



MEMORANDUM OF COOPERATION

Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve Inc.

and

The Environment Committee of the Near North School Board

DRAFT March 8, 2017

1. BACKGROUND

The Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve

In 2004, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) designated eastern Georgian Bay, from the Severn River to the French River, a world biosphere reserve. The Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve is 347,000 hectares of shoreline ecosystem and includes the world's largest freshwater archipelago. There are over 600 biosphere reserves in the world network, with 18 now in Canada.

Every biosphere reserve has three main functions: (1) conservation of ecosystems, species and biodiversity, (2) sustainable economic, human, and cultural development, and (3) capacity building through education, training and information-sharing. The biosphere reserve aims to achieve these functions through partnerships and capacity building.

UNESCO has declared 2011 to 2020 as the Decade of Biodiversity

“Education is the most effective means that society possesses for confronting the challenges of the future. Indeed, education will shape the world of tomorrow.”

Source: UNESCO (1997) Educating for a Sustainable Future: A Transdisciplinary Vision

The Near North District School Board

The Near North District School Board (NNDSB) serves the area of Sturgeon Bay to the north, MacTier to the south, Kearny to the east and Britt to the west. Staff and members of the Board are committed to educating learners to their fullest potential in preparation for life-long learning. Approximately 6,412 students are enrolled in elementary schools and 4,512 are enrolled in secondary schools. There are 36 elementary and 7 secondary schools.

The School Community is fundamental to this education system, using the opportunities of the surrounding environment to provide appropriate pathways for student learning. We play a major role in the development and vitality of our "northern" community.

The Near North District School Board acknowledges the role of several educational partners. School Councils mirror the key partners including parents and community. The Near North District School Board seeks advice from its partners. In addition, the Near North District School Board will collaborate with partners when the partnership provides advantages or added value with respect to programs and services.

“We are committed to providing all learners with a consistent, well balanced curriculum which gives the knowledge, skills and values required in a technological society and necessary to be life-long learner.”

Near North District School Board’s Environmental Committee

Established in 2007, the Environmental Committee (EC) is part of the Near North District School Board (NNDSB) and strives to create a culture of sustainability throughout the NNDSB. The committee’s role is to provide leadership that will earn the respect of future generations for the social, environmental and economic legacy they create. The EC is looking at classroom programs as well as plant operation changes to move the Board in the direction of sustainability. Initiatives to date include reducing paper usage within the NNDSB, energy efficient light bulb sales, and the beginning of an anti-idling campaign.

<https://www.nearnorthschools.ca/community/environment-committee>

Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve Inc. (GBBR)

UNESCO biosphere reserves create their own local organizations for coordinating administration, communication, projects, and networking. They work through partnerships to achieve the three functions of biosphere reserves. The Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve Inc. is an incorporated non-profit organization. It has a volunteer board of community members that share “the Georgian Bay Feeling.”

Vision: To be an international model of sustainability that preserves the values of the Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve.

Mission: To contribute to the conservation of biodiversity and sustainable development by fostering a shared responsibility for the GBBR for the next seven generations.

Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve Education Initiative 2008-2016

In keeping with our three primary functions, this initiative is aimed at educating staff and students about the Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve region and promoting the value of environmental education opportunities within this region.

Objectives of the initiative are:

- To establish an **Educational Advisory Committee** to the GBBR Inc. Board of Directors.
- To create a cohesive **Georgian Bay Biosphere Educators Network** within the Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve region, to share experiences and resources with educators.
- To continue delivering and mentoring for the “**Lessons-in-a-Backpack**” program
- To develop the **Educators Network** and **Website** as a valuable resource for educators within the Georgian Bay Biosphere region.

2. PURPOSE

This agreement provides the opportunity to create a successful partnership that will assist the Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve, through the Environmental Committee, to meet its objectives of educating staff and students about an international world biosphere reserve in which they live while also promoting the value of environmental learning opportunities in this region. This, in turn, will assist the Near North School Board “to educate learners to their fullest potential in preparation for life-long learning”. The following items of the School Board’s Vision Statement can be enhanced through this partnership:

We promote environmental awareness appreciation, ethics and stewardship in the classroom and in administrative practices.

We develop partnerships that promote the social, emotional and academic growth of learners and support the achievement of our vision.

WHEREAS the parties recognize the need to foster courageous, innovative, collaborative and responsible leadership;

AND WHEREAS, the parties also recognize that the Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve Educators Network will provide Near North District School Board students with the opportunity to learn more about the Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve region and develop a respect that leads to opportunities for environmental actions.

NOW THEREFORE, The Near North District School board and the Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve Inc. enter into this Memorandum of Cooperation, with a view to

supporting the development and implementation of an education Initiative within the Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve region.

ARTICLE I – Supporting Endeavours of the Near North District School Board

The Near North District School Board will endeavour to:

Promote and support the Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve network of educators.

Designate a Near North staff member to be a liaison for the Biosphere’s Educational Advisory Committee.

Meet with representatives of Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve Educational Advisory Committee periodically, as is reasonable, to discuss progress as well as proposals for next steps on mutually agreed joint initiatives.

Link the Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve education web page to the Near North Board website.

ARTICLE II – Obligations of the Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve Inc., through the Educational Advisory Committee (subcommittee of the Board of Directors)

GBBR Educators Advisory Committee will:

Designate a member to work with the Near North Board of Education, to coordinate the planning and implementation of joint initiatives.

Report to the Near North District School Board designated representative, on the progress of the partnership.

Promote the Near North Board as a partner during this educational awareness initiative (e.g., use of logo, links to website, letters of support for obtaining program grants).

ARTICLE III – TERM

This Memorandum of Cooperation will have effect for 12 months from the date of signing and, contingent on the accord of both parties, will be subject to renegotiation or renewal at the end of this term.

Either party may withdraw from this Memorandum of Cooperation at any time during its tenure provided that the party withdrawing gives notice, in writing, of the intention to withdraw to the other signatory at least thirty days in advance of the withdrawal date.

3. SIGNATORIES

Jackie Young, Director, Near North District School Board

(Signature) _____ (Date) _____

Rebecca Pollock, Executive Director, Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve Inc.

(Signature) _____ (Date) _____

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Glen Hodgson, Chair, Educational Advisory Committee for GBBR Inc.

(Signature) _____ (Date) _____