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Connecting nodes throughout the Salish Sea: a bottom-up approach to strengthening informed decision-making, policy making, and marine spatial planning

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Howe Sound/ Atl'ka7tsem Marine Reference Guide

Grateful to be working in partnership with the Sḵwx̱wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation), within whose traditional and unceded territory we live, play, and study. Atl'ka7tsem is the Squamish Nation's place name for the Sound.

Bridget John and Fiona Beaty, April 21st 2020

a project of Tides Canada SHARED PLATFORM

Objective

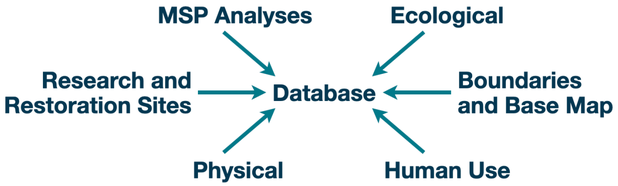
Our project's goal is to build capacity to protect, restore, and be stewards of the diverse human and natural values associated with Atl'ka7tsem's aquatic environments. Our desired outcomes are healthy oceans, strong community relationships, and effective marine spatial planning (MSP).

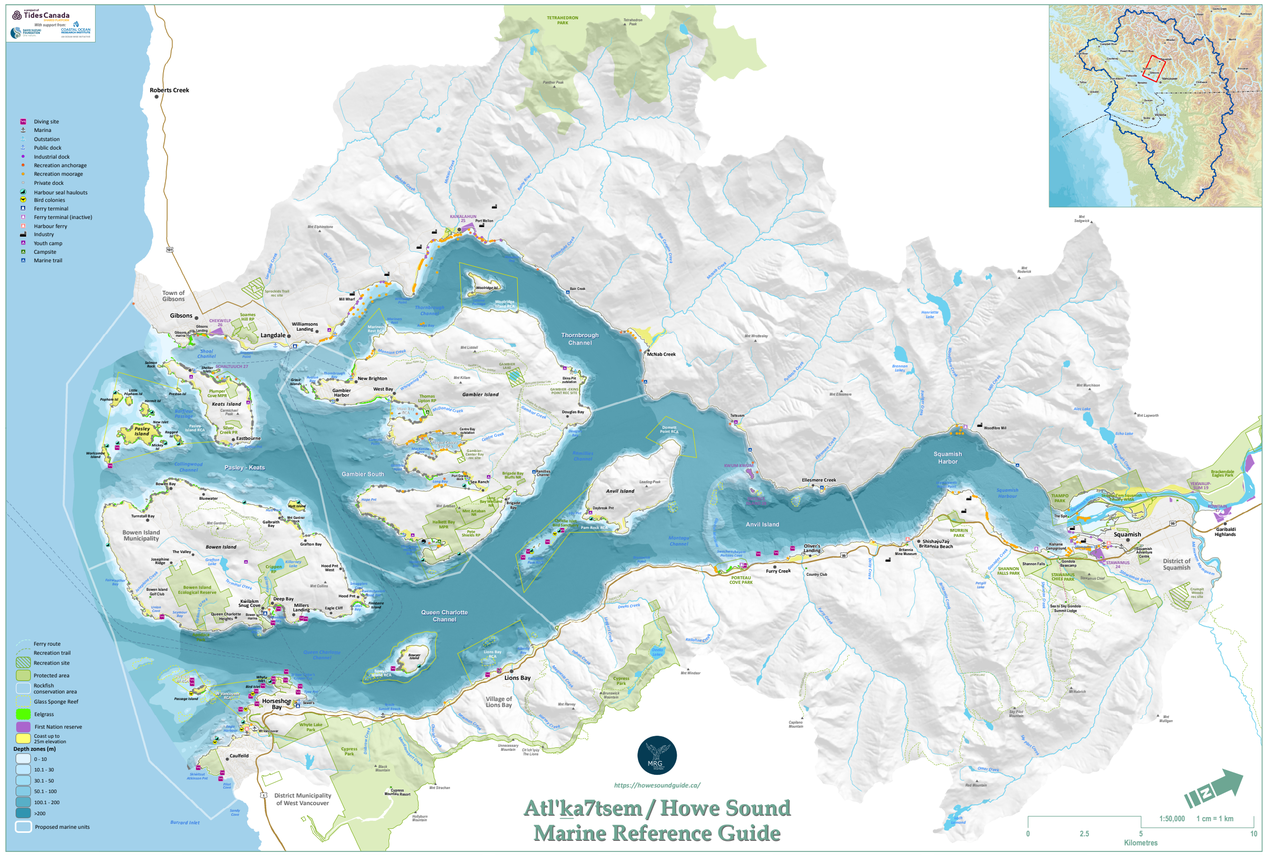
Approach

We will achieve these outcomes by creating decision-support tools (e.g. online interactive maps) that visualize and characterize the diversity of overlapping socio-ecological values associated with the Sound's aquatic environments. Our process involves a unique combination of field and community-based participatory research, GIS analysis, and relationship building.

We are gathering data from:

- Citizen science databases (e.g. eBird)
- Local long-term ecological monitoring datasets (e.g. Ocean Wise Research)
- Local, provincial, and federal government datasets (e.g. DataBC)
- Field surveys and community workshops (e.g. eelgrass survey)





Thank-you to our leadership partners, steering committee, project partners, and the many groups, foundations, and individuals whose support enables us to achieve our goals and outcomes
https://howesoundguide.ca/team/

Community Engagement

Our project engages stakeholders and rights-holders throughout Atl'ka7tsem, including local marine industries (forestry, shipping and transportation), recreation (diving, water-based sports), research and restoration (consultants, non-profit organizations), conservation groups (conservancies, non-profit organizations), community groups and residents, and diverse governments (Indigenous, local, provincial and federal).

Key Outcomes - Regional MSP Network

Through this in-depth engagement process, we have met a myriad of groups working to achieve similar objectives throughout the Salish Sea. Accordingly, our next steps involve linking our databases to produce centralized decision-support tools that contain high resolution data and accurately reflect local values and knowledge. This regional coordination may evolve into an MSP process that links nodes of community-based MSP and decision-support tools into a comprehensive regional framework and network.

Overall, this project will build local and regional capacity for decision-makers and communities to protect the cherished ecological and social values within Atl'ka7tsem and the Salish Sea, for we all depend on a flourishing and healthy ocean.