SOUTHWEST NOVA BIOSPHERE RESERVE ASSOCIATION STRATEGIC PLAN
# Table of Contents

- Executive Summary
- Introduction
- The Strategic Planning Process
- Part 1: Context
- Part 2: Strategic Plan
- Part 3: Work Plan and Next Steps
- Appendix A: Additional Planning and Implementation Resources
  - 12 Step Opportunity Evaluation Checklist
  - Board Self-Evaluation
  - Keys to Successful Implementation
- Appendix B: Full Stakeholder Survey Results
- Appendix C: Other Suggested Vision Statements
- Appendix D: Worksheets Used During Planning
- Appendix E: Review of Board Structures
Executive Summary

In 2009, the Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve Association (SNBRA) contracted the Acadia Centre for Social and Business Entrepreneurship (ACSBE) to facilitate a series of strategic planning sessions. The intent of these sessions was to provide SNBRA board members the opportunity to identify new opportunities, solve organizational challenges, and inspire action that would drive the organization forward. These sessions were held on November 26th and December 10th, but were preceded by (a) a series of meetings between the Program Coordinator and ACSBE and (b) an online survey of board members and stakeholders. The full results of these surveys are seen in the appendices of the report.

The first of the two sessions featured an extensive discussion about the role of the SNBRA Board of Directors both in an absolute sense and in relation to the Project Coordinator. In this session, ACSBE led a series of activities examining the current board structure, the current committee structure, and possible alternatives to these current structures. It was agreed by the group that the current structure is lacking effectiveness, and this was confirmed through the anonymous surveys. Initially, the board agreed that they wished to be a more policy-driven board. Under this arrangement, they would be primarily responsible for two areas: establishing policy and setting the strategic direction for the organization (i.e. vision, mission, guiding principles, and goals). This decision was later retracted, however, primarily because the board was uncomfortable delegating such a high level of responsibility to the Project Coordinator. Although the board agreed that the Project Coordinator is highly capable, they felt this shift would be unfair to all parties until such time as an Executive Director is in place. Nevertheless, the board did agree on some fundamental principles with respect to their role. During this state of transition, it is generally agreed that board will follow a modified policy governance model.

In the second session, the group shifted its focus to examine SNBRA’s vision, mission, and objectives. Specifically, the board participated in a series of small and large group discussions about the importance and relevancy of current objectives, and the intent of the vision and mission. Although the vision and mission are not yet finalized, the board engaged in thoughtful discussion about how they should be changed to better reflect SNBRA’s ideal for success.

Currently, SNBRA’s vision is articulated as follows:

*a healthy biosphere that enriches our economy, while conserving natural resources, ecosystems, culture, and quality of life.*

Its mission is largely unchanged from the previous statement, and is as follows:

*The Southwest Nova Biosphere Association will seek to balance the conservation of natural & cultural resources with sustainable resource development to support prosperous local economies and healthy communities with the voluntary support of educational institutions, community, business and government partners.*
The board did, however, make significant strides with its objectives. In addition to reaching consensus about the priority of the organization’s eleven objectives (recognizing that there must be some recognition of the order of importance), they were successful in identifying success measurements, quantitative targets, and programs and activities relating to them. Finally, the board took stock of SNBRA’s capacity to achieve the various objectives given its limited human and financial resources. This assessment is included in the report. The objectives, in order of priority, are:

**Objective 1**: Support scientific research and monitoring of ecological systems and socio-economic patterns of the Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve, to obtain further understanding of environmental conditions to support sustainable resource management.

**Objective 2**: Support voluntary conservation measures to protect landscapes, habitats, species and genetic diversity in the core, buffer and cooperation zones.

**Objective 3**: Develop the support and cooperation of the businesses, industries and communities of the Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve to balance conservation and development activities.

**Objective 4**: Support the Preservation of the ecological integrity of the protected wilderness of Kejimkujik National Park and National Historic Site and the Tobeatic Wilderness Area and the Shelburne River Wilderness Area through appropriate management and community Stewardship.

**Objective 5**: Promote demonstration sites to illustrate traditional sustainable practices of the regional economy.

**Objective 6**: Develop and promote successful local examples of cultural, educational, ecological research and development in the region.

**Objective 7**: Develop opportunities for participation of students, teachers and community leaders in Biosphere Reserve activities to improve local awareness of cultural heritage and natural environment.

**Objective 8**: Encourage development of appropriate nature-based recreation that is ecologically sustainable.

**Objective 9**: Encourage development of innovative resource use and conservation techniques to explore new approaches to local resource issues by encouraging conservation of species of commercial and traditional importance.

**Objective 10**: Facilitate cooperation among federal and provincial agencies and private landowners with respect to conservation and development objectives.

**Objective 11**: Facilitate the resolution of local issues and concerns, and identify opportunities for
cooperation by bringing different sectors and perspectives to the table

The report concludes with ACSBE’s assessment of the vital steps SNBRA must take in the coming months in order to move forward successfully. Although there is a considerable amount of work to be done, it is important to recognize the progress that has already taken place since SNBRA’s origin. The next steps are as follows:

1. Refine and confirm the vision statement
2. Add specificity to the role of the Project Coordinator
3. Work to refine and quantify the objectives
4. Accept the strategic plan as an enabling tool, and not as a restrictive document
5. Take Action
6. Conduct further research on board structures
7. Follow up with survey results
8. Distinguish between strategic meetings and business meetings
9. Pursue committee reform
10. Establish timelines and deadlines

Included in this report are a number of important appendices which complement the content of the report body. These include a number of tools to aid in future decision-making and provide insight about the implementation of this very plan. Several board development exercises are also included. Finally, the report contains an unabbreviated and unedited version of the board and stakeholder survey results.
Introduction

The following pages describe the essence of the Strategic Plan of the Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve Association (SNBRA) for the period 2010-2012. This plan was developed by the Board of Directors (and in consultation with a variety of stakeholders) in two facilitated sessions during a two month period in late 2009.

The document is organized to maximize the reader’s understanding of SNBRA’s foundations as an organization. The main body of the plan includes a contextual overview as well as an articulation of the strategic direction as determined by the Board of Directors. The appendices provide information related to the operational plan, unfiltered feedback from various stakeholders (gathered during the strategic planning process), and additional resources the Board will use to implement the plan.

Of significant importance in reading this plan is to understand that this is NOT a static document (nor is the plan static). The SNBRA Board undertakes strategic analysis and discussion on a regular basis, regardless of whether it is formally recognized as such. While the Vision, Mission, and Guiding Principles are expected to remain intact, the details of the plan as articulated in goals, objectives, measurements, and methodologies are subject to change as new circumstances emerge.
The Strategic Planning Process

Strategic Planning is a broad term that doesn’t always mean the same thing to everyone. For that reason, we will take a moment right now to explain how ACSBE and SNBRA collaborated to move through the planning cycle. There were three important components:

**Stakeholder Surveys**

It is ACSBE’s belief that a thorough strategic planning process should include the ideas, thoughts, and insights of a large, representative sample of stakeholders. Although all of these stakeholders need not be a part of the decision-making process, their opinions are valuable and should be considered by the Board. To accommodate this, ACSBE designed and – with the help of the Project Coordinator – administered a detailed online survey (the full results of which are seen in the appendices). Each member of the planning group (mostly comprised of board members and advisors) was instructed to read these insights in advance, and keep them close at hand throughout the planning process. In total, 70 individuals completed the online survey.

**Sessions with Program Coordinator**

In order for ACSBE to understand the nature of SNBRA and to enable more effective planning sessions, it was necessary for ACSBE to spend a couple of pre-planning sessions with the Project Coordinator. During these sessions, the Project Coordinator and ACSBE engaged in discussions about (a) the history of SNBRA (b) past successes and achievements (c) previous planning session outcomes and (d) desired outcomes for this planning cycle. Further, ACSBE and the Project Coordinator took steps to consolidate all this previous information into one cohesive document. It was our belief that doing so would help us properly frame the current planning process, and bring everybody to the same page for the first session. Together, ACSBE and the Project Coordinator created a document that contained a modified vision and mission, a consolidated list of objectives, and an articulation of strategic goals.

**Live Facilitated Sessions**

Once the surveys and Program Coordinator sessions were completed, ACSBE facilitated a series of live planning sessions with the board. These two sessions, which lasted 5-6 hours apiece, included a combination of group discussion, individual reflection, and small group exercises designed to bring out new ideas and facilitate consensus among board members. In the time between sessions (2 weeks), ACSBE provided the board members with a short summary of progress to date and sought confirmation of this progress through a series of questions. Generally, the facilitated sessions were organized around ACSBE’s Strategic Planning Cycle™, which is seen below and includes three phases: exploration, evaluation, and execution.
Part 1: Context

Governance Model

SNBRA functions on a modified Policy Governance model. In this regard, the board sets the strategic direction based upon inputs from a variety of sources including individual directors, advisors, stakeholder groups, staff, and citizens at large.

The board makes the final decisions relative to the undertaking of projects. Projects are managed by staff and reports on these projects are presented to the board at each meeting.

The board carries out formal monitoring of strategic progress, at least annually, based on input from staff and advisors. The board may seek public input for monitoring purposes. UNESCO monitors and evaluates performance every 10 years.

Role of the Board

The board of SNBRA is responsible for the provision of Strategic Leadership and oversight of Operations and Management. (See Policy Statement Role of the Board)
In the area of strategic leadership, the board will establish strategic direction, goals, and measurables of success. In so doing the board will be the voice of the people in the local community. It will bring to bear scientific expertise and research in such areas as conservation and sustainability, natural resources, cultural and heritage implications, and economic development in the setting of goals and policies. Priority will be given to strategies that impact the protected core of the SNSB and areas of cooperation...

In the area of oversight of operations and management, the board will assist staff by establishing links to other organizations and government. The board will, where appropriate, assist staff in the identification and provision of resources, support in proposal writing, public relations and communications. (Policy Statement Job Description Board members)

Board Composition

In accordance with the bylaws, the composition of the board will be a maximum of 21 members. In order to ensure a balance of interests and to meet the objectives of the Biosphere Reserve Association there will be THREE sectors in the SNBRA Board. These will be: Industry/Development, Government/First Nations, and Non-Government.

It is the responsibility of the board to maintain optimal board membership and as such will seek members who collectively represent expertise in conservation/sustainability of natural resources, communication to and from local community, cultural/heritage implications, resource based economic development, entrepreneurship and business development, legal issues, technology, etc.

Part 2: Strategic Plan

Vision

What is a vision statement?

A vision statement is a short statement that describes an idealistic, utopian future state of affairs that has come to exist as a result of the work an organization has done. It is not about the products or programs that help get you there, only a state of being. If you have achieved your vision, you can go home and rest easy – your work is done. A good vision statement:

- Is memorable for everyone, and often evokes emotion
- Is short, positive, and inspiring, not bogged down by excessive jargon
- Is usually unachievable from a practical point of view; it is a star on the horizon – always pursued but never achieved
- By itself, does not provide enough clarity for the operational level of the organization
Current
In recognition of our unique cultural heritage and natural region, and of the shared responsibility to conserve this environment, the Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve Association, with the voluntary support of educational institutions, community, business and government partners, will seek to balance the conservation of natural and cultural heritage with sustainable resource development in Southwest Nova Scotia, in support of prosperous local economies and healthy communities.

Suggested
[We envision] a healthy biosphere that enriches our economy, while conserving natural resources, ecosystems, culture, and quality of life.

[We envision] a healthy biosphere that conserves natural resources and ecosystems, while enriching our economy, culture, and quality of life

Mission

What is a mission statement?

A mission statement is a statement that – in some form or another – describes (a) what you do (with some level of specificity) (b) who you do it for, and (c) why you do it. A mission statement is your unique contribution to your vision, and you should be able to link the two together (with the mission statement coming underneath the vision). A good mission statement should provide readers with a better grasp on the day-to-day function of your organization than does the vision. A good mission statement:

- Includes action words, or verbs (to do something)
- Is more specific than the vision statement (remember, the two serve different functions)
- Is easy to understand to an outsider; they read it, they get it.

Current AND Suggested

The Southwest Nova Biosphere Association will seek to balance the conservation of natural & cultural resources with sustainable resource development to support prosperous local economies and healthy communities with the voluntary support of educational institutions, community, business and government partners.

Strategic Goals

What are Strategic Goals?

Strategic goals are an organization’s articulation of its top-tier priorities. Together, they add a layer of specificity to the mission statement, and serve as the foundation upon which the objectives are built. Practically speaking, they serve as a link between the mission and the objectives/action items. Without
this key link, many people often engage in the tasks of an organization but find themselves asking “how does this relate to what we’re trying to accomplish?” The model, then, looks like this:

**Vision**

**Mission**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Goal 1</th>
<th>Strategic Goal 2</th>
<th>Strategic Goal 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conservation</td>
<td>Sustainable</td>
<td>Capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Building</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Objective 1 (O1)**

*Support scientific research and monitoring of ecological systems and socio-economic patterns...*

| O1 Measurables, targets, & projects contributing to Goal 1 | O1 Measurables, targets, & projects contributing to Goal 2 | O1 Measurables, targets, & projects contributing to Goal 3 |

**Objective 2 (O2)**

*Support voluntary conservation measures to protect landscapes, habitats.....*

| O2 Measurables, targets, and projects contributing to Goal 1 | O2 Measurables, targets, and projects contributing to Goal 2 | O2 Measurables, targets, and projects contributing to Goal 3 |

**Objective 3 (O3)**

*Develop the support and cooperation of the businesses, industries and communities...*

| O3 Measurables, targets, and projects contributing to Goal 1 | O3 Measurables, targets, and projects contributing to Goal 2 | O3 Measurables, targets, and projects contributing to Goal 3 |

... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ...

**Objective 11 (O11)**

*Facilitate the resolution of local issues and concerns, and identify opportunities....*

| O11 Measurables, targets, and projects contributing to Goal 1 | O11 Measurables, targets, and projects contributing to Goal 2 | O11 Measurables, targets, and projects contributing to Goal 3 |

Ideally, then, anybody within the organization – working at any level – should be able to methodically trace what they are doing at any particular moment all the way up to the vision. For example, if someone is working on a specific program or project, he or she should be able to link that to a specific objective, which falls under one or more goals, which contributes to the mission and then to the vision.
If this link cannot be made, we must step back and assess where the link is broken and take the proper action to correct it. With that said, SNBRA has unanimously agreed that it has three strategic goals, which are as follows:

**Conservation:** To contribute to the conservation of landscapes, ecosystems & biodiversity

**Sustainable Development:** To foster economic & human development that is socio-culturally and ecologically sustainable

**Capacity Building:** To provide support for research, monitoring, education & information on issues of conservation and development.

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**Objectives – in order of priority**

These objectives are a re-clustering of your objectives (approved for 2006 Sustainability Plan) that re-focus on the action verbs contained in each objective: develop, facilitate, promote, support, encourage, preserve. The methodologies are based on a prioritized list from the March 2009 retreat.

**Objective 1:** Support scientific research and monitoring of ecological systems and socio-economic patterns of the Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve, to obtain further understanding of environmental conditions to support sustainable resource management.

**Objective 2:** Support voluntary conservation measures to protect landscapes, habitats, species and genetic diversity in the core, buffer and cooperation zones.

**Objective 3:** Develop the support and cooperation of the businesses, industries and communities of the Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve to balance conservation and development activities.

**Objective 4:** Support the Preservation of the ecological integrity of the protected wilderness of Kejimkujik National Park and National Historic Site and the Tobeatic Wilderness Area and the Shelburne River Wilderness Area through appropriate management and community Stewardship

**Objective 5:** Promote demonstration sites to illustrate traditional sustainable practices of the regional economy

**Objective 6:** Develop and promote successful local examples of cultural, educational, ecological research and development in the region

**Objective 7:** Develop opportunities for participation of students, teachers and community leaders in Biosphere Reserve activities to improve local awareness of cultural heritage and natural environment.
Objective 8: Encourage development of appropriate nature-based recreation that is ecologically sustainable

Objective 9: Encourage development of innovative resource use and conservation techniques to explore new approaches to local resource issues by encouraging conservation of species of commercial and traditional importance.

Objective 10: Facilitate cooperation among federal and provincial agencies and private landowners with respect to conservation and development objectives.

Objective 11: Facilitate the resolution of local issues and concerns, and identify opportunities for cooperation by bringing different sectors and perspectives to the table

Measurables, targets, activities, and capacity

Now that we have examined the objectives in order of priority, it is important to drill deeper and identify the measurable outcomes, targets, activities, and capacity associated with each objective. Those four components are defined as follows:

Measurables: the stated criteria against which SNBRA will measure its success in achieving the objective. It answers the question “what criteria – either quantitative or qualitative – will we use to determine the extent to which we have been successful in fulfilling this objective?”

Targets: the specific numerical or quantitative targets associated with each measurable (with the understanding that not all measurables can be measured in quantitative terms)

Activities: the specific projects, programs, initiatives, actions, or activities that SNBRA will undertake to help them achieve the measurable and targets.

Capacity: the current internal capacity that SNBRA has to achieve the objective. Although capacity is a very broad term, the SNBRA participants were asked to rank the organization’s capacity on each objective on a scale of: very low, low, medium, high, or very high

**NOTE** it is relevant at this point in the report to suggest that the process used to determine measurables and targets was different than what many of the planning participants were accustomed to. In many cases, planning groups look first at the projects and activities, and secondarily at the measurables and targets associated with them. It is ACSBE’s belief, however, that organization’s must first understand how they will measurably define success, and only then answer the question “what projects and activities will we have to undertake in order to achieve those measurements?” This represents a fundamental shift in the planning process, and it is one that the board should either consciously decide to adopt or abandon.
Objective 1: Support scientific research and monitoring of ecological systems and socio-economic patterns of the Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve, to obtain further understanding of environmental conditions to support sustainable resource management.

CAPACITY: 4.66/5.0 (or very high, very high, high)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measurable</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- # of research grants by partners</td>
<td>- New &amp; innovative research</td>
<td>- New collaborative Model e.g. like the old “Keji Science conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- New research projects</td>
<td>- # identified</td>
<td>- Strategic annual scientific review, i.e. collaborative vs. competitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- # of resources</td>
<td>- # NGOs identified</td>
<td>- Investigate use of new ICT technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Funding</td>
<td>- # of researchers identified</td>
<td>- Collaborative workshop of ENGOs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Volunteers/partners</td>
<td>- # reports listed</td>
<td>- Portal of existing science data on website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Quality of reports</td>
<td></td>
<td>- All of the above to happen under the SNBRA umbrella.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Extent to which it fits mission</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Asset development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- # of research partners identified</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Volunteers &amp; partners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Objective 2: Support voluntary conservation measures to protect landscapes, habitats, species and genetic diversity in the core, buffer and cooperation zones.

CAPACITY: 15/15 (very high, very high, very high)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measurable</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- # of successful voluntary measures for protection purposes</td>
<td>- # of engaged NGOs &amp; organization</td>
<td>- Beach clean up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- # of partnerships</td>
<td>- # of private participants</td>
<td>- Education &amp; school projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Volume of protected landscapes and areas: private, municipal, provincial, federal</td>
<td>- % increase volunteers in SW Nova</td>
<td>- Encourage wetland conservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Compliance with harvesting guidelines</td>
<td>- % increase in conservation projects</td>
<td>- Training workshop for online _____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- % increase in inclusion in school programs and activities</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Objective 3: Develop the support and cooperation of the businesses, industries and communities of the Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve to balance conservation and development activities.

CAPACITY: 2.66/5 (low, low, high)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measurable</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• # of businesses</td>
<td>• 40%</td>
<td>• Business - develop SNBRA Certification Program for businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• # of communities</td>
<td>• 40%</td>
<td>• Communities – municipal and community workshops for ICSP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• # of businesses that follow best practices</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Website – links to resources and communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• # of communities doing ICSP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• # of businesses participating</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Community growth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Define Industry Traditional: fish, farm, forestry Innovative: technology, tourism, manufacturing, mining, creative arts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Increased % of sustainable practices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Increased % of best practices sites</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Increased % of new opportunities</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Objective 4: Support the Preservation of the ecological integrity of the protected wilderness of Kejimkujik National Park and National Historic Site and the Tobeatic Wilderness Area and the Shelburne River Wilderness Area through appropriate management and community Stewardship

CAPACITY: 4/5 (very high, high, medium)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measurable</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• PR – communication on EI issues</td>
<td>• Increased community stewardship</td>
<td>• Boundary review of Tobeatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reports</td>
<td>- Management plan</td>
<td>• SNBRA representation on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Public consultation with Keji, Parks Canada and Tobeatic Wilderness Area, NS DNR, NS Tourism</td>
<td>- State of the park</td>
<td>- Committees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Link between public, community and management agencies</td>
<td>- Increase area of Tobeatic</td>
<td>- Public meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- # of interviews</td>
<td>- Decrease policy and values</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- # of press releases</td>
<td>- Parks Canada</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Tobeatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- NS DNR</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- NS Tourism</td>
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</table>

| | • 10% - 15% increase | |
| | | |
Objective 5: Promote demonstration sites to illustrate traditional sustainable practices of the regional economy

CAPACITY: 3/5 (low, medium, high)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measurable</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Land use mapping</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Agriculture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Vineyards</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Orchards</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Biodynamic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Forestry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Horse logging</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of sites</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type and diversity of sites</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partners: traditional – fishing, farming, forestry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Feedback level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td># of visitors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Amount of existing documentation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td># of facilities and where they are</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td># per county</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td># per core</td>
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<tr>
<td># of farm markets – increase vendors by %, increase attendees by %</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td># of certified woodlot owners – increase by %</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td># of farmers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td># of general public inclusion in municipal planning</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td># of hits on website</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td># of woodlot owners/companies on site</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td># of vendors (farmers) on website</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Research opportunity starts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Map assets (community mapping)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Web GIS</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nova Forest Alliance</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>“model forest” (Windhorse Farm)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers’ market network</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website to advertise</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Objective 6: Develop and promote successful local examples of cultural, educational, ecological research and development in the region

CAPACITY: 4.33/5 (very high, very high, medium)
Objective 7: Develop opportunities for participation of students, teachers and community leaders in Biosphere Reserve activities to improve local awareness of cultural heritage and natural environment.

CAPACITY: 4/5 (very high, high, medium)

Objective 8: Encourage development of appropriate nature-based recreation that is ecologically sustainable

CAPACITY: 3/5 (low, medium, high)

Objective 9: Encourage development of innovative resource use and conservation techniques to explore new approaches to local resource issues by encouraging conservation of species of commercial and traditional importance.

CAPACITY: 2.66/5 (low, low, high)
Objective 10: Facilitate cooperation among federal and provincial agencies and private landowners with respect to conservation and development objectives.

CAPACITY: 3/5 (medium, medium, medium)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measurable</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Objective 11: Facilitate the resolution of local issues and concerns, and identify opportunities for cooperation by bringing different sectors and perspectives to the table.

CAPACITY: 2.33/5 (low, very low, high)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measurable</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Part 3: Work Plan & Next Steps

Although a number of important decisions were made during the facilitated strategic planning process, there remain a number of important steps for the Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve Association in the coming months. The purpose of this section of the report is to outline these steps and offer guidance on how to complete them.

Next Step 1: Refine and confirm the vision statement

Early on in the planning process, it was generally agreed that SNBRA’s current vision statement could be enhanced to better reflect the ideal future state as imagined by the board. That is, there existed an opportunity to breathe new life into the vision by making it more succinct, memorable, inspiring, and communicable. And although it is quite clear that the Board shares a united vision, the precise wording of that vision has not yet been agreed upon.
For this reason, ACSBE recommends that – sooner rather than later – the SNBRA board ratify one vision statement for the future. Although this will require certain concessions from Board members (it is unlikely that every word will be to everybody’s unanimous agreement), we believe this is a necessary step to move forward effectively. While non-profit organizations occasionally nominate a committee to finalize a vision statement (or other components of the strategic plan) it is best if group consensus is reached. For the purpose of reaching consensus, we recommend beginning with the vision statement included in this document and working forward from there.

Finally, it is vital that SNBRA work to communicate its vision to other stakeholders. Too often, organizations spend a great deal of time crafting a vision, and then little or no time sharing it with other important people and organizations that could benefit from knowing it. Although it is unlikely that most stakeholders would want a detailed account of how SNBRA arrived at its vision, it is incumbent upon the board to ensure that the stakeholders receive the message in a manner that is relevant to them. This could be accomplished through face-to-face meetings, or through the creative use of other methods. Most importantly, at least from the stakeholder’s point of view, is ‘how can I join you in your vision?’

**Next Step 2: Add specificity to the role of the Project Coordinator**

It became quite clear throughout the planning process that the Board is not firmly settled upon a clear role for the position of Project Coordinator. Although the mandate of the position has traditionally been to execute the projects put forth by the Board, there were times during the planning process where several alternatives were proposed. Chiefly, some board members suggested that the title of the position change from Project Coordinator to Executive Director. The stated benefits of this change were threefold; first, it would add a level of credibility to the position that is not implicit in the title of Project Coordinator. Second, it would provide the current position holder with the autonomy and authority to make larger decisions within a framework provided by the board. Finally, it would make SNBRA consistent with comparable Biosphere organizations, many of whom have made this change. However, several members pointed to the disadvantages, primarily that such a change would require a great deal more policy than is currently in place. Further, there appears to be a small level of discomfort among the board in making such a large step right now.

The conclusion, then, is that the role of the Project Coordinator lies somewhere in between a purely administrative position and an Executive Director position. Further, the board agreed that the position is evolving and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. So, how should SNBRA address this? It is ACSBE’s recommendation that the SNBRA board should take steps in the short term to define the scope of the position. Although the title may or may not change, it is very important for the success and daily activities of the Project Coordinator that she has an understanding of her function vis-à-vis the board. Although it would appear to be moving in the general direction of Executive Director, this is truly a board-level decision.

**Next Step 3: Work to refine and quantify the objectives**

SNBRA has thus far done a terrific job achieving consensus on both its strategic goals, and objectives. The Board members have a clear understanding of what needs to be accomplished, and now the
question becomes ‘how will the Association do the work?’ Although the planning group has already
generated some specific ideas about how these goals can be accomplished, there is more work to be
done. ACSBE’s recommendation is that the board spends 1-2 additional sessions generating specific
ideas under each objective, drilling down into a discussion of methodologies, measurable, targets,
timelines, and resource commitments. This process can be guided using the worksheets within this
report, and the same process used during the facilitated sessions.

An important part of this step, however, is to focus FIRST on the generation of creative and
entrepreneurial ideas (without focusing on limitations). Secondarily, the focus should be on debating the
resources available for each goal and objective. Our experience shows that organizations develop their
most creative and useful ideas when they are unrestricted by real or perceived resource constraints.
Ideas can always be eliminated later, but are seldom generated in the first place when tight barriers are
placed around the people generating them.

Next Step 4: Accept the strategic plan as an enabling tool, not as a restrictive
document

Inevitably, the strategic planning cycle makes some people feel ‘boxed in’ or restricted. To these people,
the act of detailing vision, mission, guiding principles, goals, objectives, and methodologies limits the
organization’s ability to think or act freely and generate new entrepreneurial ideas. This is quite a
natural occurrence; however we would encourage all SNBRA board and volunteers to view the strategic
plan as a framework under which good ideas and positive action can take place. Really, the strategic
plan is supposed to be a framework for assessing new ideas quickly and enabling easy decisions – not a
rulebook for stifling the entrepreneurial spirit. New and innovative ideas have always been a large part
of the organizational culture at SNBRA, and it would be counterproductive if that were to change.

Next Step 5: Continuously build on the plan

The strategic plan is intended to be a fluid document, not a static one. Although it is common for board
members to breathe a sigh of relief once the concentrated period of facilitated planning is complete,
they must understand that strategic planning or strategic thinking really never ends. It is a process that
continues to evolve as new (and often unforeseen) circumstances arise. The reason why many strategic
plans find a home on the proverbial shelf is because many organizations attempt to manage today’s
organization with yesterday’s plan. This being said, there are major components of the plan that SNBRA
has agreed upon, and which should remain relevant for at least 3-5 years. However, the objectives,
methodologies, measurables, priorities, and the order of those priorities, should be reconsidered or
reconfirmed on a regular basis.

Next Step 6: Take Action

The process of strategic planning can – and sometimes does – dominate an organization’s culture. This is
not a good thing. While effective planning is an important ingredient in success, a culture of over-
planning can quickly produce board members and volunteers who are burned out or unengaged. We
believe that even though the strategic plan is not 100% completed, SNBRA has adequate clarity in its
objectives to take action and achieve results. With the completion of the measurables, targets, and methodologies (see Step 2) the Project Coordinator – with the support and encouragement of the board – should have enough direction to move forward with confidence. With each and every measurable success SNBRA achieves, it will gain momentum and recognition, raising its public profile. If the organization becomes too bogged down in planning, however, it is likely to experience frustration and fatigue.

Next Step 7: Conduct further research on board structures

Throughout the planning process, several decisions were made with respect to the board structure. At the conclusion of the first session, it appeared imminent that the board would move from being a management board to a policy board. This suggestion resulted from the recognition that the current board structure – particularly the sub-committee format – was not proving to be effective in producing results. As a result, the members generally agreed that the board should set the strategic direction and participate in a hands-on manner only in the capacity of individual experts.

Upon further review in the second session, however, it appeared that the board members had second thoughts about this shift. This hesitancy goes hand-in-hand with the decision not to change the position of Project Coordinator into Executive Director. The current suggestion is that the board structure and role will officially change when and if the title of the Project Coordinator shifts to that of Executive Director. In the meantime, ACSBE recommends that SNBRA conduct deeper research into the various board governance structures, beginning with the resources provided in Appendix E of this report.

Next Step 8: Follow-up with survey results

Appended to this report are the unabridged results from the online survey, which was completed by 70 people representing various interests. These stakeholder surveys confirmed some closely held assumptions about the organization, but also provided a great deal of insight for the board. Perhaps more than anything, it illustrated a wide discrepancy in the extent to which stakeholders understand the organization’s vision and mission. ACSBE’s recommendation is that SNBRA use these surveys in three ways. First, we believe SNBRA should use these results as an ongoing point of reference, to revisit occasionally and use in the creation of strategy. Second, we believe SNBRA should use this survey as a benchmark against which future organizational assessments can be compared. For example, perhaps in 2-3 years SNBRA can execute this same survey once again and measure progress against the 2009 version. Finally, we would encourage SNBRA to contact those individuals and organizations who indicated they would like to meet with SNBRA – it would be a missed opportunity not to. The names of those individuals have been provided to the Project Coordinator.

Next Step 9: Distinguish between strategic meetings and business meetings

The line between a ‘strategic’ discussion and a ‘business’ discussion can be unclear even at the best of times. For what begins as a high-level conversation about strategy, vision, and mission almost invariably narrows to a conversation about tasks, budgets, and technical issues. It is simply human tendency to consider urgent needs and near-term requirements as opposed to long-term strategies that are
sometimes less clear or direct. However, with that being acknowledged, ACSBE recommends that SNBRA work to consciously set aside time for each of the two meetings (strategic and business). By doing so, SNBRA can ensure an appropriate focus on both the long-term and short-term needs of the organization (recognizing that focusing only on one or the other tends to ‘starve’ the other). Common topics during business meetings would include budgets, human resource policies, organizational filings, facility issues, or day-to-day operational needs. Topics appropriate for strategic meetings, by contrast, might include vision, mission, guiding principles, goals, or a discussion of long-term trends affecting SNBRA.

Some people may suggest that from a practical standpoint (and particularly given the geographic distance between SNBRA board members), it does not make sense to multiply the number of meetings to accommodate this. This is a valid assertion, and therefore we recommend that – at a minimum – the SNBRA board divide its meetings into two segments – strategic and business. Although doing so may initially seem awkward, we believe you will find positive results. It should be noted that while ‘business issues’ can easily expand to consume all the time you have, resolving them will be oddly unrewarding without linking them to a bigger picture.

Next Step 10: Pursue Committee Reform

It became clear throughout the facilitated sessions that SNBRA’s current committee structure is not proving effective in driving progress. This was confirmed both by the survey results and through group discussion. Committee meetings, it seems, are poorly attended, leaving little opportunity to move forward with action. Although it would be easy to take this as a criticism, there are several good reasons why this has happened. Foremost among them is the sheer distance that separates board members. This extends travel times and makes it difficult for board members to attend meetings. Another reason for the inefficiency of the committees is simply the reality that all board members have other commitments and are likely facing some degree of volunteer burn out. This is a common occurrence and should not be seen as unique to SNBRA.

So, how to pursue this reform? During the facilitated sessions, it was initially agreed that committee participation should no longer be a requirement for board members. That is, if board members should choose to serve on committees, they would do so only in the capacity of an individual with interest and expertise (as opposed to as a board member with responsibilities). Although the board’s consensus about this shift is questionable, ACSBE continues to believe that this decision should stand.

That being said, there are other ways that committees can be reformed to increase effectiveness. Foremost among these is through the increased use of technology to facilitate meetings. Although face-to-face meetings are desirable, hosting meetings through conference call or through applications such as Skype save money and time, reduce emissions, and enable attendance. Another possible reform would be reducing the number of committees or reducing their mandates. Although this may seem unappealing in the short term, committees are historically more cohesive when they feel a sense of accomplishment – a feeling that doesn’t often emerge when the accomplishments pale in comparison to the mandate. Other possible reforms include the recruitment of more volunteers to serve on
committees, or placing more emphasis on individual contributions (as opposed to group committees). Overall, ACSBE recommends further discussion and clarity around this issue.

Next Step 11: Establish timelines and deadlines

In the second planning session, the SNBRA board did an excellent job developing goals, objectives, targets, and measurements. All of those outcomes have been discussed earlier in this report. However, there is one final step to be completed, and that is the determination and articulation of time frames within which each goal or objective must be completed. This is arguably for the most difficult step in the planning process for two reasons. First, it is difficult because it forces a major sense of accountability on the organization. By assigning a deadline to a goal or action, the organization starts the clock ticking and creates an increased sense of urgency towards the accomplishment of the goal. If there is no timeline for the goal, it can exist indefinitely and the organization can always satisfy itself by simply saying ‘we’re working on it’. Establishing timelines and deadlines is also challenging because it is difficult to determine an appropriate deadline for long-term goals, projects, or initiatives. For example, let’s look at objective 8. Objective 8 is to ‘Encourage development of appropriate nature-based recreation that is ecologically sustainable.’ Given the broad language used in this objective, it will understandably be challenging for SNBRA to create a time frame for it. For this reason, ACSBE recommends instead establishing time frames for the activities that are associated with that objective. Once that process has been completed, it should be much easier to justify a timeline for the objective as a whole.

Additional areas requiring attention

During our facilitated sessions, we addressed a number of issues relating to SNBRA’s long-term sustainability. Chief among these were the organization’s vision, mission, board structure, and goals. However, it is important to acknowledge that there are additional issues that will face SNBRA in the coming months. Although these were not directly discussed during the facilitated sessions, they are worthy of mention here:

Note: these five points have been raised by the Project Coordinator and have been written in a way that reflects this

1) **SNBRA’s 2011 UNESCO Review**
   The full Board of Directors should understand the process of this review and begin preparation for this significant milestone.

2) **Understanding the role and interaction of CBRA and CC UNESCO**
   The Board of Directors should understand the role and mandate of both the Canadian Biosphere Reserve Association (CBRA) along with the Canadian Commission of UNESCO. Both of these organizations have had unique communications challenges with the 15 biosphere reserves. The Chair of SNBRA is a board member of CBRA.

3) **Interaction with additional Nova Scotia UNESCO sites**
It is recommended that discussion at the board level occur regarding the proposed Bras D’or Biosphere Reserve and its potential impacts, both positive and negative, to SNBRA. Also, we should hold discussions with the other UNESCO sites in Nova Scotia to pursue possible partnerships. This could be further extended to both UNESCO Biosphere Reserves and World Heritage sites in Atlantic Canada to develop an Atlantic Canada UNESCO coalition.

4) Development of SNBRA’s Membership
Currently the membership of the Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve Association consists of the Board of Directors. Numerous organizations have requested SNBRA membership and there is currently no process in place for the approval of those memberships and information sharing. It is recommended that we develop a plan for the recruitment, approval, engagement and retention of additional SNBRA members representing the region of Southwest Nova and its diverse natural, cultural and historic landscape and industry. Also, it is recommended that we develop an approval process for SNBRA’s logo use by the membership.

5) Development of new structure for working groups and committees
It is recommended that a review process occur for the SNBRA working group and committee Structure. This need was highlighted by both the survey results and historic committee attendance. One potential model is a mix of Board Directors and general membership which may result in an adaptation of the current SNBRA by-laws.
Appendix A: Additional Planning and Implementation Resources

12-Step Opportunity Evaluation Checklist

Opportunity description:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Does it support the vision?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Does it support the mission?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Is it consistent with our core values and guiding principles?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>How many of our strategic priorities does it match with?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Is it revenue positive, revenue neutral, or revenue negative?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Does this opportunity have a champion?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>What is the risk level? Low, medium, high?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Is the opportunity a one-off, or an ongoing one?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Does this opportunity interfere with or duplicate another SNBR initiative?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Would our stakeholders support this opportunity? Would any NOT support it?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Is there an opportunity to include our partners/stakeholders in this opportunity?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>What is the best case scenario? The worst case scenario?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Board Self-Evaluation

The purpose of this template is to provide the SNBRA board with a tool with which it can periodically evaluate its performance. Seen below are 34 criteria which – collectively – indicate that a board is working effectively. INSTRUCTIONS: individually, have each board member complete the evaluation based on his or her own experiences with the SNBRA board. When completed, compare responses with remaining board members and develop an action plan to eliminate any weaknesses that may exist.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluative criterion</th>
<th>Rating (1=completely disagree, 10=completely agree)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Board has consensus about the mission of the organization</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board has consensus about the organization’s vision</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board/E.D. turnover is low</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consensus on Board roles and responsibilities</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board members fully understand their duties and liabilities</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board members can easily read and interpret financial statements</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are no unresolved conflicts on the Board or between the Board and the Project Coordinator</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a clear understanding on roles of Officers, or how one gets to become an Officer</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current board practice or structure matches by-laws</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are no apparent conflicts of interest</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Board constructively questions and challenges management’s strategies, views, and proposals</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are just the right number of committees</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committees are engaged in their work</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Board is sensitive to the needs of different stakeholders, and is aware of how their decisions affect different stakeholder groups</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Board governs itself, and is not run by the Executive Director</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Board does not 'rubber stamp' decisions</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Board does not micro-manage the organization</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Board does not suffer from decision paralysis</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Board has a clear strategic direction and clear priorities</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Board focuses on the appropriate issues</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board members speak as a united front once they leave the Board room</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Board – as a collective – is very visibly passionate about the organization’s cause</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board meetings are well attended</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Board demonstrates accountability for its decisions, actions, and results</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee meetings are well attended</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Board adheres to high ethical standards and acts with integrity</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings are well-chaired</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Board receives the right information in the right format at the right time</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Board clearly understands its role vis-à-vis staff</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Board has strong relationships with stakeholders</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Board arranges to consult staff members when appropriate</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is no volunteer fatigue or staff burnout</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Keys to Successful Implementation

Suppose our organization thoroughly develops all five products of strategic planning, completes the process, and comes up with a strategic plan. Everyone has the best intentions but when we get back to our units, we are overwhelmed with daily details. Soon it's "business as usual," the plan sits on the shelf, and before we know it, another year has passed. However, this need not happen.

The three major keys to successful strategic planning and implementation are commitment, credibility, and communication.

Up-front commitment by the leaders must include an adherence to the full and thorough process of strategic planning. There must also be a commitment to implementing the strategies recommended by the strategic planning committee.

The leaders should implement programs and services and commit allocations to meet the objectives of the strategic plan at a level that is "doable" for the organization and level of activity. As one person has put it, "To commit to plan, is to commit to change."

A strategic planning committee researches, collects input, and makes recommendations. But, it is up to members of the organization to implement the recommendations.

Credibility is created and maintained by following these three guidelines: representative participation, adherence to the complete process, and clear documentation.

The strategic planning committee should have representatives from all areas of the organization and adhere to the steps of the process. While the actual logistics of research and implementing the plan can be tailored to the available resources, all five products should be carefully developed and evaluated.

The committee should document all of its research and activities to serve as the basis for the strategic plan and its background materials. It will also serve as a clear record of the committee's activities open for all to see and evaluate. There should be nothing exclusive or secret about strategic planning. It should be open to all for review and input.

Input, feedback, and understanding are crucial at every step. A key concept to remember is that strategic planning is a cooperative and participatory process. Everyone should have input and, ideally, everyone should feel a sense of ownership over the final plan. Such personal commitment will facilitate the implementation process.

It is important to explain the principles and goals of strategic planning to everyone in the organization. We need to assure each person that although he or she may not be on the committee, everyone can have input and evaluate the recommendations. It is up to the staff and committees to determine how to fulfill each objective. The strategic planning committee makes general recommends on what they think should be done. The leadership, operating committees, and staff determine how it will be done.

An additional aid to implement the strategic plan is to create an integrated system by which the strategic plan becomes the "benchmark" (measuring stick) for progress in our organization. It then becomes a system of accountability.
The best way to set up an integrated system is for the directors to accept the strategic plan and make the mission statement part of the directives. The strategic plan can then become the context from which programs and services flow.

Strategic planning is the key to assuring that our organization is prepared for the challenges of tomorrow.

How Do We Ensure Implementation of Our New Plan?

A frequent complaint about the strategic planning process is that it produces a document that ends up collecting dust on a shelf -- the organization ignores the precious information depicted in the document.

The following guidelines will help ensure that the plan is implemented. (Note that reference to boards of directors is in regard to organizations that are corporations.)

1. When conducting the planning process, involve the people who will be responsible for implementing the plan. Use a cross-functional team (representatives from each of the major organization’s products or service) to ensure the plan is realistic and collaborative.

2. Ensure the plan is realistic. Continue asking planning participants “Is this realistic? Can you really do this?”

3. Organize the overall strategic plan into smaller action plans, often including an action plan (or work plan) for each committee on the board.

4. In the overall planning document, specify who is doing what and by when (action plans are often referenced in the implementation section of the overall strategic plan). Some organizations may elect to include the action plans in a separate document from the strategic plan, which would include only the mission, vision, values, key issues and goals, and strategies. This approach carries some risk that the board will lose focus on the action plans.

5. In an implementation section in the plan, specify and clarify the plan’s implementation roles and responsibilities. Be sure to detail particularly the first 90 days of the implementation of the plan. Build in regular reviews of status of the implementation of the plan.

6. Translate the strategic plan’s actions into job descriptions and personnel performance reviews.

7. Communicate the role of follow-ups to the plan. If people know the action plans will be regularly reviewed, implementers tend to do their jobs before they’re checked on.

8. Be sure to document and distribute the plan, including inviting review input from all.

9. Be sure that one internal person has ultimate responsibility that the plan is enacted in a timely fashion.

10. The chief executive’s support of the plan is a major driver to the plan’s implementation. Integrate the plan’s goals and objectives into the chief executive’s performance reviews.

11. Place huge emphasis on feedback to the board’s executive committee from the planning participants. Consider all or some of the following to ensure the plan is implemented.

12. Have designated rotating “checkers” to verify, e.g., every quarter, if each implementer completed their assigned tasks.

13. Have pairs of people be responsible for tasks. Have each partner commit to helping the other to finish the other’s tasks on time.
Appendix B: Stakeholder Survey Results

Total number of respondents: 70
# of respondents currently serving on Board: 24
# of respondents currently NOT on Board: 46

Which of the following best describes your association with SNBRA (check all that apply):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Association</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current board member</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former board member</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsor/funder</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interested organization</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government or Municipal official</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interested or concerned citizen</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Board members only: Based on the document you have received and read with this survey, please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following (1=totally disagree, 5=totally agree):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Agreement Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vision statement</td>
<td>3.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission statement</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The three foundational pillars</td>
<td>4.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNBRA's five priority areas</td>
<td>4.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals and objectives</td>
<td>4.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNBRA's partners and stakeholders</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How well do you feel you understand what the Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve Association is, and what it does?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I have no idea what SNBRA is or does</th>
<th>0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have only a minimal idea of what SNBRA is or does</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a decent idea of what SNBRA is or does</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a very good idea of what SNBRA is or does</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I completely understand what SNBRA is and what it does</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Board members only: to what extent are you clear about your roles and responsibilities as a SNBRA Board member?

| Completely clear | 4 |
| Clear | 6 |
| Neither clear nor unclear | 3 |
| Unclear | 1 |
| Completely unclear | 0 |

Based on the descriptions seen above, which type of board do you think SNBRA currently has?
Based on the descriptions you have read, what type of board do you think SNBRA SHOULD have?
Seen below are several criteria which combine to define the effectiveness of a Board of Directors. Based on your own experience, please evaluate the SNBRA Board on the following (1=disagree, 5=agree):

**Board Evaluation, 1 of 4**

- Few - if any - conflicts exist between board members and Project Coordinator: 4.14
- Board does NOT micromanage the organization: 3.93
- Current board practices closely match by-laws: 3.91
- Low board/advisor turnover: 3.88
- Board members are easily able to read financial statements: 3.62

**Board Evaluation, 2 of 4**

- Clear consensus about the mission of the organization: 3.60
- Strong attendance at board meetings: 3.57
- Well chaired meetings: 3.47
- Clear consensus about the vision of the organization: 3.38
- Few - if any - conflicts of interest exist: 3.31
Board Evaluation, 3 of 4

- The Board focuses on the appropriate issues: 3.27
- Board finds it easy to make decisions (no decision paralysis): 3.20
- Board makes decisions after just the right amount of contemplation and discussion: 3.15
- The board receives the right information in the right format to make good decisions: 3.15
- Board members/advisors do not feel burned out: 3.00

Board Evaluation, 4 of 4

- Board members fully understand their liabilities: 2.82
- Committees are engaged in their work: 2.79
- Board has strategic direction and clear priorities: 2.75
- Board members fully understand their roles: 2.70
- Strong attendance at committee meetings: 2.25
In your opinion or knowledge, how well has SNBRA performed (over the past two years) in advancing each of the following priority areas (1=poor, 5=excellent)

### Success in the Five Priorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Area</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth Engagement and Outreach</td>
<td>3.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation</td>
<td>3.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and Outreach</td>
<td>3.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Development/Sustainable Community</td>
<td>3.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable tourism</td>
<td>2.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please evaluate SNBRA on each of the following, as you see it (1=poor, 5=excellent)

### SNBRA Evaluation, 1 of 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Board diversity</td>
<td>3.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living up to core values and guiding principles</td>
<td>3.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project and program management</td>
<td>3.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectively using technology, the web, social media</td>
<td>3.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying new opportunities</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowering staff/board/volunteers</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**SNBRA Evaluation, 2 of 3**

- Overall performance: 3.35
- Clear vision and purpose: 3.27
- Engaging existing partner organizations: 3.27
- Level of board organization: 3.21
- Keeping stakeholders and partners informed of SNBRA's activities: 3.20
- Pursuing opportunities in a timely manner: 3.19

**SNBRA Evaluation, 3 of 3**

- Keeping members informed of the SNBRA's activities: 3.17
- Running effective committees: 3.13
- Balancing the "business" end of the organization with greater social goals: 3.08
- Measuring SNBRA's performance: 3.00
- Making decisions quickly and effectively: 2.83
- Identifying and engaging new partner organizations: 2.80
- Marketing of programs and self promotion: 2.49
One of the Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve Association’s goals is to have a strong and positive relationship with stakeholders like you. However, you have indicated that right now you feel that relationship is somewhat distant. In the boxes below, please indicate the reasons why you feel this may be the case (check all that apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I don't perceive that the work of SNBRA really applies to or affects me or my organization</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nobody from SNBRA has contacted me yet to discuss the organization and how I/we are important to it</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'm just learning about SNBRA now for the first time</td>
<td>71.4%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'm new to my job/position, so I wasn't exposed before</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability and conservation aren't really a strong area of interest for me or my organization</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have in fact been associated with SNBRA for a long time, but I still don't feel I know anything about it</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 14
skipped question 56

Would you be open to meeting with a representative from the Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve Association, so that he/she can better understand your needs as an organization, governmental unit, or individual? IF YOU ANSWER YES, please leave your contact information on the following page. Thank you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, I would be willing to meet face-to-face</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, I would be willing to discuss this by phone</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would prefer just to receive information in the mail</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, thank you</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 13
skipped question 57

In your opinion, what are Association's two greatest strengths?
Please be as detailed or as brief as you wish.

Responses by Board members

1) UNESCO Designation: Clear 3 pillars with defined goals.

2) Core funding until 2013
   Core commitment and now Project Coordinator
   Leadership

Commitment to the organization
   It's board members and the commitment to the future
   The Directors, Paid staff
board members

existing partnerships
Combined intelligence, Brain trust
It provides an imperative function
Its overview of a large geographic area, and its national and international connections.
Has a broad range of stakeholders that otherwise wouldn't be in the same room. The rejuvenated board and full time ED is a very welcome change.
1) The diverse range of members that bring so much knowledge to the organization.
2) The objectives of this organization
Focus
Delivery
Its people and commitment to SW Nova Scotia.

The geography of the Association
Grass roots approach and that we are already connected to the Municipal units.
1. Diverse enthusiastic board membership including representation from municipalities.
2. Biosphere reserve covers large area with many communities, working landscapes and protected areas.

**NON-Board responses**

The UNESCO Association. Its geographic area of interest.
Collaborative
Inclusive
The fact they have biosphere to represent - an amazing national treasure...
There seems to be a lot of enthusiasm from board members
A worldwide "brand" (UNESCO) to bring clout to activities developed in small town Nova Scotia (great vision), and a diverse group of directors, members, and partners contributing to sustainability in SW NS (great potential).
It brings together a focus of academics, organizations interested in environmental issues and a variety of age groups concerned with sustainable development.
1. Location - southern tip of NS
2. Large amount of resources to draw upon, i.e. population base, funding, universities, scientific and educational research
1. Maegan Power-Noble
2. connection to UNESCO
1. Having COGS/AGRC and MTRI in the area and actively involved.
2. Having a large core area (Keji and Tobeatic) that people are passionately concerned about.
Supporting organizations that are knowledgeable and committed to concepts.
Wealth of ecological knowledge in region
Environmental awareness and advocacy
Well educated and dedicated members
I think the associations two greatest strengths are how they communicate things to the public, and the way they target young adults/teenagers and get them interested.
excellent organiser and staff
- The power of consensus
- The timing is right
- logical geographic location
- strong partner in core area
Bring attention to the biosphere in the region / provide a common forum for different groups involved in the regional biosphere
The Association seems to have excellent networking skills and does a very good job of being involved
with a variety of activities and groups spread throughout the biosphere reserve. The integrated approach that the biosphere reserve and association takes is very inclusive.

**In your opinion, what are the Association's two greatest weaknesses? Please be as detailed as possible.**

**Board responses**

1) Public awareness, although this is increasing the general public who live in the biosphere reserve are not aware that they live in a biosphere reserve. Government Awareness: provincial government does not support us.

2) Lack of committee involvement. Although committees were formed, the members had quick burn out. They were staff driven and not member driven. Suggestion to include external experts (non board members) to sit on committees, may ease board member burn out

Lack of membership.

Lack of committee structure that delivers

Non-engagement

Under commitment to the work involved to move us forward

Communication on all issues

Timing of board meetings

lack of action an participation at committee levels

Getting the message out and education of public

I do not have enough experience to comment yet

Lack of public / governmental commitment to its role and lack of public awareness of its role.

Lack of a 'store-front' office that is public and partner-friendly.

Lack of clearly defined projects.

Focus delivery

Lack of financial resources and focus on priority results.

The geography of the Association, difficulty in setting up meetings, responding to requests in and out of the region that impacts on the Association.

1. Need to plan and execute concrete projects--only possible following employment of full time project coordinator.

2. Really a new organization that has to develop its planning capacity, networks and expertise. Much potential and opportunities for innovation lie ahead.

**NON-Board responses**

The relatively sparse population within the geographic area of interest meaning less local "buy in" that can have significance in driving projects, funding, etc.

Current level of awareness of what SWNBR can "do for me".

Collaborative

Inclusive

The two greatest strengths are double edged swords that can also be weaknesses - collaboration and inclusiveness take considerable work, commitment and a concerted balancing effort

The board members are "older" in age...need to think more youthful, not kid focused necessarily...more now.

There is little movement forward...more so recently though.

So far, an unrealized potential (lots of talk, not yet a lot of action), and a lack of specific direction?
SNBRA has a VERY broad mission, although totally admirable!
It is a very broad area and it is difficult to make that feeling of inclusiveness.
Many people still do not have a grasp of the assoc. or its agenda.

1. Minimal funding
2. Size of community (5 counties?)
   1. Large area, multiple jurisdictions and relatively large, dispersed population to engage.
   2. Lack of substantial, stable financial resources.

Administrative practices, transparency. Staff, Board members, projects appear/disappear as if by magic.
Need to have too many appointed political representatives who may or may not be really interested in goals.
Few people no about the Assoc.
Not well known in the area outside of the focus group.
The information about the Biosphere needs to be couched in much simpler terms with lots of pictures etc. on web site and in presentations. Just keep it simple
- lack of funding in the early years (particularly for staffing)
- lack of awareness in the region about the organization

Limited knowledge on the part of the public of the SNBRA and its mandate / failure to provide knowledge of the role of SNBRA in easily understood language / failure to provide ways that individuals can play a role in supporting the SNBRA mandate without being on a board or committee
Limited number of staff. Maegan does a wonderful job, but there is no much more that could be done if other staff were employed.
There is a lot of room for growth in terms of marketing. Very few people that I encounter have even heard of the biosphere reserve or the association.
Communication (but this is improving now there are staff) and informing people of what you are and why you are
Connecting with people and businesses within the biosphere reserve
board meetings too long
in the past, needed effective and long term staff to do work -- too few volunteers to build momentum

Thinking about the relationship you have with the SNBRA, what are the things that challenge/frustrate/disappoint you the most?

Board responses

Lack of commitment at the committee level. 1 staff person cannot do it all.
More project deliverables
Not having enough people committed to taking on projects/committees.
Not having a full understanding of all the issues
Board commitment to move forward with goals/objectives
Keeping in touch with the municipality on what projects are on the go in a news brief directed to council
The distance that has to be travelled for meetings
My own involvement and my municipality’s lack of interest.
Lack of projects, and the over-reliance on ‘facilitating cooperation’ which was something (illegible) 10 years ago (when government didn’t really do it) but is now the norm and doesn’t really (illegible)
My not understanding of some of the discussions and issues that go around the table. This is my lack of experience that the other members have more firsthand knowledge of. But this is OK because I DO learn a lot and with my association in the past with the CURA projects I have been involved with over the years has been a learning curve for me.
Delays
Leadership to make change happen.
The fact that we have not come to a decision on how we move forward on sustainable development projects.
I don't have any particular frustrations with SNBRA, particularly since a full time coordinator was employed.
SNBRA needs to obtain charitable status

NON-Board responses

Understanding opportunities and its mechanism for delivery of projects.
Have not been challenged/frustrated/disappointed
So much potential...yet not taking advantage of it...always stuck at the 3 pillars of biospheres and never thinking outside the box...to help achieve the goals of SNBRA
Although I am not directly involved, hearing about the politics and bureaucracy involved with the organization is disappointing. Although likely unavoidable!
I work with several organizations (Gulf of Maine Institute Digby Neck & Islands Team and the Bay of Fundy Discovery Centre Association) that reflect similar goals of the SNBRA but would like to see how we can work together and perhaps complement each other better so that we can have a greater impact locally and regionally.
Not having enough time to really get to know SNBRA as distance hinders communication.
making connections with my work that will advance my work goals and SNBRA goals
Nothing particularly.
Lack of transparency, urge to be the leader without realizing that inspired leadership is the ability to facilitate others.
Slowness in the start-up
   Lack of incentive or energy to reach communities beyond the Caledonia area
   Not sure or unaware of what is happening beside Board meetings
   Lack of visibility and little or no understanding by the public its role in NS
   Pretty much everything frustrates me when it comes to this subject.
my relationship is very short and unable to answer this question
I can't say I have a "relationship", having just learned about it.
until recently, lack of focus for the organization
Knowledge of SNBRA too recent to evaluate
Limited staff/personnel reduces the opportunities for partnerships with my organization and with others.
The mandate is great, but there is not enough resource to realistically achieve it. There needs to be focused partnership to move things forward.
The association was very stagnant, not enough new blood and energy, too much emphasis on the board and not enough grass-roots activity. With long term funding and effective, long-term staff this is improving but the board still needs rejuvenation.

When was the last time you felt ESPECIALLY proud to be associated with the SNBRA? Can you describe what made you feel this way?

Board responses
The august funding announcement was professional, well attended and well publicized.
Announcement with Greg Kerr in August
I have always felt proud to be associated with SNBRA because of what it represents.
I recently took a mini vacation to Keji and the Biosphere...the people and the location are amazing.
Someday I will live in the area.
This fall, youth empowerment
When you see the name on the front page of the local newspaper
That it was seen as a relevant part of our municipal strategic planning.
The celebration event at Keji in 2004 was excellent. The emphasis on making the place better for the next generation over the long-term was important to me.
I did feel especially proud when I attended the Lockeport revitalization project in Lockeport last month and Bob gave his presentation for SNBRA and it was so well received by the people there.
Successfully receiving Government funding to allow paid staff to be hired to promote the Biosphere area and its principals.
When funding support was found for a project coordinator.
I am proud of my association at all times. We have a committed, educated and articulate Board and staff. Being present at the Environment Canada funding announcement that was conducted in such a professional manner was gratifying, also the AGM/Open House, the involvement with Empower. The fact that we see that we are changing as a group and having this session to correct that to give us new direction.
SNBRA's collaborative initiative with the municipal ICSP programme has been very encouraging.
In my role as a consultant for SNBRA in context with Nova Scotia resource management and voluntary planning, I was encouraged by the board's interest and support for use of my services for analysis of public input, and subsequent development of discussion paper and presentations for municipalities and interest groups.
While it is always important to ensure board member conflict of interest guidelines are clear and enforced, I think the use of directors to carry out specific projects where they have expertise, combined with the role of a full time coordinator, can strengthen the capacity of the organization.

**NON-Board responses**

The collaborative work involved with the Lockeport Revitalization Initiative Event
Always proud to be associated...with SWNS - it is the sense of place...
SNBRA provided wonderful support and capacity in helping deliver youth outreach programs at our organization.
the EMPOWER Conference
at our last CBRA AGM in June
Can't think of anything.
When designation was received. We had finally done it after so many setbacks.
In the very beginning when things seemed like they might get off the ground in quick fashion.
No answer
When I was part of the EMPOWER! Youth engagement retreat in Kejimikujik, Nova Scotia. I felt proud to be chosen to do this and get an awesome experience out of it while still learning.
my relationship is very short and unable to answer this question
It was thrilling to hear about the funding. It indicated that the concept had been noticed and affirmed.
haven't had this feeling yet
N/A
Empower! Youth conference. SNBRA did an excellent job on that event.
Lockeport revitalization event.
Finish this sentence: The SNBRA will continue to grow and succeed as long as...

**Board responses**

It engages its membership and networks
As long as we have enough committed people and resources to move it forward.
We finish what we start and follow through.
we continue to have a paid co-ordinator
members become a team
People take the time to ask for help in making decisions on things they know little about concerning the environment.
it profits from the involvement of people who have the best minds and degree of commitment and as long as SNBRA continues and increases partnering
It expands its connections with the public.
It finds a distinct role in SW Nova to provide services, resolve issues, and stimulate innovative projects.
We will be recognized for what our Vision, Mission and Goals stand for.
the Biosphere remains supported by the public and continues to provide information of interest to its supporters and the public at large
We strive to understand, use and support our diversity while focussing on actions and decisions that are a win/win for everyone and the biosphere.
We remain connected to communities, keep the Board involved, and continue with PR and marketing.
Expand the committee structure to include non board members. Remain realistic with we have one staff person to do all. Remember that although we are grateful to have staff and funding that does not mean the Board can cut back on its responsibilities and commitment.
------it fully engages the expertise and experience of its board and staff to plan and carry out projects associated with its mandate.

**Non-Board responses**

It draws on its strengths as an international site of significance. I do not believe there can be enough local drive to make it relevant to a wider audience.
it collaborates in portfolio learning - looking back, looking within, and looking forward
New, fresh ideas are brought forward and acted on in a timely fashion - thinking outside the box....
... The board works to empower its staff and members (are there members? or just the board?) to engage in useful and interesting activities ON THE GROUND in communities around the biosphere.
It continues to have impact locally by involving itself with community efforts.
as the community and governments care
It maintains high quality staff and more funding.
It manages to inform, educate and engage more citizens in the whole process.
Develops greater transparency in all its dealings, develops strong partnership skills and exhibits inspired leadership.
Great effort is made to include all communities and have youth part of the involvement.
YOU REALLY NEED TO GO IN TO THE RURAL AREAS AND SMALL COMMUNITY HALLS AND GET YOUR INFO OUT. WE HAD CLIFF DRYSDALE INTO THE HAMPTON HALL COMMUNITY AND IT WAS THE FIRST I HAD HEARD OF THIS BIOSPHERE
it becomes much more well known in the region and throughout the province
Members continue with their progressive attitudes.
It continues doing what it’s doing :)
It communicates to the grass roots of the communities and bring to the attention of the powers the importance of the group.
It reaches out to educate and include community members. Its role and mission are clearly defined in the context of other similar activities in the SNBRA region. The public is made aware of their efforts and accomplishments. They continue to expand the projects they take on, especially in sustainable development/tourism. There are sufficient resources to keep full time staff and the association develops strong partnerships to move their mandate forward. It brings in new interested people to be members, volunteers, committees, board members, and staff.

**What could the SNBRA be doing to better help you (or your organization) achieve your objectives?**

**Board responses**

Seek new funding and hence more resources

Having more defined goals for the committees and having them meet often enough to allow them to achieve their goals.

Educate the people of the Biosphere on tourism ideas and to "think outside the box".

aid in the facilitation of NGO's, Government, through the goals/objectives of the BR

News letter info in paper be seen and be there with info on hot topics

Be seen as relevant in planning and economic development e.g. coastal management and tourism development.

Community media presence to highlight issues of regional importance.

I think I have to have someone better explain the Bands part and responsibilities as a partner with SNBRA. I can't seem to explain it to do it justice. This again comes from my inexperience.

Include on the new web site, when it arrives, photos from all over the Biosphere that will entice visitors to the site to understand just how truly wonderful the Biosphere actually is. If done properly, this will be the largest advertising arm of the Biosphere and further our objectives. Many Associations and residents already know about this hidden beauty, and that story needs to be told to preserve it.

Work effectively toward its vision and mission and understand the role, needs and benefits of the protected core and understand, promote and strengthen the dynamic working relationship between the protected core and the surrounding area of influence.

Board and committee involvement, good strategic plan, willingness to move forward creatively.

I think SNBRA is fundamentally on the right track. It needs to develop, refine and implement its programme plan to fulfill its important natural and cultural heritage mandate. An enthusiastic and creative project coordinator and board has the potential for excellent progress.

**NON-Board responses**

Help us understand if there are contractual opportunities, or volunteer in/kind needs that exist. I.e. what is the model of delivery for projects and list of needs for the SNBRA to undertake projects.

collaborative connections within the biosphere reserve and to other biosphere reserves

I think SNBRA needs to focus on who they are and what they want to achieve, and clearly define it (outside of the 3 pillars to being a biosphere reserve), then organizations can seek / offer partnerships better...

Clearly stating their own objectives, so we can understand better where we overlap, and how to move forward together.

We would need to have some discussion so that we can mutually benefit our objectives with real actions.

Assist with community development work.

We are a naturalist group that is particularly interest in youth education and involvement in natural history. I think there is a lot of overlap with many SWNBR objectives making cooperative efforts a real possibility.
Embracing cooperative approaches, developing active partnerships
Make information more accessible.
Don't depend on computer contact so strongly. Personal contact works better.
Make your presence felt in all communities. Use many different community organizations since rural areas are difficult to get into. Many organizations are always looking for program and speakers.
SAME ANSWER AS PREV QUESTION
Become more proactive
Like I said, just keep doing what you're doing.
my relationship is very short and unable to answer this question
Be present and more involved via local media; keep in touch with us, and support like-minded volunteer and non-profit groups that share the vision of sustainability and education on the core values of SNBRA.
keep up regular communications
Too soon to say what our objectives would be.
Possibly include more projects that focus on ecological issues outside the core area, but this is always funding dependent
Working to identify and coordinate regional projects. As a municipal government we want to participate but it is politically difficult for us to lead.
Accomplish more tangible work on the ground.

If you were to summarize the purpose of the Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve Association's existence - in your own words - in 1-2 sentences, how would you describe it?

Board responses

Connecting the dots
Empower citizens to balance conservation and sustainable development
To be good stewards of the Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve and all it encompasses.
I would use our current mission statement. It is to the point and defines our purpose.
The purpose is defined in our 3- guiding principles. Engaging the board is the major challenge in today's environment.
Broaden/spread the principles that biospheres are based upon to the general population
To get people in the Biosphere to realize what a great place the core is and that by protecting the outside area we protect the core help with development of the outside in a way that has a Sustainability element to it
The purpose of SNBRA's existence is to actively contribute to the preservation and wellness of southwestern Nova Scotia's ecological diversity in partnership with the human population who share the land. This is achieved through partnerships, protection, sharing, education, diversification and preservation.
It provides a form of management oversight of a large portion of the municipality. It has no regulatory authority or responsibility but does provide moral guidance through education, research and development activities.
To connect regional partners and share innovation, expertise, and experience. To develop and demonstrate responsible conservation and development solutions for residents of SW Nova
SNBRA's purpose is to "prevail in the support and development of sustainability within the BR." I think this sums up a lot of our objectives in as few a words as possible.
To facilitate, educate, and distribute information necessary to improve and preserve the lifestyles of residents through sustainable development, while respecting existing values.
To make the vision a reality within 5 years.
1. Advancing the cause of sustainable resource management and cultural development through the establishment of community linkages and partnerships across the south-western Nova Scotia region.
2. Facilitating the presentation of education programmes, and promoting the region as a "best case" example of resource and cultural resource management to local, regional, national and international audiences.

NON-Board responses

Currently, I would say to facilitate/coordinate sustainable management of natural resources within the biosphere, through both study and implementation of projects.

An organization that helps to evolve knowledge, attitudes and behaviours regarding the Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve and the broader connections to other UNESCO biosphere reserves.

SNBRA’s role is to engage and inspire Nova Scotians to strive toward sustainability. We need to be proud of what we have, and not be afraid to try new things - tourism, branding, partnering, marketing...to "sell" the biosphere to those in it, and others so they come see what we have.

To contribute to local communities.

A well intentioned organization that wants to mesh science and cultures in sustainable ways to preserve the environment in Southwest N.S.

To promote the uniqueness of a large piece of land in NS that is "reserved" for current and future generations. SNWBRA builds on this uniqueness through education and partnership opportunities.

To engage the citizens of southwest Nova and make them think more carefully and knowledgeably about land use decisions being made in the region; to help them develop a vision for a sustainable, vibrant and green future for the region.

To facilitate the creation of a community of interests around the sustainable use of the resources in the SNBS

C1. Clearly define the goal/mission of SNBA in understandable words.
2. Vigorously bring the above into towns and rural areas within the Biosphere.
3. Presentations must be more than words and charts. It needs to be related to the everyday lives of people. That takes skill. Maybe SNBRA needs some training in presentations.

well GOING OFF THE INFO I HAD HEARD FROM MR DRYSDALE I THINK ITS A GREAT DEAL FOR SOUTHWEST NOVA-SCOTIA

To help people in the region and NS be aware of their natural environment and bring about a society that is concerned about its social and environmental well being

Protection and sustainable growth of the environment

Protecting the southwest nova biosphere reserve, and sustaining a healthy environment.

my relationship is very short and unable to answer this question

It exists to acknowledge and preserve the "special" qualities of this part of N.S, - to educate, do research and support sustainability in culture, environment, and economy.

To coordinate sustainability efforts and promote sustainability in the core and surrounding areas.

To raise awareness of the regions biosphere including possibly fragile ecosystems. Make your environment sustainable.

To promote the three pillars of UNESCO’s Man and the Biosphere project: conservation, sustainable development and capacity building in the Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve.

Sustainable community development through balancing natural resource exploitation with environmental and cultural preservation.

How could the Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve Association better reach out to you and develop a partnership with you?

Invite me to your office for an hour. Give me tea and cookies.

Both organization need to keep each other in the loop. Possibly do joint projects in the future
Communicate what the organization really does and what type of relationship/partnership it would like to have with our organization.

**Community Presentations**

An E-mail newsletter; more frequent public events; reaching out to seniors, many of whom have strong interests and educational background.

Tell people in Halifax about what’s going on!

News items in local papers telling what is, or should, be done.

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**Appendix C: Other suggested vision statements**

**Suggestion #1**
Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve is a creative rural economy through diversity, resilience and imagination.

**Suggestion #2**
Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve is a creative, sustainable economy developed and supported through responsible collaboration and engagement of all concerned.

**Suggestion #3**
Southwest Nova Biosphere supports economic development and natural conservation (preservation) with a balance of creative collaboration and engagement.

**Suggestion #4**
Southwest Nova Biosphere supports natural conservation (preservation) in balance with economic and cultural development made sustainable by creative collaboration and engagement (connection).

**Suggestion #5**
We envision a healthy and sustainable biosphere that enriches our economy and quality of life.

**Suggestion #6**
We envision every sector of our society collaborating to create and sustain a healthy and balanced biosphere.

The group could not agree on the vision and they wanted some basic agreement before they parked it. Each member contributed one word to the vision statement and the facilitators agreed to come up with several options. The “vision” words are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Creative</th>
<th>Nature</th>
<th>Economy</th>
<th>Preserve</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable</td>
<td>Responsible</td>
<td>Conservation</td>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>And</td>
<td>Connection</td>
<td>Healthy</td>
<td>Balance</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The purpose of this activity is to attempt to align SNBR’s objectives with its strategic priorities (based on the belief that there should in fact be clear linkages between the two). INSTRUCTIONS: for each of the 12 objectives below, please indicate the extent to which you believe that objective contributes towards each of SNBR’s three strategic goals (where 0=not at all and 5=very much). Add all three boxes for a total score.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBJECTIVE</th>
<th>CONSERVATION</th>
<th>CAPACITY BUILDING</th>
<th>SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT</th>
<th>TOTAL SCORE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop and promote successful local examples of cultural, educational, ecological research and development in the region</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop opportunities for participation of students, teachers and community leaders in Biosphere Reserve activities to improve local awareness of cultural heritage and natural environment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop the support and cooperation of the businesses, industries and communities of the Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve to balance conservation and development activities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facilitate cooperation among federal and provincial agencies and private landowners with respect to conservation and development objectives.</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facilitate the resolution of local issues and concerns, and identify opportunities for cooperation by bringing different sectors and perspectives to the table</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote demonstration sites to illustrate traditional sustainable practices of the regional economy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support voluntary conservation measures to protect landscapes, habitats, species and genetic diversity in the core, buffer and cooperation zones.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support scientific research and monitoring of ecological systems and socio-economic patterns of the Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve, to obtain further understanding of environmental conditions to support sustainable resource management.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Encourage development of innovative resource use and conservation techniques to explore new approaches to local resource issues by encouraging conservation of species of commercial and traditional importance.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage development of appropriate nature-based recreation that is ecologically sustainable</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support the Preservation of the ecological integrity of the protected wilderness of Kejimkujik National Park and National Historic Site and the Tobeatic Wilderness Area and the Shelburne River Wilderness Area through appropriate management and community Stewardship</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The purpose of this activity is to build upon the first activity by examining (a) SNBR’s capacity to deliver on each objective and (b) SNBR’s past and current success level in achieving that particular objective. INSTRUCTIONS: for each of the 12 objectives below, please indicate the extent to which you believe that SNBR can realistically accomplish that objective given current resources, and then provide an assessment of how well you think SNBR has achieved that objective to date.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBJECTIVE</th>
<th>CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC GOALS (0-15)</th>
<th>OVERALL RANKING (1-12)</th>
<th>SNBR’S CAPACITY TO DELIVER THIS OBJECTIVE (very low, low, medium, high, or very high)</th>
<th>PAST/CURRENT SUCCESS LEVEL (very low, low, medium, high, or very high)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</table>
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Appendix E: Review of Board Structures

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http://garberconsulting.com/governance%20models%20what%27s%20right.htm

Introduction

Non-profit boards tend to follow one of five different approaches to governance. Each approach emphasises different dimensions of the roles and responsibilities of the board and each arises out of a different relationship between board members and staff members. These in turn reflect differences in the size, purpose, and history of the organization. I call these approaches the Advisory Board Model, the Patron Model, the Co-operative model, the Management Team Model, and the Policy Board Model. I conclude with some questions to ask when you are considering changing your board structure.

Advisory Board Model

This model emphasizes the helping and supportive role of the Board and frequently occurs where the CEO is the founder of the organization. The Board's role is primarily that of helper/advisor to the CEO. Board members are recruited for three main reasons: they are trusted as advisors by the CEO; they have a professional skill that the organization needs but does not want to pay for; they are likely to be helpful in establishing the credibility of the organization for fundraising and public relations purposes.

Individual board members may be quite active in performing these functions and consequently feel that they are making a valuable contribution to the organization. Board meetings tend to be informal and task-focused, with the agenda developed by the CEO.

The Advisory Board model can work well for a short time in many organizations but it exposes the board members to significant liability in that it fails to provide the accountability mechanisms that are required of boards of directors. By law, the board has the obligation to manage the affairs of the organization and can be held accountable for certain actions of employees and committees. It must therefore maintain a superior position to the CEO. Although the board is permitted to delegate many of its responsibilities to staff or committees, it cannot make itself subordinate to them.

Patron Model

Similar to the Advisory Board model, the board of directors in the Patron Model has even less influence over the organization than an advisory board. Composed of wealthy and influential individuals with a commitment to the mission of the organization, the Patron Board serves primarily as a figurehead for fund raising purposes. Such boards meet infrequently as their real work is done outside board meetings. Writing cheques and getting their friends to write cheques is their contribution to the organization.

Many organizations maintain a Patron Board in addition to their governing boards. For capital campaigns and to establish credibility of newly formed organizations, Patron Boards can be especially helpful. They cannot be relied upon, however, for governance tasks such as vision development, organizational planning, or program monitoring.

Co-operative Model

For a number of different reasons, some organizations try to avoid hierarchical structures. The decision-making structure in such organizations is typically labelled "peer management" or "collective management". In this model, all responsibility is shared and there is no Chief Executive Officer.
Decision-making is normally by consensus and no individual has power over another. If the law did not require it, they would not have a board of directors at all. In order to be incorporated, however, there must be a board of directors and officers. The organization therefore strives to fit the board of directors into its organizational philosophy by creating a single managing/governing body composed of official board members, staff members, volunteers, and sometimes clients.

Seen by its advocates as the most democratic style of management, it is also, perhaps, the most difficult of all models to maintain, requiring among other things, a shared sense of purpose, an exceptional level of commitment by all group members, a willingness to accept personal responsibility for the work of others, and an ability to compromise. When working well, the organization benefits from the direct involvement of front-line workers in decision-making and the synergy and camaraderie created by the interaction of board and staff.

I have noted two areas of concern with this model. The first is that although the ability to compromise is an essential element in the successful functioning of this model, cooperatives often arise out of a strong ideological or philosophical commitment that can be inimical to compromise. The second concern is the difficulty of implementing effective accountability structures. At the time of implementing this model, there may be a high motivation level in the organization which obviates the need for accountability mechanisms. But, as personnel changes take place, the sense of personal commitment to the group as a whole may be lost. In the collective model, there is no effective way to ensure that accountability for individual actions is maintained.

Management Team Model
For many years, most non-profit organizations have been run by boards which operate according to the model of a Management Team, organizing their committees and activities along functional lines. In larger organizations, the structure of the board and its committees usually mirrors the structure of the organization's administration. Just as there are staff responsible for human resources, fund-raising, finance, planning, and programs, the board creates committees with responsibility for these areas.

Where there is no paid staff, the board's committee structure becomes the organization's administrative structure and the board members are also the managers and delivers of programs and services. Individually or in committees, board members take on all governance, management and operational tasks including strategic planning, bookkeeping, fund-raising, newsletter, and program planning and implementation.

The widespread adoption of the Management Team model, arises out its correspondence with modern ideas about team management and democratic structures in the workplace. It also fits well with the widely held view of nonprofits as volunteer-driven or at least nonprofessional organizations. This model fits well with the experience of many people as volunteers in community groups like service clubs, Home and School groups, scouts and guides, and hobby groups. It also mirrors the processes involved in the creation of a new organization or service. It is no wonder then, that most prescriptive books and articles written between 1970 and 1990 (and many written more recently) define this model as the ideal.

Boards which operate under the Management Team model are characterized by a high degree of involvement in the operational and administrative activities of the organization. In organizations with professional management this normally takes the form of highly directive supervision of the CEO and staff at all levels of the organization. Structurally, there may be many committees and subcommittees. Decision-making extends to fine details about programs, services, and administrative practices. When working well, two criteria tend to be used in the selection of members: their knowledge and experience in
a specific field, such as business or accounting; or because they are members of a special interest group or sector that the board considers to be stakeholders.

While this model works well for all-volunteer organizations, it has proven to be less suited to organizations that already have professional management and full-time employees. Indeed, the deficiencies of this model have led to the current thinking in the field which differentiates "governance" (the practices of boards of directors) from "management" (the practices of employees) and the deluge of research, articles, and manuals on this topic.

The most important shortcoming is that all too frequently, it degenerates into what I call the Micro-management Team Model in which board members refuse to delegate authority, believing that their role requires them to make all operational decisions, leaving only the implementation to paid staff. The result is invariably a lack of consistency in decisions, dissatisfied board members, resentful staff and a dangerous lack of attention to planning and accountability matters.

**Policy Board Model**

As noted above, the need to differentiate the board's role from the manager's role arose from the failure of many organizations to maintain proper accountability at the highest levels and the dissatisfaction of many board members over their inability to comply with the expectations of their role. They began to ask why, when they were such competent and accomplished individuals, they felt so ineffective and frustrated as board members. This led to an examination of the role of the board, the relationship between the board and the CEO, and the relationship between the board and the community.

The originator and most influential proponent of the Policy Board Model is John Carver, whose book, Boards that Make a Difference, has had a great effect on thousands of non-profit organizations. All Policy Board Models share the view that the job of the board is: to establish the guiding principles and policies for the organization; to delegate responsibility and authority to those who are responsible for enacting the principles and policies; to monitor compliance with those guiding principles and policies; to ensure that staff, and board alike are held accountable for their performance.

Where the models diverge is the way these jobs are done and the extent to which strategic planning and fundraising are seen as board jobs.

Boards operating under the Policy Board Model are characterized by a high level of trust and confidence in the CEO. There are relatively few standing committees, resulting in more meetings of the full board. Board development is given a high priority in order to ensure that new members are able to function effectively, and recruitment is an ongoing process. Members are recruited for their demonstrated commitment to the values and mission of the organization.

**Which Model is the Right One?**

There are a number of reasons for considering a change in your governance model:

- board members are dissatisfied with their roles or the way the board operates;
- your organization is experiencing problems that can be traced back to inadequacies in board structure or process;
- your organization is entering a new phase in its life-cycle;
- the CEO has left or is leaving;
- there has been a major turnover of board members;
- There is a crisis of confidence in the board or the CEO.
The descriptions above, of the various governance models, will give you an idea of the strengths and weaknesses of each model, but the difficulty in making the transition cannot be overstated. Changing models is like changing lifestyles. You must abandon well-established ideas and patterns of behaviour, replacing them with new ideas, roles, and activities that will seem confusing and unfamiliar. This type of change takes a considerable amount of time, energy, and other resources to accomplish. The answers to the following questions will help you to determine how badly you need to change your governance model and whether your board and organization have the necessary commitment and resources to accomplish it successfully. Take your time with each question, ensuring that each board member answers each question.

- Do we have a clear understanding and agreement on the purpose of our organization? Is it written down?
- What are the basic values which guide our organization and our board? Are they written down?
- How do we know whether the good our organization does is worth what it costs to operate it?
- What financial resources do we have and can we reasonably count on for the next few years?
- To what extent are board members expected to contribute money and labour to fundraising efforts?
- Do we believe that the organization should be run as a cooperative or collective - with staff participating along with board members in the governing of the organization?
- How much time is each board member willing to give to the organization in the next year (or until the end of their term)
- How much trust does the board have in the ability of the CEO to ensure that the organization operates in an effective and ethical manner?
- What are our expectations about attendance at board and committee meetings?
- What is the attendance record of each board member?
- How do we hold board members accountable?
- What is the record of each board member and committee with respect to meetings and results?
- How useful has each committee proven to be?
- To what extent do committees duplicate staff jobs? How satisfied are our members with the current board performance?
- Who thinks we should change our governance model?
- How much time and money are we willing to devote to increasing our own knowledge and skills to improve our performance as board members?
- How does our board deal with differences of opinion?
- How do members deal with decisions when we disagree?
- To what extent is it necessary for us (board members) to be involved in the delivery of programs and services, marketing, public speaking, etc?
- Who attends our Annual General Meeting? Why do they come?
- As board members, to whom do we wish to be accountable?
- How effective is our current recruitment method in getting excellent board members?

Take some time to consider these questions. The answers will tell you the degree of difficulty you will have in changing to a new governance model and where the problems lie. For additional information and for training and consulting services related to governance models, contact: Nathan Garber & Associates email: nathan@GarberConsulting.com