

# **CHANNEL ISLANDS STATE MARINE PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN**

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## Introduction

The Channel Islands State Marine Park consists of 14 islands in Lynn Canal, approximately 25 miles northwest of downtown Juneau, Alaska; including the submerged lands surrounding each island out to the 10-fathom bathymetric line. The islands in the marine park include: Aaron, Battleship, Benjamin, Bird, Coghlan, Cohen, Gull, Indian, Lincoln, North, Portland, Ralston, Suedla, and a portion of Shelter (Figure 1, Appendix). The Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (Alaska State Parks) is responsible for management of the state lands and waters within the park.

### Establishment of Channel Islands State Marine Park

The Channel Islands have historically been recognized for their recreation value to residents of and visitors to the Juneau area. The State of Alaska selected these islands from the federal government under the Statehood Act because of their importance for community recreation. And, as early as 1970, the City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ) identified the islands as important for recreation in a comprehensive plan for park and recreation lands in the municipality. In 1983, the Alaska State Legislature established the Shelter Island State Marine Park, which included a portion of Shelter Island in the Hand Troller Cove area (HCS CSSB 128[RES]).

The Legislature expanded the marine park substantially in 2008, with the establishment of the Channel Islands State Marine Park as a unit of the Alaska State Marine Park system (CSSB 57[RES]). In accordance with AS 41.21.300, Alaska's marine parks are to be managed in a manner that will:

- Maintain the natural, cultural, and scenic values of the park;
- Maintain the park's fish and wildlife resources and lawful existing uses of these resources; and
- Promote and support recreation and tourism in the State of Alaska.

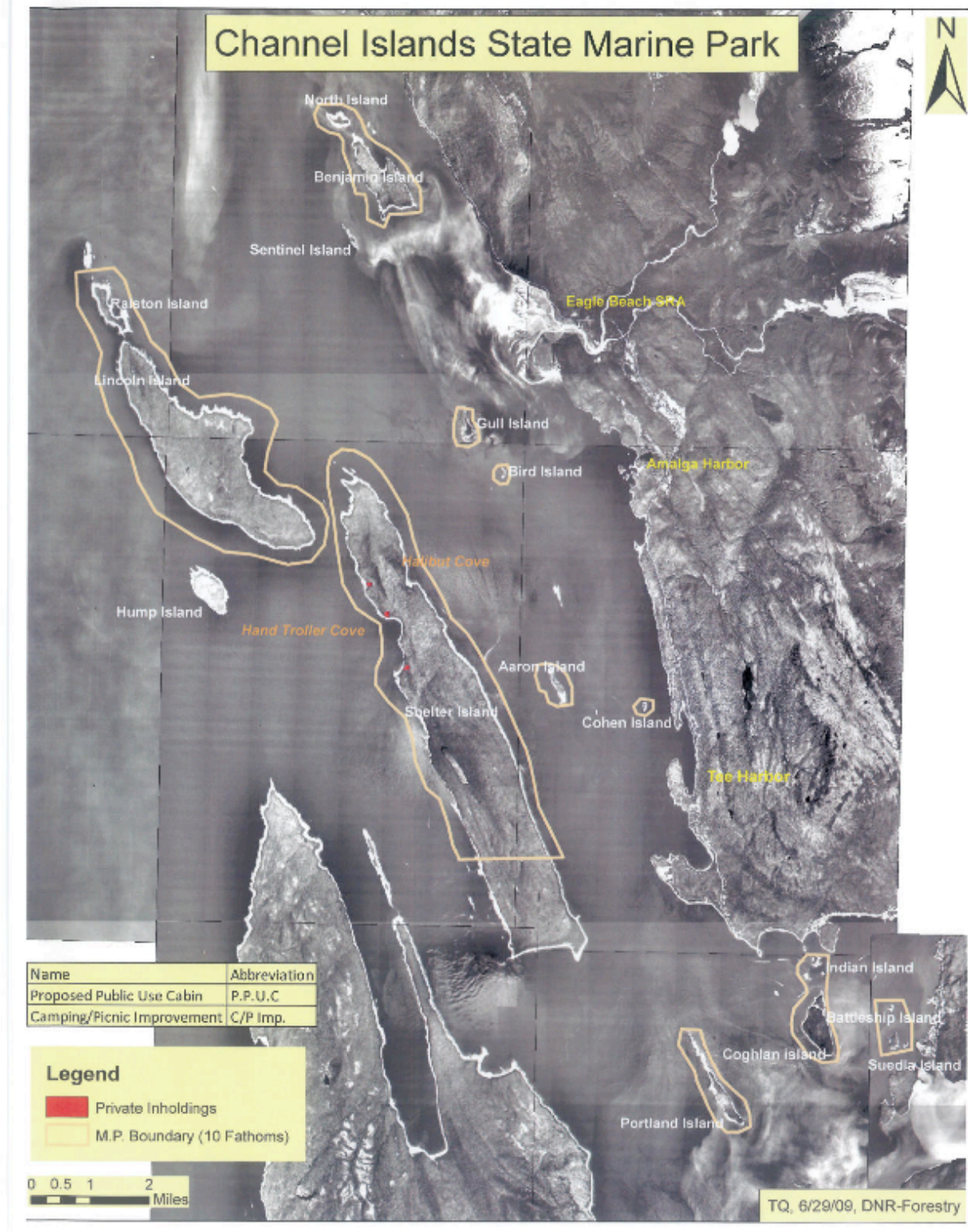
Enabling legislation established the Channel Islands State Marine Park "to protect the area's recreational and scenic resources and to preserve and enhance the continued use of the area for hunting and fishing and recreational activities."<sup>1</sup>

Statutory authority for establishment and management of the Channel Island State Marine Park is provided in Alaska Statutes 41.20, Sections 300-306. State Marine Parks are dedicated as special purpose sites under the Alaska Constitution (Article VIII, Section 7), which provides that the legislature may reserve such areas from the state public domain for the use, enjoyment and welfare of the people.

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<sup>1</sup> The Legislation that established the park specifically provided for continuation of fishing, hunting and trapping. Alaska State Parks has no authority over management of these uses.

Figure 1 Location and Boundary





## Plan Purpose & Overview

The *Channel Islands State Marine Park Management Plan*:

- Provides general information about the resources, environment and uses of the park;
- Defines goals, objectives, policies and practices for park management;
- Identifies potential locations for new facilities to support recreation uses compatible with protection of park resources; and
- Identifies actions that can be taken to promote the stewardship of this important natural recreation area.

The management plan is intended to help Alaska State Parks achieve its mission of protecting and enhancing a broad spectrum of outdoor recreation opportunities, while protecting the Channel Islands' resources and values. The plan's scale and scope is appropriate to the level of use that the Channel Islands State Marine Park experiences at Juneau's 2009 population level (31,000 people) and prepares for moderate growth in that use.

The plan identifies a process that managers will use to address proposals for any significant new development or activities in the park. Provisions for revising the plan have also been incorporated, to ensure that the plan will remain flexible and adaptable to changing conditions, public intent, and management needs.

## Goals and Objectives

The legislation that established Channel Islands State Marine Park requires that the recreational and scenic resources of the islands be protected, while public use of the area for hunting, fishing and other recreation continues and is enhanced.

A plan for the entire state park system, the *Alaska State Park System: Statewide Framework* (Alaska Division of Parks, 1982), further directs that a state park, such as the Channel Islands State Marine Park, must be managed to "maintain the Park's natural and cultural resources for long-term use and enjoyment." Guidelines in the framework state:

Recreational development and activities that provide access to or enhance enjoyment of the natural environment of state parks are encouraged. The development of a state park must insure that use levels do not diminish the value of park resources. Manipulations of the natural environment shall be limited to the immediate vicinity of development...

The Alaska State Park's management direction for the Channel Islands State Marine Park is summarized in the following goals and objectives. This direction follows legislative and Division mandates, in a manner that addresses management issues and is responsive to public preferences. Specific policies and practices that will guide management of the marine park are detailed in a later section of this plan.

**Goal One:    Preserve and protect the scenic, recreational and habitat values for which the Channel Islands State Marine Park was established.**

**Objectives:**

1. Inventory natural and cultural resources.
2. Establish a system for monitoring and periodic reevaluation of public use and activity.
3. Work with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), Alaska Department of Public Safety, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and other entities with monitoring and enforcement authority to ensure adequate protection and maintenance of the park's natural and cultural resources.
4. Provide visitor information and interpretive programs regarding the resources and values of the Channel Islands State Marine Park, to develop public appreciation for and stewardship of the park.
5. Encourage research related to the park's resources and values by the University of Alaska and other educational and research institutions.
6. Work cooperatively with managers of other park properties in the vicinity to encourage uses compatible with the values and uses of the Channel Islands State Marine Park.

**Goal Two:    Provide for the outdoor recreation needs of Channel Island State Marine Park visitors, in a manner that protects the values for which the park was established.**

**Objectives:**

1. Apply management practices that provide for the separation of uses to avoid potential conflicts, maintain the quality of recreation experiences, and provide for appropriate activities.
2. Establish facilities or developments to meet visitor needs that are compatible with the park's scenic and natural character.
3. Educate users about opportunities for the wide range of recreational opportunities available in the park.
4. Work with commercial businesses, local government and other entities to ensure the contribution of the Channel Island State Marine Park to the recreation and tourism sectors of the local and regional economy.
5. Avoid impacts to private properties in and adjacent to the park.

## **The Marine Park Environment**

### **Biological Resources**

Vegetation – The majority of the vegetation on the Channel Islands is western hemlock and Sitka spruce forest. The coastal hemlock/spruce forest is a mixture of three plant communities: true forest, grass-sedge meadow and muskeg. The true forest is a cool, moist rain forest. Tree species include western hemlock, mountain hemlock, Sitka spruce, western red cedar, Alaska or yellow cedar, red alder, vine maple, and shore (a species of lodgepole) pine. The forest understory includes alders and willows, as well as shrubs (salmonberry, Pacific red elderberry, devil's club, blueberry, huckleberry and currant) and many varieties of ferns and grasses. Grass-sedge meadows usually are in lower elevations adjacent to the shore.

Numerous muskegs occur in the park; in these areas the ground's upper layers are composed primarily of living sphagnum moss and the lower layers are composed of partially disintegrated sphagnum (peat). The water table is usually near the ground surface but with little standing water except in small ponds. Muskeg vegetation is variable in the different areas of the park but all have sphagnum moss, sedges, rushes, herbs and low growing shrubs, along with flowering plants such as skunk cabbage, marsh marigold, violets and bog orchids. The edges of the muskeg and higher areas support tall shrubs and shrub-like trees, such as shore pine, mountain hemlock, red alder, vine maple, mountain ash, and in some areas Alaska or yellow cedar.

Intertidal meadows adjacent to creeks and beaches support a wide variety of plant life. Flat areas inundated by the highest tides have distinctive plants such as goose tongue and arrow grass.

The higher areas of the intertidal zone are heavily covered with beach wild rye grass. Along the rocky coastal area the lower level of the beaches frequently have thick beds of seaweed; the upper spray zone supports a variety of lichens.

Marine Life – Marine mammals in the park include humpback, orca and minke whales; harbor seals; Stellar sea lions; and Dall and harbor porpoises. Beaches are rich with intertidal sea life such as clams, snails, mussels, small fish and crabs. All five species of Pacific salmon are found in the waters surrounding the Channel Islands, as well as Dolly Varden char, rockfish, halibut, herring, smelt, capelin and krill.

Benjamin Island is a major Stellar sea lion haul out. The primary haul out location is on the northwest shore, although sea lions use the entire periphery of the island. Stellar sea lions have been listed by the NMFS as threatened under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

A wide variety of seabirds and shorebirds live within and migrate through the park. These include various gulls and ducks, scoters, grebes, arctic terns, black oystercatchers, surfbirds, pigeon guillemots, murres, marbled murrelets; and other birds, such as loons and cormorants. Many of these birds reside in Lynn Canal seasonally; rock sandpipers and dunlin winter among the islands. The Channel Islands offer important habitat for some species, such as black oystercatchers, which nest just above tide line on eight of the 14 islands in the park and stage on

north Portland Island prior to migrating south. Additional study is warranted to evaluate the importance of the Channel Islands to the regional, and possibly overall, population of a number of seabird and shorebird species, such as the surfbird and black oystercatcher.

Terrestrial Birds and Wildlife – Sitka black tail deer have been observed on many of the Channel Islands and are noted for their excellent swimming abilities. Shelter and Lincoln islands have larger deer populations and are frequented by hunters. The forest is habitat for a variety of smaller mammals, including marten, mink and beaver. Although brown and black bears are found on the mainland, the Channel Islands do not have a large enough land base to support resident bear populations. Bald eagles nest, perch and roost throughout the Channel Islands and are year-round residents. There are willow ptarmigan on Lincoln Island. Northwest crows have nighttime roosts on the islands and feed in the intertidal area.

## **Land Ownership and Management**

The state lands and waters within the Channel Islands State Marine Park are owned and managed by the State of Alaska, as are the surrounding marine waters and submerged lands. These lands and waters were selected by the State of Alaska from National Forest lands for community recreation purposes. The *Juneau State Lands Plan* (adopted 1993) provides overall guidance for DNR's management of state lands in the Juneau area; the state area plan is superseded by more specific planning documents for the units in the state park system.

Nearby state parks include Saint James Bay State Marine Park (on the west side of Lynn Canal 34 miles northwest of Juneau) and, on the mainland to the east, Point Bridget State Park (at the south entrance of Berners Bay), Eagle Beach State Recreation Area (at the mouth of Eagle River), and the Ernest Gruening State Historic Park (at Amalga Harbor).

The CBJ manages many coastal and island park lands and shoreline access routes in the adjacent area, including parcels at Mab Island, Amalga Harbor, Bridget Cove, Lena Cove, Indian Cove, Spuhn Island and Auke Bay, Shaman Island and Barlow Cove.

Much of the land area in the vicinity of the Channel Islands is within the Tongass National Forest, managed by the USDA Forest Service (USFS).

There are three private in-holdings (ranging in size from approximately three to six acres) on Shelter Island, and several recreational cabins within the Channel Islands State Marine Park. There are also private lands located south of the park boundary on Shelter Island (Figure 1).

Hump Island, located just west of Lincoln Island, is private land. Sentinel Island, located west of Benjamin, is a lighthouse site owned and managed by the Gastineau Channel Historical Society. Point Retreat, located east of the marine park, is a lighthouse site managed by the Alaska Lighthouse Association. The Juneau International Airport, through the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), has navigation facilities on Coghlan Island.

The harvest of fish and wildlife from the lands and waters within and surrounding the Channel Island State Marine Park is managed by the ADF&G. The U.S. Coast Guard and Alaska State Troopers provide for general public safety and enforcement.

## **Public Use, Facilities and Access**

### **Recreation Uses and Facilities**

Existing non-commercial recreational use of the Channel Islands area is extensive given the park's proximity to Juneau and accessibility by boat and floatplane. Recreational uses include sport fishing, hunting, food gathering (e.g., berries, clams, seaweed), trapping, picnicking, kayaking, camping, sightseeing/photography, beachcombing and wildlife viewing.

The different islands offer varied recreation opportunities and experiences; for example, Lincoln and Shelter Islands offer good opportunity for deer hunting; Benjamin Island attracts people interested in viewing Stellar sea lions hauled out onshore; Bird and Gull Island attract seabird viewing from the water; and beaches on North Island, Lincoln Island and south Portland Island offer attractive sites for picnicking, camping and beachcombing.

Recreational uses of the islands (including fishing and hunting) can be expected to increase as Juneau's population grows, facility and access improvements are made, and Juneau residents and visitors become more aware of the park, its rich resources, and its recreational values and offerings. While the trend is expected to be increasing public use, this plan does not anticipate a rapid, substantial growth in visitation.

Current developed recreation facilities in the park include (Figure 2):

- The Rupe Andrews public use cabin at Hand Troller Cove, west shore of Shelter Island (constructed 2007)
- Hand Troller Cove – camping and picnic area, two outhouses
- Halibut Cove – camping and picnic area, one outhouse

There are no other developed recreation sites or land trails in the park; however, there are access beaches, picnic/camping areas and trail routes that people customarily use. The Channel Islands is designated as part of the Alaska State Parks Channel Islands Water Trail, and is identified by Juneau SEATrails as part of the Channel Islands Paddle Route.

Nearby coastal public recreation facilities include the Alaska State Parks public use cabins at Point Bridget (Cowee Meadow, Blue Mussel and Camping Cove cabins) and the USFS Berners Bay cabin north of the Channel Islands, and the Alaska State Parks' cabin at Saint James Bay (Bob Hinman cabin) to the northwest.

## **Commercial Activities**

Commercial activities that use the uplands within the park are required to get a permit from Alaska State Parks (11 AAC 18.010). There is currently just one commercial operation occurring on the uplands within the Channel Islands State Marine Park, an ecotourism activity to pick up and catalogue marine debris. Remote site pick-up and drop-off services serve kayakers or other park visitors, but do not require a permit unless park uplands will be used for commercial activities.

Commercial fishing, guided sport fishing and vessel-based wildlife viewing tours make transient use of park waters and will not be regulated by Alaska State Parks.

There is an increasing demand for commercially provided adventure-based tourism including kayaking, camping, and exploring undeveloped natural areas. This trend is expected to continue to grow and the Channel Islands offer ideal locations for adventure trips near Juneau.

## **Park Access**

The Channel Island State Marine Park must be accessed by boat or floatplane. The closest mainland developed launch points for boat access are the CBJ launch facilities at Amalga Harbor, Tee Harbor, North Douglas and the Don Statter Harbor at Auke Bay. There are no developed access points on the islands; boats and floatplanes access the shore at sand and gravel beaches.

## **Management Issues**

The level and types of public use typical within the Channel Island State Marine Park are generally compatible with maintenance of the area's resources and values. Nevertheless, there are issues that should be addressed to meet legislative direction for park management. Alaska State Parks, the Juneau State Parks Citizen Advisory Board (Advisory Board), and the public raised the following issues during development of this management plan.

### Park Access

- Many Juneau residents and visitors do not own a boat or plane they can use to access the park. Park managers should consider ways to improve access for these potential users (e.g., encourage or facilitate commercial businesses that could provide affordable regular transportation.)
- Improved infrastructure may be appropriate to enhance access at high use locations on the islands, including for persons with disabilities.

### Recreation Facilities and Services

- The construction of the public use cabin on at Hand Troller Cove on Shelter Island in 2007 has been well received by the public. A warm, dry shelter in the Southeast maritime climate greatly enhances the quality of recreational visits to the Channel



Islands and has raised awareness of other potential opportunities that exist there. Additional public use cabins at appropriate locations would be beneficial to meet public demand, provide emergency shelter, and continue to build the network of coastal cabins in Lynn Canal.

- Resource and aesthetic damage is occurring at some higher-use camping and picnic areas. Selected areas should be hardened and improved (fire rings and outhouses provided) to appropriately focus use and reduce overall resource impacts.
- New and improved trails could expand inland public use, enhance enjoyment, and minimize resource damage in sensitive areas.
- Facility improvements should be made with the needs of entry-level boaters and campers in mind.
- While facility improvement is encouraged in some areas, substantial areas of the park should remain in a natural undeveloped state.
- Park managers are encouraged to avoid excessive regulation or permit requirements for personal recreation uses (e.g., camping), at current or moderately increased levels of public use.
- Coastal and marine debris is an issue throughout Southeast Alaska. It is essential that the public manage its own garbage – “Bring Out What You Bring In.”
- It is expected that interest in using the park for commercial recreation will grow in the coming years. Facilities for commercially guided trips might be requested (e.g., bird viewing blinds, animal viewing platforms or outhouses). Alaska State Parks must evaluate proposed commercial activities and/or developments for compatibility with protection of the park’s resources and values and public recreation use.

#### Public education

- Education and interpretation are essential tools for encouraging visitation, managing visitor behavior, and avoiding/minimizing negative impacts on the park and other users.
- More public education is needed, including information about: recreation opportunities and facilities, the park’s resources and values (especially sensitive habitat areas and species of flora/fauna), public stewardship, managing dogs to avoid damage to sensitive resources, public safety, respect for private lands in and adjacent to the park, and other topics. Information needs to be delivered through a number of media (e.g., web, brochures, signs at access points).

#### Resource protection

- Increased visitation – which could be encouraged through additional public information and recreation facilities – has the potential to increase impacts on the park’s resources. On-going monitoring of visitation levels, facility use, and resource impacts are essential to ensure that management can be adjusted as necessary to meet legislative direction for the park.

- Appropriate management, facilities and public information need to be provided for areas of the park that provide important habitat and/or are significant for the regional and overall abundance of wildlife species. Areas of particular sensitivity and concern include the Stellar sea lion haul out at Benjamin Island, and areas used by concentrations of nesting and staging seabirds.
- There is concern about dogs causing damage in sensitive habitat areas, particularly areas important to nesting and staging of seabirds.
- There is a need for more complete information about the biotic resources of the islands, and their importance to particular species regional and overall abundance (e.g., surfbird, black oystercatcher).
- The Channel Islands SMP can be an important research/study site for the University of Alaska and other research and education institutions.

#### Existing Non-Recreation Structures

- State regulation 11 AAC 12.140 states that only authorized structures are allowed within the park. There are a number of old building and structures that need to be evaluated for ownership, historical significance and resource impacts, and a plan made for removal if appropriate.

#### Private property

- Park managers are required to provide access to and from proximate private and public land within or outside of a unit.
- Increased public use of the park raises concern among some private landowners about potential impacts to their property and to their use and enjoyment of their property.

#### Cultural resources

- There is a general lack of knowledge of the park's cultural resources, and historic and prehistoric uses.

#### Fiscal Constraints

- Budget constraints will effect what can be accomplished to address management issues at the Channel Islands State Marine Park.
- It will be essential to prioritize actions and develop partnerships among government and non-government entities to accomplish facility construction, maintenance, resource inventory, education and other initiatives.

## Management Designation, Policies and Practices

Alaska State Parks will manage the Channel Islands State Marine Park in accordance with the following land management designation, policies and practices.

### Natural Zone Designation

The Channel Islands State Marine Park is designated as a “Natural Zone” as defined by the *Alaska State Park System, Statewide Framework*.<sup>2</sup> The Natural Zone designation provides the following guidance for park management:

- Management Purpose and Characteristics – A Natural Zone designation provides for moderate-to-low impact and dispersed forms of recreation. The Natural Zone is to be managed to: remain relatively undeveloped and undisturbed, maintain high scenic qualities, and provide visitors with opportunities for significant, natural outdoor experiences. An area's natural landscape character is the dominant feature within this zone. Landscape modification may be allowed to enhance, maintain or protect the natural setting according to the park management plan.
- Developments and Activities – Developments in a natural zone are intended to provide for the safety of park visitors and to provide for a moderate level of convenience in a high-quality natural setting. A medium level of human use and activity is encouraged in this zone. Private, motorized off-road vehicle use is prohibited within this zone, except for boats and aircraft.

### Management Policies and Practices

Alaska State Parks will manage the Channel Islands State Marine Park in accordance with the following policies and practices:

#### General Resource Management

1. Research will be encouraged within the Channel Islands State Marine Park. Any proposals for associated facilities or developments (e.g., research camps) will be reviewed by Alaska State Parks staff for approval and issuance of applicable permits, with consideration of expected levels of impact within the area in which the activity will occur.
2. Resource inventories of wildlife, vegetation and cultural sites will be considered a high priority, particularly to provide baseline information for future decisions about public use, facilities and permitting. Bird nesting and staging areas, wildlife den sites, critical habitat areas and archaeological sites need to be identified and evaluated. Alaska State Parks will cooperate with other agencies, the University, non-government organizations

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<sup>2</sup> All lands and waters within each state park unit must be classified as one of four zones: Natural, Cultural, Recreational Development, or Wilderness. Zones are assigned based on legislative intent, environmental factors, historical use, existing impacts and visitor use patterns.

and public volunteers to catalog these sites. No facility development will be permitted that would potentially interfere with or degrade these sites.

3. Alaska State Parks will collect and retain research and inventory results that provide information about the natural and cultural resources of the park, for the information of park managers and the benefit of the public.
4. Patrol activity by Alaska State Park rangers is a priority. Patrol activities include visitor assistance, resource monitoring, law enforcement and monitoring park use.
5. All uses that are incompatible with the park's values as stated in the enabling legislation will be prohibited.
6. All illegal structures within the park will be removed as soon as the appropriate legal action has been taken (in accordance with 11 AAC 12.140).
7. Personal use of timber located on parklands for house logs, firewood or building materials is prohibited. Park visitors may use dead and down wood for campfires. Cutting standing trees (either live or dead) is prohibited.
8. Hunting, trapping and fishing within the park are permitted subject to state regulations.
9. Use of motorized vehicles except boats and aircraft is prohibited by 11 AAC 12.020.
10. The use of aircraft is allowed in Alaska State Marine Parks, except for the purpose of practice landing.

#### Visitor Use

1. Park staff and/or volunteers will monitor and assess the type, amount and location of public use and the resulting impacts.
2. Visitors will be required to remove all non-human waste generated in the park. Trash cans will not be provided. Latrine facilities will be provided in high use areas only. Minimum impact techniques for camping and other recreation use will be encouraged and will be highlighted in public education materials.
3. Fires are not permitted in the forest; campfires are only permitted in fire pits constructed by Alaska State Parks or in areas below the mean high tide line. Only wood that is down and dead may be used for campfires.
4. Alaska State Parks will work with NMFS, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), ADF&G and other agencies and organizations to determine what measures might be needed to protect sensitive habitat areas from impacts caused by visitor use (e.g., Stellar sea lion haul out on Benjamin Island; important seabird areas.) Specifically, Alaska State Parks will consult with NMFS and the Advisory Board during the first year of plan implementation to discuss appropriate steps for management of visitor use on Benjamin Island.
5. Alaska State Parks will provide public information about the importance of visitors managing their dogs to ensure that they do not impact wildlife, including installing signs at key locations asking people to keep dogs out of particularly sensitive areas (e.g., north

Portland Island). If public education is not adequate to address impacts, Alaska State Parks will consider the need to promulgate regulations regarding management of dogs.

#### Public Information and Stewardship

1. Alaska State Parks, Southeast Regional Office in Juneau will serve as the visitor information center and support facility for the Channel Islands State Marine Park. A small visitor information facility is also recommended for future development at the Don Statter Harbor, when that facility is rebuilt by the CBJ.
2. Public information brochures and maps will be made available to visitors to provide information regarding the Channel Islands State Marine Park. Information about the park's resources and values, sensitive habitat areas, recreation opportunities, facilities, trails, scenic areas, local hazards, park regulations, park boundaries, the location of private inholdings, and responsible outdoor recreation use (e.g., public use etiquette, minimum impact camping and public use, managing dogs to avoid damage to sensitive resources) will be included. In addition to printing for public distribution, brochures will be made available on-line. Brochures and maps will be updated periodically.
3. Public information displays will be provided inside public use cabins, at primary park access points (e.g., Amalga Harbor, Don Statter Harbor at Auke Bay), at new facilities that are developed, and other activity nodes.
4. Public outreach efforts that educate the public about the protection of sensitive areas and resources within the park will be a priority. Examples include increased public education regarding the Stellar sea lion haul out on Benjamin Island and areas used by seabirds for nesting, molting and staging (e.g. north Portland Island), through interpretive signs at primary access points, on-site and brochures.
5. Alaska State Parks will seek collaborative partnerships with local organizations with a shared interest in the use and protection of the Channel Islands State Marine Park, to promote appropriate public use and stewardship of the area (e.g., public education events, school or youth group activities).

#### Facility Development

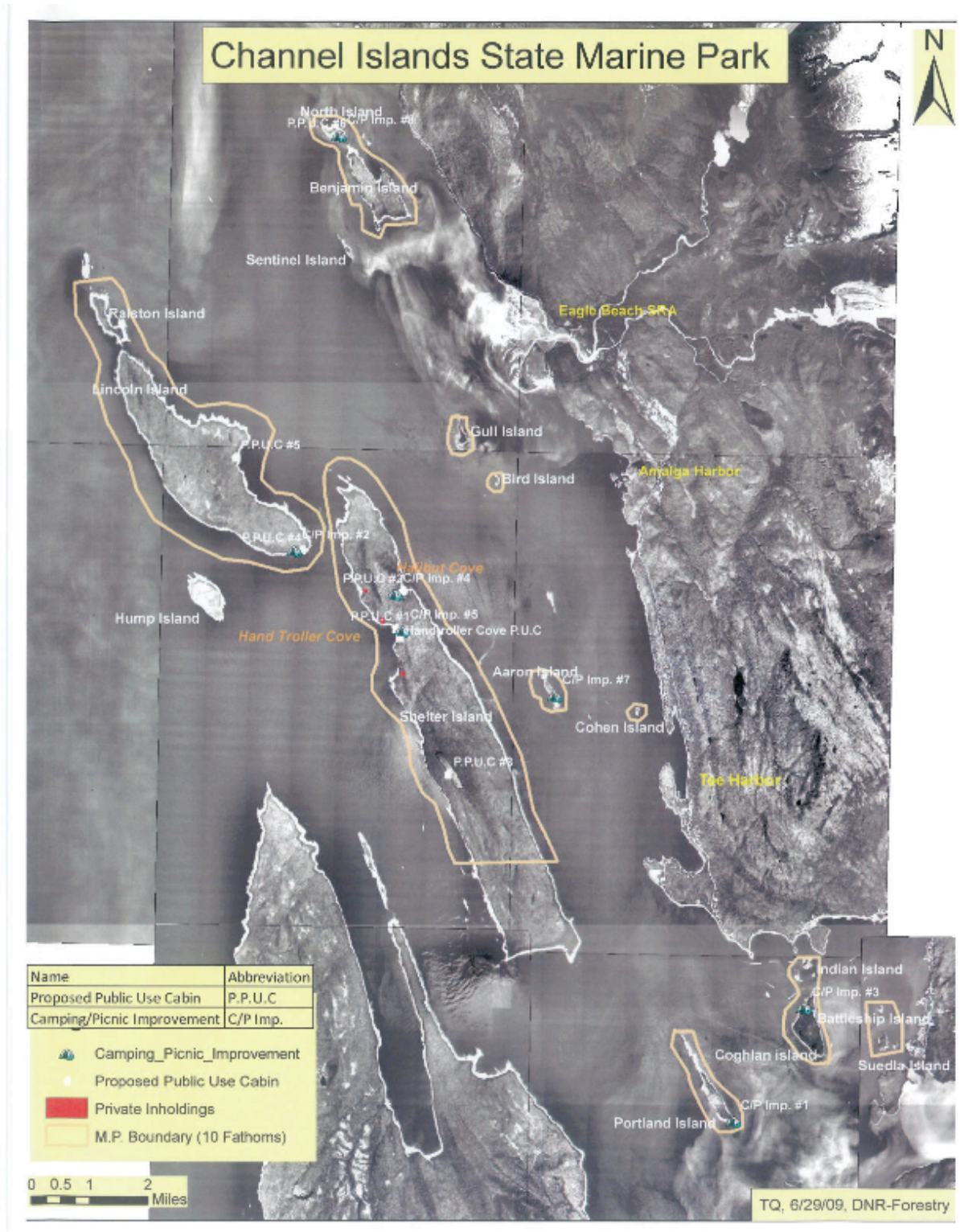
1. Proposals for public facility development within the Channel Islands State Marine Park will be developed by evaluating demonstrated public need and/or the amount of public use that a site receives, and shall be consistent with natural zone guidelines. Alaska State Parks may also propose specific facility development projects to reduce resource damage in areas of high use. Facility development plans will also consider the need to provide different levels of use and development in different areas of the park, to offer gradations in the types of landscape, services and experiences.
2. Facilities such as lodges, restaurants, gift shops, food vendors and base camps will not be developed on state land in the park because such facilities are available or could be developed by private enterprise on private property.

3. All developments in the park will be sited, designed and constructed to minimize impacts on the natural environment and the scenic quality of the area. Adverse impacts to sensitive habitat areas will be avoided.
4. As a result of the public planning process, Alaska State Parks has identified possible recreation facilities and sites to accommodate current and near-term projected public use (see Figure 2). Each potential facility and site will be subject to a review and decision process that will consider feasibility of maintenance, public safety, potential resource impacts, and potential effects on private lands. All decisions regarding site development will be vetted with the Advisory Board at a public meeting.
  - a. Cabins – Alaska State Parks is evaluating the need and locations for the construction of additional year-round public use cabins (in addition to the existing cabin at Hand Troller Cove, Shelter Island) to be managed according to the guidelines set forth in the division's cabin use policy. Funding, construction and maintenance of the cabins will be coordinated with the Advisory Board, local private landholders and local organizations. Potential cabin locations include (not in priority order):
    - Shelter Island – additional cabin at Hand Troller Cove
    - Shelter Island – Halibut Cove
    - Shelter Island – vicinity of Shelter Lake
    - Lincoln Island – south end/beach
    - Lincoln Island – east cove
    - North Island – south end/beach

Cabins should be located in a manner that protects the scenic view of the islands from the water, but still provides light and view to the cabin site.
  - b. Campground / Picnic Site Improvements – Alaska State Parks is evaluating the need for campground improvements (e.g., campsite hardening, installation of outhouses) at higher use locations. Potential sites include (not in priority order):
    - Portland Island – south end
    - Lincoln Island – south beach area
    - Coghlan Island
    - Shelter Island – Halibut Cove & Hand Troller Cove
    - Aaron Island
    - North Island



**FIGURE 2 Existing and Potential Facilities**



- c. Trails – Alaska State Parks is evaluating the need for trail construction or improvements to enhance public access and recreation opportunities and/or to avoid resource damage. Potential locations include:

- Shelter Island (e.g., consider trails connecting Hand Troller Cove, Halibut Cove, Shelter Lake)

A review of other trail opportunities is needed. When routing trails, Alaska State Parks will consult with any affected private landowners in the area to avoid impacts from public recreation use on the use and enjoyment of private lands (e.g., private land in-holdings on Shelter Island).

- d. Access Improvements – Alaska State Parks will consider the feasibility of installing mooring buoys at public use cabin sites. It will be important for the Division to work with cooperators on establishment and maintenance of the buoys.
5. Alaska State Parks will consult with the NMFS within the first year of plan implementation to discuss appropriate steps for management of visitation on Benjamin Island, prior to recommending any recreation facilities or other changes to infrastructure or visitation management. These issues and NMFS' recommendations will also be discussed with the Advisory Board.
6. Interpretation and visitor information will be incorporated into all facility development projects.
7. Alaska State Parks will seek to collaborate with volunteers and non-profit organizations (e.g., Territorial Sportsmen, Juneau Kayak Club, Litter Free, Trail Mix) to help with the construction of new facilities and maintenance of existing facilities, including trails, interpretive signs, public use cabins, access improvements (e.g., mooring buoys) and campgrounds.

#### Private Lands

1. Alaska State Parks will work to minimize impacts to private lands adjacent to the park and to in-holdings within the park.
2. Access to private land will be provided in accordance with AS 41.21.302(h).
3. Park boundaries and the boundaries of private land in-holdings will be identified on public information materials (e.g. brochures, maps). Signs will be provided to identify boundaries of inholdings.
4. Alaska State Parks does not have management authority over private lands.

#### Commercial Activities

1. Commercial activities proposing to use uplands within the park are subject to a permit or contract process and will be managed according to Division policy and state law, as provided in 11 AAC 18.010-040. In accordance with these regulations, permits may be issued by Alaska State Parks only if the proposed activity meets the criteria in 11 AAC

18.025 and is compatible with the statutory purposes for which the park was established. All permit applications will be vetted with the Advisory Board in a public meeting prior to a decision by Alaska State Parks.

2. Boats are allowed in the park for commercial fishing, guided fisheries, wildlife viewing or recreational tours. Shore excursions are also allowed provided provisions are taken to minimize impacts to park resources and required permits are obtained. Alaska State Parks will evaluate and address potential impacts during the permitting process.
3. Exclusive use of a park facility or a portion of parkland or water is only allowed through Alaska State Parks' commercial/special use permitting process (11 AAC 18.010-040.)
4. Caches for boats, food, fuel or other materials on parklands will not be permitted.
5. If commercial activities in the park negatively impact park resources or other users' experiences, limits on the number of permits issued or additional stipulations will be required.

#### Permits and Management Approvals

1. A permit is not required to use the Channel Islands State Marine Park for general recreation. Certain activities require a permit under 11 AAC 18.010, such as reserved use of facilities, special events, commercial use, or groups of more than 20 people.
2. A permit is required from Alaska State Parks for the construction or maintenance of any structure, including a sign or trail, in a state Marine Park (including Marine Park waters) (11 AAC 18.010). Alaska State Parks will review and approve permit applications on a case-by-case basis in accordance with this management plans and other relevant state statutes and regulations.
3. Alaska State Parks will consult with NMFS before authorizing activities that require a permit within one mile of a Stellar sea lion haul out. The USFWS or the NMFS will also be consulted on questions that involve any other threatened or endangered species.
4. When considering permits for activities that could potentially affect bald eagles, the Alaska State Parks will consult with the USFWS for locations of eagle nest, roost and perch trees to avoid disturbance.
5. The State Office of History and Archaeology will be contacted during planning for park facilities and prior to issuance of any management permits that may affect heritage resources. If heritage resources are known, facilities will not be placed in a location that would likely lead to adverse impacts.

## **Planning Process and Future Updates**

The *Channel Islands State Marine Park Management Plan* was developed through the work of the Alaska State Parks Southeast Area Park Superintendent and staff, in consultation with the Advisory Board and the public. Two well-advertised public meetings were held to solicit comments (July 28 and September 23, 2009); information about the plan was provided at the Alaska State Parks, Channel Islands State Park project web site and in local media; and public comments were welcomed at the public meetings and via the mail and email. The Advisory Board discussed drafts of the management plan at its meetings on August 31 and November 2, 2009. The Advisory Board unanimously recommended adoption of the final *Channel Islands State Marine Park Management Plan* on November 2, 2009.

Alaska State Parks and the Advisory Board will review the management plan every five years to assess progress in implementation and to determine the need for revisions due to changes in: (1) the level or character of park use or effects of use on park resources and values; (2) state policy, statute or regulations relevant to park management; (3) funding available for management or improvements; and/or (4) other factors. The plan review will consider the results of monitoring of public use and impacts. In addition, the Advisory Board may recommend changes to the management plan for consideration of Alaska State Parks.

## Appendix: Islands in the Channel Islands State Marine Park

The following information was drawn from the proposal to establish the State Marine Park (*Juneau Channel Islands, A State Marine Park Proposal*, 1994), and from information obtained from Advisory Board member and the public.

### AARON ISLAND

**Location:** 17 miles northwest of Juneau in Favorite Channel, 1.2 miles Northwest of Point Stevens.

**Size:** 0.4 miles long

**History:** Orth's *Dictionary of Alaska Place Names* (1967) reports Captain L.A. Beardslee, U.S. Navy (USN), named Aaron Island in 1880 for a "relative of C.J. Vanderbilt, a local miner." DeArmond, however, suggests the island was named for Aaron Cohen, a resident of Sitka and Juneau. DeArmond also believes that Cohen Island and reef were also named for Aaron Cohen.

**Description:** The island consists mainly of cliffs and headlands. There is a small landing beach on the south end, and a rocky island at the northeast end with a small beach. The dominant vegetation is Sitka spruce/Western hemlock forest; the small rocky islet is covered with herbaceous vegetation. Bald eagles, black oystercatchers, and other seabirds use the island. There is a navigation light and reflector on the island. The island is used for picnicking and camping.





## **BATTLESHIP ISLAND**

**Location:** 9.9 miles Northwest of Juneau, 1.6 miles south of Village of Auke Bay

**Size:** 0.1 miles across

**History:** Battleship is a local descriptive name, first reported by DeArmond in 1957.

**Description:** The island is mostly a vegetated rock with steep sides and a fairly flat, forested top. There is one poor landing beach. The island is accessible via sheltered waters and is used for picnicking and camping.

## **BENJAMIN ISLAND**

**Location:** 25 miles northwest of Juneau, on east shore of Favorite Channel

**Size:** 1.5 miles long

**History:** Named by Captain L. A. Beardslee, USN, in 1880.

**Description:** There are three gravel beaches on the south end of Benjamin Island, and a good access beach on the northeast side of the island. The primary vegetation is typical spruce/hemlock forest. The island is an important haul out for Stellar sea lions, and is used by eagles, black oystercatchers and other birds.





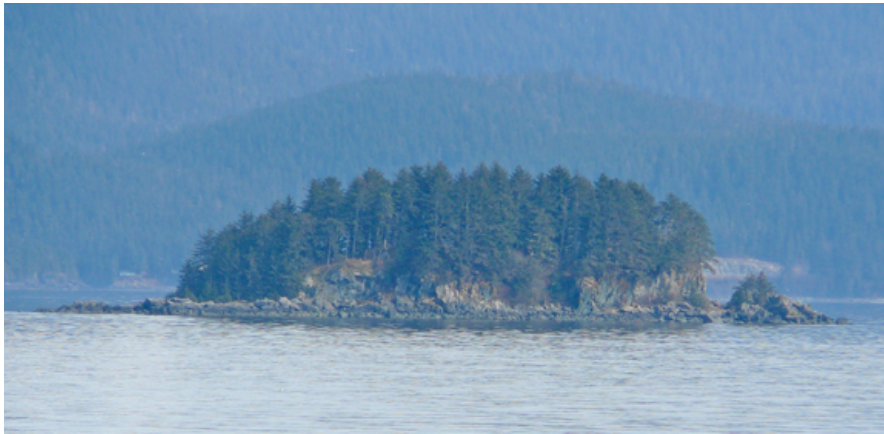
## BIRD ISLAND

**Location:** 20 miles northwest of Juneau, in Favorite Channel, 2.4 miles northwest of Pearl Harbor

**Size:** 0.1 mile across

**History:** Named by Captain L. A. Beardslee, USN, in 1880. In February 1914, the schooner *W.H. Dimond* went aground on the island and was a total loss.

**Description:** Bird Island is mainly a rock about 60 feet high, with stunted trees on top. The south and west sides are steep cliffs; the east side of the island is less steep and access is difficult but possible. Bald eagles, pigeon guillemots, black oystercatchers, and other sea birds use the island.



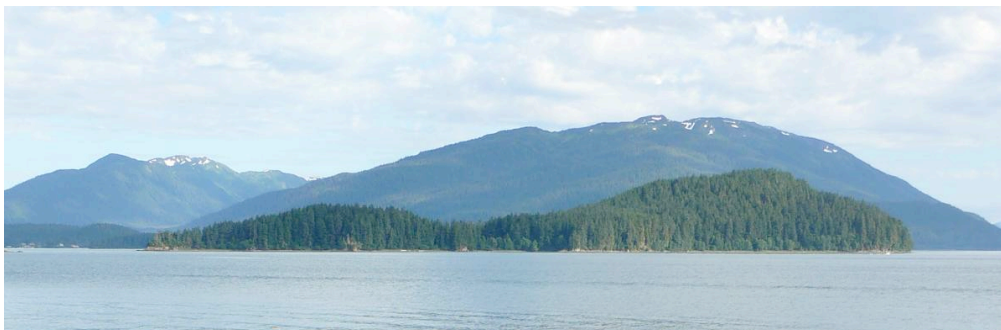
## COGHLAN ISLAND

**Location:** 11 miles northwest of Juneau, in Stevens Passage at the entrance to Auke Bay

**Size:** 1.0 mile long

**History:** Named in 1885 by U.S. Coast & Geodetic Survey (USC&GS) for Commander Joseph Coghlan, who in 1883-84 commanded the *USS Adams* in a survey of this area.

**Description:** A FAA navigation beacon is located on the northern point. There are cliffs on the southwest side; beaches on the northwest and east sides provide good access. The forested island is used for picnicking and camping. The island is used for nesting by pigeon guillemots; black oystercatchers nest on the islets to the north. There is usually a significant deer population.



## **COHEN ISLAND**

**Location:** 16 miles northwest of Juneau, off the east shore of Favorite Channel, 1 mile northwest of Point Stevens

**Size:** 0.1 mile long

**History:** Named by USC&GS 1893 for Aaron Cohen (see Aaron Island)

**Description:** There are cliffs and headlands all around Cohen Island, with no good landing sites. The island is forested and is used by black oystercatchers and other birds.

## **GULL ISLAND**

**Location:** 22 miles northwest of Juneau, in Favorite Channel, 3.5 miles northwest Pearl Harbor

**Size:** 0.4 mile across

**History:** Named by Captain L. A. Beardslee 1880, because “it was covered by sea gulls.”

**Description:** Excellent sandy beach on the south end of the island, used for picnicking and camping. The island is forested and is used by black oystercatchers and other birds.



## INDIAN ISLAND

**Location:** 11 miles northwest of Juneau, across west end of Auke Bay, 0.4 miles south of Fairhaven

**Size:** 0.1 mile across

**History:** Name published in 1962 by U.S. Geological Survey. Site of two shipwrecks, one a wood fish scow abandoned in 1970 on the east shore. Was a site for herring roe harvest and harvest of herring and baitfish.

**Description:** Very accessible in sheltered waters, with two beaches that offer good landings. Forested island; used for picnicking and camping.



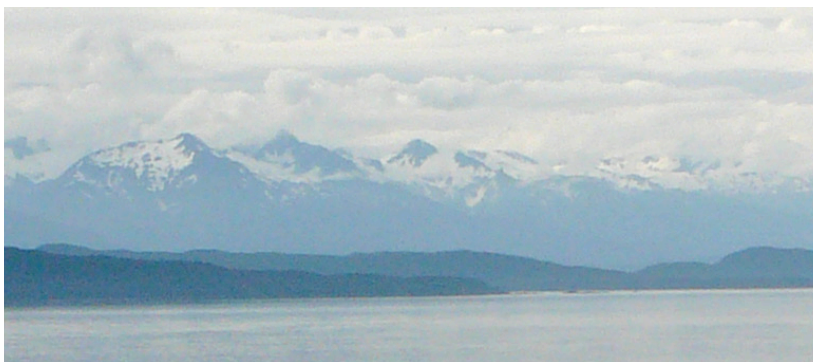
## LINCOLN ISLAND

**Location:** 24 miles northwest of Juneau, just south of the junction with Favorite Channel

**Size:** 4.7 miles long

**History:** Named in 1868 by Commander R. W. Meade, USN, presumably for Abraham Lincoln, 1809-1865, 16<sup>th</sup> President of the United States

**Description:** There are gravel and cobble beaches on the east side, with low (30 ft.) headlands. A sandy beach with good access is located on the south end. The west side has cobble, rocky beaches. Lincoln Island is exposed to the winds and waves of Lynn Canal. The island is forested with open headlands on the east side and low herbaceous growth. There are deer and beaver, bald eagles, willow ptarmigan and other birds. The island is used for picnicking, camping, hunting and other uses.



Lincoln Island behind Shelter Island's north tip

## **NORTH ISLAND**

**Location:** 27 miles northwest of Juneau, off east shore Favorite Channel, 1.2 miles southwest of Yankee Cove

**Size:** 0.4 miles long

**History:** Named in 1880 by Captain L.H. Beardslee, USN, or in 1869 by Commander R.W. Meade, USN.

**Description:** North Island is exposed to northerly winds and seas, but also offers a popular anchorage cove. A sandy beach offers good access on the south end. The island is forested and is used by black oystercatchers and other birds.

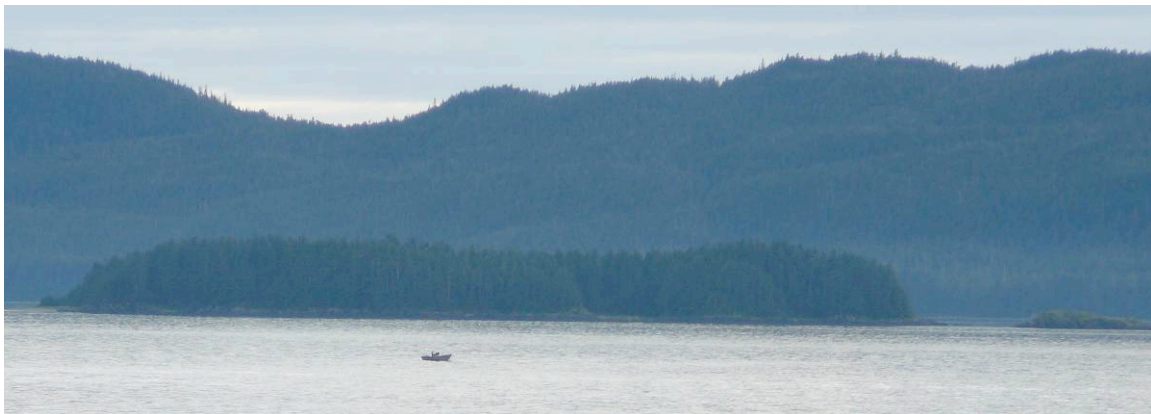
## **PORTLAND ISLAND**

**Location:** 12 miles northwest of Juneau, in Stevens Passage, 2 miles south of Point Louisa

**Size:** 1.1 miles long

**History:** Named in 1880 by Captain L.H. Beardslee, USN.

**Description:** Portland Island is primarily forested, with an extensive non-forested reef on the north end. There is an old campground with picnic tables and outhouse located on the southwest side. There is a sandy beach on the southwest corner, a beach on east side, and a gravel beach near the northern reef. Black oystercatchers nest and stage on the north reef, as do other birds.





## **RALSTON ISLAND**

**Location:** 27 miles northwest of Juneau, .2 miles north of Lincoln Island

**Size:** 1.0 mile long

**History:** Named by Commander R.W. Meade, USN, in 1868, for W.C. Ralston. A World War II CAA (now FAA) radio range station was once located on the northern shore of the island; remnants of the facility are still visible.

**Description:** Ralston Island is forested, with some open meadows. There are headlands on the east side, landing beaches on the south and east side, and extensive reefs on the east side. The island is used for picnicking and camping.



## **SHELTER ISLAND**

**Location:** 12 miles northwest of Juneau, between Favorite and Saginaw Channels, 0.6 mile southeast Lincoln Island

**Size:** 11 miles long

**History:** Named by Commander R.W. Meade, USN, in 1869.

**Description:** Shelter Island is heavily forested with spruce, hemlock, and scattered groves of Alaska yellow cedar. Deer are common on the island and are hunted. There is a state park cabin at Hand Troller Cove (west side), and camping areas at Hand Troller and Halibut Cove (east side). The southern quarter of the island is private property and is not in the Channel Islands State Marine Park. Three private land inholdings are also located within the park, near Hand Troller Cove.

## **SUEDLA ISLAND**

**Location:**

**Size:** 0.3 mile long

**History:** Local name, origin unknown. There are ruins of a cabin and fox pens in the center of the island.

**Description:** Suedla Island is forested, with three small gravel beaches on the east side; other sides are cliffs. There is a sandy beach on the connected islet on the east side. The island is accessible via sheltered waters. The island is used for picnicking and camping.