

~ FUNDY TIDINGS ~

The Quarterly Newsletter of the
Bay of Fundy Ecosystem Partnership (BoFEP)

January, 2007 ~ Winter Issue

For up-to-date information about BoFEP meetings and other events visit:
www.bofep.org/calendar.htm

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A. BoFEP and its activities:

1. BoFEP 7th Science Workshop:

a) 7th Workshop a Success - Almost 160 researchers, representatives of community groups and businesses, environmental managers and interested citizens from around the Bay of Fundy gathered at the Algonquin Hotel in St. Andrews by the Sea on October 25-27, 2006. They were there to participate in the 7th biennial Bay of Fundy Science Workshop. These popular workshops are sponsored by the Bay of Fundy Ecosystem Partnership (BoFEP). The Huntsman Marine Science Centre in St. Andrews hosted and organized this year's event.

The theme of the Workshop was *"Challenges in Environmental Management in the Bay of Fundy - Gulf of Maine"*. Dr. Gerhard Pohle, Chair of the Workshop, explained that *"the inclusion of the Gulf of Maine is deliberate, as the Bay of Fundy is a complex and interlinked component, with both bodies of water facing similar environmental challenges"*. Thus, several scientists from the northeastern US also participated actively in the workshop.

To kick-start each day of the workshop and get participants thinking, an opening plenary presentation summarized particular aspects of Bay of Fundy science. On the first morning, Fred Page from the St. Andrews Biological Station discussed some of the problems in managing the environment and resources of the Bay raised by the fact that the Bay's physical environment is constantly changing. Some of these changes involve shorter or longer-term cycles, while others, such as sea level rise and climate change are general long-term trends. On the second morning, Graham Daborn, Director of the Arthur Irving academy for the Environment at Acadia University, invoked the image of the Greek Mythical figure Penelope to describe the progress over the years in trying to understand the Bay of Fundy and Gulf of Maine ecosystems. Penelope, during the absence of her husband, warded off legions of unwelcome suitors by promising to choose one of them as soon as she finished knitting a shroud for her father-in-law. However, every night she unraveled all the work that she had completed during the day, thus putting off the decision until her husband returned and slew the importunate suitors. The myth has become an enduring symbol of a work never completed, but always in hand. Daborn likened the science of the Bay to this unfinished shroud..... every now and then new threads of knowledge force scientists to unravel the models that they have carefully woven to explain how parts of the Bay work and then rework them to reflect the new understanding.

However, the real "red meat" of the workshop were the over 80 scientific papers and posters presented in 13 different sessions. These were devoted to subjects such as salt marshes, sea birds, climate change, biodiversity, fish ecology, resource management, seafloor mapping and environmental monitoring to name but a few. Abstracts of all the posters and papers presented at the workshop can be found on the BoFEP website at: www.bofep.org/workshop2006.htm

All these papers and posters also provided abundant background information for the final wrap-up session on the last day of the workshop. After a stimulating presentation by John Coon of the University of New Hampshire entitled "*Can we get there from here? Ecosystem-based governance in the Gulf of Maine*", participants enthusiastically discussed ways that people living and working in the region can play a greater role in keeping the Bay healthy and productive.

Susan Rolston, Peter Wells and other members of the editorial team are now working hard to have the Proceedings of the Workshop ready for distribution as early in 2007 as possible.

Congratulations to Gerhard Pohle, Lou VanGuelpen, Rebecca Milne and others at the Huntsman Marine Science Centre, the Atlantic Reference Centre and the members of the program committee for doing such a superb job in organizing this very successful event.

b) Student Award Winners - The Workshop was also an excellent opportunity for budding scientists to showcase the results of their research projects. Nineteen university students competed for awards for the best student papers and posters presented at the workshop. The winners were as follows:

Best student papers (oral presentation)

First prize - Alexander Bond (University of New Brunswick, Fredericton) - "*Comparing adult and chick diet in two Alcids species using stable isotopes*"

Second prize - David Drolet (University of New Brunswick, Fredericton) - "*Effect of density of the gastropod Ilyanassa obsoleta on distribution and movement of the amphipod Corophium volutator*"

Best student posters

First prize - Koreen Millard (Acadia University, Wolfville) - "*High-resolution LIDAR elevation data of inter-tidal areas: A potential tool for examining salt marsh vegetation communities*"

Second prize - Shannon O'Connor (Acadia University, Wolfville) - "*The Atlantic Coastal Zone: all the little fishes*"

Congratulations to all the students who presented at the workshop. The judges (and the audience) were very impressed by the high calibre of the presentations.

c) Environmental Stewardship Award Winner - At the workshop Banquet, Dr. Peter Wells, recently retired from Environment Canada in Dartmouth, NS, was presented with the BoFEP "Environmental Stewardship Award". This award is

given biennially to an individual who has "*contributed significantly to the environmental health or sustainability of the Bay of Fundy*". Congratulations Peter on this well-deserved award and thanks for all the energy, enthusiasm and support you have given to BoFEP ever since its inception.

2. BoFEP 2006 Annual General Meeting

The 2006 AGM was held during the workshop on October 25th, 2006 in the Van Horne Ballroom of the Fairmont Algonquin Hotel in St. Andrews. The draft minutes of the meeting (in PDF format) can be found at: www.bofep.org/agm.htm . A few highlights include:

a) Steering and Management Committees elected for 2006-2007 - At the AGM a full slate of 24 members of the BoFEP Steering Committee was elected. In addition to the many returning stalwarts, we would also like to welcome new members Andy Didyck, Elwood Dillman, Peter Fenety, Christine Smith, John Terry, Raul Ugarte and Owen Washburn. A complete list of the members is available at: www.bofep.org/steering.htm .

At a subsequent brief meeting of the Steering Committee the BoFEP Management Committee was elected, comprising:

Chair – Barry Jones,
Vice Chair - Peter Wells
Secretary - Anna Redden
Treasurer – Patricia Hinch
At large - Peter Fenety
At large - Marianne Janowicz
At large – Owen Washburn

Ex Officio members (non voting)
Past Chair - Graham Daborn
Guest member at large - Hugh Akagi
Communications coordinator- Jon Percy
Secretariat - Leanna McDonald

b) Strategic Planning Report - A significant portion of the AGM was devoted to consideration of a discussion paper entitled "The Future of BoFEP; its long-term support". This excellent report was produced thanks to the efforts of an ad hoc Strategic Planning Committee chaired by Marianne Janowicz, who organized two stimulating retreats for Steering and Management Committee members and winnowed and synthesized the mountain of information generated into a manageable summary and recommendations. A copy of the draft Strategic Planning Committee Report is available at: www.bofep.org/strategi.htm .

c) **Proposed BoFEP Outreach Working Group** - One outcome of the Strategic Planning exercise was a proposal for a BoFEP Outreach Working Group. This group would work to raise the profile of BoFEP within the Bay community, specifically in the industry, government and First Nations sectors and encourage their involvement in BoFEP, so that the activities of BoFEP better serve the interests of the communities and sectors and the Bay of Fundy ecosystem. This proposed working group has developed a draft terms of reference. The Management Committee will recommend to the Steering Committee that it ratify the formation of this new Working Group.

d) **8th Bay of Fundy Science Workshop** - At the AGM, Anna Redden, Director of the Acadia Centre for Estuarine Research at Acadia University, offered to host the 2008 Workshop in Wolfville. This offer was enthusiastically accepted by all present. Planning for this event is already underway. [*Breaking News* ~ The workshop will take place at the Old Orchard Inn in Wolfville, October 21-24, 2008. Mark your calendar now!]

B. Partners and other organizations:

3. **Salt Marsh Workshop** - The Ecology Action Centre in Halifax is sponsoring a workshop entitled "Six Years in the Mud. Restoring Maritime Salt Marshes: Lessons Learned and Moving Forward". The workshop will be held February 1-2, 2007 at the Bedford Institute of Oceanography.

It has been six years since the EAC held its first workshop on salt marsh restoration. *Six Years in the Mud* will provide a retrospect of accomplishments in Bay of Fundy salt marsh restoration, identifying key lessons learned and how efforts have contributed to overall ecological improvement of Maritime marshes. The workshop will also explore where and how to focus future efforts in salt marsh restoration. Workshop sessions will explore knowledge and information gaps, address implementation obstacles, and identify priorities for future research and action. Community groups, researchers, government, educators, naturalists and anyone working or interested in salt marshes are invited to participate in this exciting workshop. For more information and to register contact: saltmarsh@ecologyaction.ca or visit www.ecologyaction.ca

4. Harry Thurston Lecture on Salt Marshes:

The Ecology Action Centre (EAC) invites the public to attend "A Place Between The Tides: A Naturalist's Reflections on the Salt Marsh", a public lecture by Harry Thurston, winner of the 2005 Sigurd Olson Nature Writing Award. The lecture is free of charge and is part of a larger workshop the EAC is hosting on salt marsh restoration (for more information on the workshop visit www.ecologyaction.ca). This event is cosponsored by the Gulf of Maine Council and Environmental Programmes, Dalhousie University

This lecture will take place January 31st, 7:30-8:30pm, McCain Scotiabank Auditorium (Room 256, Arts and Social Science Building), Dalhousie University. For more information contact the EAC at 442-5046 or saltmarsh@ecologyaction.ca

5. Fishermen and Scientists Research Society

a) Conference and Workshop

The Fishermen and Scientists Research Society (FSRS) will be holding its 14th Annual Conference on February 16-17, 2007 at the Best Western Glengarry Hotel in Truro, NS. The Conference will be preceded on February 15th by the joint FSRS - Gulf of Maine Lobster Foundation Lobster Science Workshop. The Lobster workshop will explore the relationship of various lobster recruitment and ventless trap projects and the advantages of different methodologies, and will also continue the cross-border information sharing and collaboration initiated through previous workshops. The 14th Annual Conference will include workshops on a wide variety of topics, from juvenile haddock habitat use to artificial lobster habitat, cod tagging, temperature monitoring on lobster traps, and inshore ecosystem research, as well as a poster/information displays session. For more information and to register contact:

pmdservices@eastlink.ca visit: www.fsrs.ns.ca or phone 902-876-1320

b) Overview of the Fishermen and Scientists Research Society

Established in January 1994, the Fishermen and Scientists Research Society (FSRS) is a non-profit organization which is an active partnership between fishermen and scientists. The FSRS was developed with the overall objectives to promote effective communication between fishermen, scientists and the general public, and to establish and maintain a network of fishermen and scientists capable of conducting collaborative research and collecting information relevant and necessary to the long-term sustainability of marine fisheries. The current membership consists of 380 members, including 253 fishermen members and 127 scientists/other members. Scientist members have come from both the government (e.g. Department of Fisheries and Oceans) and academic communities, as well as from the private sector.

The FSRS was formed out of the recognition by both fishermen and scientists that each had valuable contributions to make to the effective long-term stewardship of living marine resources. A partnership based on effective communication and common goals was a necessary prerequisite to realising the FSRS's objectives. This partnership has enabled valuable joint projects that are important to the advancement of assessment and management of our fisheries resources.

The Objectives of the FSRS have been defined as:

- To establish and maintain a network of fishing industry personnel to collect information, for use by members of the FSRS, relevant to the long-term sustainability of the marine fishing industry in the Atlantic Region.

- To facilitate and promote effective communication between fishermen, scientists, and the general public.
- To participate, as appropriate, in research projects of other agencies and institutions which require the collection of information relevant to fisheries and marine environmental monitoring.
- To generate revenue, where possible, from activities related to information gathering, sample collection, and environmental monitoring to promote the continuation of the FSRS.
- To analyze and disseminate information generated through the activities of the FSRS.
- To facilitate the provision of training to members of the FSRS as may be necessary or desirable in the carrying out of the objectives of the FSRS.
- To avoid, by action or inaction on the part of the FSRS, the perception that the FSRS is a lobby group representing the interests of either the fishing industry or the scientific community over that of the long-term sustainability of the fishery as a whole.

For more information about the FSRS and its activities visit: www.fsrs.ns.ca

6. New RARGOM Website

The Regional Association for Research on the Gulf of Maine (RARGOM) has a new Web Site that is hosted by the University of New Hampshire. NH. Visit it at www.rargom.org . It provides information regarding upcoming regional events, funding opportunities, directories, regional research and reports from all of the RARGOM theme sessions. RARGOM was founded in 1991 as an association of institutions that are actively involved in research, management and stewardship activities related to the Gulf of Maine and its watershed. It is an advocate for regional research and stewardship of the Gulf of Maine. Its basic missions are to facilitate a coherent program of regional research, promote scientific quality and encourage regional coordination and collaboration among researchers and environmental decision-makers residing at its member institutions.

7. Benthic Ecology Meeting in Atlanta

The 2007 Benthic Ecology Meeting will convene this March 21st -25th, 2007 at the Georgia Tech campus in Atlanta to learn the newest developments in marine and benthic ecology and related fields (and explore Atlanta!). We anticipate a diverse audience of students and researchers from around the United States that will create an engaging scientific and social atmosphere. Plus, the weather should be pretty good! We hope you'll join us. The deadline for registration and abstract submission is Jan 26, 2007.

For further information contact: benthicecologymeetings@biology.gatech.edu.
or visit: <http://www.biology.gatech.edu/bem2007/> for on line registration, abstract submission and information about accommodations.

8. Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence Coalition on Sustainability - Website/Newsletter

The Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence Coalition on Sustainability (SGSL) has recently given their Website a new look. To check it out go to: <http://www.coalition-sgsl.ca>
The winter issue of the SGSL Newsletter can be downloaded at:

C. Fundy and other news:

9. The Joggins Fossil Cliffs Project

The residents of Joggins had long recognized that the development of a strategy to manage and promote the world famous fossil cliffs as an educational and tourism attraction was the key to realizing the potential of both the site's and the community's future. They set out to seek a partner who shared their vision and approached the Cumberland Regional Economic Development Association (CREDA) to assist them to build on this idea. Their efforts have finally paid off, with the Federal and Provincial governments contributing almost \$7 million towards the construction of the Joggins Cliffs Interpretive Centre. The 13,000 square foot centre, which will comprise exhibition space, gift shop, café, multi purpose room and lab, is scheduled for completion in late summer. In addition, the partners have recently completed a detailed proposal to UNESCO to have the Joggins Fossil Cliffs designated a World Heritage Site. For more information about these exciting developments visit: <http://www.creda.net/~jfcliffs/vision.htm>

10. Right Whales Linger in Bay of Fundy

A fisherman and whale-watcher says he has the answer to the question that's stumping the experts -- why at least two dozen right whales are still [Mid November] in the Bay of Fundy. "There's not enough food," said Harold Theriault, a lobster fisherman for more than 35 years who owns Petit Passage Whale Watch. For the last 12 years, Theriault, also the Liberal MLA for Digby-Annapolis, has operated a whale-watching business with his wife and three sons. The family business covers the Digby Neck, George's Bank and Brown's Bank areas in search of the endangered right whales of which only about 350 still exist.

One of the right whales' food sources is krill, a reddish, shrimp-like invertebrate. Theriault says the organism has become extremely scarce in the Digby Neck area. "It used to be a few years ago that you would see the krill all over the surface of the water," he said. "It would gather all over the bottom of the boat. Now, if you go out, you can barely see it. It's as though it's gone. "What used to be normal was to see 125 to 130 whales a season. Now, we're lucky to see half that." He thinks the department of fisheries and oceans should do an intensive study to find out why the right whale's food stocks have been depleted and seek ways in which they can be brought back to acceptable levels. He's convinced the right whales remaining in the Bay of Fundy are making a last ditch effort to fatten up before migrating south for the winter. "I don't think they're gluttonous mammals. They're there trying to build up 18 inches of fat, and they won't migrate south until that happens."

Christopher Taggart is a fisheries oceanography professor at Dalhousie University and an expert on right whales. He said it is extremely rare to see whales in the Bay of Fundy at this time of year; he could cite fewer than 10 documented cases. But Taggart would not say the whales are staying to continue feeding. Taggart says typically 20 to 100 right whales congregate in the Grand Manan Basin, which includes waters off the coast of Digby, in

July, August, and September. There, they feed off a particular plankton, copepod *Calanus finmarchicus*, rich in fat, and found between 120 and 180 metres below the surface. The whales quickly accumulate the fat they need for their migration. They also feed on surface plankton. Taggart said no research supports Theriault's food shortage hypothesis, but the professor called the question intriguing. "There is no evidence yet that suggests anything about the quality or quantity of the copepod *Calanus finmarchicus* or the krill," he said. "But he is asking a very good question." Taggart says many factors influence the right whales' migration pattern including light, temperature, and food.

— By Andrew Rankin, *The Valley Today* [Windsor, N.S.],
Friday, Nov. 17/06

[Tidings Editor's footnote: On Nov. 7, 2006 CBC Radio's "Maritime Noon" featured an interview with Jerry Conway of DFO who expressed concern about the pod of 50 Right Whales still present from the area of Point Lepreau and Grand Manan Island. He said that usually most right whales leave Fundy in September, and he speculated that lots of plankton in the water might explain the continued late presence of the whales.]

D. ADMINISTTRIVIA

Fundy Tidings is circulated Quarterly (winter, spring, summer, autumn) to all registered members [go to www.bofep.org/join.htm) of BoFEP and other individuals who have expressed an interest in BoFEP and its activities. If you know of others who might like to receive Fundy Tidings or if you would like to be removed from the Fundy Tidings mailing list, simply e-mail a request to communications@bofep.org .

For more news items about BoFEP, its partners and the Bay of Fundy, periodically check the BoFEP What's New page at: <http://www.bofep.org/fundynews.htm>. You will also find back issues of Fundy Tidings archived there.

If you would like to post an item in Fundy Tidings pertaining to BoFEP, its partners or the Bay of Fundy send it along to communications@bofep.org . The submission deadlines are:

Winter - January 1st; Spring - April 1st; Summer - July 1st; Autumn - October 1st.