

## MEETING MINUTES

MABR Roundtable Gathering Volume 15  
Friday, February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020 from 10:00am to 12:30pm  
174 Island Highway East, Parksville, BC, V9P 0B1.



### Attendees (10)

Pam Shaw, MABRRI Director of Research  
Graham Sakaki, Research & Community Engagement Coordinator  
Kim Burden, Parksville & District Chamber of Commerce, E.D.  
Ceri Peacey, Community Representative  
Blain Sepos, Parksville Qualicum Beach Tourism, Executive Director  
Cheryl Jones, Snaw-naw-as First Nation, Councillor  
Haley Tomlin, MABRRI Assistant Research & Community Engagement Coordinator  
Mandy Hobkirk, MABR Coordinator  
Teunis Westbroek, Town of Qualicum Beach, Councillor  
Maureen Young, Regional District of Nanaimo

### Regrets (9)

Dave Witty, MABR Director  
Michael Recalma, Qualicum First Nation, Chief  
Michael Wyse, Snuneymuxw First Nation, Chief  
Geraldine Manson, Snuneymuxw First Nation, Elder  
Ed Mayne, City of Parksville, Mayor  
Chris Burger, City of Parksville  
Brian Wiese, Town of Qualicum Beach, Mayor  
Steve Adams, Mosaic Forest Management  
Sonja Zupanec, Islands Trust

### 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

- Cheryl provided words of welcome
- Mandy introduced and welcomed Cheryl and Blain to the Roundtable
- VIU photo release forms were signed by Roundtable members to have on file
- Pam gave a brief background on the MABR and how the Roundtable came to be

### Agenda Adoption

- Graham wanted to make two additions
  - The MABR map

- A new MABRRI project – Habitat Stewardship Program (HSP) for Species at Risk through Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC)
- Kim would like to add brief discussion about an offer to pay for signage to promote the region
- Agenda was adopted
- Mandy read the Culture of Engagement prior to updates

## Circle Updates from Roundtable Members

### Teunis Westbroek, Town of Qualicum Beach

- The Town of Qualicum Beach had an engaging public meeting with Telus, discussing the proposal of a new tower, which was requested by residents with bad cell service
  - Trying to determine what is best for the region – what is fact and what is fear mongering
  - Starts off as not a big deal, but there appears to be a ripple effect/fall out as a result so they are being cautious in determining their next actions
  - Decided to take time to make this decision
- Bike path to the school
  - Requires trees to come down and people have been upset about this
  - Will take time to make this decision, as well

### Ceri Peacey, Community Representative

- Brant Wildlife Festival
  - A lot of people have been asking about it already
  - They would like to see more elected officials attend the events
  - A VIU student in the Masters of Arts in Sustainable Leisure Management Program is conducting a study on the economic gain from the Brant Wildlife Festival; the student will be collecting data throughout the event
- Arrowsmith Nature Network
  - A group that wants to work towards preserving lands early on – before there are threats to it
- Englishman River Estuary
  - No longer an issue (as of recently)
- Tree enforcement protection in electoral areas
  - The area is becoming more urbanized and some local residents are concerned that there will be a substantial loss of trees if there is no enforcement on tree removal in the areas undergoing expansion and development
- Timberfest
  - Ceri said that given Qualicum Beach does not have a logging industry background, community members are confused about the forestry-themed event being held in Qualicum Beach
  - Community members do not understand why it is not being held in a logging community like Port Alberni, where the economic and educational benefits would be more relevant
  - Qualicum Beach has never had one before
  - Teunis said there are a lot of people that work in logging that live in the area, and it is also something that would bring people to the area in the shoulder season

- Support from the K'omoks First Nation
  - Ceri said there are differing opinions
    - Some feel the festival is a big deal – others feel it is not a big deal
    - Those opposed feel it is hard to conserve trees in the area
  - Kim said that QBP Chamber are keen that this works for the region – they want to invite all views to participate
    - Logging has been a huge economic driver in this region
    - It is important to bring all views to the table for this
- Electoral Area F Official Community Plan (OCP) review
  - Arrowsmith Watersheds Coalition Society (AWCS) recommended that the MABR contribute to the OCP review and make a case for including attention to everything in the 2002 Study of French Creek by the ministry. Lessons learned in that study should be applied to watercourses in the biosphere
- Further upland water storage
  - AWCS wants the MABR to have input on this
  - Graham asked if they are talking about creating a larger water storage than Arrowsmith Lake, or more storage between there and the outflow
  - Kim said there was an initiative brought forward to create a series of water storage (man-made places) along the Englishman River to have better access to residential and commercial use during the dry times
    - He added that Arrowsmith Lake's supply is more than adequate
  - Ceri will connect Graham with the people that are concerned about this
- Facilitate discussion/learning from Beach Creek Estuary
  - The MABR could use learning from the Construction of the man-made estuary/spit on Beach Creek for application to the larger highly degraded French Creek/Morningstar Estuary

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

- Economic development for the Northern community's region
  - Have funding for a year, and are looking to the regional district for future funding moving forward
  - Looking forward to making it work
- Signage
  - Kim had a call from a past member that was involved in the Biosphere Region (BR) and they offered to pay for a sign that promotes the BR
  - Kim said that when the events notice sign at the Welcome to City of Parksville sign is not in use, it could be used free-of-charge to hang a sign acknowledging the MABR
  - We just need someone to design the sign
    - Graham said that VIU can take on the design pro bono – he can bring a design to the next few meetings
  - Blain said there is a Brant Wildlife Festival sign just up the road from there and he suggested that maybe the MABR connects with them when it needs to be updated

### **Graham Sakaki, MABRRI**

- We just wrapped up the Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) conference at Tigh-na-mara over 5 days
  - \$36 million was distributed across 19 initiatives in 24 communities across Canada
  - Snaw-naw-as hosted a community dinner that was very well received by the participants
  - Moving forward we hope to update the compendium over time, as the projects are completed
- Fiscal year end – MABRRI had 45 projects/cost centres this year
- Busy with communications for many projects
- Projects that MABRRI is currently seeking funding for, include:
  - Bull kelp enhancement plots
  - MABR youth program
    - Recently received some funding from St. John’s Foundation
    - There has been a lot of interest in the program – even outside the MABR; therefore, we would like to expand this program
  - Plant phenology
- Forecasting to have 7 full time staff and 20 students through the school year
- A few projects that have been done with Roundtable members include:
  - RDN – Wetland Mapping and Monitoring Project
    - Mosaic Forest Management
  - Town of QB – Site Revisioning Project
    - The Town of QB partnered with the Masters of Community Planning class on this project
    - Multiple consultation events – the next event is March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020
  - Snaw-naw-as Garden of Spiritual Healing
    - Still actively seeking funding
    - We are helping the Nation at the Loaves and Fishes Program, which is at the Snaw-naw-as Health Centre every Tuesday
    - We hosted Garden Cafés coinciding with the Loaves and Fishes Program – a chef showed people how to make simple and healthy meals with foods that were previously unfamiliar to the community and were being left behind at each Loaves and Fishes visit
  - Snaw-naw-as FN, Snuneymuxw FN, and Qualicum FN - Traditional Places Names Project
    - Idea: partner with the Amazing places signs
    - Other idea: install a new sign at other part of the sites
    - This project works with all three nations
  - PQBTA – Amazing Places Project
    - We are in year 5
    - Currently promoting mid-week geocaching initiative
  - CMN – Pam will provide an update later

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

- Blain gave an overview of PQBTA – primarily focused on marketing the area for tourism
  - Product, place and people

- Over the years, the tourism association has been diversifying – developing the destination in the off-season
- Amazing Places was one of the first projects they engaged with
- Coaching businesses on how to create new experiences in the off-season
  - Have consultants that can engage with the businesses - have worked with 6 businesses to date
  - They are seeing the benefit of this already
  - Since 2000, there have only been two years that were down in tourism
  - Have been able to grow hotel occupancy in our region – was up over 3% in 2019 compared to 2018; led all of Vancouver Island in 2019 in growth
- The number of Summer visitors was down this past year, but there is not a way of confirming that
  - This is attributed to: having more visitors because people were not going to the Okanagan the past years (wildfires)
  - Higher hotel room rates – 3<sup>rd</sup> highest in all of Canada
- Kim said that there is a greater number of people camping, which is changing the way that they are visiting
  - There are new campgrounds coming, expansion of other campgrounds, and some expansion of RV parks
- PQBTA has been working closely with the Brant Wildlife Festival the past few years
  - Excited to hear about the research component of this
  - Cooperative marketing – collaboration on event calendars and social media
    - Suggested sponsoring media postings (Facebook boosting – very useful and fairly inexpensive). Using this method, you pay to have your ads to be seen by a greater audience
    - Written and promoted by the Black Press
- Research project this year: focused on re-evaluating the visitor research that was done in 2012
  - We need to determine who our visitors are in order to see what types of new experiences we should be building in the area for them
  - Social listening – investing in ‘Dashboard’ in order to measure sentiment in a number of different channels (news, media, web, etc.) – using this online intelligence to bolster the work they’re doing in the community

### **Maureen Young, Regional District of Nanaimo**

- The board created a climate change taskforce, and decided that a climate change strategy be created for the RDN
- The board continues to support action and provide resources to protect and acquire land for preservation and park land
- Endorsed an update to the Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Action Plan
- The board supports continued sustainable growth through a full review of the Regional Growth Strategy to protect and enhance rural and urban communities in the region
  - As well as support for policies and regulations that protect agricultural land and promote food production in the region
- The Parks Department gave a 3 year permit to the Vancouver Island Marmot Recovery Foundation for the purpose of conducting research on the endangered Vancouver Island Marmot population

- Includes monitoring, collecting samples, releasing and translocating marmots to support colony growth and genetic health of the population

## MABR Updates

### *Past*

#### **Citizen Science Webinar**

- In October, CBRA asked the 18 Canadian BRs to take on some of the tasks that they needed to complete
- The MABR applied for a contract to conduct a webinar and produce a showcase document on citizen science
- Hosted a webinar on how to conduct a BioBlitz event – done on January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020
- Webinar was recorded – [view it here](#)
- Now working on the showcase document that highlights 3 BR's citizen science events (ours and two others)

#### **Our Water BC Quarterly Meeting**

- Last gathering, we decided to support the OWBC initiative
- Mandy attended the quarterly meeting on January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020
- Highlights:
  - Code blue BC – public campaign launched
    - Has over 4000 supporters on their Facebook page
    - Designed to be long-term
    - Sustain BC's water
    - Anyone that wants to support this can sign a letter to John Horgan
    - Code Blue BC website [here](#).
  - Tech challenge for students
    - Getting students engaged in finding ways to benefit our water resources
    - Multiple issues to find solutions to
    - Mandy got information so VIU students could take part if they would like to
  - Petition calling on the BC Government to stop issuing new groundwater licenses to water bottling companies
    - [Link](#) to sign the petition.

#### **Electoral Area F Official Community Plan (OCP) Workshop**

- RDN is updating the OCP (currently 20 years old)
- There have been pop-up events to gather insight
- Mandy attended a workshop on February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020 that Ceri and Blain also attended
- Discussed concerns and opportunities associated with 6 topics: growth management, employment and economy, climate change preparedness, environment, housing, and mobility, health and well-being.
- There is currently a survey on the RDN's website to get input from the community
- Another workshop will be held in June for those interested
- Blain said it was refreshing to see that there was overwhelming support for transit in Area F

- Kim said that the most affordable housing in the region is in Area F, but there is no transportation to get to health services or jobs
- Teunis said that for a long time Area F was saying no to transit but there now seems to be a want for it
- Ceri said that there may be a bit of a stumbling block with regards to the amount of taxes that would be associated, with an area that doesn't have a lot of density

## **Present**

### **Leadership Vancouver Island (LVI): The Beachwood Campaign**

- A group from LVI approached MABR/RI to collaborate on an initiative they are working on
- Proposed to promote their campaign with driftwood pins to promote cleaning up local beaches
- Would need support from the Roundtable to move forward with this
- Initiate with training of our team in the methods – LVI proposed that training occur at a local Nanaimo beach
  - Kim asked why Nanaimo
  - Graham said it was an area selected by the group (LVI)
  - Kim said that if we are to support it should be in the BR
  - Blain and Kim said likely the smaller community beaches would be an option – likely not the Parksville Community Park
  - Teunis suggested Milner Gardens' beaches
- Teunis said around the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of March you would find more garbage as a result of the herring fishery
- Blain said that Surf Rider is looking to expand past the west coast - another potential partner for LVI
- The vote was that we would support the initiative, as long as all work is done within the MABR

### **EuroMAB 2023 Update**

- Last EuroMAB (2019) was in Ireland
- Discussion of us hosting EuroMAB in 2023
- Could have potentially 200 delegates in 2023 – in September
- Graham talked to Ellie at CCUNESCO – she had minimal information
  - No funding from CCUNESCO for the event
- EuroMAB or UNESCO France do kick in some funding (a small amount and quite late)
- When Graham attended a previous conference, it was \$600 for the three days
  - They had nights of “bring the food of your people”
- Teunis said that most people in QB and Parksville don't know what the MABR is – having a conference of that size would be hugely beneficial and promote the MABR locally, as well as bring money into the community
  - He feels that communities would benefit from putting money into it
  - He has asked that the MABR be brought into all community documents at the Town of QB
  - Kim said the MABR should be in the OCPs as well
  - Teunis added that if we can handle this conference, he is in favour of seriously considering this endeavor

- Graham and Mandy spoke to Gary Clarke from Frontenac Arch BR, as they hosted the conference back in 2013
  - Gary warned that Paris is very much in control of how the breakout rooms and things happen
  - Graham worries that it wouldn't be the same as many of our other events (taking into considerations the Indigenous perspectives)
- Financially, we would likely be breaking even
- Advertising supports would be hugely helpful
- The biggest concern is seed funding for the planning – costs upfront
  - Graham thinks even around \$20K could work
- Kim feels we have the capacity to host it here
  - Kim and Teunis feel that getting seed funding shouldn't be difficult
- There was discussion about partnering with Clayoquot, but they are too far from an airport to host the event
  - QB would be the place for meeting and Parksville is where people would stay
  - However, can do post-tours to Clayoquot – can also see about going to Howe Sound (hopefully it will be a biosphere by then)
- Pam said that the middle day is often field trips – they would have to be local
  - Usually 3-4 options for that day
- Mandy says that if we are keen to do this then a package needs to be sent to EuroMAB by the end of March
- Kim asked if we need to include hospitality options, etc.
  - Kim says that between him and Blain they would be willing to help determine all of these
- Consensus was to go ahead with this – Mandy will get the ball rolling

### **Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative**

- The Howe Sound Report – proposing to be a biosphere region
  - Including the whole watershed – large area
  - No geographic connection to here or Clayoquot
  - They are open to partnering on initiatives
  - They have some funding
  - They have looked at it from every perspective as to why this should be a BR – very marine focused
  - Have received support from their local First Nations
- Pam feels it would be a good idea – it would be Canada's 19<sup>th</sup> biosphere reserve

### **Canadian Mountain Network**

- Pam went to Ottawa a few weeks ago – 14 universities were involved in the meeting for the Canadian Mountain Network
- The project is funded federally through *A Network of Centre of Excellence*
  - This will be the last round of projects that will receive this funding – they will be closing this funding route in the future
- It was the MABR that pushed our application to be being accepted
  - All of the research is based in the MABR
- It gets students involved in research
- We are getting started on a couple of projects



- Would like to get a compendium of all of our projects at the end

### ***Future***

#### **2020 MABR Annual BioBlitz**

- Posters distributed to members
- Mandy will send out a pdf to all Roundtable members to have them distributed further

#### **Funding for Coordinator Position**

- Kim said that we could do a sub-committee for this
- Kim said this organization (Oceanside Initiatives) is fully funded for 4 people
  - Put together a proposal that allowed them to hire an individual to oversee the project – they came with 3 other people that are still gaining skills to be able to get into the job market
- Kim said he is happy to lead the charge in getting the MABR Coordinator position funded in a similar manner to Oceanside Initiatives
  - Funding would be a bit of a bridge (52-week programs) but allows us to work towards finding other funding
  - Kim said it needs to be run through a not-for-profit
  - Graham said it could likely be run through the VIU Foundation
- Mandy to send out emails for sub-committee

### **Closing**

- The next Roundtable gathering is set for May 8<sup>th</sup> from 10:00am - 12:30pm at the RDN
- May 1<sup>st</sup> is a fall back date
- Blain also offered the space at his office for future gatherings
- Mandy thanked everyone for attending the meeting

## Appendix A

### MABR Roundtable Gathering Vol. 15 Agenda

Friday, February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020 from 10:00am to 12:30pm  
174 Island Highway East, Parksville, BC, V9P 0B1.

**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>Arrivals:</b> Nametags & refreshments  |
| 10:10-10:20 | <b>Welcome/Opening</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Words of welcome</li> <li>• Acknowledgement of Snaw-naw-as 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>  |
| 10:20-11:20 | <b>Circle Updates</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What's new with you/your organization?</li> </ul>  |
| 11:20-11:30 | <b>COFFEE BREAK</b>   |
| 11:30-12:20 | <b>MABR Updates</b> <p><i>Past:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizen Science Webinar – Mandy to provide update</li> <li>• OWBC Quarterly Meeting – Mandy to provide update</li> <li>• Electoral Area F Official Community Plan Workshop – Mandy to provide update</li> </ul> <p><i>Present:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership Vancouver Island: The Beachwood Campaign – Graham to facilitate discussion</li> <li>• EuroMAB 2023 – Graham to provide update</li> <li>• Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative – Pam to provide update</li> <li>• Canadian Mountain Network – Pam to provide update</li> </ul> <p><i>Future:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2020 MABR Annual BioBlitz (April 18<sup>th</sup>) – Mandy</li> <li>• Funding for Coordinator Position – Graham to facilitate discussion</li> </ul> |
| 12:20-12:30 | <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>  |