

MEDIA RELEASE



Salish Sea Marineapedia Launched

December 22, 2009

The Salish Sea is the focus of an effort to establish a new relationship with the ocean. For an island community that is surrounded and defined by the ocean, we are oddly disconnected from this amazing ecosystem. Marineapedia of My Salish Sea is a bold citizen science project being launched this week by the Shaw Ocean Discovery Centre in Sidney, BC. Similar to its well known internet cousin, the Marineapedia project will enlist the skills of students, schools, youth organizations, amateur biologists and marine life enthusiasts to collect information, photos and video about the hundreds of species that live in our local waters.

From anemones to zooplankton and war bonnets to harbour seals, the information will be collected and catalogued to be freely shared on a user friendly and easily searchable website. Citizen scientists of all ages will be invited to adopt an animal and collect the data required to complete the Marineapedia template. Other volunteers with particular skills such as scuba divers will add photos, video and audio clips to enhance the information. First Nations will collaborate to supplement today's information with knowledge gained from thousands of years of connection with the Salish Sea.

The entire project will be coordinated by the Oceaneers at the Shaw Ocean Discovery Centre in Sidney. The professional educators and interpretive team at the Centre will advise and support citizen scientists as they embark on this multi-year task. To make certain the information is accurate and current, the Oceaneers will monitor and fact check the content. The website will be hosted by the Shaw Ocean Discovery Centre. The project is sponsored by the RBC Foundation.

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Our Ocean Lives Here

Molly Perry, Ocean Advocate at the Shaw Ocean Discovery Centre, and Angus Matthews, Executive Director, are available to define the concept of the Salish Sea and explain how Marineapedia will engage the community to explore, learn and cherish the ocean.

For a sample of Marineapedia of My Salish Sea click: www.oceandiscovery.ca/mysalishsea/

About the Shaw Ocean Discovery Centre

The Shaw Ocean Discovery Centre is an aquarium and marine education centre focused on the amazing ecosystem of the Salish Sea. The Centre operates as a not-for-profit community facility that is self supporting through admission fees, grants and donations. The Shaw Ocean Discovery Centre is governed, funded and owned by the New Marine Centre Society. Funds for the Shaw Ocean Discovery Centre were raised through generous community support, and a major donation from Shaw Communications. The Centre is located in a spectacular waterfront building in Sidney, BC.

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For further information, contact Robyn Waterman, Public Relations Manager, Shaw Ocean Discovery Centre, 250.665.7511 or pr@oceandiscovery.ca