



DISCUSSION PAPER

Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound Biosphere Region Management Plan 2022-2032

prepared by:

Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society



howesoundbri.org

Orca in the Sound: Rich Duncan



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1. LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AHSBR: Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound Biosphere Region (the place)

BC: British Columbia

BR: Biosphere Region

HSBRIS: Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society

NGO: Non-government Organization

UN: United Nations

UNDRIP: United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UN SDGs: United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

2. MESSAGE FROM RUTH SIMONS, PROJECT LEAD



Becoming Canada's 19th UNESCO Biosphere Reserve is both a prestigious honour and a great responsibility—one we are embracing with perseverance and optimism.

As the Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society, we are responsible for the management of the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. Our mandate is to support biodiversity conservation; facilitate education, research, and monitoring; and work with our broader community to foster sustainable development. UNESCO will be assessing our progress through rigorous periodic reviews every 10 years.

In order to further our work in these areas, we need a comprehensive and unified plan for the Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound Biosphere Region to guide how we move forward. Much of the content of the plan will be drawn from our 2020 UNESCO nomination document. We are referring to our management plan as the Nchu'ú7mut/Unity Plan. It is the next step in our journey towards a holistic land and marine use plan for this watershed region.

The engagement process we are undertaking and what we hear, will also inform planning and policy development that many others are undertaking in the region.

We are planning for today's realities and anticipating the needs of tomorrow knowing that climate change and biodiversity loss are the two most significant issues influencing our collective future.

UNESCO Biosphere Regions strive to strike a balance between the environment and people which is why we will be using the lens of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and actions to guide our planning. I am inviting you to provide input on the ideas presented in the discussion paper and work together to ensure a healthy future for generations to come.

*Ruth Simons,
President, Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society*



3. INTRODUCTION

This Nchu'ú7mut/Unity Plan is a prescription for the care of this outstanding and internationally significant place we call Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound to ensure an inspiring way forward as promised in the nomination to UNESCO. It is home to almost 46,000 people and is a neighbour to another 2.6 million people in Greater Vancouver, Canada's third largest city. Its remarkable wildness, rich biodiversity and beauty reflects the heart of Supernatural British Columbia.

This plan is in response to UNESCO's acknowledgment that: "The main objectives of the biosphere reserve are to establish and manage an overarching holistic land and marine use plan for the Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound region that is mutually recognized and respected by First Nations, civil society, stakeholders and all levels of government, to protect and conserve biodiversity in the region and to be a model for best practices and a place where people live in harmony with nature by bringing together First Nations, NGOs, academia, industry and civil society."

Further, UNESCO has recognized the challenge of achieving unification due to the fragmented nature of planning responsibilities throughout the region, beset as it is with no single jurisdictional authority but a collaboration of many, including the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw, eight local and municipal governments, three regional governments, the Islands Trust, and both federal and provincial levels of government with their host of agencies administering myriad responsibilities. The Howe Sound Community Forum has facilitated cooperation and collaboration among these agents of governance since 2000 and has repeatedly called for a unified vision and a holistic plan for the future of the entire Sound that integrates both terrestrial and marine ecosystems.

In 2013, the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) passed a resolution urging the BC government to support the development of a comprehensive plan for Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound that facilitates a coordinated land and marine use planning process among First Nations, all levels of government and other local bodies to ensure the ongoing recovery of the Sound. The BC government supported this request and this management plan answers that call.

The development of this management plan, and its ongoing implementation, is central to the emerging reconciliation between the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw and settler society, as mandated by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and affirmed through the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People Act (DRIPA) in BC, the first province in Canada to pass such legislation.

UNESCO Biosphere Regions do not have legal or regulatory standing. The Nchu'ú7mut/Unity Plan is a reflection of the policies, management layers, regulations and plans embedded in a range of federal, provincial, and local government legislation and management policies that are in place throughout the region that align with the objectives of the UNESCO Biosphere Regions.

The contents of the Nchu'ú7mut/Unity Plan plan are derived from UNESCO's Technical Guidelines and will be a living document, reflecting the changing environment of policies, plans, development and the environment.

The Plan will focus on the functions of a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve: Biodiversity Conservation, Sustainable Development and Logistic Support.

In doing so we will:

- ✓ Keep current with the many related First Nations and government strategies and plans, and strategic initiatives of regional organizations.
- ✓ Assign key indicators to our goals and provide regular reports on progress
- ✓ Provide capacity for dialogue through forums and engagement
- ✓ Operate as a sustainable organization that ensures this work is supported and the UNESCO designation is maintained for generations to come
- ✓ Adapt to changing circumstances and seek to inspire innovative new approaches

4. COMMON VALUES FOR AN ÁTL'KA7TSEM/HOWE SOUND PLAN

In 2013, the Future of Howe Sound Society hosted the Future of Howe Sound Forum. 140 people representing 70 organizations from government, industry, tourism, film, conservation, First Nations, and residents attended. **Two questions were asked:**

1. What do we value?

2. What does it take to protect those values?

Here are the key messages resulting from the dialogue:

- Build awareness of the issues affecting the environment and society
- Establish appropriate marine or terrestrial parks or protected areas
- Create a comprehensive management plan that is:
 - **collaborative**
 - **stakeholder-driven - involves all key players**
 - **include youth**
 - **sustainability-based**
 - **science-based**



4.1 QUESTIONS

- What do you value most about living in or experiencing Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound?
- What values do you feel should be the primary drivers of management of Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound?
- What are some of the main issues that would make protecting these values more challenging?
- What are some strengths and weaknesses in the current management regimes that threaten these values?

Please visit howesoundbri.org/unityplan to answer our discussion paper questionnaire.



SUP in Squamish Estuary: Erasmus Dong



View of Squamish River Estuary from Stawamus Chief mountain. Photo - Bob Turner

5. GUIDING PRINCIPLES IN RELATIONSHIP WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

HSBRIS recognizes that First Nations Peoples have lived in the territory encompassed by the AHSBR since time immemorial. HSBRIS honours the unique relationship of First Nations Peoples with these lands and waters and the deep-rooted, spiritual connection to nature that has informed their culture and way of life for thousands of years.

The Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society operates within the framework of UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme. UNESCO Biosphere Reserves are regions in which people and organizations have committed to live and work in harmony with nature and with each other.

UNDRIP sets out the individual and collective rights of Indigenous Peoples and emphasizes the importance of promoting and protecting their rights.

UNESCO’s engagement with Indigenous Peoples is framed by its mission to promote peace by encouraging inter-cultural dialogue and by reinforcing the role of sustainable development through education, the sciences, culture, and communication and information.

We acknowledge the values expressed in the Squamish Nation’s Xay Temieux Sacred Land Use plan and the Squamish Nation’s strategic plans.



Squamish. Photo: Bob Turner



5.1 QUESTIONS

- How familiar are you with the history and culture of the First Nations Peoples in this region, their culture and way of life?
- How familiar are you with the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Man and the Biosphere Programme, The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the BC Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People’s Act (DRIPA)?
- UNESCO’s engagement with Indigenous Peoples is framed by its mission to promote peace by encouraging inter-cultural dialogue and by reinforcing the role of sustainable development through education, the sciences, culture, and communication and information. Do your values align with those expressed in the Xay Temixw Sacred Land Use plan and Squamish Nation Strategic Plans?

Please visit howesoundbri.org/unityplan to answer our discussion paper questionnaire.



Garibaldi Lake panorama: Steve Quane, Fire & Ice Geopark

6. YOUR PARTICIPATION

We are in a phased process to develop the Nchu'ú7mut/Unity Plan. The process will unfold as described below:



Winter 2022

- Review technical guidelines and draft outline of the plan
- Prepare and finalize discussion paper
- Appoint members to the AHSBR Roundtable selection committee
- Engage with the representatives to gain feedback on the discussion paper



Spring 2022

- Review feedback
- Appoint AHSBR Roundtable members
- Draft project priorities and actions
- Engage and gain feedback



Summer 2022

- Convene the AHSBR Roundtable
- Review draft of the Nchu' 7mut/Unity Plan
- Review feedback



Fall 2022

- Work towards finalizing the living document

We are committed to engaging with Indigenous Peoples, all levels of authorities, the public, environmental NGOs, opinion leaders and industrial users, all of whom have varied and unique contributions to make on the path to the Nchu' 7mut/Unity Plan.



Squamish Nation Drumming : Kris Krug

The Nchu'ú7mut/Unity Plan will identify a role for all in the region in taking care of our Biosphere. This process acknowledges that:

- 1 The entire boundary of the region is Squamish Nation territory, but the region also has claims by the Tsleil-Waututh First Nation, Katzie and Musqueam First Nations, Hul'quimi'num speaking nations to the west, (including the Hahalt, Stz'uminus, the Cowichan Tribes, Lake Cowichan, Lyakson and Penelakut), the Lil'wat to the north, and to the north-west, the shíshálh (Sechelt)¹
- 2 The plans, regulations, and policies of local, regional, provincial, and federal governments evolve over time. Multiple initiatives are underway that address the values we are aspiring towards.
- 3 Multiple organizations are doing important work to protect and restore the land and waters and all people in a watershed have an important role in managing a healthy and sustainable future.
- 4 Employers in the region rely on a healthy workforce, a predictable set of rules and are vital to a sustainable future for people who live in this region. COVID 19 has impacted employers over the past two years causing employment disruption and in many cases financial losses.
- 5 Events such as COVID-19 have impacted lives, particularly youth and marginalized communities.
- 6 Communities are impacted by extreme weather events. Climate change mitigation and resiliency is an urgent matter.

7. HOW TO USE THIS DISCUSSION PAPER

We invite you to contribute your thoughts to help us ensure our priorities and goals are in the right place over the next 10 years. We also invite you to learn more about the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) and consider how we in this region are contributing to these global goals [Canada is committed to achieving](#).

**This paper is designed to promote discussion and create dialogue.
We want to hear your thoughts on:**

1

The 2030 vision for
Átl'ka7tsem/Howe
Sound

2

Issues or concerns
you think we may not
have considered

3

Big Ideas or solutions
that you or your
organization are
working on that we
may not be aware of

4

Your wish for priority
actions you think can
be achieved in our
region



Keats Island: Josh Berson



You are invited to participate in the online and in-person discussions and to submit your ideas through howesoundbri.org/unityplan until June 15th, 2022 at 4pm.

or email
howesoundbri@gmail.com

Contact us if you would like us to host an in-person dialogue.

8. ABOUT THE UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND HOW THEY LINK TO OUR PLAN



We seek a balance between protecting Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound and the ability for people and culture to thrive. A Biosphere Region embodies sustainable development in practice. The global strategy for the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) emphasizes the key role of the Man and the Biosphere Programme in the [UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#).

Informing and generating dialogue about each of the goals and how we collectively achieve them is one of our main programs. On our website, [you will find information](#) on each of the goals and ideas for generating dialogue about our connection and contribution toward the targets.

We will develop key indicators for each of the UN SDGs. We will use this framework for measuring sustainability and seeking a balanced approach to development in the region where no one is left behind.

The [Stockholm Resilience Society](#) is an international research centre on resilience and sustainability science. Their notion that a healthy environment is the foundation, supporting a healthy society that supports a healthy economy.



8.1 QUESTIONS

- Do you agree that sustainability is about meeting human needs within ecological constraints?
- Do you agree that the economy is a strategy to support society in achieving a healthy and sustainable quality of life?
- What is your ideal vision of sustainability?

Please visit howesoundbri.org/unityplan to answer our discussion paper questionnaire.

9. THE VISION: DEFINING THE DESIRED STATE FOR ÁTL'KA7TSEM/HOWE SOUND

There are many overlapping authorities and jurisdictions in the region. Each of these authorities have their own set of values, mission, visions and strategic goals. You can learn more about these on our website [here](#).

The following vision has been informed by community dialogue:

The future desired state for Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound will be achieved when the whole watershed and ocean become healthy again. When the watershed is properly functioning as an integrated ecosystem in both the marine and terrestrial realms. This is the foundation for supporting a healthy society where humanity and nature thrive.

Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound is a just and fair society that leaves no one behind. A region governed through trusting and collaborative relationships, where all members of the community are considered and supported by a vibrant and sustainable economy.



9.1 QUESTIONS

- Does this Vision statement represent what you value in Atl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound?
- Do you think this Vision statement supports the work needed for us to realize the desired state for Atl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound?
- Given what you value about Atl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound, does this Vision state your priorities suitably? If not, what would your vision statement say?

Please visit howesoundbri.org/unityplan to answer our discussion paper questionnaire.

10. ABOUT THE STRATEGIC GOALS

In our nomination document we shared three overarching objectives (page 109):



- 1 An overarching holistic land and marine use plan for the Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound region that is mutually recognized and respected by First Nations, civil society, stakeholders and all levels of government.
- 2 Biodiversity conservation needs in the region are understood and defined, and measures are in place to ensure the conservation of critical ecological values.
- 3 People, culture and humanity in the region thrive in harmony with nature.

In the following pages we outline strategies identified through our nomination process, which will lead us to meeting these objectives. Each of these goals have many actions and initiatives, many that we know are well underway.

Over the course of the dialogue and the convening of the AHSBR Roundtables, priority projects and actions will form part of the plan. Our periodic review in 2032 will be measured on the success of the goals. These partnerships and collaborations contribute toward the [UN SDG 17 Partnership for the goals](#).

We are seeking your input and feedback on these strategic goals for Biodiversity Conservation, Sustainable Development and Governance.

We invite your suggestions, information and references to activities we may not be aware of.

Help us fill the gaps and identify the opportunities and threats that are not being reflected in current plans and processes.

11. STRATEGIES FOR BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

The conservation of biodiversity is a central function of a biosphere region, with a view to making a significant contribution to the conservation of landscapes, ecosystems, species, and genetic variation, both within the Biosphere Region itself and beyond its boundaries. As stated in the UNESCO nomination document:

“ The AHSBR initiative is motivated by the need to protect and conserve biodiversity in the region and support Canada’s commitment to the Aichi targets. Current and future protected areas are to be safeguarded from the pressures of human activities that could erode their values to biodiversity. Strengthening protection for species’ habitats starts with educating about the ecosystem values and working together to protect those values.

Strengthening effective management of the protected areas is a goal for preserving these spaces for future generations. HSBRS supports projects that stem the further loss of biodiversity and help fill in the gaps where more work needs to be done (HSBRIS, 2020).

The Aichi targets mentioned above were established in 2011 under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and expired in 2020; they have recently been supplanted by Canada’s Nature Legacy and its new conservation targets (Section 4.3.1).”

Goals for the Environment.

Click on each of the UN SDGs for more information about the goals and how we are contributing towards them in Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound.



- 1 Halt and reverse biodiversity loss in Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound and facilitate the ongoing renewal and recovery of its marine, freshwater and terrestrial ecosystems (*SDG 14-2, SDG 15-1, 15-5*)
- 2 Conserve biological diversity throughout Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound, with priority given to the conservation of 1) representative ecosystems; 2) species of national and international significance; and 3) species documented as rare, endangered or at-risk (*SDG 14-A, SDG 15-1, 15-4*)
- 3 Implement the Canada Nature Legacy targets in Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound to protect 25% of land, freshwater and ocean ecosystems by 2025 and 30% by 3030 (*SDG 14-5, SDG 15-9*)
- 4 Protect sensitive ecosystems and habitats from fragmentation caused by development (*SDG 15-9*)
- 5 Adopt a watershed strategy and governance to manage and protect water resources (*SDG 6-5, 6 & 6B, 15-4, 5 & 9*)
- 6 Protect species and habitats from invasive species, pollutants, damage, and poaching through effective monitoring and enforcement (*SDG 14-1,4 15-8*)
- 7 Meet and exceed quality standards for clean air, clean water, light and noise pollution (*SDG 6-1 & 3, SDG 14-1*)
- 8 Communities meet and exceed Canada’s commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions (*SDG 13*)

11.1 QUESTIONS

- What is reflected in these strategies that inspires you?
- What is not reflected in these strategies that concerns you?
- What could be reflected in these strategies to create more of a balance between supporting a healthy environment, healthy society and healthy economy?
- Are there measures you would like to have in place to support these strategies?

Please visit howesoundbri.org/unityplan to answer our discussion paper questionnaire.

12. STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

A healthy environment supports society

To balance this work of biodiversity conservation, AHSBR and HSBRS have an equally important role to play in “fostering economic and human development which is socio-culturally and ecologically sustainable.”



Our economy is a system that requires input, conscious planning and direction in order to achieve sustainability.

Agreement between of all levels of government, First Nations and most particularly, local and regional governments, through the Biosphere Region designation and this plan will enable AHSBR communities to collaboratively realize our potential as a model region for innovative sustainable development. Implicit in these agreements is their commitment to work together to effectively manage growth; follow best practices; and invest in the necessary infrastructure to adapt to growing tourism and recreation demands and adapt to climate change.

The UN (SDGs) provide a framework for addressing and striking balance between environmental, social and economic issues, so that no one is left behind.



- 1 Communities and sector stakeholders model sustainable development through demonstrating industry best practices and standards in the integration of the three core elements of sustainable development: The environment, society, and the economy (*SDG 9, 11, 12*)
- 2 Youth and marginalized people are connected to nature through projects and programs in collaboration with local and regional educational institutions (*SDG 4*)
- 3 More communities will adopt “Nature-based Solutions” in infrastructure planning, strategies and programs (*SDG 16, 9 and 11*)
- 4 Watershed governance and planning strategies are used in planning (*SDG 6-5 & 6, SDG 9 and 11*)
- 5 Employers are meeting and exceeding the living wage for families (*SDG 8*)
- 6 Local governments in the region have pledged and committed to the UN Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities (*SDG 11*)

12.1 QUESTIONS

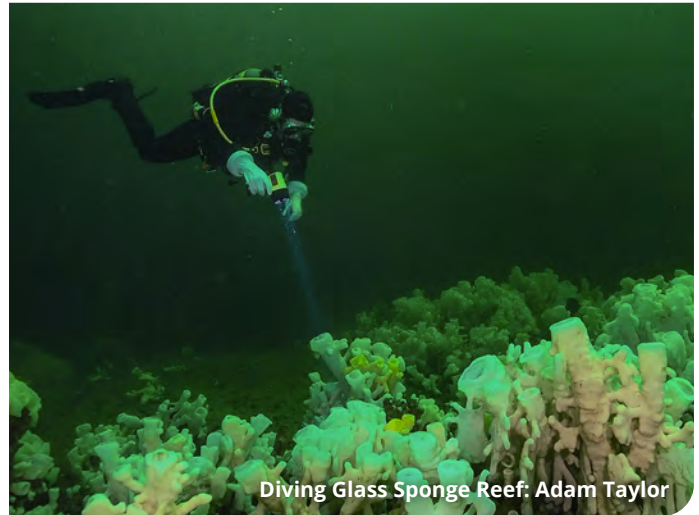
- What is not reflected in these strategies that worries you?
- What should be reflected in these strategies to create more of a balance between the environment, society, and the economy?
- What measures for the strategies would you like to see?

Please visit howesoundbri.org/unityplan to answer our discussion paper questionnaire.

13. GOVERNANCE

Governance refers to the processes through which people come together, make decisions, and take accountability for action. As the managers of the UNESCO Biosphere Region, we have developed a transparent process for selecting people to the AHSBR Roundtable. The participants would be representatives of the various locations and sectors in Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound. A committee of HSBRS is tasked to ensure balanced representation.

Our goal is for the AHSBR Roundtable to be considered the most inclusive and representative body in the region working across all sectors of society to advise and inform the priority projects and actions of our collective Nchu' 7mut/Unity Plan.



The role of participants is to advise and guide HSBRS 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 Programme and the UN's SDGs; and advance reconciliation in recognition of UNDRIP
- ✓ Support the development and implementation of AHSBR's objectives and projects that support those objectives

The AHSBR Roundtable will be convened twice per year and additional working groups may be struck. This does not replace, but is intended to be complementary to the numerous other community-style forums, consultative, advisory, and decision-making bodies in the region.

The AHSBR Roundtable is committed to pursuing its objectives in collaboration with First Nations while striving to understand First Nations cultural practices

and co-creating a holistic approach that integrates First Nations societal norms. The Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society.

HSBRIS is a non-profit society that acts as a convener and communications and engagement hub, and provides logistic support to the AHSBR.

HSBRIS is committed to creating Ethical Space which is defined as:



Ethical Space

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."



13.1 QUESTIONS

- How many people and groups should be represented by the AHSBR Roundtable?
- Who should they be?
- How often do you think they should meet?
- What factors do you think should be considered in selecting members of the Roundtable?

Please visit howesoundbri.org/unityplan to answer our discussion paper questionnaire.

14. CONCLUSION

Thank you! We want to hear from you. If you have any thoughts on:

- ✓ The engagement approach and how you would like to be involved in the future
- ✓ Issues or concerns you think we should be aware of
- ✓ Ideas or solutions you or your organization wishes to share
- ✓ Anything you wish to share on the topic of our three objectives please contact us



Keats Island: Wayne Kaulbach



Please participate in the online discussions. Submit your ideas through howesoundbri.org/unityplan until June 15th, 2022, or email howesoundbri@gmail.com