

Best Practices: The Global Picture

In case you haven't heard... "On Monday, November 13, 2018, 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

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". 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](#).