



17 Governance, Biosphere Management and Coordination

17.1 Management and Coordination Structure

The Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society (HSBRIS), a registered non-profit organization, will assume responsibility for the management and coordination of the Át'ka7sem/Howe Sound Biosphere Reserve (AHSBR). Members of the HSBRIS Board and participants in the AHSBR Roundtable will be a balanced representation of First Nations, federal, provincial and local governments, various commercial sectors and civil society.



Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society (HSBRIS), Át'ka7sem/Howe Sound Biosphere Region (AHSBR) - advisory to HSBRIS.

17.1.1 What is the legal status of the biosphere reserve?

Once established, the AHSBR will have no statutory or legally binding status in relation to Canadian or British Columbian law. In accordance with the Statutory Framework for the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, requiring at least one legally protected Core Area and an adjacent Buffer Zone, such areas have been established and incorporated into AHSBR. The legal status of these and other lands and marine waters in AHSBR is summarized in 17.1.2 below.

17.1.2 What is the legal status of the Core Area(s) and the Buffer Zone(s)?

The AHSBR encompasses two primary categories of lands and waters, those in the public domain (Public land) and those municipally held. The Province of British Columbia asserts legal administrative authority over all land and seabed land under marine waters in AHSBR's Core Areas and Buffer Zones, as outlined in Section 17.1.3 below, with one exception: the District of West Vancouver is the legal administrative authority and manager of the Buffer Zone lands adjacent to Cypress Provincial Park. The Government of Canada asserts legal administrative authority over marine waters in the water column above provincial seabed.

All of the AHSBR region is located within the Squamish Nation's unceded territory and its inherent jurisdiction according to their own laws. These lands have been used and occupied since time immemorial.

17.1.2.1 Core Areas

The Legal Status of Protected Lands and Marine Waters in the Core Areas

Protected Area	Legislation
Garibaldi Provincial Park	<i>BC Park Act</i>
Cypress Provincial Park	<i>BC Park Act</i>
Tetrahedron Provincial Park	<i>BC Park Act</i>
Pinecone-Burke Provincial Park	<i>BC Park Act</i>
Tantalus Provincial Park	<i>BC Park Act</i>
<i>Este-Tiwiłh/Sigurd</i> Creek Conservancy	<i>Protected Areas of British Columbia Act</i>
Howe Sound Glass Sponge Reef Marine Refuges	<i>Canada Fisheries Act</i>

17.1.2.2 Buffer Zones

The Legal Status of Land and Marine Waters in the Buffer Zones.

Provincial Public Land Areas	Legislation
Forested and non-forested Public lands adjacent to designated Public lands	<i>BC Forest and Range Practices Act</i>
Wildlands	<i>BC Forest and Range Practices Act</i>
Resource Exclusion Areas	<i>BC Forest and Range Practices Act</i>
Protected Lands	<i>Protected Areas of British Columbia Act</i>
Municipal Land Areas	Legislation
Lands adjacent to Cypress Provincial Park zoned CU2 and Limited Use and Recreation Development Permit Area UL9	Municipal and Regional governments under the <i>BC Local Government Act</i> and the <i>Community Charter</i>
Marine Areas	Legal Status
Rockfish Conservation Areas and Howe Sound Glass Sponge Reef Marine Refuges	<i>Canada Fisheries Act</i>



Future of Howe Sound Forum 2013, photo: L. Johnson

17.1.3 Which administrative authorities have competence for each zone in the biosphere reserve (Core Area(s), Buffer Zone(s) and Transition Area(s))?

Administrative Authorities in the Core Areas, Buffer Zones and Transition Areas

Core Areas	
Provincial Parks	BC Parks, under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy
Provincial Conservancy	BC Parks, under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy
Howe Sound Glass Sponge Reef Marine Refuges	Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Buffer Zones	
Crown Forest Land Base, Resource Exclusion Areas, Provincial Parks	BC Parks, under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy and Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development
Rockfish Conservation Areas and Howe Sound Glass Sponge Reef Marine Refuges	Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Transition Areas	
Ecological Reserve	BC Parks, under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy
Wildlife Management Area	Environmental Stewardship Division, under the jurisdiction of the BC Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy
Resource Exclusion Areas, Spatially Managed Areas and Wildlands, Crown Forest Land Base	BC Ministry of Forest, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNRORD)
Marine waters of Howe Sound	Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Transport Canada
First Nations Reserves	Squamish Nation and Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) held in trust for the Squamish Nation
Private Lands	Municipal and Regional governments under the <i>BC Local Government Act</i> and the <i>Community Charter</i> and the Islands Trust under the <i>Islands Trust Act</i>
Provincial Marine Parks	BC Parks, under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy

17.1.4 Clarify the respective competence of each of these authorities. Make a distinction between each zone if necessary and mention any decentralized authority.

Responsible Authority	Jurisdictional Competence
Core Areas	
First Nations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborative management agreement with BC Parks for the management of <i>Este-Tiwillh/Sigurd</i> Creek Conservancy.
BC Parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Authority under the <i>BC Park Act</i> for all affairs related to the planning, management and enforcement of regulations in provincial parks.
Fisheries and Oceans Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Authority under the <i>Canada Fisheries Act</i> and the <i>Oceans Act</i> to manage all matters in the water column relating to fisheries and ocean management, including enforcement of regulations under both pieces of legislation.
Buffer Zones and Transition Areas	
BC Parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Authority under the <i>BC Park Act</i> and the <i>Ecological Reserves Act</i> for all affairs related to the planning, management and enforcement of regulations in provincial parks and ecological reserves.
BC Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNRORD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible for the stewardship of provincial Public land and natural resources under the <i>Forest and Range Practices Act</i>, and for the protection of BC's archaeological and heritage resources under the <i>Heritage Act</i>.
Local Governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage use of private lands and municipal parks within municipalities and regional districts under the <i>BC Local Government Act</i>, the <i>Community Charter</i> and the BC Islands Trust under the <i>Islands Trust Act</i>.
Owners of Private Conservation Lands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Islands Trust Conservancy manages Nature Reserves, Sanctuaries and Covenants on private lands under the <i>BC Islands Trust Act</i>.
Canadian Wildlife Service, Environment and Climate Change Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manages Christie Islet Migratory Bird Sanctuary (private land) under the <i>Canada Migratory Birds Convention Act</i>.
Fisheries and Oceans Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manages fisheries sustainably, including Rockfish Conservation Areas, supports Indigenous participation and manages national network of harbours under the <i>Canada Fisheries Act</i> and the <i>Fishing and Recreational Harbours Act</i>; Under the <i>Oceans Act</i>, protects oceans, freshwater and aquatic ecosystems and species from negative impacts and invasive species; Maintains waterways and navigational aids to ensure safety for all mariners; and Responds to maritime incidents such as search and rescue and environmental emergencies.
Aboriginal, Affairs and Northern Development Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indian Reserves are created under <i>Canada Indian Act</i>, and in AHSBR are set aside for the exclusive use of the Squamish Nation. The lands remain owned by the federal Crown and are held in trust for the use and benefit of the First Nation.

17.1.5 Main Land Tenure (Ownership) for Each Zone

The main land tenure for Core Areas and Buffer Zones is provincially-owned Public land. Buffer Zone lands adjacent to Cypress Provincial Park are both provincial Public and municipally owned. Transition Areas include provincial Crown, municipal, First Nations reserves, and private land.

17.1.6 Is there a single manager/coordinator of the biosphere reserve or are several people in charge of managing it?

If one manager/coordinator, who designates and employs him/her (national authorities, environmental administrative agency, local authorities)?

There is no one single manager/coordinator governing the region. Any site-specific changes, whether through policy or conservation action, will be enacted by the appropriate land management organization as described above (e.g., First Nations, BC Parks, FLNRORD, municipal governments or NGOs) through their own decision-making processes.

Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society (HSBRIS) is responsible for managing the strategic direction and planning for the Biosphere reserve.

17.1.7 Are there consultative advisory or decision-making bodies (e.g., scientific council, general assembly of inhabitants of the reserve) for each zone or for the whole biosphere

reserve? If yes, describe their composition, role and competence, and the frequency of their meetings.

The AHSBR Roundtable established by HSBRIS would be considered the most inclusive and representative body that would advise the direction of the Biosphere Reserve. The participants invited to the Roundtable would be representative of the various locations and sectors in Átl'ka7tsem/ Howe Sound. A committee of HSBRIS is tasked to ensure balanced representation and invited participants agree to the Terms of Reference (see Appendix G). The role of participants is to provide advice and guidance to HSBRIS in order to: advance biodiversity conservation in the region's marine and terrestrial ecosystems; advance sustainable development in line with the UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Program and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals; and advance reconciliation in recognition of UNDRIP. And, to support development and implementation of AHSBR's objectives and projects that support those objectives.

The AHSBR Roundtable will be convened twice a year and additional working groups may be struck.

There are numerous consultative advisory and decision making bodies in the region. Representatives from the following groups and ones established in the future will participate at the AHSBR Roundtable.



Official opening of the Sea to Sky Marine Trail, photo: McKeever

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



The Howe Sound Community Forum (HSCF) is a body of elected representatives from the ten local governments, Squamish Nation and three regional districts that was formed in 2000 around Principles for Cooperation.

The HSCF's purpose is "to provide a forum for local governments, Regional Districts and First Nations discussions to maintain and enhance the economic, environmental and social wellbeing of Howe Sound for the benefit of present and future generations" (Appendix G). Meetings take place twice per year and the role is to share information relevant to the region, build cooperation and relationships.

The Ocean Watch Task Force formed to move forward strategic actions items contained in the the 2017 Ocean Watch Report specific to Howe Sound.

The Marine Reference Guide (MRG) leadership team and Steering Committee work to improve marine ecosystem health in Átl'ka7sem/Howe Sound by advancing marine habitat protection and restoration, and collaborative ecosystem-based management that effectively integrates

human values (e.g. culturally important areas) with ecological systems (see Section 4.3). The MRG brings together scientific, Indigenous, and local knowledge into a decision-support tool that can identify areas of high ecological and human-use value. The MRG consists of an interactive map accompanied by narrative documentation, education resources, and media. It is a unified resource on marine data for planning and decision-making by all levels of government and community groups, and for supporting collaborative management and stewardship of the region's marine ecosystems. The information will be openly accessible, subject to privacy concerns, and is intended to be used by governments (local, provincial, First Nations, and federal) to support zoning and marine planning, official community planning, and by community groups to strategize stewardship and education initiatives. Data collection for the Marine Reference Guide involves workshops, meetings, interviews, field work, and surveys from a body of representatives from various sectors, including First Nations, industry, recreation, conservation, business and government, with a focus on development of information and narratives related to the marine and freshwater areas of the region.

AHSBR encompasses portions of numerous districts that converge in Howe Sound and extend beyond the borders of the Biosphere Reserve. The terrestrial Core Areas are



Future of Howe Sound Forum, photo: L. Johnson

co-managed by BC Parks with First Nations. Annual Park Management meetings set priorities. Communications and meetings with other Provincial agencies and other stakeholders regarding impacts and potential activities near the park are ongoing.

Lands in the terrestrial Buffer Zones managed by the Provincial agencies depend on professional relationships with various organizations. Legislation requires public advertising of operating plans and proposals under both the *BC Forest and Range Practices Act* and *Land Act*. In addition to public review, there is extensive consultation with First Nations, stakeholders, other ministries, local governments, and agencies. Applications for use of Public Land go through an approval process ongoing throughout the year. Decision makers engage and build relationships with First Nations, stakeholders, local governments on any issue at any time.

Lands in the Transition Areas fall under the jurisdictions of three regional governments: Metro Vancouver, the Sunshine Coast Regional District and the Squamish Lillooet Regional District, as well as the Squamish Nation and the Islands Trust. Representatives from each of the municipalities and rural areas within the regions and the Islands Trust meet regularly, and the Squamish Nation Council has representation from the Squamish area. Regional Growth plans and Official Community Plans are developed and sent for referral to neighbouring regions, First Nations and government agencies, before being approved and filed with the BC Government.

In the terrestrial Transition Area there have been many advisory committees convened within the region around specific issues. These include the Invasive Species Councils, Sea to Sky Clean Air Society's strategic planning for management of the airshed, the Socio-economic Forum and the Science and Knowledge holders workshops in developing the Ocean Watch reports. The consensus based decision-making of these various bodies, and associated consultation processes, influence higher-level decision making. The term of these bodies varies according to their specific purposes. There are frequent short-term working groups established depending on the issue.

The marine Core and Buffer Zones are managed by Fisheries and Oceans Canada. An advisory process was developed with Indigenous groups and stakeholders to

establish the Glass Sponge Reef Marine Refuges in Howe Sound. A broader consultation process was developed for the identification of Rockfish Conservation Areas in the 2000s. The Squamish Lillooet Sport Fishery Advisory Committee was established as an advisory body to provide advice on recreational fishing issues to Fisheries and Oceans Canada in the region; this group meets at least twice a year.

17.1.8 Has a coordination structure been established specifically for the biosphere reserve?

If yes, describe in detail its functioning, composition and the relative proportion of each group in this structure, its role and competence. Is this coordination structure autonomous or is it under the authority of local or central government, or of the manager/coordinator of the biosphere reserve?

The coordination structure of the AHSBR initiative has been evolving over the past five years and continues to evolve through the UNESCO nomination process. The Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society (HSBRIS) was established in 2017 and is a registered non-profit society. HSBRIS is autonomous from the authority of local, regional or provincial governments or agencies that manage resources within the Biosphere Reserve. The HSBRIS Board strives for balanced equitable representation, as described in its Guiding Principles, and members are selected through a process defined by the HSBRIS Terms of Reference (see Appendix G). Former, current and future members of the HSBRIS Board are connected and invested in the region through their work, study or home. HSBRIS staff are responsible for preparing the bi-annual meetings, materials, communications and reports. Advice from the Roundtable guides HSBRIS in the management of the AHSBR towards its objectives (see Section 13).

HSBRIS is committed to creating and operating in a culture of "Ethical Space" as defined by Ermine, W. (2007):

The AHSBR Roundtable (see Section 17.1.7) functions as an advisory body of HSBRIS, providing advice to the HSBRIS



"It is the natural confluence of Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews and cultures. It is created through relationship building and shared governance. At a societal level, it is a vision of a future where these worldviews come together, and where both are valued equally."



Board and staff on priority action areas and research to be pursued in the short, medium and long-term. The Roundtable helps to build stronger connections across sectors in the region, sets priorities for activities and projects related to regional Biosphere priorities, strengthens the vision and builds consensus. Through diverse representation, the AHSBR Roundtable itself sets a model for how people and communities with different interests and mandates work together in a respectful, collaborative and effective way.

A sub-committee of HSBRS staff, Board and Roundtable members is responsible for setting selection criteria and selecting and electing members to participate on the AHSBR Roundtable (see Appendix G).

Over 30 people have joined an ad hoc Working Group established in 2016 providing support and guidance on strategies and many contributed to the content of the nomination dossier and the structure and coordination of the AHSBR Roundtable. Over time, representatives from the BC Government, local governments, Squamish Nation, conservancy organizations, forestry sector, academia, marine institutes, youth and a variety of business and environment interests have attended and contributed. Participants in the working group have connections to the region working with or retired from organizations referenced in this document.

17.1.9 How is the management/coordination adapted to the local situation?

To understand how management and coordination are currently practiced in Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound, it is important to understand some of the history of the region (refer to Section 16). The history demonstrates how adaptation to situations occurring in the region have been

addressed in the past. Today, Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound is in transition, with shifts in the average age of leadership, demographics, and the main drivers of the economy within the region. In addition, the Sound is being impacted by climate change and the significant population growth in neighbouring Metro Vancouver.

There are currently several groups and committees that are steering the dialogue towards a comprehensive land and marine use plan for the region, as addressed in Section 17.1.7 above. Resources within government at the provincial and local levels are limited, and the COVID19 pandemic has caused significant disruption within the economy. However, many organizations and citizen groups are more engaged than ever before. HSBRS's role is to adapt to the region's changing realities, while respecting the history, knowledge, skills and contributions of many diverse groups and First Nations. As a service oriented organization, HSBRS needs to be evolving and adapting in order to service its purpose, vision and mission. Doing this will allow HSBRS to facilitate and steer the planning for the region within the framework of the key Biosphere Reserve objectives.

17.1.10 Is there a procedure for evaluating and monitoring the effectiveness of the management?

The effectiveness of the various management programs operating in the region is reflected in various reports regularly produced by different agencies, as previously referenced in Section 16. Since the Province manages 89% of the lands within the region, the cumulative effects monitoring is likely a more comprehensive report on the effectiveness of biodiversity management.



Orca Celebration, photo courtesy of My Sea to Sky.

The AHSBR and HSBRS strategic plans will contain key and measurable indicators. Progress will be assessed annually by the HSBRS Board and at the AHSBR Roundtable.

17.2 Conflicts Within the Biosphere Reserve

17.2.1 Describe any important conflicts regarding the access or the use of natural resources in the area considered (and precise period if accurate).

If the biosphere reserve has contributed to preventing or resolving some of these conflicts, explain what has been resolved or prevented, and how this was achieved for each zone.

Over the last few decades Howe Sound has been undergoing a transition from a focus on heavy industrial activity to a service-based economy based on increased tourism, recreational activity and residential development. Through the Howe Sound Community Forums, there has been regular reporting on issues impacting the region and relationship building that supports conflict resolution. This is likely an important reason why communities and various levels of government and other stakeholders are supportive of the region becoming a Biosphere Reserve.

Conflicts within the Biosphere Region are mostly limited to the Transition Areas and are reflective of the general conflicts facing many areas of BC in general. Examples include:

- sport and commercial fishing restrictions to protect

wild fish and shellfish populations;

- human/wildlife interactions and the concerns of increased urban encroachment;
- inadequate funding to replace aging infrastructure;
- increased visitors to the region and traffic congestion;
- pollution from wrecked marine vessels;
- lack of affordable housing;
- fears that new protected areas may restrict land use;
- the use of non-renewable resources; and
- new fossil fuel supporting industry.

A continuous debate is taking place on these topics and most people have seen that the status as a Biosphere Reserve can provide important tools to help solve local problems.

BC Parks is working collaboratively with the BC Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNRORD) to manage increased use and demand by recreation users. The Provincial Parks and conserved areas in the Sea-to-Sky area of the Howe Sound region are the most highly used in the province. This increase in users is a result of BC Parks' efforts to increase visits to the parks, and as a result, new management measures are required.

Over the past eight years, certain development projects have created conflict in the region among residents, developers and community. Providing a forum for information, HSBRIS plays an important role in the pursuit of best practices and sustainable development by, for example, ensuring citizen science is recognized in the assessment process, urging that decision-making is based on Cumulative Effects Framework assessments and recognizing local management plans during environmental assessments.

In the marine areas, severe storms and storm surges during the winter of 2018/2019 resulted in a high amount of debris landing on beaches and shorelines as a result of damage to docks and other structures. HSBRIS coordinated a Howe Sound-wide clean up and is moving forward with recommendations for prevention. HSBRIS is creating a discussion over how communities are preparing for, and residents are adapting to, climate change in order to prevent future damage and to reduce the amount of debris by implementing best practices for dock management.

Conflicts over regular abuses of the rules in areas designated for conservation are common. HSBRIS supports citizen engagement in supporting existing agencies tasked with managing conflicts, including the Conservation Officer Services of the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada. HSBRIS' role is to inform the public of these conservation areas, and encourage them to "Observe, Record and Report" violations.

17.2.2 If there are any conflicts in competence among the different administrative authorities in the management of the biosphere reserve, describe these.

While no conflicts in competency between administrative authorities in the management of the Biosphere Reserve have been revealed, conflicts do arise in the availability of support resources. The Sea-to-Sky corridor is experiencing a dramatic increase in visitors and residential growth and development. Changes to government philosophy and the resulting prioritization of resourcing in the region has put additional pressures on communities. The downloading of responsibilities between levels of government is an ongoing challenge. When further reductions in support staff for natural resource operations is threatened, the

community speaks. This has resulted in the retention of key positions within the federal government for wildlife education in schools and conservation officers. The added voice of the Squamish Nation has ended many conflicts due to a proposed reduction of services.

17.2.3 Explain the means used to resolve these conflicts, and their effectiveness.

Transparency of information is at the core of building trust and a spirit of cooperation and commitment to public engagement by all levels of government. The various levels of government have laws regarding Freedom of Information, and over past years there has been increased improvement in public engagement processes during the decision-making process around development proposals. While there are still improvements needed to meet the desired high levels of trust with the public, the collaborative environment among the partners within AHSBR has done much to put pressure on decision makers to resolve conflicts favorably. The use of social media to increase the level of public engagement means decision makers receive more feedback than would otherwise be the case.

The Principles for Cooperation (Appendix G) and twice annual meetings of the Howe Sound Community Forum facilitates the sharing of information among the various working groups and committees working collaboratively on projects. Letter writing and face-to-face meetings with elected representatives bring the voices of the public to the decision makers. Consensus building has been at the core of cooperation and this has been demonstrated in local governments resolving to urge the BC government to undertake a comprehensive land and marine use plan for the region.

There is a strong government-to-government relationship with First Nations and respect for the duty to consult, particularly made more prominent in recent years. Conflicts over the proposed Liquefied Natural Gas processing and export facility in west Howe Sound, for example, are ongoing but the Squamish Nation's approval of the project was conditional on monitoring and a change of project design for environmental reasons.

Private forestry companies planning to work in areas used by recreation enthusiasts have developed a process of consultation with the recreation groups prior to work commencing in order to reduce conflict and improve

safety. Consultants are contracted by the BC Government to support recreation management plans in high conflict areas where multiple users are competing for the same resources.

These stakeholder engagement and consultation processes have improved over time. The increased opportunity for public engagement and open dialogue about regional sustainability concerns, and the generation of potential solutions, has resulted in increased trust in the collaboration process overall and the ability to achieve balance among environmental, social and economic objectives.

17.3 Representation, participation and consultation of local communities

17.3.1 At what stages in the existence of a biosphere reserve have local people been involved: design of the biosphere reserve, drawing up of the management/cooperation plan, implementation of the plan, day to day management of the biosphere reserve? Give some specific examples.

The process to begin Howe Sound region's recognition as a "Biosphere Region" was initiated in 2016. The BC land management agency, FLNRORD, has taken the biodiversity conservation approach in its planning for some time, which is why there is substantial support for a Biosphere Region.

The vision for a holistic planning approach to protect the important values of Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound began in 2013, and as mentioned in Section 3.3.1 on the formation of AHSBRI, the public have been engaged and consulted continually through various public forums ever since. The public forums attended by representatives from various sectors have led to this nomination for formal recognition and designation by UNESCO.

Through HSBRI initiatives, presentations, reports and webinars we have engaged local community groups and individuals on the idea of a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve since its inception. The Working Group meetings held approximately every two months have been open to those interested in learning more and becoming engaged. In 2016, the initiative to become a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve was presented to the Howe Sound Community Forum. Numerous presentations to community groups, industry associations and staff meetings, local government councils, Squamish Nation and universities have also taken place.

The process to nomination has been a volunteer effort with participation from various sectors who have a strong sense of pride and place. HSBRI'S Directors and Working Group members represent many of the organizations currently working in the region and there is good synergy among the groups.

There are many projects and programs currently underway



Future of Howe Sound Roundtables, photo: L. Johnson

that engage local people that are being administered by the HSBRS, or are being worked on in close collaboration with these other organizations (see Section 3.3).

17.3.2 Describe how the local people (including women and Indigenous communities) have been, and or are represented in the planning and management of the biosphere reserve (e.g. assembly of representatives, consultative groups).

The planning and project management has been transparent and inclusive of those in civil society, First Nations, partner organizations and local government from around the region expressing interest in becoming involved as part of the HSBRS Working Group that has been meeting over the past four years on a regular basis.

The Working Group has been open to members of the public and First Nations, and participation has been fairly balanced by gender and has involved youth, retirees and actively working people from various sectors. Documents and plans are made available on a shared database, and regular updates have been communicated through presentations, social media, newsletters and many one-on-one meetings. The Project Manager travels around the region on land and by water on a regular basis to engage with people in the region. The writing of this dossier has involved contributions from and consultation with a wide variety of people in the various departments of government, science based organizations, Squamish Nation and various knowledge holders.

Participation in the AHSBR Roundtable and on the board of HSBRS is based on a set of criteria that aims to strike a balance of inclusion and diversity that is representative of the region. (Appendix G).

17.3.3 Describe the specific situation of young people in the proposed biosphere reserve (e.g. potential impacts of the biosphere reserve on youth, consideration of their interests and needs, incentives to encourage them to participate actively in the governance system of the biosphere reserve)

The mission of the Biosphere Reserve is focused on ensuring a healthy environment for future generations and to create a succession plan for the stewards of the region.

As described in Section 4.5, the region is a hub for youth connecting to nature with more than 12 youth camps located in the area. The region is also a location for family summer cottages. Many of those involved and engaged in the AHSBR initiative have a connection to the area from an early stage in life. The objectives of the AHSBR result from those who wish to ensure a bright future for their successive generations. Youth have participated in the HSBRS working group and are actively working on HSBRS committees and in the design and planning of the AHSBR.

The Squamish Nation look to seven generations ahead in their planning. Grants aimed at engaging First Nations youth are being put to good use and each local committee or authority has youth engagement and advisory councils. Many events in the region are organized by youth attending universities.

HSBRS provides volunteer opportunities for youth to engage in various projects. NGO's providing outdoor education offer training for youth camp councillors, educators and park rangers. Schools in the region have a requirement for volunteer hours and youth have many opportunities to take part in events and projects, such as restoration, shoreline clean-ups or invasive species removal. Social media sites related to Howe Sound provide insight into the connection of youth to the region. In close proximity to four universities, students have studied, participated in field schools, and produced reports that consider the complexity of the issues in the region.

17.3.4 What form does this representation take (e.g. companies, associations, environmental associations, trade unions)?

A balance of private sector, and not-for-profit organizations from various sectors, as well as elected officials, First Nations and members of civil society are represented on the HSBRS Working Group, the AHSBR Roundtable, in committees or in activities as described in the various programs.

17.3.5 Are there procedures for integrating the representative body of local communities (e.g. financial, election of representatives, traditional authorities)?



The HSBRS nomination committee has established Terms of Reference for selection and invitation to participate in the AHSBR Roundtable (Appendix G). Some local governments make formal appointments to the Howe Sound Community Forum. As the convener, HSBRS has procedures in place to ensure balanced representation and participation. Observers from non-government organizations and the private sector active in the region are invited to attend.

17.3.6 How long-lived are consultation mechanisms (permanent assembly, consultative on specific projects)? Make a complete description of this consultation. What are the roles of involved stakeholders compared to the role of the biosphere reserve?

The role of the HSBRS Board of Directors sets a prescribed minimum requirement as required by the BC Societies Act (2015). Besides the standard reporting and procedures as established by provincial law for a charitable society, board members are consulted quarterly on the budget and projects. The role of those participating in the Roundtable is also established through its Terms of Reference. The HSBRS Board develops a strategic plan in consultation with the AHSBR Roundtable and all decisions are consensus based.

Projects affecting the Biosphere Region have various legally prescribed consultation procedures depending on the

authorizing authority and size of the projects. In the Core Areas, BC Parks undertakes consultations with First Nations and stakeholders over a period of many months depending on the nature of the requested changes. Projects of a certain size trigger Provincial and Federal environmental assessments that include public consultation periods; four such projects over the past six years have gone through this process.

Workshops, advisory committees, task forces and steering committees involved in issues contributing to the management of the Biosphere are created and then concluded based on the purpose of the assembly. The role of the stakeholders involved in these various forums is to convene around issues and projects in the marine area, airshed matters, industry, recreation and emergency management. HSBRS' role through the Roundtable governance model is to convene representatives from all sectors of the Biosphere.

17.3.7 What consultation mechanisms have been used, and who has been involved? Are they for specific purposes or long-term? What impacts have they had on decision-making processes (decisional, consultative or merely to inform population)?

From the early days of the initiative to have Howe Sound designated as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, the team has communicated broadly. The first presentation was

to the Howe Sound Community Forum in 2016, followed by updates at each subsequent meeting. The audience is representative of three levels of government and NGOs. Reports have been prepared and shared widely. There have been many presentations to community associations, chambers of commerce and business groups. HSBRIS has been invited as guest speakers at numerous Annual General Meetings. Updates on the initiative and planning have been provided to local government boards and councils through presentations directly to them, including the Squamish Nation Council.

Representatives from various sectors have been invited to attend Working Group meetings and engagement in the nomination process feedback has contributed to continual improvement of our organization and purposes.

17.3.8 Do women participate in community organizations and decision-making processes? Are their interests and needs given equal consideration? What incentives or programmes are in place to encourage their representation and participation (e.g. was(were) a 'gender impact assessment (s)' carried out?

We are fortunate to live in a society where women are involved and engaged on equal footing with men in the planning work. Communities around the region recognize and practice non-discrimination and the removal of barriers for persons of all genders, abilities, races and religions. Employers adhere to legally binding Provincial Human Rights codes.

17.4 Management Policy

17.4.1 Is there a management/cooperation plan/policy for the biosphere reserve as a whole?

Overall, there is no single comprehensive land and marine management/cooperation plan/policy that is strategically guiding management for all the land and waters in the Howe Sound area at this time. This is the number one objective for HSBRIS. This area is collectively managed by various levels of government at multiple scales reflecting a diversity of jurisdictions, values, administrative boundaries and plans. One of the motivations for the Biosphere Region framework is to create a unified vision and plan for the region and avoid the fragmented planning that has been

the case to date. The Howe Sound communities have been calling for a comprehensive land and marine use plan for some time, and the Biosphere Region framework and strategic planning towards the objectives and goals will take this holistic view.

As discussed in Section 3.1.3, a number of planning tools are now available to support land and marine use planning and there are several organizations in the Howe Sound region that are in the process of applying these tools. In the marine environment the Ocean Watch Task Force, the Marine Conservation Guide, the Marine Reference Guide and the Cumulative Effects Assessment reports are all contributing to the ongoing conversations and planning efforts. They provide the essential facts, narratives and maps of the region where none have existed in the past.

The Howe Sound Community Forum's stated Common Vision and shared values contained in the Principles for Cooperation (2014) serve as the basis for management by consensus of the Biosphere Region in the interim (Appendix G). All local government members have adopted the Principles that include the Common Vision.

17.4.2 Which actors are involved in preparing the management/cooperation plan? How are they involved?

Management plans for protected areas, communities and regional land use are in place in the region with all due consideration given to various stakeholders. Community's official community plans are sent to neighbouring communities for comment before final adoption. The various sectors include tourism, transportation, industry, forestry and recreation, among others, all of whom would be represented on the AHSBR Roundtable. Organizations in the region are commonly evolving their own governance models to include First Nations representation. The aim of HSBRIS and the Biosphere Region is for First Nations to be co-chairing the Board of the the HSBRIS Society and participating in the AHSBR Roundtable.

17.4.3 Do local authorities formally adopt the management/cooperation plan? Are local authorities making reference to it in other policies and/or plans? If so, please provide details.

Local and regional governments along with other

stakeholders often reference the Sea-to-Sky Land Resource Management Plan (LRMP) and its strategic direction in other planning and resource management forums and documents. Overall, the Sea-to-Sky LRMP has generally been quite well respected by local governments over the past decade in part due to their participation and input into the planning process. Endorsement of the AHSBR nomination to UNESCO and participation at the Howe Sound Community Forum is a non-binding commitment that HSBRS will ensure is referenced in Official Community planning, conservation planning, business planning and tourism plans going forward. Destination BC's Sea to Sky Destination Development Strategy published in 2019, references the strategic advantage of a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve designation for tourism (Destination BC, 2019). Over time, we expect AHSBR to be referenced in planning documents where applicable.

17.4.4 What is the duration of the management/cooperation plan? How often is it revised or renegotiated?

BC's LRMPs were originally intended to be long-term living documents that provided strategic level direction

for ten or more years before being considered for an update. During this time major, minor and administrative amendments can be made to the plan. However, new direction on land use planning in BC is moving away from large comprehensive land use planning exercises to more targeted issue-focused planning processes in collaboration with First Nations and local stakeholders. As such, a full update to the whole Sea-to-Sky LRMP is unlikely at this time but targeted planning related to certain site-specific management issues or information gaps is possible.

17.4.5 Describe the contents of the management/cooperation plan. Does it consist of detailed measures or detailed guidelines? Give some examples of measures or guidelines advocated by the plan? (Enclose a copy).

As mentioned above, a comprehensive plan for the entire region is still to be developed for the region, however examples of management already in practice fall under the Sea to Sky LRMP. Visual quality objectives are a component of this plan that influence forestry decisions. With the development of major tourism attractions, consideration of view corridors is important. Examples of



Future of Howe Sound Forum, photo: L. Johnson



Shared sense of place, photo: L. Johnson

measures advocated by the LRMP was the 2013 consensus by HSCF members that resulted in a resolution for a comprehensive land and resource management plan for the Howe Sound Region and for protection of the glass sponge reefs. The process involves discussion and learning at the Howe Sound Community Forum meetings, and crafting draft resolutions for representatives to report back to their respective organizations and municipal Councils. Resolutions may go forward to the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) annual conference where, if adopted, are forwarded to the BC or federal government for response.

Over the years, task forces have also been struck to address regional issues to be implemented such as the Sea-to-Sky Air quality management plan and the Ocean Watch Task Force. Recommendations from the task forces are then referred to the bi-annual forums.

17.4.6 Indicate how this management/cooperation addresses the objectives of the proposed biosphere reserve (as described in section 13.1).

The conditions required to meet the objectives described in Section 13.1 exist currently in the region. Important willingness for collaboration between organizations is demonstrated through various forums and assemblies. The current BC government is committed to collaborating with Indigenous governments in natural resource management that is informed by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action. As part of this

approach, the BC government has committed \$16 million over three years (2018/19–2020/21) to work collaboratively with Indigenous governments, communities, and stakeholders to modernize land use planning.

17.4.7 Is the plan binding? Is it based on a consensus?

Legally binding community plans and various land and marine plans within the region are reviewed every several years. The proposed consensus-based comprehensive land and marine use plan for the region is intended to influence planning and policy.

The Sea-to-Sky Land Resource Management Plan is a consensus-based strategic “higher level” plan that provides integrated land use and resource management direction for the region supported by the BC government. The implementation of some parts of the plan have resulted in the establishment of various legal land use designations or legal objectives. The plan also harmonizes direction from land use agreements with some local First Nations and the honour of the Public is at stake to implement these negotiated agreements.

17.4.8 Which authorities are in charge of the implementation of the plan, especially in the Buffer Zone(s) and the Transition Area(s)? Please provide evidence of the role of these authorities.

When a comprehensive plan is developed, implementing the plan rests with the existing government authorities. The BC Government and its various agencies have been responsible for coordinating the implementation and

monitoring of the Sea to Sky LRMP since 2008. Most of the plan has been implemented over the past decade.

As mentioned above, task forces or committees may be struck by the Howe Sound Community Forum with Terms of Reference approved by the local governments. Decision making power may be extended to the representatives of the committee. For example, the Sea-to-Sky Clean Air Management Plan was developed by a task force struck to work with the BC Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy to create the plan, and, to establish a longer term partially funded coordinating organization.

17.4.9 Which factors impede or help its implementation (e.g. reluctance of local people, conflicts between different levels of decision-making)

At present, there are no known factors that would impede the task of implementing a strategic management plan for the proposed Biosphere Region other than the availability of people's time.

17.4.10 Is the biosphere reserve integrated in regional / national strategies? Vice versa, how are the local/municipal plans integrated in the planning of the biosphere reserve?

At the national level, the Canadian Biosphere Reserves Association (CBRA) is in the process of developing its strategic plan for Biosphere Reserves/Regions in the country that will focus on supporting sustainable development, biodiversity conservation, climate change adaptation and social justice. Canada's and BC's commitment to these principles are well established in a number of policies, programs and procedures, all of which have been described in the preceding sections of this report. Although most government programs in support of Biosphere Reserves are provincial in origin, the Government of Canada supports the marine conservation initiatives in AHSBR through the Department of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard and manages the key protected areas and ecosystem-wide resources in the marine Core, Buffer and Transition Areas of AHSBR. Conversely, it was AHSBR's NGO partners who originally discovered, and encouraged DFO to protect, the globally significant glass sponge reefs in Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound.

The Government of Canada also committed in 2015 to adopt the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The work of HSBRS supports the efforts towards implementing these goals, particularly to work with all partners to build public awareness and foster new partnerships and networks to advance the SDGs. HSBRS has also partnered with the BC Council for International Cooperation on co-hosting SDG workshops in the region.

Canada is also committed to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP), and the current government supports the harmonization of national laws to this end. While AHSBR is not promoting political objectives, HSBRS demonstrates respect for existing Indigenous rights in the region.

In BC, the recently elected government (2018) has issued clear direction to its Ministers and their staff, in the form of Mandate Letters, to implement a number of initiatives that directly support AHSBR. Some of the more significant for biodiversity conservation include the following:

- revitalize the Environmental Assessment process and review the professional reliance model to ensure the legal rights of First Nations are respected, and the public's expectation of a strong, transparent process is met;
- enact an endangered species law and harmonize other laws to ensure they are all working towards the goal of protecting our beautiful province;
- implement a comprehensive climate-action strategy that provides a pathway for BC to prosper economically while meeting carbon pollution reduction targets, including setting a new legislated 2030 reduction target and establishing separate sectoral reduction targets and plans; and
- improve wildlife management and habitat conservation, and collaborate with stakeholders to develop long and short term strategies to manage BC's wildlife resources.

In terms of sustainable development and support for the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, this new direction

strives to:

- champion tourism as a job creator throughout BC and work to expand tourism-marketing efforts internationally;
- take measures to improve housing affordability;
- establish a Fair Wage Commission to support the work of implementing the \$15-per-hour minimum wage by 2021 and to bring forward recommendations to close the gap between the minimum wage and livable wages; and
- through partnerships with local governments, the federal government, and the private and not-for-profit sectors, begin to build 114,000 units of affordable market rental, non-profit, co-op, supported social housing and owner-purchase housing.

To support First Nations in pursuit of social justice, the direction includes measures to:

- implement the new First Nations history curriculum, develop full-course offerings in Aboriginal languages and implement the educational Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission;
- work collaboratively and respectfully with First

Nations to establish a clear, cross-government vision of reconciliation to guide the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action, and the Tsilhqot'in Supreme Court decision;

- in partnership with First Nations, transform the treaty process so it respects case law and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
- support Indigenous communities seeking to revitalize connections to their languages; and
- partnering with local governments and First Nations to develop a community capital infrastructure fund to upgrade and build sports facilities, playgrounds, local community centres, and arts and culture spaces.

At the local government level, municipal and regional land use plans in place already align well with the concept of a Biosphere Reserve as conceived and described in other sections of this document. The communities' visions and planning are already models for sustainability. Regionally, growth management strategies of the three regional districts have an influence on the impacts of higher densification and on the infrastructure needed to ensure



April 2019 Howe Sound Community Forum, photo: K. Hemmelgarn

sustainability. Pressures to expand the density prior to implementation or adequate infrastructure are ongoing.

17.4.11 Indicate the main source of the funding and the estimated yearly budget

HSBRIS intends to generate \$250,000 annually in revenue, including in-kind contributions of goods and services to cover costs for communications, engagement and overhead (see Appendix G).

Over the long-term, anticipated revenue will continue to be received from diversified sources. Long term sustainable income for 1.5 full-time staff and fixed overheads will be derived from investment returns from a dedicated endowment fund that has been established with local community foundations. Fundraising strategies have begun aimed at increasing contributions over the long-term.

HSBRIS has and continues to receive funding from local governments, grants from private funders and foundations, individual donations from fundraising campaigns and in-kind contributions, such as offers of meeting space and office space.

Developing strong relationships with universities, as described in the Letter of Engagement from Capilano University, increases the opportunities for projects to receive funding and in-kind support from new sources.

HSBRIS has also received fees for service for advisory and coordinating roles from local governments and non-government organizations. Co-hosting and collaborating with other NGO's and local governments maximizes the efficiency of available human resources and limited overhead costs.

17.5 Conclusions

17.5.1 In your opinion, what will ensure that both the functioning of the biosphere reserve and the structures in place will be satisfactory? Explain why and how, especially regarding the fulfilment of the three functions of biosphere reserves (conservation, development, logistic) and the participation of local communities

The strength of the Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative lies in the leadership and commitment of the Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound community that stands

behind it. This grass roots initiative has evolved from the first Howe Sound Roundtable in 1998, where the need for a comprehensive plan for the Howe Sound Region was first articulated. Since then, the many voices, forums, workshops, reports, and recommendations have held fast to the vision that such a comprehensive plan be achieved by 2020. This Biosphere nomination is the product of that two decade-long effort.

Conservation within the proposed biosphere rests upon the mandates and expertise of Provincial and Federal managers of Core Areas, Provincial managers of extensive forest lands, and Provincial, regional district, and municipal managers



*Second growth coastal forest,
photo courtesy of Little Explorers*

of a host of small protected areas throughout the biosphere. But the strength of conservation efforts going forward rests on the fact that the AHSBR area is an attractive place to do science and conservation because of the strong, collaborative AHSBR community and citizen science community. This community strength is in addition to protect and conserve the stunning natural beauty, strong biodiversity, and world famous geography along the transportation link between Vancouver and Whistler resort area. Science-based NGOs working on marine conservation, restoration and planning, and the BC's Cumulative Effects Assessment team have been attracted to work in AHSBR because of an active and collaborative community and strong citizen science efforts. The HSBRS further strengthens collaboration in the Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound community as a facilitator, networker, logistics supporter, and information hub.

As Vancouver City Councillor and Chair of Metro Vancouver's Climate Action Committee recently stated "the designation would push sustainable development in the region to a higher set of standards with more input from First Nations and more accountability." The Mayor of Squamish also stated "The goals of the Biosphere Reserve align very much with where Squamish wants to go with its future. "Together we can start to find ways that industry can function within the Howe Sound region without damaging the land on which it operates." Sustainable development within the proposed Biosphere Reserve with leadership of the local, provincial, Federal and First Nations governments and their commitment to ensuring development meets best possible practices. For so long people in the region have been fighting against what they don't want. The UNESCO Biosphere Reserve designation framework provides a vision for what they do want. As Metro Vancouver's backyard and playground, Howe Sound is uniquely positioned to be a model for sustainable tourism and development based on this leadership.

HSBRIS is already respected as a neutral entity focused on serving the Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound region. As a charitable non-profit society, the proposed Roundtable structure and staff capacity will provide logistical support, neutral facilitation, the convening of community sectors and the building of relationships to face complex challenges. The AHSBR community has already proved its capacity to bring its members together through socio-economic forums and sustainable development goal workshops. HSBRS acknowledges and respects that the Biosphere Region is

unceded territory of the *Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw* and seeks transparent and collaborative cooperation with our First Nations partners. We understand that strong networks bind our community together and HSBRS already provides important logistic support to existing organizations in the region.



Howe Sound inspiration, by Ryan Nickerson