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Let's Talk National Marine Conservation Areas

General Regulations Summary Paper: Commercial Activities and Special Events

Purpose of summary papers

Parks Canada is developing **general regulations** under the [Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act](#) (the Act). General regulations are nationally consistent and enforceable tools that will apply to all national marine conservation areas established under the Act, from coast to coast to coast and including the Great Lakes. The regulations will include general restrictions and prohibitions applicable to all national marine conservation areas, as well as permit requirements and authorities that can be used to manage activities specific to the context and environment of each site. Please read the [Backgrounder on General Regulations](#) for more information.

A series of summary papers has been prepared to explain the main themes of the regulatory proposal.

5 THEMES

- Research and collections activities
- Protection of natural and cultural resources
- Zoning and area-based management
- Commercial activities and special events
- Visitor experience and public use

Commercial Activities and Special Events

in national marine conservation areas

Commercial activities and special events that take place in national marine conservation areas play a central role in achieving management goals identified in the recently adopted [Policy on the Establishment and Management of National Marine Conservation Areas](#). These goals include contributing to the well-being of Indigenous peoples and coastal communities, facilitating meaningful visitor experiences and enhancing awareness and understanding of national marine conservation areas. For example, commercial tourism operators are strong contributors to local economies and provide unique opportunities for visitors from across Canada and the world to experience and learn about national marine conservation areas. Similarly, special events of various types attract a diverse array of visitors and local residents to national marine conservation areas and generate important sources of revenue for local businesses and communities. As with all aspects of national marine conservation area management, the aim is to maximize the benefits derived from commercial activities and special events, while ensuring they take place in an ecologically sustainable manner that protects natural and cultural heritage.

Why are we regulating

Regulations are a means of ensuring that commercial activities and special events are carried out in a manner that

- Protects marine ecosystems and biodiversity
- Benefits local businesses
- Fosters safe and meaningful visitor experiences
- Reflects the specific objectives of each national marine conservation area, as described in the site management plan

The regulations aim to provide certainty, clarity and consistency to business owners and event organizers with respect to the requirements and restrictions associated with conducting commercial activities and holding special events in national marine conservation areas. They attempt to do so in a manner that minimizes administrative burden and cost for businesses, individuals and Parks Canada.

What we are proposing to regulate

This section describes the components of the regulations that relate specifically to commercial activities and special events. However, it is important to bear in mind that commercial activities and special events are also subject to other components of the regulations that relate to any activity taking place in national marine conservation areas. For more information on these components, please see the other summary papers in this series.

The regulations will directly address commercial activities and special events through the creation of lease, licence and permit requirements. In all cases, these authorization requirements are intended to ensure that the activities and events in question are consistent with national marine conservation area management goals. Leases, licences and permits will be issued with conditions that specify where, when and/or how the commercial activity or special event can take place within the national marine conservation areas. This will contribute to mitigating impacts on natural and cultural heritage, fostering quality visitor experience and balancing the needs and expectations of different national marine conservation area users.

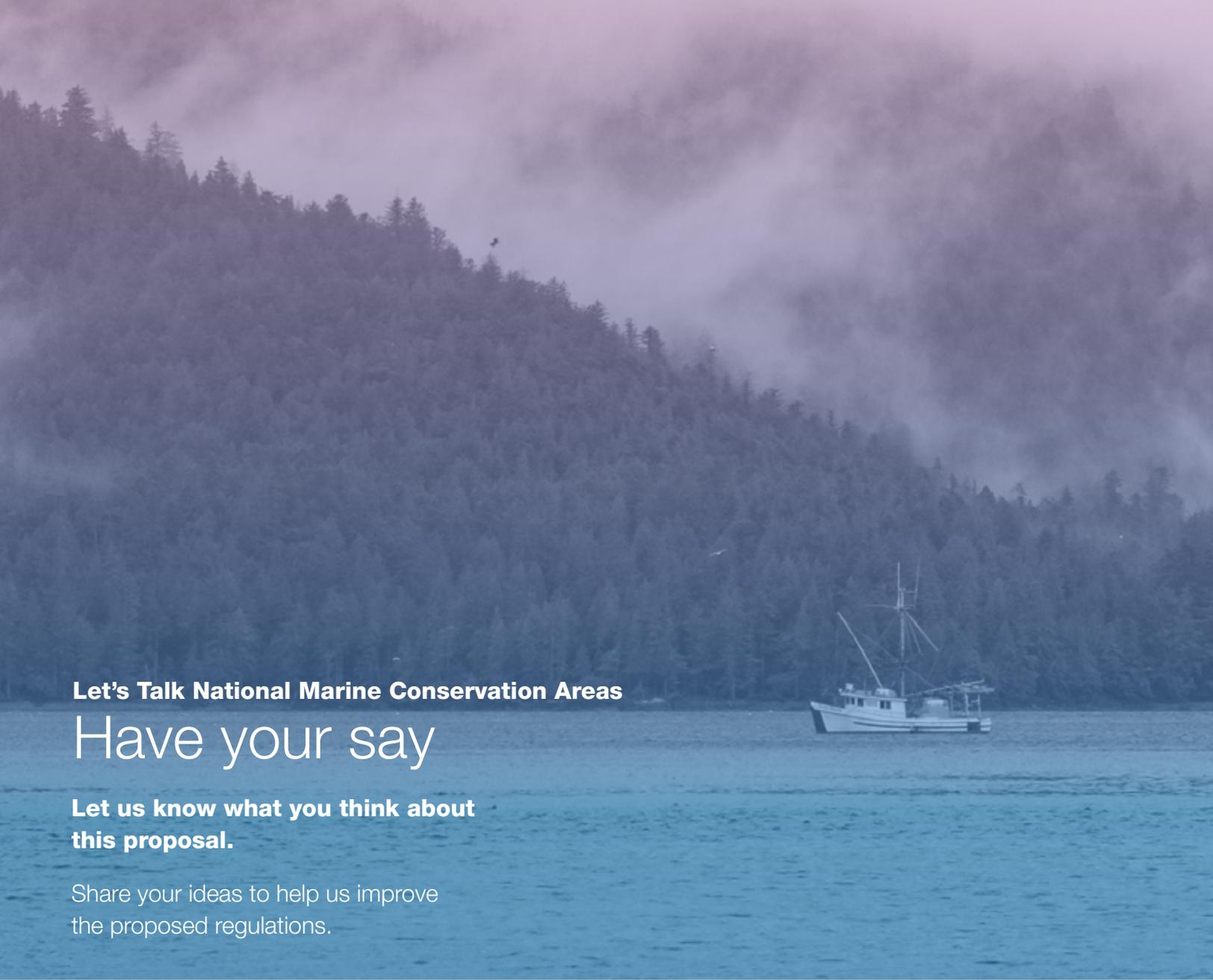
Scope of requirements for commercial activities and special events

- All commercial activities that use or occupy submerged or dry land (e.g., sea or lake bottom; islands) in a national marine conservation area will require a land use authorization (such as a lease or licence of occupation) under the regulations. Examples of commercial activities that involve land use or occupation include marinas, lodges, aquaculture facilities, renewable energy installations and other businesses that rely on permanent or semi-permanent facilities or infrastructure. It also includes commercial harvest of marine plants.
- All commercial activities related to tourism and visitation operating within a national marine conservation area will require a commercial activity permit under the regulations. This requirement applies to businesses such as those offering tours, boat charters and shuttle services, cruises, guided sport fishing, accommodation, food, sale of goods and instructional courses.
- All film and photography activities conducted for profit, gain, fundraising or promotion will require a commercial activity permit under the regulations.
- All special events will require a special event permit under the regulations. This requirement applies to planned or temporary activities conducted for commercial, recreational, entertainment, educational, commemorative, promotional, charitable or private purposes that are not already subject to a commercial activity permit. Examples include regattas, fishing derbies, parades, sports events, demonstrations, weddings and reunions.

For each authorization requirement, the application and review process, as well as the conditions specified in the lease, licence or permit, will be based on nationally consistent standards, Impact Assessment processes, and the management needs and circumstances of each site. As a result, the regulations themselves will only include a general framework for submission and assessment of applications as well as criteria for permit issuance, expiry, revocation, cancellation, and reinstatement.

At this stage, it is not anticipated that commercial activities other than those referred to here will require a lease, licence or permit under the regulations. However, other types of commercial activities taking place within national marine conservation areas will, in most cases, continue to be subject to existing authorizations under other applicable legislation and regulations. A good example is commercial fishing, which will continue to be licensed in accordance with the [Fisheries Act](#) rather than under the national marine conservation area regulations. Note that additional authorization requirements may also apply, as per existing requirements under other relevant legislation and regulations.



A scenic view of a forested hillside overlooking a body of water. A fishing boat is visible on the water. The image has a blue and purple color cast.

Let's Talk National Marine Conservation Areas

Have your say

Let us know what you think about this proposal.

Share your ideas to help us improve the proposed regulations.

We hope this summary paper has you thinking about how these regulations may affect you, and prompts you to provide feedback and comments. Your input is an important part of the process to develop regulations.

We appreciate the feedback we have received so far. Let's keep the dialogue going!

Please watch the www.LetsTalkNMCAs.ca website for updates, and share with friends and colleagues.