

DRAFT Minutes of Meeting
BLBRA Board of Directors Meeting
Thursday, January 18, 2023, 1:30 – 4:00 PM
East Bay Fire Hall, East Bay Hwy, 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:

DIRECTORS (Member at Large)		DIRECTORS (Ex Officio)	
Allison Mclsaac (Chair)	Y	Amanda Mombourquette (Richmond)	N
Liz Campbell	N	Barbara Longva (Victoria)	Y
Tony Sylliboy	Y	Steve Parsons (CBRM)	N
Parker Donham	Y	Kirsty Lock (NSCC)	Y
Veronika Brzeski	R	Stan Johnson (CEPI)	Y
Bethsheila Kent	Y	Tyler Mattheis (CB Partnership)	Y
Terri Shobbrook(Vice-chair)	R	Bonnie MacIsaac (Inverness)	R
Breah Sampson-MacDonald	Y-V		
Wendy MacKinnon	N		
Kirsten Campbell	R		
Megan MacInnis (Secretary)	Y		
Kathleen Aikens (ACAP)	Y		

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: Doug Foster (**Manager**), Ron Newcombe (**Trails Chair**) and Pierre LaRoche (**Chair Comm**)

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Speaker: Update on ECCC project – Allison Mclsaac

Chair, Allison Mclsaac, informed the members at the meeting that the BLBRA amendment was approved for funding for Yr. 4 and 5 of the ECCC project. The funding comes under the Canada Target Nature Fund for the target to protect biodiversity. The targets are Canada's commitment from recommendations at a meeting in Japan. There are four categories for the project: governance/management, research, documentation, and knowledge transfer (participation in CBRA gatherings). Governance/management helps support the biosphere with board meetings, getting staff in place, and talking about the project. Research: to focus on the water quality and quantity with the potential to IPCA (Indigenous protected and conserved area) and that research will continue. Models were being developed to look at the broader impact of the subwater sheds in the biosphere. Documentation and prioritization: identifying areas within the biosphere that we recommend protecting with other partners. Knowledge transfer includes commitment to participate in the yearly national and

regional gatherings for biospheres to exchange information including local knowledge (Mi'kmaw and traditional knowledge). All the biospheres are participating in the ECCC project with each biosphere doing their own project. The project's objectives are collection of hydrological data in Eskasoni to create models that can be applied to other watersheds, and IPCAs. The amendment approval for years 4 and 5 will continue with the original work with the same funding as year 2 and 3 – project total over 5 years is \$1,048,505.

3. Call to Order:

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. Allison determined that there is quorum.

4. Additions to the agenda:

Parker Donham adds that a budget needs to be created to prepare for the new fiscal year.

Ron Newcombe wants to discuss the Explore the Bras d'Or festival.

5. Approval of the agenda

Motion to approve agenda with the additions made by Barbara Longva and seconded by Parker Donham. Motion passed.

6. Approval of minutes – Minutes November 18, 2023

Allison McIsaac noted that in the November BoD minutes the proposed speaker, Geoff, name was spelled wrong – the change will be made to the correct spelling. Kathleen verified that she is not an Ex-Officio member – she is a Member at Large. Allison also reviewed the action item list and stated that the majority of the action items are complete or will be completed. Parker Donham motioned to approve the November BoD minutes with the noted changes and seconded by Ron Newcombe – motion passed.

Action Item: Zoe Nicholas to make changes to the November BoD minutes to reflect the correct name change and Kathleen's title on the Board list.

7. Business arising from the Minutes

8. New Business & Correspondence Requiring Action

- i. Explore the Bras d'Or
- ii. Regional Gathering
- iii. Coastal Zone Protection Act
- iv. Coxheath Copper Mine

i. Explore the Bras d'Or – Stan Johnson

Stan Johnson informs the Board that Ocean's North offered funding for a coordinator position for roughly \$45,000 for the year. The previous coordinator, Denis, moved back to Ontario with his family but was asked if he would like to coordinate the Explore the Bras d'Or again this year. This year there is going to be a gold tournament on July 26th at the Lakes golf resort. Stan said they are looking at more conservation clean ups and applying to small grants to help clean up the shores around the Bras d'Or Lake. Ron Newcombe states the trails committee's original mandate was to bring all trails under one umbrella but evolved to start adding more. Ron would like to keep the Board informed so it can

continue to build and not “fizzle out”. Discussions happening around the BoD table of different opportunities of funding to help Explore the Bras d’Or to continue and build. Allison suggests setting up a meeting in February to talk about Explore the Bras d’Or and the possibilities that people are aware of. Ron Newcombe states that there is an Explore the Bras d’Or steering committee and Allison suggests inviting Tyler Mattheis, Kathleen Aikens and Pierre LaRochelle.

Action item: Allison Mclsaac will reach out to the Explore the Bras d’Or steering committee to set up a meeting.

ii. Regional Gathering – Kathleen Aikens

Kathleen's recap on the Regional Gathering that happened during the Two Eye Seeing conference with the 3 Atlantic regional biospheres: Southwest Nova, Fundy, and BLBRA. There was a dinner with the Biospheres and ended with a walk on the Sky River trail. Kathleen appreciates the conversations and knowledge transfer that came from the meeting. Fundy is hosting the 2024 Regional gathering for the Atlantic region within the next 6 – 9 months (TBD). Allison Mclsaac chimes in that some of the funding to attend the regional will come from the Canadian Biosphere national groups and likely from the approved amendment of the ECCC.

iii. Coastal Zone Protection Act – Terri Shobbrook

Terri Shobbrook sends her regrets.

Kathleen Aikens reports that ACAP was approached by someone interested in doing research on the Coastal Zone Protection including Acts that would be applicable to Nova Scotia to better understand what’s at stake and what to do. Kathleen states that the person is a retired Professor and may be interested in presenting to the Biosphere as this is one of his areas of interest. Stan Johnson suggests that Rick McCready be invited to the meeting as he worked on the Global Standards document together.

Action item: Kathleen to invite the professor interested in doing research on Coastal Zone Protection to present to the BoD.

iv. Coxheath Copper Mine

Allison Mclsaac informs the BoD that there is a potential for a copper mine in the Coxheath area and concerns for the watershed and drinking water. There is a community group “Keep Coxheath Clean ” who reached out to several organizations including the Biosphere and had a meeting with elder Dr. Albert Marshall and EFWC. There is potential to sell the land and there is community and First Nations concerns about the environmental impact. The group has presented to the CBRM and suggests that as an act of reconciliation that the land be provided to the Mi’kmaq as an IPCA or Land Based Learning – the group may ask for a letter of support from the Biosphere or CEPI. Tyler Mattheis, Cape Breton Partnership, notifies the BoD that their role is to support any possible investments or businesses willing to expand and CBP supports the CBRM and other organizations by serving and advising. The company in question has a yearly surface lease with CBRM and has an exploration license – they do not own a mining company. The copper mine is over 100 years old and has had a couple corporate entities exploring in that area in the past 10 years. The CBRM owns 1200 acres where the mine is, but the exploration license extends to other properties. Tyler explains that copper has been declared a critical mineral for green energy. The copper mine assessment report is available online. It was determined that the BLBRA invite the organization with the exploration license to present to the Board and the Keep

Coxheath Clean group. Stan Johnson invites the BoD to a steering committee meeting in Eskasoni on February 7 with Eric Hines, General Manager for CGC, presenting.

Action item: Invite the organization with the exploration licence and the Keep Coxheath Clean group to present to the BoD (2 separate BoD meetings)

9. Committee Updates

- i. Treasurer
- ii. Manger
- iii. Trail Committee
- iv. Communications Committee
- v. Community Engagement and Learning Committee
- vi. Membership Committee

i. Treasurer – Parker Donham

Parker informed the Board that the association took in \$16,242.22 and spent \$29,870.91 in the last Quarter of 2023 with a net change of (\$13, 630.09). Parker is inquiring about an amount of \$5,483 contribution, and what it was for. Kirsty Locke suggests that a good portion of that amount may be from the TD Friends of the Environment grant for the Learning kits. It was determined that \$3983.00 came from the TD grant and \$1,500.00 is still undetermined. Parker D. lets the BoD's know that he is still getting used to the information and will have recommendations for a better financial procedure. A Financial committee needs to be created to create the budget for the new fiscal year. Parker suggests the committee compromise of the Treasurer, Chair, Doug or Zoe, and another BoD - Kathleen Aikens volunteers. Parker motions for the acceptance of the Treasurer report and seconded by Kathleen Aikens – motion passed.

Action item: Financial committee needs to be created to create the budget for the new fiscal year

ii. Manager - Doug Foster

Doug Foster talks about the Climate Change and Adaption application and states that the program was encouraged by the provincial government – the lead in Environment Gordon Smith. Doug states that the biggest thing that is wanted in the program is flood line mapping for the short term (20 years) and long term (by year 2100). The program will have 3 initial partners: New Dawn, ACAP and EXP. Other interested groups would be Municipalities, First Nations, and the Province (the Province is letting the BLBRA charge 10% in-kind for the use of their models). The second part of the project would use the bathymetric LiDAR to detect structures around the watershed – culverts, railways, roads, etc. New Dawn will be providing a complete demographic analysis for Cape Breton Island and Bras d'Or Lake.

Doug got quotes for 250 maps, laminated and unlaminated, from Breton Print (23 maps remaining in office). Pierre LaRoche suggests that the map be looked at with a needs and branding basis before the map is approved for printing. Allison McIsaac suggests Doug create a meeting with Pierre and others on the BoD to review the map before it goes to print.

BLBRA has a credit with VIBE worth \$2,300.

The banking changes are complete, and Parker Donham, Treasurer, has access.

The outdoor display at Alexander Graham Bell Museum needs to be redone and Doug suggests we AGBM be contacted to show our interest. The AGBM must fix the roof where the BLBRA display is on.

Doug would like to approach CBU to create a secure but accessible repository for the data we have. It was asked if the BLBRA shared drive would be an appropriate drive to store the data.

There have been BLBRA BoD meeting attendance issues including conflicts of time and other priorities. Zoe Nicholas will be contacting the BoD individually to ask questions about issues with BoD attendance.

Action item: Doug to create a meeting with Pierre LaRoche, Communications Chair, and other interested people to review the map before printing.

Action Item: Zoe Nicholas to contact all BoDs to ask questions about BoD Meeting schedule

iii. Trail Committee - Ron Newcombe

Ron Newcombe had to leave early so did not get to present. Bethsheila Kent, Trails committee member, explains that the hiking schedule would begin in May and end in October and hike every trail possible on Saturdays. They would like to have trail guides, interpreters, and hikers at all the trails and discuss what they see and the watershed and its importance. The trails committee is doing Fall hikes for the hikers interested in fungi as the Fall is the best time for fungi bloom. Bethsheila will send out a schedule of the Spring to Fall hike schedule. Pierre will put on the hike schedule on the website and send out a memo to the 750 subscribers.

iv. Communications Committee - Pierre LaRochelle

Pierre reports the BLBRA put out 14 newsletters and bulletins in 2023 and the subscriber list went down from 900 to 700 and went from a 38% hit to 50% hit (above industry). Pierre and Zoe attended the marketing meetings from CBRA around every 2 months and CBRA sent out a list of questions about community engagement that Pierre will distribute to the BoD. Pierre asked the BoD if they have anything to add to the newsletter it would be appreciated.

v. Community Engagement & Learning Committee - Kirsty Locke

Kirsty Locke informs the BoD that the CEAL committee has not had a meeting since the last BoD meeting. Kirsty has met with Jen Sawler from MK and has a tentative schedule to meet with the 5 MK schools for training on the teaching kits. The BLBRA teaching kits are going to be ordered and was funded by the TD and MK also has funding for 5 more kits. Kirsty asked the BoD if Zoe can order all 10 kits and bill MK for their 5. Other priorities are the QR codes for the Nicholson Trail, Adventure Labs and Bras d'Or Watch are ongoing.

Action Item: Zoe Nicholas to order materials for teaching kits.

vi. Membership Committee - Kathleen Aikens

The membership committee met on December 13 and discussed a membership drive and to work on a broader communications campaign around membership. Amanda Mombourquette will be reviewing the communication materials. The Membership committee will be asking for a small budget for the new fiscal year. Kathleen Aikens is asking if the BLBRA will have student workers to help market the membership. The committee wants to discuss the money handling process. January 18 update of membership is 150 members active (46 annual members and 104 lifetime members). Kathleen stated that the tax receipts for the annual membership will be sent out in the next coming weeks.

Action item: Annual membership tax receipts to be mailed out.

10. Ex-Officio / Partner Updates

- i. CEPI
- ii. Richmond County
- iii. Victoria County
- iv. Inverness County
- v. CBRM
- vi. Cape Breton Partnership
- vii. NSCC
- viii. PHP

i. CEPI - Stan Johnson

Stan Johnson had to leave early before he was able to present.

ii. Richmond County - Amanda Mombourquette

Sends her regrets

iii. Victoria County - Barbara Longva

Barb informs that she has joined a climate change and advisory board for the municipality. The county is working on getting a new transfer site in Mills Harbour – waiting on cabinet approval. They received \$180,000 funding from ACOA for trail improvement and will be focusing on North River trail and Red Island Trail. Transit fare will be increasing and there is a new number which is posted on the website. Victoria county is looking at getting a dog park and is in the process of looking at other dog parks and their best practices.

iv. Inverness County - Bonnie MacIsaac

Sends regrets.

v. CBRM – Steve Parsons

Not available

vi. Cape Breton Partnership - Tyler Mattheis

Tyler is pleased to have the Green Energy Engagement program about offshore energy as a partnership with Net Zero Atlantic. Some of the information sessions have been postponed due to weather and 2 were set in the Biosphere – St. Peters and Baddeck. Tylers connecting and collaborate with UINR in supporting the Regional assessment for offshore wind in NS. This is the Federal process and the Provincial government had paused their exploration and regulations of “inshore waters” waiting for the Federal thing to happen to maybe adopt a similar regime in the Provincial waters. Victoria County team successfully applied for an EV charging applications. Tyler stated that it would be very innovation and could be implemented throughout Cape Breton Island.

CBP’s podcast Invest in Cape Breton will air an episode about tourism and will have topics involving the Bras d’Or Lake.

Forward Together Population & Economic Growth Strategy that was put on hold during the pandemic is being revived and VIBE finalizing the result for the roadshow. Tyler has applied for the Community Climate Capacity program through the Clean Foundation which is money reserved for Municipalities to get a worker for a little while to help with grants. If approved the BLBRA can collaborate with workers to help the juncture between the BLBRA and Municipal efforts.

vii. NSCC - Kirsty Locke

Kirsty informs the BoD that the NSCC students will be coming up on work placements and would have specialties depending on their program.

viii. Port Hawkesbury Paper - Megan MacInnis

Megan informs the BoD they are still working on the PHP winds and looking at more sites. Megan states that Geoff would be able to say more about the project when he presents at the BoD meeting.

11. Adjournment

Next meeting: March 24, 2024 @ 1:30pm – Bonnie Brae, St. Peters

Minutes by Zoe Nicholas verified by Megan MacInnis. Please email any corrections, clarifications or omissions to Megan MacInnis by email secretary@blbra.ca .