

Briefing Note - Shared Waters Alliance

Background

Shared Waters Alliance is an international working group focused on the water quality of the Canadian-US shared waters of Boundary Bay. Boundary Bay is a critical section of BC's rare coastline habitat and is recognized locally, nationally and internationally. Shared Waters was formed in 1999 and is made up of representatives from government, First Nations and community groups from both countries.

A primary driver for the formation of this working group was the shellfish harvesting closure on the Canadian side of the border due to bacteriological contamination. Indigenous peoples (including Semiahmoo First Nation) traditionally harvested the abundant fish and shellfish resources for their livelihood. Boundary Bay oysters accounted for 50% of the total provincial oyster production from 1940 - 1963, until water contamination forced the closure of commercial, recreational and First Nations harvest.

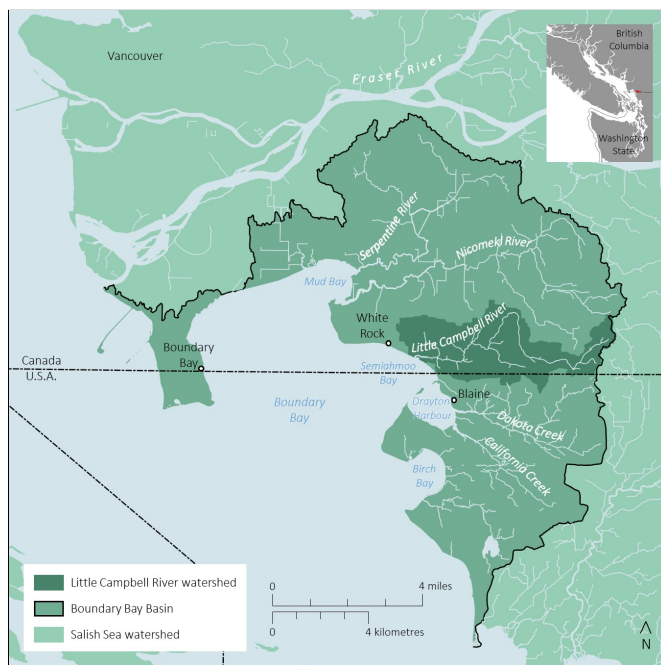
Currently, in the early stages of the revival of the Shared Water Alliance, we are updating our goals and establishing actions to move forward. We hope that by re-engaging, we can streamline efficiencies in monitoring, and better facilitate transparent communication amongst stakeholders to deliver on action-based objectives to achieve measurable improvements in local water quality.

The Shared Waters Core team consists of Chief Harley Chappell from Semiahmoo First Nation, Christy Juteau from A Rocha Canada, Matthew Christensen from Ducks Unlimited Canada, James Casey from Birds Canada, and David Riley from the Friends of Semiahmoo Bay Society. Secretariat and advisory support is provided by the Fraser Basin Council including Theresa Fresco, Regional Manager, Greater Vancouver - Sea to Sky, Bob Purdy, Executive Vice-President, and Kristine Doiron, Program Coordinator.

Vision

Boundary Bay is a healthy, vibrant ecosystem, with diverse and abundant flora and fauna, and robust water quality including clean rivers and creeks, providing First Nations food, social and ceremonial security and a rich natural heritage for future generations.

Geographic Scope



Shared Waters Alliance collaborates on environmental projects that can inform and improve the status of water quality in the Boundary Bay Basin. The basin is bound to the north by the south arm of the Fraser River, to the east by the headwaters of the Little Campbell (Tatalu) River, Dakota Creek and California Creek, and Lake Terrell in Washington state to the south including Boundary Bay, Semiahmoo Bay, Mud Bay and Drayton Harbour. Current priority actions are focused on the Little Campbell (Tatalu) River watershed as it has been identified as the most significant contributor of fecal coliform contamination to Semiahmoo Bay, and the traditional shellfish harvest location for Semiahmoo First Nation.

Participants

The purpose of the Shared Waters Alliance is to bring together First Nations, government agencies, non-government organizations, and the public to collaborate, inform, and improve the status of water quality in the Boundary Bay Basin for the benefit of all.

Including but not limited to:

City of Delta	Fisheries and Oceans Canada
City of Surrey	Fraser Basin Council
Environment and Climate Change Canada	Friends of Semiahmoo Bay Society
Fraser Health Authority	Metro Vancouver Regional District
Langley Environmental Partners Society	BC Ministry of Agriculture
Little Campbell Watershed Society	BC Ministry of Environment
Lower Fraser Fisheries Alliance	Nicomekl Enhancement Society
Pacific Shellfish Institute	Semiahmoo First Nation
South Coast Conservation Land Management Program	Surrey Environmental Partners
University of British Columbia	West Coast Environmental Law
Washington State Department of Health	Whatcom County

Objectives:

- Pool knowledge
- Establish a shared vision and priorities for restoring water quality in the Little Campbell and Semiahmoo Bay
- Establish a Semiahmoo Nation led shellfish harvest monitoring system
- Undertake collaborative watershed planning to the extent feasible to address land based source of pollution
- Support Shared Waters participants taking on the ground actions to address water quality

Current Activities

- Roundtable meetings (2-3 annually) with international multi-jurisdictional representatives to develop and refine an action plan and provide updates on partner activities
- Water quality technical working group (4-6 annually) to develop and implement a collaborative water quality monitoring plan in the Little Campbell (Tatalu) River watershed
- Engaging municipal leadership to take more active role in collaborative work
- Please see website for more information: <https://sites.google.com/view/shared-waters/home>

Conclusion

Shared Waters Alliance would like to invite (insert municipalities) to participate in a South of Fraser Gathering with neighboring municipalities to discuss ways in which we might collaboratively work together to advance water quality improvement and reconciliation in Boundary Bay.