

Striking Balance

A Documentary Series
Celebrating Canada's
Biosphere Reserves

Striking Balance

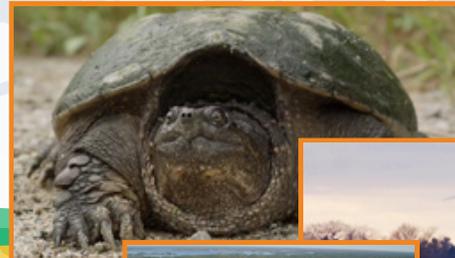
Canada's Biosphere Reserves

Synopsis

The United Nations has recognized 16 laboratories in Canada, but these are not normal research facilities with lab coats and Bunsen burners. These are laboratories for sustainable development known as Biosphere Reserves. Biosphere Reserves are volunteer-driven, grassroots initiatives, where communities have made a commitment to work together to find innovative approaches to living and working in harmony with nature.

Join us on a journey across Canada, as we look at our nation's breathtaking Biosphere Reserves in this cinematic-documentary series. We'll explore the amazing places that make up our Biosphere Reserves and what makes them special, from geological, ecological, historical and cultural perspectives. We'll meet the passionate people who have overcome tremendous challenges on their quest to find a balance between economic prosperity and environmental protection, in this vast and resource rich country. And we'll investigate the Reserves as "living laboratories" by joining academics, citizen-scientists, and indigenous knowledge keepers in their research to create a more sustainable future for both Canadians and the environments in which we live. Finding ways for bears, wolves, and farmers to live together in southern Alberta as part of the Carnivores in Communities program, reducing catastrophic amphibian and reptile road mortality at Long Point, Ontario, and eradicating invasive species at Mont Saint-Hillarie, Quebec are just a few examples of the work being done.

Filmed using IMAX-like, 6K digital cinema cameras - spectacular aerial, motion capture time-lapse and nature photography will be complimented by an original score. 2D and 3D animation will take us back into deep time to explore how these landscapes, and our relationships to them, have evolved over millennia. Interviews with experts on-site, and footage of research and grassroots programming in-action will take us right into the communities that are changing how we live and interact with nature today.



Watch the Demo at
Strikingbalance.ca



Our Goals

Our Production Model

The non-profit Living History Multimedia Association has been working with communities and non-profits to help them tell their important stories to the world since 2003. We employ a community-focused production model that is as inclusive as possible, while at the same time delivering high quality and entertaining productions. The storyline for each episode will be created in consultation with a local steering committee, there are volunteer opportunities for local high school students to participate in the high-end production process, and any of our community partners are free to use the footage we capture for the program for their own purposes.

What We've Learned

Striking Balance will inform both Canadians and the international community about what we've been learning from over forty years of scientific research at our Biosphere Reserve testing grounds.

In the Classroom

Striking Balance has been designed as a teaching tool for classrooms. As a showcase of community, volunteer, and student involvement, *Striking Balance* will provide students across the country with the tools and inspiration they need to get involved in on-the-ground research, and environmental conservation/preservation in their communities, as well as inspire the next generation of earth scientists. Schools in the Biosphere Reserves will have free access to the *Striking Balance* series and curriculum-connected course guide.

Sharing Indigenous Knowledge

The Indigenous Peoples of Canada have much to share when it comes to stewarding the land. We will engage the First Nations, Inuit, and/or Métis Communities of each Reserve, to help in telling the stories of these landscapes and share some of the ways they've lived sustainably on them for thousands of years.

Pay It Forward

In many cases, Biosphere Reserve initiatives have come from the grassroots – from individuals who have been working for decades to save a little piece of our planet. These individuals embody the spirit of each Reserve and epitomize how science and community connect. By sharing the programs and experiences of the movers-and-shakers from each of our Biosphere Reserves, we hope to inspire Canadians to be active “in their own backyards.”

Pride of Place

Each episode of *Striking Balance* will be an exploration of the breath-taking landscapes, unique natural characteristics, and human stories that make up every Biosphere Reserve. By showing-off these archetypal Canadian landscapes, we hope to instill a “pride of place” in all Canadians – to make better choices about our interactions with our environments and communities.

What is a Biosphere Reserve?

A biosphere reserve is an area that has been designated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to demonstrate innovative approaches to living and working in harmony with nature. Designation is considered after the area is selected by a national committee and proposed to UNESCO by a member country. Each reserve is typical of one of the world's major terrestrial or coastal ecosystems.

*Definition courtesy of Parks Canada

Style & Content

Style & Tone

Biosphere Reserves are at the intersection of science and community – so while we'll get involved in interesting research and innovative programming, we'll also get to know some fascinating characters. At each Reserve we'll focus on three characters who are engaged in science/research, indigenous knowledge sharing, or eco-programs that connect with the main issues and themes of the Reserve. We'll use each of these characters and their work as three conduits for traveling back in time to explore different aspects of earth science and human history, as they relate to each Character and their Reserve. Interviews with on-the-ground earth scientists of all disciplines, First Nations Elders, and historians will be combined with archival materials, and 2D and 3D animations to complete these stories. We'll also get to know our three characters as people. We'll ask the questions: "why are they doing these experiments/programs and why is it important?" to help humanize and personalize their work.

A narrator will help us navigate between characters, while introducing the 'big ideas' that connect each eco-program, research project, and story. Each episode will fly between topics and places on the landscape, but the narrator will help us make the connections between them, often over montages of stunning nature photography.

Between our characters, experts, and the narrator, viewers will be given enough information on each story to make them meaningful, but not be bogged down by stats and figures. We see *Striking Balance* as being an introduction to each Reserve, which will hopefully encourage viewers to go out and learn more, or even get involved in their own communities! To encourage this further, even though some of our stories will tackle environmental degradation or difficult episodes in human history, overall the series will maintain a positive tone – largely generated by our three main characters who are actively working to ensure a better future.

We'll also take the time to "breathe in" the amazing landscapes and wildlife of each Reserve. The latest in digital cinema technology will be used to capture spectacular aerial, motion capture time-lapse and nature shots to create a stunning, cinematic picture of Canada's Biosphere Reserves.

Segment Types

Each episode will be divided into segments in the following categories:

Hero/Story A

The main character in this storyline – Hero A – will be deeply connected to the biggest stories and themes of this particular Biosphere Reserve. This Hero will either be engaged in a research/science project, an eco-program, or indigenous knowledge development/sharing that is currently underway. We will use this Hero and their work, as a conduit for traveling back in time and looking at the geology/geography, ecology, and human history that makes their work necessary today.

Hero/Story B and C

Stories B and C will allow us to access science, indigenous knowledge, history, and eco-programming themes beyond what can be connected to Story A. If Hero/Story A is a science/research story, then Hero/Story B will be an eco-program, and C will be focused on indigenous knowledge (or vice versa).

Deep Time/Earth Sciences Exploration

Going back even farther in time to the formation of the actual landscape, we will tell the story of the geology and ecology of each Biosphere Reserve. Earth sciences experts will be on hand to join us on our journey to learn more about each Reserve's geology, ecology and more!

Human History

A combination of interviews with First Nations Elders and historians, aerial shots, animations and archival material will help us unfold how the human use of each Biosphere Reserve has evolved, from initial occupation to the present day. Special and sacred places to Indigenous Peoples within each Biosphere Reserve will be navigated with the help of local First Nations, Inuit, or Métis Elders.

One Minute Wonder

Each Biosphere Reserve we visit will have a unique collection geological, animal or plant life. However, at each Reserve there will be a few creatures that deserve special mention. Whether they are endangered species who call this place home, animals who flock here en-masse during a migration, or inhabit a particular ecosystem where few others will - there is no doubt they have amazing stories to share. We will choose two of these for One Minute Mini Segments. These mini-portraits will be fast, and upbeat, and offer viewers a taste of some of the amazing nature at each Reserve.

Project Components



Documentary Series

Each episode of our documentary series, *Striking Balance*, will be a showcase for one of Canada's Biosphere Reserves. Composed of 16 one-hour episodes, *Striking Balance* will be created using the latest in digital cinema production and editing technology, to ensure that a professional and visually enticing picture of each Biosphere Reserve is created.

Community Events

Following the completion of each episode of *Striking Balance*, a community Launch Event will be held at each Reserve, to share and celebrate the work being done within the community. These screening events will be free and open to the public, and are an opportunity to recognize our volunteers and partners.

DVDs & Blu-rays

Our audiences will be able to take the beauty of *Striking Balance* home with them on DVD, and in stunning high definition Blu-ray. Viewers will be able to watch each episode at their convenience, and share the project with an even wider audience. Partner organizations may also sell these products as fundraising items.

Course Guide

Chock-full of activities and projects developed to compliment the themes of *Striking Balance*, and adapted for Secondary and Primary curriculums, a course guide will be created for educators to bring Canada's Biosphere Reserves into the classroom.

Promotional Tools

From the footage collected for *Striking Balance*, a promotional video will be created for each Biosphere Reserve, to help further their economic, tourism, and research goals.

Mobile App

An App will be designed for *Striking Balance* to introduce users to the concept of Biosphere Reserves, and help them to get to know each Reserve intimately. Developed for the iPad, iPhone, and iPod Touch, each App will showcase video highlights from the Reserve's *Striking Balance* episode, and will use geo-positioning and geography to help users "see themselves" in relation to the Reserve. There will be two ways for users to explore the stories of each unique landscape: by using the story index to select the stories that interest them most, or by using the map feature that displays stories according to their geography. The map feature will use geo-positioning to both show the user's location in relation to story content, and notify the user when they travel near a story's location. The map will also highlight additional sites that are important to the overall story of each Reserve, which will include additional information and photographs.

On the Web

The *Striking Balance* site will be a portal for users to access all of the project's media – from the Apps, to the Course Guide, to our social media, to our online store, and our YouTube channel. Our YouTube channel will feature highlights from each *Striking Balance* episode, and give viewers a taste of what each Reserve has to offer, while encouraging them to check out the entire series, and visit each Reserve for themselves.

Public Relations

Throughout the production and post-production phases, our staff will actively work to promote *Striking Balance* and its partners through traditional and social media. "Behind the Scenes" photography and video are a vital part of our strategy, and have proven very popular for driving viewers to our sites.

UNESCO = United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNESCO's mission is to contribute to the building of peace, the eradication of poverty, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture, communication and information.

UNESCO works to create the conditions for dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples, based upon respect for commonly shared values. It is through this dialogue that the world can achieve global visions of sustainable development encompassing observance of human rights, mutual respect and the alleviation of poverty, all of which are at the heart of UNESCO'S mission and activities.

* Information from www.unesco.org

Our Biosphere Reserves



Mount Arrowsmith, BC

This Biosphere Reserve, located on the East Coast of Vancouver Island, encompasses the Moriarty and Mount Arrowsmith watersheds and the Strait of Georgia shoreline and seabed. Habitats and ecosystems range from alpine to arid, offshore islands, old-growth forests, steep mountain slopes, lakes, flood-plains, gorges, and estuaries. The local economy is evolving rapidly from one based on logging, mining, agricultural production and commercial fishing, to one increasingly influenced by tourism and a steadily growing seniors community.

Redberry Lake, SK

Redberry Lake Biosphere Reserve is located in central Saskatchewan and anchored by a core area that includes a saltwater lake and rare mixed prairie lands, in a highly grazed and cultivated landscape. The primary economic activities are agricultural, grain, and livestock production.

Clayoquot Sound, BC

This reserve is situated on Western Vancouver Island. A diverse range of ecosystems can be found within the reserve boundaries, including significant expanses of ancient temperate rainforest, lakes, rivers and streams, alpine peaks, open ocean, rocky coastal shores, long sand beaches, estuaries and mud flats. Given continued development in temperate rainforests worldwide, the reserve contains areas of global ecological significance. The reserve follows the guiding principle taken from the Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations philosophy of 'Hishuk ish ts'awalk', or 'everything is one'.

Waterton, AB

The Waterton Biosphere Reserve and National Park is situated in the extreme southwest of Alberta and covers an area of 52,597 kilometers. It encompasses a section of the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains, and extends from the Continental Divide to the eastern edge of the Canadian Great Plains. The Glacier Biosphere Reserve and National Park in Montana (USA) is located to the south of the area.

Riding Mountain, MB

Anchored by the Riding Mountain National Park, this Biosphere Reserve, about 250 kilometres northwest of Winnipeg, encompasses boreal and deciduous forests, mixed grass and rough fescue prairies, and aspen parkland. The economy consists of grain, forage crops and livestock, hunting, and eco-tourism.

Georgian Bay, ON

This shoreline ecosystem stretches over 200 kilometres northeast of Lake Huron. This Biosphere Reserve is a vast corridor of protected landscape, many islands, parks and conservation areas. It partners with over 50 stakeholder groups, including seven municipalities and a number of First Nations.

Our Biosphere Reserves



Charlevoix, QC

Charlevoix Biosphere Reserve lies northeast of Quebec City and is bordered to the south by the St. Lawrence River's salt water and tides. Its forestry and vegetation ranges from maple trees at lower elevations to open tundra in the Parc national des Grands-Jardins. The region's economy is led by the tourism and forestry sectors and boasts a growing network of local agricultural producers.

Lac Saint-Pierre, QC

The Lac Saint-Pierre Biosphere Reserve located along the St. Lawrence River between Montreal and Quebec City is comprised of a maritime waterway in the midst of an important migratory bird route, all encompassed within an industrialized area.

Manicouagan Uapishka, QC

This Reserve lies on the north shore of the St. Lawrence River and extends up to the Groulx-Uapishka Mountains. It has been highly successful in community outreach and partnerships with natural resource companies, with positive results and impacts on sustainability practices in the region. Closely linked to these partnerships, the Reserve fosters dialogue between the First Nations and Baie Comeau community leaders.

Mont Saint-Hilaire, QC

Along the plains of the St. Lawrence River and 30 kilometres from Montreal, Mont Saint-Hilaire boasts primeval forests, rocky summits, and a glacially formed lake at its centre. Mont Saint-Hilaire became Canada's first biosphere reserve in 1978.

Niagara Escarpment, ON

This Biosphere Reserve extends along the length of the Niagara Escarpment, from Niagara Falls in southern Ontario up to Tobermory at the northern tip of the Bruce Peninsula. It is home to three distinct forest zones and includes ancient cedars and a variety of localized ecosystems.

Long Point, ON

The Long Point peninsula is a coastal ecosystem on the north shore of Ontario's Lake Erie, with long beaches, undisturbed sand dunes, grassy ridges, wet meadows, woodlands, marshes, ponds, and coldwater streams. The Long Point staff and volunteers work with residents and cottage owners to ensure that activities are in balance with the rare and delicate ecosystem.

Frontenac Arch, ON

Frontenac Arch in Eastern Ontario lies in an ancient granite ridge that joins the Canadian Shield and five forest regions to the Adirondack Mountains, with the St. Lawrence River at the south. A wealth of natural habitats such as deep channels, rocky shoals and bars, submerged cliffs, broad reed beds and shallow wetlands can be found within this flooded landscape.

Our Biosphere Reserves

Fundy, NB

Located on the Bay of Fundy's north shore, this Biosphere Reserve is dominated by the world's highest tides, red clay shorelines, and unique terrestrial and marine ecosystems. New Brunswick's Acadian cultural heritage and maritime economy has influenced the development of the region's rural and urban communities. The area is renowned for its giant flowerpot rocks, and for being an annual stopover site for migratory birds.

Bras d'Or Lake, NS

Bras d'Or Lake is a unique estuarine ecosystem in eastern Nova Scotia where cold (arctic) and warm water species thrive within a few kilometers of each other. The region is home to Mi'kmaq First Nations and descendants of French, Scottish and English settlers and later newcomers, and sustains vibrant communities scattered over highlands, river valleys and along 1,100 kilometres of coastline with barrier beaches, rocky headlands, lagoons and wetlands.

Southwest Nova, NS

This Biosphere Reserve encompasses the entire area of southwest Nova Scotia, and is home to Mi'kmaq First Nations and Acadian, English, Scottish and other communities. The landscape includes rolling plains, river plains, glacial plains, hills, drumlins and coastal cliffs. As a result of its unique southerly position in the Maritimes, the region contains significant populations of Atlantic coastal plain plant species, Blandings turtle, ribbon snake and southern flying squirrel.

**Map information from CBRA Annual Report 2011-2012, and Biospherecanada.ca*

**Definition courtesy of Parks Canada*

What is A Biosphere?

The biosphere "sphere of life" includes all living things on earth, as well as the land, water and atmosphere that sustain them. Human well-being is directly linked to the health of the biosphere.

Fast Facts

- There are 16 Biosphere Reserves in Canada located across eight provinces, which have a positive impact on the lives of the two million people, living and working within their boundaries
- There are 610 UNESCO Designated sites around the world in 117 countries
- UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme is 42 years old
- The first 57 Biosphere Reserves were approved in 1976 in nine countries
- Canada's first Biosphere Reserve, Mont Saint-Hilaire, was designated in 1978
- Bras D'Or Lake is Canada's newest Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2011
- 20 New Biosphere Reserves were created in 2012

About Us

Living History Multimedia Association

The non-profit Living History Multimedia Association has been empowering communities to tell their unique and important stories to the world since 2003. We work with individuals, municipalities and non-profits to create compelling multimedia tool kits to teach, preserve and promote Canada's natural and cultural history to audiences young and old. Our work stems from an understanding that local history and storytelling plays an important role in creating healthy, engaged communities.

Taking cues from the collaborative community theatre approach, we employ a community-focused production model, which provides local historians, elders, volunteers, and students with a platform for telling the stories of their community.

As of 2013, we have created 27 hours of programming spread over 13 different projects, the most recent of which include *The Land Between*, and *A Desert Between Us & Them: Raiders, Traitors and Refugees in the War of 1812*.

Let's Make it Happen!

There are many sponsorship and partnership opportunities for you to become a part of *Striking Balance*. To learn how you, your organization, or company can become a partner on this exciting program, please visit strikingbalance.ca or contact the producers directly.

Get in Touch

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Ontario Visual Heritage Project



Canadian Biosphere Reserves Association
Association canadienne des réserves de la biosphère

Learn more at
Strikingbalance.ca