

Crown Land Application Management Plan

To complete this plan:

1. Review the [application checklist](#) and [guidance document](#)
2. Describe your project in detail in the form below (you may be required to use a qualified professional to complete the plan)
3. Submit your plan with your application through [Virtual FrontCounter BC](#).

Please note:

- If we need more information, we will contact you. Applications not meeting application requirements within the requested timeframes may be rejected.

1.0 Background

The Application for Crown land tenure requires general information about your proposed activity.

1.1 Project Overview

Describe the intended use for which authorization is requested, including construction and/or phase development details, and decommissioning information (if applicable). Provide general information on activity purpose, location, size, timeframe, and main features. Be sure to include any proposed mitigative measures for impacts.

Application Summary:

BC Ferries operates a ferry service between Heriot Bay (Quadra Island) and Whaletown (Cortes Island). By way of this application, BC Ferries is making a request for a temporary Licence of Occupation for the existing Gorge Harbour barge grid facility (the Barge Facility) on Cortes Island for approximately 8-10 weeks (January - March 2026). The Barge Facility will be used to provide temporary tug and barge (or landing craft) service for Cortes Island when BC Ferries temporarily closes the Whaletown ferry terminal during construction in early 2026.

Application Details:

Cortes Island is home to about 1,000 full-time residents, including 75 members of the Klahoose First Nation, and has several small villages including Whaletown, Manson's Landing, Cortes Bay and Squirrel Cove.

The ferry serves a mixture of residents, tourists, and commercial customers. A variety of commercial vehicles travel to Cortes Island to deliver fresh and frozen foods to the shops, and fuel (diesel, heating oil and propane) to businesses and homes. Utilities trucks, for waste management (garbage/recycling) and hydro, also travel to the island.

Both the Heriot Bay and Whaletown ferry berths are scheduled for replacement in 2025/26. The work is required to replace marine infrastructure that is nearing the end of its service life and to accommodate the deployment of a new Island Class vessel. We expect construction may occur from fall 2025 through early summer 2026.

During construction, it will be necessary to close both ferry berths for approximately 8-10 weeks (January-March 2026) and BC Ferries will establish a temporary alternate service with a tug and barge (or barge

landing craft), with substitute shore facilities. The Barge Facility, which is the subject of this FrontCounter BC Application, is the best alternate shore facility on Cortes Island. Through this Application, BC Ferries requests a temporary Licence of Occupation for the foreshore and water lot areas at the Barge Facility.

During the term of the temporary Licence (i.e., the berth closure period), BC Ferries anticipates providing up to two tug/barge round trips per day. This temporary service will ensure that essential Cortes Island community needs (for fuel, food, deliveries, utilities repairs, etc.) can be met. The types of vehicles transported are expected to be mostly commercial trucks, with some pickup trucks and cars. Trucks will be driven off the barge, through the uplands areas on the short access road, up to Whaletown Road.

As understood, Island Timberlands (Mosaic) has an existing Licence of Occupation with the Province for the foreshore and water lot areas, which allows them to utilize these areas for log handling and barging operations. Island Timberlands owns the upland areas, from the foreshore up to Whaletown Road.

The Island Timberlands Licence does not include the use proposed by BC Ferries, and BC Ferries was advised by the Province to apply for a separate Licence, which would cover the proposed temporary commercial barge service. BC Ferries recognizes that Island Timberlands is the prior rights holder, and Island Timberlands has been made aware of this application. BC Ferries is actively working with Island Timberlands to establish an agreement for use of the upland areas so that trucks disembarking from the barge are able to get to Whaletown Road.

BC Ferries does not anticipate any impacts as the Barge Facility is already used for barging operations. The temporary service will utilize existing improvements, already put in place by Island Timberlands. BC Ferries does not anticipate making improvements to the foreshore or marine infrastructure, since they are already used for barging operations. The tug/barge operator will be required to have environmental management plans and procedures in place to minimize operational risks. The plans and procedures will adhere to Island Timberland's environmental policies.

Foot passengers will not be transported through this site; they are to be transported through a different location via water taxi.

While BC Ferries is planning for 8-10 weeks of temporary use in early 2026, we would like to have some flexibility in the License term to allow for timing shifts and/or duration increases due to unexpected schedule changes.

1.2 Investigative Work

If any preliminary investigative work has been carried out, with or without an investigative authorization, provide details on work completed, incomplete, or on-going. Be sure to describe the activity, its status, and any comments/milestones.

Activity	Brief Description	Complete/ Incomplete/ Ongoing	Comments
Condition Surveys	Condition of the barge ramp improvements to be assessed before and after BC Ferries' Licence term and tug/barge use.	Incomplete	The surveys will ensure that any pre-existing conditions are noted, and any conditions developed during BC Ferries' Licence term (and tug/barge use) are noted.

1.3 Engagement with First Nations

- Describe your engagement with First Nation communities or groups regarding your proposed activities.
- Include the name of the First Nation(s) and its representative(s)
- Detail your discussion of potential adverse effects from the proposed activity and any discussed mitigation measures.
- Provide information on First Nations agreements undertaken.

The Barge Facility is located at Cortes Island, which is the traditional territory of the Klahoose First Nation and the Homalco First Nation. There is a Klahoose community, with approximately 75 residents, on Cortes Island.

BC Ferries has engaged with both Nations about the Whaletown ferry berth replacement project. The Klahoose First Nation Chief, Steven Brown, first mentioned the Barge Facility to BC Ferries, as a potential alternate shore facility location, during a meeting in 2023.

BC Ferries has reached out to both Klahoose and Homalco regarding the temporary alternate service and use of the Barge Facility. Klahoose First Nation has indicated they will support the referrals. Engagement logs are attached.

BC Ferries will continue to update both Nations and respond to any questions or comments that they have. Since the purpose of the temporary service, and use of the Barge Facility, will be to support the essential needs of Cortes Island residents, including the Klahoose community, BC Ferries does not anticipate any objections to use of the Barge Facility.

Adverse effects from the proposed activity are not anticipated. The Barge Facility is already used for barging operations. The type of materials/cargo will be different – with trucks being transported instead of forestry-related barge loading and unloading (log handling). The service will be temporary. The barge operator will be required to have environmental management plans and procedures in place.

2.0 Location

A [General Location Map](#) and a Detailed Site Plan are required to be uploaded with the application.

2.1 Description

Provide a general description of the location of the project. Be sure to note:

- Traffic patterns and volume
- Parking
- Any other significant details related to your activity

The Barge Facility is located in Gorge Harbour, on the west side of Cortes Island. The Barge Facility is comprised of approximately 200m of foreshore, plus a water lot area approximately 22,000m² in size. There are no operational or traffic impacts anticipated by use of the Barge Facility.

There is zero net increase to traffic since the commercial trucks would already be travelling to Cortes Island.

2.2 Location Justification

Tell us why you need this type of activity at this location. For example, is the activity close to a highway for easy truck access?

The Barge Facility is the best suited site on Cortes Island, since it is already used for barging operations and there are suitable improvements already in place. It also offers additional operational benefits, since there are suitable upland facilities for trucks to queue, which means traffic will not backup onto Whaletown Road. Being on the west side of Cortes Island, the Barge Facility is operationally efficient as it is the closest facility to the temporary alternate Quadra Island shore facility, which will be on the east side of Quadra Island.

2.3 Seasonal Expectations of Proposed Use

Let us know what times of the year you're proposing to use the land. Ensure you reference appropriate [timing windows](#) for projects in or around water.

Construction/ Operations	Brief Description	Season/ Timing	Comments
January – March 2026	Tug/barge service for commercial vehicles, for 1-2 round trips per day	Winter 2026	n/a

2.4 Historical Use

Has the land, or portions of the land been previously developed? Provide as much detail as you can, adding this detail to the maps if necessary.

Island Timberlands owns the upland areas, and they have a Licence with the Province for the foreshore and water lot areas. Island Timberlands has been using the Barge Facility for log handling/barging operations and they have made site improvements in the past in support of this use.

3.0 Infrastructure and Improvements

3.1 Facilities and Infrastructure

Detail any new and existing facilities, infrastructure, or processes proposed and any ancillary uses. Provide details of planned construction methods, materials, and construction scheduling. Identify mitigation for potential issues. Outline your plan for long term maintenance of improvements, decommissioning, and/or required remediation.

Facility/Infrastructure/ Process	Construction Methods/Materials	Construction Schedule	Long Term Planning
Marine Structures / Foreshore	Potential minor repairs to ensure existing improvements are safe/suited for use. Though these are expected to be minimal since the Barge Facility is already used for barging services.	Fall 2025	Decommissioning not required as Island Timberlands will continue to use the Barge Facility under their existing Licence.

3.2 Infrastructure/Access

Identify existing and proposed roads used to access the site.

Include information about:

- Types of roads and vehicles expected to use them
- Anticipated traffic volumes during construction and operation
- The use of roads by season
- Connections that:
 - Need either a Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure [permit for connection](#) or
 - [Use of a Forest Service Road](#).
- Any road use agreements

Roadway/ Proposed Connection	Existing Road Classification	Road Permittee Information and Road Use Agreements	Traffic Volume for Construction and Operational Phases	Mitigation of Traffic Effects
Private access road through uplands areas to Whaletown Road		Private access road is owned by Island Timberlands; permission being negotiated with Island Timberlands	Operational: 10 – 20 commercial trucks daily	No net increase to island/area traffic since the commercial vehicles would normally travel to Cortes Island

3.3 Utility Requirements and Sources

Describe utility requirements and potential sources, include agreements in place or underway allowing access to utilities. Utilities include power generation, electrical or gas transmission or distribution lines, and telecommunications.

N/A

3.4 Water Supply

Identify water requirements for construction and operation phases.

Construction/ Operation Phase	Water Source(s) (e.g. Surface Water, Ground Water, etc.)	Source/Location	Infrastructure Description	Agreements*
N/A	Not required			

*Agreements outside of [Water Sustainability Act Authorizations](#), such as Municipal water supply.

3.5 Waste Collection Treatment and Disposal

Identify any waste disposal (note septic system required), sewage, sanitation facilities, and refuse disposal proposed. Include agreements in place or underway such as regional health board sewage disposal permits.

Construction/ Operation Phase	Discharge distance to closest body of water (lake, well, etc.)	Volume of daily discharge	Infrastructure description	Agreements
N/A – not required. Waste will not be stored onsite. Temporary self-contained porta-potties will be arranged and located on the upland private property.				

3.6 FireSmart

Identify any proposed actions to incorporate [FireSmart](#) best practices in the tenure area.

N/A – temporary service will be during Winter, when fire risk is low.

4.0 Environmental

Describe significant impacts and proposed mitigation for each of the following:

4.1 Land Impacts

4.1.1 Vegetation Removal

Is any timber removal required? To cut timber on Crown land once your tenure has been issued, you may require an [Occupant Licence to Cut](#).

No

Are any areas of vegetation to be cleared, outside of timber removal?

No

4.1.2 Soil Disturbance

Will there be any areas of soil disturbance, including grubbing, excavation, contouring, and levelling?

No

Is the area to be excavated a [brownfield](#) site or have the potential to be [contaminated](#)?

No

Any ground-disturbing activities have the potential to impact [archaeological](#), paleontological [fossils](#), or historical artifacts. Have you considered these [potential impacts](#) or taken any action to identify them? You may be required to hire a professional to assist with your investigations.

No ground-disturbing activities or impacts.

4.1.3 Riparian Encroachment

Will any works be completed within or adjacent to the riparian zone of any water body? The [Riparian Areas Protection Regulation](#) may affect your development if it's within 30 metres of a watercourse and you intend to:

- Disturb soil
- Remove plants
- Construct or install works for flood protection
- Develop drainage systems or service sewer or water systems

N/A

4.1.4 Pesticides and Herbicides

Will [pesticides, fertilizers, or herbicides](#) be used during construction, operations, or maintenance?

N/A

4.1.5 Visual Impacts

What impacts will your activity have on [visual quality objectives](#). Could it impact sight lines from surrounding areas likely to be used for scenic viewing?

N/A

4.2 Atmospheric Impact

4.2.1 Sound, Odour, Gas, or Fuel Emissions

Will your activity cause any of the following to disturb wildlife or nearby residents?

- Sound?
- Odour?
- Gas?
- Fuel Emissions?

Sound – Noise created by commercial trucks disembarking from the barge will be of short duration (15-20 minutes). This will happen two – four times per day, depending on the number of round trips (one-two). There are no neighbours close to the Barge Facility. Traffic noise on Whaletown Road, at the access point, will be greater, but there are no residents immediately nearby.

Fuel Emissions – There will be fuel emissions from the tug/barge and trucks. However, overall it is expected there will be a net reduction in truck fuel emissions as compared to the usual BC Ferries ferry service since fewer trucks are expected to travel to Cortes Island during the berth closures.

4.3 Hydrology

4.3.1 Drainage Effects

Will the project result in changes to land drainage?

No

4.3.2 Flood Potential

Will the project result in a potential for flooding?

No

4.4 Fish and Wildlife Habitat

4.4.1 Disturbance to Fish/Wildlife and Fish/Wildlife Habitat

What effect will your activity (construction or operations phase) have on [wildlife or wildlife habitat](#)?

Minimal, if any, impacts are anticipated. No construction planned; any repairs or improvements should be considered general maintenance to the terminals infrastructure. During operations, vehicles will stay on existing roadways. There will be increased marine use and increased noise from trucks.

Will the activity (construction or operations phase) occur in and around [streams, lakes, estuarine, or marine environments](#)?

Yes – at Gorge Harbour.

Is the construction or operation of your activity likely to increase erosion or sedimentation?

No

Will the construction or operation of your activity require [water diversion](#)?

No

Will the activity threaten or endanger [species at risk](#) in the area?

No. Island Timberlands has informed BC Ferries that there is no critical habitat, and no species at risk noted. BC Ferries will note and inform Island Timberlands of any species at risk observed.

5.0 Socio-Community

Describe significant impacts and proposed mitigation for each of the following:

5.1 Land Use

Describe the current community setting or any locally known areas in use on, or near, the activity area.

Cortes Island is home to about 1,000 full-time residents, including 75 members of the Klahoose First Nation. The island is mostly rural, and there are several small villages including Whaletown, Manson's Landing, Cortes Bay and Squirrel Cove.

There are no residential neighbours immediately close-by to the Barge Facility. Looking at online maps, it appears that the closest residential buildings are approximately 450m away. The area around the Barge Facility (and between any neighbours) is heavily forested and this would provide natural sound dampening/mitigation.

The foreshore area is zoned Marine Industrial One (MI-1), with permitted uses including: industrial, public, or private moorage; and log dumping, booming, and storage. The uplands are zoned Forestry Two (F-2), and the permitted principle uses include: forestry/silviculture, log handling and storage, and residential.

Excerpts from the Cortes Island zoning bylaws are attached.

5.1.1 Land Management Plans and Regional Growth Strategies

Are there any plans, strategies, or use restrictions that could limit or prevent your activity? They include:

- [Land and resource management plans](#)
- Coastal plans
- Provincial or regional growth strategies
- [Local government plans](#) with zoning, or management policies or use restrictions in place that could limit or preclude your proposed use of the land?

Refer to the [Union of BC Municipalities](#), and check the websites of the municipality, regional district, or other organization with jurisdiction that includes your activity area.

Presently, the foreshore and uplands zoning enable BC Ferries' intended use. As confirmed by the Strathcona Regional District (SRD), ferry services on Cortes Island are considered a Utility Use, and as such are permitted in all foreshore and upland zones. The Utility Use definition in the zoning bylaws includes ferry services where such use is established by government, a Crown corporation, or an individual or company regulated by a government commission.

5.2 Socio-Community Conditions

5.2.1 Adjacent Users or Communities

Is the project likely to restrict public access, or the ability of adjacent landowners or tenure holders to access their property or tenures?

No restrictions to public access or adjacent landowners. BC Ferries' use of the facility may impact Island Timberland's access/use of the facility temporarily, and BC Ferries and Island Timberlands are actively working on an agreement to manage joint use while BC Ferries' Licence is active.

5.2.2 Public Access

Will the project result in changes to public access?

No

5.2.3 Existing Services

Describe any increased demand on fire protection, health facilities, or emergency services. Include proposed management or mitigation measures.

N/A

END OF FORM