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**TO:** Committee of the Whole                      **MEETING:** July 9, 2019

**FROM:** Courtney Simpson  
Senior Planner                      **FILE:** 0360-20 (MABR Roundtable)

**Subject:** Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region Roundtable Representation

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. That the Chair appoint a Director as the Regional District of Nanaimo representative to the Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region Roundtable.
2. That an amendment be made to "Regional District of Nanaimo Board Procedure Bylaw No. 1754, 2017" to add the Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region Roundtable to Schedule B - External Appointments.

### **SUMMARY**

The Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region (MABR) lies within the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN). MABR is funded and managed by Vancouver Island University that receives guidance from a Roundtable of regional representatives of local First Nations, local and senior levels of government, Vancouver Island University, conservation organizations, forestry industry and local businesses, as well as two elected community representatives. The Regional District of Nanaimo elected representatives have not participated in the Roundtable and have recently been requested to appoint a representative. Given the focus of the MABR Roundtable and political representation from local governments and First Nations in the area, the RDN Board's participation at the Roundtable is recommended.

### **BACKGROUND**

Dr. David Witty, Director of the Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region (MABR) requested that the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) appoint an RDN representative to the Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region Roundtable, and reappoint the Coordinator of the Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Program to also sit on the Roundtable. Dr. Witty appeared as a delegation to the May 14, 2019 Committee of the Whole with this request (Attachment 1 – Delegation Request).

#### ***The Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region***

The MABR was initially coordinated through the Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Foundation. In 2014, the foundation was dissolved and Vancouver Island University (VIU) and the City of Parksville took responsibility for managing the MABR. The MABR includes land within RDN

member municipalities and electoral areas (Attachment 2 – Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region Boundaries).

The current mandate of the MABR is as follows<sup>1</sup>:

*Biosphere reserves are considered model regions for sustainable development. They work to promote the conservation of biological and cultural diversity in addition to economic and social development. In each biosphere reserve, community partners work together to find innovative ways to achieve a balance between the needs of humans and nature.*

Further, the MABR has four strategic objectives<sup>2</sup>:

1. Conserve biodiversity, restore and enhance ecosystem services, and foster the sustainable use of natural resources.
2. Contribute to building sustainable, healthy and equitable societies, economies and thriving human settlements in harmony with the biosphere.
3. Facilitate biodiversity and sustainability science, education for sustainable development and capacity building.
4. Support mitigation and adaptation to climate change and other aspects of global environmental change.

The MABR Research Institute (MABRRI) at VIU delivers the programs and undertakes research with the guidance of the Roundtable. MABRRI's research and community engagement coordinators, project coordinators, VIU students, and faculty associates work with community partners to create and conduct research projects that advance understanding of people and nature, and the interaction between these, within the Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region. The following is a list of some of the current projects:

- Forage Fish Spawning Habitat Monitoring
- Wetland Mapping in the RDN
- Lake Monitoring in the Little Qualicum Water Region
- MABR Environmental Monitoring App
- Snaw-Naw-As Education & Outreach Program
- The MABR Amazing Places
- International Journal of Biosphere Reserves

### ***The Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region Roundtable***

In terms of governance, staff for the Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region and the its associated research institute at VIU receive guidance and direction from a Roundtable of regional representatives from local First Nations (Snaw-Naw-As, Qualicum, and Snuneymuxw), local and senior levels of government, Vancouver Island University, conservation organizations, forestry industry and local businesses, as well as two elected community representatives.

RDN staff attended the Roundtable from 2015 to 2017. In 2017, Dr. David Witty wrote to the RDN to extend an initiation that the RDN become an official partner of the MABR through

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<sup>1</sup> Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region Mandate (2019, June 17) Retrieved from: <http://www.mabr.ca/mandate/>

<sup>2</sup> Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region Mandate (2019, June 17) Retrieved from: <http://www.mabr.ca/mandate/>

signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with VIU, modelled after MOU's with the City of Parksville and Town of Qualicum Beach and equal in spirit to the verbal agreements with the Qualicum First Nation and Snaw-Naw-As First Nation. However, at that time the RDN Board did not support continued RDN involvement in the Roundtable.

The recent request from Dr. David Witty is for the RDN to appoint a representative to the Roundtable and reappoint the Coordinator of the Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Program to also sit on the Roundtable. There is no request to enter into a MOU with VIU at this time. A MOU is not a requirement for participation on the Roundtable, but could be revisited in the future.

To appoint a Board representative to sit on the Roundtable, the Procedures Bylaw should be amended to add the MABR Roundtable to the list of external committees to which Board members are appointed. The Roundtable meets quarterly as a group to discuss the various initiatives that the Biosphere Region is engaged in. Given the political representation at the Roundtable it is appropriate to include a Director from the RDN Board but given organizational work program demands and the nature of the Roundtable discussions, it is not recommended that RDN staff be appointed to this body. Any requests for assistance from the RDN on projects or initiatives from the MABR, including staff time, would be the subject of a future report to the Board.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

1. Direct staff to prepare an amendment to "Regional District of Nanaimo Board Procedure Bylaw No. 1754, 2017" to add the Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region Roundtable to Schedule B - External Appointments and the Chair appoint a Director to the Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Roundtable.
2. Receive this report and provide alternate direction to staff.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Coordination of the MABR Roundtable is through a VIU staff member. The position is entirely funded by VIU. Specific activities and initiatives undertaken by the MABR are funded by a variety of sources, typically by grant funding. The appointment of a RDN Director to the MABR Roundtable can be accommodated within the existing 2019 financial plan and this appointment would be identified in subsequent annual financial plans.

## **STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

Participation on the MABR Roundtable contributes to the Strategic Plan goal of Environmental Stewardship - Protect and enhance the natural environment, including land, water, and air quality for future generations.



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July 2, 2019

Reviewed by:

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- G. Garbutt, General Manager, Strategic and Community Development
- P. Carlyle, Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments:

1. Delegation Summary
2. Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region Boundaries