# Metlakatla First Nation

COMMUNAL HARVEST PLAN FOR BIVALVES

# Introduction to Metlakatla

- Community 5 km NW of Prince Rupert, BC
- 900 members
- Traditional marine territory encompasses DFO statistical areas 3, 4, 5, and lower Skeena River.
- Bivalves such as Butter Clams and Cockles represent an easy-to-harvest, local source of food during the winter months.
- No commercial or recreational harvest on BC's North Coast since 1960s

# Communal Harvest Plan

- Pioneered by Metlakatla Fisheries Program (MFP), in partnership with:
  - Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO)
  - Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)
  - Environment Canada (EC)

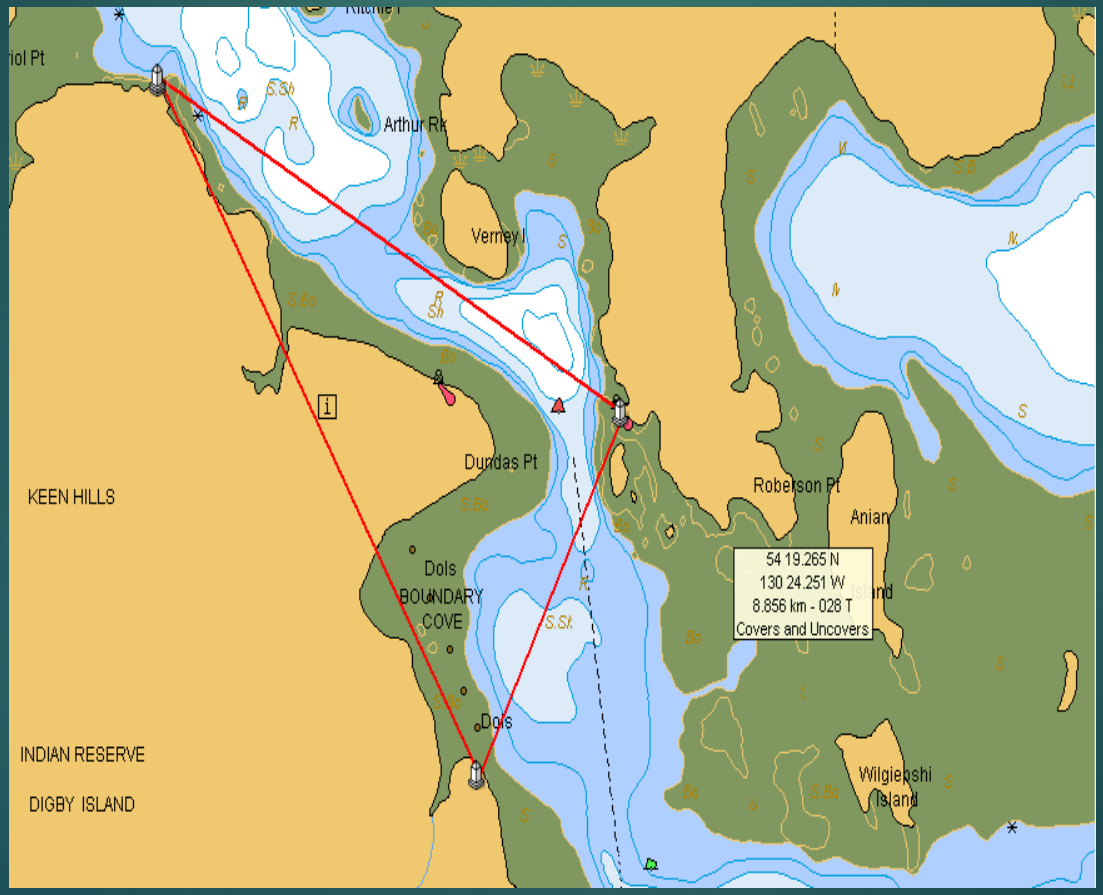

# Roles of Organizations

- MFP: Manages fishery for band members, collects samples of mussels, clams, and cockles and submits them to CFIA for testing, conducts patrols to ensure harvests are happening within tested beaches, posts biotoxin levels for community.
- EC: Conducts water quality testing, ensures fecal coliform and other bacteria levels are low enough for a bivalve harvest
- CFIA: Tests samples submitted by MFP for biotoxins such as PSP, ASP, and DSP
- DFO: Enforcement of conditions of Communal Harvest Plan

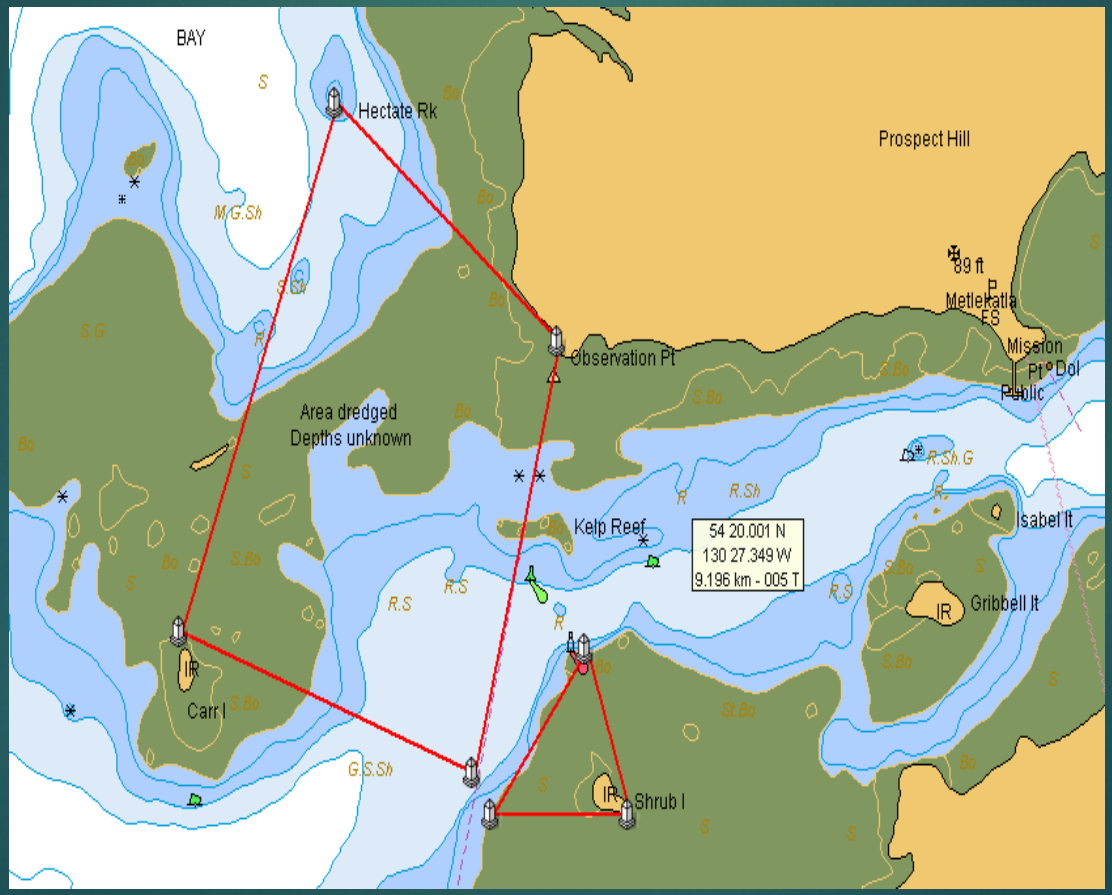
# Seasonal timeline of fishery

- August-September: Mussels are collected and submitted to CFIA.
- September-April: After 3 consecutive mussel samples show low PSP levels, a target species sample (clams and cockles) is submitted to CFIA. If results have low levels of biotoxins, a variation order is requested to open clam fishery until monitoring shows an increase in biotoxins, or April 1st, whichever comes first
- April – September: all bivalve harvest is closed, except for research purposes

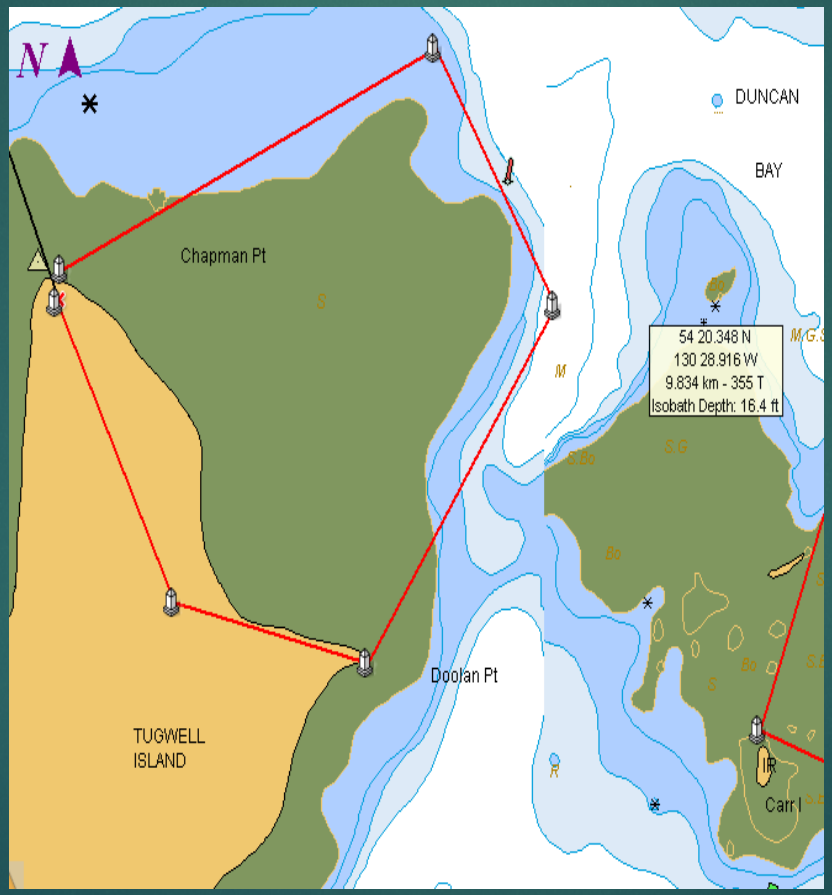
# Areas of Harvest: Dundas Point



# Areas of Harvest: West Observation Point

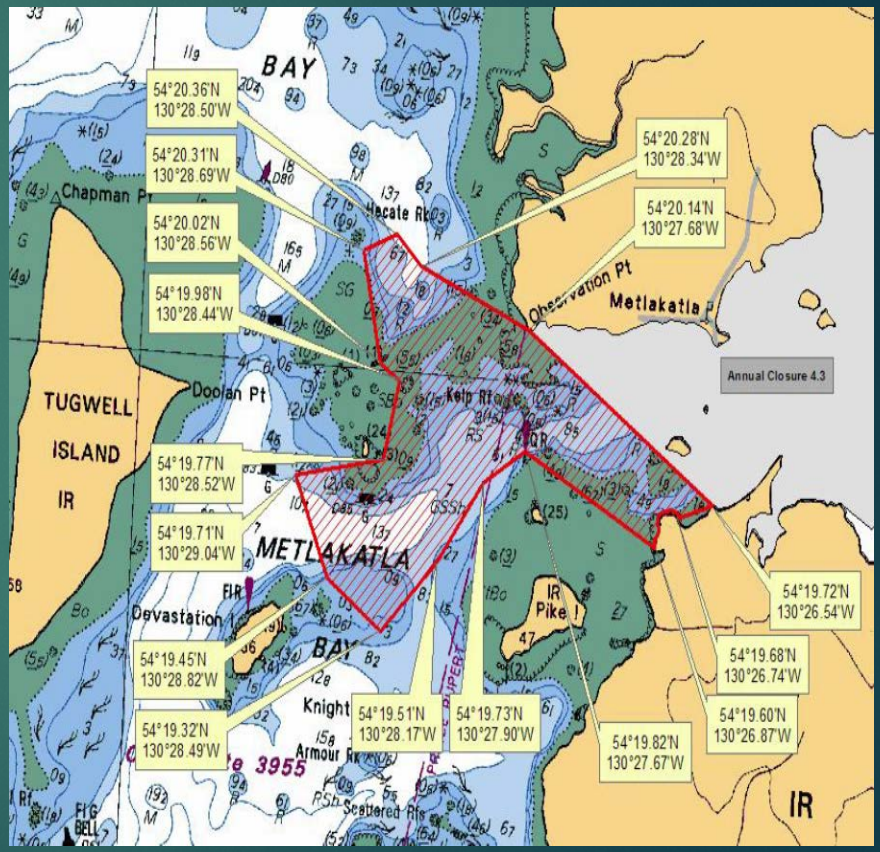


# Area of Harvest: Doolan Point



# Harvest Locations

- There are several additional harvest locations, which are currently closed due to water quality and/or contamination issues.
- Water quality around Metlakatla has improved due to a new wastewater management facility, and additional sites may be open in the future, pending water quality testing



# Postings used for community announcements

**Figure 2.0**

## PUBLIC NOTICE

Mussel and Butter clam samples were collected and tested for Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning (PSP) **Date 20__.**

| | |
|---|---|
| Observation Point | ___ ug / 100 g |
| West Observation Point | ___ ug / 100 g |
| South-East Metlakatla Bay | ___ ug / 100 g |
| Doolan Point | ___ ug / 100 g |
| Dundas Point | ___ ug / 100 g |

***PLEASE NOTE that samples of 80 ug and over are considered TOXIC***

**Majority of toxins remains in the siphon; please ensure the entire siphon is removed prior to preparation for consumption.**

Permit(s) to harvest can be obtained at Metlakatla Band Office (250) 628-3234

# Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning (PSP)

## *What Is Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning?*

**Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning (PSP) is caused by a poison produced by small organisms called *dinoflagellates*.**

Clams, mussels, oysters, snails, scallops, and barnacles ingest these organisms while feeding, and the poison is stored in their bodies. This toxin has been found in this seafood at every month of the year**,** and **butter clams have been known to store the toxin for up to two years.**

**Signs and symptoms of PSP most often occur within 10 to 30 minutes after eating affected seafood**. Problems can include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, and tingling or burning lips, gums, tongue, face, neck, arms, legs, and toes. Later problems may include shortness of breath, dry mouth, a choking feeling, confused or slurred speech, and lack of coordination.

A high percentage of toxins are stored in the siphon of the butter clam. **Siphons must be removed prior to preparing clams for consumption**.

***If you or someone you know experiences any of these symptoms related to PSP poisoning do not hesitate to call your local emergency centre and transport person immediately.***

**METLAKATLA HEALTH STATION: 628-3234 Ext.29**

**PRINCE RUPERT HOSPITAL: 624-2171 or 911**

# Catch Monitoring

- Amount of bivalve harvest is recorded monthly by MFP technicians
- Data collected by on-grounds patrol, phone and in-person interviews, catch calendars, and food fish permit

**Dundas Point**

| Month | Butter Clam (lbs.) | Cockle (lbs.) |
|---|---|---|
| November 2015 | 2,640 | 540 |
| December 2015 | 660 | 180 |
| January 2016 | 2,780 | 720 |
| February 2016 | 30 | 60 |
| March 2016 | 60 | 0 |
| TOTALS | 6,170 | 1,500 |

# Research

- Stock assessment surveys planned for Metlakatla's clam beaches
- Archaeology: Clam garden in process of rehabilitation and assessment

# 2016 Clam Garden Project at Dundas Point