

@Bay of Fundy Ecosystem Partnership (BoFEP)

BoFEP's Strategic Plan 2011–2015

- Shaping the Future Direction and Agenda -



@pgw 2007. Coastal observation deck with interpretation panels at Alma, NB, at the eastern entrance to Fundy National Park.

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Overview

This working document describes the BoFEP Strategic Plan for the period 2011–2115. It has been prepared for the Steering Committee and membership to help shape a future direction and agenda for BoFEP. The organization has been in place since 1997 and has been supported by Environment Canada (major annual grants), Fisheries and Oceans Canada (for specific projects), and the group's membership. The organization has run with two supported positions – a Secretariat housed at the Acadia Centre for Estuarine Research, Acadia University, Wolfville, NS, and a communications coordinator residing in Granville Ferry, NS. Service on the Management Committee is volunteer as is the Steering Committee. The focus of BoFEP has been and still is largely the work of the research-oriented working groups, the biennial Bay of Fundy Science Workshop, and communications covering the website, the *Fundy Tidings* e-newsletter, and periodic *Fundy Issues* fact sheets. The group's record of this activity is seen on its website – www.bofep.org. As funding opportunities, personnel, and environmental issues of concern change with time, it is necessary for an organization to examine itself and plan accordingly. This strategic plan is the outcome of several years of intermittent planning and analysis, led by the Outreach Working Group and its Strategic Planning Advisory Committee. It identifies an organizational and operational path forward for BoFEP. We believe that implementing the Strategic Plan will lead to a more sustainable organization and work output of continued value to the mission and goals of BoFEP.

1. BoFEP— Who We Are and What We Do

In 1996, people conducting research on the Bay of Fundy and interested in its future gathered to discuss how to protect and conserve the ecosystem of the Bay from the many threats that were impinging upon it.¹ The academics, researchers, government representatives, members of NGOs and coastal residents concluded that a greater integration of ecosystem research occurring within the Bay of Fundy region was needed, inclusive of jurisdictions (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Maine) and watersheds.

BoFEP was formally established in November of 1997. Its objective then and now is:

- To promote diverse, dynamic and productive Bay of Fundy plant and animal communities, coastal habitats and watersheds that are appreciated, valued and wisely used by residents and visitors.

In short, the organization seeks to achieve wise conservation and management of the Bay's natural resources and habitats by encouraging co-operative activities among stakeholders, monitoring ecosystem trends, and facilitating the sharing of information. Between 1997 and 2011, BoFEP has been running a lean organization to deliver on its vision, mission and goals (see Appendix 1: Vision, Principles, and Mission).

Our principal achievements have been through working groups, communications and workshops. A number of working groups have conducted new research and synthesized information on priority topics. A sustained communications effort focuses on fact sheets on issues and aspects of the Bay's ecology, and running the website for internal communication and our primary window on the world. A quarterly Newsletter *Fundy Tidings* has been produced and distributed since 2003 to all Members and Friends of BoFEP. There is the biennial Bay of Fundy Science Workshop (with Proceedings) and occasional fora on special topics such as causeways, tidal power, and other issues broadly impacting the Minas Basin and its watersheds.

¹ A background scientific report on the Bay of Fundy and its issues, prepared in advance of the 1996 Workshop, helped to focus the discussion and became part of the report of that workshop (see Percy et al. 1997 at <http://www.bofep.org/publications>).

2. How We Achieve Our Goals

To achieve its vision for the Bay of Fundy, BoFEP's mission is:

- to study and promote the ecological integrity, biodiversity and productivity of the Bay of Fundy ecosystem;
- to foster the social well-being and economic sustainability of its coastal communities; and
- to facilitate communication and co-operation among individuals and organizations interested in understanding, sustainably using and conserving the resources, habitats and ecological processes of the Bay of Fundy.

BoFEP carries out its mission and achieves its goals by:

- *facilitating* the creation of knowledge about the Bay of Fundy,
- *sharing* that knowledge, and
- *using* that knowledge to maintain and improve the health of the Bay.

Facilitating the Creation of Knowledge about the Bay of Fundy

Since 1997, BoFEP has facilitated the creation of new information and knowledge through its various working groups that focus on specific aspects of the Bay of Fundy ecosystem such as mudflat ecology, eelgrass habitat, sub-littoral ecology, salt marsh ecology and the effects of tidal restrictions, and stress and cumulative effects of pollution. Working Groups that consider the economic and cultural components of Bay of Fundy life include the Outreach, Fundy Informatics, and the Minas Basin Working Groups.

The working groups are composed of academics, government representatives, researchers, members of community groups and interested citizens. They can address any issue of collective interest. The working groups fund their activities from various sources in government, national funding agencies, and industry.

The annual work plan and projects of BoFEP create new networks of people working together and new information. Results of studies are

reported on formally at the biennial workshops, e.g., the recent 9th workshop held in Saint John, NB, as well as in BoFEP technical reports and other publications (see www.bofep.org). For instance, the 2010–2011 project funded by Environment Canada has created ecological risk assessments on two types of chemicals found in the Bay’s ecosystems (Mercer and Kidd 2011, unpubl. man.) and facilitating discussion with municipal planners on their priorities and needs associated with land-based pollutants and other coastal issues (e.g., flooding) that threaten the Bay’s coastal communities (Sprague and Graham 2011, unpubl. man.). This project, continuing into its second year, is supported directly from our annual grant from Environment Canada and other sources available to the organization. It will help set priorities for our continued work on pollution and our understanding of its contribution to cumulative effects and ecological change in the Bay. It also is stimulating discussions on potential solutions, e.g., pollution reduction and control at source, banning of chemical substances, remediation of river banks and wetlands, and education, and furthering support for innovative programs such as that on Marsh Creek, Saint John..

Sharing Knowledge about the Bay of Fundy

BoFEP sponsors a biennial Bay of Fundy Science Workshop to convey new information and knowledge produced by working groups, other regional researchers, and BoFEP members. Nine workshops have been held to date (October 2011). The workshops attract a broad cross section of people who are interested in the Bay of Fundy, its ecosystem, and living resources. After each workshop, a Proceedings is published and distributed to participants, as well as being available on the website.

The BoFEP Technical Report series is now established as a home for the Proceedings and project studies. It carries on from the earlier technical reports that were published through Environment Canada.

The most recent *Fundy Issues* fact sheet, “Fundy’s Fascinating Fossils: the Unique Palaeontology of the Bay of Fundy” (Percy 2010), is the thirty-first published since 1997. It was written to help celebrate the designation of Joggins, Nova Scotia, as a UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site in 2008. A few other *Fundy Issues* titles are: “The Seaweed Forest – Rockweed Harvesting in the Bay of Fundy”, “Whither the Weather? Climate Change and the Bay of Fundy”, and “Fundy in Flux: The Challenge of

Understanding Change in the Sea”. The 31 fact sheets to date are available in printed form as well as on the website.

BoFEP also has a quarterly e-newsletter, *Fundy Tidings*. It provides news about BoFEP, highlights new information on the Bay, summarizes what partner organizations are doing, and profiles a selection of noteworthy activities occurring in the region.

The BoFEP website (www.bofep.org) archives all of the above publications as well as provides information on research conducted by the working groups. Examples are the ongoing bibliography on the mudflat amphipod, *Corophium volutator* (D. Hamilton, Mount Allison University), and a searchable Fundy “Information Collaboratory” giving access to the content of all BoFEP publications to 2006 (this project is also ongoing at Dalhousie University). A variety of other relevant and recent documents pertaining to the Bay of Fundy and to the function of BoFEP are also posted on the website.

Utilizing Information about the Bay of Fundy

BoFEP, its members, and hundreds of web users utilize the information on its website and from many other sources to identify research, management and policy priorities for the coming years. The organization creates dialogue about topics that have a bearing on the management of the Bay of Fundy ecosystem(s) to maintain its current ecosystem/ecological health and integrity (see Proceedings of the 2002 Bay of Fundy Science Workshop for discussion of the concepts of ecosystem health).

BoFEP currently has an ongoing series of Talking Circles on conservation. To date, these gatherings have brought members of the First Nations community together with other coastal residents to explore the concepts and practice of conservation from the different cultural perspectives, to listen and learn from one another, and to work together on the various challenges of utilizing and conserving coastal habitats and living resources. BoFEP worked with the Coastal Zone Canada Association at its 2010 Conference in Charlottetown, PEI, to conduct a special, well-attended session on this topic.

BoFEP information is utilized by researchers, government agencies and personnel, and other organizations in many regional projects and

programs. Consultants utilize the information when providing information for environmental impact assessments of new projects (e.g. the proposed tidal power projects in both upper and lower parts of the Bay), as do the agencies that review the project proposals. Groups use the information as they create educational programs and as they inform the public about the Bay of Fundy ecosystem. An example is the current project of public information sessions on biodiversity sponsored by the Coastal Livelihood Trust (CLT), a group located in southwest New Brunswick (see unpubl. rept. to BoFEP, 2011), and the joint EAC-BoFEP project with municipal planners. Information generated by BoFEP and its members was used by the groups proposing the establishment of the Fundy Biosphere Reserve in NB and the UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site at Joggins, NS; both of these important initiatives were successful, reflecting the value of BoFEP's role as an information source for the Bay.

3. Why We Do It

The Bay is a dynamic, highly productive and diverse coastal ecosystem, despite 400 years of settlement and significant change in some habitats, e.g., salt marshes. The Bay contains an abundance of valuable renewable resources and wildlife that is both fascinating and challenging for the scientists studying ecological relationships and the impacts of human activities. The Bay's natural history is very well documented, which is essential to understanding how to proceed with its current resource and environmental management.

However, the scientific and coastal communities around the Bay of Fundy are deeply concerned about its long-term health and ecological integrity. The Bay faces a myriad of resource and environmental problems. For example, reduced fish stocks have threatened the very existence of many coastal communities, steeped in the marine tradition of fisheries as a mainstay of their economies. Other wildlife species have declined in numbers or changed their migration and distribution patterns in the Bay due to interactions with the human population. For instance, collisions between ships are a known threat to the small population of North Atlantic Right whales, a problem now partially resolved by officially shifting the shipping lanes. Salt marshes have been vastly reduced in the upper Bay by historic dyking and draining to create agricultural lands, thus removing a key carbon source from the Bay; as their ecological importance becomes recognized, some marshes are being opened up when agricultural use ceases.

Causeways and dams obstruct 25 of 44 major rivers and many smaller ones flowing into the Bay, and may have altered sediment transport, species movement, and other ecological processes over wide areas. The millions of shorebirds that feed on the Fundy mudflats during their annual migration from the Arctic to South America may be in population decline, live precariously, and require food (amphipods and polychaete worms, in particular) from the mudflats to build up fat reserves needed for the grueling 4000 km non-stop flight between summering (Arctic) and wintering (tropical and sub-tropical) areas.

Other problems persist. Point and non-point sewage contamination has permanently closed many highly productive shellfish flats. The list of potentially hazardous chemicals found in seawater, bottom sediments and marine organisms is growing, as shown by the regional Gulf of Maine Council's Gulfwatch program, amongst others. Land-based activities and coastal aquaculture contribute to long-term chemical exposure of the Bay. On the Annapolis River, the spinning turbines of the Annapolis Royal tidal power plant continue to kill migrating fish (e.g., American shad) each year. In all, the 1996 BoFEP workshop identified at least 38 major issues confronting the Bay, and most have since been confirmed.

The cumulative effect(s) of such disturbances and stresses, especially fishing, nutrients, toxic chemicals and river barriers, have been threatening the ecological integrity of the Fundy ecosystem at an accelerating rate in recent decades. The sustainability of many of its natural resources, from fisheries species to its extraordinary wildlife, has been significantly undermined, slowly curtailing future economic opportunities for many of the Bay's resource-based coastal communities. For over 100 years, marine scientists and ecologists have strived to enhance our understanding of the Bay's oceanographic and ecological processes, marine biodiversity, and living resources. Perhaps now we are beginning to understand interrelated and cumulative impacts of human caused disturbance and pollution that challenge the health of the Bay of Fundy, despite its enormous water exchange and apparent resiliency.

It is within this context and with these concerns that the founders of BoFEP saw a role for an independent organization integrating our collective efforts to study, protect, and conserve the health of the Bay, its living

resources and biodiversity, and its many intrinsic values. BoFEP attempts to provide reliable unbiased information on all of these topics.

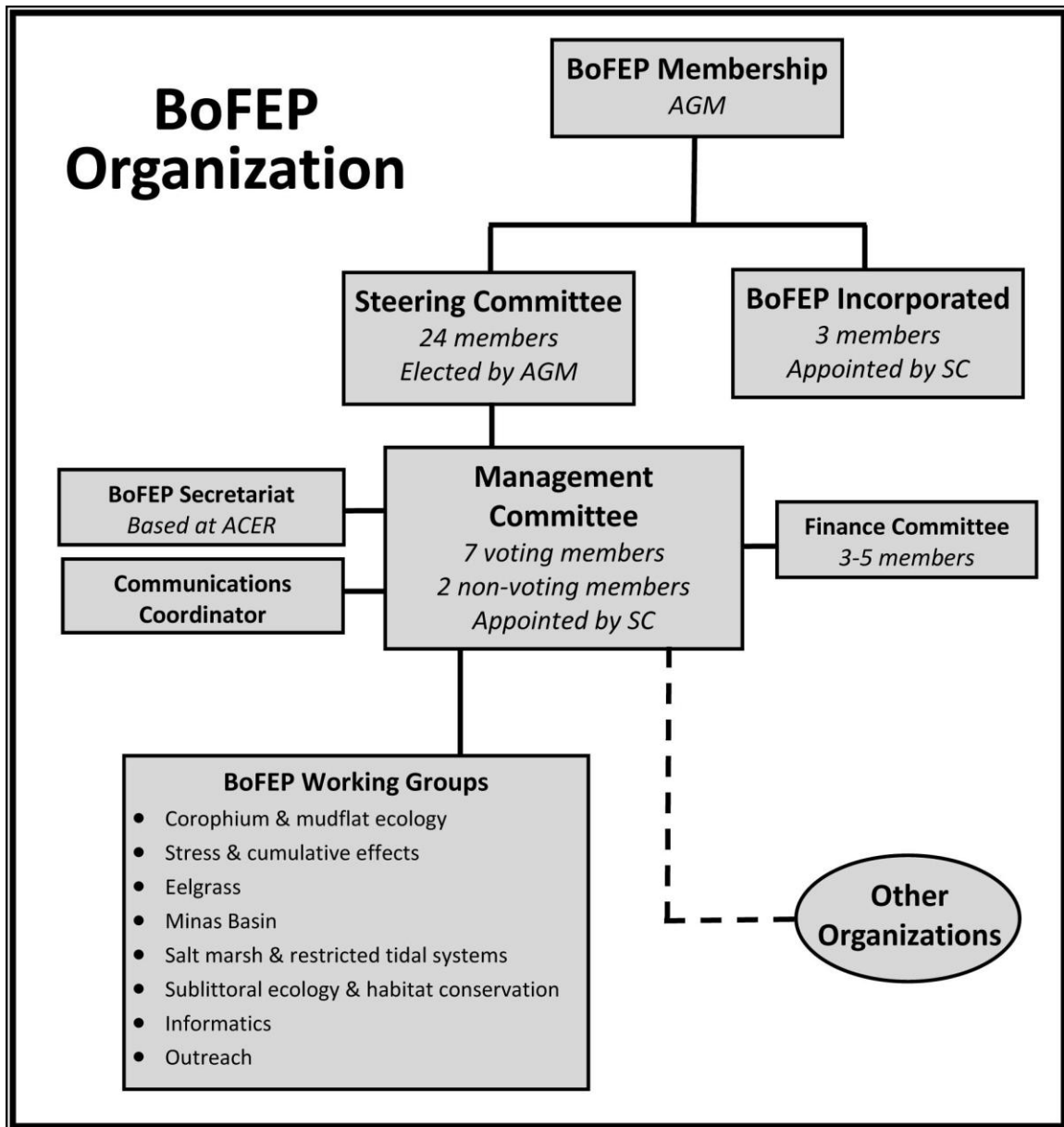
4. How We Are Organized

BoFEP is an organized but informal partnership of people and institutions interested in the Bay of Fundy. Personal and institutional memberships in BoFEP are vital to its operation. It currently operates with a volunteer, elected Steering Committee drawn from its partner organizations and individuals, and a volunteer elected Chair and Management Committee (see Figure 1). Two key positions are the BoFEP Secretariat (footnote 2) located at Acadia University, and the Communications Coordinator and Webmaster; these positions are supported directly from our annual grant from Environment Canada, and other fiscal resources available to the organization. BoFEP has a Constitution and By-Laws to assist in running the organization (see website).

BoFEP Working Groups conduct collaborative research projects, conservation activities and educational initiatives that produce new information and promote recognition of the ecological significance and health of the Bay of Fundy. From 1997 to 2006, the working groups and the Communications Coordinator were supported annually through contracts from Environment Canada (Canadian Wildlife Service). BoFEP now provides support to the working groups through an annual proposal submission process and review, considering the connection and relevance of each proposal to the current priorities of BoFEP and its primary funders, the main one being Environment Canada–Atlantic Region (Atlantic Ecosystems Initiative).

BoFEP invites participation by all interested citizens who share a vision of a sustainable, healthy, productive and biologically diverse Bay of Fundy. Since 1997, BoFEP has grown to include community groups, resource harvesters, scientists, resource managers, coastal zone planners, businesses, government agencies, processing industries, shipping interests, regional academic institutions and interested individuals.

Figure 1. BoFEP Organizational Structure



5. Strategic Plan 2011–2015 — Shaping the Future Direction and Agenda

Developing this strategic plan has permitted the Management Committee and Outreach Working Group to assess the strengths and weaknesses of BoFEP, through many meetings and a SWOT analysis, and to identify key components of a plan to move the organization forward into a

new phase of revitalization, innovation, and productivity. Strategic planning requires that we look at the present as well as the future. This is the time to act to address the challenges of funding, capacity, complexity of issues, and relevance of our mission to the Bay's future.

Revising the Organizational Structure and Moving Forward

BoFEP started conceptually as a “Virtual Institute” in the form of a geographically dispersed, adaptable, responsive, and inclusive network linking all partners who generally share the BoFEP vision and principles. However, early on in its history, BoFEP established a Secretariat (based from the start at the Acadia Centre for Estuarine Research, see footnote 2), and has had a Communications Coordinator to maintain the website, produce fact sheets and the newsletter, and do other communications tasks. It has an active Management Committee that has been working in multiple locations around the Bay with in-kind support. We have evolved far beyond the virtual concept while maintaining the website presence as an integral part of the structure and as the key communications tool.

In its present structure, BoFEP has brought researchers and coastal residents together to foster wise(r) management of the Bay of Fundy. It has earned a good reputation and enjoyed consistent support from governments for almost 15 years. It enjoys a strong level of trust and confidence for its impartiality (i.e., objectivity and non-advocacy), a place for discussions and starting new initiatives, and for the timely presentation and production of relevant information. By many persons, it is seen as a one-stop access point for information about the Bay and its environmental and resource issues.

BoFEP has also developed relationships with other organizations. These include the Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment (GOMC), the Atlantic Coastal Action Plan or ACAP sites (through Environment Canada's Atlantic Ecosystem Initiative), the Atlantic Coastal Zone Information Steering Committee (ACZISC), the Southern Gulf of Saint Lawrence Coalition, and various universities. Some of these linkages are formal, e.g., GOMC and ACZISC. This has resulted in mutual information exchange, cooperation on projects and meetings, a wealth of talent and expertise in the working groups, and the consequent ability of some of the working groups to secure funding from diverse sources.

A small group of volunteers, now mostly retired from their professional careers, maintain BoFEP. Their collective knowledge and commitment to BoFEP and its mission have resulted in securing funding for projects, managing those projects, encouraging working group activities, overseeing the creation of new information, and making it accessible through the website, the newsletter, and the biennial workshops.

The current Management Committee believes that BoFEP needs a new organizational structure. Successful organizations often outstrip their capacity to operate efficiently. Unless this is recognized and corrected, an organization can either fail completely or function well below its optimum. The activities and demands of BoFEP are now well beyond the capacity of the current volunteers running the Management Committee and the existing support structure (Secretariat² and Communications Coordinator). The Outreach Working Group has discussed and suggested potential solutions at previous Steering Committee meetings (especially February 2010 and May 2011) and annual general meetings. The suggested path forward related to organizational structure follows.

The *Strategy for Revising Organizational Structure* consists of identifying ways for the organization to maintain and perhaps increase its capacity, become revitalized, and be effective in conducting its work.

Goals under this strategy are:

- To choose and implement a new organizational structure;
- To build on the partnerships with other established organizations and also seek out new partners. This will provide the opportunity for sharing the responsibility for projects and benefiting from activities in other organizations;
- To place more emphasis on communicating new knowledge about the Bay and the greater Gulf of Maine and watersheds to its members and stakeholders;

² The Secretariat of BoFEP, located at the Acadia Centre for Estuarine Research (ACER), has been in operation since 1997. BoFEP shares a Secretary with ACER. This position provides essential support for BoFEP by providing a permanent address for the organization; a location for meetings; the mailing lists of members and working groups; correspondence and information about BoFEP; coordination of BoFEP activities; coordination with the Communications Coordinator and the Chair; the organization of management and steering committees, and annual general meetings; storage of publications and display materials; etc. This position is now supported by the overhead on projects. It has proved to be an invaluable position to BoFEP's many functions.

- To place more emphasis on membership development and fee collection to strengthen member's relationships with the organization and assist with funding; and
- To ensure the viability and output of key working groups through finding adequate funding and keen new members.

The **organizational objectives** for the organization are:

- To proceed with applying for charitable status. This will facilitate key requirements for the organization and allow BoFEP to apply for project funds to more diverse funders such as foundations and corporate interests. The application for charitable status should be submitted by late 2011, acquiring it in 2012.
- To revise the organizational structure to better meet the challenges of the maturing organization, create organizational efficiency, and address today's funding challenges. The options, in order of preference, and key considerations for re-organizing the structure (see Figure 1 page 9) are:
 - Option A: Have a paid coordinator to run the day-to-day activities of the organization, which includes secretariat and fiscal responsibilities (budget and accounts); to maintain contact with the working groups and direct the activities of the BoFEP Ambassador Program³; and to seek funds and write proposals for grants and other funding sources. A salary (\$45,000) would be required for this full-time position. A communications officer would be employed to maintain flow of information about the Bay of Fundy as with the current organization (website, e-newsletter, fact sheets); this part of this option would require \$25,000 in funding, as it is a part-time position.
 - Option B: Maintain a true virtual institute through the website, including updates on activities in the Bay of Fundy region through periodic e-newsletters, linkages to other organizations, posting of relevant publications, an occasional Fundy fact sheet,

³ The Ambassador Program, initiated in 2010, is a modest program with four people, two from each province, who have volunteered to meet with organizations and people in the private sector; describe in detail our organization (BoFEP), its mission and goals, and needs; and explore projects of mutual interest that might be financially supported by industry. This program is coordinated by a member of Management Committee. The overall aim is to engage the private sector in discussions about the Bay of Fundy and encourage collaborative ventures. More will be posted on the website on this program.

etc. Working groups would be independent but utilize the website and the e-newsletter to distribute information on their activities. Minutes and financial records of working groups would be maintained by volunteers, but available on the website. This option would require \$15,000-\$25,000 for the Communications Coordinator, depending upon extent of the work.

- Option C: Maintain the website only, for BoFEP working group and member's use.

The preferred option is Option A. It was supported in principle by the Steering Committee in Sackville, NB, May 10th, 2011, and has the backing of the current Management Committee. This option will move BoFEP to the point where there is minimally both a part-time BoFEP Coordinator and a Communications Coordinator. This option necessarily requires funds that are not presently available and that must be acquired through fund raising by the Ambassador Program, and through applying for grants from foundations and other sources.

As a way of moving toward the preferred organizational Option A, an interim position of “program manager” should be considered, involving the following:

- To manage and coordinate the sub-components and sub-contracts of the current Environment Canada contract FY11-12 (ending March 2012).
- To direct the Ambassador Program.
- To identify the foundations and institutions that would have an interest in BoFEP activities, and to write grant proposals for their consideration.

This could be either a full-time position for three to four months or part-time over the remainder of the fiscal year. The BoFEP Communications Coordinator would continue, as would the Secretariat, providing the current Environment Canada support continues (Note: this support has been renewed until March 2012). This interim situation would require up to \$15,000 in new funds that could be obtained in part through targeting membership fees (which are growing, albeit slowly, by mid-2011).

In this fiscal year (FY11-12), the Management Committee will plan ahead using this Strategic Plan. It is hoped that Option A can be initiated, providing funds are available. If a part-time or full-time Coordinator is hired, with the consolidated duties as described above, the function and location of the current, long-serving Secretariat will be reviewed.

Communications and Working Groups

The two components of BoFEP's work critical to the current organization are its communications and the activities of its working groups. The strategies presented below for these two components are based on two assumptions: a) that members support the overall vision, mission and goals of BoFEP as articulated above, and that members assume communications and working groups to be key continuing parts of the BoFEP operation; and b) that BoFEP will move gradually towards a renewed organization (Option A above, with two paid coordinators, a consolidated Secretariat function, and a larger annual operating budget).

1. The Communications Strategy

Conveying new information about the Bay of Fundy, its ecology, coastal communities, and economic drivers is critical to the future and influence of BoFEP. The organization is built upon three pillars: promoting and facilitating *the creation, sharing and using* of knowledge about the Bay of Fundy (see Section 2).

From its beginning, BoFEP has been fortunate in having a highly talented Communications Coordinator with an extensive science background and a remarkable commitment to BoFEP. We have been able to maintain and refresh the website, produce and distribute newsletters (*Fundy Tidings*), and research and write *Fundy Issues* fact sheets on a fairly regular basis. The Proceedings of each BoFEP biennial workshop are published and distributed to participants, to libraries and government departments. All publications are housed on the website.

The new Ambassador Program, initiated in 2010, is intended to make BoFEP more familiar to stakeholders, to create a relationship with new stakeholders, and to encourage financial contributions to the organization. In effect, the Ambassador Program becomes a leg of the communications task, its goal being to increase the public/stakeholders familiarity with BoFEP and

its products, the rationale behind its various activities, and its need for support.

However, as BoFEP has grown, the tasks required under “communications” have increased in number and complexity, and this is likely to continue. For instance, the membership has identified the need for BoFEP to be more visible in the media with press releases, interviews, and articles. BoFEP generally needs the means to convey messages on the state of the Bay of Fundy’s environment and resources to policy makers. The formal link to GOMC is important in this regard and our contribution to the State of the Gulf report was supported by DFO in 2009–2010. As well, working groups need effective ways to transmit new information to people living around the Bay. Additional people will be needed, from volunteers to sub-contractors, to fulfill these additional activities.

The **Communications Strategy** seeks to build upon the strength of the information that BoFEP creates and the ways to send it to the public through:

- A larger arsenal of communications tools.
- More members of the communications team.

Communication goals include:

- Continued strategic budgeting for communications to ensure that:
 - the website is effective in transferring information and is easy to use;
 - the *Fundy Issues* fact sheets continue to be written and produced;
 - *Fundy Tidings* continues to be compiled, produced and distributed; and
 - funds are available for new communications initiatives.
- Increasing the arsenal of communications tools (e.g., press releases, articles, social media communications, films for the general public).
- Increasing the number and variety of publications from the organization and its working groups.

Communication objectives are:

- Communication tasks will be divided up among members, and/or additional staff:
 - Immediate responses to the release of publications or relevant events, or events of BoFEP, are part of the Communication Coordinator's role. *Fundy Tidings*, regular updates of the website, *Fundy Issue* fact sheets and marketing tools (including brochures and displays) are the purview of the Communications Coordinator.
 - One-on-one communications with the public will be pursued by the new BoFEP Ambassadors.
- Articles will be produced regularly to send to weekly newspapers in the Bay of Fundy region that encapsulate the stories of the *Fundy Issues* Fact Sheets or other materials of interest to coastal stakeholders. Press releases on working group achievements or the results of BoFEP sponsored projects are incorporated into the communications plan.
- A speaker's bureau of BoFEP members and associates should be considered for talks to service groups, schools, or other interested parties.
- Other publications will be undertaken, such as the compilation of *Fundy Issues* fact sheets into a book on the Bay of Fundy (now being undertaken with DFO support, Summer 2011), and summaries of annual reports and AGM minutes. These will be written for the interested media and general reader.
- An analytical tool to track website use will be incorporated into the website. Feedback from the public is essential to ensure that communications products are targeting their intended audience(s) and are utilized effectively.
- The Ambassadors will be provided with *Fundy Issues* fact sheets, annual reports, information on BoFEP projects, information on working groups, and other materials to assist in marketing the organization and its essential role in the Bay of Fundy region.
- The possible role of interns and graduate students interested in the role of communication in ocean governance, through such programs as Marine Affairs at Dalhousie University, will be considered.

2. The Working Groups Strategy

Working groups and their projects are at the center of BoFEP's mission of facilitating the creation, dissemination and use of information and knowledge to help maintain the ecosystem health and integrity of the Bay of Fundy.

The working groups attract regional experts, many of whom have been with BoFEP since its beginning. The working groups engage a network of researchers from various institutions to work on collaborative agendas. The working groups undertake focused research on topics of concern and convey the research results to the broader Bay of Fundy community, through the BoFEP website and participation in the biennial Bay of Fundy workshops. This network of researchers facilitates their access to funds from a variety of sources to conduct their research. Importantly, the working groups also provide advanced university students with research and networking opportunities.

The output of working groups and their continued connection to BoFEP operations is only possible under the first funding and organizational option (Option A, supported program coordinator and communications coordinator).

The **Strategic Plan for Working Groups** has three parts:

- Each Working Group project will strive to consider its implications to at least two of the three components of environmental sustainability of the Bay of Fundy: ecology and environment; society and communities; and coastal economy, planning and management.
- Working groups will extend their links to other Bay of Fundy and Gulf of Maine organizations such as the Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment, the Atlantic Canada Coastal and Estuarine Science Society (ACCESS), the Regional Association for Research on the Gulf of Maine (RARGOM), the Northeast Regional Association for Coastal Ocean Observing Systems (NERACOOS).
- Working groups will ensure that their research projects or other studies (e.g., literature reviews, data analyses) are relevant to the concerns and information needs of residents of coastal communities and other stakeholders.

The Goals of the Working Group Strategy are:

- With assistance from the Outreach Working Group, the working groups will develop a method to interact with the coastal communities, to directly provide information to them, and to obtain feedback on future research needs and directions. This could build on the example of the Minas Basin Working Group when it was actively engaged with local communities through a series of open houses (2002–2003).
- The viability of new or rejuvenated working groups addressing vital topics is addressed by BoFEP and every effort made to keep those groups funded and productive.

The Objectives of the Working Group Strategy are:

- A member of the Outreach Working Group will work with each working group to devise a reasonable reporting out process so that progress on that group's agenda is conveyed regularly, and to assist in the linkages with Bay of Fundy coastal communities in order to provide information directly and to obtain feedback on research needs and directions.
- The dialogue will continue on conservation concepts and practice, and how a common vision on conservation needs for the Bay of Fundy could be used to help maintain and sustain its ecosystem health and ecological integrity.

Conducting Special Projects

BoFEP has been supported by Environment Canada for many years for its basic funding. Over the past three years, this funding has been granted for specific projects, rather than for a combination of operational support and our various activities on communications, workshops and forums, and working groups. To complete the Environment Canada projects, we have subcontracted to other organizations and individuals, retaining a small percentage of the funds for overhead, i.e., running our Secretariat. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans has also provided BoFEP with small grants for fact sheets, technical papers (e.g., the GOMC theme paper in 2010) and most recently, for the Fundy book (in preparation 2010–2012). The New Brunswick government provided BoFEP with a contract in 2007–2008 for the conduct of meetings dealing with tidal power and a synthesis

report. Importantly, many groups have co-sponsored and helped fund the biennial Science Workshops; the private sector has been particularly generous, as shown by the 2011 workshop sponsors.

Access to specific project funds will likely be the primary source of funding in the future, as general support for non-government, community-based organizations is becoming much more difficult to obtain.

Our strategy regarding the conduct of special projects is the following:

- Each accepted project must fit within the mission and goals of BoFEP.
- BoFEP will seek funding for special projects of interest and importance, especially through its Ambassador Program.
- BoFEP's new special projects should involve younger people, e.g., coastal monitoring of litter, especially plastics; photography of special places; high school science projects; trail maintenance along coastlines.
- The projects will be managed by members of the Management Committee.
- The contractors should be members or member organizations of BoFEP, and preferably members of BoFEP working groups.
- A percentage of each contract, not exceeding 16%, will be charged for BoFEP operations, i.e., organizational overhead.
- Every project will have joint sponsorship – the funder, the contractor, and BoFEP. All parties will be acknowledged for their contributions.
- Project results will be the intellectual property of both the project sponsor and BoFEP.
- Project reports will be given at the biennial science workshop or specific meetings dealing with the topic being investigated.
- Every project will produce a report that is published through BoFEP, placed on the website, and advertised through BoFEP and its members.

Maintaining BoFEP's Volunteer Base and In-kind Support

In-kind support from volunteers, partner organizations, and participants in the many activities remains the backbone of BoFEP's

operations and success to date. This support involves valuable time, specialized information and knowledge, and often fiscal resources. An NGO such as BoFEP cannot function without it. We have estimated in the past that in-kind support, primarily through the active working groups and Management Committee members, exceeds our cash expenditures by 4:1 to 6:1. To date, attempts to bring accuracy to this estimate have not been successful, despite its importance in grant applications.

A strategy related to volunteers and in-kind support could consider:

- Initiating a succession plan for key committees.
- Engaging and recruiting more young professionals through BoFEP's research projects, working group activities of other kinds, biennial workshops, and special topic fora.
- Making more accurate estimates of current in-kind support, and utilizing this information in the Ambassador Program and in all project proposals.

6. Next Steps—Implementing the Future Direction and Agenda for BoFEP

The Bay of Fundy has many unique features, ecosystems, living resources and marine wildlife, as illustrated by its selection as Canada's only entry into the New7NaturalWonders Contest in 2010–2011. The Bay's long-term and comprehensive stewardship is urgently needed. Despite progress in a number of areas, the reality is that such comprehensive stewardship is delayed by the paucity of appropriate policies and action at various government levels, and frequent failure to use the available legislative tools to ensure adequate conservation and protection. BoFEP's view is that genuine and comprehensive stewardship will come from the actions of citizens around the Bay, and through the activities and actions of NGOs, as well as through the continued programs of government institutions. The activities of people in the coastal communities and their organizations will be essential to ensure that negative trends of environmental and resource loss are reversed, that the Bay is protected from harmful new developments, and that coastal areas deserving of long-term conservation are set aside for perpetuity. As reliable and current information is the backbone of effective action, the work of BoFEP as an organization and with its partners has a place in the Bay's stewardship.

In this strategic plan, we have described where BoFEP has been as an organization, where we are (i.e., our current core activities of communications and working groups), and strategies to move forward with those core activities. The Management Committee, assisted by the Outreach Working Group, has spent considerable time over the past five years discussing how BoFEP should move into the future. As discussed above, this effort was driven by three imperatives:

- A strong feeling that the Bay of Fundy is imperiled due to the increased pressure of human activities and that BoFEP's work should be contributing to a broader integrated ocean management approach to the Bay and the greater Gulf of Maine, an approach involving all coastal stakeholders committed to the conservation and protection of the Bay.
- The opinion of our membership that BoFEP is fulfilling a role important for achieving such an approach.
- A view that our current organizational structure and funding envelope are critically stretched and that we have been working beyond our capacity to deliver indefinitely. There is also recognition that an energetic and strategic renewal of the organization is needed rather than facing the alternative—a slow and irreversible decline and cessation of key activities due to limited funding and the capacity of the personnel involved in the core organization. Organizations need such renewal from time to time to keep a fresh and relevant program of activities and to solve major organizational issues before they prove fatal to the group. We need more and younger, newly trained, and technologically adept people to accomplish the work.

The Steering Committee meeting of May 2011 gave the BoFEP Management team a clear mandate to move forward and implement this strategic plan, and move the organization in a direction that is practical, achievable, and consistent with BoFEP's vision and goals. BoFEP will do the following over the next year (2011–2012):

- Adopt the strategic plan set out above as a working document to guide BoFEP's activities for the next five years.

- Work towards initiating Option A for its organizational structure, and immediately put into place an interim Coordinator for our primary work agenda for FY11-12.
- Move ahead with the Ambassador Program, with an emphasis on raising funds for core activities.
- Confirm each partner's commitment to the organization and their active role with the organization.
- Actively seek a wider and engaged membership.
- Move the organization ahead with energy, efficiency and commitment.

7. Acknowledgements

This document was prepared by members of the Strategic Planning Advisory Committee of the Outreach Working Group of BoFEP, led by Marianne Janowicz (BoFEP Vice-Chair) and Peter Wells (BoFEP Chair). Barry Jones (Past-Chair) and Owen Washburn (Management Committee) hosted several initial meetings of the Outreach Committee/WG, essential to moving this initiative ahead. Peter Etheridge of the Committee is thanked for considerable assistance with the formal strategic planning process. The International Ocean Institute, Dalhousie University, permitted the use of their strategic planning blueprint. We especially thank our primary funder, Environment Canada–Atlantic Region, for their annual grants, and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans for important project contracts. Both departments have sustained the organization and its projects for many years. We also are very grateful to the many other partners and members of BoFEP for their support in so many ways. Last but not least, we thank the Steering Committee members for their constant input, encouragement and commitment to BoFEP and all the other organizations engaged in promoting and safeguarding the sustainability of the Bay of Fundy.

Appendix 1. Vision, Principles, and Mission of BoFEP

SHARING THE VISION

VISION: The Bay of Fundy Ecosystem Partnership (BoFEP) wants to see:

Diverse, dynamic and productive Bay of Fundy plant and animal communities, coastal habitats and watersheds that are appreciated, valued and wisely used by residents and visitors.

BoFEP will achieve this vision by:

1. Promoting the ecological integrity, vitality, biodiversity and productivity of the Bay of Fundy ecosystem, in support of the social well-being and economic sustainability of its coastal communities; and
2. Facilitating and enhancing communication and cooperation among all citizens interested in understanding, sustainably using and conserving the resources, habitats and ecological processes of the Bay of Fundy.

THIS VISION is predicated on the following general principles:

1. Conservation, protection and management of Bay of Fundy resources and their habitats should be ecosystem-based and reflect a holistic understanding of ecosystem structure, processes and interactions.
2. Resource development and other coastal zone activities should be based on ecologically sound integrated coastal planning and management.
3. Coastal planning and management should be transparent and open to participation by resource users, coastal communities, First Nations, industries, scientists, governments, managers and all other individuals and groups with interests in the Bay of Fundy ecosystem.
4. Effective communication and active co-operation among all citizens with an interest in the Bay of Fundy, and linkages with groups and programs that share similar objectives are vital to this enterprise.

TO ADVANCE THIS VISION, BoFEP will:

1. Form a geographically dispersed, adaptable, responsive and inclusive network, linking all partners who share the vision and principles;
2. Serve as a readily accessible network for scientific, community and other knowledge pertaining to the Bay of Fundy by:
 - a) *facilitating the timely sharing of information about the Bay of Fundy among partners*
 - b) *fostering effective communications among interested groups and individuals*
 - c) *encouraging and facilitating co-operative activities and linkages among partners and with other interested groups or individuals;*
3. Promote and facilitate the regular assessment of the state of the Bay of Fundy ecosystem (or of specific issues) which will identify issues, priorities, accomplishments and new directions.
4. Promote and facilitate long-range planning and integrated management in the coastal zone.