

New online tool celebrates the natural gems of the region

June 30, 2011

Moncton, NB – The UNESCO Fundy Biosphere Reserve is encouraging people to get out and explore the Amazing Places in our region through a new and innovative initiative called *Trail Amazing Places*.

As part of a collaborative trail mapping initiative, Trail Amazing Places uses GPS technology to create an inventory of hiking trails throughout the region, where *Amazing Places* are identified as places of environmental significance such as biodiversity, topography, landscapes or views that depict the unique environment of the region.

“The Trail Amazing Places project is an innovative way of showcasing the natural assets of our region”, said Dr. Yves Gagnon, Chair of the UNESCO Fundy Biosphere Reserve. “By illustrating these Amazing Places in the region we want to foster the public participation in not only enjoying these unique assets, but also to work together to protect them”.

Designed as an engagement and education tool, Trail Amazing Places is based on Google Earth and other web resources. “We’re using technology that is freely available as a new way to learn about hiking trails and Amazing Places throughout our region”, said Andrew Spring, Executive Director of the UNESCO Fundy Biosphere Reserve.

The organization is also hoping that the community will get involved in the initiative. “We’re hoping that the public will comment on the Amazing Places identified and suggest new Amazing Places or potential new hiking trails in the region”, adds Spring. “We want the community to be involved in this project and be proud of the Amazing Places in our region”.

Trail Amazing Places was also intended to be a best practice for other regions throughout the country. “The How-To manual is available on our website and we’ve had a great deal of interest from other places to implement a similar project” said Spring, who was invited by Trans Canada Trail to present this project at the Ontario Trails Conference in April 2011. “We’re excited to make this region of New Brunswick an example for the rest of the country to follow”. The UNESCO Fundy Biosphere Reserve initiative is also showcased nationally in a special insert of Trans Canada Trail featured on the Globe and Mail website (to be published July 1st).

Trail Amazing Places was funded by Trans Canada Trail, with support also from Environment Canada, who funds UNESCO designated Biosphere Reserves nationally, Mountain Equipment Co-op, New Brunswick Department of Wellness Culture and Sport, and through partnerships with Fundy National Park and the New Brunswick Trails Council.

For more information on the Trail Amazing Places and the UNESCO Fundy Biosphere Reserve, visit www.fundy-biosphere.ca

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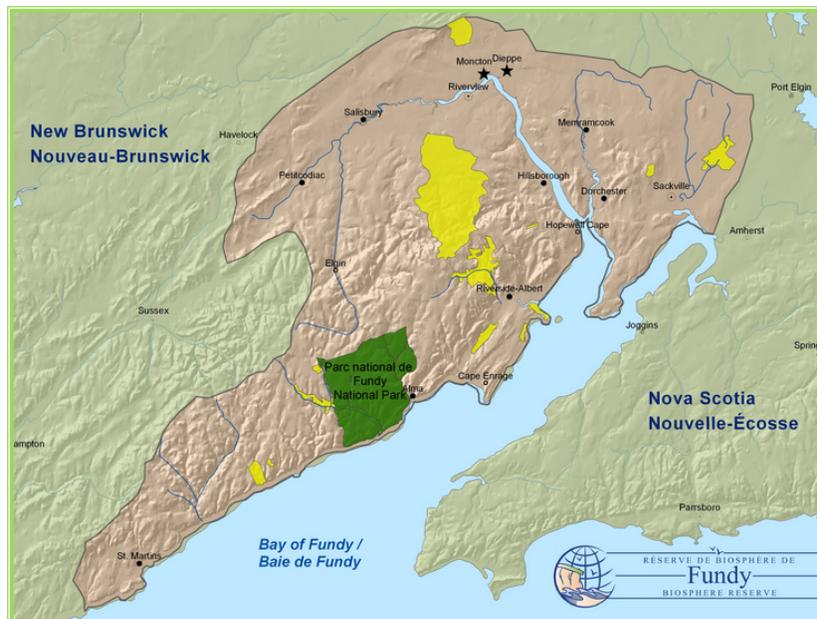
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Additional Information

The UNESCO Fundy Biosphere Reserve

In September 2007, the Fundy Biosphere Reserve was given UNESCO designation as a World Biosphere Reserve. It joined a network of 15 Biosphere Reserves across Canada and over 600 worldwide, whose overall goal is to improve the relationship between people and their environment by promoting the conservation of biodiversity and fostering sustainable development initiatives.

The UNESCO Fundy Biosphere Reserve is an area of over 430,000 hectares of the Upper Bay of Fundy coast, stretching from St. Martins to the Tantramar Marsh, near Sackville, and inland to Moncton. It is a community-based initiative comprised of individuals and representatives of various stakeholder groups, organizations and local communities working to promote the sustainable development of the region by enhancing the research and innovation capacity and by creating a forum for various groups to share information, knowledge and best practices.



The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has the mandate to achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character. In the early 1970's, UNESCO established the Man and the Biosphere Program, which aims to improve the relationship of people with their environment globally, through the creation of Biosphere Reserves.