



Case Study: Champlain-Adirondack Biosphere Network Community Engagement *Achieving More Together Than Alone*

Case Background:

The Champlain-Adirondack Biosphere Network was established as a trans-boundary biosphere region between northern New York and Vermont in 1989. At the time, the designation received a significant amount of resistance from residents across the biosphere reserve due to fear that the designation would bring additional land use regulations, particularly in the Adirondack region in New York. As a result, the CABN largely remained inactive until 2016. With new leadership, in 2016 the CABN formed a bi-state steering committee and began community outreach to communicate the value of biosphere regions and bioregional collaboration.

Since its reinvigoration, CABN has strategically leveraged their Annual Meetings as a way to actively engage the local community in NY and VT, to spread awareness about CABN and the value of BRs, to promote bioregional collaboration, and to support existing sustainable development initiatives across the biosphere. Each year, participation and the tangible outcomes from our Annual Meetings has significantly increased.

In October 2019, CABN's bi-state Steering Committee hosted one of its most effective Annual Meetings and community engagement events at the University of Vermont's Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources where we invited citizens, students and faculty from three colleges, community leaders, international biosphere reserves, and local organizations to share and envision examples of sustainable development initiatives and successful bioregional projects. The event illustrated the benefit of bioregional collaboration in BRs and the role that BRs play in listening, framing, and addressing diverse stakeholder perspectives and interests.

Below is an overview of the event's key highlights and tangible outcomes -

What is a biosphere reserve and the value to our communities?

- Cliff McCreedy, U.S. Biosphere Network Coordinator, National Park Service Natural Resource Stewardship & Science Directorate

International Biosphere Presentations of Best Practices:

- Ursula Georgeolou, [Mata Atlantica Biosphere Reserve](#), Brazil
- Yuriy Bihun, [East Carpathians Biosphere Reserve](#), Ukraine
- Erik Wang, [Frontenac Arch Biosphere Network](#), Ontario, Canada
- Genevieve Poirier-Ghys, [Mont Saint-Hilaire Biosphere Reserve](#), Quebec, Canada
- Estelle Cardin, [Lac Saint-Pierre Biosphere Reserve](#), Quebec, Canada

Local Organization Presentations on Implementing the UN's 17 SDGs:

- Jim Brangan, [Lake Champlain Basin Program](#)
- Walter Poleman, [Greater Burlington Sustainable Education Network](#)
- Erin Griffin, Adirondack Youth Climate Summit, [The Wild Center](#)
- Brittany Christenson, Farmacy and Pollinator Projects, [ADK Action](#)

Breakout groups: Realizing and communicating benefits of bioregionalism

Meeting Outcomes:

1. Signed Twinning Agreement with the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Network.
2. BR Name change from Champlain Adirondack Biosphere Reserve to Champlain-Adirondack Biosphere Network (to be more inclusive and less restrictive).
3. Recruited founding members for the CABN Youth Board at this event – Samuel Cuthell and Talia Crowley. Samuel is now the chair of the USBN Youth Board.
4. Established and strengthened partnerships with international biosphere partners, and local organizations who are working to support the 17 SDGs
5. Connected with the company Westerly Studios to design a logo for CABN. Following this, Westerly Studios also created a logo for Mammoth Cave BR.
6. Garnered support from the Lake Champlain Basin Program's Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership to design and launch a [CABN website](#).
7. Spread awareness and garnered support from local leaders across the biosphere in NY and VT.
8. The event received a substantial amount of media attention across our BR in New York and Vermont -
 - <https://www.wamc.org/post/champlain-adirondack-biosphere-reserve-annual-meeting-discusses-bio-regionalism-and>
 - <https://www.uvm.edu/uvmnews/news/university-vermont-host-united-nations-biosphere-delegation>