



SPRING 2016 UPDATE

Dear Friends of the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere,

These updates are sent out to a “friends of the biosphere” list we actively maintain. We hope you enjoy hearing about the work of the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere. We near the mid-point of our 10 year mandate and are making progress in many projects – thanks to the work of many volunteers. I encourage you to volunteer with one or more of our areas of activity and/or help us with a financial, tax-receipted donation.

Read below for news about:

- **2016 Annual General Meeting**
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- **A Memorial Bench**
- **Federal SD strategy**

2016 Annual General Meeting – June 16th – St. Peters:

The annual meeting of the members of the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Reserve Association (BLBRA) will be held on Thursday June 16th – 7 p.m. at the Bonnie Brae Senior Citizens Club in St. Peter's. It coincides with the annual St. Peter's Seaside Lobsterfest. The regular Board of Directors meeting will be from 1:30 to 4:00 pm (open to all) and then we will break for a chowder dinner (\$18.00) being offered at the St. Peters Marina. We then return to the Bonnie Brae for a short AGM business meeting followed by a Biosphere Trivia session. We are aiming for a fun evening with lots of prizes. Hope to see you there!

Project Updates:

1. **Bras d'Or Watch:** This is citizen-based monitoring of the watershed. It was held for the first time last year and continues in 2016 at more sites – all set for July 16th! At each site, resource people, including scientists with their gear, help direct the public in a series of activities that involve observation, measurement, and recording what's found! We are fortunate to have financial support from the East Coast Credit Union, the Teachers Plus CU, the TD Environment Fund and the World





Wildlife Federation! Circle your calendar for July 16, 2016 and keep up-to-date with the planning for this summer through the [Bras d'Or Watch FaceBook Page](#).

2. **Education Resource:** Work by this committee continues on the educational resource materials that have been developed. Changing curriculum guidelines requires some changes need to be made. We are looking into the publication of 2 of the three resource manuals developed. The background information on various habitats will prove very beneficial to elementary school teachers. A grant request to SSHRC will go out August 1, 2016.

The Ben Eoin “20 hectare classroom” project went very well this past winter. The combination of physical activity (skiing) with learning about forest ecology was a hit with students and teachers. There is a rigorous evaluation being conducted that will determine if this pilot program will go ahead next year.

3. **Bras d'Or Atlas:** The web based [Bras d'Or Biosphere Atlas](#) continues to be an important way for people to get information about community groups, research activity, trails and other significant features of the Biosphere region. Check it out – from the map on our web site’s home page – and suggest additions to the database!

4. **Walking Trail:** This project has a brochure that describes this project that can be [downloaded here](#). [A comprehensive map](#) has been printed showing trails and points of interest identified during workshops held over the past year. They will be promoting the project at summer festivals around the Lake. Students from the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) are working on a survey about trails that will be given to residents in the West Bay area. It will inform residents of the project and determine the level of interest on the part of residents to attend a public meeting (or two) on the subject.

5. **Working with Partners:** We are working closely with many other organizations. Very soon we will participate in World Oceans Day – June 4-5th in the Grand Narrows/Iona area. On June 4th, there are panelists talking about “Adapting to Change in Canada’s Inland Sea” followed by a keynote speaker with a broad experience in sustainable development research. Come and visit the Biosphere display booth on Sunday afternoon in the St. Columba hall!

We are working with the folks at Nova Scotia trails as they put the finishing touches on the Trans Canada Trail in Cape Breton. A large part of the trail will follow a water route through the Bras d'Or and the signage for it will promote the Biosphere designation.

In October we hope to have 2 community events in association with the Celtic Colours International Festival. We are working with them to have a hiking event at the Ben Eoin Ski Hill on Thursday, Oct 13 from 1-4 PM. Plans include naturalists available to help lead the hike and



answer questions about natural history. The second event would be showing the one hour documentary about the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere recently created as part of the "Striking Balance" series – highlighting 8 of the 18 biosphere regions in Canada. We hope to have 5 showings, Monday to Friday (Oct. 10th – 14th) in the afternoon at the Alexander Graham Bell National Historic site in Baddeck. Final details of Celtic Colours events will be announced on June 20th.

6. **Alexander Graham Bell Display:** The display at the Alexander Graham Bell National Historic Site is in its second year. It represents 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. We will have a summer student as part of the display again this year.

7. **Proud to Share:** UNESCO has created a Facebook "Public Group" for Biosphere Reserves to share with the world, aspects of their region that they are "proud to share". Volunteer Annamarie Hatcher is posting one per week. Articles posted to date include Biosphere Amphibians, Big Spruce Brewery, and Eagles. Posts can be anything you are doing, enjoying, sustainable and you are proud to share. Have a look at:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/UNESCOmaB/>

Who is 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 – coming soon – June 16, 2016. 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.

Keep your membership up to date. **Memberships need to be renewed annually.** The Membership fees are: \$10/individual; \$ 25/family; \$ 30/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: Our application for official Charitable Status with the Canada Revenue Agency has been successful! All financial contributions will receive a receipt for income tax purposes! Please give generously – for yourself, a relative or friend.



The 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

A Memorial Bench:

The Muggah family have arranged for the purchase and installation of a memorial bench. It will be placed on the waterfront boardwalk alongside Baddeck Harbour and a plaque will honour the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Reserve! What a great gesture!



Government of Canada Sustainable Development Strategy:

The federal government has issued a draft 2016-2019 Federal Sustainable Development Strategy (FSDS) and they want our input. It is titled "Planning for a Sustainable Future". You can see the strategy on-line, download it and make comments. We encourage all Canadians to look at this plan and help to make it better. All comments need to be in by June 24th, 2016.

To access the strategy on-line, go to:

<https://www.ec.gc.ca/dd-sd/default.asp?lang=En&n=CD30F295-1>

Please contact us if you want more information or if you want to get 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!

May 30, 2016