



Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve Association

2016-17 SNBRA Chairman Report

Dear current and past SNBRA Directors, staff;

First and foremost I would like to thank all of you for your support for the UNESCO Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve Association. Our tasks have continued to be very challenging. Without your commitment it would have been impossible to achieve the significant progress we have made.

As discussed at the June 28/17 Board of Directors meeting much has yet to be done to achieve SNBRA's full potential. I am quite concerned that time and emotional capital spent on the UNESCO Periodic Review process as it has been implemented since 2011, has been in many instances counterproductive to the work to be done to advance use of science for sustainable resource management, and celebration of the cultural richness in our region.

However I do believe that the zoning system that SNBRA negotiated in 2016 with the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources, Parks Canada and Environment Nova Scotia including a working landscape 'buffer area' and 'zone of cooperation', as per UNESCO requirements, has the potential to result in more progressive resource management planning from a socio-economic perspective in our region.

Protection of biodiversity and other resource values, habitat connectivity and long term sustainable forest management based on accurate scientific data accessible through the 'Interactive Science Atlas' among other sources will be achieved with principled negotiations between concerned parties. On the other hand shrill accusations and polarization based on inaccurate information can be counterproductive for all communities of interest.

Assuming UNESCO sees fit to give us full endorsement for our programme soon, our most important challenges include progress with tasks identified in our May 15/17 Action and Strategic plans:

-SNBRA needs to identify and implement strategies to obtain steady and significant revenue to support core staff positions.

-SNBRA needs to consolidate funding to support our Cultural Heritage Coordinator position and subsequently staff an Executive Director and permanent scientific/geomatics staff.

-We need to build on the excellent work that has already been done with the Yarmouth Cultural Heritage and Science Interpretive Centre and the Universite Saint Anne Church Point projects.

-A longer term partnership needs to be fully developed with the NSCC Centre of Geographic Science and Applied Geomatics Research Group.

-SNBRA needs to more fully collaborate with the various NGO's, educational institutions, and businesses in the region and encourage their representation on our Board.

-We need to more fully engage the Mi'kmaq community in our science and cultural heritage presentation initiatives.

-Importantly we need to enlist young folks and students to serve on our board.

In conclusion I feel very optimistic about our associations' potential to achieve good and essential progress for southwestern Nova Scotia.

Let's hope UNESCO agrees very soon.

Respectively submitted
Cliff Drysdale
Chairman SNBRA