



Howe Sound/Atl'ka7tsem Marine Reference Guide¹

Project Plan, V25, June 2019

1.0 Vision

Governments, First Nations, stakeholders, and communities work together to achieve positive outcomes that benefit current and future generations of human and aquatic life in Howe Sound/Atl'ka7tsem (“the Sound”).

2.0 Purpose

The Howe Sound/Atl'ka7tsem Marine Reference Guide (“the Guide”) offers resources and support to decision-makers, marine spatial planners, and aquatic sectors (e.g. industry, recreation, tourism, conservation, education) so that regional aquatic environmental health and sustainable economic and community development can flourish in tandem.

The objective of the Guide is to provide a unified aquatic information resource that supports marine spatial planning and decision-making by all governments, sectors, and communities², strengthens education and awareness of the biodiversity and human values associated with the Sound’s aquatic environment, enables integrated aquatic management, and enhances existing decision-making processes by linking sector planning and management to regional ecosystem frameworks.³ The Guide will be non-binding and respect the authority, rights and title, jurisdictions, and processes of existing First Nations, governments and sectors.

3.0 Context

Howe Sound/Atl'ka7tsem is within the traditional ancestral and unceded territory of the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) and borders the Tsleil-waututh, Sechelt and Musqueam Nations’ territories. The region is an ecologically rich marine area that sits directly adjacent to the growing metropolis of Vancouver. As such, it is representative of many parts of the world, where post-contact development confronts socio-ecological integrity.

The Guide builds off the work of numerous groups that focus on improving aquatic ecosystem health in the Sound (Figure 1). In particular, it relates to the [Ocean Watch Howe Sound Edition](#) (2017), which reported the status of various marine ecosystem health indicators and catalyzed action toward collective awareness and management of the Sound’s aquatic environment. The Guide will learn from other marine spatial planning initiatives in British Columbia, including West Coast Aquatic’s [marine Guide](#), the [Pacific Northwest Coast Integrated Management Area](#), the [Marine Planning Partnership](#) of the Central and North Coasts, and the [Gwaii Haanas Land-Sea-People Management Plan](#).

¹ This document was approved of by the Guide’s steering committee in October 2018. It is presented for planning purposes and is subject to change upon continual review and revision by the steering committee and leadership partners.

² Based on the Ocean Watch – Howe Sound edition executive summary’s action plan, Action item 1.2

³ Wording borrowed from the Pacific North Coast Integrated Management Area Plan for the Federal and Provincial governments and the Central and North Coastal First Nations 2017.



The Guide will be the first tool that pulls together comprehensive data associated with the Sound’s aquatic ecological and human-use values and that involves multisectoral participation in its leadership and content. In doing so it will build and strengthen relationships amongst the Sound’s numerous aquatic user groups and governments, which is fundamental to establishing successful and sustainable management. It will also be the among the first tools to bridge the land-sea boundary by adopting a watershed scope for content and data.

4.0 Deliverables

The Guide will produce the following:

Interactive map – An online interactive map that displays spatial data associated with the Sound’s marine environment and watersheds (including ecological, biophysical, human-use, industrial, recreational, socio-economic, cultural and long-term ecological monitoring data layers)⁴. This will enable overlaying data layers to understand multi-use of aquatic spaces and to reduce conflict between user groups. The map will also provide data analysis and cumulative effects assessments tools.

Narrative resources – The Guide will provide resources that detail best practices, recommended uses of and objectives for the aquatic environment to protect significant ecological, industry, recreation, and socio-cultural values, and will support an action framework for decisions regarding the management of watershed ecosystems and activities.⁵ These resources will be informed by the collated knowledge and data provided in the interactive map, developed by the management team, and approved of by the leadership partners and steering committee.

5.0 Goals

1. *Strengthen collaboration between First Nations, governments and aquatic sectors*⁶

Objectives:

- a. Relationships between First Nations and governments are strengthened and collaboration advances reconciliation
- b. Decision making is collaborative and consensus-based, while respecting the rights, title and jurisdiction of each First Nation and government
- c. Sense of place and community is strengthened by improving communication and coordination between First Nations, governments, and aquatic sectors
- d. Aquatic sectors and stakeholders participate actively either on the steering committee or through community dialogue and engagement
- e. The Guide deliverables reflect the values, needs, and hopes of the Sound’s community.

⁴ Based on the Ocean Watch – Howe Sound edition Executive summary’s action plan, action item 1.1

⁵ Based on the Ocean Watch – Howe Sound edition Executive summary’s action plan, action item 1.3 and 1.4
Wording borrowed from the Marine Plan Partnership MOU between the Province of British Columbia, First Nations of the Pacific Coast and Tides Canada.

⁶ Wording borrowed from the Gwaii Haanas Land-Sea-People Management Plan between the Council of the Haida Nation and the Government of Canada.



2. *Build knowledge and capacity to protect, restore and be stewards of the health, biodiversity and human-value of Howe Sound/Atl'ka7tsem's aquatic environment*

Objectives:

- a. Knowledge gaps are filled for key ecological features species and habitats⁷, data-poor regions of the Sound, human-associated data layers (e.g. economically or socio-culturally important areas)
 - b. The ten data layers outlined in the Aquatic Initiatives diagram are documented and integrated in the Guide deliverables to the best of our knowledge and capacity (subject to privacy concerns)
 - c. As assessment of the multi-use of aquatic spaces helps to understand how different user groups interact with the aquatic environment and in doing so reduce user conflict and support sustainable management
 - d. Community partnerships are supported between First Nations, aquatic sectors and academic institutions to improve long-term ecological monitoring (e.g. plankton and oceanographic monitoring), support cultural activities, strengthen traditional knowledge sharing from First Nation elders to youth, and build local stewardship capacity.⁸
 - e. The knowledge gathered helps to address and mitigate threats currently facing the aquatic environment (e.g. poaching, illegal and unregulated activities)
3. *Support decision-making and regional development over the long-term that integrates the values and information available in the Guide*

Objectives:

- a. Governments, First Nations and aquatic sectors trust and refer to the Guide to Guide and support their decision-making
 - b. The Guide informs research and regional community and economic development
 - c. A long-term sustainability plan ensures that the information contained within the Guide is up-to-date and accurate beyond the project's three-year development and implementation phase
4. *Endorse a holistic understanding of Howe Sound/Atl'ka7tsem and advance knowledge and appreciation of the region*

Objectives:

- a. Awareness of and connection to the Sound increases at local, regional, and national levels
- b. Engagement with youth increases
- c. Comprehension of the interconnected nature of human, terrestrial and aquatic systems increases
- d. The Guide advances opportunities to learn about the unique attributes and narratives associated with the Sound beyond the region.

⁷ This includes but is not limited to conducting UAV surveys for nearshore monitoring and ROV surveys for groundtruthing benthic habitats (e.g. suitable rockfish habitat and glass sponge reef locations).

⁸ This may learn from and eventually evolve toward the Guardian Watchmen Program.



6.0 Principles

The Guide will work in accordance with the following principles:

Shared responsibility – First Nations, governments, aquatic sectors, and communities in the Sound acknowledge a shared responsibility for aquatic environmental health.⁹

Ecosystem and watershed approach – The Guide acknowledges the intrinsic relationship between terrestrial, freshwater, and marine ecosystem components. Accordingly, the Guide’s outcomes and processes will adopt an ecosystem approach that balances ecosystem function and connectivity with human activity on land and at sea.³

Adaptive process – The Guide will integrate local and traditional knowledge together with historic, industrial, ecological, and social information, and acknowledges that project objectives, processes and outputs will iterate over time as available knowledge continually improves.⁹

Respect – The natural world, First Nations’ traditional laws, rights and title, and the rights and responsibilities of aquatic sectors and regional residents are respected.¹⁰

Transparency – Operations and communications are clear, fair and open, and decision-making is accountable to the public and stakeholders.¹⁰

Inclusivity and trust – All sectors, communities, and persons impacted by this project will have the opportunity to participate in a fair and open manner in order to strengthen trust and respect within the Sound’s community.⁹

Information to action – Upon gathering knowledge and reaching consensus, the Guide will serve as a tool to transform knowledge into action. Outcomes will vary depending on the topic, and may include outreach events, dissemination of information, and hands-on activities.⁹

7.0 Management structure

Leadership partners:

Structure: First Nations and Local Governments form the Guide’s leadership partners and oversee the project’s evolution. The Provincial and Federal Governments may be integrated into this role and relationship as the planning evolves.

Responsibilities: The leadership partners are responsible for decision-making by consensus¹¹ associated with the project’s scope and development, and for ensuring that the project progresses using collaborative, integrated, and respectful frameworks.

⁹ Wording borrowed from West Coast Aquatic’s Governance Board Manual, 2017.

¹⁰ Wording borrowed from the Coastal First Nations Conservation Economy framework, 2018.

¹¹ Shared decision-making by consensus involves coming to an agreement that the members can live with. The members may not agree with every aspect, but taken as a whole, a decision based on consensus satisfies the major interests and concerns of the members to the extent that all can support it. Wording taken directly from West Coast Aquatic’s Governance Board Orientation Manual.



Steering committee:

Structure: 10 respected representatives and champions from First Nations, governments, and aquatic sectors form the Guide’s steering committee. Individuals are committed to the project vision, principles, and goals. They have experience overseeing large projects and are willing to meet quarterly or as needed.

Responsibilities: The steering committee steers the project progression and provides advice on reports, draft products, studies, and strategies. They are responsible for decision-making by consensus associated with the project’s development and implementation. When consensus is not attainable, decision-making will occur by majority vote. They will act as champions to extend the project’s network and outreach, collectively decide upon and approve the narrative resources associated with the map and assist in acquiring available information.

Management team:

Structure: 2-4 qualified individuals that have knowledge about Howe Sound/Atl’ka7tsem’s aquatic environment, experience in project management, GIS website and data management, communications, and research.

Responsibilities: The management team will draft plans and documents associated with the project’s framework, seek and secure funding, report to the steering committee and leadership partners, ensure deliverables and outcomes are achieved on time and budget, hire staff and contractors as needed, organize meetings and maintain records, establish linkages with relevant groups and projects, and ensure regular communications.

Administrative body:

Structure: The Guide is a project on the Tides Canada’s shared platform. Tides Canada is a national Canadian charity dedicated to a healthy environment, social equity, and economic prosperity.

Responsibilities: Tides Canada has full fiduciary and governance responsibility for the Guide.

8.0 Timeline

Phase 1: Planning (May-September 2018)

Outputs: Terms of Reference, Project Plan, confirmed management structure

Budget: \$30,000 from the BC Marine Planning Fund; \$4950 from Ocean Leaders.

Activities: Outreach within Howe Sound/Atl’ka7tsem to build relationships and identify the use of this tool by decision-makers and the community; identify management structure and leadership

Phase 2: Implementation (September 2018 – December 2021)

Outputs: Achievement of the project’s deliverables, vision and goals.

Budget: ~\$200,000/year; \$20,000/year from Local Governments, the rest from foundations and contributors.

Timeline:

Year 1: Data collection (September 2018-December 2019)

Activities and deliverables: Build and expand aquatic datasets, community engagement and outreach, organizational partnerships and project expansion



Year 2: Data analysis (September 2019-December 2020)

Activities and deliverables: Conduct a cumulative effects assessment¹² based on available data, community engagement and outreach, collectively agree upon narrative resources

Year 3: Training, outreach and project conclusion (September 2020 – December 2021)

Activities and deliverables: Familiarize regional planners, staff, and community members with how to use the Guide, formulate a long-term sustainability plan

9.0 Partners and people

Leadership Partners

Ocean Watch Task Force¹³, Squamish First Nation

Steering Committee

Ian Ross, Mosaic Forest Management

Jessica Schultz, Ocean Wise

Sarah McJannet, District of Squamish

Ruth Simons, Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative

Nadine Parker, Department of Fisheries and Oceans

Randall Lewis, Squamish Nation

Adam Taylor, Underwater Council of British Columbia

Trevor Dunn, Sea to Sky Gondola

Bill Wareham, David Suzuki Foundation

Advisors

Andrew Day, BC Parks Foundation, Darcy Dobell, the Wabe

Supporters

Confirmed: Moore Foundation, Sitka Foundation, Vancouver Foundation, District of Squamish, Islands Trust, District of West Vancouver, Town of Gibsons, Village of Lions Bay, Bowen Island Municipality, Squamish-Lillooet Regional District, Sunshine Coast Regional District, North Growth Foundation, National Geographic Society,

Proposed: Real Estate Foundation, Moore Foundation, Lush, Patagonia,

¹² The Guide's cumulative effects assessment (CEA) will complement and support the Province's CEA, which is being conducted by the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations, and Rural Development.

¹³ The Ocean Watch Task Force was established by the Howe Sound Community Forum with a principal goal of furthering the action items outlined in the report's Action Plan, the first of which is this project.

Figure 1. A review of the connectivity of various initiatives in Howe Sound/ Atl'ka7tsem

