

Vascular Plant Inventory Computerization Planned

A pilot project for joint development of an information system on biological diversity in selected Biosphere Reserves was formulated and approved by participants at the November conference on Management of Biosphere Reserves, held at the Great Smoky Mountains NP. The project will establish a model for an interdisciplinary world information system on the biological resources of Biosphere Reserves.

Initial focus will be to develop a computerized inventory of vascular plants occurring within selected Biosphere Reserves in the United States, Mexico, and the People's Republic of China. The initial system, which will take advantage of ongoing projects in the three countries, will include a list of scientific and vernacular plant names, cultural uses (traditional and modern), status of each taxon, and habitat information. Bibliographic material will support and document the data base.

A steering committee will establish appropriate nomenclature, assure compatability of data base format and management, and explore the feasibility of establishing a common data storage facility.

The project will allow for participation by Biosphere Reserves having varying degrees of available information. It will be designed for phase expansion in accordance with criteria established by the steering committee.

The initial project will be limited in scope because of the need to demonstrate the importance, utility, and feasibility of the information system and to open channels of communication among Biosphere Reserves. The minimal resources required for the project will be provided by the participating countries. Other MAB National Committees that wish to participate are invited to do so.

This project will be completed during calendar year 1985 and a report will be made available to the Council prior to the next session. The report will recommend a phased approach to the further development of the system.