

SOME POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF BIOSPHERE RESERVE DESIGNATION

(1) In Conservation

- Ties together ecologically complementary protected areas under different administrators in the same biogeographic region (a unique capability)

- Promotes better integration of conservation and development (in furtherance of the World Conservation Strategy)

- Encourages greater emphasis on conservation of ecosystems (in addition to traditional emphasis on components of ecosystems)

- Encourages greater emphasis on maintaining suitable conditions for continuing evolution of biological diversity

(2) In Science

- Fosters more emphasis on science for better management

- Improves standardization of methods for data collection, analysis, and reporting

- Encourages more secure protection of research sites

- Encourages more use of designated areas by the scientific community

- Encourages use of designated areas for demonstration R&D projects (e.g., geographic information system at Great Smoky Mountains N.P.)

- Increases emphasis on ecosystem-level studies

- Increases emphasis on interdisciplinary research involving the natural and social sciences (e.g., ethnobiology studies)

- Improves regional scientific cooperation on problems of common interest

- Provides additional research opportunities and facilitates coordination of basic and applied research in the region

(3) In Education

For the Public...

- Helps foster an ecological perspective, a conservation ethic and a world view conducive to solving problems at the local, regional, and global levels

- Promotes better understanding of the role of protected areas in general, and the particular biosphere reserve, in solving interrelated environmental, land use, and socioeconomic problems, and in improving human well-being

- Promotes better understanding of the role of protected areas in conserving biological diversity

Some Potential Benefits of Biosphere Reserve Status...continued

(3) In Education (continued)

For the Scientist and Manager...

--Encourages use of designated areas for scientific and resource management training by universities and government agencies

--Provides a focus for international training and technology transfer in science, ecosystem management, and environmental education.

(4) In Cooperation

--Establishes a new symbolism (i.e., "people working together to solve problems"), to which many people will respond positively. This is a unique aspect of biosphere reserves which, if effectively communicated, can improve public support for protection of the designated areas.

--Encourages volunteerism

--Promotes development of new regional institutions for better cooperation among scientists, resource management specialists, and protected area administrators. Examples: Southern Appalachian Research/Resource Management Cooperative; Virgin Islands Resource Management Cooperative

--Promotes development of productive working relationships between the designated areas and local people. Examples: Waterton Lakes B.R. (Canada), La Mapimi B.R. (Mexico)

--Provides a framework for developing personal and institutional relationships through a growing international network

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