

Redberry Lake Biosphere Reserve

Annual Report 2012



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Redberry Lake
Biosphere Reserve



To carry out its mandate Redberry Lake Biosphere Reserve (RLBR) delivers and implements programs that contribute to the conservation of ecosystems, biodiversity and countryside; to the sustainable development of local culture, society, and economy and to build capacity within the area through scientific research, learning, and public education. This work is accomplished by networking with other organizations, community groups, educational and scientific institutes and partnering Biosphere Reserves within the world network.

Quick Facts about RLBR

UNESCO designation in 2000

One of 16 BRs in Canada

The only BR in Saskatchewan

Covers the closed watershed of Redberry Lake

Located within the Aspen Parkland Ecoregion

Population: ca. 5,000

Designated Federal Migratory Bird Sanctuary and Important Bird Area (IBA)

Research & Education Centre features displays on BRs, local environment, history and culture

Agri-Environmental Group Plan (AEGP)

In 2012/13 the Redberry Lake Watershed AEGP reached 41 producers to take part in 82 Beneficial Management Practice projects. With over \$515,700 applied for in 2012/13 the AEGP program potentially brought over \$257,850 back to producers living in RLBR and area.

The AEGP Program under Growing Forward will end in April 2013.

Sustainable Future Planning in RLBR and area

Building on the good work members of the community have been involved with, during 2012 the members of the RLBR Regional Planning Initiative, have been continuing to work together with the locally grown planning firm to develop the final drafts of a comprehensive planning framework to guide growth and development over the next 25+ years. This includes the development of a volunteer district planning commission, Comprehensive District Plan, and respective Official Community Plans, Zoning Bylaws and reference maps for each of the participating member municipalities.

Ecological Goods and Services (EGS)

LIRA project was identified as best practice of management and governance in Canadian Biosphere Reserves within the “Land Management and EGS” cluster—part of a partnership research project funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC).

Land and Infrastructure Resiliency Assessment (LIRA)

The Redberry Lake watershed is one of three LIRA testing sites in Saskatchewan. LIRA complements both the Regional Planning within Redberry Lake and area as well as the mandates of a World Biosphere Reserve: environmental protection, sustainable adaptation, planning and development, capacity building through knowledge exchange and research as well as multi-stakeholder partnerships.

In May a “LIRA Partnerships Learning Event with Rural Team Saskatchewan and AAFC” was held in RLBR to showcase the tangible application of the tools, and methodology of the LIRA project. The on-site tour demonstrated the impact of the multi-stakeholder partnerships necessary to successfully undertake such an initiative.

The final report of the LIRA project will be published in 2013.

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Close ties to Universities and Researchers

- Signed Memorandum of Understanding with School of Environment and Sustainability (SENS), U of S to strengthen the already existing partnership and to expand the scope of research and education projects relating to the environment and sustainability sectors. This partnership was presented by SENS at the Sustainability Conference in Los Angeles (AASHE, Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in higher Education).
- Approximately 30 students participated in SENS' "Ecosystem Science and Sustainability Experimental" Field Trip to RLBR. Students from ASPNet Hafford Central School accompanied university students on day one. Two university students will be doing research projects in RLBR.
- Master's Thesis by Oksana Zbyranyk, U of S "Collaboration between researchers and Biosphere Reserve Practitioners: A Case Study of Redberry Lake Biosphere Reserve, Canada"
- Research Project by Xi Zhao, U of S: "Opportunities for Ecotourism Development in the Redberry Lake Biosphere Reserve, Saskatchewan"

Education and Awareness on a Local Level

- Summer student from Hafford Central School
- Field day Grade 7, Hafford Central School
- Kid's Club: 6 events with about 60 attending kids ages 5-14
- 300 visitors at Research & Education Centre throughout summer
- Family Winter Program: snow shoeing, BBQ and nature quiz

Surveying changes in RLBR

- Prairie and Parkland Marsh Monitoring Program: Four survey site visits by BR staff and volunteers (Bird Studies Canada)
- Important Bird Area site visit, monitoring and report by BR staff and Nature Saskatchewan (Nature Saskatchewan)
- Water level data collection by RLBR staff at hydrometric gauging stations in Redberry Lake (Water Security Agency)

Communication Achievements

- One year of www.redberrylake.ca: always up to date, community calendar shows current events in RLBR and region
- One year of facebook and twitter: likes and followers increasing
- Four newsletters—subscriber list to online edition growing
- 35 articles in various magazines, newspapers and online

International Delegations from Japan and Germany

- Three members of the Japanese National Committee for MAB Programme and researchers of a project conducted by the Research Institute for Humanity and Nature in Japan visited Saskatchewan and RLBR. Their interest was to learn how local environmental knowledge (incl. culture) is formed through interaction among various groups and community members and how it is used to make decisions.

- A delegation of the German Rhoen BR visited RLBR for an official unveiling and release of the joint brochure 'Partners in the World Network'. The brochure was presented at a meeting of all Canadian



BRs, Canadian Commission for UNESCO and the Canadian MAB Commission at the U of S and to the public with representatives from Tourism Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan German Council and the Honorary Consul of the Federal Republic of Germany in Saskatchewan. Meetings with stakeholders from the tourism industry were held afterwards to promote tourism to the province and to build capacity and partnerships.

Promoting Sustainable Tourism

- RLBR became a member of Canada Nature Escapes Cooperative, a group of Saskatchewan based operators to collaboratively attract more visitors to Canada and the province.
- Development of RLBR Visitor Guide and distribution to the five visitor reception centres at the Saskatchewan border.

Community Farmer's Market

- Initiated by RLBR
- Once a month from May-October in Hafford
- 25 vendors, approx. 500 visitors