2011 Marks 10 year UNESCO Designation Anniversary

2011 is an exciting time for Nova Scotia. It marks the 10th anniversary of the UNESCO Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve, and at the same time celebrates the new designation of the Bras d’Or Lake Biosphere Reserve (www.blbra.ca). With the anniversary, there also is a review process; the purpose of the review is to provide a reflection of the past 10 years, which highlights accomplishments and shows how those within the boundaries are working together, by ways of conservation, sustainable development and capacity building.

In case you are not familiar with the term ‘Biosphere Reserve’, it is a site that is established by a specific region and recognized under the UNESCO MAB Program (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization- Man And the Biosphere Program), to promote sustainable development based on local community efforts and sound science.

The Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve encompasses the 5 counties of Annapolis, Digby, Yarmouth, Shelburne and Queens, and their 16 Municipalities, totaling 1,546,374 hectares. At our core we have the nationally protected Kejimkujik National Park and National Historic Site and the provincially protected Tobeatic Wilderness Area, the largest in Atlantic Canada.

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What A Biosphere Reserve Is NOT:

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

What is a Biosphere Reserve?

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

The 3 basic functions of a Biosphere are:

Meet the new Manager for SNBRA!

Lisa Kamperman is the new Manager for the Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve Association (SNBRA); she went to University at Dalhousie in Halifax and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts. Her work experience includes rural development on the provincial level in both Nova Scotia and Alberta.

When Lisa started with SNBRA, she recognized the importance of creating awareness of the Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve, especially with residents of SNBR. The new website that was created in 2010 was launched in January 2011, presentations were made to various groups throughout SNBR, and connections were made with partners throughout the region. Under the direction of a Board of Directors, made up from all areas of the SNBR, an action plan of five goals was established for the Manager to focus on: branding, signage, youth/community awareness and engagement, newsletter, and workshops. Lisa experienced the SNBR community pulling together when planning a tour for the 10 year review in June 2011; SNBRA board members and community representatives made themselves available for interviews and tours with the reviewers. In the late Spring SNBRA was fortunate to receive one federal and one provincial grant to fund two summer student positions. This has been a busy summer for SNBRA, attending the Canadian Biosphere Reserves Association Annual General Meeting and workshops, SNBRA’s AGM and 10 year review, all in June. The summer focus has been community and youth outreach and engagement with the help of the summer students.
Summer 2011 with our students: Graeme & Kate!

Summer 2011 thus far - A reflection on the month’s events—by Graeme Matheson

- Familiarized ourselves with the goals, principles and mandates of SNBRA and gained understanding on the size of the Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve.
- Participated in water invertebrate research with Mersey Tobeatic Research Institute (MTRI).
- Visited Noah’s Place Farm - a small, family run farm which sells goats milk soap and wool. They grow or raise the majority of their food and sell excess, (through their shop) to fund the farms operations.
- Clean the Annapolis River Project (CARP) - joined them in some Tunicate research.
- Lockeport Regional High School - we learned about their O2 program and the school greenhouse.
- Loon research at Mersey Tobeatic Research Institute (MTRI).
- Planted a Monarch Butterfly Garden and took part in a Recycling Relay with Middleton Day Camp.
- Attended and participated in the Kejimkujik Mi’kmaw Celebration Day.
- Worked with the Municipality of Shelburne to plan and lead a cultural and historic geocaching activity at the Shelburne Founders’ Days.
- Hosted information booths in Keji, Middleton Farmers Market and at Shelburne Founders’ Days.
- Documenting all data for the Community Mapping Project of events from SNBRA, Summer 2011.
- SNBRA website and Facebook page updates of the events listed above.
- Created new brochures and new information posters for SNBRA.

What’s next for us?

- Lawrencetown Exhibition/taking in events and networking (Aug 15).
- IncrEDIBLE lunch in Annapolis Royal/Farmers Market (Aug 21).
- Twitter & YouTube accounts!~

Visit our website to follow Graeme and Kate on their next adventure in the SNBR!
Vision:
We envision a healthy and sustainable biosphere while respecting our culture, quality of life and natural resources.

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