

Seagrass Conservation Group Terms of Reference

1) Purpose

The purpose of the Seagrass Conservation Working Group is to conserve the ecological integrity of seagrass ecosystems by promoting research, inventories, communication and partnerships.

2) Area of Interest

We recognize the importance of seagrass habitat in the coastal areas of the North East Pacific. Our focus is British Columbia with linkages to other jurisdictions.

3) Goal

To protect, conserve and increase seagrass habitat.

4) Mandate

The Working Group will support and advise community and agency projects related to seagrasses, acting to coordinate and integrate related projects, project proponents, regulatory agencies, research and existing information.

5) Roles

a) The Seagrass Conservation Working Group will provide support which may include leadership, advice, guidance, networking, education and access to resources (including funding sources)

b) The Working Group will enlist and coordinate community based projects, create a comprehensive knowledge base and establish a network to link existing information resources, providing advice, support, and, where possible, solutions.

6) Objectives

- a) Inventory existing seagrass beds.
- b) Review information currently existing on seagrasses, identify gaps and make information available to others.
- c) Develop, share and encourage the use of consistent protocols for the study and restoration of seagrasses.
- d) Coordinate, encourage and support stewardship groups, industry, First Nations, government, and all other interested parties in activities including mapping, monitoring and outreach programs.
- e) Promote collaboration between government agencies, First Nations, community organizations, the academic community, businesses and individuals to achieve conservation of seagrasses.
- f) Support proposals and projects that will help protect, maintain or increase seagrass habitat. Assist with fundraising to support these projects.
- g) Act to increase the network being developed to protect seagrasses, including a user friendly web site.
- h) Influence policy and legislation pertaining to seagrass and its habitat.

7) Membership

The Seagrass Conservation Working Group welcomes those interested in seagrass conservation, including First Nations, Federal, Provincial and local governments, NGO's, individuals, researchers and businesses.

- a) Additional participants are welcomed to join at any time.
- b) Membership is on a voluntary basis and parties may choose to withdraw at any time.

8) Committees

- a) The Seagrass Conservation Working Group may form committees to support meeting its objectives.
- b) Each committee will have tasks approved by the Seagrass Conservation Working Group.
- c) Decisions of committees will be through consensus. Committees may refer items, on which they are unable to reach consensus, to the Seagrass Conservation Working Group for further discussion and resolution.

9) The Chair

- a) Members will assume the responsibilities of Chairing the Seagrass Conservation Group on a rotating basis as deemed necessary.
- b) The duties of the Chair are to:

- i) Chair meetings of the Working Group
- ii) Prepare agendas
- iii) Carry out other tasks as requested by the Working Group

10) Administration

Each Chair will be responsible for any administrative requirements during his or her tenure.

11) Decision Making

All decisions of the Seagrass Conservation Working Group will be through consensus of the sitting members. Sitting members are those in attendance during a given discussion. All decisions will be communicated to others via e-mail prior to finalization, giving everyone an opportunity to comment.

Any member who feels that a specific decision may conflict with the policies of their employer may abstain from the decision. Members can support the majority but ask that their dissent be recorded.

12) Meetings

The Seagrass Conservation Working Group will meet at intervals decided on by the members.

13) Changes to the Terms of Reference

The terms of reference for the Seagrass Conservation Working Group may be amended through agreement of the members.

14) Authority

The Seagrass Conservation Group has no authority or role beyond that expressed in these terms of reference and is not a legal or financial entity.