



# Kitasoo Spirit Bear Conservancy

## Management Plan

June 2015

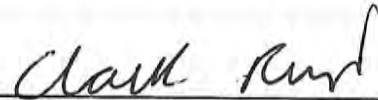


BC Parks

Cover Page Photo Credit: Doug Neasloss

# Kitasoo Spirit Bear Conservancy Management Plan

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## Acknowledgements

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## Plan Highlights

Kitasoo Spirit Bear Conservancy is within the asserted territories of the Kitasoo/Xai'xais First Nation, Heiltsuk Nation, and Gitga'at First Nation. The conservancy is home to the uncommon Spirit Bear, and has high cultural and coastal marine values.

The Kitasoo Spirit Bear Conservancy Management Plan identifies objectives and strategies that focus on:

- protecting historical and current First Nation habitation, harvesting and hunting areas and activities, and associated cultural, economic and biological values;
- providing for and promoting present and future First Nations access to those areas and activities;
- maintaining the ecological integrity of the conservancy;
- maintaining representative flora and fauna, and protecting at risk plant communities, ecosystems and wildlife species in both terrestrial and marine environments; and
- protecting the wilderness values associated with key recreational activities and sites that, in turn, support opportunities for wildlife viewing, wilderness-based boating, kayaking and salt water angling.

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# 1.0 Introduction

## 1.1 Management Plan Purpose

The management plan establishes:

- a vision and role for the conservancy and addresses current issues affecting the vision;
- management goals and objectives;
- strategies which ensure the food, social, ceremonial and cultural uses by the First Nations continue into the future;
- strategies that ensure the protection of the conservancy's biological diversity and ecosystems;
- appropriate types and levels of public and commercial recreational activities, and the location and kinds of facilities that will be developed to accommodate those uses;
- appropriate activities and acceptable uses of the conservancy's natural resources; and
- implementation and monitoring programs within an adaptive management framework.

## 1.2 Planning Area

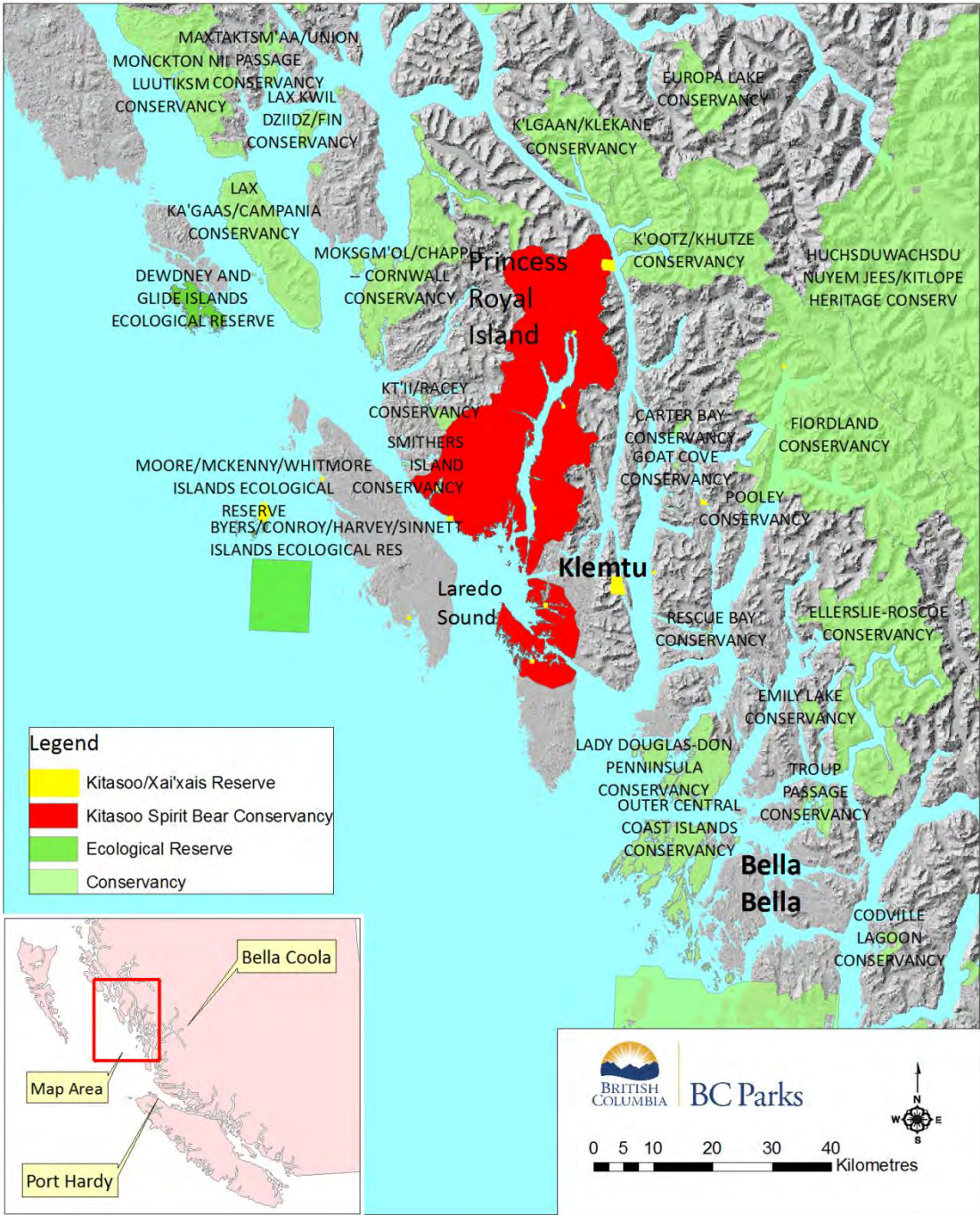
The 102,875-hectare Kitasoo Spirit Bear Conservancy is located on the central coast of British Columbia. It is approximately 160 kilometres north of Port Hardy on Vancouver Island, 120 kilometres northwest of Bella Coola, 110 kilometres south of Kitimat and 50 kilometres north of Bella Bella (Figure 1).

The conservancy is centred in what recently has become known as the Great Bear Rainforest. It is an exquisite example of pristine west coast rainforest and encompasses the entire watershed of Laredo Inlet, situated on Princess Royal Island (Figure 2).

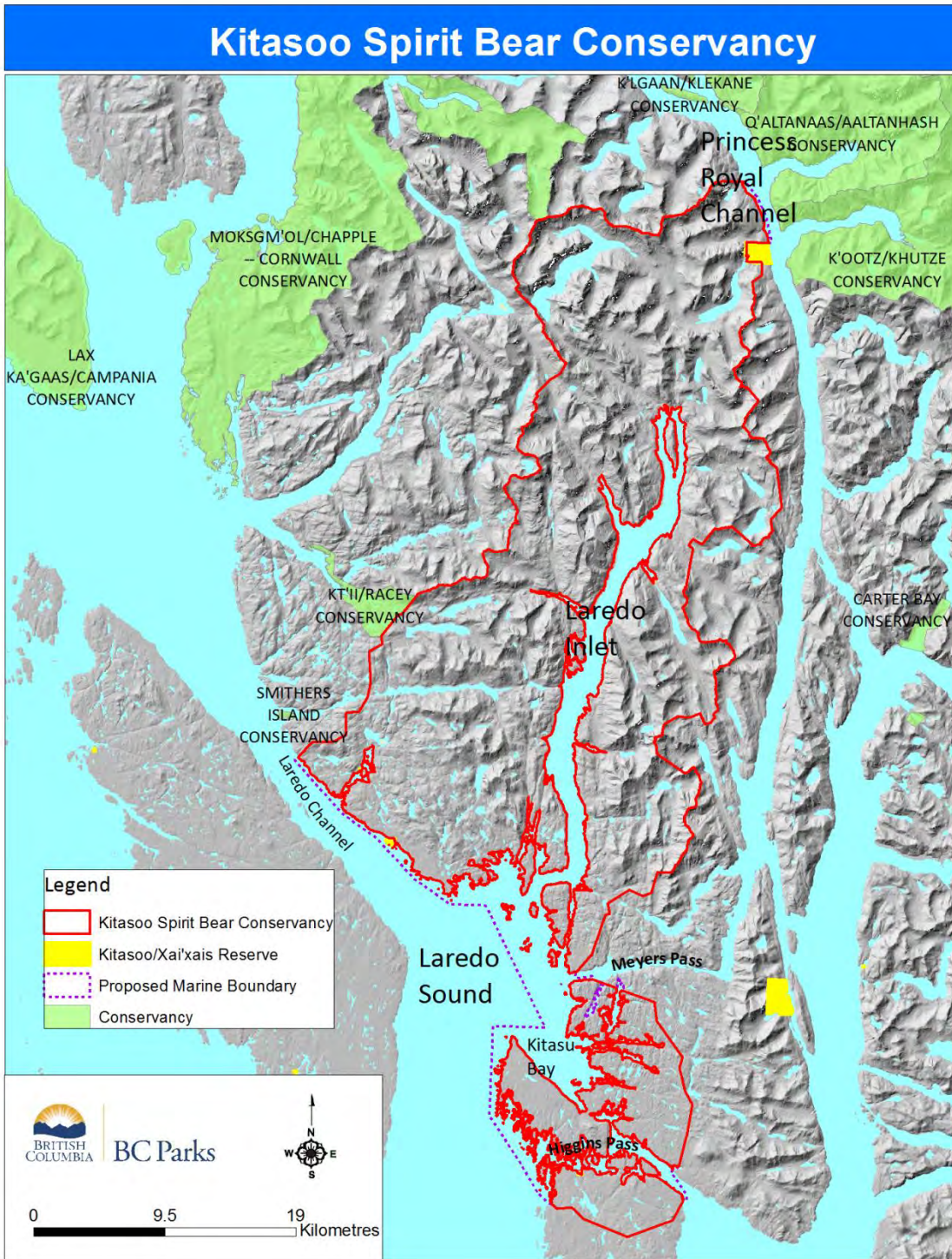
The conservancy extends from the partially protected waters of Laredo Sound and Laredo Channel, up the Laredo Inlet to Canoona Lake and the surrounding mountains to the shore of Princess Royal Channel on the east side of Princess Royal Island.



# Kitasoo Spirit Bear Conservancy: Context



**Figure 1: Context Map for Kitasoo Spirit Bear Conservancy**



**Figure 2: Map of Kitasoo Spirit Bear Conservancy**

### 1.3 First Nations Territory Assertions

The Kitasoo Spirit Bear Conservancy is located within the Kitasoo/Xai'xais First Nation's asserted territory. The Kitasoo/Xai'xais First Nation asserts aboriginal title and rights, including ownership, jurisdiction and management over the lands, waters and resources, including the marine spaces, throughout their territory. Their laws and traditions hold them responsible for ensuring that the natural and cultural heritage of the Kitasoo/Xai'xais territory are passed on to future generations.

The eastern boundary of the Kitasoo Spirit Bear Conservancy is also located within the Heiltsuk Nation's asserted territory. The Heiltsuk Nation asserts aboriginal title and rights, including ownership, jurisdiction and management over the lands, waters and resources, including the marine spaces throughout their territory. Their laws and traditions hold them responsible for ensuring that the natural and cultural heritage of the Heiltsuk territory are passed on to future generations.

The westernmost boundary of the conservancy is also located within the Gitga'at First Nation's asserted territory. The Gitga'at First Nation asserts aboriginal title and rights, including ownership, jurisdiction and management over the lands, waters and resources, including the marine spaces throughout their territory. Their laws and traditions hold them responsible for ensuring that the natural and cultural heritage of the Gitga'at territory are passed on to future generations.

This management plan and its supporting documentation and appendices do not in any way define or limit the title and rights of the Kitasoo/Xai'xais First Nation, the Heiltsuk Nation, the Gitga'at First Nation, or British Columbia, and will be without prejudice to the positions of the Kitasoo/Xai'xais First Nation, the Heiltsuk Nation, the Gitga'at First Nation, and British Columbia with respect to the title and rights of the Kitasoo/Xai'xais First Nation, the Heiltsuk Nation, the Gitga'at First Nation, and British Columbia in regard to administrative and regulatory proceedings, and current or future litigation or negotiations.

In good faith, the Heiltsuk Nation and Gitga'at First Nation acknowledge and support the Kitasoo/Xai'xais First Nation for their work and dedication towards the completion of this management plan for future generations.

### 1.4 Obligations, Agreements and Other Plans

#### Kitasoo/Xai'xais Rights, Title and Land Use Plans

Kitasoo Spirit Bear Conservancy, like all parks and protected areas in British Columbia, is subject to constitutionally protected (section 35 of the *Constitution Act*, 1982) aboriginal and treaty rights. Members of the Kitasoo/Xai'xais continue to access and practice their culture in these protected areas.

The Kitasoo/Xai'xais First Nation's support for this conservancy management plan was achieved through community consultation and is based on information in the Kitasoo/Xai'xais Land Use Plan, which draws upon traditional laws and customs, and provides strategic direction for land and resource use in their territory. The land use plan was released in the summer of 2000.

Direction in the Kitasoo/Xai'xais Land Use Plan that is relevant to the management of Kitasoo Spirit Bear Conservancy was incorporated in the management plan. The Kitasoo/Xai'xais will refer to this management plan and to their individual land use plans to guide ongoing management of the conservancy, and to ensure their food, social, ceremonial, cultural and economic interests in the conservancy are protected.

The Kitasoo/Xai'xais Land Use Plan provides direction that Kitasoo/Xai'xais community members and businesses must have a more active and equitable role in the regional economy. The Kitasoo/Xai'xais have also stated they will continue with their traditional activities (e.g., hunting, fishing, trapping, gathering and cultural practices) which are integral to their distinctive culture. These concepts are also identified in the Central Coast Land and Resource Management Plan.

### **Provincial Land Use Plan and Provincial Legislative Framework**

Princess Royal Island was identified as a part of the Central Coast Land and Resource Management Plan protected area discussions. Kitasoo Spirit Bear Conservancy was a final recommended outcome of the land use plan. The Kitasoo Spirit Bear Conservancy was established in 2006, under Schedule E of the *Protected Areas of British Columbia Act*, and is administered and managed through the *Park Act*.

A conservancy is set aside:

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

### **Permitting**

Section 8 of the *Park Act* directs that any interest in land in a conservancy must be authorized by a park use permit. Section 9 directs that most uses of a natural resource in a conservancy must be authorized by a park use permit. A park use permit can only be issued if the use or activity will not restrict, prevent or inhibit the development, improvement or use of the conservancy in accordance with the four

reasons for setting aside a conservancy as identified in paragraphs (a), (b), (c) and (d) of the preceding section.

The *Park Act* further states that a park use permit must not be issued to authorize commercial logging, mining, or hydroelectric power generation, other than local run-of-the-river projects. "Local run-of-the-river projects" in relation to a conservancy means run-of-the-river projects supplying power for use (a) in the conservancy, or (b) by communities, including First Nation communities, that do not otherwise have access to hydroelectric power.

### **Strategic Land Use Agreement**

The Kitsoo/Xai'xais First Nation and the Province of British Columbia have signed a strategic land use planning agreement<sup>1</sup> that provides further direction on specific conservancies and on the role of conservancies generally. Reviewing the detailed protected area boundaries and including recommendations on the naming of conservancies is one of the process steps agreed to in the strategic land use planning agreement. The boundary for the Kitsoo Spirit Bear Conservancy was finalized through this process.

### **Collaborative Management Agreement**

A Collaborative Protected Area Management Agreement has been reached with the Kitsoo/Xai'xais First Nation and the Ministry of Environment<sup>2</sup>. This agreement establishes a framework for the governments to collaborate on the planning and management of protected areas. The agreement identifies how the governments will work together to:

- facilitate the Kitsoo/Xai'xais First Nation with enhanced access to economic opportunities in protected areas in Kitsoo/Xai'xais Territory if these opportunities are compatible with the protection of natural, cultural and recreation values as identified in an approved management plan;
- identify economic opportunities of interest to the Kitsoo/Xai'xais within their territories;
- consider the interests of other British Columbians in the planning and management of the protected areas in the Kitsoo/Xai'xais Territory;
- prepare and implement conservancy management plans;
- review and make recommendations on park use permit applications and renewals; and

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<sup>1</sup> Strategic Land Use Planning Agreement between Kitsoo/Xai'xais Nation and the Province of British Columbia (June 27, 2006).

<sup>2</sup> Protected Area Collaborative Management Agreement between Kitsoo Nation and the Province of British Columbia (January 18, 2007).

- undertake conservancy management operations.

When needed, representatives of the Kitasoo/Xai'xais and BC Parks will make recommendations about cultural/ecological research proposals as per principles and decision-making mechanisms outlined in the Collaborative Protected Area Management Agreement.

### **Reconciliation Protocol**

In December 2009, the Province signed a Reconciliation Protocol Agreement with the Kitasoo/Xai'xais First Nation. The protocol consists of a series of community-based agreements intended to increase economic and legal certainty for resource and land use, establish a process for shared decision making and create opportunities for participation in the green economy.

Specific to protected areas, the reconciliation protocol establishes a new government-to-government engagement framework through which the Ministry of Environment and the Kitasoo/Xai'xais will collaborate to review and make park use permit recommendations in coastal conservancies and other protected areas. The reconciliation protocol also establishes policy commitments for the Kitasoo/Xai'xais to access and develop an equitable portion of the commercial economic opportunities within their territory.

### **Enhanced Access to Economic Opportunities Agreement**

The Kitasoo/Xai'xais First Nation and the Ministry of Environment will work collaboratively to implement policy commitments for economic opportunities for the Kitasoo/Xai'xais as referenced in the Reconciliation Protocol Agreement and the Collaborative Management Agreement, thus enabling the Kitasoo/Xai'xais First Nation to access and develop an equitable portion of the commercial economic opportunities within their territory. The Ministry of Environment will be working with the Kitasoo/Xai'xais on an agreement to implement this commitment through management planning, quota assignment, park use permitting processes and other mechanisms for providing or transferring rights and privileges as per the *Park Act*.

### **Black Bear Hunting Closures**

In a commitment specific to Kitasoo Spirit Bear Conservancy and consistent with previous government-to-government discussions regarding the land and resource management plan, a Black Bear (includes the Spirit Bear<sup>3</sup>) hunting closure was implemented in the spring of 2009. Hunting the Spirit Bear has been prohibited in British Columbia for close to 100 years.

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<sup>3</sup> The Spirit Bear is a Black Bear with white coloration due to a rare genetic trait. The Spirit Bear occurs most frequently on the central and north coast of British Columbia.

## 1.5 The Planning Process

As part of implementing signed collaborative management agreements, the Province and the Kitasoo/Xai'xais appointed representatives to work together on the management plan. These representatives gathered background information, prepared a draft management plan, met with the neighbouring Gitga'at and Heiltsuk First Nations to ensure that their interests are appropriately incorporated in the management plan, and finalized the management plan.

The Kitasoo/Xai'xais and provincial government representatives have prepared this management plan integrating information and direction from First Nation-provincial agreements, and identifying key values and issues.

In June 2014, the representatives developed a draft management plan for public and stakeholder review. The Kitimat-Stikine Regional District and stakeholders were contacted directly to solicit their input. Also, the public and stakeholder review draft was posted on the BC Parks website for broader comment and circulation.

Throughout a multi-year process from 2009 to 2014, BC Parks also solicited input from First Nations, Natural Resource Sector agencies, forest licensees, the Kitimat-Stikine Regional District, and stakeholders regarding the recommended marine boundaries for the conservancy (Section 1.6).

## 1.6 Community Involvement

Ongoing engagement and outreach with local communities are important to ensure that residents are aware of and supportive of the management direction for the conservancy and the recreational opportunities provided by it. This will include continued dialogue with residents of the local communities and any interest groups or local governments who have expressed interest in the use and development of the conservancy.

The Kitasoo Spirit Bear Conservancy lies within the Kitimat-Stikine Regional District. The Regional District's headquarters is in Terrace. Communities closest to the conservancy include the Kitasoo/Xai'xais community of Klemtu, the Gitga'at community of Hartley Bay, the Heiltsuk community of Bella Bella and the community of Shearwater. The closest municipal government is in Port Hardy, 120 kilometres to the south.

## 1.7 Recommendations for Marine Boundaries

A component of the management planning process is to evaluate and recommend a marine boundary for the conservancy that protects adjacent marine values and is

complementary to the terrestrial component. This management plan recommends adding a substantial marine foreshore to the conservancy (see maps in Appendix 2). The 19,302-hectare proposed boundary captures kelp beds, rare marine eco-units, the photic zone, and Laredo Inlet and Kitasu Bay including a Rock Fish Conservation Area administered by Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO). The marine foreshore would reduce risks to protected area values.

The recommended marine foreshore for the Kitasoo Spirit Bear Conservancy overlaps and is functionally congruent with the Protection Management Zone (PMZ) of the First Nations-BC Marine Planning Partnership for the North Pacific Coast (MaPP) initiative. The MaPP process focuses on the marine areas and uses in the foreshore (intertidal zone), coastal “inland waters”, and the lands covered by these waters. The Protection Management Zone is primarily intended for conservation and may be recommended as a marine protected area under applicable legislation.



## 2.0 Values and Roles of the Conservancy

### 2.1 Role and Significance in the Protected Areas System

Kitasoo Spirit Bear Conservancy forms part of a network of protected areas negotiated under the Central Coast Land and Resource Management Planning process. The conservancy is significant in the protected areas system because it:

- protects high cultural values of the Kitasoo/Xai'xais people, including several village sites and seasonal camps, and other cultural sites;
- maintains the traditional use by the Kitasoo/Xai'xais people of the resources within the conservancy, which are important for on-going food, social, ceremonial and commercial activities;
- protects the internationally significant Spirit Bear;
- provides substantial representation of the Hecate Lowlands Ecosection and the Kitimat Ranges Ecosection (Section 2.3);
- protects high biodiversity and significant representation of central coast ecosystems which protect the abundance and distribution of representative, rare, endangered and threatened coastal plant communities (identified in table 3), ecosystem site series (red and blue listed by the British Columbia Conservation Data Centre as identified in table 3), fish (e.g., herring, sockeye, coho, pink, chum and steelhead), wildlife species (e.g., ground nesting water fowl and the Spirit Bear) and marine species (e.g., Sea Otter and Humpback Whale migration corridor);
- provides destination and local recreation opportunities for bear viewing, general wildlife viewing, motorized boating and kayaking; and
- makes a significant contribution to the recreation values of the adjacent Laredo Sound, Milbanke Sound and Finlayson Channel areas, by providing undeveloped natural upland views for boaters, kayakers, commercial sport fishing parties and other conservancy visitors.

### 2.2 Cultural Heritage Values

The Kitasoo/Xai'xais, and other First Nation people, have inhabited and collected food and materials from Princess Royal Island since time immemorial. The conservancy is a critical source of resources that support the Kitasoo/Xai'xais culture and way of life, including berry picking, fishing, bark stripping, medicinal plant harvesting and other sustenance activities. The Kitasoo have indicated that archaeological values within Kitasoo Spirit Bear Conservancy are high and extensive, but like many other sites on the coast, this information is not well documented. Kitasoo/Xai'xais elders indicate the conservancy contains many unrecorded cultural and heritage sites.

During the implementation of the Indian reserve system in the 1880s and again during the McKenna McBride hearings in the early 1900s, representatives of the Kitasoo and Xai'xais peoples made presentations about their use of the lands and resources within their traditional territory. The statement of specific claim reiterated the earlier statements, and the oral history of Kitasoo/Xai'xais further substantiates the use and occupancy of the lands and resources in the conservancy to the present day.

The Kitasoo/Xai'xais First Nation is an amalgamation of two ancient family groups; the Xai'xais who lived in the eastern part of the territory, and the Kitasoo, who lived in the west. The conservancy straddles Laredo Inlet and Kitasu Bay, which is the heartland of the Kitasoo people. The Kitasoo people, represented by their hereditary chiefs who continue to hold title, had several villages and fishing stations in the area, evidenced by the eight Indian Reserves that are surrounded by, or are adjacent to, the conservancy. Indian Reserves are not part of the conservancy and are a product of the *Indian Act*, managed by the Kitasoo/Xai'xais people.

### 2.3 Biodiversity and Natural Environments

The conservancy's 102,875 hectares represent a diverse natural environment in the heart of the west coast rainforest. The southern half of the conservancy receives very heavy rainfall and consists of relatively flat topography creating boggy, wet soils, scrub forests and marshlands. The inner reaches of Laredo Inlet and the Canoona watershed are more rugged, with better drainage and subsequently higher forest cover. The conservancy captures several rare ecosystems, especially the rare Sitka spruce-oceanspray site.

The conservancy is home to the uncommon Spirit Bear and represents the only protected area specifically established for the protection of Spirit Bears on the coast of British Columbia.

In the Valued Marine Environments and/or Features database<sup>4</sup>, the shoreline of the Kitasoo Spirit Bear Conservancy is recorded as supporting Pacific Herring spawning, Dall's Porpoise, Pacific White-sided Dolphin, Humpback Whale, Killer Whale, Bald Eagles, waterfowl and marine mammal haulouts.

#### Terrestrial Ecosystems

The terrestrial portion of conservancy is in the Hecate Lowlands and Kitimat Ranges eco-sections. It protects 63% of the overall provincial protected areas system

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<sup>4</sup> The Valued Marine Environments and/or Features Database was developed to identify key values warranting marine protection status. An overview report on the database and objectives is available at <ftp://ftp.gis.lucogov.bc.ca/pub/coastal/rpts/overview.pdf>.

representation of the Hecate Lowlands Ecosection and 37% of the overall protected areas system representation of the Kitimat Ranges Ecosection. Thus, the conservancy makes a significant contribution to the representation of these ecosections in the provincial protected areas system.

The Hecate Lowlands Ecosection covers the windward, west aspect slopes of the conservancy to the head of Laredo Inlet. The Kitimat Ranges Ecosection covers the windward and leeward slopes and the rugged mountainous areas of the northern portion of the conservancy, which are massive, rounded, granitic mountains dissected by the Laredo fiord.

The conservancy also contributes to the protection of various variants<sup>5</sup> of the Coastal Western Hemlock and the Mountain Hemlock biogeoclimatic zones (see Table 1). The conservancy’s contribution to the provincial protection of specific biogeoclimatic variants ranges from relatively insignificant (0.7 percent) to moderately significant (18 percent).

**Table 1: Biogeoclimatic (BEC) Variant Representation**

BEC variant	BEC variant code	Total area of BEC variant in B.C. (hectares)	Total area of BEC variant in B.C.’s protected areas (hectares)	% of total area of BEC variant that is protected	Total area of BEC variant in Kitasoo Spirit Bear (hectares)	% of provincial protection of this BEC variant contributed by Kitasoo Spirit Bear
Coastal Western Hemlock Very Wet Hypermaritime, Central variant	CWH vh 2	1,644,597	608,756	37%	5,5753	9%
Coastal Western Hemlock Very Wet Maritime, Submontane variant	CWH vm 1	2,033,604	295,665	15%	20,723	7%
Coastal Western Hemlock Very Wet Maritime, Montane variant	CWH vm 2	1,377,082	274,655	20%	8,742	3%

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<sup>5</sup> British Columbia’s biogeoclimatic classification system divides ecosystems into biogeoclimatic (BEC) zones representing climatic variations associated with specific types of soils, plant and animal communities. Within zones, subzones and variants reflect finer-scale climatic variations.

BEC variant	BEC variant code	Total area of BEC variant in B.C. (hectares)	Total area of BEC variant in B.C.'s protected areas (hectares)	% of total area of BEC variant that is protected	Total area of BEC variant in Kitsoo Spirit Bear (hectares)	% of provincial protection of this BEC variant contributed by Kitsoo Spirit Bear
Mountain Hemlock Moist Maritime, Windward variant	MH mm 1	1,602,039	438,986	27%	5,459	1%
Mountain Hemlock Moist Maritime, Windward Parkland variant	MH mmp	22,4867	69,678	31%	547	0.7%
Mountain Hemlock Wet Hypermaritime, Windward variant	MH wh 1	119,816	41,605	35%	3,776	9%
Mountain Hemlock Wet Hypermaritime, Windward Parkland variant	MH whp	29,944	5,205	17%	973	18%

Vegetation in the terrestrial areas of the conservancy is primarily old-growth temperate forest with pockets of second growth scattered along the shoreline and pockets of open bogs on the flatter terrain. Bogs are strikingly abundant throughout the coastal lowlands. The extensive peatlands form a mosaic of blanket bog, bog woodland and scrub forest on the relatively flat terrain. Floodplains and estuaries are uncommon in the area, and are important wildlife habitats. The second growth areas are primarily the result of forest harvesting by hand loggers.

Temperate rainforests dominated by western hemlock, western redcedar, amabilis fir, and Sitka spruce cover the lower slopes, with mountain hemlock, yellow-cedar and amabilis fir at higher elevations; deciduous trees are uncommon. The conservancy includes a good representation of highly productive forests on rich metamorphic rock. Although at this time the pockets of second growth forest are small and less diverse than that which was historically present, it is anticipated that the vegetation within the area will progress into a more varied spectrum of species and plant associations.

Common understory shrub species include salal, Alaskan blueberry, false azalea and red huckleberry. Deer fern, bunchberry and false lily-of-the-valley are commonly found in the herb layer.

## Rare and at Risk Communities, Table 2

An inventory of plant communities at risk has not been conducted; however, Probability of Rare Ecosystem Mapping predicts seventeen plant communities at risk may be present in the conservancy.

**Table 2: B.C. Conservation Data Centre Blue and Red-Listed Plant Communities**

Zone	Subzone & Variant	Site Series	Rare Plant Association
CWH	vh2	07	CwSs - Devil's club
CWH	vh2	02	PIYc - Rhacomitrium
CWH	vh2	08	Ss - Lily-of-the-valley
CWH	vh2	09	Ss - Trisetum
CWH	vh2	10	Dr - Lily-of-the-valley
CWH	vm1	03	HwCw - Salal
CWH	vm1	04	CwHw - Sword fern
CWH	vm1	07	BaCw - Salmonberry
CWH	vm1	08	BaSs - Devil's club
CWH	vm1	09	Ss - Salmonberry
CWH	vm1	10	Act - Red-osier dogwood
CWH	vm1	12	CwYc - Goldthread
CWH	vm2	03	HwCw - Salal
CWH	vm2	04	CwHw - Sword fern
CWH	vm2	07	BaCw - Salmonberry
CWH	vm2	08	BaSs - Devil's club
MH	wh1	03	SsHm - Reedgrass

## Terrestrial Wildlife

Terrestrial wildlife found in the conservancy is that typical of coastal low elevation areas along this portion of the central coast and includes Black-tailed Deer, Black Bears, Grizzly Bears, Gray Wolves, furbearers, raptors, upland and marine birds, and amphibians and reptiles. Larger and/or more transitory terrestrial species are dependent on areas outside of the conservancy. Upland areas contribute shelter, food and other habitat needs to shoreline species and to some marine bird species.

Bald Eagles are common in the conservancy. Hosts of shorebirds, such as sandpipers and plovers, feed busily along the beaches and tidal flats. Feeding flocks of dabbling ducks, diving ducks, geese, gulls, auklets, murrets and murrelets are numerous in the waters of Laredo Inlet. Black Oystercatchers, Pelagic Cormorants and surf birds, such as Black Turnstones and Ruddy Turnstones, are also common. In addition, nesting

colonies of Black Oystercatcher, Glaucous-winged Gull, grebe and Pigeon Guillemot have been identified within the conservancy.

The conservancy is very significant in that it is home to the uncommon Spirit Bear. The Spirit Bear is a Black Bear with white coloration due to a genetic trait. The Spirit Bear occurs most frequently on the central and north coast of British Columbia. The conservancy is the largest protected area in the province contributing to the protection of the uncommon Spirit Bear.

### Terrestrial Species at Risk

Due to a lack of inventory information, the presence of specific at risk wildlife species in the conservancy has not been confirmed. The following table lists fish and wildlife species that are at risk in British Columbia and may be found within the conservancy:

**Table 3: Fish and Wildlife Species at Risk Potentially Present in Conservancy**

English Name	B.C. Status	Habitat Type
Canada Goose, <i>occidentalis</i> subspecies	Blue	lakes, marshes, terrestrial
Coastal Tailed Frog	Blue	marshes, rivers, terrestrial
Double-crested Cormorant	Blue	estuaries, lakes, marine, marshes, rivers, terrestrial
Great Blue Heron, <i>fannini</i> subspecies	Blue	estuaries, lakes, marshes, rivers, terrestrial
Green Heron	Blue	estuaries, lakes, marshes, rivers
Grizzly Bear	Blue	estuaries, lakes, marshes, rivers, terrestrial
Hairy Woodpecker, <i>picoideus</i> subspecies	Blue	marshes, terrestrial
Marbled Murrelet	Blue	estuaries, lakes, marine, terrestrial
Northern Goshawk, <i>laingi</i> subspecies	Red	terrestrial
Pacific Water Shrew	Red	estuaries, marshes, rivers, terrestrial
Peregrine Falcon, <i>pealei</i> subspecies	Blue	estuaries, lakes, marine, rivers, terrestrial
Pine Grosbeak, <i>carlottae</i> subspecies	Blue	terrestrial
Steller's Jay, <i>carlottae</i> subspecies	Blue	marshes, terrestrial

### Marine Ecosystems

The Kitasoo/Xai'xais First Nation, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the Province of British Columbia, and some industry and environmental non-governmental organizations have contributed to fisheries and marine habitat inventories over the past two decades, resulting in a database for many of the species.

The recommended marine foreshore of the conservancy is almost entirely in the *marine* North Coast Fiords Ecosection with a minor portion in the *marine* Queen Charlotte Sound Ecosection in the southern part of this proposed marine foreshore. With the recommended marine foreshore, the conservancy would make a major contribution (19,119 hectares) to the representation of the North Coast Fiords Ecosection, and a relatively minor contribution (183 hectares) to the representation of the Charlotte Sound Ecosection in the provincial protected areas system.

The North Coast Fiords Marine Ecosection consists of deep, narrow fiords cutting into the high relief of the Coast Ranges. The waters are protected from the open ocean, have restricted circulation, and are often strongly stratified by freshwater flowing from the mountains. The Queen Charlotte Sound Ecosection consists of a shallow marine area. Ocean waves and currents mixing marine water with freshwater from the mountains affect this area.

### **Marine and Shoreline Wildlife**

The proposed marine foreshore of the conservancy has a high diversity and abundance of marine habitats and species. According to the Valued Marine Environments and/or Features database, the foreshore and marine environments in the conservancy provide high value habitat for a number of important marine and intertidal wildlife species including mammals, shorebirds, waterfowl, shellfish and fish.

The entire shoreline from Meyers Pass through to Higgins Pass (Figure 2) represents one of the highest valued Herring spawning areas on the British Columbia coast. Both Laredo Inlet and the exposed coast of the conservancy have several small to medium sized salmon streams, typically with small estuaries. Open ocean and bottom dwelling marine life exists in abundance and includes rockfish, halibut, blackcod, dogfish and sea cucumber.

Intertidal species include northern abalone, several species of sea urchins, chitons and snails. The shoreline of the conservancy is recorded as supporting dabbling ducks, diving ducks, gulls, Marbled Murrelets, geese, Pelagic Cormorants, loons and grebes. Also found are rare algae such as platinum shiny white top shell and marine mammals including Grey Whale, Killer Whale, Humpback Whale, Dall's Porpoise, Pacific White-sided Dolphin, Harbour Porpoise and various others.

Many of the marine species and habitats are dependent on areas outside of the conservancy for part of their habitat or life cycle needs.

## Marine and Shoreline Species at Risk

Table 4 lists the marine fish and wildlife species that are at risk and are or may be found within the Kitsoo Spirit Bear Conservancy, including the proposed marine addition.

**Table 4: Marine Species at Risk Potentially Present in Conservancy**

English Name	BC Status	Habitat Type
Ancient Murrelet	Blue	marine
Cassin's Auklet	Blue	marine, terrestrial
Common Murre	Red	marine, terrestrial
Eulachon	Blue	estuaries, marine, rivers
Horned Puffin	Red	marine, terrestrial
Leatherback	Red	estuaries, marine, terrestrial
Northern Abalone	Red	marine
Pelagic Cormorant, <i>pelagicus</i> subspecies	Red	estuaries, marine, terrestrial
Steller Sea Lion	Blue	estuaries, marine
Tufted Puffin	Blue	marine, terrestrial
Platinum shiny white top shell	Blue	marine
Humpback Whale	Blue	marine
Killer Whale	Red	marine
Sea Otter	Red	marine
<i>Corallimorphus</i> species (Large Knobbed Tentacle Anemone)	Red	marine

## High Value Fish Habitat and Fisheries Sensitive Watersheds

The conservancy contains a variety of fish streams and fisheries-sensitive watersheds. Several are high value fish habitat, containing fish species such as sockeye, coho, pink, chum, cutthroat, Dolly Varden, rainbow and steelhead salmonid species which are very important to the Kitsoo/Xai'xais food fishery (see Table 5).

**Table 5: Fish Species at Risk Potentially Present in Conservancy**

English Name	BC Status	Habitat Type
Bull Trout	Blue	lakes, rivers
Cutthroat Trout	Blue	estuaries, lakes, marine, rivers
Dolly Varden	Blue	estuaries, marine, rivers
Eulachon	Blue	estuaries, marine, rivers



Pink Salmon	Yellow	estuaries, marine, rivers
Chum Salmon	Yellow	estuaries, marine, rivers
Coho Salmon	Yellow	estuaries, marine, rivers
Rainbow Trout	Yellow	estuaries, lakes, marine, rivers
Sockeye Salmon	Yellow	estuaries, lakes, marine, rivers
Chinook Salmon	Yellow	estuaries, marine, rivers
Pacific Lamprey	Yellow	estuaries, marine, rivers

## 2.4 Recreation

As a recreation destination, the conservancy is mainly focused on marine-accessed activities. No established infrastructure exists; however, there are identified boat havens and anchorages for marine cruising, and limited access to dispersed terrestrial recreation (e.g., beach activities and bear viewing). The conservancy, with its unique geography and ecology, lends itself to some unique recreational opportunities for viewing bears including the Spirit Bear, marine and aquatic species and diverse bird species; angling; and cultural tours. Increasing numbers of wildlife viewers from regional, national, and international points of origin are attracted to viewing the uniquely coloured Spirit Bear. The conservancy supports and contributes to the tourism base in the region by providing several businesses with guiding opportunities such as marine touring and wildlife and nature viewing. The marine-based recreation opportunities in this conservancy are enhanced because of its proximity to other protected areas in the area.

Part of the conservancy is located along the Inside Passage which has relatively undisturbed visual and scenic values. The conservancy is part of a system of marine protected areas, including Fiordland Conservancy, K’ootz/Khutze Conservancy, Q’altanaas/Aaltanhash Conservancy, Outer Central Coast Islands Conservancy and Lady Douglas - Don Peninsula Conservancy, which provides attractive natural protected anchorages for boaters. Together, these protected areas provide a system of marine protected areas along the north and central coast of British Columbia.

## 2.5 Development and Use of Natural Resources

For the purposes of this management plan, resource use is defined as those resources that are used in an extractive manner. Therefore, commercial bear viewing, which is a use of a natural resource, falls under “Recreation Management” in this management plan.

The only existing commercial/industrial extractive resource activities in the conservancy are trapping, guide outfitting, angle guiding, and harvesting of marine invertebrates, seaweed, and fish.

It is expected that economic activities in the conservancy will be related primarily to use of the area for nature and cultural-based tourism. Bear viewing will continue to be considered as appropriate within the conservancy. Some potential exists for harvesting of non-timber forest products, such as fern fiddleheads and salal, and shell fish, and seaweed in the conservancy. There is also potential for micro hydro development in the conservancy supplying power to First Nation communities in reserves adjacent to the conservancy.

## 3.0 Management Direction

### 3.1 Management Vision

The Kitasoo Spirit Bear Conservancy protects and maintains the natural environment and biological diversity within it including the Spirit Bear. The Kitasoo Spirit Bear Conservancy also protects and maintains the Kitasoo/Xai'xais First Nation's spiritual, food, social, ceremonial and cultural use. Recreational opportunities are available for marine, river and shoreline-based wilderness recreation.

BC Parks and First Nations are working jointly to protect the values enshrined within the conservancy and manage the conservancy into the future for the enjoyment of all visitors. Both traditional/local ecological knowledge and laws, and scientific knowledge inform management decisions.

### 3.2 Management Objectives and Strategies

#### 3.2.1 Preservation and Maintenance of Food, Social, Ceremonial and Cultural Uses

The Kitasoo/Xai'xais First Nation has an extensive history of use within the Kitasoo Spirit Bear Conservancy including fishing, hunting, trapping and gathering food and medicines, among other uses. The Nation's traditional and sustenance harvesting activities in the conservancy are not well documented. However, the right to continue practices identified as aboriginal rights is understood.

Members of the Klemtu community may not understand that traditional uses are not limited by establishment of the conservancy under provincial legislation. Increased availability of information about the conservancy in the community of Klemtu would increase knowledge about the ability to practice traditional harvesting and other cultural activities in the conservancy.

The Nation's cultural heritage sites and traditional use sites and features are also not well documented but are known to exist in the area. Where there is limited information it is difficult to ensure that the values are protected. Certain uses can cause unintended disturbance to cultural heritage and traditional use sites and features. With more detailed information on cultural heritage and traditional use sites and features, more specific protection measures can be put in place.

Over-harvesting of some species may cause declines in local natural resource stocks, many of which the Kitasoo/Xai'xais depend on for sustenance. The Kitasoo/Xai'xais Indian Reserves that are adjacent to or surrounded by the conservancy have also experienced increasing public traffic by recreationists.

Management Objective	Management Strategies	Performance Measure
<p><b>To provide for and promote Kitasoo/Xai'xais traditional and sustenance uses, resource harvesting activities and cultural practices in the conservancy.</b></p>	<p>Support efforts to provide information about the cultural values in the conservancy to the community of Klemtu, with a particular emphasis on the values in the cultural zones.</p> <p>Support efforts to identify and monitor traditional and sustenance harvesting activities.</p> <p>Support opportunities for the Kitasoo/Xai'xais to manage the cultural values in the conservancy, including protection and monitoring (e.g., through the Guardian Watchmen Program).</p> <p>Where necessary, support measures to ensure resources, such as sea cucumbers, are available for First Nations use. This may include monitoring, supporting implementation of programs such as use or catch restrictions, focusing uses away from sensitive sites, and/or limiting non-First Nations harvest of natural resources important to First Nations.</p>	<p>Increased community knowledge and use of the values in the cultural zones.</p> <p>Completed inventories of traditional use and subsistence harvesting areas.</p> <p>The Kitasoo/Xai'xais are actively involved in protection and monitoring of cultural values.</p> <p>No declines in the abundance and distribution of traditional resources and foods from current levels.</p>
<p><b>Identify, protect and maintain Kitasoo/Xai'xais cultural heritage and traditional use sites and features, and archaeological and historical sites.</b></p>	<p>Perform historical and ethnographic research, archaeological field assessments, and cultural heritage and traditional use field inventories and assessments in collaboration with the Kitasoo/Xai'xais.</p> <p>Identify and evaluate risks and stresses to Kitasoo/Xai'xais cultural sites and features.</p> <p>If necessary, implement protective measures, which may include: restricting access; focusing use</p>	<p>Completed historical and ethnographic research and cultural heritage field inventories and maps.</p> <p>Cultural heritage and traditional use areas and associated values are protected and/or avoided.</p> <p>Monitoring detects no damage or adverse impacts to culturally</p>

Management Objective	Management Strategies	Performance Measure
	<p>away from sites; developing best practices for recreational activity; public information/interpretation initiatives; and/or monitoring of sensitive sites (e.g., though the Kitasoo/Xai'xais Guardian Watchmen).</p> <p>Given the sensitivity of some of the cultural sites, three cultural zones have been established (see section 3.3). Site level management plans with specific protective measures for sensitive or special features sites will be developed for these cultural zones.</p> <p>Support the development of an educational package about the cultural heritage sites, features and gathering areas of traditional foods and resources in the conservancy, and distribute to the public and park use permit holders to inform them about protecting cultural resources.</p> <p>Support the management (e.g., through monitoring) of the seaweed harvest (except for <i>macrocystis</i>) in the Cultural Use Zones to avoid potential irreversible impact of this activity on sensitive cultural features.</p>	<p>sensitive sites due to visitor use.</p>
<p><b>Minimize inappropriate recreational traffic in or adjacent to Indian Reserves.</b></p>	<p>Discourage facility development or recreational activities, including boat anchorages, near the Indian Reserve boundaries.</p> <p>Install conservancy boundary signage adjacent to the Indian Reserves.</p> <p>Recommend that Transport Canada close areas directly</p>	<p>Conservancy boundary signage prepared and posted.</p> <p>No incidents of trespass on Indian Reserves.</p> <p>Anchorage closures in place.</p> <p>No incidents of trespass</p>

Management Objective	Management Strategies	Performance Measure
	<p>adjacent to Indian Reserves to anchoring.</p> <p>Inform the public about “no trespassing” on Indian Reserves and the sensitive cultural values associated with the reserves.</p>	on Indian Reserves.

### 3.2.2 Protection and Maintenance of Biodiversity and Natural Environments

The conservancy represents a diverse natural environment in the heart of the west coast rainforest. It captures several rare ecosystems and species, including the uncommon Spirit Bear. Human use and environmental changes may cause site-level disturbance or cause declines in the abundance and distribution of these rare and at risk ecosystems, ecological communities and species. For example, Spirit Bears may be adversely impacted by high levels of recreation activity. Populations of intertidal and subtidal marine species may be adversely impacted by harvesting. Oil spills, sewage and other disturbance from commercial marine transportation and recreational boating may impact intertidal and subtidal areas.

The integrity of ecological values within the conservancy and the avoidance of unintended impacts may be enhanced by improving public awareness and knowledge about the ecological values and the services they provide. In other cases, more direct management and intervention measures may be required.

Management Objective	Management Strategies	Performance Measure
<p><b>Identify and protect regionally rare, special and at risk ecosystems, ecological communities and species.</b></p>	<p>Inventory ecological features, focusing on rare and at risk ecosystems, communities and species.</p> <p>Prior to the development of infrastructure (e.g., tent pads, trails, etc.), complete site specific inventory of rare and at risk ecosystems, communities and species.</p> <p>Support collaborative scientific research and collection of traditional/local ecological knowledge related to ecology,</p>	<p>Completed inventories of rare and at risk ecosystems, ecological communities and species.</p> <p>Rare and at risk ecosystems are inventoried prior to any development.</p> <p>No impacts on rare ecosystems from upland development.</p> <p>Completed reports on wildlife ecology and</p>

Management Objective	Management Strategies	Performance Measure
	<p>behaviour, and distribution of Spirit Bear, Black Bear, Grizzly Bear, and other applicable wildlife species.</p> <p>Support the implementation of protective measures for rare and at risk ecosystems, ecological communities, and species. Such measures may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focusing uses away from sensitive sites;</li> <li>• Implementing public information initiatives;</li> <li>• Monitoring the most vulnerable ecosystems, ecological communities and species; and</li> <li>• Limiting public and commercial access. Signs may be erected and maps distributed showing the off-limits areas.</li> </ul> <p>Where necessary, make recommendations to limit commercial access for invertebrate harvesting at sensitive sites.</p>	<p>distribution.</p> <p>Protective measures implemented, as appropriate.</p>
	<p>Support the development of an invasive species program and explore partnerships with existing programs as well as conduct field assessments to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• monitor invasive species;</li> <li>• locate and eradicate invasive species, and</li> <li>• increase public awareness.</li> </ul>	<p>No increase in abundance of invasive species observed.</p>
<p><b>Increase public, industry and local community awareness of the ecological services and</b></p>	<p>Publicize the ecological services and benefits that the conservancy provides.</p>	<p>Information distributed to downstream users, communities and industry.</p>

Management Objective	Management Strategies	Performance Measure
<b>benefits that the conservancy provides.</b>		
<b>Sustain the abundance and distribution of Black/Spirit Bears in the conservancy.</b>	Evaluate and monitor Spirit Bear populations and implement mitigation measures and/or recruitment strategies where required.	Protection, mitigation measures and/or recruitment measures implemented, where required.
<b>Maintain the aquatic and marine environment in its natural condition free from sewage contaminants or pollution.</b>	<p>Encourage appropriate agencies to develop a water quality monitoring program for freshwater and marine areas in conjunction with other regional initiatives.</p> <p>Monitor and evaluate marine use in relation to sewage and pollution. Where appropriate, make recommendations to the federal government regarding management issues under their jurisdiction (e.g., closing anchorages to discharge of sewage and grey water from holding tanks).</p> <p>As appropriate, use communication material to inform and discourage the discharge of bilges and sewage in intertidal and sub-tidal areas.</p> <p>Support the development of an oil spill preparedness plan for Klemtu.</p>	<p>Water quality is adequate to maintain marine life in a condition safe for human consumption.</p> <p>No decline in species abundance or distribution observed due to pollution.</p>
<b>Sustain the abundance and distribution of marine, intertidal, and sub-tidal species as well as anadromous and freshwater fish species.</b>	<p>Recommend the amendment of the legal boundary of the conservancy to add the marine foreshore described in Section 1.6.</p> <p>Establish appropriate zoning for the recommended marine foreshore.</p> <p>Monitor and evaluate intertidal and/or sub-tidal marine species (e.g., clams, crabs, sea urchins) and</p>	<p>Inclusion of recommended marine foreshore in conservancy boundary.</p> <p>Populations of marine species are maintained at a level that supports a sustainable harvest.</p> <p>Abundance of harvested fish species</p>



Management Objective	Management Strategies	Performance Measure
	<p>their habitats for impacts.</p> <p>Do not allow manipulative scientific research except for the continuation of the existing experimental fishery for marine benthic invertebrates, or ecosystem restoration measures as described below.</p> <p>Where necessary, develop mitigation measures and/or recruitment strategies. Where population declines are observed, encourage Fisheries and Oceans Canada to limit the harvest of affected species.</p> <p>Work with other provincial government agencies to ensure angling regulations are appropriate and enforced.</p> <p>Support the implementation of ecosystems restoration measures such as fish stocking and habitat enhancement for native species only.</p>	<p>is maintained or increased.</p>

### 3.2.3 Protection and Maintenance of Recreation Values

Kitasoo Spirit Bear Conservancy holds great potential for well-managed, dispersed or extensive recreation such as boating, kayaking, and wildlife viewing. Cultural interpretation and guiding services available in the conservancy would also enhance the cultural tourism experience available to visitors. Incomplete knowledge of current recreation use levels and patterns, however, makes it difficult to enhance future recreational opportunities and experiences. Limited public knowledge of the recreation values and opportunities in the conservancy also reduces the level of recreation use.

In general, recreational activities will be supported if they do not have an impact on cultural and ecological features and values of the conservancy. Providing some recreation infrastructure would increase recreational use by visitors with small craft. However, if managed inappropriately, recreational infrastructure and activities may

have a negative impact on the conservancy’s other values or on other recreational activities. For example, large conspicuous facilities likely don’t fit the wilderness character of the conservancy and may alter the wilderness recreation and cultural experiences.

Air access (e.g., helicopters and float planes) may alter the recreational and cultural experiences in the conservancy. Aircraft noise may negatively affect spiritual practices related to some sacred sites. Also, particularly in remote watersheds, aircraft noise may displace bears from foraging sites and may thus negatively affect bear viewing.

Bear viewing, in particular, has been identified as a recreational activity in the conservancy. However, many river and creek systems where bears are apparent are confined and sensitive sites that can accommodate only small, well-managed groups.

As cultural and recreational use patterns evolve over time or new opportunities are developed (e.g., cultural tourism, wildlife viewing), new areas of conflict may arise between these activities and hunting. Such potential conflicts between new activities and hunting may result in a risk to public safety. Hunting may also conflict with and impact the quality of traditional or sustenance use activities. There is limited site specific information about the current levels of hunting in the area.

<b>Management Objective</b>	<b>Management Strategies</b>	<b>Performance Measure</b>
<b>Identify recreational values.</b>	Develop a baseline inventory of current recreational use and identify potential future opportunities.	Completed inventory of recreational opportunities and use.
<b>Increase public knowledge of the conservancy’s recreational values.</b>	Identify recreation opportunities and facilities in promotional and marketing materials, including the BC Parks’ website.	Information on the conservancy’s recreational values distributed.
<b>Provide visitors with a diversity of safe and high quality cultural and wilderness recreation opportunities.</b>	Support appropriate use for tourism purposes such as guided recreational/cultural activities (e.g., kayaking, boating, camping, hiking, wildlife viewing and nature appreciation).  Sustainably manage tourism opportunities in accordance with the Kitasoo/Xai’xais and BC Parks Collaborative Management	The number of guided visitors to the conservancy and their impact is sustainable.  Kitasoo/Xai’xais have equitable access to economic opportunities.  Cultural interpretation and guiding services

Management Objective	Management Strategies	Performance Measure
	<p>Agreement and any other potential agreements (for example, Enhanced Access to Economic Opportunities Agreement).</p> <p>If necessary, establish limits for group size and total visitor numbers to manage crowding and to provide for a high quality cultural and wilderness recreation experience.</p> <p>Encourage tourism operators to utilize the services in Klemtu.</p> <p>Support the development of an outreach education program for recreational users and the delivery of that program by the Guardian Watchmen.</p>	<p>are available in the conservancy.</p> <p>An increase in the number of tourists visiting the interpretive centre in Klemtu.</p> <p>Outreach education developed for delivery by the Guardian Watchmen.</p>
<p><b>Improve infrastructure for visitors arriving in small craft.</b></p>	<p>Consider designation of hiking trails, camping sites and kayak landing sites if they don't significantly impact cultural and natural heritage values and features, particularly rare and at risk ecosystems, ecological communities, and species.</p> <p>Develop and distribute maps showing the location of all recreational infrastructures.</p>	<p>Hiking trails, camping sites and kayak landing sites developed and mapped, and posted with appropriate signage.</p>
<p><b>Manage recreational activities so that they support other conservancy values.</b></p>	<p>Develop criteria to ensure recreational use is compatible with cultural and natural heritage features and values.</p> <p>Develop and distribute a 'best management practices' document to tourism operations in the conservancy for all commercial recreation. Monitor adherence to the best management practices by tourism operators.</p>	<p>Commercial activities are monitored.</p> <p>All park use permit holders have prepared a site specific management plan.</p> <p>Allocation of park use permits for appropriate activities.</p> <p>Increased number of</p>

Management Objective	Management Strategies	Performance Measure
	<p>Support the Guardian Watchmen to monitor impacts of recreation on conservancy values.</p> <p>Complete annual monitoring reports on recreation sites and complete a backcountry recreational impact monitoring (BRIM) assessment every three years.</p> <p>Require commercial recreation park use permit holders to prepare a site specific management plan for their operations that minimizes impacts on conservancy's values. An annual review will be undertaken to determine if any changes are required to the permit operations.</p> <p>Encourage tourism operators to build mutually beneficial relationships with the Kitsoo/Xai'xais.</p> <p>In the Cultural Zones, only allow camping at the existing designated sites because cultural sites are sensitive to disturbance.</p> <p>Only support construction of wharves and docks if these structures are associated with upland facilities and are appropriate for the wilderness character of the conservancy.</p> <p>Allow the construction of facilities such as administrative buildings and lodges in the Nature Recreation Zones and Cultural Zones, if these buildings fit the wilderness character of the conservancy.</p>	<p>partnership agreements between tourism operators and the Kitsoo/Xai'xais.</p> <p>Hazard assessments completed.</p> <p>Monitoring reports completed annually. BRIM reports completed every three years.</p>

Management Objective	Management Strategies	Performance Measure
	<p>In the Wilderness Recreation Zones, allow only for small-scale basic facilities, such as backcountry huts and shelters at access points for user convenience and safety, and protection of the environment.</p>	
<p><b>Manage bear viewing activities at a level that ensures protection for bear populations and their habitat.</b></p>	<p>Support guided bear viewing as a recreation activity in the Laredo Nature Recreation Zone and the Wilderness Recreation Zones.</p> <p>Designate appropriate bear viewing sites within the conservancy informed by scientific research, and traditional/local ecological knowledge, including the identification of the appropriate viewing method (e.g., such as ground-based or water-based viewing with appropriate spatial and temporal restrictions).</p> <p>Establish daily and seasonal visitor number limits for bear, wildlife, and nature viewing, to sustain a healthy abundance and distribution of bears and other wildlife in the conservancy.</p> <p>Conduct bear hazard assessments for current and future facilities and trails.</p> <p>Monitor human - bear interactions and implement measures to reduce the potential for negative bear - human interactions where necessary.</p>	<p>Completed bear hazard assessments.</p> <p>Bear populations are stable or increasing.</p> <p>No changes detected to bear use of habitats in viewing areas.</p> <p>Bear viewing strategy implemented.</p>
<p><b>Support aircraft access that minimizes the potential for negative impacts to recreational and cultural</b></p>	<p>If accessing Canoon Lake by plane, recommend that commercial operators follow the aircraft access route outlined on Figure 7. Public aircraft operators will be encouraged to also follow this</p>	<p>Commercial operators are following the aircraft access route.</p> <p>Information assembled to support</p>

Management Objective	Management Strategies	Performance Measure
experiences.	<p>route if accessing the lake.</p> <p>If aircraft noise disrupts cultural practices or aircraft landings damage sensitive cultural sites, pursue regulatory changes to close Cultural Zones either spatially or temporally to aircraft landings.</p>	<p>recommendations to regulatory changes if required.</p>
<p><b>Minimize any possible conflicts between hunting and other activities occurring in the conservancy.</b></p>	<p>Gather baseline information on existing hunting pressures.</p> <p>Continue to support the existing Black Bear and Spirit Bear hunting closure for the entire conservancy.</p> <p>Continue to support the existing Grizzly Bear no-open hunting season for the entire conservancy<sup>6</sup>.</p> <p>At such time as use patterns change or new opportunities are occurring, it may be necessary to evaluate the appropriateness of all hunting in some areas of the conservancy, and consider temporal or spatial hunting closures in specific locations where a conflict exists with an existing or proposed use, where public safety concerns exist, or where there is a conservation concern.</p>	<p>Baseline hunting information collected.</p> <p>The hunting impact on cultural and other recreational activities is monitored and measures taken to minimize any negative impacts.</p>
<p><b>Increase the use of local services in Klemtu by conservancy users.</b></p>	<p>Encourage conservancy visitors to utilize local services in Klemtu.</p>	<p>Increased visitors to local service providers in Klemtu.</p>

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<sup>6</sup> The management of Black Bear, Spirit Bear and Grizzly Bear hunting will be consistent with outcomes of negotiations between the KITASOO/XAI'XAIS First Nation and the Province of British Columbia. If required, changes will be reflected in amendments to this management plan. The KITASOO/XAI'XAIS First Nation does not support any bear hunting within the Nation's territory.

### 3.2.4 Development and Use of Natural Resources

Commercial services (e.g., fuel station, marina, accommodation) in Klemtu are underutilized.

There is potential for new resource use such as non-timber forest products (NTFPs) harvesting within the conservancy.

Management Objective	Management Strategies	Performance Measure
<p><b>Identify and support compatible resource use, such as non-timber forest products, consistent with the conservancy designation.</b></p>	<p>Permit and support compatible resource development opportunities.</p> <p>Non-timber forest products harvesting, trapping, aquaculture, marine invertebrate harvesting, seaweed harvesting<sup>7</sup>, micro hydro, and marine transportation are considered to be appropriate resource uses within the conservancy in accordance with the plan’s zoning objectives and other defined criteria such as protection of cultural heritage and biodiversity values.</p> <p>All resource use identified above will be defined and monitored by the collaborative management agreement representatives (e.g., a resource use plan may be developed and implemented).</p>	<p>Allocation of permits for compatible resource development opportunities, without impacting cultural heritage and biodiversity values.</p> <p>Kitasoo/Xai’xais have equitable access to resource development opportunities.</p>

### 3.3 Zoning Plan

This management plan uses zoning to assist in the planning and management of the conservancy. In general terms, zoning divides an area into logical units to apply consistent management objectives for protection of cultural heritage, conservation, and recreational values. The zones reflect the physical environment, intended land use, existing patterns of use, the degree of human use desired, and the level of management and development required (e.g., which activities/uses are permitted

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<sup>7</sup> See management strategy in section 3.2.1 for harvesting of seaweed other than *macrocystis* in the Cultural Zones.

and a particular set of management objectives that may apply). Zoning can be used to physically separate incompatible activities or uses within the protected area and provide visitors and managers with a quick visual representation of how a particular protected area is managed.

Three management zones have been identified for the Kitasoo Spirit Bear Conservancy (Figure 3 and Table 10):

- Nature Recreation Zone (1 zone);
- Wilderness Recreation Zone (3 zones); and
- Cultural Zone (3 zones).

Please see Appendix 1 - Appropriate Uses Table for activities that are appropriate in each zone. Consult the maps for individual zones and the proposed foreshore zone boundaries (See Figures 4, 6, 9, 10, 11, and 12).

**Table 6: Kitasoo Spirit Bear Conservancy Management Zones**

Zone	Zone #	Area (hectares)	Percent
<i>Nature Recreation Zone</i>			
Laredo	NR1	17,418	
<b>Sub-total</b>		<b>17,418</b>	<b>16.9%</b>
<i>Wilderness Recreation Zones</i>			
Canoona Uplands	WR1	7,216	
Laredo Uplands	WR2	55,118	
Nomel	WR3	2,851	
<b>Sub-total</b>		<b>65,185</b>	<b>63.4%</b>
<i>Cultural Zones</i>			
Canoona	CM1	4,939	
Kitasu/Higgins	CM2	13,279	
Laredo Channel	CM3	1,986	
<b>Sub-total</b>		<b>20,204</b>	<b>19.7%</b>
<b>Grand total</b>		<b>102,807</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



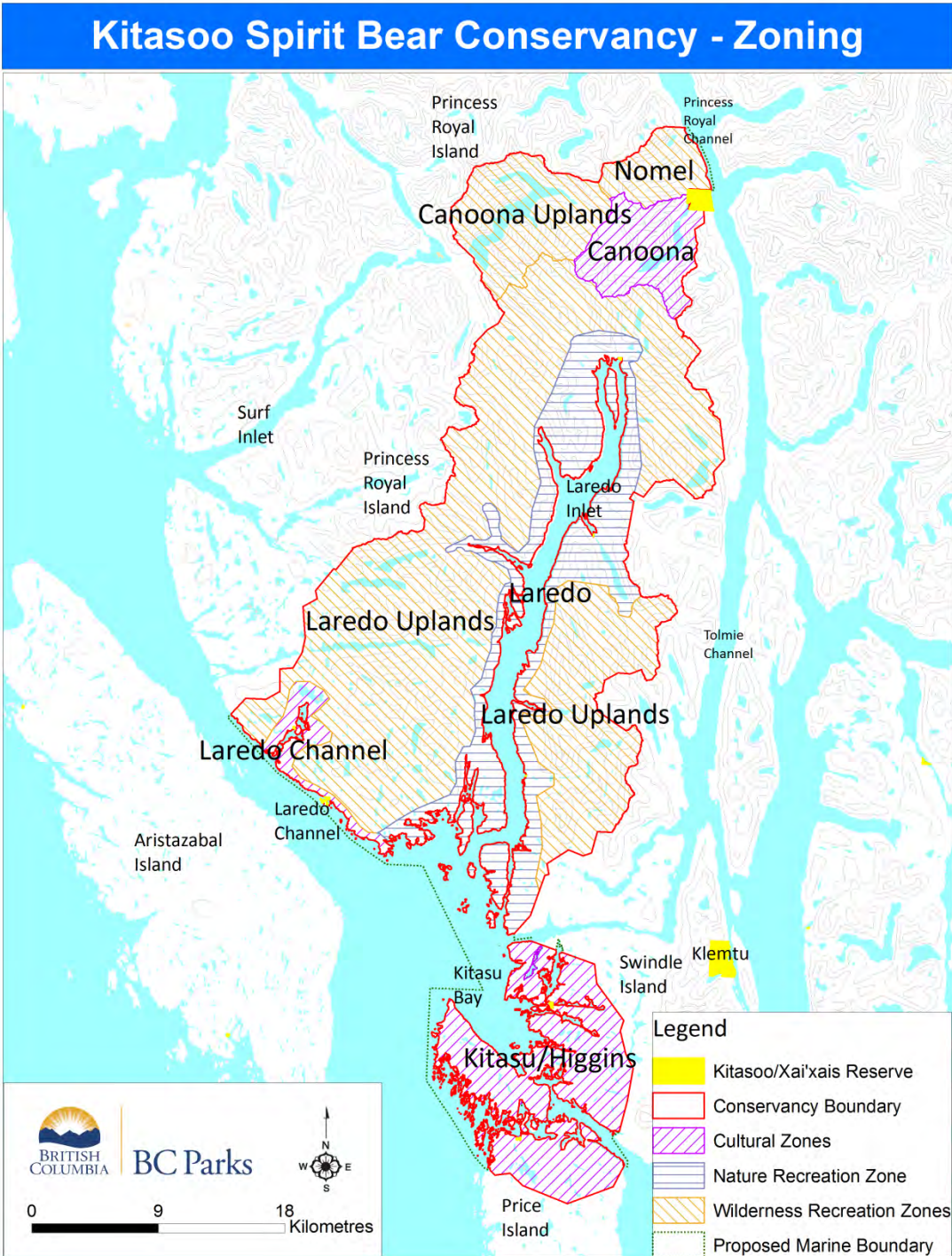


Figure 3: Conservancy Zoning Overview Map

### 3.3.1 Laredo Nature Recreation Zone (NR1)

This zone consists of the shore and adjacent uplands of Laredo Inlet, and includes approximately 17,418 hectares (16.9%) of the conservancy (Figure 4).

#### ***Objective and Management Intent***

The objectives of this zone are to:

- to protect scenic values and to provide for backcountry recreation opportunities in a largely undisturbed natural environment;
- to maintain biological diversity of ecosystems, fish, wildlife and natural environments; and
- to protect areas of special cultural and spiritual significance to the Kitasoo/Xai'xais people.

Low-impact recreation is appropriate in this zone (e.g., hiking, camping, kayaking, historic and nature appreciation). The area can be accessed by boat (motorized and non-motorized) and preferred anchorages are designated as per Figure 5. Trails and designated sites may be developed for overnight camping and/or day use (e.g., picnicking). Commercial bear viewing is appropriate within this zone subject to the strategies provided in Section 3.2.3. Guided land and water-based bear viewing areas will be designated, and viewing will be restricted to specific sites and access routes in some areas.

Cultural values will be identified and, where appropriate, protected as per the strategies in Section 3.2.1.

The types of activities considered appropriate in this zone are further described in Appendix 1 - Appropriate Uses Table.

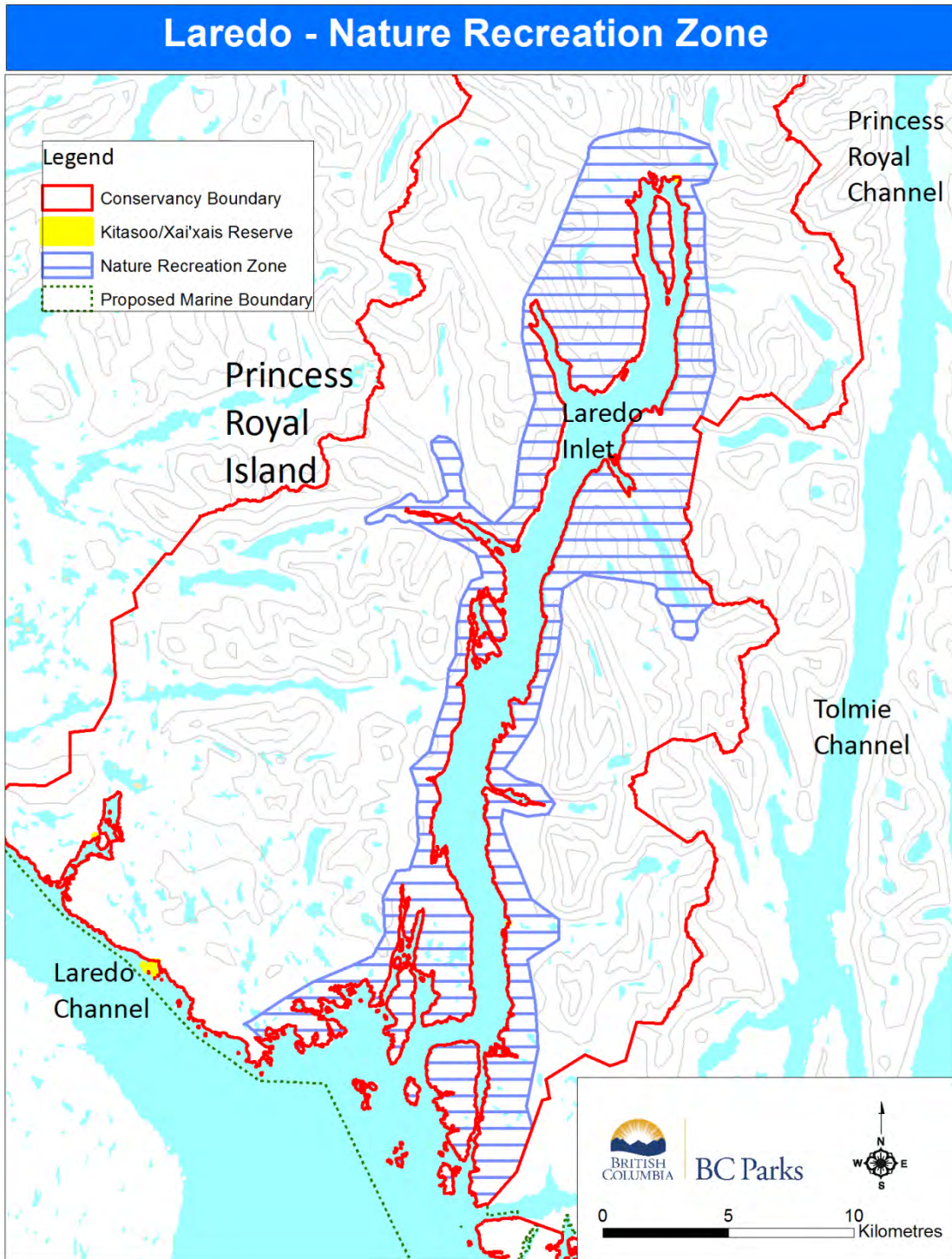
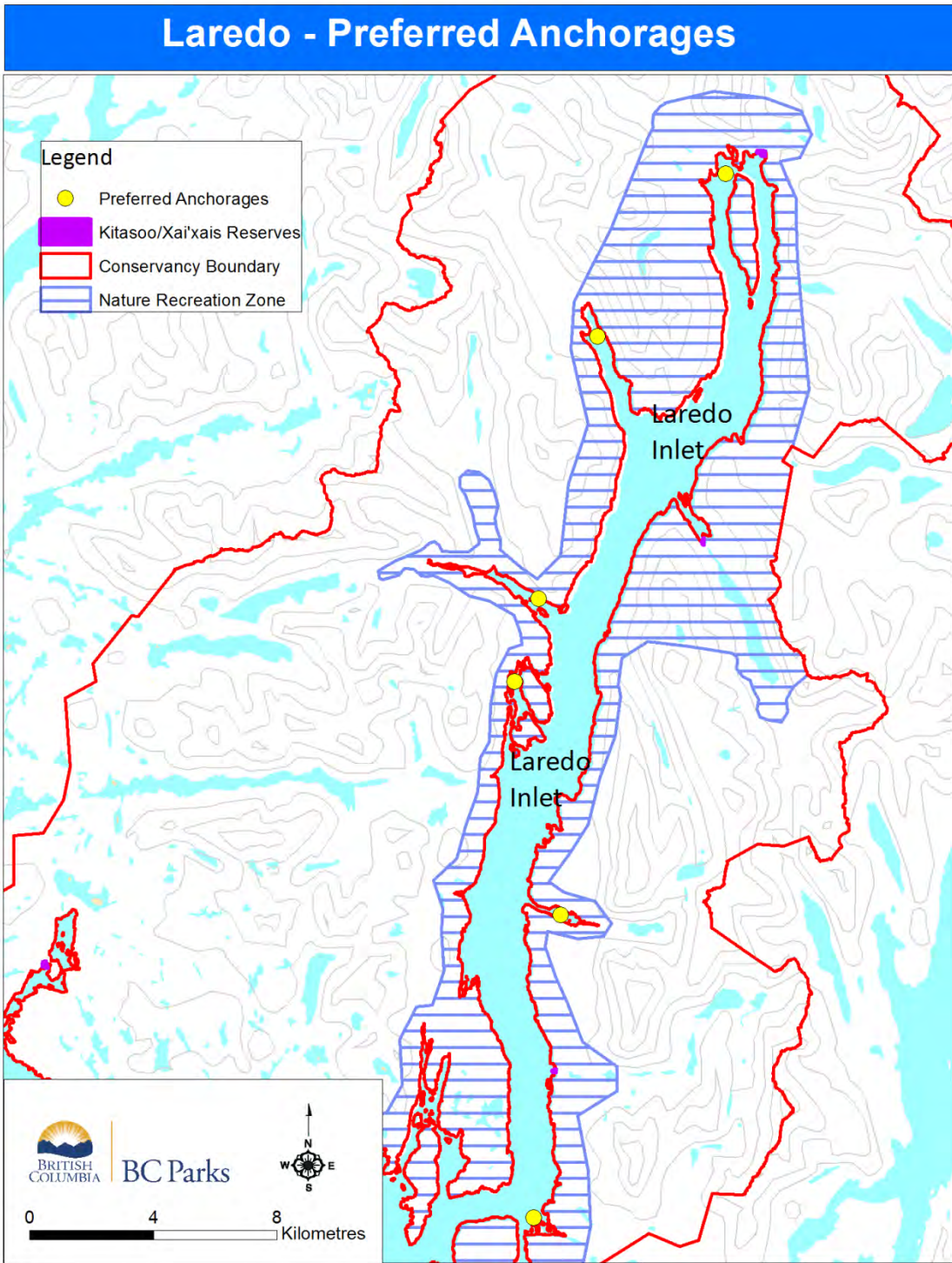


Figure 4: Laredo Nature Recreation Zone Map



**Figure 5: Preferred Anchorages Map**

### **3.3.2 Wilderness Recreation Zones (Laredo Uplands; Canoona Uplands; Nomel)**

These zones include approximately 65,185 hectares (63.4%) of the conservancy. This includes the Laredo Uplands Wilderness Recreation Zone (55,118 hectares), Canoona Uplands Wilderness Recreation Zone (7,216 hectares), and Nomel Wilderness Recreation Zone (2,851 hectares).

#### ***Objectives and Management Intent***

The objectives of these zones are:

- to protect a remote, undisturbed natural landscape and to provide very-low impact backcountry recreation opportunities dependent on a pristine environment;
- to maintain biological diversity of ecosystems, fish, wildlife and natural environments within the zone; and
- to protect areas of special cultural and spiritual significance to the Kitasoo/Xai'xais people.

Very low-impact recreation is appropriate in these zones (e.g., hiking, camping, kayaking, historic and nature appreciation) to provide a solitary experience in a wilderness atmosphere. The area can be accessed by boat (motorized and non-motorized). Trails and designated sites may be developed for primitive overnight camping and/or day use (i.e., picnicking). Commercial bear viewing is appropriate within these zones subject to the strategies provided in Section 3.2.3. Guided land and water-based bear viewing areas may be designated, and viewing may be restricted to specific sites and access routes in some areas.

Management of these zones is oriented to protecting a pristine environment. Management actions are minimal and not evident except to ensure low visitor use levels. Visitor access may be restricted to protect the natural environment and visitor experience.

Cultural values will be identified and, where appropriate, protected as per the strategies in Section 3.2.1.

The types of activities considered appropriate in these zones are further described in Appendix 1 - Appropriate Uses Table.

#### ***Laredo Uplands Wilderness Recreation Zone (WR1)***

The Laredo Uplands Wilderness Recreation Zone consists of the uplands of Laredo Inlet as well as a small portion along Laredo Channel as shown on Figure 6. Very low-impact wilderness recreation is appropriate in this zone. Access is by air or by boat.

Boat access to this zone is from Laredo Inlet through the Laredo Nature Recreation Zone or Surf Inlet.

### ***Canoono Uplands Wilderness Recreation Zone (WR2)***

The Canoono Uplands Wilderness Recreation Zone consists of the upper portion of the Canoono River and Anchor Lake watershed as shown on Figure 7.

Very low-impact wilderness recreation is appropriate in this zone. The use of a guide will be encouraged for recreation activities in this zone. To minimize the noise impact on people and wildlife in the adjacent Canoono Cultural Zone, it is recommended that commercial and recreational aircraft follow the designated flight path from Princess Royal Channel as shown on Figure 8.

### ***Nomel Wilderness Recreation Zone (WR3)***

The Nomel Wilderness Recreation Zone consists of that portion of the shores and uplands of Princess Royal Channel within the conservancy as shown on Figure 9. Access to this area is difficult because there are no adjacent anchorages in Princess Royal Channel. Access is primarily by motorboat (boats generally anchor in Aaltanhash Inlet or Khutze Inlet) or by kayak. Very low-impact recreation is appropriate in this zone.

# Laredo Uplands - Wilderness Recreation Zone

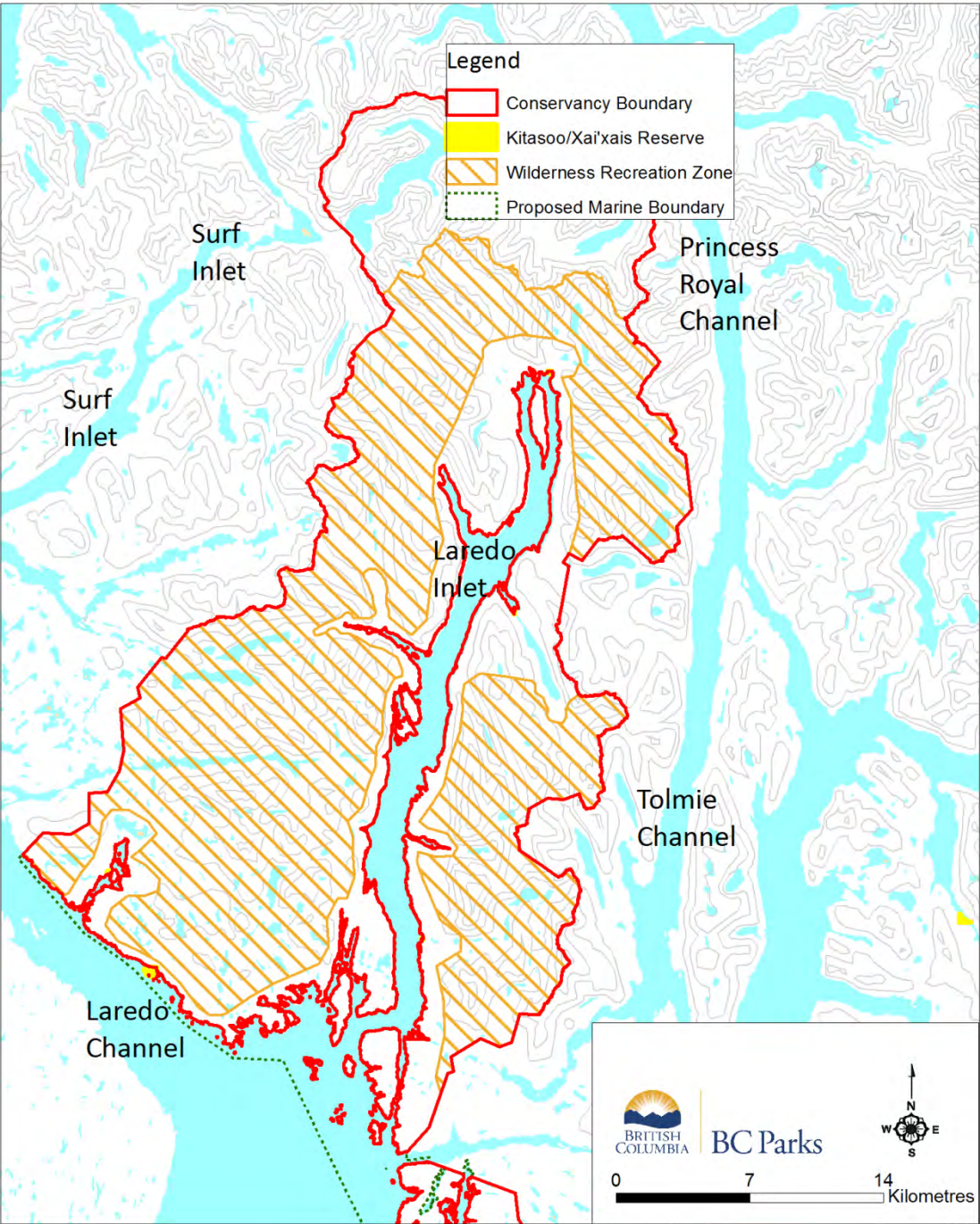


Figure 6: Laredo Uplands Wilderness Recreation Zone Map

# Canoona Uplands - Wilderness Recreation Zone

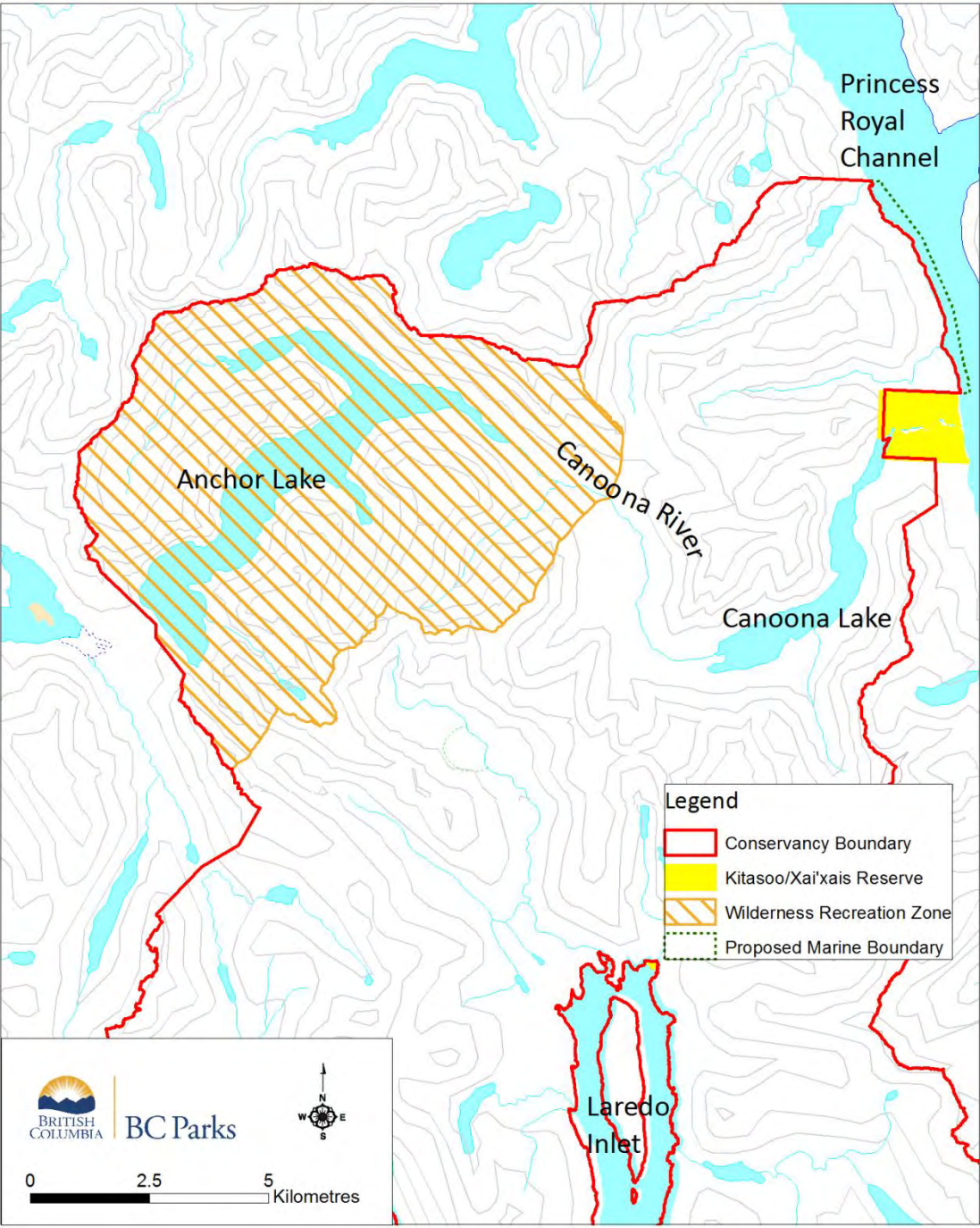
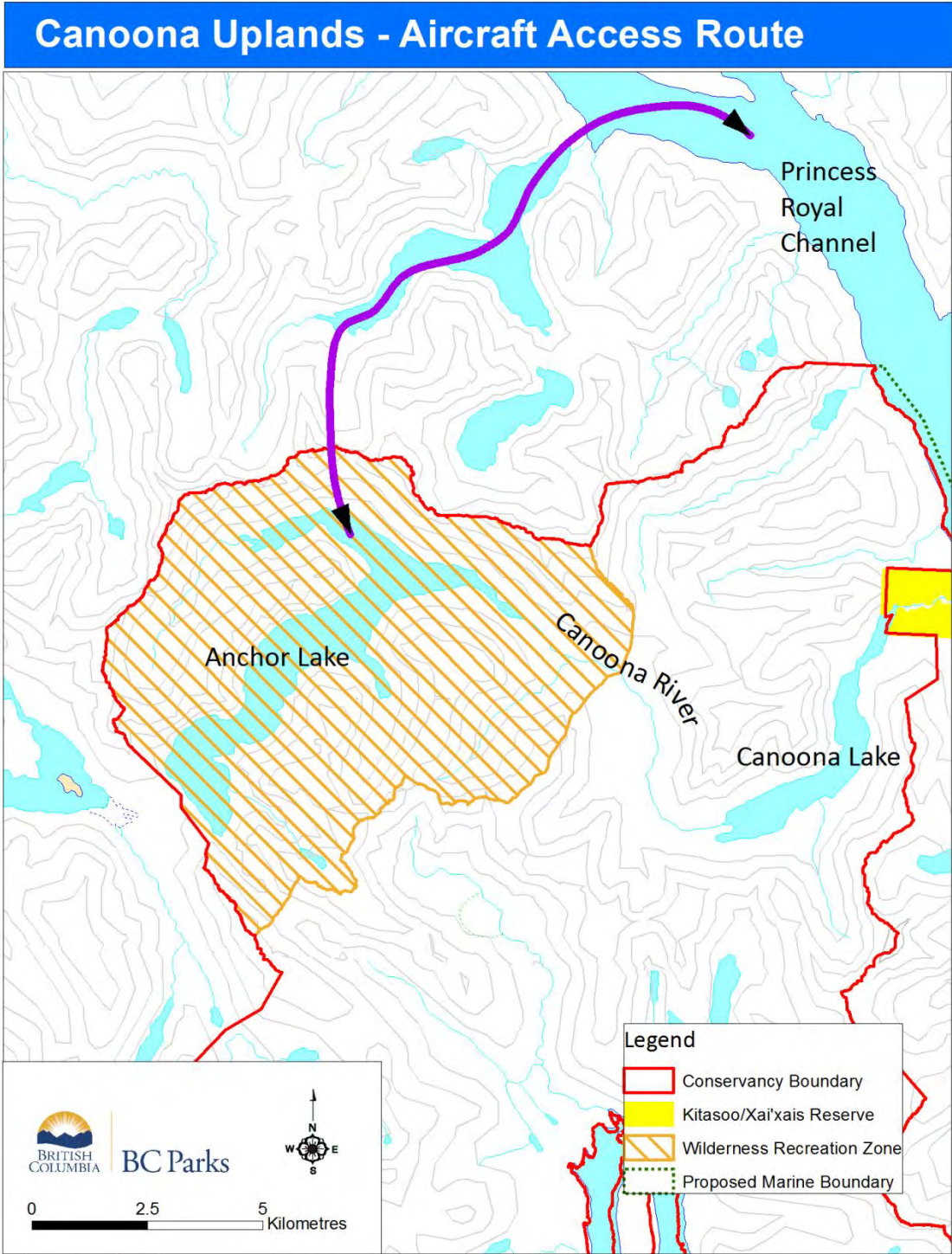


Figure 7: Canoona Uplands Wilderness Recreation Zone Map





**Figure 8: Aircraft Access Route to Canoona Uplands Wilderness Recreation Zone Map**

# Nomel - Wilderness Recreation Zone

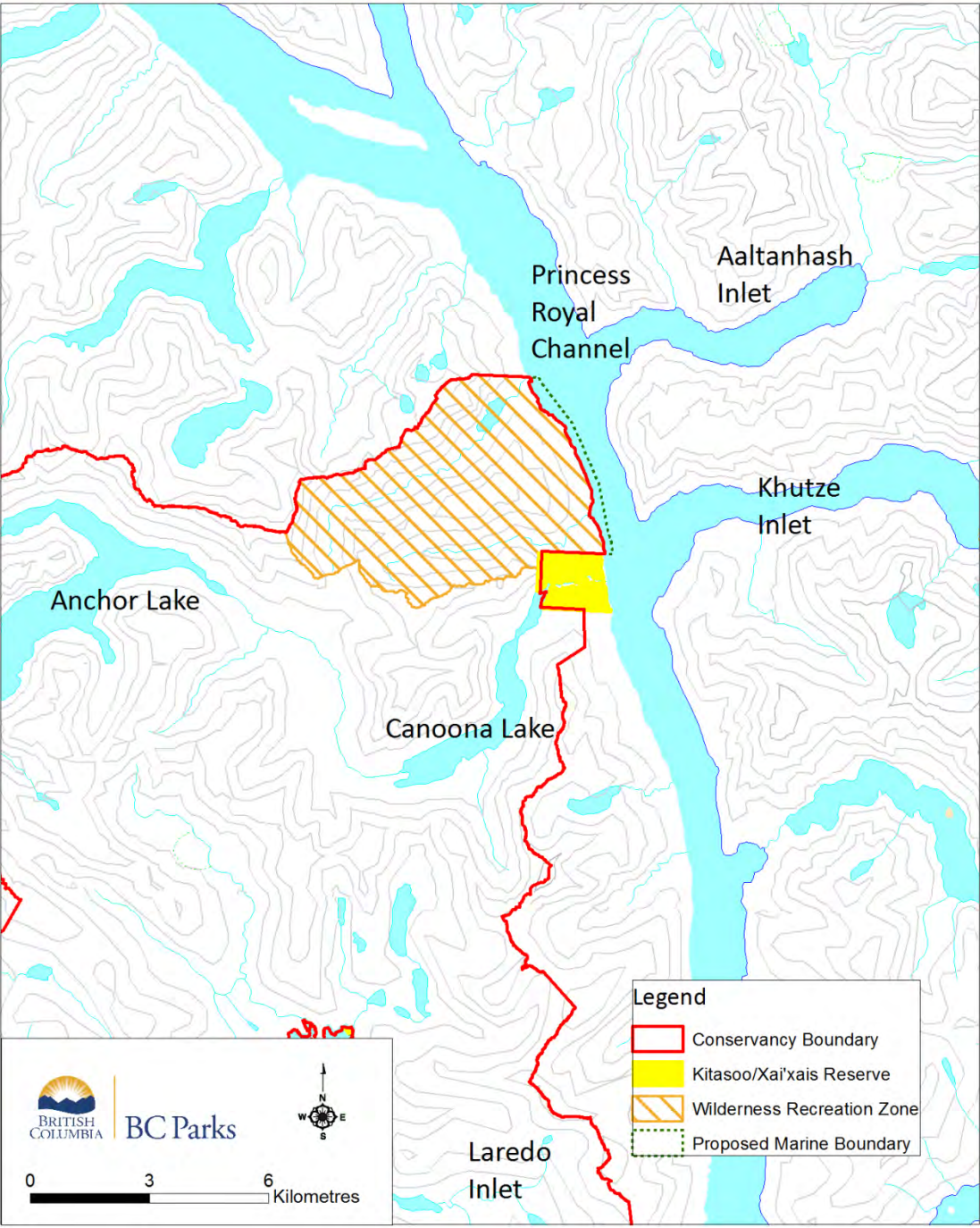


Figure 9: Nomel Wilderness Recreation Zone Map

### 3.3.3 Cultural Zones

These zones include approximately 20,204 hectares (19.7%) of the conservancy. This includes the Canoona Cultural Zone (4,939 hectares), Kitasu/Higgins Cultural Zone (13,279 hectares) and Lareda Channel Cultural Zone (1,986 hectares).

#### ***Objectives and Management Intent***

The objectives of these zones are:

- to protect sensitive areas of cultural and spiritual significance to the Kitsoo/Xai'xais people;
- to provide areas where the Kitsoo/Xai'xais people can conduct their cultural and spiritual activities in an undisturbed environment; and
- to maintain biological diversity of ecosystems, fish, wildlife and natural environments within the zone.

Management of these zones is oriented to protecting cultural resources and features, with on-going monitoring. Visitor access and low-impact use is appropriate in these zones but will be managed to protect the cultural resources and features where needed. Site level management plans with specific protective measures will be developed for key areas of interest in these cultural zones.

The zones can currently be accessed by boat (motorized and non-motorized), but access may be restricted as per the management strategies in Section 3.2.1 and any applicable site level management plan. Specific sites may be designated for cultural use only due to the sensitivity of these cultural sites.

Cultural/archaeological research is appropriate and may be encouraged in this zone.

Maintenance of biological diversity is important in the cultural zones because biological diversity is integral to the culture of First Nations in British Columbia<sup>8</sup>.

The types of activities considered appropriate in this zone are further described in Appendix 1 - Appropriate Uses Table.

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<sup>8</sup> See Turner, N. J. 2007. Importance of Biodiversity for First Peoples of British Columbia. Paper prepared for the Biodiversity BC Technical Subcommittee

### ***Canoona Cultural Zone (CM1)***

This zone consists of the lower portion of the Canoona River watershed as shown on Figure 10. The zone is culturally significant because the Kitasoo/Xai'xais have advised that their people have traditionally inhabited and have been collecting food and materials from the conservancy, including the Canoona River watershed for millennia. The watershed remains very important to the Kitasoo/Xai'xais for fishing in fresh waters and marine waters.

Access is generally by boat but the zone cannot be accessed by boat without permission to cross through the Kitasoo/Xai'xais Indian Reserve that sits between Princess Royal Channel and Canoona Lake. If aircraft noise disrupts cultural practices or aircraft landings damage sensitive cultural sites, pursue regulatory changes to close this zone either spatially or temporally to aircraft landings.

### ***Kitasu/Higgins Cultural Zone (CM2)***

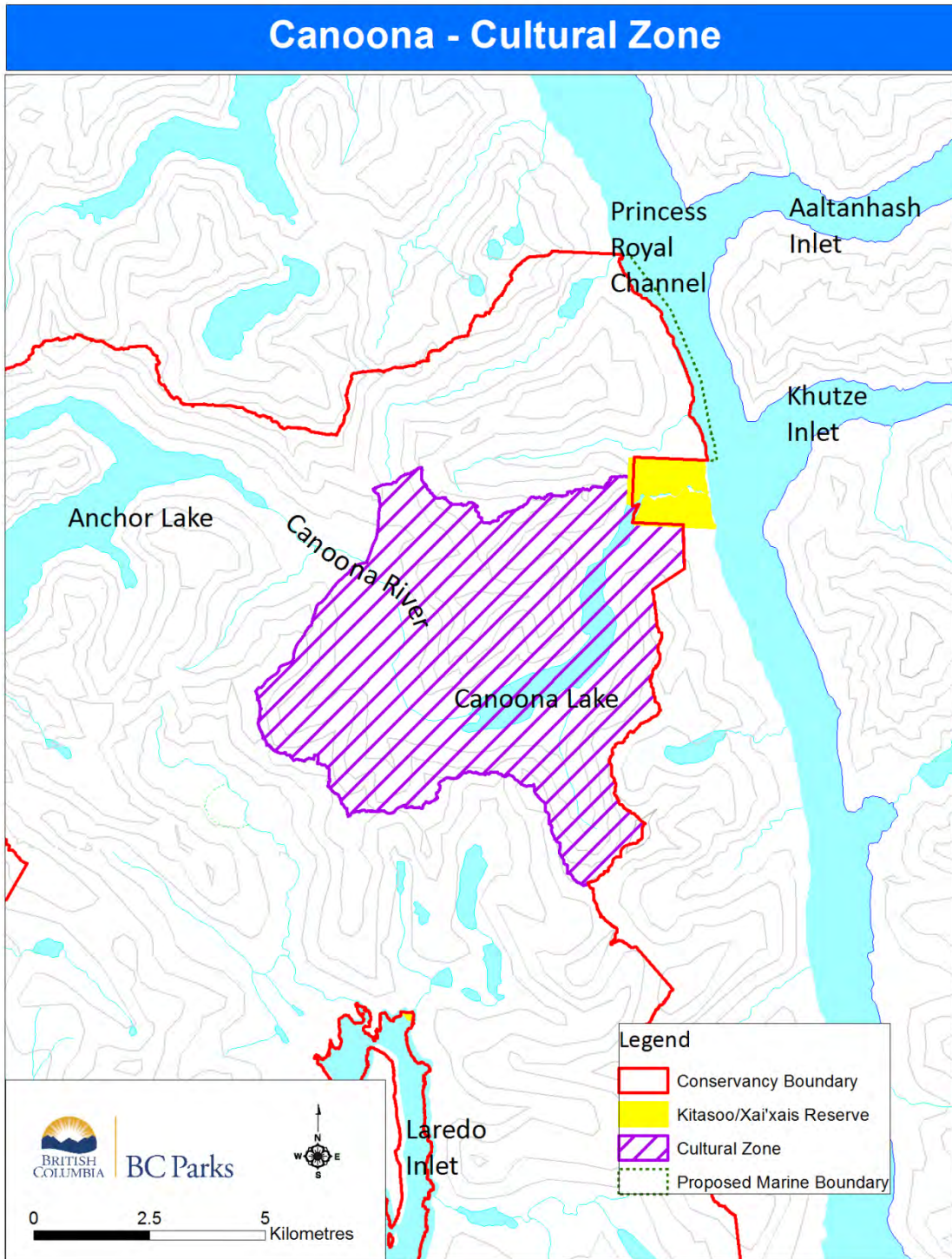
This zone is the southern portion of the conservancy, extending from Price Island in the south to Meyers Pass in the north, encompassing a large portion of western Swindle Island. It includes Higgins Pass, between Swindle and Price islands, as shown on Figure 11. This zone is the heart of the Kitasoo/Xai'xais Traditional Territory and is one of the most frequently used areas by the Kitasoo/Xai'xais people. Marvin Island has been a camping ground and resource gathering centre for many generations.

If aircraft noise disrupts cultural practices or aircraft landings damage sensitive cultural sites, pursue regulatory changes to close this zone either spatially or temporally to aircraft landings.

### ***Laredo Channel/Kent Inlet/D'isju Cultural Zone (CM3)***

This zone consists of the shore and adjacent uplands of Laredo Channel and Kent Inlet. The Kitasoo/Xai'xais have been collecting food and materials from this area for millennia, and it continues to be an important food and materials source.

If aircraft noise disrupts cultural practices or aircraft landings damage sensitive cultural sites, pursue regulatory changes to close this zone either spatially or temporally to aircraft landings.



**Figure 10: Canoona Cultural Zone Map**

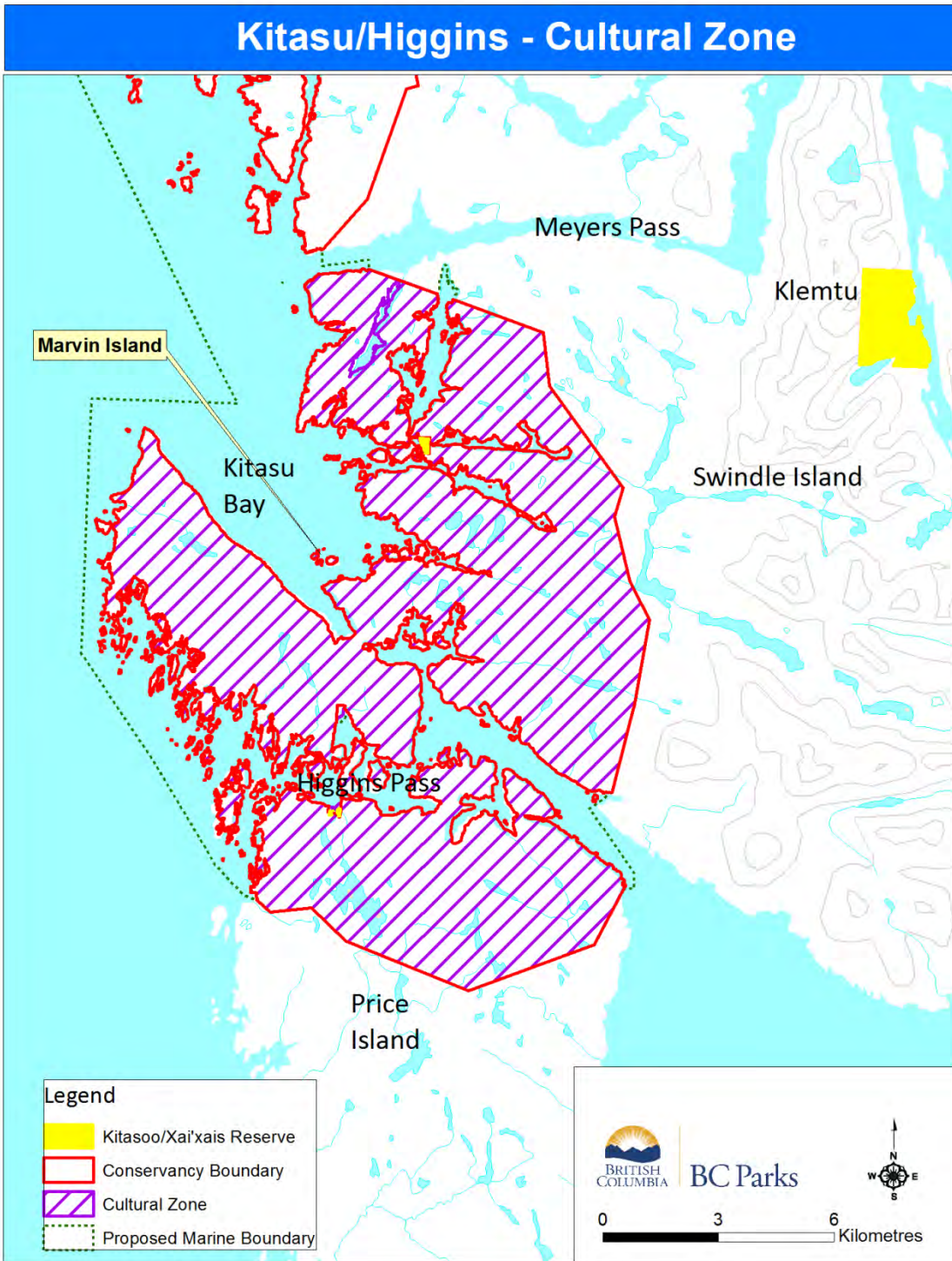


Figure 11: Kitasu/Higgins Cultural Zone Map

# Laredo Channel/Kent Inlet/D'isju - Cultural Zone

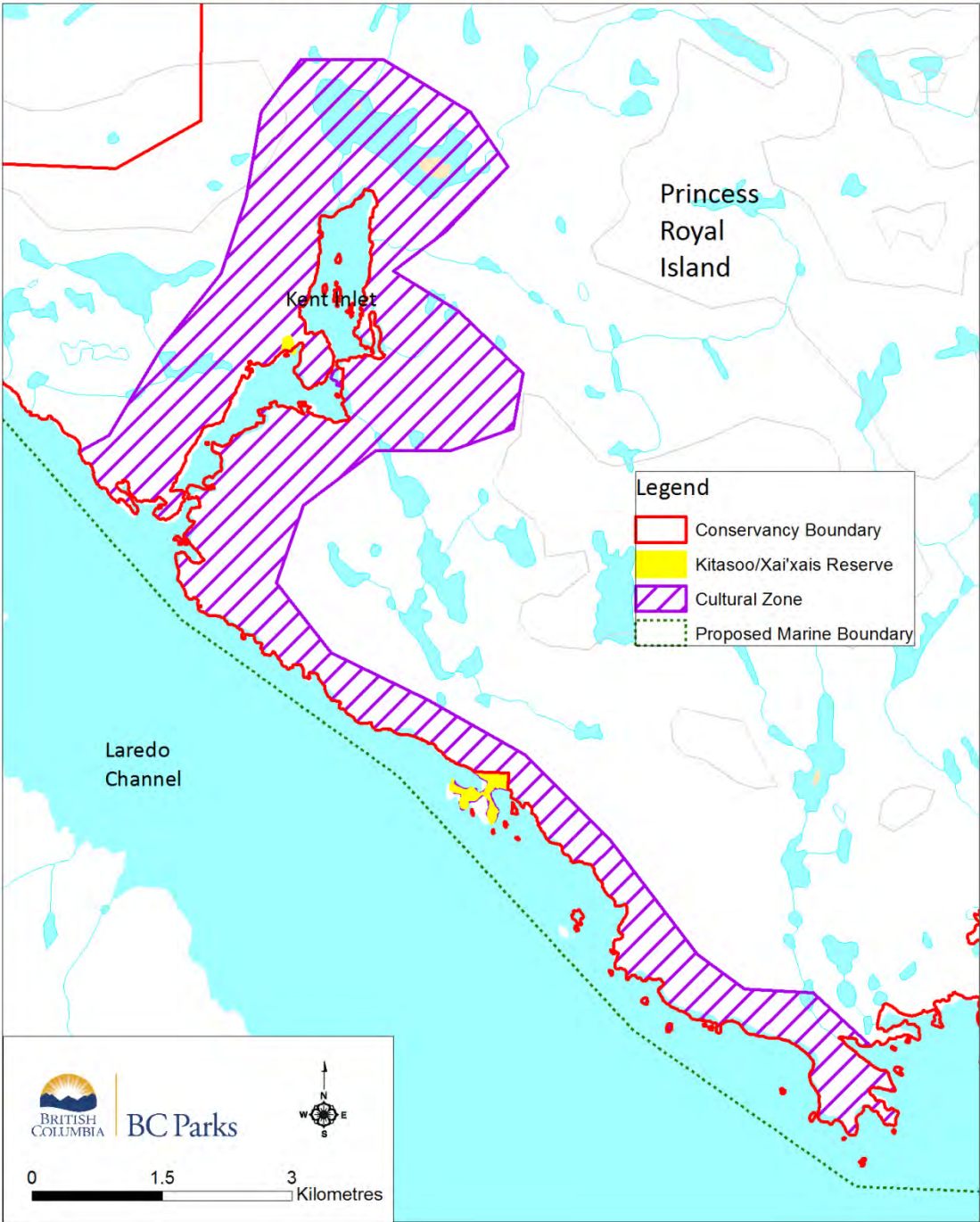


Figure 12: Laredo Channel/Kent Inlet/D'isju Cultural Zone Map

## 4.0 Plan Implementation

### 4.1 Implementation Plan

The collaborative management agreement between the Kitasoo/Xai'xais First Nation and the Ministry of Environment establishes a cooperative framework for ongoing administration and management of the conservancy, including reviewing and making recommendations on the approval and monitoring of park use permits.

The Kitasoo/Xai'xais and BC Parks will jointly prepare annual work plans and budgets to support implementation of the conservancy management plan. Implementation of the strategies within the Kitasoo Spirit Bear Conservancy Management Plan will be prioritized based on available resourcing, cost, feasibility and overall benefit toward conservancy objectives. The Kitasoo Spirit Bear Conservancy Collaborative Management Agreement representatives will prepare a detailed annual implementation work plan that includes timelines, responsibilities, and required resources to achieve each activity.

Broader community interests will be addressed through ongoing outreach activities associated with management operations. Collaboration, along with community outreach activities, will help to increase First Nation and non-aboriginal community awareness and engagement in management of this conservancy.

The Kitasoo/Xai'xais First Nation may at some point enter into a process for negotiating a comprehensive treaty or other agreements with the governments of Canada and British Columbia. At the completion of those negotiations, the parties will reassess the collaborative relationship and the management plan in the context of treaty or agreement outcomes.

### 4.2 Adaptive Management

Adaptive management involves a five-stage process of planning, action, monitoring, evaluation and revision which will be carried out in the process of implementing conservancy management plans. Adaptive management is a formal process for continually improving management strategies by learning from the outcomes (results) of the monitoring and evaluation.

This management plan includes an initial suite of management strategies that provide direction on how to achieve stated management objectives. BC Parks and the Kitasoo/Xai'xais will refer to the strategies as annual conservancy management work plans are developed and implemented. The parties will monitor and evaluate management results against stated objectives and revise strategies and work plans as part of the collaborative adaptive management process.



### 4.3 Review and Amendments

Management strategies and operational work plans may be adjusted based on monitoring and evaluation to ensure the vision is maintained and the objectives and results are achieved.

This management plan will be reviewed and revised if necessary to address improvements in local and regional knowledge and the results of conservancy management and monitoring. In the event management operations or monitoring reveal issues that need to be addressed, the Kitsoo/Xai'xais and BC Parks will meet as required to resolve those issues as part of the collaborative management process.

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: Appropriate Use Table

The following table summarizes existing and potential future uses in the Kitsoo Spirit Bear Conservancy that are and are not appropriate in each zone. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all uses that may be considered in this protected area in the future.

Please note that many appropriate uses are geographically restricted (e.g., only allowed in certain areas of the Kitsoo Spirit Bear Conservancy). Please ensure that you are well informed of any use restrictions as indicated in the table. It is highly recommended to review relevant sections of the management plan where indicated in the table.

Appropriate Use Table Legend		
<b>N</b>	<b>Not an appropriate use</b>	The use is not appropriate in the indicated zone. If the use currently exists but the management planning process has determined that the use is no longer appropriate in all or part of the protected area, the management plan will include strategies for ending the activity (e.g., phasing out, closing).
<b>Y</b>	<b><u>May</u> be an appropriate use</b>	<p>Some level or extent of this use may be appropriate in the zone(s) indicated. If the activity/use already exists, the management plan provides guidance on the appropriate level of use and may address specific restrictions or planned enhancements (e.g., capacity, designated areas for a particular activity, party size, time of year, etc.).</p> <p>For new or expanded uses, this symbol indicates that the use <u>may be considered</u> for further evaluation and approval. The appropriateness of some activities may not be confirmed until a further assessment (e.g., BC Parks Impacts Assessment Process) or evaluation process (e.g., park use permit adjudication) is completed.</p>
<b>N/A</b>	<b>Not an applicable use in this zone</b>	Indicates where it is not feasible for the use to take place in this zone (e.g., mooring buoys in a terrestrial zone).

Activity/Facility	Nature Recreation Zone	Wilderness Recreation Zones	Cultural Zones <sup>9</sup>	Comments
<b>Activities/Uses</b>				
Aircraft Access	Y	Y	Y	Follow the recommended aircraft access route to Canoono Lake; if aircraft noise disrupts cultural practices or aircraft landings damage sensitive cultural sites, pursue regulatory changes to close Cultural Zones either spatially or temporally to aircraft landings.
Beach Activities (swimming, picnicking, etc.)	Y	Y	Y	
Boating (non-power – e.g., kayaking)	Y	Y	Y	
Boating (power)	Y	Y	Y	
Camping	Y	Y	Y	Camping in the Cultural Zones should only occur at designated sites.
Commercial Marine Invertebrate and <i>macrocystis</i> Seaweed Harvesting	Y	Y	Y	
Commercial Seaweed Harvesting other than <i>macrocystis</i>	Y	Y	N	
Cultural Tourism	Y	Y	Y	
Filming (commercial)	Y	Y	Y	
Fire Management (prevention)	Y	Y	Y	
Fire Management (suppression)	Y	Y	Y	
Fish Stocking	Y	Y	Y	As per section 3.2.2., fish stocking should only occur as part of ecosystem restoration measures and only for native species.
Fish Habitat Enhancement	Y	Y	Y	Only for native species.
Fishing (guided and unguided)	Y	Y	Y	
Forest Insect/Disease Control	Y	Y	Y	
Harvesting non-timber forest products (botanicals)	Y	Y	Y	
Hiking/Backpacking/Walking	Y	Y	Y	
Hunting (guided and unguided)	Y	Y	Y	See section 3.2.3 for existing restrictions on bear hunting.
Invasive Species Management	Y	Y	Y	
Scientific Research (assessment)	Y	Y	Y	

<sup>9</sup> Restrictions may apply in the Cultural Zones as per applicable site level management plan and/or management strategy.

Activity/Facility	Nature Recreation Zone	Wilderness Recreation Zones	Cultural Zones <sup>9</sup>	Comments
Scientific Research (manipulative activities)	Y	N	Y	Only allow continuation of existing manipulative research in foreshore area (see applicable management strategy in section 3.2.2).
Trapping	Y	Y	Y	
Wildlife/Nature Viewing	Y	Y	Y	
<b>Facilities/Infrastructure</b>				
Administrative Buildings and Compounds	Y	N	Y	
Lodges, Cabins, Huts and Shelters	Y	Y	Y	Only backcountry huts and emergency shelters (small scale and appropriate for the wilderness setting) are appropriate in the Wilderness Recreation Zone.
Campgrounds	Y	Y	Y	
Interpretation and Information buildings	Y	Y	Y	
Hiking trails	Y	Y	Y	See section 3.2.3 for details
Wharves/Docks	Y	Y	Y	See section 3.2.3 for details
Mooring Buoys	Y	Y	Y	

# Appendix 2: Maps of the Recommended Marine Boundary

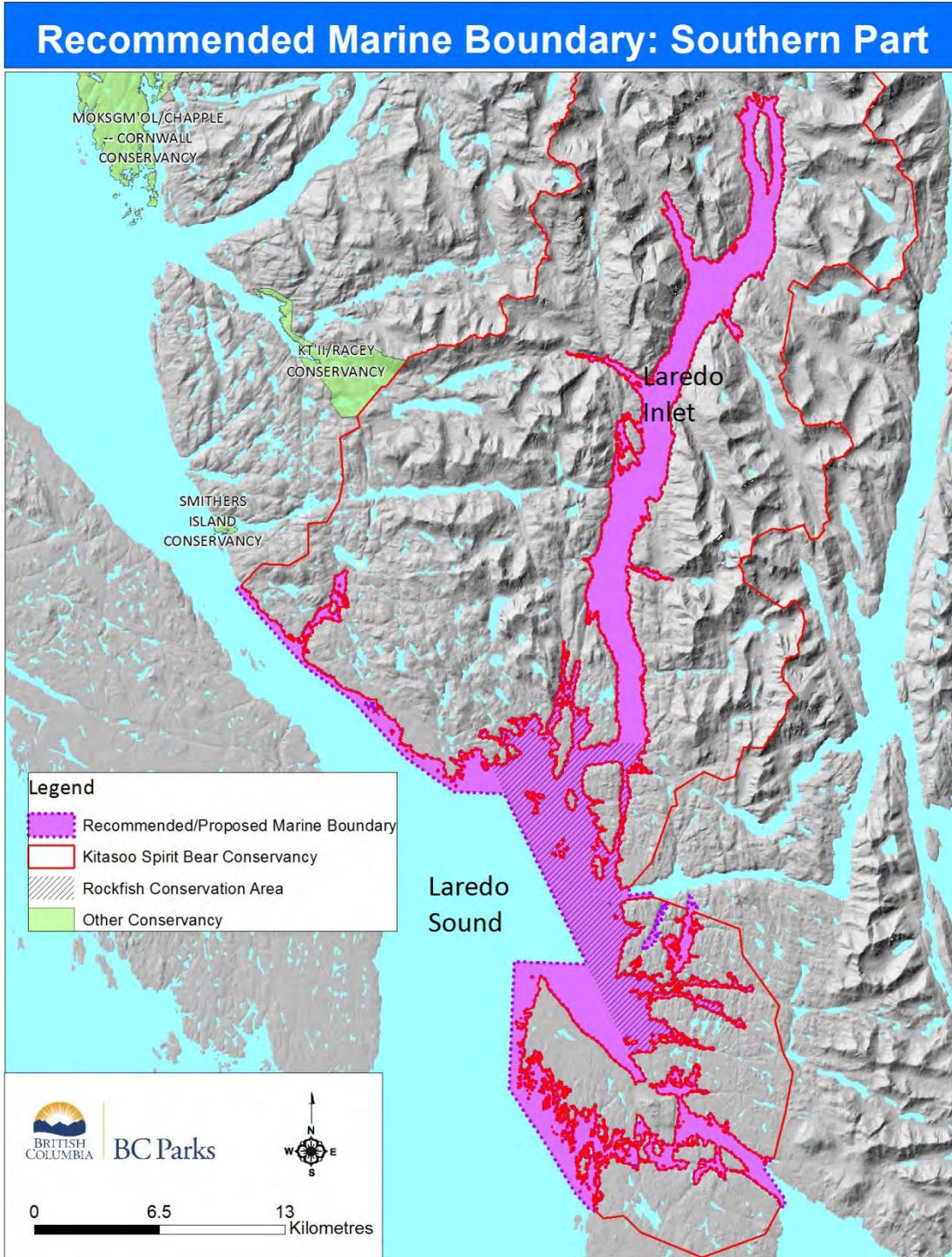


Figure 13: Map of the Recommended Marine Boundary – Southern Part

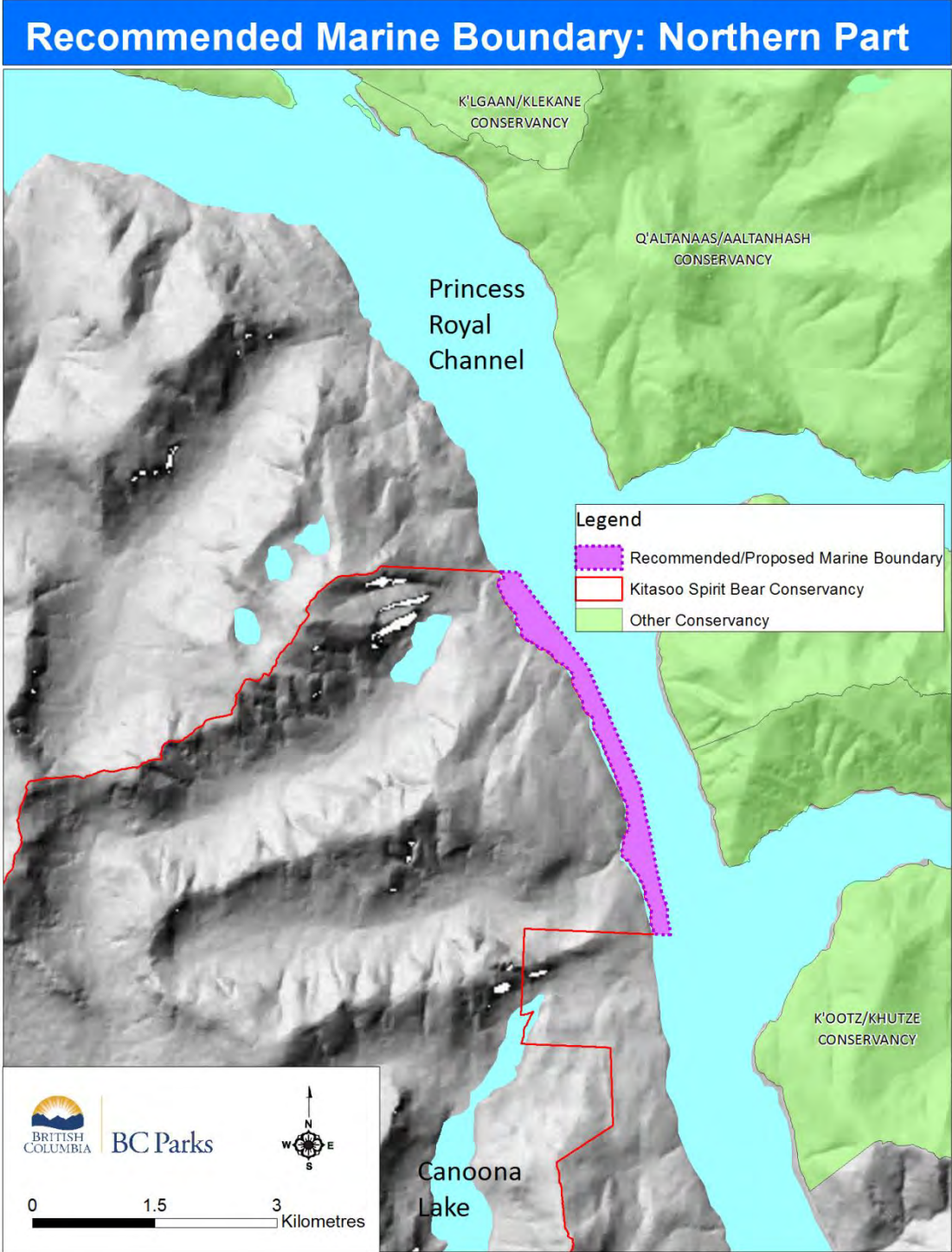


Figure 14: Map of the Recommended Marine Boundary – Northern Part