



Tsa-Latl/Smokehouse Conservancy Management Plan

March 2013



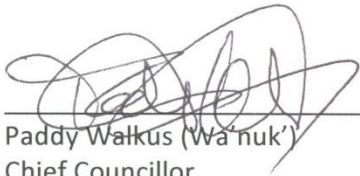
Gwa'sala-
'Nakwaxda'xw
Nation



BC Parks

Tsa-Latí/Smokehouse Conservancy Management Plan


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13/04/13.

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Acknowledgements

Preparation of this management plan for Tsa-Latí/Smokehouse Conservancy would not have been possible without the involvement of the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw First Nation. The traditional knowledge provided by the Ninogads (knowledgeable ones), Hereditary Chief Willie Walkus, Hereditary Chief Thomas Henderson and Chief Councillor Paddy Walkus, was invaluable in preparing this management plan. Management planning documents were jointly prepared by Scott Harris, Planner for the N^anw^akol^as Council, and BC Parks' planning staff.

The Gwa'sala and 'Nakwaxda'xw were two separate First Nations who were amalgamated and relocated from the mainland coast to the Tsulquate Indian Reserve on northern Vancouver Island in the 1960s.

The area that includes Tsa-Latí /Smokehouse Conservancy is within the traditional territory of the Gwa'sala First Nation. Long Lake and the conservancy's river systems were critically important to the Gwa'sala people for harvesting and processing salmon. Halowis (Indian Reserve No. 5) was a key village site near the mouth of Smokehouse Creek.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Management Plan Purpose

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 is the result of a collaborative planning process between the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw First Nation and BC Parks.

This management plan sets out the long-term, strategic direction for Tsa-Latí /Smokehouse Conservancy and provides guidance for how the conservancy will be managed. It describes the conservancy's important cultural heritage, natural, and recreational values and presents a vision for the future of the conservancy. In addition, 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 and natural values;
- identifies appropriate types of recreational activities;
- identifies zones; and,
- provides management direction related to appropriate uses of the conservancy's natural resources.

1.2 Planning Area

This 37,886 hectare conservancy is located east of Cape Caution and north of Seymour Inlet on the central coast of British Columbia. The conservancy includes the Long Lake, Smokehouse Creek and Canoe Creek watersheds and captures a range of ecosystems from estuary to alpine tundra (Figure 1). The conservancy lies approximately 350 kilometres northwest of Vancouver and 70 kilometres northeast of Port Hardy, in the vicinity of a number of other conservancies: Neğił/Nekite, Ug^wiwa'/Cape Caution, Ug^wiwa'/Cape Caution-Blunden Bay, Wáwáł/Seymour Estuary and Lockhart-Gordon (Figure 2).

Tsa-Latí /Smokehouse Conservancy is located within the traditional territory of the Gwa'sala-Nakwaxda'xw First Nation. Tsa-Latí (pronounced "Cha-sla") refers to the area around Long Lake, and includes Halowis (Indian Reserve No. 5), which was a key village site near the mouth of Smokehouse Creek. Long Lake and the conservancy's river systems were critically important to the Gwa'sala people for harvesting and processing salmon.

Gwa'sala-Nakwaxda'xw First Nation is 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.

Access to the conservancy is primarily by air. It is also possible to access the conservancy using a shallow boat through Wyclees Lagoon during the high-tide slack. A worn dirt road leads from the shore of Wyclees Lagoon, to Toksee Indian Reserve and into the conservancy to Long Lake near the mouth of the Docee (Toksee) River.

1.3 Legislative Framework

Tsa-Latí /Smokehouse Conservancy was established on July 14, 2006 pursuant to the *Park (Conservancy Enabling) Amendment Act, 2006*. The conservancy is named and described in Schedule E of the *Protected Areas of British Columbia Act* and is administered under the *Park Act*. The boundary of the conservancy was amended slightly in 2008 to except an existing mineral claim (5 hectares) at Triangle Lake.

Conservancies are set aside for four main reasons:

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

1.4 Management Commitments

Collaborative Management

A collaborative management agreement between the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw First Nation and BC Parks outlines the relationship that the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw and the Province have in the planning and management of the protected areas within Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw First Nation traditional territory. The collaborative management agreement 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 for the parties 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,

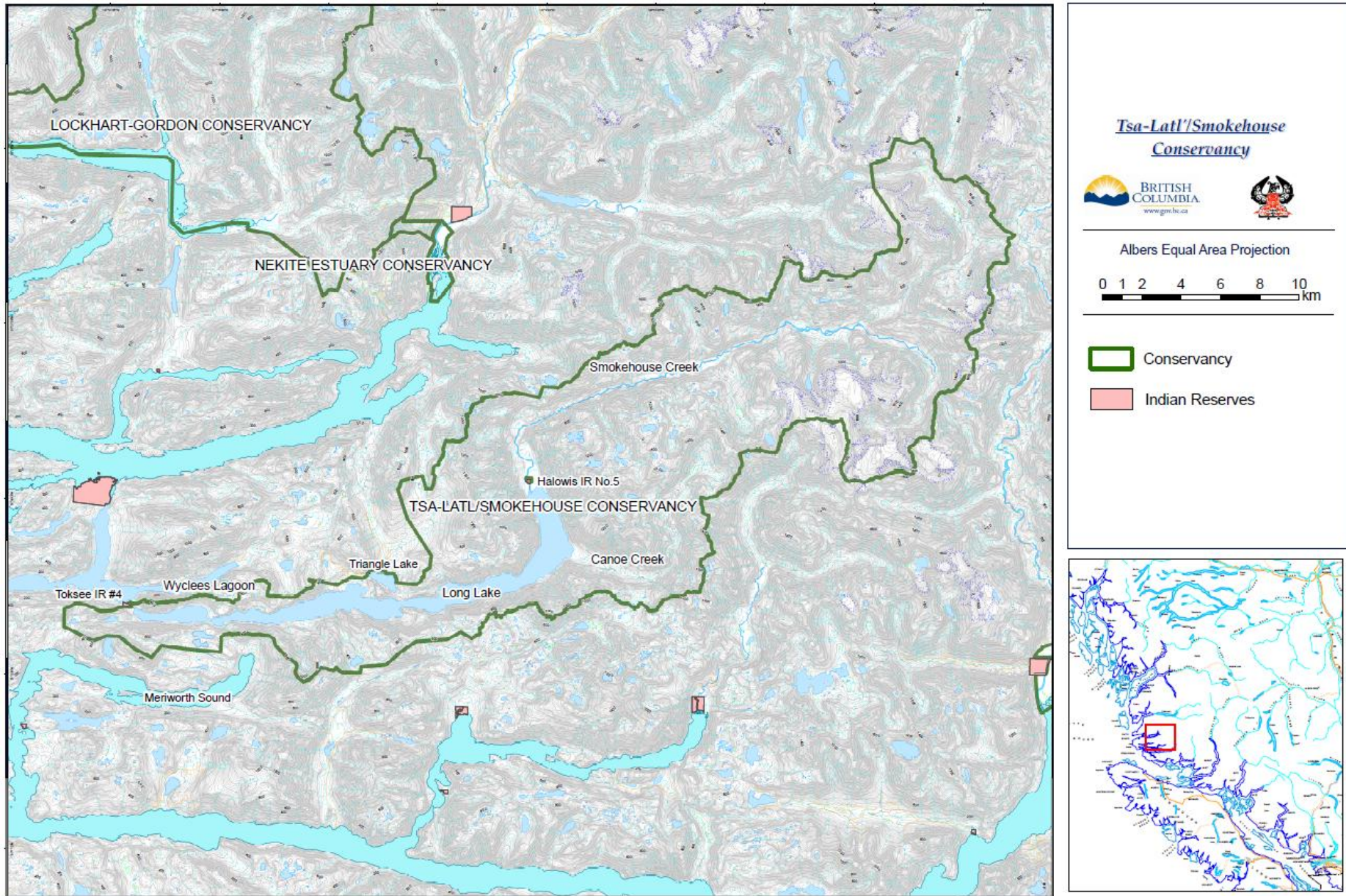


Figure 1: Conservancy Map

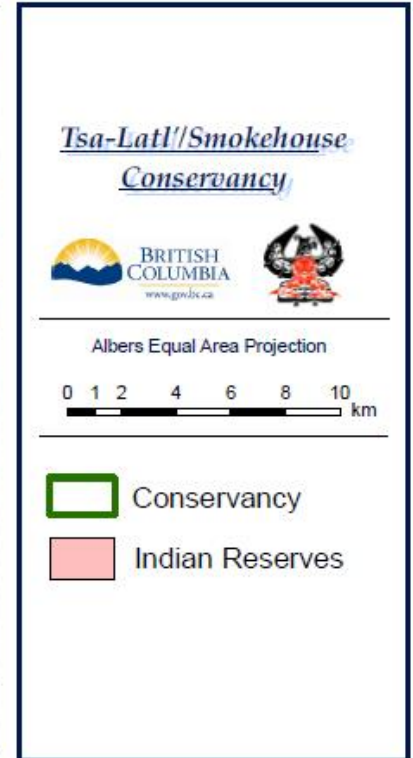
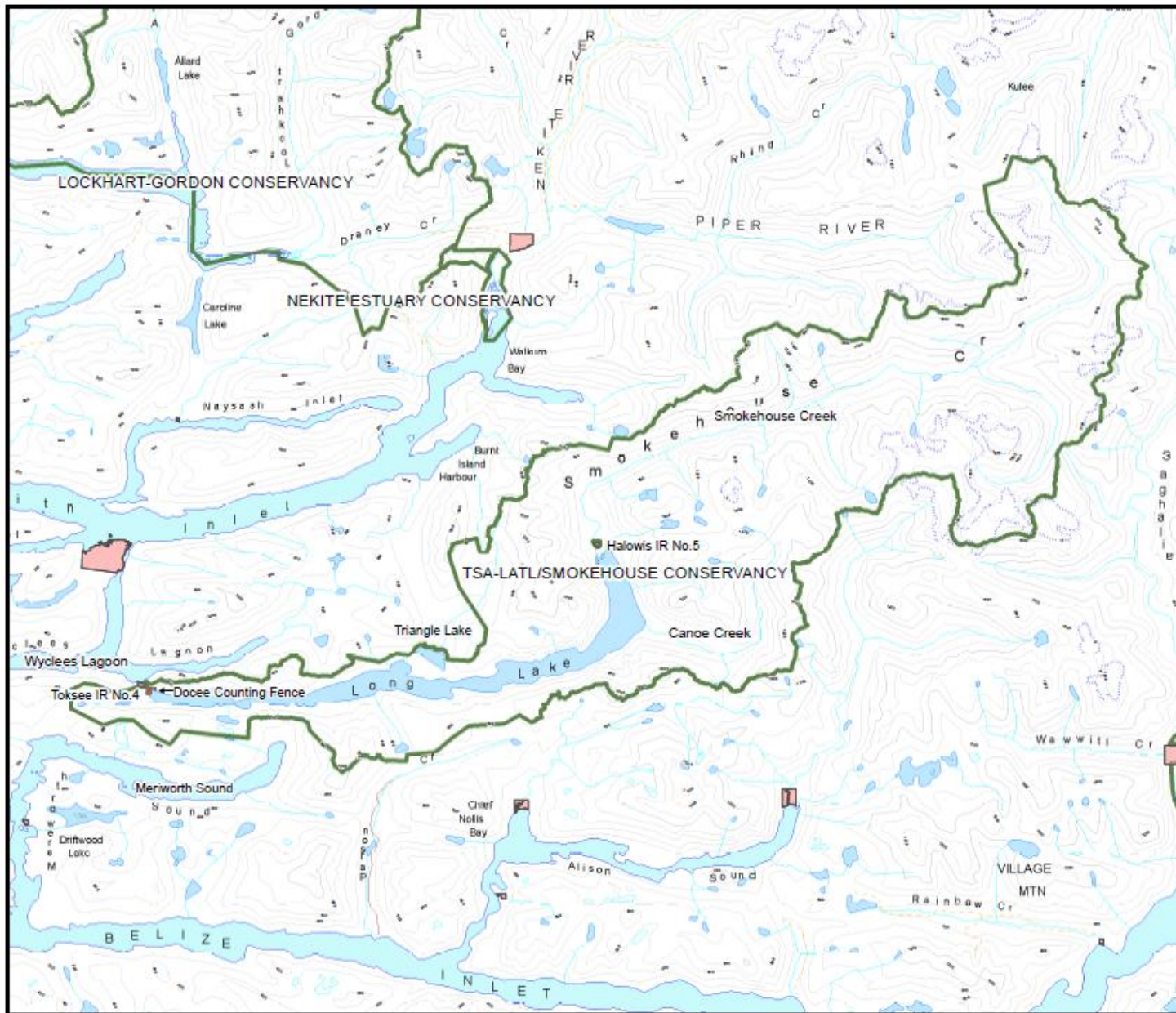


Figure 2: Conservancy Context Map

- makes the protected areas available for the use, recreation and enjoyment of all British Columbians.

Land Use Planning

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 Tsa-Latí /Smokehouse Conservancy: 1) protection of First Nation cultural use; 2) habitat conservation/protection; and, 3) ecosystem representation. The AIP indicated that recreational opportunities exist, but these opportunities are limited by the primary roles.

The Central Coast Land and Resource Management Plan (CCLRMP) (2004) identified this area for protection and recommended that the principles of ecosystem based management be applied to land management throughout the central coast, including conservancies. The two overarching goals of ecosystem based management are to: 1) maintain the ecological integrity of terrestrial, marine and freshwater ecosystems; and 2) achieve high levels of human well being.

The CCLRMP identified protecting a representative example of the North Pacific Ranges (NPR)¹ Ecosection as a primary role for the conservancy. Another role for the conservancy is to provide opportunities for remote backcountry tourism.

In this management plan, the primary roles for the conservancy have been adopted from the agreement-in-principle with consideration of the roles recommended in the Central Coast Land and Resource Management Plan.

At the time that the central coast conservancies were announced, the Minister of Environment made a commitment that existing tenured uses within the area that was established as conservancy may continue.

1.5 Adjacent Patterns of Use

Land uses and activities occurring adjacent to Tsa-Latí/Smokehouse Conservancy include the following:

- Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Indian Reserves (IR) including:
 - Wyclees IR No. 1 on the shores of Smith Inlet at the entrance to Wyclees Lagoon;
 - Halowis IR No. 5 excluded from the conservancy near the mouth of Smokehouse Creek;
 - Toksee IR No. 4 adjacent to the conservancy's northwest boundary on the shores of the Docee River and Wyclees Lagoon;

¹ When the CCLRMP recommendations were developed, this area was part of the North Pacific Ranges (NPR) Ecosection. Since then, ecosection boundaries have been revised and the conservancy is now located within the Central Pacific Ranges (CPR) Ecosection.

- Waump Biodiversity Mining and Tourism Area (BMTA),² which encompasses the Waump Creek watershed adjacent to the conservancy’s southeastern boundary;
- mineral claim “Triangle” 513763 adjacent to the conservancy’s northern boundary at Triangle Lake;
- commercial fisheries occurring in Smith Inlet; and,
- a number of forestry tenures on lands outside the western portion of the conservancy, with both historic and ongoing operations.

² Biodiversity, Tourism and Mining Areas (BMTAs) are one of the three types of land use zones established under the North and Central Coast Land Use Decision (2006). They are situated next to protected areas to contribute to conservation of species and ecosystems. Commercial timber harvesting and commercial hydro-electric projects are prohibited within BMTAs.

2.0 First Nations History and Culture, and the Roles and Values of the Conservancy

This section describes the First Nations history and the key cultural heritage, natural, recreational and resource use values found within Tsa-Latí /Smokehouse Conservancy.

2.1 First Nations History and Cultural Heritage

Values

The Gwa'sala and 'Nakwaxda'xw were two separate First Nations who were amalgamated and relocated from the mainland coast to the Tsulquate Indian Reserve on northern Vancouver Island in the 1960s. The area that is now contained within Tsa-Latí /Smokehouse Conservancy was an important resource harvesting and processing area for the Gwa'sala people.

Gwa'sala families who had fishing rights to Tsa-Latí (refers to the area around Long Lake) utilized the villages of Halowis (IR No. 5) near the mouth of Smokehouse Creek, and Toksee (IR No. 4) on the Docee River as important salmon processing sites. Salmon were harvested and processed throughout the summer and fall to use for sustenance, social, ceremonial and trade purposes.

Sockeye Salmon were prized throughout the traditional territory, but those caught at Tsa-Latí were considered the best quality given their high fat content. One Elder recalls;

At one time the Gwa'sala people would work on 400 - 500 sockeye per family and they would spend day and night, non-stop for 3 weeks preparing salmon (smoking, canning, jarring, barbequing, etc.). Now we are lucky to get 400 - 500 sockeye for the entire community.

Other salmon species, including large Chinook Salmon, were also caught in the area. This species was sun-dried and smoked (K'a'was), then stored in bent boxes to be gifted at potlatches or used for trade purposes. K'a'was was a particularly prized gift at potlatches. The other salmon species, Chum, Coho and Pink, were processed for use during the winter months.

Salmon remain a critical part of the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw First Nation's identity, so much so that the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw have been referred to as the 'salmon people'. Legends, songs, dances, and prayers reflect how the health of this species is linked to the health of the community. These and other legends, stories and songs from Tsa-Latí reflect the rich history of resource use in this area.

In addition to salmon harvesting and other hunting and gathering activities, this area was also known for its quality cedar. Large cedar trees found around Tsa-Latí and further up Canoe Creek were utilized for building big houses and other village structures. Gwa'sala carvers would also carve massive cedar trees into ocean-going canoes.

A third former village site in general proximity to the conservancy is Wyclees (IR No. 1), located where Wyclees Lagoon empties into Smith Inlet. This was an important area where Gwa'sala members would gather for winter ceremonies and potlatches to exchange gifts and share legends from the area. Families from the Tsa-Latí area would display their unique regalia at these events.

There are also a number of cultural sites of significance to the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw within the conservancy. There were other village sites in Tsa-Latí that were not made into Indian Reserves, and pictographs mark important historic events and stories from the past. There are also a number of spiritual sites located on the historic travel route between Halowis and Toksee villages.

Role

The cultural heritage role of Tsa-Latí /Smokehouse Conservancy is to protect cultural sites and support the Gwa-sala people in reconnecting to these lands and waters and the resources they provide. The conservancy provides opportunities for the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw membership to educate their future generations and the public on the practices and traditional knowledge of the First Nation.

2.2 Biological Diversity and Natural Environment

Values

Intact Watershed

The conservancy protects a long and narrow watershed that incorporates a diverse range of ecosystems from estuary to alpine tundra. It includes Long Lake, a fjord-like lake that extends approximately twenty-two kilometres eastward into the Coast Mountains. The conservancy has a high degree of naturalness, providing excellent examples of old-growth forest habitat for a variety of coastal species.

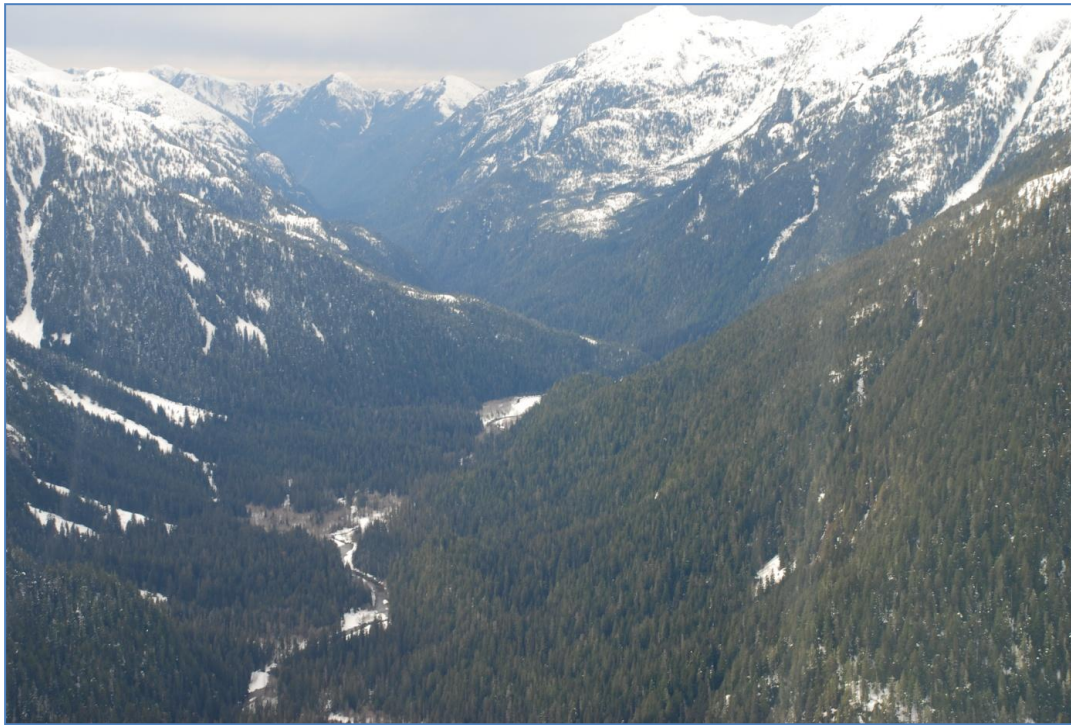


Figure 3: Tsa-Latí /Smokehouse Creek Watershed

Ecosystem Representation

The majority of Tsa-Latí /Smokehouse Conservancy lies within the Central Pacific Ranges (CPR) Ecosession³, which is dominated by montane influences on the western slopes of the Coast Range Mountains. Very small portions of the conservancy are also included in the Hecate Lowland (approximately 40 hectares) and the Northern Pacific Ranges (182 hectares) ecosessions.

The conservancy also includes substantial examples of four biogeoclimatic (BEC) units⁴: Coast Mountain-heather alpine (CMA unp), Coastal Western Hemlock very wet maritime submontane (CWH vm1), Coastal Western Hemlock very wet maritime montane (CWH vm2) and Mountain Hemlock moist maritime windward (MH mm1).

Prior to the establishment of the conservancy, the Central Pacific Ranges Ecosession was underrepresented in the provincial protected areas system. The addition of Tsa-Latí/Smokehouse Conservancy improves the representation of CPR substantially, as the conservancy accounts for approximately 20 – 30% of the CPR Ecosession/BEC variants that are contained within the provincial protected areas system.

³ British Columbia's ecoregion classification system divides the province into areas of similar climate, physiography, oceanography, hydrology, vegetation and wildlife potential. Ecosessions are the narrowest in scope of the geographic units within this classification system.

⁴ British Columbia's biogeoclimatic ecosystem classification (BEC) system divides the province's terrestrial ecosystems into zones (called biogeoclimatic variants) where specific types of soils, plant and animal communities develop.

In particular, the conservancy helps to fill gaps in the CPR, including representation of a complete multi-watershed Grizzly Bear/salmon ecosystem, lakes, old-growth forests and wetlands (on the eastern side of Smokehouse Creek). Table 1 summarizes the contribution of the conservancy to ecosystem representation.

Table 1: Ecosection and Biogeoclimatic Zone Representation

Ecosection/ Biogeoclimatic (BEC) Variant Combination	Total Area of Ecosection/ BEC Variant Combination in B.C. (ha)	Total Area of Ecosection/ BEC Variant in Protected Areas (ha)	Percent of Ecosection/ BEC Variant Combination in the Province that is Protected	Total Area of Ecosection/ BEC Variant Combination in the Conservancy (ha)	Percent of Province-wide Protection of Ecosection/ BEC Variant Combination in this Conservancy
CPR Ecosection/ CMA unsp variant	851 442	40 512	5	8 404	21
CPR Ecosection/ CWH vm2 variant	248 038	32 758	13	10 051	31
CPR Ecosection/ CWH vm1 variant	242 971	27 261	11	8 068	30
CPR Ecosection/ MH mm1 variant	245 485	29 606	12	8 784	30
HEL Ecosection/ CWH vh1 variant	121 814	9 818	8	40	0.4
HEL Ecosection/ CWH vm1 variant	1 671	0.19	0.01	0.02	9.2
NPR Ecosection/ CMA unsp variant	370 065	32 638	9	181	0.6
NPR Ecosection/ MH mm 1 variant	120 537	25 976	22	1	< 0.01

Fish

Tsa-Latl' /Smokehouse Conservancy includes Smokehouse, Canoe and Docee creeks, which together with Long Lake, provide important, high value habitat for a number of fish species. Five species of Pacific salmon have been observed within the conservancy, as well as Dolly Varden Char and Cutthroat Trout. Dolly Varden Char and Cutthroat Trout are both provincially blue-listed species.⁵ In some years, there is also a substantial population of Stickleback within Long Lake.

Smokehouse Creek supports valuable spawning and floodplain rearing habitat for Coho and Sockeye salmon. Most spawning activity occurs within the lower 2.5 kilometres of the creek, although there is some scattered spawning activity up to the impassable cascade at 5.3 kilometres. Canoe Creek provides fish habitat in its lower reaches up to impassable falls at

⁵ 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 British Columbia 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.

6.4 kilometres. The Docee River also supports Chinook, Chum and Pink salmon, including valuable spawning habitat for Chinook Salmon.

Chinook, Chum, Coho, Pink and Sockeye salmon are present in Long Lake. It provides particularly sensitive and valuable spawning and rearing habitat for Sockeye Salmon. Sockeye beach spawning has been documented in Long Lake between Smokehouse and Canoe creeks and south of the Long Lake outlet into the Docee River; however, these areas are reported to have deteriorated in recent years due to the accumulation of woody debris. Chinook historically spawned along the beach south of the Docee River outlet and at the lake's first narrows. Some activity may remain in these locations, but more activity has been observed at two other sites within the Docee River in recent years.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada operates a counting fence on the Docee River, near the outlet of Long Lake, within the conservancy. This facility has been in operation since 1972 and includes a counting fence, house and several work buildings (Figure 4). At the site, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) staff measure daily Sockeye, Coho and Chinook escapement information from July to mid-September.



Figure 4: Toksee Counting Fence in Tsa-Latí /Smokehouse Conservancy

Grizzly Bear

Tsa-Latí /Smokehouse Conservancy was ranked as the number five priority for the protection of Grizzly Bear/salmon ecosystems in the Central Coast Land and Resource Management Plan. This ranking reflects the conservancy's productive diversity of bear habitats, high spring and fall Grizzly Bear use, and extensive use of its waterways for salmon fishing.

Grizzly Bears are a keystone species, and are regionally significant, as they are the top predator in the temperate rainforest of the central coast. Grizzly Bears are also a focal species in ecosystem-based management on the central coast and are a provincially blue-listed species. As a focal species, Grizzly Bears' population status and presence in the conservancy reflect the health and integrity of their habitats. They also play a significant role in sustaining ecological productivity in coastal forests. For example, by carrying salmon

carcasses upland from the rivers and estuaries, Grizzly Bears help to bring an influx of nutrients into riparian forests.

The conservancy protects important class 1 and 2 Grizzly Bear habitat, principally in the valley bottoms of Smokehouse and Canoe creeks and in the higher elevation areas of the Smokehouse Creek watershed. These high quality habitats include the conservancy's wetlands, which provide important spring foraging opportunities; rivers and creeks, which provide spawning salmon as an important fall food source; as well as higher elevation areas important for winter denning and summer food foraging.

Ungulates

Tsa-Latí /Smokehouse Conservancy is highly suitable for ungulates and includes valuable winter range for Mountain Goat and Black-tailed Deer. A number of areas within the conservancy were formerly designated as Mountain Goat Winter Range (U-5-004) and Deer Winter Range (U-5-005).⁶ The Ungulate Winter Range (UWR) designations have now been superseded by the establishment of the conservancy under the *Protected Areas of British Columbia Act*. As such, the habitat represented in these UWRs is now protected in the conservancy.

The patches formerly designated as Mountain Goat UWR include portions of the shoreline and steep slopes between Smokehouse and Canoe creeks, as well as the upper reaches of Canoe and Smokehouse watersheds. In winter, Mountain Goats seek protected ledges in steep rocky areas near winter ranges that provide escape terrain and a forage supply. Shrubs, conifers, lichens, and mosses provide critical winter forage supply, in contrast to a summer diet of forbs, sedges, rushes, alpine and subalpine grasses found at higher elevations.

The patches formerly designated as deer UWR include portions of the northern side of Long Lake from just above the second narrows to the furthest extent of the conservancy boundary, as well as the lower reaches of Smokehouse and Canoe creeks. Black-tailed Deer require thermal cover and accessibility of shrubs above snow for forage in winter. Well-established shrub communities found in old-growth forest are an important element of Black-tailed Deer winter range.

Birds

Tsa-Latí /Smokehouse Conservancy protects important nesting, rearing and foraging habitat for birds and waterfowl. In particular, Marbled Murrelet and Northern Goshawk habitats are found within the conservancy. Both these birds are focal species for ecosystem-based management on the central coast. Marbled Murrelet is a provincially blue-listed species and Northern Goshawk is a provincially red-listed species.

⁶ Ungulate Winter Range (UWR) is defined as an area that contains habitat that is necessary to meet the winter habitat requirements of an ungulate species.

Marbled Murrelets nest predominantly on larger diameter (15 - 75 cm), moss-covered branches of old-growth coniferous trees. There is moderate to high (class 2 and 3) nesting habitat along the lakeshore and inland at low elevations around the lake, as well as up the river valleys of Smokehouse and Canoe creeks. Very high (class 1) nesting habitat can be found on the southern lakeshore just above the first narrows and on the very low reaches of Smokehouse and Canoe creeks.

Northern Goshawks nest and forage in mature and old-growth forest stands with a closed canopy and open understory. Moderate and high quality habitat for foraging is located immediately along Long Lake and along Smokehouse and Canoe creeks. Nesting habitat quality is low to moderate immediately along the lakeshore and moderate to high along Smokehouse and Canoe creeks. All other areas are nil or low for Northern Goshawk nesting and foraging.

Climate Change

Climate change is expected to result in changes to species composition and ecosystem functioning across the terrestrial landscape. Possible effects include retreating glaciers, hydrological changes associated with glacial/snow melt patterns, increased frequency and severity of extreme weather events, increased river and lake temperatures, ocean acidification, and sea level rise. As glacial-fed watersheds, the Canoe, Smokehouse and Long Lake watersheds are vulnerable to these potential effects.

In addition to being vulnerable to the effects of climate change, protected areas also have a role in mitigating the impacts of climate change by naturally storing carbon, and providing refuge for species that migrate when conditions become unfavourable in their existing habitats. With its expanse of ecosystem types ranging from estuary to alpine tundra, the conservancy provides adaptation opportunities by facilitating species migration and adaptation.

Role

The conservancy's biodiversity and natural environment conservation role is to protect a large, intact and largely pristine watershed with high value old-growth temperate rainforest and high quality river and lake systems. The conservancy protects habitat for Grizzly Bear, five species of Pacific salmon, ungulates, waterfowl and birds, including species at risk such as Marbled Murrelet and Northern Goshawk. As the second largest protected area in the Central Pacific Ranges Ecoregion, the conservancy makes a substantial contribution to the representation of this ecoregion and includes a range of ecosystems to support species migration and adaptation to climate change.

2.3 Recreation

Values

The conservancy's remote, diverse environment holds considerable scenic values and some opportunities for backcountry recreation. Current recreation levels in the conservancy are low.

There is one commercial recreation permit for guided angling in the lower reaches of Smokehouse Creek (both above and below Halowis IR No. 5). This activity is conducted via helicopter. There are two inactive traplines and one Guide Outfitter Area certificate within the conservancy. The conservancy is currently open, in season, to hunting of Mountain Goat, Black Bear, Grey Wolf, Cougar and Black-tailed Deer, as well as various species of small game, waterfowl and upland birds. There is no limited entry hunt for any species in the conservancy⁷.

In addition to these existing activities, recreational opportunities compatible with the primary roles of the conservancy include wilderness-based experiences such as canoeing, kayaking, nature appreciation, wildlife viewing, camping and hiking.

Role

Tsa-Latí /Smokehouse Conservancy's recreational role is constrained by the primary roles of the conservancy. There is an opportunity for a low level of low impact, recreational opportunities that are consistent with a wilderness experience, and are sensitive to the natural and cultural values in the conservancy.

2.4 Resource Use

Values

Tsa-Latí /Smokehouse Conservancy currently provides opportunities for recreational use of the conservancy's natural resources, as well as opportunities for First Nations cultural, social and ceremonial resource uses. With the exception of the commercial recreation activities currently permitted within the conservancy, there are no other commercial resource uses occurring within Tsa-Latí /Smokehouse Conservancy.

Role

Conservancies can play a role in the sustainable use or development of natural resources, provided that this activity is consistent with the protection of the purposes for which the conservancy was established. Tsa-Latí /Smokehouse Conservancy's resource use and development role is expected to be limited. There may be a opportunities for a low level of low-impact and small-scale resource uses (e.g., harvest of botanical forest products). Small scale clean energy projects (e.g., local run-of-river hydro) and associated infrastructure (e.g., utility corridor) may also be appropriate to support cultural activities or cultural tourism within the conservancy.

⁷ For complete, updated information, refer to the current BC Hunting and Trapping Synopsis available at <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/fw/wildlife/hunting/regulations/>

2.5 Significance in the Protected Areas System

Tsa-Latí /Smokehouse Conservancy is significant in the parks and protected areas system because it:

- is an area of high importance to the Gwa'sala people as a seasonal resource harvesting and processing area that is associated with three important, former village sites; and,
- is the second largest conservancy on the southern central coast, which:
 - protects the Smokehouse Creek/Long Lake watershed in its entirety;
 - adds an important representative example of the Central Pacific Ranges (CPR) Ecoregion, which was previously underrepresented in the protected areas system;
 - includes a diverse range of ecosystems from estuary to old-growth coastal forests and alpine tundra; and,
 - protects important Grizzly Bear/Sockeye Salmon interactions and habitat for other regionally important and/or at-risk species.

3.0 Management Direction

3.1 Vision

Tsa-Latí /Smokehouse Conservancy continues to support the cultural heritage values, biological diversity and ecological functions associated with the conservancy’s old-growth temperate rainforest, lake and river ecosystems. Habitats are maintained or restored and support abundant fish and wildlife, with thriving populations of Grizzly Bear, Pacific salmon, Northern Goshawk and other regionally important species.

Gwa’sala-‘Nakwaxda’xw members have access to, and are reconnecting with, the former village sites, and passing on their traditional knowledge of this area to future generations. Visitors enjoy the remote wilderness environment, and are gaining an appreciation of Gwa’sala-‘Nakwaxda’xw cultural heritage in this area.

The collaborative relationship between the Gwa’sala-‘Nakwaxda’xw First Nation and BC Parks is strong, with the First Nation actively participating in conservancy management activities. Both traditional ecological knowledge and scientific knowledge are utilized in the management of the conservancy. BC Parks and the Gwa’sala-‘Nakwaxda’xw First Nation work together to ensure the conservancy is managed into the future for the enjoyment of all visitors.

3.2 Management Objectives, Issues and Strategies

Five broad management objectives have been identified for Tsa-Latí /Smokehouse Conservancy. The following tables list key management issues and strategies related to each objective.

<i>Objective 1: Respect and protect First Nation’s social and cultural heritage.</i>	
Issues	Strategies
<p>Visitors may be inadvertently impacting Gwa’sala-‘Nakwaxda’xw cultural heritage sites.</p> <p>Lack of visitor awareness of the significance of these protected areas to the Gwa’sala-‘Nakwaxda’xw may contribute to these inadvertent impacts.</p>	<p>Develop signage and educational materials to explain the cultural heritage values in the conservancy.</p> <p>Encourage users to contact the Gwa’sala-‘Nakwaxda’xw First Nation to better understand the cultural sensitivities of the area. Provide contact information for the First Nation on the BC Parks website.</p>

Objective 1: Respect and protect First Nation's social and cultural heritage.

Issues	Strategies
<p>There is potential for vandalism of cultural heritage sites to occur in the conservancy as this has been a problem at other cultural sites in the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw traditional territory.</p>	<p>Support increased Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw presence in the conservancy to monitor cultural heritage sites.</p> <p>Develop a collaborative approach to monitoring, compliance and enforcement activities in the conservancy between Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Guardian Watchmen, BC Parks Rangers, and other provincial and federal authorities.</p> <p>Develop collaborative procedures for reporting incidents involving disturbance of First Nations cultural heritage and archaeological sites to the appropriate authorities.</p>
<p>The conservancy's remoteness and limited access routes present challenges for Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw accessing Halowis Indian Reserve No. 5 and former village sites.</p>	<p>Evaluate access options via Wyclees Lagoon and Meriworth Sound to determine viable access routes into the conservancy and Halowis Indian Reserve No. 5 via overland trail/road and boat.</p> <p>Allow for the construction of basic dock/boat launch facilities if required to facilitate access.</p>
<p>Due to the planned focus on cultural and traditional uses in the First Nations Cultural Heritage Zone (e.g., re-connecting with and resuming use of Halowis village site on Long Lake), hunting may conflict with and impact the quality of cultural activities in this zone.</p>	<p>Recommend regulatory changes to prohibit hunting in the First Nations Cultural Heritage Zone.</p>

Objective 2: Protect and maintain biological diversity and the natural environment.

Issues	Strategies
<p>Lack of information on populations of species at risk and focal species in Ecosystem Based Management (e.g., Grizzly Bear, Marbled Murrelet, Northern Goshawk) prevents development of detailed management strategies and may result in unintended impacts on the conservancy's ecological values.</p>	<p>Encourage partnerships to allow for inventories and research to monitor and better understand species at-risk/focal species in the conservancy and implement management strategies as required.</p>
<p>There is the potential for increased visitor use and cultural/recreational facility development to disturb important habitat for focal species (e.g., Grizzly Bear, Marbled Murrelet, Northern Goshawk).</p>	<p>Include site-surveys for focal species in the impact assessments for facilities/activities that could impact these values.</p> <p>Utilize Identified Wildlife Guidelines for these focal species when reviewing park use permit applications (e.g., retain suitable nesting trees for Marbled Murrelet and avoid any deterioration of class 1 or 2 Grizzly Bear habitat, etc.).</p>

Objective 2: Protect and maintain biological diversity and the natural environment.

Issues	Strategies
<p>Excessive woody debris in Long Lake and other factors have contributed to the deterioration of salmon spawning and rearing habitat in the conservancy.</p>	<p>Encourage site-specific research associated with Pacific salmon populations and threats to their survival.</p> <p>Coordinate with Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) and other partners to develop and implement a salmon habitat restoration plan, if deemed appropriate.</p> <p>Work with Fisheries and Oceans Canada biologists, Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw biologists, and the provincial agencies responsible for fisheries management to ensure restoration activities pose minimal disturbance to other conservancy values.</p> <p>Avoid facility development/resource use activities that could negatively impact spawning/rearing habitat (consult with Fisheries and Oceans Canada regarding locations).</p>
<p>A contaminated site (Federal Contaminated Sites Inventory No. 12429) at the site of the Docee Counting Fence may pose a risk to conservancy values.</p>	<p>Cooperate with federal agencies responsible for the Federal Contaminated Sites Inventory to determine the status of the site and any specific actions that may be required to minimize risks to conservancy values.</p>
<p>The conservancy's values may be vulnerable to adverse effects from adjacent/external land uses or phenomenon (e.g., forestry activities, commercial fisheries, climate change, etc.).</p>	<p>Build relationships with relevant provincial/federal agencies and tenure holders adjacent to the conservancy.</p> <p>Monitor adjacent activities for potential impacts to conservancy values.</p> <p>Support research into threats to the conservancy's natural values identified through a conservation risk assessment, including the effects of climate change on watershed hydrology, and develop management strategies as required.</p> <p>Identify areas that may be affected by hydrological or other impacts resulting from climate change and avoid locating facilities in vulnerable locations.</p>

Objective 3: Provide recreational opportunities that are consistent with the protection of natural and cultural heritage values.	
Issues	Strategies
Existing recreational use levels are believed to be low; but there is limited information/knowledge regarding recreational use levels and patterns.	Monitor recreational use and implement strategies to protect the conservancy's cultural heritage and biodiversity values if use levels increase.
Visitors may not be aware of the difficulty of accessing this remote conservancy due to the limited access routes.	Ensure visitors are aware of the limited access routes into the conservancy by communicating this information on the BC Parks conservancy web page.
The lack of recreational infrastructure in this remote conservancy limits the opportunity to accommodate a modest, potential increase in recreational use over time.	Allow the development of small-scale, low impact recreational facilities to support an overall low level of recreational use (e.g., basic trails, primitive campsites and/or small-scale, backcountry-oriented shelters; small-scale cultural/educational and interpretation or information structures).

Objective 4: Ensure the small number of economic opportunities in the conservancy contribute to broader goals of human wellbeing on the central coast, including a fair distribution of benefits among First Nations and non-First Nations communities⁸.	
Issues	Strategies
The Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw 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 Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw First Nation with enhanced access to economic opportunities in the protected areas within their traditional territory.

Objective 5: Ensure any 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.	A low level of low-impact resource use may be considered in the conservancy. Consider specific resource use or development proposals for further evaluation.

⁸ Adapted from the Ecosystem Based Management Goal to achieve high levels of human well-being in the central coast. See 2004 Central Coast Land and Resource Management Plan Completion Table Recommendations (p.17) at http://archive.ilmb.gov.bc.ca/slrp/lrmp/nanaimo/cencoast/docs/table_rec/final_report_may20_04.pdf

3.3. Conservancy Zoning

Introduction

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 Tsa-Latí/Smokehouse Conservancy is divided into two zones: First Nations Cultural Heritage Zone and Wilderness Recreation Zone (Figure 1).

First Nations Cultural Heritage Zone

Description

The First Nations Cultural Heritage Zone includes approximately 7,630 hectares (20%) of the conservancy. The zone encompasses Long Lake and Triangle Lake, as well as the terrestrial area on the north side of Long Lake extending from Smokehouse Creek around to the unnamed creek that drains from Hazel Lake in the southwest end of the conservancy near the first narrows of Long Lake.

Objective and Management Intent

This zone aims to protect values associated with former Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw village sites and other areas of spiritual and cultural significance. It is also aimed at facilitating Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw access to the village site near Halowis (Indian Reserve No. 5).

Natural and cultural values are to be maintained and recreational activities are not encouraged in the terrestrial portions of the zone, particularly in the areas above Long Lake between the Docee River and Smokehouse Creek.

The portion of the zone between the Docee River and the unnamed creek draining from Hazel Lake may be utilized to support access into the conservancy if an appropriate route is identified. Low impact, small scale facilities may be appropriate in this area to support Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw and/or recreational access, or to facilitate research, monitoring or restoration activities. Some low impact, recreational activities, such as such as wildlife viewing, canoeing and kayaking, may also be at the western end of the conservancy.

Low frequency float plane landing on Long Lake is an appropriate use within this zone. The eastern and western ends of the lake are the preferred locations for low frequency helicopter landing sites in this zone. Motorized boat use on the lake is also expected to be low frequency, but is appropriate, especially as it is needed for research, restoration, monitoring and cultural access purposes.

Cultural/archaeological research is appropriate in this zone. All cultural/archaeological research proposals will be collaboratively evaluated by the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw and BC Parks.

Ecological research, fisheries management and the activities associated with the Fisheries and Oceans Canada counting fence will continue to be supported within the zone.

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

Wilderness Recreation Zone

Description

The remainder of the conservancy falls within the Wilderness Recreation Zone. This zone includes approximately 30, 290 hectares (80%) of the conservancy. It comprises the area along the southern shore of Long Lake beyond the unnamed creek draining from Hazel Lake, the Canoe Creek watershed and the majority of the Smokehouse Creek watershed.

Objective and Management Intent

The overall objective of this zone is to protect a remote, undisturbed natural landscape in which biological values are conserved and cultural heritage values and uses are maintained. Backcountry recreational opportunities that are dependent on a wilderness setting are also supported within this zone.

Recreational activities will be managed to protect the conservancy's natural and cultural values. Low impact recreational activities such as hiking/backpacking, camping, nature and historic/cultural appreciation, wildlife viewing, canoeing and kayaking are appropriate in this zone.

At present, there are no existing trails or facilities to support recreational activities in the conservancy. In the future, basic trails, primitive campsites and/or small-scale, backcountry-oriented shelters may be appropriate. Small-scale cultural/educational and interpretation or information structures may also be appropriate. The lower reaches of Smokehouse Creek is the preferred location for low frequency aircraft access within this zone.

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

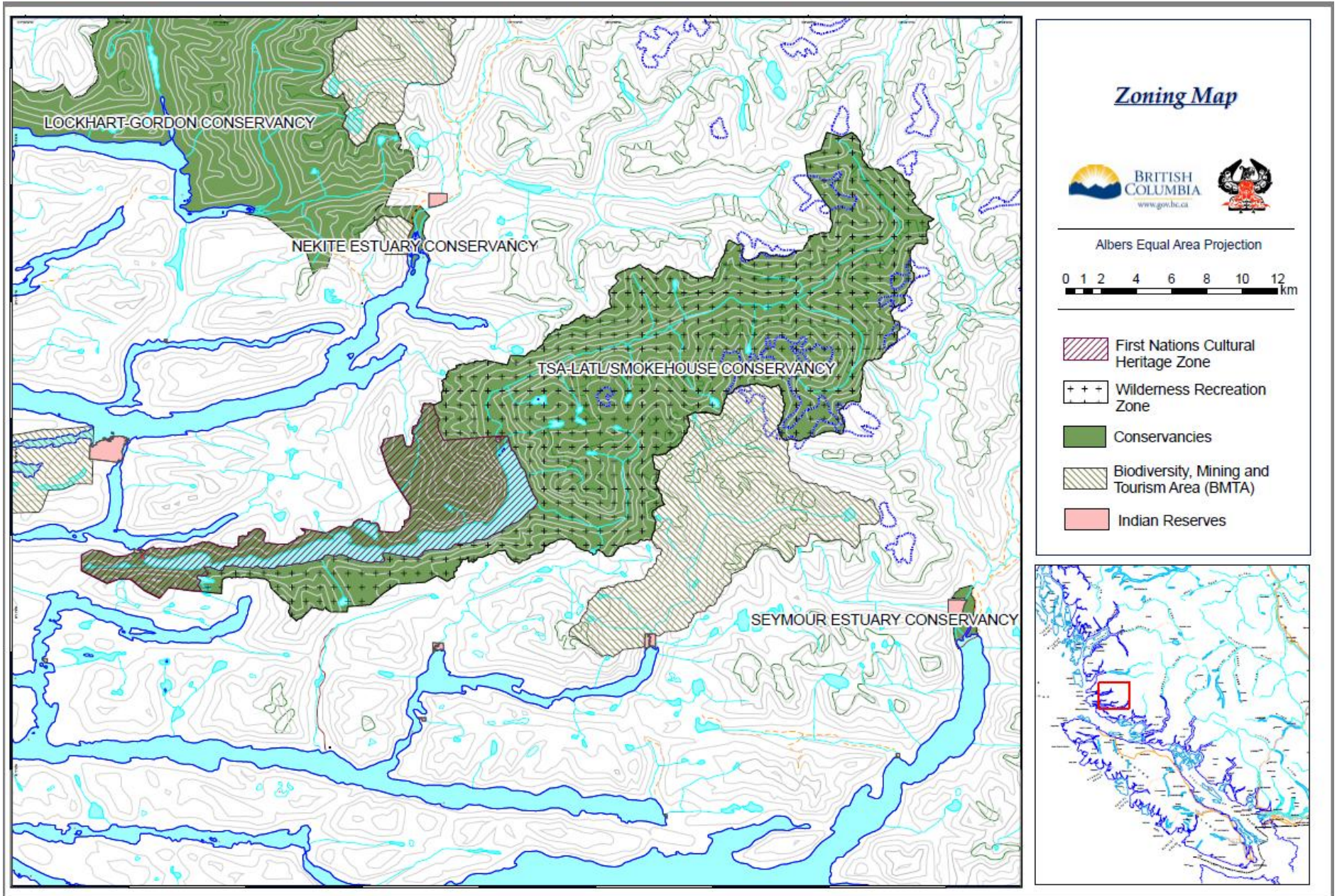


Figure 5: Zoning Map

4.0 Plan Implementation

4.1 Policy Context

In addition to any legislation or policies highlighted in the management plan, there are numerous other provincial/regional policies and guidelines which will be considered during management plan implementation. This includes items such as: BC Parks policies on permitting, conservation, commercial recreation/tourism guidelines, BC Parks Bear-People Conflict Prevention Plan, and impact assessment processes. Government commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the ecosystem-based management commitments for the central coast will also influence management plan implementation.

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. A reviewable action is defined as any proposed project, activity or management decision that has the potential to cause an impact on the natural, cultural heritage and/or recreational environment. Actions include, but are not limited to the following:

- new activities, including projects entirely or partly funded, assisted, conducted, regulated or approved by BC Parks (e.g., approval of a new recreational activity or research project, issuance of a commercial guide permit);
- substantial changes in continuing actions, such as considerable changes in operations, areas of use, or in methodology or equipment (e.g., use of new equipment for routine maintenance); and,
- specific projects such as construction or management activities (e.g., public/private venture projects, expansion or development of facilities, conservation management projects, special projects and locally funded projects).

4.2 Implementation

BC Parks and the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw First Nation will work collaboratively to manage Tsa-Latí /Smokehouse Conservancy for the benefit of all British Columbians. Many of the initiatives recommended by the management plan are not funded as part of core BC Parks' activities. As such, the parties will seek project-specific funding and partners to implement high priority strategies and to monitor key performance measures. Specific projects will be evaluated for priority in relation to the overall protected areas system.

4.3 High Priority Strategies

High priority strategies for implementation include:

- Developing a collaborative approach to monitoring, compliance and enforcement activities in the conservancy between Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Guardian Watchmen, BC Parks Rangers, and other provincial and federal authorities.
- Evaluating access options via Wyclees Lagoon and Meriworth Sound to determine viable access routes into the conservancy and Halowis IR No. 5 via overland trail/road and boat.
- Coordinating with Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) and other partners to develop and implement a salmon habitat restoration plan if deemed appropriate.
- Implementing Collaborative Management Agreement commitments to provide the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw First Nation with enhanced access to economic opportunities in the protected areas within their traditional territory.

4.4 Adaptive Management

An adaptive management approach will be applied to Tsa-Latí /Smokehouse Conservancy to ensure its management remains relevant and effective. 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. Adaptive management is flexible, collaborative, and responsive to public input.

As part of this adaptive process, the management plan will be reviewed as required by the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw First Nation and BC Parks. A review of the management plan would generally be triggered by the complexities of the management issues in the conservancy and/or a significant change in circumstances (e.g., a natural disaster, major environmental change or discovery of a major new archaeological site, etc.), rather than a specific time period.

A management plan review will consider any necessary updates to the management plan that: 1) are required to keep management direction current and relevant; 2) correct the intent of a policy statement; 3) address some error or omission; or, 4) address a new proposal that has the potential to significantly affect existing management direction. 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 Table

The following table lists existing and potential future uses in Tsa-Latí /Smokehouse Conservancy. This is not an exhaustive list of uses that may be considered in this protected area.

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. When determining the appropriateness of a specific activity, the table must be reviewed in conjunction with the other sections of the management plan, including the role descriptions, vision, objectives and strategies.

Activities	Cultural Heritage Zone	Wilderness Recreation Zone
Wildlife Viewing	Y	Y
Boating (motorized and non-motorized)	Y	N/A
Mechanized Off-Road Activity (e.g., mountain biking)	N	N
Motorized Off-Road Activity (e.g., quads, 4x4s, dirt bikes)	N	N
Aircraft Access	Y	Y
Snowmobiling	N	N
Hunting ⁹	N	Y
Angling	Y	Y
Fisheries Habitat Restoration	Y	Y
Botanical Forest Product Harvest	Y	Y
Facilities/Infrastructure		
Campsites	Y	Y
Lodges	N	N
Small-scale cultural/educational and interpretation or information structures	Y	Y
Administrative Buildings and Compounds	N	N
Cabins/Yurts/Huts	Y	Y
Shelters	Y	Y
Boat Launches	Y	N/A

⁹ The management of hunting in the Wilderness Recreation Zone will be consistent with the outcomes of negotiations between the Gwa'Sala-'Nakwaxda'xw First Nation and the Province of British Columbia. If required, changes will be reflected in amendments to this management plan.

Activities	Cultural Heritage Zone	Wilderness Recreation Zone
Boat Docks/Wharves	Y	N/A
Mooring Buoys	Y	N/A
Interpretive Signage	Y	Y
Access Roads	Y	N
Trails	Y	Y
Clean Energy Projects (small scale, for use in the conservancy)	Y	N
Utility Corridors (non-intrusive power/transmission lines for power generated for use in conservancy)	Y	N
Fisheries Habitat Restoration Infrastructure	Y	Y
Aquaculture Facilities	N	N/A

Legend		
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	May be 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 may be considered 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).