

ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020

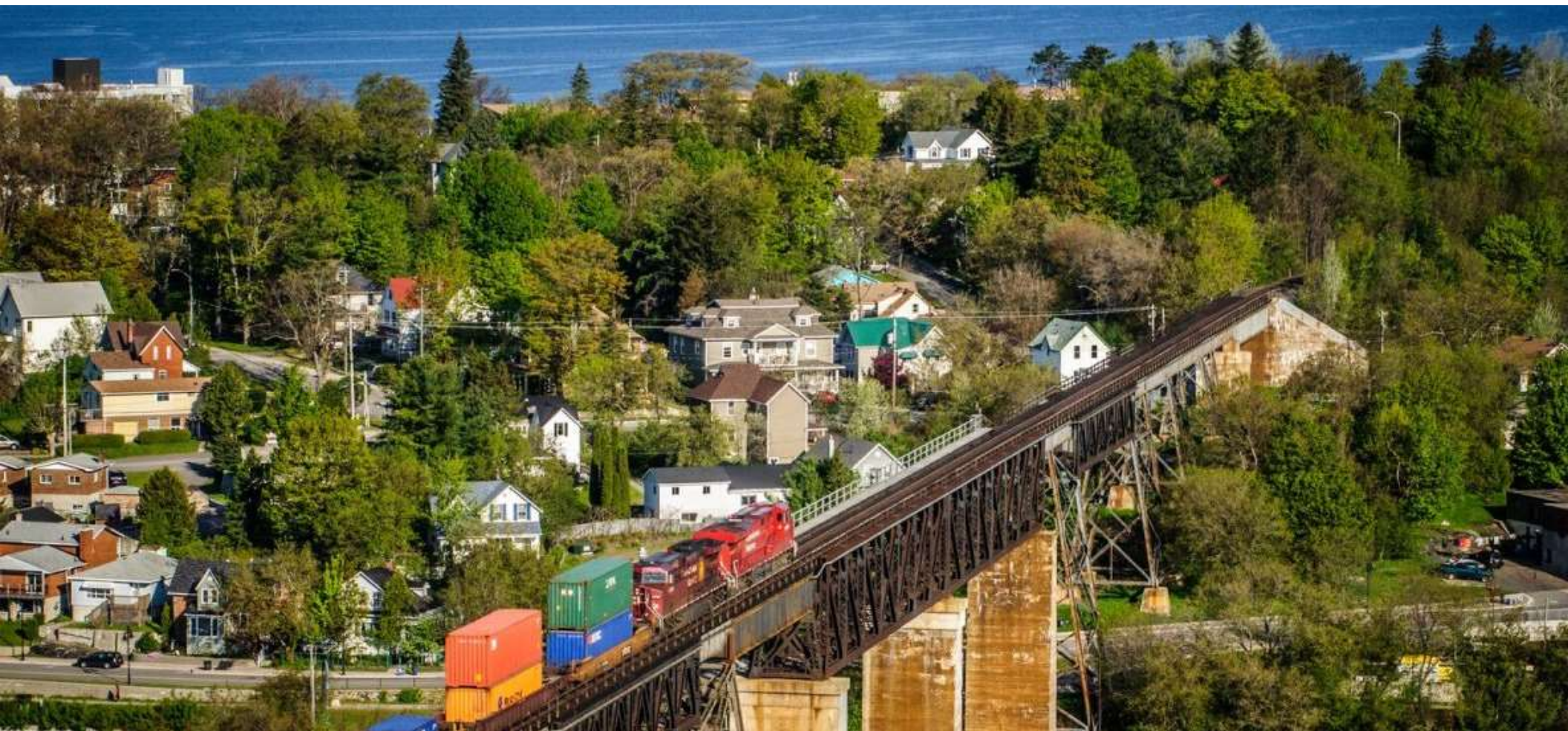
biospherecanada.ca



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Canadian
Biosphere
Reserves Association



Canada's UNESCO biosphere reserves: People and nature - in balance.

MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR

This has been an inspiring year for the Canadian Biosphere Reserves Association (CBRA). I would like to start by thanking all eighteen biosphere reserves (BR) for your dedication, commitment, and embodiment of the complementary values of sustainable development, biodiversity conservation, climate action and reconciliation. Our UNESCO mandate sets extremely high standards which you continue to strive for and uphold, and for this I admire you.

Located within the traditional territories of over fifty Indigenous Nations, Canada's BRs have continued to build relationships and develop projects in partnership within Indigenous Peoples at the local level on our ethical space journey. Thank you to the Indigenous Circle for CBRA for your national level guidance.

2020 marked the end of a three year contribution agreement with Environment and Climate Change Canada. This work, at both the national and local level, enabled BRs to act as catalysts for starting conversations relating to Target 1 and to further develop relationships with local First Nations and community partners.

In June 2019, the BR family was able to gather in-person in the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Reserve to discuss climate action and adaptation planning. The end of 2019 also marked the development of the CBRA 2020-2025 Strategic Plan which outlines three priority areas where CBRA can help BRs implement the Man and the Biosphere Program in Canada. These priority areas include organizational excellence, capacity building and raising the profile of the amazing work being done in Canada by the eighteen UNESCO sites.

BRs bring people, communities, organizations and sectors together, helping them identify and meet common objectives. It is an honour to serve as CBRA's Chairperson and an inspiration to be a part of this incredible network -- a true Canadian treasure.

With tremendous gratitude,



Rebecca Hurwitz, Board Chair
Canadian Biosphere Reserves Association
chair@biospherecanada.ca



“

Canada's UNESCO biosphere reserves inspire a positive future. They bridge communities, organizations and sectors, building the relationships required to create a sustainable future for humans and nature.

”

CANADA'S 18 BIOSPHERE RESERVES

235,000 Km²

Their collective area
(bigger than the UK)

50+ Indigenous Nations

Hosts of Canada's UNESCO
biosphere reserves

CLICK

on the name
of a biosphere
reserve to
visit their
website



BIOSPHERE RESERVES ARE



Regions: physical areas of land, typically surround a national and/or provincial park, representing Canada's iconic landscapes.



Organizations: Non-profit, non-governmental organizations, governed by 4 pillars of work including biodiversity conservation, sustainable development, climate action and reconciliation.



On an ethical space journey, incorporating two-eyed seeing of both Western and Indigenous perspectives into all BR activities using principles from the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.



Communities: Groups of local residents and businesses working towards a common sustainable development goal.



Implementing global mandates such as the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Program, the Sustainable Development Goals, the Convention of Biological Diversity, at a local scale. They are also 18 in a 700+ member network of biosphere reserves around the world.

CBRA GOVERNANCE IN 2019-2020



CBRA Board of Directors and members of the Indigenous Circle for Biosphere Reserves in Canada at the CBRA Fall Gathering in November 2018.



2019 Vancouver Island Gathering Photo - Gathering to develop the CBRA 2020 - 2025 Strategic Plan.

Executive Committee

Chair: Rebecca Hurwitz, Clayoquot Sound, BC

1st Vice-Chair: Gary Clarke, Frontenac Arch, ON

2nd Vice-Chair: Pam Shaw, Mount Arrowsmith, BC

Treasurer: Greg Mason, Georgian Bay, ON

Secretary: Jennifer Dingman, Fundy, NB /
Brian Illnicki, Beaver Hills, AB

Directors

Antoine Suzor, Charlevoix, QC

Brian Illnicki, Beaver Hills, AB

Bruce Hatcher, Bras d'Or Lake, NS

Christian Bouchard, Lac Saint-Pierre, QC

Dolphus Tutcho, Tsá Tué, NWT

Éric Malka, Mont Saint-Hilaire, QC

Guillaume Proulx, Manicouagan-Uapishka, QC

Jennifer Dingman, Fundy, NB

Larry Hawrysh, Redberry Lake, SK

Linda Gregory, Southwest Nova, NS

Rick Levick, Long Point, ON

Valerie Pankratz, Riding Mountain, MB

Bill Dolan, Waterton, AB



2020 - 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

CBRA approved the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan at the December 10th, 2019 board of directors' meeting. This document was created to act as the foundation of CBRA's actions between 2020-2025. The highlights of CBRA's activities from 2019-2020 are included below and framed within the CBRA Strategic Plan priority areas.

ENHANCE OUR COLLECTIVE CAPACITY TO DELIVER ON THE BR PROGRAM

CBRA is facilitator of connections between BRs, provides the common tools to help BRs build on their successes and strives to bring all Canadian BRs to the same level of operation. Having comprehensive, open, and transparent means of information sharing is critical for all BRs working together.

CAPACITY BUILDING

With support from CCUNESCO and the BR leads, CBRA led the development of capacity building webinars on topics including: Communication Branding, Ecosystem Services, Citizen Science, Buffer Zones, Youth Engagement, BR Governance * and Financing your BR. In addition to the webinar, CBRA and the BR leads developed a showcase document series, denoted by an asterisk on the topics above. [Note showcase documents for tourism, sustainable development goals, climate change adaptation are also part of the series but came in the 2020 – 2021 timeframe].

In addition to the webinars and showcase documents, CBRA also contributed to the Climate Change Adaptation Forum, held in the Bras d'Or Lake BR in June 2019.

2020 - 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

ENHANCE OUR COLLECTIVE CAPACITY TO DELIVER ON THE BR PROGRAM

LEVERAGE LEARNINGS

March 31st, 2020 marked the end of a three year contribution agreement with Environment and Climate Change Canada to establish Canada's BRs' role in the Pathway to Target 1. The CBRA National Biodiversity Plan was completed in March 2020 to document the accomplishments, identify lessons learned and look to the future of what still needs to be done. Highlights include:

Through national (in-person) meetings, the ability for BRs to learn and share knowledge increased exponentially.

The adoption of tiered, learning approach to encourage BR-to-BR knowledge transfer and thus developing a national network of expertise.

Work symbolizing 1 of 19 goals from the Aichi Targets/ Canada's Biodiversity Strategy where BRs can provide meaningful contributions.

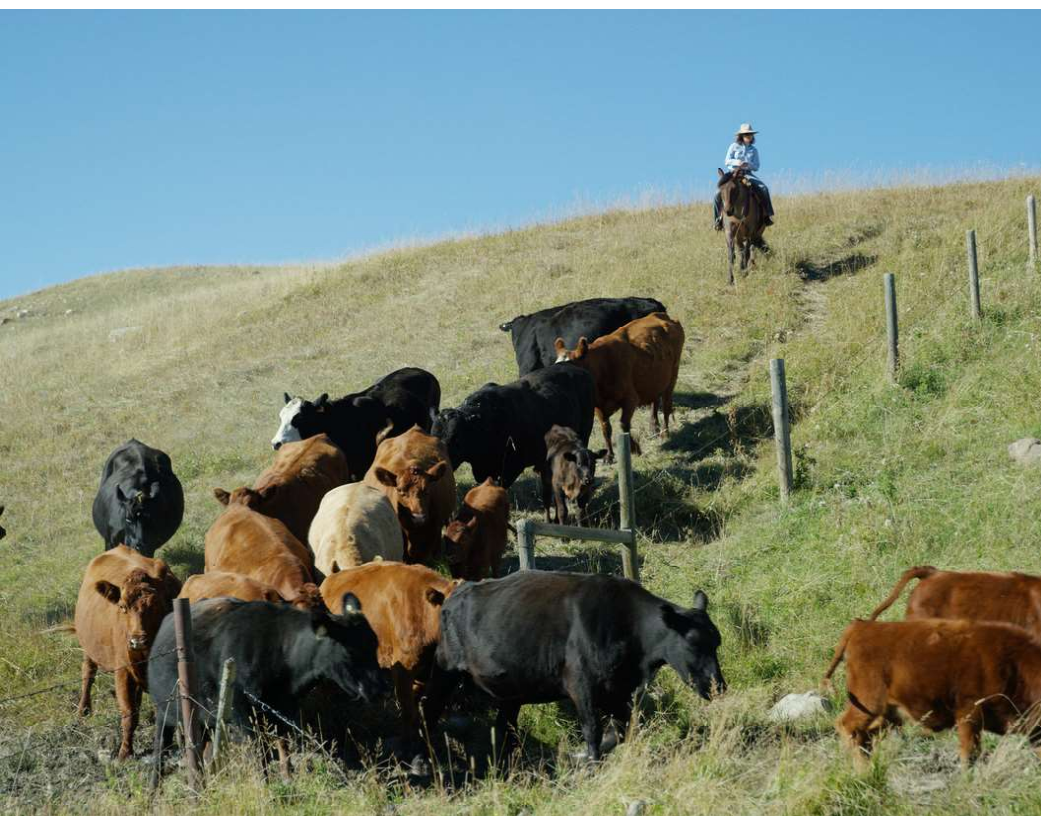
A team approach - part time CBRA and Indigenous Runner Coordinators, together with BRs to implement the workplan and develop internal BR capacity.

The beginning of an ethical space journey with the Indigenous Circle (IC) and increasing awareness of Indigenous perspectives in all CBRA activities.

Reconciliation and climate change can be a lens for accomplishing conservation and sustainable development for Canadian BRs.

Global to Local - This provided the opportunity to implement the national and international targets at a community level

BRs can apply biodiversity conservation in working landscapes, outside of protected areas, and compatible with people and communities.



Canada's 18 biosphere reserves are continuing to conserve important areas for biodiversity and are proof that the environment and local economic development can thrive together. They play a key role in mobilizing local partners and are ideally positioned to build more resilient and sustainable communities in the post-COVID-19 era.

Sébastien Goupil,
Secretary-General of the Canadian
Commission for UNESCO

2020 - 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

ENSURE ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

CBRA is a charitable, national non-profit organization. CBRA is an association composed of 18 member sites, spread across Canada from coast to coast to coast. As a non-profit organization, CBRA has requirements that it must follow and requires a revised governance model to run an effective, transparent organization.

GOVERNANCE

Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve, on behalf of CBRA, is currently investigating a CBRA governance model review which will provide recommendations for revisions to ensure effective governance of a national organization.

SEEK OUT SUSTAINABLE, LONG-TERM CORE FUNDING

The three year contribution agreement with Environment and Climate Change Canada helped BRs to leverage additional funding. Four of the pilot sites received additional funds to continue their work including one project receiving \$1 million over three years and another for \$1 million over four years. CBRA is grateful to the CCUNESCO for continued annual project-based funding.

LEARN ABOUT, DEVELOP, INCORPORATE AND HONOUR ETHICAL SPACE AND TWO-EYED SEEING

In line with Canadian and UNESCO values, CBRA will continue to practice reconciliation as described in the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions Calls to Action and UNDRIP, to develop relationships with Indigenous Nations in Ethical Space and to implement two-eyed seeing in its practices and communications. The Spirit of Cooperation, completed in March 2020, is a document that outlines the Indigenous Circle's intention to achieve joint values through Ethical Space and the implementation of national programs and communications in the spirit and practice of reconciliation.

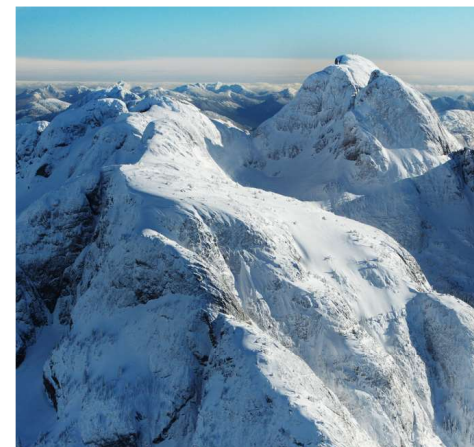
2020 - 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

ENSURE ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

STRENGTHEN AND CLARIFY CBRA'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CANADIAN COMMISSION OF UNESCO (CCU); EUROMAB, AND WITH THE INDIGENOUS CIRCLE

In Canada, BRs are represented by the CBRA and the Canadian Commission for UNESCO. Both organizations play a role in helping Canada's BRs build their capacities individually and collectively as well as help facilitate knowledge sharing between them. They also both play important roles in raising awareness of BRs among multiple levels of society in Canada.

BRs recognize humans and the environment are interconnected and acknowledge that sustainable livelihoods can be practiced in a way that respects natural law. Over the next five years (and far beyond), CBRA will move forward in collaboration and partnership with the Indigenous Circle, building ethical space into its activities, and upholding the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).





Over the past seven years, my Directing partner, Zach Melnick, and I have spent time in nearly every Canadian biosphere region. We've been humbled by the generosity of the people who live in them. They've invited us into their lives to share the work they're doing to bring their homes closer to sustainability. When the environmental, economic, and cultural challenges facing the world seem so daunting, it's in the backyards of biospheres where we find hope.

Yvonne Drebert - Producer, Striking Balance

2020 - 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

ESTABLISH OUR NATIONAL PRESENCE

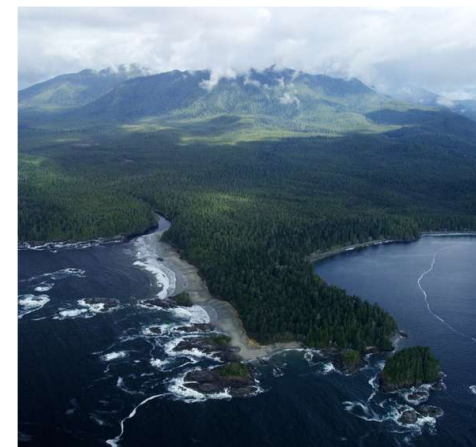
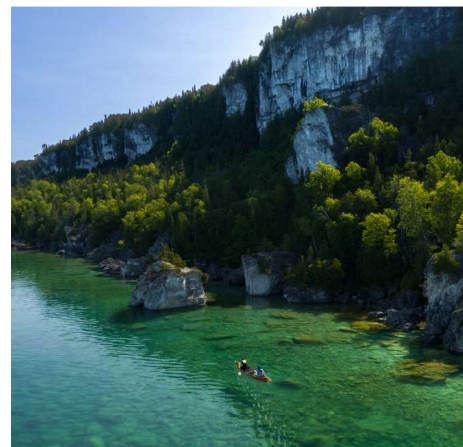
Collectively, the BRs represent a national network of expertise in implementing biodiversity conservation and sustainable development. This expertise can be translated into meaningful contributions to national conversations while promoting BRs and identifying opportunities for potential new partnerships.

BUILDING NATIONAL PRESENCE OF THE BRS

CBRA presented at, attended, and/ or contributed to numerous conferences to profile the work of Canada's BRs.

QUANTIFY THE COLLECTIVE, CUMULATIVE WORK OF BRS

Through the three year contribution agreement with Environment and Climate Change Canada, the National Biodiversity Plan was written to quantify and record the work completed by the BRs.



OTHER WAYS TO LEARN ABOUT BRS

AMAZING PLACES

The Amazing Places project is now thriving in five Canadian BRs. The project goal is to identify and promote significant natural sites for residents and visitors to explore in order to encourage better knowledge of ecological features and inspire a commitment to conservation.

RECONCILIATION PAPERS AND VIDEOS

In 2018, with support from the Canadian Commission for UNESCO and the Community Conservation Research Network, CBRA developed a series of reflection papers and videos describing stories of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples in Canadian BRs. The stories are authored by individuals who are connected to the BRs and provide diverse perspectives on how meaningful relationships are developed and how knowledge can be respectfully shared between cultures.

STRIKING BALANCE

In 2016, TVO started a journey across Canada to look at our nation's biosphere reserves in a two-season cinematic documentary series called Striking Balance. Each episode explores one particular biosphere reserve and highlights some of the local gems and what makes them special, from geological, ecological, historical and cultural perspectives. Almost all of the photos used in this annual report are from Striking Balance episodes.



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