

BoFEP Chairperson Report November 2018

This year has been a productive one for BoFEP. We hosted the **12th Bay of Fundy Science Workshop** in May, **A Changing Fundy Environment: Emerging Issues, Challenges and Priorities**. We completed a three-part project on living shorelines. The Informatics Working Group has been active and the Ocean Literacy and Awareness Working group is taking shape. Steering Committee met to review the final panel discussion at the Workshop and it is anticipated the results of that panel and the following discussion by Steering Committee will help shape the path that BoFEP will follow in the next few years.

Back to the workshop. It was attended by approximately 125 people many of them new to BoFEP. Talks were compelling and informative, and the participants were thoroughly engaged throughout the event. Please look at the BoFEP website for the Proceedings and especially be sure to look at the panel discussion, “Next Steps for BoFEP – Moving Ahead with a Focused Program”. so that each of you can identify how and where you can help BoFEP as it finalizes and launches its new direction.

The three-part living shorelines project was funded by the *New Brunswick Environmental Trust Fund*. With the help of *Eastern Charlotte Waterways*, Danielle St. Louis and Donald Killorn, contractor Mary Casement and Chief Hugh Akagi of the Peskatomuhkati, Nation, we worked with coastal landowners to screen shorelines for their feasibility as sites for living shoreline plantings to control erosion. A brochure was created that discussed the living shoreline approach to coastal erosion. This has been circulated widely throughout Charlotte County. And we held a very successful talking circle including members of the Peskatomuhkati, Wolastoq, and Kanienkehaka nations as well as representatives from the New Brunswick archeology community and individuals with a strong interest in the Fundy Bay ecosystems, local history and Indigenous issues. The discussion focussed on middens and ancient artifacts. I will leave you with one of the critical take away messages from the Talking Circle.

The vast wealth of historical data, both cultural and archeological, contained in middens is of crucial importance to the worlds of science, culture and national history. Middens “are monuments of our activities in various locations.” Both deliberate and accidental man-made destruction need to be mitigated to minimize loss of these treasures as much and as soon as possible. Time is of the essence in relation to ongoing consultations regarding legislation on these issues both on the Provincial and Federal level. Establishing and implementing a new joint protocol for handling these treasures is imperative before more history is lost. Collaborative efforts to reach mutual agreement on new legislation between the Province of NB and Indigenous Nations that are inclusive and respectful should continue. The objective is to define culturally appropriate regulations that will allow preservation and educational programs that mitigate further man-made destruction to these valuable midden sites and to support the process of rebuilding Indigenous communities.

As you probably know, I am stepping down as Chair of BoFEP. I have been with BoFEP since its founding meeting. I served as co-Chair for about four years under Peter Wells and Peter Fenety. I have been Chair for six or more years. And it is time for someone else, some new leadership to take over.

BoFEP is near and dear to my heart. So, I would like to leave you with some thoughts about BoFEP as it moves forward.

As Joshua mentions in his report for the Workshop, BoFEP presents a lot of opportunities for someone concerned about the Bay of Fundy to make a difference. I believe a critical activity for BoFEP is to reach out to members of the coastal communities of the Bay of Fundy to identify the local issues and to work with communities to resolve those issues. This in fact, was one of the points made at the panel session at the end of the 12th workshop and it is something that I have wanted BoFEP to do for the past four years. It is through this outreach that the people who are concerned about the Bay will find BoFEP.

Over the past 10 years, I have caucused with BoFEP friends and members of Steering Committee in St. Andrews on a regular basis. It is a model that I would encourage to happen in other parts of the Bay because it gives us a sense of what is happening throughout the Bay. During the last one, in September and we missed two people who had been part of the caucuses over the years, Peter Fenety and Owen Wasburn. In September, there was discussion of the old BoFEP format of working groups. These working groups brought scientists, researchers and interested Bay of Fundy people together to discuss and research a topic important to them. We no longer have the funding we once had to do this. But I propose in this electronic era, we do not need the same amount of funding. I encourage Management Committee and Steering Committee to consider reinstating more working groups. Not only do they feed into our Workshops, but they bring like minded people together to resolve issues in the Bay of Fundy. It is an effective outreach effort.

I feel strongly that there is a role for BoFEP to play in research that will help us better understand what will happen to the Bay and its important species in these times of changing climatic conditions. We have some project designs, we just need to find the funders.

I concur with Peter's mantra of the past seven years, that we need to have a devoted, salaried manager to organize meetings---herd the sheep, but also to seek funding for various projects BoFEP wants to undertake.

Thank you for your contributions and support over the last few years and I look forward to working with you as Past Chair.