

Spring 2019 Update

Vision: To see all communities within the At'ka7tsem/Howe Sound Biosphere Region (AHSBR) living sustainably within a healthy ecosystem that has a diversified economy and vibrant cultures as well as ongoing advantages associated with UNESCO designation.

Mission: To work collaboratively toward the Vision by providing logistic support for research, education and training that not only promotes biodiversity conservation within both water-based and land-based environments but also promotes sustainable development of the economy with high priority on social and cultural values as well as environmental values.

- In line with this Mission AHSBR aims to create an 'ethical space' culture¹ that effectively integrates indigenous and non-indigenous worldviews and cultures grounded in relationship-building and shared governance intended to promote dialogue and sharing of knowledge/experiences with local and global applicability.
- AHSBR is developing a Strategic Communication and Engagement Hub for the delivery of the various logistic services required to support this Mission.

Objectives: AHSBR is working on three key objectives in its efforts to see the region become an exemplary model of ecosystem-based management that sensitively strikes a balance between its environmental priorities and its social, cultural and economic priorities.

Objective 1: To advance **biodiversity conservation** in the region's marine and terrestrial ecosystems.

Objective 2: To advance **sustainable development** in line with the UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Program priorities and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

Objective 3: To advance **Reconciliation** in recognition of UNDRIP, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples that enshrines the rights of the world's indigenous peoples in terms of their survival, dignity and well-being.

In pursuing these three objectives there is a focus on supporting research, gathering information, organizing knowledge and achieving wisdom in order for AHSBR to create an exemplary model of ecosystem-based management. UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Program focuses on building a scientific foundation for improving long-term human-environment relations and sharing innovative approaches implemented in designated Biosphere Regions as models for consideration by members of the UNESCO World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Proposed Governance: Governance of the At'ka7tsem/Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society will involve a Board of Governors, a Roundtable Advisory Group and the Staff and Volunteers.

Board of Directors (8-10 Board members) are being drawn from all sectors of society with emphasis on deep commitment to [UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Program](#). The Board will be co-chaired with one chair position reserved for a Squamish Nation representative and one chair position reserved for a non-indigenous person.

Responsibility: Strategic planning and overall direction of AHSBR.

¹The Canadian Biosphere Reserves Association definition of ethical space: "It is 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."

Roundtable Advisory Group: (10-15 advisors) represent the diverse stakeholder groups in the region.

Responsibility: Advice and consensus-building related to AHSBR initiatives.

Staff and Volunteers: An Executive Director is to be appointed with responsibility for overseeing the strategic and operational responsibilities required to achieve AHSBR's mission; additional staff will be recruited over time. Volunteers will continue to play a particularly crucial role in the overall success of AHSBR through their involvement in a wide range of initiatives.

Responsibility: Day-to-day AHSBR operations.

Activities: The Strategic Communications and Engagement Hub under development by the Atl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society is focused on its three key objectives. Some of the associated activities are primarily of a communication nature and others are more strongly associated with engagement initiatives.

Communication

- Serve as a clearinghouse for information/knowledge including information gathering, research database maintenance and widespread information/knowledge dissemination through the AHSBR website and social media pages in order to actively promote its use for informed decision-making.
- Create and make public an annual report on AHSBR performance including progress on all strategic goals.
- Advance education by disseminating conservation information and research results from the region to science organizations and educational institutions, including work on regional climate change issues.
- Support and increase understanding of the Skwxwú7mesh snichim language, cultural and history.
- Build awareness about the UNESCO World Network of Biosphere Regions, the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Program and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Engagement

- Participate in an advisory capacity on working groups that include non-profits and registered charities with a shared purpose of advancing conservation in the Atl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound Biosphere Region, enhancing co-ordination and efficiency wherever possible.
- Plan, coordinate and host public events and multi-stakeholder forums with Skwxwú7mesh and other First Nation groups to address matters related to Reconciliation.
- Facilitate involvement of volunteers in research projects, event organization, and educational materials development.
- Develop institutional capacity within the Atl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound Biosphere Region to meet its goals and objectives, including workshops and networking events related to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, highlighting the value of an ecosystem-based approach to management that balances ecological, economic and social objectives leading to enhanced sustainable development.

Funding: The Atl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society is building on its successful initial rounds of donor funding with its proposal to the Canada Revenue Agency to become a registered charitable organization and longer-term plan to establish sustained funding for the work of the society through the establishment of the Atl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound Biosphere Region Foundation. The society also is planning to establish partnerships and to obtain grants that are aligned with initiatives related to its three objectives.

UNESCO Biosphere Region Nomination: The 200+ page nomination document on which decisions about designation as a UNESCO Biosphere Region is based has reached the final stage of the drafting process. Document editing and final production will be done by Bill Henwood, formerly a senior planner with Parks Canada and an active participant in the World Commission on Protected Areas. The draft document will be available for review and comment by end of May with submission to the Canadian Commission for UNESCO to follow soon thereafter. Nomination documents are received each year in September and successful applicants are announced in the following June.

For more information contact: Ruth Simons, Lead, Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society
howesoundbri@gmail.com www.howesoundbri.org