

TVO's Striking Balance explores Canada's Biosphere Reserves

TORONTO, ON – September 27, 2016 - Narrated by Blue Rodeo's Jim Cuddy, *Striking Balance* is an eight-part documentary series coming to TVO starting Oct. 4th at 9pm, that explores Canada's Biosphere Reserves. Each episode will be available across Canada at TVO.org following the first broadcast.

Most of the time when Canadians think about nature, we think about far off places - wilderness areas, untouched by humans. But those places don't exist. People have been a part of nearly every Canadian landscape for thousands of years, and UNESCO Biosphere Reserves are a way to think about nature that includes people as part of the environment. For those living in Canada's Biosphere Reserves, the environment is only healthy if human communities and the ecosystems that sustain them are both thriving.

Shot over 170 days, *Striking Balance* goes across the country, combining aerial and time-lapse photography to create a stunning picture of Canada's breathtaking Biosphere Reserves. The series includes interviews with over 250 Canadians struggling to create sustainable symbiotic relationships between people and nature.

Executive Producer of the series for TVO, Jane Jankovic says: "TVO is proud to support this documentary series exploring Canada's Biosphere Reserves from coast to coast. It's gorgeous, but more exciting is its message that sustaining the environment is not just about turning nature into shrines. We meet people across the country who live and work on these reserves in a way that can keep the land and its ecology viable for generations to come. It's truly inspiring."

Biosphere Reserves are designated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO. "We can be proud of our biosphere reserves, which play a critical role in preserving Canada's rich ecosystems. Innovative community engagement is at the heart of these initiatives, which balance biodiversity protection with local needs. We are pleased to see this work recognized in TVO's new series, which will further help connect Canadians to these extraordinary places," says Sébastien Goupil, Secretary-General of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO

The eight biosphere reserves featured in the series are:

- Long Point, Ontario
- Clayoquot Sound, British Columbia
- Mont Saint-Hilaire, Quebec
- Bras d'Or, Nova Scotia
- Georgian Bay, Ontario
- Redberry Lake, Saskatchewan
- Fundy, New Brunswick
- Waterton, Alberta

“World Biosphere Reserves showcase some of the planet's most amazing and unique natural landscapes. In Canada, these areas often directly align with The Nature Conservancy of Canada’s (NCC’s) work to conserve Canada’s most significant habitats. NCC is proud to support this series of inspiring stories of people who are meeting head on the challenges of balancing use and protection of the land they love,” says Wendy Cridland, Director of Conservation for Ontario for the Nature Conservancy of Canada, a partner on the project.

The stories *Striking Balance* explores are far-reaching. In Waterton, Alberta, in spite of rising land prices, ranchers are keeping tens of thousands of acres of prairie intact – creating both an incredible home for wildlife, while maintaining the ranchers’ cherished way of life. In Cape Breton, known for its steel mills and coal mines, the Mi’kmaq of the Bras d’Or Lake have spent forty years developing a sustainable farming industry for oysters – a high-value product that also cleans the lake. In Georgian Bay, Ontario, small-scale forestry was impacted by the endangered species act, until the industry teamed up with biologist Jeremy Rouse to figure out a way to harvest wood without harming the threatened blanding’s turtle. And in Clayoquot Sound, British Columbia, the Tla-o-qui-aht are harnessing traditional knowledge to create economic prosperity in their communities today, with a plan to increase the abundance of the oceans and rainforests for the next 500 years.

The series kicks-off on October 4th at 9:00pm on TVO with the Long Point episode. Once surrounded by desert, Ontario’s Long Point – the world’s longest freshwater sand spit, is today lush with forests and wetlands. Ironically, an invasive plant, phragmites, is now its biggest threat.

Striking Balance is produced in partnership with TVO, Knowledge Network, the Nature Conservancy of Canada and Parks Canada.

Visit strikingbalance.ca for a trailer, clips and news from the series. For stills or to preview the series, contact the producer.

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