

MARCH 2023

SIGNS *of* *the* SOUND

ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT



Note. From *Sea to Sky 1*, by jammer5, 2008, Trip Advisor (<https://www.tripadvisor.ca/Profile/jammer5/Photo/18624827>).

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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 Liíwat, xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), shíshálh (Sechelt), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and Səlilwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tseil-Waututh) Nations.

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Thank You!



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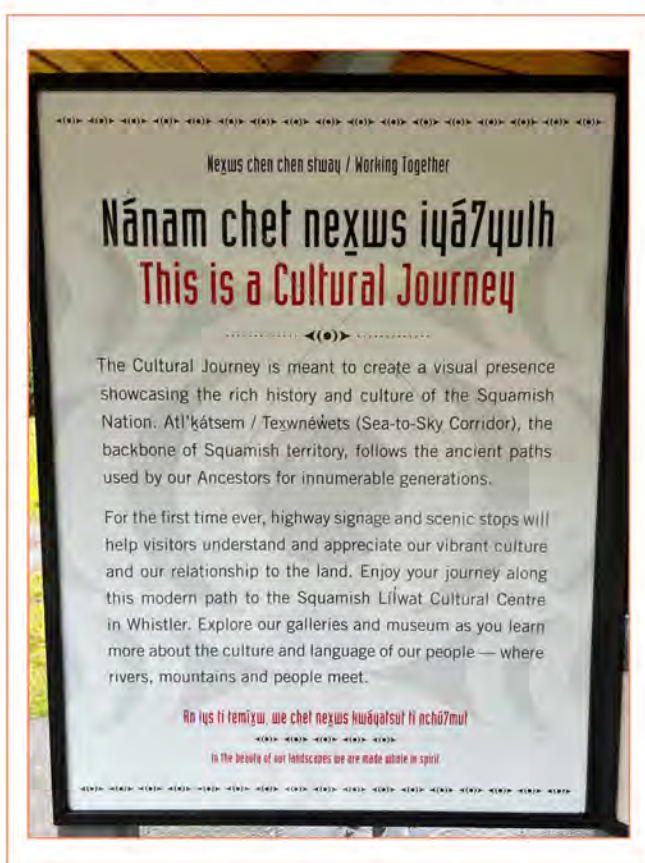
1. INTRODUCTION

This project is a collaboration between the Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society (HSBRIS) and a project management Student Team from Capilano University's School of Tourism Management. Titled "**Signs of the Sound**", the project focuses on signage within the Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound Region in British Columbia. Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound is a geographic region and not a provincial park; the entire biosphere lies within Unceded First Nations Territories. HSBRIS is the primary organization that works to promote conservation and sustainable development of the area.



Cultural Journey Kiosk at Horseshoe Bay, B.C. (own photo).

SIGNS *of* the SOUND



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

The main purpose of this project is to determine if existing signage in the region reflects these elements, and whether they remain relevant for visitors to the region. Signage in the region should connect to the core values of HSBRIS: the promotion of sustainability, preservation, and education. The signs should incorporate elements of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), as well as reflect a country now strongly committed to Indigenous Truth and Reconciliation.

The Student Team intends to familiarize itself with the region's geography, culture, history, and the values of its Indigenous communities. The main goal is to increase the knowledge of—and an appreciation for— UNESCO biospheres, biodiversity, and the UN SDGs will be key project takeaways for the student team.



Biodiversity signage at Porteau Cove Park, B.C. (own photo).

Some foundational work has been previously completed by the organization, and there is existing signage that is present throughout the region. The attention is drawn to the network of Cultural Journey kiosks along the Sea-to-Sky Highway route that were constructed in 2010. While they are excellent examples of informational signage in the region, there is the question of whether they need to be updated.

The team intends to use these existing resources, its observations, its research of sites throughout the region, and communications with the client to deliver proposals and recommendations to contribute to HSBRIS's signage initiative.

There is value in pursuing this project because is that BC's coastal regions have the highest visitation numbers of all regions throughout the province. There is also currently no established tourism program within the Biosphere, although the Society recognized the importance of tourism to the region's economy in its UNESCO nomination documents. Any work that contributes to enhancing the experience of the Biosphere's visitors while simultaneously educating them is beneficial.



Cultural Journey Kiosk at Porteau Cove, B.C. (own photo).





2. PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Society's ED and Administrator have expressed concerns about the current state of the region's signage: it is a medley of old and new signs created by different groups, organizations, and government bodies. Some are believed to be outdated, in poor condition, or nonexistent. For example, the Cultural Journey kiosks (a series of informational kiosks displaying eight signs each) constructed along the Sea-to-Sky Highway were originally constructed for the 2010 Vancouver Olympics.



Cultural Journey Kiosk at Horseshoe Bay, B.C. (own photo).



Cultural Journey Kiosk at Horseshoe Bay, B.C. (own photo).

Strategically placed at rest-points and locations with scenic vistas, they are meant to provide tourists and locals the opportunity to learn about the rich history of the region's Indigenous groups. With Truth and Reconciliation becoming an even greater national priority in the 13 years since the Olympics, HSBRS believes there is value in taking inventory of the region's existing signage and reviewing their contents. The Student Team has decided to pursue this goal as the project's principal purpose: to provide research and suggestions for the Society on how it can better adjust the contents of the region's signs to better align with its goals.

The need for signage updates and creation has been an ongoing initiative. The Society has worked with BC Parks (an agency of the province's Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy) in the past: BC Parks, however, already manages thousands of provincial parks, and must fairly distribute their limited resources, funding, and human resources to groups throughout the province. HSBRS was –with their support– able to successfully install new signage at a provincial

park within the Biosphere in summer 2022. In a January 2023 presentation by Green Step (a consultancy) to the Vancouver, Coast & Mountain Tourism Region (VCM) of which the Biosphere is a part of, the following focus area was highlighted: work with local, regional, provincial, etc. and other partners to improve interpretive natural and cultural signage and education.

The ED emphasized the desire to have more updated signage that aims to primarily educate visitors on the importance of biodiversity, environmental sustainability, the protection of the Biosphere’s many areas, and “leav[ing] no trace behind”. Incorporation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) as a framework is also vital.

The main challenge of this project is finding signage from comparable regions that have effectively incorporated Truth and Reconciliation in their design. In our research we have investigated parks and other natural regions within Canada that are integrating Truth and Reconciliation into their signage. The well-funded National Parks system across the United States has been considered in this research as well.



2.1 Project Objectives

What has been emphasized is that HSBRIS is not looking for tangible deliverables (ex. New signage), for society already has the skills and talents to do that. What they would appreciate most is robust research on the subjects as described below:

- 1.** **To** create an inventory of the existing signage and kiosks along the sea-to-sky highway in the Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound Region between the city of Vancouver and Porteau Cove Provincial Park; to research signage in other UNESCO designated biospheres, BC provincial parks, and within the U.S. National Park Service.
- 2.** **To** determine if existing inventoried signage exhibits satisfactory and updated information regarding: education (natural environment), direction and wayfinding, and culture (history and significance of area). Any recommended updates will incorporate elements of the UN SDGs.
- 3.** **To** investigate the Sea-to-Sky Destination Management Council’s “Don’t Love it to Death” campaign.





3. FINDINGS

This section features research done on various topics related to the project objectives and deliverables.

3.1 SWOT Analysis of Existing Biosphere Signage

A **SWOT** analysis was done on the signage observed during a site visit to the Biosphere region on February 7, 2023. The sites visited were **Horseshoe Bay, Tunnel Point, and Porteau Cove Marine Park**. Presented below are the highlights from each SWOT.

Cultural Journey Kiosks

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of Symbols • Kiosk Design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QR code integration • Improve visibility 	
WEAKNESSES	THREATS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restricted Spaces • Signage Visibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget Constraints • Wet 	

For full SWOT see **Appendix Fig. 3**

Strengths:

- The kiosk effectively promotes indigenous culture
- Symbols made information accessible and understandable
- Canoes and water travel were seamlessly displayed on signage
- The design of the Coast Salish cedar hat shaped roof was engaging

Weaknesses:

- The kiosk was limited by its physical space
- The limited space also made it challenging to create a clear and organized layout.
- The visibility of the signage was not optimal
- This made it difficult for visitors to navigate the kiosk

Opportunities:

- Technology advancement for a more interactive experience.
- Signage visibility improved with lighting and contrasting colours

Threats:

- Design, fabrication, installation, and maintenance all require funding.
- Large signage construction procedures involve various stakeholders.
- It may be difficult to obtain funds due to the BC Parks' budget constraints.
- The kiosk area is flooded with water.



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

Porteau Cove Marine Park Signage

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed Park Information Marine life Info-graphics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration Responsible tourism 	
WEAKNESSES	THREATS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Damaged Signage Lack of attention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental Degradation Irresponsible Tourism 	

For full SWOT see **Appendix Fig. 4**



Biodiversity signage at Porteau Cove Park, B.C. (own photo).

Strengths:

- Provide valuable information about the diverse marine life in the area
- It includes information on hiking trails, camping areas, picnic sites, and other recreational activities, security and emergency.

Weaknesses:

- Damaged signage make it difficult for visitors to read or interpret the information provided.
- Damaged signs can create a negative impression of the park and reduce the perceived quality of the visitor experience.
- Signage may be ignored due to distractions, lack of interest, or poor placement.

Opportunities:

- Collaboration can ensure that the signage reflects local perspectives and addresses different visitor needs and interests.
- Promoting responsible tourism practices among visitors. For instance, education campaigns, sustainable tourism programs, or community engagement activities.

Threats:

- Environmental degradation such as water pollution, habitat loss, or climate change.
- It could impact the park's biodiversity and the visitor experience.
- In turn, this could also affect the quality and relevance of the signage in the park.
- Irresponsible tourism such as littering, vandalism, or damage to natural and cultural resources.



Signage at Porteau Cove Park Trailhead, B.C. (own photo).



Signage at Porteau Cove Marine Park, B.C. (own photo).

3.2 Cultural & Responsible Tourism



Cultural and responsible: these types of tourism were studied because their principles and values most align with those of HSBRIS and its ideas for the Biosphere. With signage being a complementary element to the touristic experience, the signs of the Biosphere and its messages should be consistent with the elements that make up the idea of these types of tourism according to Nelson (1994) and Canadian Commission for UNESCO & MAB National Committee Canada (2002):

- Consistent with a positive environmental ethic, fostering environmentally conscious preferred behaviours in participants
- No erosion of resource integrity, or interruption of environmental processes
- Concentration on intrinsic over extrinsic values; facilities and services are not the main attractions by their own merits

- **Biocentric:** accepts nature on its terms, rather than the terms of the visitor; no significant transforming of the environment for the convenience of the visitor
- First-hand experience with the natural environment

- Expectation of gratification is measured in terms of appreciation and education, not thrill-seeking or physical achievement (that's adventure tourism)
- High cognitive (informational) and effective (emotional) dimensions to the experience; high levels of preparation required from leaders and participants

Responsible tourism has also been an ongoing initiative of Hawaii's state tourism board. According to Siddiqi (2023), this program focuses on cultural tourism and stewardship, both things that native Hawaiians want. With an increase in tourists interested in purposeful travel and the cultural history of destinations, the tourism board has worked with businesses and organizations throughout the islands to offer them new and fulfilling experiences. Visitors can engage in volunteerism (like helping to clean a beach), or other activities like helping the Lahaina Restoration Foundation with its archival activities. The board recognizes that opportunities exist to engage its visitors with authentic and culturally accurate experiences. It is important to not only tell authentic and historical stories from the islands, but to help its visitors craft their own so that they may share them when they return home (Siddiqi, 2023).

Hands-on History: A Mālama Hawaii Program

3 Hours - Ages 12+



Free Attendees Ages 12+

Prices for Touristav: Mālama Hawaii (2023) \$20/line

Hands-on History: A Mālama Hawaii Program

Duration

3 Hours

Note: Lahaina Restoration Foundation. (n.d.). *Voluntourism opportunity with the foundation*. [screenshot]. Lahaina Restoration Foundation. <https://lahainarestitution.org/>

Ecotourism must also, according to Canadian Commission for UNESCO & MAB National Committee Canada (2002), “recognize and respect the land rights of indigenous and local communities, including their protected, sensitive and sacred sites” (p. 40). Inclusion of the Indigenous voice and point-of-view is important when considering the messaging of the Biosphere’s signs, whether they are being created from scratch or updated; the results can be more authenticity, more history, and more knowledge (Siddiqi, 2023). Good signage is part of having properly planned, developed, and managed natural and rural areas. Badly made ones, on the other hand, can be detrimental because it can lead to the erosion of cultural traditions (Canadian Commission for UNESCO & MAB National Committee Canada, 2002).

Signage can help be an advocate for more responsible tourism. It can be used as a medium to spread awareness of the importance of stewardship in a destination. It can be an opportunity to, as Siddiqi (2023) says, engage visitors with authentic and culturally accurate experiences, so that they might make stories that can be shared at home.

There is a renewed interest in Canada in righting the wrongs of the past, especially regarding its treatment of its Indigenous peoples. With Truth and Reconciliation in full swing, it is worth looking at what other place around the country, as well as other countries, are doing to repair their relationships with Indigenous groups. In all the work that it does to promote Australia, Tourism Australia (2021a) considers its vision for reconciliation: the cultures and knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities are central to the nation’s identity, and all Australians should feel proud of connecting with the storytelling, resilience, and innovation of these thousands of years old cultures.



Note. Tourism Australia. (2021b). *Tourism Australia adopts Aboriginal dual naming*. [graphic]. Tourism Australia. <https://www.tourism.australia.com/en/news-and-events/news-stories/tourism-australia-adopts-aboriginal-dual-naming.html>

In 2021, Tourism Australia published this national map adopting a dual-naming convention for its states and major cities. After consulting and confirming with Elders and Traditional Owners, Traditional Aboriginal names were published next to their English language equivalents. By doing this, the DMO acknowledges that the land it operates on has been under the custodianship of its Indigenous peoples for over 60,000 years. It is an attempt and effort to incorporate the knowledge and language of these peoples into the mainstream consciousness.



Jasper National Park in Alberta, Canada, uses interpretive signage as a medium of communications with its many visitors. According to Parks Canada (2017), signs in its Maligne Valley educate visitors about the wildlife and human history of the area, in addition to providing wayfinding and directional information. By using stories, the park aims to develop a connection with its audience, enhancing their experience and creating a deeper understanding for the cultural heritage of the destination.



Note. Parks Canada. (n.d.). Example of Parks Canada interpretive signage in the Maligne Valley, Jasper, Alberta. [image]. Parks Canada. <https://parks.canada.ca/pn-np/ab/jasper/gestion-management/plan/maligne/interpretation>

3.3 QR Codes

Quick Response codes – better known as QR codes – have existed since 1994, yet their uses and uptake by the public have been limited. Despite their compact format and ability to lead people to vast amounts of additional information in a convenient way, their deployment by businesses and organisations (tourism related or not) was almost non-existent. This was all true until the COVID-19 pandemic thrust them into the mainstream. Suddenly, these little square matrix barcodes were everywhere: restaurants used them to direct people to online menus; they were on proof of vaccination cards that were required to eat at most restaurants; and anywhere that information needed to be conveyed on printed material, a QR code could replace the need for that printed material.



The public is now more familiar with seeing and using them. QR codes have been adopted by museum and cultural institutions as well, to provide more information or deeper experiences for its visitors. Their effectiveness and the value they bring to these places varies, however, and some places have seen more success than others. Calder and Kaulbach (2021) describe an innovative usage of QR codes by the Cliffs of Fundy Geopark: QR codes included on a series of signs lead to sound files of members of the local Mi'kmaw nation telling their legends and oral traditions .



The content that a code leads to has to be worth visiting for someone to go through the trouble of scanning it. The content that the geopark's codes lead to is genius because it includes and incorporates the Mi'kmaw and their heritage, and adds a depth, meaning, and authenticity to a person's visit .

3.4 Interpreting Culture & Heritage

An excellent and comprehensive 79-page interpretation guide and strategic plan for the Cliffs of Fundy Geopark in Nova Scotia by Calder & Kaulbach (2021) was found and studied. The most relevant points are presented below:

Interpretation is experiential:

- Audience is not captive (visitors can leave whenever they want)
- Audience pays attention because they choose to, and want to learn out of genuine interest
- Interpretation is needed to entice visitors to pay attention (ex. Following trails, using arresting and captivating phrases, graphics, and ideas)

Text language must be accessible – remember your audience!

- Use scientific terminology sparingly, but don't forego it altogether

Citing Ham (2013), successful interpretation will:

- “ENHANCE visitor experience” (p. 4)
- “IMPACT attitudes and promote appreciation for a place” (p. 4)
- “STRENGTHEN protection and stewardship” (p. 4)

Successful interpretation needs to:

- “have a theme or compelling point” (p. 5)
- “be organized, easy to follow” (p. 5)
- “be relevant to the visitor” (p. 5)
- “be enjoyable to process” (p. 5)

Visuals are a primary, not secondary, element:

- Visual information is processed in the brain faster
- Visual aids in classroom settings can greatly improve learning
- People can remember the contents of photos quite accurately
- Ideas presented visually are easier to comprehend and remember than those presented as words

A person can only absorb & carry so much information in their brain:

- Signage is limited by the fact that only 3-4 main points will ever stick with the viewer
- Almost no one will read a solid block of text, and many will be put off by excessive text altogether



Elements of engaging interpretive strategy (p. 11)

- “grounding the visitor in time and space (“Where am I in Earth history?” and “Where does this site fit in the story of the Geopark?”)”
- “inviting language that speaks to the interested layperson”
- “non-exclusion of visitors by avoiding unexplained scientific terminology and concepts”
- “reference to other learning resources”
- “orientation with respect to nearby or related geosites (“Where am I in the Geopark?”)”
- “access to tourism information (washroom facilities, tours, nearby food and accommodation)”

“Indigenous artwork is an important ‘voice’ in fixed interpretation at geosites” (p. 22)

- It acts as an important cross-cultural bridge

The geopark has a unifying interpretive message of change

3.5 In-Person Findings

A **Site** visit was conducted by team on February 7, 2023. Driving along the Sea-to-Sky Highway, the following sites were visited:

Horseshoe Bay
Tunnel Point
Porteau Cove Marine Park

Team Observations:

- Difficulty finding kiosks due to lack of signage to guide visitors
- No obvious signs indicating location of each Cultural Journey kiosk and which side of the road they are on
- Kiosks not easily visible on Google Maps, making them difficult to find
- PDF map created by Squamish Lil’wat Cultural Centre is too vague and requires more detail to find kiosks
- Cultural Journey kiosks are outdated and in need of touch-ups, with poor lighting and visibility



Student Team at Cultural Journey Kiosk, Horseshoe Bay, B.C. (own photos).



Student Team at Cultural Journey Kiosk, Horseshoe Bay, B.C. L-R: A. Siu; M. Kawasaki; M. Chung; I. Solodushko; C. Tong (own photos).

4. RECOMMENDATIONS & DELIVERABLES



The recommendations that Capilano University Project Management team has provided are listed as follows:

1. By identifying the existing signages that are present in other BC provincial parks biosphere, it will identify the successful strategies that can be imitated and considered for the further development of the updated signage.
 - Cultural & Responsible Tourism in BC Parks & Heritage Sites
2. By conducting the research report on the implementation of QR codes into signage we will provide additional information regarding the potential options available to the client
 - Report on QR Codes
3. By conducting the inventory and analysis of existing cultural journey kiosks the team intends to offer detailed suggestions on updating the signage to accommodate the needs of the HSBRIS and benefit the organizational operations.
 - Existing Signage Inventory & Analysis



REPORT:
Cultural & Responsible Tourism in
BC Parks & Heritage Sites



REPORT:
QR Codes



REPORT:
Existing Signage Inventory
& Analysis

4.1 Cultural & Responsible Tourism in other BC Parks

After conducting the initial research there is an intention to create and provide a research report about the features of existing signage in other BC provincial parks. It is crucial to reflect on the other existing examples to cater to similar values and correspond to those within the goals and desires of the client. The analysis of several locations will provide guidance and support for future decision making regarding the HSBIRS signage updating. Due to this analysis, the client will gain the benefit of understanding what other organizations are utilizing to maximize the focus on Indigenous culture, heritage, messages, values, or relating to natural environments. Using clear examples along with thorough analysis offers tools to elaborate on the positive practices that are utilized by the other BC provincial parks as the primary focus for the research.

The Capilano University student team will create a report with examples of values included in the sample signage. The cultural aspect also plays an essential role in the projection and introspection of important ingredients to create support for an organization and translate value and engagement for the local visitors.

Direct experience with nature, preservation, and appreciation of the area will be the main goals of the client, therefore the Student Team intends to create an additional report on the existing signage that portrays similar values. It will benefit the Howe Sound Biosphere region in taking a different outlook in arranging their signage and potentially borrowing some successful practices.

Deliverables:

- Comparison of 3 BC provincial parks signage practices
- Tips on placement, location, and engagement with the visitors

Analysis of successful practices of collaborating with indigenous groups in cultural signage

- Recommendations on incorporation of responsible tourism, preservation of environment, and importance of cultural component.
- Definition of responsible & eco-tourism in signage
- Recommendations of best practices utilizing topic above in relation to signage

4.2 QR Codes

Clear and concise information on signage for educational purposes is needed on the current signages. Therefore, there is an opportunity for the HSBRIS to utilize QR codes to expand the information given to the visitors in the region. QR codes may be placed on existing signage so that users may scan the code with their mobile device. This will help enhance the quality of information available for visitors to access if they are interested in finding out more about the rich history, culture, geography and biodiversity of the region, as well as the values of the Indigenous communities that live there.

However, because of certain limitations with the usage of QR codes, it would be important to conduct research to determine the effectiveness of using QR codes to supplement signage. For example, despite the rising usage of QR codes, it cannot be considered common knowledge as not everyone knows how to use them. Similarly, not everyone owns a mobile device, or may own a device that is not compatible with scanning QR codes. Meanwhile, there are also areas in the region where cellular internet signals are weak or non-existent. Therefore, we will look into more recent research and reports regarding successful use cases and implementations of QR codes in other BC Parks. Furthermore, work could also be done to explore creative ways of utilizing QR codes, such as using them to connect users with an audio file that can play educational information and stories that visitors can listen to (Hike Kamloops, n.d.). **Appendix Fig. 1** gives a list of BC parks and trails that have implemented QR codes to enhance the visitor experience.

The goal of implementing QR codes is to provide additional information for visitors, so more information can be collected on how to incentivize visitors to use them. The research could also help the HSBRIS discover possible solutions to the limitations with using QR codes. For instance, by using a combination of physical leaflets with QR codes and QR codes on signage to overcome the issue of limited internet connections in some areas of the region.

Deliverable:

Recent research or successful use cases of QR codes in other BC Parks

- Example of Bay of Fundy Geopark success regarding QR codes & signage
- Examples of stories of indigenous people shared in the links attached to QR codes



The Story Trail in Tsútswecw Park. (Hike Kamloops, n.d.)



QR coded trails in Bowen Island. (Bowen Island, n.d.)

4.3 Cultural Journey Kiosks Inventory & Analysis

After completing a site visit to Horseshoe Bay, Tunnel Point, and Porteau Cove Marine Park in the Biosphere region, the Student Team was able to create a very small inventory of signs. Using this inventory combined with the secondary research, the team can provide a report to determine if existing inventoried signage exhibit satisfactory and updated information regarding education (natural environment), direction and wayfinding, and culture (history and significance of area).

Secondary research will assist with examples of signage that will create better images of what are the present signage and assist while crafting the recommendations. The photos collected from the site visit will provide the most amount of information to rely on while offering a summary and elaborating on recommendations. And last but not least, any updates will incorporate elements of the UN SDGs.



To engage in the community members such as the indigenous groups, Capilano University's student group could work closely with the community when re-designing/updating the signages. Once the designing is completed, Capilano University's student group and HSBRIS could share with the local indigenous groups to receive the feedback. Once the signages are completed at the Cultural Journey Kiosks, HSBRIS can invite the local indigenous groups to the site to spread the awareness about the updated kiosks.

This aligns with the overall recommendation considering the analysis of the current signage, therefore with the proposals of content for the updated signage.

Deliverables:

- Summary of the existing signage and content that is already present in the Howe Sound Biosphere Region. Inclusion of Indigenous partners in the cultural type of signage.
- Recommendations of content changes to ensure they reflect developments post-2010 (such as decolonization, and Truth and Reconciliation); How is Reconciliation changing Indigenous messaging? With a growing demand for Indigenous cultural tourism, how are Indigenous tourism products and interpretive signage changing?
- Recommendations of size, placement, visibility, and design.

4.3.1 Visibility of Cultural Journey Kiosks

According to the site visit in-person findings, the Student Team has identified the issue of finding the location of the Cultural Journey kiosks in the Howe Sound Biosphere Region. It was observed that the location of the kiosks is not very visible, and not identifiable on commonly used maps. It would be of great benefit to visitors if they were more easily found and identifiable.

The team recommends a better way to locate those kiosks. As Google Maps and Apple Maps are one of the most used map and way-finding platforms, it would be beneficial to reach out to Google Business Profiles and suggest the inclusion of the kiosks on maps of the Howe Sound region.

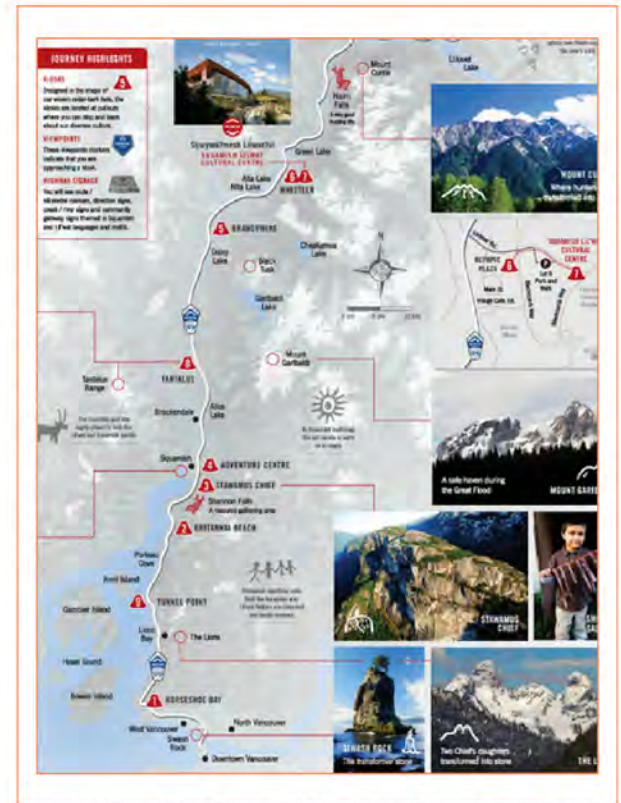
In addition, when visitors search for the Cultural Journey kiosks on the internet, the Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre's website shows up first. On their website, there is a PDF map of Cultural Journey kiosks. The map does not do a very good job of pinpointing where exactly to find these kiosks. It does not tell the user pertinent information, like which exit to take on the Sea-to-Sky Highway to get to each cultural journey kiosk. HSBRIS could consider working with the Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre to update their map or recommend to them that a more detailed one should be made.

As the spaces for the Cultural kiosks are limited and sometimes suffer from visibility, adding lights or other landmarks to draw more visitors might help; this could help brighten them up could catch people's attention when they pass by.



Recommendations:

- HSBRIS should reach out to Google Business Profiles and suggest the inclusion of the kiosks of the Howe Sound region on the map. This step will be utilizing the existing issue conveniently and efficiently and reflect on the values and desires of an organization.
- HSBRIS should use Apple Business Register to list all the kiosks on Apple Maps to make it easier for visitors to find, as it is one of the most commonly used online maps nowadays.



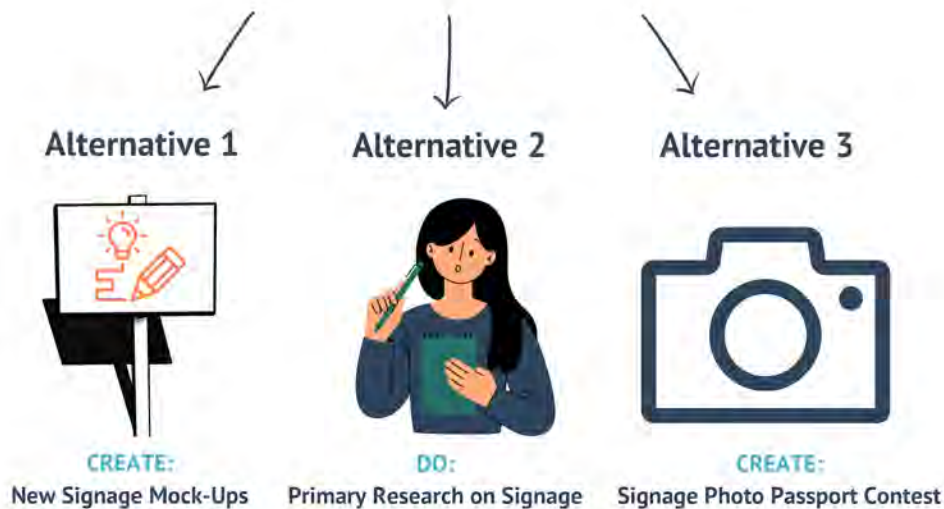
Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre (2023). *Map of the cultural journey kiosks*. [image]. <https://slcc.ca/experience/cultural-journey/>



B.C.'s Howe Sound Designated a UNESCO Biosphere Region, 2021

5. ALTERNATIVES

Alternative Recommendations



Three alternative recommendations have been identified for this project:

- 1.** Create new signage mock-ups
Deliverables
 - Create a mock-up of land acknowledgement signage for Squamish Nation
 - Create three mock-ups of directional signage in Horseshoe Bay, Tunnel Point, and Porteau Cove
 - Create a mock-up of signage that reflects the Don't Love it to Death campaign
- 2.** Conduct primary research on existing signage through interviews, focus groups, and/or surveys
Deliverables
 - Develop relevant research questions
 - Collect data through interviews and observation
 - Analyze findings to create research report
- 3.** Create a social media campaign for a signage photo contest
Deliverables
 - Determine the budget for this campaign
 - Create and develop social media mock-up posts and graphics to promote contest guidelines, rules, and hashtags
 - Conduct a comparative analysis of similar contests conducted by Vista System Company

The three alternatives and their deliverables are discussed in the pages to follow.

5.1 New Signage Mock-ups

The main proposal of the project is to renew the existing signage to help communicate cultural, directional, and environmental information to visitors in the region. Therefore, the creation of new signage mock-ups may benefit the HSBRIS as it reflects the research conducted for the project. As signage plays an important role in visitors' experience, signage has the potential to be educational tools to share Indigenous values and knowledge, and especially information about Truth & Reconciliation. This alternative recommendation can be used to supplement recommendation 4.3, which is to create an inventory and analysis of the Cultural Journey Kiosks. Analysis of the existing signage through an inventory and SWOT would reveal how current signage is lacking and inspire mock-ups of improved signage.



Land acknowledgment sign in Gaston building. (O'Connor, 2019).



Directional signage being rolled out in Prince Rupert, BC. (Sign Media, 2022).

Based on initial in-person findings at Horseshoe Bay, Tunnel Point, and Porteau Cove, it is clear that visibility of signage must be improved. Therefore, new signage mock-ups will focus on that region of the Howe Sound. Directional signage will help guide visitors toward their next destination and offer an efficient and effective way to navigate through the region.

Furthermore, environmental information can be communicated through signage that displays messages to leave no trace behind. By consulting with the best practices of the Don't Love it to Death campaign, mock-ups of signage that promote responsible visitation can be created.



Don't Love it to Death Campaign promotional poster. (Don't Love it to Death, n.d.)

Deliverables:

- Research the history and culture of the Squamish Nation and create a mock-up of land acknowledgement signage to communicate important cultural information to visitors
- Create three mock-ups of directional signage: Horseshoe Bay, Tunnel Point, and Porteau Cove
- Research the Don't Love it to Death campaign and create a mock-up of signage that displays the campaign's principles

As discussed in a meeting with Diane, Administrator of the HSBRIS, signs must do three things: provoke, relate, and reveal. The signage mock-ups will reflect those three elements, and provide clear and straightforward interpretation to the visitors of the region.

5.2 Conduct Primary Research on Signage

HSBRIS can gain a more robust understanding of the perceptions of existing signage in the region by conducting primary research through interviews, focus groups and/or surveys. While it is valuable and necessary to conduct research with existing data from other regions, it is important to note that not all results are transferable. Therefore, collecting primary data will be beneficial because the information will be specific to the biosphere region and involve stakeholders that are familiar with the region and have the potential to help contribute to the mission and goals of the HSBRIS. In terms of deliverables, virtual, in-person, or on-site interviews may be arranged to explore how visitors interact with the signage and their perceptions, thoughts, and opinions on it. Specifically, it would be beneficial to approach visitors on site to collect data, through observation and interviews.



Islands along the Howe Sound. (own photo).

Conducting primary research may also help determine how Truth & Reconciliation can be integrated into signage by consulting with the Indigenous communities that reside in the region. Furthermore, the HSBRIS can determine what role different stakeholders (visitors/tourists and residents/locals/Indigenous groups) play and what they collectively believe needs to be updated and improved when it comes to signage. Other areas that can be explored through the research include first impressions of,

impact, accessibility, relevancy, and readability of the existing signage which could help the HSBRIS understand the direction to moving forward in making progress to better reflect signage with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Deliverables:

- Develop research questions to help identify visitors' perceptions of existing signage
- Collect data through virtual, in-person, and/or on-site interviews to explore how visitors interact with the signage and their perceptions
- Create a research report by analyzing all the data to determine the results and identify implications for the HSBRIS



The primary research may be an alternative to the comparative analysis with other sites. However, there may be some limitations to this approach due to time constraints, lack of resources, and means to make frequent on-site visits. Nevertheless, the information collected from the research would be valuable to the HSBRIS.

5.3 Signage Photo Passport Contest

Hosting a signage picture passport contest is an effective approach to support HSBRIS' commitment to the 4th SDG goal (see **Appendix Fig. 2**) 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). This effort highlights the significance of existing signage, encourages sustainable tourism, and helps achieve SDG goals through social media and other marketing channels. The contest raises awareness of the value of signage and strengthens collaboration in the Biosphere Area, while involving adolescents and under-served areas in nature-based education programs by working with local educational institutions. Through this competition, HSBRIS may gain awareness on sustainable development and strengthens relationships with people and places, embracing interesting ideas towards youth education, expanding audiences, and preserving culture.

To participate in the signage photo passport contest, candidates are asked to submit three images to prove they have visited and seen the signs in the Átl'ka7sem/Howe Sound Region. These photos should be shot in three separate locations within the region and should demonstrate the significance and influence of signage. Competitors must also offer a brief description of each area, as well as their impressions of the signage and cultural relations. All contributions must be made via social media channels, using specific contest hashtags and tagging the HSBRIS official account.



To encourage participation in the signage picture passport contest, prizes may be awarded to winners who share their images and experiences on social media. The winning images may also be prominently displayed on the HSBRIS website and social media channels. In addition to the initial prize of a new Apple Watch SE, winner will have the opportunity to contribute to the new design phase of signage and the renewal procedures as an added reward.

Vista Systems, a manufacturing company of modular sign systems, conducted a similar signage photo content test. While both the HSBRIS and Vista System contests are based on signage, there are some significant variations between the two. The Vista system signage photo contest is straightforward, focusing on the photo itself, but it is ineffective since the topic is broad. In contrast, the HSBRIS contest has a strong emphasis on promoting the local interpretive value of signs, as well as the ideas of sustainability, cultural awareness, and community participation. This corresponds with the HSBRIS' principles and aims, making their challenge more appropriate for persons interested in these areas.

Deliverables:

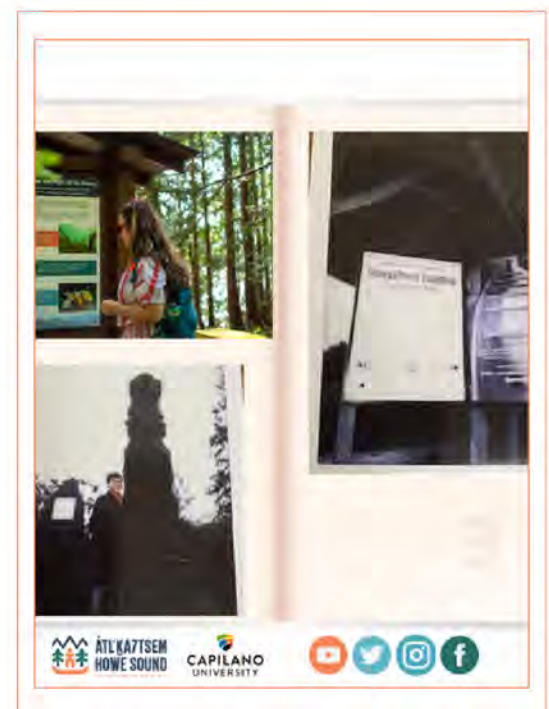
- Determine the budget for the signage photo passport contest campaign
- Develop and publish social media mock-up posts and graphics to promote the signage photo passport contest, including contest rules, guidelines, and hashtags
- Conduct a comparative analysis of similar contests conducted by Vista System Company



Social media mockup (own design)



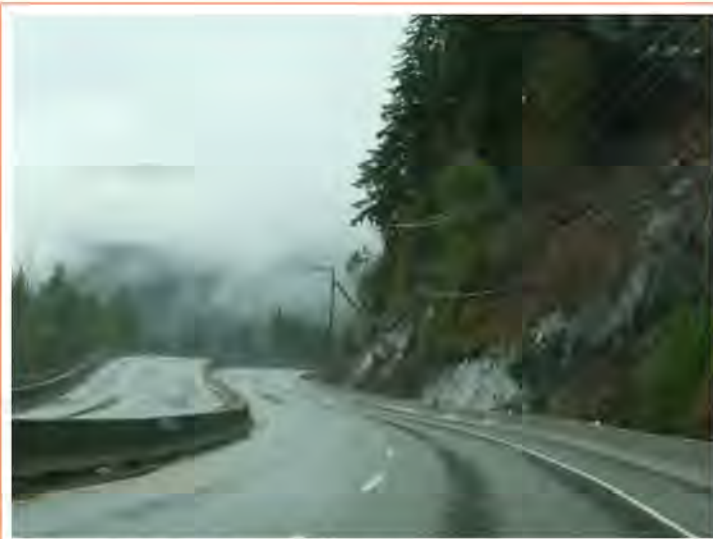
Cultural Journey Kiosk at Tunnel Point, B.C. (own photo).



Social media mockup (own design)

6. CONCLUSION

Aligning with the core values of the HSBRIS to promote sustainability, preservation, and education, there is an opportunity for the organization to update signage in the region to effectively communicate directional, cultural, and environmental information to visitors. The research presented in this report indicates that effective signage has the potential to positively impact visitors' experiences and help foster a sense of stewardship in protecting the region. Furthermore, signage plays an important role in managing and minimizing the environmental impact from tourism. The findings from the research also support the idea that signage must be clear, compelling, relevant, and enjoyable to the audience. Therefore, an inventory of existing signage would be beneficial to determine how signage can be renewed to reflect the most relevant information and incorporate elements of Truth & Reconciliation and the Don't Love it to Death campaign.



Driving along the Sea-to-Sky Highway, B.C. (own photo).



View from Tunnel Bluffs overlooking Howe Sound. (Vancouver Trails, n.d.).

Based on discussions with the team at HSBRIS, a SWOT analysis that emerged from a site visit to the biosphere region, and initial findings from the research, the Capilano University Student Project Management team recommends refurbishing the existing signage and cultural kiosks through research, community engagement, and the consideration of incorporating QR codes. By using the UN Sustainable Development Goals as a framework for the project, research reports on cultural and responsible tourism in BC Parks and heritage sites, QR codes, and existing signage inventory and analysis can be generated. In addition, three alternative recommendations may be considered, which include new signage mock-ups, primary research on signage, and a social media passport photo contest. The research, recommendations and the deliverables discussed in this report can be used to help the biosphere region improve signage to better educate visitors on its history, culture, and biodiversity, with the goal of protecting and preserving the region.

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8. APPENDIX

Figure 1. List of BC parks and trails utilizing QR codes

Name of Park/Region	Name of Campaign	Implementation Date
Tsútswecw Park	Story Trail in Tsútswecw Park https://bcparksfoundation.ca/projects/discover-parks/storytrails/tsutswecw-park/	May 2019
Bowen Island	Trail Walks on Bowen https://www.tourismbowenland.com/qr-coded-trails-enhance-trail-walks-on-bowen/	May 2016
Alice Lake	Story Trail in Alice Lake Park https://bcparksfoundation.ca/projects/discover-parks/storytrails/story-trail-in-alice-lake-park/	N/A
Kootenay National Parks	Kootenay National Park Trail Guide https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2022/pc/R64-438-2022-eng.pdf	N/A

Figure 2. UN Sustainable Development Goals #4



Figure 3. SWOT Analysis of Cultural Journey Kiosks (Horseshoe Bay & Tunnel Point)


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 • Local 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Degradation • Budget Constraints • Wet • Local Hazards • Wildfire • Information Accuracy • Irresponsible Tourism • Shifting Visitor Preferences • Climate Change 	

Figure 4. SWOT Analysis of Porteau Cove Marine Park Signs

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES	 SWOT
<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 • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget Constraints • Environmental Degradation • Wildfire • Local Hazards • Wet • Irresponsible Tourism • Pollution • Shifting Visitor Preferences • Climate Change 	



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