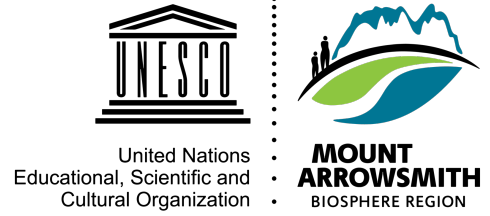


MEETING MINUTES

MABR Roundtable Gathering Volume 20
Friday, September 17th, 2021 from 10:00am to 12:30pm

Virtual meeting via Zoom.



Attendees (10)

Mandy Hobkirk, MABR, Coordinator
Courtney Vaugeois, MABRRI, Assistant Research & Community Engagement Coordinator
Pam Shaw, MABRRI, Research Director
Ceri Peacey, Community Representative
Lehann Wallace, Regional District of Nanaimo, Electoral Area G Director
Graham Sakaki, MABRRI, Regional Research Institute Manager
Steve Adams, Mosaic Forest Management, Resource Technologist
Chris Burger, City of Parksville, Liaison
Marnie Eggen, Islands Trust, Island Planner
Teunis Westbroek, Town of Qualicum Beach, Councillor

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
- Acknowledgement of First Nation unceded Territory
- Around the circle brief introductions

Agenda Adoption

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

MABR Updates

Past:

MABRRI anniversary – Graham

- MABRRI's 7-year anniversary was hosted last month at Rathtrevor Provincial Park. We were fortunate to have Lawrence Mitchell, Michael Recalma, and Ceri Peacey join.
- Quick recap from the past 7 years at MABRRI:
 - Employed (to date) 160 Research Assistants
 - Employed (to date) 18 full-time Senior Research Assistants and Project Coordinators
 - Involved 38 Faculty, mostly all from VIU

- Together we have raised well over \$3 million in funding for research and community engagement
- Have either led or supported approximately 100 research projects
- Had well over 200 community members support our projects
- Looking back from where we started to where we are today, it is important to recognize everyone on the Roundtable for helping making these numbers happen. MABRRI thanks and raises our hands to all the Roundtable members. We hope for the next 7 years we will show improvement as we have for the last 7 years.
- Chris proposed that him and Graham approach the City of Parksville to remind them of the legacy of the MABR and MABRRI and the relationship with the City.
- Graham suggested sending the MABR Coordinator to each of the Municipalities in the MABR to provide an update.
- Mandy agreed and indicated that if anyone needs any materials to represent the MABR to let her know and she can put materials together.

Present:

ECCC Contribution Agreement (OECMs) – Mandy

- The Canadian Biosphere Reserves Association (CBRA) has been working to create contributions agreements between Canadian biosphere regions and Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC).
- These agreements are to develop Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) and protected areas to contribute to Canada’s pathway to target 1.
- It has been delayed due to the Federal Election, but we are hoping to hear back by the end of the month.
- The project is complicated and requires a lot of cooperation and engagement. We might need to call on Roundtable members for financial and/or in-kind assistance and guidance.
- It would be paying the MABR Coordinator wages for the next 3-5 years.
- Graham – it’s looking at about \$200,000 per fiscal year, lots will be spent on engagement. We will need to coordinate with First Nations and City councils to ensure we are approaching things appropriately.
- It will be a big learning curve so we will need to do a lot of outreach with our partners. We plan on collaborating on a BC level and a national level.
- If we get it approved it starts as a 3-year agreement, and if it goes well it can turn into 5 years.
- Lehann asked whether the MABR Roundtable has a relationship with the Nature Trust. They are becoming a significant conservancy land owner in the region.
 - As the Elected Official for Area G, Lehann has been working with as many developers as possible to ensure sustainable development of the estuary corridors and preservation of conservancy land. Change is made difficult because Electoral Areas do not have jurisdiction on things like watercourses, subdivision approval and tree preservation – the Provincial Ministry does. Area G can influence change for all other Areas that are connected through the waterways that run through G (within the MABR) but the Provincial Ministry has most impact.

- Ceri mentioned that although the MABR Roundtable has a number of conservation groups engaged, she is not sure if the Roundtable has reached out directly to the Nature Trust.
- Mandy indicated that the only work she has done with the Nature Trust is through the BioBlitz and Brant Wildlife Festival. She feels that it would be a good idea to reach out to them and invite them to the Roundtable.
- Chris agreed with Lehann – that the MABR should be reaching out to the Nature Trust. He hopes that we can get those bodies and stakeholders back into the decision making.
- Mandy asked if anyone is opposed to Mandy starting this process?
 - No concerns were raised. Teunis indicated his support.

SDG Youth Community Grant Program – Mandy

- The MABR and MABRRI has recently launched a \$5,000 grant program for youth to implement the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the MABR. The money can be spent on one project or multiple projects, however we hope to fund multiple projects.
- Eligible schools are those that fall within in the MABR boundaries.
- Application period has been extended to close on October 15th, 2021. Once closed, we will have a selection committee to review applications.
- Mandy asked if any members would like to sit on the selection committee. So far, the committee is composed of Mandy and Kim Burden.
 - Teunis and Lehann agreed to sit on the committee.

Tseshaht and K'ómoks First Nation – Mandy

- This item is regarding inviting them to the Roundtable. The MABR sits within 7 First nations, currently we only have 3 on the Roundtable.
- This item is tabled until the next meeting to ensure we will have perspectives from the Nations on the Roundtable.
- Ceri questioned if the timing of the Roundtable meeting makes it difficult for our First Nations representatives to attend. Graham and Mandy will follow up with the First Nations representatives about this.

Future:

Non-advocacy Policy – Mandy

- Mandy sent out a draft Non-advocacy Policy for the Roundtable prior to the meeting. This could be a document that is implemented to distinguish what the MABR Roundtable can and cannot support. Mandy often fields requests about the MABR supporting controversial and sensitive topics, some of which go against key MABR Stakeholders.
- Teunis expressed concern that those types of topics are often what people wonder about, if the MABR doesn't speak about it, then what do we do? He questioned if the MABR could speak from a scientific perspective, not necessarily against or for certain topics, but with scientific facts. He feels that this type of letter would be effective with local decision-makers.
 - Teunis also wondered if it would be possible to create an interpretation board and place it within the MABR.
 - Graham confirmed that there is an information board at the Faye Smith memorial site. Additionally, there have been discussions with First Nations to have carvings along the highway that would also acknowledge the MABR.

- Graham expressed that he understands some of Mandy’s hesitancy to respond to some of the request, as it would often require Mandy to send advocacy letters to members of the Roundtable. It would be a difficult position to be in. It is also important to remember that Biosphere Reserves do not have a mandate of advocacy. While a lot of the functions and values overlap with the key issues, they are not mandating advocacy.
- Lehann agrees that it would be helpful to have a non-advocacy policy, but that doesn’t mean the MABR cannot provide a scientific or educational perspective. The MABR can help people understand and be informed about many topics.
 - Lehann also mentioned that when looking at the list of prohibited activities, there can always be grey areas. For example, “contentious issues” can be a matter of perspective and topics in the newsletter can also be viewed as contentious. The Non-advocacy Policy can be used to help guide the newsletter topics.
- Teunis suggested that Mandy could pull some words from the Biosphere Reserve’s guidelines and three functions to provide consistency.
- Chris expressed that he feels there are two sides to this. He is concerned about having the Coordinator or Graham put in some difficult positions. Perhaps in the grey areas, the topic can be brought back to the Roundtable to be discussed. Advocacy around the science going on in the area is about as neutral as we could be. At the end of day, the role of the Roundtable is to talk about sensitive topics.
 - Teunis agrees with Chris that having conversations about sensitive topics at the Roundtable is important as it helps open minds.
- Steve echoed the others’ thoughts and agreed that the contentious issue bullet point may need to be removed. He also asked that if anyone is asking about Mosaic’s activities that they please be directed to Mosaic. Steve can help direct people to the best contact at Mosaic.
- Mandy will review the drafted policy and add the suggested changes. An updated draft will be presented at the next meeting.

Discussion of Coordinator Position – Graham

- Graham and Mandy have been talking internally about how the Roundtable can support the Coordinator position. Graham proposed creating a review board and providing a performance review to Mandy and share expectations about the next few years.
- Graham is seeking volunteers to conduct the review process with Graham. Teunis and Chris volunteered to sit on this board. Chris stated that although this is a big process, it is important to do and support Mandy in the way that she needs.
- Graham will draft and provide the materials needed.
- Ceri proposed that perhaps a survey should be sent around the Roundtable for a performance evaluation on Mandy’s position.
- Mandy mentioned that any feedback is highly appreciated so she can best meet the needs of the group.

Circle Updates from Roundtable Members

Ceri Peacey, Community Representative

- For this year’s Brant Wildlife Festival they are thinking about implementing a “Brant passport”. Last year they needed to have the festival self-directed due to COVID. They will likely develop a plan A and a plan B for the festival.

- Chris thanked Ceri, noting that the work she has done year after year has not gone unnoticed. This was echoed by Lehann and Steve. Lehann also mentioned that she would be happy to provide assistance where needed.

Lehann Wallace, RDN

- The RDN is in the budget season. Some of the opportunities coming forward reflect a different approach for the conservation management in the Englishman River area - there is a shift of approach to management of areas.
- There has been a request submitted to the Ministry to conduct an assessment of Area G, but it is a long process. She will advocate for the ability of more collaboration.
- Additionally, the RDN is actively recruiting for a General Manager, Planning and Development.

Marnie Eggen, Islands Trust

- The Executive Committee of the Islands Trust, who have land use authority over the Ballenas-Winchelsea Islands in the Islands Trust area, met in April this year and were very pleased with BC Parks Foundation acquisition of West Ballenas Island, ensuring its environmental protection into the future.

Steve Adams, Mosaic Forest Management

- Mosaic assisted the RDN with the start up with their Community Watershed Monitoring Network Fall sampling program. Mosaic contributes to the project through funding of the data validation step.
- As mentioned previously the company has been working for the last 2 and half years to integrate their GIS systems, and they have finally accomplished this.
- Now that the Island is getting more rain, Mosaic is starting up their activities now because there is a lower fire risk.

Chris Burger, City of Parksville

- The City of Parksville's plans for the new recreation centre have changed. There is a need to contribute to conserve that area and Chris thinks that is something the MABR can help provide.

Teunis Westbroek, Town of Qualicum Beach

- The Town of Qualicum Beach has received a \$300,000 grant to complete a new development process project, which they have partnered with VIU on. Teunis will provide further information once things have developed further.
 - On the topic of a new development process, Ceri mentioned that she feels there should be water catchment and grey water systems built into all new development. We need to be ahead of things.

Pam Shaw, MABRRI

- Pam has been working with Eli Enns to offer a new Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCA) certificate program through VIU. She believes IPCAs will be a highly supported area from the Federal Government over the next few years.
 - The certificate involves 6 courses, with the 1st being an intensive land-based course on the west coast and the 5 other courses will be online.
 - In Canada, there are currently no universities where you can earn about IPCAs.
 - Pam will keep everyone updated as they move forward.

Graham Sakaki, MABRRI

- Haley Tomlin, MABRRI's Former Research and Community Engagement Coordinator, has left MABRRI to pursue her Registered Professional Biologist (RPBio) certification. Jessica Pyett has moved up to Haley's position as Research and Community Engagement Coordinator. Courtney Vaugeois has moved up to Assistant Research and Community Engagement Coordinator.
- At the beginning of September, Anna Lawrence was hired as a Senior Research Assistant at MABRRI.
- Additionally, MABRRI has 6 job postings currently open, including another Senior Research Assistant to work on the environmental projects
 - In reference to the new development process project in the town of Qualicum Beach, Graham has been engaging in discussions about collaborating with VIU's Masters of Community Planning program. They have 10 municipalities across the province on board to support the process and share their toolkits and best practices. The idea is to have a development application process at the end that fits Qualicum Beach.

Closing

- Next Roundtable gathering
 - Tentatively December 10th from 9:00am – 11:30am.
 - To be hosted over Zoom unless there are changes with COVID.

Appendix A

MABR Roundtable Gathering Vol. 20 Agenda

Friday, September 17th, 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
10:00-10:15	Welcome/Opening <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Words of welcome• Acknowledgement of First Nation unceded Territory• Around the circle brief introductions• Review and collectively adopt agenda• Reminder of the MABR Roundtable Culture of Engagement
10:15-11:30	MABR Updates Past: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• MABRRI anniversary - Graham Present: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ECCC Contribution Agreement (OECMs) – Mandy• SDG Youth Community Award Program – Mandy• Tseshaht and K'ómoks First Nation – Mandy Future: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Non-advocacy Policy – Mandy• Discussion of Coordinator Position – Graham
11:30-11:40	Coffee Break/ Health Break
11:40-12:20	Roundtable Members <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What's new with you/your organization?
12:20-12:30	Closing <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Final reflections & action items• Next Roundtable date, host, agenda• Closing words