Applicant UNESCO Global Geopark
Cliffs of Fundy Aspiring Geopark, Canada
geographical and geological summary
1. Physical and human geography - 1500 characters

Located on the North shore of the Minas Basin in Nova Scotia, the Cliffs of Fundy spans an area of approximately 2511 km² in area from Cape Capstan, Apple River Bay (N45°28'30.1019 W64°51'23.99285) in the northwest to Isle Haute (N45°14'35.29933 W65°02'32.36814) in the southwest, including all nearshore islands and sea stacks, to the terminus of the Cobequid Bay and mouth of the Salmon River (N45°21'34.83539 W63°23'0.56176) in the southeast, north to the Cobequid Fault (N45°29'54.66831 W63°22'54.08049) in the northeast and west along the Cobequid Highlands following the northern boundaries of the Portapique and Economy River Wilderness Areas and Franklin Manor Indian Reserve. The landscape is diverse, with hills, mountains, valleys, heavily forested areas, and coastal marshlands. There are dense areas of biodiversity, with rare birds, fungi, and plants as well as wilderness areas and reserves. The extremes of the Nova Scotian Continental climate are moderated by the Bay of Fundy sea winds, resulting in cooler summers and warmer winters. The area has a combined population of approximately 5800 people, largely the descendants of Scottish, Irish, and English immigrants, and includes two municipal counties – Colchester and Cumberland. Many residents work in the service industry, or in trades, forestry, and fishing. Much of the economic activity of the area is tourist-related – art galleries, summer festivals, traditional crafts and foods, music events, and outdoor activities draw tourists from across the globe. The entire area of the geopark is connected by one main roadway.

2. Geological features and geology of international significance – 1500 characters

The international significance of the Cliffs of Fundy aspiring geopark has long been established, and involves many areas of geological and indigenous heritage including:

i) one of the world's foremost exposures of the Central Atlantic Magmatic Province, the largest outpouring of lava in Earth history attending the breakup of the supercontinent Pangea and implicated in the end-Triassic mass extinction event;

ii) a textbook example of an ancient rift valley system;

iii) a tectonic and structural nexus of Pangean assembly, expressed by the Cobequid-Chedabucto Fault and Minas Fault system, which constitutes the terrane boundary between Avalonia and Gondwana;

iv) site of early dinosaurs mirrored in contemporaneous sites in Africa, China and South America;

v) site of the earliest documented exploration for minerals by European explorers in the earliest Seventeenth century;

vi) cultural centre of oral traditions and trade source, and oldest and best documented region of the indigenous peoples of northeastern North America; and

vii) site of the highest tides on Earth, the Minas Basin of the Bay of Fundy.