

# Gulf Islands National Park Reserve Management Plan Newsletter #4

February 2012



## Moving Forward from Phase 1

Based on input received in Phase 1, the Planning Team, with assistance from the Park Advisory Board, has drafted a potential vision statement for the park, updated overall management principles, and proposed 15 year objectives.

As Phase 2 builds on the vision and objectives, it is important to provide draft information to inform the discussions in Phase 2, particularly the proposed 5 year actions.

Although the vision, management principles and objectives will not be finalized until the public has reviewed and commented on a draft Management Plan (in Phase 4), the following will serve as the starting point.



Narvaez Bay, Saturna Island  
Parks Canada/Christian J. Stewart

## Park Vision

The intent of a vision is to express what the park will **be like in 15 year's time**—its significance, its special character, what one can experience, and how we are working together to achieve our goals for this special place.

Please rate the draft vision on page 2 as excellent, good or poor.

If you think it needs further work, please let us know what you think would improve it.

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# Gulf Islands National Park Reserve

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## Draft Vision

Gulf Islands National Park Reserve is a treasured natural place; a living legacy that connects people to the sensitive coastal ecosystems and rich multi-cultural heritage of the Salish Sea. The park is meaningful to many peoples, for many reasons.

We will strive to ensure Gulf islands National Park Reserve is a place where.....

Old growth Douglas fir forests stand beside iconic Garry oak meadows. Rocky shorelines continue to shelter nesting black oystercatchers and islets provide resting spots for seals and sea lions. Beneath the waves, eelgrass meadows provide a nursery for juvenile fish. These vibrant coastal habitats and the wildlife that depends on them, continue to capture the hearts of visitors. First Nations, local communities, interested Canadians, scientists and Parks Canada continue to learn about and work together to restore and maintain healthy and diverse ecosystems. We lead by example and make measurable improvements at key locations.

Cultural heritage is valued and respected. Meaningful examples of cultural heritage are managed to minimize potential impacts and help tell interesting human stories. The on-going connections of the Coast Salish peoples to the Gulf Islands are recognized—for millennia the region has been home to their ancestors and strong spiritual ties exist. The lands and waters of the Salish Sea region continue to provide food and medicines. Today, in the park, they connect with their traditional lands, activities and practices to help teach their children and preserve their culture. Coast Salish knowledge is appreciated, their cultural sites are respected, and their involvement enhances both park management and visitor experience.

Those who came to this region more recently—the Chinese, European, Hawaiian and Japanese—are also recognized and key sites help illustrate their lives and interactions with the environment. Visitors get a glimpse into the past at homestead sites, light stations, and industrial sites such as an island brick-making factory. Island residents, area businesses and Parks Canada share a commitment to preserving and presenting the qualities that give each island its distinctive character.

People come from near and far to enjoy the dynamic intersection of land and water, the quiet peacefulness and the unique natural ecosystems. Some visitors play on a sandy beach or walk a short trail. A group of kayakers view wildlife as they ply the park waters. Others may participate in a restoration project—removing invasive plants and replacing them with native grasses and trees—or help Parks Canada staff monitor deer or clam populations. At the end of the day, whether watching the sunset from a serene campsite, the deck of a boat or a neighbouring bed and breakfast, all have had their own Gulf Islands experience.

This remarkable park enriches the lives of Canadians and instils in all a desire to protect and steward it as a refuge for nature, a sanctuary for visitors, and a place of continued use by the Coast Salish peoples. Our strong and diverse alliances further conservation, enhance visitor experience, and bolster public awareness and understanding of this unique part of Canada.



Sunrise, East Point, Saturna Island  
Parks Canada/Christian J. Stewart

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## Proposed Management Principles

Based on comments received during Phase 1, the following overall Management Principles are now being proposed.

In all decision-making, Parks Canada will be guided by the following principles:

- Decisions are consistent with the national park mandate (resource conservation, enjoyment and education) and the vision for GINPR.
- Recognizing the sensitivity of the ecosystems in the Strait of Georgia Lowlands Natural Region, Parks Canada will make maintenance or restoration of ecological integrity the first priority when considering all aspects of park management.
- Visitor opportunities and facilities are moderately rustic in nature. Connecting with nature in quiet, peaceful ways is the primary focus. Connecting with cultural heritage is a second focus and will be undertaken in targeted locations, through targeted actions.
- Major park projects include a public/visitor awareness/education component.
- Parks Canada provides specific mechanisms and opportunities for Coast Salish First Nations to collaborate in the planning and management of the park reserve and considers First Nations interests and input before decisions are made.
- The Park Advisory Board (PAB) is consulted for advice on strategic matters relating to the planning and operation of the park reserve.
- Efforts are made to build and maintain positive relationships with stakeholders and the public and regular updates are provided on park operations and implementation of the Management Plan.
- Parks Canada provides opportunities for the public to be engaged in planning processes and key projects and if significant changes to management or park services are proposed, public consultation is undertaken and interests and input are considered before decisions are made.
- Leadership and sustainability are **demonstrated through the use of “green”** management practices and collaboration to advance mutual goals.
- Parks Canada uses science, research, traditional, and expert knowledge to support evidence-based and social-based decision-making.



Mt Warburton Pike, Saturna Island  
Parks Canada/Christian J. Stewart

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## 15-Year Objectives

The Planning Team, in collaboration with the Park Advisory Board, has also been working **on draft objectives to guide Parks Canada's** efforts over the next 15 years.

Initial draft objectives are:

### *Restoring Ecological Integrity*

- The park better represents the Strait of Georgia Lowlands Natural Region characteristics through a strategic restoration program.
- The marine components are protected and managed as an integral part of the park reserve ecosystems.
- Effective, ecosystem-based management is **occurring and the park's ecological** monitoring program provides information for decision-makers on condition status and management effectiveness.
- The conservation status of species at risk (listed under the *Species at Risk Act*) using the park in a significant manner is maintained or improved.
- The public is more aware of the significance **and sensitivities of the park's ecosystems** and are actively helping to protect them.



Mahoi House, Russell Island  
Parks Canada/Christian J. Stewart

### *Maintaining Cultural Heritage*

- Key cultural heritage values are maintained and presented through a strategic cultural resource management program.
- Protection is improved at agreed upon priority First Nations cultural heritage sites.
- **Guided by the park's Cultural Resource** Values Statement, priority Non-First Nations cultural heritage buildings and landscapes are better protected and presented.
- The public is more aware of the significance and sensitivities of key cultural heritage values and are actively helping protect them.

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## 15-Year Objectives

### *Enhancing Visitor Experience*

- Visitor opportunities and services are planned and implemented through a strategic visitor experience program.
- More Canadians are attracted to experience, connect with and help manage the park through enhanced and new visitor opportunities and promotions.
- **More visitors feel they've gained an understanding** of something interesting or valuable through interpretive programming or volunteer opportunities.
- Visitor experience is enhanced by authentic Coast Salish culture-based interpretive opportunities.
- Park facilities are relevant to and meet the needs of park visitors and are designed, located and maintained in ways that provide adequate protection to natural and cultural heritage resources.

### *Engaging Canadians Outside the Park*

- Public awareness and understanding of the significance of GINPR and support for its ongoing protection are increased through strategic public outreach education initiatives.



Cabbage Island  
Parks Canada/Christian J. Stewart

### *Working Together*

- The public understands First Nations rights to undertake traditional activities, such as hunting and harvesting, in the park and is respectful of First Nations peoples who are undertaking such activities.
- Coast Salish First Nations are involved in developing park management initiatives of mutual interests and First Nations communities are aware of the cooperative work.
- Public support for the park is stronger since partners, key stakeholders and interested Canadians are engaged in relevant conservation, visitor experience, and education activities.
- Partnering arrangements are used to maximize achievement of the national park mandate, management plan key strategies and shared goals with others.

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## Next Steps

Phase 2 of the management planning process is now beginning.

In January-February 2012, four stakeholder sessions were held to help develop proposed 5-year actions for public for consideration.

Beginning in March, consultations with Coast Salish First Nations will be undertaken. A Coast Salish workshop, meetings with Chiefs and Councils, and sessions with the three Parks Canada-First Nations Committees will be used to gather initial comments and suggestions on Phase 2 information.

Public sessions (open houses or information booths) are being planned for Mayne, Pender and Saturna Islands and in Sidney, Victoria and Vancouver between May and July.

A Phase 2 Newsletter, outlining proposed actions, is expected in late April or early May 2012. Additional Phase 2 information, including public session locations, will be available through the park website as we get closer to May ([www.parkscanada.gc.ca/gulf](http://www.parkscanada.gc.ca/gulf)).

Thanks for your continued interest in Gulf Islands National Park Reserve and your participation in the management planning process.