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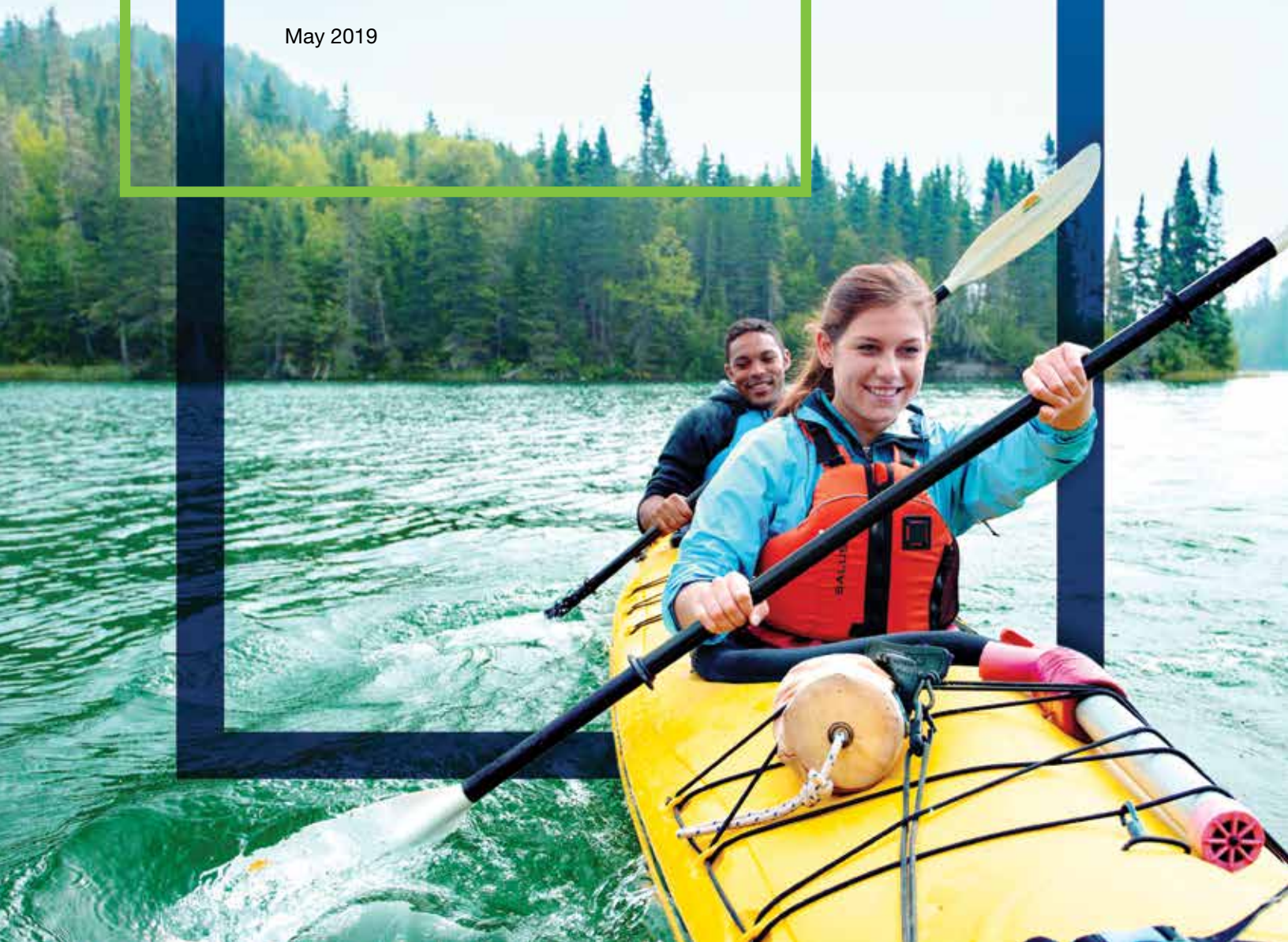
Canada

Parks Canada's Policy Framework

**For the management
of national marine
conservation areas**

BACKGROUND

May 2019



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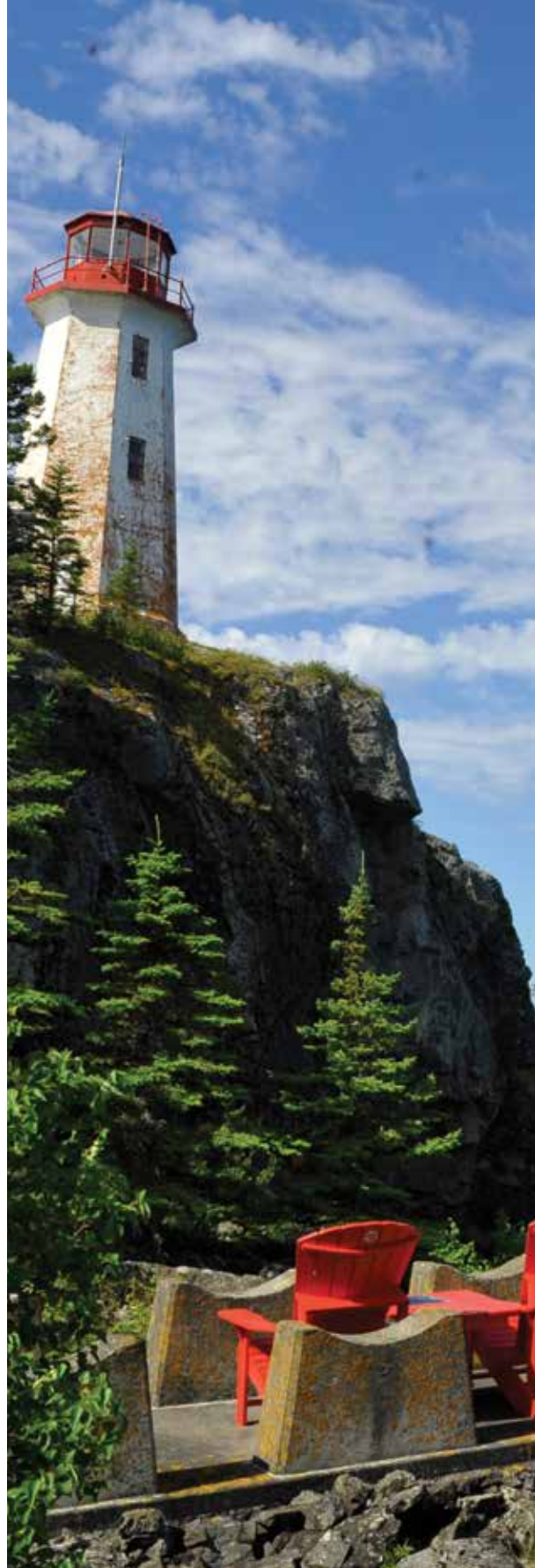
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Toward a revised policy for national marine conservation areas

Parks Canada is revising its policy for national marine conservation areas (NMCAs). The policy guides how Parks Canada plans and manages NMCAs and articulates our leadership role in working with partners and stakeholders to support these special places.

Updates to the 1994 NMCA policy are needed so that it aligns with the *Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act* (2002). The updates will also reflect the experience Parks Canada has gained from more than 20 years of establishing and managing NMCAs. This revision will help ensure that representative examples of Canada's marine heritage are protected and conserved today, and for future generations.

Parks Canada would like to hear from individuals and stakeholder groups with an interest in national marine conservation areas. A backgrounder and a discussion paper have been prepared to facilitate this process:

- This backgrounder summarizes Parks Canada's policy objectives for NMCAs and our strategy for achieving them, and provides additional context for a discussion paper.
- The discussion paper highlights the proposed changes to the NMCA policy and potential areas for new regulations.

The public is invited to visit Parks Canada's online engagement platform at **www.letstalknmcas.ca**. We invite you to review the documents and provide your thoughts.



Context

Canada's oceans and Great Lakes

Canada has the longest coastline in the world: more than 243,000 km along the Atlantic, Arctic and Pacific oceans, plus another 9,500 km along the Great Lakes. The vast, varied and productive marine ecosystems off these coasts have played a major role in shaping Canada's history and economy. Canada is also responsible for 5.75 million km² of water within its maritime boundary – the equivalent of about 60 percent of the country's land mass.

Canada's marine and Great Lakes environments sustain diverse marine life and ecosystem function, which benefit all Canadians. They are vital to the nation's culture, economy and national identity, with more than one-quarter of Canadians living in coastal areas. Indigenous communities have connections to these areas that span millennia. Increasingly under pressure

from intensive use, climate change and pollution, the health of our oceans and Great Lakes is under threat.

Marine protected areas

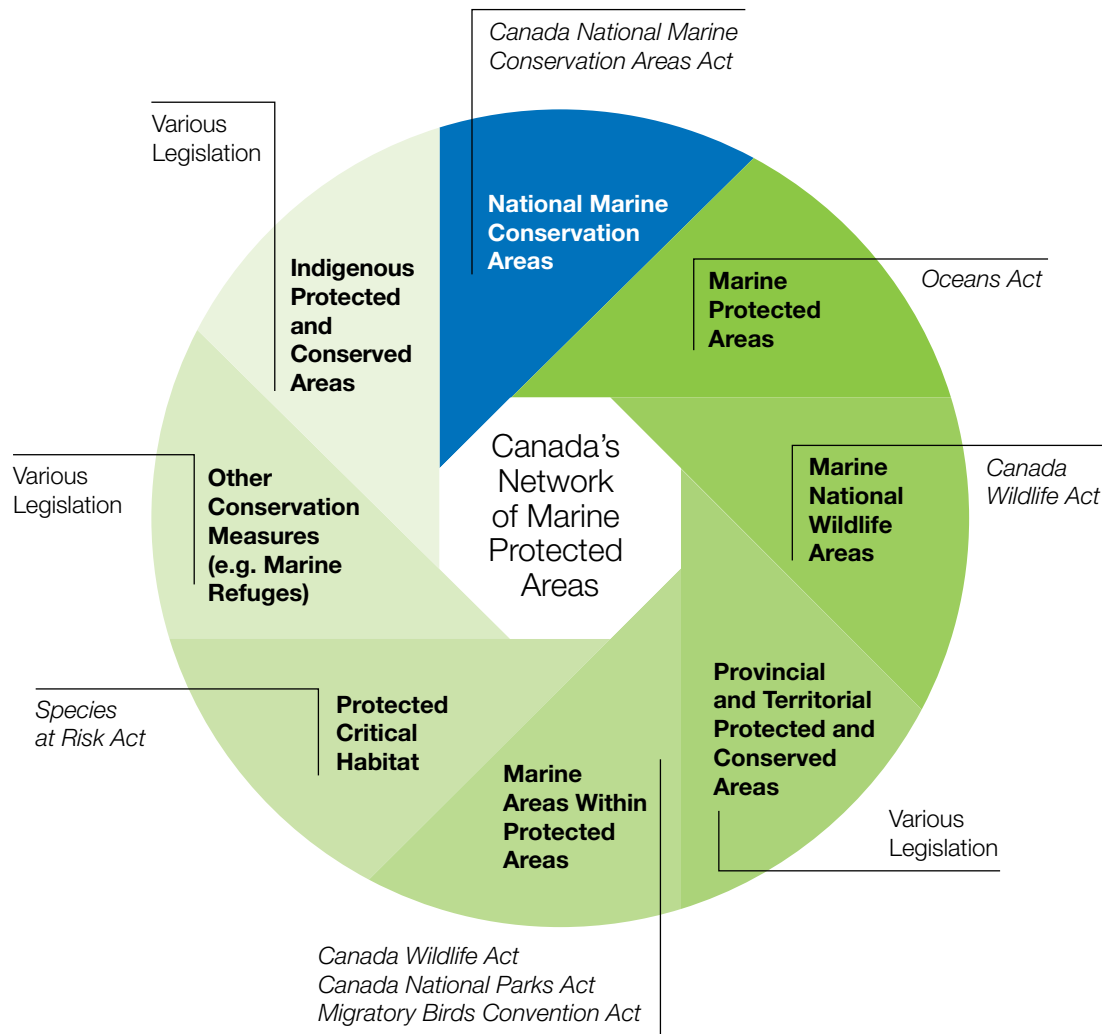
According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature, marine protected areas, or MPAs, are areas “dedicated and managed ... to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values.”¹ MPAs can play a key role in protecting species, habitats and ecosystems, and in providing social, economic and cultural benefits. The Government of Canada is committed to protecting and conserving Canada's marine environment over the long term, thereby contributing to global conservation targets and helping establish a worldwide network of MPAs.

Three federal departments – Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Environment and Climate Change Canada, and Parks Canada are responsible for Canada's federal MPAs and each of these departments has a legislated mandate to establish and manage them. These federal MPAs, together with provincial, territorial and Indigenous-managed areas, form Canada's marine conservation network (Figure 1).

¹ <https://www.iucn.org/theme/protected-areas/about>

FIGURE 1

Canada's network of MPAs and other conservation measures



This figure illustrates different types of MPAs and other conservation measures in Canada and the legislation that governs them.

National marine conservation areas

Parks Canada administers a type of MPA called national marine² conservation areas, or NMCAs. This document provides an overview of Parks

Canada's NMCA program, detailed descriptions of NMCA policy objectives and Parks Canada's strategy for achieving them.

² Throughout this document, "marine" refers to areas in the marine environment (i.e. oceans, estuaries) and the Great Lakes (i.e. freshwater).



About the NMCA Program

The *Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act* (2002) affirms the need to create a system of NMCAs, and gives Parks Canada the authority to establish and manage these areas. Parks Canada's 1995 NMCA system plan, *Sea to Sea to Sea*, identifies 29 marine regions within Canada's Atlantic, Pacific and Arctic oceans and Great Lakes (see Figure 2).

When the NMCA system is complete, it will represent each of these marine regions.

Within each region, Parks Canada selects NMCAs in close consultation with local communities, regional stakeholders and Indigenous peoples. NMCAs are selected to represent the biology, geology, oceanography and marine and coastal habitats of the marine regions where they are located, as well as the area's cultural and historical features.

Currently, five marine regions are represented by four NMCAs. In addition to these, several other sites are proposed and are at various stages in the establishment process. The number of NMCAs is expected to grow in the coming years.

FIGURE 2
Current status of Parks Canada's
NMCA system

Canada's National Marine Conservation Areas

— NMCA — Proposed Area

Quebec

- A Saguenay–St. Lawrence Marine Park
- B Îles de la Madeleine

Ontario

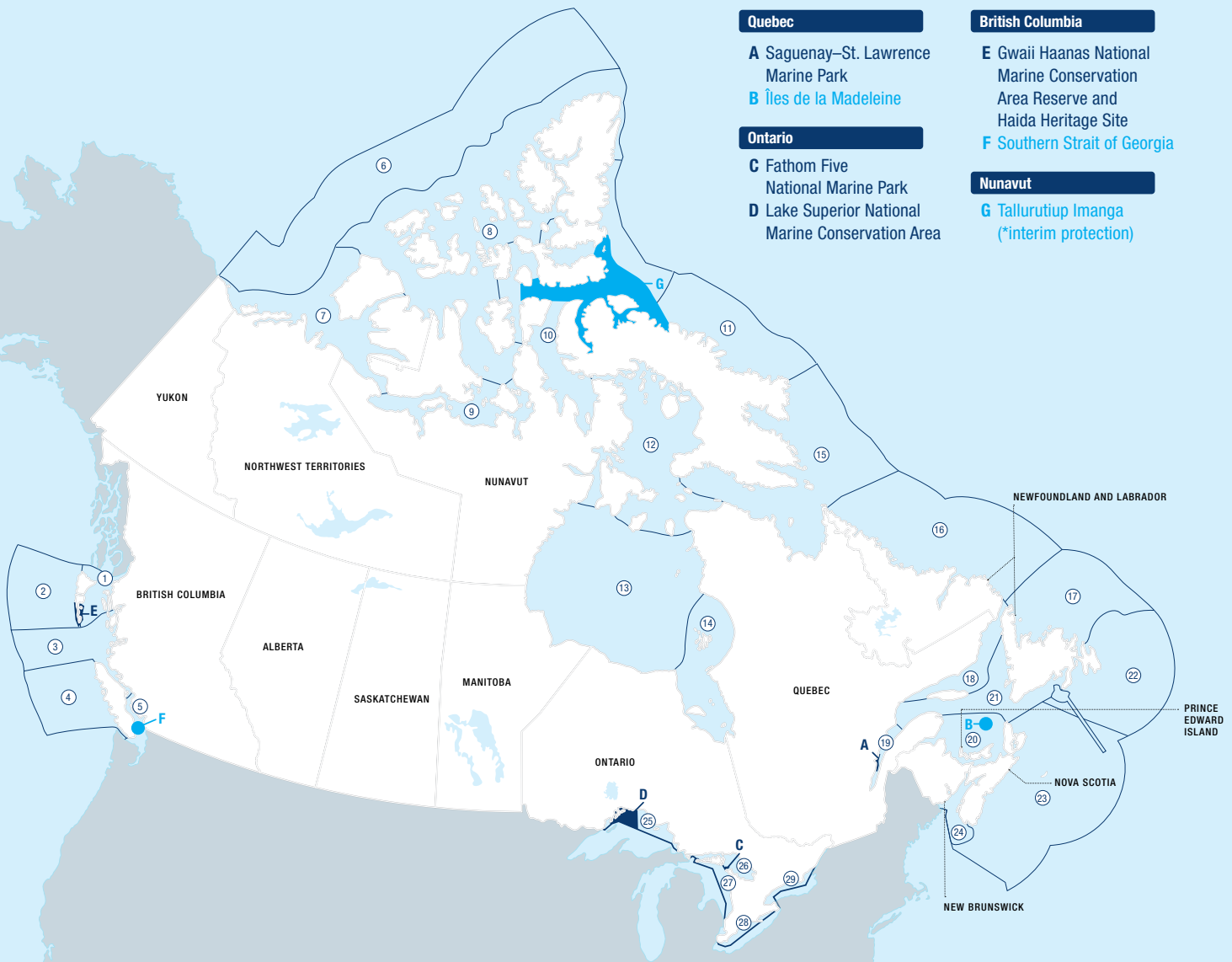
- C Fathom Five National Marine Park
- D Lake Superior National Marine Conservation Area

British Columbia

- E Gwaii Haanas National Marine Conservation Area Reserve and Haida Heritage Site
- F Southern Strait of Georgia

Nunavut

- G Tallurutiup Imanga (*interim protection)



Marine Regions

Pacific Ocean

- 1 Hecate Strait
- 2 Queen Charlotte Shelf
- 3 Queen Charlotte Sound
- 4 Vancouver Island Shelf
- 5 Strait of Georgia

Arctic Ocean

- 6 Arctic Basin
- 7 Beaufort Sea
- 8 Arctic Archipelago
- 9 Queen Maud Gulf
- 10 Lancaster Sound
- 11 Baffin Island Shelf
- 12 Foxe Basin
- 13 Hudson Bay
- 14 James Bay

Atlantic Ocean

- 15 Hudson Strait
- 16 Labrador Shelf
- 17 Newfoundland Shelf
- 18 North Gulf Shelf
- 19 St. Lawrence Estuary
- 20 Magdalen Shallows
- 21 Laurentian Channel
- 22 The Grand Banks
- 23 Scotian Shelf
- 24 The Bay of Fundy

Great Lakes

- 25 Lake Superior
- 26 Georgian Bay
- 27 Lake Huron
- 28 Lake Erie
- 29 Lake Ontario

NMCA Reserve (NMCAR) is an NMCA that is within an area subject to an Indigenous rights claim accepted for negotiation by the Government of Canada. An NMCAR is established and managed in the same manner as an NMCA, but the status of the area is subject to the final resolution of the Indigenous claim.

Why NMCA's are important marine areas

Marine areas designated as NMCA's provide a range of benefits that contribute to the well-being of people and the world. These include conserving natural heritage, maintaining biological diversity and providing opportunities for people to pursue sustainable livelihoods that benefit coastal communities and Indigenous peoples. They also provide ecosystem services such as the provision of water and food, climate regulation, spiritual experiences and sense of place.

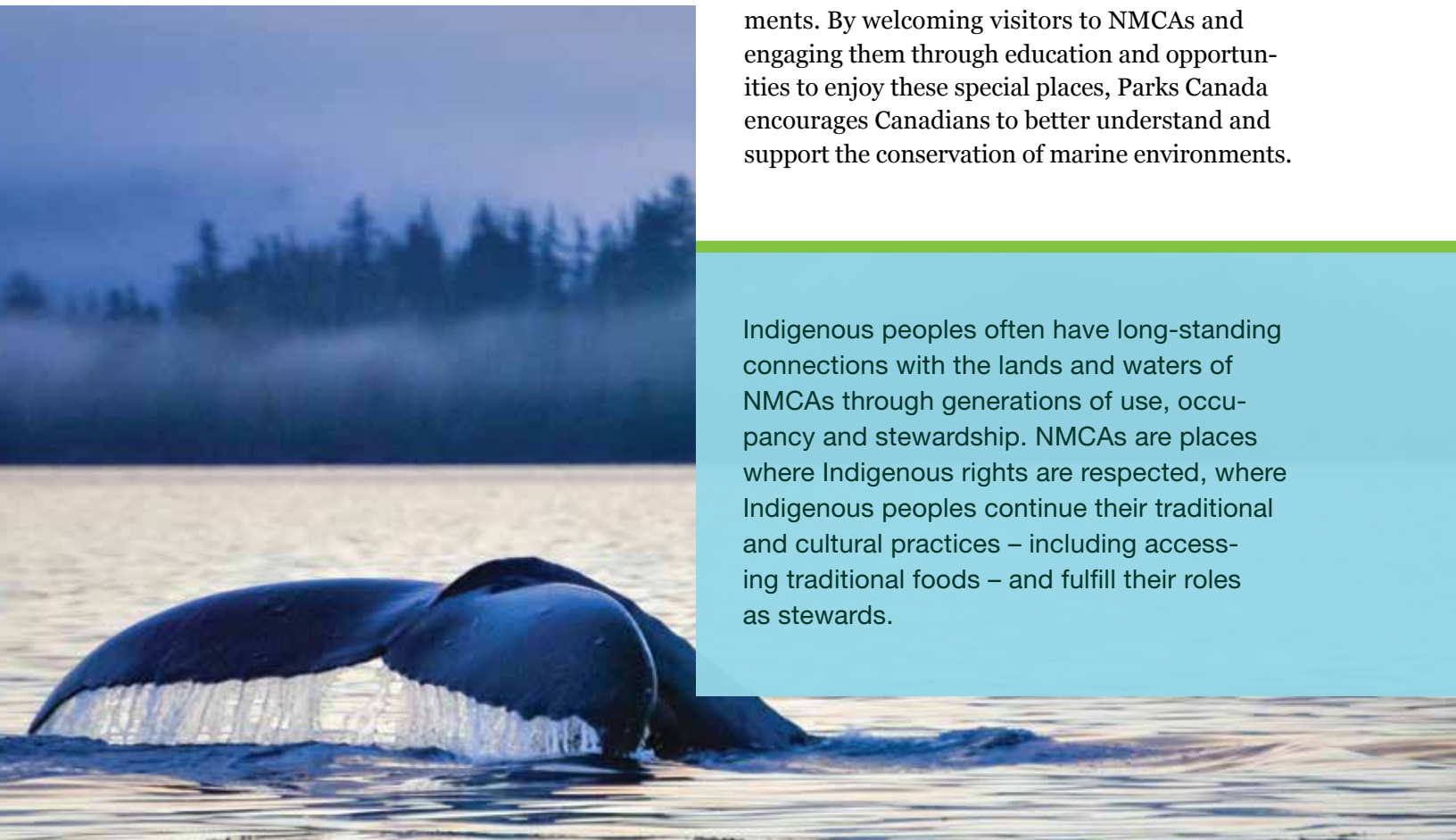
Purpose of NMCA's

As the *Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act*, s. 4(1) states, NMCA's are established and managed to protect and conserve representative marine areas for the benefit, education and enjoyment of the people of Canada and the world. The purpose of NMCA's is to achieve ecological sustainability in these areas, create enjoyable experiences for visitors, promote awareness and understanding among Canadians, and provide benefits for Indigenous peoples and coastal communities.

Ecological sustainability is achieved in an NMCA when marine biodiversity and ecosystem processes are protected, resilient and capable of supporting a range of ecologically sustainable uses.

Through NMCA's, Parks Canada provides opportunities for Canadians to forge stronger connections with marine and Great Lakes environments. By welcoming visitors to NMCA's and engaging them through education and opportunities to enjoy these special places, Parks Canada encourages Canadians to better understand and support the conservation of marine environments.

Indigenous peoples often have long-standing connections with the lands and waters of NMCA's through generations of use, occupancy and stewardship. NMCA's are places where Indigenous rights are respected, where Indigenous peoples continue their traditional and cultural practices – including accessing traditional foods – and fulfill their roles as stewards.





Policy objectives for the management of NMCA's

To help achieve the purpose of NMCA's, Parks Canada has outlined the following policy objectives. These objectives are inter-connected and mutually reinforcing, and will be considered collectively as Parks Canada manages NMCA's collaboratively with partners.

1. Collaborate and consult on the planning and management of NMCA's.
2. Protect and conserve marine biodiversity and ecosystems within NMCA's.

3. Ensure that marine uses in NMCA's are ecologically sustainable.
4. Conserve cultural heritage in NMCA's.
5. Recognize Indigenous peoples' responsibilities as stewards of NMCA's.
6. Support the social, cultural and economic well-being of Indigenous peoples and coastal communities adjacent to NMCA's.
7. Foster visitor experiences that build strong connections to and enjoyment of NMCA's.
8. Promote awareness, understanding and appreciation of the natural and cultural heritage of NMCA's.
9. Advance knowledge and understanding of marine environments in NMCA's.

The following pages describe each policy objective and outline how Parks Canada achieves them. Please see Appendix A (page 23) for a list of definitions.

1. Collaborate and consult on the planning and management of NMCAs

Management planning is the process of identifying and documenting the purpose and objectives of an NMCA in a management plan. Legislation directs Parks Canada to prepare management plans for NMCAs in collaboration with Indigenous peoples and relevant federal, provincial and territorial governments and coastal communities. Parks Canada undertakes this work with advice and guidance from a local management advisory committee, and by consulting with local stakeholders such as marine users and the general public.

The management plan sets out a long-term ecological vision for the NMCA. The plan covers how Parks Canada and its partners will protect biodiversity and ecosystems, create visitor experiences, manage human use, and apply zoning and restrictions. The primary considerations in the

development and modification of the management plan are the principles of ecosystem management and the precautionary principle, as laid out in legislation. In the planning process, Parks Canada and its partners use the best available information, including science, Indigenous knowledge systems and knowledge from local communities.

An NMCA's management plan is a key document that helps guide decision-making. Every NMCA management plan is tabled in Parliament and needs to be reviewed at least every 10 years. Parks Canada leads, works with and coordinates the efforts of other parties to fulfill the purpose of NMCAs. The legislation that applies to marine environments is complex and requires collaboration across many jurisdictions that share authority and responsibility for NMCAs. The *Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act* states that the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard and the Minister of Transport must agree to the management plan when it affects their areas of responsibility (i.e. fishing, aquaculture and fisheries management, and marine navigation and marine safety).

To achieve this policy objective, Parks Canada:

- Actively pursues partnerships with Indigenous peoples in the planning and management of NMCAs through a range of cooperative management arrangements.
- Enables coastal communities, stakeholders and Canadians to be involved in the planning and management of NMCAs by consulting with these parties and including them on management advisory committees.
- Works closely with other managers responsible for NMCAs (federal, provincial, territorial, Indigenous) to develop and achieve the purpose, conservation and management objectives of the area (e.g. coordinate law enforcement responsibilities).
- Uses multiple evidence-based approach³ to a decision-making and management planning (e.g. assessing new uses and activities within the NMCA).
- Collaborates with others on monitoring and reporting to assess progress towards NMCA management objectives, and adjusts the management approach as necessary.

³ A process that weaves together Indigenous, local and scientific knowledge to enrich decision-making in a way that preserves and respects the integrity of each knowledge system while recognizing the interconnectedness of social and ecological systems.



Members of the Gwaii Haanas Archipelago Management Board celebrating completion of the Gina 'Waadluxan KilGuhlGa Land-Sea-People Management Plan in November 2018.

Left to right: Tyler Peet (Parks Canada), Colin Masson (DFO), Cindy Boyko (Council of the Haida Nation), Gaagwiis Jason Alsop (Council of the Haida Nation), Ernie Gladstone (Parks Canada).

Missing: Robert Bennett (Council of the Haida Nation).



2. Protect and conserve marine biodiversity and ecosystems within NMCAs

NMCAs are places that protect and conserve healthy and resilient marine ecosystems. The *Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act* provides for fundamental protection to these areas through a prohibition on oil, gas, mineral and aggregate exploration and exploitation, and places strict limits on ocean disposal in collaboration with various regulatory authorities. Protection to these areas is also afforded through other legislation, including the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999*; the *Fisheries Act*; and the *Species at Risk Act*.

Human uses and activities can pose risks to the structure and function of ecosystems within NMCAs. These risks need to be mitigated or managed to ensure the area is protected for future generations.

To achieve this policy objective, Parks Canada:

- Identifies and documents the long-term conservation objectives of an NMCA.
- Uses zoning to provide long-term protection to special features, sensitive ecosystem elements and representative characteristics of the marine region. (For more information, see discussion paper: *Protecting Canada's Marine Heritage*).
- May restrict or prohibit specific activities and uses through an NMCA's interim management plan or management plan.
- Identifies and manages, where necessary, "special management areas" within an NMCA which may need more protection at particular times of the year for a specific conservation reason, or that apply to only a specific area of the NMCA.
- Enhances the ecosystem's resilience by undertaking ecological restoration activities (e.g. kelp bed restoration).
- Increases the protection for species and habitats (e.g. by taking measures to prevent the introduction of invasive alien species; by managing aircraft and drone use to prevent danger or disturbance to wildlife and wildlife habitat; see discussion paper).
- Provides a flexible and effective way for managers of individual sites to act or respond quickly in cases where conservation or visitor safety is threatened at the site (see discussion paper).
- Excludes highly developed areas from NMCAs and prohibits infrastructure with the potential to disturb and pollute (e.g. marine terminals, ports, dams, large renewable energy or aquaculture operations).
- Works with other protected areas in the region to foster connectivity and increased conservation gains at a regional or seascape scale.

Kelp bed restoration in Gwaii Haanas

Gwaii Haanas National Marine Conservation Area Reserve and Haida Heritage Site is undertaking a conservation and restoration project over the next few years to restore kelp beds.

Kelp forests benefit coastal communities and ecosystems by increasing coastal productivity and supporting ecological sustainability. Today, kelp forests in Gwaii Haanas are greatly diminished due to voracious grazing by hyperabundant sea urchins. This degradation negatively impacts culturally and economically important species, including endangered northern abalone, by reducing habitat that provides food and protective cover. The aim is to restore kelp forests along roughly 3 km of coastal habitat in an Abalone Stewardship Area within Gwaii Haanas.

This work is a collaborative project between the Council of the Haida Nation, Parks Canada Agency, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, commercial fishers, Florida State University and the University of British Columbia.





Non-renewable vs. renewable resources

Within an NMCA, no person may explore for or exploit hydrocarbons, minerals or any other inorganic matter. However, the ecologically sustainable use of marine renewable resources is allowed, including the harvest of renewable resources. Renewable resources are those that can be used repeatedly and replenished naturally. They include living things such as wildlife and plants, as well as energy (wind, wave or tidal energy).

3. Ensure that marine uses in NMCAs are ecologically sustainable

Many of the benefits that an NMCA provides depend on marine ecosystems being healthy and resilient. This means the use of NMCAs must be managed in an ecologically sustainable manner. This can be done only by adopting a holistic view of the natural environment. Decisions must consider the dynamic and interactive nature of ecosystems and the ways in which humans use them, as well as their finite capacity to recover from stress caused by human disturbances.

A range of activities and uses may be allowed in NMCAs, including harvesting renewable resources (e.g. fishing, hunting), shipping, recreational activities and tourism (e.g. boating, scuba diving, swimming), land use including various types of shoreline or marine infrastructure (e.g. moorings, docks, renewable energy operations) and scientific research. These activities and uses must not pose a risk to the achievement of the NMCA's purpose and objectives⁴. Where an activity or use occurs, effective management and evaluation mechanisms must be in place to ensure the activity or use is ecologically sustainable.

⁴ It is important to note that this does not apply to search and rescue operations, and movement of ships or aircraft or any activity undertaken in the interests of Canadian sovereignty or security may be exempt through regulations made under the CNMCAA.

To achieve this policy objective, Parks Canada:

- Works with others to achieve the NMCA's management objectives and ensure marine uses are ecologically sustainable through adaptive management and enforcement.
- Identifies ecologically sustainable use zone(s) for each NMCA.
- Monitors the ways in which the NMCA is used and the activities that take place in the area, and assesses whether they are being done in an ecologically sustainable manner.
- Assesses with others new activities proposed in the NMCA to ensure potential uses are aligned with the purpose and objectives of the NMCA, based on the best available knowledge.
- Works with others to manage the harvest of renewable resources to be consistent with the purpose and management objectives of the NMCA and to occur at ecologically sustainable levels. This includes fishing, hunting and trapping, gathering or collecting and renewable energy operations.
- Works cooperatively with Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the fishing industry to prohibit bottom trawling and minimize other methods of fishing and use of gear that may have an impact to the seabed or lakebed within an NMCA.
- Manages land use and occupancy within NMCAs so it is consistent with the purpose, management objectives and zoning for the site. Expanding small, developed areas and infrastructure, and upgrading existing facilities will not be allowed unless they align with the purpose and conservation objectives of the NMCA (see discussion paper).

Managing vessel speed in Saguenay–St. Lawrence Marine Park

Thousands of commercial ships pass through the Saguenay–St. Lawrence Marine Park each year. Because these ships cross critical habitat and foraging grounds for several species of whale, including the beluga, there are concerns about how they might affect these species.

In 2011, Parks Canada formed a working group with representatives from government, industry, academia and non-government organizations. The group's task was to assess

ways to reduce whale exposure to vessels and manage the risk of collisions, and this work led to recommendations in 2013 for a voluntary reduction in vessel speed and an area that vessels should avoid.

Involving stakeholders from the beginning of the process has fostered strong support for these measures and helped ensure compliance. The result is a substantially reduced risk of deadly collisions between ships and whales.



4. Conserve cultural heritage of NMCAs

NMCAs conserve cultural resources and heritage values. These reflect the past and ongoing use of cultural landscapes and seascapes by many generations of Indigenous peoples and coastal communities. A wide variety of cultural resources that span more than 10,000 years exist within NMCAs in environments ranging from islands to shorelines to deep underwater.

Examples of cultural resources include shipwrecks; archaeological sites such as shell middens, fish traps and historic settlements; built heritage such as cabins or lighthouses; and cultural landscapes. The latter may include living landscapes that local populations continue to use in a traditional manner, or submerged paleo-landscapes. Cultural landscapes often

have intangible values such as views, specific land patterns, travel routes, landmarks, archaeological sites, the presence or absence of vegetation, and natural or built features such as rock formations or cabins.

Cultural resources may have value and significance for Indigenous and coastal communities, and for others at the local, national and international levels, and may vary in their requirements for protection and conservation. Cultural resources also contribute to the public's understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of a place.

Parks Canada's *Cultural Resource Management Policy* applies to all cultural resources within protected heritage places administered by Parks Canada, including NMCAs. The policy outlines requirements for identifying and assessing impacts, monitoring and conserving cultural resources and sharing their heritage value.

To achieve this policy objective, Parks Canada:

- Identifies and documents the known cultural resources and heritage values of an NMCA, ensures they are managed in accordance with Parks Canada's *Cultural Resource Management Policy* and determines the long-term conservation objectives for them.
- Works with Indigenous partners and coastal communities to identify, conserve and manage cultural resources and cultural heritage.
- Conserves significant cultural resources as special features of an NMCA in "fully protected zones" (see discussion paper).
- Prevents the damage, destruction or disturbance of cultural resources resulting from human activities (see discussion paper).

5. Recognize Indigenous peoples' responsibilities as stewards of NMCAs

Indigenous peoples' rights under s. 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* are respected in NMCAs, and the spirit and intent of treaties and agreements between Canada and Indigenous

collectives are honoured. Efforts to advance reconciliation lead to recognition of the important role of Indigenous peoples as stewards of traditional lands and waters within NMCAs. The NMCA system provides benefits to and supports increased opportunities for Indigenous peoples, including via participation in the establishment and management of NMCAs.

To achieve this policy objective, Parks Canada:

- Seeks and supports partnerships with Indigenous peoples in establishing and managing NMCAs, which may take the form of various cooperative management arrangements that benefit Indigenous peoples.
- Facilitates Indigenous peoples' connections to traditionally used lands and waters within NMCAs and the exercise of Indigenous rights, which may include harvesting (or extractive use) of renewable marine resources.
- Ensures that Indigenous rights and priorities related to managing NMCAs are understood and reflected in the planning process.
- Works with Indigenous peoples in co-developing approaches to NMCA decision-making, monitoring and reporting that acknowledge, respect and draw on Indigenous and scientific knowledge in an equitable and appropriate manner.
- Supports opportunities for Indigenous peoples to present and share their heritage and culture with visitors; this increases the public's understanding of Indigenous use and stewardship of traditional lands and waters within NMCAs.

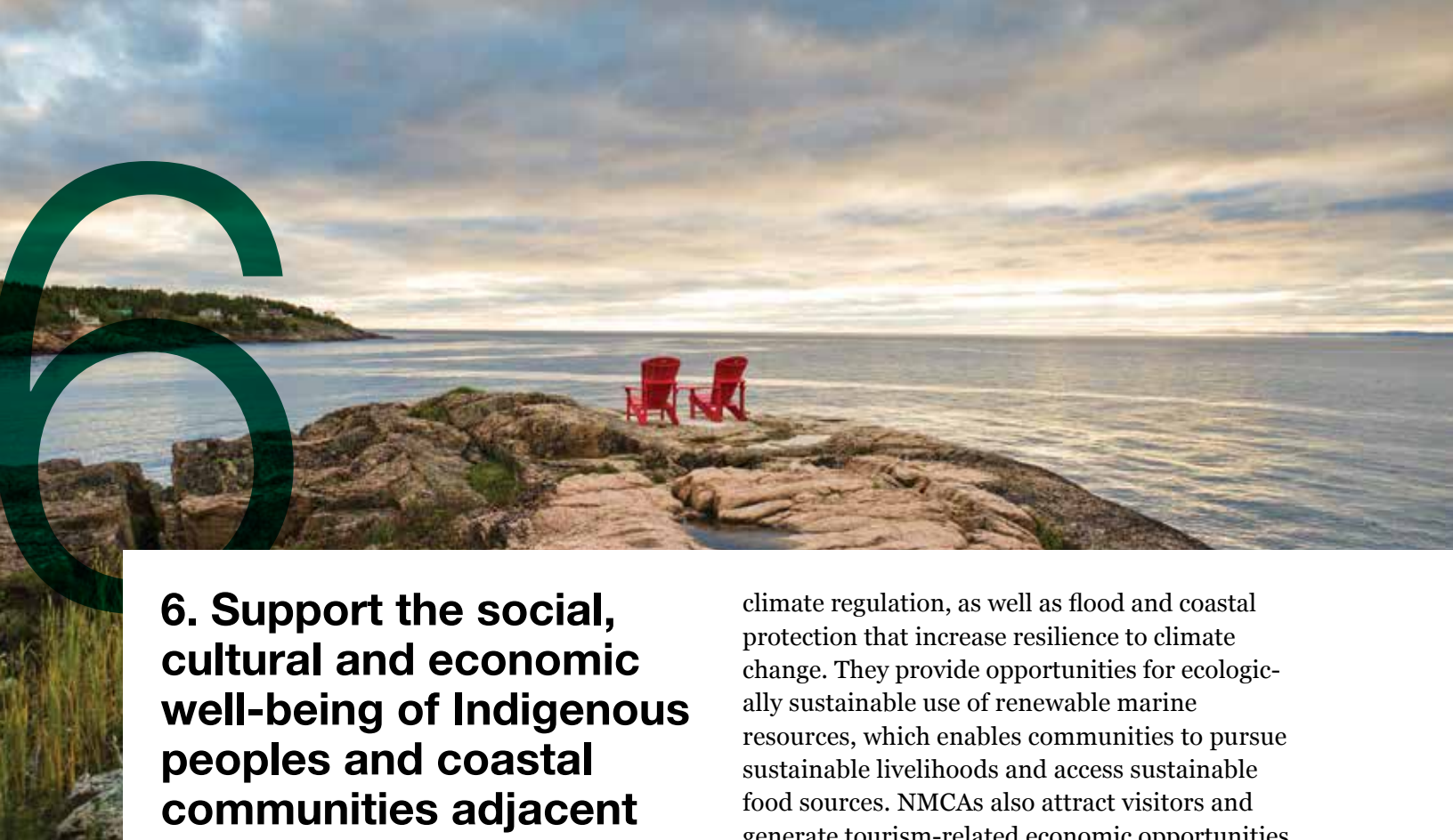
The Archipelago Management Board: A governance example

Together, the Government of Canada and the Council of the Haida Nation manage Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve, National Marine Conservation Area Reserve and Haida Heritage Site through the Archipelago Management Board.

The Gwaii Haanas Agreement was signed in 1993. In this groundbreaking document, the two parties strongly agreed on the need to protect the region's natural, cultural and marine treasures, but also recognized their differing views on ownership of the area.

The agreement is now seen as a model of cooperative management that enables those with differing viewpoints on sovereignty, title and land ownership to work together.

In 2010, the Gwaii Haanas marine area was officially designated a national marine conservation area reserve and Haida heritage site. The Gwaii Haanas Land-Sea-People Plan was completed in 2018 with input from partners, stakeholders and the general public.



6. Support the social, cultural and economic well-being of Indigenous peoples and coastal communities adjacent to NMCAs

The marine environment is fundamental to the social, cultural and economic well-being of Indigenous peoples and others living in coastal communities. NMCAs contribute to the well-being of these communities by protecting, conserving and enhancing the ecosystem services that the oceans and Great Lakes provide. NMCAs provide ecosystem services such as water and

climate regulation, as well as flood and coastal protection that increase resilience to climate change. They provide opportunities for ecologically sustainable use of renewable marine resources, which enables communities to pursue sustainable livelihoods and access sustainable food sources. NMCAs also attract visitors and generate tourism-related economic opportunities and development that may increase opportunities for Indigenous peoples and coastal communities.

NMCAs can help conserve natural and cultural heritage resources that are valued by coastal communities and Indigenous peoples. In turn, the strong connections local communities have to NMCAs make these groups vital stewards of the areas.

To achieve this policy objective, Parks Canada:

- Facilitates and supports opportunities for Indigenous peoples and coastal communities to access and use NMCAs and their marine resources in an ecologically sustainable manner.
- Identifies management objectives that support the social, cultural and economic well-being of Indigenous peoples and coastal communities in an NMCA, and documents them through management planning.
- Promotes and markets NMCAs in ways that incorporate the perspectives of Indigenous peoples and coastal communities, encouraging recreation or tourism services in the area and opportunities for local businesses.
- Encourages social and economic benefits to Indigenous peoples and coastal communities through the ecologically sustainable use of marine resources.
- Develops and fosters local conservation practices with Indigenous peoples and coastal communities that maintain the health and increase the resilience of marine ecosystems.

7. Foster visitor experiences that build strong connections to and enjoyment of NMCA

NMCAs are places for visitors to experience and enjoy, leading to their deeper understanding and appreciation of the diverse natural and cultural heritage of Canada. These experiences may lead to increased general support for marine conservation and stronger connections to the NMCA they have visited.

To achieve this policy objective, Parks Canada:

- Provides opportunities for visitors to experience NMCAs by supporting the provision of facilities, programs and volunteer opportunities for visitors.
- Promotes a leading role for Indigenous peoples and coastal communities to present and share their heritage and culture with visitors.
- Facilitates the availability of a range of tourism and recreational services (e.g. whale watching, guided kayaking) in NMCAs that meet the site's purpose and objectives (see discussion paper).
- Manages appropriate special events in NMCAs (see discussion paper).
- Encourages and supports stewardship initiatives by visitors, recreational users and industry groups.



8

8. Promote awareness, understanding and appreciation of the natural and cultural heritage of NMCAs

Public engagement and outreach about NMCAs promotes awareness and understanding of marine conservation and marine environments among all Canadians. Canadians who are unable to visit an NMCA can learn about NMCAs through Parks Canada's public education and engagement efforts.

To achieve this policy objective, Parks Canada:

- Promotes awareness, understanding and appreciation of Canada's marine environments.
- Builds awareness and understanding of marine conservation and NMCAs through a range of outreach and media efforts, often in partnership with others.
- Strives to communicate the connections of Indigenous peoples and coastal communities to NMCA lands and waters by sharing information with visitors and Canadians at large.



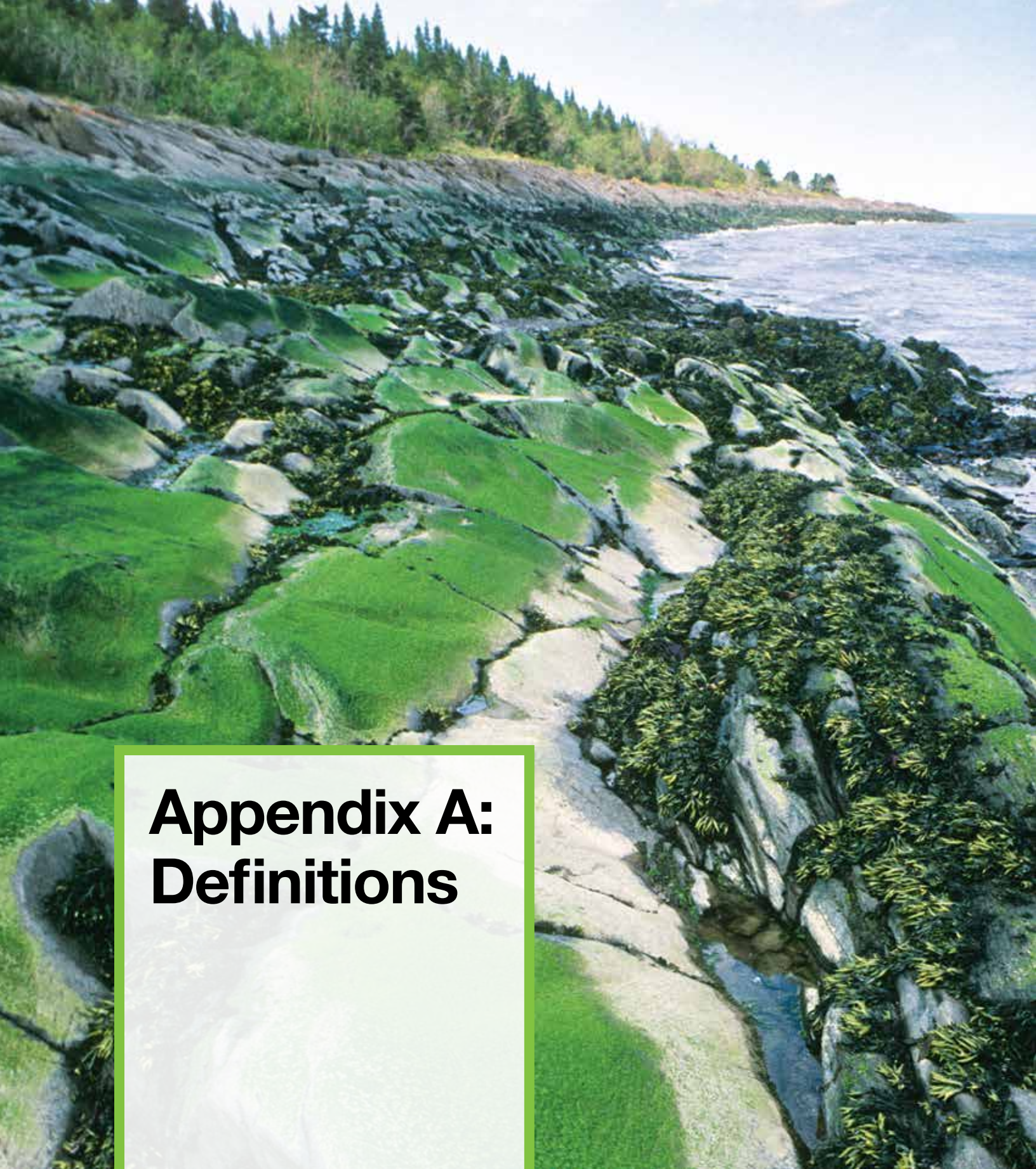
9. Advance knowledge and understanding of marine environments in NMCAs

Robust and timely monitoring information is required for NMCAs to be managed in an adaptive and evidence-based manner, and to meet legislative requirements for reporting on their state. NMCAs also have the potential to contribute to longer-term or regional research efforts, as they serve as benchmarks or sentinel sites.

Because marine environments are complex, ever-changing and vast, collaboration and partnerships are needed to significantly advance understanding of them. Parks Canada works with other federal agencies, Indigenous peoples, academia and others to maximize opportunities for collaborative and coordinated research and monitoring, and to find better ways of sharing existing information. Parks Canada and its partners will establish research priorities that strategically guide these collaborative efforts. At the same time, research within NMCAs must be managed so that it does not impair ecosystems or cultural resources, in a manner that is consistent with the purpose and objectives of the NMCA.

To achieve this policy objective, Parks Canada:

- Monitors and reports publicly on the state of the NMCA.
- Identifies priorities for NMCAs and encourages research and partnerships to help fill knowledge gaps required for effective decision-making.
- Ensures that all research is in keeping with an NMCA's purpose and management objectives (see discussion paper).
- Promotes the collaborative use of a multiple evidence-based approach to research.
- Establishes sentinel sites or benchmarks for long-term monitoring in NMCAs.



Appendix A: Definitions

coastal community	A group of people who live adjacent to an NMCA and that use an NMCA for their livelihood or cultural practices, and who have been affected in some way by the establishment of an NMCA.
cultural heritage	Tangible cultural resources and intangible cultural heritage, such as cultural traditions, practices, knowledge, skills and beliefs.
cultural resource	<p>A human work, an object or a place that is determined on the basis of its heritage value to be directly associated with an important aspect or aspects of human history and culture. (Parks Canada's <i>Cultural Resource Management Policy</i>)</p> <p>Examples include: shipwrecks, historical or archaeological objects, archaeological sites (terrestrial or submerged), buildings or engineering works (terrestrial or submerged), and cultural landscapes or seascapes.</p>
ecological sustainability	Ecological sustainability is achieved when marine biodiversity and ecosystem processes are protected, resilient and capable of supporting a range of ecologically sustainable uses.
ecologically sustainable use	<p>Use of marine resources in a manner that meets the needs of present and future generations without compromising the structure and functions of ecosystems. (<i>Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act</i>, s. 4(3)).</p> <p>This term is used to describe zones 3 and 4 in the proposed NMCA zoning framework.</p>
Indigenous knowledge	Knowledge of Indigenous traditional and cultural activities, as well as knowledge of the natural world, including physical environments, the cosmos and the spirit world, and the values and principles governing Indigenous persons' conduct and interactions with one another, the natural world, the cosmos and the spirit world, transmitted through oral tradition, ceremonies, song, mnemonic devices, laws and stories, and by conducting and observing Indigenous traditional and cultural practices.
management advisory committee	A group of people representative of diverse interests in an NMCA appointed to make recommendations to the Minister responsible for the Parks Canada Agency on the formulation, review and implementation of the management plan for an NMCA.
marine protected area	An area in the marine environment that is defined and managed through legal and other effective means to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values.
marine region	A distinct geographic unit of the marine and Great Lakes environment defined by Parks Canada based on biological, ecological, oceanographic and geological characteristics. Parks Canada has identified 29 marine regions in Canada, which form the basis for the NMCA system plan.
precautionary principle	Where there are threats of environmental damage, lack of scientific certainty is not used as a reason for postponing preventative measures (<i>Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act</i> (2002) preamble).
representative	A quality reflecting the characteristics of the marine region it occurs within, including biological, ecological, oceanographic and geological characteristics.
sensitive ecosystem element	An ecosystem element that is at risk of loss or being compromised because of its inherent intolerance to disturbance of its current state.
special feature	A natural feature or cultural resource of outstanding or unique value within the NMCA or within the marine region because of its inherent rarity or particular importance.

