



CSA's and CSF's - A model for sustainable development?

Stewart Fotheringham, along with his partner Nicole Burkhard, own Whippetree Farm near Annapolis Royal. Whippetree Farm is a vegetable farm that specializes in ecological farming and forestry and offers a community supported agriculture (CSA) program. In the words of Whippetree Farm a CSA is a commitment between the member and the farmer, an opportunity to invest in a local farm, paying up front at the beginning of the season for a weekly share of vegetables from the farm. CSA's are a local food movement. It's a great way for individuals to have a connection to their food, know their farmer and where their food is grown. Whippetree Farm is going into their second season in Round Hill. The spring and summer of 2011 were very wet, but the fall made for a successful extended season. Here are some questions the Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve Association (SNBRA) asked Stewart:

SNBRA: What is the biggest challenge you face as a CSA?

Stewart: Educating people about the concept. Even though CSAs have been in existence for decades in North America it is relatively new to Nova Scotia.

SNBRA: What is your favorite thing about the farm and your job?

Stewart: The lifestyle - living in a rural community, getting to know our neighbours, being able to raise children in a healthy environment, eating wholesome food that we produce and being my own boss.

SNBRA: Would you say Whippetree Farm is a model for sustainability?

Stewart: We hope so. Using horses instead of tractors helps reduce our carbon footprint. They eat grass, provide us with compost for the fields, and we have a relationship with our horses. This way of farming is definitely an art. Making a living from the land and doing it so in a sustainable manner can be difficult to find the right recipe, but it's very rewarding.

SNBRA: What are you doing differently this year?

Stewart: We have a new website where members can sign up online, and pay using their credit card with PayPal. On top of a farm pick-up we'll have a drop off location in Annapolis Royal at the old train station and hope to have one in Bridgetown too if we get enough interest.

SNBRA: What do you feel the biosphere is to your organization and what would you like to see in the future?

Stewart: The biosphere can raise awareness for this area and our farm; we can help tell each other's stories. The UNESCO designation shows credibility, but can also be another level of community. (continued on pg. 3).

For more information about Whippetree Farm (CSA) visit: www.whippetreefarm.ca or 

SNBR Quick Facts:

- Designated by the UNESCO MAB program in 2001.
- The 12th Biosphere Reserve to be designated in Canada.
- 5 counties of: Annapolis, Digby, Yarmouth, Shelburne and Queens.
- The Core of the Biosphere Reserve is the largest protected wilderness area in the Maritimes.
- SNBRA is a hotspot for biodiversity and is home to 75% of Nova Scotia's species at risk.

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What A Biosphere Reserve Is NOT:

- It is NOT a new level of bureaucracy
- It is NOT a World Heritage Site
- It does NOT create any new regulations
- It does NOT restrict the rights of citizens- aboriginal or non-aboriginal



What is a Biosphere Reserve?

An international designation of recognition from UNESCO for a region that demonstrates a balance between humans and the biosphere.

The 3 basic functions : 1.Conservation 2. Sustainable Development 3. Capacity building



Bob and Heather in Iqaluit, Feb 2012

“...we must all continue to learn and to share our individual experiences with the larger community.” - Bob Maher.



Lisa on the beautiful windy shores of Bras d'Or Lake for the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Reserve Celebration –September 2011

“...there appears to be a renewed culture of networking and partnerships happening all over...” Lisa Kamperman.

A Message from the Chair

I am writing for the SNBRA newsletter from Iqaluit (Nunavut) on Baffin Island. We are having blizzard-like conditions with temperatures around minus twenty Celsius. My means of communication is through my iPad - for both email and Skype. The reason for this extended Winter holiday is simple, my wife, Heather, is working out of the Iqaluit office for the federal government - Parks Canada. I have retired.

This reality is likely to increase for those of us who choose a residence in Southwest Nova Scotia. There are, of course, many pluses and minuses. On the plus side, we have the opportunity to look at other lifestyles, cultures and landscapes in this diverse country called Canada. We can learn a lot from seeing how other regions cope with the same problems, e.g. rural infrastructure, access to technology, health and education services. We can benefit from different strategies to promote our natural and cultural heritage. On the negative side, we are forced to separate our source of income (economic factors) from our social and cultural interests.

Under these conditions, it is possible to reflect on the needs of Southwest Nova Scotia and then to Skype with Lisa about our strategy. I have been encouraging Lisa to develop a number of positive economic strategies:

- i) To encourage a strong network between all of the UNESCO World Heritage and Biosphere Reserves in Nova Scotia. This should be a positive message for all three levels of government, but especially the province.
- ii) In difficult economic times, it is NOT the time for the significant Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) in the region, e.g. SNBRA, Mersey Tobeatic Research Institute (MTRI), The Clean Annapolis River Project (CARP) to compete but rather to collaborate and share the values.
- iii) In a market driven world, it is important that the public and the tourism industry understand the value of the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) brand. This will be an important focus in 2012.

Finally, we must all continue to learn and to share our individual experiences with the larger community. I will strive to do just that, even at a distance for the next six months.

- Dr. Robert (Bob) Maher, PhD

Manager's Perspective~

It has been a year now that I have been in the position as Manager for the Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve Association (SNBRA). After our successful summer with our 2 summer students, September was very busy for me. We had the opportunity to discuss the Southwest Nova Biosphere with 4 travel writer's from Mexico, Chicago, Edmonton and New York; and then traveled to Cape Breton to join the celebration of the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Reserve becoming designated. Since the summer I have been working to network throughout the region to renew past partnerships as well as drum up new ones.

There are a lot of plans for the future, and SNBRA has participated in several strategic sessions of all types; from the Mersey Tobeatic Research Institute's strategic session, Kejimikujik National Park and Heritage Site Visitor Experience Opportunities Concept workshop, the first Hike Nova Scotia Summit, to the Tourism Industry Stakeholders sessions. SNBRA also

participated in the Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act public feedback sessions.

Most recently SNBRA participated with the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Reserve, UNESCO World Heritage Sites and with provincial representatives, all have come together to establish a working group on how we can promote these brands together, while educating the public. SNBRA has been working on a cross-Canada networking project with the other 15 biosphere reserves in Canada. SNBRA is specifically working on the Education Cluster.

So far 2012 feels as though there are a lot of good things brewing for NS and the SNBRA; and there appears to be a renewed culture of networking and partnerships happening all over. This is a good sign, and will help connect local pride to a stronger sustainable community. Stay tuned for updates in 2012!
-Lisa Kamperman, Manager SNBRA



CSA's and CSF's - A model for sustainable development? - (continued)

There certainly has been a lot of buzz lately about Off the Hook, the only Community Supported Fishery (CSF) in Atlantic Canada; most recently making the top 3 for the Rare Conservation/National Geographic Turning the Tide for Coastal Communities award (<http://www.rareplanet.org/en/challenge>). Off the Hook Cooperative Limited was formed in 2010 and in spring 2011 Dave Adler became the Community Supported Fishery Coordinator via The Ecology Action Centre. Dave says he was drawn to this position for personal values, his love of the ocean, and his business background. In the beginning the approach was to support small scale, sustainable fisheries by providing fishers with a fair price for their catch by connecting them directly with consumers. This idea was to change the fishermen from the "price taker to the price setter", bringing back value and pride in the fishing industry. The fishermen who helped start the co-op are located in Digby County in the SNBR and fish off the shores of Digby. Off the Hook is working on branding and expanding the CSF. Currently they are working on establishing CSFs around the province and working on the licensing details, as well as tools to make this process easier. Some questions SNBRA asked Dave:

SNBRA: Does it work like a CSA? Do you have similar seasons?

Dave: Last year the membership started at the end of June (for ground fish). There are generally 2 seasons: summer and fall. But there are also lobster deliveries in the off-season and we are looking into maybe halibut for spring. Currently there are what we call "satellite drop offs" in Tantallon, Wolville, Tatamagouche, Bedford, Dartmouth, Lower Prospect, and North End Halifax, with the main location being the Brewery Market in Halifax. And we are always looking to expand.

SNBRA: Do you think maybe all lobster fishermen will switch to this model?

Dave: Right now the main issue in the lobster fishery is price. We need to empower fishers to set a fair price so that they can cover their expenses and run a viable business. Right now that industry is not set up that way. The fishery is basically a feudal system: fishers are expected to take whatever price they are given, then walk away.

SNBRA: Do you see "Off the Hook" partnering with other CSA's?

Dave: We would like to help other communities set up their own CSF's. We are also working with existing CSA's to make fish available to their members.

SNBRA: Do you freeze any of the fish?

Dave: Currently no, everything is fresh, but that being said, if fish is packaged well and frozen, and frozen right after the fish are caught, and then defrosted properly, it is just as good as fresh. We are looking into shipping fish to Quebec and Ontario using this method.

SNBRA: Do you see Off the Hook as an ideal model for sustainability?

Dave: Yes, but I'd like to word it as a "model for empowering coastal communities", where confidence and pride is fostered and the profit stays with the fishermen.

SNBRA: How do you practice balance?

Dave: Currently the timeline gives breathing space as the fishing industry is seasonal, but the summer is busy.

As consumers we must realize that our purchases are what drive the economy, and by choosing to support local we are investing in our communities, our health and ultimately a sustainable future.

For more information about "Off the Hook" (CSF) visit: www.offthehookcsf.ca or 

- interviews and article by Lisa Kamperman



To look up other CSAs visit:

<http://www.acornorganic.org/acorn/databaseregional.html>





UNESCO Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve

www.swnovabiosphere.ca

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Winter 2012 Newsletter

How to contact us:

We'd love to hear from you!

E-mail:
info@swnovabiosphere.ca

or

Look us up on SKYPE by our email address

Our Vision:

We envision a healthy and sustainable biosphere while respecting our culture, quality of life and natural resources.

Our Mission:

To deliver and facilitate programs that empower and educate youth, citizens, and industry on the benefits of maintaining a sustainable biosphere reserve while supporting scientific and other research necessary to effect the objectives of the biosphere reserve.

Volunteers needed to monitor the groundwater in SNBR & all of NS

What is groundwater? Groundwater is water that completely fills the spaces in the ground beneath us. Think of a sponge that is sitting in a bowl of water: the water level (or water table) is the water surface within the sponge, and groundwater is the water in the lower portion of the sponge! Groundwater is always moving, most of the time it flows in the same direction of the ground above it, toward low areas like streams or ponds, which gives the local elevation of the water table.

A new project called Groundswell is finding out how groundwater levels are changing in communities across the province, and it's free! The basis of the project is to find water wells that could be used for long term monitoring. If you have a drilled well that is not in use, Groundswell might be able to use it as a long-term monitoring site. Your well could provide water level information for your whole community!

What is Project Coordinator Jennifer West looking for?

Wells that are:

- Unused (Do you know of an extra well at the back of someone's property? An unused well on a vacant property? Or a well that was used for a groundwater study?)
- Drilled (Unfortunately dug wells can't be used for this project.)

The project is free, and only requires your permission to access the well and install a small monitoring device in it. Trained volunteers from your community will visit the well several times each year to upload the data, which will be available online for municipal planners, consultants, researchers and every day citizens like you.

Contact Jennifer if you know of a possible site at [902-442-5046](tel:902-442-5046), and visit the project website at www.ecologyaction.ca/content/groundswell. - Jennifer West, Project Coordinator EAC

This project would not be possible without the generous support from the RBC Blue Water Project.



Ecology Action Centre
40 YEARS OF ACTION



If you or your organization has a story highlighting:

- 1. conservation,*
- 2. sustainable development*

or

- 3. capacity building,*

and would like to be featured in the next newsletter,

please send your information to:
info@swnovabiosphere.ca

To find event listings happening around the Biosphere and for

March Break Activities!

Visit our website:

www.swnovabiosphere.ca

Next Full Issue:
August 2012

Next Board of Directors Meeting:
April 19, 2012

~ PHOTO CONTEST ~



Inspire us with your photos from around the Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve.

For further details visit :
www.swnovabiosphere.ca

Contest is open from March 1, 2012 and closes on May 31, 2012.



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<http://www.facebook.com/UNESCO.SNBR>



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