

# ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021

[biospherecanada.ca](http://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

2020-2021 will be a year not quickly forgotten as it marked the start of the COVID global pandemic. 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 with Indigenous Peoples at the local level on our ethical space journey. Thank you to the Indigenous Circle for CBRA for your national-level guidance.

Some of the highlights from this year included:

- Season 2 of the 'Striking Balance' TV series was launched in January 2020 and explores the evolution of 7 Canada's 18 BRs. Season 1 featured 8 BRs in both English and French.
- In January of 2020, members of the CBRA network went to Ottawa to build relationships with other national organizations as well as members of the federal government.
- In the fall of 2020, CBRA together with CCUNESCO, conducted regional communication workshops to determine common best practices and challenges for communicating about the UNESCO biosphere reserve brand in Canada. The development of a brand and communications strategy for Canada's 18 BRs complemented the work in the regional workshops.
- In addition to building a library of resources for the network, several Showcase Documents were written on cross-cutting themes by the BRs to complement a case study of successful projects called Leveraging Success.

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.



Rebecca Hurwitz, Canadian Biosphere Reserves Association Chair,  
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 Km<sup>2</sup>**

Their collective area  
(bigger than the UK)

**50+ Indigenous Nations**

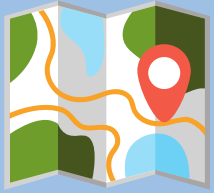
Hosts of Canada's UNESCO  
biosphere reserves

**CLICK**

on the name  
of a biosphere  
reserve to  
visit their  
website



# BIOSPHERE RESERVES ARE



Regions: 235, 000 square kilometers of regions in Canada, typically surround a national or provincial park and representing Canada's iconic landscapes.

**235**



Organizations: 18 non-profit, non-governmental organizations, governed by 4 pillars of work including biodiversity conservation, sustainable development, climate action and reconciliation.

**18**



On an ethical space journey where BRs are working with some of the 50 First Nation that host the BRs to incorporate two-eyed seeing of both Western and Indigenous perspectives into all BR activities.

**50**



Communities: Groups of local residents and businesses working towards a common sustainable development goal and including 1000s of volunteer hours

**1000**



Implementing global mandates - UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Program, the Sustainable Development Goals, the Convention of Biological Diversity and the United Nations Declaration of Indigenous Peoples - at a local scale. They are also part of a 700+ member network of BRs around the world.

**700**

# CBRA GOVERNANCE IN 2020-2021

## Executive Committee

Chair: Rebecca Hurwitz, Clayoquot Sound, BC

1st Vice-Chair: Jennifer Dingman, Fundy, NB

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

Treasurer: Greg Mason, Georgian Bay, ON

Secretary: Brian Illnicki, Beaver Hills, AB

## Directors

Antoine Suzor, Charlevoix, QC

Brian Illnicki, Beaver Hills, AB

Bruce Hatcher, Bras d'Or Lake, NS

Louise Corriveau, 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

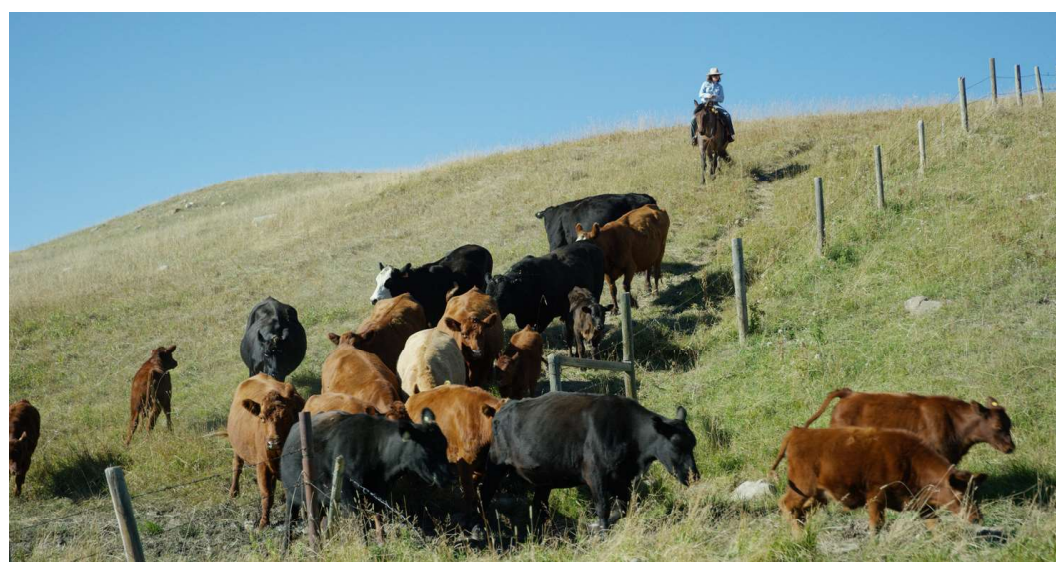
David Sollows, Southwest Nova, NS

Rick Levick, Long Point, ON

Valerie Pankratz, Riding Mountain, MB

Bill Dolan, Waterton, AB





# 2020 - 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

The CBRA's Strategic Plan was approved in 2019. It continues to drive the activities of the national organization and its actions to support the 18 local sites. Here are a few highlights from this year:



## ENHANCE OUR COLLECTIVE CAPACITY

The CBRA network created an internal BR Resource Library and a monthly newsletter filled with recent science, celebrations of site-level capacity and other relevant news.

## ENSURE ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

CBRA continues to strengthen its relationship with the Indigenous Circle through ethical space discussions as well as relationships with the Canadian Commission of UNESCO and other BR networks.

## ESTABLISH OUR NATIONAL PRESENCE

CBRA profiled the work of Canada's BRs at several national conversations. CBRA also produced several thematic showcase documents as well as Leveraging Success, showcasing successful BR projects at the site-level.

# WHAT IS CBRA'S VALUE TO BIOSPHERE REGIONS?

*By uniting biosphere regions at the national level, CBRA facilitates positive change at a larger scale than we could implement alone.*

Mandy Hobkirk,  
Mount Arrowsmith (BC)

*The expertise and support we gain by being part of CBRA opens doors to new opportunities that might not otherwise be possible for us.*

David Sollows  
Southwest Nova (NS)

*CBRA helps align, inspire and coordinate Canadian biosphere reserves. CBRA also helps to build capacity, strengthen the local sites, and our collective position on the national and global stage.*

Jennifer Dingman,  
Fundy (NB)

*The US Biosphere Network has benefited greatly from its relationship with CBRA, comparing ideas and strategies on improving our respective countries' BR efforts.*

Brian L. Houseal  
Chair, US Biosphere Network

*CBRA allows the Canadian biosphere reserve network to create multiple opportunities for the development of projects and collaborations.*

Guillaume Proulx,  
Manicouagan-Uapishka (QB)

*The CCUNESCO greatly value our partnership with CBRA and CBRA's ability to build capacity and support for the Canada's network of biosphere regions. We are looking forward to continuing our work with CBRA over the course of the next year to mobilize knowledge, build capacity and increase the visibility of Canada's biosphere regions.*

Roda Muse,  
Secretary-General of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO





# 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.

## CONTACT US

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