

EPPER PASSAGE PROVINCIAL PARK

PURPOSE STATEMENT AND ZONING PLAN

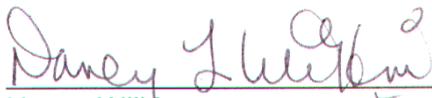
August 2003

Approved by:



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Environmental Stewardship Division

Date: August 8/03



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Assistant Deputy Minister
Environmental Stewardship Division

Date: Jan. 21/04

EPPER PASSAGE PROVINCIAL PARK Purpose Statement and Zoning Plan

Primary Role

The **primary** role of Epper Passage Park is to protect the natural values associated with a fast water marine ecosystem. The park incorporates two small islands (Morfee Island and Dunlap Island) and the rich foreshore and marine life found in the surrounding waters. The park protects the red-listed purple lobular sea squirt (ascidian), one of only four known occurrences of this species. It also provides habitat for groundfish, geoducks, scallops, sea urchins, sea cucumbers, octopi, abalone and coastal marine birds such as great blue herons, surf scoters, black oystercatchers, alcids, geese, swans, ducks, and bald eagles. Resident gray whales occasionally use the protected area as a foraging site for benthic organisms.

Secondary Role

The **secondary** role is to offer a scuba diving opportunity in a popular destination area on the west coast of Vancouver Island. The park is strategically located at the junction of Bedwell Sound and Mauras Channel between Meares and Vargas Islands on the west coast of Vancouver Island. This scenic wilderness area of Clayoquot Sound is popular for boating, kayaking, fishing, scuba diving, wildlife viewing, and nature exploration. Wilderness camping is allowed but no facilities are provided. The closest all-weather anchorage is in Quait Bay off Cypress Bay and nearby Tofino to the south offers numerous amenities for coastal cruisers.

Management Issues

Known Management Issue	Response
Lack of knowledge of the distribution and abundance of the massive purple sea squirt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Encourage research of the purple sea squirt ➤ Conduct an inventory of all subtidal values.
Pre-existing uses that are nonconforming -- BC Hydro transfer station (Morfee Island) and Coast Guard navigation lights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Monitor permits to ensure that impact from maintenance activities are minimized.
Impact of commercial marine harvesting, recreational harvesting, recreational diving, and industrial traffic on conservation and recreation values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Liaise with the recreational diving and charter operations to ensure awareness of the red-listed species and marine values. ➤ Work with Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) on possible commercial fishery closures (geoducks, sea urchins, sea cucumbers, octopi) and on minimizing impacts from the fishery on park values. ➤ Liaise with the sport fishing community to ensure that levels of use are appropriate for the park.
Lack of park awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Increase levels of educational information on the website as a way to developing awareness of park values.
Relationships with First Nations and pending treaty settlements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop good working relationships with First Nations to develop an understanding and appreciation of protected area status and park values. ➤ Liaise with Central Region Board (CRB) to inform them of management issues in the park.

Participation in Biosphere Reserve	➤ Work with Biosphere Foundation and CRB to ensure the Environmental Stewardship Division's perspective is taken into account in Biosphere activities and projects.
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Zoning

Special Feature Zone – covers the entire park (306.3 hectares) in recognition of the purple sea squirt and the rich marine ecosystem. The objective of this zone is to protect and present significant natural or cultural features, resources, or processes because of their special character, fragility and heritage values.

Conservation

- Representation
- ecosection Epper Passage Park makes a very minimal contribution of 0.03% to the representation of the Windward Island Mountains Ecosection (WIM), which is well represented in the protected areas system at 17.4%.

With 251 hectares of foreshore, it provides a minimal contribution of 0.28% to the overall representation of the Vancouver Island Shelf *Marine* Ecosection (VIS), which is under protected provincially at 5.4%.
- biogeoclimatic subzone/variant Epper Passage makes a very minimal contribution of 0.06% to the representation of CWHvh1, which is well represented in the protected areas system at 19.3%.
- Special Features Rich marine ecosystem, fast water passage, 2 small pristine islands, uncommon massive purple sea squirt, octopi, bald eagle nests
- Rare/Endangered Values *Red-listed* - purple lobular sea squirt. *Blue-listed* - resident and migrant gray whale (NE Pacific population), great blue heron, surf scoter. *Yellow-listed species of conservation concern (S3-S4)* - bald eagle and black oystercatcher.
- Scientific/Research Opportunities Subtidal fauna, sea squirt

Recreation

- Representation
backcountry Not Applicable
destination Diving, boating, kayaking
travel corridor Secondary kayak route from Tofino to Hot Springs Cove

local recreation Diving, nature appreciation
- Special Opportunities None known at this time
- Education/Interpretation Opportunities Understanding and appreciation of marine biodiversity and purple ascidians

Cultural Heritage

- Representation Values unknown
- Special Feature None known at this time

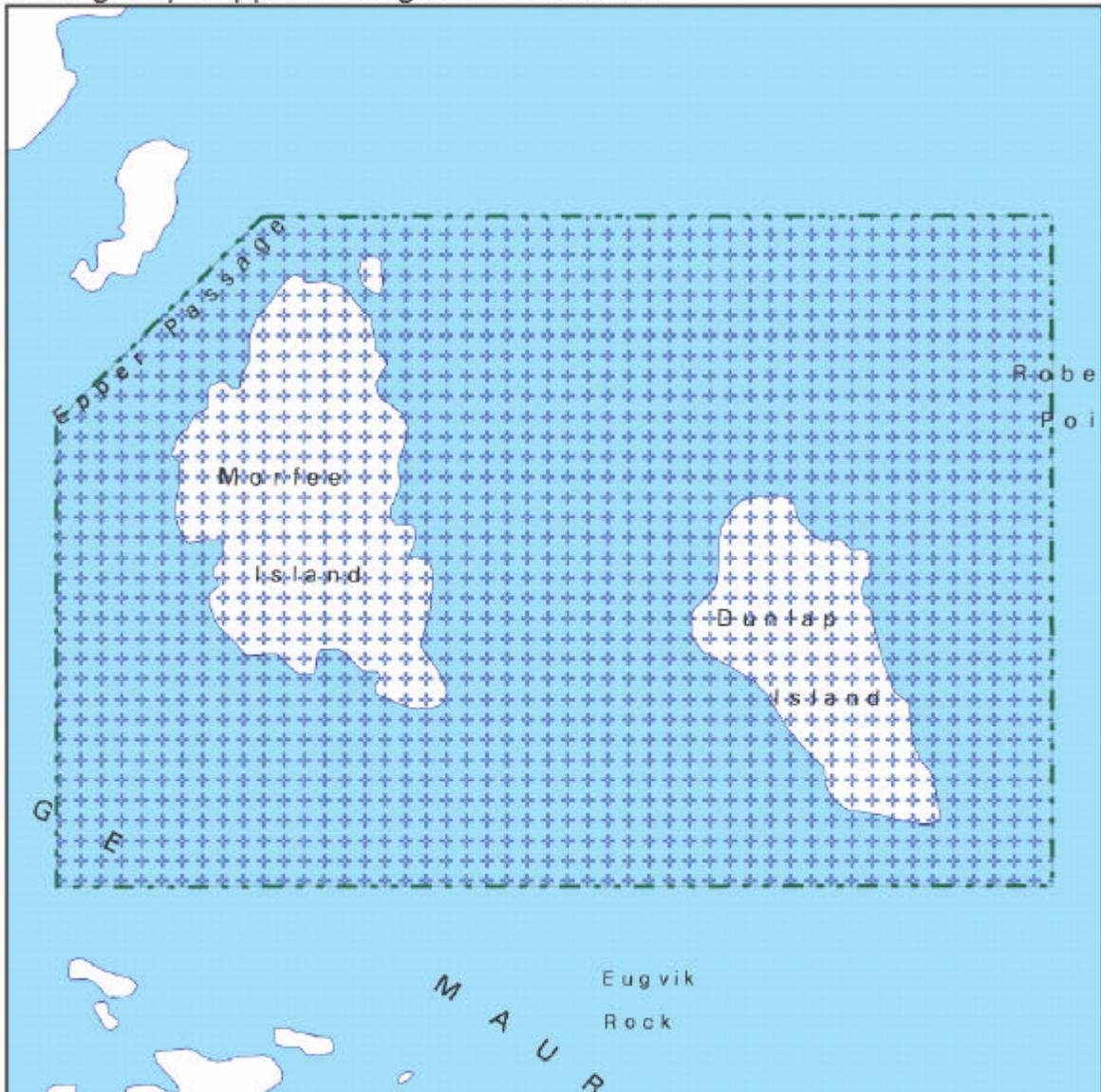
Other Management Considerations

Other Designations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Part of Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Reserve
Relationship to other PAs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Part of a system of protected areas in Clayoquot Sound
Co-operative Management Arrangements	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Encompassed in the Interim Measures Extension Agreement with the Central Region Board
Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not Applicable
Vulnerability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Natural values are vulnerable to commercial marine harvesting, recreational diving, industrial traffic, and nearby aquaculture
Relationship to other Strategies	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Interim Measures Extension Agreement. Identified for protection in the 1993 Clayoquot Sound Land Use Decision. Marine Protected Areas Strategy.

Area: 306.3 hectares (55 ha upland; 251 ha upland)

Date of establishment: July 12, 1995

Zoning Map - Epper Passage Provincial Park



Projection: Albers Equal Areas
Datum: NAD83



-  Special Feature
-  Protected Area Boundary



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