

## MEETING MINUTES

MABR Roundtable Gathering Volume 19  
Friday, May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021 from 10:00am to 12:30pm

Virtual meeting via Zoom.



### Attendees (12)

Mandy Hobkirk, MABR, Coordinator  
Haley Tomlin, MABRRI, Research & Community Engagement Coordinator  
Jennah Stavroff, Community Representative  
Pam Shaw, MABRRI, Research Director  
Ceri Peacey, Community Representative  
Graham Sakaki, MABRRI, Regional Research Institute Manager  
Steve Adams, Mosaic Forest Management, Resource Technologist  
Chris Burger, City of Parksville  
Teunis Westbroek, Town of Qualicum Beach, Councillor  
Kim Burden, Parksville & Qualicum Chamber of Commerce, E.D.  
Blain Sepos, Parksville Qualicum Beach Tourism, E.D.  
Jenni Otilie Keppler, Guest

### Objectives

The main objectives of this Roundtable gathering are for participants to:

1. Continue to engage in respectful and meaningful dialogue with one another.
2. Discuss past, present, and future events for the MABR/RI.
3. Hear from one another about regional/organizational/community updates.

### Welcome & Opening Prayer

- Mandy provided words of welcome
- Circle introductions

### Agenda Adoption

- No changes or additions
- Reviewed the *Culture of Engagement*

### Circle Updates from Roundtable Members

#### Pam Shaw, MABRRI

- MABRRI has 26 employees this summer
- MABRRI's 7-year anniversary is coming up (August 14<sup>th</sup>)
- We're becoming more well-known and people want to get students involved in community-based research

#### Graham Sakaki, MABRRI

- MABRRI just hired a new Planning Projects Coordinator
  - Sonal Deshmukh just received a 3-year work permit and moving forward she'll be working full-time with MABRRI

- Upcoming project: new proposal with Town of Qualicum Beach and 13 other municipalities around the region looking at Development Approval Processes
- Canadian Mountain Network (CMN) is now in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of funding
  - Extending the project to 4 years
  - Vital Signs report for MABR will be released by end of summer
- Partnered with IISAAK OLAM Foundation for 3-year project
  - Looking at Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs)
  - Working to create a main hub at one of the University campuses (UVic or VIU) with satellite hubs across Western Canada which will help with Canada's Target 1 goals
- Canadian Foundation for Innovation (grant for equipment)
  - Received this funding for ~\$160K
  - We will start ordering equipment soon and compile a list of all our resources – it will be available to community groups to use as well
- MABRRI currently has about 25 projects on the go

#### **Teunis Westbroek, Town of Qualicum Beach**

- Since 2006 the town had planned to combine the parks and public works yard, which is in the Community Park (it's been in the Official Community Plan since 2006)
  - For now, to accommodate those in need, the Town will bring in 15 pods for the homeless during COVID. The pods will be placed in the public work yard, which will be transitioned at a later date.
- The town has been acquiring more park land, approximately 10 acres over the last while; they recently acquired the Wilson property.

#### **Chris Burger, City of Parksville**

- Parksville is looking at constructing a major recreational complex
  - It's in the early stage and involves some sensitive lands near the well fields
- There's lots of development in the area, including new housing and apartment blocks
- There are always challenges regarding the balance between humans and nature in our area
- Mandy asked if there are any updates on the proposed aquatic center's site location?
  - Chris replied that they are still in the early stage of creating an advisory committee to evaluate the sites – If you are a professional and can provide insights and assessments to work with the consulting team, you can apply to be a part of the advisory committee
  - This process will take time and there will be lots of opportunity for input (no sites have been 100% selected yet)
- Ceri asked if there was a list of other sites because the site currently discussed is a very sensitive ecosystem
  - Chris said its early days, but there are other sites
  - There is an intent at the end to have a referendum – the people will have a huge democratic say

#### **Blain Sepos, Parksville Qualicum Beach Tourism**

- There are province-wide travel restrictions in place – the industry is rolling with it
- Activity and experience providers are the hardest hit
- PQBTA has made a grant available to small businesses to help offset a small investment they've made to improve customer experiences (a new tent to extend a patio, rejig an experience to put in new plexiglass to divert people, or to make something virtual instead)

- \$3,000 per eligible business
- If it's not done there may be a lot of businesses that won't make it
- Affordable housing through hotel tax: working with RDN, City of Parksville and Town of QB to determine if the accommodation tax would be enough to support affordable housing
  - They would have enough funds to subsidize hospitality and tourism workers, which would make it easier for these people to live in the area it helps the local businesses
  - Consultation with RDN is coming up
  - Will enter into contract with Society of Organized Services (SOS) to distribute funds
- Chronic staffing shortage in Parksville/QB will be the worst this summer
  - Lots of businesses depend on students
  - With restrictions in place and businesses not being able to have guests, these students are looking for other jobs
  - When restrictions are lifted and businesses can hire, there won't be any more students to access
  - Trying to identify supports for local businesses
- Hopefully due to pent up demand we will see lots of visitors in the community again
- Jennah said it might be an idea to partner with the school district as they need to have a certain number of volunteer hours
  - Students could perhaps work before the end of June and possibly turn it into a summer job after some volunteer training
  - Could tap into the high school students if there won't be university students available
  - End of year school field trips can include experiences with local businesses
- Blain said there hasn't been a ton of success with high school student work to-date
  - Agreed that lots of businesses do depend on end of year school trips
- Graham said if you're looking for university level employees there are CEWIL funding opportunities still available (\$1,800 chunks for partners to hire students)
  - Blain said that it is the number of students vs the number of jobs available that is not in balance
- Kim said he has 5 jobs he's offering to people under 30, but he's only had 2 applicants
  - Graham said we can try to help promote these jobs, if we pass things onto Mandy we can help spread the word – maybe through VIU Communications directly
- Chris said lots of people don't want to work anymore, which is a drag on our economy
  - There is a wide range of choices for the ones willing to work
  - Fear is that as we come out of this pandemic and people will want to start travelling there will be a huge number of visitors but the businesses will be totally overwhelmed
- Blain said Chris is right – rates will go up because there will not be enough staff to maintain all the rooms the businesses have, so some will need to not be booked each night in order to keep up, which will then make it too expensive for people to visit
  - There will be sections of restaurants closing and shorter hours

#### **Kim Burden, Parksville & Qualicum Chamber of Commerce**

- The Benchmark program is rolling out and looking fantastic
  - Sneak peaks of some of the artist's work is on Facebook
  - Prototype bench is going to Ballenas High school
  - 30 artists have been designing 30 benches
  - All sites of the benches will be in the biosphere region
  - At the end of summer they will be auctioned off

- He's working on the map for the self-guided tour, which will get locals into parks and areas they may not have normally gone
- Branding exercise in QB
  - During a time that we can't have events, they are focusing funds on a branding strategy
  - Have reached out as far as possible to get input but there is still time to participate

### **Steve Adams, Mosaic Forest Management**

- RDN CWMN (Community Watershed Monitoring Network) will be starting up soon
  - Mosaic supports this through access, safety, and they fund the validation process in the Englishman and Little Qualicum region
- They have a record number of summer students this year
  - 10 students are spread out in 5 departments: operations (engineering), forestry (replanting, silviculture), sustainability (wildlife research), GIS team, and finance
- DJI Mavic Mini Drone
  - Trying to get it into the hands of planners
  - It is small enough to fly without pilot's license
  - He'll be giving a presentation to the whole company
  - Want to get more people using the drones to find more opportunities to integrate into their business
- Committed to being an equal opportunity company
  - They want to bring on the best people fit for their work
  - Signed a 2-year commitment with Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion and how Mosaic can play a major role in inclusion

### **Ceri Peacey, Community Representative**

- Brant Wildlife Festival
  - This year's festival was a challenge with COVID restrictions
  - Highlights:
    - Thanks to funding from PQBTA, The Brant Wildlife Festival was able to produce several videos of special places in the PQB area
    - They hosted a successful 'spot the brant' contest
    - The MABR held a cyber BioBlitz, which recorded 817 observations, 382 species, and involved 31 participants
    - The North Island Wildlife Recovery Centre videotaped this year's Eagle Release
    - Arrowsmith Naturalists and MABR produced a very clear map of the Parksville Qualicum Wildlife Management Area (PQWMA) and a bird trail guide for spring birds
    - The Brant Count seemed to get a lot of attention
  - Looking at trying to compress it into 7-10 days next year (just opened up this discussion)

### **Student Researcher Presentation (Jenni Otilie Keppler)**

- Jenni asked to join one of the meetings because having human connection is very important to her
- Jenni prepared a presentation for us to discuss ideas for research for her Master's Program
  - Planning to be a visiting research student starting next spring
- About her
  - Professional background in illustration and graphic design

- Freelancing since 2013 in the realm of eco-social change
  - How she got here
    - Wanted to do something more connected to nature
    - Started studying international forest ecosystem management
    - Her program discussed UNESCO Biosphere Reserves – it’s very holistic and integrates humans and nature
    - Found she wants to do something working with people involving global change movement
      - A big focus of the program is system thinking
    - Part of the program is the research semester (this is where she wants to come over to the MABR)
    - She has a very strong connection to the West Coast of North America
- Research proposal
  - Resilience assessment – stability of modern society is at threat due to changes in biodiversity and major disturbances
    - What do we need to face such changes?
    - How can we as a region of living beings be resilient on a personal, communal, and regional level?
    - What do we need to let go of to not make things worse?
    - What could we bring back (cultural practices and knowledge) that would help us?
  - Goal:
    - Identifying an inspirational goal or vision for the MABR in the context of regional resilience
  - Process:
    - Stakeholder interviews
      - What do we need to do to reach the inspirational goal that was identified for the MABR?
      - She’d like to interview 15-20 people (after 15 people patterns usually start to emerge)
    - If possible, do a broader survey
    - Present results to Roundtable and the BR in a workshop
  - Strategies and formulation for guiding practices and MABR Resilience Action Plan

## MABR Updates

### Past

#### Mid-Island Stewardship Caucus (MISC) – Graham

- A few months ago, a newly formed group was put together – spearheaded by the Nanaimo & Area Land Trust (NALT) and Ceri
- The idea of MISC is to share equipment and other resources to promote and help other stewardship group’s work
- There’s been discussions on who could sit on the committee
  - MISC is not inviting advocacy groups, and instead is focusing on groups that are working on environmental projects

- It has been great so far – it’s nice to connect with all the organizations and is really benefiting the MABR as we are able to reach a larger audience
- Ceri added that the MABR Periodic Review will be great because the MABR has been so engaged at the community level
  - Graham added that the next periodic review will be in 2024

### **Present**

#### **Potential to Restructure Roundtable Gatherings – Mandy**

- Open to discussion regarding the structure of the gatherings
- Currently meeting every 3 months for 2.5 hours
  - An option would be meeting every other month for 1.5 hours
- Ceri likes the idea of restructuring
- Chris likes the part of the meeting where we get to hear everyone’s thoughts
- Teunis said every two months and shorter meetings would be good
- Mandy said next meeting would be scheduled for August and we can make decisions then when we re-evaluate the status of COVID-19
  - Teunis says let’s hang in one more time and then hopefully we can meet in person like we used to do
- Chris said we could have a hybrid model – in person meetings, but have those that can’t make it in person join in using Zoom

#### **Arrowsmith Naturalists Bee and Butterfly Pollinator Project – Mandy**

- Arrowsmith Naturalists are promoting pollinator plants to create habitat for the declining population of bees, butterflies, and other pollinators.
- They are hoping to create signs for individuals to put in their front gardens where the public can see them
  - There are signs you can download online for free, but would be best to have them laminated or printed on aluminum
  - As a small volunteer organization, the Arrowsmith Naturalists have limited funds and don't want to have to sell the garden signs if they can give them away
- On a bigger scale, they hope to have some informative signs in parks
- Is there a way for us to help with signage costs and/or placement? Do we know of any funding opportunities they could go for to get them started?
- Blain understands that it’s nice to give away but purchasing something puts value in it
  - Those that would want to take part wouldn’t bat an eye at paying for the sign
  - Could be a fundraising opportunity – maybe rethink/restructure
- Kim echoes Blain’s thoughts
- Graham said that we have a grant at VIU (NutritionLink) if there is a way to align it to food security pollination, there may be a way to get some funds from this
  - Graham has posed it to the whole group – the project must be on food security/education driven

#### **Initiatives to Combat Lack of Recycling Options – Mandy/Jennah**

- In March 2020, the Parksville QB bottle depot stopped accepting certain types of recycling
- Community members are concerned about the lack of access to recycling services
  - Since there are no local drop off for these items, recycling is either being run to Nanaimo or Courtenay for processing

- A recent news article stated that there were recommendations for the Town of QB, Parksville and QB chamber of commerce, and City of Parksville to work together and pursue the private sector in providing this service
- Teunis said they passed a motion to be more aggressive with the provincial government and are looking at alternatives
  - Possible to have recycle depot at existing businesses
- Jennah added that it could be turned into an opportunity for skills training/income generation/community coming together with the homeless
  - Is there grants/funding to train the people to sort at a pop-up collection points – get around some of the regulatory section of the province
  - Instead of passing it off to regional governments they could support with grants or in-kind support
- Teunis suggested that these ideas are written and sent to the RDN Board of Directors
- Mandy suggested bouncing ideas off of Lehann and Maureen

#### **Letters of Support for Eagle Preserve – Mandy**

- The Save Estuary Land Society is still trying to raise funds for the first eagle preserve on Vancouver Island
- They are asking if Roundtable members might be willing to provide letters of support, which would be used to support funding applications so they can purchase the land
  - Goal is \$500,000 to purchase land
- The society is willing to provide talking points or a template letter
- Kim had received a request
  - Suggested they might want to explain the scope of their project a bit more as their letter raised some concern regarding development restrictions
  - Want to dispel controversies that have existed with that piece of land
- Ceri said that they do have a presentation
- Kim said that the fact they were trying to purchase the 5 acres was not clear
- Mandy will review the materials with them
- Ceri said that the developing company wants to sell to a conservation organization
  - Asked if Kim can forward what he got onto Mandy so she can review

#### **Future**

#### **2 Billion Trees National Funding Opportunity – Mandy**

- The Canadian Biosphere Reserves Association (CBRA) have asked if we would like to be a part of a national tree planting initiative
- CBRA is reaching out to each of the Canadian BRs to determine whether we would like to be part of a national funding proposal to take part in the Growing Canada's Forests Program.
- If we would like to be part of this initiative, we need to determine how many trees we could plant, and where we would plant them
- To plant approximately 1,200 trees we would need roughly a hectare of land
- Graham added that we've done this before near the new water intake – this is not reforestation; it is areas that don't have trees
  - These have to be trees that won't be cut for at least 50 years
- Mandy explained where trees can be planted based on what the funding outlines

- Graham said that there was a discussion of Parksville wetlands – coniferous trees for water retention
  - Kim said it's worth talking to Parksville about this location
    - Said there is a farm location that is overgrown with blackberries (not part of the current projected site for the aquatic centre)
    - Chris said it's difficult because there is so much discussion about this specific site
- Chris said that he can raise the topic with Parksville
- Jennah asked if it has to be a block planting or spread out?
  - Mandy said she believes you can have multiple sites – will double check requirements
- Chris said that the City has offered trees to the community before
- Jennah likes the idea of having some available to the public – gives people some hands on buy in/ownership
  - Potential sites: Port Alberni into Hilliers and along the creeks area – huge blow down events due to storm; Carson Creek Subdivision – lost its cover, creek has too high of turbidity – community is looking for a solution
- Mandy needs to complete the survey for CBRA as they want a rough idea of the type and approximate size of land
- Graham suggested less than 5ha (<5000 trees); planting window is February/March
- Steve said that Mosaic would likely be able to supply the trees, and could also do a fall plant
- Mandy will complete the survey confirming that we are on-board

#### **Natural Asset Study on Shelly Creek Watershed – Mandy/Ceri**

- This has been done and is available to share with them

#### **Closing**

- Mandy will send an email regarding the next Roundtable Gathering date



## Appendix A

### MABR Roundtable Gathering Vol. 19 Agenda

Friday, May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021 from 10:00am to 12:30pm  
Virtual Meeting via Zoom.

**Roundtable contact: Mandy Hobkirk - (250) 709-7678**

#### Objectives

The main objectives of this Roundtable gathering are for participants to:

1. Continue to engage in respectful and meaningful dialogue with one another.
2. Discuss past, present, and future events for the MABR/RI.
3. Hear from one another about regional/organizational/community updates.

#### AGENDA

Time	Activity
10:00-10:10	<b>Welcome/Opening</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Words of welcome</li><li>• Acknowledgement of First Nation unceded Territory</li><li>• Around the circle brief introductions</li><li>• Review and collectively adopt agenda</li><li>• Reminder of the MABR Roundtable Culture of Engagement</li></ul>
10:10-11:00	<b>Roundtable Member Updates</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What's new with you/your organization?</li></ul>
11:00-11:15	<b>Student Researcher Presentation</b> Visiting Student Researcher from Germany – Jenni Otilie Keppler
11:15-11:25	<b>Coffee Break/ Health Break</b>
11:25-12:25	<b>MABR Updates</b> <i>Past:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mid-Island Stewardship Caucus (MISC) – Graham</li></ul> <i>Present:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Potential to Restructure Roundtable Gatherings – Mandy</li><li>• Arrowsmith Naturalists Bee and Butterfly Pollinator Project – Mandy</li><li>• Initiatives to Combat Lack of Recycling Options – Mandy/Jennah</li><li>• Letters of Support for Eagle Preserve – Mandy</li></ul> <i>Future:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2 Billion Trees National Funding Opportunity – Mandy</li><li>• Natural Asset Study on Shelly Creek Watershed – Mandy/Ceri</li></ul>
12:25 – 12:30	<b>Closing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Final reflections &amp; action items</li><li>• Next Roundtable date, host, agenda</li><li>• Closing words</li></ul>