

Resilience and Social-Ecological Systems:

The UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Program in Australia and Canada

by

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This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for a degree or diploma by the University or any other institution, except by way of background information and duly acknowledged in the Thesis, and to the best of my knowledge and belief no material has previously been published or written by another person except where due acknowledgment is made in the text of the thesis. The author has previously published some original sections of this thesis.

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Abstract

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Biosphere Reserves (BRs) provide an example of an integrated sustainability framework that allows for connection between international, national, state / provincial and local levels of conservation and capacity-building. The three major functions of a BR are conservation of biodiversity, sustainable development and support for logistics. As coupled social-ecological systems, BRs explicitly acknowledge that human systems and ecological systems are inextricably linked, and have the potential to bridge ecological and social-political spheres that have been viewed as predominantly disparate entities, rather than as interconnected or nested systems.

The aim of this thesis is to identify the key features (assets, process and outcome) required to enhance the fit between governance systems and ecosystems using the UNESCO BR model, and develop a framework for establishing BRs as resilient working landscapes. By identifying features that seem critical for linking civil society, institutions and government dynamically across multiple levels, the research addresses the governance dimension of ecosystem management and the social factors that enable such management. The scope of the thesis is limited to developed country contexts.

Data are derived from focus groups, site visits, 52 key informant interviews and literature reviews. The research process utilised an emergent, naturalistic inquiry, characterised by abductive, deductive and inductive methods. Four Australian and four Canadian qualitative case studies support and demonstrate the three phases of the BR resilience conceptual framework developed herein.

UNESCO BRs originated in the early 1970s as international examples of biodiversity conservation and sites of scientific research and monitoring. Since this time, the international program has broadened to include more complex notions of social-ecological systems, reflecting shifts in environmental discourse and praxis. The Australian BR Program is characterised by government-initiated BRs and those generated through community-derived stewardship. Over the same period, the Canadian BR Program has consistently developed through community capacity and the Canadian Biosphere Reserve Association.

Capital assets and 'new governance' processes are two of the three key phases of developing a successful (resilient) BR. Adaptive capacity is a key component of the final phase; the achievement of a resilient working landscape. In the framework, evolution and devolution of a BR occurs in response to social and ecological variables. However, maintenance and renewal of capital assets are crucial to sustaining the first and most fundamental phase of BR resilience.

Specific guidelines for the application of the BR resilience conceptual framework are provided to inform individual BRs and their national programs more generally, and provide any party interested in the BR concept with a means to develop a resilient BR, from its inception. Avenues for future research are suggested, with a recommended focus upon harnessing greater understanding of resilience factors in social-ecological systems, and the relationship of these to BRs.

Keywords: UNESCO Biosphere Reserves, resilience, social-ecological systems, working landscapes, capital assets, new governance, adaptive capacity, Australia, Canada.

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Table of Contents

Abstract	iii
Acknowledgements	v
Table of Contents	vi
List of Figures	x
List of Tables	xi
Acronyms	xii
Foreword	xv
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Background.....	1
1.2 Social-Ecological Systems and Resilience	6
1.2.1 Capital.....	12
1.2.2 Governance	12
1.2.3 Resilience	13
1.3 Contentions.....	14
1.4 Aim and Objectives of the Thesis	16
1.5 The Structure of the Thesis	17
1.5.1 Methodological Logic of the Thesis	18
2 Research Design.....	21
2.1 Researching BRs: Geographic Scale and Multi-Disciplinarity	21
2.2 Research Approach	22
2.3 Methods	25
2.3.1 Qualitative Research	25
2.3.2 Literature.....	25
2.3.3 Elite Sampling and Snowballing Technique	27
2.3.4 Interviews.....	28
2.3.5 Focus Groups	30
2.3.6 Case Studies and Site Visits	30
2.3.7 Ethics	32
2.4 Analysis.....	32
2.5 Validation	34
2.6 Application to the Research.....	34
3 Biosphere Reserves.....	35
3.1 The Concept	35
3.2 Biosphere Reserve Functions.....	36
3.3 The Institutional Framework of UNESCO/ MAB	37
3.3.1 The UN and UNESCO.....	37
3.3.2 UNESCO, Natural Sciences Division, Programmes and Sub-programmes: Ecological and Earth Sciences for Sustainable Development	38
3.4 The Structure of MAB	41
3.4.1 Seville Strategy and Statutory Framework	41
3.5 Biosphere Reserve Zones	43

3.5.1	The Core.....	44
3.5.2	The Buffer.....	45
3.5.3	Zone of Cooperation (or Transition Area).....	45
3.6	Other Types of Biosphere Reserve	48
3.7	Mark I and Mark II Biosphere Reserves	49
3.7.1	The Voluntary Nature of Biosphere Reserves.....	50
3.8	Designation Process.....	51
3.9	The Language of UNESCO	54
3.10	Benefits of Successful Biosphere Reserves and Biosphere Reserve Programs.....	55
3.11	Application to the Research	59
4	Science and Conservation: BRs 1960 – 1980s	61
4.1	The Sanctity of Science – 1960s Conceptual View.....	61
4.2	The Sanctity of Science – 1960s Events	63
4.3	Expanding Environmentalism – 1970s Conceptual View	64
4.4	Expanding Environmentalism – 1970s Events	66
4.4.1	Protected Areas.....	66
4.4.2	Biosphere Reserves	68
4.4.3	World Heritage Areas	70
4.4.4	Ramsar	71
4.5	The Fight of Conservation – 1980s Conceptual View	72
4.6	The Fight of Conservation – 1980s Events	75
4.7	Application to the Research.....	77
5	The Working Landscape: BRs 1990s – 2007	79
5.1	Recognising the Working Landscape – 1990s Conceptual View.....	79
5.2	Recognising the Working Landscape – 1990s Events	83
5.3	The New Century – Conceptual View.....	88
5.4	The New Century - Events.....	91
5.4.1	The MAB Urban Group.....	96
5.4.2	Networks of the MAB Program.....	97
5.4.3	Connectivity Conservation.....	99
Yellowstone to Yukon		100
Alps to Atherton Initiative		100
Gondwana Link		101
5.5	Application to the Research.....	103
6	National BRP Contexts: Australia and Canada	105
6.1	Australia: Historical Context.....	105
6.2	Present Context	107
6.2.1	The EPBC Act and BRs.....	111
6.2.2	MII Style BRs.....	113
6.2.3	Australian Biosphere Volunteers (ABV) Inc.....	114
6.3	Multi-Tenure Reserve Networks	115
6.4	Canada: Historical Context	118
6.5	Present Context	121
6.5.1	CBRA Business Plan.....	126
6.5.2	Sixth Biennial Leading Edge Biosphere Reserve Conference	126
6.5.3	Annual Meeting - 2006	127
6.5.4	Canadian Biosphere Research Network (CBRN).....	128
6.5.5	Champions	129

6.6	Application to the Research.....	129
7	Capital and New Governance	130
7.1	Capital for BRs.....	130
7.1.1	Natural Capital	131
7.1.2	Financial Capital	132
7.1.3	Social Capital.....	132
7.1.4	Institutional Capital	136
7.2	Governance Overview	136
7.3	Current Thinking on Governance for BRs	140
7.4	New Governance	143
7.4.1	Institutional Aspects: Ecologically Rational Institutions (low rigidity) and Openness ..	146
7.4.2	Social Aspects: Partnerships and Capacity-building.....	148
7.4.3	Intellectual Aspects: Social Learning and Multiple Knowledges.....	149
7.4.4	Bioregional Aspects: Place.....	151
7.5	Application to the Research.....	154
8	Canadian Case Study Biosphere Reserves	155
8.1	Case Study Data.....	158
8.2	Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Reserve, Ontario	158
8.2.1	The Environment	158
8.2.2	History of the Designation	162
8.2.3	Capital and Governance in the NEBR.....	164
8.2.4	Lessons for Resilience	171
8.3	Long Point Biosphere Reserve, Ontario	173
8.3.1	The Environment	173
8.3.2	History of the Designation	175
8.3.3	Governance and Capital in the LPBR	177
8.3.4	Lessons for Resilience	184
8.4	Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Reserve, British Columbia	186
8.4.1	The Environment	186
8.4.2	History of the Designation	187
8.4.3	Governance and Capital in the CSBR.....	189
8.4.4	Lessons for Resilience	197
8.5	Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Reserve, British Columbia.....	199
8.5.1	The Environment	199
8.5.2	History of the Designation	201
8.5.3	Governance and Capital in the MABR	202
8.5.4	Lessons for Resilience	208
8.6	Lessons from Canadian BRs and the BRP	210
9	Australian Case Study Biosphere Reserves.....	213
9.1	Case Study Data.....	216
9.2	Riverland (Bookmark) Biosphere Reserve, South Australia.....	216
9.2.1	The Environment	216
9.2.2	History of the Designation	217
9.2.3	Governance and Capital of the RBR	221
9.2.4	Lessons for Resilience	226
9.3	Fitzgerald River National Park Biosphere Reserve, Western Australia.....	228
9.3.1	The Environment	228
9.3.2	History of the Designation	229
9.3.3	Governance and Capital in the FRNPBR.....	231
9.3.4	Lessons for Resilience	235
9.4	South-West Tasmania National Park Biosphere Reserve, Tasmania.....	237
9.4.1	The Environment	237

9.4.2	History of the Designation	239
9.4.3	Governance and Capital in the SWBR	240
9.4.4	Lessons for Resilience	241
9.5	Mornington Peninsula – Western Port Biosphere Reserve, Victoria	243
9.5.1	The Environment	243
9.5.2	History of the Designation	244
9.5.3	Governance and Capital in the MPWPBR.....	248
9.5.4	Lessons for Resilience	254
9.6	Lessons from Australian BRs and the BRP	255
10	Resilience for Biosphere Reserves	258
10.1	Phase Changes in the BR Resilience Framework.....	259
10.2	Supporting and Demonstrating Phase I of the BR Resilience Conceptual Framework: Assets	263
10.2.1	Summary: Phase I	267
10.3	Supporting and Demonstrating Phase II of the BR Resilience Conceptual Framework: Process	267
10.3.1	Multi-level Partnerships and Collaboration.....	269
10.3.2	Coordination	271
10.3.3	Openness and Ecological Rationality (institutional rigidity).....	272
10.3.4	Place-based and Capacity-building.....	273
10.3.5	Social Learning and Multiple Knowledges.....	274
10.3.6	Summary: Phase II	276
10.4	Supporting and Demonstrating Phase III of the BR Resilience Conceptual Framework: Outcome	277
10.4.1	Polycentric Approach.....	278
10.4.2	Connectivity Conservation.....	279
10.4.3	Adaptive, Innovative and Experimental.....	280
10.4.4	Interdependent (power sharing) and Equitable	281
10.4.5	Collaboration and Networking	282
10.4.6	Reflective and Visionary	283
10.4.7	Complexity and Uncertainty.....	284
10.4.8	Resources and Expertise (knowledge).....	284
10.4.9	Summary: Phase III	286
10.5	Applying the BR Resilience Framework: Guidelines for BR Resilience	288
10.5.1	Phase I.....	288
10.5.2	Phase II.....	290
10.5.3	Phase III.....	293
11	Conclusion.....	297
11.1	Fulfilment of Aim and Objectives	297
11.2	Significance of the Contribution	298
11.3	Avenues for Future Research	301
11.4	Endnote	301
12	References	304
	Appendix A.....	330
	Appendix B.....	333
	Appendix C.....	347
	Appendix D.....	350

List of Figures

Figure 1 The complex system that constitutes a landscape (L), shaped by human minds, activities and social systems through nature, economy and culture	8
Figure 2 The BR Resilience Conceptual Framework.....	11
Figure 3 A generalised view of the spatial scale of a variety of biophysical and societal features	22
Figure 4 Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences under the Natural Sciences Sector.	38
Figure 5 An ideal BR where the natural values of the core zone are protected by a concentric structure	44
Figure 6 Approach to BR designation and organising	52
Figure 7 The reserves protected so far in the Gondwana Link project.....	102
Figure 8 Location of Australian BRs.....	111
Figure 9 Locations of Canada's BRs*	122
Figure 10 The Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Reserve	160
Figure 11 A cliff-face within the Niagara Escarpment BR, in the Bruce Peninsula National Park.	161
Figure 12 The region of Hamilton, a major city within the NEBR.....	162
Figure 13 Long Point.....	174
Figure 14 Long Point Biosphere Reserve area.....	175
Figure 15 Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Reserve.....	187
Figure 16 A CBT Advisory Committee	195
Figure 17 Sydney Inlet Biosphere Research Cabin	195
Figure 18 Clayoquot Field Station.....	196
Figure 19 Mount Arrowsmith in winter.....	199
Figure 20 The MABR area	201
Figure 21 The first issue of Oceanside dollars, released on 30 September, 2003.....	207
Figure 22 Bookmark Biosphere Reserve area, including Calperum and Taylorville Stations	217
Figure 23 The location, major sponsors and photo of the McCormick Centre.....	224
Figure 24 Fitzgerald Biosphere Reserve Area.....	229
Figure 25 The area of the South-West National Park and the Biosphere Reserve (delisted)	238
Figure 26 Mornington Peninsula, French Island, Phillip Island and Western Port Bay region	243
Figure 27 MPWPBR Living Strategic Plan.....	252
Figure 28 The BR Resilience Conceptual Framework.....	262

List of Tables

Table 1	Synopsis of BR-related benefits at three operational levels (WNBR, BRP and BR).....	57
Table 2	Key differences between BRs and World Heritage Areas.....	71
Table 3	Changing priorities for World Parks Congresses (1962 - 2003).....	82
Table 4	Regional networks of MAB	98
Table 5	Australian Biosphere Reserve details.....	109
Table 6	Some other multi-tenure reserve networks operating in Australia.....	117
Table 7	Canadian Biosphere Reserve details	124
Table 8	Synopsis of principles from existing usage of good governance codes relevant to regional NRM governance.....	139
Table 9	GoBi criteria and indicators for success in governance of BRs.....	142
Table 10	Overview of Canadian Case Studies: BR profiles	157
Table 11	Land use designations of the NEPA and the use of these zones as NEBR zones.....	164
Table 12	Sources of EBC funding for conservation efforts within the NEBR region	165
Table 13	A selection of CBT Project Grants – 2006.....	192
Table 14	Categories of land within the MABR.....	201
Table 15	Overview of Australian Case Studies: BR profiles.....	215
Table 16	Tasks completed, late and impending for BAG, July 2002.....	248

Acronyms

A2A	Alps to Atherton (Australia)
ABV	Australian Biosphere Volunteers (Australia)
ALT	Australian Landscape Trust (Australia)
BAG	Biosphere Advisory Group (Australia)
BR	Biosphere Reserve (UNESCO)
BPBA	Bruce Peninsula Biosphere Association (Canada)
BRIM	Biosphere Reserve Integrated Monitoring Program
BRP	Biosphere Reserve Program (UNESCO)
CALM	Department of Conservation and Land Management (Australia)
CBRA	Canadian Biosphere Reserve Association (Canada)
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBM	Community based monitoring
CBR	Clayoquot Biosphere Reserve (Canada)
CBT	Clayoquot Biosphere Trust (Canada)
CC / MAB	Coordinating Council of Canada / MAB (Canada)
CLARET	Clayoquot Alliance for Research, Education and Training (Canada)
CLM	Community Land Managers (Australia)
CMN	Conservation Management Network
CSBR	Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Reserve (Canada)
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific, Industrial and Research Organisation (Australia)
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CZS	Chicago Zoological Society (United States / Australia)
DEH	Department of Environment and Heritage (previously Environment Australia)
DEWR	Department of Environment and Water Resources (previously DEH) - Australia
EA	Environment Australia (Australia)
EDO	Environmental Defenders Office (Australia)
EMAN	Ecological Monitoring and Assessment Network (Canada)
EMO	Environmental Management Organisation
ENGO	Environmental Non-Government Organisation
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency (Australia)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FBG	Fitzgerald Biosphere Group (Australia)
FBMA	Fitzgerald Biosphere Marketing Association (Australia)
FRNPBR	Fitzgerald River National Park Biosphere Reserve (Australia)

FRNPA	Fitzgerald River National Park Association (Australia)
IBP	International Biological Program (UNESCO)
ICC	International Coordinating Council (UNESCO)
ICSU	International Council of Scientific Unions
ISKM	Integrated System of Knowledge Management
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature (World Conservation Union)
LPBR	Long Point Biosphere Reserve (Canada)
LPWBRF	Long Point World Biosphere Reserve Foundation (Canada)
MI	Mark I Biosphere reserves (government – derived) (Australia)
MII	Mark II Biosphere reserves (community – derived) (Australia)
MAB	Man and the Biosphere Program (UNESCO)
MABF	Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Foundation (Canada)
MABR	Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Reserve (Canada)
MDG	Millenium Development Goals (UNESCO)
MEAFEC	Mount Eliza Association for Environmental Care (Australia)
MISP	Multi-stakeholder Integrative Sustainability Planning
MLA	Main Line of Action (UNESCO)
MPSC	Mornington Peninsula Shire Council (Australia)
MPWPBR	Mornington Peninsula Western Port Biosphere Reserve (Australia)
MPWPBRF	Mornington Peninsual Western Port Biosphere Reserve Foundation (Australia)
NEBR	Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Reserve (Canada)
NEC	Niagara Escarpment Commission (Canada)
NEP	Niagara Escarpment Plan (Canada)
NEPA	Niagara Escarpment Plan Area (Canada)
NEPOSS	Niagara Escarpment Parks and Open Space System (Canada)
NGO	Non – Government Organisation
NHT	Natural Heritage Trust (Australia)
NRM	Natural Resource Management
OMF	Oceanside Monetary Foundation (Canada)
OPG	Ontario Power Generation (Canada)
RAIN	Ravensthorpe Agricultural Initiative Network (Australia)
RBR	Riverland Biosphere Reserve (Australia)
SCRIPT	South Coast Regional Initiative Planning Team (Australia)
SD	Sustainable Development
SEABRN	South-East Asian Biosphere Reserve Network
SES	Social-Ecological Systems

SI / MAB	Smithsonian Institute / MAB
SWBR	South West Biosphere Reserve (Australia)
TBR	Transboundary Biosphere Reserve
TWWHA	Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (Australia)
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNEP	United Nations Environment Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WCPA	World Commission on Protected Areas
WNBR	World Network of Biosphere Reserves
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development
Y2Y	Yellowston to Yukon (United States / Canada)

Australian States / Territories

ACT	Australian Capital Territory
NSW	New South Wales
NT	Northern Territory
QLD	Queensland
SA	South Australia
TAS	Tasmania
VIC	Victoria
WA	Western Australia

Canadian Provinces

AB	Alberta
BC	British Columbia
MB	Manitoba
NB	New Brunswick
NL	Newfoundland and Labrador
NS	Nova Scotia
ON	Ontario
PE	Prince Edward Island
QC	Quebec
SK	Saskatchewan

Foreword

The goal should be to seek not detailed knowledge of parts of the system, but improved understanding of the dynamics of the whole system.

Carl Folke

Each stage of human civilization is defined by our mental structures; the concepts we create and then project upon the universe.

Edwin H. Land

The seeds of the future are to be found in the extremes of the present. So our wildest ideas are the ones that give us insights into the surprises of the next few decades.

Steve Cork

Biosphere Reserves are places where nature nurtures the minds, hearts and bodies of the people, and the people strive to live gently and maintain vital processes to sustain themselves and the other species that share the biosphere.

Canadian Biosphere Reserve Association

A biosphere reserve is like a butterfly - if you open the cocoon for it, it is not going to fly. It has to struggle to get out.

Jim Birtch

I think there are some folks who just have experienced the power of working together, and when they get hold of that, it's kind of hard to forget it.

David Spann

All rights reserved. Our traditions of analysis in theoretical and empirical ecology have been largely inherited from developments in classical physics and its applied variants. Inevitably, there has been a tendency to emphasize the quantitative rather than the qualitative, for it is important in this tradition to know not just that a quantity is larger than another quantity, but precisely how much larger. It is similarly important, if a quantity fluctuates, to know its amplitude and period of fluctuation. But this orientation may simply reflect an analytic approach developed in one area because it was useful and then United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Biosphere Reserves strive for a harmonious interaction between humans and nature. As landscapes provide suitable units to mutually address matters of conservation and sustainable development, this study aims to explore the potential and realized contribution of biosphere reserves for landscape governance and management. We emphasize the role of stakeholder participation and cooperation as an overarching condition for integrated landscape approaches. Moreover, the biosphere reserve zonation concept can provide orientation to manage the "multifunctionality" of a landscape and address the associated trade-offs between different stakeholders' aspirations. View Biosphere Reserves Research Papers on Academia.edu for free. Soviet biosphere reserves became an important instrument for international ecological cooperation. Creation of new national parks led to the spreading semi-protected territories. The aim of this article is to show how Soviet scientists worked out the principles of natural parks and biosphere reserves in the Soviet Union. That research will be of interest to geographers, biologists and conservation activists involved in different ecological activities. Save to Library. Download. The UNESCO World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) covers internationally designated protected areas, each known as biosphere reserves, that are meant to demonstrate a balanced relationship between people and nature (e.g. encourage sustainable development). They are created under the Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB). The World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) of the MAB Programme consists of a dynamic and interactive network of sites. It works to foster the harmonious integration of people