

Becoming World Class
Action Plan for the Frontenac Arch Biosphere
2009-2012



Going Forward

This is the Frontenac Arch Biosphere's second business plan. We look back on the first plan with a great feeling of accomplishment. During its six-year life, the notion that the Biosphere is a globally significant and unique treasure has grown among local people, all levels of governments and many other organizations in this region. It deserves a special kind of stewardship. The Biosphere also grew by over 40% in this period, with the addition of the Township of South Frontenac. This is a special place in our world—and with this comes responsibility.

For that reason, our focus will increasingly be the overall health and sustainable development of the Biosphere, and actions needed to ensure that our unique yet fragile natural and cultural heritage is maintained and developed in a responsible and sustainable way.

Mission

The Frontenac Arch Biosphere's Mission is to encourage people to work together toward a more sustainable way of life.

Vision

The Frontenac Arch Biosphere will be known by all who live and visit here as a world-class model of successful, sustainable development. We will celebrate our natural, economic and human qualities and forge a new way of working, living and growing together.

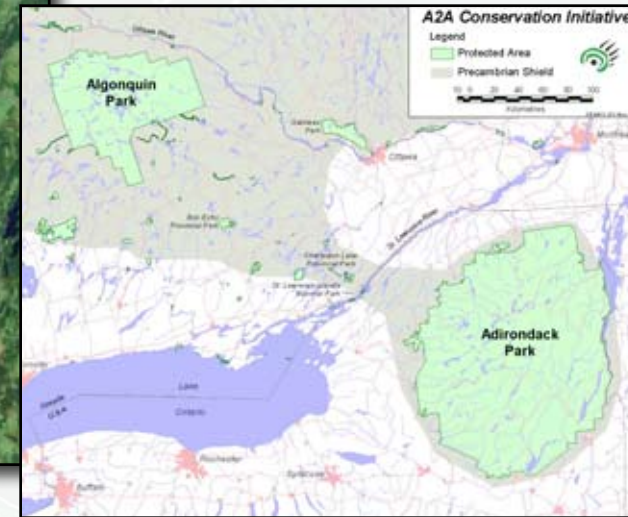
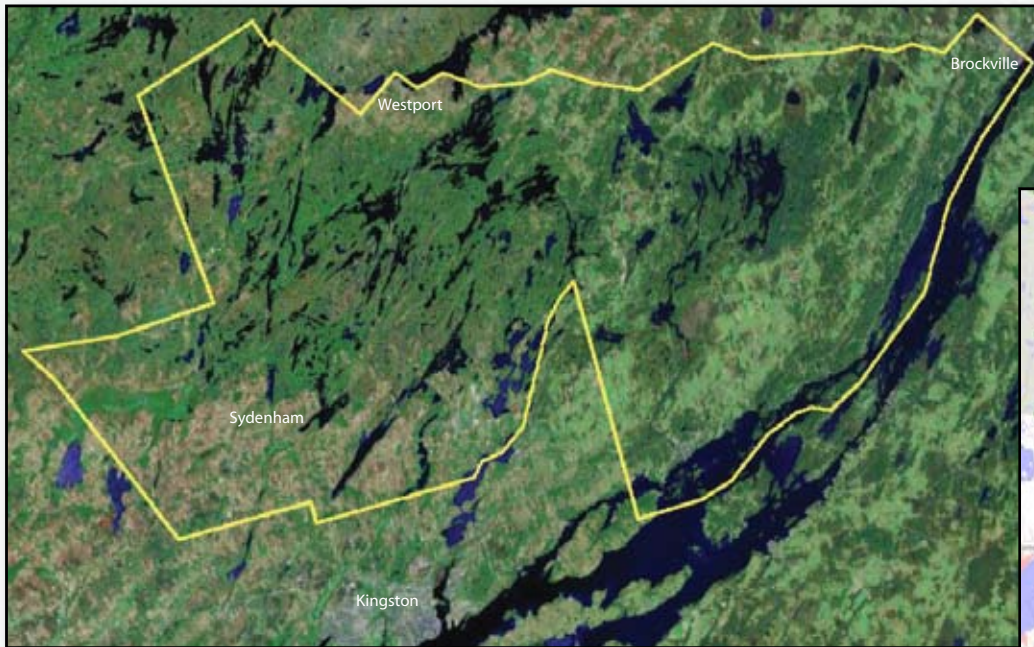
What is a Biosphere?

The United Nations Education, Culture and Science Organization (UNESCO), in its Man and the Biosphere program, designates outstanding regions of the world as Biosphere Reserves. To be selected as a Biosphere, a region must be globally significant in terms of its ecology, and through education and support must work toward sustainable community development. UNESCO challenges us to conserve our environment while meeting the economic, cultural and social needs of the Biosphere's residents and visitors. It is more than a recognition, it is a responsibility.

Today, there are nearly 550 UNESCO designated Biospheres in more than 100 countries around the world. Canada, with all its richness, has just 15. Each in its own way focuses on elements of sustainable development: respect for the environment, healthy and equitable economies, cultural richness and vibrant communities, today and in the future.

For more information, visit www.fabr.ca





What is the Frontenac Arch?

The Frontenac Arch is the name given to an ancient ridge of granite that sweeps across the St. Lawrence River forming a corridor between the Canadian Shield and the Adirondack Mountains. Where the ridge intersects the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River, it forms the beautiful Thousand Islands. One can see the granite ridge in the rock faces along Highway 401. First Nations call the Frontenac Arch the “backbone of the mother”—Mother Nature’s spinal column.

At the crossroads of the Frontenac Arch and St. Lawrence River, five separate forest regions meet creating a great richness of plant, insect and animal species—making it the most biodiverse region in Canada, and a place of great beauty. It has a long and rich cultural heritage and served as the historic gateway through the St. Lawrence River to all of Canada. The Frontenac Arch is a unique chorus of people, landscapes and living creatures.

The World Recognizes the Frontenac Arch Biosphere

The Frontenac Arch Biosphere lies on the central Canadian portion of the Frontenac Arch, roughly between Brockville and Gananoque, extending northward toward Sydenham and Westport. It received its UNESCO designation in 2002. The Frontenac Arch is one of the few regions in the world to receive two UNESCO designations. In 2007, UNESCO designated the Rideau Canal as a World Heritage Site. It runs through the heart of the Biosphere.

To maintain our high quality of life and ensure a rich culture, grow the economy, and preserve the environment in this region, we must all develop and maintain a healthy relationship between people and nature.



Marketing strategies workshop for artists and artisans in Athens

What is the Biosphere Network?

The Frontenac Arch Biosphere is a non-profit organization of committed volunteers, organizations, governments and agencies that operates as the Biosphere Network. Meeting the requirements of a Biosphere designation takes work and a commitment to stewardship. The Network works co-operatively with all parties and interests to build on the vision for the Biosphere. Our vision and action plan belongs to the community.

Reaffirming the Four Pillars of Sustainable Development

This plan is built upon the Charter of the Frontenac Arch Biosphere. It is built on our belief that this unique Biosphere, with its mix of urban and rural communities, mixed land use, and its gift of natural beauty and heritage, can only be sustainable if we focus on the four pillars of sustainability.

- Environmental sustainability: all actions should enhance and protect the environmental worth that the world has so clearly recognized
- Economic sustainability: we must support a vibrant economy and foster longterm wealth for our citizens
- Social sustainability: our institutions and infrastructure must foster healthy family and community life over the long term
- Cultural sustainability: we must foster an atmosphere that encourages expression, communication and interaction in the arts, recreation and well-being of our citizens and visitors; and we must preserve our cultural heritage



Rugged granite shores on the Frontenac Arch



Narrows Lock on the Rideau Canal



Celebrating our community and heritage



Art is the expression of our community

The Action Plan in a Snapshot

The Board of Directors of the Frontenac Arch Biosphere offers an Action Plan to assist our community in becoming more sustainable. We cannot do it alone. The Frontenac Arch Biosphere sees itself in a collaborative leadership role, designed to stimulate all who live and visit here to contribute to the sustainability of our region. This outward-looking plan focuses on what we have learned in the past three years.

The following pages outline the main projects and areas of preoccupation for the Biosphere Network over the next four years, 2009-2012.



Goal 1: Build Community Capacity

The Biosphere Network will be a champion for vibrant, healthy, successful sustainable communities.

1. Charter of Biosphere Values
2. Sustainable communities development strategy: create an integrated approach
3. Food Strategy: build on and beyond our Local Flavours programme
4. Arts and Culture: artists and artisans: build an artistic expression of the Biosphere
5. Education Network: support natural and cultural heritage program providers in the Biosphere
6. Conservation Strategies: build partnerships for conservation of ecologically significant lands, and toward the increased use of perpetual and renewable energy sources
7. Sustainable Tourism: Phase Two - Charter Process
8. Trails Council: continue developing the Council and action plans



Students celebrate Earth Day



Chef meets farmer through Local Flavours



Views at Landon Bay



Follow a 4,000 year-old paddle route

Goal 2: Centre of Excellence: Sustainability

The Biosphere Network will foster collaboration and knowledge exchange, engaging those within the Biosphere and globally to contribute to better understanding of all aspects of sustainability.



above: GPS data collection for trails mapping
below: Sustainable tourism workshop in Sydenham

1. Health of the Biosphere Report: develop and report on key indicators of sustainability, and on our progress toward sustainability
2. Sustainability Centre: support the development of new facilities and programs that focus on the goals and achievements of our partners in sustainability, to benefit both residents and regional visitors
3. Biosphere Institute: create institutional linkages that bring together and disseminate information and tools for sustainable community development; assist our partners and the community in sustainable community development
4. Community Atlas: develop a highly accessible integrated database and map the natural, cultural, social and community facets of the Biosphere
5. International Modeling and Co-operation: share knowledge and experience with Biosphere Reserves in Canada and abroad



Goal 3: Grow Organizational Capacity

The Biosphere Network will build on its efforts to serve as an organizational focus and support for people, organizations and governments so that more may benefit from co-ordinated research, shared action and increased capacity. It must become more sustainable in order to do that.

1. Communications and Creating a Distinct Identity: communicate the goals, programs and activities of the Biosphere Network
2. Human Resources: develop, train and nurture the Board, staff and volunteers of the Biosphere Network
3. Excellence in Board Governance: ensure integrity of Biosphere activities through sound policy, Board development and accountability
4. Endowment Fund for Biosphere Development: finance the Biosphere's infrastructure and base programmes
5. Membership Expansion and Regional Integration: grow and integrate sustainable development throughout the Biosphere community



A View 10 Years into the Future, in the Frontenac Arch Biosphere

This Action Plan focuses on the overall health and sustainable development of the Biosphere over the next four years. Yet, it is helpful to gaze a decade into the future, to envision where the successes of this Action Plan, and those that follow, may lead.

The Frontenac Arch Biosphere has become a Canadian and world model of sustainable community development. As a result of sophisticated planning, we celebrate our culturally rich, economically strong and ecologically healthy vibrant community. Collaboration of all levels of government with community organizations has built a sustainability network that nurtures the well-being of all who live here, and stewards the health of our land and heritage.

Visitors from Canada and abroad would find communities aware and proud of the natural and cultural resources of their land. They would see this landscape celebrated in the art, music, architecture and literature they discover in galleries, book stores, web portals and in virtually every public institution they visit. They would find an online encyclopedia of knowledge at their fingertips, and a wealth of resources to guide their visits.

Residents and visitors alike will find a region that is self-sustaining in its food supply, with clean and healthy water from lake and river, and at the tap. They will find a region networked with trails for all interests, threading the history, culture, ecology and business community into an unrivalled experience.

They would see a wealth of healthy and interconnected forests and lakes and wetlands, so that the rich diversity of the natural landscape flourishes. The Biosphere attracts people from across the globe to see Canada's ecological stronghold. They would see farms—small and large; green and prosperous—capable of supplying not only the thriving communities of the Biosphere, but able to contribute to the nation's food supply.

The Biosphere organization will have become financially self-sustaining, and it will be an institute of excellence for its values and programmes, working on behalf of its broad partnership of agencies and organizations toward true sustainability of the Biosphere.



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