



OVERVIEW

PROPOSED UNESCO FUNDY BIOSPHERE RESERVE

NEW BRUNSWICK, CANADA

NOMINATION DOCUMENT

April 10, 2007

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme was initiated in 1972 to support the rational use of the resources of the biosphere on which all life depends. Biosphere Reserves have grown out of this program since 1976, which are of international importance, because they demonstrate innovative approaches to conservation and sustainable development. Presently, there are 13 operational biosphere sites in Canada, with several others under development including the Fundy Biosphere Reserve (FBR) proposal.

The Proposed Area

The area being proposed is the coastal landscape extending from St. Martins, in the southwest corner of the proposed area, through the Tantramar Marsh, in the northeast corner (Figure 1). It includes the coastal marine environment as well as the watersheds that flow into the upper Bay of Fundy. The Bay of Fundy is recognized internationally as one of the world's richest marine environments and is renowned for having one of the highest tidal ranges in the world. The topography of the region is defined by a bold irregular shoreline with rugged near perpendicular cliffs and by forested river valleys which deeply incise the landscape punctuated by waterfalls, rapids and steep rock walls. The topographic elevations in the area range from a minus 30 m below sea level in the coastal areas and up to 400 m in the interior highland areas. At the head of the bay, broad sweeping salt marshes, mudflats, agricultural lands and the Petitcodiac River dominate the landscape. The upper Bay of Fundy and its adjacent watersheds is one of Canada's most dramatic and ecologically diverse landscapes, and is one of the least disturbed areas on the Atlantic Coast, between Florida and Nova Scotia, Figure 2. These features combined with the rich heritage and culture of the area as well as the long history of science and sustainable management planning that has been developed in the region makes it a suitable candidate for international recognition under UNESCO - Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme.

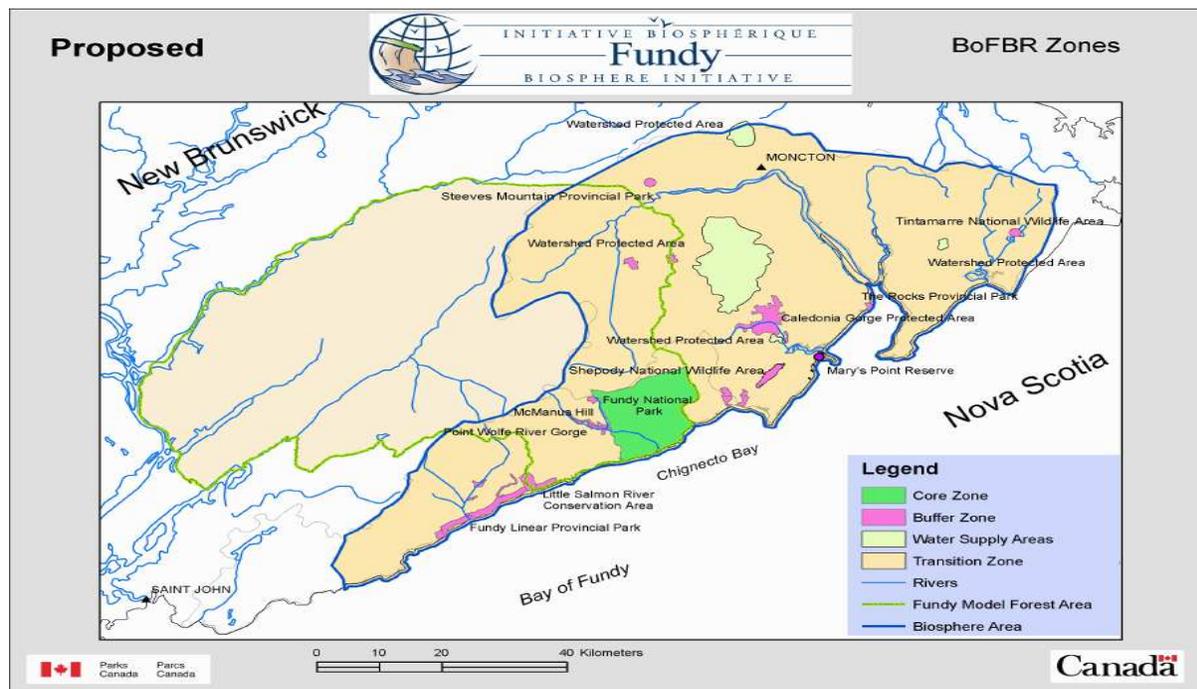


Figure 1: Proposed Fundy Biosphere Reserve zone map.

The Planning

The Fundy Biosphere Reserve Network (FBRN) has been actively developing the concept and promoting the idea with local communities, policy makers, resource sector managers, scientists, educators and conservation groups for more than seven years. With the assistance of New Brunswick Enterprise Network, New Brunswick Environmental Trust Fund, Parks Canada, Université de Moncton and Mount Allison University, the Fundy Biosphere Reserve Network has completed the required nomination documents and has submitted them to UNESCO Canada with the endorsement of Parks Canada, and the province of New Brunswick, local communities and its own diverse group of stakeholders.

The Facts

Biospheres are locally administered organizations that adhere to a set of straightforward guidelines set out by UNESCO – MAB. In short, each biosphere site is intended to fulfill three complementary and mutually reinforcing functions:

- A *conservation function* - to contribute to the conservation of landscapes, ecosystems, species and genetic variation;
- A *development function* - to foster economic and human development that is socially, culturally and ecologically sustainable;
- A *logistical support function* - to create a support network of scientists, resource managers and policy makers to assist communities and resource sectors address sustainability issues and concerns.

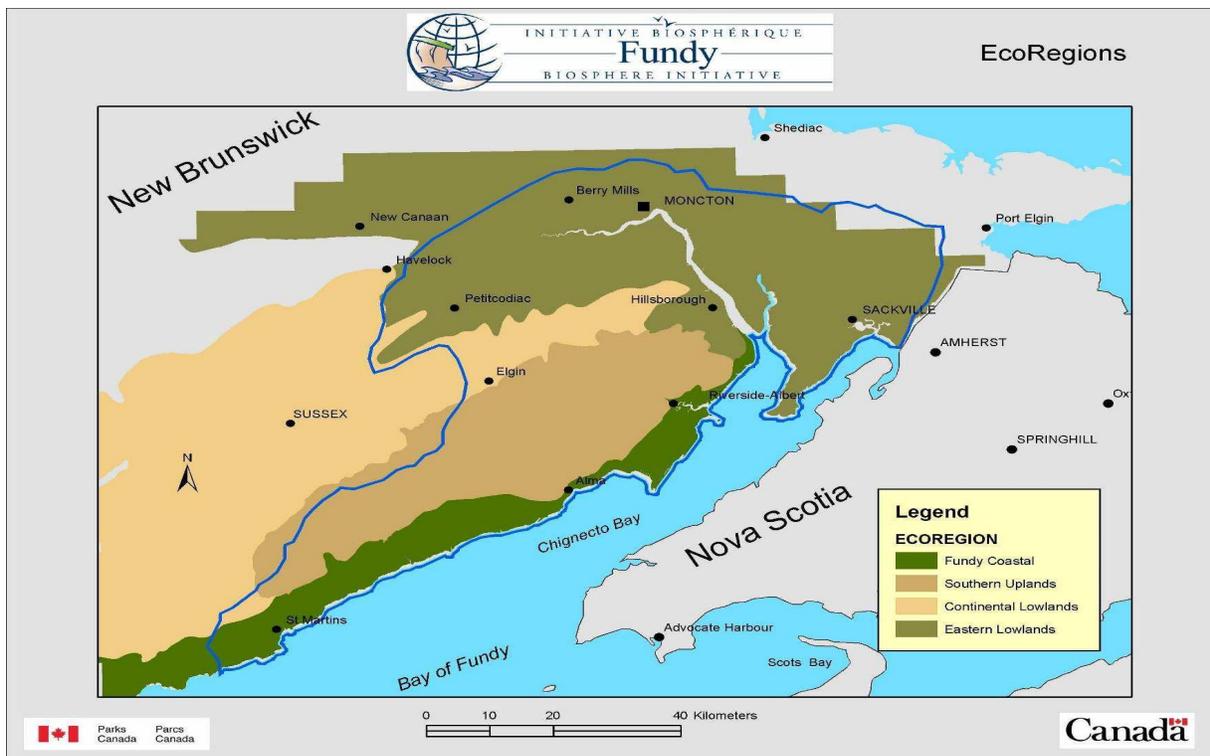


Figure 2: Ecoregions and municipalities within the FBR.

Biosphere Reserves must be able to demonstrate that it includes a protected area of reasonable size referred to as the Core Area; which in this case, it is Fundy National Park. It is the Core Area of which the title Biosphere Reserve is indicative. There must also be a Buffer Zone where there is a minimal environmental impact and this is comprised of all the other protected areas, conservation areas and special management areas in the proposed territory. The largest portion of the landscape is referred to the Transition Area of cooperation where resources are managed and utilized to generate revenues.

Biosphere Reserve sites have no jurisdictional authority and do not set or change regulation and no jurisdictional authority or rights are bestowed on the governing body when an area is designated or recognized by UNESCO - MAB. Furthermore, they are required to operate within existing laws, regulations and jurisdictional guidelines on all lands because they are representative of the province's commitment to sustainable management. However, biosphere sites do draw on the support of key stakeholders within their local network to convey the message of sustainable development across resource sectors and to the public at large. In Canada, Biosphere Reserve sites are normally coordinated by non-profit, non-government organizations that derive operating funds through public and private grants such as scientific, educational grants and environmental improvement funds.

The Objective

The overarching intent of the Fundy Biosphere Reserve is to provide a forum for dialogue and information sharing between communities, resource sectors, government agencies and researchers. This cooperative network of partners will work to assist communities in developing a more sustainable way of life based on a common understanding that a healthy economy can only be supported by a healthy environment.

General Projects and Activities

The activities that will take place in the proposed Fundy Biosphere Reserve include:

- Initiate and coordinate environmental and sustainable economic development projects, activities and opportunities;
- Work with its stakeholder network to develop the knowledge required to assist policy makers, resources managers and communities to manage and utilize their resources in sustainable manner;
- Initiate, develop and deliver environmental education and awareness programs aimed at schools, communities and the public at large that promote broad-based conservation, restoration and sustainable management;
- In association with local academic and research institutions, carry out research initiatives that promote wise utilization and conservation of resources and economic development;
- Assist communities and local businesses with projects and activities that promote an appreciation of the local heritage and culture;
- Promote the sharing of information across resource sectors to promote a broad-based conservation ethic;
- Provide leadership by being proactive on conservation and resource utilization issues and in developing solutions to them;
- Collaborate with its stakeholders to develop sustainable management plans, monitoring tools and reporting processes designed to meet the requirements of society today as well as meeting the needs of future generations.

The Governance

Once UNESCO - MAB designation is achieved, the organization will be governed by a Board of Directors elected from its stakeholder group. The cross sectional representation would include senior management people from:

- Academic Institutions
- Community Economic Development Agencies
- Conservation Organizations
- Federal Government Departments and Agencies
- First Nations Communities
- Heritage Organizations
- Municipalities
- New Brunswick Provincial Departments and Agencies
- Public at Large
- Regional Planning Commission
- Resource Sectors
- Tourism Associations

In the proposal phase of the initiative, an Interim Board of Directors, composed of the following members, has been created. This Interim Board of Directors is fully operational and is working to further define and establish the governance of the initiative.

Dr. Yves Gagnon	Université de Moncton	Chair
Dr. Paul Bogaard	Mount Allison University	Vice-Chair
Peter Etheridge	Fundy Biosphere Reserve	Secretary
Arnold Kearney	Department of Intergovernmental Affairs Province of New Brunswick	
Edouard Daigle	Fundy National Park Parks Canada	
Frank Tenhave	Enterprise Fundy	
Vince Zelazny	Department of Natural Resources Province of New Brunswick	

In summary, the proposed UNESCO Fundy Biosphere Reserve would provide international recognition for a very unique part of the province of New Brunswick and the area's diverse cultural history that dates back to the original Mi'kmaq inhabitants of the region. It will also provide recognition for the people of the province of New Brunswick and their commitment to environmental and economic sustainability. In other regions of the world, this national and international recognition has been successful in attracting more public and private investments, creating new business opportunities, increasing tourism and helping to stabilize local community economies.

Please note that the UNESCO - MAB proposal documents have been written with the intention that they will form the basis of future educational and interpretation documents. In addition, they will help in providing guidelines for future governance and directions of the organization.