

## **Canada - British Columbia Steering Committee Meeting Minutes**

### **Southern Strait of Georgia National Marine Conservation Area Reserve South Okanagan – Lower Similkameen National Park Reserve Feasibility Assessments February 15, 2017**

#### **Present:**

Rob Prosper (co-chair), Vice President, Protected Areas Establishment and Conservation Directorate, Parks Canada

Wes Shoemaker (co-chair), Deputy Minister for the Environment, British Columbia

Pat Thomsen, Executive Director, Pacific and Mountain Parks, Parks Canada

Jim Standen, Assistant Deputy Minister for the Environment, British Columbia

#### **Invited for Canada:**

Kevin McNamee, Director, Protected Areas Establishment, Parks Canada

James Gordon (note taker), Project Manager, Proposed National Marine Conservation Area Reserve in the Southern Strait of Georgia, Parks Canada

Lisa Joe, First Nations Coordinator, Parks Canada

#### **Invited for British Columbia:**

David Ranson, Executive Director, Provincial Services Branch, BC Parks

Ken Morrison, Manager, Planning and Land Administration, BC Parks

Heather Davies, Senior Parks and Protected Areas Planner, BC Parks

Regrets: Helen Davies, Field Unit Superintendent, Coastal BC Field Unit, Parks Canada

#### **Administration:**

Introductions were undertaken around the table. Pat Thomsen was welcomed as a new representative on the Steering Committee for Canada.

It was agreed that Rob Prosper would chair this meeting and that Wes Shoemaker would endeavour to chair the next one

The Agenda was approved without revision.

The draft minutes of the December 16, 2013 meeting were approved without revision.

#### **Meeting Objectives:**

A quick review of the meeting objectives was discussed. It was recommended that in addition to the items listed in the agenda there also be a quick discussion of Gambier Island, progress

towards the Aichi targets, any considerations due to the upcoming provincial election, and an update on the Interim Management Plan for Gwaii Haanas.

### **Federal/Provincial Priorities:**

The Province indicated a continued priority on jobs, the economy and the environment. The Province has made a recent investment in BC Parks for both capital and operating dollars. This will include adding 1900 new campsites in across BC with approximately 800 in the BC Parks system.

The Province expressed a continued interest in both the SSG NMCAR proposal and in pursuing increased protection in the South Okanagan.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the Oceans Protection Plan.

Both BC and Canada expressed a strong commitment to reconciliation efforts with First Nations. In this context, guardian programs are being explored and mandate letters reflect the importance of reconciliation efforts.

The Aichi Targets (including the Pathway to Canada Target 1) were discussed as a key priority for all. Various means and criteria for achieving biodiversity targets are being investigated and considered especially with interests in practical ways to act and achieve results on the ground. Parks Canada identified three key pillars of reconciliation efforts: reconnection to land and traditional use, economic benefit and commemoration of indigenous history.

Pat Thomsen provided a brief update of the Gwaii Haanas Interim Management Planning process.

A brief update regarding stakeholder interests in protection of Gambier Island was provided by both BC and Canada.

A brief update regarding Parks Canada's Natural Region 7 (Northern Interior Mountains and Plateaux) was provided by Canada.

The upcoming Provincial Election was discussed. Because of normal restrictions on government communications during elections, it was indicated that no major public consultations should proceed until after the election.

### **Steering Committee:**

The role of the Steering Committee was discussed and reiterated in the context of the MOU and the committee's continued commitment to the process of feasibility assessment for the Southern Strait of Georgia and the South Okanagan.

The issue of committee membership and structure was discussed, particularly in regards to the future potential for enabling First Nations participation.

s.13,s.16

Both the Province and Canada expressed a sincere commitment to collaborative engagement and consultation.

s.13,s.16

Canada provided an update regarding the proposed National Marine Conservation Area Reserve in the Southern Strait of Georgia and stakeholder engagement.

Canada provided an update regarding First Nations engagement regarding the proposed National Marine Conservation Area Reserve in the Southern Strait of Georgia.

s.13,s.16

s.13,s.16

#### **South Okanagan:**

An update regarding the Province's current proposal for a protected area complex (including potential for both provincial and federal designations) in the South Okanagan was provided by the Province for the purposes of re-opening discussions with Canada. Parks Canada expressed an interest in the proposal and for participating in further discussions going forward. It was recognized that the proposed boundaries are still conceptual in nature and remain open for discussion. It was expressed that the principle of "lead with geography and act with culture" will remain an important part of future efforts. It is anticipated that further discussions with the Province, Canada and First Nations will continue at future meetings.

#### **Other Business:**

No other items were discussed.

**Next Meeting:**

The Steering Committee indicated a desire to aim for the end of May 2017 for the next meeting.

DRAFT