

## 2013 Annual Report for the Bras d'Or Biosphere

- **Strategic Planning:** We held two strategic planning sessions in the Fall of 2012. About 20 people were solicited from current Board members, past Board members, Observers, and representatives from the Bras d'Or Stewardship Society, the Collaborative Environmental Planning Initiative and Cape Breton University's Bras d'Or Institute for Ecosystem research. A facilitator led the group through a strategic planning process that identified the strengths, limitations, opportunities and threats of our organization. This then generated a list of priorities which was honed down to 3: Education, Marketing and creating an Asset Database.
- The **Web-based atlas** (asset database) is now on-line and available to the world. Over 200 community groups around the biosphere and beyond are indicated for their location and information about them. Check it out by using the web site ([www.blbra.ca](http://www.blbra.ca)) and look for it under "Documents".
- The **Science Curriculum** project is a joint effort between the Department of Education and the Bras d'Or Biosphere to develop a teaching manual using the Biosphere Reserve as its focus – to teach about habitats. The working group has finished Phase I – collection of the content for the manual and are moving onto Phase II - editing the material that has been collected and working with the Department of Education. First Nations input has been a central part of this initiative.
- The **Use of the BLBR Logo** is an issue that is coming to the fore. More and more businesses and other organizations are asking to use the BR logo to promote the area for tourists. We think the logo is an exciting graphical representation of a balanced relationship between people and the environment. It is our "brand" and we are looking for ways that it can help sustain the Association. Part of this is the process to get it Trade Marked.
- A new project getting legs is the idea of a **Walking Trail** around the biosphere! We have a dedicated steering committee and an advisory group working on this and we have received significant funding to help move this project along over the next year.
- Our priority area of awareness building is also showing itself in the development of a **Signage – Master Plan**. We have secured funds to hire a consultant to develop a master plan for signage around the biosphere. This will give much more recognition to the designation and should help give tourists a better experience.
- Our **Annual General Meeting** was held on June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2013. It was at the Middle River Community Hall. The Middle River Watershed Society gave a presentation on "**How can we make our watershed sustainable?**" It was a great evening – over 45 people in attendance!

Jim Foulds, Chair, BLBRA