

**Minutes of Meeting DRAFT**  
**BLBRA Board of Directors Meeting**  
**Thursday, November 17, 2022, 1:30 – 4:00 PM**  
**Highland village, 4119 Highway 223, Iona, NS B2C 1A3, NS**



*Our mission is to improve balance in the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere by encouraging community capacity building, conservation efforts, and sustainable development.*

Attendance:

<b>DIRECTORS (Member at Large)</b>		<b>DIRECTORS (Ex Officio)</b>	
Allison McIsaac ( <b>Chair</b> )	Y	Amanda Mombourquette (Richmond)	Y
Doug Foster	Y	Barbara Longva (Victoria)	R
Chris King	Y	Tracy Marshall (Youth Coordinator)	N
Eileen Crosby ( <b>Past Chair</b> )	Y	Kirsty Lock (NSCC)	Y
Liz Campbell	Y	Stan Johnson (CEPI)	Y
Veronika Breski	Y	Tyler Mattheis (CB Partnership)	R
Rodney Chaisson ( <b>Treasurer</b> )	Y		
Kathleen Aitkens (Acap)	Y		
Pierre LaRochelle	Y		
Terri Shobbrook (Vice Chair)	Y		
Kirsten Campbell	N		

*A quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the Board shall consist of 50% of the Executive Comm. plus 6 non-executive Board members. (Y= Present; R= Regrets sent; N= none)*

Observers/Guests: Ron Newcomb (Trail committee)

**Call to Order:**

At 1:30 pm Chair Allison McIsaac began the meeting by acknowledging that the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere is located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People. Noted regrets.

- 1. Additions to the agenda:**  
NS community challenge fund (Doug)
- 2. Approval of the agenda:**  
**Motion** to approve made by Terri, seconded Allison. Motion passed unanimously.
- 3. Changes to minutes**  
Acap be changed from ex-officio to member at large.
- 4. Approval of previous minutes**  
Motion to approve minutes, Kathleen, second Rodney. Motion passed unanimously

5. **Business arising from last meeting** (not dealt with elsewhere):

I. **Action Items** (See folder)

II. **ECCC update.**

Doug contacted CBRM and the Eastern planning commission for mapping features in the biosphere. Both digital and hard copy form. Advanced LiDAR imaging and current Ortho photos throughout cape Breton. Obtained licenses for GIS version of Property Online for BLBRA and Eskasoni Fish and Wildlife. Invoice was to be sent but hasn't been received yet. Lots of potential with this software to add trails, track signage, etc. Discuss how to use the software for subcommittees. There's need to have a trained GIS technician to add all features we'd like to be able to access/interpret to create maps for use.

Took water samples with master students, Allison attended. Potential interaction between surface water and ground water and checked on all the loggers to make sure they were still in place. Lots of ATVs in the area trying to mitigate crossings to prevent damage. Summary report to be developed with ongoing data. Another update to be posted in Jan in ECCC folder then look forward to planning next field day in the spring.

In kind services within the agreement, hard vs soft (Eileen) excel file that covered the first year to be sent to Doug to be updated. Should include time people spend on things, i.e., mapping, correspondence etc.

III. **2022 Strategic Plan review/Governance Update**

Strategic plan - Info graphic referenced and added to meeting folder. Expressed need to reach out to partners and see how we can engage some of the academic institutions and do a strategic plan to work with first nations groups. A short updated should be provided to partners to remain relevant. (what we're doing and what they can help with etc.) Take sections of the strategic plan and break it down by committees, fill out the template and send it to committee chairs.

Governance Update - In person/online format. Come up with a variety of dates make a google poll and let people decide. Eileen to send out poll to find a date that works for most.

IV. **Marketing Plan Update**

Tracey was supposed to send update, but it never came in. Eileen to follow up and post in meeting folder. Pierre to talk about website. New logos and graphics being finalized website new menu items colours etc. 5000\$ grant through digital NS should be available Jan/Feb more to come during communications report

V. **Board Travel Claim process**

Form to be filled out provided by Rodney circulated at group, also available online. To be submitted post meeting. Those who do not wish to keep the money can still submit form and the money can be used as an in-kind donation .

## 6. **New Business**

### i. **Review of BLBRA committee structure**

Review standing committees plus suggested committees and how to make it work together with the strategic plan. Bras D'or watch committee to be reassembled with the help of Kathleen.

Communication committee to be built with FB, Instagram and other engagement. Add marketing and communications together to simplify process then subdivide within committee. Potential for infrastructure committee, someone to look after and maintain signage roadside, at sites of interest, trails, etc. Create a task list by committee to be made available to find volunteers. Review and update all displays around local points interest i.e., Highland Village, Bell Museum etc. potentially move away from static displays to digital presentations, look into costs. Kirsty to look at updated signage at tourist attractions, reproduce multiples to save costs. Eileen to mention to Tracey.

### ii. **Funding Opportunity**

sustainable communities fund for 75,000\$ up to a million. Municipalities also looking to get funding for climate infrastructure. Doug to attend and report back on an online meeting Nov 18 at 1pm to learn about fund. Kathleen to work with Doug on proposal. An interest in funding to be submitted to be reviewed to see if its ready to submit a full proposal or wait longer to refine it. potential to look at funding for a management plan for the erosion on Kidston Island and incorporate it into local landscapes to prevent property erosion.

## 7. **Treasurer's Report**

See report posted on drive. Board expenses higher than normal to help with strategic plan. Report shows expenses received so far but more outstanding. Signage repairs from Gordon for expenses, 230\$. Should compensate Gordon for his work/travel for maintaining signs.

Motion to accept treasurers report. Rodney moved to have report accepted Eileen seconds. Motion passed unanimously.

## 8. **CEPI**

Started barrichois pond task team last year, found mounds in straight line looking into whether they were oyster bioherms, if the Mi'kmaw were harvesting oysters at these sites. Did soil samples and they were bioherms. Working on getting funding now to see how to progress with these piles of shells. Tourism task team started this winter. Recreational fish task force for to develop Mi'kmaw guide program. Two eyed seeing conference, and how to incorporate into everyday work. CEPI youth to hold a conference as well

## 9. **Ex-officio Reports**

### i. **Richmond County (Amanda)**

add in paper about railway, no plans to activate it. Significance for trail development alleviate some concerns a group looking to do some operations on part of the trail between here and Truro. Biosphere needs to be more on the minds of councillors in counties, find ways to engage more. An annual presentation to local councils as an example. Adding panels to municipal buildings to promote living/working/owning a business in the biosphere. Theres a large education portion to be put forward. Explain to citizens that they can still change things while living in the biosphere. Ie Lunenburg where you cant change houses.

Clean foundation could maintain summer student for biosphere. Clean could do all admin stuff for student if BLBRA could pay 40% of salary. Have student attend all festivals and events around the

biosphere to do pop up informational booths to present to the public\_Hiring students in collaborations with ACAP they get a number of good applicants and can't take them all.

Talking in self governance that don't fit in the board agenda. More flexible application/funding process that may arise quickly and work collaboratively with other organizations. Reformat meetings If something like this arises and have a quick online meeting to vote on applications if they require attention. Hiring admin through ECCC is federal and could be bolstered with provincial money as well

## **ii. NSCC (Kirsty)**

Grant of interest for NSCC as well more potential for collaboration. NSCC involved in starting a new chapter in actus group is a global organization for students to solve problems within their community. Social enterprise that problems can be solved by developing business solutions. A competition on how to solve these problems. Students narrowed down to food insecurity for now but can be adjusted in the future to better reflect the mission of the biosphere reserve. Engage the two groups together

## **10. Committee Reports**

### **i. Executive committee (Alison)**

Doug off probationary period as part of his contract board informed.

### **ii. Membership Committee (Doug)**

Should we be doing invoicing. Not necessarily a good idea needs more time to develop a new strategy. Need clear direction on how to handle this. Need to maintain some kind of membership application process. Some places don't charge at all. They still sell memberships but anyone that volunteers gets a free membership. Biosphere in Scotland has a pledge for members/businesses with the option to donate. Leave it with the committee till the next meeting.

Doug, Kathleen, Veronika, and Pierre. Amanda looking to join as well

### **iii. Trail Committee (Ron)**

Past event not as successful look into why. Trying to connect with community groups to get ore engagement. Old NSP lines potential to turn into trails and work with them on that process. Looking at more places to advertise maps for trail systems. Selling at more places that have the capacity to sell them

### **iv. Communication Committee (Pierre)**

5000\$ grant from digital NS to change menu system on website. Applied for 15000\$ grant for tourism. Newsletter is getting good hit rates 40-46% click rate which is slightly better than the national average. Next newsletter Dec 20<sup>th</sup>. Amazing places used by other biospheres. If we get funding its something to add to explore more communities around the region

### **v. Forest Watch (Kirsty)**

Next step adding QR codes to signs waiting on website completion to work with. Looking for ways to expand committee and take on more which path to take with these new avenues. Potential for badging opportunities to get people more engaged i.e. hit all waterfalls in CB etc. If bras d'or watch could also fit under other committees ways to amalgamate groups

**vi. Bras d'or watch (Kathleen)**

Less BLBRA activity and more ACAP. Becomes considerably more expensive when ACAP hosts due to staff expenses. Find ways to merge with other groups and devise a plan to create more events.

Upcoming events – ECCC hosting event in Feb to discuss all biosphere activities in Ottawa. Stan and Allison to attend.

**Adjournment - Motion** to adjourn by Eileen at approximately 4:20 pm

Next meeting: Jan 12<sup>th</sup> 2023, East Bay NS

Minutes by Megan. Please email any corrections, clarifications or omissions to me via [secretary@blbra.ca](mailto:secretary@blbra.ca)