



Pacific Regional Virtual Workshop Summary Report

Lead: Lilia Yumagulova, Pacific Regional Coordinator

On June 22, 2020, the Canadian Ocean Literacy Coalition (COLC) held the Pacific Virtual Workshop to review and discuss the [Pacific regional report](#) and explore steps for moving forward. This workshop was part of the five regional sessions of the virtual workshops (Atlantic, St. Lawrence, Pacific, Inuit Nunangat, Inland Canada) and one national session. Participants were invited to comment on the research results (strengths, barriers, and preliminary recommendations) and discuss the following question: *How can a national strategy help advance ocean literacy (OL) in the Pacific region?* The highlights from these discussions are captured below.

Workshop Facilitation Team

Diz Glithero (COLC), Sarah MacNeil (COLC), Noémie Roy (COLC), Lilia Yumagulova (COLC), Barb Sweazey (Stratos), Michael van Aanhout (Stratos), Dan Adams (Stratos), Nathalie Wilson (Interpreter).

Participants

Thank you to the 43* participants who attended the workshop and contributed their insights for developing a national ocean literacy strategy.

Andrea Nesdoly (University of Victoria), Brent Baron (Indigenous Services Canada), Carol Amaratunga (Cartis Research Inc.), CarolAnne Black (CarolAnne Black, Consulting Science Writer), Carolynn Beaty (Sitka Foundation), Christy Wilson (Fisheries and Oceans Canada), Cindy Marven (MEOPAR), Claire O'Brien (Pacific Science Enterprise Centre, Fisheries and Oceans Canada), Danika Strecko (Ocean Wise), David Zandvliet (Simon Fraser University), Erin Harris (Fisheries and Oceans Canada), Hali Moreland (Parks Canada), Heather Murray (CaNOE), Holly Neate (CaNOE), Janet Stalker (Ocean School), Jennifer Putland (Ocean Networks Canada), Jonathan Kellogg (Hakai Institute), Josh Silberg (Hakai Institute), Kate MacDonald (Fisheries and Oceans Canada), Kiley Best (CaNOE), Kirsten Mathison (Georgia Strait Alliance), Lauren Hudson (Ocean Networks Canada), Leslie James (BC Ferries), Lucija Prelovec (Ocean School/CaNOE), Maia Hoeberechts (Ocean Networks Canada), Mark Mattson (Swim Drink Fish), Rakibul Islam (Bangladesh University of Professionals), Natasha Jackson-Drouin (University of British Columbia), Nicola Bridge (Ocean Conservation Trust), Nikki Kroetsch (Fisheries and Oceans Canada), Patrick Wells (Memorial University of Newfoundland), Robi Smith (Artist), Sandra Scott (University of British Columbia), Sarah Board (CaNOE), Sarah Saunders (WWF-Canada), Sean Rogers (Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre), Tara Donaghy (Fisheries and Oceans Canada).

*Please note that due to technical limitations, this list does not include the names of the participants who joined over the phone.

Part 1: Review of the Pacific Regional Report

Regional Strengths

The following strengths were identified in the report: First Nations stewardship and leadership; Long-running OL initiatives and reach; Place-based, experiential learning; Multi-faceted research; and Multi-sectoral partnerships.

Additional strengths identified by participants:

- Strong presence of community volunteer environmental stewardship groups
 - Citizen science and stewardship with volunteers is key and “huge” in the region, with some shared examples including tools like E-Oceans and Whale Report
- Love of the ocean and awareness of the importance of the ocean in everyday lives in B.C.
 - A high percentage of British Columbians are invested in the environment and its health, and have been for a long time (a shared perspective voiced by workshop participants from within and outside of the region)
- Demographic considerations:
 - A majority of the population is concentrated in a few areas of the province; this is a strength in reaching lots of people in a relatively small area, but comes with substantial challenges in reaching people outside of the major population centres
 - Population concentration can help with communication (e.g., the Metro Vancouver regional government can help communicate to all member municipalities relatively easily)
 - There are many newcomers to Canada in the Metro Vancouver area (which has a high diversity of people and cultures) and it is important to communicate and provide education opportunities to share why the ocean is important, both in general and in the Pacific region specifically

Regional Barriers

The following barriers were identified in the report: Lack of funding and competition for it; Inequitable access to the ocean and OL initiatives; Fragmented governance; and Disconnect from nature.

Additional barriers identified by participants:

- OL and stewardship is not a priority for many businesses/economic decision-makers; lack of regulation can result in unsustainable practices, excessive production of waste (specifically plastic) and there is a need for enforcement of environmental regulations (that are not only federal but reflective of regional priorities)
- Capacity and resources to train volunteers

- Lack of communication results in redundancy/waste of resources (e.g., lack of communication between communities and governments, between different levels of governments, and within government agencies)
- Lack of ocean as a systematic part of K-12 education
 - OL currently lives predominantly in the ocean science sphere
 - For example, the 7 OL principles focus on the "science" of the ocean, which can be foreign for many teachers; it would be important to connect the dots between the ocean and art, health, socio-economic factors, culture etc. to affect the way people view and value the ocean
 - Arts-based responses/research show how deeply people in the Pacific region think and feel about the ocean, and this type of reflection and connection needs to be encouraged more

Regional Recommendations

Participants were invited to poll on the preliminary recommendations identified in the regional report to gauge which recommendations resonated the most. The results of the informal poll are indicated in Table 1.

Respectfully recognize Indigenous Knowledges	73%
Include the ocean as part of the school curricula in B.C. and nationally	70%
Foster more coordinated and collaborative action	47%
Make better connections between OL and broader issues	47%
Expand OL to include the political visibility of the ocean	40%
Invest in OL	30%
Foster accessibility and inclusivity	23%
Develop a shared ocean identity	20%

Table 1: Pacific preliminary recommendations polling results.

Part 2: Building a National Strategy: Pacific Insights

Throughout the workshop, participants identified the need to maintain the diversity of regional specificities, perspectives, and practices within the national strategy. Below is a summary of the breakout group discussions which were centered on ensuring a successful national strategy in the Pacific region and an effective national strategy overall (organized around ideas for the design of the strategy, the goals of the strategy, and the outcomes of the strategy).



1. Towards a Successful National Strategy in the Pacific Region

- Centre Indigenous Knowledge and rights in the strategy
 - The majority of the coastal communities in B.C. are First Nations.
- Include Indigenous voices and leadership within communities
 - For initiatives to be successful, there is a need to listen, step back, be patient, invest in relationship building, have a political understanding of how important this is to come together.
- Include the ocean throughout the curriculum in B.C.
 - Examples of similar initiatives in the curriculum include: the BIG Ideas, similar to the Indigenous connections and learning outcomes, which brings together many organizations and initiatives; the Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund, which works to include First Nations Traditional Knowledge into the school programs
- Connect the dots across existing networks and initiatives in B.C.'s robust OL community instead of reinventing the wheel
- Support local community organizations (highly visible and connected to the communities and water) which either want to collaborate or already are collaborating with various levels of government to steward their local ecosystems (e.g., groups working under the Pacific Streamkeepers Federation)
- Utilize existing pathways for citizen engagement such as libraries and municipal government programs
- Focus on coordinated and collaborative **action**, working together, talking less and committing to more stewardship **action**.

2. Towards an effective National Strategy Overall

An effective national OL strategy should be:

- A form of advocacy for regional needs/growth
- A space for more communication and relationship-building between regional and national levels
- Not prescriptive and leaves room for regional modifications
- Tied into policy through the people on the ground
- Rooted in regional accountability, ensuring tangible outcomes

Goals of the strategy:

- Leverage strengths of partners/organizations
 - Recognize skills and assets to hone in on effective collaboration
- Communicate at the policy level that OL is broader than ocean science
- Connect newcomers to the ocean
- Break down barriers, silos, competition within and between regions
 - Use of online tools is an opportunity during the pandemic
- Recognize communication and networking as key

- Help address funding issue by sharing resources, ideas, lessons rather than wasting resources on reinventing the wheel each time
- Identify means to include OL in broad curriculum
 - Link OL to First Peoples and place-based education
 - Identify strategic pathways to connect OL to provincial and national curriculum that already exists (e.g., Sustainable Development Goals, Indigenous knowledge in B.C. curriculum)
- Conduct a national needs assessment study to ascertain OL knowledge levels to provide a baseline study and a starting point for future programming and action as well as measure progress and provide a basis for longitudinal studies

Outcomes of the strategy:

- Recognition that OL in Canada is a multi-sectoral issue, not just relevant to science or education
- Sector-specific calls for action, working groups, and recommendations (e.g., within industry, marine transportation working group, fishing working group)
 - This should be done through a collaborative approach within the industry and can draw on effective examples in B.C. where multiple actors in one industry collaborate (e.g., ECHO program in B.C.)
- Funds directed to the right places, particularly long-term projects
- Programs and groups able to tell their story through a shared platform to explain what they're doing, how it is valuable, and how to move forward.
- Equitable access to funds and programs; mandated subsidies from industry (e.g., logging, oil, gas) to ocean programs or a national grant-provision organization
 - Corporate responsibility dollars to fund environmental work combined into one pot that can more easily be spread over more organizations and reach more people
- Active, engaging, and meaningful communication across initiatives and between national and regional levels
- Mechanisms to ensure continued momentum
 - E.g., OL communities of practice; a space to learn how similar issues are being tackled in other areas and to support initiatives in this common ground; taking concerns to Ottawa; driving the same policy issues across the country to make the national strategy more visible and interconnected

