



Wawał/Seymour Estuary Conservancy Management Plan

March 2013



Gwa'sala-
'Nakwaxda'xw
Nation

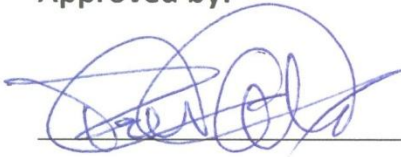


BC Parks

Wawaλ/Seymour Estuary Conservancy

Management Plan

Approved by:



Paddy Walkus (Wa'nuk')
Chief Councillor
Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw First Nation

13/04/13

Date



Thomas Henderson (Hetlamas)
Hereditary Chief
'Nakwaxda'xw First Nation

13/04/13

Date



Don Cadden
Regional Director, West Coast Region
BC Parks

MARCH 15/13

Date



Brian Bawtinheimer
Executive Director, Parks Planning and Management Branch
BC Parks

March 15/13

Date

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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 Wawał/Seymour Estuary Conservancy¹ 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 is the result of a collaborative planning process between the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw 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 Note that the name "Wawley" listed in Schedule E of the *Protected Areas of British Columbia Act* is an incorrect spelling of the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw place name for the Seymour Estuary. The spelling preferred by the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw, Wawał, has been used throughout this management plan.

1.2 Planning Area

Wáwáλ/Seymour Estuary 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*.

The conservancy protects 289 hectares of upland and 37 hectares of foreshore (326 hectares in total) at the head of Seymour Inlet, a 75 kilometres long fjord on British Columbia's central coast (Figure 1). The conservancy is located approximately 80 kilometres northeast of Port Hardy, 161 kilometres northwest of Campbell River, and 300 kilometres northwest of Vancouver. The conservancy includes the Seymour River estuary, a salt marsh of ecological interest, and a section of the lower Seymour River.

The Wáwáλ/Seymour Estuary Conservancy is a former village site of the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw First Nation. The 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.

Wáwáλ/Seymour Estuary Conservancy is surrounded by forest lands, with past and planned timber harvesting activity adjacent to its eastern and western borders. There is also a log handling and storage facility on the shore on the east side of the estuary adjacent to the conservancy. The Wáwáλ Indian Reserve (IR No. 12) is located on the western shore of Seymour River, approximately two kilometres upstream from the river mouth. Forest Service Road 8376-01 follows the eastern border of the conservancy from the estuary northward across the Seymour River, looping southward again to arrive at Wáwáλ Indian Reserve.

1.3 Management Commitments

Collaborative Management

A collaborative management agreement (CMA) 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 protected areas within Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw 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 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,
- 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 the Wáwáλ/Seymour Estuary Conservancy: protection of First Nations cultural resources and protection of the Seymour Estuary wetland complex and associated fish and wildlife habitats. The AIP also lists provision of backcountry tourism and recreation opportunities that are consistent with estuary values as a secondary role for the conservancy.

The Central Coast Land and Resource Management Plan (CCLRMP, 2004) recommended that the principles of adaptive 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 to achieve high levels of human well being. The CCLRMP also identified several management issues to be addressed in estuary conservancies, including: 1) First Nations interests; 2) access to upland developments; and, 3) best management of Grizzly Bear – human interactions with respect to recreation.

At the time that the central coast conservancies were announced, the Minister of Environment also made a commitment that existing tenured uses in these conservancies may continue.

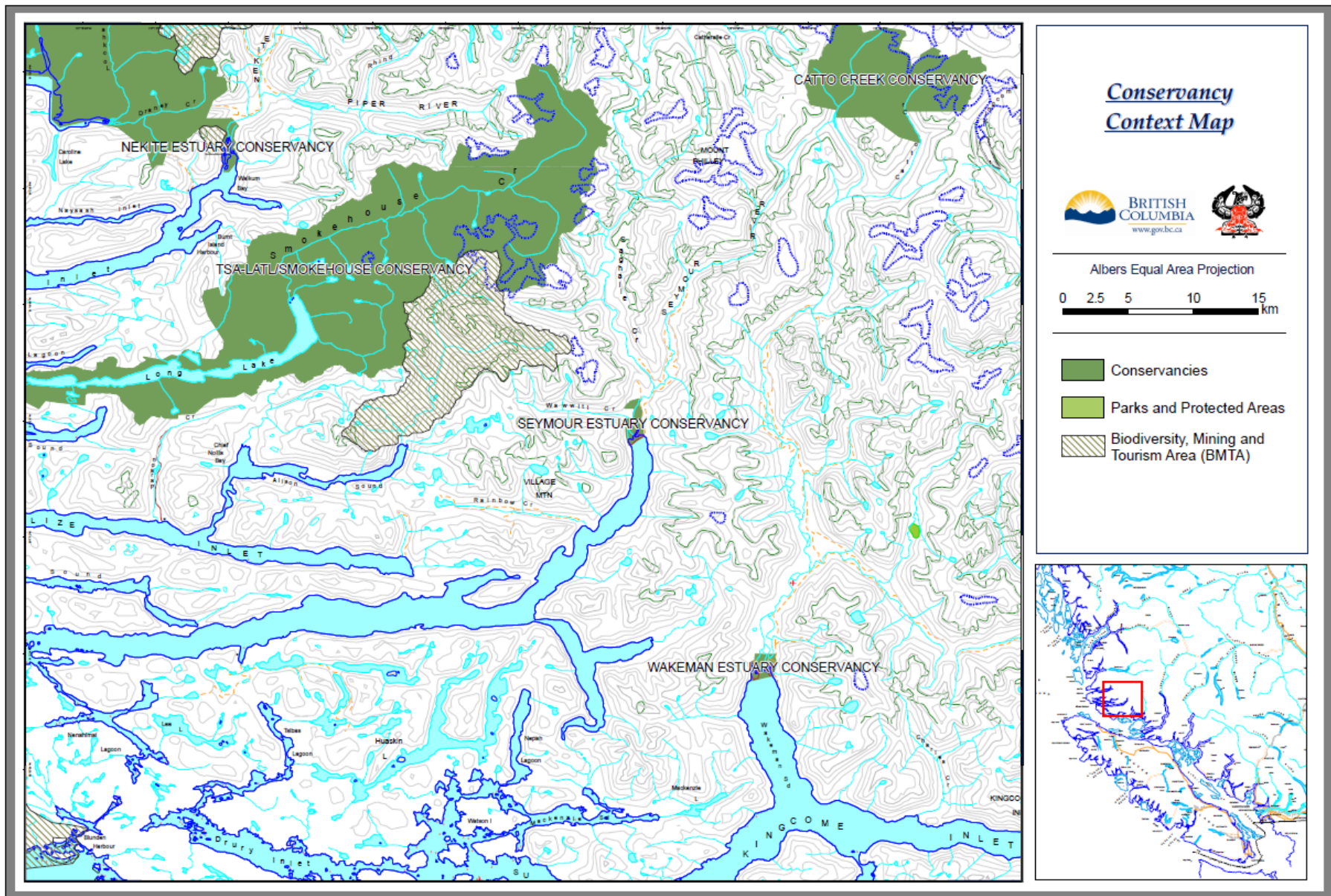


Figure 1. Conservancy Context Map

2.0 Roles and Values of the Conservancy

The Wawał/Seymour Estuary Conservancy is significant in the parks and protected areas system for the following reasons:

- The conservancy protects First Nations cultural heritage uses. Specifically, the conservancy protects Gwa'sala-'Nakwada'xw culturally significant sites and traditional use areas, including a former 'Nakwaxda'xw village site, seasonal resource harvesting area, salmon fishing and processing sites, and estuarine gardens cultivated by 'Nakwaxda'xw families;
- The conservancy protects the Wawał/Seymour Estuary wetland complex and associated fish and wildlife habitats, making an important contribution to the representation of B.C.'s coastal estuaries in the provincial protected areas system; and,
- The conservancy offers visitors a remote, backcountry recreation experience in a scenic and biologically diverse estuarine environment.



Figure 2: Wawał/Seymour Estuary

2.1 Cultural Heritage

Wawał Village Site

Wawał was an important village site for the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw First Nation. Three clans came from Wawał: the Grizzly clan, the Thunderbird clan, and the Raven clan. At one time, there were cabins on stilts at the mouth of Wawał. When the Indian Reserve was established by the federal government in 1888, the Indian Agent located the reserve close to a sand bar, upriver from the estuary. The establishment of Indian Reserve No. 12 divided the three clans that lived and worked in the area. A 1914 account indicates that there were four houses remaining in the Wawał/Seymour Estuary at this time, with the residents using the location for fishing and root gardens. The written record also speaks of Indian Reserve No. 12, Wawał, as having Eulachon and Pacific salmon fisheries, and being a favourite hunting and trapping location of the 'Nakwaxda'xw people.

Wawał was one of many village sites that provided key food, trade and sustenance resources for the entire Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw community. These resources were used for survival during the winter, for trade, and for participation in potlatch ceremonies. The clans were responsible for harvesting different resources in specific areas within the territory during different seasons.

Seasonal Resource Use

In the spring, the food gathering cycle in the Wawał/ Seymour Estuary Conservancy began with the harvesting of Eulachon and processing of Eulachon oil. Root foods and medicines were also harvested in the spring. These foods and medicines formed an integral part of First Nations feasts and ceremonies. Harvesters travelled by dugout canoe through the estuary to reach each of the harvesting sites. An 'onion like' bulb, considered to be a delicacy, was collected from the rich, fluvial soils of the estuary, then stored and served to important guests during feasts and ceremonies. Many researchers and historians now recognize these estuary locations as 'root gardens', which First Nations cultivated by harvesting a portion of the roots and scattering the remainder in patches for future harvests. As a source of many medicinal plants, the estuary and surrounding marshy areas also served as the 'Nakwaxda'xw 'pharmacy'.

The summer was a time of collecting berries and drying ground fish. Wewamis (time to work the rivers) excited the 'Nakwaxda'xw members from Wawał. A salmon ceremony was performed before any salmon were harvested. Once the families were at the mouth of Wawał thanking the Creator for the bounty provided, the chiefs would determine the amount of fish to be caught. During the salmon season, it was common to see seals and Killer Whales eating their fill of salmon before carrying on to other fishing grounds. Grizzly Bears also 'fattened up' for the winter along the Seymour River, with the largest bears frequenting the gravel bar where the river was shallow. Younger Grizzly Bears and Black Bears fished closer to the river mouth where the water was deeper and the salmon harder to

catch. Throughout the fall, families living at Wáwáλ harvested the plentiful Coho Salmon and Chum Salmon to smoke and dry for future use.

Hunting for ducks, Black-tailed Deer and Mountain Goat (upland from the conservancy) occurred during colder months in preparation for the winter ceremonies. In the winter, some members would stay at Wáwáλ to hunt and trap, but many families would head to Tigwaxtee' for the winter ceremonies to celebrate the bounty the Creator had provided from each of the harvesting locations throughout the territory. Wáwáλ was prized and respected and, in turn, provided many gifts for the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw First Nation and their guests.

2.2 Biological Diversity and Natural Environment

The conservancy protects important biodiversity values associated with a coastal estuary on a protected inlet. A salt marsh/slough adds habitat complexity to the west side of the estuary, as does a small pond and wetland inland of the estuary. The conservancy is important for the protection of:

- Chum, Coho and Pink Salmon;
- Grizzly Bears;
- Marbled Murrelet habitat; and,
- Biodiversity values associated with an estuary ecosystem.

Ecosystem Representation

The conservancy protects a major coastal estuary and associated wetlands. Estuaries are among the most productive of all ecosystems, supporting large populations of fish and wildlife in a small area. Offering a diversity of food sources and habitats, estuaries are used by approximately 80% of coastal wildlife species at some point in their life cycles. Estuaries are naturally rare ecosystems, comprising less than 3% of British Columbia's coastline.

Wáwáλ/Seymour Estuary Conservancy makes an important contribution to the representation of B.C.'s coastal estuaries in the provincial protected area system.

B.C.'s ecoregion classification system divides the province into areas of similar climate, physiography, oceanography, hydrology, vegetation and wildlife potential. Ecoregions are the narrowest in scope of the geographic units within this classification system. The terrestrial portion of the conservancy (289 hectares) is within the Central Pacific Ranges (CPR) Ecoregion. The marine component of the conservancy (37 hectares) is within the Queen Charlotte Strait (QCT) Marine Ecoregion. Due to its relatively small size, the conservancy does not make a significant contribution to the representation of these ecoregions in the provincial protected areas system.

B.C.'s terrestrial ecosystems are also divided into biogeoclimatic (BEC) zones where specific types of soils, plant and animal communities develop. The conservancy makes a minimal contribution (289 hectares) to the protection of the Coastal Western Hemlock Submontane Very Wet Maritime (CWHvm1) biogeoclimatic variant.

Fish

Salmon are a keystone species in the conservancy, providing an important food source for Grizzly Bears and a critical source of nutrients for the riparian forests of the lower Seymour River and estuary. The Seymour River provides habitat for Chum, Coho and Pink Salmon within two kilometres of the river mouth, at which point waterfalls obstruct fish passage. There is a major spawning area for Chum and Coho in a series of tributaries entering Seymour River from Wawwat'l Creek. The estuary is also an excellent rearing ground for Coho Salmon, and provides spawning habitat for Pacific Herring.

Birds

The western shore of the estuary and head of Seymour Inlet have been identified by the Canadian Wildlife Service as an area of significance for goldeneyes and gulls. The Pacific Estuary Conservation Program ranked 442 of British Columbia's coastal estuaries for their relative biological importance to waterbirds.² Attributes used to assess biological importance included data on estuary size, habitat rarity, Pacific Herring spawn occurrence, waterbird use, and intertidal species rarity. The Wawał/Seymour Estuary received a moderate score of three on a scale of one to five in this ranking exercise, with one being the highest.

The conservancy also contains 13 hectares of Class 2 (high value) and 10 hectares of Class 3 (moderate value) habitat for Marbled Murrelet.³ Marbled Murrelet is a provincially blue-listed⁴ species and a focal species in ecosystem based management on B.C.'s central coast.

Grizzly Bears

The Wawał/Seymour Estuary Conservancy is important for the protection of Grizzly Bears. The entire conservancy is very high value Grizzly Bear habitat, offering excellent foraging opportunities, particularly in the early spring. Grizzly Bears are an ecological indicator species, in that their population status and presence reflect the health and integrity of their habitats. They are also a provincially blue-listed species.

² Ryder, J.L., J.K. Kenyon, D. Buffett, K. Moore, M. Ceh, and K. Stipek. 2007. An integrated biophysical assessment of estuarine habitats in British Columbia to assist regional conservation planning. Technical Report Series No. 476. Canadian Wildlife Service, Pacific and Yukon Region, British Columbia.

³ Class 2 high value habitat = key habitat features are common and widespread; Class 3 moderate value habitat = key habitat features present but patchy.

⁴ 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.

Grizzly Bears play a critical role in the productivity of the Seymour estuary. In spring and early summer, Grizzly Bears feed on sedges, grasses and forbs in the estuary. In the fall, the bears carry spawning salmon upland from the river, bringing an influx of nutrients into the riparian forests.

Climate Change

Climate change is expected to result in changes to species composition and ecosystem functioning across the landscape. Other anticipated changes include increased frequency and severity of extreme weather events, as well as sea level rise due to melting ice and thermal expansion of warming ocean waters.

Protected area systems 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. As one of a number of major coastal estuaries in the provincial protected areas system, Wáwáλ/Seymour Estuary Conservancy contributes to the role of the protected areas system as a whole in conserving multiple examples of ecologically important estuarine habitats, thereby facilitating resilience and adaptation to climate change.

The Wáwáλ/Seymour Estuary Conservancy will likely be impacted by the effects of climate change. Specific impacts are difficult to predict. However, the estuary is expected to be impacted by projected sea level rise. The entire estuary is ranked as having very high shoreline sensitivity to sea level rise, due to the susceptibility of the estuarine sediments to erosion. Substantial re-arrangement of intertidal habitats and loss of trees along the shoreline can be expected as high sea levels and storm events coincide. Wáwáλ/Seymour Estuary Conservancy may also experience impacts to water quality and availability due to changes in the timing, intensity and duration of precipitation and snowmelt events in the Seymour River watershed. Overall, the effects of climate change may alter ecological dynamics in the estuary and result in impacts to natural, cultural and recreational values in the Wáwáλ/Seymour Estuary Conservancy.

2.3 Recreation

The conservancy plays a role in providing opportunities for remote, backcountry recreation in a scenic and biologically diverse coastal estuary. Wáwáλ/Seymour Estuary can support a variety of wilderness recreation opportunities that are compatible with the protection of natural and cultural values, such as bird/wildlife viewing, nature photography, hiking, fishing, beach and river bank exploration, camping and boating.

Recreational fishing (guided and non-guided) is a popular seasonal recreational activity in the conservancy. In particular, Seymour Estuary is a destination for coho fishing during the months of August to October. Access to the conservancy for guided freshwater angling is

typically by air. Aerial helicopter-based sightseeing/wildlife viewing also takes place as part of these guided angling excursions.

Non-guided saltwater and freshwater anglers generally arrive by boat. To reach the conservancy from Queen Charlotte Sound, recreational boaters must first navigate the Nakwakto rapids at the entrance to Seymour Inlet. Adventurous boaters seeking solitude and scenic cruising may choose to explore the lesser visited Seymour and Belize Inlets en route to the conservancy. There is a temporary anchorage at the head of Seymour Inlet providing access to the conservancy in fair weather, as the anchorage does not provide shelter from prevailing winds.

The conservancy is also currently open to recreational hunting, in season, and there is an active park use permit for guide outfitting.

In addition, given the conservancy's rich cultural heritage and natural values, there is potential for development of a cultural tourism opportunity, including a wildlife viewing component, to provide visitors with a guided cultural and natural interpretation/education experience.

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. There is an existing trap line overlapping with the conservancy. However, there are currently no park use permits for natural resource uses in the Wawał/Seymour Estuary Conservancy.

The conservancy provides opportunities for First Nations cultural, social and ceremonial uses of traditional marine and terrestrial resources.⁵ The conservancy may also be able to support small scale commercial resource use or development opportunities that are compatible with the conservancy's roles and values. Natural resource use and development opportunities that may be appropriate in this conservancy include commercial aquaculture (not including salmon aquaculture) and commercial harvesting of botanicals (e.g., salal, mushrooms).

⁵ Note: Management of marine fisheries falls under the jurisdiction of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO).

3.0 Management Direction

3.1 Vision

The Wawał /Seymour Estuary Conservancy continues to support the cultural heritage and biodiversity values associated with this productive estuary ecosystem. Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw families have re-connected with this special place in a manner that promotes the unique cultural history of the area. Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw members continue to practise cultural traditions and pass on traditional ecological knowledge to the next generation, thereby contributing to the protection of cultural heritage and biodiversity values in the Wawał /Seymour Estuary Conservancy. Visitors are enjoying the wilderness recreation opportunities in the conservancy, and gaining an appreciation of Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw cultural heritage.

The Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw First Nation is participating in economic opportunities associated with cultural tourism and recreational activities in the conservancy. The collaborative relationship between the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw First Nation and BC Parks is strong and capacity is being built within the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw to diversify participation in all aspects of protection and management. The parties strive to ensure the conservancy is managed into the future for the enjoyment of all visitors.

3.2 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, existing patterns of use, the degree of human use desired, and the level of management and development required.

The entire Wawał/Seymour Estuary Conservancy is designated as a First Nations Cultural Heritage Zone.

First Nations Cultural Heritage Zone

The purpose of the First Nations Cultural Heritage Zone is to protect the cultural heritage and biological values associated with the estuary. Cultural activities, including traditional harvesting and processing of estuary resources, will be an important use in this zone. This zone is also appropriate for backcountry recreation activities, such as camping, hiking, bird/wildlife viewing, nature appreciation/exploration and recreational fishing. Cultural tourism development, including wildlife viewing, trails and interpretive signage, will be considered as possible future uses in this zone. Backcountry campsites and small scale buildings to be used for cultural education and interpretation are also possible, future facilities in this zone. For a complete list of appropriate uses in this zone see Appendix A.

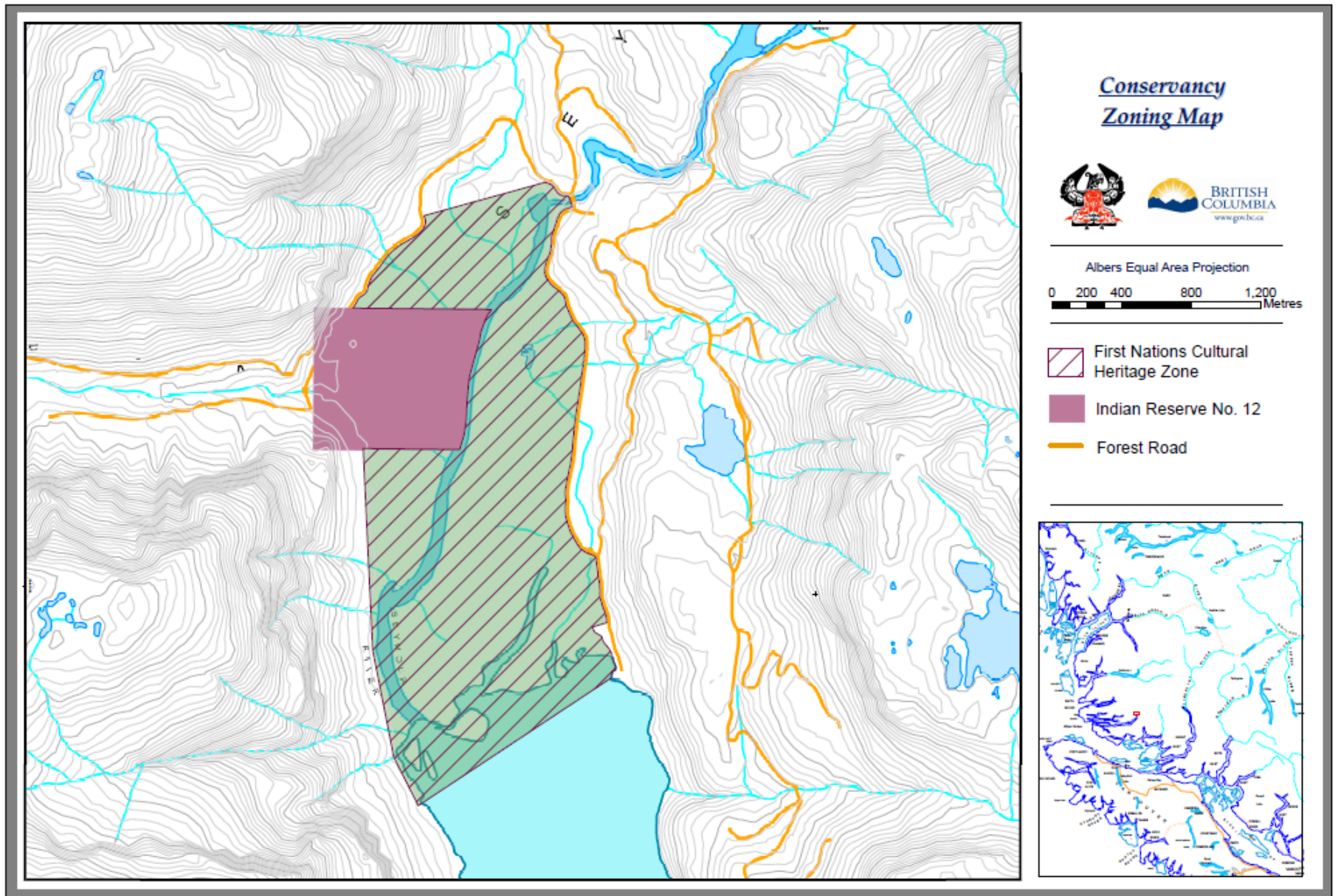


Figure 3: Zoning Map

3.3 Management Objectives, Issues and Strategies

Five broad management objectives have been identified for Wawaλ/Seymour Estuary Conservancy. The following tables list key issues related to each objective, as well as management strategies to address these issues in the conservancy.

Objective 1: Respect and protect Gwa’sala-’Nakwaxda’xw social and cultural heritage values.	
Issues	Strategies
Gwa’sala-’Nakwaxda’xw concern that sacred/cultural heritage sites in the conservancy have been disturbed by visitors.	<p>Develop collaborative procedures for reporting incidents involving disturbance of Gwa’sala-’Nakwaxda’xw cultural heritage sites to the appropriate authorities.</p> <p>Support an increased Gwa’sala-’Nakwaxda’xw role in protecting cultural heritage features in the conservancy.</p> <p>Develop a Guardian Watchman program to involve the Gwa’sala-’Nakwaxda’xw First Nation in monitoring, compliance and enforcement activities to protect cultural heritage and ecological features.</p>
Gwa’sala-’Nakwaxda’xw interest in increasing participation in cultural heritage and traditional use activities in the conservancy (e.g., fishing; harvesting and processing of traditional estuary resources; stewardship of terrestrial and marine resources; passing on traditional knowledge to youth).	<p>Support Gwa’sala-’Nakwaxda’xw cultural and traditional use activities in the conservancy.</p> <p>Identify suitable locations for campsites and/or small scale buildings to support cultural interpretation/education activities and the Guardian Watchmen program.</p>
Gwa’sala-’Nakwaxda’xw Elders have observed declines in the abundance of fish stocks and other traditional resources in the estuary and river.	The Gwa’sala-’Nakwaxda’xw and BC Parks will work with Fisheries and Oceans Canada and other partners to rebuild fish stocks and other species through habitat restoration activities in the conservancy.
Lack of public awareness of the significance of this area to the Gwa’sala-’Nakwaxda’xw First Nation may impact protection of cultural heritage values.	<p>Gwa’sala-’Nakwaxda’xw and BC Parks may develop signage/educational materials to describe the cultural heritage values in the conservancy.</p> <p>Encourage visitors to contact the Hereditary Chief of the Gwa’sala-’Nakwaxda’xw First Nation to learn more about cultural protocol and cultural heritage values in the conservancy. Provide contact information for the Gwa’sala-’Nakwaxda’xw First Nation on the BC Parks website.</p>

Objective 1: Respect and protect Gwa’sala-‘Nakwaxda’xw social and cultural heritage values.

Issues	Strategies
The conservancy name listed in Schedule E of the <i>Protected Areas of British Columbia Act</i> is an incorrect spelling of the Gwa’sala-‘Nakwaxda’xw place name for the Seymour Estuary. The spelling preferred by the Gwa’sala-‘Nakwaxda’xw, Wawaλ, has been used throughout this management plan.	Recommend a change to the legal name of the conservancy to reflect the correct Gwa’sala-‘Nakwaxda’xw place name for the Seymour Estuary.

Objective 2: Protect biological diversity and natural environment values.

Issues	Strategies
Implementation of ecosystem based management in the central coast may require baseline research and ongoing monitoring of focal species and ecological processes in the conservancy.	Encourage research in partnership with other organizations and agencies to monitor the ecological processes and focal species within the conservancy.
Inventories of species at risk are incomplete.	Encourage research on species at risk.
The conservancy is vulnerable to the effects of climate change and has very high sensitivity to sea level rise.	<p>Manage the conservancy to accommodate the potential migration of the estuary upstream.</p> <p>Identify the areas that may be inundated.</p> <p>Avoid construction of facilities or other infrastructure in areas that may be part of the migrating estuary.</p>
Due to its small size, the conservancy is vulnerable to adverse effects from land uses and marine activities adjacent to the conservancy.	Monitor adjacent land uses (e.g., forestry) and marine activities (e.g., recreational salt water fishing) for potential impacts to conservancy values.

Objective 3: Manage recreation to protect cultural values as well as fish and wildlife values associated with the estuary.

Issues	Strategies
<p>Backcountry recreation opportunities that are consistent with the protection of cultural and natural values are appropriate in the conservancy.</p>	<p>Encourage public recreational opportunities that are compatible with protection of cultural/natural estuarine values (e.g., bird/wildlife viewing, backcountry campsites and small scale buildings to be used for cultural education and interpretation, nature photography, hiking, fishing, beach and river bank exploration, boating and cultural tourism).</p> <p>Backcountry campsites and small scale buildings to be used for cultural education and interpretation are possible future facilities in the First Nations Cultural Heritage Zone. Cultural tourism development, including wildlife viewing, trails and interpretive signage, will be also considered as possible future uses in this zone.</p> <p>Provide information to the public on recreational opportunities in the conservancy (e.g., via the BC Parks website).</p>
<p>A significant increase in recreational use has the potential to impact fisheries and wildlife values in the conservancy.</p>	<p>BC Parks and the Gwa’sala-’Nakwaxda’xw will collaboratively monitor recreational use, using the Backcountry Recreation Impact Monitoring (BRIM) process, and manage accordingly.</p> <p>Angling guiding activity in the conservancy will be managed to ensure a high quality wilderness experience, maintain healthy fish stocks, and minimize disturbance to the Grizzly Bear population.</p>
<p>Frequent helicopter activity in the conservancy (during the late summer – fall Coho Salmon fishing season) may cause disturbance to Grizzly Bears as this activity coincides with a period of intense use of riparian and estuarine habitat.</p>	<p>Make permittees aware of the Ministry of Environment Wildlife Guidelines for Backcountry Tourism/Recreation, in particular the guidelines for aircraft use, to assist in minimizing disturbance to Grizzly Bears and other wildlife.</p> <p>Monitor wildlife disturbance resulting from helicopter activity. If required, work with users to develop site-specific guidelines to minimize disturbance to Grizzly Bears.</p>
<p>Recreational fishing pressure in the Seymour Estuary and the adjacent waters of Seymour Inlet may impact fisheries values in the conservancy.</p>	<p>BC Parks and the Gwa’sala-’Nakwaxda’xw will communicate any concerns that may arise regarding recreational salt water angling in the estuary to Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO).</p>

Objective 3: Manage recreation to protect cultural values as well as fish and wildlife values associated with the estuary.

Issues	Strategies
Due to the conservancy's small size and the planned increase in traditional use and guided recreational activities in the conservancy (e.g., harvesting and processing of traditional estuary resources, cultural tourism, wildlife viewing), hunting may pose a risk to public safety and conflict with these other recreational or cultural activities. .	Recommend regulatory changes to prohibit hunting in the conservancy.

Objective 4. Ensure economic opportunities in the conservancy contribute to broader goals of human wellbeing on the central coast.

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 with enhanced access to economic opportunities within their traditional territory.
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.

Objective 5. 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 conservancy management objectives.	Consider specific proposals for further evaluation.

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 Wawał /Seymour Estuary Conservancy will be monitored and evaluated by the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw First Nation and BC Parks. No specific, future management planning is envisioned for Wawał /Seymour Estuary Conservancy. However, BC Parks will work with the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw First Nation to coordinate planning and management of the Wawał /Seymour Estuary Conservancy, as required.

Management strategies and actions may change over time to reflect new circumstances and information gained. For example, management strategies may be revised to respond to the implementation of broader objectives of ecosystem based management⁶ in the central coast.

The BC Parks' Impact Assessment Policy will also 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.

Priority strategies for implementation include:

- developing a Guardian Watchman program to involve the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw First Nation in monitoring, compliance and enforcement activities to protect cultural heritage and ecological features; and,
- encouraging visitors to contact the Hereditary Chief of the Gwa'sala-'Nakwada'xw First Nation to learn more about cultural protocol and cultural heritage values in the conservancy. Providing contact information for the Gwa'sala-'Nakwada'xw First Nation on the BC Parks website.

The implementation of the first priority action outlined above is dependent on the availability of BC Parks' Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw financial and staff resources. Approval of this management plan does not constitute approval of funding for implementation.

⁶ 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

Appendix A – Appropriate Uses Table

The following table lists existing and potential future uses in Wawaʼλ /Seymour Estuary 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. The table must be reviewed in conjunction with the other sections of the management plan, including the role descriptions, vision, objectives and strategies.

Activity	First Nations Cultural Heritage Zone
Wildlife Viewing	Y
Cultural Tourism	Y
Recreational Fishing	Y
Angling Guiding	Y
Hunting	N
Boating (power)	Y
Boating (non-power)	Y
Camping - backcountry	Y
Facilities	
Small Buildings/Facilities for Cultural Interpretation/Education/Guardian Watchmen Program	Y
Administrative Buildings and Compounds	N
Fixed Roof Accommodation	N
Trails	Y
Campsites - backcountry	Y
Other Uses	
Air Access (fixed wing/rotary)	Y
Scientific Research	Y
Commercial Harvesting of Botanicals (e.g., salal for floral, or mushrooms)	Y
Aquaculture (not including salmon aquaculture) ⁷	Y
Fisheries Habitat Restoration (e.g., abalone, shellfish, salmon) ⁸	Y

⁷ Note that Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) is responsible for the management and regulation of aquaculture under the federal *Fisheries Act*.

⁸ Note that management of marine fisheries is under the jurisdiction of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO).

Activity	First Nations Cultural Heritage Zone
Trapping	Y
Filming (commercial)	Y
Communication Sites	Y
Habitat Restoration	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	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 <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).