

# Johnstone Strait Recreation Project: (Draft) Summary of Workshop #1

**Date:** June 5<sup>th</sup> 2007: 1:00pm to 6:30pm  
**Location:** Black Bear Resort, Port McNeil, BC

## Attendees:

	<b>Representative</b>	<b>Interest and/or organization</b>
1.	Andrew Jones	Kingfisher Wilderness Adventures
2.	Breanne Quesnel	Spirit of the West Kayaking
3.	Steve Emery	North Island Kayaks
4.	Kim Crosby	Wild Heart Adventures
5.	Liam McNeil	Independent Kayak Tour guide
6.	Jared Towers	North Island Marine Mammal Stewardship Association; and Seasmoke Whale Watching (Alert Bay)
7.	Don Wilson	Village of Port McNeill; water taxi service
8.	Doug Sandilands	Cetus Research and Conservation
9.	Ken Vande Burgt	Campbell River paddlers club
10.	Chris Stewart	RCMP S/Sgt
11.	Mark Whitworth	RCMP Port McNeill
12.	Charlie Toman	Mount Waddington Regional District Assistant Planner
13.	David Rushton	Area D Director (Telegraph Cove, Tsitika, Woss)
14.	Marilyn MacArthur	Mount Waddington Regional District
15.	Wolfgang Haider	Simon Fraser University
16.	Jason Nephin	Simon Fraser University
17.	Leah Malkinson	Chair, BC Integrated Land Management Bureau
18.	Diane Tetarenko	Deputy Chair, Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts,
19.	Jim Johnston	Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
20.	Scott Harris	Nanwakolas First Nation Council
21.	Chris Kissinger	Ministry of Environment – BC Parks
22.	Sean Owens	Integrated Land Management Bureau Co-op Student
23.	Terje Vold	Consultant
24.	George Sranko	Consultant
25.	Warren Mitchell	Consultant
26.	Charlie Cornfield	Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts

## 1. Welcome and Introductions

- Johnstone Strait Project Co-Chairs Leah Malkinson and Diane Tetarenko opened the meeting and welcomed participants.
- Participants introduced themselves and the interests they represent

## 2. Project Context and Scope

- Leah provided an overview of the project objectives, scope and context.
- The Johnstone Strait Recreation Project is one of two projects that are pilot testing the Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) process for recreation management.

- The Objectives for the Workshop were identified as:
  - Introduce purpose and objectives of project
  - Learn from each other about interests, values, issues, and concerns related to sea kayaking / camping in Johnstone Strait
  - Introduce LAC methodology aimed at improving kayaking / camping experiences
- A copy of the presentation is attached in PDF form.

#### ***Discussion Points Regarding Project Scope and Context***

- It is important that other user groups are being addressed and involved so that it is not just kayakers making the decisions. There may be a need to widen the groups involved in the pilot project at some future time.
- There is a need to recognize the impact of other users/resources on kayaking. Also need to be aware of the impact of kayaking on other users in the region. Other users in the region need to be made aware of the results of this pilot project. It will be important to ensure that this pilot project in regard to kayaking is also communicated to, and considered within the context of, other resource sectors and users.
- Communications: need clarity and consistency in terms and what is allowed within different designations. The project needs good public distribution of any documentation.

### **3. Break-Out Groups**

- Participants were grouped into 4 small break-out groups and tasked with discussing the following questions:
  1. What are your interests and values regarding kayaking and camping in the Johnstone Strait region?
  2. What are your issues and concerns regarding kayaking and camping in the Johnstone Strait region?
- A summary of the reports from each break-out group is provided in Attachment A.

### **4. Workshop Summary of Values, Interests, Issues and Concerns to be addressed in the Johnstone Strait Sea Kayaking and Camping Project**

#### ***Overriding context***

- **Maintaining a kayaking experience that includes whales and wilderness as the overriding context**

The overriding theme developed from the Breakout groups was the importance of maintaining the overall kayaking experience in the region. Whale watching is considered to be the number one draw for visitors to the region and for commercial and recreational kayakers. There is also a strong level of interest in maintaining the visual quality of the region and ensuring that visitors to the region will always be able to experience a sense of nature and the 'Great Canadian Wilderness'. It is also important that the kayaking experience be maintained by

minimizing the conflicts with other resource users such as sports and commercial fisheries.

*Issue Themes, as developed from Breakout groups and confirmed at plenary:*

- **Availability of campsites for commercial and public users**

The availability and development of campsites for commercial and public users is an area of great concern and uncertainty. Many commercial operators noted that the lack of certainty of campsite availability made the planning of their guided trips difficult. The issue of certainty revolves around the overcrowding of campsites and the conflict between public and commercial use at various campsites. Certain campsites are easier to access than others and this convenience of use can lead to over-use. Commercial operators voiced a desire to see adequate camping space provided for public recreation and promoted the accommodation of both public and commercial use campsites. Participants at the workshop wanted to see a system developed to effectively manage the public and commercial usage of campsites so all parties can be provided with campsite certainty.

- **Campsite conditions e.g. sanitation, facilities and visual quality**

With the ever increasing use of the region's campsites, the condition of the campsites has become a concern. Issues related to sanitation, the provision of facilities and visual qualities of the sites were mentioned. The kayaking and camping experience in the region is highly dependant on the visual quality of the region and the condition of the campsites is an important visual element. There was discussion regarding voluntary compliance versus regulation of campsite conditions. The development of proper campsite facilities raised the issue of who is to pay for, police and manage the campsites if a development initiative was undertaken. The pack-in pack-out waste management approach is practiced by some sea kayakers on a voluntary basis but may not be effective.

- **Safety, e.g. boating safety, wildlife interactions, food caching, search and rescue**

Safety in the region was a recurrent theme at the workshop. Boating safety, wildlife interactions, food caching, search and rescue, transient boaters and a lack of party identification were identified as key safety concerns. Much of the concern over safety in the region relates to the need to provide information and properly educate users. Campsite certainty is also a safety issue for commercial operators in the circumstance that their planned campsite is full and they must go in search of another within a short timeframe. Many of the stakeholders at the workshop believed it would be in the best interest of the region to provide an office/central organization where all recreationists are to register, receive safety briefings, acquire wilderness etiquette information and possibly obtain

certification. Visible identification of valid commercial operators and researchers would aid in enforcement, safety and management of users in the region.

- **Interaction with whales. Are guidelines being applied and implemented effectively?**

As whales were determined to be the main draw to the region, various stakeholders mentioned the interaction with the whales and appropriate whale interaction guidelines as a key theme. Current whale watching guidelines do exist, but they are difficult to enforce and are the same guidelines that apply to larger whale watching vessels in the region. The key question raised was: are the current whale watching guidelines appropriate for Sea Kayakers? Further research on the interaction with whales and public education about whale watching guidelines is needed.

- **Respect for First Nations values, interests and lands**

Respect for First Nations values, interests and lands was a common theme brought up in the Breakout Groups. Much of the area in the pilot region has significant cultural and historical First Nations heritage, making it important to foster management agreements regarding use of the area and provide First Nations with protection of their rights and traditional uses. First Nations would also like the public to understand and respect their traditional uses of the area. There is some concern that removal of cultural heritage artefacts from the region is occurring.

- **Communications**

There is a need for improved communication between commercial operators, the public, government agencies, and community members. There is also a need to ensure an open dialogue between the parties, to ensure that everyone understand and appreciate other parties views, to obtain a better understanding of First Nation issues, and to avoid miscommunication and misunderstanding. Continued discussions and open dialogue are also needed to strengthen the ability of tourism operators and community members in meeting the needs of visitors to the region. In this regard, the Limits of Acceptable Change process is designed to assist stakeholders and the public in developing a shared vision for sea kayaking and camping in Johnstone Strait.

- **Informing and educating operators, recreationists, other resource users, and communities**

Many of the themes identified in the workshop reflect a need for increased public communication and education . Many public recreationists and self guided tour groups can be unclear about regulations and restrictions in the region. A method/system to provide the public with the appropriate information is desired.

Providing better access to current information will help users of the region be better educated on wilderness ethics and regulations, and also be able to plan their routes accordingly. As mentioned in the safety theme, an office/central organization where all recreationists are to register, receive safety briefings, acquire wilderness etiquette information and obtain maps and information on the region would help greatly with public communication, information and education.

- **Economic viability for operators and for local communities (certainty, stability, marketing)**

The economic viability of the commercial kayak operators and local communities is an overall theme that is strongly related to several other issue themes. The development of a sustainable tourism sector is an important contributor to regional goals for strengthening and diversifying the local economy. Sea kayaking is an important part of the tourism sector, but other activities such as sports fishing are also strong in the region. The Sea Kayaking season is limited to a 2-3 month period during the summer, during which time usage of the region's campsites is very high. There may be a perceived conflict between preserving the whales/wilderness versus improving the economy and growing the tourism industry. Most people agree, however, that the sustainable management of whales and wilderness is fundamental to the ongoing health of the economy in the region.

- **Access- infrastructure e.g. launch sites**

Access-infrastructure for Sea Kayakers, especially public, and launch site usage is also a concern. The majority of Sea Kayakers launch from the vicinity of Telegraph Cove and fees such as parking and launching fees may be considered to be a deterrent to more casual recreationists. Other than the opportunity to interact with whales, there are other areas on Vancouver Island with similar wilderness experiences available where these fees are not part of the equation.

## **5. Key Actions/Next Steps**

- A workshop summary will be provided to participants in about two weeks following the workshop for review and comment.
- A 'glossary' of terms important to public and commercial sea kayakers related to land designations (like conservancy) and tenuring will be prepared by ILMB and distributed.
- A targeted survey related to Steps 2-4 of the LAC process on opportunity classes, indicators, and inventory of existing resource and social conditions will be undertaken with workshop invitees during the summer by the consulting team.
- The next stakeholder workshop is scheduled for October. Prior to that a Progress Report will be distributed.

## **Your Feedback**

- Please send any comments on this draft Workshop Summary to Leah Malkinson at [Leah.Malkinson@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Leah.Malkinson@gov.bc.ca) by June 29<sup>th</sup>. A final Workshop Summary will be sent in early July and posted on the ILMB website
- Also, if you have any post-workshop ideas or thoughts on the issues themes above, or other issues not raised at the workshop, please provide those to Leah at the above e-mail by June 29<sup>th</sup>. We will compile your feedback as an Addendum to the Workshop Summary.

## **Attachments**

1. The presentation on Project Context and Scope
2. The interests and issues of each Breakout group
3. The interests and issues of each Breakout group organized according to theme