

# HISTORY OF THE BRUCE PENINSULA BIOSPHERE ASSOCIATION

The Bruce Peninsula Biosphere Association has established itself as a credible and recognizable organization with strong foundations and solid support from the community. It has maintained an approach that engages the community in all of its endeavours and attempts to represent all interests in its decision-making. This approach is not only integrated into the current projects of the Bruce Peninsula Biosphere Association, but it was also inherent during its inception in 2000.

## **a. Gaining Community Support**

- ❑ In early 2000, several community members canvassed for interest throughout the municipality to establish a community-based association dedicated to the ideals of UNESCO Biosphere Reserves. This would be the first community along Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Reserve to have an association that implemented the concept of biosphere reserves.
- ❑ The founding meeting took place on November 20, 2000 at the Tobermory Community Centre, with approximately 60 people attending the event. A wide range of speakers presented at the meeting in an effort to better understand the concept of biosphere reserves, the role of communities in the implementation of this concept, and furthermore, the benefits of this association to the community at large. A unanimous vote at the end of the meeting led to the establishment of a steering committee.

## **b. Establishing the Fundamental Goals**

- ❑ Representing various sectors of community, the steering committee was formed to establish the fundamental ideals of the Association, and furthermore, to develop a constitution and bylaws. Despite the diverse backgrounds, perspectives and interests among the members of the steering committee, there was an emphasis to be impartial and consider the interests of the community while making decisions.
- ❑ To understand the fundamental goals of the Association, the steering committee began to establish a vision of the Association's role within the community. The guiding principles of the Association would foster a balance between conservation and development in support of a healthy, sustainable community. It would assume a 'facilitating role' to build capacity in the community through forum, open dialogue and information exchange.

## **c. Our Constitution and Bylaws**

- In the spring of 2001, the steering committee began to develop a constitution and bylaws for the Association that addressed the grassroots needs of the community while adhering to the objectives of UNESCO Biosphere Reserves. Local concerns and issues were integrated into the goals and objectives of the Association, using the biosphere reserve concept as a framework to determine how these concerns and issues should be addressed.
- By fall 2001, the steering committee received financial support for the Association and began to apply for incorporation. The Bruce Peninsula Biosphere Association was officially incorporated by late November 2001.