

Chair’s talk, BoFEP AGM, October 16, 2020

- 1) Thank-you for attending this Annual General Meeting of BoFEP. Special thanks are due to members of our Steering Committee, and our Management team, and others in the Fundy community, for their work over the past year on behalf of the communities and ecosystems of the Bay of Fundy and its watersheds.
- 2) This year marks the 25th anniversary (1995-2020) of BoFEP and its founding group, the Fundy Marine Ecosystem Science Project. This is surely something to celebrate. It is notable that some of our active members have served since 1995. Sadly, we have also lost four long term members in recent years.
- 3) With a focus on creating, sharing and utilizing Fundy information, BoFEP has many accomplishments as seen from the website, e.g. 11 biennial workshops, with Proceedings. BoFEP also works with other groups, such as those represented by the current Steering Committee, the Gulf of Maine Council, and various regional government departments, at all levels of government.
- 4) Despite 2020 being a year disrupted by the Covid 19 pandemic, we are planning the next steps for BoFEP for the next few years. It is a pivotal time as the Gulf of Maine as a whole is experiencing climate change, with marine biodiversity and species distributions being impacted. It is also the UN Decade of Ocean Science 2021-2030, bringing attention to the needs and challenges of the oceans, one of which is the need for a more ocean-literate population, from school children to policy makers.
- 5) Hence, our current activities and program agenda have moved ahead, recognizing the new realities, challenges and opportunities. The management team and several committees have met regularly throughout the year. Accomplishments and progress include:

- a. We remain **financially viable**, though having limited funds for major new initiatives. “Paid Memberships Matter”! We have basic financial needs to run as an organization. Additional funds would give us a part-time Coordinator to assist us with our operation, finding new funds, and initiating new projects on key Fundy issues.
- b. Our **communications efforts** continue successfully: you will hear about them shortly. Our Fundy Tidings Newsletter continues to be an invaluable source of information.
- c. Our BoFEP **Bay of Fundy Science Workshop series** was on track for an exceptional meeting in the spring, co-sponsored with ACCESS, but was disrupted by the pandemic. The Workshop will continue but likely in a new format in the foreseeable future, either 2021 or 2022. This will be briefly addressed at this meeting.
- d. Two **working groups**, Ocean Literacy and EIUI (Environmental Information – Use and Influence) continue and reports are being presented here. Reliable information and an informed public are key to keeping Fundy healthy for the future.
- e. A new **BoFEP Strategic Plan** has been prepared during the past year to guide us and identify our priorities and opportunities. It will be discussed briefly at this meeting.
- f. BoFEP identifies broadly the **key environmental, resource and community issues in Fundy**, but perhaps should choose one location for projects, such as the Minas Basin. This is due to past attention there and some significant ongoing marine research, tidal power development, community interest, and new initiatives such as the Cliffs of Fundy UNESCO Global Geopark. This requires a wider discussion.

- g. Lastly, we need to **address our need for more volunteers** – more members, younger members, vibrant steering and management teams, new ideas to enhance membership, etc. Excellent suggestions were tabled at the 2018 Fundy Workshop and are reflected in the new Strategic Plan and the people and groups identified in the **2020 Nominations Committee report**.
- 6) To conclude, thank you for participating in this meeting and for your continued interest in and commitment to Bay of Fundy environmental issues and in the work of BoFEP. All the best and good health.

Peter Wells, BoFEP Chair, 2019-2020.