



## **Proposed National Marine Conservation Area Reserve Southern Strait of Georgia Feasibility Assessment**

### **Information for Private Tenure Holders**

Parks Canada and the Province of British Columbia are jointly undertaking a study concerning the prospective establishment of a national marine conservation area (NMCA) reserve in the Southern Strait of Georgia and Haro Strait. In 2011, a draft boundary for the proposed NMCA was made public, and consultations on the boundary began. You are receiving this letter because you have been identified as holding a residential tenure that falls within, or is adjacent to, the proposed NMCA draft boundary (these tenures are administered by the BC Ministry of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations).

The purpose of this document is to provide you with some background information on the NMCA initiative and to invite you to share your views and perspectives on this proposal. Attached to this letter is the spring 2012 Project Update, which provides some background information on the feasibility assessment, Parks Canada's mandate and a map of the proposed boundary for consultation. If you are interested in more information about the Southern Strait of Georgia NMCA Reserve Feasibility Assessment, please visit our website at [www.pc.gc.ca/straitofgeorgia](http://www.pc.gc.ca/straitofgeorgia), email us at [straitofgeorgiamca@pc.gc.ca](mailto:straitofgeorgiamca@pc.gc.ca) or call Parks Canada at 604.666.1986.

#### **What is a National Marine Conservation Area (NMCA)?**

A NMCA is a type of multi-use marine protected area that is managed and used in an ecologically sustainable manner, and is intended to meet the needs of present and future generations. NMCAs help maintain healthy, functioning ecosystems and include the seabed, the water above it and all living resources. For more information, please see the Project Update provided in this package, or visit [www.parkscanada.gc.ca/straitofgeorgia](http://www.parkscanada.gc.ca/straitofgeorgia).

#### **What activities are allowed within an NMCA?**

Activities such as commercial and recreational fishing, commercial shipping, marine transportation and a range of recreation and tourism activities will continue in an NMCA, but with an emphasis on conservation-oriented management practices. The only activities not allowed within an NMCA are the exploration and development of oil and gas and undersea mining.

#### **Are private tenures allowed within an NMCA?**

Existing private infrastructure such as docks, wharfs, stairwells and retaining walls that have a valid tenure from the Province of British Columbia will be allowed within an NMCA. Requests to construct new infrastructure would be assessed to determine impacts on ecosystem structure and function.

#### **Why is an NMCA being considered here?**

NMCAs are established to protect and represent the diversity of Canada's marine environments. The marine life along the west coast of BC is among the most diverse in the world's temperate waters. This highly productive habitat supports rich subtidal communities, lush kelp forests, harbour seals, killer whales, sea lions, porpoises, seabird colonies, and thousands of invertebrate species. This rich marine environment is treasured by those living near it, and by visitors who choose the southern Strait of Georgia as a vacation destination.

**Where are we in the process?**

We are currently in the feasibility assessment stage of the establishment process. This means that the Governments' of Canada and British Columbia are assessing whether it is practical and desirable to establish a NMCA in the Southern Strait of Georgia. Since the start of the feasibility assessment, we have been involved in conversations with First Nations, local governments, key stakeholders, tenure holders and the public to get their views on the proposal. If an NMCA is determined to be feasible, further detailed consultation will follow.

**Who would administer my tenure if an NMCA was established?**

If an NMCA was established, Parks Canada would become the lead federal authority for the administration of public lands within an NMCA, because the land and the seabed would be transferred from BC to Canada. All tenures that are within the NMCA boundary would become the responsibility of the Government of Canada and would be administered by Parks Canada.

Parks Canada would assume the responsibility of issuing renewed or new tenures within the NMCA. Although the operational details on how tenures would be issued and renewed does not normally get worked out until feasibility is determined, the spirit and intent is to have a seamless transition.

**If a NMCA is established here, will I have to pay a fee to access my tenure?**

No, Parks Canada will not charge fees for travelling through the NMCA to get to tenures or private property.

**What are the boundaries for the proposed NMCA?**

The map on pages 6 and 7 of the enclosed Project Update shows the boundary for consultation that the Governments' of Canada and British Columbia announced in October 2011. The proposed boundary for consultation covers approximately 1,400 sq. km, stretching from Cordova Bay to southern Gabriola Island, including Saanich Inlet. The proposed NMCA includes Crown land (private land is not included) up to the high water mark in the areas shown on the map. This proposed boundary is the result of feedback received during consultations, and technical and scientific assessments. We want to hear your thoughts about the proposed boundary and the areas that have been included and excluded (more information on the rationale for including or excluding areas is available on pages 4 and 5 of the Project Update).

**We want your feedback!**

The feedback we receive from tenure holders and others will be considered before a final decision is made on the feasibility and the boundary of the proposed NMCA reserve.

We encourage you to submit your comments and/or feedback about this initiative and the proposed boundary via email ([straitofgeorgianmca@pc.gc.ca](mailto:straitofgeorgianmca@pc.gc.ca)) or through regular mail at:

**Mailing Address**

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