
Report from the Chair

If I were to write that this has been a year of great change, I would be wrong, because your organization continues to struggle to survive, as it has since it was formed almost 15 years ago. Over the years since then, small amounts of money have dribbled into the organization from senior governments – federal and provincial – which seem to be unable to figure out who we are and why we should exist at all. Those reluctant and unreliable dribbles of funding, in fact, only served to confuse us and – at a local level – make us an object of envy when we had even a little money, and laughter when we didn't have any at all.

So early last year, your Board and your staff leadership realized that, since we were in a box and apparently unable to escape, perhaps we should think outside the box if we were to make any progress at all. We engaged the help of a professional facilitator who brought willing board members and staff together to explore our options and create what is referred to as a strategic framework with which to move forward.

Through those several day-long discussions, the big thing we learned was to never use the word “grant” again, unless it is something we are giving to someone else who we think deserves it. (I'm pretty sure that was not exactly the words the facilitator would have used, but that is, in fact, where we wound up.) I think we all know that trying to plan a future based on grants which may or may not come is a recipe for depression, frustration, and rage. I am sure that some – if not all – of us around this Board table have felt a measure of one or more of those emotions.

The big thing we learned is that we actually have assets. The “hard” assets, like the Research Centre, are obvious (until now we have failed to track that one on our balance sheet, even though its expenses are tracked in our profit-and-mostly-loss statement!) But those are not the assets we learned to care about. The assets which will serve us well into the future are contained in the experience and respect that have been earned by our staff, and the power of our community through the potential and past commitment manifested in our governance system. This is a community-based agency, neither government nor corporate, and that reality is truly significant.

So your Board has agreed by motion to move forward as a Board of Governors, operating through a strong Operations Committee. This Operating Committee will manage projects moving forward in collaboration with Working Groups, under the management of the Executive Director.

It is an interesting and exciting new model, which allows us to serve the larger community (federal and provincial governments and other municipalities), and our own local community, through service agreements, activities and projects.

I would like to thank our Executive Director John Kindrachuk and our Communications Coordinator Susanne Abe for their help with the Board and all the project work they do that keeps the doors open and the power bill paid. I cannot say that without acknowledging their spouses (Diane Kindrachuk and Thomas Abe) for their patience and very often their contribution of talent.

Finally, I would like to thank our vice-chair, Peter, for acting as chair for the last 3 months, and for assisting me with this report.

Gary Nickel

Report from the Executive Director

It is with great pleasure that I provide our Annual Report for 2013. It has been a year that has seen a start of change in our operations since we have lost Government funding. This report will identify our past year funding sources and how the mandates of the organizations that we work with fit well with our own mandate.

I would like to thank Andrew Hawrysh, our past Chair for all the time and effort that he put into the Redberry Lake Biosphere Reserve since its inception. His insight and voluntary contributions will be greatly missed by board and staff alike.

I would also like to thank Susanne as staff and Thomas as a volunteer for their hard work and dedication to this organization and its mandate.

This past year has been a year of using the relationships with our partner agencies to keep our selves afloat. The North Saskatchewan River Basin Council (NSRBC) who we provide office space to and are contracted to provide management and communication services for is our major funding source for this year. Their mandate of providing source water protection within the North Saskatchewan River Watershed and which the Redberry Lake Watershed is a sub watershed, fits in well with our BR mandate. This partnership will continue to provide us with contract work as we go forward in our new funding model.

Another important source of funding that will continue is through the AEGP. This project is now administered by the NSRBC and we will be continuing to provide funding for environmental projects in the BR and municipalities in the central part of the North Saskatchewan River Watershed.

We have also initiated some smaller sources of funding such as canoe rentals, admission to our Research and Education Centre and rental of the Centre as well.

As we move forward into 2014 with our new funding model, we will continue using our existing partners and develop new partnerships to fulfil our mandate of making our area a great place to live.

John Kindrachuk

Nominating Committee Report

Elected Municipal Members (not subject to vote)*

Gary Nickel (RM of Great Bend)
Nick Partyka (RM of Douglas)
Marc Brochu (RM of Meeting Lake)
Don Paulow (RM of Redberry)
Ron Kowalchuk (Mayor of Hafford)

Appointed Municipal Members (not subject to vote)*

Stan Novicki (Town of Hafford)
Chris Gonda (RM of Redberry)
Eugene Sass (Redberry Lake Regional Park Board)

Sector Members (to be voted upon)*

Larissa Matechuk (Education)
Larry Hawrysh (Culture)
Peter Kingsmill (Science)

***Note:** *Elected and Appointed Municipal members, according to the by-laws, are automatic voting members of the Board of Governors of the RLBR and do not need to be further voted upon at the AGM. Sector Members, however, have a two-year term and sit at the pleasure of the Board, and therefore must be voted upon every second AGM.*

Submitted by the Nominating Committee (Chris Gonda/Peter Kingsmill)

Redberry Lake Biosphere Reserve Annual Report 2014



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Redberry Lake
Biosphere Reserve



To carry out its mandate Redberry Lake Biosphere Reserve (RLBR) delivers and implements programs that contribute to the conservation of ecosystems, biodiversity and countryside; to the sustainable development of local culture, society, and economy and to build capacity within the area through scientific research, learning, and public education. This work is accomplished by networking with other organizations, community groups, educational and scientific institutes and partnering Biosphere Reserves within the world network.

Quick Facts about RLBR

UNESCO designation in 2000

One of 16 BRs in Canada

The only BR in Saskatchewan

Covers the closed watershed of Redberry Lake

Located within the Aspen Parkland Ecoregion

Population: ca. 5,000

Designated Federal Migratory Bird Sanctuary and Important Bird Area (IBA)

Research & Education Centre features displays on BRs, local environment, history and culture

Redberry Lake Biosphere Reserve at international EuroMAB Conference

In October 2013 the biannual EuroMAB conference took place in Canada for the first time. The EuroMAB Network is made up of all European and North American member states which participate in the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) program and in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (a total of 284 Biosphere Reserves representing 52 countries).

One of this year's highlights for Canadian Biosphere Reserves was the final year of a three-year Partnership Research Project, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). For the EuroMAB conference, Redberry Lake and Alberta's Waterton Biosphere Reserves collaborated to provide a workshop on facilitation skills to the biosphere reserve practitioners attending this conference.



Working together with a Calgary-based company which specializes in stakeholder engagement, the workshop was designed to provide participants with exposure to the art and science of facilitating collaboration and consensus, and an opportunity for hands-on practice with key facilitation tools. The workshop was well attended, proving that Biosphere Reserve practitioners feel the need to further educate themselves on facilitation skills and tools.

In addition, the two Biosphere Reserves participated in the *SSHRC Partnership Project* plenary session *Good Practices in Building Local Engagement: Strategies, Networking and Lessons Learned* held at EuroMAB. A presentation titled *Land Management and Ecological Goods and Services – Engaging Community and Partners to Work towards a Common Vision* introduced the land management projects undertaken in Waterton, Riding Mountain and Charlevoix Biosphere Reserves. The RLBR presented the LIRA project as a Saskatchewan best practice. With an audience of over 200 participants, this session was the best attended event at EuroMAB 2013.

Close ties to Universities and Researchers

2013 marks the third year students from the University of Saskatchewan's School of Environment and Sustainability (SENS) have been out to the RLBR for their annual field trip. And, this year we were pleased to welcome a second group of students. Seventeen students came to Redberry to study the "Human Dimensions of Environmental Change". They met with young students from Hafford Central School, as well as with seniors and other local residents. The students wanted to find out first-hand how life has changed over time in Hafford and area, as well as everybody's perception about future changes and challenges.

The following weekend we hosted a second group of SENS students. Their focus was on "Ecosystem Science and Sustainability". At their demonstration sites on Marshy Creek and area the students were accompanied by students from Hafford Central School. We added this experience for the second year now, to give school students the chance to get in contact with research, researchers and the University experience.

The annual field trips to the RLBR are part of the Memorandum of Understanding which was signed in spring 2012 between the School of Environment and Sustainability and the RLBR.



Two research projects were conducted in the RLBR in 2013:

- Jessica Lankshear, U of S: "Investigating Human-Black Bear Interactions in Redberry Lake Biosphere Reserve"
- Evan Bassett, U of S: "An Examination of the Canada-Saskatchewan Farm Stewardship Program in the Redberry Lake Watershed"

Both project reports can be downloaded at www.redberrylake.ca/researchintous

Promoting and Practicing Sustainable Tourism

- By joining the **Canada Nature Escapes Cooperative**, the RLBR joined a formal group of Saskatchewan-based operators whose goal is to collaboratively attract more visitors to Canada and the province.
- In 2013 we developed a program called "**Life in the Biosphere**" taking visitors on a tour through Saskatchewan's only BR.
- On the occasion of the 100 year celebration of the Town of Hafford and the RM of Redberry, the Biosphere Reserve along with Prairie Wild Consulting, created a **map of local attractions and Points of Interest within the BR**. The map is available at the Research & Education Centre.
- 700 copies of the revised **RLBR Visitor Guide** were distributed again to the five visitor reception centres at the Saskatchewan borders and were handed out at the "Sports and Leisure Show" in Saskatoon.
- We thank our partner **Clearwater Canoeing** for equipping us with **canoes** to rent out to visitors who want to explore Redberry Lake by boat. It was a huge success! We also thank **Marine Masters** of Saskatoon for partly donating us a beautiful 16 feet long dock for our canoe rental operation.
- For 2014 we are planning to develop a one-of-a-kind hiking trail, to be called the "**Redberry Lake Discovery Trail**" which will feature interactive stations and displays to explore the secrets of nature.



We are pleased to have **Mountain Equipment Co-op** and **EcoFriendly Sask** contributing towards this project!

For more information and how to get involved, visit www.redberrylake.ca/exploreus/hikingtrailstips

RLBR District Planning Report

During 2013, Prairie Wild Consulting (PWC, the planning consultant for the RLBR region) organized various meetings for the regional planning initiative and the Redberry Lake LIRA pilot project. The participating municipalities in this initiative include: RMs of Douglas, Meeting Lake and Great Bend; Towns of Hafford and Radisson; Villages of Borden, Maymont and Speers; and, now Richard. Numerous follow-up phone calls were done from time to time throughout the year to check in with all the municipalities involved, and to offer planning advice and development review responses.

In April 2013, a District Planning Commission meeting was held in Borden whereby the DPC Agreement was reviewed by the municipalities. The regional planning framework was also explained to provide a better understanding of regional planning and its associated benefits. At this same meeting, the Village of Richard expressed interest in joining the regional planning initiative and was accepted as part of the group. Municipalities were reminded during this meeting to review their respective zoning by-laws/maps which have already been sent to them to facilitate submission to the Province for consideration and subsequent approval. PWC later sent out the revised DPC Agreement for signing by the municipalities, and followed up with several calls/emails to get this duly signed. Draft OCP sections and an overall District Plan was drafted and scheduled for peer review in this same year.

In March 2013, the LIRA Technical Team together with a representative from the Water Security Agency met with the stakeholders from Radisson and Borden, and went through a flood map validation exercise based on their local knowledge. Together, we explored adaptation options for mitigating potential flooding within the LiDAR area. Unfortunately, on April 29 2013, Radisson and Borden declared states of emergency because of flooding. This prompted PWC to visit the area, take pictures of affected sites, and even provide support by helping to offload sand bags. PWC later sent out flood maps created through the LIRA study to assist their emergency response efforts. After the flooding incident, PWC met with the Administrator for Borden/Great Bend in May 2013 and documented the flood event in order to validate the LIRA study.

In June 2013, PWC (together with the RLBR) also developed a cultural tourism map for Hafford/Redberry Lake for the Town's centennial celebration. The Main & Summary reports for the Redberry Lake LIRA Pilot Study were also completed by PWC in September 2013. Finally, in November 2013, a stakeholder meeting was convened at the RLBR centre for the stakeholders where the report for Redberry Lake LIRA Pilot Study was presented and explained to participants.

Members of Prairie Wild recently met with members of the RLBR Planning District to provide an update on the final preparation of the District Planning Agreement and planning tools. This took place in Borden on March 5, 2014. Additionally, as part of the Technical Team, PWC presented the Redberry Lake LIRA results at the upcoming *Extreme Flood Event Risk Management Workshop* on March 31st, 2014 in Regina.

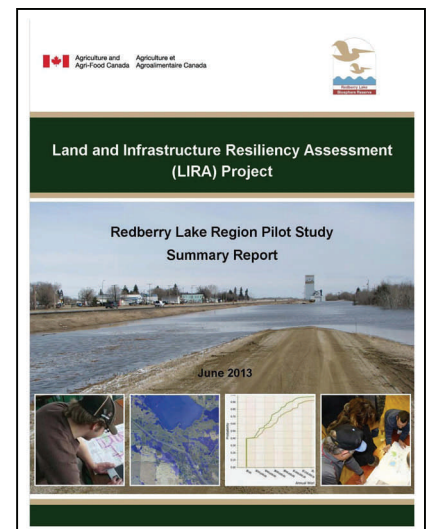
Submitted by PWC

Land and Infrastructure Resiliency Assessment (LIRA)

The Redberry Lake watershed is one of three LIRA testing sites in Saskatchewan. The LIRA complements both the regional planning initiative within the Redberry Lake Biosphere Reserve area of cooperation as well as the mandates of a World Biosphere Reserve: environmental protection, sustainable adaptation, planning and development, capacity building through knowledge exchange and research as well as multi-stakeholder partnerships.

The main focus of the Redberry Lake Region Pilot Study is to provide stakeholders with information on how to identify and develop adaptive climate strategies which are both practical and cost-effective.

The LIRA Summary Report for the Redberry Lake region can be downloaded at www.redberrylake.ca



Agri-Environmental Group Plan (AEGP)

Since its inception in 2006 until the termination of the *Growing Forward Program* in March 2013, the Redberry Lake Watershed AEGP Group successfully reached 306 producers, involving them in a total of 653 Beneficial Management Practice projects within the Rural Municipalities of Blaine Lake, Douglas, Great Bend, Leask, Mayfield, Meeting Lake and Redberry. With over \$4.56 million applied for, the AEGP was able to potentially bring over \$2.28 million back to producers living in the RLBR area of cooperation.

For the duration of the new five-year *Growing Forward 2 Program* (2013-2017), the Government of Saskatchewan has contracted the local watershed groups in the Province to offer technical assistance to potential applicants.

Producers and municipalities in the former Redberry Lake Watershed AEGP can now contact the North Saskatchewan River Basin Council (NSRBC) for assistance: www.nsrbc.ca



Education and Awareness on a Local Level

Together with Hafford Central School, the RLBR created a short film which showcases how UNESCO Associated Schools and UNESCO World Biosphere

Reserves work together, build capacity through this partnership and therefore – and most importantly – empower youth in embracing nature as part of their culture.



Forty-five young students from Grades 5, 9 and 10 headed to Oscar Creek to examine the health of this freshwater creek that feeds into Redberry Lake; they tested the water for dissolved oxygen, phosphates and nitrates and caught macro invertebrates with dip nets. Iain Philips, Aquatic Macro-invertebrate Ecologist at the Water Security Agency, and other experts from partner organizations, accompanied the students and explained to them how these factors are indicators for the health of “their” watershed.

The video can be viewed at www.redberrylake.ca

Surveying changes in the Biosphere Reserve

- Important Bird Area site visit, monitoring and report by BR staff and Nature Saskatchewan
- Water level data collection by RLBR staff at hydrometric gauging stations in Redberry Lake (Water Security Agency)



Contact Redberry Lake Biosphere Reserve

Box 221
Hafford, SK
S0J 1A0

Phone: 306-549-4060
Fax: 306-549-4061

info@redberrylake.ca

www.redberrylake.ca

