

Biosphere Reserve Management Meeting Held in Smokies

Editor's Note: The MAB Biosphere Management Conference took place just as this issue of Park Science was going to press. Following is a short account of the opening sessions, as stage-setting for more detailed coverage of the presentations by workshop leaders and recommendations that still were taking place at press time. The fuller coverage will be carried in the Spring issue.

"The success or failure of the Biosphere Reserve concept is directly related to the collective efforts that Biosphere Reserve managers provide to this program."

With these words, Roland H. Wauer delivered his opening day challenge to the MAB Conference on the Management of Biosphere Reserves, Nov. 27, 1984, in the Great Smoky Mountains NP.

Wauer, who is assistant superintendent in charge of science and resource management at Great Smokies, defined resource management as "A process of resource protection (that) incorporates all the pieces of a multi-disciplinary matrix into a comprehensive perspective for the long-term perpetuation of an area's natural systems."

"It is more than planning and implementation," he told the delegates. "It also involves interpretation, monitoring, and research."

He urged American and Canadian Biosphere Reserve area managers, many of whom were present, to grasp the leadership role in developing the biosphere reserve concept. "European countries expect and want America to take the lead in resource protection on a worldwide scale," he said.

Harold Eidsvik, senior policy advisor to Parks Canada, in his keynote address, complimented the Great Smoky Mountains NP managers for their successes in "preserving a sustained society, in an economic as well as a natural, social and moral sense."

This integration of human activities that sometimes seem poles apart became a central theme in Eidsvik's view of Biosphere Reserves. The extension of the biosphere reserve roles, beyond that of National Parks, was presented as "the integration of conservation, development, and society, for the betterment of people around the world."

In line with Wauer's challenge to managers, Eidsvik urged delegates to "develop pilot projects that demonstrate to the world the usefulness of Biosphere Reserves."

The key, Eidsvik said, is communications. A communications management committee would be a useful — perhaps even a vital — addition to every Biosphere Reserve area. Eidsvik stressed the need for public understanding and backing of Biosphere Reserve management's commitment to long-term management of ecosystems rather than short-term management of visitor facilities.

The role of protected areas is a vital part of the essential linkage between conservation, development and society, Eidsvik said. "None of these three is sustainable in isolation."

The conference workshops dealt with five areas: air pollutants, development of non-renewable resources, use of renewable resources, problem species, and visitor activities. Jack Moorehead, Everglades NP superintendent, summarized the workshop recommendations at the close of the conference.



The Sheraton Gatlinburg hotel, where the conference was held in November 1984 on management of biosphere reserves. Sequoia Kings Canyon Supt. Boyd Evison observed that the General Sherman Tree, if placed in the hotel lobby, would overtop the 15-story structure by more than 100 feet, "and if you looked out the 10th story window, you'd see the view from the first branch of the General Sherman Tree."

The Great Smoky Mountains, from the Sheraton Gatlinburg hotel parking lot, with Mount Le Conte in the center distance.

