

# mab notes

**Biosphere Reserve Symposium.** The Man and the Biosphere Program, one of five technical symposia held at the World Wilderness Conference in Estes Park, Colorado, Sept. 14-17, 1987, drew a packed house every day. Sixteen papers by participants from nine countries presented an evolutionary history of the biosphere reserve concept and a status report on its implementation in different regions of the world. In the poster session, 16 case studies showed how the concept is being applied in Canada, Costa Rica, Mexico, Panama, the Philippines, and the United States. At a workshop on the final day, lively discussion addressed opportunities, impediments, and priorities for implementing the biosphere reserve concept. The discussions yielded specific recommendations that supplement the more general recommendations in a resolution on biosphere reserves prepared by 10 symposium participants.

The papers illustrated the great functional variety of today's biosphere reserves. For instance, Y.A. Israel and S.M. Semenov discussed biological monitoring techniques in Soviet biosphere reserves, which stress this function. Bernie Lief, in a paper supplementing his poster on Waterton Lakes, Alberta, describes how the national park core and adjacent landowners in the cooperative "transition area" search for solutions to elk management issues, impacts of oil exploration, and other mutual concerns through a Management Committee and a Technical Committee. Walter Lusig stressed sustainable development in his exposition of the 10-year effort to create scientifically based guidelines for managing Mt. Kulal Biosphere Reserve and adjacent lands on the dry northern border of Kenya, where nomadic pastoralists face a deteriorating environment.

Structural variety of biosphere reserves also was evident. Carleton Ray's paper explored the establishment of coastal and marine reserves, with their peculiar zoning and management challenges. In Central Mexico, symposium participants learned, a large biosphere reserve containing populations of *Zea diploperennis*, the perennial wild relative of maize, has been established, but only one percent of the reserve is in public ownership. Cooperation between scientists and local people is the basis of this biosphere reserve.

In the midst of the learned gathering at Estes Park, a Kuna tribal leader from Panama perhaps expressed the biosphere reserve idea best of all: "For the Kuna culture the land is our mother, and all living things that live on her are brothers, in such a manner that we must take care of her and live in a harmonious manner on her; because the extinction of one living thing is also the end of another."

Copies of the following papers relating to national parks may be obtained from Bill Gregg in the Washington office: Caroline Rogers, no title (Virgin Islands Biosphere Reserve); Tundi Agardy and James Broadus, "Coastal and Marine Biosphere Reserve Nominations in the Acadia Boreal Region: Results of a Cooperative Effort between the U.S. and Canada" (includes Cape Cod NS and Acadia NP); Bernie Lief, "Case Study: Waterton Biosphere Reserve" (some reference to Glacier NP); D. Wilson Crumacker and William Gregg, "An Ecosystem Conservation Database for the United States" (macroreserves); and William Gregg, "On Wilderness, National Parks, and Biosphere Reserves" (definitions and philosophy).

**FY1988 Research Budget.** The Executive Committee of the U.S. MAB National Committee has approved a total FY1988 budget of \$940,000, assuming, with the usual uncertainties, that federal agencies will supply the funding requested. New MAB research is budgeted for \$440,000.

This year all research proposals must come from MAB Directorates and address one or more of the following MAB research themes: (1) ecosystem functioning under different intensities of human impact; (2) management and restoration of human-impacted resources; (3) human investments and resource use; (4) human response to environmental stress.

Preference will be given to proposals which concentrate their research activities on one or more of the following target areas.

- biosphere reserves;
- biological diversity;
- global climate and ecological change;
- biomes or ecotones of the arctic, arid lands, or tropics.

In addition, \$100,000 has been budgeted for five symposia on research themes 1-4, plus The Action Plan for Biosphere Reserves.

Anyone desiring more information or having an idea for a research proposal involving one or more biosphere reserves should contact Bill Gregg (202-343-8122). He points out that projects related to more than one MAB directorate tend to get more money.

**Getting Together in the Southern Appalachians.** In August, representatives of five federal agencies met at Clemson University to discuss cooperation on regional resource issues in a MAB framework. Participants from the Economic Development Administration, Tennessee Valley Authority, the Department of Energy's Oak Ridge Laboratory, the Forest Service, and the National Park Service appointed a planning group which has now drafted a memorandum of agreement among federal agencies. If approved, this memorandum would establish a Southern Appalachian MAB Cooperative.

At present, John McCrone, Director of the Clemson University NPS/CPSU, and Tommy Gilbert, former NPS MAB Coordinator who first proposed such Southern Appalachian cooperation, are serving as an informal secretariat. The hope is to get money to staff a MAB Cooperative office, which would develop proposals for specific projects for the Cooperative. McCrone would seek broader support for the Cooperative among other organizations, including foundations. Thus far, the Southern Appalachian Research/Resource Management Cooperative (SARRMC) is being used as the umbrella for regional activities. On Nov. 3-4, 1987 SARRMC sponsored a conference in Asheville, NC on "The Southern Appalachians: Our Land, Our Future" which was expected to help structure the proposed MAB regional program.

Much of the regional research would focus on a biosphere reserve cluster composed of federal, state, and possibly private areas, all surrounded by a zone of cooperation that would include the whole Southern Appalachian region. Great Smoky Mountains NP and Coweeta Hydrological Laboratory already are part of the BR cluster.

Projects like this provide a dimension to conservation that recognizes the impossibility of achieving sustained development without understanding natural ecosystem processes. As we learn more about how these processes work, we are better able to maintain or restore the genetic diversity of species upon which the continuing evolution of these processes depends.

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