Approved Minutes
Board of Directors' Meeting
Thursday, March 19, 2026 - 1:30 – 4:20 PM

Location: Bonnie Brae Seniors Hall | St. Peter's, NS

Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Reserve Association

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

unesco Man and the Biosphere Programme

1. **Welcome and Introductions**
   Chair Allison began the meeting at 1:30 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.

   The Board members and attendees then shared a quick round of introductions.

ATTENDANCE

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

Observers: Alana Baxter, retired civil servant – ECCC protected areas; Colette Mesher, BLBRA Project Manager; Pierre LaRochelle, BLBRA Administrative Veronika Brzeski, past board member - Zoom, Ron Newcombe, Trail Committee chair.

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 Megan, seconded by Kate.* ***Motion Carried***

3. **Review and Approval of the Minutes: January 15, 2026 meeting.**
   MOTION to approve the minutes made by Megan, seconded by Stan. Motion Carried

4. **Business arising from previous minutes**
   i. **Review Listening to People of the Lake**
   Ron reviewed how successful the workshop had been and highlighted the history of collaboration among CEPI members.
   ii. **Intern funding through Clean Foundation**

Colette also noted that this particular Clean Foundation grant had the proviso that the positions were designated and limited to applicants identifying as Indigenous People (First Nations, Métis, or Inuit), Black, African Canadian, or people of African Descent. There was some pushback received via email on seeking out a grant with these restrictions. We received approval for two Indigenous positions.

Colette and Pierre interviewed the two candidates and believe they will provide very good support during the 15 week engagement over summer activities.

5. **Treasurer Report/ Update**

   i. **Treasurer Report**

   Colette reviewed the income statement provided by Billy Taylor. She also discussed the RBC funding approved to develop the Kluskap legend story working with the three biospheres in the Atlantic Corridor. Ron asked about how the approximately $2k that remains on a trails account started in 2013 by Cheryl Bartlett.

   ACTION ITEM: Pierre *will look up some past history.*

   Kathleen asked about any outstanding invoices.

   ACTION ITEM: **Colette** is doing a final review.

   MOTION: Made by Kathleen, seconded by Stan t*o accept the financial reporting as presented by Colette.*

   Motion Carried

   ii. Delegated Representative for Municipal Funding

   Discussion by Allison and Colette on the need to explicitly assign a BLBRA representative for municipal funding requests.

   MOTION: Made by Megan, seconded by Kate.

   Be it resolved that:

   the BLBRA board authorizes Colette Mesher as the project manager to apply for municipal funding from the Cape Breton Regional Municipality to support the community engagement activities related to the larger knowledge mobilization project.

   the BLBRA board authorizes Colette Mesher as the project manager to apply for municipal funding from the Municipality of the County of Richmond to support the community engagement activities related to the larger knowledge mobilization project.

   the BLBRA board authorizes Colette Mesher as the project manager to apply for municipal funding from Inverness County to support the community engagement activities related to the larger knowledge mobilization project.

   the BLBRA board authorizes Colette Mesher as the project manager to apply for municipal funding from Victoria County to support the community engagement activities related to the larger knowledge mobilization project. ***Motion Carried***

   Other Funding Requests Reviewed: Colette reviewed that she is waiting for decisions on four applications for grants (Circular economy with CBRA, Community-led research, EcoAction Stream 2 and Rural Communities Foundation Free to Play).

   Pierre reviewed that a Capstone Project proposal was submitted to NSCC-Centre of Geographic Sciences (COGS) to have a student(s) create a GIS dataset to support the geographies that are required for UNESCO and our own geographical interests. These will be important as we approach the Periodic Review. Response expected late March.

   iii. **Budget Review (2026-2027)**

   Allison reviewed the 2026-2027 budget. There is an income expectation of $129,054.00 among MEOPAR* Knowledge Mobilization, ECCC Project Reporting, Coast Reach and Clean Foundation project funding.

   **An independent not-for-profit, the Marine Environmental Observation Prediction & Response network (MEOPAR) funds research, trains students, mobilizes knowledge and forms partnerships in the area of marine risk and resilience.*

Kathleen and Colette also identified that new memberships and membership renewal are also a source of other income. Peer-to-peer conversations are the most successful in obtaining new memberships.

Allison reviewed the projected expenses among Trails, Membership, CEAL, Communications, salaries and professional services. The total 2026-2027 expenses are estimated to be $95,002.40.

It was identified by several board members that there have been significant budget cutbacks made by the province varying from 20% to 40% in some instances that affect non-profit organizations' operations not only this year but over a few years.

ACTION ITEM: All *could look for opportunities to collaborate more closely with other organizations in more formal project delivery sharing.*

6. **Strategic Planning Review**

Allison led the review of the 2022-2025 Strategic Plan, our identified core values of Environmental Stewardship, Respect, Collaboration, Inclusivity, Responsibility and Two-Eyed Seeing and the related discussions focussed on our Goals and Objectives. It was agreed to extend the Core Values and the four Strategic Pillars of Inclusive Partnerships & Collaboration, Environmental Stewardship, Sustainable Economic Development and Community Engagement. Key was developing more partnerships which might include industry, service providers and our citizens, as well as universities and additional First |Nation communities.

Jay suggested three individuals for developing youth involvement - **Brady Doucette from Potlotek,** of Potlotek who has been a leader at Unama'ki College - CBU; **Cheyenne Isaac-Gloade** (cheyenne@kinu.ca) a Youth Engagement Coordinator living in Membertou, and Theresa Harron (theresa.harroun@brasdorcepi.ca).

An additional two Operational Pillars are also in the Strategic Plan – Increased Capacity and Funding and Communication and Marketing.

All the pillars have various goals and objectives which Allison briefly reviewed.
Note: Attached to these minutes is an Infographic and a template for committees and individual to review to ensure that their valued initiatives and energy contribute to achieving the goals we have established.

ACTION ITEM: ALL *are encouraged to review the Strategic Plan, consider ways to deliver on the goals and next steps including frequency of review at board meetings.*

Allison referred to the marketing plan developed by Vibe and the need to development metrics and Key Performance Indicators.
Kathleen suggested that many of our Strategic Goals were specific and accomplished through the ECCC project activities.

ACTION ITEM: Colette/Pierre *will look at identifying the Strategic Plan goal accomplishments to both the overall ECCC reporting and update the same in the Annual Impact Report.*
Colette asked about communicating our messaging to industry such as the Marble Mountain Estates – Winery & Vinyard operation which has a strong interest in supporting the biosphere.
ACTION ITEM: Pierre *reported that the Atlantic Corridor project will come out with some communication tools sometime in late June and will share these.*

7. **Round Table Updates**

   i. **UINR**

` Jay and Anik spoke of distributing the water testing kits at various schools. Working with Veronika.

   ii. **Trails Committee**

Ron reported that the committee is looking at engaging an elder to lead a medicine walk during one of the 2026 Walk the Watershed events. Looking at using an honorarium for compensation.

Ron spoke about jumping onboard the Hike Nova Scotia Hiker Challenge Badges program. Could be a $1,000 associated with the badge design and development. Need to establish the themes of the badges. Hike NS would provide another promotion outlet.

Pierre used the opportunity to bring up the Amazing Places initiative that is used by a few other biospheres and Anik mentioned some sites that might be worth showcasing.

***ACTION ITEM: Ron** will pursue the Hiker Challenge Badges initiative and related budgeting.*

iii. **ACAP**
Kathleen spoke of ACAPS 'Right Pairing' tree planting efforts in Baddeck and at the head waters of the Sky River in Whycocomagh and Waycobah. A group is working in Potlotek on a more classroom aligned model. Also a group working in CBRM on a wetlands project. In Membertou worked with Peter Paul who is working with youth.

iv. **Megan MacInnis Bunyan**
Megan suggested that she could pass on biosphere related material and information to private land owners about the biosphere if they are within the boundary.
***ACTION ITEM: Staff** will review, develop and share appropriate materials with Megan and any others who wish to do the same.*

8. Ex-officio/ Partner Updates

i. **Richmond County:**
Kate reported on:
a) The Climate-Ready Plans and Processes which is an 18-month project. (CRPP) funded by the Green Municipal Fund (GMF), which helps Canadian municipalities and Indigenous communities assess climate risks and integrate adaptation into local planning. Grants up to
b) Coastal Cohort – NS Environment – The county is now a part of 20 communities across NS that work collectively with the department and Clean Foundation on Climate Action – in various forms – coastline protection, erosion mitigations, etc.
c) Working with the Eastern District Planning Commission (EDPC) and flood mapping by the Province through Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM) - It is province wide and it is flood inundation mapping for all riparian waterways throughout the province.
d) Quest Canada – This is all about efficiencies – whether it is energy or water consumption, etc.
e) Extreme Flood Mapping – Point Tupper – a pilot with the province and they chose Richmond County due to the imminent investment by some large international companies. The modelling will inform the current tenants of the park and also be a useful tool for future investors.

ii. **Victoria County:**
Donna reported that Victoria County was participating in many of the same projects as Richmond. In addition she spoke of a great presentation by the Baddeck Valley 4-H Club in February of work done in participation with ACAP. The 4-H Clubs may be a good volunteer resource to consider for various biosphere initiatives. The 4 – H's are Head, Heart, Hands, and Health. Donna also noted that Dalhousie will be holding Municipal Water Resiliency & Planning Symposium, May 12, 2026 Municipal Water Resiliency & Planning Symposium. **Online and in-person component.**

9. New Business & Correspondence Requiring Action
i. None to report.

10. Adjournment at 4:20 pm
Next Meeting: May 21, 2026, We'koqma'q Volunteer Fire Hall, 1:30 pm – 4:00 pm
Minutes prepared by Pierre LaRochelle and verified by Megan MacInnis. Please email any corrections, clarifications, or omissions to Megan MacInnis. email secretary@blbra.ca .

BLBRA STRATEGIC PLAN

VISION

We envision all things thriving in the special place that is the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere.

MISSION

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

CORE VALUES

- Environmental stewardship
- Respect
- Inclusivity
- Responsibility
- Two-Eyed Seeing
- Collaboration

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

INCLUSIVE PARTERSHIP & COLLABORATION

GOAL A.1

Engaging rights holders and stakeholders to understand how the BLBRA can engage with each organization.

GOAL A.2

Develop a strong partnership with CBU and NSCC by the end of 2022.

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

GOAL B.1

Work with local governments, rights holders & stakeholders to educate, raise awareness, and share best practices while supporting decision-makers.

SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GOAL C.1

Explore how BLBRA can use its knowledge/UNESCO status to support & grow local businesses while stewarding the biosphere.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

GOAL D.1

To get our educational resources into the public domain and used in schools by Sept. 2022.

GOAL D.2

To increase our offer of/community members' engagement in citizen science activities.

GOAL D.3

To evaluate BLBRA's current membership model, explore other models and adjust as needed.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Reserve Association

BLBRA OPERATIONAL PRIORITIES

OPERATIONAL PRIORITIES

- Funding & Capacity
  1. Secure sustainable funding to hire qualified, long-term staff at living wage.
  2. Secure office space/BLBRA hub facility for volunteers and future staff.
- Communications & Marketing
  - Develop a detailed marketing strategy to compliment the current communications plan.

ACADIA ENTREPRENEURSHIP CENTRE