

SYDNEY INLET PROVINCIAL PARK

PURPOSE STATEMENT AND ZONING PLAN


September 2003

Approved by:



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Date: Jan. 15/04

SYDNEY INLET PROVINCIAL PARK Purpose Statement and Zoning Plan

Primary Role

The **primary** role of Sydney Inlet Provincial Park is to protect one of the best examples of a coastal fjord on Vancouver Island. Sydney Inlet has been preserved in its entirety, from its entrance north of Flores Island to the mud flats of the Sydney River at the head of the inlet. The park supports high biodiversity values as it encompasses a diversity of landscapes including portions of a river and estuary, deep coastal waters, steep mountains rising from the water's edge, and old growth Sitka spruce and Douglas-fir forests.

A variety of rare and unusual flora and fauna can be found in the undeveloped, pristine wilderness park. The Sydney River and estuary support considerable salmon runs, including a population of chinook, and habitat for cutthroat trout, rainbow trout, steelhead and sculpin. The mudflats contain eelgrass beds and significant beds of clam and oyster as well as food and habitat for a variety of coastal and marine birds such as geese and swans including trumpeter swans, ducks, bald eagles, great blue herons, black oystercatchers, alcids, and other shorebirds. The park provides wildlife habitat for marbled murrelets, bats, black bears, elk, cougar and wolves and also protects rare plant communities and the red-listed dwarf trillium. The inlet may also contain groundfish, rockfish, herring, halibut, lingcod, harbour seal, gray whale, Olympia oyster, Pacific sardine (pilchard), and basking shark.

Secondary Role

The **secondary** role is to provide recreation opportunities in a pristine wilderness setting. The inlet, with its high scenic values and tranquil waters, is an ideal location for sea kayakers and coastal cruisers looking for a respite from ocean swells. Scuba diving, ocean swimming, and sport fishing for clam and oysters are other possible activities. There are no designated campsites but wilderness camping is allowed. The park is only accessible by float plane or boat. Anchoring is very difficult in the inlet as it terminates in a drying shoal which drops off quickly; however, there are many excellent all-weather anchorages nearby in various inlets. The park is close to Maquinna Marine Provincial Park which provides an opportunity to soak in the hot springs. Together with Hotsprings Village, visitors have access to facilities such as a wharf, store, marine fuel station, private campground, and anchorages.

Tertiary Role

The **tertiary** role is to protect cultural features. Clayoquot Sound has a vibrant First Nations heritage, both past and present. The area has been inhabited for thousands of years by the Nuu-chah-nulth First Nation peoples and the park is rich in First Nations sites and post-contact sites that capture glimpses of the past. The park contains two provincial heritage sites (Lord Western and the Sydney Inlet mystery wreck) that are protected under the *Heritage Conservation Act* (HCA).

Quaternary Role

The **quaternary** role is to provide opportunities for biological research. The Clayoquot Biosphere Trust has a research cabin located on the western side of the inlet that provides a base for scientists to study in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Reserve. Unique opportunities exist to undertake long term year-round studies in coastal ecology and on the events and species that occur in the region. Research ranges from natural history and biological inventory to environmental monitoring in the estuary and climate monitoring.

Management Issues

Known Management Issue	Response
Lack of knowledge of cultural values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Conduct a cultural inventory and traditional use study in conjunction with First Nations.
Impact of logging upstream of the estuary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Work with the Ministry of Forests and forest companies to ensure protection of park values and ensure downstream effects do not occur. ➤ Work with the Ministry of Forests to develop and implement a water quality monitoring program.
Log poaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Enlist support of researchers to report and monitor illegal activities in the park; possibly pursue a partnership with the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust (CBT).
Impact of the use of the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust research cabin and research activities in the estuary on natural and recreational values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Implement the Backcountry Recreation Impact Monitoring (BRIM) process in the area surrounding the cabin and in the estuary. ➤ Continue to work with CBT in supporting research in the park. As part of the CBT permit, require a yearly research program plan prior to the research season. This plan should detail all research activities and potential effects on natural and cultural values. ➤ Monitor the permit covering the cabin and the reserve to ensure that activities are not impacting the park and that wilderness values are maintained. ➤ Develop a recreation plan (for all Clayoquot Sound protected areas) to develop a strategy for visitor facilities and public information on appropriate behaviour. Work with First Nations where appropriate.
Relationships with First Nations and pending treaty settlements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop good working relationships with First Nations to develop an understanding and appreciation of protected area status and park values. ➤ Liaise with Central Region Board (CRB) to inform them of management issues in the park.
Participation in the Clayoquot Biosphere initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Work with the CBT, CRB and Parks Canada to ensure the Environmental Stewardship Division's perspective is taken into account in activities and projects associated with the Biosphere Reserve in Clayoquot Sound.

Zoning

Natural Environment Zone -- covers the entire park (2,774.2 hectares) in recognition of the conservation and recreation values. The objective of this zone is to protect a largely undisturbed natural environment while providing appropriate recreational opportunities and protecting scenic values.

Conservation

Representation
- ecosection

- ☒ Sydney Inlet Provincial Park makes a small contribution of 0.97% to the representation of the Windward Island Mountains Ecosection, which is well represented in the protected areas system at 17.4%.

It also makes a minimal contribution of 0.78% to the overall representation of the Vancouver Island Shelf *Marine* Ecosection (VIS), which is under protected provincially at 5.4%.

- biogeoclimatic subzone/variant

- ☒ Sydney Inlet Provincial Park makes a small contribution of 1.3% to the representation of Coastal Western Hemlock (CWH) vm1 biogeoclimatic variant, which is under represented in the protected areas system at 7%.

It also makes a minimal contribution of 0.17% to the representation of CWHvm2, which is under-protected provincially at 8.7%.

Special Features

- ☒ Coastal fjord, old growth, estuary, salmon habitat, sea caves, rare species

Rare/Endangered Values

- ☒ *Red-listed species* marbled murrelet and dwarf trillium (*Trillium ovatum* var. *hibbersonii*). It is one of the few known occurrences of the plant, which is endemic to western Vancouver Island and also occurs in Hesquiat Lake Park. *Blue-listed species* gray whale, cutthroat trout and trumpeter swan. *Yellow-listed species of conservation concern (S3-S4)*: chinook, coho and sockeye salmon. Potential habitat for the blue-listed Olympia oyster, also listed as Special Concern by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC).

Scientific/Research Opportunities

- ☒ The Clayoquot Biosphere Trust (CBT) owns and operates a research cabin in Sydney Inlet. Opportunities include, but are not limited to, ecosystem-level and species-level studies of undisturbed temperate rainforests, estuarine environments, environmental changes and human impacts on the environment.

Recreation

Representation		
backcountry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Remote marine and wilderness experience
destination	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Kayaking, boating, diving
travel corridor	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Kayak route from Tofino to Hot Springs Cove
local recreation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not Applicable
Special Opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	None known at this time
Education/Interpretation Opportunities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	High biodiversity and cultural values

Cultural Heritage

Representation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Post-contact history
Special Feature	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	First Nation sites, 2 heritage sites under the <i>Heritage Conservation Act</i>

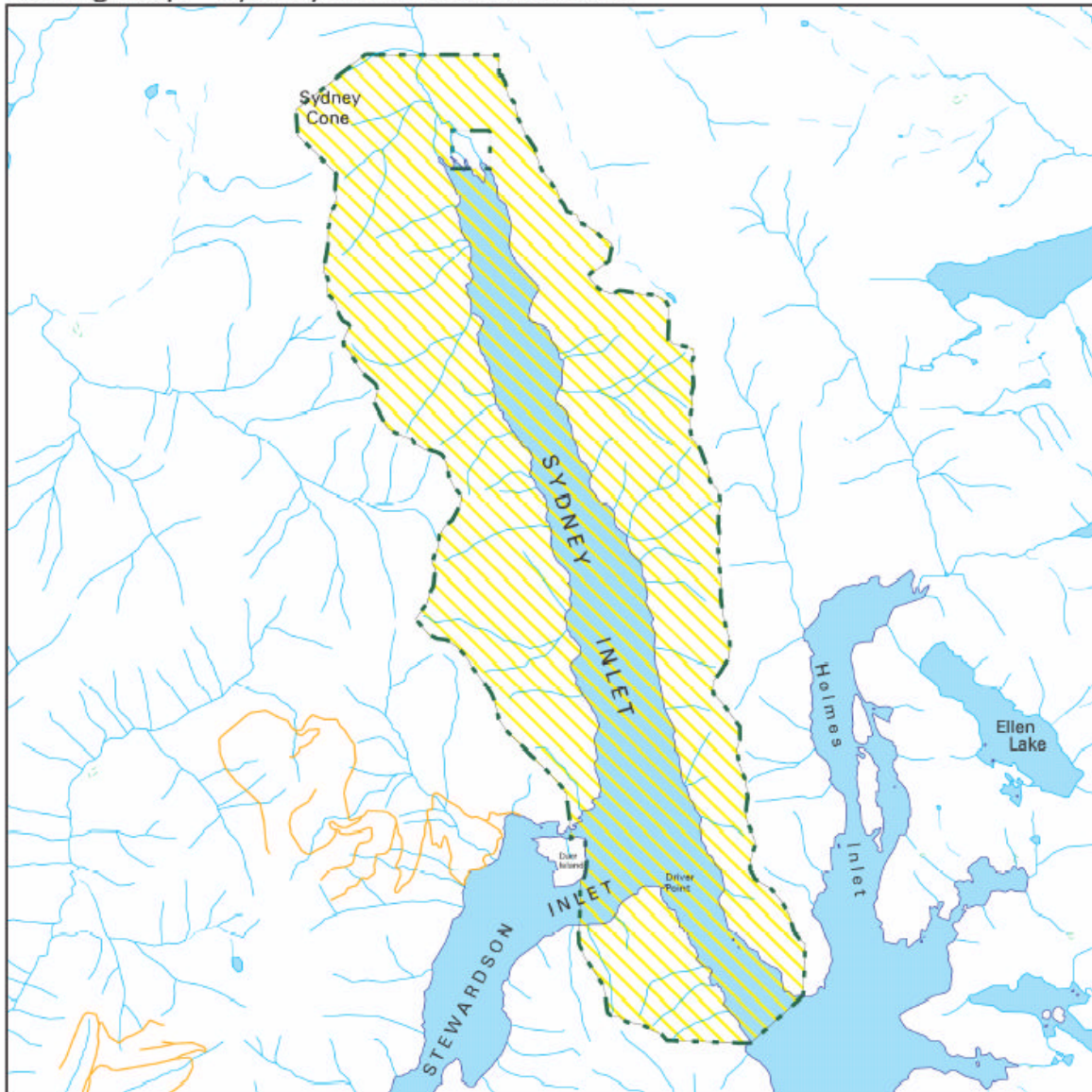
Other Management Considerations

Other Designations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Part of the Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Reserve. Contains 2 provincial heritage sites. Potentially part of an Important Bird Area (IBA) site for breeding marbled murrelets called the Hesquiat Lake area site (boundary is unclear). The IBA program is an international program that identifies and supports the protection of lands having special bird habitats.
Relationship to other PAs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Part of a system of protected areas in Clayoquot Sound
Co-operative Management Arrangements	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Part of the Interim Management Agreement Extension with the Central Region Board
Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not Applicable
Vulnerability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Logging in the watershed – downstream effects of logging on the estuary, commercial harvest of benthic marine species, recreational use, research activities in estuary, log poaching.
Relationship to other Strategies	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Interim Measures Extension Agreement. Identified for protection in the 1993 Clayoquot Sound Land Use Decision.

Area: 2,774.2 hectares (2,083.2 ha upland; 691 ha foreshore)

Date of establishment: July 12, 1995

Zoning Map - Sydney Inlet Provincial Park



Projection: Albers Equal Areas
Datum: NAD83



 Natural Environment
 Protected Area Boundary



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Support Services

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