Ocean Watch Action Committee

Meeting Notes



Friday June 10th 2022 from 9:30-11:30 am via Zoom (see recording)

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

**Participants**:

Bowen Island Municipality:

Bonny Brokenshire, Manager of Environment and Parks Planning

District of West Vancouver:

Heather Keith, Senior Manager of Climate Action and Management, Mathew McKinnon, Parks Environmental and Ecosystems Manager, Sharon Thompson, Councillor

Town of Gibsons:

 Annemarie De Andrade, Councillor

Metro Vancouver:

Marcin Pachcinski, Division Manager

David Suzuki Foundation:

 Kilian Stehfest, Marine Conservation Specialist

Marine Stewardship Initiative – Make Way Charitable Society:

 [Courtney Smaha](http://courtney.smaha@gmail.com), Project Director, Bridget John, Program Manager

Marine Life Sanctuary Society:

 [Adam Taylor](http://adamtaylor@mlssbc.com), Board Member

Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society:

 Ruth Simons, Project Lead, Ian Winn, Director, Hasan Hutchinson, Director

Department of Fisheries and Oceans Marine Conservation Target Team and Fisheries Management

 Danielle Derrick, Regional FAM Officer

Guests:

Meagan Leitch, Environmental Consultant (formerly District of Squamish)

[Stephanie Hewson](http://shewson@wcel.org), Lawyer, Marine Program, West Coast Environmental Law

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

**Note Taker:**  Bridget John, Program Manager, Marine Stewardship Initiative (MSI)

**ACTIONS**

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| 1 | Submit updates to the Ocean Watch [Action Tracker](https://www.howesoundbri.org/ocean-watch-action-tracker)  |
| 2 | Provide feedback for the Biosphere’s [Nchu’ú7mut/Unity Plan](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/58c0c358ebbd1a9d3cd1ecf0/t/62489f9ac3785e360dabc270/1648926624689/Unity%2BPlan%2BDiscussion%2BPaper%2BMarch%2B2022.pdf) |
| 3 | Increase education and engagement surrounding Glass Sponge Reef areas |
| 4.  | Communities to reach out to Marcin to collaborate on the Metro Van barge clean up this summer |
| 5. | Check out the Town of Gibsons Aquifer Mapping update [report](https://gibsons.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Town-of-Gibsons-Aquifer-Mapping-Study-Update-June-2022.pdf) |
| 6. | Collect and send coordinates and photos of bigger marine debris items to MSI’s marinedebriscoordinator@gmail.com email |
| 7. | Check out MSI’s [2022 Project Update](https://howesoundguide.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/MSI-World-Ocean-Day-Update.pdf) |
| 8.  | Ruth to share the document of Species at Risk in the AHS region |
| 9. | Brainstorm ways to Celebrate the Year of the Salish Sea [link](https://www.yearofthesalishsea.ca/) |
| 10. | Share the AHS Education Kit from Ocean Wise widely [link](https://ocean.org/action/atl%E1%B8%B5a7tsem-txwnewu7ts-howe-sound-ocean-watch-education-kit/) |

**NOTES:**

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| AGENDA | DISCUSSION | ACTION ITEMS/ DECISIONS |
| 1. Welcome, introductions and review of the notes from March 25th.  | * [This is the Year of the Salish Sea](https://www.yearofthesalishsea.ca/)
* Share the Nchu’ú7mut/Unity Plan further
* Courtney may have more copies of the 2020 Ocean Watch report
 | **Provide feedback for the Biosphere’s Nchu’ú7mut/Unity Plan** |
| 2. Verbal updates from participants towards the Action Tracker | MLSS* Frustration of lack of enforcement resources for people going into GSR areas or rockfish poaching
* May be interest from the Squamish Nation for monitoring in the future
* 3 violations caught in the last few years but much more enforcement is needed
* New GSR closure area at Mariners Rest is still seeing recreational boats going in there. Folks may not know about the closures so education is very valuable. Education needs to be increased.
* DFO has followed some violations of commercial boaters in some GSR areas
* DFO staff are trying but they are lacking the resources
* There are going to be some signs put up near Halkett Points and Dormant Point GSR areas saying “No Fishing”.
* Adam will talk to Passage Island folks more this summer

DFO* Currently working on developing an outreach and education work plan to raise awareness about the glass sponge reefs. Working on engagement with lots of parties to do this in a collaborative way.
* Going into research on management and monitoring of glass sponge reefs
* There is some funding related to conservation and monitoring coming out in the future
* Danielle to get back to Kilian on OPP funding

DSF* Additional funding for monitoring and enforcement last year

District of West Vancouver* Heather has a new role called Senior Manager of Climate Action and Management
* Push forward initiatives surrounding GHG, climate adaptation, etc.
* April - council adopted foreshore management permit area (e.g. buffer between beaches)

Metro Vancouver* Finalizing contractor for barge clean up
* Aug 6 and 7th tentative date
* Covering Bowyer and Passage Island
* Barge clean up happens every 6 years in different communities
* Potential for having single stops in addition to the main two islands - can talk details with any communities that are interested
* Most common item - styrofoam blocks. Can get rid of these at the transfer station
* Race Rocks Marina has a lot of styrofoam piling up

Town of Gibsons* Released [Aquifer Mapping update report](https://gibsons.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Town-of-Gibsons-Aquifer-Mapping-Study-Update-June-2022.pdf) (first one was done in 2013)
* Coastal Assets project - showcased as a case study through the Changing Climate. [Link here](https://changingclimate.ca/case-studies/#reports).
* Michelle is doing her masters at UBC and looking at barriers for natural asset management. Will be reaching out to some people for interviews
 | **Increase education and engagement surrounding Glass Sponge Reef areas****Communities to reach out to Marcin to collaborate on the barge clean up this summer****Check out the Town of Gibsons Aquifer Mapping update** [**report**](https://gibsons.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Town-of-Gibsons-Aquifer-Mapping-Study-Update-June-2022.pdf) |
| 3. Nex̱wlélex̱wm/Bowen Island Marine Stewardship Partners group - Bonny Brokenshire | * 34 PCAs in the Sound that were identified by DSF and Ocean Wise on the Marine Conservation Map (2 types of areas)
* Members representing: BIM, BIC, Sea Change, DSF, BIFWC, and MSI
* So much work done in Kwil'akm (Squamish Nation place name for Mannion Bay)
* Goals
	+ engage and educate community
	+ engage and educate boating community
	+ marine policy development
	+ communication dissemination
* Exploring Bowen’s Marine World has an educational website along with the [Marine Atlas book](https://bowenislandconservancy.org/our-work/bowen-island-marine-atlas-project/#:~:text=The%20Bowen%20Island%20Conservancy%20and,recovery%20of%20our%20marine%20neighbourhood.): intended to be a model for other communities
* Eelgrass buoys seem to really be working.
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| 4. Marine Protected Areas project – Stephanie Hewson, West Coast Environmental Law | * Species and Habitat Approach
	+ indicator of ecosystem health
	+ reflect different aspects of marine ecosystem
	+ significant data/research in area
* Eelgrass, marine birds, glass sponge reefs and salmon are the indicator species WCEL has chosen
* federal marine refuges protecting glass sponge reefs
* federal RCAs
* Provincial parks (e.g Halkett Bay), wildlife management area (Squamish Estuary)
* Regional parks (e.g. Whytecliff Park), local government marine conservation zoning (e.g. Gambier Island W-4)
* Drew heavily on Ocean Watch reports, MSI, MCA, and Biosphere
* Species Analysis: Salmon
	+ threats within marine and coastal areas that can be addressed through spatial protection
	+ OW report has already identified the measures to protect salmon
		- Used the MSI map to look at Salmon Spawning stream in Howe Sound. East side there’s a lot of urban/industrial zoning and on the west side most estuaries are unprotected.
		- Examples: the Squamish Estuary is protected, Bowen has land based parks around some of their estuaries and Gambier has zoning that helps to protect some of these estuarine areas
		- Overlapping jurisdiction over species marine activities
		- Legal protection
			* Indigenous protected and conserved areas
			* Federal (ESAs in development, MPAs)
			* Provincial
			* Local Provincial Parks, Ecological Reserve, Land Act, ELU Act
			* Government
				+ Zoning (Parks, Buffer Zones), Development Permit Area, Regional Parks
		- Next steps
			* Analysis: protected area size and siting for effectiveness, governance and coordination for all A-HS
			* Engagement
				+ Outreach to ENGOs, community groups, local government
* Province is developing Coastal Marine Strategy
	+ Ruth submitted a letter for the Biosphere
	+ The Coastal Strategy can help with intergovernmental connections
	+ Howe Sound area could be a regional area study/ case study in the Coastal Strategy
* WCEL has been in touch with the Squamish Nation in planning the project, addressing co-governance, hoping it will be informative for the work that the Squamish Nation is undertaking
* IPCA course may be of interest: “The first post-secondary program dedicated to Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs)!” [Info here](https://www.iisaakolam.ca/ipca-planning).
* For each of the species identified there is a specific area that will be highlighted (e.g. Halkett Park, Pasley Island)
* WCEL [book on Coastal Laws and Protections](https://www.wcel.org/publication/guide-coastal-and-ocean-protection-law-in-british-columbia)
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| 5. Summer of Marine Debris tracking and coordinated clean-up - Courtney Smaha - Marine Stewardship Initiative | * Main decision support tool is the Marine Reference Guide
	+ In 2019, MSI created a marine debris layer in the map to better understand areas in need of clean up and action. However, this information needs to be updated.
	+ MSI hired a Marine Debris Coordinator as a three month position made possible from the Ocean Bridge Direct Action program
	+ Goals
		- Create Marine Debris Reporting System
		- Shoreline Cleanups
		- Analyze Data
	+ Marine Debris Reporting System
		- collect geographic information for marine debris sightings
		- this information will directly go into ArcGIS and our map
	+ Shoreline cleanups
	+ Analyze data for action
		- determine where the marine debris may be coming from
	+ Collect coordinates and photos and send to marinedebriscoordinator@gmail.com
* Art
	+ Art By Di Sponge Reef Fragment will be shown this year
	+ Howe Sound art challenge from K-gr 12 from [My Sea to Sky](https://myseatosky.org/competitions/howe-sound-art-challenge/)
* Ocean Watch Education Kits updated - promote the use of it in classrooms
* Courtney and Bridget presented at World Oceans Day at two events in collaboration with Blue Mar 4 Change, Biosphere, My Sea to Sky Art Challenge.
	+ See the [online presentation](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8X1Gd_wLTrQ) here targeted for classrooms and families
* MSI created their [2022 Project Update](https://howesoundguide.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/MSI-World-Ocean-Day-Update.pdf)
 | **Collect coordinates and photos of bigger marine debris items and send to** **marinedebriscoordinator@gmail.com****Check out MSI’s** [**2022 Project Update**](https://howesoundguide.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/MSI-World-Ocean-Day-Update.pdf) |
| 6. Balancing development, flood protection and the environment – workshop planning | * Meagan no longer at the District of Squamish - independent consultant
* Carry over from last OWAC How communities are managing coastal squeeze
* Workshop on this
	+ May include case studies, site visits to see the issues in action, etc
	+ August 2022 workshop date
	+ Like the idea of a regional plan so people can be on the same page
	+ Sea level rise is a regional issue
	+ Understanding where different communities are on this
 | **Watch for invitation and details on August Workshop**  |
| 7. Other news and wrap up. | * Following HSCF and discussions to support HSCF 2022 and beyond
	+ Biosphere has sent letters to each of the councils with a request to support the changes in the Principles of Cooperation and recognizing the Biosphere as the convener of the HSCF
	+ Suggested to have a MOU
	+ Asked each local government to host a HSCF ($4500/forum)
* Unity Plan
	+ Strengths, opportunities and threats for each of the sectors.
	+ Through the lens of SDGs, identify the capacity and funding needed to reach goals
	+ Commitment from ECCC for funding
	+ [OECMs](https://www.iucn.org/commissions/world-commission-protected-areas/our-work/oecms): AHS is technically all a buffer to RCAs
	+ Determine what areas are buffering but not formally recognized as buffer zones?
	+ Federal government has brought a lot of funding in for species at risk (e.g. rockfish)
* Wildlife Connectivity Project in Squamish Valley starting soon
	+ Should be a model for other regions
	+ Biodiversity Conservation Strategy will be produced
* Biosphere will have increased capacity soon
* List of Species at Risk for AHS in nominated document
	+ Judith manages the background of iNaturalist
	+ 47 Species at Risk (6 in the marine area)
	+ Ruth to share this document
 | **Ruth to share document of species at risk in the Sound** |
| 8. Informal networking | * Stephanie would love to chat about any Marine Conservation efforts from those working in local government. She will reach out.
* Celebrate the Year of the Salish Sea
* Juvenile of rockfish rely on eelgrass and nearshore areas - could be good for education and outreach
* Bowen Island adopted the Year of the Salish Sea. Would love to collaborate with the Town of Gibsons for this. Film night, or paddling?
* Work with other groups to collaborate to get the message further
* Bob Turners video on the Salish Sea is great
* Support [education kits from Ocean Wise](https://ocean.org/action/atl%E1%B8%B5a7tsem-txwnewu7ts-howe-sound-ocean-watch-education-kit/)
* Ensure Nicholas Sonntag is aware of the education kits as well
* State of the Salish Sea report on the health of the Salish Sea is a great resource
 | **Brainstorm ways to Celebrate the Year of the Salish Sea** [**link**](https://www.yearofthesalishsea.ca/)**Share the AHS Education Kit from Ocean Wise widely** [**link**](https://ocean.org/action/atl%E1%B8%B5a7tsem-txwnewu7ts-howe-sound-ocean-watch-education-kit/) |