

Questions and Answers about the potential value of applying a Cumulative Effects (CE) Assessment for Howe Sound

What is the desired outcome of a CE assessment?

The primary outcome of a CE assessment is a common understanding of the current and potential future condition of values. The common understanding serves as vital context for resource decision-making. While information on the spatial zones and objectives for some values (i.e. old growth, visual quality) exists today, information on the condition relative to objectives is not available.

The CE assessment provides an opportunity to have an informed discussion and come to a shared understanding of what government, First Nations and stakeholders see as emerging opportunities and risks on the landscape.

How does this process provide governments with information for informed processes & decisions?

Once fully implemented, assessments will be periodically completed for each area, and reviewed by interagency teams, tasked with identifying emerging risks and potential mitigation actions. Assessment reports and recommendations for mitigation will be provided to all Statutory Decision Makers and publicly available, i.e. for clients to consider in applications.

Is there an opportunity to come to consensus on shared values before using the tool?

The next step in exploring the opportunity to apply a CE assessment in Howe Sound would be to identify what values are of interest for Howe Sound and compare this with the values that have been assessed to date in the piloting phase of the provincial framework, as well as priority regional values and availability of associated datasets.



Cumulative Effects Framework
Assessing and Managing Cumulative Effects in British Columbia

What are the provincial CE values and how are they weighted?

The provincial framework does not rank or weigh values. Rather it provides an integrated and consistent picture of the condition of economic, social and environmental values in the assessed areas.

In order to identify an initial set of provincially consistent values for the implementation of the framework the following selection criteria have been used: values that have legal or policy objectives in existing legislation, land use plans, or other forms of management direction; values identified in strategic agreements with First Nations, or otherwise identified as supporting an Aboriginal or treaty right; values that can be mapped and have robust existing data. Values should be as broad as possible to allow the nesting of fine-scale values within them (e.g., old-growth dependent species should be nested under forest ecosystem biodiversity). Additional values that don't meet these criteria today (e.g. there are no existing objectives or data to support assessment) but are deemed important for cumulative effects assessment, may be integrated over time.

The following table shows the selected values, example indicators and sources with existing objectives.

Values	Indicators	Existing Objectives
Forest Ecosystem Biodiversity	Young, mature and old seral forest representation	FRPA Default Provincial Old Growth Objectives FRPA/OGAA Land Use Objectives for old, mature and early seral forest representation
Riparian Ecosystems	Riparian ecosystem condition	FRPA & OGAA Riparian Objectives
Water Quantity and Quality	Peak flow risk Low flow risk Sediment risk	FRPA & OGAA Water Objectives Draft Provincial Water Objectives in Water Sustainability Act BC Water Quality Guidelines and Water Quality Objectives
Air Quality	Airshed condition	Federal Air Quality Objectives
Priority Fish and Wildlife Species	Grizzly bear population Mule deer habitat and population Moose habitat Caribou habitat Fish habitat	Land Use Plan Objectives / Grizzly bear recovery strategy FRPA Ungulate winter range objectives Land Use Plan objectives South Peace Northern Caribou Implementation Plan
Visual Quality	Visual quality	FRPA / LUO Visual Quality Objectives
Cultural Heritage Resources	Cultural heritage resource condition	FRPA/OGAA Objectives for Cultural Heritage Resources
Resource Capability	Timber harvesting land base by level of constraint	FRPA Timber Objectives Forest Act Objectives
Economic Wellbeing	Crown revenues, investment capital, economic diversity, labour supply/demand	There may not be explicit legal or policy objectives for these values the same as those values identified above, however best available info on status and trend will be used to provide important context for natural resources decision-making.
Social Wellbeing	Employment, population, income, education, community participation	



Beyond assessing condition and trend of values, how could a CE assessment help in healing the environment?

The idea of managing cumulative effects is to proactively identify any risk to values in order to support dialogue and decisions that ensure values remain in good conditions, and to return values to a good condition if they have been compromised.

The proposition is that with better pro-active management of cumulative effects opportunities for sustainable economic development can be utilized without compromising environmental objectives. There is a range of options to reduce development footprint such as sub-regional mitigation strategies that apply to all industry that have impact whatever sector they come from, better upfront information for proponents to enhance design of projects or show alternative locations with less risk, and more clarity on the existing risk and opportunities on the landscape.

Can the CE assessment provide a foundation for further planning efforts?

There is a strong link between planning and the CEF, with the outcomes of each approach informing the other. For one the CEF builds on the foundation of values and existing legal and policy objectives. Vice versa CEF can identify present condition and future trends and risks to the priority values and thereby inform decision makers about the need to make strategic decisions, i.e. the broad scale CE assessment may identify geographic areas and values that are a priority for further planning at strategic or tactical levels, to identify solutions to identified risks and inform trade-off decisions that are required.

Given the interest of stakeholders, three regional districts, and multiple jurisdictions in Howe Sound - who might be involved in the collaboration?

If an interest to pursue a CE assessment in Howe Sound is confirmed the specific roles and responsibilities would have to be defined. In principle the CEF promotes meaningful engagement with governments, First Nations, industry, stakeholders, partners, and clients. The interest from partners, stakeholders, First Nations and local governments and the jurisdictional responsibilities for marine and coastal areas will provide some guidance about who should be involved.

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