Pacific Region Contaminants Atlas

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Slide 1:
The Pacific Region Contaminants Atlas (PRCA) is designed to help users find out more about contaminants primarily in receiving marine environments. PRCA is hosted on the Community Mapping Network along with over 50 interactive web mapping applications – you can ask me more about CMN during the conference.

Those contaminants end up in the Salish Sea in many ways including sediment transport.
There is nothing in the PRCA specifically about sediments but the organizers asked I mention “sediments” to sort of relate to the other presentations in this session.

- The industrialized and urbanized Georgia Basin is the current focus of the PRCA. However, PRCA was intentionally designed to collect and provide information for other important eco-regions.

- The PRCA provides information on sources and levels of environmental contaminants, current issues and species of concern, such as salmon, killer whales and other marine mammals.

- There are examples of Government and community actions to address
these concerns and that everyone can take to help minimize their individual contributions to environmental pollution

- Various sections of the PRCA provide brief summaries on topics of interest and more detailed information on these issues can easily be accessed through links to fact sheets and other websites.

- There are also "Tools" in the PRCA to assist users to find published information. These include:
  • the Contaminants Database Search Engine
  • the Map Explorer with lots of geo-referenced data and
  • CODIS (which I will come back to) is one of those data sets about research findings mostly outside of the Georgia Basin.
Here are some examples of what you will find in the Pacific Region Contaminants Atlas:

- The Map Explorer contains over 200 layers depicting information and datasets

- Map layers identify and provide information on contaminant sources; environmental levels; natural resources; sensitive and protected areas; crucial areas with respect to habitat, migration, and distribution of numerous species, including salmon, killer whales and other marine mammals; shellfish closure areas; regional land use and land cover; and much more.

- These layers can be viewed individually or in combinations, to assist in identifying issues and relationships to the release or presence of contaminants.

- In this example, the layers selected include Killer Whale Habitat (Critical and Proposed Critical) with Oil and Gas Sector Exploratory Wells
Slide 3:
This view shows the layer of documented "Disposal at Sea" locations and the linked abstract for surveys in 1975 and 1978 of the Point Gray disposal area.
Slide 4:
The Contaminants Database Search Engine is a geo-referenced searchable database of documents regarding contaminants - published reports and scientific journal articles. The database currently contains more than 2500 documents, with more being added on a regular basis.

- Documents are not limited to the Georgia Basin. The database contains documents relating to other west coast regions including the Yukon, Washington, Oregon and Alaska.

- General and Advanced literature searches can be conducted based on a wide variety of parameters such as title, author, date, publisher, specific contaminants, media type, source type, watershed and Regional District.

- The search parameters used for this example were:
  - Watershed: Coastal Marine Areas
  - Contaminant: PCBs, and,
  - Media type: mammals

- This search produced 60 documents and could have been further refined by adding additional parameters.
Adobe pdfs or online versions of most documents are available directly from the search results (unless prohibited by copyright protection). The database is not just a bibliography of relevant documents, but is a repository of the documents themselves.
Slide 5:
This is a view of another PRCA information channel to the BC Ministries of Environment (MOE) and Forests, Lands and Resource Operations (FLNRO) for the South Coast library of reports and publications:

- Documents are not on-line but you are able to find out the basic title, author, keywords for a document and know it is shelved in the Surrey offices.
- This example is for a consultants report linked to Okeover Cr. Near Powell River.
- The MOE reports focus on environmental quality issues and the FLNRO reports relate to Fish, Wildlife, Habitat and Water management.
Slide 6:
The PRCA has a connected site for younger audiences that can be accessed from the PRCA home page.
Along with pages for areas of interest like “Human Impacts”, “Marine mammals” there are pages with links to:

- Games and Quizzes
- And resources for Teachers

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The Continental Oceanographic Data Information System (CODIS) is the complete legacy data set that I believe was mothballed by DFO a few years ago. As far as I know CODIS is only available as a searchable catalogue with georeferenced points on the CMN – a Google search yesterday confirmed that: This example of CODIA shows:

- Four of the five CODIS point layers with the far upper left point displaying a link to that specific entry in the catalogue database
- The marine locations are mostly outside the Georgia Basin except in the Fraser Estuary
- There is also a searchable web form with basic key words and a much more detailed form to refine your search interest
Those are the highlights for the PRCA and the future for PRCA is:

- to continue with improvements to the PRCA to make it even more useful
- to promote awareness and interest and encourage use
- to access resources for maintenance and updating, which is crucial to the usefulness of any tool.

The PRCA currently has no source of funding and much of the work is being done on a voluntary basis.

We are looking for suggestions to improve on the site and to access resources to keep it current and useful so please send your feedback to contact info on slide

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Thanks very much.