



Strawberry Isle Marine Research Society
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September 23, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is to affirm our support for the continued designation of the Clayoquot Sound UNESCO Biosphere Region, established in 2000.

Our region has worked together for the past decade to advance the objectives of the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve program in our region. As a partner of the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust, Strawberry Isle Marine Research Society (SIMRS) has been able to contribute to achieving the objectives of sustainable development, biodiversity conservation and reconciliation, through education, research and collaboration. Our mission is to promote and conduct marine research, education, and monitoring within the Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Region for the health of coastal and marine ecosystems.

Over the years, SIMRS has developed and led many biodiversity conservation projects in the region including our ongoing efforts in studying sea star wasting disease, monitoring endangered Killer Whale populations, and protecting injured marine mammals through our emergency response program. The data collected through our research contribute to both local and global knowledge on how climate change is affecting our marine ecosystems, and assist in informing mitigation, management, and monitoring activities by both governmental and non-governmental organizations. Data from our Sea Star Stewardship Program have contributed to the Vital Signs program for the past 5 years and is actively contributing towards numerous UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The work done by our organization is largely a collaborative effort supported by deep alliances and partnerships with our communities, and ultimately fostered by the Clayoquot Biosphere designation. Both our Sea Star Stewardship Program and Killer Whale Monitoring Program rely on citizen-science and community engagement, and our Build-A-Whale Program engages children and youth through hands-on education. Both Clayoquot Biosphere Trust and the West Coast N.E.S.T. have been essential partners in promoting participation in these programs to locals and visitors alike, helping strengthen stewardship towards the marine environment.

We are proud to support the continued Clayoquot Sound UNESCO Biosphere designation, and look forward to participating in the next ten years of activities in our region.

Sincerely,

Karyssa Arnett

Director of Operations