



Baynes Sound / Lambert Channel Learning Exchange | March 2019

Summary Report

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for Islands Trust & World Wildlife Fund Canada*



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Executive Summary

On March 25, 2019, the Baynes Sound / Lambert Channel Learning Exchange was jointly hosted by Islands Trust and World Wildlife Fund Canada at the Kingfisher Resort in Royston, B.C. located in K'ómoks territory. More than thirty participants attended, representing First Nations, federal, provincial, and local governments as well as conservation groups, industry representatives, and others with an interest in the Baynes Sound / Lambert Channel area. A complete list of participants can be found in Appendix A.

Building on the positive momentum of the 2018 Baynes Sound / Lambert Channel Ecosystem Forum, objectives for the 2019 Learning Exchange were to: create an opportunity for shared learning, based on the next steps identified at the Baynes Sound/Lambert Channel Ecosystem Forum 2018; facilitate continued dialogue and information exchange, based on shared values and concerns; and identify next steps for collaborative action.

In the morning, presentations inspired participants to think about how to move the work forward in a sustainable and positive way. The two guest presenters included Kate-Louise Stamford, member of the Ocean Watch Task Force for Atl'ka7tesm/Howe Sound, and Ian Cameron of the Saanich Inlet Protection Society.

In the afternoon, participants broke into smaller discussion groups, with topics determined by the participants themselves including: consider the potential for a research/ demonstration project to explore sustainable aquaculture practices; discuss the importance of herring in the Baynes Sound / Lambert Channel area; consider options for a future framework for this group; discuss how to create opportunities for inclusive First Nations participation. Each group had one hour to discuss their topic and determine what recommendations they would like to bring back to the plenary.

In plenary, after each group shared the recommendations ensuing from their discussion, a broader discussion took place to determine next steps. Some of the key actions identified include:

Participants clearly expressed a desire continue to work together, and expressed a collective desire to refer to their collaboration as the *Baynes Sound / Lambert Channel Ecosystem Forum* going forward. Several working groups were formed to advance the goals of the Forum, including the goal of revising the structure of the Forum itself to ensure its sustainability and effectiveness.

Please contact Gillian Nicol (gnicol@islandstrust.bc.ca) or Kim Dunn (kdunn@wwfcanada.org) if you have questions or comments about this report.

Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide background information and a summary of the discussions that took place at the Baynes Sound / Lambert Channel Learning Exchange on March 25, 2019. Please note that this is a summary of the discussions and that formal consensus was not sought for each point, although there was general agreement within the discussions.

Building on the positive momentum of the 2018 Baynes Sound / Lambert Channel Ecosystem Forum, objectives for the 2019 Learning Exchange were to: create an opportunity for shared learning, based on the next steps identified at the Baynes Sound/Lambert Channel Ecosystem Forum 2018; facilitate continued dialogue and information exchange, based on shared values and concerns; and identify next steps for collaborative action.

Importance of the Baynes Sound / Lambert Channel Ecosystem

Baynes Sound and Lambert Channel—a thermally stratified inland sea, internationally recognized Important Bird Area and nationally designated Ecologically and Biologically Significant Marine Area (EBSA)—is a highly productive ecosystem, home to a regionally unique combination of diverse marine and coastal habitats.

Baynes Sound / Lambert Channel is the highest ranked cumulative spawning and rearing area for herring in the Strait of Georgia ecoregion, producing one-third of all herring in BC's waters—positioning this area as a critical linchpin in terms of the ecosystem health of the BC Coast. Seabirds, juvenile salmon, mollusks and other forage fish find shelter in the ecologically-distinct elements of Baynes Sound / Lambert Channel. The Sound is a summer molting area for sea ducks, and has globally and nationally significant aggregations of waterfowl, shorebird and gull species during herring spawn. Several at-risk bird species use Baynes Sound for feeding or stop-overs.

Baynes Sound / Lambert Channel contains important foraging and haul-out sites for Pacific harbour seals and Steller sea lions. The Sound has been consistently used as spawning grounds during herring spawn runs. The estuaries and riparian areas of the Sound provide spawning and rearing habitat for Coho, chum, coastal cutthroat trout and likely some steelhead. Fifteen salmon bearing streams drain into Baynes Sound / Lambert Channel. Intertidal eelgrass beds act as nurseries and provide protection and valuable food sources for these salmon. Significant quantities of both wild and cultured shellfish are produced within the waters of the Sound.¹

¹ This section is copied from the 2018 Baynes Sound/ Lambert Channel Ecosystem Forum 2018 Summary Report by Dr. Karen Hurley and Kim Dunn.

Summary of Discussion

Opening

K'ómoks Elder Donna Mitchell opened the Learning Exchange, which was facilitated by Jessie Hemphill of Alderhill Planning Inc. After opening comments from the co-hosts (Kim Dunn on behalf of World Wildlife Fund Canada (WWF) and Clare Frater on behalf of Islands Trust) the group did roundtable introductions (see Appendix A for a full list of participants.) Participants then engaged in a networking activity at their tables: each person was asked to choose one image from a selection at their table, choosing an image that somehow represented their connection to the Baynes Sound / Lambert Channel area. Participants were then asked to discuss their images at their table groups. Some participants also shared the image they chose and the meaning behind it with the rest of the plenary group.

The facilitator then reviewed the agenda and objectives for the day:

1. Create an opportunity for shared learning, based on the next steps identified at the Baynes Sound / Lambert Channel Ecosystem Forum 2018;
2. Facilitate continued dialogue and information exchange, based on shared values and concerns; and
3. Identify next steps for collaborative action.

The group added two additional objectives:

4. Form working groups to carry actions forward and report back in October; and
5. Discuss creative ideas for sustainable funding and leadership.

Presentation by Kim Dunn – Review of Activities since 2018

After the opening activities, Kim Dunn shared a presentation to give some more context to the Learning Exchange, reviewing the importance of the area, past and present human use, governance and jurisdiction in the area, and previous activities of the same group of stakeholders represented at this event.

Participants were invited to share comments and questions with Kim regarding the presentation. Some of the comments included:

- On the biological significance slide: One participant felt that there are actually >100,000 birds in the area, instead of the listed >10,000²
- On the biological significance slide: California sea lions have now moved into the area, in addition to Stellar sea lions

² The statistic in the slide is correct according to its source: Canadian Science Advice Secretariat Report 2014/101. *Identification of Ecologically and Biologically Significant Areas on the West Coast of Vancouver Island and the Strait of Georgia, and in some nearshore areas on the North Coast: Phase II – Designation of EBSAs*

- On the biological significance slide: It should be noted that there are 17 salmonid bearing streams in the area
- On the Strait of Georgia ecoregion EBSA slide: The boundaries of the EBSA were redrawn to be smaller after a federal scientific review (many participants would prefer to continue working with the larger boundary, which they feel is more reflective of the actual ecosystem)
- On the human use slide: First Nations should be the first on the list, out of respect.
- On the governance and jurisdiction slide: There is too much of a focus on human use and not enough on conservation and health of the system. Conservation regulatory mandates are just as important as government mandates for the regulation of human activity.

Activity: What's Happening in Baynes Sound / Lambert Channel Right Now?

After Kim's presentation, participants were asked to use sticky notes to write down things that are currently happening in the Baynes Sound / Lambert Channel area. Responses included:

<i>Herringfest</i>	<i>K'ómoks estuary working group & restoration of Courtenay/K'ómoks estuary</i>	<i>Islands Trust: consideration of a secretariat role to assist Howe Sound Forum and other possible areas/forums</i>
<i>Ecosystem based herring management plan</i>	<i>Continued beach cleanups (almost every day)</i>	<i>Petitions (parliamentary) to: reduce microplastics, reduce single use plastics, ban [herring kill fishery? Kelp fishery?]</i>
<i>Department of Fisheries and Oceans: Juvenile herring surveys conducted since 1990 now not being funded</i>	<i>K'ómoks important bird area = bird surveys</i>	<i>Gord Johns parliamentary motion M151 to reduce marine microplastics passed 288-0 in parliament</i>
<i>Research project on herring larvae and micro plastics consumption (K'ómoks First Nations, Association of Denman Island and Marine Stewards, University of British Columbia)</i>	<i>K'ómoks First Nations, Association of Denman Island and Marine Stewards project, watershed research on microplastics, heavy metals, persistent organic pollutants with pollution tracker</i>	<i>Ocean Defenders [elected?] in Courtenay/Port Alberni riding</i>
<i>Proposed community-based management plan for herring?</i>	<i>K'ómoks First Nations guardians</i>	<i>Pacific Wild kelp forest restoration</i>
<i>Proposed forum on herring for Strait of Georgia or Salish Sea?</i>	<i>Updated carrying capacity study (still coming) Department of Fisheries and Oceans</i>	<i>Eel grass restoration</i>

<i>Beach joint clean up resulting in 70% less beach debris going to dump – 90% recycled</i>	<i>Integrated management gap analysis (WWF-Canada)</i>	<i>Opportunities for nearshore restoration (eelgrass, marine riparian, shoreline debris, ~-7m waters)</i>
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Presentation by Kate-Louise Stamford, Ocean Watch Task Force Atl'ka7tesm/Howe Sound



After the morning break, Kate-Louise Stamford shared a presentation about the Atl'ka7tesm/Howe Sound Community Forum and its Ocean Watch Task Force. Kate-Louise described the governance of the Task Force (all elected leaders from First Nations and local governments) and how participant communities take turns hosting the semiannual event. Federal and provincial representatives are also invited to attend and help to advance the interests of the Task Force.

One of the key accomplishments of the Task Force has been the collaborative development of the Howe Sound Marine Reference Guide with partners Tides Canada and the Coastal Ocean Research Institute (CORI). An online version of the guide can be accessed at www.marineguide.ca.

Kate-Louise also discussed how the work of the Forum is complemented by regular Forum meetings, out of which come recommendations to specific local governments and First Nations who may adopt the recommendations if they wish. She also emphasized the importance of acknowledging strengths and the people who are champions of this work. After the presentation, participants had the following questions for Kate-Louise:

Q: *What is the composition of the forum?*

A: At the moment the forum is attended by elected officials, while the task force itself has pulled in others (e.g. from the scientific community). Specific projects such as the Marine Reference Guide involve many others, including industry.

Q: *How did you activate the cumulative impact assessments?*

A: There was a lot of advocacy (talking to Member of the Legislative Assembly, passing a resolution at the Union of British Columbia Municipalities annual general meeting, meeting with representatives of the province). British Columbia is developing a cumulative effects framework, and Howe Sound was chosen as a pilot.

Q: *How was the Suzuki Foundation involved?*

A: Their data collection fed into the Marine Reference Guide; there was a funding synergy.

Q: *What is the relationship between Ocean Watch and the Howe Sound Forum?*

A: The forum happens once or twice a year. Ocean Watch (which is a subset of the forum) meets more regularly for specific projects and presents recommendations at the forum.

Q: *Are meetings open to the public?*

A: Yes, but Ocean Watch meetings are not publicized, while the forums are.

Q: *How did you secure funding?*

A: There were several private grants through the Coastal Ocean Research Institute. TIDES Canada came on as a partner to help with project administration.

Q: *How is the federal government involved?*

A: They are invited to events, and are targeted during advocacy work.

Q: *What are your thoughts on First Nations being the overriding jurisdiction?*

A: It's possible to operate like this, and they are heavily involved. Right now the Squamish Nation is working on a marine use plan. Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh and Musqueam are all leading a cumulative effects study.

Kate Louise mentioned several links in her presentation and while she answered questions. The links are below:

Howe Sound/Atl'ka7tsem Marine Ecosystem Reference Guide

<https://howesoundguide.ca/>

Barkley Sound Marine Ecosystem Reference Guide – <http://westcoastaquatic.ca/merg/>

Tides Canada - <https://tidescanada.org/>

David Suzuki Foundation Atl'ka7tsem Conservation Mapping Project -

<https://davidssuzuki.org/project/howe-sound/>

Provincial Cumulative Effects Assessment interim report:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/natural-resource-stewardship/cumulative-effects-framework/regional-assessments/south-coast/howe-sound-cumulative-effects-project>

Presentation by Ian Cameron, Saanich Inlet Protection Society



Ian Cameron provided the group with an historic overview of some of the factors influencing the development and activities of the Saanich Inlet Protection Society, which has been operational since 1989. Some activities of the Society include founding the SeaChange Conservation Society in 1998, launching the Shorekeeping program in 1999, hosting the Headwaters Deepwater Conference in 2001, operating “Pumpty Dumpty” (a volunteer-operated vessel designed to collect sewage at the request of boats in the area) and, in 2007, participating in the development of the Saanich Inlet &

Peninsula Atlas of Shorelines. SIPS holds roundtables three times each year with a variety of participants, including representatives from local governments. Roundtables are two hours long on weekday afternoons and includes discussion on issues of concern as well as educational presentations. The Saanich Inlet Protection Society Board of Directors meet monthly and have a website, saanichinletprotection.org. Saanich Inlet Protection Society is a registered charity.

Participants had the following questions for Ian:

Q: *Have you spoken to the municipality about zoning to prohibit permanent anchorages in Brentwood Bay? The courts have upheld their right to do so.*

A: Central Saanich will not prohibit live-aboards; they’ve been around too long.

Q: *How do you separate anthropogenic changes from non-anthropogenic changes when assessing cumulative impacts? Is it realistic to expect certain species to come back despite, for example, climate change?*

A: Baseline studies are essential, it is never too late to begin (perhaps using historical data.) It’s important to try to understand which changes are reversible and which are not.

Q: *How many members do you have, and what is your annual budget?*

A: SIPS has about 25 regular members and a budget of about \$8,000 per year which mostly goes towards the roundtables.

Q: *What is your main form of advocacy?*

A: Engaging politicians (local, provincial and federal)

Q: *How does the Board of Directors prioritize issues?*

A: The mandate comes from the AGM and the roundtables, which are open to the public.

Q: *How did the Saanich Inlet Protection Society sub-groups emerge?*

A: Most of them had specific grants at the beginning, and then became self-sustaining.

Q: *Is there a stream of new members?*

A: It's more like a trickle. Old age among current members is the biggest threat to SIPS sustainability.

Activity: Open Space



After lunch, facilitator Jessie Hemphill invited participants to identify topics of interest to them for small group discussion. Four topics emerged: consider the potential for a research/ demonstration project to explore sustainable aquaculture practices; discuss the importance of herring in the Baynes Sound / Lambert Channel area; consider options for a future framework for this group; discuss how create opportunities for inclusive First Nations participation. Participants were asked to choose whichever group they preferred. Groups had one hour to discuss their topic and then bring recommendations back to the

plenary.

Small Group Discussion 1: Aquaculture Research Project & Demonstration Site



This group, hosted by Barb Mills, discussed the potential for a research project that examines methods for ecological restoration of an aquaculture site with the goal of demonstrating potential improvements that the industry could make aquaculture gear or methods to have less of

a negative impact on the ecosystem. There was discussion about partnering with Carl Butterworth at Vancouver Island University, and potentially using Deep Bay which has offered two plots for potential research initiatives. Regarding these plots, the group wondered if any students have come forward already to study these plots, and whether or not the tenures have been secured (there was a suggestion to talk to Jordan Wagner at the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resources Operations and Rural Development (FLNRO) about this.)

There was a feeling among the group that it would be a wonderful outcome of this Learning Exchange to develop a positive relationship with the aquaculture industry that was based on sharing best practices (e.g. reduction of (micro)plastics, sequestration of carbon dioxide) while still building revenue. Other aspects of aquaculture that could be considered for research include variations to netting (e.g. “ghost”/linen netting, like that used in Washington), use of organic and biodegradable materials, use of marine plants, eelgrass restoration, implementation of a “green” certification program, protection from sea lions, use of aluminum floats and rebar.

The group discussed potential steps for moving this idea forward. They include:

- Develop a working group;
- Clarify the research question(s) and purpose of the initiative;
- Contact potential partners (Carl Butterworth at Vancouver Island University, Chair of Business Department at Vancouver Island University, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Deep Bay, etc.);
- Develop a concept paper;
- Do a survey of growers/tenure holders for an initial survey re: feasibility of alternatives (Jennifer Mollins thought DFO could sponsor this);
- Find a researcher/student to research alternative aquaculture methods and/ or gear in other parts of the world. Association of Denman Island Marine Stewards has \$5000.00 of funding for this;
- Research funding possibilities for the test site. Jennifer and Jordan both thought that they could find ‘pots of money’ for this. Sources mentioned were from the provincial Ministry of Agriculture;
- Get shellfish grower(s) to come to the table and discuss alternatives, with the working group being aware that shellfish growers would need financial support for trialing other practices, as they make little profit as it is.

Some of the additional comments and questions that arose from the discussion included:

- There is a grower on Denman Island that has been very helpful in beach cleanups
- DFO and the shellfish growers association clean up.
- The project must be compatible with a shellfish grower
- There are different pots of money for different research questions
- Industry Canada has the Industrial Research Assistance Program (IRAP) (for innovative practices)
- There may be different courses of funding depending on the focus of the project.
- Funding for model farms
- Some of the applicants are doing this to make money but may also have a restoration interest as well

- Having a research project that could restore and provide food source
- Fees for Department of Fisheries and Oceans are legislated so there isn't any flexibility
- Agriculture may have a small pot of money for upgrades and pilot projects.
- Department of Fisheries and Oceans Fisheries and Aquaculture Clean Technology Adoption Program
- Lush cosmetics funding
- Jordan Wagner and Jennifer could potentially be an initial contact for their ministries
- May wish to contact the IRAP office to discuss biodegradable and durable materials
- What are the financial advantages?
- Can we have a student in the business management program help with this?
- Use this forum to do surveys from the industry about materials
- Involve First Nations in the discussion of products and methods used. K'ómoks First Nation is using some traditional methods and is revising their marine use plan
- Jennifer from DFO will act as a liaison
- BC Shellfish Growers Association, Darlene
- Create the partnership between Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations, and Rural Development (FLNRO) and Department of Fisheries and Oceans
- Get a student to research possible funding sources as well as alternative practices for shellfish aquaculture with regards to equipment and materials used
- See if TIDES, Project Watershed, or Hakai Institute are researching similar questions
- There needs to be financial benefit to growers

Ideas for Research into Alternatives and Restoration:

- Alternatives to netting (DFO is already working on this),
- Alternatives to oyster blue rope
- Aluminum alternatives to floating rocking oyster gear
- Combining eel grass restoration with aquaculture

Small Group Discussion 2: Importance of Herring in Baynes Sound / Lambert Channel



This group, hosted by Grant Scott, discussed the importance of herring in Baynes Sound and Lambert Channel including management issues, history, and what happens next. One of the initiatives discussed was the Herring Festival hosted by

the Conservancy of Hornby Island. There has been a huge amount of public interest, with more than 300 people on boat tours at the last one. The festival was initially a celebration of the herring of the area, but then grew into a forum to discuss concern with the Integrated Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP) for herring.

The group talked about the importance and the complexity of the herring systems for our ecosystem and economics. Some participants feel that Baynes Sound and Lambert Channel is the most important spawning area in North America for herring. Baynes Sound is a retention area (a residential herring area). This also applies to the eggs, but doesn't apply to juveniles who radiate outwards and don't stay in the Lambert Channel. Larval survival empirical data has been gathered for 3-4 years, and ongoing juvenile studies have been done.

There was also some discussion about the impacts of commercial fishing in this area's herring population. Gillnetters are fishing while the herring are spawning, so the roe is usually very fresh. There is a concern that the roe would get bruised, but this isn't usually a problem. The market wants the larger fish, but since 2010 the "size at age" went down. The group wondered if this had to do with the location and movement of the herring populations, and whether or not there is any way to figure this out.

The bulk of the fish in the Strait of Georgia are under 3 or 4 years of age, but young herring has not always been that way. What is causing this change? One theory is that around Lambert Channel there are high quantities of krill – which effect the changes in herring populations. In the Strait of Georgia, this was a large yield of krill and herring. There might not be any studies on this issue. There is a Krill fishery in Jarvis Inlet, which likely have a lot of data and information. Another change discussed by the group is over time the herring bloom has evolved and changed where it goes.

The group also asked the question, are there two sub-species of herring? Resident vs Non-Resident (or migratory). Points made about this topic included:

- The herring baitfishes are first taken from Galiano Island. There are huge schools of fish (roughly 50 thousand tonnes). The last few years the fish have seemed to move further north (Qualicum).
- Large bodies of migratory stock of fish; people are directed away from the locations with smaller groups of herring.
- Studies of genetics of herring have changed and advanced over the last decades and there has been tagging and but none of these are showing that there are different species. Exception: Cherry Point is different, and it spawns later.
- All of the places that we hear about – are all of the pockets of residents getting caught up in the migratory catch and is that causing damage? We don't know where they are.
- Fisherpeople are saying they do not see herring in the same places they used to be. Marine mammals (e.g. seals and sea lions) have changed substantially in the Gulf Islands and this has changed the salmon stocks and probably the herring stocks.
- Integrated Fisheries Management Plan and the assessment base for the Strait of Georgia view the migratory stock as one fishery. There is a lot of history that has gone into how it was developed.

The group also discussed concerns with the Integrated Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP) for herring:

- Lack of mention of effect/result on birds and mammals.
- The baseline was taken from a modelling process completed in 1951 (216 thousand tons) and since then, there has been a collapse. Why do they start with 1951? One explanation was that the catch could be attributed to the actual stock after that date.
- In the 1970s and 80s, major focus on conservation/management policy – “highest and best use.” Now there is very little mention. People trip over this value statement. But it is still very important and should be clarified.

The group expressed concern that there is an intrinsic value put on herring that isn't often considered when making decisions about land use. Where we don't see herring there are usually pulp mills. There used to be herring spawning in Nanaimo harbour and Ladysmith way. Unfortunately, they are gone now. There is probably a trade-off between herring and the use of the foreshore because the herring populations are so sensitive - we need to be very careful with the way that we treat the remaining stocks. It is a public resource; it needs to be conserved.

The discussion led back to the topic of the impact of commercial fishing. Fisheries are currently based on a conservative human harvest, but maybe we need to include the needs and impacts of other creatures, along with understanding the events created by fishing. People see herring as a public resource and want to know where the herring is going. One participant expressed concern that a lot of our herring goes to international

markets for roe. But then there is the food versus bait use and there seems to be no indication of how much is used for each of those uses. A fishery professional in the group explained that the majority of herring harvested is not going to human food as a primary use (but a by-product), and that our roe herring goes to Japan for processing. They take out the roe and then process the fish carcass as human food in Japan. It is a winter fishery, meaning that many of the fish become frozen in blocks of ice and shipped out as fish meal and aquaculture feed. The group wondered if the public and fisher-people have a problem with this, as even if it is just the perception that this is a big use of herring and it might not be. Sustainability is also important to fisher people. Gillnetters are concerned about food and bait because they do not want that to affect their access to roe. The agreement between the different fisheries has to consider the sustainability of the entire fishery.

The group expressed the opinion that if the public is going to have value-based conversations about the fishery, we need to find a way to quantify and talk about it. The group wondered if there is a way that the end use of all of the herring could be tracked, so that the public could be made aware of what is happening with the resource. The Ministry of Aquaculture could keep track of what is being exported. However, is there a better way to gather more complete information? What can this group do about it?

The group agreed on the value of having a common plan to work towards sustainability. Focusing on the higher value commodity-based fishery means less fish would need to be caught. There is a need for research and development to advocate for the value-based change towards the higher value fishery. It would be more sustainable and lucrative!

The group wondered about local investment in a marketing campaign to support and promote herring as a luxury product. This could bring social benefit and pride, as well as an invested community involvement. Norway provides some examples of best practices in this realm.

The group agreed that these were the main points from their discussion:

- Herring is important – ecologically and the employment/ecological ramifications
- There is a need to form a working group to meet and continue the dialogue about the complex and important issue of herring in this ecosystem
- We must find ways to gather better and more complete information so that it can be shared among all of the stakeholders
- Public support is needed for the herring industry to continue and succeed and possibly to evolve for the better (acknowledging that harvest policies and fishery regulations are quite good)
- Is the fish-farm connection going to be an issue for the public or the commercial fisher-people?

Small Group Discussion 3: Future Framework for this Group



Dorrie Woodward hosted this group, which focused on the need for the Learning Exchange participants to transition into a formal organization. The organization would build their identity, and draw on participation based on that identity. The key question for consideration is “How can these groups continue to come together to be a group that works towards conservation and ecological recovery in the Baynes Sound / Lambert Channel area?”

The group discussed other organizations that could provide inspiration. One such organization is Comox Valley Project Watershed and the K’ómoks Estuary

Working Group which has worked on a comprehensive estuary management plan and is now working on implementing actions identified through planning and consultation. The group agreed that it would be valuable to meet with Project Watershed to see if they would be interested in taking on a Baynes Sound and Lambert Channel working group/management process. A participant from the Baynes Sound and Lambert Channel learning exchange could be a board member and lead on a partnership or group that would address ecosystem issues in Baynes Sound and Lambert Channel.

Another example of a successful organization is the Howe Sound Community Forum, which is a body of elected officials, but the administration of the Forum happens from outside of government. The Ocean Watch Task force was created by Howe Sound Community Forum to address key identified issues. Coast Ocean Research Institute used the Ocean Watch task force and Howe Sound Community Forum as a legitimizing body, while Ocean Watch Task force and Howe Sound Forum used Coast Ocean Research Institute to advance some of their framework objectives. Howe Sound Forum and Coast Ocean Research Institute are restricted around actions because of heavy government involvement. Howe Sound Forum identified comprehensive land and sea management as a key goal.. The Ocean Watch scientific report helped cut across political boundaries and identify key areas for action.

The group considered the following points drawing from the Howe Sound example:

- How do you engage with industry?
 - Howe Sound Forum tries very hard not to take a clear stance on industry. Their Marine Reference Guide had industrial and economic interests on the board, which helped with data selection and provision.
- The Squamish Nation is one of the biggest developers in the Howe Sound region, having them at the table leads to an inclusion of development concerns in negotiations.
- Other groups such as the biosphere and conservation societies are the appropriate and active vehicles pushing against industrialization.

- Howe Sound Community Forum agendas are shaped by who can participate; however moving forwards the meetings will be planned around the strategic plan.
- Having a clear purpose to the forum has helped to keep stable funding.
- TIDES can run administrative process for specific projects (e.g. managing the researching and establishment of a database for Howe Sound Community Forum).
- Howe Sound has also looked at the biosphere initiative as a model for coordinating a conservation initiative.
- Squamish River Watershed Society could be a model to replicate if Baynes Sound / Lambert Channel area forum group is looking for grants/restoration efforts. Non-profits are good at boots on the ground but have little regulatory weight.

Reflecting on the next steps for establishing an organization to address the needs in Baynes Sound / Lambert Channel, the group agreed on the necessity of stable funding (possibly from the Comox Valley Regional District) and considered the following points:

- What would this group do exactly? There is a need for a clear terms of reference and/or statement of principle. Ideally we would get decision makers to sign onto these. The Terms of Reference should include primacy of First Nations rights and title above other levels of jurisdiction.
- Regarding composition of the group: A broad cross-sectional group like this can easily get the ear of government because it is an easy way for them to be in contact with local sentiment, needs and/or concerns. Where does the regional district fit?
- Regarding leadership of the group: Islands Trust could potentially provide a secretariat function but currently Islands Trust cannot provide grants and there is no group in North Island area that could qualify for support from Islands Trust. Islands Trust can lead processes and support but is going to have a level of government rigor that can lend credibility but also bog the process down in government protocol. Additionally, all elected officials with Islands Trust may not be familiar with Baynes Sound and Lambert Channel. By having a decision-making body of Islands Trust charged with secretariat functions leaves a Baynes Sound and Lambert Channel initiative vulnerable to funding/leadership changes after an election. Alternatively, a grassroots-led approach has the advantage of being local, focused, and driven, but could also be captured by narrow interests.
- Task-force set up is a challenge because planners and government bodies need to be able to justify their participation in a process.
- Inclusion of First Nations/relationship building with First Nations is very important.
- Regular conversations = more likely to have participation from elected officials.
- Are we trying to create a new regulatory body? No, they do not want to.
- Buy-in from partner groups without regulatory authority has been a successful model for galvanizing community action and building community strength.

There was also some discussion about how to best include First Nations including K'ómoks First Nation, and the Comox Valley Regional District. The group considered the following questions and points:

- How does a policy umbrella group engage with First Nations? There is a need to invite First Nations, but staffing will be a concern.
- The Guardian watchmen program works on a project-based funding model; would need to try to find a way to support First Nations engagement capacity as well as funding.
- K'ómoks First Nation Council remained relatively stable after last council election.
- Cowichan Valley Regional District is constantly improving relationships with First Nations.
- Climate change adaptation is part of the zoning conversation in the Comox Valley Regional District.
- Comox Valley Regional District was invited, but they were a bit busy to come to the learning exchange.

There was much discussion about the idea that the organization should commission a study of the state of the area, and its ecological integrity by setting up a working group to develop a comprehensive ecosystem-based management plan with its own terms of reference and cross-section of participants. Group member shared the following ideas:

- Planners help keep the conversation grounded in what is realistic policy;
- Government staff are restricted in what they can do, but they understand the legislative process;
- The Baynes Sound and Lambert Channel area does not have the wealth of data available/comprehensive scientific plan available yet;
- Pooling of data / collection of data needs to be a priority to help get planners and stakeholders traction on key issues for conservation;
- We should learn from the Howe Sound experience: engage citizen scientists and keep public engaged in the decision process/data process;
- Engaging citizens needs a “marketing hook”: Baynes Sound and Lambert Channel area has herring spawn as a “hook”;
- Ecological diversity of the area/fecundity of the area is powerful;
- Lots of data does exist for the area: Simon Fraser University studies, Hornby Island stewards, Islands Trust forage fish study;
- Data needs to be synthesized and data gaps need to be identified.

What are the next steps?

- When will Islands Trust have a secretariat that can provide administrative and support services to regional groups?
- Approach project watershed about replicating estuary working group for Baynes Sound and Lambert Channel area
- Use the management plan gap analysis

- Development of terms of reference/statement of intention
- Interim governance working group to work through proposals/visions for a Baynes Sound – Lambert Channel round table/working group/forum
- Talking to K'ómoks First Nations to see what partnership could look like? What type of group and governance they would like to participate with.
- Environmental funding scan → what foundations could provide seed and long-term funding for the process?
- Could Coastal Ocean Research Institute be approached about researching and producing an Ocean Watch manual/report for the Baynes Sound and Lambert Channel area (gaps analysis and data overview)?
- How should communications happen within the membership and with the public?

In addition to identifying the above next steps, the group also determined criteria for assessing a good model for a future forum/round table/group:

- Ability to attract funding;
- Structural durability;
- Buy-in from stakeholders at learning exchanges;
- Stable, multiple-source funding.

Ideally, the outcome of the next steps will be:

- (Near term) having some clearly described options to formalize the process/structure ready for the next learning exchange after the next federal election
- Regular conversations
- Working group
- Eventually → need an ecosystem-based plan

Small Group Discussion 4: Creating Opportunities for First Nations Participation



This group, hosted by Gillian Nicol, discussed potential ways to create opportunities for First Nations participation. The group noted they were grateful that Chief Mike Recalma had attended both the Forum in 2018 and this learning exchange. The need to work together has been clearly identified at this and previous Baynes Sound and Lambert Channel events. There is a strong desire on the part of all participants to create a inclusive dialogue space where all participants feel comfortable and culturally safe. The group noted that

there was a sincere desire moving forward to provide opportunities for greater and more meaningful engagement.. The group considered the possibility of making presentations to the Chiefs and Councils of the K'ómoks First Nation and other Nations, which would require knowing the schedule of Council meetings in order to apply to be on the agenda. The group wondered if it would be possible to get time at one of the K'ómoks First Nation treaty forums to discuss collaborative planning – such as, how does their planning overlap with the Baynes Sound/Lambert Channel environmental groups and government groups?

There was some discussion about other options for building relationships with First Nations, including hosting Community-to-Community Forums using the Union of British Columbia Municipalities Community to Community Funding to build relationships. The group also discussed Indigenous organizations who could be invited to participate, including Nanwakolas, and potentially the Aboriginal Aquaculture Industry (recognizing that they are a service provider, not a planning body or designated area.) The group acknowledged that individual relationships are key, and informal in-person meetings can help to build relationships. Ideally, relationships could go beyond the political level and allow staff from different communities and organizations to communicate with one another. Once the relationship has been established, consistent meetings are essential to keep the positive momentum going. Ladysmith and Stz'uminus was recognized as a very inspiring example of this relationship building in action.

One need that the group identified is to make sure First Nations actually get tangible benefits from participation. It is important not to use First Nations as token participants, or to try to use it to legitimize the learning exchange. Non-Indigenous people need to be very clear about why they have asked Indigenous people to participate. Having some events geared more towards leadership (less frequent, more about advocacy) and some geared towards staff and volunteers (more frequent, more nitty-gritty) could help make it easier for Indigenous people to participate. As well, as ensuring that cultural understanding and safety awareness is part of non-Indigenous participants understanding.

The group discussed that it would be good to communicate the tangible benefits to their Nations for participation – one benefit could be offering content at the learning exchanges that is of interest to the First Nations. Another benefit could be sharing data that has been collected.

Another positive step towards relationship building is for the non-Indigenous participants to educate themselves on local Indigenous history and contemporary context, and to speak out on a regular basis about the need for acknowledgement and reconciliation. Many participants stated that they would love to have First Nations participants present on that history and share their knowledge about how to be good stewards of the land.

The group decided on the following recommendations:

- Provide presentations to Chiefs and Councillors from local First Nations at their regular meetings, or at a special meeting.
- Offer to organize events for First Nations communities, so their members can participate (to learn more about the learning exchange and also provide input for any special projects).
- Pay for data analysis and provide the results to First Nations
- Provide opportunities for First Nations to share knowledge to other leadership in the region (e.g. herring, sea lion migration, etc)
- Ask the First Nations for recommendations for the learning exchange/forum's terms of reference: What structure? What timing? What roles would work best for them?
- Try to include the K'ómoks First Nation in the next learning exchange/forum as a presenter on their Marine Use Plan.
- Encourage learning exchange participants to attend public events held by the First Nations, go to the community, build face-to-face relationships, acknowledge First Nations through meetings and recognition.
- Keep in mind that the framework used should include a statement of the terms of reference that references aboriginal rights and title of the land, and acknowledgment of the territory.
- We cannot ask First Nations to participate in a process in order to validate it. We need to really focus on our role and how we communicate what we're doing, and why we want to engage and include First Nations in the process.

Next Steps

Action Items

After each small group finished their discussions, recommendations were shared in plenary. The rest of the participants had the option to recommend amendments to the recommendations, and the participants were asked if anyone objected to the inclusion of each recommendation. The final list of amended recommendations is as follows (not in order of priority):

From Group 1: Aquaculture Research Project & Demonstration Site

- Form a **working group** to develop a research proposal for a demonstration project re: restoration/alternative practices for an aquaculture site and report back in October (**Provisional Chair – Barb Mills, Members – Dan Lisch, Alex Munro**)
- Get a researcher to help research aquaculture best practices and equipment as well as funding sources and assist with development of research proposal

From Group 2: Importance of Herring in Baynes Sound / Lambert Channel

- Form a **working group** to convene more dialogue about herring and report back in October (**Provisional Chair – Grant Scott, Members – Cath Gray, Art Martell, Vanessa Minke-Martin, Bryan Rusch and Doug Hay**)

From Group 3: Future Framework for this Group of Stakeholders

- Form a **working group** to study options for a framework /structure, consider ecosystem based management as a basic assumption, and discuss the feasibility of various communication tools and to report back in October (**Provisional Chair – Dorrie Woodward, Members – David Critchley, Kim Dunn, Tim Ennis, Alex Munro**)
- Approach organizations that might contribute (financially or otherwise) to a framework for a more consistent advocacy organization for the Baynes Sound / Lambert Channel area (Islands Trust, Comox Valley Project Watershed, Coastal Ocean Research Institute, Fraser Basin Council)
- Talk to First Nations communities about what structure would work best for them, for this new framework

From Group 4: Creating Opportunity for First Nations Participation

- Meet regularly with First Nations formally and informally to build relationships
- Clarify why non-Indigenous participants want First Nations participation
- Include a statement in the Terms of Reference that acknowledges the jurisdictional primacy of Aboriginal rights and title, Indigenous knowledge and connection to the land
- Co-develop and communicate tangible benefits to each First Nation

- Educate ourselves about First Nations history and modern context

Logistical Next Steps

- Organize the next Ecosystem Forum for October/November 2019 after the federal election
- Invite the K'ómoks First Nation to the next Forum to share information on their history, stories, and marine use plan
- Send a follow-up email to participants within the week after the March 2019 Learning Exchange
- Provide final summary report to participants by late May/early June

Participants noted that the Comox Valley Regional District will be having an open house on the liquid waste management plan in May 2019 and that information should be distributed to participants. The group agreed that when issues of concern come up, it is appropriate to circulate information beyond the working groups in a more formal way, for example, regarding issues of concern about Coal Hills at Union Bay.

Suggestions for Next Forum

Participants were also asked to share suggestions for the next Ecosystem Forum gathering, requested for Fall of 2019. The following suggestions were made:

- K'ómoks First Nation marine use plan and story telling
- K'ómoks First Nation on history of herring and current context
- Within Baynes Sound – First Nations traditional knowledge of fish spawning in fall months
- K'ómoks elder talking about the sea, knowledge and stories
- Potential speakers/case study: Clean-up of Drayton Harbor water quality (Blaine, Whatcom County), 1999 shellfish closure, Drayton Harbor community oyster farm, Drayton Harbor shellfish protection district, Puget Sound Restoration Fund
- Michelle Washington from Tla'amin First Nation could talk about herring – or elders from K'ómoks or Qualicum might want to speak about cultural value
- Working groups (identified in next steps) report back to plenary group
- Share ideas for restoration (e.g. opportunities for marine nearshore)
- Discuss the reality of a cumulative effects study
- Next step on management plan – an integrated one?
- Herring science expert
- Microplastics scientist talk
- How to include the voices of young people? Young Indigenous people? Their vision for the future
- Identify available and applicable tools (regulatory, management) to protect the most vulnerable ecosystem components in the area
- Two days next time – if possible
- Question re: how 12-year climate change deadline interferes with ecosystem based management

Appendix A: List of Participants

Name	Organization
Maryann Watson	West Coast Environmental Law
Dorrie Woodward	Association of Denman Island Marine Stewards
Barb Mills	Association of Denman Island Marine Stewards
Grant Scott	Islands Trust, Trustee
Catherine Gray	Conservancy Hornby Island
Carl Butterworth	Deep Bay Field Station, VIU
Tim Ennis	Comox Valley Land Trust
David Critchley	Islands Trust, Trustee
Chief Mike Recalma	Qualicum First Nation
Alex Munro	Taylor Shellfish Farms- Fanny Bay Oysters
Doug Hay	DFO Emeritus
Greg Thomas	Herring Industry Advisory Board
Kim Dunn	WWF-Canada
Gillian Nicol	Islands Trust
Jessie Hemphill	Alderhill Planning Inc
Jordan Wagner	Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations, and Rural Development
Dan Lisch	Friends of Baynes Sound
Vanessa Minke-Martin	Pacific Wild
Bryan Rusch	Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Nikki Wright	Seachange
Ian Cameron	Saanich Inlet Protection Society
Kate-Louise Stamford	Ocean Watch Task Force Atl'ka7tesm/Howe Sound
Jaime Dubyna	Senior Planner, Islands Trust
Art Martell	Caretaker, K'omoks Important Bird Area
Emery Hartley	Masters of Ecological Economics, Student
Kelsea Shadlock	Student, Master of Community Planning
Kayla Harris	Student, Master of Community Planning
Clare Frater	Islands Trust
Jennifer Mollins	Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Jennifer Meilleur	Atl'Kitsem/Howe Sound Biosphere Reserve Initiative

Appendix B: Agenda

AGENDA

Baynes Sound / Lambert Channel Learning Exchange
Kingfisher Resort, Royston
Kingfisher Room March 25, 2019

Aims of the Learning Exchange

- Create an opportunity for shared learning, based on the next steps identified at the Baynes Sound/Lambert Channel Ecosystem Forum 2018;
- Facilitate continued dialogue and information exchange, based on shared values and concerns; and
- Identify next steps for collaborative action

Time	Topic
8:00 – 8:30 am	Registration + Coffee
8:30 – 9:30 am	Opening + Introductions
9:30 – 10:00 am	Review of activities since 2017 learning exchange
10:00 – 10:15 am	Break
10:15 – 12:00 pm	Presentations and Q+A <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kate-Louise Stamford, Ocean Watch Task Force Atl'ka7tesm/Howe Sound• Ian Cameron, Saanich Inlet Protection Society
12:00 – 1:00 pm	Lunch (provided)
1:00 – 1:30 pm	Energizer, set up for open space groups
1:30 – 2:30 pm	Open space breakout groups
2:30 – 2:45 pm	Break
2:45 – 3:30 pm	Report back from open space groups
3:30 – 4:00 pm	Discuss next steps
4:00 – 4:30 p m	Closing circle

Please contact Kim Dunn with any questions and concerns: kdunn@wwfcanada.org