



Qwiquallaq/Boat Bay Conservancy Management Plan

January 2013

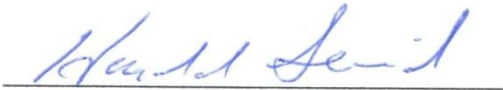


Mamalilikulla -
Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em First
Nation



Qwiquallaaq/Boat Bay Conservancy Management Plan

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Management Plan Purpose

Conservancies are set aside for four main purposes:

- for the protection and maintenance of their biological diversity and natural environments;
- for the preservation and maintenance of social, ceremonial and cultural uses of First Nations;
- for protection and maintenance of their recreational values; and,
- to ensure that development or use of their natural resources occurs in a sustainable manner consistent with the purposes above.

This management plan sets out the long-term direction for Qwiquallaaq/Boat Bay Conservancy and provides guidance for how the conservancy will be managed.

In 2006, the provincial government and First Nations across the province initiated a new relationship. On the central coast, a collaborative approach has been taken with regards to management planning and operation of protected areas. This management plan establishes the foundation and charts the course for the ongoing collaborative management of the conservancy by the Mamalilikulla-Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em First Nation and BC Parks.

The management plan identifies the conservancy's important cultural heritage, natural, and recreational values, and presents a vision for the future of the conservancy. As well, the management plan:

- addresses current issues affecting the long-term vision for the conservancy;
- guides day-to-day management for the protection of cultural heritage, natural and recreational values;
- identifies appropriate types of recreational activities;
- identifies zones; and,
- provides management direction related to allowable activities and acceptable uses of the conservancy's natural resources.

1.2 Planning Area

Qwiquallaaq/Boat Bay Conservancy was established on May 31, 2007 pursuant to the *Parks and Protected Areas Statutes Amendment Act, 2007*. The conservancy is named and described in Schedule E of the *Protected Areas of British Columbia Act* and is administered under the *Park Act*.

Qwiquallaaq/Boat Bay Conservancy is located 72 kilometres southeast of Port Hardy, 103 kilometres northwest of Campbell River, and 300 kilometres northwest of Vancouver, in the

southern central coast of British Columbia. The conservancy encompasses 639 hectares of forested land on the western end of West Cracroft Island, including Boat Bay, Growler Cove, Cracroft Point and the Sophia Islands (Figure 1). This management plan recommends the addition of approximately 768 hectares of marine foreshore to the conservancy.

Qwiquallaaq, in the First Nation's language, means "twisted center" or "funnel". The conservancy is situated at the point where the land begins to funnel the ocean through the northern end of Johnstone Strait and the upwelling of currents produces a rich marine environment.

Qwiquallaaq is shared territory of the Mamalilikulla - Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em First Nation and Tlowitsis First Nation. Of these two First Nations, the Tlowitsis First Nation is the only one currently involved in comprehensive treaty negotiations with Canada and British Columbia. British Columbia recognizes that protected area status does not prevent a First Nation from identifying these lands as areas of interest in the treaty process.

Other ecological reserves, provincial parks and conservancies nearby include Robson Bight (Michael Bigg) Ecological Reserve, Lower Tsitika Park, Broughton Archipelago Park and Broughton Archipelago Conservancy.

1.3 Management Commitments

Collaborative Management

A collaborative management agreement (CMA) between the Mamalilikulla-Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em First Nation and BC Parks outlines the relationship that the Mamalilikulla-Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em and the province have in the planning and management of protected areas within Mamalilikulla-Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em First Nation Traditional Territory. The CMA commits the parties to plan, manage and use these protected areas in a manner that:

- recognizes and affirms aboriginal rights and provides the First Nation with continued access to land and resources necessary to exercise these rights, subject to measures necessary for conservation and public safety;
- protects natural, cultural and recreational values for future generations;
- provides the First Nation with enhanced access to economic opportunities in the protected areas that are compatible with the protection of natural, cultural and recreational values;
- integrates ecosystem-based science and traditional ecological knowledge;
- builds capacity and provides opportunities for the First Nation to be involved in the planning, management and use of the protected areas;
- promotes communication between BC Parks and the First Nation; and,
- makes the protected areas available for the use, recreation and enjoyment of all British Columbians.

Land Use Planning

The Central Coast Land and Resource Management Plan (CCLRMP) identified Qwiquallaaq/Boat Bay Conservancy for protection and recommended that the principles of ecosystem based management (EBM) be applied to land management throughout the central coast, including conservancies. The two overarching goals of EBM are to maintain the ecological integrity of terrestrial, marine and freshwater ecosystems, and achieve high levels of human well being. The CCLRMP identified protection of backcountry tourism and recreation values as a primary role for Qwiquallaaq/Boat Bay Conservancy, as well as research opportunities associated with Killer Whales and Robson Bight.

In the land use planning agreement-in-principle (AIP) signed in 2006 between the province and the First Nations of the southern central coast, the parties agreed on the primary roles for the Qwiquallaaq/Boat Bay Conservancy: cultural heritage use and habitat conservation/protection. The AIP lists ecosystem representation and recreation as secondary roles for the conservancy. Boat Bay was also included previously in a planning unit in the North Island Straits Coastal Plan, which recommended conservation as a priority for Boat Bay. This plan also noted the role of this area in reducing the impact of seasonal boating traffic in Robson Bight (Michael Bigg) Ecological Reserve, by offering viewing locations at an appropriate distance from the Killer Whales on the rubbing beaches at Robson Bight.

In this management plan, the primary roles for Qwiquallaaq/Boat Bay Conservancy have been adopted from the agreement-in-principle (2006), with the key roles recommended in the CCLRMP (2004) included as secondary roles. At the time that the central coast conservancies were announced, the Minister of the Environment also made a commitment that existing, tenured uses may continue.

1.4 Adjacent Patterns of Use

The lands adjacent to the conservancy are currently under forestry tenures to TimberWest and Western Forest Products. There is also a navigational beacon on a small parcel of land at Swaine Point that is excluded from the conservancy.

Johnstone Strait is a key travel corridor through the sheltered east side of Vancouver Island. Cruise ships, transport barges, motor boats, kayaks and sailboats all utilize the waters off the conservancy as a marine corridor to travel north into Queen Charlotte Strait or south to the Strait of Georgia.

In addition, there are commercial salmon troll, gillnet and seine fisheries, as well as prawn and crab fisheries in the vicinity of the conservancy. There are also two Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) Rockfish Conservation Areas (RCAs) within the foreshore adjacent to the conservancy, one at Cracroft Point/Growler Cove and the other at Boat Bay (Figure 1).

2.0 Roles and Values of the Conservancy

As identified in the land use planning agreement-in-principle between the province and the First Nations of the southern central coast, the primary roles of Qwiquallaaq/Boat Bay Conservancy are cultural heritage use and habitat conservation/protection. Secondary roles of Qwiquallaaq/ Boat Bay Conservancy are to protect backcountry tourism and recreation values, and provide research opportunities associated with whales and Robson Bight.

Qwiquallaaq/Boat Bay Conservancy is significant in the protected areas system for the following reasons:

- the conservancy is culturally significant to the Mamalilikulla-Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em First Nation as a seasonal resource gathering location, a rest stop on former trading journeys through the traditional territory, and an important area for the highly respected Killer Whales (maḵ'inuḵ);
- the conservancy and recommended foreshore addition protect a nutrient rich, dynamic and highly productive stretch of coastline, including kelp and seagrass beds, in the Outer Fjordlands and Johnstone Strait Ecosections, as well as a diversity of wildlife species, including globally significant Killer Whale populations, Dall's Porpoises, provincially blue-listed Harbour Porpoises and Pacific White-sided Dolphins, migratory salmon, rockfish and a variety of at risk coastal bird species;
- the conservancy contributes to filling a gap in the representation of the Coastal Western Hemlock very wet maritime biogeoclimatic variant within the Outer Fjordlands (OUF) Ecosection;
- the conservancy offers a range of day use and overnight camping opportunities for kayakers and provides a safe anchorage for boaters travelling through Johnstone Strait;
- Killer Whale research and monitoring activities are also ongoing in the conservancy.

This section describes the cultural heritage, natural, recreational and resource values for both the existing conservancy and the recommended foreshore addition.

2.1 Cultural Heritage

Qwiquallaaq/Boat Bay Conservancy was traditionally used by many First Nations as a stopover site for journeys through the key travel corridor known as the funnel, which connects the northern Kwakwaka'wakw villages to the communities in the south. Boat Harbour, or Boat Bay as it is now called, is a small cove affording shelter for canoes and an ideal location for a break from a long journey. Mamalilikulla-Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em elders' accounts of the conservancy suggest that this area was utilized as a rest stop and camping spot for trading journeys to and from village sites, and for travel to seasonal resource gathering areas. In the 1994 Tribal Journeys, First Nations communities from up and down

the coast travelled to Victoria for the Commonwealth Games, once again using Boat Bay as a rest stop.

Qwiquallaaq/Boat Bay Conservancy was also an important seasonal resource harvesting location and part of a larger network of important sites in the First Nations' annual food gathering cycle. Nutrient upwelling caused by the interaction of currents and tides in this unique area contributes to a rich diversity of marine and bird life. A variety of marine plants, crabs, clams, ground fish, and rockfish can be found here. At different times of the year, seals, sea lions, herring, salmon, porpoises, whales and many bird species congregate in this area to feed and breed. This resource rich funnel is considered by some Mamalilikulla-Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em families to serve as the local grocery store. Petroglyphs found in the vicinity of Qwiquallaaq/Boat Bay Conservancy demonstrate the significance of the area to the First Nations that utilized this location.



Figure 2. First Nations travelling in Johnstone Strait¹

Resources such as eelgrass (t'sat'sa'yam), a grass-like plant that grows in sheltered bays, were once found in abundance in Growler Cove and used communally for food. The eelgrass was gathered as a vegetable and was obtained by twisting a pole among the leaves and pulling it up by hand, or collecting it at low tide. The tender shoots and rhizomes were eaten fresh and uncooked. The blades were placed in the sun to dry and then stored in boxes for winter use.

Giant bull kelp was also collected and used by the Mamalilikulla-Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em at Qwiquallaaq/Boat Bay Conservancy. The long hollow kelp stems were used for storing eulachon grease and other kinds of fish oil, and used to make strong ropes, fishing lines, nets and harpoon lines.

The Killer Whale (max'inux) is common in the vicinity of Qwiquallaaq/Boat Bay Conservancy and is a highly respected animal within Kwakwaka'wakw culture. Many stories, songs, masks and dances refer to the Killer Whale. Elders insist that the max'inux need to be respected and never taunted or disturbed in any way. It was believed that people who were sick and saw a Killer Whale should go to the shore and take a mouthful of sea water and blow it towards the max'inux. Then they should ask the max'inux to take the sickness away, addressing the max'inux as the long-life-maker.

¹ Source: Edward Curtis, 1914.

“We have a responsibility to our people to care for this creation where we are living. The max’inux are our ancestors, their spirits transformed, and have come back to see that the environment is being taken care of.” (Elder / Ninogad)



Figure 3. Killer Whale near Robson Bight

One Killer Whale story sees Sugwalis (a powerful Chief) changed into max’inux. In the story, “he felt his body grow long and very powerful. His arms became broad like huge paddles. A light kick of his legs, now stuck together, sent him racing ahead. He thanked Kwanikwalakw (the Transformer), took a deep breath, and dove.”²

It is believed by many First Nations that important members of their communities come back in the spirit form of the Killer Whale. Qwiquallaaq/Boat Bay Conservancy is an important place, as the Killer Whales frequent this area for its abundant food resources and for the rubbing beaches in Robson Bight (Michael Bigg) Ecological Reserve.

The First Nations’ cultural and spiritual connection to the surroundings of this great place includes the power of the Killer Whale, as seen in the artwork and culture throughout the region. Travelling with guidance from the ancestors, the max’inux is an important part of any journey. To this day, the Killer Whale brings back ancient memories of the dances, songs and stories that were passed on from generation to generation about this powerful and awesome creature.

2.2 Biological Diversity and Natural Environment

Qwiquallaaq/Boat Bay Conservancy makes a significant contribution to the protection of biodiversity and ecological values in British Columbia. The conservancy is situated in a dynamic and highly productive marine environment at the convergence of Johnstone Strait, Queen Charlotte Strait and Knight Inlet. The exposed bluffs, rocky points, protected bays, coves and small offshore islands in the conservancy support a variety of habitats and

² BC Ministry of Education, 1997.

species. Strong currents and tides in Johnstone Strait also create nutrient rich habitats for marine species that are recognized for their biological, cultural and economic values.

The conservancy and recommended foreshore addition are important for the protection of:

- kelp and seagrass beds;
- Killer Whales, Harbour Porpoises, and other marine mammals;
- migratory salmon and rockfish; and,
- provincially red and blue-listed³ coastal bird species.

Ecosystem Representation

The conservancy contributes to filling a gap in the representation of the Coastal Western Hemlock very wet maritime biogeoclimatic variant within the Outer Fjordlands (OUF) Ecosystem. With the recommended foreshore addition, Qwiqallaaq/Boat Bay Conservancy would also make an important contribution to the representation of the Johnstone Strait (JOS) Ecosystem in the provincial protected areas system.

British Columbia's ecoregion classification system divides the province into areas of similar climate, physiography, oceanography, hydrology, vegetation and wildlife potential. Ecosystems are the narrowest in scope of the geographic units within this classification system. The terrestrial portion of Qwiqallaaq/Boat Bay Conservancy (639 hectares) is within the Outer Fjordland Ecosystem (OUF). The OUF Ecosystem is an area of rugged, low relief, consisting of inlets, sounds, islands and peninsulas, east of Johnstone Strait and Seymour Narrows. The conservancy makes a minimal contribution (0.15%) to the protection of the OUF Ecosystem in British Columbia (435,923 hectares).

The marine foreshore recommended for inclusion in the conservancy (768 hectares) is within the Johnstone Strait Marine Ecosystem (JOS). The JOS Marine Ecosystem is characterized by protected coastal waters in narrow, restricted channels. Approximately 4.23% of this ecosystem is protected in the province. The recommended foreshore addition in Qwiqallaaq/Boat Bay Conservancy would make an important contribution (7.51%) to the area of this marine ecosystem currently within provincial protected areas (10,220 hectares) (Table 1).

Within terrestrial ecoregions, there are biogeoclimatic (BEC) zones where specific types of soils, plant and animal communities, and aquatic systems develop. The terrestrial component of Qwiqallaaq/Boat Bay Conservancy protects 639 hectares of the Coastal Western Hemlock submontane very wet maritime biogeoclimatic variant (CWHvm1). The conservancy makes a minimal contribution (0.22%) to the area of CWHvm1 currently within protected areas in the province (292,837 hectares) (Table 1).

³ Species and ecological communities are assigned to the red or blue list on the basis of the provincial Conservation Status Rank (SRANK) assigned by the B.C. Conservation Data Centre. The red list includes species/ecological communities that are extirpated, endangered or threatened. The blue list contains species/ecological communities that are considered to be of special concern.

Table 1. Terrestrial Biogeoclimatic Zone and Marine Ecorepresentation.

Biogeoclimatic (BEC) Variant or Marine Ecorepresentation	Total Area of BEC Variant or Marine Ecorepresentation in B.C. (ha)	Total Area of BEC Variant or Marine Ecorepresentation in Protected Areas (ha)	Percent of BEC Variant or Marine Ecorepresentation that is Protected	Total Area of BEC Variant or Marine Ecorepresentation in the Conservancy (ha)	Percent of Province-wide Protection of BEC Variant or Marine Ecorepresentation in this Conservancy
CWHvm1	2,017,377	292,837	14.52	639	0.22
JOS Ecorepresentation	241,826	10,220	4.23	768*	7.51*

*This area is within the recommended foreshore addition and is not yet included in the conservancy.

Kelp and Seagrass Beds

Kelp beds are located in several sites in the foreshore adjacent to the conservancy, including Cracroft Point, Growler Cove, Baronet Passage and the Sophia Islands. Seagrass beds, dominated by eelgrass, are located in Growler Cove and on the north side of Cracroft Point.

As globally significant, productive and diverse ecosystems, kelp and seagrass beds serve as nursery areas for juvenile fish and support complex food webs, involving a diversity of invertebrates, fish, birds, and mammals. The kelp and seagrass beds in Growler Cove and along the north side of Cracroft Point are also recognized for their historically large Dungeness Crab populations.

Marine Mammals

The marine area surrounding the conservancy is frequented by two globally significant Killer Whale populations: the provincially blue-listed Northern Resident and the provincially red-listed West Coast Transient. Both populations are also listed as threatened under the federal *Species at Risk Act*. The conservancy is at the centre of the range of critical habitat for these resident Killer Whale pods. A blue-listed (threatened) Northeast Pacific Offshore Killer Whale population also visits the area less frequently.

As predators of salmon and marine mammals, Killer Whales are a keystone species and an indicator of overall marine ecosystem health. The conservancy is located directly across Johnstone Strait from the rubbing beaches at Robson Bight (Michael Bigg) Ecological Reserve, which are used by the majority of the Killer Whales in the strait between June and November. The conservancy offers Killer Whale viewing locations at an appropriate distance from these rubbing beaches at Robson Bight (Michael Bigg) Ecological Reserve, helping to minimize disturbance of the whales.

Other at risk whale species observed in the vicinity of the conservancy include Humpback Whales and Grey Whales, both provincially blue-listed species and federal species of special concern. As well, there are Dall’s Porpoises, Harbour Porpoises (blue-listed; special concern), Pacific White-sided Dolphins (blue-listed), and Minke Whales in the vicinity of the conservancy. The marine area adjacent to the conservancy is also significant as a calving ground for Dall’s Porpoise.

Harbour Seals and Stellar Sea Lions (blue-listed; special concern) are present in large numbers in the vicinity of the conservancy. California Sea Lions, Northern Elephant Seals and Northern Fur Seals (blue-listed) have also been seen on occasion by wildlife viewing tour operators.

Fish

Many fish species, including all five species of Pacific salmon, are present in the marine area adjacent to the conservancy. The conservancy foreshore serves as a resting and holding area for migrating salmon returning from the Pacific Ocean to the Fraser River between July and October. Out-migrating juvenile salmon also utilize the kelp and seagrass beds in the conservancy foreshore. In addition, there are two Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) Rockfish Conservation Areas (RCAs) within the foreshore adjacent to the conservancy, one at Cracroft Point/Growler Cove and the other at Boat Bay (Figure 1). Rockfish Conservation Areas prohibit recreational and commercial harvesting of rockfish to support the recovery of populations of inshore rockfish found within British Columbia's marine waters.⁴

Birds

Bald Eagles, Osprey and Great Blue Herons (blue-listed; special concern) are known to reside in the area. There have also been reported observations of a number of red and blue-listed bird species, including the Northern Goshawk (threatened), Marbled Murrelet (threatened), Common Murre, Peregrine Falcon (threatened), Sandhill Crane, Tufted Puffin and Band-tailed Pigeon.

Other Significant Wildlife and Plant Species

Visitor observations indicate that Black Bear, Grizzly Bear, Cougar, and Grey Wolf may be present infrequently on West Cracroft Island. An observation of Roosevelt Elk (blue-listed) has also been reported.

2.3 Recreation

Tourism and recreational activity have increased considerably in recent years in Qwiqallaaq/Boat Bay Conservancy, beginning with an increase in sports fishing activity in the area. In the 1980s, there were small numbers of kayakers but few campsites. In the 1990s and early 2000s, there was a rapid expansion in tourism and the area around Boat Bay became a popular summer outdoor recreation destination. Opportunities to view Killer Whales and other marine wildlife are a key attraction in this area of Johnstone Strait.

⁴ Other recreational and commercial fishing restrictions also apply. Information on Rockfish Conservation Areas (RCAs) is available on the Fisheries and Oceans Canada RCA web page at <http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/maps-cartes/rca-acis/index-eng.htm>

Tourism and recreational use of the conservancy is marine-oriented, with limited use of the upland. The conservancy protects a number of significant recreational values, including scenic views, campsites and boat anchorages. A key use of the conservancy is as a base for viewing and studying Killer Whales and other marine wildlife.

Kayaking, recreational boating, sport fishing and camping are significant recreational uses of the conservancy and adjacent foreshore. Kayakers use the many rudimentary campgrounds and picnic sites along the shoreline and within the Sophia Islands. Sport fishers also use the foreshore to the north of the conservancy (Baronet Passage) during salmon season.

Recreational boaters find shelter in Growler Cove, Pig Ranch or Boat Bay as they cruise Johnstone Strait, often en route to the Inside Passage and other northern locations. There is an identified boat haven in Growler Cove with two anchorage sites, one just outside the cove and one near the head of the cove. There is also an identified anchorage at Boat Bay. Boat Bay can be exposed to easterlies and is recommended mainly for protection from the westerly winds. Growler Cove is a safer anchorage during all weather conditions and is used by the majority of cruisers and commercial boats who visit the conservancy.



Figure 4. View from Growler Cove Picnic Site and Kayak Parking for Trail Head to Pig Ranch

Camping areas and picnic sites in the Pig Ranch area and Boat Bay provide access to a trail that leads to the Eagle Eye Bluff marine observation site used by the wardens in the Robson Bight Marine Warden Program who monitor Killer Whales and marine vessels at Robson Bight (Michael Bigg) Ecological Reserve. The trails to the bluff and the observation post provide key recreational opportunities within the conservancy and support its role in reducing the visitor use pressures on Robson Bight (Michael Bigg) Ecological Reserve.

Cultural tourism is a possible future recreational opportunity in the conservancy. Signage and small structures to support interpretation, as well as small scale, backcountry-oriented, fixed-roof accommodation may be appropriate to support a cultural tourism experience. Guided wildlife viewing and guided fishing opportunities that are compatible with the protection of the conservancy's cultural and natural values may also be appropriate.

2.4 Resource Use

Natural resource use and development may be permitted in the conservancy, provided that this activity occurs in a sustainable manner and is consistent with the protection and maintenance of biodiversity and natural environments, First Nations social, ceremonial and cultural uses, and recreational values.⁵ With the exception of existing trap line areas that overlap with the conservancy, there are currently no terrestrial commercial resource uses occurring in Qwiqallaaq/Boat Bay Conservancy. Existing marine resource uses in the vicinity of the conservancy include commercial salmon troll, gillnet and seine fisheries, as well as prawn and crab fisheries. The conservancy also provides opportunities for First Nations cultural, social and ceremonial uses of traditional marine and terrestrial resources.⁶

In the future, the conservancy may support natural resource use activities such as commercial shellfish aquaculture, kelp aquaculture, commercial harvesting of botanicals (e.g. salal, mushrooms), and alternative energy generation (i.e., wind/tidal) for use in the conservancy.

2.5 Research and Education

Research, monitoring and educational activities associated with Hanson Island have occurred in the area for a number of years. This research involves long-term monitoring and study of whale behaviour. There is a monitoring station on Cracroft Point and a small cabin in Boat Bay associated with this activity. There are opportunities for partnerships between researchers and First Nations in this conservancy. One such partnership currently exists between CETUS Research and Conservation Society and the Yukusam Heritage Society, whose members include the Mamalilikulla-'Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em, 'Namgis and Tlowitsis First Nations.

⁵ Note: The *Park Act* prohibits commercial logging, mining and hydro-electric power generation, other than local run-of-the-river projects, in conservancies.

⁶ Note: Management of marine fisheries falls under the jurisdiction of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO).

3.0 Management Direction

3.1 Vision

The significant cultural heritage and ecological values in both the marine and terrestrial areas of Qwiquallaaq/Boat Bay Conservancy are protected. The conservancy's forested upland and dynamic marine environment continue to support rich biodiversity values, including coastal bird species, kelp and seagrass beds, migratory salmon, rockfish and marine mammal species.

Mamalilikulla-Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em members are actively reconnecting with Qwiquallaaq/Boat Bay Conservancy in a manner that promotes the unique cultural history of the area. First Nations are participating in economic opportunities within the conservancy and passing on traditional cultural knowledge to future generations and visitors. Visitors to the conservancy are enjoying marine-oriented backcountry recreational opportunities and gaining an appreciation of First Nations cultural heritage.

The Mamalilikulla-Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em First Nation and BC Parks are working collaboratively to understand the needs of visitors and coordinate all aspects of the protection and management of this conservancy.

3.2 Recommended Marine Boundary

Protected area recommendations from the central coast land use decision that led to the establishment of the conservancy did not address the marine environment. The Mamalilikulla-Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em First Nation and other coastal First Nations requested that the marine areas adjacent to the new central coast protected areas be considered for protected area status. The collaborative management agreement between the Mamalilikulla-Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em and the province provides that individual management plans make recommendations respecting the extension of the conservancies in Mamalilikulla-Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em territory into the marine environment. This management plan recommends expansion of the original conservancy boundary to include the foreshore component illustrated in Figure 5. The proposed boundary protects a marine zone of considerable ecological value, including kelp and seagrass beds, offshore islands, and Rockfish Conservation Areas, as well as First Nations traditional use areas. The recommended foreshore component also protects marine-oriented recreational values. The proposed foreshore addition has an approximate area of 768 hectares.

3.3 Conservancy Zoning

Introduction

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 intended land use, the degree of human use desired, and the level of management and development required.

In this conservancy there are two zones: First Nations Cultural Heritage Zone and Nature Recreation Zone (Figure 5).

First Nations Cultural Heritage Zone

The First Nations Cultural Heritage Zone protects cultural heritage features and uses in Growler Cove and at Cracroft Point, including a portion of the adjacent foreshore recommended for inclusion in the conservancy.

Growler Cove and Cracroft Point

Growler Cove, Cracroft Point and the adjacent foreshore are important areas for cultural use by First Nations. A key purpose of this zone is to protect traditional marine resources, including the eelgrass beds and shellfish populations in Growler Cove (e.g., clams and crabs), and to allow for natural regeneration of the forested upland.

The two upland campsites in Growler Cove will be closed and one will be turned into a day-use picnic site for the enjoyment of recreational users. The camping location at Cracroft Point will also be closed. Recreational boaters will be requested to utilize the boat anchorage location outside of this zone near the entrance to Growler Cove. The Killer Whale monitoring station on the south side of Cracroft Point will remain at its current site to allow the continuation of this work to understand the Killer Whale in its marine environment.

Creation of two wilderness camping locations with a small number of formalized tent sites in the northern section of the conservancy on Baronet Passage will be considered, to be used for cultural tourism (see Table 2).

A list of appropriate uses in this zone is provided in Appendix A. This zone comprises approximately 43% of the conservancy and recommended marine addition, including 299 hectares of upland and 308 hectares of marine foreshore.

Nature Recreation Zone

The remainder of the conservancy, including Boat Bay, Eagle Eye Bluff and the recommended marine addition, is zoned Nature Recreation. This zone will offer a broad range of recreational activities, including day use and overnight camping (see Figure 6, Figure 8 and

Table 2). Boat anchorage (with associated picnic sites) will continue to be an encouraged use in the Nature Recreation Zone at the identified boat havens in Boat Bay and near the entrance to Growler Cove.

First Nations Cultural Tourism and Nature Interpretation Site at Boat Bay

Boat Bay is intended for First Nations cultural tourism, as well as continued, seasonal use for nature interpretation, education and research. Signage may be developed to communicate First Nations history and the importance of this area to the various First Nations. The tent sites will be formalized over time and toilet facilities may be installed. A seasonal dock or boat landing site may also be established at this location. As well, commercial fixed-roof accommodation (small-scale, backcountry-oriented) will be a possible, future use at Boat Bay. Such fixed-roof accommodation will be well-integrated into the natural environment and designed to respect and reflect the natural and cultural values of the conservancy.



Figure 5. Boat Bay - Cabin and Tent Pads

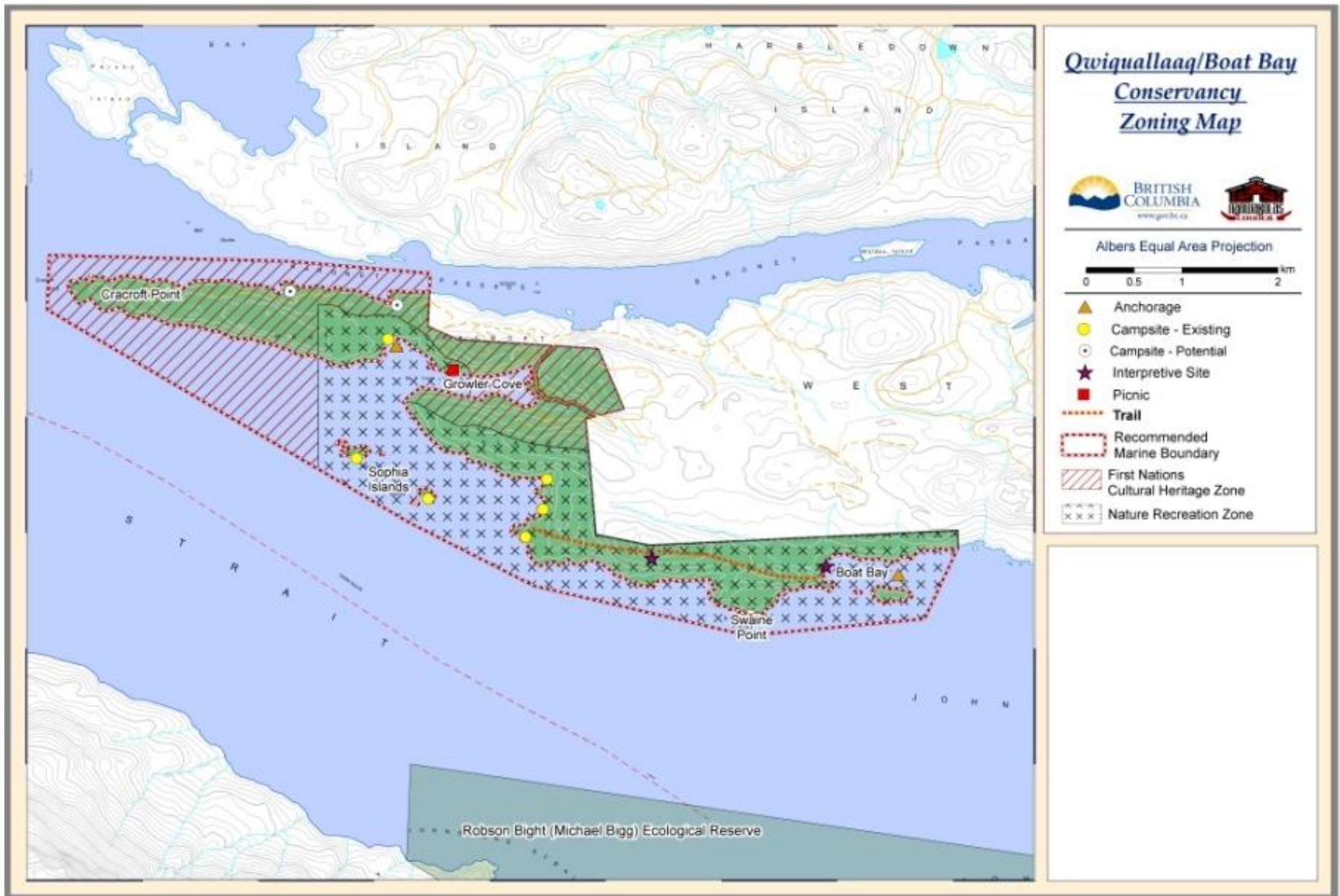


Figure 6. Zoning Map.

Eagle Eye Bluff

Eagle Eye Bluff is a lookout overlooking Johnstone Strait and Robson Bight between the Pig Ranch campground and the Boat Bay Research Facility/Warden Cabin. This site is intended for the observation of whales across Johnstone Strait in the Robson Bight (Michael Bigg) Ecological Reserve, and for cultural interpretation. The proximity of an existing Killer Whale viewing structure to the bluff edge presents a safety issue, which has been addressed recently through fencing and will be monitored. Sections of the trail to Eagle Eye Bluff may be upgraded, as required. A toilet may also be installed. Over time, the existing viewing structure may be replaced with a new structure designed to reflect First Nations culture, and to allow for Killer Whale/wildlife watching and cultural tourism/education.

A list of appropriate uses in this zone is presented in Appendix A. This zone comprises approximately 57% of the conservancy and recommended marine addition, including 340 hectares of upland and 460 hectares of marine foreshore.



Figure 7. Eagle Eye Bluff, Killer Whale Viewing Structure and View towards Robson Bight.

3.5 Management Objectives, Issues and Strategies

Eight broad management objectives have been identified for Qwiquallaaq/Boat Bay Conservancy. The following tables list key issues and interests related to each objective, as well as management strategies to address these issues in the conservancy.

<i>Objective 1: Respect and protect First Nations social and cultural heritage values.</i>	
Issues	Strategies
Interest in maintaining and enhancing the conservation and sustainable use of traditional marine resources.	<p>Recommend the amendment of the legal boundary of the conservancy to add the foreshore component described in section 3.2.</p> <p>Manage activities to protect marine ecological values and resources.</p> <p>Work with Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) to monitor and, if necessary, limit harvest levels of marine resources.</p>
Cultural heritage features have been disturbed by visitors in the past.	Support increased Mamalilikulla-Qwe’Qwa’Sot’Em presence in the conservancy as one means to monitor cultural heritage features (e.g., through “Guardian Watchmen” program – see Objective 5).
Recreational use of the portion of the boat anchorage located in a traditional use area in Growler Cove may impact the conservancy’s role in protecting First Nations cultural heritage and marine values (e.g., seagrass beds, shellfish, crab populations), such as by anchor damage, or unauthorized refuse or sewage disposal.	<p>Discourage use of the portion of the identified boat haven at the head of Growler Cove to protect cultural heritage values.</p> <p>Encourage continued use of the portion of the boat haven just outside the entrance to Growler Cove and the anchorage at Boat Bay.</p> <p>Develop and implement a communication strategy to inform the boating community of the two preferred anchorage locations in the conservancy.</p>
Lack of public awareness of the importance of the conservancy to the Mamalilikulla-Qwe’Qwa’Sot’Em may compromise protection of cultural heritage values.	<p>Develop signage/educational materials to communicate the cultural heritage values of the conservancy to the public.</p> <p>Encourage visitors to contact the Mamalilikulla-Qwe’Qwa’Sot’Em First Nation Office to learn more about cultural protocol and cultural heritage values in the conservancy. Provide contact information for the First Nation on the BC Parks website.</p>

Objective 2: Protect biological diversity and natural environment values

Issues	Strategies
Lack of site-specific information on species at risk may impact protection of biological diversity in the conservancy.	Encourage site-specific inventories and take appropriate measures to protect species at risk (e.g., provincially blue-listed Great Blue Heron and other coastal bird species observed in the conservancy).
There are historic and ongoing research interests in the conservancy, specifically related to studying whale behaviour and monitoring whales at Robson Bight (Michael Bigg) Ecological Reserve.	<p>Continue to encourage research, monitoring and educational activities in the conservancy.</p> <p>Encourage researchers to develop joint projects with the Mamalilikulla-Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em.</p> <p>BC Parks will work to develop protocols for researchers engaging in projects with the First Nation.</p>
Forest and marine ecological values at Growler Cove and Cracroft Point have been impacted by past land use and marine activities.	<p>Close Growler Cove and Cracroft Point to camping to facilitate restoration. Allow day use at these sites and emergency use at Cracroft Point.</p> <p>Recommend the amendment of the legal boundary of the conservancy to add the foreshore component described in section 3.2.</p> <p>Within the limits of provincial government jurisdiction, manage recreational activities and resource uses in the foreshore to minimize risk to marine ecological values and foster stewardship of marine resources, including the seagrass beds.</p>
Conservancy may be vulnerable to negative impacts from adjacent land uses and marine activities.	<p>Build relationships with relevant federal agencies and tenure holders adjacent to the conservancy.</p> <p>Monitor adjacent marine and land use activities for potential impacts to conservancy values.</p> <p>Engage with Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) to ensure that Rockfish Conservation Areas (RCAs) are maintained and build a cooperative relationship to support the Rockfish Conservation Areas.</p> <p>Engage with DFO to monitor and protect marine species and ecological features in the recommended foreshore addition (e.g., kelp and seagrass beds, Dungeness Crab population, migratory juvenile and adult salmon, etc.).</p>

Objective 3: Protect backcountry tourism and recreation values	
Issues	Strategies
Many existing tenting sites do not meet BC Parks' standards.	Ensure campsites are formalized to BC Parks' standards over time.
A significant increase in recreational use has the potential to impact the conservancy's role in protection of cultural heritage and biodiversity values.	Monitor recreational use, using the Backcountry Recreation Impact Monitoring (BRIM) process, and manage accordingly to ensure recreational activity does not exceed biological and cultural heritage capacity.
Changes from previous patterns of recreational use are required to manage the impact of recreational activities in the conservancy.	<p>Specific management direction is provided for day use areas and campsites previously identified in the North Island Straits Campsite Assessment and commonly used by public and commercial kayakers (see Table 2).</p> <p>Exclusive⁷ commercial recreation opportunities may be offered at a maximum of three campsites in Qwiquallaaq/Boat Bay Conservancy: Sophia Islands East, Pig Ranch Base Camp and Pig Ranch South Point.</p> <p>Develop and implement a communication strategy to inform recreational users of the changes to previous campsite use patterns.</p> <p>Work with all commercial and public user groups to implement the vision of the conservancy.</p> <p>Adjust campsite management direction, as required, in response to changes in levels and patterns of recreational use.</p>

⁷ "Exclusive" means that the number of permitted opportunities for a specific activity or use within a protected area is restricted to a specific number of operators. Each campsite identified for an exclusive commercial recreation opportunity in this conservancy will host one commercial recreation operator. Other operators may use sites identified for transient commercial operators in this management plan (see

Table 2).

Table 2. Management Direction for Day Use and Campsite Locations in the Conservancy.

Campsite Identification # ⁸ (from North Island Straits Campsite Assessment)	Campsite Name (from North Island Straits Campsite Assessment)	Potential Overnight Capacity (tent sites)	Management Direction
34	Cracraft Point	0	Do not develop camping site. Emergency use only.
35	North West Growler Cove	Approx. 5	Public recreational use and transient commercial operators; formalize tent sites over time; pack out waste.
36	Growler Cove	0	Close camping site. Allow for day use only (picnic area).
37	Head of Growler Cove	0	Close camping site.
38	Sophia Islands West	2	Public recreational use and transient commercial operators; pack out waste; formalize tent sites over time.
39	Sophia Islands East	12	Utilize for commercial camping site. Operator to provide formalized tent sites and appropriate waste disposal facilities. One exclusive commercial opportunity may be offered here.
40	Tips Rock	0	No camping at this site.
41	Pig Ranch North	Approx. 8	Public recreational use and transient commercial operators; pack out waste; formalize tent sites over time.
42	Pig Ranch North Point	0	This site to remain closed to camping.
43	Pig Ranch Central	1	Recreational use; pack out all waste. Potential for additional tent sites to be developed here.
44	Pig Ranch Base Camp (former name Northern Lights)	Approx. 12	Utilize for commercial camping site. Operator to provide formalized tent sites for recreational use and appropriate waste disposal facilities. One exclusive commercial opportunity may be offered here.
45	Pig Ranch South	0	Day use site. Requires signage and map for trail to Eagle Eye Bluff. Toilet may be installed. Trail to Eagle Eye Bluff may be upgraded.
46	Pig Ranch South Point	6	Utilize as commercial camping site. One exclusive commercial opportunity may be offered here. Operator must provide formalized tent sites for recreational use and provide appropriate waste disposal facilities.

⁸ See Figure 8 for locations of campsites.

Campsite Identification # ⁸ (from North Island Straits Campsite Assessment)	Campsite Name (from North Island Straits Campsite Assessment)	Potential Overnight Capacity (tent sites)	Management Direction
47	Boat Bay (including the Warden Cabin site)	Approx. 12	For continued, seasonal use as a research/monitoring/nature interpretation site and future use for First Nations cultural tourism. A second site, in addition to the “Warden Cabin” campsite, may be developed to accommodate these multiple uses. One exclusive commercial opportunity for First Nations cultural tourism may be offered here. Operator to provide formalized tent sites and provide appropriate waste disposal facilities. Fixed roof accommodation (small scale, backcountry) may also be considered. A seasonal dock or boat landing site may be established.
47-1	New 1 Baronet Passage	To be determined	Potential to develop limited number of formalized tent sites.
47-2	New 2 Baronet Passage	To be determined	Potential to develop limited number of formalized tent sites.

Objective 4: Ensure public safety.	
Issues	Strategies
The proximity of the Killer Whale viewing structure at Eagle Eye Bluff to the bluff edge presents a safety issue for visitors and researchers.	Maintain the safety fence to ensure continued public safety at the Eagle Eye Bluff viewing structure (or employ alternate safety measures, as necessary). Over the longer term, consider upgrading or replacing existing viewing structure with a new structure designed to reflect First Nations culture.
Due to the conservancy's small size and moderate level of recreational use, hunting may pose a risk to public safety.	Recommend regulatory changes to prohibit hunting in the conservancy.
With the increasing intensity of recreational use, human-bear interactions require management attention to ensure the safety of recreational users and preserve wildlife values.	Develop and implement a communication strategy to inform the public of appropriate food storage practices at camping locations and prevention of wildlife-human interactions in this wilderness setting.

Objective 5: Support First Nations engagement and participation in conservancy management.	
Issues	Strategies
Mamalilikulla-Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em wishes to participate in monitoring of visitor activities, as well as compliance and enforcement activities, to protect cultural heritage and biodiversity values.	Develop a collaborative approach to monitoring, compliance and enforcement activities in the conservancy (e.g., between First Nations "Guardian Watchmen" and BC Parks' Rangers).
Mamalilikulla-Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em wishes to be able to respond in the event of an environmental emergency that may impact the conservancy (e.g., an oil spill adjacent to the conservancy).	Engage with the appropriate federal and provincial agencies to understand environmental emergency procedures, and facilitate communication between Mamalilikulla-Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em and these agencies.

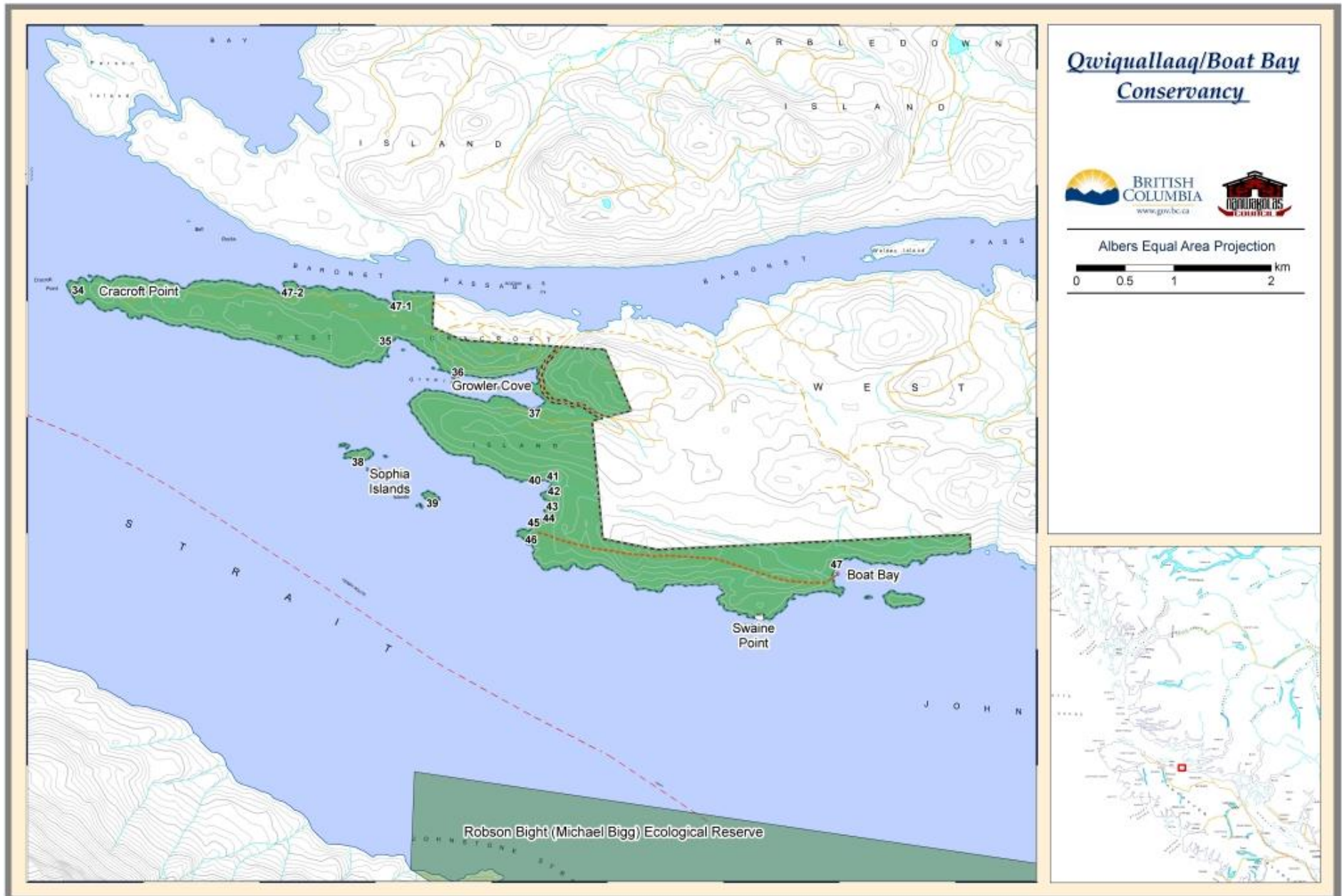


Figure 8. Locations of Campsites described in Table 2.
Qwiquallaag/Boat Bay Conservancy Management Plan

Objective 6: Ensure economic opportunities in the conservancy contribute to broader goals of human well being on the central coast.

Issues	Strategies
Mamallikulla-Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em First Nation does not participate in an equitable portion of the economic opportunities that exist in the protected areas within their traditional territory.	Implement collaborative management agreement commitments to provide the Mamallikulla-Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em First Nation with enhanced access to economic opportunities in the protected areas within their traditional territories.
Recreation and tourism opportunities are important for economic diversification in local communities on northern Vancouver Island and the mainland coast.	Encourage recreational users to use local transportation, tourism and guiding services. Identify and allocate commercial recreation opportunities to support local economic diversification.

Objective 7: Protect the integrity of the conservancy boundary.

Issues	Strategies
Lack of marine area included in the conservancy boundary impedes the ability of BC Parks and Mamallikulla-Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em to protect ecological, cultural heritage and recreational values in the foreshore.	Amend the conservancy boundary to include the recommended 768 ha foreshore component.

Objective 8: Ensure the use of natural resources is sustainable and consistent with the protection of the conservancy's values.

Issues	Strategies
Resource use or development activities can occur if they do not impact identified values/roles and/or conflict with other management objectives of the conservancy.	Consider specific proposals for further evaluation. Ensure proposals follow the BC Parks Impact Assessment process.

4.0 Plan Implementation

An adaptive approach will be applied to the management of this conservancy. Adaptive management involves a five-step process of planning, action, monitoring, evaluation and revision of management strategies to reflect lessons learned. Adaptive management is flexible, collaborative, and responsive to public input.

The effectiveness of the management strategies identified in this management plan at achieving the objectives for the conservancy will be monitored and evaluated by the Mamalilikulla-Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em First Nation and BC Parks. Management strategies and actions may change over time to reflect new circumstances and information gained. Management strategies may also be revised to respond to the implementation of broader objectives of Ecosystem Based Management in the central coast.⁹

The BC Parks Impact Assessment Policy will be applied in this conservancy. All reviewable actions will be subject to an assessment of potential impacts, including consideration of the cumulative impacts of proposed actions on conservancy values.

The management plan may be amended as part of this adaptive management process. BC Parks will work with the Mamalilikulla-Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em First Nation to coordinate planning and management of the Qwiquallaaq/Boat Bay Conservancy, as required. Priority strategies for implementation include:

- Developing and implementing a communication strategy to inform visitors of the changes to previous campsite use patterns, including the closure of the campsite at the Head of Growler Cove, as well as the conversion of Growler Cove to a day use/picnic site;
- Developing and implementing a communication strategy to inform visitors of the preferred boat anchorage locations (Boat Bay and the entrance to Growler Cove) and to discourage use of the boat anchorage at the head of Growler Cove;
- Amending the conservancy boundary to include the recommended foreshore component;
- Recommending regulatory changes to prohibit hunting in the conservancy;
- Ensuring that, over time, tent sites are formalized at the Research Facility/Warden Cabin, all commercial operators' campsite locations (Pig Ranch Base Camp, Pig Ranch South Point, Sophia Islands East), and all other camping locations indicated in Table 2;

⁹ Information on the definition and implementation of ecosystem based management is available at http://www.ilmb.gov.bc.ca/slrp/lrmp/nanaimo/central_north_coast/index.html

- Implementing collaborative management agreement commitments to provide the Mamalilikulla-Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em First Nation with enhanced access to economic opportunities in the protected areas within their traditional territories;
- Working to develop protocols for researchers engaging in projects with the First Nations;
- Installing toilet facilities at the Research Facility/Warden Cabin at Boat Bay, Pig Ranch South (trailhead to Eagle Eye Bluff), and Eagle Eye Bluff; and;
- Working with all commercial and recreational user groups to implement the vision of the Qwiquallaaq/Boat Bay Conservancy.

The implementation of priority actions outlined in this management plan is dependent on the availability of BC Parks and Mamalilikulla-Qwe'Qwa'Sot'Em First Nation financial and staff resources. Approval of this management plan does not constitute approval of funding for implementation.

Appendix A – Appropriate Uses Table

The following table lists existing and potential future uses in Qwiqallaaq/Boat Bay Conservancy. This is not an exhaustive list of uses that may be considered in this protected area. The management direction for marine activities listed here will apply once the conservancy boundary is amended to include a foreshore component.

The table is provided to summarize the uses which the management planning process has confirmed are not appropriate in the conservancy. The table also gives a general indication of the management direction for other uses. The table must be reviewed in conjunction with the other sections of the management plan.

ACTIVITY	ZONE	
	First Nations Cultural Heritage	Nature Recreation
Recreational Activities		
Guided Wildlife Viewing	Y	Y
Cultural Tourism	Y	Y
Hunting	N	N
Facilities		
Cultural Building / Educational Facility; Interpretation and Information Buildings	Y	Y
Administrative Buildings (e.g., existing “warden cabin”)	N	Y
Commercial Fixed-Roof Accommodation (small-scale, backcountry-oriented)	N	Y
Trails (cultural/wildlife viewing purposes)	Y	Y
Interpretive Signage	Y	Y
Campsites	Y	Y
Dock	N	Y
Resource Use		
Commercial Harvesting of Botanicals (e.g., salal, mushrooms)	Y	Y
Commercial Aquaculture (kelp, shellfish)	Y	Y
Alternative Energy Generation (tidal, wind) for use in the conservancy	Y	Y
Other Uses		
Scientific Research	Y	Y
Filming (commercial)	Y	Y
Habitat Restoration	Y	Y

Legend for Appropriate Uses Table

N	Not an appropriate use in this zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It has been confirmed during the management planning process that this use is not appropriate in this zone. • This may be an existing use which the management planning process has determined is no longer an appropriate use in this zone. The management plan details strategies for addressing this inappropriate use (e.g., phasing out, closing).
Y	<u>May be</u> an appropriate use in this zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This indicates that some degree or scale of this use may be appropriate. • For existing uses, the management plan will provide guidance on the appropriate level or scale of this use (e.g., direction to reduce, restrict or increase the current level of this activity) and may address specific restrictions or enhancements (e.g., capacity, appropriate sites, designated trails, purposes, party size, time of year, etc.). • For new or expanded uses, this does not constitute approval. This indicates that the use <u>may be considered</u> for further evaluation and possible approval (e.g., park use permit adjudication, completion of a review as part of the BC Parks Impact Assessment Process). In some cases the appropriateness may not be confirmed until further assessments are completed.
N/A	Not an applicable use in this zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is applied where it is not feasible for the use to take place in this zone (e.g., mooring buoys in a terrestrial zone).