



Minutes
Board of Directors' Meeting
Thursday, November 20, 2025 - 1:40 – 4:20 PM
Location: Baile nan Gàidheal | Highland Village Museum, Iona,

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



1. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Allison began the meeting at 1:40 pm by welcoming everyone and acknowledged that the meeting was being held on Cape Breton Island – Unama’ki, in Mi’kma’ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi’kmaq people.

Jessica Fuller, the Highland Village Museum event coordinator, welcomed everyone to the venue and spoke a bit about the heritage of the village and the fact that over 30,000 visitors had visited the site in 2025, up 2,000 over 2024, partially driven by weather and free admission for children. Although closed to the general public off season, groups are welcome to enquire about using the facilities for hosting their own gatherings. Jessica also pointed out that the Highland Village was where the original designation of the Bras d’Or Lake Biosphere Region was celebrated by 11,000 attendees in the Fall of 2011, and among 17 others locations around the lake. *See some highlights and related videos [HERE](#).*

The Board members and attendees then shared a quick round of introductions. This was Kate Cave’s first Biosphere meeting as Richmond County’s ex-officio member.

ATTENDANCE

DIRECTORS (Member at Large)		DIRECTORS (Ex Officio)	
Allison McIsaac (Chair)	Y	Kate Cave (Richmond CT)	Y
Terri Shobbrook (Vice-chair)	R	Bonnie MacIsaac (Inverness CT)	N
Adele Hunt (Treasurer)	R	Donna Matheson-Lefort (Victoria CT)	Y
Megan Bunyan (Secretary)	Y	Kirsty Lock (NSCC)	Y
Anik Martin	N	Stan Johnson (CEPI)	Y - Zoom
Jay Denny	N	Steve Parsons (CBRM)	N
Kathleen Aikens	Y	Tyler Cole (CBP)	N
Liz Campbell	N		
Rod Thompson	N		
Tony Sylliboy	Y		
Vacant			
Vacant			
Vacant			

A quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the Board shall consist of: 50% of the Executive Comm. (2) and 6 non-executive Board members. Y= Present; R= Regrets sent; N= Absent

QUORUM DECLARED

Guests: Regina Cozzi, Sr. Lab Instructor & X-Oceans Outreach Director, Dalhousie University attended the introductions only, via Zoom, and is looking forward to some possible collaboration in 2026.

ACTION ITEM: Allison – will schedule a more extensive conversation with Regina in 2026 board.

Observers: Colette Mesher, BLBRA Project Manager; Pierre LaRoche, BLBRA Administrative Assistant; Eileen Crosby, past board member; Veronika Bezski, past board member.

2. Additions to and Approval of the Agenda:

There were no additions to the agenda as presented and reviewed by Allison.

*MOTION to approve the agenda as is made by Kathleen, seconded by Megan. **Motion Carried***

3. Review and Approval of the minutes: September 18, 2025

*MOTION to approve the agenda as noted made by Megan, seconded by Kathleen. **Motion Carried***

4. Business arising from September 18, 2025 meeting.

Review and approval of tabled items:

i. Agenda, May 15, 2025 minutes

*MOTION to approve the agenda as is made by Megan, seconded by Kathleen. **Motion Carried***

ii. Minutes of May 15, 2025 Meeting

*MOTION to approve the Treasurer's Report made by Kathleen, seconded by Megan. **Motion Carried***

iii. September Treasurer Report

*MOTION to approve the Treasurer's Report, with the ECCC amounts reflected correctly on the Income Statement and Statement of Financial Position, made by Kathleen, seconded by Kirsty. **Motion Carried***

iv. Board Succession Planning

As requested at the last meeting Allison presented her overview of chairperson responsibilities. These will be added to the board manual. The chairperson is considered by UNESCO and CBRA as the site manager. Lots of email communications. Involves working with the bookkeeper, treasurer and staff. Currently the position is a volunteer position and there is no funding available from the national level. Still being pursued however.

ACTION ITEMS:

Board members of 1 year or more experience were asked to consider taking on the volunteer chairperson role and make themselves known to the Executive before the next AGM.

Board members were/are asked to consider how to spread the workload.

Board members were/are asked to consider having a new Mi'kmaq Chair/Co-chair position under an updated governance model. The position could help align and expedite delivery of our UNESCO objectives, all aligned with reconciliation and sustainable development.

The Executive Board will set up a governance review session.

5. Treasurer Report/ Update

Allison reviewed the report by Billy. The detailed report is in the meeting folder.

ACTION ITEM: All are asked to investigate means to find funding to cover staff and intern costs post March 2026.

6. Committee/ Project Updates

i. Community Engagement and Learning Committee

Kirsty referenced her report in the meeting folder. The \$25,000 grant request has been sent into the East Coast Credit Union to cover a facilitator and 2026 events and equipment. A \$25,000 Clean Foundation grant has been approved for a [CoastReach](#) project related to community engagement and climate change impacts on shore erosion. The timeframes are workable. Safety issues including seasonal access are being addressed. Looking at opportunities to host our Biosphere data. Veronika

spoke of the [Community Climate Change Engagement \(CLARI\)](#) from St. FX and possible funding opportunities.

ii. New CEAL Committee Chair

ACTION ITEM: All were/are reminded that Kirsty needs to step down as of June 2026 and the CEAL Chairperson position will be open to all, board members or not. Note however that each committee shall include at least 1 member of the board of directors. ([see Board Manual 2025](#)).

iii. Trails

Allison reported on behalf of Ron that the last event was the Fungi walk and planning is ongoing for 2026 summer events.

iv. Communications

i. Social Media

Posting Possibilities: Discussion arose around widening the ability for individuals, committees and possibly interns to promote directly onto Facebook and Instagram as well as support more live streaming. Currently communications (Pierre), Admin Assistant (Pierre) and Instagram (Megan) create posts or post creative when provided by others. NovaStream has similar rights.

ACTION ITEM: Pierre will review giving BLBRA staff and others permissions to post on the BLBRA social media sites and add content to the website.

Veronika and Kirsty confirmed that the CEAL committee suggested that the Bras d'Or Watch Facebook page be discontinued and merged with the BLBRA FB page going forward.

ACTION ITEM: Pierre will build out the current Meta Business Suite to ensure FB and Instagram are linked and explore the communications planner tool.

ACTION ITEM: Pierre will facilitate the notification/transition from the [Bras d'Or Watch FB page](#) to the [BLBRA FB page](#).

ii. Highway Signage:

Pierre reported that the NS Department of Public Works could not install the new branding panel below the existing signs due to clearance issues. It may be possible to do a test of stick-on branding on both the highway signs and private property signs.

ACTION ITEM: Adele can remove the \$3,200 budgeted for Highway signage upgrades - new logo from the 2025-2026 budget.

7. ECCC and Proposal Development Update

i. ECCC Status

Working on Climate Adaptation Resilience Training (CART). Exploring how to share research data such as Reid's, through a publisher or perhaps even through UNESCO and other channels. Looking for a data hub for the ECCC data and Biosphere data. Working on the knowledge sharing aspect of the ECCC grant to apply the learnings to various communities within the Biosphere at public sessions and through media encapsulation. The area of interest being looked for designation as an Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area (IPAC) is still in the process (5 years?) to get approval.

ii. Funding Initiatives.

Colette reported on her work to obtain new funding and tracking of outstanding responses from funders on submitted requests. Looking at community needs and possible collaboration.

ACTION ITEM: All are asked to identify to Colette if there are any community-led research projects that the BLBRA could collaborate on related to oceans, coastlines, the inland sea.

iii. Other Project Initiatives.

Colette is working with Stan and the Organizations Relating to the Bras d'Or (ORB) which includes CEPI, Pitu'paq, UINR and others to identify other collaborative opportunities.

iv. Fund Development Committee

Collette and the Fundraising committee, including Eileen Crosby, are designing a fundraising landing page for the website as well as looking to increase ads on the Facebook page. Could do a "Giving Tuesday" campaign as well as targeted email. Kathleen discussed matching donations as a concept, possibly up to a \$1,000.

v. Membership

Kathleen reported that there are currently 35 Annual memberships and 104 Lifetime memberships. Kathleen also raised the idea that a new position of Membership Ambassador may be beneficial to proactively represent the BLBRA at various levels of government, industry and organizations.

ACTION ITEM: Board members were reminded to maintain their Annual BLBRA Membership if not a Lifetime member.

ACTION ITEM: Executive Committee can consider creating a Membership Ambassador position.

8. Ex-officio/ Partner Updates

i. CEPI:

Stan reported that the [3-day CEPI Youth's Sustainable Futures Forum](#) was finishing this day. CEPI Senior Council meeting moved to January. Working on Pictou Landing/CLEAN project with Colette.

Etuaptomuk /Two- Eyed Seeing Conference is planned for March 10-12, 2026.

(Note from Pierre: see [Etuaptomuk/Two-Eyed Seeing as a Framework for Sustainable and Inclusive Tourism Planning and Development](#)). Eleanor Anderson, Cape Breton & Leeds Beckett Universities.

ii. Richmond County:

Kate reiterated her interest to contribute to the BLBRA mission on behalf of Richmond County.

iii. Victoria:

Donna mentioned that they had just launched their [Coastal Planning and Support Program \(CPSP\)](#) project via a \$20,000 funding offered through the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM), funded by Dept of EEC. Looking at coastal erosion and zoning bylaws. More online mapping available.

iv. Inverness County

v. CBRM

vi. Cape Breton Partnership

vii. NSCC:

Kirsty believes that, as identified in the Strategic Plan, that the Biosphere has a better presence within the NSCC/Port Hawkesbury Campus. New NSCC ex-officio representative.

ACTION ITEM: Kirsty will continue her search for a new NSCC ex-officio representative from among staff.

viii. PHP

9. Strategic Plan review

Allison reported that the Executive is looking at setting up Strategic Plan Report Card sessions. Eileen suggested that the fiduciary responsibilities of the board should also be reinforced during these discussions. Discussions concluded that the first review should be by current members, perhaps some active observers & partners invited, and then once the strategic plan's current goals are vetted, prioritized and assigned resources, gaps and further community input could be captured. And then look at a new 5 year plan.

ACTION ITEM: Staff to set up Strategic Plan review sessions

10. New Business & Correspondence Requiring Action

i. Liability insurance and disclaimer requirements

Discussion evolved around the use of signed waivers and liability insurance for our interns and public events. Both can be involved in water and on land activities. Also should we have notice on the website and with event promotions in general. Not a drop off service – adults must be present at all times. Some Adobe forms available. Training is typically provided to interns and project members.

ACTION ITEM: Staff to review options and insurance needs.

ii. Summer intern needs, descriptions

iii. Contracting options

Discussion focused on tendering, candidate selection and contract awarding and are there parameters such as contract amount, timely need or contract duration to consider before choosing to go through a fully competitive process with interviews or in some cases, award to a known resource with past experience doing a similar effort for the organization. Zeroed in on contracts under \$10,000 not necessarily needing a fully competitive process; and concern that any overlapping of contracts with minimal supervision not be perceived by the CRA as an employee arrangement versus contract.

ACTION ITEM: Allison will ask the **Finance Committee** for some direction for early January, 2026 and call the board back if an emergency session is required.

iv. Letters of support guidance

TABLED

v. Nomination letter (Fred and Lynn Baechler)

ACTION ITEM: Allison will draft up a letter for review by the Executive.

11. Canadian Biosphere Region Association (CBRA) Update

TABLED

12. UNESCO update

TABLED

13. Adjournment at 4:20 pm

Next Meeting: January 15, East Bay Fire Hall 1:30 pm – 4:00 pm

Minutes prepared by Pierre LaRoche and verified by Megan MacInnis. Please email any corrections, clarifications, or omissions to Megan MacInnis. email secretary@blbra.ca.