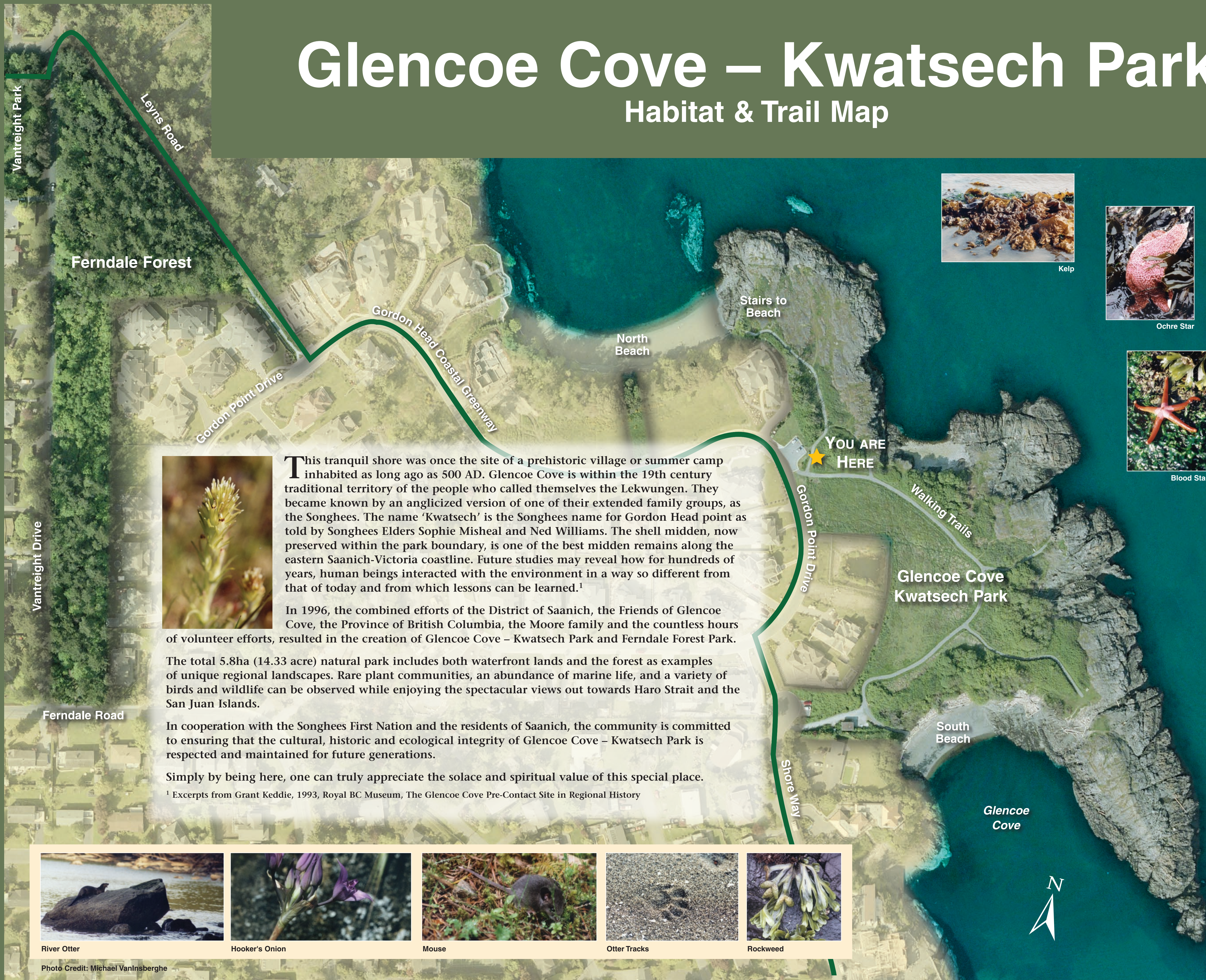


# Glencoe Cove – Kwatsech Park

## Habitat & Trail Map



This tranquil shore was once the site of a prehistoric village or summer camp inhabited as long ago as 500 AD. Glencoe Cove is within the 19th century traditional territory of the people who called themselves the Lekwungen. They became known by an anglicized version of one of their extended family groups, as the Songhees. The name 'Kwatsech' is the Songhees name for Gordon Head point as told by Songhees Elders Sophie Misheal and Ned Williams. The shell midden, now preserved within the park boundary, is one of the best midden remains along the eastern Saanich-Victoria coastline. Future studies may reveal how for hundreds of years, human beings interacted with the environment in a way so different from that of today and from which lessons can be learned.<sup>1</sup>

In 1996, the combined efforts of the District of Saanich, the Friends of Glencoe Cove, the Province of British Columbia, the Moore family and the countless hours of volunteer efforts, resulted in the creation of Glencoe Cove – Kwatsech Park and Ferndale Forest Park.

The total 5.8ha (14.33 acre) natural park includes both waterfront lands and the forest as examples of unique regional landscapes. Rare plant communities, an abundance of marine life, and a variety of birds and wildlife can be observed while enjoying the spectacular views out towards Haro Strait and the San Juan Islands.

In cooperation with the Songhees First Nation and the residents of Saanich, the community is committed to ensuring that the cultural, historic and ecological integrity of Glencoe Cove – Kwatsech Park is respected and maintained for future generations.

Simply by being here, one can truly appreciate the solace and spiritual value of this special place.

<sup>1</sup> Excerpts from Grant Keddie, 1993, Royal BC Museum, The Glencoe Cove Pre-Contact Site in Regional History



River Otter



Hooker's Onion



Mouse



Otter Tracks



Rockweed

Photo Credit: Michael VanInsberghe



Kelp



Ochre Star



Blood Star

### HABITAT ZONES IN THE PARK



**1 Environmentally Sensitive Zone.** This is the rocky bedrock shore area along the oceanfront just beyond the limits of the shoreline shrubs. The herb/lichen/moss plant communities thrive on winter rains and dry out completely in the hot summer sun. In bedrock pockets where a thin layer of soil has developed, the lichens are replaced by forbs and mosses. Deeper pockets support grass-dominated communities. For small animals such as mice and for some waterfowl, these areas provide limited seasonal forage. The fragility of this ecosystem makes it one of the most threatened plant communities within the park. It includes species such as wild asparagus, Macoun's meadowfoam, Hooker's onion and Owl-clover.

**2 Forest Preserve Zone.** This zone, bordered by Vantreight Drive and continuing along the north slope, is primarily a Douglas fir, arbutus, and oceanspray community growing on very dry soils. It was identified in the Environmental Social Review (ESR) as an edaphic climax forest with an open canopy and well developed understorey. An abundance of English ivy, some English holly and blackberry are threatening the trees, groundcovers and shrubs. This urban forest provides a rich habitat for deer and other small animals, small birds, and larger birds of prey on the peripheral edge trees.

**3 North Beach Zone.** This is the gravel beach area on the forested north slope. Steep slopes surround the beach, which although protected from the open waters is still subject to high tides and wave action. Some undercutting of the slope is evident along the inside edge but otherwise rocky shores remain. From this zone one can see the covenant-protected cormorant rookery to the west end of the beach.

**4 South Beach Zone.** Opposite North Beach, across the field, lies South Beach. Here, a combination of rocks and logs are preventing further erosion. The upper slopes of this beach hold the middens of the First Nations people in earlier times. During high tides this zone has very limited beach access. Vegetation is dominated by Scouler's willow, Himalayan blackberry and Nootka rose in a moderately dry soil. Small fauna such as rabbits, mice and birds inhabit this zone. The shrub thickets provide nesting, forage and security for numerous songbirds such as the red-winged blackbird.

**5 Old Field Zone.** This meadow area is a remnant of a formerly large field of cultivated grasses. These include colonial bentgrass, wheatgrass, hairgrass, prairie junegrass, and orchardgrass among others. Some sites also have native herbaceous perennials. Numerous species of birds such as red-winged blackbirds (Ref. David Pearce) are found among the rose and blackberry bushes. This zone is relatively flat but the water table appears near the surface for most months of the year and provides habitat for plants and small animals.

**6 Mixed Vegetative Zone.** A mixed border of trees and shrubs divides the Old Field Zone from the Environmentally Sensitive Zone. Vegetation is predominantly Scouler's willow, Nootka rose, snowberry, Garry oak and oceanspray along with some camas, chocolate lily and Colombian lily. Invasive species such as English ivy, Scotch broom, English holly, Himalayan blackberry and introduced azalea are encroaching into this zone. The lateral subsurface seepage from the upper slopes results in a moist soil regime. Garry oak are found in the north end of this zone. Songbird nests have also been observed.

**7 Ocean Zone.** The intertidal zone is an important habitat for marine life, including seals, otters, cormorants, herons, ducks, barnacles, mussels, sea stars, and floating marine plants. The rocky shoreline down to the Ocean Zone is steep and prevents easy human contact with water. This littoral zone is characterized by a variety of algae, barnacles, limpets, crabs and snails. Tides – rising and falling; waves – crashing and rolling; winds – howling and blowing; are all part of the Ocean Zone.