

3. (On-Table)



Presentation to District of West Vancouver Council – June 22, 2026

Ruth Simons,
Executive Director, Howe Sound Biosphere
Region Initiative Society

- [Who we are](#)
- What we do
- What we envision
- Next steps

*Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound Biosphere Discovery
Centre – a hub for nature learning and discovery.*





About our organization and purpose:

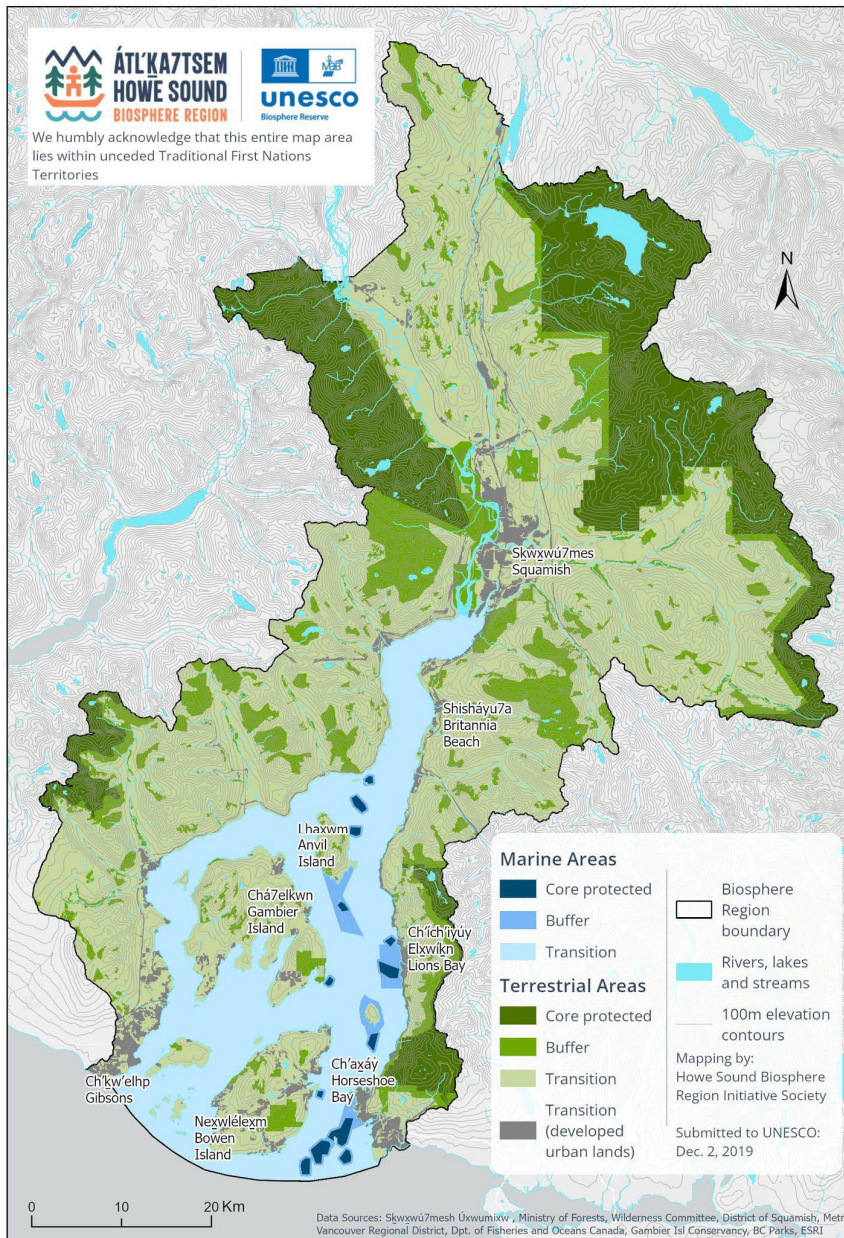
Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society (HSBRIS) is a not-for-profit charitable organization formed in 2017.

UNESCO is the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, which designated our region in 2021.

Models for Sustainable Development Where Nature and Humanity Can Thrive

Our Focus areas:

- Building networks and consensus
- Generating information and capacity
- Increasing connection to people and place



About the Biosphere Region:

- Over 2,000 square kilometers – from mountain peak to ocean floor
- 5 municipalities, 3 regional districts, 2 provincial jurisdictions, 1 Federal
- Wholly within the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumíxw/Squamish Nation territory.
- 65,000 permanent & part-time residents, plus thousands of visitors each year.



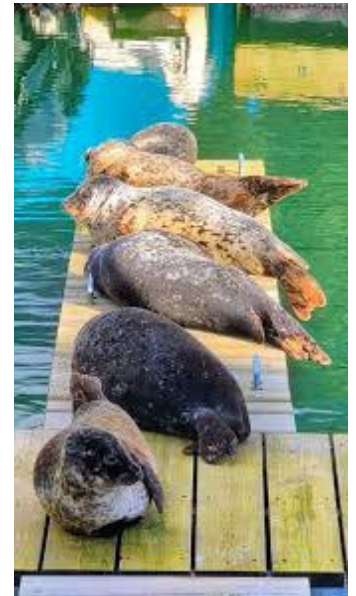
ÁTL'KA7TSEM / HOWE SOUND BIOSPHERE DISCOVERY CENTRE

VISION

It is an innovative gateway to understanding and experiencing the Howe Sound UNESCO Biosphere. This **visitor, and family-oriented community hub** will offer creative space, **interactive learning, hands-on programming, and interpretive displays and exhibits** for visitors of all ages to connect with the unique ecology and biodiversity of the region

PURPOSE

The Biosphere Discovery Hub **connects people to place by bringing together culture, Indigenous knowledge, and community**. Visitors gain a deeper understanding of how nature and humanity thrive in the Howe Sound region. The venue can serve as an incubator, an innovation hub for a sustainable future.



Network and Collaborations

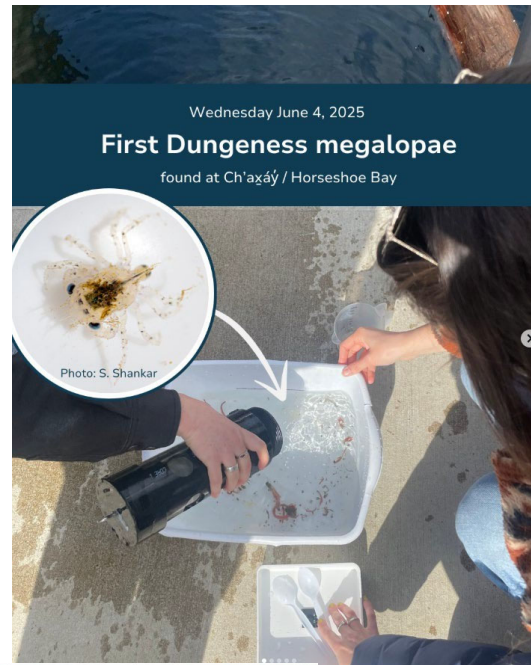
- Educational institutions
- From local to global - environmental NGO's marine and terrestrial
- All levels of government and sectors
- National and international Biosphere Network
- First Nations
- Community groups





Research and Monitoring Projects

Horseshoe Bay will be a hub for partners at work on research and monitoring projects. And a collaborative space for volunteers and citizen scientists to learn and share knowledge. Generate and launch new projects that can support learning and enhance the local ecosystem. Inspire youth and generate more volunteers.

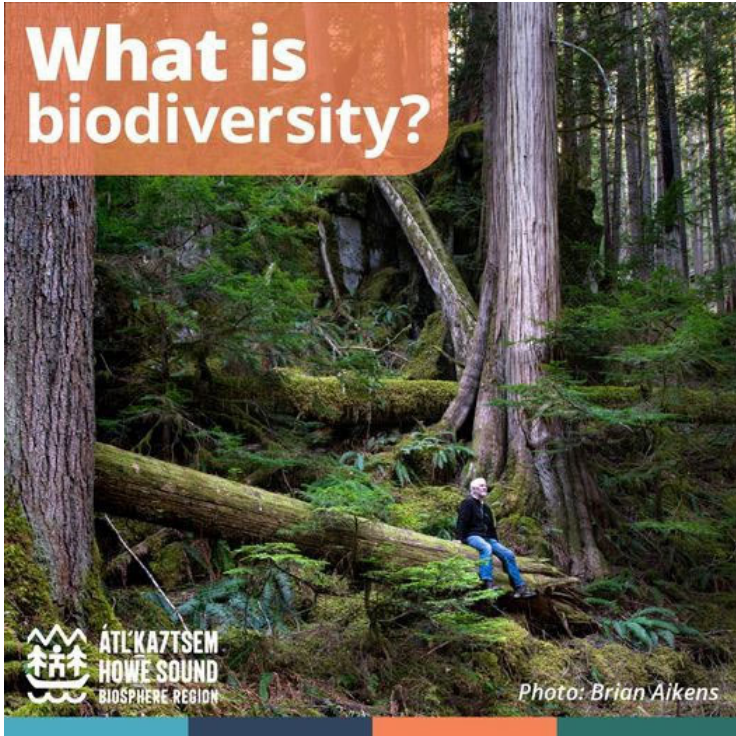




Education and Learning

Community members, visitors, and institutions are invited in to connect with place and nature. In indoor and outdoor classrooms, the Howe Sound Biosphere Discovery Hub will serve as a venue for connecting learners with nature and the science behind discovery.

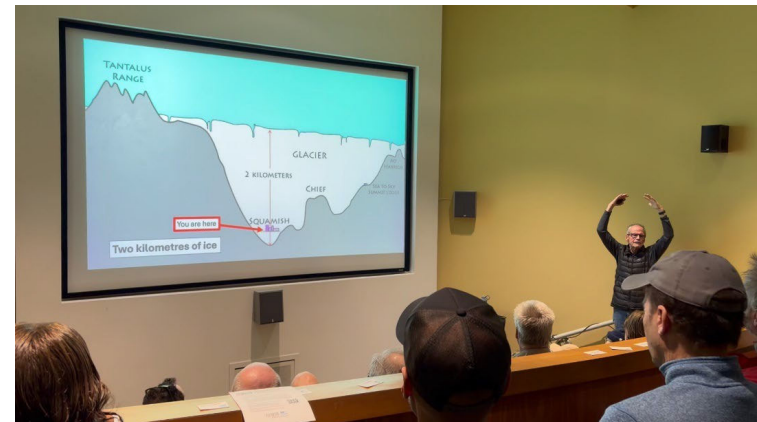
What is biodiversity?





Incubator/Innovation Hub

We invite all critical thinkers, entrepreneurs, and knowledge keepers. The venue will serve as a knowledge hub for issues facing our region today and into the future.





Connecting people from Sky to Sea

A venue to connect people to place. A stop/destination along the Trans Canada Trail, we welcome people to discover the connectivity of our ecosystems, of mountain trails to marine trails, to each other and why we should care.





Exciting Creative Space

A venue to exhibit creative expressions of nature. A space where the community and visitors will be looking forward to the next wow exhibit.



Various examples for inspiration

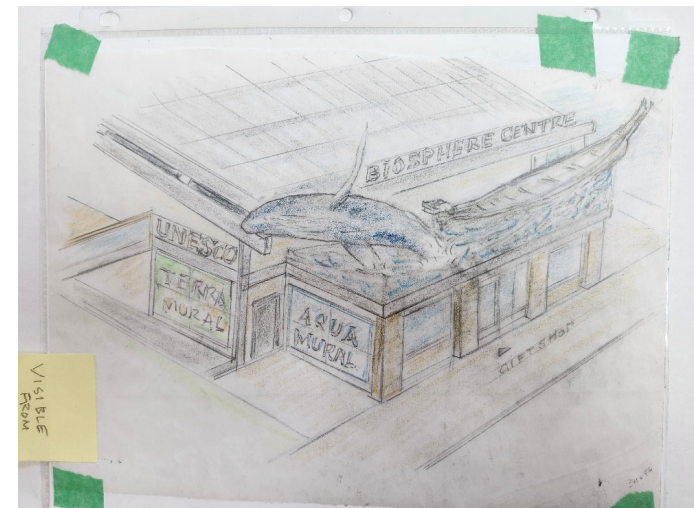
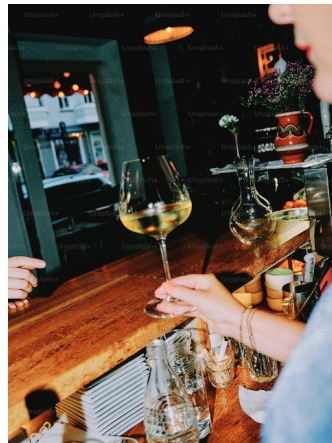




Commercial Spaces for dining and retail

Two additional tenants in the building will align well with the Biosphere Discovery Centre theme. Community members and visitors can purchase and enjoy food and beverages while enjoying the views from indoor and outdoor seating.

Retail space attracts and welcomes people into the building. Opportunities to serve community gatherings, tourists, bikers, hikers and boaters.





Next steps

- With funding support from Sitka, we have engaged Tango Management to provide project management support, with an initial focus on Site Analysis.
- The intent of the analysis is to assess the current condition of the building, identify required improvements and associated ownership responsibilities and costs, and evaluate the regulatory approval requirements, as well as the availability of site access, utilities, and supporting infrastructure.

