

What is *Vital Signs*?

Vital Signs is a biennial check-up through which the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust (CBT) measures the vitality of our communities and identifies significant trends in several areas critical to the region's quality of life. The report includes all of the communities within the Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Reserve region: Hot Springs Cove, Ahousaht, Opitsaht, Tofino, Esowista/Ty-Histanis, Ucluelet, Hitacu, Macoah and Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District, Area C.

The information is a compilation of numerous research sources, many of them local, which will help the community make connections between issues and trends in different areas. The findings are presented in a reader-friendly format to make them as accessible as possible. An expanded, in-depth report will also be made available on our website, complete with links to original community research.

Vital Signs also has national implications. Our report is part of a national initiative led by community foundations across Canada and its findings will be part of a national summary issued annually by Community Foundations of Canada.

Which indicators will you measure?

The Clayoquot Biosphere Trust is consulting with a wide range of community groups to ensure our indicators capture the area's unique issues and attributes. For example, along with more traditional quality of life measures such as low birth weight babies or high school completion rates, we will be tracking access to Nuu-chah-nulth language learning opportunities and human-wildlife interactions.

Why are you leading this program?

The CBT works with a wide range of community groups so this report will provide us with a comprehensive view of local issues. Measuring our region's vitality in critical areas assists the community on many levels, from informing policy and governance decisions, to focusing educational and research initiatives, to raising public awareness. This project will also increase the effectiveness of the CBT's grant making, helping us to inform our donors about issues and opportunities in the community and assisting us in making connections between individuals and groups to address those issues.

Are you working with other organizations in the community?

Although *Vital Signs* is an initiative of the CBT, we engage a wide range of community organizations and leaders, including Island Health, the Coastal Family Resources Coalition, Parks Canada, Environment Canada, municipal councils, and many more to gather valuable research information from numerous sources in the community.

How is *Vital Signs* different from other indicator initiatives?

Different indicator initiatives exist across Canada. Some track specific issues at a local level, such as a police department monitoring crime levels. Others analyze national data from a particular perspective, such as trends in obesity rates. All play an important role in helping us better understand our communities, but *Vital Signs* is valuable because it:

Collates a broad range of data. We will develop a distinctly broad picture of the region using relevant national data and identifying local research on a wide range of subject areas.

Engages the community. *Vital Signs* will reflect the community because it will involve the community at every level, from determining the report's indicators and exploring research sources, to assigning grades.

Feeds a national report. Because community foundations across Canada are participating in this project we will be able to share results and track local trends at the national level.

Is research you can read! We are committed to publishing a reader-friendly document that appeals to a wide range of readers looking for a snapshot of quality of life and of community vitality.

How will *Vital Signs* add value to current research?

Vital Signs has the ability to draw public attention to the terrific indicator work already taking place in our communities. By consolidating new and existing data, *Vital Signs* makes a wide range of information easier to access. Individuals and organizations interested in detailed analysis of particular areas can simply use our *Vital Signs* website links to find the in-depth reports they need.