



FALL 2015 UPDATE

Dear Friends of the Bras d'Or Biosphere,

These updates are sent out to a “friends of the biosphere” list we actively maintain. Hopefully, you enjoy hearing about the work of the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere. We are now well into our 5th year and are making progress in many projects – thanks to the work of volunteers. I encourage you to become more involved and/or help us through a financial donation.

Project Updates:

1. **Education Resource:** This long-term project has seen ongoing progress. This Grade 4 Science resource, using the Bras d'Or as a local laboratory to teach concepts around “habitat” will be in three sections/books: (1) Teachers, (2) Students and (3) Activities & Outcomes. The committee conducted a focus group at Cape Breton University on Books 1 and 3. The 14 elementary teachers liked what they saw and made great suggestions to make the documents more user-friendly. Upcoming tasks include work on Book 2 and to make application for funding to support the production and distribution of these materials. Jim Burton, M. Ed., after a distinguished career in the NS Dept. of Education has recently taken over as Chair of this committee. We want to thank Shauna Barrington for her role as Chair during the early years.

2. **Bras d'Or Atlas:** The web based [Bras d'Or Biosphere](#) Atlas has been advanced over the past few months by one of our summer students, Chad Snow. Chad has updated and edited much of the information and has made access much simpler – thanks! In his own



words...”Working for the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Reserve was a great and interesting experience. I worked not only as a programmer but as well as a geographer and mapper for my home Cape Breton and its Biosphere. I've been given a great opportunity to work closely with Bruce Hatcher and other deep-sea divers. Not only did I learn more about programming and things close to my field of study, I also learned fascinating things about my island Cape Breton and its Lakes. It's amazing learning about parts of the island I've never even heard of and even more interesting to see the beauty of the environment.”

3. **Bras d'Or Watch:** This is citizen-based monitoring of the watershed. It was held on July 18th this year, at 6 sites around the shores of the Bras d'Or and promises to be an annual event! At each site, resource people, including scientists with their gear, helped direct the public in a series of activities that





involved observation, measurement, and recording what was found! There was generous financial support for the project from the East Coast Credit Union, the Teachers Plus CU and the Cape Breton Regional Municipality! Circle your calendar for July 16, 2016 for the next Bras d'Or Watch. Keep up-to-date with the planning for 2016 through the [FaceBook Page here](#).

4. **Walking Trail:** This project has completed its First Phase with the production in August of a final report to the Advisory Group. The report summarizes findings from 4 public workshops held around the watershed during the past winter, along with advice received from the Advisory Group at its May meeting. A brochure that describes this project has been distributed to more than 6000 homes within the watershed and can be [downloaded here](#).

Strong public interest and input are being shown for the idea of a walking trail around the Lake. Work has already begun on next steps recommended by the Advisory Group. [A comprehensive map](#) has been printed showing trails and points of interest identified during area workshops. These are posted in community gathering places throughout the watershed. The map is a draft form of what is currently known about existing trails, and is inviting additional information.

5. **Signage in the Biosphere:** Local communities are promoting the Biosphere designation by erecting signs that inform local residents and tourists about the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere. One is at Ross Ferry, Boularderie Island, where the Ross Ferry Stewardship Society has put a plaque (see picture) on their main building that highlights their pride and active support for the BR!



6. **Alexander Graham Bell Display:** The display at the Alexander Graham Bell National Historic Site has been open throughout the past season. It is a fantastic opportunity to reach approx. 70,000 people a year – to inform visitors about the UNESCO Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere, Bell's environmental connections and his love for the



Bras d'Or. Our summer student, Kevin MacDougall, made the following comment about his time with us:

"This summer I had the pleasure of working as the Interpreter for the Bras d'Or Biosphere exhibit in the Alexander Graham Bell Museum. I really enjoyed learning in detail about the Bras d'Or Lake and its surrounding watershed, an area I have lived by and enjoyed my entire life. It was interesting to integrate and apply some of the knowledge I learned in university with the information I studied for the job and use it to educate visitors about the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere. My favorite part of the job was meeting and talking to people from all over the world and witnessing their amazement at the beauty of



the Bras d'Or. It made me appreciate how fortunate I am to live here. It was also very great to see how visitors from afar, as well as local residents, realize the importance of the biosphere. It was rewarding when people visited the exhibit and acknowledged how crucial the goals of the biosphere are to ensuring that present and future generations can enjoy the Bras d'Or Lake. I appreciate being given the opportunity to play a part in educating the public and gaining some personal experience working for the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Association this summer. I plan to learn as much as possible about the biosphere as I continue my studies. I can only hope I have jobs like this in the years to come."

Who we are – the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Reserve Association:

The association is a group of members who elect a Board of Directors at the Annual General Meeting of the association – usually in June. The Board (up to 20) carries out the activities of the Biosphere Reserve with the help of many other volunteers who donate their time and expertise so generously! Organizational items we are currently dealing with:

Membership: The Membership committee (Don Crosby, Eliot Frosst and Bruce Hatcher) is busy developing plans and policies around membership. Lynn Baechler, recently retired from the Board of Directors, has volunteered to be a “registrar” for the membership committee.

We encourage you to keep your membership up to date. **Memberships need to be renewed annually.** The Membership fees are: \$10/individual; \$ 25/family; \$ 25/business/organization. Go to the “Join/Donate” page on our web site to become a member. Membership ensures that you get all the news and it gives you a vote at all membership meetings.

Charitable Status: We have applied for charitable status with the Canada Revenue Agency. This task was led by Teresa MacNeil and Jim Foulds along with pro bono help from Hasan Naqvi of the McInnes-Cooper legal firm. We expect to hear some positive news very soon. It is hoped that this status will encourage more donors to support our extensive voluntary program!

Logo Trade Mark: The process of registering our trade mark is winding its way through the system. The mark is the logo and text – as you see at the top of the page. We want to make sure our “brand” is protected and can be used only by us or others who receive our permission to promote our activities.



The 2015-2016 Board of Directors: At the AGM in June we elected the following members as our Board of Directors:

- Jim Foulds - Chair
- Bruce Hatcher – Vice Chair
- Jim MacDonald – Secretary
- Don Crosby - Treasurer
- Teresa MacNeil – Past Chair
- Annamarie Hatcher
- Fred White
- Eliot Frosst
- Ivan Doncaster
- Fraser Patterson
- Dwayne MacDonald
- Katja Seufert
- Gordon Kerr
- Maureen Cameron-MacMillan
- Alan MacMillan
- Tom Johnson
- Foncie Farrell
- David Harris
- Henry Muggah

SUPPORT THE BRAS D'OR BIOSPHERE



BECOME A MEMBER

Annual Fee: Individual: \$10 Family: \$ 25
Business or Organization: \$ 25

DONATE

Choose which project you wish to support, or let us decide!

CLICK ON THE **JOIN/DONATE** BUTTON ON THE [WEB SITE](#) TO PAY WITH CREDIT CARD OR
PAYPAL - OR EMAIL US AT: CONTACT@BLBRA.CA

Please contact us if you want more information or if you want to be more involved. Browse our web site – www.blbra.ca. We have a lot of information posted there. You can also come to one of our meetings, follow us on Facebook [www.facebook.com/blbra] or sign up to receive notices of anything new that is posted to the web site – a great way to keep up to date!

Thanks for your continuing support!