



K'uuna Gwaay Management Plan

July 2011



Council of the
Haida Nation



Cover photo: Berry Wijdeven

Foreward

"... a changing of tides, as we come to appreciate the fragile and precious nature of our marine areas".

Guujaaw

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1.0 Introduction

The Haida Nation and the Province of British Columbia have a dispute of title over all of Haida Gwaii, but through planning and negotiations the Haida Nation and the province have taken steps towards reconciliation of interests.

K'uuna Gwaay is now formally protected by both the Haida Nation as a Haida Heritage Site and the Province of British Columbia as a conservancy. For the purposes of this management plan, the area will be referred to as K'uuna Gwaay. Other areas established as both Haida Heritage Sites and conservancies will be referenced as protected areas in this document. The Haida Nation and the province through their respective authorities are now working together in managing this area.

This management plan does not have a complete or comprehensive listing of all cultural features or cultural inventory in the area. There are far more cultural features, many that are not inventoried, and other cultural values which are held in secret by the Haida Nation.

Preparation of this management plan for K'uuna Gwaay¹ has been jointly undertaken by the Council of the Haida Nation and the Province of British Columbia's Ministry of Environment (hereafter referred to as "the Parties").

1.1 Management Plan Purpose

The purpose of this management plan is to:

- establish the vision, long-term strategic direction, guidance, and acceptable uses for K'uuna Gwaay;
- ensure that any activities are respectful of the natural values and not in conflict with Haida social, ceremonial and cultural uses;
- ensure protection for lands and seas in their natural state;
- describe the background and legal context of K'uuna Gwaay; and,
- manage visitor use.

1.2 Planning Area

K'uuna Gwaay has been used by Haida people and given them life since time immemorial.

K'uuna Gwaay is located on the northeast coast of Louise Island, about 35 km southeast of the community of Sandspit (Figure 1). It is part of an archipelago-wide system of protected areas². In total, half of the land base of Haida Gwaii is now in protected status. K'uuna

¹ Phonetic pronunciation is "K'ooona Gwaay"

² that includes Gwaii Haanas, several provincial parks and ecological reserves and ten other protected areas.

Gwaay includes numerous small unnamed islands and a portion of Heming Head on Talunkwan Island (Figure 2). The terrestrial component of K'uuna Gwaay covers 2,106 hectares. The elevation range is from sea level to 993 metres.

A marine component/foreshore area has been delineated by a joint Haida Nation and Province of British Columbia process that covers an additional area of 13,162 hectares³, and includes the adjacent islands of Reef, Skedans, Limestone, Low and South Low. Boundaries for the marine portion of the protected area are brought forward first by Order in Council, then by legislation to ensure equal protection across the terrestrial and marine components. This management plan will provide direction to this marine area as well.

There is one reserve⁴ within the boundaries of K'uuna Gwaay. It will remain as a reserve and is not a part of the K'uuna Gwaay management plan.

The Laskeek Bay Conservation Society (LBCS), with the assistance of local groups and volunteers, has been active for many years in conservation work on Haida Gwaii and maintain a research station on East Limestone Island. The camp is used to facilitate data collection, research, and monitoring programs on various species at risk in the area. Work has focused on marine bird research since 1983, and the impacts of introduced species since 1995. Additionally, tours for visitors are offered and since 1991 various school programs have been undertaken where students receive hands-on education in environmental issues and field biology.

Since 1984, Environment Canada (EC)/Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) researchers have established and kept up a research station at Reef Island. They have been actively conducting detailed studies on migratory birds, especially seabirds and partnering with other organizations on research programs ever since.

Additionally, in 1995 the Research Group on Introduced Species (RGIS) with the support of the Centre Nationale de Recherche Scientifique in France, became involved in the unique research opportunities in this area and has been conducting on-going research work and programs on introduced species. Notably, the organization successfully removed Black-tailed Deer from Low and South Low islands to create two deer-free locations that now support un-browsed native vegetation, which is a rarity on Haida Gwaii. They share the research base at Reef Island with Environment Canada.

There are two other protected areas in the vicinity of K'uuna Gwaay. Kunxalas is less than 5 kilometres to the north (although the marine components are adjacent). Gwaii Haanas is less than 2 kilometres to the south and protects the rugged south archipelago as well as many significant Haida heritage locations. The national park reserve also includes SGaang Gwaii World Heritage Site.

³ All navigation and activities related to navigation (including within any marine protected areas established by provincial legislation) is managed by Transport Canada mainly through the *Canada Shipping Act*, other federal statutes and international treaties.

⁴ Skedans Reserve #8

Access to K'uuna Gwaay is primarily by boat and there are a number of sheltered inlets suitable for anchoring. Floatplane and helicopter access are possible at suitable shoreline and onshore landing locations.

The Haida Nation Watchmen program uses a camp at Skedans Reserve from spring to autumn to serve as guardians of this culturally significant site called Skedans. The guardians ensure the respect of the natural environment and important sites, and provide stewardship and information to visitors.

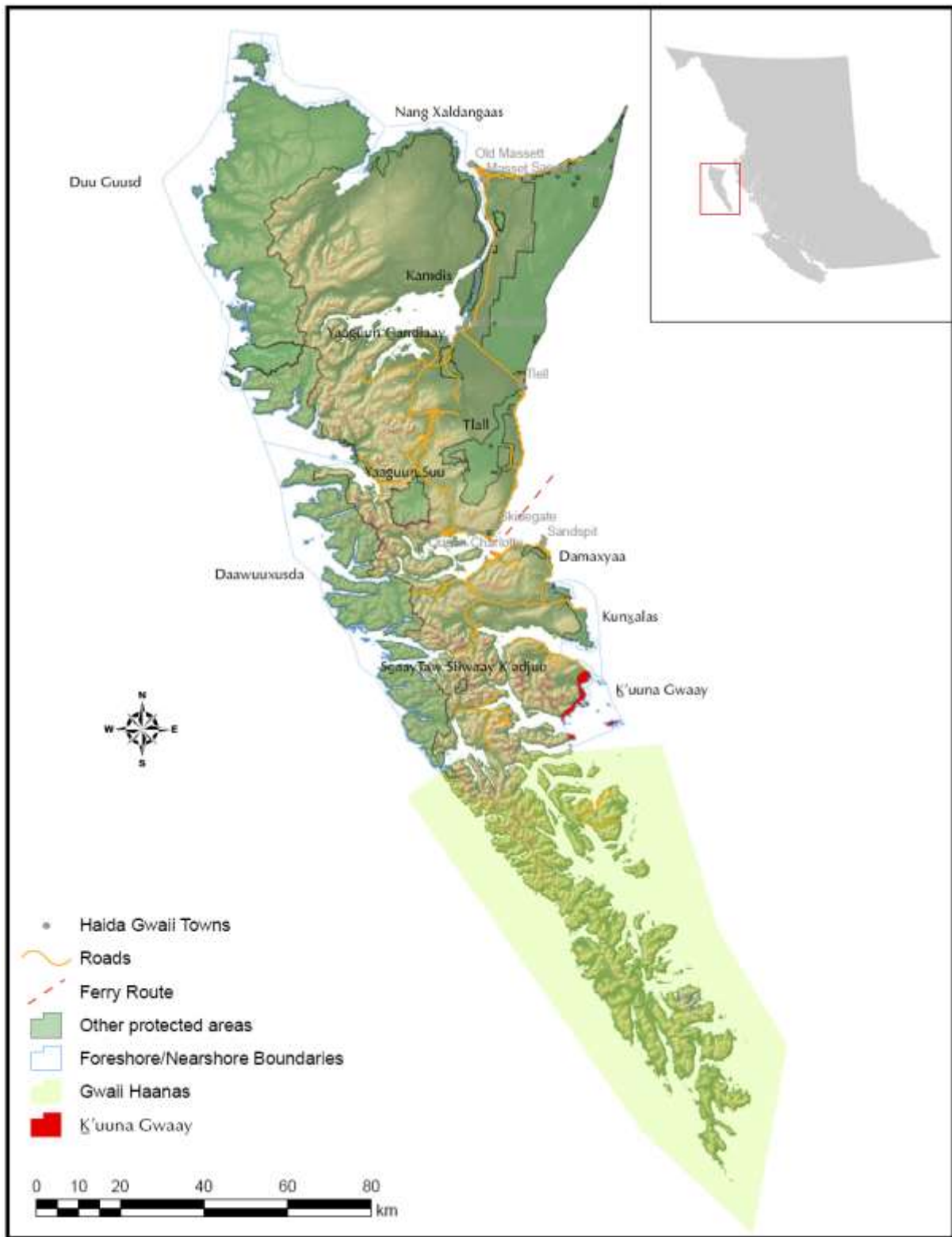


Figure 1: Regional Context Map

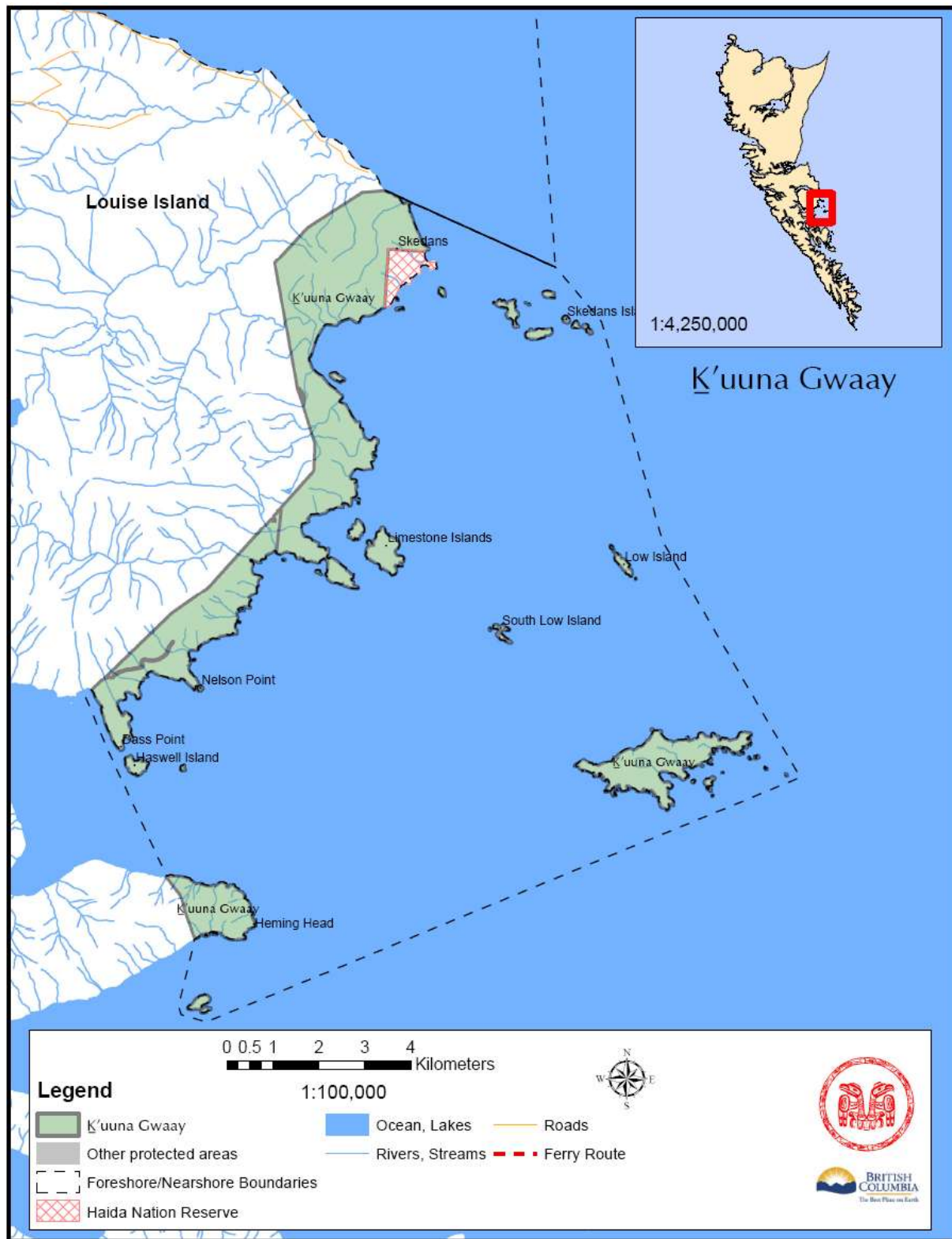


Figure 2: K'uuna Gwaay Map

1.3 Planning and Policy Context

The Parties acknowledge each other's respective authorities and are cooperating in the management of K'uuna Gwaay. The Haida Nation and the Province of British Columbia have agreements on land use and reconciliation and use their respective lawmaking authorities to enact this management plan. For example, permits are to be jointly reviewed and adjudicated as per processes such as the Solutions Table that are consistent with existing agreements between the Haida Nation and the Province of British Columbia. Additionally, an appropriate government to government forum will be utilized to address collaborative management of the protected areas.

A brief chronological history is summarized below.

According to archaeological evidence, K'uuna Gwaay has been occupied for at least 10,000 years by the Haida people although Haida oral history indicates much longer.

Due to the notable seabird nesting colonies and presence of marine mammals along the eastern coast of Louise Island, several islands were originally established as wildlife management areas (WMA). Skedans, Reef, and Limestone islands received designation as wildlife management areas under the *Wildlife Act* in July 1988 (OIC 1353/88). These three WMAs are protected within K'uuna Gwaay and will no longer need the WMA status.

In 2002, a wildlife habitat area was established under the Forest Practices Code for the seabird nesting colony on Low Island. The purpose of this designation was to establish protective measures for this critical location designed to help maintain Cassin's Auklet nesting habitat. This island is protected within K'uuna Gwaay and will no longer need the wildlife habitat area status.

In 2004, the Haida Land Use Vision based on the principles of Yah'guudang (respect) was put forward by the Council of the Haida Nation to guide deliberations towards a sustainable land use plan for Haida Gwaii. In 2007, the Haida Gwaii Strategic Land Use Agreement (SLUA) supported the Haida Land Use Vision which included the protection of K'uuna Gwaay.

The SLUA stated that the new protected areas were to be set aside for cultural, spiritual, ecological, and recreation purposes, and the areas were to be maintained for the benefit, education and enjoyment of present and future generations. The agreement was formally signed off by the Haida Nation and the Province of British Columbia on December 12, 2007.

On December 17, 2008, Order in Council No. 977/2008 established the terrestrial component of K'uuna Gwaay. On October 29, 2009, K'uuna Gwaay was named and described in legislation by passing and providing Royal Assent to Bill 10 — 2009 (*Protected Areas of British Columbia Amendment Act, 2009*).

The Kunst'aa guu – Kunst'aayah Reconciliation Protocol was signed by the Haida Nation and the Province of British Columbia on December 11, 2009. On June 3, 2010, Bill 18 — 2010,

entitled the *Haida Gwaii Reconciliation Act*, received Royal Assent. This bill contains amendments that have implications to protected area planning and management on Haida Gwaii. This management plan is consistent with the intent of the *Haida Gwaii Reconciliation Act*.

In October 2010, the Haida Nation, at the Annual House of Assembly, adopted the *KaayGuu Ga ga Kyah ts'as – Gin 'inaas 'laas waadluwaan gud tl'a gud giidaa* (Haida Stewardship Law). The purpose of the Haida Stewardship Law is to ensure the well being of Haida Gwaii and create an economy that is respectful of the land, culture and people through establishing structures to manage the forests and the land, which include the manner in which humans interact with the natural world. This management plan is consistent with the intent of the Haida Stewardship Law.

1.4 Planning Process

The Parties initiated management planning for *K'uuna Gwaay* in the fall of 2009 as part of a broader effort to prepare management plans for all eleven new protected areas on Haida Gwaii.

Area descriptions were developed from available information for each protected area to identify important cultural and natural values, as well as recreational and economic interests. Individual management plans incorporated information from the area descriptions.

Public informational sessions were jointly held by the Parties in the communities of Old Massett, Masset, Port Clements, Skidegate, Queen Charlotte and Sandspit in January 2010 as part of a series of public consultation sessions being held to implement ecosystem based management measures on Haida Gwaii. Protected area maps with proposed marine boundaries were shared with the public and information was provided regarding the management planning process, and what opportunities would exist for future public review and input.

In February, March and April 2010, draft management plans were developed for public review and presented at open houses held in Old Massett, Tlell, Skidegate and Sandspit. The public review drafts were also posted on the Haida Nation website and the BC Parks' website for broader comment and circulation.

2.0 Values of K'uuna Gwaay

2.1 Significance and Role in the Protected Areas System

K'uuna Gwaay:

- is an area rich with cultural values including village sites and seasonal camps, registered archaeological sites and cultural features within the forests;
- is part of an archipelago-wide system of protected areas that now protects half of the land base of Haida Gwaii;
- is inclusive of fossil beds and geological formations from antiquity;
- protects a pure limestone rock formation that crosses through the protected area and is conducive to the development of unique karst features and a variety of rare or sensitive ecosystems and endemic plants;
- has high value intertidal and kelp forest areas, numerous Peregrine Falcon nesting sites and spring/summer forage habitat for a variety of seabirds;
- has been a focus for research, restoration and educational programs for more than twenty five years on marine birds, marine mammals, and various introduced species and the long-term nature of this work may be unique on the west coast of North America;
- contains several internationally significant seabird nesting colonies; and,
- is on an important boating and recreational kayaking route to Gwaii Haanas that often includes an overnight stop in the area.

2.2 Cultural Heritage

The people of the Haida Nation have occupied and collected food and materials from K'uuna Gwaay since time immemorial.

This management plan does not have a complete or comprehensive listing of all cultural features or cultural inventory in the area. There are far more cultural features, many that are not inventoried, and other cultural values which are held in secret by the Haida Nation.

Several archaeological sites contain a diversity of cultural features including culturally modified trees (CMTs), subsurface shell middens, a habitation cave, a petroform, lithics, human remains and fire broken rock. Further work will undoubtedly reveal even more of these treasures.

The management plan provides for the continuance of Haida culture through traditional use of the area. Some examples of traditional use within K'uuna Gwaay include monumental cedar and cedar bark harvesting, seaweed harvesting, medicinal plant harvesting, hunting, fishing, trapping and food gathering. K'uuna Gwaay also provides the setting for spiritual use and the physical expression of culture through monumental art such as totems or establishment of traditional style infrastructure.

2.3 Natural Heritage

K'uuna Gwaay is within the Skidegate Plateau terrestrial ecosection (which is well represented by protected areas on Haida Gwaii), and classed as Coastal Western hemlock, Sub-montane wet hypermaritime (CWHwh1) according to the province's Biogeoclimatic Ecosystem Classification (BEC) system.

The marine component is within the Hecate Strait marine ecosection.

Several rare ecological communities are found in K'uuna Gwaay. For example, Jimmy Wilson Creek empties into Skedans Bay where it forms a locally rare Sitka spruce – Pacific reedgrass (*Picea sitchensis* – *Calamagrostis nutkaensis*) estuarine association (blue listed⁵) that is unique to the east coast of the archipelago.

The area is dominated by marine sandstone, with two outcrops of basaltic volcanic rocks near Vertical Point and Dass Point. Limestone Island is a deposit of pure limestone that consists of massive grey crystalline limestone. South Low Island also has a limestone outcrop. The limestone outcrops on Limestone Island, Vertical Point and South Low Island create unique habitats for rare and endemic plants. Mesozoic rock and fossils preserved on Haida Gwaii record a nearly complete uninterrupted span of geological time from the Late Triassic through Late Cretaceous. The fossil records provide a rare opportunity for glimpses into the distant past and provide insight of primal life on earth.

The deer-free status of Low and South Low islands allows for vegetation growth that is rarely found elsewhere on Haida Gwaii. K'uuna Gwaay contains other important ecological associations including:

- the Western redcedar-Sitka spruce/snake liverwort community (blue listed);
- the Western redcedar-Sitka spruce/Skunk cabbage community (blue listed);
- the Western redcedar-Sitka spruce/sword fern community (blue listed);
- the Sitka spruce/Tall trisetum community (red listed); and,
- the Sitka spruce/False lily-of-the-valley community (red listed).

K'uuna Gwaay contains fish-bearing streams that are known to host Sockeye Salmon, Coho Salmon, Chum Salmon, Pink Salmon, Steelhead, Dolly Varden and Cutthroat Trout. K'uuna Gwaay's recommended marine area is highly biologically diverse, and supplied 5% of the Haida Gwaii Rockfish fishery between 1995 and 2004 as well as 2% of Haida Gwaii's Geoduck fishery. The foreshore and marine environments also provide high value habitat for important marine species and include six Harbour Seal haulouts and three Stellar Sea Lion haulouts.

⁵ Blue list = list of ecological communities, and indigenous species and subspecies of special concern in B.C. Red list = list of ecological communities, and indigenous species and subspecies that are extirpated, endangered or threatened in B.C. (<http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/atrisk/faq3.html#1>).

Bird Studies Canada has identified the area as an Important Bird Area. The area hosts numerous listed species including 18 known Peregrine Falcon (blue listed) nesting sites, and important foraging habitat for Pelagic Cormorants (red listed), Ancient Murrelets (blue listed), Tufted Puffins (blue listed) and Marbled Murrelets (red listed). Within K'uuna Gwaay, Northern Goshawks (laingi subspecies – red listed) and Marbled Murrelets (red listed) may inhabit areas of old-growth forest (>250 years old).

Environment Canada, the Laskeek Bay Conservation Society (LBCS) and the Research Group on Introduced Species (RGIS) have monitored seabirds, shorebirds, marine mammals, and cavity nesting birds as well as conducted plant inventories on Limestone Island and surrounding areas. These studies have documented important ecological baselines and quantified impacts on native species from introduced species through academic and civilian science.

Researchers on East Limestone Island maintain cabins and tent sites for accommodation, and to mark and maintain research and interpretation trails. Public access is available through the educational and interpretive programs offered by LBCS and RGIS, and is limited in order to reduce impacts to nesting seabirds. Limestone Islands have an Ancient Murrelet seabird colony and nesting habitat for Pigeon Guillemots, Cassin's Auklets and Fork-tailed Storm Petrels. Bald Eagles, Peregrine Falcons, Saw-whet Owls, Sitka Black-tailed Deer and River Otters also utilize the islands.

The Research Group on Introduced Species (RGIS) maintains a camp on Reef Island. Reef Island is not easily accessed, but is visited for wildlife viewing, education and research. Reef Island contains important nesting habitat for various seabird species including Fork-tailed Storm Petrels, Glaucous-winged Gulls, Pigeon Guillemots, Ancient Murrelets and Cassin's Auklets. Other notable bird species that utilize the area include Bald Eagles, Marbled Murrelets, Peregrine Falcons, Black Oystercatchers, Common Ravens and Northwest Crows.

The Skedans Islands have been a part of a long-term scientific study on the impact of introduced Sitka Black-tailed Deer on the forest ecosystem of Haida Gwaii.

The remote location of K'uuna Gwaay provides an excellent opportunity to maintain biological diversity and natural environment values. Of on-going concern is the presence of introduced mammals. For example, Black-tailed Deer, Squirrels, Norway Rats and Raccoons pose a threat to local ecosystems and species. In addition, several non-native invasive plants have been recorded on Limestone Island including burdock spp., bull thistle, Canada thistle, sowthistle spp., and common crupina.

2.4 Recreation

The area is on an important boating and recreational kayaking route to Gwaii Haanas that often includes an overnight stop at Vertical Point. Visitors may tour the research stations on Limestone and Reef islands and learn about conservation issues and local ecology. Occasionally, whales or other marine mammals may be viewed in this area. Navigational

lights can be found on Haswell Island and Low Island. Recreational sites of interest include a Haida village site, old settlers' cabins, the Hawk's Nest mine site at Heming Head (where the old mine shaft can still be seen), and an anchorage located to the north of the Limestone Islands.

2.5 Respectful Use of Natural Values

The Haida trap throughout K'uuna Gwaay.

The province has issued one trapline license.

3.0 Management Direction

3.1 Vision

Haida culture is the interrelationship of people to the land.

K'uuna Gwaay will remain as the ancestors of the Haida Nation have known it. K'uuna Gwaay and the other protected areas continue to provide the sustenance and spiritual values to this and future generations.

K'uuna Gwaay contributes to the protection of nationally important seabird nesting colonies and rare terrestrial and intertidal ecosystems and biophysical features. The unique biogeography of K'uuna Gwaay supports on-going research, monitoring and educational programs that facilitate study and restoration of original ecosystem dynamics, and work towards elimination of introduced species.

Although recreational facilities are not well developed, boating, nature appreciation and wildlife viewing are activities enjoyed by Haida Gwaii residents and visitors alike whom are attracted to the natural beauty and wilderness qualities of the area.

3.2 Management Issues, Strategies and Performance Measures

Management strategies and objectives for K'uuna Gwaay have been identified through a thorough analysis of key issues that may affect the balance between protection and use. The management plan will always consider the well being of the lands and marine area first.

Knowledge, education and on-site monitoring will be primary tools of management.

The next stage of planning will be to develop site level management plans for select high use and sensitive areas.

Cultural Heritage

Key issues which may affect achievement of stated Haida cultural values in K'uuna Gwaay are described. These issues relate primarily to the need for detailed inventories of key values. Filling information gaps in the early stages will help prevent impacts from recreational use and other activities. Identified strategies focus on resolving or managing these issues (Table 1).

Table 1. Goals, Objectives, Issues, Strategies and Performance Measures for Cultural Heritage

Overall Management Goal: Preserve and maintain Haida social, ceremonial and cultural uses.

Objective	Issue	Strategy	Performance Measure
Identify, protect and maintain Haida cultural heritage features, archaeological sites and traditional use locations.	Many cultural heritage features, archaeological sites and traditional use locations are well documented, but information for some areas may be incomplete. Where there is limited information it is difficult to ensure that the values are protected.	Continue historical and ethnographic research, cultural heritage field mapping and inventory programs where knowledge gaps exist.	Completed historical and ethnographic research and cultural heritage field inventories.
	Certain uses can cause unintended disturbance to cultural heritage and traditional use sites and features.	Identify and report where cultural heritage features, archaeological sites and/or traditional use resources or sites exist within areas that have periodic human use.	Prior to any site specific development or within areas that receive recreational use, ensure cultural heritage sites and features identified.
		Identify and evaluate extent of threats and implement site specific protective measures for sensitive or special feature sites, such as those in Appendix 2, which may include: - marking areas as off-limits; - focusing use away from sites; - restricting aircraft access; - developing site level management plans for select high-use and culturally sensitive areas; - developing best management practices for aircraft, and pleasure craft activities in anchorages; and/or, - public information/interpretation initiatives.	Appropriate measures established at sensitive sites.
		Consider opportunities for monitoring activity at most vulnerable sites.	Monitoring of activities achieved.
Ensure that new uses are compatible with Haida traditional activities.	Many traditional and sustenance harvesting sites and activities are well documented, but information for some areas may be incomplete or withheld for traditional reasons and customs. Where there is limited information it is difficult to ensure that the values are protected.	Support efforts to identify and monitor traditional and sustenance harvesting sites and activities where knowledge gaps exist.	Completed inventories of traditional use and sustenance harvesting areas.
		Visitors respect traditional reasons and customs for privacy through dialogue and understanding with either Party.	Visitors are respectful people on the land.
	There are traditional cultural use activities that can benefit from monitoring or facilitation using existing Haida Nation programs.	Identify uses (such as cultural cedar harvesting) that benefit from continued facilitation from the Haida Nation to ensure sustainable and on-going access to traditional resources, recognizing that many activities are preferable to occur in non-protected areas.	Traditional users are engaged in specific uses and programs. Linkages are made with on-going Haida Nation and provincial administrative processes (such as the Haida Gwaii cultural wood permit process).
	Support local stewardship efforts to rebuild abalone populations.	Local stewardship efforts result in an abalone population increase.	

Natural Heritage

Key issues which may affect achievement of stated biological diversity objectives in K'uuna Gwaay have been identified. These issues relate primarily to the potential impacts from

introduced species, recreational use and commercial activities within K'uuna Gwaay, and working with conservation partners with their on-going research, monitoring and restoration programs and public outreach efforts. Identified strategies focus on resolving or managing these issues (Table 2).

Table 2. Goals, Objectives, Issues, Strategies and Performance Measures for Natural Heritage

Overall Management Goal: Protect and maintain the diversity of terrestrial, intertidal and marine ecosystems and contribute to ecological connectivity.			
Objective	Issue	Strategy	Performance Measure
Identify and protect regionally important, and provincially rare and at risk ecosystems, ecological communities and species.⁶	Lack of inventory values results in unintended impacts on the protected area's rare and at risk ecosystems, ecological communities and species.	Identify research and inventory needs. Support programs designed to fill information gaps with emphasis on rare and at risk ecosystems, ecological communities and species.	Number of initiatives underway that enhance information. Biological baseline developed and shared by EC, LBCS and RGIS provides foundation for programs.
		Collaborate with established research organizations to identify restoration initiatives for the areas' rare and at risk ecosystems and species. Particularly pertaining to logged riparian areas, nesting seabird habitat, and rare plant assemblages.	Comprehensive knowledge base achieved. Integrity of riparian/fish habitat, seabird nesting habitats, and rare plant assemblages restored/maintained.
	Marine bird breeding, nesting and foraging sites require special considerations during sensitive periods. There is evidence that current use is causing site-level disturbance and declines in the abundance and distribution of rare and at risk ecosystems, ecological communities and species.	Increase public and visitor awareness about seabird sensitivities and provide guidelines for appropriate conduct to avoid impacts in seabird areas.	Information package and guidelines available regarding seabird needs, approach standards, etc., and are utilized by public and commercial operators to minimize impacts.
		Where necessary, limit access to protect rare and at risk ecosystems, ecological communities and species such as nesting seabirds.	Access restrictions in place where appropriate.
		Support efforts to maintain integrity of seabird habitat, and minimize the risk of injury and mortality to seabirds.	Development does not occur within seabird nesting islands. Activities that alter shoreline and/or intertidal or inshore marine waters are prevented.
		Consider amending the Management Unit Type 4 boundaries if compelling new ecologically-based information indicates the need for revision to meet management intent and protect values.	Where sufficient rationale warrants revision, Management Unit Type 4 boundaries are amended.
	Introduced species are displacing and harming native flora and fauna. Specific	Evaluate presence, distribution and threat of introduced species.	Presence, distribution and threat of introduced species is documented.

⁶ To recognize the likely occurrence of distinctiveness on Haida Gwaii, rare is applied to Conservation Date Centre (CDC)-listed species and ecological communities as well as identified locally rare or at risk species and ecological communities.

Overall Management Goal: Protect and maintain the diversity of terrestrial, intertidal and marine ecosystems and contribute to ecological connectivity.

Objective	Issue	Strategy	Performance Measure
	concerns are related to deer browsing and predation of seabird colonies by rats and raccoons.	Undertake prevention initiatives and introduced species control programs on a co-ordinated and priority basis. Mechanical and biological methods are preferred. Monitor and report on efficacy of efforts.	Control programs in place. Target species controlled or removed. Disturbance and predation levels reduced. Monitoring reports completed.
		Support efforts in on-going introduced species research, education and public information programs.	Programs supported.
	Without knowing the effects of global climate change and sea level rise on ecosystems, ecological communities and species, it is difficult to know how to mitigate negative impacts to these values.	Support programs designed to monitor environmental change and impacts.	Monitoring programs supported.
		Initiate adaptive management practices and processes if required.	Adaptive management initiated.
Protect intertidal and subtidal habitat to help sustain the abundance and distribution of marine species.	Habitat and populations of marine intertidal and subtidal species are sensitive and are subject to adverse impacts from human activities.	Work with other agencies to monitor and, if necessary, consider limiting recreation and other activities.	Populations of intertidal and subtidal species are monitored and habitat sustained.
Protect paleontological resources.	A diversity of globally significant fossil beds from the Mesozoic era are well documented throughout K'uuna Gwaay. Removing these fossils threatens our understanding of the natural heritage of Haida Gwaii.	Support programs to educate public and visitors of the importance of paleontological resources remaining intact.	Public education and awareness is enhanced.
		Monitor and inventory fossil sites in K'uuna Gwaay.	Fossil sites remain intact.

Recreation

Key issues which may support provision for recreational opportunities in K'uuna Gwaay are described. These issues relate primarily to maintenance of access and potential impacts on stated cultural or ecological values from recreational use. Identified strategies focus on resolving or managing these issues (Table 3).

Table 3. Goals, Objectives, Issues, Strategies and Performance Measures for Recreation

Overall Management Goal: Provide for limited commercial and public recreational use in a natural environment.

Objective	Issue	Strategy	Performance Measure
Identify opportunities for appropriate wilderness recreation and identify any necessary associated facilities.	There is a need to determine appropriate and respectful approaches to recreational visits in K'uuna Gwaay. Where there is limited information it is difficult to ensure that the values are protected.	Develop a baseline inventory of structures and current and potential recreational uses, with emphasis on use or sites near cultural or natural features of interest.	Completed baseline inventory of recreational opportunities, structures and use.
	Existing infrastructure requires on-going maintenance.	Implement a Backcountry Recreational Impact Monitoring (BRIM) assessment on any current recreation sites.	Bi-annual backcountry site inspections completed with BRIM reports every four years.
		On East Limestone and Reef islands, small scale infrastructure is user maintained to support use related to research and public interpretation activities (e.g., cabins, tent sites, outhouses).	Maintenance of existing small scale on-shore infrastructure is achieved by users.
	Determine long-term visitor use infrastructure maintenance or development needs.	Long-term visitor use infrastructure maintenance and development needs analyzed.	
The current level of public awareness of available recreation opportunities affects the ability to meet economic objectives.	Identify recreation opportunities and facilities in promotional and marketing materials in consideration of existing cultural activities.	Development and distribution of promotional information and materials.	
Provide limited facilities for low impact and low wilderness recreation opportunities.	Frequent air access (e.g., helicopters and float planes) causes disturbance to seabirds or marine mammals.	Develop permit conditions under a Haida Gwaii protected area management agreement by the Parties when in place that allows for some aircraft access to East Limestone Island.	Seabirds and marine mammals remain unimpacted by commercial aircraft trips.
	Recreational use can impact other heritage and natural values.	Develop criteria to ensure recreational use is compatible with the cultural and natural heritage features or values.	Criteria are developed to determine acceptable limits and avoidance of impacts, and BRIM reports are used to inform adaptive management on a site specific basis.
		If required, develop a site level management plan for Vertical Point where high visitor use may overlap with natural values and a culturally sensitive area.	Site level management plan completed for Vertical Point if required.
	Tourism in K'uuna Gwaay provides limited benefits to the people of Haida Gwaii.	Provide young people with the requirements in guiding and career opportunities related to K'uuna Gwaay.	K'uuna Gwaay is relevant to island youth.
		Encourage companies to utilize residents and local services in the use of K'uuna Gwaay.	Increase in the number of local opportunities.
		Develop opportunities for cultural interpretation and guiding services.	Increase in the number of local opportunities.
		Assist in the diversification of local economies.	K'uuna Gwaay becomes an asset to the Haida Gwaii economy.

Respectful Use of Natural Values

Key issues which may affect achievement of stated objectives related to the respectful use of K'uuna Gwaay relate primarily to the potential conflict between the use of and potential

impacts on the cultural and natural and values that have been identified. Identified strategies focus on resolving or managing these issues (Table 4).

Table 4. Goals, Objectives, Issues, Strategies and Performance Measures for Respectful Use of Natural Values⁷

Overall Management Goal: Provide for compatible opportunities where appropriate.				
Objective	Issue	Strategy	Performance Measure	
Identify appropriate uses and support the delivery of local economic benefits.	Small-scale ⁸ tree removal is an acceptable management option when required for human health and safety, or to facilitate approved development, or for ecological restoration or forest health management projects.	Identify appropriate opportunities for small-scale tree removal.	All projects compliant with management plan direction.	
	Current and future commercial uses by the Haida Nation including infrastructure development may be needed to enhance the visitor experience.	Proposals will be subject to meeting the goals, objectives and protection of values outlined in this management plan.	Visitor experience is enhanced by cultural infrastructure.	
	Harvest of forest botanicals ⁹ by Haida medicinal practitioners will continue in K'uuna Gwaay. Any harvesting of forest botanicals by others can be permitted if the harvest is sustainable and will not impact identified values or conflict with other management objectives.	Authorizations will not be issued to any individual that may compromise the natural values.	Monitor harvest levels for different botanicals.	
		Specific proposals for access will be considered in the context of maintaining cultural and natural values.	All proposals are compliant with management plan direction.	
		To guide conditions for commercial permit approvals, consider method and scale of harvest (quantity over area), location (to gauge degree of compatibility with traditional or recreational users), and level of benefit to local economy.	Commercial use is consistent with balancing traditional/sustenance use, ecosystem integrity and local economic benefit.	
	Harvest of marine plants (including seaweed), herring spawn on kelp, or shellfish by Haidas will continue in K'uuna Gwaay. Harvesting by others can be permitted if the harvest is sustainable and will not impact identified values or conflict with other management objectives.	Specific proposals for access will be considered in the context of maintaining cultural and natural values.	All proposals are compliant with management plan direction.	
		To guide conditions for commercial permit approvals, consider method and scale of harvest (quantity over area), location (to gauge degree of compatibility with traditional/sustenance use), and level of benefit to local economy.	Commercial use is consistent with balancing traditional/sustenance use, ecosystem integrity, and local economic benefit.	
		Commercial marine harvest activities will not be permitted in Management Unit Type 1 or Management Unit Type 4.	Commercial marine harvest does not occur in Management Unit Type 1 or Management Unit Type 4.	
	The nature of economic benefits for	Utilize an appropriate government to	Develop and maintain an economic plan	

⁷ Natural resource uses and developments must be consistent with the cultural, natural and recreational purposes of K'uuna Gwaay.

⁸ A few trees, or less than 1 hectare in area.

⁹ Forest botanicals are non-timber-based products gathered from forest and range land with seven recognized categories: wild edible mushrooms, floral greenery, medicinal products, fruits and berries, herbs and vegetables, landscaping products, and craft products.

Overall Management Goal: Provide for compatible opportunities where appropriate.

Objective	Issue	Strategy	Performance Measure
	the Haida Nation in K'uuna Gwaay has not yet been defined.	government forum to access economic opportunities for the Haida Nation.	for protected areas on Haida Gwaii that assists Haida individuals and businesses to take advantage of economic and employment opportunities.

3.3 Zoning

Zoning assists in the planning and management of protected areas. In general terms, zoning divides an area into logical units to apply consistent management objectives. The management units identified in K'uuna Gwaay are in accordance with Haida Gwaii Yah'guudang - respect for all living things - and reflect the intended land use, the acceptable level of development and use, and the level of management required (Figure 3).

The following three units have been identified within K'uuna Gwaay and uses that have been deemed as appropriate for each of the units are identified in Appendix 1.

Management Unit Type 1

Management Unit Type 1¹⁰ is an area within K'uuna Gwaay where the primary goal is to protect and maintain Haida cultural values, and provide for social and ceremonial uses within the natural environment.

The purpose of the unit is to protect these significant features in the context of a living Haida culture. Sensitive heritage special feature sites are identified in Appendix 2. These sites are for cultural and spiritual use including the special use by youth and elders. These areas will receive site level management plans and protective measures which may include: restricting and/or limiting access or the development of best management practices for aircraft and pleasure craft activities in anchorages.

Management activities in this unit will focus on protecting cultural and natural heritage values. Management efforts will be directed to ensuring that access and the use of this area occurs in such a way that the cultural and natural heritage values are maintained.

Management Unit Type 4

The purpose of Management Unit Type 4¹¹ is to maintain intact ecological processes and protect the outstanding natural biological diversity found within this area.

¹⁰ This unit corresponds to the BC Parks Cultural Zone.

¹¹ This unit corresponds to the BC Parks Special Feature Zone.

This unit is established with the intent to protect habitat for nesting seabirds, and reflects a range of nesting habitat (including previously identified Wildlife Habitat Areas) and Low and South Low islands. A secondary objective will be to provide opportunities for limited wilderness recreation if compatible with the intent of this unit.

The management activities in this unit will focus on maintaining natural biodiversity and ecological processes, and protecting the habitat for the internationally significant populations of nesting seabirds.

Management Unit Type 5

The intent of the Management Unit Type 5¹² in K'uuna Gwaay is to protect Haida cultural features and access for social and ceremonial uses, and maintain natural biodiversity and ecological processes. This unit also allows for the enjoyment of the natural environment where compatible with the cultural and natural values. Low impact activities, such as no trace hiking are appropriate.

Management activities in the unit will focus on efforts to maintain and sustain cultural use, natural biodiversity and ecological processes, and protecting habitat for species. Additionally, a secondary objective will be to manage for some development or use of natural resources while maintaining opportunities for commercial and public recreation.

¹² This unit corresponds to the BC Parks Nature Recreation Zone.



Figure 3. K'uuna Gwaay Management Zones Map

4.0 Plan Implementation

Implementation of the K'uuna Gwaay Management Plan will involve identifying strategies and achieving stated performance measures, while focusing on implementing high priority strategies. Strategies and performance measures will be prioritized in terms of cost, feasibility and overall benefit to management.

4.1 Implementation Resources

The Parties will develop and maintain a collaborative workplan for the protected areas. Items to be included in the workplan will include a description of the resources available during a given time period including staff and any additional operating or project funds that may support identified initiatives. The Haida Nation will dedicate staff and resources as funding allocations permit. The Ministry of Environment will seek project-specific funding to implement priority strategies and monitor key performance measures, subject to provincial funding availability. Specific projects will be evaluated for priority in relation to the overall protected areas system. Many of the initiatives contemplated are not funded as part of core ministry activities so jointly seeking funds from available funding sources either provincially or externally will be considered.

Permit holders will be required to collect and provide information related to performance measures and the overall state of K'uuna Gwaay. Such requirements will be defined in approved permits and in any protocols between the Haida Nation and the permittee.

4.2 Priority Implementation

As part of developing on-going workplans, priorities will be developed for the implementation of strategies and performance measures. A key priority is to implement management strategies which support cultural use and cultural inventory information. These priorities will be developed based on Haida Nation and provincial interests taking into account the requirements of other protected areas on Haida Gwaii such as developing baseline data to support management strategies.

4.3 Reporting

The Parties will prepare a summary bi-annual report describing progress on implementation of protected area management plans.

4.4 Management Plan Review

In order to ensure that the management of K'uuna Gwaay remains relevant and effective, an adaptive management approach will be used. Adaptive management involves a five-step

process of planning, action, monitoring, evaluation and revision of the management plan to reflect lessons learned, changing circumstances and/or objectives achieved.

The management plan will be reviewed as required by the Parties and may be affirmed, revised, or amended by written agreement. A review of the management plan should generally be triggered by the complexities of the management issues in the protected area and/or a significant change in circumstances (e.g., a natural disaster, major environmental change or discovery of a major new archaeological site), and not by a specific time period.

A management plan review looks for any necessary updates to the management plan that are required to keep management direction current and relevant, correct the intent of a policy statement or address some error or omission. 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 Uses Chart

The following table lists existing and potential future uses or activities in K'uuna Gwaay. However, it is not an exhaustive list of all uses that may be considered in this protected area. The table also indicates the uses which the management planning process has confirmed are not appropriate in K'uuna Gwaay. Additionally, a permit cannot be issued for commercial logging, mining, or hydroelectric power generation, other than local run-of-the-river projects that supply power to approved uses in K'uuna Gwaay or nearby communities that do not otherwise have access to hydro-electric power.

The table must be reviewed in conjunction with the other sections of the management plan, including the descriptions, vision, objectives and strategies. Uses are subject to existing policies and any relevant impact assessment processes.

Activity/Facility	Management Unit		
	Type 1 ¹³	Type 4 ¹⁴	Type 5 ¹⁵
Cultural Heritage			
Cultural, Ceremonial, Food Gathering and Social Uses	Y	Y	Y
Cultural Infrastructure (facility-based)	Y	N	Y
Natural Heritage			
Fire Management ¹⁶	Y	Y	Y
Forest Insect/Disease Control	Y	Y	Y
Noxious Weed Control	Y	Y	Y
Scientific Research	Y	Y	Y
Recreation			
Administrative Buildings and Compounds	N	N2 ¹⁷	N
Aircraft Access	Y	Y	Y
Anchorage	Y	Y ¹⁸	Y
Backcountry Huts and Shelters	N	N2	N
Boat Launches	N	N	N
Boating (Motorized)	Y	Y	Y
Boating (Non-motorized)	Y	Y	Y
Camping – backcountry or boat accessible	Y	N2 ¹⁹	Y
Campsites and Picnic Areas – road accessible	N	N	N
Commercial Recreation (facility-based)	N	N	N

¹³ This unit covers 1,109 hectares of land and 1,153 hectares of marine foreshore in K'uuna Gwaay.

¹⁴ This unit covers 342 hectares of land and 68 hectares of marine foreshore in K'uuna Gwaay.

¹⁵ This unit covers 655 hectares of land and 11,951 hectares of marine foreshore in K'uuna Gwaay.

¹⁶ As per the fire management plan.

¹⁷ Existing structures only on East Limestone and Reef islands used by on-going research programs.

¹⁸ Permitted, but not encouraged.

¹⁹ Existing activities only on East Limestone and Reef islands used by on-going research programs.

Activity/Facility	Management Unit		
	Type 1 ¹³	Type 4 ¹⁴	Type 5 ¹⁵
Commercial Recreation (no facilities)	Y	Y	Y
Fishing	Y	Y	Y
Heli-hiking	N	N	N
Hiking/Backpacking/Walking	Y	N	Y
Hunting ²⁰	Y	Y	Y
Interpretation and Information Buildings / Signs	Y	N1	Y
Mechanized Off-road Access (non-motorized – i.e., mountain biking)	N	N	N
Motorized Off-road Access (i.e., 4x4, motorcycles)	N	N	N
Pack Animal Use	N	N	N
Trails (hiking)	Y	N1 ²¹	Y
Wharves/docks	N	N	N
Wildlife/Nature Viewing	Y	Y	Y
Respectful Use of Natural Values			
Angling Guiding	Y	Y	Y
Aquaculture (finfish)	N	N	N
Aquaculture (shellfish)	N	N	Y
Commercial Botanical Forest Products	N	N	Y
Commercial Filming	Y	Y	Y
Commercial Marine Plant Harvesting	N	N	Y
Commercial Herring Spawn on Kelp	N	N	Y
Communication Sites	N	N	N
Grazing (domestic livestock)	N	N	N
Guide Outfitting ²²	Y	Y	Y
Independent Hydro Electric Power Projects & Infrastructure	N	N	N
Marine-based Manufactured Log Recovery	Y	Y	Y
Trapping	Y	Y	Y

- Y Appropriate
N Not appropriate
N1 Not appropriate except for expressed management purposes as identified in the Management Plan
N2 Not appropriate, but if the specific activity or facility existed at the time of establishment of the protected area, it is normally appropriate for it to continue
N/A Not applicable

²⁰ The management of black bear hunting will be consistent with outcomes of negotiations between the Council of the Haida Nation and Province of British Columbia. If required, changes will be reflected in amendments to this management plan.

²¹ For research and interpretation purposes only.

²² The guide outfitting certificate is owned by the Council of the Haida Nation. There will be no commercial black bear hunting.

Appendix 2 – Heritage Special Feature Sites



K' uuna Gwaay Management Plan

Approved by:



April Churchill
Vice President of the Haida Nation

July 29, 2011

Date



Brian Bawtinheimer
Director, Parks Planning & Management Branch
BC Parks

August 2, 2011

Date

Back Cover Photo: Berry Wijdeve

