

Vancouver Island North has applied for Whale Heritage Site status

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Communities in the northern Vancouver Island region are working together for international accreditation as a Whale Heritage Site.

“Vancouver Island North currently meets all the criteria required to become a Whale Heritage Site, including those that focus on how people co-exist with, benefit from, conserve, and celebrate cetaceans,” explains Andrew Jones, President of the North Island Marine Mammal Stewardship Association (NIMMSA). He says “accreditation may bring regional, national, and global attention to the area and help to promote sustainable tourism, marine conservation, and the whale-related cultural heritage of coastal communities”.

First Nations people of the northern Vancouver Island region have shared a cultural connection with killer whales for thousands of years. The area contains the world’s first ecological reserve for whales and is home to some of the longest-running whale research projects ever conducted. It is also where Canada’s commercial whale-watching industry began.

The Whale Heritage Site initiative, recently launched by the World Cetacean Alliance aims to identify unique locations around the world where cetaceans have played an important role in the development of community, conservation, culture, policy, science, arts, and the economy.

A Vancouver Island North Whale Heritage Site would recognize the unique ways that people relate to whales in the area. The certification does not aim to impose limitations but rather to highlight values that already exist.

An advisory team consisting of representatives from regional government bodies, tourism industry stakeholders and non-governmental organizations including the NIMMSA, the Regional District of Mount Waddington, Aboriginal Tourism BC, Community Futures, the MERS Marine Education and Research Society, the City of Campbell River, Raincoast Research and Tourism Vancouver Island have provided input on the initial application for Whale Heritage Site status for the northern Vancouver Island region.

For more information or to be involved in the Vancouver Island North Whale Heritage Site process please contact NIMMSA Administrator, Jared Towers at nimmsa@gmail.com or [250-902-1779](tel:250-902-1779).