

**Skeena Region**

# **MANAGEMENT DIRECTION STATEMENT**

**March 2003**



**for Kitson Island Marine  
Provincial Park**



**BRITISH  
COLUMBIA**

**Ministry of Water, Land  
and Air Protection**  
Environmental Stewardship  
Division

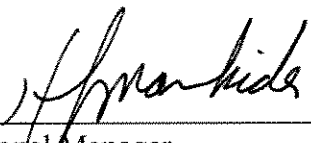


## Kitson Island Marine Provincial Park Approvals Page

### Forward

Kitson Island Marine Provincial Park Management Direction Statement provides management direction for 5-7 years or until the statement is revised. Ongoing consultation between the Environmental Stewardship Division and First Nations may result in revisions as appropriate.

### Approvals:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Regional Manager  
Skeena Region  
Environmental Stewardship Division

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Environmental Stewardship Division

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# **Kitson Island Marine Provincial Park**

## **Management Direction Statement**

### **Introduction**

#### **Purpose of the Management Direction Statement**

Management direction statements (MDS) provide strategic management direction for protected areas that do not have an approved management plan. Management direction statements also describe protected area values, management issues and concerns; a management strategy focused on immediate priority objectives and strategies; and, direction statements from other planning processes. While strategies may be identified in the MDS, the completion of strategies is subject to funding and funding procedures. In addition, all development associated with these strategies is subject to the Parks and Protected Areas Branch's Impact Assessment Policy.

#### **Context**

The provincial government established Kitson Island Marine Park on June 14, 1993 under the authority of the *Park Act* by Order-in-Council 788/93. The *Protected Areas of British Columbia Act* provided legislated status for the park's boundaries on June 12, 2000. A portion of the park is subject to the negotiation of a lease by the provincial government with the Prince Rupert Port Corporation. Kitson Island is located on the southwestern edge of Flora Bank, five kilometres west of Port Edward. The park covers the entire 20 hectares of Kitson Island and Kitson Islet, and 24.7 hectares of foreshore for a total area of 44.7 hectares. Kitson Island Marine Provincial Park is within the asserted traditional territory of the Tsimshian First Nation.

Kitson Island Marine Provincial Park protects Kitson Island, Kitson Islet, and the surrounding foreshore. Kitson Island's east shore contains a sand beach; a rare natural feature on the north coast. Easily accessible from Port Edward, the sandy beach on Kitson Island is an extremely important recreational destination for Prince Rupert area residents. Kitson Island Marine Provincial Park is used mostly by small boaters and kayakers for day use with some overnight use. The park contains no maintained facilities. Prudhomme Lake Provincial Park and Diana Lake Provincial Park, both east of Prince Rupert on Highway 16, provide camping opportunities and day use facilities. A system of marine anchorages provides additional marine recreation opportunities. Backcountry recreation opportunities are available in Seven Sisters Park, 200 kilometres to the east on Highway 16, and within the Gitnadoix River Recreation Area, 40 kilometres east but only accessible by jet-boat. The North Coast Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) which is in progress is expected to identify additional protected areas offering backcountry recreation opportunities near Prince Rupert.

Kitson Island Marine Provincial Park is the most northern park in a system of marine parks along British Columbia's coast. Other marine parks to the south include: 1) Klewnuggit Inlet Marine Provincial Park (1,733 hectares), 98 kilometres south of Prince Rupert; 2) Lowe Inlet Marine Provincial Park (767 hectares), 118 kilometres south of Prince Rupert; 3) Union Passage Marine Provincial Park (1,373 hectares), 98 kilometres southwest of Kitimat and 138 kilometres south of Prince Rupert; 4) Green Inlet Marine Provincial Park (36.5 hectares) on the north side of Green Inlet's terminus; 5) Jackson

Narrows Marine Provincial Park (71 hectares) on the southeast corner of Roderick Island; 6) Oliver Cove Marine Provincial Park (74 hectares) on Don Peninsula; and 7) Hakai Conservation Study Area (122,998 hectares) south of Bella Coola. See Figure 1 for the regional distribution of marine parks. Other protected areas on the north and central coast that complement existing protected areas are recommended in the recently completed Kalum LRMP and the ongoing Central Coast LRMP. Further sites will be identified through the North Coast LRMP.

## **Marine Provincial Park Attributes**

### **Conservation**

- Protects an extremely small area of the moderately represented Hecate Lowlands Ecoregion. Currently 4% of this ecoregion is included in the protected areas system.
- Protects approximately 20 hectares of the CWHvh2 (Coastal Western Hemlock very wet Hypermaritime subzone, Central variant). This variant is well represented in the protected areas system (9.96%). The park contributes <0.01% of the overall protected areas system representation of the CWHvh2.
- Conserves 24.7 hectares of the poorly represented North Coast Fjords Marine Ecoregion. Currently 3.11% of this ecoregion is included in the protected areas system.
- Protects an island with a regionally significant sandy beach recreation feature.
- Protects important salmon habitat on Flora Bank.
- Protects marine areas of medium importance for waterfowl.
- Protects marine areas of high importance for harbour porpoises, and of medium importance for humpback whales, killer whales and Dall's porpoises.

### **Recreation and Tourism**

- A sandy beach on the southeast side of Kitson Island is a day use destination for the people of Prince Rupert for beach activities, picnicking and short hikes.
- A destination for kayakers and small boat owners, with some informal camping on Kitson Island. The park contains no facilities, a fact that maintains the wilderness character for some users.
- Some overnight moorage may occur by the island but the anchorage is somewhat exposed and the island lacks fresh water.
- Recreational fishers intensely fish the area for salmon, halibut and Dungeness crabs.
- The park provides SCUBA diving and scenic viewing opportunities.

### **Cultural Heritage**

- The Environmental Stewardship Division has not identified cultural resources in the park. Local First Nations traditional use studies may provide additional information.

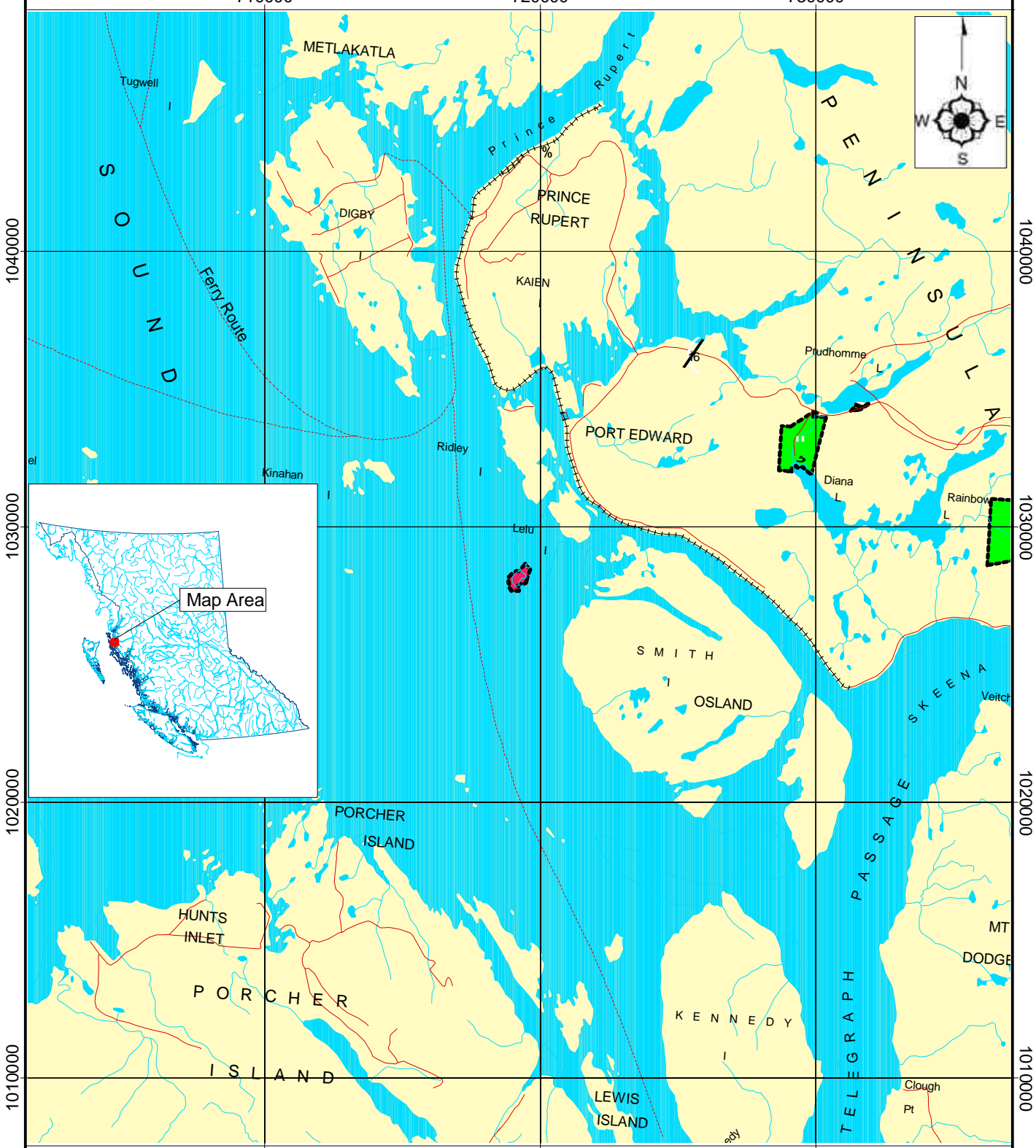
### **Commercial Business Opportunities**

- Provides potential commercial business opportunities for guided interpretation and education boat tour groups based on the special features of this park. This type of business is best developed as part of a systems approach where several provincial parks, protected areas and Crown land areas along the Inside Passage are included to give clients a diverse and interesting program. (See Appendix 1 for activities allowed in this park).



Figure 1: Regional Context

Kitson Island Marine Park



## **Significance in the Protected Areas System**

- Protects an accessible regionally significant sand beach, a rare recreation feature on the North Coast.
- Contributes to the diversity of the protected areas system along the Inside Passage and north coast of British Columbia.

## **Land Uses, Tenures and Interests**

### **Access**

Kitson Island Marine Provincial Park is five kilometres west of Port Edward in Chatham Sound. Access is by boat from Port Edward via Porpoise Channel.

### **Existing Tenures, Alienations and Encumbrances**

- A portion of the park is subject to the negotiation of a lease from the Prince Rupert Port Corporation, but the lease is not yet finalized.

### **Adjacent Patterns of Land Use**

- The marine area around Kitson Island is intensely used for commercial harvesting of sockeye, pink and chum salmon travelling up the Skeena River, and moderately used for Dungeness crab harvesting.
- Coastal industries, such as the pulp mill at Ridley Island, pose a potential pollution threat to the park.

### **First Nations Interests**

Kitson Island Marine Provincial Park is within the asserted traditional territory of the Allied Tsimshian Tribe and Metlakatla Band. The Tsimshian Tribal Council supported park establishment and noted the following interests:

- Establishment be non-prejudicial to existing or future land claims;
- That all traditional Tsimshian rights be maintained;
- That the presence of anchor buoys is acceptable;
- That there be no land-based developments at this time; and,
- That any land-based developments should require permission from the appropriate Hereditary Chief(s).

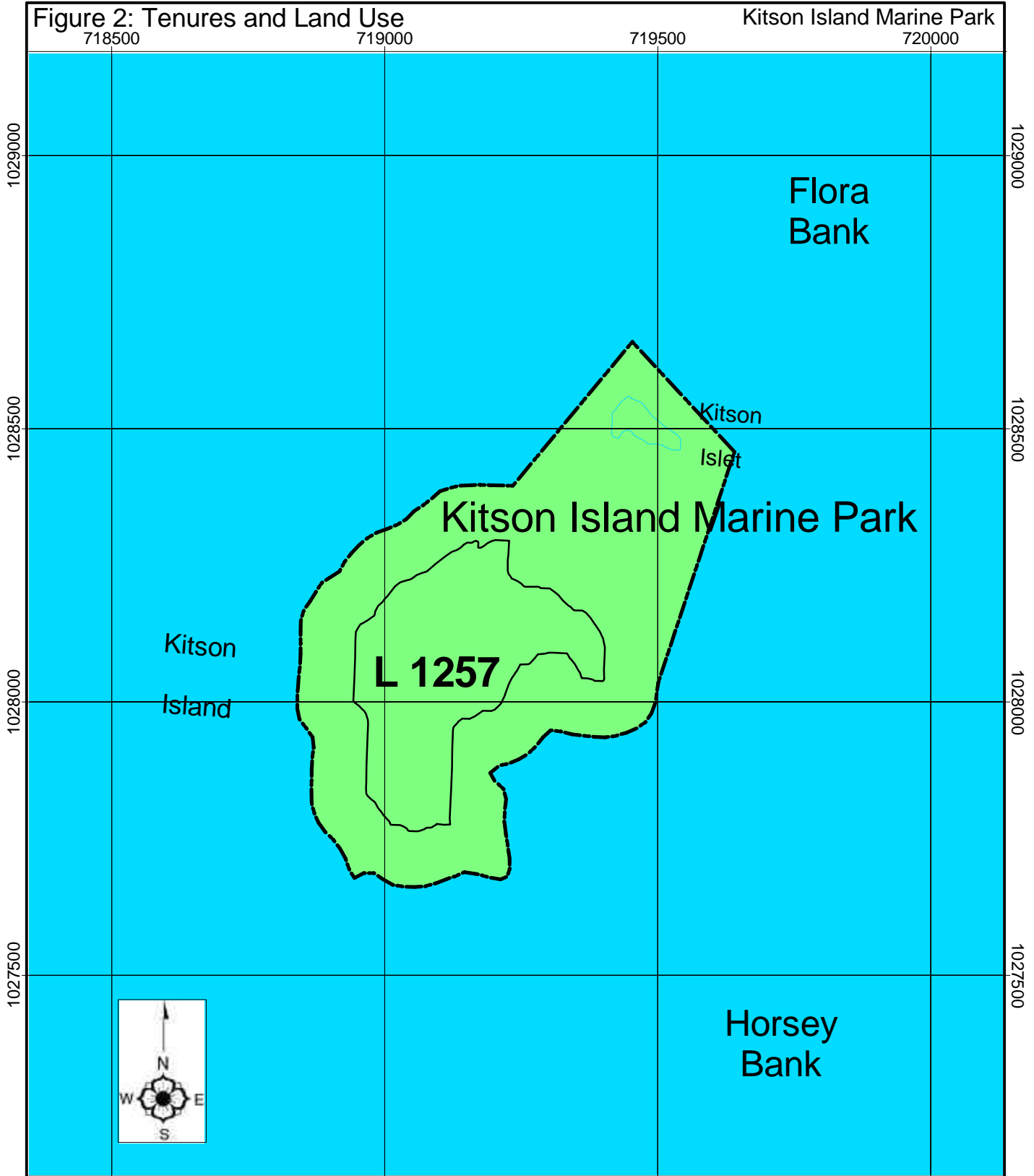
### **Other Agency Interests**

- Prince Rupert Port Corporation has an interest as the park is subject to a lease arrangement with the Port.
- The Biodiversity Branch and Fish and Wildlife Recreation and Allocation Branch of the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection and the Canadian Wildlife Service have an interest in the waterfowl that use Flora Bank.
- The Village of Port Edward and Prince Rupert City have an interest in the tourism potential of the park.
- Department of Fisheries and Oceans has an interest in the fisheries and marine values of Flora Bank.
- Canadian Coast Guard has an interest in any navigation issues in the area.

- Lies within Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection Wildlife Management Unit 6-11 and Department of Fisheries and Oceans Statistical Area - Subarea 4-12.

Figure 2: Tenures and Land Use

Kitson Island Marine Park



Scale 1:10000

100 0 100 Meters

Minor Roads	Kitson Island Marine Park Boundary	Indian Reserve
Major Roads	Cadastral Data/Tenures	Protected Areas
Rail	\$ EMPR Mines and Showings	

BRITISH COLUMBIA

BC Parks

Skeena District

## Private and Public Stakeholder Interests

- Sea Kayaking Association of British Columbia has an interest in the park as a destination for kayak users.
- Prince Rupert and Port Edward residents look to this park as an important local boating and outdoor recreation destination.
- Skeena-Queen Charlotte Regional District is interested in the park because of its tourism benefits.
- Local boaters look to this park as an important outdoor recreation destination.

## Marine Provincial Park Role Statement

The primary role of Kitson Island Marine Provincial Park is to provide recreational opportunities for the people of the Prince Rupert area, as one of a few easily accessible sandy beaches in the North Coast area. Kitson Island is also one of a number of marine parks along the Inside Passage (Lowe Inlet, Klewnuggit Inlet and Union Passage provincial parks are others nearby), which provide a system of marine parks for small boaters. Of almost equal importance is the park's role of protecting the natural values of a small outer coast island, significant wildlife species and their habitats and the portion of Flora Bank within the park.

## Management Commitments and Issues

### Management Direction from Previous Planning

A freshwater fisheries information summary and management strategy for the park indicates that at present no concerns or issues require attention and that current information about aquatic life in the park is adequate. Because of the park's proximity to Prince Rupert, however, a survey of marine life and an assessment of human activity would be a priority if a regional marine park resource inventory or coastal planning process is implemented.

### Management Issues

Theme	Issue
Protecting marine park ecological values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The park's flora and fauna are relatively unknown because inventory of these values is incomplete, especially the waterfowl and fisheries values of Flora Bank.</li> <li>• Impacts on the park's values may occur because management agencies may not be coordinated in their resource management activities (i.e. federal/provincial relations).</li> <li>• Environmental Stewardship Division has no knowledge of camping and other human use impacts on the park because of a lack of monitoring.</li> <li>• Oil spill pollution potential because of the park's coastal location.</li> <li>• Potential for increased use of Kitson Island because of an existing growth in the number of pocket cruise ships and the possible introduction of major cruise ships to the Prince Rupert Port.</li> </ul>
Protecting recreational values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some garbage and pollution problems occur in the park because of a lack of toilet and refuse disposal facilities.</li> <li>• No information is available on present use levels or levels of user satisfaction because the park is not monitored.</li> </ul>
Public safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Travel to the island in small craft may be hazardous because the island is exposed to rapid weather changes and hazardous ocean currents.</li> </ul>
General park management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uncertainty about management responsibilities for the park because the lease of the park from Prince Rupert Port Corporation remains incomplete.</li> </ul>

## Management Direction

### Priority Management Objectives and Strategies

Objective	Strategy
To protect the park's ecological values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete an inventory of flora and fauna, especially of Flora Bank.</li> <li>• Work with other agencies such as the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, the Biodiversity Branch and Fish and Wildlife Recreation and Allocation Branch of the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection, and the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management to ensure co-ordination between management agencies and to ensure management activities do not affect the ecological integrity of the park.</li> <li>• Complete an assessment of the impacts of camping and other human uses on the park.</li> <li>• Ensure Environmental Stewardship Division staff (regional in particular) are aware of their role in the BC Marine Oil Spill Response Plan and the sensitivity ratings of the park's coastline in the Coastal Resources and Oil Spill Response Atlas when the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management completes this mapping for the North Coast.</li> <li>• Should Cruise Ship traffic result in an increased use of this park, a study/plan may be required to mitigate impacts on the park's natural values. The study will investigate opportunities for hardening sites and directing use.</li> </ul>
To protect the park's recreational value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate the need for facilities (e.g. toilets and garbage receptacles), especially related to possible increased use levels.</li> <li>• Install a comments box to gather information on user numbers and user satisfaction.</li> </ul>
To ensure the park is safe for public use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare a park brochure and include safety information on ocean currents and weather.</li> </ul>
To protect First Nations values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet with the Allied Tsimshian Tribes and Metlakatla Band as issues require.</li> </ul>
Finalize park status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negotiate and conclude the park lease with the Prince Rupert Port Corporation.</li> </ul>

### Consultation and Future Planning

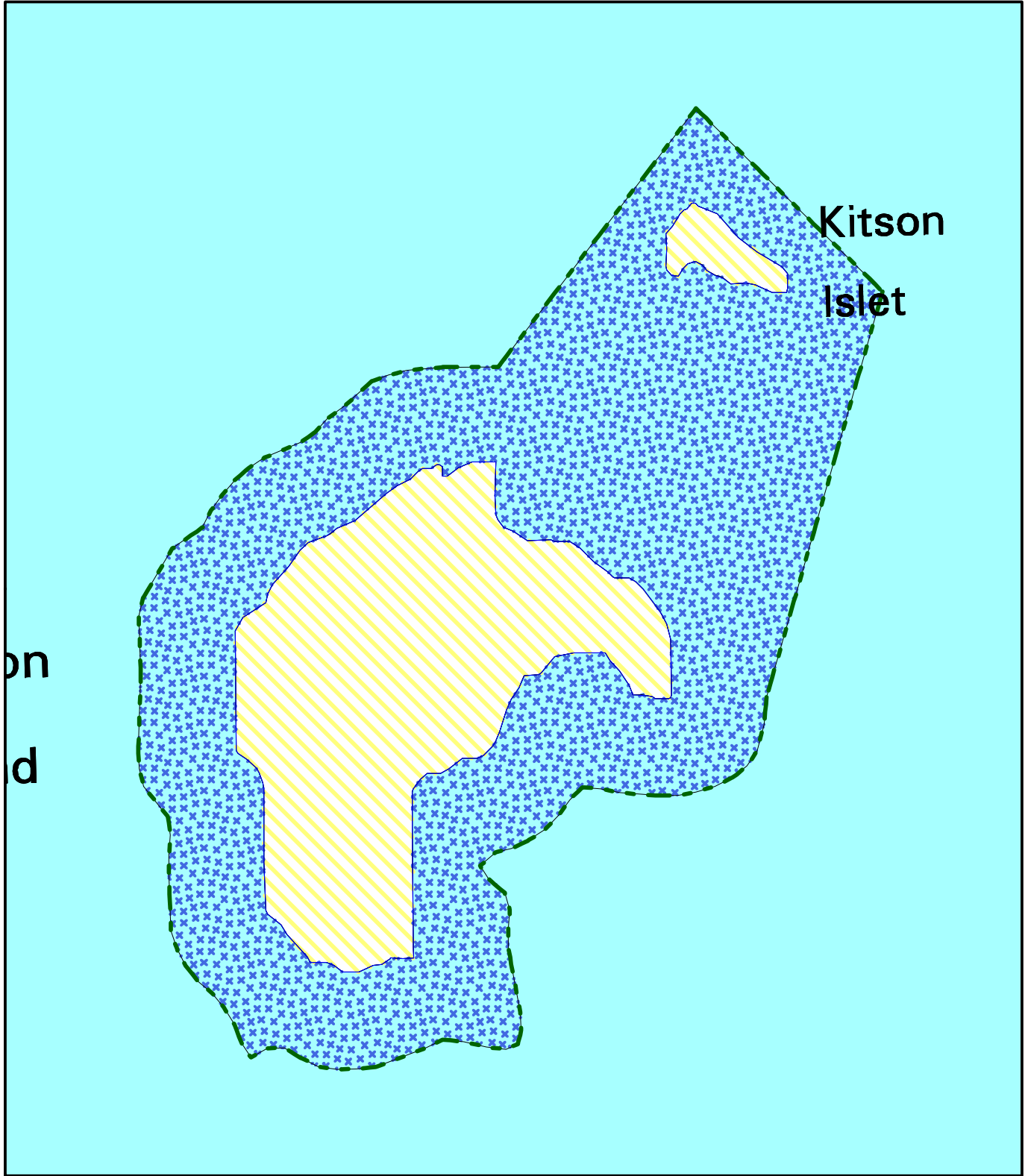
The Environmental Stewardship Division will consult with the Tsimshian, local stakeholders and resource users as necessary. This park has a low priority for the preparation of a full management plan. The park's management direction statement will be reviewed and revised, if necessary, in five to seven years time or earlier if increases in user numbers present additional issues.

### Zoning Plan

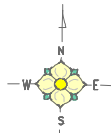
The park's land above the ocean's natural boundary is zoned Natural Environment to confirm the park's natural character and recognize the park's outdoor recreation features and recreational emphasis. The Natural Environment Zone covers 20 hectares of the park.

The park's foreshore is zoned Special Feature to protect the aquatic habitat and fish and wildlife values. The Special Feature Zone extends over 24.7 hectares.

Figure 3: Zoning



Projection: UTM Zone 9  
Datum: NAD83



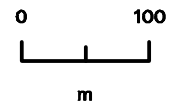
Natural Environment



Special Feature



Protected Area Boundary



**Appendix 1. Kitson Island Marine Provincial Park  
Table of Acceptable Uses, Activities and Facilities**

<b>Activity/Use/Facility</b>	<b>Acceptability</b>
Aboriginal traditional uses	<b>Y</b>
Hunting	<b>N</b>
Fishing	<b>Y</b>
Trapping	<b>N</b>
Grazing (domestic livestock)	<b>N</b>
Recreational Gold Panning/Rock Hounding	<b>N</b>
Utility corridors	<b>N</b>
Communication Sites	<b>N</b>
Horse Use/ Pack Animals	<b>N</b>
Guide Outfitting (hunting)	<b>N</b>
Guide Outfitting (fishing)	<b>N</b>
Guide Outfitting (nature tours)	<b>Y</b>
Guide Outfitting (river rafting)	<b>N/A</b>
Cat-Assisted Skiing	<b>N/A</b>
Ski Hills	<b>N/A</b>
Commercial Recreation (facility-based)	<b>N</b>
Commercial recreation (non-facility based)	<b>Y</b>
Backcountry Huts	<b>M</b>
Water Control Structures	<b>N</b>
Fish Stocking and Enhancement	<b>N</b>
Road Access	<b>N/A</b>
Off-road Access (snowmobiling)	<b>N/A</b>
Off-road Access (motorized)	<b>N</b>
Off-road Access (mechanical activities)	<b>N</b>
Motorized Water Access	<b>Y</b>
Aircraft Access	<b>Y</b>
Fire Management (suppression)	<b>Y</b>
Fire Management (prescribed fire management)	<b>M</b>
Fire Management (prevention)	<b>M</b>
Forest Insect/Disease Control	<b>N1</b>
Noxious Weed Control	<b>N1</b>
Exotic Insect/Disease Control	<b>N1</b>
Scientific Research (specimen collection)	<b>M</b>
Scientific Research (manipulative activities)	<b>M</b>

Y= allowed subject to conditions identified in the management direction statement or management plan  
M= may be permitted if compatible with protected area objectives  
N/A= not applicable

N= not allowed  
N1= allowed for expressed management purposes only  
N2= present and allowed to continue but not normally allowed