

## MEETING MINUTES

MABR Roundtable Gathering Vol. 26  
Friday, June 2nd, 2023 from 09:00am to 11:30am  
Location: Mosaic Forest Management  
201-648 Terminal Ave, Nanaimo BC V9R 5E2, Canada  
(Douglas Fir Meeting Room)



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## Attendees (14)

Anne Skipsey, Town of Qualicum Beach, Councillor  
Blain Sepos, Parksville Qualicum Beach Tourism Association, Executive Director  
Catherine Watson, Community Representative  
Graham Sakaki, MABRRI, Research Institute Manager  
Jenica Ng-Cornish, MABRRI, Assistant Manager Projects  
Kim Burden, Parksville & District Chamber of Commerce, Liaison  
Lehann Wallace, Regional District of Nanaimo, Area G Director  
Mandy Hobkirk, MABR Coordinator  
Michael Recalma, Qualicum First Nation, Chief  
Pam Shaw, MABRRI, Research Director  
Ray Woroniak, Community Representative  
Shawn Lukas, Nature Trust BC, West Coast Conservation Land Coordinator  
Steve Adams, Mosaic Forest Management, Resource Technologist  
Sylvia Martin, City of Parksville, 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. Hear from one another about regional/organizational/community updates.
3. Discuss past, present, and future events and research for the MABR/RI.

## Welcome & Opening Prayer

- Round of introductions.
- Mandy reviewed the *Culture of Engagement*.

## Agenda Adoption

- Agenda adopted with addition from Kim on an update on the Snaw-naw-as welcoming poles.

## MABR Updates

### TRANSECTS TILL – Graham Sakaki

- TRANSECTS is an international partnership between Germany, South Africa and Canada.
  - The TRANSECTS TILL (Transdisciplinary International Learning Lab) brings together grad students from each of the universities for on the ground research experience.
- Germany has completed their TILL and feedback has come back. The MABR and VIU are hosting the next TILL in May 2024.

- Graham shared an outline of the schedule, which includes open spaces for community partners to engage students in the work they're doing. Graham hopes that partners here can attend the final presentations (June 13, 2024) and the wrap up BBQ at Rath Trevor Beach (June 14, 2024).
- Students will be looking at one main research question with the sub-committee: How do invasive species impact the SDGs in the MABR?
- It was suggested some invasive species that could be focused on include bull frog, grey squirrel, and the orange algae that is showing up on the Gulf Islands.
- Moving forward, if people want to add species to the list they can get in touch with Graham, Alanna, or Pam.
- Pam suggested talking to the Invasive Species Council of BC. Steve suggested discussion with the Coastal Invasive Species Committee also. He will connect Graham with the committee via email.

### **ECCC OECM Project – Jenica Ng-Cornish**

- MABRRI's project, *Qualifying UNESCO Buffer Zones as Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) in the MABR*, funded by Environment and Climate Change Canada, is aiming to designate areas in the region as OECMs.
- We have shifted focus from looking at areas "from scratch" to looking at areas that already have management plans in place that may align with OECM criteria.
  - A primary focus remains at the French Creek Estuary Nature Preserve, where MABRRI is a member of the working group that is developing the management plan.
  - Heritage Forest and Milner Woodlands are other areas of consideration.
- Potential sites that we reviewed with project partners remain as part of the workplan, including Enos Lake, Little Mountain, and the area adjacent to Macmillan Provincial Park. The work to be undertaken is yet to be determined, and may involve mostly restoration.
- Any suggestions or comments on areas to consider are welcome.
- The Canadian Biosphere Reserves Association is optimistic that ECCC will provide another 2 years of funding to all BRs in Canada.
- Lehann asked how it works when ownership isn't public.
  - Jenica – any group can put forward an application but ideally the province helps support that application. The land owner has to be the one to approve and ideally put the application through.
  - Lehann suggested that the Nature Trust may have some sites in the biosphere with master plans. Heritage forest, Milner Gardens, and the Parksville wetlands have master plans in the works or already existing.
  - Blain added that Little Mountain has been a focus of dumping issues.

### **BC BR Gathering Debrief - Chief Michael Recalma, Lehann Wallace, Steve Adams**

- Chief Michael Recalma, Geraldine Manson, Lehann Wallace, Steve Adams, and Graham Sakaki (along with 3 other MABRRI staff) attended a gathering for BC biosphere regions in Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation traditional territory (Clayoquot Biosphere Region) in April.
- The gathering was focused on the role that BRs can play in reconciliation, and provided a space for truthful discussions, knowledge sharing, and relationship building.
- The group that attended reported that the gathering was rich in Indigenous culture, and offered experiences to learn about relationships with the land by getting out on the water, and visiting the *Studio in the Woods* (an outdoor carving lab).
  - The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was also implemented and more awareness about it came from the gathering.
- It is within the Canadian Biosphere Reserves Association's budget to host regional gatherings again next year.

### **New Relationship Trust Fund – Pam Shaw**

- In a May 31 press release, it was announced that the New Relationship Trust is accepting applications from First Nations in BC to support the implementation of UNDRIP. Each First Nation in BC will be eligible for \$260,000 annually for a total of \$1.04 million over 4 years.
  - How can we be of assistance for Nations - support from Roundtable and/or MABRRI?
- The funding program is part of the Declaration Act Engagement Fund which aims to support the implementation of the Declaration Act Action Plan, which is divided into 4 sections: Self-Determination and Inherent Right of Self-Government; Title and Rights of Indigenous Peoples; Ending Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination; and Social, Cultural, and Economic Well-Being.
  - These all overlap with the SDGs, IPCAs, OECMs, TRC, etc. so there is lots of work that can be done.

### **MABR Festivals (Presentation/Discussion)**

#### **Brant Wildlife Festival – Presentation from Jes Hovanes, Communications Manager, Nature Trust BC**

- The MABR is taking over the hosting of the festival moving forward; the Nature Trust is supporting for the upcoming year.
- Ceri Peacey is the community representative who leads the organization of events within the festival. She will continue to support the transition for the next couple years.
  - Mandy Hobkirk (MABR Coordinator) and Courtney Vaugeois (MABRRI Education and Engagement Coordinator) will be working with Ceri and the Nature Trust to organize and host the festival.
- The festival has been running since 1991 and the Nature Trust took it on about 17 years ago to coordinate the branding, advertising, and finances.
- There is an endowment invested in the Festival through Nature Trust funds that will be transferred over.
- 19 events were held last year, put on by community groups and members. It's important to diversify the festival to include arts, film, etc. so that it is both environment and community oriented.
- Main sponsors are currently the Town of Qualicum Beach, the City of Parksville (currently \$5K each), Mid-Island Co-op, and PQB Tourism Association. TQB and the City of Parksville are both interested in providing more funds. MABR will need to start application/request processes asap. Reminder from Anne that TQB does not have a grant program, so the preference is to provide a fee for service.
  - Continue to ask local groups and businesses for sponsorships.
  - Need to apply to the Mid Island Co-op every year.
- Funds raised are to support advertising, marketing, coordination, and any staff costs. Nature Trust has provided donations through in-kind staff time.
- When applying for grants, attendance is always a big question. The festival has been placed around dates of the Carving and Arts Show and the NIWRA Eagle Release, as both get large turnouts and provide opportunity for the Brant Festival to host smaller tours with good attendance.
- Questions/comments:
  - Consider applying for Community Gaming Grants. Deadline is August 31 this year.
  - What is the commitment required for the administrative point of contact? Jes has done higher level admin work such as the marketing plan, new website, applications, ad buy, etc., totaling to about 50 hours each year. Ceri has done day-to-day social media and actual organization of events, totaling to approximately 2 months full-time each year.

- What is the structure of event management (i.e., ability to administer tax receipts)? Will likely use the VIU Foundation to hold funds and administer charitable tax receipts, rather than setting up a new society.

### **Action Items:**

- Anne to share template for requesting TQB fee for service with Mandy/Graham. MABR to start the request process asap, prior to TQB strategic planning this fall.
- Sylvia to discuss funding for the City of Parksville's 5-year plan, and connect with Mandy/Graham.
- Jes to send Mandy/Graham previous applications made to Mid-Island Co-op and information from the City of Parksville. MABR to submit application for this coming year; Kim can support with contact at Mid Island Co-op.

### **MABR Fall Festival**

- Building on discussion from Roundtable Vol. 25 on a potential Biosphere and SDGs Awareness Day. The MABR/MABRRI would like to host this in collaboration with community groups, starting in fall 2024.
- The goal is to provide education and engagement opportunities primarily for youth, while also engaging the wider community.
- Ray is involved and familiar with KSS so suggested to host it at the school as it's a guaranteed way to reach youth and families. If we want students to be actively involved (preparing exhibits, etc.), November may be the earliest we can host it as September and October are very busy. If we are aiming for youth attendance only, can be hosted in September.
- Nature Trust is doing work with the ecological club at NDSS, who seem open to initiatives like this. Monica Bradley is a champion at Ballenas Secondary – perhaps she could foster interest in a similar initiative.
- Ideas for festival structure:
  - Develop a framework for an afternoon that can be held at multiple schools, including direct engagement and participation from students. In this scenario, an MABR festival would be a separate event.
  - Host an SDG/Biosphere Awareness Day Festival to foster engagement and awareness for all communities, with youth as a main target. Possibly a one- or two-day event.

### **Action Items:**

- Ray to reach out to SD69 trustees to gauge interest in participation in a biosphere awareness day.
- Gauge interest from community groups in contributing to the festival, then start brainstorming ideas of what type of event is possible.
  - Ray to connect with community groups to determine interest in contributing to the event. Will base next community representative report around potential community group involvement in the festival.

### **How can we become better known in our community?**

- Use the Brant Wildlife Festival to start the process of becoming better known in the community, which will in-turn support future funding opportunities.
- Consider appearing as a delegation to the RDN on an annual basis (September – October) to increase awareness of the MABR to the Board.
- Campaign where businesses are able to put SDG logos in their spaces to showcase goals they are aligning with.

- Develop a communication plan
  - Repeat concise and consistent messaging to multiple points of contact why the BR exists and the work we're doing.
    - Develop a list of organizations that can be presented to.
  - Engage the community in identifying the benefit of a BR and linking to the SDGs.
  - Create a media release every couple of months (increase promotion of MABR newsletter?); increase social media presence.
- Signage
  - Consider trying again for the blue sign program.
  - Short-term solution: signs that say "you are in a BR" with QR codes at town halls, main attractions, etc. Distribute brochures to visitor centres, libraries, etc.
  - Connect the MABR to local places/attractions. For example, adding signage at Heritage Forest that identifies it within the MABR.
- Promoting the MABR as a tourist destination
  - The UNESCO designation gives credibility – incorporate this into the promotion of the MABR.
  - PQB qualifies for funding through destination BC.
  - PQB Tourism Association is a big supporter of the MABR Amazing Places program and considers the MABR to be doing well in terms of promoting tourism. Digital advertising, maps, guidebooks, etc. can help.
    - The Destination BC development strategy process is currently underway, which incorporates the SDGs and sustainability. Moving forward, potential for more collaboration with the MABR to promote, fundraise, and support each other mandates.

#### **Action items:**

- Mandy to upload the SDGs report to the MABR website
- Kim to look into possible office space for the MABR at the Parksville Civic Centre.
- Mandy to look into the MABR map that was developed for the visitor centre.
- Kim and Mandy/Graham to connect on renting out space below the entrance sign into Parksville that the Chamber owns – a 2x12' sign for the MABR could be placed here.
- For next Roundtable Agenda: everyone to bring ideas on why/how the MABR is a tourist destination.

#### **Funding**

- The MABR will be taking over the Brant Wildlife Festival endowment from Nature Trust – if we have to tap into it, how can we ensure that it gets replenished?
- The Brant Festival has good branding already – adding the MABR to the branding will enhance the MABR's presence, and there is money within the community that will help fund the festival.
- Approach new funding opportunities with the Brant Festival and SDG Festival under one umbrella linked to "MABR Festivals"

### **Circle Updates from Roundtable Members**

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

- Mosaic's Sustainability Report was just released – Mandy to distribute to Roundtable.
- Mosaic adopted a new behaviour-based safety program.
- We Wai Kai First Nation recently signed to be the main contractor for the North Island.

- The Big Coast Forest Climate Initiative is deferring 40, 000 hectares of forest for 25 years for carbon crediting. The lands create opportunities for IPCAs, to be First Nations led.

#### **Lehann Wallace, Regional District of Nanaimo**

- The RDN Board will be starting the strategic planning process in July
  - Important opportunity for the RD

#### **Sylvia Martin, City of Parksville**

- The City of Parksville is designating \$750, 000 to a non-political water study to understand what is affecting Parksville’s current water supply, and to determine what future water quantity needs are.

#### **Chief Michael Recalma, Qualicum First Nation**

- The gas station is making good process and is set to be open by August.
- Elections are taking place in August this year.
- There is a carving boat tour coming to Nanaimo on June 19 at 10 am (likely Maffeo Sutton Park).

#### **Kim Burden, Parksville and District Chamber of Commerce**

- The Chamber of Commerce has new director who took over on May 1, and the QB Chamber of Commerce has a new director who took over on March 15.
- Kim will soon be introduced to Snaw-naw-as First Nation as CEO of the Nanoose Economic Development Cooperation.
- Update on the poles at Snaw-naw-as: Currently a delay as new poles need to be identified and cut for when the carvers will be available. The pathway is complete.
  - Graham to work with Qualicum First Nation to submit another application to First Peoples Cultural Council, so working with poles at both Nations can follow the same timing.

#### **Sean Lukas, Nature Trust BC**

- The acquisition as Little Qualicum River was successful; now moving forward with property assessments.
- Recently signed a partnership agreement with Qualicum First Nation.
- Continuing monitoring on Englishman River and looking to include Little Qualicum in the program.
- Mariner Way project is underway: Completed phase 1 to remove concrete, riprap, seawall. Now working on phase 2 which is looking at the inside of the estuary.
- Continuing with coastal foreshore assessment of PQBWMA which identifies community level projects, habitat enhancement, etc.

#### **Anne Skipsey, Town of Qualicum Beach**

- Motion going forward to AVICC on scotch broom has been adopted and is now moving forward to UBCM.
  - Looking to have meetings with ministers of transportation as scotch broom has been identified as the worst invasive species on the Island.
- The pollinator pathways project with Arrowsmith Naturalist could be successful on a regional approach in supporting biodiversity; perhaps something MABRRI may have interest in.

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

- The community engagement piece for the Destination BC Development Strategy was very well done – over 800 resident surveys were filled out as part of this process.
  - The strategy is about using tourism as a strategy for the community - not just marketing – to align values with residents.
- PQB Tourism’s main funding source is local hotel room tax. Need to renew the tax this year which provides ‘marching orders’ for next 5 years.
- Collaborating with the City of Parksville and Town of Qualicum Beach to do a report on the impacts of short-term vacation rentals on affordable housing in our region.

## **Community Representative Updates**

### **Catherine Watson, Community Representative**

- Continuing work with MVIHES
  - Discussing going into VIU lab to and see sample analysis to engage more volunteers
  - Starting an eel grass mapping project this Sunday – volunteers getting training by Nicky Wrist on mapping and replanting.
  - Natural hydrology study at Shelly Creek is looking at how the creek has been ditched and how to restore the historic wetland in the area and moderate dry spells for fish.
- Involved in small film series on climate change – showed the MABRRI video and Jessica Pyett (MABRRI) delivered a presentation.
- Suggested that PROBUS would be another group to speak for raising awareness about the MABR.

### **Ray Woroniak, Community Representative**

- Please refer to Ray’s Community Representative Report (Appendix B)
- Next report will provide an update on engaging with various groups on discussion around contribution to festivals.

## **Closing**

Next meeting: Friday, September 15, 09:00 - 11:30 am, location TBD.

## Appendix A

**MABR Roundtable Gathering Vol. 26**  
**Friday, June 2nd, 2023 from 09:00am to 11:30am**  
 Location: Mosaic Forest Management

**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. Hear from one another about regional/organizational/community updates.
3. Discuss past, present, and future events and research for the MABR/RI.

Time	Activity
09:05 – 09:10	<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>
09:10 – 9:40	<b>MABR Updates</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TRANSECTS TILL – Graham Sakaki</li> <li>• ECCO OECM Project – Jenica Ng-Cornish</li> <li>• BC BR Gathering Debrief – Lehann Wallace/Steve Adams/Geraldine Manson/Chief Recalma/Graham Sakaki</li> <li>• New Relationship Trust Fund – Pam Shaw</li> </ul>
9:40 - 10:30	<b>MABR Festivals (Presentation/Discussion)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brant Wildlife Festival – Jes Hovanes (guest presenter from the Nature Trust of BC)</li> <li>• MABR Fall Festival (Biosphere and SDG Awareness/Youth)</li> <li>• How can we become better known in our community?</li> <li>• Funding</li> </ul>
10:30 – 10:40	<b>Coffee Break/Health Break</b>
10:40 – 11:10	<b>Roundtable Member Updates</b>
11:10 – 11:25	<b>Community Representative Updates</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catherine Watson</li> <li>• Ray Woroniak</li> </ul>
11:25 – 11:30	<b>Closing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final reflections</li> <li>• Next Roundtable date and host</li> <li>• Closing words</li> </ul>



## Appendix B

MABR Community Representative Report - Ray Woroniak

June 2, 2023

### 1. Community Group Reports

#### **Friends of the Qualicum Beach Forest**

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.” Margaret Mead

In March of this year, Qualicum Beach Council took a significant step forward in adopting Tree Protection Bylaw No. 725 which is intended to help manage our tree canopy and preserve it for future generations. The bylaw serves to balance the rights of individual property owners and the welfare of the community, our rights versus our responsibilities and obligations. The bylaw is not about restricting all tree removal, it allows some removal without permits, some removal with permits, others with permission.

Comparatively speaking this not a radical change, municipalities up and down the Island and across the Province have already passed tree protection bylaws that apply to public and private property. By joining other municipalities with tree protection bylaws Qualicum Beach is implicitly recognizing that trees are part of our natural infrastructure that deserves protection. Our urban forests perform so many important functions for us succinctly explained in this short video entitled “The Exponential Benefits of Trees,”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kyXDjOamDj8> Most importantly trees are nature’s best way of fighting climate change by removing carbon dioxide from the air, storing carbon in the trees and soil, and releasing oxygen into the atmosphere.

The hope of the Friends of the Qualicum Beach Forest, a group that strongly advocated for the tree protection bylaw, is that the passage of the bylaw will begin a conversation about trees, one that centres around the SDG goal of partnership, a partnership with nature and for the common good. The concept of partnership implies we are all connected with one another and, in this context, connected with and part of nature itself. This represents a shift in terms of the way we think about trees from one linked with individual property rights to one emphasizing responsibility, care and stewardship of our forests and the planet itself.

In implementing the tree protection bylaw Qualicum Beach will be contributing to a number of SDGs: 1) good health and well-being; 6) clean water and sanitation; 11) sustainable cities and communities; 12) responsible consumption and production; 13) climate action; 14) life below water; 15) life on land.

Implementation of the bylaw will not be easy. There will be opposition to the change, problems with and a possible resistance to properly resource, implement, and enforce. Staff will have to buy into this cultural change becoming part of the “greening” of the Town’s administration.

Here are some recommendations to facilitate and expedite change in the management of our urban forest:

1. Take every opportunity available to educate our community about the role and importance of the tree bylaw in managing our urban forest and mitigating climate change.
2. Expedite the implementation of the Urban Forest Master Plan, with particular emphasis on watershed planning.
3. Advocate for prioritization of watershed plans with other key regional stakeholders, particularly with respect to the Little Qualicum River and French Creek Watersheds. And it's time to save all 360ha of Hamilton Marsh and the surrounding forested wetlands from logging.