



## **Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve Nomination Document (Overview)**

(Condensed excerpt from the nomination document for the Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve, see complete nomination document at [www.thegreenpages.ca/snbr-rbsn](http://www.thegreenpages.ca/snbr-rbsn)):

The Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve (SNBR), as proposed in this nomination document, will comprise a significant portion of terrestrial and coastal southwestern Nova Scotia, a province situated on Canada's east coast.

The proposed biosphere reserve will represent the unique natural region of southwestern Nova Scotia and will assist in the provision of sustainable practices for the core, buffer and transition areas. Core protected zones are representative of five major landscapes of the province which includes extensive wildlands. The protected areas also preserve the integrity of rare, unique, and outstanding examples of floral and faunal associations not found anywhere else in the country. These are the disjunct Atlantic Coastal Plain flora and fauna that includes 11 nationally-listed species at risk, and several other focal species that are threatened to varying degrees including populations of mainland (native) moose, pine marten, southern flying squirrel and Blanding's turtle.

The biosphere reserve will also preserve the integrity of cultural resources and heritage in the region. The most significant of these cultural heritage resources is the history of First Nations land stewardship. There is a vital history of Mi'kmaq use of the lands and waters of the area for travel, sustenance, medicine, trade and survival. Several significant archaeological sites are preserved throughout the region. These ancient sites include encampments, travel routes, village sites, fishing grounds and petroglyphs. In 1995 Kejimikujik National Park received additional designation as a National Historic Site commemorating its status as a Mi'kmaq cultural landscape.

The rich cultural heritage of the region also includes the founding settlements of the first French and early British colonies in the New World at that historic sites of La Have, Fort Anne, and Annapolis Royal. These sites are preserved and presented through historic interpretation and education. More recent settlement by northern European immigrants to the South Shore and inland has shaped land-use practices, and has created a cultural mosaic. Black settlement by people escaping southern slave trade is celebrated along the southwest shore region in Shelburne County, adding to the cultural diversity of the region. The present-day cultural spirit and natural environment of the region is the central theme that drives the tourism industries of southwestern Nova Scotia.

The proposed biosphere reserve will promote and encourage further experimentation with traditional means of resource management and will identify opportunities for enhancement. The traditional industries of the region include: forestry, small-scale mixed agriculture, nearshore coastal fisheries, professional backcountry guiding for recreational angling and hunting, prospecting and gold mining. Current land use is affected by the history of the region. Forestry (for pulp, timber and specialty products) remains the dominant economic stimulus in the region, supported by seasonal tourism, manufacturing and small-scale farming. Techniques of "best practice" have been developed to address environmental values for many of the industries of southwestern Nova Scotia, and similar voluntary mechanisms will be explored for improving the sustainability of land-use.

The proposed core zones consist of the entire inland terrestrial component of Kejimikujik National Park and National Historic Site of Canada (381 km<sup>2</sup>), and the Tobeatic Wilderness Area (1038 km<sup>2</sup>). Buffer zones include provincial Crown lands adjacent to core zones, parcels of private lands and waters owned by Nova Scotia Power within adjacent watersheds, and lands owned by Bowater Mersey Paper Company lands along the Shelburne River corridor. While the Natural Environment and Outdoor Recreation Areas (Zones III and IV) of Kejimikujik National Park and National Historic Site of Canada (55 km<sup>2</sup>) are proposed as a component of the core zone, these lands also contribute to the buffer function by focusing visitor use, where strategic recreation management techniques are implemented to minimize environmental impact. Connecting core, buffer and transition zones is the Shelburne river, a 53 km remote, wild river within a 280 km<sup>2</sup> watershed, designated as a Canadian Heritage River.

Indeed, there is a good opportunity for expansion of the core and buffer zones within the structure of the proposed biosphere reserve, given that several lands in the region are currently designated protected areas. The Kejimikujik National Park and National Historic Site of Canada Seaside Adjunct (22km<sup>2</sup>) is a pristine coastal headland that is afforded legal protection, and management to preserve ecological integrity. Similarly, the large undisturbed, provincially protected lands at Lake Rossignol, Tidney River and Bower's Meadows Wilderness Areas (in close proximity to the proposed core and buffer zones) are protected by legislation, and are managed primarily for biodiversity preservation.

A biosphere reserve will support the research and monitoring strengths of Kejimikujik National Park and National Historic Site of Canada, internationally recognized for its outstanding research record focused on the Long Range Transport of Airborne Pollutants, acid rain monitoring, rare species monitoring, and forest biodiversity study associated with the Smithsonian Institution's Monitoring and Assessment of Biodiversity (SI/MAB) Program. This strength is supported by members of the forest industry, and partner government agencies and academic institutions with research interests in the region.

There are significant contributions that can be made to national and international MAB goals by the SNBR proposal. Importantly, the SNBR will be the first biosphere reserve in Canada's Atlantic region. Ten other biosphere reserves are established in Canada, supported by the Canadian Biosphere Reserves Association, a large network of volunteers and professionals that facilitate cooperation between sites. Close links to this Association have been built over the course of the last several years, and opportunities for participation in CBRA national projects by the SNBRA will be evaluated this year. Several current projects of the partners in the SNBR proposal are nationally important and have good potential to be shared. International MAB priorities such as the protection of cultural heritage, education of local citizens and tourists, and demonstration of sustainable use of the primary resources are directly addressed within activities currently undertaken by partners in the SNBR proposal.

The Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve Committee was established in 1998 and incorporated as an association in March 2000. A diverse partnership group has been organized in support of the nomination. These partners include federal, provincial and municipal land managers, corporations representing the forest industry and hydro-electric power generation industry, local First Nations communities, and non-government conservation, tourism, youth and community health organizations.

The current projects of the Association include facilitation of a major Species at Risk Stewardship grant for 2000-2001 that will lead to education, interpretation and training programs directed at residents and visitors, concerning rare and threatened species. A full-time Project Coordinator has been hired to facilitate operation of the Association and to stimulate further projects which may include participation in national projects led by the Canadian Biosphere Reserve Association. Biosphere reserve establishment will stimulate and strengthen agency, corporate, non-governmental organization, and citizen activities related to land management, resource utilization and tourism development.