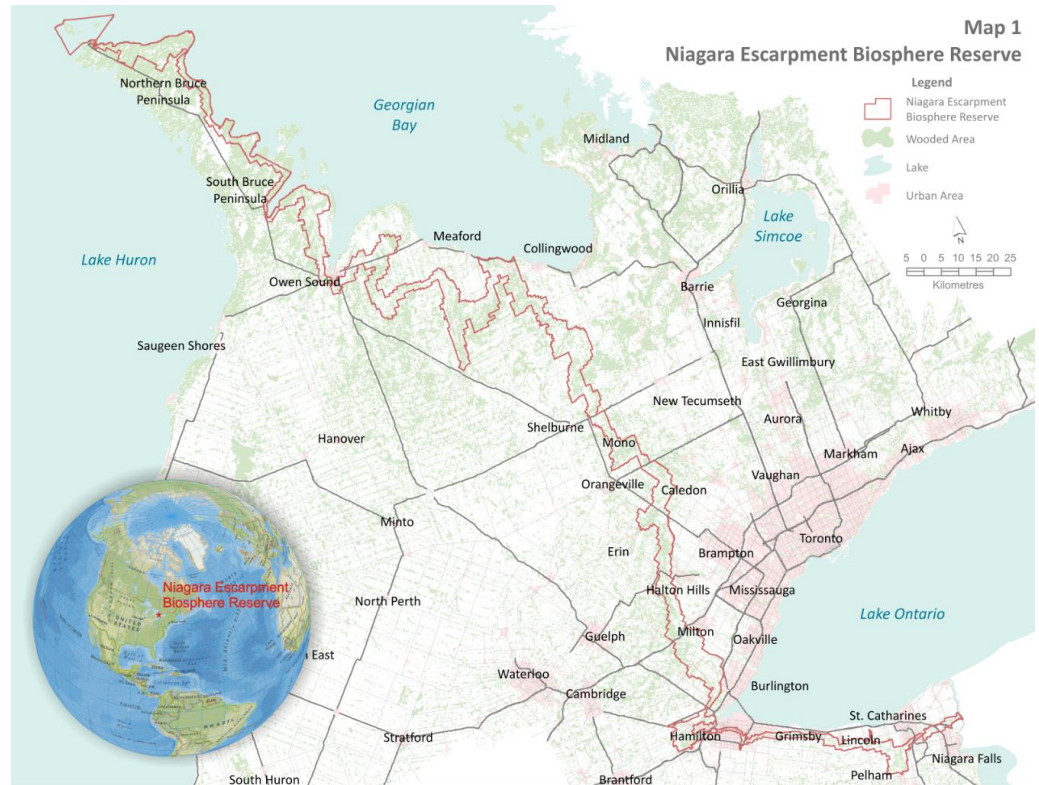


# Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Reserve

## Proposed Leadership Model and Transition Plan

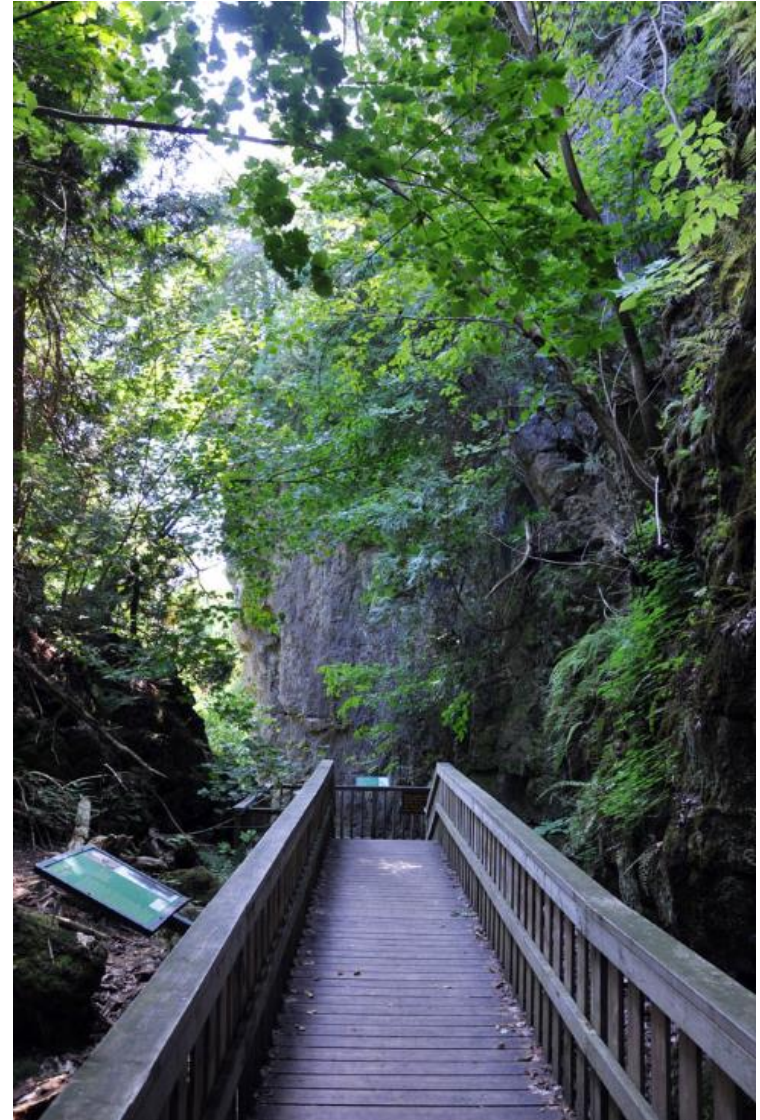
## Presentation to NEBR Participants



**July 30, 2019**

## Meeting Objectives

- **Share findings** from recent scan of BR governance practices and interviews and surveys with NEBR participants
- **Propose a vision** for a new NEBR and a transitional leadership model to get there
- **Hear your feedback** and suggestions for improvement
- **Establish guiding principles** to underpin both transitional and longer term models
- **Gauge & engage** your interest and commitment moving forward



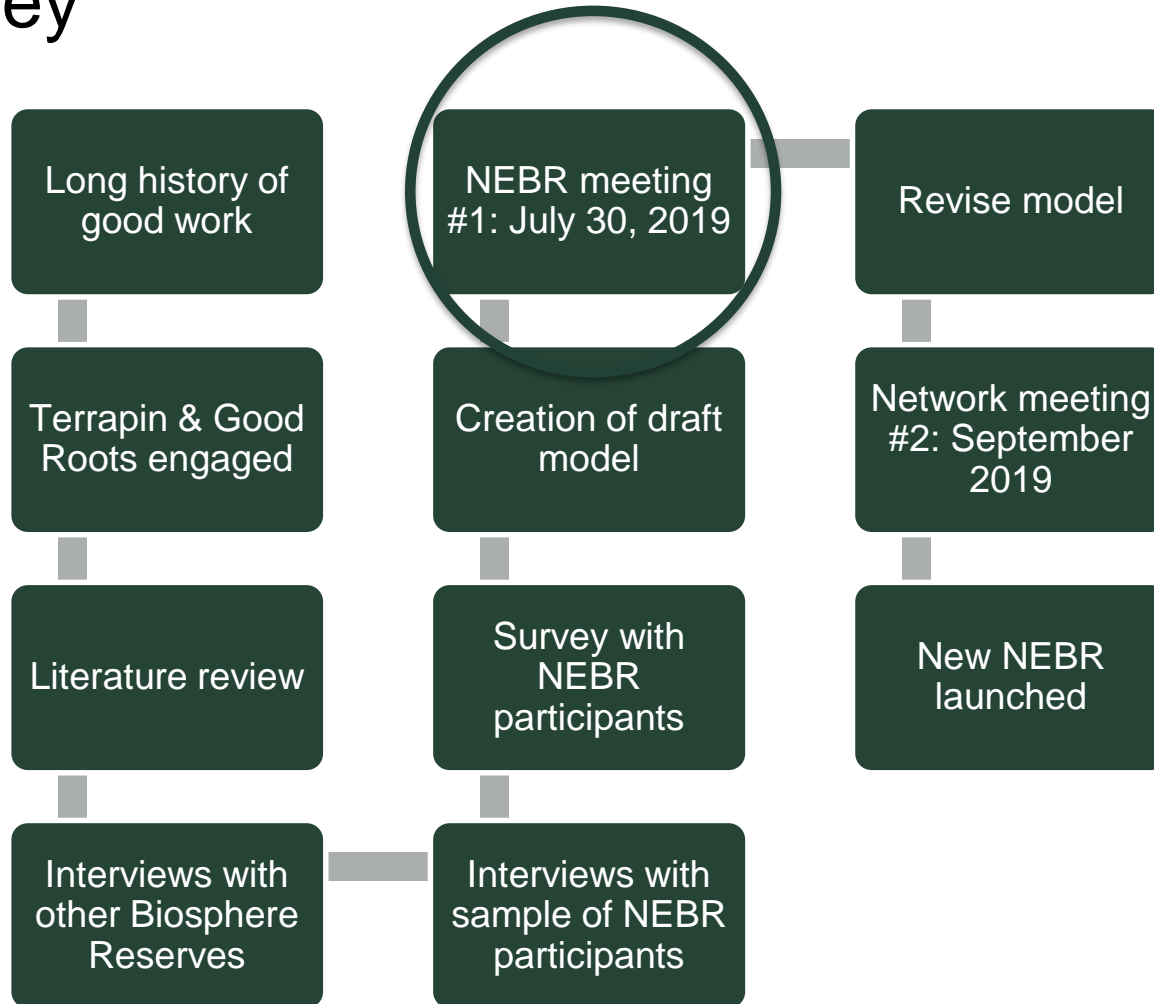
# Meeting Agenda

- **Welcome, Land Acknowledgement & Introductions**
- **Presentation:** Environmental Scan, NEBR Consultations, Proposed Model
- **Guiding Principles Exercise**
- **Lunch**
- **Breakout Group Discussions**
- **Next Steps & Commitments**
- **Closing Remarks**





# A Journey



## Biospheres Interviewed

- Clayoquot Biosphere Trust, British Columbia
- Fundy Biosphere Reserve, New Brunswick
- Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve, Ontario
- Manicouagan-Uapishka Biosphere Reserve, Quebec
- Redberry Lake Biosphere Reserve, Saskatchewan

# Biosphere Reserve Good Governance

- Need clearly defined vision, goals and objectives to inform governance decisions
- Commitment to the vision, goals and objectives and a strong sense of place are more important than strict adherence to representation
- Organization must be trusted and considered impartial
- Diversified funding is key to financial sustainability
- A governance body should open doors to new funding
- 10-year UNESCO review is onerous and needs dedicated coordination and resources
- Indigenous engagement is an ongoing process based on building relationships of trust and reciprocity
- Extent and nature of engagement by local Indigenous communities must be defined by them

## Vision for the future – a sample from the NEBR interviews

- *"All communities within the biosphere reserve have advanced towards environmental sustainability. We have clear natural areas, human areas, and yet the environment within both is still maintained."*
- *"A major piece of wilderness has been protected so people continue to be awed by - so people want to come. Tobermory is ahead of the curve - leader in how sustainable tourism happens successfully."*
- *"Species at risk have been adequately protected, green corridors have been established, all the jewels of the Escarpment protected."*
- *"The biosphere reserve is more closely associated with the concept of a working landscape and not associated exclusively with regulation."*

## Questions/Discussion?





## Who we spoke with



■ Academia ■ CA ■ Indigenous ■ Industry ■ Municipality ■ NGO ■ Tourism

## What we heard

- Everybody is on board with UNESCO's MAB Principles.
- NEBR in its current form is underperforming.
- Establishing a new organization will be challenging in a crowded and competitive landscape and can't compete with member organizations.
- Indigenous leadership is essential and value proposition needs to be made clear.
- NEBR is seen as agent of the NEC and a constraint on economic activity.

## What we heard – continued

- The 10-year UNESCO Review process provides a strategic focus for a new organization.
- Like all start-ups, the new NEBR will require a runway comprised of adequate funding and expertise with which to establish itself.
- While a democratically established organization with balanced participant representation is essential, it may be necessary to begin with a transitional leadership committee capable of driving the designation renewal process (job #1) while taking time to thoughtfully clarify and communicate the organization's purpose, achieve the desired representation in terms of its leadership and staffing and, put the new NEBR on a financially sustainable footing.

## What the web survey confirms

- Umbrella services
  - Fundraising
  - Grant making
  - Knowledge mobilization & exchange
    - Annual/biennial conference
  - NEBR promotion
  - Internal & external communications
  - UNESCO designation renewal (10-year review)



## What the web survey confirms

- Willing to be a founder
  - 11/16: “Yes”
  - 1 as a funder
  - 4 as a joint grant applicant
  - 4 by contributing staff time
  - 6 by contributing technical expertise
  - 1 by sharing physical space
- Willing to contribute time:
  - 5 said 5 or more hours per month

## Vision for longer-term leadership

- Based on priorities expressed by NEBR participants, the new NEBR:
  - Is independent
  - Has 9 - 11 voting directors (odd number being key)
  - Has non-voting members, e.g. executive director, NEC representative
  - Ultimately, has a membership that is open to individuals and organizations who support the mission, vision and values of the organization
- Priorities for leadership include:
  - Demonstrated commitment to the NEBR
  - Representation from Indigenous communities, various regions, sectors, skill sets

## Questions/Discussion?



# A transitional plan is desirable





# Transitional Leadership Committee

Starting with a small (3-5) transitional leadership committee (TLC) to focus on:

1. **Formalizing the longer-term governance structure:** overseeing not-for-profit incorporation and development of initial by-laws; ensuring optimal representation for governance is achieved including:
  - Indigenous communities;
  - Diverse regions; and,
  - Relevant sectors.
2. **Establishing a programmatic direction** consistent with:
  - Broader UNESCO goals and successful renewal of the biosphere reserve designation;
  - Calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada; and,
  - Needs of its members.

## Transitional Leadership Committee (cont.)

**3. Establishing communication standards and systems** to articulate NEBR priorities, activities and impact:

- Among NEBR participants;
- With funders;
- With the public; and,
- With Canadian Biosphere Reserves Association (CBRA).

**4. Fund development**, including:

- Establishing a compelling case for support; and,
- Securing initial financial investment to support transitional and longer-term goals (e.g. grant funding from governments, foundations, donations from individual donors).

## Working Groups

- The Transitional Leadership Committee will benefit from the establishment of volunteer working groups to focus on each the 4 key priorities. NEBR participants not present on July 30<sup>th</sup> will be given an opportunity to express their interest to participate in the TLC or in a working group.

## Establishing the TLC & Working Groups

- NEBR participants not present on July 30<sup>th</sup> will be given an opportunity to participate in the TLC or working group via email to full NEBR database.
- **For TLC** - after receiving expressions of interest a brief web-based application form & selection criteria will be shared.
- Interested candidates will be presented at a September 2019 meeting – where NEBR participants will be asked to approve (and if necessary vote on) candidates.
- We propose this September meeting be framed as the launch of the transitional NEBR leadership phase.
- Working group members will be accepted without a formal selection process, but with the intention to achieve a balanced number on each group.



## NEC as secretariat

- Both the TLC and working groups should be supported by the NEC in a secretariat role - providing technical expertise, administrative support and institutional memory.

## Indigenous Leadership

- It is the sincere desire of the NEC, NEF and other founders (and by edict of UNESCO) that a new community-based NEBR be relevant and valuable to Indigenous communities along the Niagara Escarpment and that Indigenous communities choose to actively engage in its leadership.
  - The extent and nature of Indigenous leadership in the NEBR will ultimately need to be determined by representatives from the various Indigenous communities upon whose traditional lands the NEBR is located.
  - The longer-term governance model that NEBR participants (led by the TLC) settle on will need to be flexible and responsive to future discussions with and the ultimate wishes of various Indigenous communities along the Escarpment.
  - Immediate efforts should be made to continue and expand initiatives to get to know these Indigenous communities, their priorities, challenges and potential opportunities for collaboration within the World Biosphere Reserve frame.

## Indigenous Leadership (cont.)

- **Prospective options for Indigenous leadership:**
  - As members of the Transitional Leadership Committee and/or working groups in the transitional phase;
  - As Directors of a newly incorporated NEBR organization (to this end, the new NEBR could permanently hold a set number of director positions, e.g. a minimum of 4 of 11 director positions, for Indigenous representatives, to be filled if and when they choose to do so);
  - As members of an Indigenous Advisory Council which provides input into developing priorities, plans and policies developed by the NEBR; and/or,
  - Other options as determined by Indigenous representatives.

## Initial Resources

- Adequate initial resources (funds and in-kind support) will be essential to ensure the proposed model can function. One significant cost in the first year will be for an experienced lawyer specializing in not-for-profit and charitable governance to help with incorporation and by-laws. We suggest initial resources could flow from:
  - NEC – Secretariat support;
  - Contributions from participating organizations; and,
  - Grants (TBD).

## We want to hear from you

- What are you excited about?
- Does anything make you nervous?

## Questions/Discussion



## Guiding Principles

- Encourage diverse and inclusive participation that is representative of civil society.
- Provide an environment that promotes respect, builds new relationships and embraces diverse ideas, knowledge, cultures, and experiences of all the Network members.
- Facilitate and maintain an accessible, open and transparent Network which enshrines a democratic decision making process and fosters effective and continuous communications.
- Recognize, celebrate and share the successes achieved by the Network.
- Facilitate an action oriented, results driven, collaborative approach to support the long-term sustainability of the NEBR.



## Table Discussions:

Table 1

Long-term leadership structure

Table 2

Program directions and activities

Table 3

Communications

Table 4

Fund development

## Table Discussions: Questions

- How can we work together to make this area of focus a success? The more ideas the better at this early stage!
- What are the potential roadblocks that might need to be overcome and how can we do so?

THANK YOU!