

HOWE SOUND COMMUNITY FORUM WEBINAR QUESTIONS – GROUPED BY TOPIC

Impacts of a CEA on decision-making?

- How will decisions be made differently after a CEA process is completed – at provincial, regional and municipal levels?
The framework has been developed primarily to support provincial decisions related to resource authorizations and management. However, the outcome of a regional cumulative effects assessment is publicly shared and available to support decisions not just in provincial government but in other levels of governments and private sector. Decision makers will have a better understanding of the condition of select values and an estimate of the changing risk to achieving the objectives for those values. It is expected that a cumulative effects assessment in Howe Sound would be also valuable information for local governments' decisions on zoning and marine management carried out by federal government. A cumulative effects assessment in Howe Sound would be a good opportunity to explore this in more detail.
- Is there a legislative component to a CEA; what legislative outcomes could come as a result of the CEA information, e.g., could it be to preserve and protect certain areas in Howe Sound? Could it be used as a basis for zoning for tourism, industry, conservation?
There is no immediate and preset legislative implication. Cumulative effects assessment results provide decision support for natural resource managers within their existing legal framework and responsibilities. However, the results of a cumulative effects assessment may lead to other processes where the circumstances warrant strategic responses. The cumulative effects assessment describes how existing land use objectives in the applicable statutes are actually met, and what risk is anticipated for the future. With this type of information every level of government, First Nations, and stakeholders could then look at their respective management toolkits (which includes legal and non-legal tools) to decide how best to mitigate a risk to a value; i.e. information can be immediately used in statutory decisions of government and in designing better land use applications of proponents. Where a high risk for values is better addressed through strategic responses, i.e. protected areas, those options will be discussed in the regional review process; the information shared with First Nations, local governments, and stakeholders; and a process with the necessary rigor and adequate opportunity for public consultation can be initiated to further explore and develop that strategic response. The information coming from the cumulative effects assessment will provide valuable information for such a process.
- What impacts could a CEA have on current development initiatives in Howe Sound, particularly plans to log two new woodlots on Gambier and proposals for a gravel mine at McNab, a possible garbage incinerator and an LNG operation at Woodfibre?
It depends upon on the timing of those authorization decisions and the timing of the first completed cumulative effects assessment report. It is possible that some of these project authorization decisions will be made before the first cumulative effects assessment report is completed. However, even if decisions are already made cumulative effects assessment results can be valuable post-authorization to inform tenure holders and respective area managers of current baseline conditions and trends for their consideration in any future management /mitigation practices.
- Could the goal of creating a marine and land management plan be realized through the CEA process?

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A cumulative effects assessment does not produce a plan. The province is moving away from initiating lengthy and costly comprehensive planning processes to utilizing more focused and efficient results-based management/planning processes that can prove to be just as, if not more, effective. The cumulative effects assessment process is more akin to undertaking a more modernized version of the socio-economic and environmental base case exercise that was used in LRMP planning processes, and it adds to that information what is expected to happen in the foreseeable future. Cumulative effects assessments have an additional advantage of ongoing monitoring of key values. Information outcomes from a cumulative effects assessment process can be used by all land and marine managers for consideration in future authorization decisions and results-based management/planning tasks. The cumulative effects assessment process can also act as a needs analysis exercise by identifying areas or issues requiring more focused management/planning work from respective levels of government in the future. A cumulative effects assessment helps land and marine managers to focus future management on values at risk rather than spending valuable government resources on planning management strategies for all values that may, or may not, already be well addressed through existing management practices.

What's included in the CEA process?

- What are the opportunities for creating new objectives that aren't included within current provincial legal policy objectives?

Establishing new objectives is not in scope for CE assessments. However, the results of cumulative effects assessments inform about challenges and gaps in objectives. Those gaps and challenges need to be addressed through appropriate processes, and, notably, with adequate public consultation. For example, if the cumulative effects assessment in Howe Sound would identify any such gaps it would lead to a discussion what steps can be taken to address them. For example, one of the possible outcomes of a cumulative effects assessment report may be that the province would look at its provincial tool kit to see how it might better manage or mitigate a risk to a certain value. The development of new legal land use objectives and/or management strategies for a certain area could be one of a number of management/mitigation options that could be considered.
- How are species and ecosystems at risk (SEAR) incorporated into a CEA? This is a federal government program with provincial and regional implications.

In most regions the assessment of selected fish and wildlife species will be an important focus of cumulative effects assessments. To identify what fish and wildlife values are assessed a number of criteria will be applied. Among the criteria are management concerns for species/ecosystems that already face risk or have low recovery potential if affected. This provides a strong link to SEAR.
- What is the value that captures local interests in a CEA, i.e., the people who live in this place – Howe Sound? (Activities in Howe Sound affects people – these affected people, local governments and First Nations have “Primacy of Place”.)

Local interests are captured in many ways. The provincially consistent list of values for cumulative effects assessments is capturing values of importance to people in BC, those are spanning from environmental, to social and economic values. Fish and wildlife species that have special importance in a region will reflect on the interests of local communities and complement the set of values that are consistent across the regions. The planned workshop on

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May 2, 2014 will help to understand what values best capture the key interests of local communities in Howe Sound and to what degree they meet with the values identified in the CEF.

- Can we see any results from the pilot projects, including any marine data?
A limited amount of work has been undertaken to date to pilot the application of cumulative effects assessment in coastal /marine areas (MaPP, West Coast Aquatic, Southern Strait of Georgia NMCA) . Work completed in marine projects will likely be helpful in identifying priority values, indicators and datasets to support CEA in coastal areas. A cumulative effects assessment has not yet been completed, and the Howe Sound could be the lead on piloting this.

- Are there specific time frames for the assessment process?
Is there a reasonable amount of time that stakeholders can expect the assessment will take? (Time is an issue because of the need to be proactive rather than reactive to activities and land use decisions.)
It is too early to provide a definitive answer for how long it will take for Howe Sound because the scope of the project has not yet been defined. A first step will be to identify the values in the May 2, 2014 workshop. Other questions will be the availability of data and resources, and the ability of First Nations and stakeholders to support the assessments. Generally speaking, pilot CEA's have been completed within a year to a year and a half. Where models have now been developed for selected values and base data is readily available, these values can be assessed much more quickly. Notably, the provincial approach is to conduct a cumulative effects assessment within one year in assessment units that are considerably larger than Howe Sound.

- Once the CEA is developed, when there is a review of the CEA, what role is available to the Howe Sound Community Forum (collective of elected officials representing the local interests of citizens)?
The role of the partners should be discussed and confirmed as part of project scoping. In principle, the methods and results of cumulative effects assessments could be made available for review and feedback from the HSCF, and there could be an opportunity for discussion of potential recommendations for addressing any issues or risks identified through the cumulative effects assessment, that would be provided to the relevant decision-makers within provincial, First Nations and local governments.

How are values treated in a CEA?

- In terms of environmental values, who is responsible for pulling together baseline studies/information to show the current status of any species or ecosystem; and, who decides what species or ecosystems to “value”?
The provincial government is collecting data for the provincially and regionally (fish and wildlife) identified set of values. The provincial CEF explores opportunities to collaborate and integrate data from other sources. Shared data from other sources could improve the understanding for the provincially and regionally list of select values, and it could open the opportunity to assess other values in addition to that list. The planned workshop on May 2 will help to understand what values are of interest for Howe Sound and what data exist for those values in provincial government and other sources.

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- Is there a draft list of marine values that the province is working with? NOTE: The Sea to Sky Habitat Atlas (2003/04) has an excellent base line of environmental data for Howe Sound <http://cmnbc.ca> - it includes Provincial & Federal data plus local government and community based information
 - Some work has been undertaken to date to pilot the application of cumulative effects assessment in coastal /marine areas. Values and their components identified in other provincial marine planning initiatives (MaPP, West Coast Aquatic, Southern Strait of Georgia NMCA) can provide a credible starting point for discussions regarding values in Howe Sound. Additionally, other initiatives such as the British Columbia Marine Conservation Analysis (BCMCA) identified marine data, including data for Howe Sound. A cumulative effects assessment has not yet been completed, and the Howe Sound could be the lead on piloting this..
- Are values in the assessment weighted, e.g., is a biodiversity value, or a threatened species value, considered equal to a water quality, visual quality or employment value?
 - Values in cumulative effects assessments are not ranked or weighted. The assessments provide a integrated and consistent picture of the condition of economic, social and environmental values. Each value is assessed relative to government objectives that have been established. The expectation is that an elevated level of risk for any value will trigger a discussion in the review of assessment results and a appropriate management response.
- If this is the case, is there a way for regions to suggest that some values are greater than others?
 - Values in cumulative effects assessments are not ranked or weighted. A weighting of values can pose a false choice where management response is delayed, because the value under pressure is not en vogue. In addition it is most likely, that people in any region hold a variety of beliefs on the importance of values.
- In generating these “heat maps”, is each overlapping value considered to have a value of 1?
 - The maps shown depict the level of risk for values. Green is low risk, orange is high risk. The methodology to assess the risk is specific for each value.
- This CEA framework sample is organized from a resource extraction point of view; would it be useful to organize it from a parks, conservation or recreation point of view?
 - In fact it is not organized from a resource extraction point of view. However, it is correct, that the language used to describe the framework is linking back to existing Acts that govern land use in BC (i.e. Forest and Range Practices Act). The conceptual design of the CEF is focusing on cumulative effects as changes caused by any type of development and natural processes. The framework reflects a values centered approach, to provide consistent information to support resource decisions across the sectors – whether the decisions are for conservation or for extraction. While it has not been a primary driver, it is an intriguing idea to use the information for informing recreational planning.

For more information please contact CumulativeEffects@gov.bc.ca