***BoFEP – Chairs AGM Report – November 2024 (file – D4 Nov 12th )***

Welcome to this year’s AGM.

Thank-you for attending this meeting and supporting the various activities of BoFEP.

BoFEP, now in its 28th year, continues with its primary mandate of “creating, sharing and using knowledge about the Bay of Fundy” in the interests of a healthy and sustainable bay, now and into the future. Following many years of workshops, writing fact sheets, running working groups on specific topics, and conducting specific projects, the products of which are on our website, we continue our work on the theme of ocean literacy, convinced that informed citizens connected to the bay will work together for its conservation and protection. We also study and emphasize the importance of understanding how the scientific and social knowledge of the bay contributes to better coastal management. All of such efforts are especially important in this era of climate change and its impact on the ocean.

What follows is an overview of our recent achievements, ongoing work, and our challenges as a small but dedicated Fundy organization.

**Achievements**

We had a very successful biennial conference, the Tides of Change, in June this year. It was organized and co-sponsored in association with ACCESS (the Atlantic Canada Coastal and Estuarine Science Society) and the HMSC (Huntsman Marine Science Centre). Held at the HMSC, in Saint Andrews, it was very well attended and had a strong program of papers, plenary talks, posters, and public panel discussion. It was assisted financially or in kind by 15 sponsors. Two Fundy citizens were given our BoFEP Environmental Stewardship Award (see the BoFEP website). The program and abstracts are on our website and will soon be followed by a formal BoFEP Proceedings on the website.

BoFEP continues to be a focal point for reliable information on the Bay of Fundy. Through its large mailing list and its paid membership, it continues to bring attention to the Bay and the challenges it faces, whether they be overfishing, obstructions on rivers, pollution such as sewage and plastics, and the warming effects of climate change. There continue to be many ongoing environmental and fisheries resource issues in the Bay and its rivers and estuaries. As well, the Bay of Fundy and its watersheds have six Unesco sites, unique in the world. It is truly a special place, for its biodiversity, its living resources, and its human history.

**Ongoing work (the work plan 2023-24-25)**

Our management team meets monthly to discuss progress, allocation of funds, and new opportunities. The work plan primarily covers communication and working groups. Members of the team are busy people but always find time for BoFEP.

As our highly committed Jon Percy will report, our website assisted by Michele Tremblay remains popular and Jon continues to put together the very informative Fundy Tidings newsletter several times a year.

Our part-time BoFEP Coordinator Emilie Butler has been active, helping with the OLWG and the video project led by Sandra Currie, along with our website adviser, Michele. Both Emilie and Michele will continue until March 2025, on these and other initiatives. Their service to BoFEP is much appreciated.

The Ocean Literacy WG (OLWG) has been very active this year with successful PD events with school teachers and teachers in training. Mike Butler will provide the details in his report. The EIUI program continues apace, with new funding coming in, and a student study of Fundy salmon in the upper bay being completed recently.

One special project has been Sondra Eger’s Minas Basin colouring book and booklet – with BoFEP support, the booklet has been produced in limited quantities with our support and was shown at our OLWG PD day event, Saturday, Oct. 19th. The full book is now completed and is available by order through Sondra, on an order by order basis (no mass printing).

Plans are underway to contribute to the upcoming Coastal Zone Canada Conference in PEI, in June 2025. A call for abstracts is end of this month. We are discussing what to present there on Bay of Fundy/BoFEP initiatives and programs. Your views and input would be welcomed.

It should also be noted that the Gulf of Maine Council will be meeting in Saint Andrews next May. As a member of its working group, BoFEP will be participating and encouraging a discussion of Passamaquoddy Bay and Bay of Fundy environmental issues. It is noteworthy that three persons from the Maritimes were given Council awards at the June 2024 Council meeting.

**Organizational and Funding Challenges**

We need to involve all Steering Committee members with BoFEP initiatives. We want to encourage the formation of new working groups. We also need to pursue funding for hands-on Fundy projects, such as in past years and need help identifying sources of funding and people to lead submissions. We suggest WGs on Barriers, Coastal Erosion, and Tourism, and need volunteers to initiate them, and others of special interest. Suggestions are welcomed.

We also need to consider recruitment of new active members and leadership more broadly for BoFEP; succession planning is important to any organization. Several of us may not be around in the next 20-30 years! Younger volunteers for positions and initiatives are needed.

BoFEP membership (paid or not) needs to be addressed (again!!) and a committee reformed and closely linked to our treasurer’s role. This is crucial. To this end, we now have e-transfer for all payments, and we are changing our Post Office Box from Parrsboro to Halifax, for efficiency.

I hope that these challenges can be discussed later in this meeting, as well as at a full on-line SC meeting in the near future. Your active participation will keep BoFEP viable and relevant.

I welcome discussion on any or all of the above as we proceed through the AGM and at any time afterwards.

Thank-you once again for your interest, commitment and work on behalf of BoFEP and its primary goal – contributing to the environmental and living resource sustainability of the Bay of Fundy and the greater Gulf of Maine through its communication and working group efforts.

Peter G. Wells, Chair of BoFEP, 2023-24.

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