

# Clayoquot Sound Periodic Review: Report of External Reviewers June 2021

Sarah Gamble and Maureen Reed

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## Part 1: Brief description of the BR

Clayoquot Sound Biosphere was designated in 2000. It is located on the unceded territories of five Indigenous nations including the Hesquiaht First Nation, Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation, Toquaht Nation, Ahousaht, and Yuułuʔiłʔatḥ.<sup>1</sup> These territories are located on the west coast of Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada. It has a regional year-round population of approximately 6,462, but welcomes more than 1,000,000 visitors to the area each year.

The Clayoquot Biosphere Trust (CBT) is a registered charity that administers the Clayoquot region and acts as a convener organization that fosters the ideals of the MAB Programme. When established, the CBT received a \$12 million (CAD) trust fund that it invests and then employs to support and promote local projects for research, education and training. In 2012, the CBT joined the Community Foundations of Canada to strengthen national networking and opportunities across Canada. The CBT is governed by a 10-member board of directors and their alternates in the region's five First Nations, the Districts of Tofino and Ucluelet and Area C of the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District.

In the past 10 years, Clayoquot has been grappling with a growing tourism sector and declining fishing and forestry sectors. Much of the work of the CBT has been to collaborate with First Nations to support their land-use visions, conservation initiatives, and capacity enhancement for Indigenous leadership, governance, stewardship, and economic development.

## Part 2: Overview of site visit

### External Reviewers

Sarah Gamble is a heritage professional and partner in the firm Moose & Muskwa Consulting Inc. Her professional career began with 17 years in consulting archaeology and cultural

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<sup>1</sup> Canadian Biospheres now described themselves as Biosphere Regions rather than Biosphere Reserves. The Clayoquot Biosphere Trust (CBT) is the central administrative authority for the Clayoquot Sound Biosphere (area of the UNESCO BR). The Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Region refers to the land and communities within the boundaries of the Clayoquot Sound Biosphere as well as the territories of Yuułuʔiłʔatḥ, the Toquaht Nation, and the District of Ucluelet, who are outside the boundaries but were signatories to the UNESCO nomination and participating communities in the governance and programs of the CBT.

anthropology before she took on the role of first Executive Director for the Tumbler Ridge UNESCO Global Geopark for five years. Ms. Gamble is passionate about creating connections and understanding of holistic worldviews, which weave past and current human knowledge with the biological, geological and geographical characteristics of our earth. She is the Vice Chair of the Canadian Geoparks Network and an official UNESCO Global Geopark evaluator.

Maureen Reed is Distinguished Professor in the School of Environment and Sustainability at the University of Saskatchewan and shares a UNESCO Chair with Dr. Jim Robson in Biocultural Diversity, Sustainability, Reconciliation and Renewal. Maureen’s research focuses on practices of governance that support the sustainability of local ecosystems, livelihoods, and communities that rely on them. Recently, she has been working to learn how gender, culture and other factors shape how people in forest-based and Indigenous communities plan for, are affected by, and respond to climate hazards. She works with Biosphere Regions, Model Forest organizations, and Indigenous and rural communities. She has worked with Biosphere Regions for 20 years and served on the Canadian-MAB committee between 2011-2018.

**Summary of site visit (e.g. dates, format, people met etc.)**

This periodic review was conducted remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Reviewers received training from the Canadian Commission for UNESCO in April 2021, followed by planning meetings with Ms. Rebecca Hurwitz, the Executive Director of the CBT, on April 1, May 5, and May 18. Meetings were then held with local residents and representatives of Indigenous and settler governments, industries, and not-for-profit organizations in the region between May 18 and May 21 (See Table below). Additionally, Dr. Reed observed part of the Board meeting of the CBT on April 22, and part of the Annual General Meeting on May 26.

<b>Meeting Topic</b>	<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Attendees</b>
Pre-review planning	April 1, 2021	Rebecca Hurwitz, Maureen Reed, Sarah Gamble
CBT Board Meeting	April 22, 2021	Maureen Reed, Rebecca Hurwitz, CBT Board members and alternates, guests
Periodic Review Report Reflections and Roundtable Planning	May 5, 2021	Rebecca Hurwitz, Maureen Reed, Sarah Gamble
Tla-o-qui-aht Working Group Roundtable	May 18, 2021	Rebecca Hurwitz, Maureen Reed, Sarah Gamble, John Watson, Lorena Frank, Robert Martin (Nuukmiis), Saya Masso

Interview between Vital Signs editors and UNESCO Reviewers	May 18, 2021	Rebecca Hurwitz, Maureen Reed, Sarah Gamble, Faye Missar, Laura Loucks
CBT Governance Roundtable	May 19, 2021	Rebecca Hurwitz, Maureen Reed, Sarah Gamble, Nicky Ling, Ruth Charleson, Cathy Thicke, Anne Mack, Geoff Lyons, Elyse Goatcher-Bergmann, Kendall Woo
CBT Conservation & Land Relationship Roundtable	May 20, 2021	Rebecca Hurwitz, Maureen Reed, Sarah Gamble, Laura Loucks, Josh Charleson, Dan Lewis, Mary Toews, Aaron Rodgers, Bruce Greig, Mike Davis, Barb Beasley
CBT Tourism Roundtable	May 20, 2021	Rebecca Hurwitz, Maureen Reed, Sarah Gamble, Nicole Gerbrandt, Nancy Cameron, Abby Fortune, Denise Stys-Norman, April Froment, Michelle Hall, Chris Seitcher, Dave Tovell
CBT Food Security Roundtable	May 21, 2021	Rebecca Hurwitz, Maureen Reed, Sarah Gamble, Erika Goldt, Helene Descoteaux, Heather Shobe
Periodic Review Virtual Roundtables Debrief	May 21, 2021	Rebecca Hurwitz, Maureen Reed, Sarah Gamble
CBT Annual General Meeting	May 26, 2021	Rebecca Hurwitz, Maureen Reed, CBT Board members and alternates, guests

**Part 3: Highlights and achievements over the past 10 years**

Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Trust is a high capacity organization that has many accomplishments across all three BR functions. The Trust operates as a hub for multiple networks that engage local, regional, provincial and federal government agencies, five First Nations, and numerous local organizations that support conservation, sustainability, health,

and economic initiatives. Efforts to summarize these achievements would exceed the space limitations of this report. Hence, we have selected only a few that stand out and refer the readers to the self-study for more details.

### ***Conservation***

The CBT provided an accurate zonation map that demonstrates that the BR continues to meet the zonation requirement of the Statutory Framework. The total land area remains the same as in 2010. Because of ongoing watershed planning, new forms of land designation (e.g. special management zones), and engagement of First Nations within planning processes, land use designations within the BR have changed over time. Hence, the proportion of land in the core protected area has increased by 27.5%; in the buffer zone by 3.5%. The total land area of the transition zone decreased by 31%. Despite the total land area decrease in the transition zone, the total population grew by 22% between 2011 and 2018, and visitation rates to this high amenity region remain high, with more than 1,000,000 visitors per year.

Multiple conservation initiatives were described in the self-study document and in meetings with local residents. This sentiment was expressed multiple times through the meetings: “specific to land management and conservation, aside from programs in the CBT, the biggest success is in relationship-building.” Meeting participants explained that when the Clayoquot Sound Central Region Board was disbanded in 2009, the CBT saw a gap and began to take a leadership role in coordinating planning efforts across the region. One summarized, “the CBT has filled this need [for regional thinking and coordination] ... it’s been really helpful. Having the CBT ask us ‘have you considered this?’ ...and having us think more regionally is so valuable.”

Significant challenges remain in relation to the conservation function including in land management (forestry, tourism, human-wildlife conflicts, territorial challenges, beach cleanups), in foreshore management (e.g., aquaculture, landslides affecting nearshore habitats for marine species, kelp, eelgrass), and in protection of the marine environment (e.g., boating conflicts, salmon and herring populations). As the CBT has no jurisdiction and no power to set regulations, it has focused on bringing people together to discuss land visioning, land relationships with the First Nations at a regional level, and supporting individual organizations that are engaged in public education, research and monitoring, and habitat restoration.

Despite these challenges, successes were noted by roundtable participants in some key conservation areas:

- bringing international attention to the Tofino Mudflats that have been designated as a Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network site, increasing success in migratory bird monitoring;
- raising awareness and continuing monitoring of human wildlife conflicts. Education and monitoring “would not be possible without support from CBT” (see also Vital Signs and West Coast NEST);

- supporting wild salmon studies, both in marine and freshwater environments, including remediation of spawning stream beds after landslides following years of mismanagement by historic forestry practices;
- encouraging marine monitoring and research in general;
- providing education and activities relating to plastics reduction;
- encouraging the development of experimental underpasses on highways to reduce wildlife mortality on roads; and
- building key relationships within conservation and research communities. With the CBT funding role, different organizations are required to work together, increasing education and reach of research.

***Sustainable Development*** (foster economic and human development which is socio-culturally and ecologically sustainable)

The CBT's key role as regional convener has also been evident in its support for the sustainable development function. By far, the most significant initiative in this regard is *Vital Signs* - a biannual report beginning in 2012 on the state of health of ecosystems and communities in the Biosphere. Every group we met volunteered to say how important this initiative was in informing their work in the region. *Vital Signs* uses data from Statistics Canada, CBT projects, scientific research, the Vancouver Island Health Authority, the BC Ministry of Education, and Parks Canada, among others, to document the state of the region with respect to climate change, youth belonging, education, safety, income inequality, housing, transportation and Indigenous languages. The report is shared with local First Nations, municipalities, regional authorities and organizations to draw attention to the needs and capacities of people in the region. It has unabashedly pointed to significant disparities in income, housing, and food security between Indigenous and settler communities. Providing evidence of these disparities has also sparked regional *Vital Conversations* wherein community leaders and organizations work together on key topics such as sustainable tourism. Additionally, *Vital Signs* informs the allocation of funds in the grants program administered by the CBT. Importantly, the CBT was the first of the Canadian foundations to use *Vital Signs* to track progress towards the SDGs, with emphasis on 8 of the 17 SDGs. This work has shifted the thinking of the BR as an environmental organization to one that is also concerned with the ecological, social, cultural, and economic health of the region.

A member of a partner organization noted the value of the designation, pointing out that a regional workshop held in "localizing SD goals" was available to all parties in the region because this region IS a biosphere reserve. "Having the BR framework and language helps us to put into concrete language and credence to localizing the SDGs. It helps us to push for policy changes because we are part of a Biosphere Reserve...This benefits the region and other places beyond the region."

Sustainable Tourism has become critical to supporting sustainable development. This priority emerged from *Vital Signs*, with a Vital regional conversation held in 2019. Recognizing the need to generate better understanding of the circular economy and how tourism can enhance or

detract from principles of the circular economy, as well as the need to engage youth in tourism planning, the CBT has created West Coast NEST - an educational hub aimed at diversifying tourism to include how best to include learning opportunities for tourists, students and youth. For example, the West Coast NEST offers co-learning and co-action opportunities for a high school youth group to better understand how people's decisions and actions affect the local environment. Working in partnership with other organizations, NEST has engaged students in experiential learning activities such as beach and trail clean-ups, invasive species inventories, and regenerating trail systems.

Additionally, CBT is working in partnership with national park, tourism, and community planners to undertake strategic planning on tourism.

However, the divide between Indigenous and settlers is quite apparent in who benefits from the tourism economy. First Nations see large numbers of people who visit. Millions of dollars go to the Tofino economy while a very small proportion is invested back to Indigenous communities. In particular, Indigenous youth and elders may be left out of the benefits of tourism. Many impacts arise because of increased boat traffic, the high cost of food, and pressure on potable water and wastewater treatment, especially during the summer months when visitation is highest.

There has been discussion of a cultural healing centre that would showcase both Indigenous and other cultural practices for wellness, although to date, there has been little uptake. Discussion of cultural tourism that supports a regenerative, circular economy, is just emerging in the region. Some efforts have been undertaken by Tourism Vancouver Island and by the Barclay Community Forest to determine how to provide meaningful employment of youth in the tourism economy in culturally appropriate ways.

Affordable housing is also a key development issue in the region. Again, resolution of this issue is outside the purview of the CBT. However, Vital Signs has tracked challenges in housing and the CBT initiated regional discussions. The high cost of housing has exacerbated income inequalities in the region as it also affects what income is available for food, transportation, and other household needs.

The last major development issue raised has been food security. This is a cross-cutting issue that is connected to the low-wage tourism economy, housing availability and affordability, land available for food procurement, and loss of cultural knowledge related to food procurement, wild harvesting, and preservation. The CBT has provided grants to support knowledge exchange and cultural learning around traditional foods. Financial and in-kind partnerships between the CBT and other local or regional organizations has also increased the number of school garden programs in the region.

The CBT has also been working with the Regional District to improve access to food for local people and to provide skills and infrastructure for food procurement and preservation.

Federal programs for youth in agriculture and provincial health programs are also ways to enhance knowledge and develop strategies for local food security. The CBT is working with multiple partners to bring these opportunities to the region. Partner organizations to the CBT also expressed a desire to see some stronger branding of 'coastal foods'. Representatives of non-Indigenous organizations stated that this could involve tourists as well, however, only if Indigenous organizations and communities are interested or willing, since involving tourists in this work directly will require permission by First Nations because it could involve harvesting in Indigenous territories.

- **Logistic support** (*support for demonstration projects, environmental education and training, research and monitoring related to local, regional, national and global issues of conservation and sustainable development*)

The [West Coast NEST](#) (an acronym for Nature. Education. Sustainability. Transformation.) is a hub for courses and learning experiences for visitors to the region, convened through the CBT. This hub provides learning across both conservation and sustainable development objectives.

Just following our visit, the CBT launched a Story Map related to 10 Years of Partnerships. They featured 83 letters of support that help describe the diverse partnerships in the past decade, including activities related to events and courses, research, training and more. Details can be found at [this website](#).

Regarding research and conservation projects, the CBT senior management and research team commented on their efforts to engage university partners along with the smaller NGOs and other independent research institutions. A knowledge symposium was planned prior to the Covid-19 pandemic and may be an opportunity in the future. A Standard of Conduct for Research was developed with attention to operating within proper protocols for First Nations communities, and while some researchers choose to embrace the protocols, others find the process cumbersome and choose to continue their research in the region without the CBT's involvement. Continuing to elevate the importance of respectful interactions with local communities is a valuable role for the CBT. We encourage the research team to continue to pursue those partnerships and use of the Standard of Conduct for Research.

Since the designation of Clayoquot Biosphere, the board of directors has been co-chaired by an Indigenous and a settler representative. Multiple committees have been established to work on projects collectively. In 2018, the CBT engaged in a Theory of Change project identifying five actions that it would advance in support of its convenor function: "facilitating and coordinating healthy community and ecosystem initiatives; empowering youth; co-leading sustainability research, education, and training; achieving the Biosphere Centre, and stewarding granting and governance processes" (self-study p. 30). The CBT has also facilitated provincial planning processes with First Nations that support *their* visions for land allocation and management. Slowly First Nations on the west coast are securing agreements with provincial and federal governments that support recognition of their rights and interests. It takes years to build trust

and, in some cases, tensions remain high. Nevertheless, there are multiple entry points for engagement of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

How the investment funds are allocated has been a source of concern for many years. Access to and benefit from funds was brought up by multiple First Nations participants in the periodic review. Furthermore, First Nations community representatives voiced uncertainties regarding overall access to benefits from increased tourism and in some cases described fear and concern in the community settings. During the roundtable debrief, the CBT staff reflected on the disparity of experience voiced between First Nations and settler communities and individuals. Since the roundtable discussions, the CBT staff have prepared an Equity Pathway Briefing Note, presented to the CBT Board at the May board meeting. Well received, the aim of the document is to ensure formal steps are taken “to develop an equity statement and review” of the granting program and policies. Further engagement with First Nations will be key to success, which is outlined in the briefing note. Positively, a first step has been taken in the 2021 Vital Grant recommendations, where a significant portion of funding has been allocated to First Nations proposals.

More broadly, in the past 10 years, it appears that the CBT has gained a positive reputation for becoming ‘a spider in the web’. Recognizing that the CBT was created out of conflict about logging of old-growth forests, the CBT has worked hard to build relationships and has earned a reputation for its efforts. One participant stated, “The CBT was created to bring these groups [municipalities, First Nations, environmentalists] together to come to mutual solutions that people could get on board with.... There is still tension between certain groups and topics. Rebecca and the [CBT] board has been able to tap into the community, and really embrace the First Nation groups. I observe a real attempt to bring in more First Nations’ participation and collaboration. It has transformed dramatically. I give credit to Rebecca and other board members. It’s the strongest it’s been for a while.” Similarly, one of the regional authorities noted, “There is a cultural and geographic divide between Alberni valley and coastal communities. Now there are some government programs and a vibrant committee that bring agricultural interests together...supported by CBT. The CBT offers its organizational structure and size and sustainability, and longevity as an organization so that Regional District is comfortable working with them.”

- **Management/governance** (management plan, community engagement and participation, communications)

The CBT is in a strong financial position with significant funding over what Canada requires in the fund. Despite the fluctuations of the financial markets, the CBT is in a stronger financial position than it was 10 years ago.

Multiple strategies have been employed to ensure transparency of practice, engage with all communities, and invite participation. Given the challenges of the tourism economy (where people are not resident year-round), the physical geography (where many communities are



accessible only by boat), the distribution of information and participation opportunities within and across communities are not always ideally realized.

That noted, every table spoke highly of the leadership provided by the Executive Director, Ms Rebecca Hurwitz. For example, one board member stated: “Rebecca has reached out and ensured we have good introductions, training, policy and procedures. We can also suggest training.... We feel really well supported.” Another told us: “A lot to Rebecca’s credit, she’s been feisty to ensure that the representative from this community is able to attend the meeting and ensuring that we go to their communities for meetings.” The COVID-19 pandemic put a pause to in-person community meetings and the vagaries of internet access in rural areas limited some aspects of participation. Nevertheless, there is an extraordinary effort to ensure people are included and have access to the information and time they need to make local decisions.

Members of the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations reconciliation table indicated that the CBT has provided a safe space for difficult conversations; however, there are challenges around how the board is constituted and how funding is allocated. One member of the reconciliation table noted: “Rebecca has provided us with extra stuff. There are challenges with communications between the Board, CBT and communities. How communities select their board members and get information back remains a challenge.”

Engaging effectively with Indigenous communities and governments is a challenge for all Biosphere Regions in Canada. As noted by a partner organization, “the CBT does amazing work around language, and cultural knowledge sharing.... it’s a slow process of reconciliation. It is helpful to have the CBT to support us and keep moving forward.”

First Nations spoke with multiple voices. Members of the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations reconciliation table were clear that UNDRIP needs to be acknowledged at both the Provincial and Federal government levels. As the CBR is a UNESCO site that operates with an endowment by the Federal government, and for the Nations was designated by the Canadian government, Tla-o-qui-aht representatives specifically requested that working within the assertions made in UNDRIP be noted in this report.

The colonial settler system of government is very different than the traditional government structures which have been practiced by the five First Nations communities since time immemorial. Some challenges with engaging from both the CBT and First Nations communities’ perspectives were noted with respect to differences in protocols and communication. One First Nation representative noted that:

Rebecca has been working to learn the governance system of First Nations. She’s learning. Many board members don’t understand it either. For CBT to be successful to make a bonding reliable relationship, it’s important to learn their [First Nations’] governance. There are five First Nations; each one has a different governance structure. If CBT wants to work with Hesquiaht, they have to learn their governance, instead of ‘this is what we have to offer’ .... someone

mentioned that CBT has been working hard to be fair, transparent, and inclusive. My first meeting with CBT I felt out of place (this was years ago, I went as an alternate, so I didn't return) ... but today it's an improvement. Now First Nations are listened to. It's a relationship that needs to be worked on with First Nations and CBT.

Another First Nation representative indicated that she was from a modern treaty nation. We are at different spaces in our own governance systems. It requires more in-person contact with the community, rather than just the director trying to convey the messages. CBT has been doing that a lot. They have traveled to all our communities. I've been involved with CBT since its inception. I like their goals for communities. COVID has kept us in our communities – sometimes a blessing. Challenges include geography to connect with communities. Having youth involved. Needs a communication link – possibly youth, or a communications person can go into communities and talk about CBT and what we can both benefit from and learn together.

COVID amplified differences in equity, in many different spheres: food security, access, internet reliability, and access to revenue generated by the tourism industry. While the settler community tourism societies felt very positive about the inclusion of Indigenous peoples in the tourism industry, the roundtable participants felt that there were issues of accessing the industry, training and support to establish business, and that unmonitored visitors trespassed into communities and acted disrespectfully. One participant noted that they “live in a billion-dollar area where everyone benefits from our people and land.” Food security is a higher priority for the First Nations people than tourism, and opportunities for the CBT to continue in relationship building with the First Nations through food security were presented.

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**If the BR has previously undergone a periodic review, how did they address the recommendations that arose the last time?**

Yes. Three recommendations were made by the IACBR and were addressed by the CBT.

1. **The core area may be too small.** The original core area was approved at the time of designation (2000) and was confirmed by reviewers in 2010. Nevertheless, the core area has been increased since 2010 as noted above.
2. **Impact of aquaculture and mining exploration.** CBT followed up with the CCCUNESCO who confirmed that the CBT has no regulatory authority over activities within the BR. Nevertheless, the CBT does contribute its expertise to on-going discussions such as providing a detailed submission relating to the siting of three salmon farms near the BR's core protected area.
3. **Monitoring for conservation objectives.** The CBT provided a report in 2013 outlining extensive monitoring projects and included this report as an appendix to the full report. CCUNESCO responded that it was satisfied that the CBT is meeting this requirement.

## Part 4: Opportunities and Recommendations

- Opportunities for the next 10 years

We are encouraged about the vision for the Biosphere Centre, planned for Tofino in the coming years. In particular, the emphasis on its being a regional ‘hub’ rather than simply office space for the Trust is compelling. We hope that the next reviewers will be able to see it at full capacity, with vibrant individuals and organizations working together for regional sustainability.

The physical and cultural geography of Clayoquot Sound and the history of Indigenous-settler relations will make communication with communities an on-going challenge. In the last 10 years, CBT has made enormous strides in raising awareness among all communities, board members, and visitors to the region about the rights, responsibilities and valuable contributions of First Nations to the region’s long-term sustainability. Nonetheless, the history of colonization, physical isolation of communities, and on-going growth pressures suggest that communication and collaboration will remain a challenge despite many and varied efforts. We recognize that inter-cultural relationships take time - decades and generations - to build trust, respect, and reciprocal benefits. There has been a lot of progress between 2000 and 2010. The CBT leadership has brought vision, stability, a principled approach, and a strong commitment to ‘justice’ to the role. The challenges and benefits are described in more detail in the [Story Map](#).

Multiple representatives noted the importance of maintaining and building relationships over time, and it should be noted that for the Indigenous peoples of the CBR, relationship building is a longstanding process that will continue to grow if nurtured. Investing organizationally in a long-term vision of reconciliation and relationship with First Nations communities and peoples will allow realistic goals to develop for the work to be done. As the current relationship has taken generations to come to this place, it may take generations to reconcile.

*Vital Signs* has shown to be an incredibly powerful tool for all aspects of the CBT’s work. Continued follow up to the results of the Vital Signs and growing the Vital Conversations and Vital Grants will ensure the impact of the reports continues to grow. For example, the new equity lens for funding is a good example of how having conversations and listening can result in positive change for the CBT.

- Recommendations for improvement

1. **We recommend ongoing communications efforts and to re-visit communication strategies with Indigenous and community partners to ensure opportunities to engage occur at different levels of community - from council to general community members.** Many different participants in the roundtable discussions noted the efforts by CBT staff to engage different communities, including First Nations and settler communities, as well as various interest groups and outside researchers and universities. Improvements in overall communication was noted and the efforts appear to be having a positive effect. While an

improvement is noted in communication, there are still gaps in entire communities and user groups.

2. **Continue the work to engage youth** in all aspects of the CBT - in specific educational projects, governance, and strategic initiatives.
3. **We recommend that CCUNESCO develop a funding strategy to support the national network of Biosphere Regions to undertake Vital Signs in their regions, possibly in concert with other UN designated sites in Canada.** Vital Signs has proven to be a 'vital' exercise and report for decision makers across multiple levels and sectors across the region. Such an initiative across the country would heighten the value and visibility of Biosphere Regions nationally and would make visible BRs' contribution to Canada's efforts to achieve social, economic and environmental sustainability, and in particular, the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

#### Part 5: Conclusion

- Is the BR continuing to satisfy the criteria of [Article 4 of the statutory framework](#)?

Yes.

- Does the self-study report need to be updated with any clarification/additional information prior to submission to UNESCO?

We offered some minor suggestions for clarification or correction.

#### Final Words:

The CBT is an exemplary organization among Biosphere Regions. It is upholding the UNESCO Constitution in "building peace" as a foundation for regenerating relationships with the lands, waters, and peoples of the region. It is clear that the team's efforts will have lasting positive impact in all of the key BR functions. There are many strong practices observed by the review team which would be beneficial to share with other Canadian BR's and the broader international community. We encourage the CBR to keep up their excellent work.

We would like to thank the CBT and its partners for the warm welcome we received and for the feedback they provided to support the periodic review and the designation.

We also acknowledge the work of Rebecca Hurwitz and her team in coordinating a virtual periodic review when they had been working towards a traditional on-site review for ten years. Through thoughtful consultation with the reviewers and by incorporating the [Story Map](#) journey of the past ten years of work, Ms Hurwitz has taken care to ensure that this review was meaningful and engaging for the team.