The Bay of Fundy Ecosystem Partnership: 2015

Planning Workshop Documentation

Friday January 16 and Saturday January 17, 2015

Marshlands Inn

Sackville, New Brunswick

##### DRAFTED BY

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# Background

On Friday January 16 and Saturday January 17, 2015, the steering and management committee members of the Bay of Fundy Ecosystem Partnership and invited guests (Appendix A) met through a facilitated workshop to revisit the Partnership’s goals and identify short term (and longer term) actions.

Prior to attending the workshop, participants agreed up an agenda and outcomes for the session and had requested that Ms. Jenna Boon, Executive Director for the Joggins Fossil Institute, facilitate the workshop. This documentation has been drafted by Ms. Boon to provide a record of the outcomes of that planning session.

# A Vision of a Sustainable Bay of Fundy Ecosystem

Workshop participants were asked prior to attending the workshop to examine their own vision of the Bay of Fundy as a sustainable coastal/marine ecosystem and to identify key elements for achieving sustainability. A round table discussion was held on Friday evening to communicate those ideas and develop a shared vision of what sustainability comprises for the Bay of Fundy Ecosystem Partnership.

The following ideas were tabled:

* The Bay of Fundy needs to be thought of as a collection of people that interact with natural systems
* The Bay is a collection of communities for example fisheries, science, industry, towns, wildlife and BOFEP needs to address issues at a community level
* BOFEPs role is to get people from various communities involved to understand impacts on the Bay of Fundy Ecosystem
* BOFEP requires a change in philosophy to actively reach out to communities to not only address pure science but applied science as well and that change in philosophy makes sense from a political point of view.
* Sustainability can be thought of as people living in harmony with nature and the ecosystem has both anthropogenic and natural components
* Future decisions by BOFEP need to be based on that idea of people living in harmony with nature
* Nature has intrinsic values
* Ecosystem management can be forward looking and can adopt the aboriginal concept of looking 7 generations into the future
* The context of people not being a part of nature has religious underpinnings -
* If people are considered as a part of nature or natural systems there is a risk that it is ok for people to be destructive
* An ecosystem approach incorporates demographics, rural community sustainability and livelihoods
* Timescales of what the ecosystem was like in the past and into the future
* Key indicators of sustainability relate to social, economic, environmental, health and species populations
* The resilience and adaptability of people and natural systems need to be considered
* Sustainability relates to maximum natural resilience
* Cumulative impacts of humans have yet to be understood
* The Bay is effected by impacts that may originate outside of the Bay of Fundy ecosystem
* Sustainability has an inherent misconception of things “staying the same”; however, it is understood that ecosystems constantly change
* Sustainability has become a politically important concept to support development
* What is the yard stick to measure sustainability – using today as a reference point or baseline?
* The health of natural systems can equate to the health of society
* Natural processes causing change relative to human processes causing change where there is a balance yet an ever evolving dynamic environment
* Tipping points can be reached through cumulative impacts
* Sustainability relates to future generations and survival of communities
* Story telling may be important for people to understand the relevance of natural systems

# Identifying issues and opportunities for a sustainable coastal/marine ecosystem

Within the context of working towards a sustainable Bay of Fundy, participants identified both challenges (issues) and opportunities (assets). Once the factors were identified, various themes were used as a framework for understanding the significance of these factors. These themes were Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental. The barriers and opportunities are noted below.

LEGAL BARRIERS

* Gaps and overlaps in jurisdiction and mandate
* Inadequacies in regulatory framework (i.e. the Fisheries Act)
* Existing legal instruments may not necessarily used
* Recent changes in the political arena may not be positive

LEGAL OPPORTUNITES

* Marine protected areas and designated areas exist
* Potential for evidence based decision leading to regulatory framework

TECHNOLOGICAL BARRIERS

* Bay of Fundy is extreme and consequently it is often difficult to measure
* Lack of knowledge and gaps in knowledge
* Loss of corporate knowledge (social)
* Inaccessibility of data (also legal and political)
* Difficulty understanding scientific data / misrepresentation
* Pros and cons – best fishing techniques

TECHNOLOGICAL OPPORTUNITIES

* New methods of communication (internet, social media)
* New digital tools to synthesize and analyze information and data
* Green energy (wind and tidal)
* Strong technological capacity in certain sectors (ie the military)
* Industry has opportunity for technological innovation

SOCIAL BARRIERS

* Disconnect between people and nature
* Poverty and economic strife (rural community decline)
* Lack of resources, skill set and capacity
* Communication problems, jargon and misinformation
* Lack of common shared vision for the Bay
* Lack of knowledge of relationship between people and the Bay
* Lack of knowledge and respect for Aboriginal rights and history
* Disinterest and disengagement leading to under valuing and under appreciation of the Bay

SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES

* Education, awareness and communication
* Opportunity to connect to others and to nature
* Collaboration and inclusivity (examples exist)
* BOFEP’s reputation
* Historical context – assets (Aboriginal history + St. Andrews)
* Bay of Fundy is known and valued

ENVIRONMENTAL BARRIERS

* Impacts of aquiculture
* Marine debris and pollution
* Climate change
* Land-use and industrial development
* Lack of implementation of an ecosystem approach

ENVIRONMENTAL OPPORTUNITIES

* Ecology, low impacts
* Resiliency
* Iconic species and ecosystems (today and in the geological past)
* Tourism/tides
* Rivers and watershed history and significance
* Protected areas
* Climate change adaptation /education
* Politically people are ready to change
* Low industrial development and low population
* New methods of aquaculture

POLITICAL BARRIERS

* Fragmentation of responsibilities between numerous jurisdictions
* Emphasis on economic development at the expense of conservation
* Lack of political influence in the area due to low population density
* Land use is not considered sufficiently with the context of ICOM
* Inconsistency of government programs for the Bay as a whole
* Inadequacy of regulatory framework
* Other political priorities driving interest away from the Bay – i.e. the arctic and oil and gas

POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

* Established organizations/structure (ie BOFEP exists)
* Interdepartmental collaboration
  + Marine Protected Areas
  + Data Exchange
  + Federal/provincial/municipal and aboriginal government and non-government orgs potential to collaborate

ECONOMIC BARRIERS

* Lack of knowledge and integrated information (communication)
* Rural depopulation
* No reference to tourism as an economic opportunity
* Perceived lack of opportunities
* Competing interests (i.e. fisheries and tidal power and oil and fracking)

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

* Proximity to USA (New England)
* Opportunity for partnerships
* Opportunity for cultural and natural tourism
* Tidal power as a renewable energy source

# IDENTIFYING WHAT BOFEP SHOULD BE DOING TO ADDRESS ISSUES AND MAXIMIZE OPPORTUNITIES: Common themes to inform goal setting

Participants were asked to individually document what they understood as priorities for BOFEP. The following list outlines these common themes as identified among small working groups.

* Educate everyone about history, culture, ecology of the Bay of Fundy
* Collaborate (develop partnerships) with all groups – act as a hub
* Communicate/share evidence based information (translate science, continue to produce newsletters and conduct workshops)
* Promote education to a variety of audiences
* Identify priority issues (consideration of climate change)
* Facilitate ways to produce new information
* Facilitate education
* Provide forums
* Promote an appreciation / create awareness
* Engage with the public
* Facilitate discussion about Bay of Fundy issues
* Will be a voice for the Bay of Fundy
* Will encourage science through collaboration
* Will provide advice to inform policy
* Will work at a regional scale

# Organizational Goals were identified from common themes:

All workshop participants collectively identified four areas for BOFEP to focus on in the immediate and short term. These areas include:

1. COLLABORATE: Promote (encourage facilitate) collaboration to identify and address priorities issues affecting the Bay of Fundy
2. COMMUNICATE: Communicate information about the Bay of Fundy for informed (good) decision making and to instill an appreciation of the values of the Bay of Fundy

* BOFEP can impart knowledge with the intent to change behaviours
* BOFEP can disseminate information
* BOFEP can communicate information about the Bay for good decision making
* BOFEP can inform citizens through education and communication

1. IDENTIFY: Identify priority issues (through internal and external inputs) and take focused action on those issues

1. FACILITATE: Facilitate the creation of new information by encouraging and engaging in science and research on priority issues.

* BOFEP can create new information
* BOFEP can help others create new information
* BOFEP can encourage science and research

# Identifying Actions to achieve Goals

Based on the four general goals identified for BOFEP, workshop participants suggested actions that could be taken to work towards achieving those goals. Two goals were highlighted as priorities and these included continuing to take action to communicate and educate and identifying priority issues.

1. COLLABORATION
   1. BOFEP will continue to host an annual workshop (Lead:? Date ?)
   2. BOFEP will continue to interact with the Gulf of Maine Council
2. COMMUNICATION/EDUCATION
   1. BOFEP will continue to produce a newsletter (Lead: Jon)
   2. BOFEP will host an annual workshop (Lead: ?)
   3. BOFEP will complete the Bay of Fundy Issues Book (Lead: Marianne)
   4. BOFEP will work with Dalhousie University Students in “Management without Borders” to identify opportunities to educate secondary students about the Bay of Fundy through a review of provincial curriculum outcomes (Lead: Mike)
3. IDENTIFY PRIORITY ISSUES – next six months
   1. Conduct and internal review of issues identified in this workshop and clearly articulate and prioritize issues
   2. Conduct an external review to identify and prioritize issues (web survey)
4. FACILITATE CREATION OF NEW INFORMATION
   1. Finalize a background paper on remote sensing