



To: MAB Secretariat, 7, place de Fontenoy, F-75352 Paris 07 SP, France

From: Canadian Commission for UNESCO

## National Report of Activities 2017-2019 – Man and the Biosphere Programme Canada

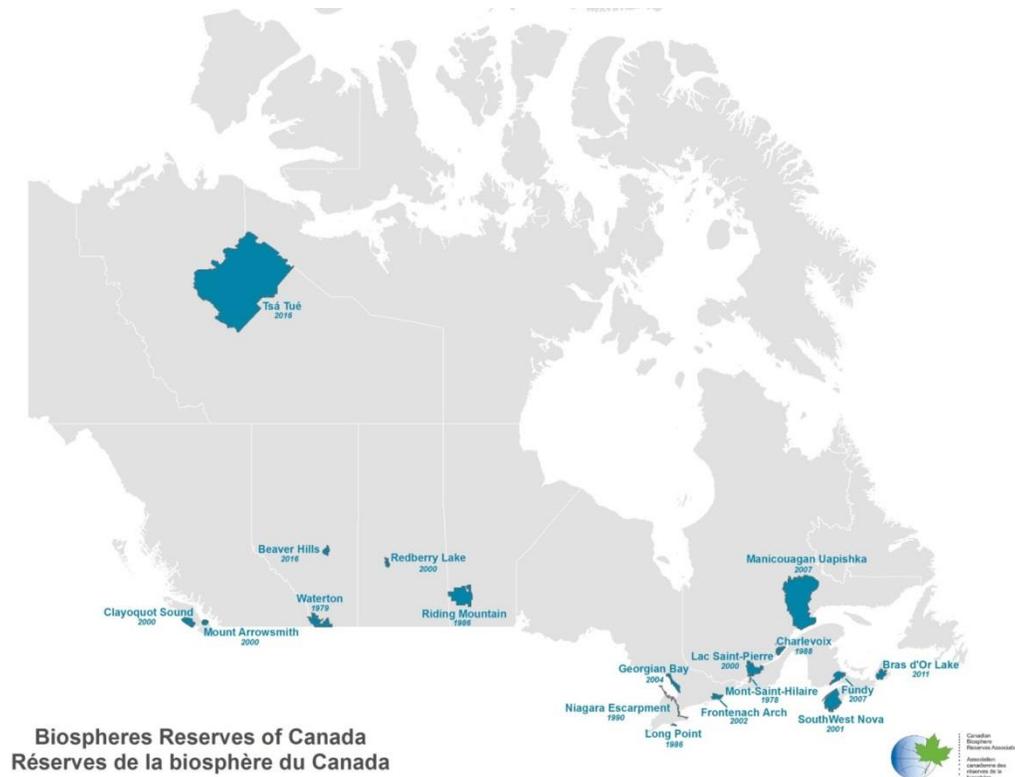
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The Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme was established in Canada in 1972 and its first biosphere reserve (BR), Mont Saint-Hilaire, was established in 1978. Today there are 18 BRs in Canada and two regions aspiring to become BRs. The Canadian MAB programme is managed by two organizations.

The Canadian Commission for UNESCO (CCUNESCO) supports the network to build capacity, mobilize knowledge and increase its visibility and relevance, and fulfils the quality assurance function of assessing candidate BRs, coordinating periodic reviews and nominations. The CCUNESCO Natural Sciences Programme Officer serves as the focal point for communications between the Canadian BRs and the MAB Secretariat.

The Canadian Biosphere Reserves Association (CBRA) is a not for profit organization governed by a board of directors comprising one representative from each Canadian BR, along with a number of invited observers. It meets twice a year in person and more regularly *via* teleconference. Its activities also include capacity building, knowledge mobilization and increasing the visibility of the network, in addition to fundraising and coordinating national projects. Canadian BRs do not receive any core government funding; the activities of CBRA are supported by program funding from federal government, other agencies, and the CCUNESCO. Individual BRs are supported through endowments, or local, regional and national funding competitions.

Individually, and collectively, Canada's BRs are working hard towards the implementation of the Lima Action Plan. The following report highlights some of the activities that have taken place, at the national and international levels, since Canada last reported to the MAB-ICC at their 29<sup>th</sup> Session. (Lima Action Plan (LAP) outcomes are indicated at the end of each section.)



## National Activities

### *G7 Tree Project*

In an effort to limit the environmental impact of the G7 Summit in La Malbaie, Quebec, in June 2018, the Government of Canada entered into an agreement with the Charlevoix Biosphere Reserve to make the summit an environmentally responsible event. One of the highlights of this agreement was the planting of 100,000 trees in 14 of Canada's 18 biosphere reserves, from British Columbia to Nova Scotia in May 2018. This initiative helped to replenish, restore and reforest sites chosen by the participating local communities, and to offset some of the greenhouse gases from the G7 Summit. (LAP: A1.4, A4.4, C3.2, C5.1)

### *Reconciliation in action*

In June 2017, the Manicouagan Uapishka BR hosted the national event "Building Sustainability and Reconciliation" in Baie Comeau, bringing together BR representatives, academics, and Indigenous partners from across the country. The event involved a series of workshops and knowledge-sharing activities to develop a vision for how BRs can become a driving force for both conservation and reconciliation in Canada, and particularly within BRs. In order to support broader reconciliation efforts underway in Canada and to advance the UNESCO Policy on Engaging with Indigenous Peoples, a number of reconciliation initiatives followed that meeting. In a project financially supported by the CCUNESCO and the Community Conservation Research Network, BRs across Canada have been documenting their stories of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples in the form of reflection papers and videos. The [stories](#) and [videos](#) are available online. During 2018, with the support of the CCUNESCO, CBRA invited Indigenous Peoples whose traditional territories host Canada's BRs, to meet with CBRA members in Ottawa (February 2018) and Mount Arrowsmith biosphere region (November 2018). During the meetings the delegates built relationships and discussed how Indigenous and non-

Indigenous Peoples involved in Canadian BRs can work together in the spirit and practice of reconciliation. (LAP: A1.1, A1.3, A2.2, A2.3, A4.5)

### ***Striking Balance TV series***

Striking Balance Season 2 is currently in production, featuring more of Canada's 18 BRs. Season 1 featured 8 BRs and is now available in both [English](#) and [French](#). Each documentary film explores the evolution and progress made by one of Canada's 18 biosphere reserves. Filmmakers Zach Melnick (Director) and Yvonne Drebert (Producer) work closely with each community to ensure that the stories they tell are accurate and compelling. (LAP: D3.1)

### ***Federal government contribution agreement***

In 2017, CBRA established a three-year contribution agreement with Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) to lead a project that assists with the identification, recognition, and reporting of Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs) and Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs) within and in proximity to BRs. As part of this project the Canadian BRs are working towards helping Canada deliver its commitment to Aichi Target 11 (to increase the area of protected lands in Canada to 17%). This project is demonstrating how biosphere reserves can create opportunities to work in collaboration with multiple stakeholders and rightsholders in the achievement of the 2020 biodiversity agenda. (LAP: A1.2, A1.3, A5.3, C3.2, C5.1, E1.2)

### ***Mobilizing knowledge about and between Canada's 18 BRs***

Since 2018 CBRA has had a social media coordinator and is now active on [facebook](#) and [twitter](#). CBRA has also launched a series of training webinars for its members. Since 2018, CBRA has been training its members on issues such as communications, ecosystem services, and periodic review preparation with more planned over the coming year. These webinars are recorded and available for CBRA members on their [website](#). In 2018 CCUNESCO and CBRA organized a second event on Parliament Hill (Speaker's Lounge) in Ottawa. The event, "Reception on the Hill with Canada's UNESCO Biosphere Reserves", provided a common forum to Canadian Parliamentarians, Senators, senior government officials, and BR representatives, in order to offer more visibility to the Canadian Biosphere Reserves network. The CCUNESCO and CBRA worked together during 2018 on a number of projects relating to capacity building and knowledge mobilization within the network. The first project was a document on how to achieve charitable status for Canadian BRs, in order to be able to access more funding only available for organizations with charitable status. The second project was the production of a "[Guide to being a Biosphere Reserve in Canada](#)". This document is a useful tool for aspiring and existing BRs to become more familiar with the programme. (LAP: A1.1, A1.2, A2.1, A2.2, A2.3, A4.4, A5.3, B1.2, B5.1, C3.1, D3.1)

### ***Federal tourism strategy***

The CCUNESCO worked to raise awareness about Canada's BRs with the Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, which resulted in Canada's BRs being mentioned in the new [Federal Tourism Strategy](#) (2019): "*Canada's UNESCO Biosphere Reserves and Geoparks will be positioned as key destinations for sustainable tourism, and local communities will be supported in their collective efforts to achieve and maintain these prestigious UNESCO designations.*" This is a huge advance and is the first time that Canada's BRs have been mentioned in a federal tourism strategy. (LAP: A3.1)

### ***Periodic reviews and nominations***

In 2018 Mont Saint-Hilaire marked its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a BR by also having its periodic review. Two expert reviewers were recruited by the CCUNESCO to perform a site visit and to provide advice and recommendations to the BR. The CCUNESCO is supporting Frontenac Arch and Fundy BRs in their follow-up reporting following their 2017 periodic reviews. In addition, the CCUNESCO and CBRA continue to

provide support and advice to At'l'Kitsem/Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative, and the proposed Îles de la Madeleine BR. (LAP: A2.2, A2.3, A6.1)

## International Activities

### *Regional and thematic network participation*

Eleven representatives from Canada attended EuroMAB 2019 at the Dublin Bay Biosphere participated in the plenary session and workshops, in some cases as session chairs. In addition, the Canadian and US BRs congregated for a “meet and greet” to explore opportunities for collaborations between the MAB programs in both countries. Canadian BRs also continue to be actively engaged with [NordMAB](#) and the [World Network of Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves](#). In September of 2017, two representatives of the Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region (MABR) (Vancouver Island, Canada), and a representative from the Manicouagan-Uapishka BR had the opportunity to attend the first ever Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Youth Forum located in the Po Delta Biosphere Reserve in Italy. Larissa Thelin, Projects Coordinator (MABR), Ashley Van Acken, Assistant Research and Community Engagement Coordinator (MABR), and Anthony Bacon, an Indigenous youth from Manicouagan-Uapishka BR, had the opportunity to share their experiences from a Canadian Biosphere Reserve perspective while also gaining insight on how BRs function on an international level. (LAP: A1.3, B1.1, B1.2, B2.1, B5.1)

### *#ProudToShare 2018*

In 2018 the CCUNESCO provided financial support to the MAB Secretariat for participation in the ECOSOC High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, and for the #ProudToShare project. Biosphere Reserves in the world network were invited to produce 60 second films demonstrating how they are implementing the UN Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. The films were shown at the High Level Political Forum at the United Nations in New York City in July 2018 to demonstrate the collective impact of BRs in tackling the SDGs. Two representatives from Canada attended the event with representatives from the MAB Secretariat. (LAP: A1.1, C2.2)

### *North American Dialogue on Biocultural Diversity*

Indigenous and non-Indigenous representatives from Canada’s BRs met in Montreal in April 2019 to take part in the first North American Dialogue on Biocultural Diversity. The dialogue was organized by the Secretariat for the Convention for Biological Diversity (SCBD), the CCUNESCO, and a number of other Indigenous and non-Indigenous partner organizations. It was part of a series of events organized within the framework of the UNESCO-SCBD Joint Programme of Work to explore the meaning and values of the links between biological and cultural diversity at the regional level and implications for solutions for global problems facing humanity. The CCUNESCO created space within the agenda for participants to explore the connections between traditional knowledge, culture and languages, and how these links contribute to the UN Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. The event was an official event of the International Year of Indigenous Languages (2019), and the output of the meeting was a declaration to encourage the 196 Parties to the CBD to embed considerations of the links between biological and cultural diversity into the Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework. (LAP: C2.1, C2.2)

### *UNESCO Chairs*

A number of UNESCO Chairs in Canada are working directly on themes relating to the MAB Programme, fostering north-south dialogues and international cooperation and learning. These include the [UNESCO Chair on Community Sustainability: From Local to Global](#) (Brock University), the [UNESCO Chairs in Biocultural Diversity, Sustainability, Reconciliation, and Renewal](#) (University of Saskatchewan), [UNESCO](#)

[Chair on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions](#) (Laval University), and the [UNESCO Chair on Island Studies and Sustainability](#) (University of Prince Edward Island). (LAP: A4.1, A4.2).

### *International publications*

During 2018 and 2019 Maureen Reed (UNESCO Chair, University of Saskatchewan, Canada) and Martin Price (UK) edited the book "[UNESCO Biosphere Reserves: Supporting Biocultural Diversity, Sustainability and Society](#)", which will be published in September 2019. CBRA, the CCUNESCO, and Maureen Reed collaborated on a chapter entitled, "Perspectives on Growth and Change in Canada's 18 UNESCO BRs". Vancouver Island University continues to publish the online [International Journal of Biosphere Reserves](#). Through written, video, audio, and other media submissions, this journal provides an international forum for the collective body of multidisciplinary research occurring in biosphere reserves across the globe. Members of the WNBR are encouraged to submit their work for publication.

The CCUNESCO formed a working group in 2018 to produce a guide on "[Assessing Ecosystem Services in UNESCO Biosphere Reserves](#)". The guide, written by Liette Vasseur (Brock University and UNESCO Chair) and Robert Siron (Ouranos), was completed in March 2019 and received support from UNESCO including the use of the official MAB logo. It was presented to delegates at EuroMAB 2019, is available to download from the CCUNESCO website, and other biosphere reserves are encouraged to contribute additional case studies to those presented in the guide. Most recently, Liette Vasseur was invited by UNESCO to present the paper to a meeting of BRs in Ethiopia. (LAP: A4.1, A4.2, A7.1, A7.3, B5.1, B7.1, B7.2, D3.1)

### *Selected publications:*

Baird, J., Plummer, R., Schultz, L., Armitage, D., & Bodin, Ö. (2018). Integrating Conservation and Sustainable Development Through Adaptive Co-management in UNESCO Biosphere Reserves. *Conservation and Society*, 16(4), 409-419. Retrieved from <https://www.istor.org/stable/26500655>

Béliveau, M., Germain, D., Ianăș, A.-N. 2017. Fifty-year spatiotemporal analysis of landscape changes in the Mont Saint-Hilaire UNESCO Biosphere Reserve (Quebec, Canada). *AN. Environ Monit Assess* (2017) 189: 215. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10661-017-5938-y>

Kermagoret C, Dupras J (2018) Coupling spatial analysis and economic valuation of ecosystem services to inform the management of an UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve. *PLoS ONE* 13(11): e0205935. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0205935>

Paes Ferreira, M.I., Shaw, P., Sakaki, G.K., Alexander, T., Golzio Barqueta Donnini, J.G.B., & Rego, V.V.B.S (2018). Collaborative governance and watershed management in biosphere reserves in Brazil and Canada. *Ambiente & Água – An Interdisciplinary Journal of Applied Science*, 13(3), 1-11. DOI: 10.4136/ambi-agua-2225

Reed, M.G. 2018. The Contributions of UNESCO Man and Biosphere Program and Biosphere Reserves to the Practice of Sustainability Science. *Sustainability Science*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-018-0603-0>.

Reed, M.G. and Abernethy, P. 2018. Facilitating co-production of transdisciplinary knowledge for sustainability in a national partnership of UNESCO Biosphere Reserves. *Society and Natural Resources*. 31: 39-56.

Reed, M.G., and Abernethy, P. 2019. Social Learning Driven By Collaboration in the Canadian network of UNESCO Biosphere Reserves. In: *Transformations of Social-Ecological Systems: Studies in co-creating integrated knowledge toward sustainable futures*. Sato, T., and Chabay, I. Editors. Springer: Japan. (Also available in Japanese)

Shore, M. and Potter, K. 2018. Assessing Biosphere Reserves for Qualification as Other Effective AreaBased Conservation Measures (OECMs): A Preliminary Analysis. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5735fdc137013b8eeb217d63/t/5aba58ff0e2e723b8ec76eaf/1522161920988/Assessing+Biosphere+Reserves+for+Qualification+as+OECMs+-+Preliminary+Analysis+FINAL+-+March+27+2018.pdf>