

Ocean Watch Action Committee

Meeting Notes

Friday, September 22nd, 2023, from 9:30-11:30 am via Zoom

The purpose of this committee is to advance the actions recommended in the 2020 Ocean Watch Howe Sound report.

Participants:

- Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw: unable to attend
- Bowen Island Municipality:
 - Andrew Leonard, Mayor
- District of West Vancouver:
 - [Heather Keith](#), Senior Manager of Climate Action and Environment
- Town of Gibsons:
 - [Michelle Lewis](#), Natural Asset Technician
- District of Squamish:
 - [Sarah McJannet](#), Community Planner
- Gambier Island Local Trust Committee: unable to attend
- Metro Vancouver:
 - [Marcin Pachcinski](#), Division Manager
- Marine Stewardship Initiative – Make Way Charitable Society:
 - [Ellika Cairns](#), Project Director, Melany Sanchez, Project Coordinator; Erica Olsen, Governance and Monitoring Lead; Rebecca McDonald, Marine Debris Coordinator
- Marine Life Sanctuary Society:
 - [Adam Taylor](#), Board Member
- Nicholas Sonntag Marine Education Centre
 - [Krysta LaLiberte](#), Curator
- Sea to Sky Invasive Species Council:
 - [Clare Greenberg](#), Executive Director, Erin Galloway, Field Program Manager
- Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society:
 - [Ruth Simons](#), Executive Director; [Ian Winn](#), Director; [Hasan Hutchinson](#), Director;
- General public: Tom Elliott, Squamish
- Moderator:** Ruth Simons, Executive Director, Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society (HSBRIS)
- Note taker: Diane Mitchell, Admin@howesoundbri.org

ACTIONS

1	Feedback on committee welcomed by Ruth
4.	Consider joining sub-committee to distribute marine debris fund as and when funding is approved and requested.

5.	<p>Let Ruth know of any specific topics to be taken to next HSCF on October 13</p> <p>Ruth looking for people to review the draft Nchu'ú7mut /Unity Plan over the next couple of weeks</p>
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NOTES:

AGENDA	DISCUSSION	ACTION ITEMS/ DECISIONS
1. Welcome & Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OWAC is sub-committee of the Howe Sound Community Forum, organized in response to the Oceanwise 2020 report. • Next updated Howe Sound report on marine health anticipated in 2025. Action tracker HSBRIIS maintaining will contribute to the data for the report. • John Roe (Dead Boats Society) who reported at last meeting has not yet heard about funding to remove abandoned and derelict boats from Howe Sound. 	Feedback on committee welcomed by Ruth
2. European Green Crab Monitoring	<p>Clare:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring marine and intertidal in Squamish Estuary and Furry Creek. None found so far but that doesn't mean there isn't any in Howe Sound. Been difficult to secure more than one year's funding, but DFO Aquatic Invasive Species team, agreed to funding for 2023/24 year. This will allow SSISC to travel to Gibsons to train Nicholas Sonntag Centre staff in trapping, share knowledge and volunteer resources and start ball rolling in this area. • Test trapping will be done in Williamsons Landing area soon. Test trapping will also be done in Porteau Cove soon. Test trapping has also occurred on Bowen this summer. But still hoping to get more trapping in the future. • Ruth/Clare applied to new DFO national Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Fund for 3 years of funding. • Transition in staffing: Ellika who ran ECG SSISC monitoring has moved on to MSI. Rebecca will transition into SSISC and grow reach into invasive animals. <p>Ian:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where can individuals learn about ECG? https://ssisc.ca/crabteam (also has external links) <p>Ruth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officially launching Howe Sound ECG Network 	
3. Marine Stewardship	<p>Ruth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courtney Smaha, former Project Director for MSI moved to 	

<p>Initiative</p>	<p>work with Province on the Coastal Marine Strategy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please to welcome Ellika as new Project Director <p>Ellika:</p> <p>Action 1 – Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Herring survey: record number of volunteers and employed Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw technicians; 2023 report in final review phase Dungeness crab surveys; collaboration with Hakai Institute and Sewells Marina for survey of crab megalopa timing and distribution in Salish Sea; this in an indicator of populations in future years Big jump from previous year with over 200,000 (up from 20,000) megalopa in Salish Sea and over 85,000 in Horseshoe Bay area. Exciting but challenges, also combined with warm temperatures 11 volunteers responded to traps and monitored challenges Hakai will be publishing 2023 report in next few months. But map of distribution can be found here https://sentinels.hakai.org/ <p>Action 2 – Protect & Restore (see Marine Debris report)</p> <p>Action 4 – Legislation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governance Advisory Committee (GAC) had introductory meeting in April. Facilitated by MSI and contains technical staff from Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw, local/regional governments and organizations GAC focus will provide space for information sharing not decision making, and foster relationship building Presentations on range of topics will precede next full GAC meeting 	
<p>4. Marine Debris Coordinator update on activities</p>	<p>Rebecca:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Began as coordinator in July Four avenues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collection & management: overhauled and updated of reporting tool; quality assurance and quality control of debris layer in MRG Outreach & education: developed new materials, social media, and attended events to encourage more “eyes on the water” Cleanups: research requirements of medium-sized debris cleanup and supported other partners in active cleanup; field surveys Research & resource development: research network of resources (cheat sheet coming soon) and explored establishment of fund to support community-led cleanups 	

	<p>Marcin:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When next cleanup done, Metro Vancouver may be able to contribute if debris in Electoral A <p>Ruth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommendation come from a local who has coordinated many cleanups is to send clear and strong message to contractors working near shoreline to secure their materials as this is source of many debris. <p>Krysta:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Though much debris was collected there is still a lot out there. <p>Ian:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has reported on West Howe Sound, including on derelict scow in Andy's Bay. But often ownership is unknown. <p>Ruth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is province's role in ensuring the water lease is enforced? <p>Ian:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Andy's Bay case, owner of the scow is not the owner of the water lease. <p>Ruth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MSI and HSBRIIS proposing marine debris fund; idea to provide funding on reimbursement on mid-sized marine debris collection where no other funding options available, though noting that neither MSI nor HSBRIIS could accept any liability. Could be incentive for those who may otherwise not take action. Cost of equipment rentals, fuel, contractors' costs etc. Not to replace efforts of shoreline cleanups or larger boats. Ready to apply for a Give Where You Live grant with West Vancouver Foundation (could bring in up to \$20,000) but would also accept donations. Looking for OWAC members to join Ruth, Ian, Ellika and Rebecca on a sub-committee to make decisions when applications come in <p>Sarah:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is this being taken to next HSCF as a proposal? Great idea. DoS finding ad hoc cleanup is challenging. Would be good to involve those involved in solid waste local at government level. Will chat to DoS staff. <p>Ruth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes; was mentioned at last HSCF and will be updated at October event. 	<p>Consider joining sub-committee to distribute marine debris fund as and when funding is approved and requested.</p>
<p>5. Updates and review of last meeting's notes</p>	<p>Sarah:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff will be presenting comprehensive climate action update to Council next week on progress on Community Climate Action Plan endorsed in 2020. 	

- Continuing to support work on Spit deconstruction; phase 2 finished in May but contouring and replanting work ongoing.
- Getting ready to engage with Squamish Wildlife Connectivity Project
- New Environment Manager will be starting
- Ongoing progress on downtown marine access and Mamquam Blind Channel maintenance strategy. Update to Council in July. Council endorsed advocacy letter to federal and provincial ministers to highlight funding challenges for coastal marine communities outside of a major port.
- Coastal waterfront protection projects continue, working with Sḵw̓x̓wú7mesh Uxwumixw and DFO.

Ruth:

- Danielle Derrick of DFO has moved on and replacement on leave. Heather Brekke is HSBRI appointed DFO representative, so could be an alternative point of contact for OWAC in the meantime.

Heather:

- Bought back another property on Ambleside waterfront; house will be relocated. Property will be turned into parkland.
- Still working with coastal engineer to adapt to sea level rise and climate change. Piers still being repaired from Jan 2022 storm but through insurance so like-for-like but looking to adapt sea wall and reef structures.
- Spring/summer work to clear logs from main coves
- Forested area push to remove invasive species; ivy campaign this year.
- Approval to do expanded tree planting program and condition assessment of district owned trees for proactive maintenance.
- New Environment Committee (citizens) almost established to move climate action initiatives forward.
- Next phase of wildfire fuel treatment ongoing.

Ruth:

- Log salvage may be topic for last meeting, e.g. to find out more about who does it.

Heather:

- West Vancouver put forward resolution to UBCM to establish inter-agency working group to investigate sources of log debris within Strait of Georgia and Howe Sound and determine collective funding source for removal of debris from coastlines
<https://www.ubcm.ca/sites/default/files/2023-08/2023-UBCM-Resolutions-Book.pdf>

Adam:

- Supports log debris initiative but note that small operators will tuck logs away in small bays including on top of eel grass beds. So will be important to know where logs would be towed in interim before disposal.
- MLSS hosted boat tour around Whytecliff Park with DFO, HSBRS, Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw, West Vancouver Council to talk about common issues and fisheries enforcement. Field visits very worthwhile.

Marcin:

- Invasive species and wildfires are key topics. Staff finished working completing two new best management practices documents. Butterfly Bush <https://metrovancover.org/services/regional-planning/Documents/butterfly-bush-fact-sheet.pdf>. Orange Hawkweed <https://metrovancover.org/services/regional-planning/Documents/orange-hawkweed-fact-sheet.pdf>. Full set of invasive species best management practices <https://tinyurl.com/2payb6um>
- Several fires in vicinity of Howe Sound. Hired a consultant to do community wildfire resilience planning. Initial planning should be complete by end of year.

Krysta:

- Focused on marine debris cleanup.
- ECG training upcoming.

Ruth:

- Preparing OWAC summary for next HSCF on October 13. Let Ruth know of specific topics to be emphasized.
- Reminder to all that Oceanwatch Howe Sound / Átl'ka7tsem / Howe Sound Strategic Plan 2019 – 2021 exists. Ruth would like to know what could be done to have it be a reference document for local governments. For HSBRS, the report is providing key indicators.

Sarah:

- Value to the plan as a way to seed actions for communities to take. But can be good conversation for governance committee.

Erica:

- All actions relate to MSI Governance Advisory Committee but some actions may already be underway at different levels of government. Scope for the GAC to build on it.

Ian:

- Request for summary of plan to be presented at next OWAC committee. Perhaps smaller sub-committee can review and make recommendations.

Ruth:

Let Ruth know of any specific topics to be taken to next HSCF on October 13

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Between Exec Summary and report of work done to date, a review by a smaller committee could be done if resources to do this. <p>Sarah:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does OWAC and strategic actions within larger AHSUBR work, e.g. thinking sustainable development? Is there a way to simplify and streamline to be more manageable? <p>Ruth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Nchu'ú7mut/Unity Plan will be released soon and contains series of goals and priority actions. Contents guided by UNESCO Technical Guidelines for biosphere regions. Plan recognizes the diversity of existing plans and strategies. Ruth is looking for people to review. • The plan will also be used by the AHSUBR Roundtable governance committee. Recruitment has begun. From marine community, looking for marine conservation organization representative. Information on criteria, terms of reference and sectors can be found https://www.howesoundbri.org/ahsbr-roundtables • Using Argyle PR on how to approach each of the sectors sought. Fall will be spent on recruitment. • Still to determine funding and incentives. <p>Erica:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would be good to have a connection between MSI GAC and AHSUBR Roundtable. 	<p>Ruth looking for people to review the draft Nchu'ú7mut /Unity Plan over the next couple of weeks</p>
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