

September 15, 2022

Marine Protected Areas Network for the Northern Shelf Bioregion

Media Backgrounder

What is a marine protected area (MPA)?

Definitions from the Canada-BC MPA Network Strategy:

Marine Protected Area: “A clearly defined geographical space recognized, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values.”

Marine Protected Area Network: “A collection of individual marine protected areas that operates cooperatively and synergistically, at various spatial scales, and with a range of protection levels, in order to fulfill ecological aims more effectively and comprehensively than individual sites could alone.”

What will an MPA network achieve?

Used around the world to protect and conserve marine habitats and species, MPA networks help areas recover from various stresses, protect and conserve ecological values, and create ecological, cultural, social and economic benefits more than single MPAs are able to do on their own.

The goals of the MPA network include:

Goal 1: to protect and maintain marine biodiversity, ecological representation and special natural features.

Goal 2: to contribute to the conservation and protection of fishery resources and their habitats.

Goal 3: to maintain and facilitate opportunities for tourism and recreation.

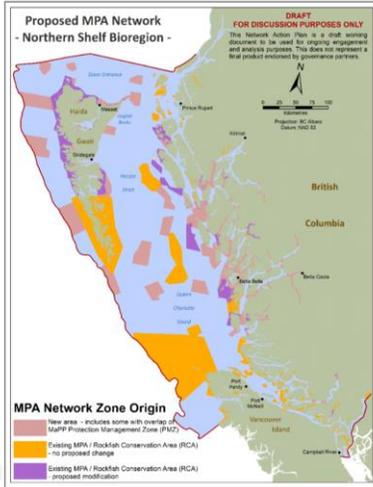
Goal 4: to contribute to social, community and economic certainty and stability.

Goal 5: to conserve and protect traditional use, cultural heritage and archaeological resources.

Goal 6: to provide opportunities for scientific research, education and awareness.

What does the MPA Network cover?

The MPA Network comprises a third of the Northern Shelf Bioregion, which extends from North Vancouver Island to the Alaska border (see figure 1). For coastal BC, the proposed network of MPAs includes a mix of existing and proposed MPAs.



(Figure 1)

Who is involved?

The governance partnership for Network planning and implementation includes:

First Nations Governments	Province of British Columbia	Government of Canada
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Central Coast: Kitasoo/Xai'xais, Heiltsuk, Nuxalk and Wuikinuxv First Nations, supported by the Central Coast Indigenous Resource Alliance (CCIRA) - North Coast: Gitga'at, Gitxaala, Kitsumkalum, Kitselas, Haisla, and Metlakatla First Nations - Haida Gwaii: Council of the Haida Nation - North Vancouver Island: Mamalilikulla, Tlowitsis, Da'naxda'xw Awaetlala, Wei Wai Kum, and K'ómoks First Nations, as represented by the Nanwakolas Council, and Kwiakah First Nation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ministry of Land, Water, and Resource Stewardship* - Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fisheries and Oceans Canada* - Environment and Climate Change Canada - Parks Canada - Natural Resources Canada-Transport Canada

*Lead federal / provincial agency

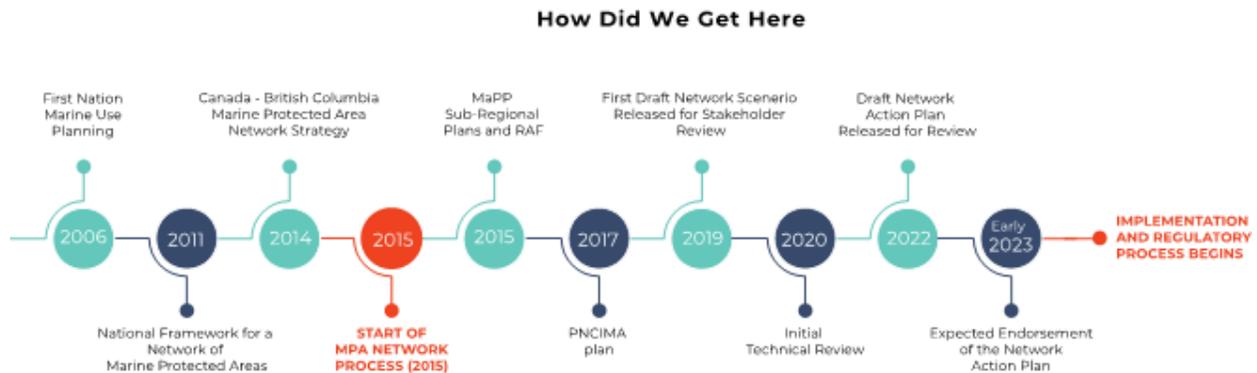
What is the MPA Network planning process and timeline?

After years of marine use planning, the MPA Network process began in 2015. Governance partners started with an assessment of existing MPAs. Over the years, the governance partners worked to design and map out a proposed network that would increase conservation while maintaining the cultural,

economic, and recreational opportunities that people and communities in the Northern Shelf Bioregion depend upon for their wellbeing and livelihoods (see figure 3).

The process will result in a Network Action Plan, which is a blueprint to guide the implementation of a network of MPAs in the Northern Shelf Bioregion. It summarizes the approach used to develop the proposed design for the MPA Network and provides recommendations to support its implementation, governance and adaptive management.

Once the NAP is endorsed, establishing new MPA sites can begin. This future multi-year process will include more opportunities for engagement and input from First Nations, stakeholders, and the public. During this period, the development of additional details for sites, including proposed management measures, will continue, and additional, localized analyses carried out.



(Figure 3)

How can the public get involved?

Public engagement on the draft Network Action Plan runs from September to the end of October, 2022. Residents are invited to provide input on the draft Network Action Plan via an online survey, webinars and in-person open houses. Learn more about the MPA Network in the Northern Shelf Bioregion, upcoming webinars and open houses, and access the online survey by visiting: <https://mpanetwork.ca/engage>

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