

Biosphere Highlights

November 30, 2017

People & Nature; Better together

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Meet the Residents...



The Bras d’Or estuary is a fine place to be an Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*) (Mi’kmaq: Plamu). We know that because one of our own has just returned from her North Atlantic sojourn. Scientists from the Bras d’Or Institute at Cape Breton University, Dalhousie University and Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries spent some time inserting radio tags into kelts in Middle River during 2014 and 2015. A kelt is an adult salmon that has left its’ freshwater spawning grounds and is returning to the ocean. After one or more years at sea it returns to the same spawning grounds. One of the kelts that was tagged in 2015 has just returned. Check out this article and others by Dr. Annamarie Hatcher on our Face Book page. **To get the full story, click on the Facebook icon below.**



The Global Picture

In case you haven’t heard... “On Monday, November 13, a new, dire “warning to humanity” about the dangers to all of us has been written by 15,000 scientists from around the world.

The message updates an original warning sent from the Union of Concerned Scientists that was backed by 1,700 signatures 25 years ago. But the experts say the picture is far, far worse than it was in 1992, and that almost all of the problems identified then have simply been exacerbated.”

THE INDEPENDENT (click [here](#) for the rest of the article)

Climate change and rising sea levels are realities that we all face around the globe. In the Bras d’Or Lake Biosphere our shorelines are slowly claiming nearshore lands so our adaptation strategy has to involve consideration of buffer zones or setbacks between rising waters and our houses, cottages and out-buildings.



Photo by Lynn Baechler

The Local Picture: A Word or Two about Setback

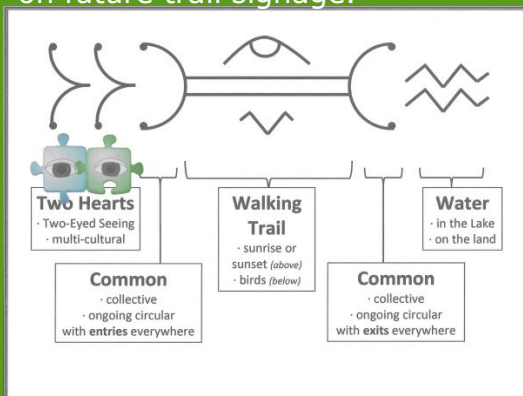
Best Practices Corner (by Dr. Jim Foulds)

When we develop land near water it is important to leave as much natural vegetation between the water and where you clear the land or build. This provides a buffer for the lake or stream. The buffer will reduce and filter runoff, stabilize lake/stream banks, maintain the chemical, physical and biological integrity of water resources and provide habitat for shoreline wildlife. All too often, we clear land all the way to the shore and that leads to greater shoreline erosion and excess sediment going into the lake or stream. The buffer can’t be too wide but the minimum recommendation – as a best practice - is 30 metres or 100 feet. For greater guidance to development in the Biosphere, check out the Collaborative Environmental Planning Initiative’s “Bras d’Or Lakes [Development Standards](#)”

Clarification



Since 2013, the BLBRA has been working on connecting and extending existing trails and old roads in order to connect all these paths to make one impressive trail called the Bras d'Or Lake Walking Trail. A few years ago, Albert and Murdena Marshall of Eskasoni designed the above glyph to represent that trail. The diagram below explains the meaning of the glyph. Watch for it on future trail signage.



For more details, check out the initial report from the Trail Committee found [here](#).

Teaching, Learning & Scholarship in the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Reserve



Friday, November 17th 2017 | Birch Room (TC-7)
10am - 12pm

An open event for all students, staff, and faculty.
Come learn about existing CBU connections as well as future opportunities.

Light refreshments and snacks will be provided.



Also, land owners whose properties lie along the lake shore in the Biosphere should be aware that rising water levels threaten current shorelines as was reported by [CBC](#) back in 2006. This CBC report was based on research carried out by John Shaw, Robert B. Taylor and colleagues of the Atlantic Geoscience Centre, Natural Resources Canada. Based on this research report, Timothy Lambert wrote an article entitled *Sea Level Rise and the Bras d'Or Lake* which appeared as an insert in the July 2006 issue of the Blue Heron for the Bras d'Or Stewardship Society. It is well worth the read. Here is the link to that [article](#).

Teaching, Learning & Scholarship in the Biosphere

On Friday November 17th, a gathering was held at Cape Breton University (CBU) to discuss "Teaching, Learning and Scholarship in the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Reserve". This event was envisioned after dialogue between the Trails Committee of the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Reserve Association (BLBRA) and the CBU Provost's group, representing the Deans of four schools and leaders of Unama'ki College. The event was seen as a means to introduce CBU researchers and students to members of the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Reserve community. Hosted by Dr. Pat Maher (University Teaching Chair in Community Engaged Teaching and Scholarship), the event was open to faculty, staff and students. It began with an opening presentation by BLBRA Vice-chair and Co-chair of the Trails Committee, Maureen Cameron. This presentation "set the stage"; including a general description of the UNESCO's Man in the Biosphere' program and an analysis of the past work of the BLBRA and its Trails Committee in collaborations with CBU and other universities. That was followed by examples from CBU faculty of their current work (Drs. Bruce Hatcher, Annamarie Hatcher, Ken Oakes, Rod Beresford and Pat Maher). Faculty members shared short presentations about their research, teaching and overall engagement with the region, followed up by a question and answer period. There was a general consensus at the close of this session that continued collaboration between CBU and the Biosphere in terms of future program development, education and research was a potentially productive undertaking. (Dr. Pat Maher)

Notes from the Chair

"What a fine meeting of the Board of Directors (and local guests) we had this month! The ceremonial opening of a new, two-lane bridge across the St. Peter's Canal gave us the happy excuse to locate our meeting in this historic community at the only man-made connection of the Bras d'Or estuary to the Atlantic Ocean. What struck me was the breadth of activities and topics we considered in three and a half hours.

As an integral part of the Collaborative Environmental Planning Initiative for the Bras d'Or Lake (aka "CEPI"), we have a vital link to the governance aspect of the Biosphere: because all of the 18 agencies that are legally empowered to regulate human activities in the Biosphere are signatories of the Bras d'Or Charter (the core of the CEPI's power). It was gratifying to learn that the CEPI work plan and budget have been approved. We fully support the work of the CEPI because we share a focus on the difficult but essential goal of mutual sustainability of economic and ecologic systems (i.e. Man and the Biosphere).

Schedule of BLBRA Meetings

OUR NEXT MEETING IS AT...

Baddeck	Thurs., Jan. 18
Potlotek	Thurs., Feb. 15
Whycocomagh	Thurs., Apr. 12
St. Peter's	Thurs., May 10
Iona (AGM)	Thurs., Jun. 21

NOTE: Meeting times are 1:30 -4:30 pm.

Consider joining the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Reserve Association.

Annual Membership:

Individual	\$10.00
Family	\$25.00
Business	\$30.00
Indiv. Lifetime	\$125.00

The BLBRA is a registered charity. Tax receipts are also issued for donations.

The BLBRA is trying to raise \$1,500.00 to help pay for a web site redesign. Can you help us....



Donate Now!

Contact Us

website - <http://www.blbra.ca> Or email us at: contact@blbra.ca

Follow us on Facebook & Instagram



Or tweet us at

https://twitter.com/BL_Biosphere

We are also moving with determinism towards a comprehensive plan for Biosphere signage. It is critical that, almost 8 years after the UNESCO designation, we have signs on highway #105 and #4 that inform people they are in a UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Reserve!

A core program in the BLBRA work plan is the development of an elementary school science curriculum that uses the Biosphere as a forum for experiential learning. It was very positive to learn from Education Committee Chair Jim Burton that several of the curriculum elements have been tested in local schools, and feedback is being made available. The future is the children, and we strive to engage them in the concept and the reality of the Bras d'Or Biosphere." (Dr. Bruce Hatcher)

St. Peter's Canal Bridge Opening



L to R: Sen. Dan Christmas and Chief Wilbur Marshall of Potlotek look on as the Hon. Rodger Cuzner cuts the ribbon to officially open the Canal Bridge.



Parks Canada representative, Blair Parody, Field Unit Superintendent for CB and Canso addresses the opening.



Robert Pictou of Potlotek First Nations performs the sweet grass ceremony on Chief Wilbert Marshall.



Senator Dan Christmas addresses the gathering on behalf of the Government of Canada.

For more on [this story](#), check out the Port Hawkesbury Reporter article.

The BLBRA welcomes your comments or suggestions. Let us know if you do not wish to receive this newsletter. Address your comments or suggestions to: m.eileencrosby@gmail.com

Note: There will be no Board meeting or newsletter for the month of December.