

## **REPORT OF THE BoFEP OCEAN LITERACY/AWARENESS WORKING GROUP**

To be submitted to the BoFEP AGM, at the FORCE Centre, Friday, Oct 16, 2020.

The report submitted to the BoFEP Management Committee re. the panel session, entitled “Ocean Literacy and Awareness”, presented at the BoFEP Science Workshop in Truro, May 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>, 2018, established the rationale for the Working Group, and introduced some important Ocean Lit.-oriented panellists and participants. A follow-up panel was planned for this year at the biennial BoFEP Science Workshop, also in Truro. The cancellation of this workshop, due to Covid-19, seriously diminished the momentum created two years previously. However, the subject has continued to be of BoFEP, regional and national attention:

**BoFEP Action:** Several communications and visits have been made with faculty at the Department of Education at Acadia University to discuss Ocean Lit. training options and opportunities in the context of the University’s B.Ed., and M.Ed., programs. They expressed interest and were willing to discuss the idea further but noted that the curricula are dictated by the Provincial Departments of Education and not the Universities! That is a challenge. Recall that the Working Group considers that the provision of such training, however brief, would encourage the introduction of ocean awareness at ALL grade levels and in all subjects. It would definitely provide the teachers with the confidence to access the plethora of school-ready resources that are available, largely free of charge, e.g. Ocean School, prepared by, among others, Boris Worm at Dalhousie University, and the National Film Board. It is proposed that the Working Group pursues this initiative, as the ripple effect of teachers introducing ocean awareness into their respective curricular objectives could be profound, not only for the students but also, indirectly, for the parents. Other universities with Education Departments in NS will also be targeted, facilitated by the experience of our contacts with Acadia University.

**Regional Action:** The Canadian Ocean Literacy Coalition held their Atlantic Virtual Workshop on June 22 of this year. Chaired by Julia Ostertag, they reviewed the

**Atlantic Regional Report**, one of five regional reports across Canada. The participants addressed the following question: “How can a national strategy help advance ocean literacy (OL) in the Atlantic Region?” The approach of the BoFEP Working Group, i.e., tackling teacher Ed., was not mentioned.

**National Action:** Based on the results of the five Regional Workshops, the COLC team has been drafting a **Canadian Ocean Literacy Strategy**. Two action-oriented workshops are planned to share feedback and perspectives on the national draft, on Tuesday, October 20<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday, October 27<sup>th</sup>. I have registered for the workshop on the 27<sup>th</sup> and hope to raise the perspective of the BoFEP Working Group. I will keep you informed of developments and hope that the national and regional actions will facilitate and encourage activities within the BoFEP Ocean Lit. Working Group.

Sincerely,

Mike Butler (IOI-Canada)  
BoFEP Ocean Lit. Working Group