



Strategic Plan

2021-2026

Howe Sound Biosphere
Region Initiative Society

howesoundbri.org

Photo: Chris Christie





Our Vision

An Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound where humanity and nature thrive.

Our Purpose

Strengthening collaboration in the Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound Biosphere Region.

Our Mission

We facilitate and support the organizing and planning of complex activities that bring allegiance toward balancing development, conservation, and equity in the Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound region.

In response to the key systemic challenges in the region, we're focusing on three outcomes over the next 10 years:

- Sustainable Development:** An overarching, holistic land and marine use plan, mutually recognized and respected by First Nations, civil society, multi-sector stakeholders, and all levels of government.
- Biodiversity Conservation:** Needs are understood and defined, and measures are in place to ensure conservation of critical ecological values.
- Reconciliation, Equity & Inclusion:** Needs and meaning for the Squamish Nation and all nations and communities in the region are learned and defined collaboratively and plans for advancement are mutually supported.



Photo: J. Berson

Strategic Context

The Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society (HSBRIS) formed in 2017 with the aim to strengthen collaboration and engagement in Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound toward one strong and united vision for the region and on a collective approach to addressing key systemic issues. We aspire to be a model Biosphere Region which is defined by UNESCO as learning places for sustainable development.

This five-year strategic plan prioritizes key activities in service to the entire region and our strategic priorities.

Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative functions with support from many volunteers and organizations across the region. Together we are striving to be designated in 2021 as Canada's 19th UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.

Regional Context

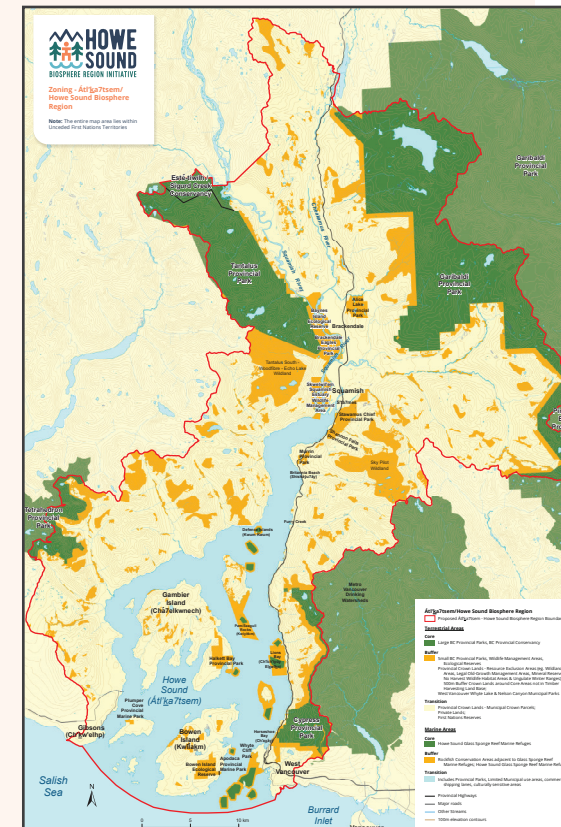
The Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound watershed includes a majestic fjord perched spectacularly on the edge of Vancouver, British Columbia.

Since time immemorial, the Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound inlet and adjacent mountains and valleys have been the territory of the *Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw* (Squamish Nation), and these lands remain unceded to this day. After decades of industrial development and pollution, a public outcry in the 1980s led to environmental reforms and, over the past decade, a stunning recovery of marine life. The return of whales and dolphins to the inlet, and the discovery of internationally significant glass sponge reefs by citizen and government scientists, has swelled public pride and inspired further conservation and scientific efforts.

This emerging reconciliation between people and Nature now forms a basis for relationship-building and reconciliation between local settler culture and First Nations. Energized by Nature's recovery, yet concerned that no single jurisdiction has political responsibility for this place, a Howe Sound Community Forum of local elected officials has for two decades sought a comprehensive approach for the region. This Forum has brought together a broad coalition of interests – local communities, First Nations, senior governments, businesses, industries, organizations, and citizens - who come together to learn, to share, and to explore a way forward.

The success of the Forum to create community in Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound has recently inspired major investments by NGOs and governments in the form of environmental and social health reports about the region, a regional conservation strategy, a provincial cumulative effects assessment, the development of a marine database, and new protected areas. This progress has paralleled significant advances by local First Nations to plan land use, protect Wild Spirit Places and other cultural lands, create new economic ventures in forestry and land development, and promote language use and culture. Today, the conversation in Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound between First Nations and settler culture sits within a larger pan-Canadian dialogue that seeks truth-telling, reconciliation and relationship-building.

This enhanced knowledge infrastructure, community building, and strengthened relationships with First Nations sets the table for a natural next step for Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound – a UNESCO Biosphere Region designation that will formalize our biodiversity conservation commitments, strengthen First Nations – settler relations, and build capacity for community building, decision making, education and research. This application for Biosphere Region designation carries the collective support of local communities, First Nations, regional governments, provincial and federal governments, and non-government organizations – a true testimonial to our community desire to achieve this status and commit to a legacy for generations to come.





Strategic Priorities

2021-2026

To achieve our 10-year outcomes, we need to focus on and achieve the following four interim outcomes.

Our Values

Appreciation

We seek to recognize the best in people and places that surround us, to honour the history, stories and culture of those that came before us, and to value, protect, and celebrate those things that give us life.

Mutual Respect

We are open and adaptive in our interactions across cultural differences, acknowledging that all knowledge systems are validated and equally respected – that no worldview is above another.

Collaboration

We are unwavering in our desire to strengthen relationships and trust among people and communities, working together transparently and with care, to build our collective capacity for the benefit of the entire region.

Creativity

We see the strengths and possibilities in diversity and encourage the sharing of knowledge, ideas, and responsibility to co-create the innovative solutions required to solve our challenges, together.

✓ Advance Sustainable Development

Key partnerships and adequate supports, data and tools are in place for planning gaps across the region to be filled; and the region's sustainability targets are defined and embedded with the UN's sustainable development goals (SDGs) in the planning and decision-making processes.



Photo: F. Beaty

✓ Advance Biodiversity Conservation

Key partnerships work to further education, monitoring, and research, fill knowledge gaps, and increase stewardship and connection to place.



Photo: W. Kaulbach

✓ Advance Reconciliation, Equity & Inclusion

The Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound Biosphere Region Roundtable and forums for convening in ethical space are well established to further the relationships, dialogue and understanding in the context of all AHSBR nations and communities.



Photo: K. Krug

✓ Strengthen Our Organization

We are a strong, capable, high-capacity organization with diverse and adequate resources to fulfill our purpose.



Photo: K. Hemmelgarn



Achieving Our Outcomes

3 Program Areas & Key Activities

Generating Information and Capacity



We support and advise.

Together with strategic partners and collaborators, we support research to identify knowledge gaps and actions, and bring our regional perspective, expertise and information to action planning that furthers AHSBR's strategic priorities. We achieve our goals through:

- Research & Monitoring
- Decision-making Tools
- Strategic Communication
- Advising
- Advisory Services

Increasing Connection to People and Place



Photo: K. Hemmelgarn

We engage and connect people.

By educating, sharing knowledge and information, providing support and tools, we can advocate for and highlight best practices in AHSBR and increase belonging and stewardship. We achieve our goals through collaboration with:

- Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw and other First Nations
- Schools and Universities
- Active participation in the UNESCO Biosphere Region Network

Building Networks & Consensus



Photo: K. Hemmelgarn

We convene and facilitate.

Together with our strategic partners and collaborators, we bring people together, hold ethical space, bridge divides, and balance perspectives to build consensus and collaboration among First Nations, civil society, multi-sector stakeholders, and all levels of government. Over the next five years, opportunities will arise to convene and facilitate groups around certain issues and tasks as they arise—this includes various industry groups that contribute to the economic wellbeing of the Biosphere. Key events include:

- Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound Biosphere Region Roundtables
- Howe Sound Community Forum (HSCF)
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Workshops
- Howe Sound Conservation Network
- Howe Sound Sustainable Economic Development Network

Key Capacity Areas: Operational Priorities



To ensure we will achieve our five-year strategic priorities and can adequately support our program areas, we must build capacity across the four foundational pillars of Management, Governance, Resources, and Administrative Systems & IT. To allow for a strong transition from a mostly volunteer-led organization to an effective and sustainable organization with a living wage standard, developing adequate resources across funding, staffing and governance is our key priority. For full details of the objectives and key results (OKRs) we defined for each pillar to help us measure and evaluate our progress, and the associated priority initiatives we will undertake, please contact us for the full strategic plan document.



It takes all of us to sustain Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound!

Please contribute to our efforts.

Our purpose and program is distinct because it is a holistic, collaborative and inclusive approach to addressing fragmentation across the Átl'ka7tsem / Howe Sound Biosphere Region.

You can financially support us in the following ways:

- Leave a legacy for the future through the West Vancouver Foundation's Howe Sound Biosphere Fund
- Make a monthly or one-time contribution towards our annual operating fund
- Provide program and/or activity-specific funding



Ruth Simons, Joyce Williams with MP Patrick Weiler delivering the nomination document at the offices of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, Ottawa. December 2, 2019

Contact Us

To discuss your contribution, support and/or any other questions regarding the Átl'ka7tsem / Howe Sound Biosphere Region:

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Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society is a not-for-profit organization Incorporated under the Societies Act (British Columbia) #S0067740