



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

From: Canadian Commission for UNESCO

# National Report of Activities 2019-2021 Man and the Biosphere Programme Canada

---

The Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme was established in Canada in 1972 and its first biosphere region (BR), Mont Saint-Hilaire, was established in 1978. Today there are 18 BRs in Canada and a 19<sup>th</sup> region submitted its nomination documents to the MAB Secretariat in September 2020. The Canadian MAB programme is overseen 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 of one representative from each Canadian BR, along with a number of invited observers. It meets regularly *via* videoconference. Its activities 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 project funding from federal government, other agencies, and the CCUNESCO. Individual BRs are supported through a diversity of sources including endowments, 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.



## National Activities

### *Increasing visibility for Canada's Biosphere Regions*

In 2020, the CCUNESCO and CBRA collaborated to produce a brand and communications strategy for Canada's 18 BRs. Professional consultants worked with the network to identify key messaging and audiences for the BRs and training was provided to all 18 sites in a series of national and regional webinars and workshops.

Season 2 of the 'Striking Balance' TV series was launched in January 2020 and features 7 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. Both series are available to watch [here](#).

To celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Man and the Biosphere Programme, the CCUNESCO collaborated with Lock 3 Media (the producers of the Striking Balance series) to produce a 2-minute promotional video about Canada's Biosphere Regions. 'Canada's Biosphere Regions. People and nature – in balance' is available in both [English](#) and [French](#) and was launched on May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021 to celebrate the International Day for Biological Diversity.

### *Periodic Reviews and Nominations*

The Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative submitted its nomination dossier to the MAB Secretariat for evaluation in September 2020. If approved, this will become Canada's 19<sup>th</sup> Biosphere Region.

Clayoquot Sound and Bras d'Or Lakes Biosphere Regions are undertaking their periodic reviews in 2021. Two expert reviewers for each site were recruited by the CCUNESCO to perform an evaluation, a virtual visit, and to provide advice and recommendations to the BR. The reports will be submitted to the MAB Secretariat in September 2021.

### *Mobilizing Knowledge*

Between 2019 and 2021, members of Canada's BRs met multiple times in person and virtually. They have also continued to build relationships with Indigenous partners through meetings between CBRA representatives and the Indigenous Circle of Indigenous representatives from BRs across the country.

In June 2019, the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Reserve welcomed representatives from Canadian BRs, the Indigenous Circle, a contingent of local Indigenous youth, and members of the public, to their [Climate Change Adaptation Forum](#). The outcome was a document of [guidelines](#) for climate change adaptation that is informing the work of Canada's BRs.

CBRA organized a series of webinars during 2019 and 2020 for representatives from Canada's BRs on topics including communications, ecosystem services, zonation, youth engagement, governance, and financing. The webinar series was a great success and one of the outcomes of the series was a series of [resources](#) for BRs. Another outcome was a series of showcase documents on themes including tourism, sustainable development, research in BRs, and citizen science.

In January 2020 CBRA and CCUNESCO representatives met with various federal departments including the federal SDG Unit, Parks Canada, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, as well as Innovation and Social Development Canada to raise awareness of the MAB program in Canada.

During 2020, CBRA organized a national data compilation project to gather information about Canada's biosphere regions to share with key stakeholders. It also launched its [Strategic Plan](#) (2020-2025).

## BIOSPHERE REGIONS BY THE NUMBERS



## International Activities

### *Regional and thematic network participation*

Staff from CBRA have been meeting regularly with representatives from the US MAB group to identify opportunities for cooperation and collaboration. They have also had a number of meetings with representatives from the Canadian Geoparks Network to discuss how the two networks of UNESCO designated sites could cooperate.

Colin Robinson, a Canadian youth representative from Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Region took part in the 2019 MAB Youth Forum in the Changbaishan Biosphere Reserve, China. Colin provided a report and feedback to the Canadian BRs about his experience and is working with youth from other BRs across Canada to develop a Canadian MAB Youth Network.

### *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), the [UNESCO Chair on Food, Biodiversity and Sustainability Studies](#) (Wilfrid Laurier University), and the [UNESCO Chair on Island Studies and Sustainability](#) (University of Prince Edward Island).

### *Project with UK National Commission*

The CCUNESCO and the UK National Commission for UNESCO have been collaborating on a project to propose a framework for knowledge-sharing and capacity-building between BRs, UNESCO Global Geoparks and World Heritage Sites. The project involved a survey of the three types of designations in both Canada and the UK and the report will be published in Autumn 2021.

### *Support for #SOSAfricanHeritage project*

The CCUNESCO has partnered with the German National Commission for UNESCO for its #SOSAfricanHeritage 2021 project, a special support programme for UNESCO sites in Africa that have been negatively impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. As part of the partnership the CCUNESCO will be providing support to a biosphere reserve in Malawi for a project aiming to develop alternative income-generating activities for marginalised women to improve their livelihoods and lifestyles, and also have a positive impact on the mountain environment and its natural resources.

### *Selected publications:*

Building back better with Canadian biosphere reserves (2020) <https://ipolitics.ca/2020/08/24/deep-dive-building-back-better-with-canadian-biosphere-reserves/>

Reconciliation in Action: Reflections on Reconciliation within the Georgian Bay Biosphere Region, Anishinabek territory (2019) <https://en.ccunesco.ca/-/media/Files/Unesco/Resources/2019/08/ReconciliationInActionGeorgianBayBiosphereReserve.pdf>

The Uapishka Station and Reconciliation: Working Together (2019) <https://en.ccunesco.ca/-/media/Files/Unesco/Resources/2019/07/The-Uapishka-Station-and-Reconciliation-Working-together.pdf>

Reconciliation in Action: Building Meaningful Relationships in Canada's Biosphere Reserves (2019) <https://en.ccunesco.ca/blog/2019/9/reconciliation-in-action-building-meaningful-relationships-in-canada-biosphere-reserves>

Local Actions for Global Challenges: Canadian Share Insights at EuroMAB 2019 (2019) <https://en.ccunesco.ca/blog/2019/4/euromab-2019>

### *Selected presentations:*

McDermott, L. and L. Vasseur. Canadian Biosphere Reserves Association Film Shorts - presentation and animation. Celebration of Nations, St Catharines. September 7, 2019.

Vasseur, L. 2019. Assessing ecosystem services in Canadian biosphere reserves. EVAMAB Closing Workshop, Bahir Dar, Ethiopia, 13-17 May 2019. (invitation from MAB-UNESCO, Paris)

Vasseur, L. 2019. Assessing ecosystem services in biosphere reserves: presentation of the tool. Canadian Biosphere Reserve Association. June 10, 2019.

Vasseur, L. 2020. Transition of the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). Invited lecture (virtual) in Jessica Blythe SSAS5P01 class. October 26, 2020

### ***Selected peer-reviewed publications:***

Blye, C.-J., Halpenny, E.A., Hvenegaard, G.T. & Patriquin, D. Knowledge Mobilization in the Beaver Hills Biosphere, Alberta, Canada. 2020. <https://doi.org/10.3390/land9110424>

Izurieta, G, A. Torres, J. Patiño, C. Vasco, L. Vasseur, H. Reyes and B. Torres. 2021. Exploring community and key stakeholders' perception of scientific tourism as a strategy to achieve SDGs in the Ecuadorian Amazon. *Tourism Management Perspectives* 39: 100830. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2021.100830>

Vasseur, L. 2020. Embracing cultures in ecosystem governance in biosphere reserves: slowing down the pace. In Reed, M. and M. Price (Eds.). *UNESCO Biosphere Reserves: Supporting Biocultural Diversity, Sustainability and Society*. Routledge, UK: 309-320.

Spring, A., Skinner, K., Simba, M., Nelson, E., Baltzer, J., Swanson, H. and Turetsky, M., 2019. 3 Taking care of the land. *Sustainable Food System Assessment*, p.42.

Bayha, M. and Spring, A., 2020. Response to COVID in Déljñę, NT: reconnecting with our community, our culture and our past after the pandemic. *Agriculture and human values*, p.1.

Blay-Palmer, A., Spring, A., Nimmo, E.R. and de Lacerda, A.E.B., 2020. Traditional food, the right to food, and sustainable food systems. In *Routledge Handbook of Sustainable and Regenerative Food Systems* (pp. 65-83). Routledge.

Reed, M.G., and Price, M.F. 2020. (eds.) *UNESCO Biosphere Reserves: Supporting Biocultural Diversity, Sustainability and Society*. Earthscan/Routledge. 352 pp. (25 chapters)

Reed, M.G. 2020. Sharing in Governance for Sustainability: Experiences of Indigenous Peoples and Canadian Biosphere Reserves. [Guest statement], pp. 175-176 In P. Dearden, B. Mitchell and E. O'Connell, *Environmental Change and Challenge*, (6<sup>th</sup> ed.) Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.

Reed, M.G. and Price, M.F. 2020. 'Introducing UNESCO Biosphere Reserves' pp. 1-10 in Reed, M.G. and Price, M.F., (eds.) *UNESCO Biosphere Reserves: Supporting Biocultural Diversity, Sustainability and Society*. Earthscan/Routledge.

Reed, M.G. 2020. 'Conceptual Origins and First-Generation Biosphere Reserves' Pp. 13-28 in Reed, M.G. and Price, M.F., (eds.) *UNESCO Biosphere Reserves: Supporting Biocultural Diversity, Sustainability and Society*. Earthscan/Routledge.

Shaw, P., Shore, M., Haine-Bennett, E. and Reed, M.G. 2020. Perspectives on Growth and Change in Canada's 18 UNESCO Biosphere Reserves Canada. Pp 76-88 in: Reed, M.G. and Price, M.F., (eds.) *UNESCO Biosphere Reserves: Supporting Biocultural Diversity, Sustainability and Society*. Earthscan/Routledge. (shared collaboration)

Reed, M.G., and Price, M.F. 2020. Unfinished Business: The Present and Future Contributions of Biosphere Reserves to Sustainability Science. Pp. 321-332 in: Reed, M.G. and Price, M.F., (eds.) *UNESCO Biosphere Reserves: Supporting Biocultural Diversity, Sustainability and Society*. Earthscan/Routledge.

Reed, M.G., and Abernethy, P. 2019. Social Learning Mobilized by Collaboration in the Canadian network of UNESCO Biosphere Reserves. Pp 169-187 in: Sato, T., and Chabay, I. (eds.) *Transformations of Social-Ecological Systems: Studies in co-creating integrated knowledge toward sustainable futures*. Springer: Japan. (also available in Japanese from University of Tokyo Press). [Note: Japanese edition was published first. See below]. 169-187.

Guertin, M-A., Poirier-Ghys, G., Reed, M.G., Dupras, J., and Sauriol, G. 2019. L'éducation relative à l'environnement dans la Réserve de Biosphère du Mont Saint-Hilaire : observations et tensions. *Éducation Relative à l'environnement*. 15: n.p. <https://journals.openedition.org/ere/>

Reed, M.G. 2019. The Contributions of UNESCO Man and Biosphere Program and Biosphere Reserves to the Practice of Sustainability Science. *Sustainability Science*. 14: 809-821. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-018-0603-0>.

Reed, M.G. 2021. Biosphere Reserves. In Ray C. Anderson (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Sustainability*. Great Barrington, MA: Berkshire Publishing. <https://www.berkshirepublishing.com/2021/06/28/biosphere-reserves/>

Reed, M.G., Robson, J.P., Lindgren, A., Friedrichsen, P., Brock, T., Davidson-Hunt, I., Lichtenstein, G., Shackleton, S., Vasseur, L., and Worthen, H. 2020. Foundational principles for intercultural research with Indigenous and rural peoples: Connecting principles to knowledge mobilization. In: *Imagining the Future of Knowledge Mobilization: Perspectives from UNESCO Chairs* (Chapter 2, pp. 31-50). Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada / Canadian Commission for UNESCO. Ottawa: Canada.