**Chair’s Report, BoFEP AGM, October 2021**

The past year and a half has been unique as all of us have tried to stay healthy during the ongoing Covid pandemic. Despite having to cancel last year’s planned BoFEP workshop, and with limited opportunities to meet in person, the management committee has met monthly by ZOOM, keeping BoFEP activities running along smoothly, albeit at a reduced pace.

As BoFEP approaches its 25th anniversary next year, it is worth noting what has been accomplished by this small organization with volunteers and limited funding. Outputs include the newsletter, *Fundy Tidings*; renewed activity on the website, with an active Facebook page; early planning for the next biennial workshop to exchange ideas and information; access to reliable information on the bay and it’s watersheds; a new video project; and continued engagement with the Gulf of Maine Council and other organizations. As Covid gets under control, we are much looking forward to hosting the 2022 Bay of Fundy Workshop, with ACCESS as a co-partner, and hopefully with many co-sponsors as in previous years. You will hear more details shortly about some of this activity.

There is no shortage of Fundy environmental concerns, issues, new science and new initiatives to discuss. Issues include continued concerns about the ecological effects of open-pen aquaculture; the accommodation of lobster fishing outside of specified seasons by First Nations peoples (perhaps now resolved); concerns about tidal power development and the requirement for monitoring around the newer units; monitoring of the various whales that inhabit the outer bay seasonally, including the endangered right whales now rarely seen in Fundy; monitoring of white sharks, subject of a tagging program in NS waters; and continued opening up of salt marshes in the upper bay wherever possible. As Editor of the PNSIS, it is worth noting three articles of direct relevance to the Bay of Fundy in the latest Issue (51-2, 2021) – an editorial on ocean literacy by 3 SC members (1); an article by past BoFEP Chair and SC member Graham Daborn on the contributions of Acadia University scientist Sherman Bleakney (2); and importantly, a review of the ecology of the seabirds of East Machias Island, located in the outer bay, by long-time BoFEP contributor, Tony Diamond - UNB-Fredericton (3). Research continues on many topics at the institutes surrounding the Bay of Fundy and will be presented at the 2022 workshop.

As BoFEP advances forward successfully into its next phase, the Steering Committee must consider some immediate and longer term needs to keep the organization viable and importantly a meaningful contributor to the bay’s sustainability:

* **Immediate needs - volunteers for key positions**:
	+ Replacement for a key position, our Treasurer.  Susan wishes to retire after many years of excellent service.
		- Confirmation of two new Financial Directors (to make the required four), to maintain our financial status with the NB government.
	+ Co- chairs for the next BoFEP/ACCESS Biennial Bay of Fundy Workshop (Spring 2022), the theme of which will be Ocean Literacy.
* **Longer term (over the next year) needs:**
	+ Further implementation of the 2020 BoFEP Strategic Plan (4), to guide our collective work;
	+ A larger paid membership – this must be enhanced by a direct pay system, to be instituted once we have a new Treasurer and four confirmed financial directors;
	+ Volunteers to participate in the BoFEP Video project (please contact Sandra Curry);
	+ A stronger presence of people and organizations from New Brunswick, especially from groups like the HMSC and ACAP Saint John;
	+ A more engaged SC - everyone on the SC to be involved in at least one project; that would include direct engagement of our younger SC members and others;
	+ Continued active working groups (e.g. ocean literacy; informatics) and funding  and volunteers for their specific projects;
	+ Continued input of information items to the Fundy Tidings newsletter, to assist the long-standing editor, Dr. Jon Percy (5);
	+ Input to our social media platforms;
	+ Active linkage to other groups active around Fundy, such as the HMSC, Cliffs of Fundy UNESCO Geopark, CPAWS, Ocean North, and of course, all of the groups represented by the Steering Committee. We are a partnership with many shared aspirations and goals.

Your comments on this report and all of the other reports that will be presented today are welcomed, now and after this AGM. An engaged SC and BOFEP membership is obviously important for achieving our primary objective - communicating about the environment of the Bay, its living resources, its biodiversity, and the future of its many coastal communities.

References

1. Wells, P.G., Butler, M.J.A., and Eger, S. 2021. Ocean literacy – communicating science in an ocean province. PNSIS 51(2): 253-256.
2. Daborn, G. 2021. An ever-inquiring mind: a tribute to Dr. J. Sherman Bleakney. PNSIS 51(2): 257-270.
3. Diamond, A.W. 2021. Seabirds in a changing ocean: an overview of 20 years of research and monitoring on Machias Seal Island, Bay of Fundy, Canada. PNSIS 51(2): 365-409.
4. BoFEP. 2020. *2020 UPDATE TO BOFEP’S STRATEGIC PLAN – SHAPING THE FUTURE DIRECTION AND AGENDA*. Internal BoFEP report, August 2020. 17 p.
5. Percy, J. 2021. Fundy Tidings. A Newsletter of BoFEP, Sept. 2021. (www.bofep.org) .

Presented by Peter Wells, Chair BoFEP, 2020-21.