



New Initiative by UNESCO Fundy Biosphere Reserve Makes Hiking Interactive

Moncton, NB – (Oct. 14, 2011) The UNESCO Fundy Biosphere Reserve is encouraging people to get out and explore amazing places in the region through a new and innovative initiative called Trail Amazing Places.

As part of a collaborative trail mapping initiative, Trail Amazing Places uses GPS technology to create an inventory of hiking trails throughout the region and identify places of environmental significance for biodiversity, topography, landscape or views that depict the unique environment of the region. These are the Amazing Places.

“Many of the Amazing Places, such as the Sea Caves in St. Martin’s and the Hopewell Rocks, will be familiar to people. Others are equally spectacular but less well-known and we wanted to showcase them all to the people and communities in the UNESCO Fundy Biosphere Reserve,” said Megan de Graaf, Executive Director of the UNESCO Fundy Biosphere Reserve.

Anyone wishing to discover one of these unique spots, can go to www.fundy-biosphere.ca, click on Explore the Fundy Biosphere Reserve/Trail Amazing Places and download the free Google Earth program along with a Fundy Biosphere file. The file will open in Google Earth and show dozens of places along the reserve. A click on any of the sites will bring up pictures and information describing that locale.

Bringing a smartphone along on the trail will make the adventure truly interactive. Each trail head sign has a barcode that hikers can scan. The code links to a web page with information about that particular spot. Additionally, the information on the page can be updated with new information whenever necessary.

“We’re looking for people and communities to get involved and to explore our unique region,” de Graaf said. “We’ll be adapting the website to reflect the feedback we get, as people suggest new Amazing Places to add to the list.”

Dr. Yves Gagnon, Chair of the Fundy Biosphere Reserve, points out that the Amazing Places project has already elicited a great deal of interest nationally. A presentation on the project was requested for the Ontario Trails Conference and the initiative was also showcased nationally in a special July 1 insert of Trans Canada Trail featured on the Globe and Mail website.

The federal government is contributing \$57,000 per year for five years (2009-2013) for a total of \$285,000 to the Fundy Biosphere Reserve community support programs, such as Trail Amazing Places.

Robert Goguen, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Member of Parliament (Moncton-Riverview-Dieppe) announced the funding at a recent press conference in Moncton where the Trail Amazing Places Initiative was unveiled.

For more information on the Trail Amazing Places and the UNESCO Fundy Biosphere Reserve, visit www.fundy-biosphere.ca