

# The Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve

## 2014-2015 Annual Report

Designated by UNESCO in 2004, the Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve stretches 200 km along the eastern coast of Georgian Bay from Port Severn to the French River, in the largest freshwater archipelago in the world.

The GBBR model aims to integrate core protected areas, surrounding buffer areas and outer transition area of communities that support sustainable development. The biosphere creates a forum for cooperation and operates through community partnerships.



### Board of Directors

- Patrick Northey
- Jim Douglas
- Glen Hodgson
- Tonia Blenkarn
- Bill Spinney
- Steve Munro
- Dave Ballentine
- Barb Wohleber
- Laura Peddie

### Biosphere Staff

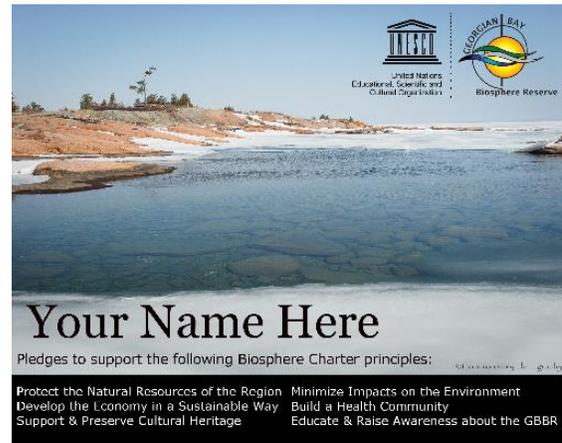
- Greg Mason, General Manager
- Rebecca Pollock, Communications Manager
- Glenda Clayton, Species at Risk Coordinator
- David Bywater, State of the Bay Coordinator
- Delaina Arnold, Education Coordinator
- Allison Graham, Eco-Tourism Coordinator
- Brian Mills, Love Your Lake Coordinator
- Carolyn Patterson, State of the Bay Research

## Thank You Charter Members!

GBBR's many business, organization and family members directly support our work and help to educate our community!

See our list of Charter Members:

<http://www.gbbr.ca/healthy-economy/business-and-organization-biosphere-charter-members/>



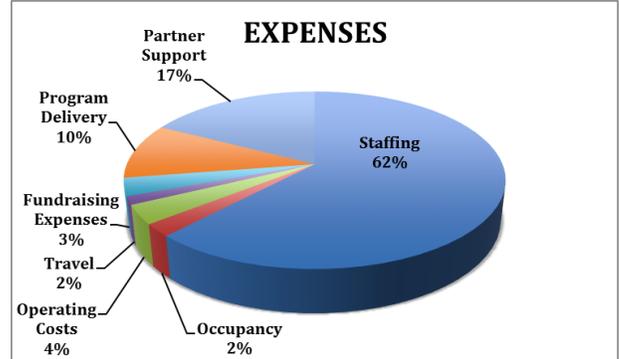
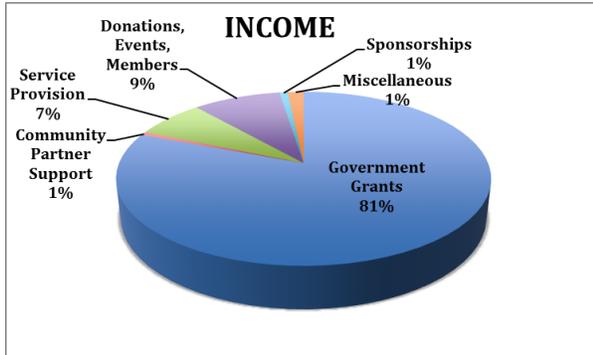
## Program Highlights – 2014-2015

- *State of the Bay* ecosystem health report workshops and [new website](#)
- Hosted 3 *Explore Our Shores* workshops
- Continued to offer [Life on the Bay](#) guide, workshops and resources
- Offered [Species at Risk](#) outreach and research
- Continued [Lessons-in-a-Backpack](#) and [Water Festival](#) for local schools
- Offered monthly [Films That Make You Think](#)
- Support for Active Transportation & Trails, including an Open Streets event
- Used Fundy Biosphere model of [Amazing Places](#) to expand eco-tourism
- Partnered to build the Booth Street Community Garden, totalling 66 plots
- Online [Local Food Guide](#) & [Parry Sound & Area Food Charter](#)
- Hosted over 50 workshops and events
- Submitted our [10-year periodic review](#) to UNESCO

**Thank you to the 45 organizations involved in our UNESCO review!**

The International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves concluded that “the site meets the criteria” for continued inclusion in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

# Financial Statements



Revenue	2015	2014
<b>Government Sources:</b>		
Conservation	\$234,007	\$90,216
Sustainable Community	\$64,448	\$0
Education	\$41,959	\$117,967
Operational Grants	\$71,415	\$125,364
<b>Non-Government Sources:</b>		
Community Partner Support	\$3,268	\$11,970
Service Provision	\$36,234	\$27,495
Donations, Events, Members	\$45,932	\$48,524
Sponsorships	\$4,250	\$10,600
Miscellaneous	\$8,316	\$29,176
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$509,829</b>	<b>\$461,312</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Staffing	\$310,851	\$215,326
Occupancy	\$11,375	\$8,487
Operating Costs	\$17,461	\$42,674
Travel	\$7,553	\$10,246
Fundraising Expenses	\$16,219	\$6,928
Program Delivery	\$50,814	\$83,014
Partner Support	\$86,630	\$79,909
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$500,903</b>	<b>\$446,584</b>
Excess of revenue over expenses	\$8,926	\$14,728

## Funders & Sponsors

Biodiversity Education & Awareness Network  
Canada-Ontario Agreement  
Desmasdon's Boatworks  
District of Parry Sound Social Services  
Administration Board  
Dufferin Simcoe Land Stewardship Network  
Employment & Social Development Canada  
Environment Canada's Lake Simcoe South-  
Eastern Georgian Bay Clean Up Fund &  
Habitat Stewardship Program  
Friends of Killbear Park

Iron City Fishing Club  
Lake Huron Framework for Community Action  
Near North District School Board  
Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Internship  
Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources &  
Forestry Species at Risk Stewardship Fund  
Ontario Trillium Foundation  
Rotary Club of Parry Sound  
Tourism Development Fund  
Township of the Archipelago  
**And many event sponsors!**

## Species at Risk in the Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve

We are extremely lucky in eastern Georgian Bay to have the opportunity to observe over 1,100 species of plants and animals! This incredible biodiversity is linked to the range of habitats found in our area including rock barrens; mixed forests and wetlands. Among the diverse species found along our shoreline, over 40 are identified as species at risk including the endangered spotted turtle and threatened eastern foxsnake.

Increasing road networks present a threat to many wildlife species in particular reptiles. Road mortality is a serious threat to reptiles

since they are relatively slow moving and can be hard to see. Roads near water are of particular concern for turtles as they move across the road in search of hibernation or egg laying sites. The loss of adult females on roads is particularly devastating since it not only removes breeding turtles from the population; it means all future offspring are lost. Depending on the species, a turtle must survive ten to twenty years before she starts laying eggs.



According to Dr. Ron Brooks, from the University of Guelph, even a loss of one per cent to two per cent of adults each year from the "extra" road mortality will eventually lead to the disappearance of the local population. Dr. Brooks comments, "My view is that these animals are not going to survive if we don't prevent the road kill problem."

### **Citizen Science in Action!**

To obtain information on the prevalence of reptiles on area roads and identify potential areas of concern, volunteers regularly survey six roads. Irma Hammel, a seasonal resident of Snug Harbour, began recording sightings this spring. She simply takes a GPS equipped camera along on her daily walk or bike ride on Snug Harbour Road. Irma notes, "When people see what I'm doing, they ask questions then get involved themselves...so now, rather than just my reports, the community is involved in recording sightings."

Irma's highlights include finding an alive, large eastern foxsnake but she has also found a number of dead at-risk reptiles including both foxsnakes and massasauga rattlesnakes.

Diana Clements is also a regular reporter from McDougall Township. Diana comments, "I am fortunate to live in an area where there are many species of significance. Reporting on their presence is a simple way I can contribute to knowledge of these species that will hopefully allow for evidence-based planning and policy development in the future."

Diana notes that changes in technology have simplified the process. "While my reporting in the past has been inconsistent, with the use of my smart phone and the Freelance PS app I can send GPS coordinates in less than half a minute. Reporting has never been so easy!"

Additional roads in our area that are regularly surveyed by volunteers include Wasauksing, Skerryvore, Dillon and Sand Bay. The results of the roadway surveys are fairly consistent. Three turtle species were documented and only a small percentage of individual turtles had been struck by vehicles.

These results are encouraging. Along these routes high levels of turtle egg predation were noted, likely predators include raccoon, raven, fox and bear. The mortality rate for snakes was significantly higher. In addition to being less visible, it is possible that drivers are less likely to swerve to avoid or stop to move a snake than a turtle.

The information gathered will be used to support possible mitigation projects. Opportunities might include increased signage, creating artificial nest sites and using protective nest cages to decrease egg predation, minor adjustments to road maintenance timing, and replacing old culverts with larger culverts to act as migratory corridors.

Residents can also play a role in further decreasing these numbers. As you travel the roads, please watch out for reptiles and other wildlife. Residents are also strongly encouraged to volunteer with the GBBR by recording species at risk sightings. Residents who travel area roads with consistent regularity are prime volunteers as the data collected can show trends.

Volunteer Robert Merkel says “I have seen too many dead reptiles on the roads. Many drivers do not see them and if they do, cannot react quickly enough. I have talked to friends and acquaintances about this problem over the span of many years. Later, they tell me about when they see a snake or turtle and it is possible to stop, they usher it across the road.”

If you are interested in surveying a road in your area, please contact [info@gbbr.ca](mailto:info@gbbr.ca) for more information. Spring is coming! Report your sightings here!

## **Annual General Meeting**

Thank you to everyone who participated in our Annual General Meeting February 22nd. The GBBR is pleased to welcome two new members to our Board of Directors, Peter Koetsier and Ron Chase.

Congratulations to *Spirit of the Biosphere* award winner Don Clement (right) for his stewardship and volunteer efforts!

