



Ocean Watch Action Committee Meeting Notes

Friday, April 5th, 2024, District of Squamish Council Chambers
from 9:30-10:30 am via Zoom/in-person to 12:00

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

Participants:

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Bowen Island Municipality:

Andrew Leonard, Mayor, [Carla Skuce](#), Manager of Environment & Parks Planning; Sue Ellen Fast, Councillor

District of West Vancouver:

[Heather Keith](#), Senior Manager of Climate Action and Environment

Town of Gibsons:

[Annemarie De Andrade](#), Councillor

District of Squamish:

[Sarah McJannet](#), Community Planner

Metro Vancouver:

Jenn McCutcheon, Area A Director; [Marcin Pachcinski](#), Division Manager

Marine Stewardship Initiative – Make Way Charitable Society:

[Ellika Cairns](#), Project Director; Erica Olsen, Governance and Monitoring Lead

Marine Life Sanctuary Society:

[Adam Taylor](#), Board Member

Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society:

[Ruth Simons](#), Executive Director; [Ian Winn](#), Director

Guests:

Courtney Smaha, Marine Resource Planning Officer, Ministry of Waters, Lands and Resource Stewardship, Province of BC

Edith Tobe, Executive Director, Squamish River Watershed Society

Moderator: Ruth Simons, Executive Director, Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society (HSBRIS)

Notes: Diane Mitchell, HSBRIS

ACTIONS

1	Consider providing Oceans Legacy with letter of support for their marine debris funding application. Deadline was April 12th.
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2	Review the Coastal Marine Strategy Intentions Paper
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NOTES:

AGENDA	DISCUSSION	ACTION ITEMS/ DECISIONS
1. Welcome & Introduction	<p>Ruth and Sarah:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> From the District of Squamish Council Chambers, we welcomed those who made the trip and those on Zoom 	
2. Updates	<p>Sarah:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bringing forward a Marine Access Review for Council endorsement has been worked on for several years. Addresses marine needs and priorities for the community. Also integration of coastal protection, climate planning and infrastructure. Also presenting an update on the Mamquam Blind Channel long-term maintenance and funding strategy to address navigability and restoration opportunities where St'a7mes River outflow comes in, which has been increasingly challenging. <p>Edith:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently working with Aquatic Ecosystem Recovery Fund and BC Salmon Restoration Fund to make significant changes to training berm, modifying lower spit, opening 850m of former spit to allow access from Squamish River back into estuary at 80% of tidal flows for migrating juvenile chinook into feeding grounds. Also, upgrades along training berm at key culvert locations, replaced undersized pipes with large 3m x 3m concrete box culverts. Now post-construction, monitoring salmon with radio-tags. Fish are using new openings making significant use of new breach through berm. Funding in place until 2027; looking to replace two more culverts at upper end. Also looking to install culvert connectivity along sea and spur line servicing Terminals. Big undertaking; need to ensure not adding to flood risk levels. Will help clean out the Upper Bridge Pond area and improve fish habitat, making system more resilient <p>Director McCutcheon</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Metro Vancouver does a clean up in more remote areas every two years. Last one was in Howe Sound, next one will be in Indian Arm. Possibly opportunities for overlap or partnering. 	

- Received Metro Vancouver risk mapping report; Bowen and West Vancouver on there. Looked at flooding, sea level rise, earthquakes and forest fire.

Adam:

- MLSS finished first full year of funding for monitoring programs, including reinstating the lingcod egg mass survey and new rockfish monitoring. Also secured some funds from BC Parks related to Halkett.
- 9 species of rockfish observed including 2 under review for SARA (quillback and yelloweye). Also, hundreds or thousands of baby quillbacks for first time in about ten years. Will be about 10 years until they're big enough to breed. Maybe can get improvement to monitoring or enforcement. Couldn't have done it without the volunteers.
- Also doing outdoor education programming with Squamish Nation Elementary Schools and secured funding for contract educator to work with Nation's language and culture department to enhance language and culture at outdoor education events.
- New logo from Art by Di.

Carla

- Monitoring for European Green Crab will continue on one side of Bowen island.
- Renaming two beaches with Squamish Nation names.
- Follow up from last OWAC, has found providers for spill response. Training will probably occur in June.
- Don't Love it to Death campaign happening on the island; signage has been installed.
- Bringing a report to council next week on Municipal Protected Areas project, towards the 30x30 commitment.

Heather

- Continuing to look at sea level rise work and coastal planning of public area. Winters will be most impactful and problematic.
- Continuing working with streamkeepers around large fish kill last fall from highway tire runoff. Undertaking pilot studies looking at bioswales and other options to minimize the flush of chemicals coming after first major rains in September.
- Streamkeepers have projects to increase fish passage of Cypress Creek at Stearman Beach. Timeline unknown.
- North Shore Sea Level Rise Strategy working group has been re-established after about a two year hiatus. Cross North Shore partnership with First Nations North Shore Emergency Management to implement strategy

and work together.

Councillor Fast

- Islands Trust is renewing trust policy statement (big policy statement over all island OCPs); mandate to preserve and protect rural character ecosystems.
- Looking at integrated spatial planning as a bigger concept for next stage of terrestrial planning.
- Bowen's OCP is coming up.
- Has been looking at some of Bowen's commitments to OWAC and the Biosphere Region and thinking about how to keep ocean commitments in the 30 x 30 commitment.
- New online website for Mannion Bay, [Discovering Kwilákm.](#)

Mayor Leonard

- Bowen Island OCP about to start. Terms of Reference approved by Council; explicitly states that anything done on OCP needs to use lens of UN SDGs, DRIPA and UNDRIP as well as through a sustainable economy model.
- For Metro Vancouver, lots at Board level regarding marine initiative, e.g. MV's Watershed Education Program which engaged around 7500 people (public and students) in watershed education programming in 2023.

Ian:

- Site has been identified on the Sunshine Coast for European Green Crab monitoring, close to Camp Elphinston and Hutchinson Creek. One preliminary survey conducted last September; none found.
- Need to submit an application to DFO for more monitoring in spring and summer. Working with Nicholas Sontag Marine Education [Centre Renamed TidePools Aquarium](#) to get the site established. Need to get equipment, resources and people.
- Joined Ocean Legacy Foundation last month for boat tour around southern Howe Sound looking for marine debris. Happy to report that compared to previous surveys, level of marine debris is reducing. Cleanup efforts paying off but there is still a lot of debris in Andys Bay. Owner of that foreshore has applied to Transport Canada Receiver of Wrecks to take over some of the larger vessels to dispose of them properly. Still a lot of foam and plastic on the beaches.

Ellika

- Ocean Legacy applied for funding for several larger cleanups in Howe Sound. They have the skills to tackle larger structures, metal, partial sunken materials, etc. They are looking for letters of support.

Consider providing Oceans Legacy with letter of support for their marine debris funding application by April 12

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They have surveyed the entire shoreline. • MSI hosting a community shoreline cleanup with Squamish Terminals on April 23 • As no one from SSISC present today, will report that EGC monitoring will continue this year, same sites in Squamish and Furry Creek but possibly also adding a site at Porteau Cove with BC Parks. • A lot of herring spawn this year in and around Squamish estuary. Squamish Nation hosted welcome ceremony on March 14. • Herring spawn surveys will continue into early May. • Marine Reference Guide going through back end updates for better functionality. • Will be hiring a program coordinator in May. • Dungeones crab monitoring will happen in Horseshoe Bay in partnership with Hakai Institute. 	
<p>2. Log salvaging</p>	<p>Ruth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Log salvaging remains an issue as only certain trees are marketable and are salvaged. The rest when cleared are dumped at sea and float back in. • Problem for continued erosion along riverbanks. • Could be an interesting workshop but large-scale, ongoing issue. • Ruth recommends reading Edge of the Sound by Jo Hammond for the history of salvaging in Howe Sound. <p>Adam</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In sheltered areas where logs are stored logs, the areas are either heavily damaged or undergoing recovery. Without designated areas to store logs, they can damage eelgrass beds which are also found in sheltered areas. Some was also being stored in a provincial park and the salvager was asked to remove them; they're now in a private area. Needs elected officials and staff to identify where logs could be stored temporarily until they can be taken to the mill. 	
<p>3. Marine Spatial Planning</p>	<p>Courtney:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working for the planning side of the Coastal Marine Stewardship branch of Province of BC, working with DFO and First Nations Fisheries Council on the planning stage of the Marine Spatial Planning for the South Coast. Encourage all to read intentions paper; out of this will come Draft Coast Marine Strategy, in 2024. Overlaps with Átl'ka7tsem / Howe Sound initiatives. • In prep for the planning of the Marine Spatial Planning for the South Coast. Not yet out for external 	<p>Consider reading Coastal Marine Strategy Intentions Paper</p>

	<p>engagement. Focuses on two biosphere regions. Howe Sound is part of the southern shelf biosphere region.</p> <p>Ruth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not been able to connect with DFO about updates to the glass sponge reef/RCA realignment. <p>Erica</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MSI Governance Advisory Committee met recently. A lot of support for the group, being able to coordinate and think strategically around what is anticipated coming from provincial/federal levels. • Also, conversation about a formal connection to OWAC. Led to a conversation about actions from Ocean Watch Report and plan to have another iteration of the report. • Exploring name and whether better as Marine Planning Working Group. Intention is not to create a marine plan but to coordinate the marine plans coming from federal/provincial/First Nations authorities. In discussion. <p>Ellika</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most recent OceanWatch report was published in 2020. As Oceanwise no longer researching locally, there is a gap to be filled. Ellika and Ruth spoke with Aroha Miller to find out logistics to gauge time and cost for updating the report. Any future version would be scaled back. Next steps for OWAC, looking to form an advisory committee to scope out project. Funding and a contractor would be required. <p>Ruth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would appreciate at least one from local government on this advisory committee. Looking for volunteers or delegates. Councillor Sharon Thompson volunteered. <p>Sarah</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggest a workshop or key questions to make it easier to commit to. <p>Courtney</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be an opportunity to fill gaps, e.g. crustaceans. <p>Edith</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to utilize summer students. 	<p>Local Government rep to join the advisory committee.</p> <p>Workshop to be arranged before or with next OWAC mtg.</p>
<p>4. Walk about Squamish</p>	<p>The meeting ended at 10:30 and the group lead by Sarah McJannet walked to view the Mamquam Blind Channel by the connecting pedestrian bridge under construction. Here Sarah told the history of the development along the channel, the current challenges and many plans for restoration, renewal, managing growth and resilience to climate change.</p>	<p>Keep watch on the opening of the beaches at the Oceanfront Park. Walk the trails of the estuary to view the restoration.</p>

