

APRIL 2023

SIGNS *of* the SOUND

REPORT ON:

EXISTING SIGNAGE ANALYSIS



Cultural Journey Kiosk at Tunnel Point, B.C. (own photo).

**By: Marian Chung, Mei Kawasaki, Brooke Moriarity,
Alexander Siu, Iuliia Solodushko & Cloud Tong**

*Capilano University Student Team,
School of Tourism Management*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Capilano University is named after Chief Joe Capilano, an important leader of the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) Nation of the Coast Salish Peoples. We respectfully acknowledge that our campuses are located on the territories of the Líłwat, xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), shíshálh (Sechelt), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and Səlílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tseil-Waututh) Nations.

The Capilano University Student Team also wishes to acknowledge the following individuals for their support & guidance throughout this project:

Ruth Simons

Executive Director,
Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society

Diane Mitchell

Administrator,
Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society

Kara Walker

Instructor,
Capilano University

Thank You!





REPORT: EXISTING SIGNAGE ANALYSIS

Table of Contents

	Page#
INTRODUCTION	3
FINDINGS	3
APPLICATION & LIMITATIONS	9
CONCLUSION	10
REFERENCES	11
APPENDIX	A1



1. INTRODUCTION

In early February, a site visit was conducted by the team to explore signage in the Sea-to-Sky highway. During the site visit, the team stopped by Horseshoe Bay, Tunnel Point, and Porteau Cove. One of the goals of the visit was to create an inventory of signage in the Biosphere region, but upon discussion with the HSBRIIS, we realize that it is not feasible due to the expansive size of the region and the limited time and resources available for the student team. Because an inventory of a small sample of signage will be less elemental to the HSBRIIS, the student team has determined that a detailed SWOT analysis on the sample signage would be of better value. Therefore, the purpose of this report is to analyze the sample of the existing signage in the three locations that were visited. Detailed SWOT analyses will be provided for the two cultural journey kiosks at Horseshoe Bay and Tunnel Point, as well as for the various signs at Porteau Cove.

In addition, upon discussion with the HSBRIIS, the team has realized the value of understanding which jurisdictions the signage falls under, as many of them were created by different groups at different points in time. This information would help to determine whose authority it is to manage the signage. Using a combination of personal observation from the site visitation and secondary research, this report aims to determine if the existing signage in the biosphere region exhibit satisfactory and up-to-date information in regards to education (natural environment), direction and wayfinding, and culture (history and significance of area). In-person findings will aid in the creation of the signage SWOT analysis, and secondary research will supplement the in-person findings to identify whose jurisdictions the signage is under. In addition, this report will discuss whether signage reflects Truth & Reconciliation, how it is changing Indigenous messaging, and how Indigenous tourism products and interpretive signage is changing because of a growing demand for Indigenous cultural tourism. Furthermore, this report will provide suggestions for relevant next steps that HSBRIIS can take with the existing signage analysis.

2. FINDINGS

HORSESHOE BAY & TUNNEL POINT CULTURAL JOURNEY KIOSKS

Based on the objectives of the sample inventory signage analysis report, below is a full SWOT analysis of the signage in the Horseshoe Bay and Tunnel Point culture journey kiosk. To offer a thorough knowledge of the influences and valuable insights about the signage, we analyze and highlight strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.



HORSESHOE BAY CULTURAL JOURNEY KIOSK

Strengths

The Horseshoe Bay cultural journey kiosk's main strength is that it offers visitors an educational and cultural experience that highlights the local history and culture. The kiosk has various designs and exhibits that showcase the region's natural beauty and cultural heritage. It includes descriptions of materials such as "obsidian, jade, copper, bone, and antler used for weaponry and hunting". Besides, symbolism such as "water" and "canoes" are used to extend the meaning of water travel throughout the signage. All these elements successfully create a strong visual presence.

Weaknesses

The main drawback with the Horseshoe Bay cultural journey kiosk is its restricted space. The area around the kiosk is relatively small, limiting the amount of information that can be presented. Our team found that the space could hardly fit 6 people at once, making it challenging for them to fully appreciate the experience before wanting to leave. Furthermore, the fading signage adversely affects the exhibits and visual appeal, diminishing the overall visit experience. In particular, the fading is severe on the map of the journey to the Squamish Lil'wat cultural center, with words and boards fading and black debris of color appearing.

Opportunities

The main opportunity of Horseshoe Bay cultural journey kiosk is to expand the surrounding area of its cultural journey kiosk to include more exhibits and displays. This would allow tourists and locals to explore more and spend more time reading the signage and absorbing information. Another opportunity is to conduct signage maintenance. As previously mentioned, the signage needs refurbishing to enhance visuals, and more lighting. In addition, the PDF map created by the Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre is too vague and needs more detail to help visitors find the Cultural Journey kiosks.

Threats

One of the main threats to the Horseshoe Bay cultural journey kiosk is the environmental impact, particularly the wet conditions in the area. When our team visited the site, the weather was poor with rain and fog, causing flooding due to the kiosk's structure and design. We couldn't stay for long as it was wet and uncomfortable to step in the water puddles. Another significant threat is the lack of interactivity. There were hardly any people around, and few knew about the cultural journey kiosk. There is a risk that this kiosk will be forgotten and left behind.



TUNNEL POINT CULTURAL JOURNEY KIOSK

Strengths

The Tunnel Point cultural journey kiosk is a great way to learn about the local history and culture of the Squamish Nation. It features a geographic distribution of their territory, which spans approximately 6732 square kilometers. Visitors can gain a deeper understanding of the area's indigenous culture and history through illustrations of St'ap'es Gambier Island and the first ancestor story of the Squamish people. The kiosk is set in a beautiful location with stunning views of the surrounding mountains and water, making it an ideal vantage point for the Squamish people.

Weaknesses

The Tunnel Point cultural journey kiosk's wayfinding is one of its main weaknesses. Visitors may struggle to locate the booths due to a dearth of distinct signage and a map showing their position and which side of the road they are on. The kiosks are also not readily visible on Google and Apple Maps, making them difficult to find. Graffiti is another noteworthy flaw. The natural attractiveness encircling the kiosk site may attract unwelcome attention from vandals, leaving unsightly graffiti marks on the kiosk. Graffiti has had a noticeable impact on one of the visuals on the signage.

Opportunities

Tunnel Point culture journey kiosks could include visible signs in Google and Apple maps, as well as visible navigational signs at the entrance to the signage. This increases the visibility of signs. Furthermore, technological advancements should be implemented to the signage, expanding to include more interactive and entertaining aspects. The kiosk can provide tourists with a deeper and more comprehensive knowledge of the local history and culture by integrating virtual reality exhibits and QR code. Additionally, after users scan the QR code, an augmented reality display with multilingual design of the kiosks can be shown, allowing the kiosk to be marketed more widely and draw a larger audience.

Threats

One threat to the Tunnel Point cultural journey kiosk is the changing preferences of visitors. As technology advances and perspectives shift, the information provided by the kiosk may not hold the same level of interest or attention for audiences. Another threat to the kiosk is budget constraints within BC Parks, which may limit the resources available for maintaining and upgrading the kiosk. Design, fabrication, installation, and maintenance all require funding, and it may be difficult to obtain the necessary funds due to these budget constraints.



JURISDICTION

The cultural journey kiosks were created by the Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre (SLCC), which is an Indigenous-owned non-profit organization and registered charity located in Whistler, BC (Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre, n.d.-a). The cultural journey kiosks were created in partnership with the BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, prior to the 2010 Winter Olympics as part of the Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project (Tran BC, n.d.). Many different stakeholders were involved in the creation of the project, including the West Vancouver-Sea-to-Sky MLA at the time, Joan McIntyre, and the Minister of Aboriginal Relations, John Piper, as well as the Squamish Hereditary Chief, Ian Campbell (Smysnuik, 2010). Of the nine cultural journey kiosks, the team visited the first stop (Horseshoe Bay) and the last stop (Tunnel Point) in the journey.

According to Chief Campbell, the building of the cultural kiosks helped to strengthen the relationship between the First Nations community and businesses, tourism, local government, and the province (Smysnuik, 2010). These cultural kiosks were created with the intention of giving visitors the opportunity to learn about the culture of the Indigenous groups that have long-standing connections with the regions along the Sea-to-Sky highway (Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre, n.d.-b). The information provided in the kiosk panels feature “local culture, legend, geography” and also highlight both “Indigenous and non-Indigenous tourism attractions” (Tran BC, n.d.). As many visitors are not familiar with the language of the Indigenous groups, they are able to stop by the kiosks to learn how to pronounce the names written on the signs (Miller, 2010). To help visitors navigate through the journey, there are also viewpoint markers that signal the kiosks are just up ahead (Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre, n.d.-b).

According to Destination BC, the provincial government has provided funding for initiatives to grow tourism in the Vancouver Coast & Mountains region (2021). The cultural journey kiosks are one of the initiatives that will be funded, as the project, led by Indigenous Tourism British Columbia, will build up to four new kiosks in new locations (Destination British Columbia, 2021).



PORTEAU COVE

In relation to the cultural journey kiosk, we have conducted a full SWOT analysis of the signage in Porteau Cove Marine Park based on the objectives of the sample inventory signage analysis report. This analysis examines the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the signage in Porteau Cove.

Strengths

One of the main strengths of Porteau Cove is the detailed information signage that provides comprehensive information about the park. This includes signs that showcase park attractions, services, local hazards, contact information, and emergency services. Additionally, there are signs that highlight the local flora and fauna, giving visitors a deeper understanding of the area's biodiversity. During our site visit, we learned about the different wrecks and reefs in the area and saw signage outlining marine conservation efforts to build homes for rockfish such as tiger rockfish. This is a fascinating way to preserve nature.

Weaknesses

One weakness of Porteau Cove is the lack of cultural signage. While the existing signs provide useful information, their limited number may restrict the visitor experience. The park's specific signs are mainly focused on the park and aquatic life, with little educational purposes. Additionally, the only two signs near the ocean that provide information on wrecks, nets, and marine life have been badly damaged. The words are fading, and the signs are covered with water droplets due to weather conditions and natural damage.

Opportunities

One opportunity for Porteau Cove Marine Park is to collaborate with local educational institutions to ensure that the signage reflects local perspectives and addresses the needs and interests of different visitors. This aligns with the fourth SDG goal of connecting youth and marginalized people to nature through initiatives and activities in collaboration with local and regional educational institutions and the community (HSBRIS, 2021). Another opportunity is to promote responsible tourism practices among visitors, such as through education campaigns, sustainable tourism programs, or community engagement activities. This is especially important as our team observed littering in the park near the ocean.

Threats

One of the main threats to the signage in Porteau Cove is natural damage. The signs are exposed to water and weather conditions, which causes fading and damage to the words and visuals. Given the surrounding environment and limited resources for maintenance and repair, it can be difficult to keep the signage in good condition. Another significant threat is irresponsible tourism, as visitors who disregard the natural environment cause littering and damage to one of the signs. This can impact marine life in the area and lead to more severe problems such as erosion or damage that could render the signage ineffective in communicating its message.



JURISDICTION

The park was established in July of 1981. It is a provincial park under the jurisdiction of BC Parks, a provincial government entity, which can also be seen from the logo on its signs. The park's facility operator is Sea to Sky Park Services Ltd, as it is common practice for BC Parks to use contractors. The information about the park can be found on BC Parks' website. There have been delays with BC Parks' new signage guidelines. In their website, they do acknowledge that their web pages do not fully reflect the Indigenous Peoples connection to the land and that they are working in partnership with them to change that (BC Parks, n.d.-a).

According to the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society British Columbia Chapter, BC Parks has not been adequately funded for years (CPAWS-BC, 2021). As a result, visitors using management strategy plans have been placed on major delays, inhibiting progress to upgrading infrastructure, including signage (CPAWS-BC, 2021). However, in 2021, BC Parks did publish their Visitor Use Management Strategy Plan for Joffre Lakes Provincial Park, which was created in partnership with Lílwat Nation and N'Quatqua (CPAWS-BC, 2021). In their plan, BC Parks recognizes that increasing the presence of the Indigenous communities is a priority, and that they will do this through the creation of new interpretive signage which will highlight their "culture and history" (CPAWS-BC, 2021). Therefore, while low budgets and lack of funding remains a challenge, it appears that BC Parks recognizes the importance of signage as it relates to cultural education and environmental protection, despite the major delays.



3. APPLICATION & LIMITATIONS

Although the team was unable to complete a full inventory of signs in the biosphere region due to time constraints and lack of resources, SWOT analyses have been completed for three existing signage in the Howe Sound. Despite the small sample, it is clear that there is both an opportunity and a need to update signage to better reflect the goals of the HSBIRIS as it relates to environmental protection, sustainability, and cultural education. The report discusses how signage can be improved, and while further study may be needed in order to implement any changes, the report provides valuable groundwork for future reference. The report also illustrates that partnerships, collaborations, and consultations with the Indigenous community is a priority.

Some limitations have been identified. As the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society British Columbia Chapter recognizes, there have been delays with BC Parks' new signage guidelines (CPAWS-BC, 2021). Therefore, any signs that are created will need to be in accordance with guidelines, which have not yet been updated. Furthermore, it is unclear whether the cultural kiosks along the Sea-to-Sky highway are under the authority and management of the Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre (SLCC) or the BC Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure, as both parties were involved in their creation. The student team has contacted the SLCC to investigate, however, no response has been received at the time of writing this report. Therefore, it is important to note that determining the jurisdiction of signages may be a challenge for future research.

As far as recommendations for future study are concerned, it would be valuable to create an inventory and analysis of all the existing signage in the region to gain a better understanding of the state of signage. This may help identify trends and patterns in signage in certain areas of the region, and how visitors are engaging with them. In terms of next steps, it will be worthwhile to consider the opportunities presented within the analyses, particularly as it relates to collaboration, community engagement, improvements to visibility, and interactivity such as QR code integration and/or multilingual design.



4. CONCLUSION

In summary, the student team's SWOT analyses of three existing signs in Howe Sound revealed a need for improved signage that aligns with the goals of the HSBIRIS. The report highlights the importance of collaborating and consulting with the Indigenous community and local authorities when conducting signage maintenance and designing new signage. However, our team encountered problems in defining jurisdiction, such as delays in BC Parks' new signage guidelines and trouble determining the jurisdiction of some signs due to a lack of responses. Future research should aim to create a complete inventory and analysis of all existing signage in the region to identify trends and patterns in visitor engagement. The report provides valuable groundwork for future reference and recommends pursuing opportunities such as collaboration, community engagement, improved visibility, and interactivity. Improving signage in Howe Sound can promote environmental protection, sustainability, and cultural education while enhancing the visitor experience.

Overall, the signage in Howe Sound Biosphere region has the potential to provide an educational and engaging experience for tourists. However, sufficient maintenance, strategic placement, and engagement with local communities and educational institutions are required to ensure their efficacy and longevity. Technological and sustainability advancements can also improve the tourist experience while aligning with the region's dedication to sustainability.



4. REFERENCES

BC Parks. (n.d.-a). Porteau Cove Park. <https://bcparks.ca/porteau-cove-park/>

CPAWS-BC. (2021). New Visitor Use Strategy for Joffre Lakes Provincial Park. <https://cpawsbc.org/vums-joffre-lakes-provincial-park/>

Destination British Columbia. (2021, Jun 10). TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN VCM GROWS WITH STRONGERBC INVESTMENT. <https://www.destinationbc.ca/news/trtdi-projects-vc/>

Miller, J. (2010, Jul 2). Cultural Journey increases nations' visibility. The Squamish Chief. <https://www.squamishchief.com/local-news/cultural-journey-increases-nations-visibility-3339607>

Smysnuik, S. (2010, Jul 2). Cultural Journey Sea to Sky officially launched. Pique Newsmagazine. <https://www.piquenewsmagazine.com/whistler-news/cultural-journey-sea-to-sky-officially-launched-2485866>

Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre. (n.d.-a). About Us. <https://slcc.ca/visit/about-us/>

Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre. (n.d.-b). Cultural Journey Sea-to-Sky Highway. [PDF]. <https://slcc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/SLCC-CulturalJourneyMapSpread-MedRes-08May2016.pdf>

Tran BC. (n.d.). Learn Indigenous History on the Sea to Sky Cultural Journey. <https://www.tranbc.ca/2012/08/07/learn-indigenous-history-on-the-sea-to-sky-cultural-journey/>

HSBRI. (2021). HSBRI strategic plan 2021-2026. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/58c0c358ebbd1a9d3cd1ecf0/t/606df6e572aafc7e089f2341/1617819387356/HSBRI_Strategic+Plan_2021-2026+Summary+for+web.pdf

United Nations. (n.d.). Goal 4 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs. United Nations. Retrieved from <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal4>




5. APPENDIX

Figure 1. Email sent to SLCC

MESSAGE SENT MARCH 23: Hello, I am a student at Capilano University in the School of Tourism Management, and I am working on a project regarding signage in the Howe Sound region. We are currently investigating the jurisdictions in which the signage falls under, and I am curious to know if the cultural journey kiosks along the Sea-to-Sky highway falls under the authority of the SLCC or the BC Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure. If you have any information to share, it would greatly be appreciated! Thank you!

(Student Email sent to SLCC, own design)

Figure 2. SWOT Analysis of Cultural Journey Kiosk (Horseshoe Bay)

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES	 SWOT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn the Indigenous culture Use of Symbols Kiosk Design Clear Message Illustration Cultural History Long-term Investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration QR code Integration Signage maintenance Improve visibility Community engagement Awareness campaign Signage development Financial Support 	
WEAKNESSES	THREATS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited Map Directions Lack of Attention Restricted spaces Require a vehicle to get there Language Barriers Most Trail beside signage is only for summer-use Signage Visibility Graffiti 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural Damage Budget Constraints Wet Local Hazards Wildfire Information Accuracy Irresponsible Tourism Shifting Visitor Preferences Lack of Interactivity Technology 	

(SWOT Analysis of Cultural Journey Kiosks (Horseshoe Bay), own design)

Figure 3. UN Sustainable Development Goals #4



(Goal 4 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs)



Figure 4. SWOT Analysis of Cultural Journey Kiosk (Tunnel Point)

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES	 SWOT LOMS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn the Indigenous culture • Use of Symbols • Kiosk Design • Clear Message • Illustration • Cultural History • Long-term Investment • Open spaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration • Multilingual Design • Signage Maintenance • Improve Visibility • Community Engagement • Awareness Campaign • Signage Development • Financial Support 	
WEAKNESSES	THREATS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited Map Directions • Lack of Attention • Limited Parking Spaces • Require a vehicle to get there • Language Barriers • Most Trail beside signage is only for summer-use • Signage Visibility • Graffiti 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Impact • Budget Constraints • Natural Damage • Local Hazards • Wildfire • Information Accuracy • Irresponsible Tourism • Shifting Visitor Preferences • Lack of Interactivity • Technology 	

(SWOT Analysis of Cultural Journey Kiosks (Tunnel Point), own design)

Figure 5. SWOT Analysis of Porteau Cove Marine Park Signs

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES	 SWOT LOMS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colourful Designs • Detailed Park Information • Clear Message • Use of Symbol • Easy to Access • Marine life Info-graphics • Contact Information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QR Code • Collaboration • Signage Maintenance • Awareness Campaign • Responsible Tourism • Sustainable Education • Signage Development • Local Support 	
WEAKNESSES	THREATS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Damaged Signage • Lack of attention • Signage fading • Language Barriers • Fewer Cultural Signage • Location • No Staging Signage • Signage Visibility • Graffiti 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget Constraints • Environmental Impact • Wildfire • Local Hazards • Technology • Irresponsible Tourism • Information Accuracy • Shifting Visitor Preferences • Natural Damage 	

(SWOT Analysis of Porteau Cove Marine Park Signs, own design)



**Marian Chung, Mei Kawasaki, Brooke Moriarity,
Alexander Siu, Iuliia Solodushko & Cloud Tong**
School of Tourism Management, Capilano University
TOUR 435-01: Applied Project Management in Tourism
Kara Walker
April 2023