Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region
Roundtable Gathering Volume 2 – Minutes

Date: Friday, February 5, 2015
Time: 13:00-15:00
Location: Snaw-Naw-As Health Centre

Attendees

1. Aunty Anne – Snaw-Naw-As First Nation Elder
2. Chris Burger – City of Parksville
3. David Bob – Snaw-Naw-As First Nation
4. Dave Witty – Vancouver Island University
5. Julie Pisani – Regional District of Nanaimo
6. Ken Epps – Island Timberlands
7. Kim Burden – Parksville & District Chamber of Commerce
8. Mark Stephens – Snaw-Naw-As First Nation
9. Michael Recalma – Qualicum First Nation, Chief
10. Mike Donnelly – Regional District of Nanaimo
11. Monica Shore – Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region, Facilitator
12. Olayinka Fadayiro – Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region
13. Pam Shaw – Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region Research Institute
14. Steve Adams – TimberWest
15. Uncle Jim – Snaw-Naw-As First Nation Elder

Regrets

1. Brent Edwards – Snaw-Naw-As First Nation, Chief
2. Chris Cole – TimberWest
3. Makenzie Leine – Island Timberlands
4. Marc Lefebvre, City of Parksville, Mayor
5. Neil Horner – Town of Qualicum Beach, Councillor
6. Tom Reid – Vancouver Island Conservation Land Management Program
7. Tony Litke – Ministry of Environment

Welcome & Opening Prayer

• Aunty Anne, Snaw-Naw-As Elder, sang welcome prayer
• Uncle Jim, Snaw-Naw-As Elder, said words of welcome
• David Bob, former Snaw-Naw-As Chief, opened the meeting

Agenda

• Reviewed and approved with no changes

Culture of Engagement

• Monica presented a revised version of the MABR Roundtable Culture of Engagement that captures group’s words from last meeting.
• Group reviewed the Culture of Engagement and agreed to adopt the all ten principles.
Roundtable Goals

Monica spoke about the Roundtable’s function and purpose:

- Every UNESCO biosphere reserve (BR) is required to have a governance mechanism. In Canada, some BRs are not-for-profit organizations, some are charitable foundations, some are run as businesses or social enterprises, and some are even run by government. There is no prescribed structure—we can create our own—which is what we have done in establishing this Roundtable. The MABR is the only Canadian BR with a regional roundtable as its governance mechanism. Although it is more flexible than other structures (it is what we make it), we still have a mandate that is common to all UNESCO BRs.
- The Madrid and Lima Action Plans determine the common goals for all BRs, for the national Man and the Biosphere Committees, and for UNESCO’s national commissions. These high-level plans inform the goals and activities of all individual BRs, and it is where the priority action areas that we voted on last time were derived.

Comments by participants on developing Roundtable goals:

- The goals need to identify the types of decisions we will make. They may be non-binding but they could still have an influence on government and decision-makers.
- Our goals should link to research ideas and the work being done at MABRRI.
- The Roundtable is a venue in which we can enhance regional connectivity and relationships and develop partnerships.
- Our goals need to reflect our regional values and demonstrate our respect for multiple ways of knowing.
- This Roundtable wants to move past conflict to engagement.
- The Roundtable should work together to help promote the region. Sustainable economic development (e.g. ecotourism) is part of our mandate as a biosphere reserve.
- Goals should reflect the desire to increase the region’s awareness about cultural and traditional knowledge, perspectives, ceremonies, and protocol. For example, raising awareness of the loss of plants and foods that are used in traditional medicine or cooking (e.g. soap berries)—making sure that there is regional responsibility for preserving these species and protecting traditional practices, etc. Some of the fish you cannot even have anymore – not edible. Medicinal plants we don’t see anymore.
- It needs to be stated that part of what we are doing in moving forward is with the help and guidance of our First Nations.
- The MABR is all Traditional Territory of several groups; we need to incorporate that into the goals—not let it be an add-on. It should encompass everything we are doing here.
- It comes down to cross-cultural education from both sides—learning from each other—we’re all neighbours. That’s the reason we’re here.
- The Roundtable is an opportunity for learning together; it should reflect that learning takes time, careful listening, appreciation for other ways of knowing and doing. If we’re successful there will be generations that follow this example.
- The Roundtable needs to have the ability to adapt and change over time.
- Elders teach us that we need to slow down and take our time. These days, everything is so instant and everyone expects an immediate answer. We have to learn how to take our time.
- We need to think three or four generations ahead in the decisions that we make—think about our grandchildren. The goals should be long-term and multi-generational.
- Perhaps we need to create Guiding Principles that encompass everything we do at this Roundtable. Goals would be embedded in these Guiding Principles.
What is the Roundtable's approach to decision-making?

• Decision-making is a process—it's about learning together, sharing, asking for guidance. That's what we do here.
• The Roundtable is an advisory body; participants learn from each other through discussions and activities, and then report back to their own agencies (where more tangible decisions are made).
• The Roundtable can help communicate the different perspectives and realities of living and working in this region, which can lead to more effective regional decision-making if incorporated into policy etc.
• We can work together to tell the story of the region more effectively. For example, the issue of the loss of medicinal plants and how to gain access to areas where they still grow. The region needs to look at natural ecology and work together to protect what is important. We need to have more discussion and education so we know what we are doing to the lands. Decisions need to be made on how to approach land use.
• Working with First Nations has changed perspectives and worldviews. Need to make sure everyone else at the table understands the realities of today so we can all have impacts on our own decision-makers.

Group Activity: Implementing Priority Action Areas

• Small groups of 2-3 people brainstormed together for 20 minutes
• Each group presented ideas for events, research or other potential initiatives

Outcomes of Brainstorms:

1. An event that focuses on the foundations of Vancouver Island, that celebrates the history and heritage of food, health, and nature—how the past has influenced the current state of food from surrounding land and waters. Demonstrating how food, water, culture, and healthy ecosystems are interconnected. Incorporate research, knowledge exchange, education about Indigenous practices, and actionable outcomes.
2. Create a research project that demonstrates the connections between climate change education, food security, and the types of policies required to support these. Climate change and land use are closely connected, and food security touches everyone. We need to learn to grow food locally, and can do so with First Nations leadership.
3. A simple event with Elders and storytelling. Stories about the different species of clams, how to prepare and eat shellfish, about traditional methods for harvesting clams and how/when to safely harvest this source of food (e.g. red tide). This ties in 3 priority action areas: Research on health of coastal and marine areas in the MABR; increasing food security in the MABR; increasing awareness about Indigenous protocol.
4. Study how climate change is affecting food security in the MABR. Create a demonstration community garden that involve youth participation over an entire growing season. This addresses the following priorities: Increase food security in the MABR; Youth engagement; Public engagement and events; Climate change education.
5. Create and promote a community lecture series that explores and incorporates Indigenous protocols, knowledge of Elders, and cross-cultural themes. This addresses the following priorities: Increase awareness about Indigenous protocols; Support opportunities for cross-cultural education, events, and dialogue; MABR community lecture series.
6. Research the different perspectives and practices around regional food security with "information keepers" (rather than "experts") through the form of dialogue and informal chatting (way to incorporate Indigenous protocol). Different cultures and values see the land differently. Explore how food, water and land reflect our values. Ultimate goal of the project to develop a collective vision of the MABR.
Follow-up action to group activity: MABR and MABRRRI staff to seek opportunities to implement these ideas through research and events in 2016 and future years.

**Closing Remarks from Snaw-Naw-As Elders**

- Uncle Jim: All these issues are important. Climate change: everyone knows how bad it got for Cowichan River last summer. It got so close to what is happening in California. Let’s not become California. Let’s work together to protect our environment and our water. All areas of our home are affected by lack of water. Salmon had a hard time last year… We can use traditional medicine to solve modern problems and to help the environment.

- Aunty Anne: All I want to say is thank you for what has taken place here. I know we will accomplish something for our next generation. I’m concerned about our grandkids, hoping that things will work out for the next generations. Thanks to David Bob for always bringing up things that are important to our community.

**Next Meeting**

**Date:** Friday May 6th  
**Time:** 1:00 to 3:30pm  
**Location:** City of Parksville

MABR Roundtable Gathering Volume 2 concluded at 3:25pm.