

Zoning Plan

Parks Canada's national park zoning system is an integrated approach to the classification of land and water areas in a national park and designates where particular activities can occur on land or water, based on the ability to support those uses. The zoning system has five categories:

- Zone I - Special Preservation;
- Zone II - Wilderness;
- Zone III – Natural Environment;
- Zone IV - Outdoor Recreation; and
- Zone V - Park Services.

This management plan establishes the first zoning plan for Sable Island National Park Reserve, including Zone I, II, III and IV areas. There are no Zone V areas proposed as this designation is not applicable in the Sable Island National Park Reserve context. The boundaries of the zones are based on the most current geospatial data about Sable Island's natural and cultural resources that are available. The island's geomorphology is constantly changing, therefore the geospatial locations presented in maps 2-5 are subject to change.

Zone I – Special Preservation

This zone describes areas within a national park that require special preservation because they contain unique, threatened, or endangered natural or cultural features. Preservation is the key consideration. Motorized access is not permitted. Where an area is too fragile to allow public access, every effort will be made to provide park visitors with off-site programs and exhibits interpreting the area's special characteristics.

The following areas are identified as Zone I and together account for 0.7 % of the park reserve:

- **Roseate Tern Critical Habitat at East Light:**
In order to protect critical habitat for endangered Roseate Terns, this Zone I designation will be in effect from the time Roseate Terns arrive to nest until they leave (May 1 to August 31). These dates may change if ongoing monitoring indicates that the arrival/departure dates for terns is changing. Outside of the nesting period, this area will be Zone II.
- **Freshwater Ponds:**
There are several freshwater ponds on Sable Island that are essential to maintaining the island's current biodiversity. The number and total surface area of freshwater ponds have decreased through time. All freshwater pond ecosystems including a 5 metre buffer around the pond edge are designated Zone I areas.

Zone II – Wilderness

This category contains extensive areas that are good representations of a natural region and are conserved in a wilderness state. The perpetuation of ecosystems with minimal human interference is the key consideration. Zone II areas offer opportunities for visitors to experience firsthand the park's ecosystems and require few, if any, services and facilities. In much of Zone II (70 % of park reserve area), visitors have the opportunity to experience remoteness and solitude. Motorized access is not permitted except strictly controlled motorized access for research, park operations and outreach and education activities relating to the park that are authorized by Parks Canada and are consistent with Parks Canada policy and regulations.

In keeping with Parks Canada policy, the vast majority of Sable Island National Park Reserve is Zone II. This includes all vegetated areas of the island, embryo dunes on South beach, non-vegetated areas within

the interior of the island (except zone III crossings), the Western sand spit bounded by Autumn's Crossing, and the Eastern sand spit bounded by East Crossing.

Zone III – Natural Environment

Areas that are managed as natural environments provide opportunities for visitors to experience a park's natural and cultural heritage values through outdoor recreation activities, requiring minimal services or facilities of a rustic nature. While motorized access may be allowed, it will be carefully controlled.

Operational activities on Sable Island National Park Reserve require motorized vehicle use. This use will be permitted in Zone III (29% of the park reserve areas) including: perimeter beach areas (defined as areas between the scarp of vegetated dunes and ocean), the West Light fenced area which contains infrastructure and requires regular access by motorized vehicle, and five designated island crossings. Crossings are existing sand corridors that are approximately 5 metres wide and permit travel between the North and South sides of the island.

Controlled access by fixed-wing aircraft, helicopter and boat will be permitted in Zone III.

Zone IV – Outdoor Recreation

Outdoor recreation areas are capable of accommodating a broad range of opportunities for understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the park's heritage values and related essential services and facilities (e.g., park operation and administrative functions) in ways that impact the ecological integrity of the park to the smallest extent possible. Access by motorized vehicles is allowed.

Sable Island National Park Reserve's operational and administrative functions are centralized within Main Station, which has been assigned Zone IV (0.3% area of park reserve). This area includes operational infrastructure contained within a fenced area, a helipad, and a surrounding heath buffer area. The helipad is not in use from May to August to protect the tern colony in the immediate area.

Zone V – Park Services

Zone V is applied to major park operation and administrative functions. There are no Zone V areas included on Sable Island National Park Reserve.

Environmentally Sensitive Sites / Culturally Sensitive Sites

Environmentally Sensitive Sites (ESS) and Culturally Sensitive Sites (CSS) are designated on the zoning maps where an area is either too small to be designated as a discrete Zone I or because a site may be variable from one year to the next. Recognition as an ESS or CSS ensures that the values for which a site has been designated are protected and respected in any park management decisions or actions. There is one recognized ESS and five recognized CSSs at Sable Island National Park Reserve:

Ecologically Sensitive Sites

ESS1 Tern Colony

There has been a tern colony at this location since at least 1998, although the colony increased dramatically in size starting in 2006 and it is now one of two main colonies on the island (the other colony is in a Zone I special preservation area). In 2016, 1873 pairs of terns nested here, comprised of 95% common terns, and 5% Arctic terns.

Culturally Sensitive Sites

CSS1 Number 3 Lifesaving Station

This area includes significant architectural and artifact evidence of the exposed and below grade buildings associated with the Number 3 lifesaving station. In addition, there are also substantial

numbers of pre-lifesaving (1801) artifacts located that are clear evidence of an earlier 18th century occupation.

CSS2 East Lighthouse and Life Saving Station

In addition to the well-defined archaeological remains of the original East Light House, the area includes a minimum of 22 additional unique archaeological sites associated with remnant structural and artifact evidence of both the lighthouse and lifesaving operation at East Light.

CSS3 Old Main Station

While only six archaeological sites have been identified on the surface of “Old Main Station,” as the most intensively occupied area of Sable Island during the 19th and 20th centuries, there are substantial below grade archaeological resources associated with the numerous buildings and occupation zones. This is confirmed by a preliminary ground penetrating radar assessment in 2018.

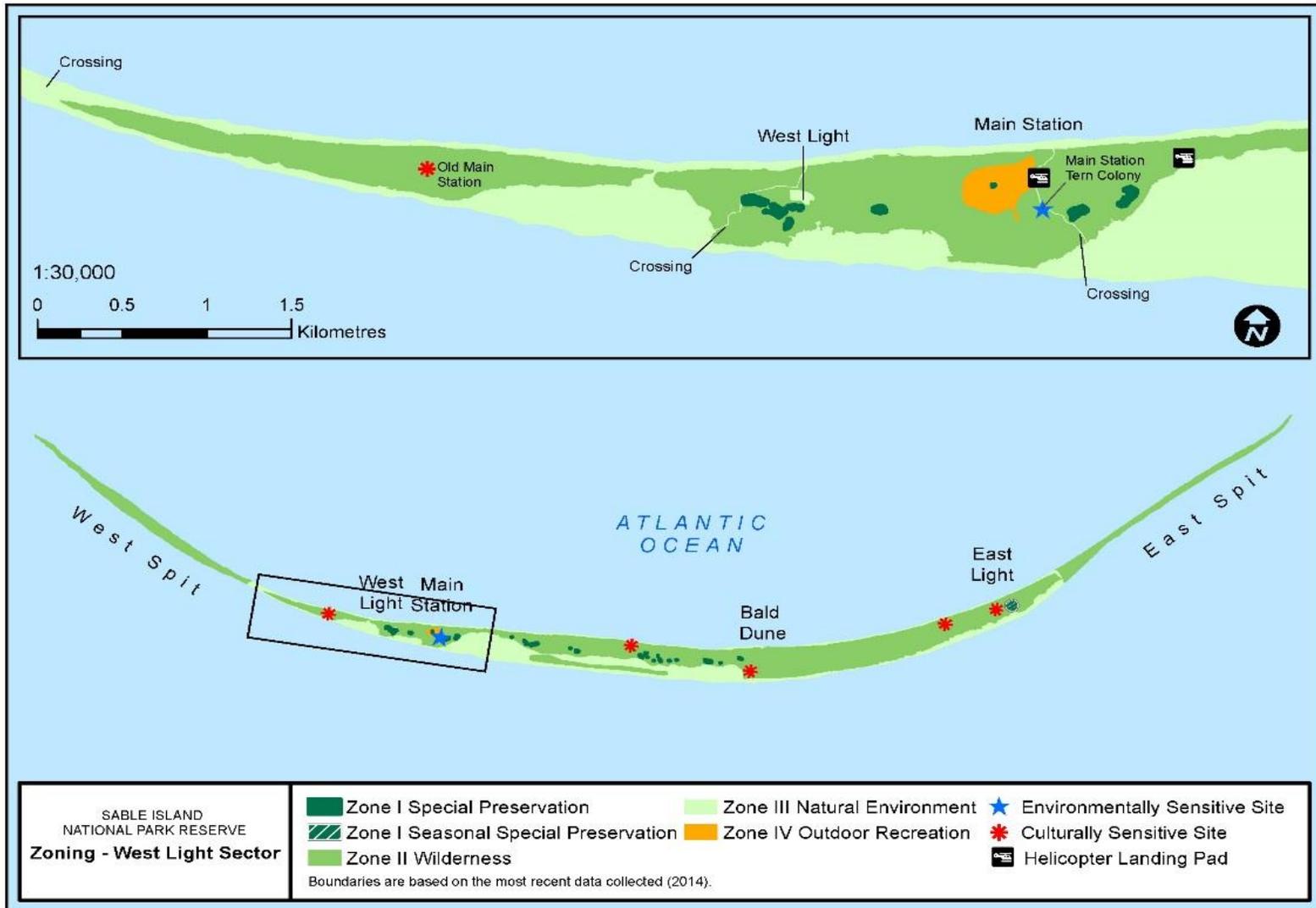
CSS4 Number 2 Lifesaving Station

There are only four archaeological sites associated with the Number 2 Lifesaving station. Much of this site is currently below surface with occasional sand “blowouts” revealing structural evidence of the main house site.

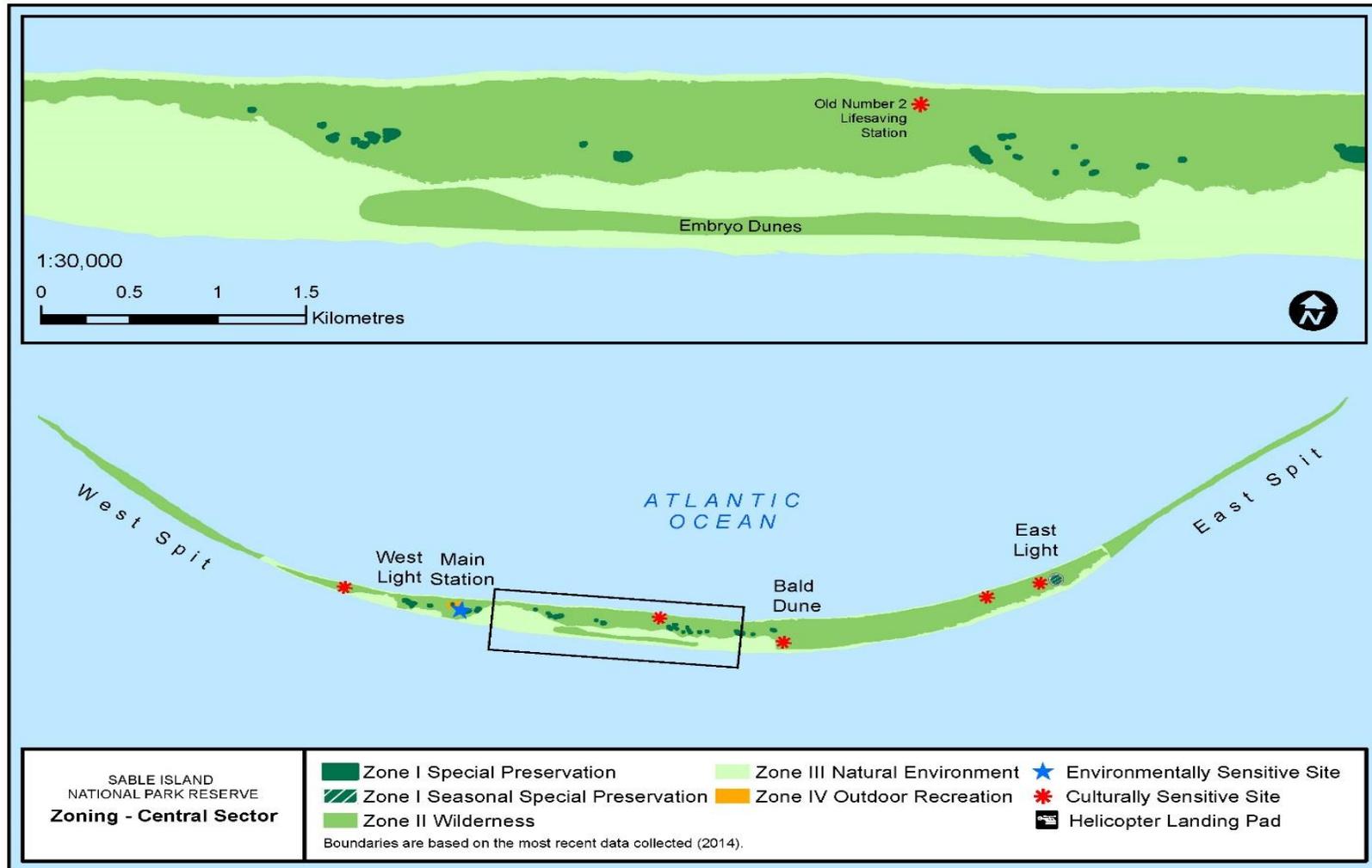
CSS5 Number 4 Lifesaving Station

While there does not appear to be any remnant structural evidence of the Number 4 station, there is clear evidence of the site location based on the presence of artifacts located in a sand “blowout”.

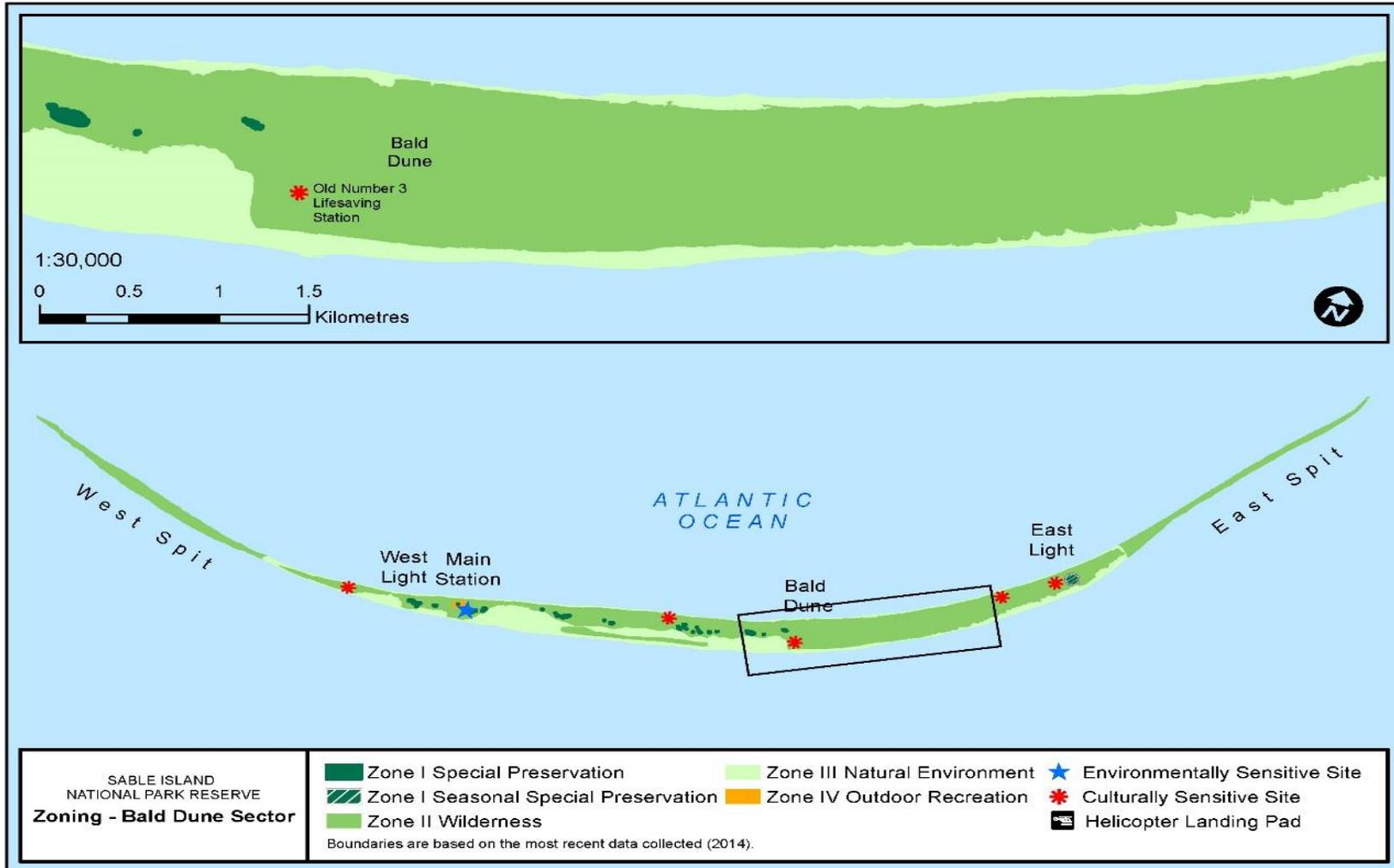
Map 2 Zoning: West Light Sector



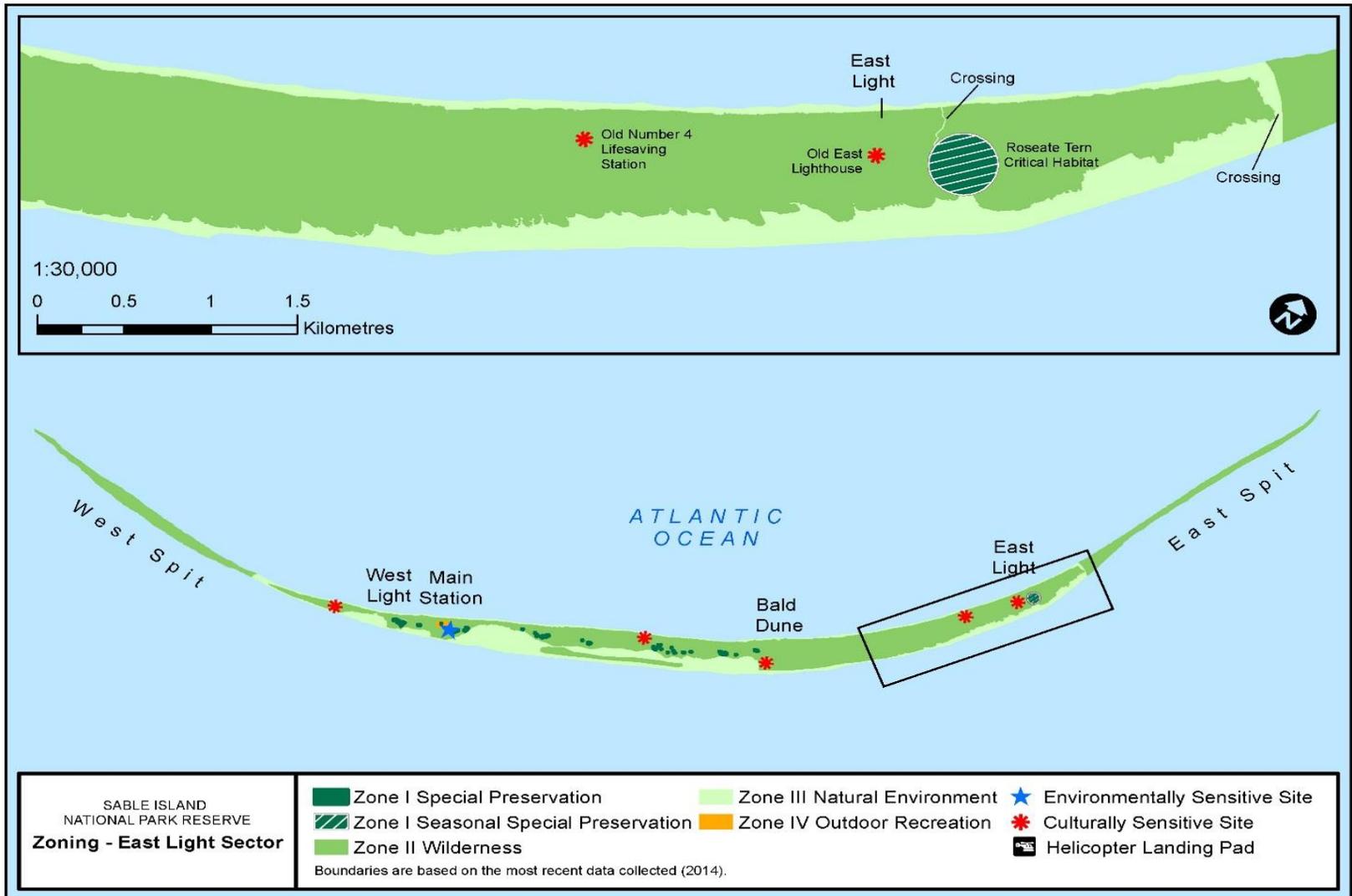
Map 3: Zoning: Central Sector



Map 4: Zoning: Bald Dune Sector



Map 5: Zoning: East Light Sector



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