



# Gulf Islands

National Park Reserve Of Canada

## Sidney Spit Area Plan



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**Gulf Islands National Park Reserve  
Sidney Spit Area Plan**

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## 1.0 Context

### 1.1 Introduction

Gulf Islands National Park Reserve was established by agreement between Canada and the Province of British Columbia in May 2003. The word “Reserve” is used when an area proposed for a national park is subject to a claim in respect of aboriginal rights that has been accepted for negotiation by the Government of Canada. In this document GINPR, national park reserve, and park will be used interchangeably to refer Gulf Islands National Park Reserve. Land transfers, one of which was the provincial Sidney Spit Marine Park, occurred in April 2004 and GINPR’s first operating season followed in the summer of 2004.

Sidney Spit comprises the north-western 19% of Sidney Island and includes 172 ha of upland area and 628 ha of marine area (Figure 1). The remaining 741 ha of Sidney Island is owned by the Sallas Forest Strata Corporation. The perimeter of the Sallas Forests area is developed as a strata title residential community, with a density of one dwelling per 20 acres, and the interior is used largely for timber management.

### 1.2 Background

Sidney Island is one of the southern Gulf Islands situated between Vancouver Island and British Columbia’s mainland. It is located southeast of the town of Sidney on Vancouver Island. Sidney Island, and the other Gulf Islands, is within the dry maritime sub-zone of the Coastal Douglas fir biogeoclimatic zone within the Strait of Georgia Lowlands natural region. Mild, wet winters and warm summers with limited precipitation characterize this biogeoclimatic zone.

The island is made up primarily of glacial outwash sands and marine clays and its coastline is dominated by sand beach, dunes, and steep eroding bluffs. A large hook spit-lagoon complex and long spit exists at Sidney Spit. The hook spit-lagoon complex is significant from an ecological perspective. Vegetation consists of second growth coastal Douglas fir forests fringed with Garry oak and arbutus woodlands. A key ecological issue on Sidney Spit is the over-abundance of the non-native European Fallow Deer. They are having significant impact on the ecological integrity on the island.

Several Coast Salish First Nations have expressed historical ties to and a continued interest in this area. They have lived in and used the area for thousands of years. There are several Sencot’ en names for Sidney Island and the land in GINPR: *skwthamen* is thought to refer to the spit area and the southeastern shore of the lagoon—it can be interpreted to mean “submerged by waves”; *kwshamen* is thought to refer to the lagoon (Bouchard and Kennedy 1996).

First Nations use of Sidney Island included hunting, fishing, harvesting of plants and shellfish, quarrying for toolmaking, villages and sacred sites. The shores of Sidney

Island have been identified as a traditional site for crabbing and shellfish gathering (Bouchard and Kennedy 1996). Evidence of these uses exists in some areas. The Coast Salish people continue to use Sidney Spit for traditional purposes and have expressed interest in protecting their cultural heritage there. Much of Sidney Spit (excluding the day use and marine area) is closed from November to February to ensure public safety while Coast Salish people hunt deer on the island.

European exploration of the Gulf Islands began in 1791 with the arrival of the Spanish, followed by the British in 1792, who claimed the Gulf Islands for the British Crown. The Hudson's Bay Company received a Royal Charter in 1849 that gave them control of Vancouver Island and the surrounding area. At this time, Chief Factor James Douglas gave Sidney Island the name of "Sallas Island"; it was later renamed Sidney Island. There are conflicting stories on the origins of the new name. In 1902, George L. Courtney purchased the entire island for a private hunting preserve and introduced Ring-necked Pheasants and Fallow Deer to the island. In 1908, the Sidney Island Brick and Tile Company Ltd. was incorporated and production of clay brick products began on-island. The company closed its doors in 1925. At this time the land reverted back to the provincial government. In 1930, the province declared Sidney Spit a public use reserve; in 1961, Sidney Spit Provincial Marine Park was established (Cook & Dunster, 2007).

In 1974, Sidney Island was included in the Islands Trust Area—a provincially established area under the jurisdiction of Islands Trust. Through provincial legislation, the Islands Trust is charged with preserving the unique character and environment of the Gulf Islands. It is made up of a federation of local governments and a land stewardship board. The North Pender Local Trust Committee is the government agency responsible for local land use planning matters for Sidney Island. The Islands Trust Fund Board, the land protection and stewardship branch of Islands Trust, has worked with Sallas Forests since the late 1990s to establish eight conservation covenants protecting significant natural areas on Sallas Forests portion of the island.

Figure 1: Sidney Spit map



Access to the island is by boat only and during the summer months a privately-operated, walk-on passenger ferry travels between the Town of Sidney and Sidney Spit. Park facilities at Sidney Spit include a 150 m dock, 21 mooring buoys, a day use/picnic area with tables and an information kiosk, 20 walk-in campsites and a communal picnic shelter, and a walk-in group day-use/camping site with picnic shelter that can accommodate groups of 30-50 people and other related facilities (privies, water taps, trails, interpretive signs). The 2006 Patterns of Use study estimated use at Sidney Spit to be approximately 15,000 people between June and September. It is the most heavily used area within GINPR.

## **2.0 Site Information**

### **2.1 Park Zoning**

Zoning is a management tool that considers both the ecology and use of an area. It provides a general management vision or direction that Parks Canada will use for each area.

The majority of Sidney Spit, including most of the marine area, is zoned as “Natural Environment” (Zone 3). Natural Environment zones are areas where visitors can experience the park’s natural and cultural heritage values through outdoor recreation activities that require minimal services and rustic facilities. Wilderness zone (Zone 2) applies to the intertidal area on the west side of the hook spit and long spit—thus allowing beach use to occur. Wilderness zones are used for areas that provide good representation of the ecosystems of a park and are to be maintained with minimal human interference. Further, this zone recognizes that the ecosystems have a limited capacity to withstand use. Visitor opportunities in wilderness zones should provide an experience of remoteness and solitude and if any services and facilities are provided they must be limited in number and rudimentary in nature. The long spit, hook spit and the lagoon are zoned as Special Preservation Areas (Zone 1) because they are rare, sensitive ecosystem features and provide the best (and significant) examples of certain habitats. In GINPR, Special Preservation Areas are closed to access and use, except for those specifically authorized by the Park Superintendent (e.g., for research or restoration). These zones are illustrated on Figure 2.

### **Figure 2: Interim Park Zoning**



## 2.2 Ecological Overview

This ecological overview is based on information from two major inventories undertaken by GINPR: a shorezone mapping project (2005), which describes the shoreline/intertidal characteristics, and a Terrestrial Ecosystem Mapping project (Green, 2007) which classified and mapped the southernmost Gulf Islands using aerial photography interpretation and extensive field checks. Other available regional information and local knowledge have supplemented the information. Figure 3 illustrates the ecosystems of Sidney Spit. Additional detail on the structural stages, dominant forest cover species and ecosystems can be found in a separate report entitled Sidney Island Area Planning Ecological Overview (Columbia, 2007).







Douglas fir-shore pine-arbutus	20.23	2.37	0.0	0.0
Douglas fir-Garry oak-Saskatoon-herbs	0.69	0.08	0.70	0.44
Douglas fir-arbutus-salal-hairy honeysuckle	89.32	10.48	4.40	2.76
Douglas fir-salal	284.42	33.37	48.39	30.33
Douglas fir-oniongrass	43.07	5.05	0.0	0.0
Douglas fir-grand fir-Oregon grape	149.69	17.56	46.69	29.26
Garry oak-mixed grass	0.26	0.03	0.0	0.0
Western redcedar-grand fir-foamflower	20.22	2.37	4.11	2.57
Western redcedar - Indian plum	128.44	15.07	13.00	8.15
Western redcedar-slough sedge	34.52	4.05	4.80	3.01
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>770.87</b>	<b>90.45</b>	<b>122.08</b>	<b>76.51</b>
<b>Wetland sites</b>				
bulrush marsh	0.22	0.03	0.0	0.0
seashore saltgrass tidal marsh	0.69	0.08	0.69	0.43
glasswort tidal flat	10.44	1.23	10.44	6.54
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>11.35</b>	<b>1.33</b>	<b>11.13</b>	<b>6.98</b>
<b>Non-wetland sites</b>				
rock moss-selaginalla	25.37	2.98	0.0	0.0
dunegrass	19.33	2.27	18.85	11.81
camas-herbs	1.97	0.23	0.39	0.24
juniper-oak	0.30	0.04	0.30	0.19
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>46.97</b>	<b>5.51</b>	<b>19.53</b>	<b>12.24</b>
<b>Non-vegetated sites</b>				
coastal bluff	13.47	1.58	2.52	1.58
gravel pit	0.31	0.04	0.0	0.0
Lake	0.49	0.06	0.0	0.0
Pond	1.20	0.14	0.0	0.0
rock outcrop	0.09	0.01	0.0	0.0
beach	7.50	0.88	4.29	2.69
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>23.06</b>	<b>2.71</b>	<b>6.81</b>	<b>4.27</b>
	<b>852.25</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>159.55</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Sidney Spit and Sidney Island are dominated by mesic to rich ecosystems that have ample groundwater and deep soils. These cover 76% of the park's (and 90% of the whole island's) upland area and are forested ecosystems, although some areas are currently non-forested due to previous disturbances (e.g., clearing). Vegetation on the island is dominated by mature coastal Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii* var. *menziesii*), grand fir (*Abies grandis*), western hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*), western redcedar (*Thuja plicata*), bigleaf maple (*Acer macrophyllum*), arbutus (*Arbutus menziesii*), Garry oak (*Quercus garryana*) and western flowering dogwood (*Cornus nuttallii*). Understory vegetation includes salal (*Gaultheria shallon*), sword fern (*Polystichum munitum*) and bracken fern

(*Pteridium aquilinum*), Oregon grape (*Mahonia nervosa*), western fescue (*Festuca occidentalis*) and orchard grass (*Dactylis glomerata*).

Within the national park reserve portion of the island, vegetation consists primarily of second growth Douglas fir, western redcedar and grand fir. In certain locations the forest contains substantial portions of red alder, bigleaf maple, vine maple and black cottonwood. The Douglas fir-leading forest stands range between 40 and 150 years of age. No old forest (250+ years) is identified in the Terrestrial Ecosystem Mapping, although in some cases veteran trees, particularly some very large western redcedar and Douglas fir, have been noted in the field. In certain areas, clay layers embedded in the sandy soil provide water retention that is beneficial for deep rooting trees during summer drought periods. One stand (0.5 ha) of particular interest is an 60-70 year old stand of trembling aspen and very large cottonwood trees located near the Park Facility Operator's cabin. This is an uncommon occurrence.

The only Garry oak ecosystem at Sidney Spit is located on Eagle Island, in the lagoon. The islet exhibits favourable conditions (primarily shallow soils on bedrock) for this ecosystem and an ecological restoration project is currently on-going on the islet.

Throughout the island, understory vegetation is almost entirely absent and regeneration of tree species is thwarted by intense grazing and browsing by deer. Data from vegetation exclosures established in 1989 and re-measured in 2004 indicate significant negative effects to ecological integrity from this grazing and browsing.

### ***Non-forested sites***

With the exception of sites that were cleared in the past for previous uses (e.g., agriculture), non-forested sites in the park reserve are essentially coastal. These coastal communities are significant conservation features. The dominant ecosystems are dunegrass and glasswort tidal flats associated with the dune/spit complexes. Other significant features are the beaches and eroding bluffs that fringe the island.

### ***Flora***

No broad systematic survey of flora has been undertaken to-date, however, data does exist from several individual inventory projects over the years. These provide a relatively comprehensive plant list—in total 157 plant species have been identified. One designated species at risk (COSEWIC-listed), contorted-pod evening primrose (*Camissonia contorta*) has been identified on-site and six species listed by the provincial Conservation Data Centre exist (the provincially red-listed graceful arrowgrass (*Triglochin concinnum*), the blue-listed fleshy jaumea (*Jaumea carnosa*) and the slender wooly-heads (*Psilocarphus tenellus* variation *tenelus*), and the yellow-listed Brant (*Branta bernicla*)). Additionally, foothill sedge (*Carex tumulicola*), a provincially red listed species, was tentatively detected near the camping area in 2006 (Ceska, 2006) but species identification needs to be confirmed during the flowering season.

Thirty non-native species, including 3 shrubs, 11 grasses and 16 forbs, have been documented.

A survey for rare plants was undertaken in July 2004 and March 2005 by Matt Fairbarns (2005). Contorted-pod evening primrose (*Camissonia contorta*), yellow sand-verbena (*Abronia latifolia*) and beach carrot (*Glehnia littoralis*) were found in sandy areas near beaches, while fleshy jaumea (*Jaumea carnosa*) and graceful arrowgrass (*Triglochin concinna*) were observed in shallow tidal flats. These locations are areas of high human activity that could generate a conservation conflict. Three other rare species—grey beach peavine (*Lathyrus littoralis*), beach bindweed (*Convolvulus soldanella*) and black knotweed (*Polygonum paronychia*)—were not found despite careful surveys for their presence. These three species are known on James Island, Cordova Spit and/or Island View Beach and suitable habitat exists at Sidney Spit. The most significant find was contorted-pod evening primrose (*Camissonia contorta*) found near the end of the long spit. This small annual herb is ranked as critically endangered (S1) in British Columbia and endangered by COSEWIC. Status under *Species At Risk Act* (SARA) is pending public consultation. Fleshy jaumea (*Jaumea carnosa*) is a good candidate for ‘at-risk’ designation under SARA while yellow sand-verbena (*Abronia latifolia*) and beach carrot (*Glehnia littoralis*) may warrant designation as Special Concern species under the Act. Yellow sand-verbena (*Abronia latifolia*) is of special interest because it is the host plant for the Sand-verbena Moth, which COSEWIC has listed as endangered. Page (2006) identified the provincially red-listed creeping wildrye grass (*Leymus triticoides*) in the vicinity of the picnic area near the main dock. This species is susceptible to damage from heavy human traffic.

The 2004 and 2005 Fairburn surveys also provides preliminary distribution information on selected invasive species that were determined to be ecologically important and controllable. General characterization of non-native plants is based on the BC Species database (Ministry of Forests 2004).

### ***Fauna***

There have not been any systematic surveys of fauna on Sidney Island although large numbers of naturalists have provided opportunistic data, particularly on birds. Similarly, the Canadian Wildlife Service maintained a research camp at Sidney Spit for many years during which time species occurrence data was collected.

The long sandy spits, lagoon, forests and open grasslands support a surprising variety of wildlife. Sidney Island’s large lagoon, tidal flats and salt marsh complex are unique features within the southern Gulf Islands. (moved) The Sidney beaches and lagoon are very important habitat for migrating shorebirds, providing an important feeding and resting area – particularly for shorebirds. The adjacent waters of Sidney Channel are also recognized as important habitat for all marine birds. Sightings of Great Blue Heron, Bald Eagles, Purple Martin, Rhinoceros Auklets and Swallows as well as flocks of ducks, geese, and Sandpipers are common. Large flocks of Brant Geese use the park in March and April and, during July and August, hundreds of Heerman's Gulls use the area. Sidney Spit also provides winter habitat for many birds.

Sidney Island is known to support few native mammal fauna but has had several species introduced over the years, including European Fallow Deer (*Dama dama*). Since their

introduction to Sidney Island over 100 years ago, Fallow Deer have dominated the local ecology and are recognized as an impediment to the ecological integrity of the island. The total population of Fallow Deer on Sidney Island has been estimated at a low of 700-900 animals (Simmons 1989 in Maurer 1989) and a higher estimate at the same time of over 1200 animals (Gary Bowden 1989). Recent recapture data suggests a 2003 population of approximately 1,100 animals (Golumbia and Iwanson 2005). Efforts to control the deer population over the past 23 years have not been effective in mitigating the negative impact they have had on the island's ecological integrity. Black-tailed Deer (*Odocoileus hemionus columbianus*), a native species, are also present on Sidney Island. Records indicate the population was augmented in 1982 with 200 animals from Beacon Hill Park in Victoria (Cook and Dunster 2007). The species is recognized as native, known to be good swimmers and expected to travel amongst the Gulf Islands regularly.

Five herpetiles have been documented on the island (Pacific Tree Frog, Bullfrog, Northwestern Toad, Northwestern Garter Snake, and Western Garter Snake) although the introduced Bullfrog has not been confirmed. Norway and Black Rats are expected to occur at Sidney Spit but have not been confirmed. Both of these are introduced species and are common in the southern Gulf Islands. Raccoon, River Otter, European Rabbit, Mink, Deer Mouse, Little Brown Bat and Red Squirrel have all been documented on island.

There are 93 bird species that have been observed at Sidney Spit. This is based primarily on observations from 2006 and 2007 but includes observations back to the mid 1980s. Many of the species are transitory and not necessarily breeding on Sidney. Observations of note include 4 listed species at risk and 10 introduced species. Purple Martin, historically present throughout southern British Columbia and now considered provincially threatened, occur at Sidney Spit as a result of a nest box program initiated by the park in conjunction with the Georgia Basin Ecological Assessment and Restoration Society.

Sidney Spit (spit and dune habitat) has been surveyed for moths several times since 2001 and most recently in 2006. The target species, Sand-verbena Moth (*Copablepharon fuscum*), which is considered endangered by COSEWIC, was not detected although the habitats are suitable and the moth has been found within 10 km. In the survey, fourteen species were identified, including *Trichoclea edwardsii* (Noctuid moth) that is currently under review by COSEWIC (Page, 2006).

### ***Shorezone and Marine***

Eelgrass (*Zostera* sp.) is the predominant vegetation type in the intertidal and subtidal portion of the lagoon and by the mooring/anchoring areas. The extensive intertidal salt marsh includes rush (*Juncus* sp.), saltgrass (*Distichlis spicata*), American glasswort (*Salicornia virginiana*), graceful arrowgrass (*Triglochin concinnum*), salt marsh dodder (*Cuscuta salina*), alkali grass (*Puccinellia* sp.) and fleshy jaumea (*Jaumea carnosa*). The upper beach zone around the lagoon consists of a band of wild rye (*Elymus* sp.), Scotch broom (*Cytisus* sp.) and beach logs.

### ***Disturbance History***

The most obvious disturbances to the island ecosystems have been from hyper-abundant Fallow Deer, industrial use (Sidney Brick and Tile Company), expanded recreational use, small-scale farming and logging, and encroachment of invasive exotic species.

Despite the obvious disturbances on the landscape, 86% of visitors to Sidney Spit perceived the natural conditions there to be very healthy or healthy. Only 5% felt the natural conditions were not healthy or very unhealthy (2006 Survey of Visitors, GINPR).

The disturbance history provides opportunities for interpretation of the cultural history, changing values with respect to land use and opportunities for ecosystem restoration.

### ***Ecological Restoration***

The park vision states that the park will achieve a greater level of ecological integrity and provide a natural refuge in an increasingly developed region. Further, the vision indicates that GINPR will protect terrestrial and marine ecosystems in a more balanced natural system; provide opportunities for humans to appreciate nature; and show a high degree of environmental leadership—all of which relate to the need for and value of ecological restoration.

Sidney Island ecosystems have high ecological value. In particular, the extensive dune and spit habitat and the lagoon are unique in this area. The lagoon also contains one of the best examples of eelgrass (marine) habitat currently known within the park (per. Comm. C. Robinson, 2007).

At present, the three main drivers affecting ecological integrity at Sidney Spit are hyper-abundant Fallow Deer, invasive, exotic species encroachment, and uncontrolled human activities (e.g., dogs off leash, informal trails, anchoring in eelgrass areas).

## **2.3 Cultural Heritage Overview**

### ***First Nations Context***

First Nations people have lived in this area for thousands of years, in areas along the eastern portion of Vancouver Island as far north as the Nanaimo area, in the Gulf Islands, along mainland BC's south-western area, and in what is now part of Washington and Oregon states in the United States. Many Coast Salish First Nations have indicated that they consider Sidney Island and the surrounding waters to be part of their traditional territories. They value this site as part of their history and as tangible evidence of their connection to the land.

Generally, there are two Coast Salish languages spoken in this area: Sencot'en and Hul'q'umi'num. There are several Sencot'en names for Sidney Island and the land in GINPR: *skwthamen* is thought to refer to the spit area and the southeastern shore of the lagoon—it can be translated as “submerged by waves”; *kwshamen* is thought to refer to

the lagoon (Bouchard and Kennedy 1996). The Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group (HTG) has indicated that Sidney Island is outside of their core area of interest as outlined in the treaty process, though they have indicated do they use the waters in the area. Further research may help to identify Hul'qumi'num place names in the area.

First Nations have protected rights through the Canadian Constitution, and some have additional treaty rights. Their traditional uses of the land, for food, social and ceremonial purposes, are generally permitted within national park reserves. In undertaking their traditional uses and in managing the park, First Nations and Parks Canada will work together to ensure public safety and long-term protection of resources.

### ***Types of First Nations Use***

First Nations uses of Sidney Spit and surrounding areas included hunting, fishing, harvesting plants and shellfish, village and camp settlements as well as sacred sites (Bouchard & Kennedy, 1996). Some of these activities and areas persist today, to varying degrees. Much of Sidney Spit (excluding the day use area and marine area) is closed from November to February to ensure public safety while Coast Salish people hunt deer on the island.

### ***Newcomer Context***

The term “newcomer” is used in this document to encompass the various cultural groups, other than First Nations, who have settled and lived in the area. In particular, these include Europeans, Hawaiians, Japanese and Chinese communities. The following overview is based on information from the “Settlement & Land Use History Gulf Islands National Park Reserve Post-Contact Landscape History” report (Cook & Dunster, 2007).

European exploration of the Gulf Islands began in 1791 with the arrival of the Spanish to the area. Jose Verdia and Jose Narvaez passed through Haro Strait, charting some of the islands as they continued to the Strait of Georgia. The British arrived shortly thereafter and claimed the Gulf Islands for the British Crown in June 1792. The Colony of Vancouver Island was created in 1849.

The Hudson's Bay Company received a Royal Charter in 1849 that gave them control of Vancouver Island and the surrounding area. At this time, Chief Factor James Douglas gave Sidney Island the name of “Sallas Island”; later it was renamed Sidney Island. The island was surveyed in 1860 (Figure 4) and six sections were purchased. Although several parcels were bought and sold over the next few years, settlers did not begin to occupy the island until 1863 when Louis Schott bought land at the south end of Sidney Island. In 1871, he purchased an additional 3 lots at the north end of the island (what is now national park reserve land). Both the 1860 survey and Schott's survey for the three northern parcels show that a Government Reserve existed on the western sand barrier and the small island, now known as Eagle Island.

Also in 1902, George L. Courtney purchased all properties on Sidney Island for \$25,000, with the intention of establishing a private hunting preserve. In 1907, he purchased 45 ha



of the western barrier spit, although the government retained a shoreline reserve around the spit. Courtney maintained a farming function through tenant farmers/caretakers for the island and sold railway ties from timber logged on the island. During the period when the land was a private hunting ground, Ring-Necked Pheasants and Fallow Deer were introduced.

In October 1908 the Sidney Island Brick and Tile Company Ltd. was incorporated. The company produced clay brick products until it closed its doors in 1925. In 1911, a workforce of 47 people existed. Production and employment peaked in 1912-13 with approximately 70 men employed. The largest single shipment of bricks from the Sidney Island plant was 600,000 to the Granby Consolidated Mining and Smelting Company in 1912-13. Sidney Island bricks were incorporated into the Empress Hotel and Hotel Vancouver, as well as the old CPR depot in Vancouver. Historical research indicates that 8 houses, 2 bunkhouses (one for 17 Chinese labourers, one for 18 others), a bath house, 2 clay pits, a brick mill, kiln and dryer, engine house, buried reservoir, wharf/dock and boathouse, office, cookhouse, barn and fields existed (Commonwealth Historic Resource Management Ltd, 2006). Remnants of structures, earthworks, machinery parts, building hardware and brick scatter are evident in the area. The Sidney Island Brick and Tile Company Ltd. changed hands in 1924 and was closed in 1925. At this time the land reverted back to the provincial government. In 1930, the province declared Sidney Spit a public use reserve.

A communications station was established on Sidney Island around 1942 in connection with wartime air bases in the Victoria area. After the war, the radio tower was retained for civilian use. It evolved into an un-manned site with radio towers and navigation beacons.

Sidney Spit Provincial Marine Park was established by Order-in-Council on November 28, 1961. From 1981 until 2004, the land base increased so that approximately 1000 acres were transferred to the federal government when GINPR was created. This transfer took place under Order-In-Council 407 (April 24, 2004).

### ***Visitor Access and Use***

Access to Sidney Spit is provided by a privately operated, pedestrian ferry (Alpine Ferry) contracted by GINPR. The ferry runs between the Town of Sidney and Sidney Spit. It currently offers in the range of eight departures/day and can accommodate approximately 50 passengers per trip. Beyond the ferry, access is by private boat/kayak. Most visitors access the island via the dock/day use area. Some visitors pull up dinghies/kayaks/small boats directly on the sandy shores of the long spit, the outside of the hook spit, or beside the camping area (Figure 1). Sidney Spit is a popular anchorage for boaters.

The GINPR 2005 Survey of Visitors and Residents estimated that nearly 16,000 visitors come to Sidney Spit during the months of June through early September. In 2006, data from ferry ticket sales and camping, mooring buoy and dock registrations indicate that

there were roughly 15,000 visitors to Sidney Spit. Sidney Spit is the most heavily used area within GINPR.

***Current marine-based facilities and services***

The existing marine facilities at Sidney Spit include a 150 metre dock and jetty to the day use area and 21 mooring buoys. All mooring buoys were replaced in 2004 and the dock system was upgraded/replaced in 2007. Park interpreters conducted sporadic kayak roving in 2007 as a means of providing interpretive information to boaters and kayakers. This roving will be continued in the short term.