

A new university/community alliance: the Mt. Arrowsmith Biosphere Reserve experience

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The Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Reserve (MABR) is one of two UNESCO designated Biosphere Reserves in British Columbia, Canada. Successful Biosphere Reserves elsewhere in Canada and the world have developed best practices often in tandem with local universities and researchers. In order to move forward at the MABR, a new partnership between the City of Parksville, unique among cities due to its location within a Biosphere Reserve, and Vancouver Island University has been developed. In keeping with the mandate and goals of the UNESCO designation, this new governance and management arrangement aims to enhance the regional benefits that derive from such a designation including the promotion of cultural, economic, environmental and social health of the region. This relies on identifying community engagement opportunities and research program development that expands the mutual interests of MABR partners, including but not limited to local First Nations, Regional Districts, resource users, landowners and other key stakeholders who have an interest in the MABR. The purpose of this presentation is to share this new MABR governance structure and partnership with Geoparks and Biosphere Reserves interested in innovative management models.

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