

COMMUNITY-BASED ECOSYSTEM MONITORING: A TOOL FOR DEVELOPING AND PROMOTING ECOSYSTEM-BASED MANAGEMENT AND DECISION MAKING IN THE LONG POINT WORLD BIOSPHERE RESERVE

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***Abstract:** The Long Point World Biosphere Reserve (LPWBRF) is home to over 50 vulnerable, threatened or endangered species. The ecological integrity of the Long Point National Wildlife Area and surrounding landscape is compromised by local land use decisions - not unlike other protected areas and working landscapes across Canada. Much research and monitoring, predominantly environmental, is conducted in the LPWBR by academic institutions, industry, government agencies, ENGO's, and citizens groups. However, research and monitoring specialists in the LPWBR often work in isolation. There is a need for better coordination between the specialists themselves. And there is a need for better linkages between research and monitoring specialists and the needs of management agencies and local land use decision-makers.*

This paper will examine the process whereby concerned citizens, governments, industries, academia, community groups, and local institutions are bringing complimentary skills, roles, and resources to the table in an effort to monitor, track, and respond effectively to environmental issues of common community concern in the LPWBR. While at the fledgling stage, there is serious commitment by all parties to initiate an integrated, comprehensive LPWBR Community Based Ecosystem Monitoring program that will effectively contribute to sound decision making in the biosphere reserve, and provide periodic State of the Environment reporting to the public.

The paper will also describe the components that have been deemed necessary for an effective monitoring program by the participants of the LPWBR Community Based Ecosystem Monitoring Initiative. These include: historical and current monitoring and research programs survey; identification of information gaps; selection of indicators; standardization of monitoring protocols; historical and current data management; and reporting mechanisms, among others.

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