

Canada's Biosphere Reserves and Agriculture

(Information from Canadian Biosphere Reserves Association Report 2011-2012)

Canada's Biosphere Reserves enhance innovation, generate partnerships and research opportunities, and increase community engagement, education and public awareness. Most of the reserves also play important roles in fostering local food production and promoting sustainable agricultural practices. Of the 16 Canadian Biosphere Reserves, 11 include agricultural landscapes. (Map attached) Examples include:

- **Southwest Nova:** Dominated by agriculture and maritime economies, it seeks to promote balanced conservation and sustainable development. A Lake Atlas includes data on water quality and fish species. (www.swnovabiosphere.ca)
- **Reserve Mondiale De La Biosphere De Charlevoix:** Conducted a needs assessment in the region with information on agricultural production and impacts on water quality and quality of life. A key project promotes and develops eco-agriculture. (www.museevirtuel.ca/exhibitions/Hilare)
- **Frontenac Arch :** Features a "Local Flavours" program, a group of 125 farm producers, markets, distributors, restaurants that promote and invest in local food production. 25 governmental and non-governmental groups are joined in a Conservation Collaborative. (www.fabr.ca)
- **Georgian Bay:** Conducts a series of hands-on workshops at Parry Sound Community Garden for new gardeners, and a program to coordinate donations of produce to local food banks. (www.gbbr.ca)
- **Niagara Escarpment:** Features a "Flavours of the Biosphere" video about local foods. An Inventory of the Biodiversity of the Niagara Escarpment has been conducted to assist stakeholders and decision makers on conservation and development issues. (www.escarpmentfund.ca)
- **Riding Mountain:** The "At the Farm Gate" Program features food markets and seminars to stimulate local food production and networks and sustainable tourism initiatives. A Bovine Tuberculosis Stakeholders Advisory Committee works with municipalities affected by the infectious disease carried by both wildlife and domestic animals. (www.rnbr.ca)
- **Redberry Lake:** Biosphere Reserve team promotes the Redberry Lake Watershed Agri-Environmental Plan of the Canadian-Saskatchewan Farm Stewardship Program, which provides technical support for farmers and ranchers, fostering sound beneficial management practices that mitigate the agricultural impacts on soil, water, air and biodiversity. (www.redberrylake.ca)
- **Waterton:** Biosphere Reserve team works with landowners, municipalities, and Alberta Fish and Wildlife to balance biodiversity conservation with agricultural use and address conflicts and economic impacts of large carnivores (bears and wolves) on ranching operations. There is also active involvement in the Southwest Alberta Cooperative Weed Management Area, a partnership of stakeholders who share knowledge and resources on invasive plants that threaten grassland biodiversity and have significant agricultural and economic impacts. (www.watertonbiosphere.com)
- **Mount Arrowsmith:** Team works with Vancouver Island University to research impacts of climate change on the environment and livelihoods of communities in the mountain areas.

Team holds community seminars to facilitate discussion of local issues and sustainability practices among First Nations, community leaders and others. Team also works on a Marine Aquatic Invasive Species Monitoring Project with Fisheries and Oceans Canada; and studies the management of invasive plant species in collaboration with community, municipal and trust organizations. (www.mabr.ca)

- **Clayoquot Sound:** Its vision for sustainability calls for a healthy ecosystem with vibrant cultures and a diversified economy. An innovative "Healthy Food, Healthy Community" Program features a Food Action Plan for the area, workshops on food production and security, nutrition, traditional First Nation diets, community gardening, wild food harvesting, and non timber forest products. A Sustainability Studies Curriculum has been developed for Grade 11 and 12 students. (www.clayoquotbiosphere.org)

CANADA BIOSPHERE RESERVES

