



THE BLUE HERON

The Bras d'Or Stewardship Society

P.O. Box 158, Baddeck, Nova Scotia B0E 1B0

VOLUME 17

JANUARY 2014

NO. I

Money is like muck, not good except it be spread

Francis Bacon (1561 – 1626)

But what is money that like muck it needs to be spread? Given the centrality of money in our lives, inevitably there are a variety of colloquial sayings concerning what money is and does. Though not defining money, they do suggest some of its perceived characteristics; 'Money the root of all evil'... '(money) makes the world go around'... 'money is power'... 'filthy lucre' and so on but none get to the heart of it, then again the very point maybe that money has no heart, no anatomy at all.

Money, it seems, is unique to our species. Even our nearest genetic relatives the great apes with whom we share about c. 97% of our genes have no such concept. It is strictly a human notion, a product of our minds, a cognitive concept, a figment of our imaginations, a belief that those little metal discs, pieces of plastic or paper, or figures so swiftly and easily brought

to life on a computer are nothing less than the high road to that holiday in Bermuda, the power saw, fridge full of groceries, car, house or whatever we want.

Among other ways, the power of this belief is made publicly manifest in almost every major modern city where, among the most imposing, grandiose, costly, often new and well patronised buildings are banks. The secular equivalent of churches and other religious buildings that by their number, size and cost suggest that belief in money has a much more widely held, more powerful hold on the human spirit than any particular religion. And, to add weight to the belief dimension of money, as in the case of the religions in their sacred edifices with their faith-specific ornamentations and icons, in its profane equivalents so too is it with banks with their safety deposit boxes, vaults with (we hope) some cash, electronic gadgetry, and an out of sight coffee machine or two. As with religious buildings and their sacred visible contents these have at least a partially symbolic as well as practical value.

That money is a form of faith not of fact, is further if unconsciously revealed when we hear bankers, economists and other such financial shamans of the money faith talk about losing or restoring **confidence** (i.e. faith) in a banking system, currency or institution as in the 2008 sub-prime driven financial near disaster that almost brought our whole banking structure tumbling down.

There is another odd aspect of money that is worth a passing glance. In all its visible forms be it as coins, paper or plastic, from a narrow fundamentally practical point of view it is singularly

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www.brasdorstewardshipsociety.org

NOTICE

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY WILL BE HELD ON SATURDAY, APRIL 26, 2014 AT 10:00 A.M. AT THE MASONIC HALL IN BADDECK ALL MEMBERS ARE INVITED TO ATTEND AS WELL AS INTERESTED CITIZENS WHO ARE CONCERNED WITH THE FUTURE STEWARDSHIP OF THE BRAS D'OR LAKES.

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“Our goal is to protect, conserve and restore the Bras d'Or Lakes”



useless. If hungry, you can't eat it, if thirsty you can't drink it, if cold it doesn't warm you.

Money then is at least peculiar 'stuff', its meaning as difficult to pin down as mercury is to pick up, that whatever else it maybe it is not wealth per say but potential wealth, be it in the form of things, services or whatever money can buy. If it is not "spread" it remains potential and nothing more, in the electronic age only numbers on computer monitor.

Long after he retired from the motor business the late Gordon MacAulay of Baddeck held court daily in his garage where he either read the paper or chatted with those who came in. On one such occasion he said to me; "When I was young all I wanted to do was to make money and I made lots of it" after a pause he added; "But what use is it to me now?" What indeed James O'Brien

NEWS ITEMS:

Semi Annual Meeting:

On August 17, 2013 the semi-annual meeting of the Society was held in the Baddeck Community Hall with 24 in attendance. A brief report of the Society's business was presented as well as an update on the Society's financial position. Veronika Brzeski made an excellent presentation on mapping and climate change. Natali Fagan spoke about and showed a video she had produced on the Bras d'Or Lakes. The video is now on the Society's web site. Laval University graduate student, Kevin C. Ma, reported on the work of studying the lake wide effort to understand the extent and the identity of the species that make up the non-native invasive species that now reside in the Bras d'Or Lakes,

Race the Cape:

In mid-July 2013 a new sail boat regatta was completed that attracted several competitors over a five day period. There were three legs to this event starting in St. Peters and ending in Sydney with stopovers at the new Ben Eoin Marina in East Bay and in Baddeck. The plan is that this series of day races will become an annual event promoting more sailing activity on the Bras d'Or Lakes.

Bras d'Or Lakes Interpretive Center:

The Bras d'Or Lakes Interpretive Center located in the Old Library Building in Baddeck has recently closed its doors. The center has been in operation for close to 15 years. Its purpose has been to provide information through diorama type displays on the Bras d'Or Lakes and its watershed. The center was open to the public from June through September with operating oversight and funds coming from the Bras d'Or Preservation Trust. The reason cited for the closure is lack of operating money to meet overhead costs. The center will be missed as it was a good asset for the community.

Nova Scotia Nature Trust Event:

Society Board member David Gunn hosted a celebration of the Nova Scotia Nature Trust's involvement with land preservation and conservation at his home looking over West Bay on August 8, 2013. The guests of honour were Farley Mowat and his wife Claire. The Mowat's have gifted their summer property near St. Peters to the Nova Scotia Nature Trust. To date the NSNT has protected close to 1,500 acres of ecologically significant water front property within the Bras d'Or Lakes watershed. The Nova Scotia Nature Trust

continues to seek out private property within the watershed for future conservation purposes.

New Regulations for Foreign Boat Owners:

In late August 2013, Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) announced new regulations for foreign boats visiting Canadian waters with regards to winter storage and work legitimacy regarding boat maintenance and repairs. Foreign boats will not be allowed to winter over unless a deposit on 5% on the value of the boat is made by the owner or the owner imports his or her boat into Canada, paying applicable duties and taxes. These rules will have a highly negative impact on those businesses which now have foreign boats stored for the winter. There will be a strong ripple effect as foreign boat owners become aware of the rules which no doubt will result in less boat traffic on the Bras d'Or Lakes.

The St. Peter's Canal:

During this past summer the hours of operation of the St. Peter's Canal at the southern entrance of the Bras d'Or Lakes suffered from curtailed operating hours. This resulted from mandated cut backs by the federal government. Parks Canada is responsible for the operation of the St. Peter's Canal. The cut back in hours of operation caused several boats with their owners on board to be delayed a few days from entering and exiting the Bras d'Or Lakes. Gerry Gibson who operates the St. Peter's Marina stated that overall boat traffic was down this summer.

Ben Eoin Marina:

The Cape Breton Post (11/5/2013) reported that the Ben Eoin

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Marina has had 'a strong start in its first season of operations' with a reasonable amount of boating activity. The marina hopes to offer boat safety courses, navigation courses and search and rescue instruction as well as a learn-to-sail program for young people.

To date a liquor license has yet to be procured. No financial numbers have been provided to determine the bottom line which would determine the viability of this enterprise. The marina board plans a campaign to attract new members to shore up current membership numbers.

Nature Nova Scotia (NNS):

The 2014 Annual General Meeting of NNS (formerly the Association of Nova Scotia Field Naturalists) is to be held at the Gaelic College in St. Anne's from May 30 – June 1, 2014. The meeting will follow the usual format of these meetings, with a reception on Friday evening (May 30). Presentations on Saturday morning (May 31), followed by field trips in the afternoon and a banquet in evening. The mandatory annual business meeting will be held on Sunday morning (June 1) followed by further field trips in the afternoon. For those interested in any aspect of the natural world, these meeting can be entertaining, interesting and informative.

The Nova Scotia Commission on Building Our New Economy:

The Commission, chaired by Acadia University President Ray Ivany and Commissioners including John Bragg, Irene D'Entremont, Dan Christmas and Susanna Fuller completed the second round of public consultations in November. Meetings in Cape Breton included Sydney, Port

Hawkesbury and St. Ann's Bay, with over 60 people attending. The final report of the Commission is scheduled to be released early in 2014. The Commission's work has been unique in that it has engaged Nova Scotians in identifying challenges and opportunities for economic prosperity, while conducting research on opportunities within Nova Scotia's current economic sectors as well as identifying potential ways forward from other jurisdictions. Nova Scotia is currently facing increasing challenges with outmigration from rural areas and an aging population which will reduce government revenues needed for essential services. At the same time, many of our important natural resource industries remain intact and there is significant opportunity to increase the value of these resources. Traditional industries as well as new and emerging industries - and opportunities to be innovative, while protecting our environment, were seen as key elements by Nova Scotians in increasing wealth creation and ensuring we can continue to enjoy our existing quality of life.

The interim report was released in May 2013 and can be viewed here: www.onens.ca.

Interim Chairman's Report

Henry Fuller

With this issue of the Blue Heron, the Bras d'Or Stewardship Society commences its 17th year of working to protect and conserve and restore the Bras d'Or Lakes. As an organization, the Society has worked enthusiastically to provide sustained leadership and a credible forum with regards to issues that affect both positively and adversely the environmental integrity of the Bras d'Or Lakes and its watershed.

As noted many times, the survival of the society is directly proportionate to the dedication of its board members and of our loyal members of the public

who support the work of the Society on an annual basis. To gauge the success of the Society's efforts is not always an easy task. Over the last 16 years we believe that the Society has made positive contribution, it has been made to foster greater public awareness about the significance of the Bras d'Or Lakes.

Issues that have been dealt with are far and wide in scope and importance. There is no 1-10 scale to measure the significance of issues and topics broached. However, taken together over a sixteen year period makes for a sea of interesting issues that ebb and flow with rising concern or lack thereof.

Some of the historic issues such as subdivision development on the Bras d'Or Lakes have moved off the radar screen to the extent that global economic situation has affected the flow of money. Pollution from boats is today less of a problem than in the past as demographics show a decline in boating activity on the Bras d'Or Lakes. This summer on a quick eye count only 35% of the 110 moorings in Baddeck's Harbor were occupied. There was not full occupancy at the new 75 slip marina in Ben Eoin. The number of boats passing through the St. Peter's Canal (see News Items) was also down even though funds have been expended to attract boaters to the Bras d'Or Lakes.

The one major issue brought to our attention is the continued erosion of shorelines. It was suggested that the lack of winter ice cover on the Bras d'Or Lakes plays a significant role for observed erosion as strong winds build waves that cause erosion. When there is ice on the water this is not the case as waves are not generated!

More severe weather conditions have been predicted with regards to climate change, but this past hurricane season turned out to be a bust, but the odds out there suggest that Mother Nature will always keep us on our toes.

Living Shorelines

by Emily LeGrand

As the climate changes and sea levels threaten to rise, coastal erosion is on the minds of many coastal communities around Nova Scotia. Deciding what to do about coastal erosion is a challenging process for anyone with property or infrastructure along the coast.

Currently in Nova Scotia, the options are essentially composed of rock armouring, which does slow erosion for a time, but not without consequences severe enough to make us reconsider how and why we live on the coast. Rock armouring can stop sediment movement which is essential for coastal ecosystem formation and maintenance, such as salt marshes, tidal mudflats and beaches. Where rocks are, plants aren't, which means that the natural filtering properties of coastal vegetation that keep water quality high are lost, thus threatening human safety and enjoyment while swimming, and degrading marine habitat. Humans are also affected by excessive rock armouring. Neighboring un-armoured properties often erode more quickly as a result of wave energy deflection. And it's quite hard to get to the water when one has to climb over a boulder field!

So what instead? Well, there is another approach that the Ecology Action Centre has been watching progress over the last several years, and believes is worth a try in Nova Scotia. It's called Living Shorelines. Essentially, a living shorelines approach means noticing natural processes which slow erosion and stabilize a coast, and from there, developing techniques which deliberately mimic these processes. Living Shorelines began in the state of Maryland in the 1980s, and has blossomed to include a diverse range of techniques appropriate for a wide variety of coastal situations and ecosystems, and is supported by state legislation and federally funded, university driven research.

In response to learning of these successes along the eastern seaboard of the United States, the

Ecology Action Centre's Coastal and Water Team decided it was time to try to translate this innovative coastal erosion management approach to the Nova Scotian context. As a two year project showcasing three privately owned demo sites along the Northumberland Strait wraps up, Emily LeGrand and Jennifer Graham have been traveling around the province telling the Living Shorelines story. Most recently, they discussed the hands-on techniques used on the three demo sites at ACAP-Cape Breton in Sydney at a public talk on November 5th, 2013.

The techniques developed in conjunction with a Living Shorelines expert team convened for a Nova Scotian context emphasize stabilizing the steep, eroding, sloped banks which characterize the Northumberland Strait shoreline. The deep roots of native, salt tolerant plant species are the best defensive against erosion. Thus, the techniques the Ecology Action Centre recommends focus on creating the right conditions for these plants to germinate and thrive on the hostile, dynamic coastal bank environment. To learn more about the specific techniques, and Living Shorelines and coastal erosion in general, visit the Living Shorelines Tool K.



Constant Vigilance

by Bill Danielsen

At university, ever so long ago, I took a course in celestial navigation. It was a wonderful course, thanks to our professor, an exuberant, elderly woman barely five feet tall. In her high gravelly voice, Professor Wright related tales of maritime calamities. After each story, she would pump her fist high, and in the sternest voice she could muster, she would cry "Constant vigilance!"

Those are probably the only two words I can remember verbatim

from my entire university career. And now, as we embark on the New Year, they come back to me with renewed import. Our vigilance as environmental stewards has never been more important as we face threats that range from global to those in our own back yard.

Globally, the worst threat by far is one we all are causing, every day, by polluting the atmosphere with carbon dioxide. The science proving that CO₂ and other greenhouse gases act like a blanket, warming the earth, is indisputable. For the Bras d'Or, the impacts of this warming include higher water levels, loss of productive shallow wetlands, risk of septic and runoff pollution, and changes in plant and animal aquatic species, among others.

Although we have the facts relating greenhouse gas buildup and climate change before us, we seem incapable of acting. Why?

Many reasons come to mind: The problem is immense, so it's hard to know where to begin. The emissions are invisible, so we tend to forget about them. We don't want to alter our lifestyles or derail programs designed to "grow the economy."

But the prime reason we dally is because people are confused about climate change. Corporate and government petroleum interests, committed to preserving our oil-based economy, have waged campaigns claiming that climate change is exaggerated or nonexistent, and that addressing it would be too costly. Meanwhile, certain news media add to the confusion. Sensational stories capture audiences, but since sensational stories don't happen every day, some get created by tampering with the facts. One culprit is the U.K.'s Daily Mail tabloid, which has won MediaMatters' "Climate Change Misinformers of the Year" award for 2013, for misleading climate articles that have been syndicated and rebroadcast worldwide. Such misinformation efforts have been remarkably successful in muddying

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the issue in many people's minds.

Turning from a global issue paralyzed by disinformation overload to a local issue cloaked in near silence: consider nearby Green Cove, in Cape Breton Highlands National Park. That spectacular site is destined to be developed into a gigantic memorial to the war dead, thanks to a deal apparently struck between the federal government and a private citizen, with no public input and contrary to the Park's environmental stewardship mandate. Now, I am totally in favour of a national memorial to those fallen in war. I served in the military for five years, one of them in a war zone. I am profoundly grateful to those who have made the ultimate sacrifice. But why is beautiful Green Cove also to be sacrificed? And if silent partners can make such decisions, how secure is the Bras d'Or, or any protected natural wonder?

Our first line of defence is constant vigilance. We need to be vigilant about what we hear, and – even more difficult – what we don't hear. And vigilance implies action; there's no value in knowing our ship is navigating for the rocks, if we don't grab the wheel and change course.

Middle River

Watershed Association (MRWA) Report

Chuck Thompson

The MRWA has sent in a proposal to the **Atlantic Salmon Conservation Fund** to get funding to work with CBU in studying the movements of both adult and juvenile salmon in the Middle River. The proposal has been submitted with letters of support from UINR, DFO, CBU, NS. Dept. of Fisheries and others. It is hoped the knowledge gained will help us to understand how salmon interact with

the Bras d'Or Lakes and knowledge gained may be applicable to rivers throughout Atlantic Canada. The DFO dive counts indicated that the number of adult salmon exceeded the counts of 2012, which was the highest number seen since the dives began in the mid-eighties. Dr. Bruce Hatcher of CBU, if monies are approved, will head up the project and he has done considerable work on the Bras d'Or Lakes. A decision is expected in April.

Background, Activities and Future Plans of the Ross Ferry Association (RFA)

Terri Shobbrook

The Ross Ferry Marine Park is located on the scenic Bras d'Or Lake in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. The park is on the site of the ferry which operated for many years between Ross Ferry and Big Harbour, across the Great Bras d'Or Channel. The RFA, a volunteer based community organization, was formed with the intention of improving the site and to providing continued access to the Bras d'Or. The Society negotiated an agreement with the Province of Nova Scotia to manage the site and work began to create the Marine Park. Today we have a vibrant community park which includes picnic areas, walking trails, refurbished wharf facilities, a sewage pump out for boaters, a boat launch, and a children's playground, all in an idyllic setting on the shores of the Bras d'Or. The park has continued to receive funding from the federal government and municipal governments for summer students but apart from these contributions the operation and maintenance of the park is dependent on local fund raising and donations.

We had a successful 2013 season and in November a new Executive was formed at the AGM. The Executive is as follows: Terri Shobbrook, Chair (674-0148), Eliot Frosst, Tanya Grant, Marilyn MacKenna, John Hugh Edwards, Margie MacLeod, and Mel Brown.

Early in 2014 the Executive will meet to begin making plans for the upcoming season. In addition to our annual July 1 and Labour Day celebrations we are planning a 2014 kick-off in May. We were successful in obtaining a Green Gym system from Victoria County and that will be installed this Spring. Our major project this year will be some much needed repairs and maintenance to the Wharf. Once we have determined the needed repairs and the associated costs we will be striking a fundraising committee.

New members and volunteers are always welcome. Our web address is <http://rossferrymarinepark.weebly.com> and we are also on Facebook as *Ross Ferry Stewardship Society and Marine Park*

***The Bras d'Or
Stewardship Society
is interested in
contributions from our
members. If you have
something to contribute
to the Newsletter or
would like to work with
the society's board,
please let us know.
The society is an all
volunteer organization
that welcomes input
from individuals
interested in promoting
the conservation,
protection and
restoration of the
Bras d'Or Lakes and its
watershed.***

Biosphere Update – for January 2014



The UNESCO Biosphere Reserve is the “star” of 2 videos created by summer student Natali Fagan. With funding via the Bras d’Or Stewardship Society (BSS) and supervision by Dr. Bruce Hatcher of the Biosphere Reserve, Natali has been able to devote many hours to these highly informative videos entitled Biosphere 101 Part 1 and Part 2. They use the Bras d’Or Lake Biosphere Reserve to explain the emphasis on conservation, sustainable development and logistical support that form the core functions of this designation. To view them, go to our web site [WWW.BLBRA.CA]!

The Biosphere Reserve Association accepted an offer from Dr. Cheryl Bartlett to apply residual funds (\$20,000) of her Canada Research Chair to assist the initiation of our Walking Trail project. This activity would fulfill an outstanding commitment of her research relating to “Integrative Health and Healing: co-learning our way to expanding wholeness through restoration of relationships with the land.” In keeping with the purpose and procedure for which these funds were transferred, the BLBRA established a Working Group which met throughout the summer of 2013. Its task was to consult with a range of people knowledgeable about essential features of a well-designed walking trail that would suit the circumstances and size of the Bras d’Or Lake setting.

Throughout these consultations they were mindful of walking trail initiatives already in place in localities throughout the watershed as well as with the Trans Canada Trail system as it extends through Cape Breton. The Working Group will distribute a report of its findings to members of an Advisory Group, numbering approximately 40 persons associated in various ways with the idea and importance of a Bras d’Or Lake-related walking trail. The report will form the basis for a meeting of the Advisory Group on November 30th, 2013. The outcome of that meeting will provide material for 4, one-day workshops to be held during winter 2014 in locations around the Lake. These workshops will be open to the public. The product of the workshops will be presented to the second meeting of the Advisory Group, to be held in the spring of 2014. The results of this meeting will mark completion of funded activities. However, it is intended that the overall process will provide the BLBRA with a solid base upon which to build a Feasibility Study recommending subsequent steps required to achieve the overall Walking Trail project.

A Master Plan for signage throughout the Biosphere has been prepared and will be presented to the Board of Directors this fall. It is a thorough, detailed plan for signage that includes cost estimates, sign layouts, and suggestions for where the signs should go. This is part of the awareness building task that is always a priority for the Board of Directors. The people of the Bras d’Or need to know of this prestigious designation and how it can help with the stewardship of the watershed.

Board members Dr. Bruce Hatcher and Tom Johnson recently attended the EUROMAB 2013 conference in Brockville Ontario. EUROMAB brings together representatives from Biosphere Reserves throughout North America and Europe every 2 years and this is the first time it was held in Canada! It was an excellent meeting that featured, in part, a focus on the role of indigenous peoples in biosphere reserves.

The association welcomed three new Board members this year: Elliott Frosst, David Harris and Jennifer Brown have replaced outgoing members Shirley McNamara, Kim Paul and Liz MacCormick. The Executive for 2013-2014 is:

Chair – Jim Foulds
Vice-Chair – Jennifer Brown
Secretary – Lynn Baechler
Treasurer – Bruce Hatcher
Past-Chair – Teresa MacNeil

We encourage you to contact us if you want more information or if you want to help. Browse the web site – WWW.BLBRA.CA . We have a lot of information posted there. You can also follow us on Facebook, Twitter and/or sign up to receive notices of anything new that is posted to the web site – a handy way to keep up to date!

Thanks for your support!

Jim Foulds, Chair,
Bras d’Or Lake Biosphere Reserve Association



The Bras d'Or Stewardship Society

P.O. Box 158
Baddeck, Nova Scotia B0E 1B0

January 15, 2014

To Society Members and Friends:

Another year has passed in the life of the Bras d'Or Stewardship Society. The society has completed its sixteenth year as a non-profit society focusing on issues relating to the Bras d'Or Lakes and its watershed. Over this period the focus has been directed to the Bras D'Or Lakes and its surrounding watershed with regards to environmental concerns.

This sixteen year time frame provides some insight into the past, present and future issues that bear on the future of the Bras d'Or Lakes and its peripheral land. Perhaps the one stand out feature is that has persisted over these years is the fact that most of the Bras d'Or shoreline remains undisturbed. Development that might have been more intense seems to have taken a back seat as current economics have slowed what once may have been thought to be 'a potential bonanza'.

The winner here is of course the Bras d'Or Lakes that might well have suffered under an onslaught of shorefront development. The question to be asked is why is it that not more development has occurred given the high profile Cape Breton Island garners in the world of tourism and recreation?

In the late 1980s and early 1990s there seemed to be lots of energy and money flowing into the development of the shoreline as there was an influx of individuals looking for the qualities of life that encouraged them to buy shore front property. Land prices were reasonable and property was available. Individuals had the money to purchase properties. Today, land is not cheap and the economic uncertainties have tempered the pace of development plus surplus money is scarcer.

Looking ahead it is difficult to predict what the future holds in store for the Bras d'Or Lakes and its watershed. Land has become more expensive as have development and building costs. Combine this with increasing real property taxes, cost of utilities and ongoing general maintenance suggests that going forward that development will continue to remain subdued. The current economy of Cape Breton is not buoyant.

Combining this with demographic factors i.e. an aging population, lack of well paying jobs and the many choices people have today, requires some rethinking of how we approach the future planning for development that will enhance the future economic sustainability of our communities. Not to think about such matters is not a good way to embrace the future!

We hope that you enjoy this edition of the Blue Heron and will continue to support the Society. We continue to work on issues that are brought to our attention with regards to protecting the environmental integrity of the Bras d'Or Lakes and its watershed. We wish you the very best as we enter a New Year.

Sincerely,

Henry W. Fuller, Interim President



"Our Goal is to Protect, Conserve and Restore the Bras d'Or Lakes"

The Bras d'Or Stewardship Society

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Bras d'Or Watch
 to report any observed acts, incidents and violations
 that threaten the integrity of Bras d'Or Lakes please call
 any of the directors listed above.

Our Email: www.brasdorstewardshipsociety.org

2014

BRAS D'OR STEWARDSHIP SOCIETY

MEMBER	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$15.00		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, I am in favour of conserving and restoring the
FAMILY	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$25.00		Bras d'Or Lake and watershed through
CONTRIBUTOR	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$50.00		responsible stewardship.
SUPPORTER	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$100.00	Name	
LIFETIME MEMBER	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$500.00	Address	

*Mail check or money order along with your name
 and address to:*

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e-mail

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