiple generations from now. This vision statement provided key guidance in the development of the management plan, and it will assist managers in making decisions regarding stewardship, recreation and research activities in the conservancy. It is particularly important to consider the vision when assessing future recreation demands or approaches to conservation management that are not explicitly addressed in this management plan.

The Huchsduwachsd Nuyem Jeas/Kitlope Heritage Conservancy represents the honouring of commitments made and remains a wilderness area, and the largest natural temperate rainforest in the world. The Haisla are welcome in their ancestral home, as are all British Columbians.

The conservancy plays an important role in grounding the Haisla. Haisla members describe the opportunity to visit the conservancy as a celebration of what it is to be Haisla; what it is to be Henaaksiala. Non-Haisla leave the conservancy having learned about and having experienced Haisla culture.

In a typical day a visitor may fish in the river and visit the cultural centre for information and to share stories. The Haisla always feel welcome when visiting the conservancy and are the dominant presence on the landscape. Historically, Haisla have settled, traveled and lived in harmony with the valley and its ecosystems.

The harmonious relationship between people and the valley continues to exist. While people visit the conservancy, the impact of their activities does not alter the large-scale natural processes. The ecosystems in the Kitlope continue to operate and evolve as they have for thousands of years. These ecosystems continue to support healthy populations of ungulates and carnivores as well as a variety of small mammals, birds, amphibians and fish. The rivers and creeks are healthy and used by spawning salmon. The establishment of well thought-out scientific programs that incorporate traditional knowledge contributes to the knowledge base of the area's ecosystems, and is a hallmark of the conservancy.

Human use of the land is primarily attributed to cultural, scientific learning and recreational use within the conservancy. A cultural centre built in traditional style provides a place for visitors to dry off and to learn about Haisla/Hanaaksiala culture. It also provides an important base for scientific exploration. All facilities blend into the natural environment. Small-scale tourism has been enhanced, and it is not unusual to see small groups of people boating, canoeing, kayaking, hiking and fishing within the area. A few small developed trails provide an opportunity for visitors to explore the landscape that surrounds the river and cultural centre. The protection of the area and its habitat, the role of the area in sharing cultural values and enhancing scientific and traditional knowledge are a sources of pride for Haisla people, as it is for all British Columbians.

## 3.2 Key Management Issues

The following are some of the key management issues associated with the conservancy.

- There is a concern in the First Nations' community that Haisla values and traditional uses may be limited by the conservancy designation and conservancy management policies.
- Haisla have noted that cultural values as well as natural values require protection.
- A number of facilities projects are planned within the conservancy, including a cultural centre, research facilities and maintenance of the existing ranger/watchmen cabin. It may be a challenge to construct durable and easily maintained facilities that are visually appropriate for the conservancy, and that minimize impacts to ecological values.
- One of the key objectives of the conservancy is to protect the natural values of the area, including wildlife and the integrity of the conservancy's ecology. Management of the conservancy must have the sustainability of natural values as a primary focus.
- Recreational uses and facilities need to be planned to maintain a sense of wilderness, and to ensure that there is no long-term damage in areas of regular use.
- There is potential for conflict between wildlife and visitors to the conservancy, between consumptive users and non-consumptive uses of the area, and between motorized and non-motorized transport.
- The scenic and ecological values along Gardner Canal may be impacted by activities on adjacent lands.

### 3.3 Management of Natural and Cultural Values

#### Hydrology and Water Quality

The water in the conservancy’s rivers and in Kitlope Lake is generally pristine due to the lack of industrial development and remoteness from human-caused changes to the environment. <b>Issues</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Strategies</b>
<p>Recreational activities, in particular motorized activities on the rivers, and increased visitation to the area have the potential to impact the water quality in the conservancy.</p> <p>Recreational facilities built along riverbanks are vulnerable to seasonally changeable water levels.</p> <p>Increased facility development and recreational use may impact water quality.</p> <p>The slow flushing Gardner Canal relies on the integrity of its tributaries to maintain beneficial nutrient levels and keystone species<sup>12</sup> such as salmon.</p>	<p>To situate facilities to ensure long-term viability and to minimize risk of water contamination.</p> <p>To ensure that the naturally dynamic river processes are unaltered by human activity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage research that furthers our understanding of the conservancy’s climate, hydrology and geomorphology, with a particular focus on predicted changes as a result of climate change.</li> <li>• Establish a continuing program for water sampling to establish a baseline of the water quality, flow and other river characteristics.</li> <li>• Locate permanent campsites, structures, fuel storage, spill containment facilities and human waste disposal facilities on stable terrain, well back from active floodplains and creeks. Facilities should be located to ensure that artificial mechanisms for bank stabilization are not required.</li> <li>• Monitor the impacts of jet boats and other motorized watercraft on river systems. In the event of unacceptable impacts on water quality or water-based ecosystems, place restrictions on use.</li> <li>• Encourage responsible waste practices by visitors to the conservancy.</li> </ul>

<sup>12</sup> Keystone species are species whose very presence contributes to a diversity of life and whose extinction would consequently lead to the extinction of other forms of life.

## Vegetation

<p>The complexity of the forests in the conservancy gives them resilience to disturbances but at the same time they are vulnerable to the impacts of continuous use. <b>Issues</b></p>	<p><b>Objective</b></p>	<p><b>Strategies</b></p>
<p>As a result of the dense vegetation and difficult terrain, human activity is concentrated at campsites and trails with associated impacts due to erosion, trampling of vegetation and waste disposal. The lack of baseline information on vegetation and ecosystems makes it difficult to ensure that negative impacts are minimized.</p> <p>The productivity of some traditional food plants is dependent on annual use or other management techniques such as burning of old brush (e.g., blueberries).</p> <p>Careful design of human activity areas is necessary to avoid damaging rare or vulnerable ecosystems and habitats, and to ensure that areas of traditional Haisla harvest are not adversely affected.</p>	<p>To establish baseline vegetation information in high human use areas.</p> <p>To conserve abundant plant communities and identify low-impact spaces for recreational development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage the establishment of a program of science-based activities focused on identifying baseline information, and bringing insight to the function and structure of coastal ecosystems.</li> <li>• Avoid inappropriate disturbance or damage to rare or endangered plant communities by completing comprehensive impact assessments when developing facilities, trail and camping areas.</li> <li>• Where appropriate, undertake further ethnobotanical studies of plant uses and locations in the Kitlope, and use this information to ensure that important gathering areas are not impacted by visitor use. Ensure that issues associated with the sharing and future use of collected information is addressed in permit conditions.</li> <li>• Work with the Haisla to identify and manage significant berry producing areas to maintain their productivity.</li> </ul>

## Marine and Freshwater Species

Freshwater fish, principally Pacific Salmon and Eulachon, are key components of the coastal ecosystem, providing a crucial food source for a range of wildlife species.

Issues	Objective	Strategies
<p>Eulachon runs to the Kitlope have been significantly below average in recent years.</p> <p>Historic records suggest that there were large runs of Sockeye Salmon to the Kitlope, with runs currently only 10% the size of a historic high recorded in 1963.</p> <p>The evolutionary and functional processes that link freshwater systems and slow moving tidal systems like the Gardner Canal are little understood.</p>	<p>To conserve viable natural fish populations while providing opportunities for an ecologically sustainable level of fishing and traditional harvesting.</p> <p>To identify means of addressing declining Eulachon and Sockeye Salmon runs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Artificial fisheries enhancement and/or stocking projects will not be permitted unless fish populations are at risk of local extirpation.</li> <li>• Encourage further research on fish populations and habitats in the conservancy, and communicate findings with other management agencies. This includes:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Using the conservancy as a benchmark or control ecosystem to research the causes and potential ways to mitigate declining Eulachon and Sockeye Salmon populations; and,</li> <li>- Investigating the relationship between terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Support non-manipulative research activities over manipulative activities.</li> </ul>

## Terrestrial Wildlife Species

The Kitlope watershed provides a diverse array of habitat types for terrestrial wildlife due to the large size of the watershed, and its varied landforms and climatic conditions across elevational gradients and extending from coast to interior.

Issues	Objective	Strategies
<p>There is a lack of information on the conservancy's wildlife populations.</p> <p>There is a concern about the status of the Grizzly Bear population. Inventories of Grizzly Bear habitat and populations will be needed in connection with the management of the Grizzly Bear Management Area.</p> <p>Development of facilities and trails can impact wildlife, particularly during vulnerable periods.</p> <p>Human safety is also a factor if areas of human use increase the potential for human-wildlife interaction and conflict.</p>	<p>To ensure viable wildlife populations in the short term and long term.</p> <p>To acquire adequate data on populations of key wildlife species to be able to monitor trends and population viability over time.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess high value habitats for key wildlife species and identify critical habitats at a local scale.</li> <li>• Encourage research that increases knowledge of wildlife vulnerabilities to disturbance and displacement.</li> <li>• Undertake inventories of the area's wildlife populations, giving priority to on-going inventories of Mountain Goats and Grizzly Bears.</li> <li>• Undertake regular discussions with Haisla and knowledgeable experts to expand understanding of the conservancy's wildlife populations.</li> <li>• Monitor areas of current human use and take steps to restore or mitigate negative impacts on wildlife as required.</li> <li>• Avoid inappropriate disturbance or damage to wildlife by completing comprehensive impact assessments when developing facilities, trail and camping areas.</li> </ul>

## Cultural Heritage

The Henaaksiala people lived in and utilized the Huchduwachsdu Nuyem Jeas for many centuries.

*“Haisla history illustrates concepts of resource management based on cultural principles, such as responsibility of each individual to respect and protect the diverse food chain provided by our air, lands and oceans.”* - Kitamaat Village webpage.

Part of the foundation for the Kitlope agreement between the Haisla people and the Province of British Columbia is the acknowledgement of the Kitlope as the ancestral homeland of the Haisla/Henaaksiala people. A number of steps have been put in place to acknowledge this, including (a) participation by the Haisla on the Kitlope Management Committee; (b) approval of the management plan by the same; (c) on-going operational involvement by the Haisla Nation; and (d) provisions in the Kitlope agreement to ensure on-going Haisla involvement and input into the management of the conservancy. This management plan has been prepared on the understanding that human and natural values are inseparable.

Issues	Objective	Strategies
<p>There is a concern in the First Nations’ community that Haisla values and traditional uses may be limited by the conservancy designation.</p> <p>The Haisla have a living connection with the Kitlope that should not be in any way diminished or impinged upon by the designation of the conservancy and its use by visitors.</p> <p>The rich cultural heritage associated with the conservancy is a treasure to be respected and appreciated by all visitors.</p>	<p>To protect and encourage respect for Haisla values, artefacts, village sites and spiritual places.</p> <p>To maintain on-going opportunities for Haisla traditional harvesting practices, including the collection of food and medicines.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor and support efforts to ensure that the laws that prohibit the removal or alteration of cultural artefacts are respected. Support mechanisms to ensure knowledge of this prohibition is shared appropriately with conservancy users.</li> <li>• Develop an inventory of cultural sites.</li> <li>• Collaboratively determine which conservancy sites will be made available for public access and which sites should be closed to the public.</li> <li>• Encourage guided tourism opportunities focused on cultural and natural values.</li> <li>• Encourage Haisla efforts to identify and secure opportunities and training for Haisla people to become guides, watchmen, camp leaders, interpreters and tourism operators.</li> <li>• Investigate funding opportunities for the construction of a Haisla cultural centre that shares information on the natural and cultural heritage of the area and its people with visitors.</li> <li>• Consider and evaluate opportunities to provide cultural interpretation through the Haisla watchmen program and at the cultural centre.</li> <li>• Collaborate with the Haisla, Heiltsuk and other neighbouring First Nations to gain a better understanding of the trade patterns and history of the various Kitlope grease trails.</li> </ul>



### 3.4 Management of Uses and Activities

This management plan includes tools to reduce the potential for conflict between uses and activities (e.g., zoning, restrictions on the type and location of activities; and ongoing monitoring of activities and associated impacts).

#### Facility Development

While the conservancy objectives are primarily focussed on providing a remote, wilderness experience, a certain level of facility development is appropriate and necessary to ensure the safety and comfort of visitors to the area, to provide for on-going use of the area for research, guided recreation and interpretive services, and to provide support for on-going operational activities.

Issues	Objective	Strategies
<p>Inappropriate or excessive facility development has the potential to negatively impact the cultural and spiritual connection and welcome to the land. It may also negatively impact on the visual quality and remote wilderness experience of the conservancy.</p> <p>The type and number of facilities should reflect the zoning for the conservancy and existing and anticipated uses within each zone.</p> <p>All facilities must be built and maintained in consideration of the local climate and natural processes. Having clean, warm and dry accommodations can greatly increase access to the conservancy and for many visitors may improve their experience.</p>	<p>To plan and manage facility development in a manner appropriate to the vision and objectives for the conservancy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow for a cultural centre built in traditional First Nation style. Make the proposed cultural centre the priority for facility development. In the short to mid-term, the development of a concept plan and feasibility study outlining the desired cultural centre, learning/heritage outcomes, and operational viability should be conducted.</li> <li>• Support and encourage the development and use of nearby tourism facilities (e.g., Kowesas, Kemano area) as staging grounds for recreational use of the conservancy.</li> <li>• Allow for one or two small-scale (up to 10 beds) accommodation facilities within the Nature Recreation Zone.</li> <li>• Assess proposals for new facilities against the management plan and ensure proposals are reviewed by the Kitlope Management Committee.</li> </ul>
	<p>To provide adequate infrastructure to ensure safe and environmentally sustainable use of the area.</p>	
	<p>To ensure that facilities are built to withstand the climate and natural processes of the area.</p>	
	<p>To maintain the experience of being with nature and experiencing the spiritual connection with the conservancy.</p>	

## Hiking

The conservancy currently has a small number of trails within the vicinity of the Kitlope estuary and Kitlope Lake, as well as undeveloped routes linking the Kitlope Valley with ridgelines in protected areas in the interior.

Issues	Objective	Strategies
<p>Recreational opportunities are currently limited in the conservancy and there is a desire to increase the opportunities.</p> <p>There is a desire to enhance visitor experience through the development of short trails and in the long term through the restoration of two of the grease trails.</p> <p>The potential for trail development is limited by the steep topography of the area and the costs and challenges of working in such a remote area.</p>	<p>To provide a range of quality backcountry hiking opportunities for visitors to the conservancy.</p> <p>To develop suitable trails that are consistent with, and do not detract from, the wilderness aesthetic of the conservancy and that meet objectives to maintain natural and cultural values.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the short to medium term, identify and seek out funding opportunities to create one or two short hiking trails, which may include a cultural component in the vicinity of any developed facilities/campsites and the village site of Miskusa (Indian Reserve #16). Priority for selecting potential trail locations should be associated with increasing access into the conservancy and enhancing opportunities for recreation activities at existing or proposed sites (e.g., cultural centre).</li> <li>• As a longer-term initiative, identify and seek out funding opportunities to provide backcountry hiking opportunities through redevelopment of the historic grease trails.</li> <li>• Provide information on trails within the conservancy at the Haisla watchmen/BC Parks’ ranger cabin and proposed cultural centre, at the offices of BC Parks and on the BC Parks’ website.</li> <li>• Undertake Backcountry Recreation Impact Monitoring (BRIM) at established sites along trails and apply restorative or mitigative measures in a timely manner where impacts are evident.</li> </ul>

## Hunting

Hunting is practiced and valued by many local residents and First Nations people. There is one guide outfitter whose territory includes the conservancy.

Issues	Objective	Strategies
<p>Hunting activities may conflict with other recreational activities in the conservancy, particularly bear viewing.</p> <p>There is very limited inventory information to support harvest allocations. In the absence of data on actual population numbers, harvest considerations are based on reported hunting success and habitat information.</p> <p>Without adequate levels of enforcement and compliance, including patrols during the hunting season, there may be illegal hunting and poaching.</p> <p>The guide outfitter has voluntarily agreed to not harvest in the conservancy but would like a final resolution with regards to whether the long-term direction is to not include a commercial hunting opportunity in the conservancy.</p>	<p>To ensure healthy and sustainable populations of game species.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue the current Grizzly Bear hunting closure. Support the continued inclusion of the conservancy within the larger Grizzly Bear Management Area. The Strategic Land Use Planning Agreement, dated April 1, 2006 between the Province and the Haisla also supports inclusion.</li> <li>• Encourage and support science-based studies, including population inventories and habitat use studies, and use this information in determining harvest allocations.</li> <li>• Monitor success and harvest within the conservancy and use this information to inform management activities.</li> <li>• Collaborate on compliance and enforcement during the hunting seasons and respond to issues as required.</li> <li>• Monitor conflicts between users and, where necessary, develop strategies, such as recommending hunting closures at specific sites or during specific time frames, to reduce conflicts.</li> <li>• Consistent with provincial hunting regulations, ensure hunting safety restrictions are enforced within proximity of facilities or high use recreational sites (e.g., cultural facilities, tourism cabins/facilities).</li> <li>• Phase-out guided hunting while acknowledging the existing operator’s certificate includes the conservancy. Acquisition by the Haisla of the conservancy portion of the guided hunting territory will be required to allow the activity to be phased-out. BC Parks will be supportive of Haisla efforts to acquire the conservancy portion of the territory. Further discussions on opportunities to facilitate this will be required; however, this reflects the deliberations and discussions held as part of the management planning process as outlined in Appendix 4.</li> </ul>
	<p>To ensure an adequate enforcement presence during the hunting season.</p>	
	<p>To ensure that competing uses do not conflict with each other within the conservancy (e.g., hunting and bear viewing).</p>	

## Angling Activities

	Objective	Strategies
<p>Sport fishing is one of the most popular recreational activities in the conservancy. There are currently two fishing guides holding permits to guide anglers in the area, accessing the area by boat or floatplane. <b>Issues</b></p> <p>With only moderately-sized fish runs, there is an increased need to ensure that fishing is managed in a sustainable manner to avoid unacceptable reductions in the fish run.</p> <p>Bear-human encounters associated with angling pose safety issues to bears and visitors.</p>	<p>To conserve viable natural fish populations while providing opportunities for a sustainable level of fishing in a wilderness setting.</p> <p>To provide an interpretive component associated with the fishery resource.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage and support scientific studies related to the fish resource.</li> <li>• Communicate with Fisheries and Oceans Canada and other interests regarding the state of fish resources, and strategies to maintain fish habitat and population numbers.</li> <li>• Encourage Fisheries and Oceans Canada to monitor population trends in order to consider appropriate restrictions and/or develop conservancy specific fisheries regulations.</li> <li>• Monitor levels of fishing success in the conservancy, including:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Requiring guides to report annually on fishing success; and,</li> <li>- Conducting periodic creel surveys to monitor the quality of the fishing experience and success of the fishers.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Manage the allocation of angling user days to maximize utilization while maintaining the sustainability of fish stocks. The allocation of angling user days is addressed in the Guided Recreational Use section.</li> <li>• Implement the strategies in the Bear-Human Conflict Prevention Plan (Skeena Section) to minimize encounters between humans and bears.</li> <li>• Provide safe opportunities to view salmon spawning in Kitlope Lake and the lower Tezwa River, and consider interpretive opportunities at the cultural centre.</li> </ul>

## Wilderness/Scenic Viewing

With its fjord-like setting, the conservancy has abundant natural features, including forests, gravel bars, rushing creeks and waterfalls, steep granite walls, snowfields and glaciers. Healthy populations of Grizzly Bear and Black Bear, birds and other mammals can be seen on the river banks when salmon and Eulachon are running.

Issues	Objective	Strategies
<p>The quality of the visitor experience is diminished when large numbers of visitors are present at the same time.</p> <p>Aircraft flightseeing impacts wildlife and the wilderness experience of visitors on the ground. Other forms of motorized transport may also conflict with the non-motorized visitor experience.</p> <p>Recreational activities that rely on motorized boat access may disturb spawning fish and cause erosion.</p> <p>Some of the resource development adjacent to the conservancy may negatively impact the views and features on the access route along Gardner Canal to the conservancy.</p>	<p>To maximize opportunities for wilderness sightseeing experiences while maintaining the overall visitor experience, and minimizing impacts to natural, cultural and aesthetic values.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage short-term or day visits to the conservancy with visitors staged on marine vessels during their stay. The timing and number of visiting vessels may need to be managed to ensure a quality experience.</li> <li>• Discourage low-level flightseeing within the conservancy, particularly during the summer and fall months when wildlife are in the estuary and vulnerable to disturbance. If required, work with air companies operating in the area to identify voluntary altitude restrictions and or flightlines to avoid unacceptable negative impacts. Note: The provincial government has no authority to regulate aircraft overflights.</li> <li>• Encourage motorized boat operators to use technologies that minimize pollution and noise on motor boats.</li> <li>• Develop appropriate facilities to accommodate small group tours to the conservancy, such as the planned cultural centre.</li> <li>• Locate facilities to blend with, or be hidden by, the natural visual characteristics of the conservancy.</li> <li>• Collaborate with agencies and forest licensees involved in resource development activities along Gardner Canal to encourage minimal visual impacts from logging and other activities along the approach to the conservancy.</li> </ul>
	<p>To ensure that use and development within the conservancy does not detract from the natural scenery and special features of the area.</p>	
	<p>To encourage a high quality visual experience while travelling to and from the conservancy.</p>	
	<p>To ensure a high quality remote wilderness experience while visiting the conservancy.</p>	

## Winter Recreational Use

In a typical winter there are few visitors, if any, to the conservancy. Winters in the conservancy are generally severe, with heavy snows and cold air flows down the valleys to the head of Gardner Canal. Gardner Canal often freezes, preventing boat access to the area.

Issues	Objective	Strategies
<p>The remoteness of the conservancy severely restricts winter use and poses safety challenges for winter trips.</p>	<p>To allow appropriate, non-motorized, winter activities within the conservancy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow backcountry skiing and other non-motorized winter activities in the conservancy. Do not allow snowmobiling and heli-skiing within the conservancy.</li> <li>• Provide information on appropriate winter activities and associated risks on the BC Parks' website.</li> </ul>
	<p>To provide information respecting the risks and hazards associated with winter travel to the conservancy.</p>	

## Guided Recreational Use

Guided recreational activities considered appropriate in the conservancy include: hiking and cultural tours; boat transportation; kayaking tours; aircraft tours (high elevation scenic tours only); and, angling.

Issues	Objective	Strategies
<p>Increasing numbers of guided park visitors to the conservancy may impact natural and cultural values.</p> <p>The conservancy is of high cultural significance to the Haisla First Nation and there may be opportunities for the Haisla to engage in providing cultural tourism activities appropriate to the area.</p> <p>As a result of the initial interest in the conservancy, the initial allocation of 1200 user days was allocated to various permit holders but not all of these user days are currently being utilized.</p>	<p>To encourage commercial recreation operations that provide high quality visitor experiences in the conservancy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that, prior to approval of proposed guided recreation operations, all developments associated with the operation have been assessed to identify, avoid, and where essential, mitigate impacts on the fisheries resource, wildlife habitat, and other key values.</li> <li>• Develop information for brochures and the BC Parks' website to encourage no-trace camping and hiking practices, including packing out all garbage.</li> <li>• Continue and, where resources allow, enhance the existing monitoring program, which involves Backcountry Recreation Impact Monitoring and an annual review of guide reports.</li> <li>• Encourage all guided operators to incorporate information about Haisla culture into their programs.</li> <li>• Ensure a representative of the Kitlope Management Committee reviews the conditions of park use permits with each permit holder at issue or renewal. Permit term should be set in consideration of the potential impact that may occur.</li> <li>• Manage commercial recreation use as follows:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The existing maximum 1200 guided recreation user days and 600 rod-days will remain unchanged, unless monitoring indicates that the level of use is impacting natural and cultural values.</li> <li>- If the demand for recreation user days exceeds the 1200 user days, conduct an impact assessment on expanding the number of user days. (a) If the impact assessment indicates that an increase in user days is appropriate, increase the number of user days and allocate the opportunities. (b) If the impact assessment process indicates that an increase in user days is inappropriate, undertake a competitive process to re-allocate some or all of the existing user days.</li> <li>- Provision of a certain percentage of guided recreation user days for Haisla use and/or weighting for cultural component will be considered as part of any competitive allocation process.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<p>To encourage and support Haisla efforts to develop cultural tourism operations.</p>	
	<p>To provide access to tourism opportunities that are respectful of the conservancy's ecological and cultural values.</p>	

## Scientific and Research-Based Activities

The conservancy provides an opportunity to combine traditional knowledge with science to improve the understanding of coastal temperate rainforest ecosystems.

Issues	Objective	Strategies
<p>Baseline and functional information on productivity in undeveloped watersheds is needed to appropriately manage natural resources.</p> <p>Traditional ecological knowledge, which is based on a long-standing and well-developed understanding of the local environment and the impact of local communities on local resources, has an important role in complementing, supplementing, and guiding western-based methods of scientific research and resource management.</p> <p>A number of different agencies, or individuals within agencies, are involved in managing fish or wildlife species, creating challenges for communication and decision-making.</p>	<p>To employ a combination of traditional ecological knowledge and science to expand our knowledge of natural processes and ecosystem interdependencies and provide a baseline of data from which to monitor the state of natural resources into the future.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage and facilitate the sharing of information and development of research programs with the involvement of First Nations, academic institutions, non-governmental organizations and the various relevant government agencies (federal and provincial).</li> <li>• Encourage research that will lead to better management practices as well as generate interest in the conservancy.</li> <li>• Where practical, utilize existing programs and facilities (e.g., Kemano Cabin) to cooperatively support research within the conservancy. When contemplating new facilities and activities consider opportunities to enhance the research potential of the conservancy.</li> <li>• Encourage the use of traditional ecological knowledge in research (e.g., by providing opportunities for the Haisla to participate on projects and project working groups or by including the use of traditional ecological knowledge in the criteria used to evaluate research projects for the area).</li> <li>• Encourage local and regional post-secondary institutions to include study of the conservancy and its surroundings as part of their research programs.</li> </ul>
	<p>To develop a better understanding of the interdependencies between land-based ecosystems and marine ecosystems.</p>	
	<p>To foster improved interagency and inter-governmental communication and interaction in order to provide more effective and integrative management of ecosystems and species.</p>	



## Access Management

Guided recreational access is controlled through the use of the park use permit system by stipulating the type, amount and location of access and use on each permit.

Most travel to and within the conservancy is by boat, including guided tours by marine vessels to the estuary, jet boat tours in the lower Kitlope and Tezwa rivers, canoe and raft trips.

Issues	Objective	Strategies
<p>The remoteness of the area makes it difficult to access.</p> <p>Tidal changes are large and the rivers fluctuate in volume dramatically over short periods, creating challenges for safe travel on the river systems (e.g., jet boating).</p> <p>Risks associated with river travel are greatly increased during spring, summer and fall floods when river levels are changeable, and large amounts of debris are carried down the river.</p> <p>There is potential for conflicts between boat users if traffic on the rivers and lake increases in the future.</p> <p>Motorized access impacts the remote wilderness experience sought by some visitors to the area.</p> <p>Monitoring of access currently only occurs during the summer and early fall. There is a</p>	<p>To promote opportunities for the Haisla, local residents and visitors to access the conservancy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Protected areas zoning identifies areas of motorized and non-motorized use.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wilderness Recreation Zones: These zones have been designated to provide areas with limited or no motorized traffic and low probability of contact with other groups. In particular, within Wilderness Recreation Zone 2 (Figure 3) there will be no motorized boat traffic except for traffic required for management purposes, and only a low level of guided recreation activities (non-motorized activities with possible helicopter access).</li> <li>- Nature Recreation Zone: Motorized and non-motorized access is permitted within this zone.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Promote the use of canoes, kayaks and other non-motorized vessels as the preferred mode of transportation on Kitlope Lake. Discourage jet boat use on Kitlope Lake. Conservancy managers will monitor conflicts between non-motorized and motorized traffic on Kitlope Lake, and consider additional management actions aimed at reducing or eliminating such conflict.</li> <li>● Allow the use of guided boat transport to access river systems and Kitlope Lake. Prohibit motorized terrestrial transport, such as snowmobiles and all terrain vehicles, within the conservancy.</li> <li>● Provide current travel information and advisory information specific to the Gardner Canal and the conservancy on the BC Parks', Haisla and Na na kila websites. Also provide information regarding boating hazards, particularly highlighting the dangers of rapid changes in the rivers velocity and flow, and navigational hazards caused by debris during river floods. Ensure Haisla watchmen and BC Parks rangers work with tourism operators to increase visitor familiarity with the conservancy river systems and their seasonal fluctuations and sensitivities.</li> <li>● Investigate and work with partner organizations to identify opportunities for projects and other initiatives that will provide a management presence in the conservancy during the spring and</li> </ul>
	<p>To maximize safety of travellers to this remote location, including safe travel on river systems.</p>	
	<p>To ensure the public is aware of the safety risks associated with visiting the conservancy.</p>	
	<p>To provide appropriate opportunities for motorized and non-motorized access in a manner that minimizes conflicts between users.</p>	

Issues	Objective	Strategies
<p>desire to monitor use of the conservancy throughout the year.</p>	<p>To ensure adequate monitoring of access to and within the conservancy.</p>	<p>late fall/winter months, and allow for monitoring of access and use in the area in shoulder seasons.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage the relevant provincial government agency and adjacent forest tenure licensees to consider the impacts of access development in watersheds adjacent to the conservancy on protected area values (e.g., as part of Haisla or agency input into proposed forest stewardship plans or through direct discussions with BC Parks and forest tenure license holders).</li> </ul>
	<p>To minimize impacts on natural and cultural values by boats.</p>	

## Visitor Interpretive Services

The proposed cultural centre will be an important interpretive facility that enhances visitor information and use. The combination of heritage education programs and natural history programs will ensure that the conservancy remains a special place for learning.

Issues	Objective	Strategies
<p>The abundant natural and cultural values in the conservancy, supported by the Haisla interest in sharing their experiences and traditions of stewardship, provide an opportunity for high quality interpretive programs.</p> <p>Provision of guided or unguided interpretive tours is a challenge due to the conservancy's remoteness.</p> <p>Lack of facilities and packaged interpretive materials presents challenges to sharing information on the conservancy's values.</p> <p>The conservancy presents opportunities to educate and inform visitors of the long history of occupation and use by the Henaaksiala/Haisla First Nation.</p> <p>Activities such as guided ecological and cultural interpretive programs are growing in popularity.</p>	<p>To encourage and facilitate visitor appreciation of the conservancy's natural and cultural heritage.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Prepare interpretive materials, programs and supporting facilities in conjunction with the development of the proposed cultural centre, which is intended to be the primary place for interpretive activities and provision of visitor information.</li> <li>● Design and develop a comprehensive interpretative plan for the conservancy based on natural history and cultural themes incorporating Haisla art, philosophy, lifestyle, place names and history.</li> <li>● Encourage naturalists, researchers and journalists to visit the area and write about their experiences.</li> <li>● Continue with the production and distribution of a conservancy brochure and map and update, as required.</li> <li>● Encourage visitor use between May and September when Haisla watchmen are more likely to be available to provide on-site information about the conservancy and Haisla heritage.</li> <li>● Encourage tourism operators to incorporate guided tours that share and provide information on the conservancy's natural and cultural values into their operations.</li> <li>● Highlight ecological tourism and cultural tourism opportunities in the conservancy on the BC Parks' website.</li> </ul>
	<p>To develop a diverse array of interpretive services, including orientation location information, information on natural history and education on Haisla heritage and culture.</p>	
	<p>To provide infrastructure to enhance the natural and cultural experience of the conservancy.</p>	
	<p>To develop a suitable facility for interpretive activities and provision of visitor information.</p>	

## Promotion and Visitor Safety

While the conservancy offers outstanding natural and cultural features, the infrastructure for recreation is minimal and the remoteness of the area provides a number of challenges for attracting visitors.

Issues	Objective	Strategies
<p>Transportation to the conservancy is costly and, depending on the weather, can be very time consuming.</p> <p>There are challenges to ensuring a safe and high quality visitor experience, given the remoteness and lack of infrastructure in the conservancy.</p> <p>The conservancy needs to be adequately promoted in order to ensure on-going visitation and to generate economic benefits from the conservancy.</p>	<p>To manage visitation for a safe and high quality experience with minimal impacts on natural features and resources.</p> <p>To maintain and increase awareness of the conservancy within the region, nationally and internationally.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide current travel information and advisory information on the BC Parks' and Haisla Tourism websites specific to the Gardner Canal and the conservancy.</li> <li>• Use small information shelters at key recreation sites to provide information on hazards to be aware of, as well as natural or cultural history.</li> <li>• Support efforts to have the conservancy (eastern Gardner Canal) area made accessible to VHF Channel 16.</li> <li>• Participate in marketing efforts being made by other organizations such as Tourism British Columbia, especially where tourism marketing are being focussed at growing international markets interested in First Nation heritage such as Germany and Japan.</li> <li>• Work with tourism operators, researchers and the Haisla Nation to develop opportunities to increase local visitation to the conservancy.</li> <li>• Provide links to commercial transportation operators websites on the BC Parks' website and other relevant websites.</li> <li>• Implement periodic user satisfaction surveys and make changes, where necessary.</li> </ul>

## Strategic and Operational Planning and Management

The conservancy provides an opportunity for the Province and the Haisla to gain experience in the collaborative management of a protected area. Day-to-day operations are administrated by BC Parks and implemented by the Haisla watchmen and BC Parks' staff. The Haisla employ seasonal watchmen who patrol the area and also maintain the public facilities. These services are provided on behalf of the committee and the specific activities are detailed in a contract between BC Parks and the Haisla. Finding funding from non-government organizations is an important aspect of the broader Haisla operations.

Issues	Objective	Strategies
<p>Funding is needed to maintain ongoing operational management by the Haisla in the conservancy.</p> <p>Increased funding is needed for the development of: the cultural centre, trails, scientist accommodation and other overnight accomodation.</p>	<p>To ensure sufficient funding to provide adequate enforcement, resource management, interpretation, facilities, facility maintenance and safety services in the short and long-term.</p> <p>To identify and secure funding to enhance the development of facilities and activities consistent with the vision for the conservancy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the Haisla Nation in its efforts to find funding for to implement projects that are consistent with the management plan.</li> <li>• Consider opportunities to support and provide accommodation for scientists to encourage science-based initiatives (e.g., through long-term use of the Kemano cabin or investigating options to integrate scientific accommodations or basic research facilities into the proposed cultural centre).</li> </ul>

## 3.5 Zoning

As part of management planning, protected areas are generally zoned into spatial units, based on areas having relatively uniform natural, cultural and/or recreational values and therefore similar management goals. The management plan sets out intended and appropriate land uses, as well as appropriate levels of use, management and development in each zone in relation to specific management objectives.

The Huchsduwachsdu Nuyem Jeess/Kitlope Heritage Conservancy is divided into one Nature Recreation Zone and two Wilderness Recreation Zones (Figure 3). These are described below.

### **Nature Recreation Zone**

Two percent of the conservancy is zoned Nature Recreation (Figure 3). This zone represents the areas of highest human activity and use immediately along the Kitlope River and around Kitlope Lake. The overall management intent within this zone is to protect scenic values and to provide opportunities for recreation and cultural use in a largely undisturbed natural environment.

This zone includes the most accessible part of the conservancy and higher levels of use are anticipated here relative to the Wilderness Recreation zones. Permanent facilities are permitted. Anticipated activities include the maintenance of existing facilities and the development of a cultural centre. Development and maintenance of facilities will be visually compatible with natural settings and located to minimize impacts on the natural and cultural values. Motorized watercraft, such as jet boats, are permitted.

### **Wilderness Recreation Zones**

Ninety-eight percent of the conservancy is zoned Wilderness Recreation (Figure 3). The objective of Wilderness Recreation zones is to protect remote, undisturbed natural landscapes and to provide backcountry recreation opportunities that are dependent on pristine environments. Management actions are minimal and not manipulative. Low levels of guided recreation use are permitted, facility development is minimal and only to a level sufficient to satisfy remote backcountry user needs (e.g., non-permanent tent frames and no-trace campsites). Types and levels of recreational use may be managed in these zones to ensure that any long-term damage to ecosystems is minimized. Access is generally non-mechanized and non-motorized (see exception below).

There are two Wilderness Recreation zones within the conservancy. Note that the boundaries shown in Figure 3 are approximate and may be adjusted in the future to better reflect actual areas and intensities of use.

#### ***Wilderness Recreation Zone 1***

This wilderness recreation zone includes:

- The lower 12 kilometres of the Tezwa River;

- About 32 kilometres of the Kitlope River above the confluence of Kitlope Lake and Kitlope River; and,
- Jug and Ear lakes in the upper Gamsby drainage.

Motorized travel is appropriate in this zone. There is a higher level of acceptance for motorized travel and camp-style facilities in this zone, compared to Wilderness Recreation Zone 2. Designated campsites are permitted on the shores of Kalitan, Ear and Jug lakes and at the confluence of the Kapella and Kitlope rivers.

### ***Wilderness Recreation Zone 2***

This Wilderness Recreation zone includes the upper Kitlope and Tezwa rivers. There will be minimal infrastructure development and only non-motorized travel (with the exception of some helicopter access as detailed below). Low impact camping is permitted but without permanent structures. Park use permit holders may have occasional helicopter access considered as part of their park use permit application.

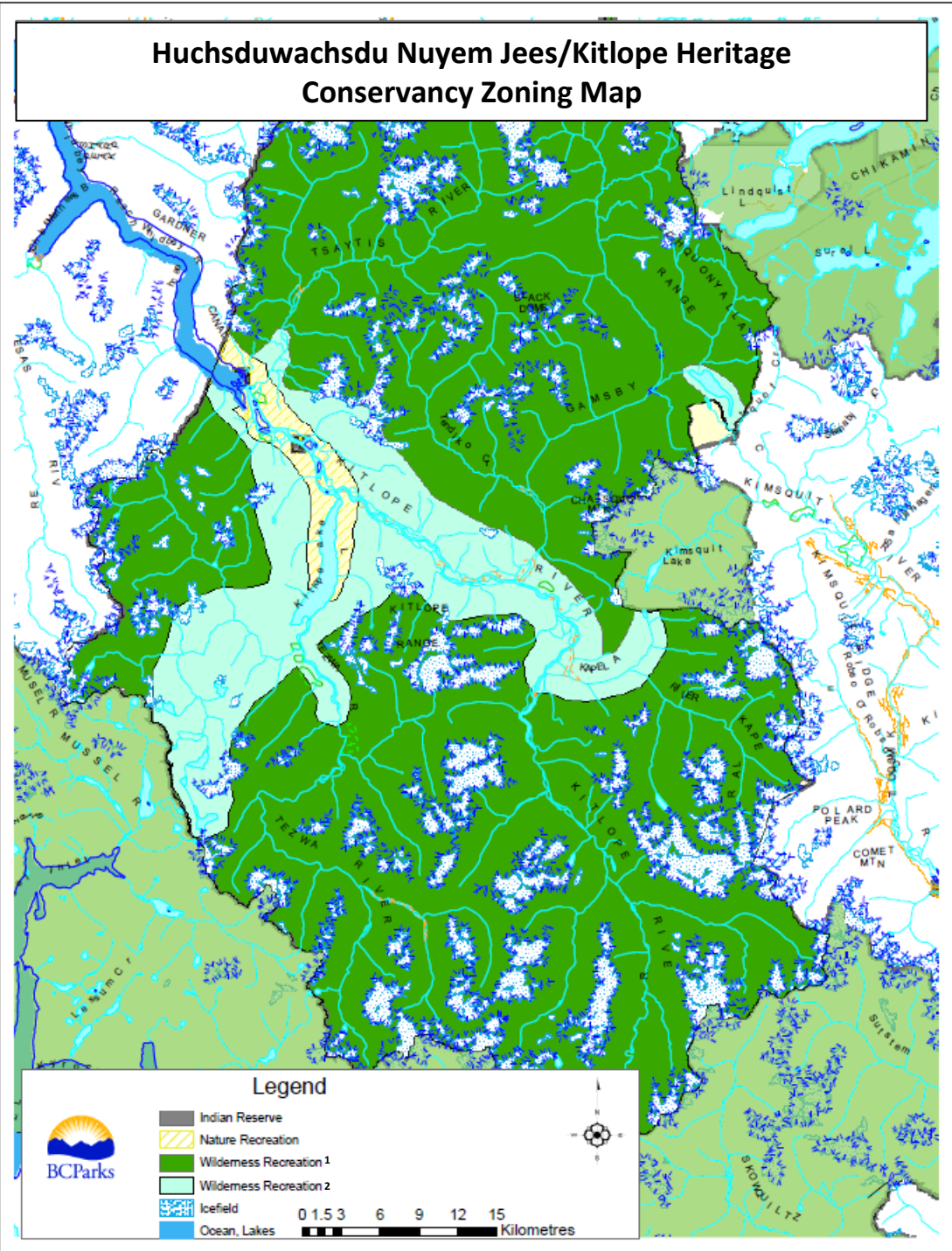


Figure 3: Conservancy Zoning Map



## 4.0 Plan Implementation

### 4.1 Policy Context

In addition to any protected area specific policies highlighted in the management plan, there are numerous other provincial/regional policies and guidelines which will be considered during management plan implementation.

### 4.2 Implementation

Implementation of the management plan is the responsibility of BC Parks in conjunction with the Haisla First Nation and other interested parties and agencies. Many strategies contemplated within the management plan have funding and resource requirements. At the same time, BC Parks and the Haisla First Nation have budgetary constraints and competing projects requiring funding. Consequently, implementation of strategies identified in the management plan will be dependent upon available funding, agency and First Nation priorities and on partnerships developed. In this section, major capital development projects presented in this management plan are listed and ranked in terms of relative implementation priority.

<b>Projects</b>	<b>Priority</b>
Interpretation and publicity	High
Fundraising activities	High
Construction of Cultural Centre (long term)	Med-High
Development of a trail system:	
1 to 2 small trails associated with campgrounds/cultural centre (short term)	Med-High
Upgrade of grease trails and development of alpine route (long term)	Med-Low
Development of research base facility	Low

### 4.3 Adaptive Management

In order to ensure the management remains relevant and effective, an adaptive management approach will be used. Adaptive management involves a five-step process of planning, action, monitoring, evaluation and revision of the management plan to reflect lessons learned, changing circumstances and/or objectives achieved. Adaptive management is flexible, collaborative, and responsive to public input.

The management plan will be reviewed as required by BC Parks and the Haisla First Nation. A review of the management plan should generally be triggered by the complexities of the management issues in the protected area and/or a significant change in circumstances (e.g., a

natural disaster, major environmental change or discovery of a major new archaeological site), and not a by a specific time period.

A management plan review looks for any necessary updates to the management plan that: are required to keep management direction current and relevant; correct the intent of a policy statement; address some error or omission; or address a new proposal. Any updates or changes to the content of the management plan will be addressed through a formal management plan amendment process. The amendment process will include an opportunity for public input.

# Appendix 1. The Kitlope Agreement 1996

FEBRUARY 16, 1996

## AGREEMENT

BETWEEN:

HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH THE SECOND in right of  
the Province of British Columbia

AND:

THE HAISLA NATION

WHEREAS Huchsduwachsdu Nuyem Jees (the "Kitlope Valley") is the ancestral home of the Haisla Nation and as such is of central importance to the cultural, spiritual and economic well-being of the Haisla Nation;

AND WHEREAS the Kitlope Valley is part of the Greater Kitlope Ecosystem which is the largest remaining intact coastal temperate rainforest on Earth.

AND WHEREAS both parties wish to manage the Kitlope Valley as a protected area because of its cultural and natural global significance.

AND WHEREAS on August 16, 1994 British Columbia and the Haisla Nation announced their agreement that the Kitlope Valley was to be protected and jointly managed by British Columbia and the Haisla Nation.

AND WHEREAS the Kitlope Valley is within the territory claimed by the Haisla Nation and identified by the Haisla Nation in their Statement of Intent which has been accepted by the British Columbia Treaty Commission for the negotiation of a treaty by the Haisla Nation, British Columbia and Canada.

AND WHEREAS Order-in-Council - establishes the Huchsduwachsdu Nuyem Jeas/Kitlope Heritage Conservancy (the "Conservancy") and authorizes the Minister to enter into an agreement with the Haisla Nation for the purpose of managing and administering the protected area.

AND WHEREAS both Parties welcome this opportunity to work together in a spirit of mutual respect and understanding.

THEREFORE, the Parties agree as follows:

1. The Conservancy shall be managed in accordance with the Park Act and regulations.

2. Neither the establishment of the Conservancy nor anything in Order-in-Council ( 194/96 ) nor anything in this Agreement shall prejudice, affect, or otherwise limit the aboriginal rights of the Haisla Nation.
  
3. Neither the establishment of the Conservancy nor anything in Order-in-Council ( 194/96 ) nor anything in this Agreement shall prejudice, affect or limit the Treaty Negotiations involving the Haisla Nation, the Government of British Columbia, and the Government of Canada.
  
4. This Agreement will remain in effect until a Treaty is signed and ratified by the Haisla Nation, British Columbia and Canada.
  
5. The Haisla Nation and British Columbia shall establish a Committee (the "Committee") to give effect to the commitment to jointly manage the Conservancy.
  
6. The Committee will be composed of three (3) representatives appointed by the Haisla Nation, three (3) representatives appointed by British Columbia, and a mutually agreed upon chair.

7. The Committee will work by consensus; and failing consensus, by majority vote.
  
8. Subject to the Park Act and regulations the Committee will be responsible for the following matters in respect of the Conservancy:
  - management plans;
  - annual operational plans;
  - recommendations respecting issuance and terms of all Park Use Permits;
  - recommendations respecting annual operations and capital development budgets;
  - research projects; and
  - publications and cultural and interpretation communications.
  
9. British Columbia and the Haisla Nation will work together to identify commercial, economic and employment opportunities for Haisla people in ways which are consistent with the purpose and objectives of the establishment and management of the Conservancy. Such opportunities may include wilderness tourism as well as Conservancy operation and maintenance activities.

10. The Committee will meet four times a year either in Kitamaat Village, in the Conservancy, or at some other location determined by the Committee. Additional meetings may be called at the discretion of the Committee.
  
11. Travel cost, per diem remuneration and other reasonable expenses for non-B.C. government members of the Committee to attend meetings of the Committee will be borne by British Columbia subject to an appropriation being available for this purpose in the fiscal year in which the expenses are claimed. B.C. Parks agrees to request the necessary appropriation. Other monetary issues which may arise in relation to the operation of the Committee will be resolved by the Committee.
  
12. This Agreement may be amended by written agreement of the Parties.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the parties have executed this Agreement on this 21 day of February, 1996.

Signed on behalf of the Haisla Nation by:

Robert LeBlond  
Chief Councillor

Ken Hall  
Councillor

Harvey Grant  
Councillor

Louise Barrette  
Councillor

David Williams  
Councillor

Gary Morrison  
Councillor

Signed on behalf of the Province of British Columbia by:

[Signature]  
Minister of Environment  
Lands and Parks



## Appendix 2. Contribution of the Conservancy to Ecosystem Representation in B.C.

Indicators			Ecosystem representation					
			Total in province (ha)	Amount in existing protected areas system (ha)	Amount in the conservancy (ha)	% protected in province (as of August 2010)	% represented provincially by the conservancy	Ratio: Area in the conservancy/ area in all BC protected areas (%)
Biogeoclimatic units								
Zone	Subzone/variant	Code						
Coastal Western Hemlock	Very wet maritime	CWHvm	286,687	107,256	66,300	37.41	23.13	61.81
Coastal Western Hemlock	Very wet maritime, montane	CWHvm2	1,377,083	110,185	100	8.00	0.01	0.09
Coastal Western Hemlock	Wet sub-maritime, montane	CWHws2	632,461	65,504	45,100	10.36	7.13	68.85
Mountain Hemlock	Moist maritime, windward	MHm1	1,602,039	290,314	75,050	18.12	4.68	25.85
Mountain Hemlock	Moist maritime, leeward	Mhmm2	1,223,264	129,317	30,450	10.57	2.49	23.55
Boreal Altai Fescue Alpine	Undiff	BAFAun	2,845,316	718,538	2.9	25.25	Negligible	Negligible
Coastal Mountain-Heather Alpine	Undiff	CMAun	182,837	20,721	10.65	11.33	Negligible	0.05
Coastal Mountain-Heather Alpine	Undiff + parkland	CMAunp	4,163,746	845,857	104,018	20.31	2.5	12.3
<b>Ecosections</b>								
Kimsquit Mountains		KIM	763089	171,596	87,918	22.5	11.5	51.2
Kitimat Ranges		KIR	2,255,611	471,946	232,904	20.9	10.3	49.4

## Appendix 3. Appropriate Uses Table

The following table lists existing and potential future uses or activities in Huchsduwachsd Nuyem Jeess/Kitlope Heritage Conservancy. However, it is not an exhaustive list of all uses that may be considered in this protected area. The table also indicates the uses which the management planning process has confirmed are not appropriate in Huchsduwachsd Nuyem Jeess/Kitlope Heritage Conservancy. The table must be reviewed in conjunction with the other sections of the management plan, including the role descriptions, vision, objectives and strategies. Uses are subject to existing policies and any relevant impact assessment processes.

Activity/Facility	Appropriate in Nature Recreation Zone	Appropriate in Wilderness Recreation Zone 1	Appropriate in Wilderness Recreation Zone 2
<b>Activity</b>			
Aircraft landing	Y	Y	Y
Flightseeing			
Note: The provincial government has no authority to regulate aircraft overflights.			
Boating (power)	Y	Y	N
Boating (non-power)	Y	Y	Y
Camping - no trace	Y	Y	Y
Fishing	Y	Y	Y
Horse use/pack animals (not exotic)	N	N	N
Hunting	Y	Y	Y
Off-road access (non-mechanical; mechanical; motorised)	N	N	N
Skiing (downhill & cross-country track based)	N	N	N
Heli-skiing	N	N	N
Skiing (backcountry)	Y	Y	Y
Trapping	Y	Y	Y
<b>Facility</b>			
Administrative buildings – ranger cabin	Y	N	N
Backcountry huts and shelters	Y	Y	N
Boat launches	N	N	N
Campsites with permanent infrastructure	Y	Y	N
Interpretation and information buildings	Y	N	N
Facility based accommodation	Y	N	N
Trails (hiking)	Y	Y	Y
Utility corridors (power/transmission lines, rights-of-way)	N	N	N
<b>Legend</b>			
N	Not an appropriate use in this zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It has been confirmed during the management planning process that this use is not appropriate in this zone.</li> <li>This may be an existing use which the management planning process has determined is no longer an appropriate use in this zone. The management plan details strategies for addressing this inappropriate use (e.g., phasing out, closing).</li> </ul>	
Y	May be an appropriate use in this zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This indicates that some degree or scale of this use may be appropriate.</li> <li>For existing uses, the management plan will provide guidance on the appropriate level or scale of this use (e.g., direction to reduce, restrict or increase the current level of this activity) and may address specific restrictions or enhancements (e.g., capacity, appropriate sites, designated trails, purposes, party size, time of year, etc.).</li> <li>For new or expanded uses, this does not constitute approval. This indicates that the use <u>may be considered</u> for further evaluation and possible approval (e.g., park use permit adjudication, completion of a review as part of the BC Parks' Impact Assessment Process). In some cases the appropriateness may not be confirmed until further assessments are completed.</li> </ul>	

## Appendix 4. Guided Hunting Issues Paper

### Kitlope Management Planning Process (Issue Paper #1) Kitlope Guided Hunting January 2007

The issue of hunting and harvesting animals has been a challenging issue for the Kitlope Management Committee, particularly those issues related to commercial Guide Outfitting<sup>13</sup>. In fact, the only non-consensus decision of the Kitlope Management Committee relates to a past decision to grant a park use permit for guide-outfitting. This permit was granted despite the Haisla's objections. The Minister of the day supported the decision to grant the permit but indicated that the issue of whether or not guide-outfitting should be a permissible activity could be dealt with in a future Protected Area Management Plan.

#### Haisla Perspective

The Haisla have not expressed a blanket opposition to hunting of animals, except for grizzly bears. In fact, harvesting of wild species has been an important food and nourishment source for the Haisla people. The harvesting of wild species is also an important activity that is practiced by many local residents.

The Haisla representatives of the Committee have raised a number of concerns associated with "trophy hunting" and guide outfitter operations. The largest concern is that guiding commodifies wildlife species and that this does not align with the *Haisla nuyem*<sup>14</sup> which indicates that you only take what you need and that you make full use of what is given. This particular concern has extra relevance in the Kitlope Heritage Conservancy which is an important and sacred area to the Haisla people. The second major concern expressed by the Haisla members of the committee and also heard during public open houses in preparing the draft management plan. Specifically, there is a concern that not all of the animal is being fully utilized and that there is particular concern that this may be the case in the case of commercial guiding.

Restating the above concerns and noting other concerns expressed by the Haisla representatives and by a number of Haisla members attending public open houses or raised in meetings with elders relate to:

- *Nuyem* related issue of "Take only what you need"
- *Nuyem* related issue of "Make full utilization of what is given"
- The special and unique cultural aspect of the Heritage Conservancy and the special importance accorded to the management of the heritage values within the conservancy
- Historical relations with previous Guide Outfitters
- Belief that not all animals harvested are being properly reported
- View that with increased industrialization, development and associated pollution in many portions of the Haisla traditional territory that the Kitlope and surrounding environment as an area to support First Nation traditional harvest may become more important for FN use.

Haisla members - of the Kitlope Management Committee - have suggested that they would be able to support First Nations hunting; and as a measure of good faith be able to support resident hunting,

---

<sup>13</sup> All non-residents are required to be accompanied by a licenced guide while hunting big game

<sup>14</sup> *Haisla nuyem* refers to the traditional laws, codes and customs that the Haisla have historically and in many respects still take guidance and direction from

particularly for those residents who reside in the northwest with the Haisla. However, the members feel there is strong opposition to Guide-Outfitting within the Kitlope amongst the Haisla population. The Haisla have also pointed out that the area is designated as a “Heritage Conservancy” and that it is difficult to see Guide Outfitting and in particular trophy hunting being compatible with the heritage component of the conservancy.

### **Provincial Perspective**

The provincial Wildlife Harvest Strategy contains three goals:

**Goal One:** Maintain the diversity and abundance of native species and their habitats throughout British Columbia.

**Goal Two:** Provide a variety of opportunities for the use and enjoyment of wildlife.

**Goal Three:** People and wildlife living in harmony.

Goal One is the highest priority of the Wildlife Program. It is a commitment to maintain and, where appropriate, restore B.C.’s native wildlife species and their habitats throughout the province.

Goal Two focuses on sustainable use and enjoyment of wildlife species and their habitats. This includes management of wildlife to provide opportunities for a range of activities, including education (research, nature study), viewing, hunting, and trapping.

Goal Three focuses on reaching a balance between meeting the needs of wildlife and the needs of people. Impacts of human activities on wildlife can severely affect wildlife species abundance, distribution, and diversity. Impacts of wildlife on people are less widespread and are mostly economic (crop, landscape, or structural damage), safety, or health related.

At Kitlope Committee meetings provincial representatives and the Haisla representatives both agree that the conservation of the wild species within the conservancy is of utmost priority. As part of this commitment wildlife harvest levels are set at a lower level than for adjacent outside of the protected area.

The provincial representatives have also expressed that First Nation followed by resident hunting are priority as it relates to sustainably harvesting wildlife in the conservancy. However, the provincial representatives have expressed a contrasting view with respect to Guide-Outfitting. The provincial representatives have expressed that this activity is an important part of the hunting landscape within BC, which includes the Kitlope.

In response to specific Haisla concerns the provincial representatives have indicated that Wildlife Act requirements to fully utilize the game meat, the setting of quotas and reporting requirements and export restrictions and permits are thought to address many of the concerns raised by the Haisla.

The provincial representatives have indicated that the presence of a properly licensed and regulated operator can often provide additional eyes and ears within the conservancy. In the vast majority of cases professional and responsible guides are an invaluable source of information that can be utilized to highlight issues with wildlife populations. Changes in effort, presence of animals or other issues are regularly shared between Guide Outfitters and Ministry personnel. At the same time, the Ministry has indicated that the combination of watchmen, park rangers and conservation officers are ready to take enforcement action where appropriate.

## **The Management Planning Process**

As part of the Management Planning Process open houses were held to identify management issues facing the Kitlope. Additionally, a newsletter was prepared and distributed within the open house communities, on the web, to park permit holders and to known stakeholders. Open houses were held in Kitamaat, Kitimat and Terrace in July 2005. The July 2005 open house reconfirmed that the committee had a difference of opinion on whether or not guide-outfitting should be an acceptable activity. While the open houses received marginal attendance there were a number of persons who felt that guide-outfitting was not compatible with the protected area.

To finalize the Management Planning Process a set of open houses and internal Haisla review by Na Na kila is proposed for the spring of 2007. Part of finalizing this issue includes a review of the draft management plan with particular review comments welcomed on the options associated with the guide-outfitting certificate. Three options are presented below in order to gauge public opinion and support for each of the listed options.

### **Option 1: Permit commercially guided hunting in the Kitlope Heritage Conservancy with the following condition**

- no grizzly bear hunting (the Kitlope is currently closed to Grizzly harvesting and the plan and the government-to-government land use agreement with the Haisla recommends the area be incorporated into the adjacent recommended grizzly bear management area)

### **Option 2: Permit commercially guided hunting in the Kitlope with the following conditions**

- no grizzly bear hunting (recommend inclusion within the adjacent recommended grizzly bear management area).
- Work with the guide outfitter and the Haisla to identify opportunities to ensure that all portions of the animal are fully utilized. This may include providing non-desired portions of the animals to the Haisla.
- Encourage closer collaboration and communication between the Haisla and the Guide-Outfitter.

### **Option 3: No commercially guided hunting to be permitted in the Kitlope**

- This would require further detail on the mechanics for acquiring the tenure, in the Kitlope Portion. This would involve a careful analysis of associated issues including ability to purchase, the viability of the remainder of the territory and ability to enact conditions to a Certificate or Park Permit in accordance with current contractual arrangements.