
mab notes

The projected FY1988 budget of the U.S. MAB Program is \$940,000 (up from \$650,000 in FY1987). Of the eight agencies expected to contribute, five had already obligated funds as of November 1987. More than half of the budget is earmarked for symposia and new research.

Symposium Proposals. The MAB-8 Directorate reviewed two symposium proposals at their February meeting. One, developed by G. Carleton Ray and Bill Gregg, deals with application of the biosphere reserve concept to management of Mid- and South Atlantic coastal barriers. The Directorate endorsed this proposal and forwarded it to the U.S. MAB Executive Committee for a decision on funding. The other is a bi-national symposium and workshop on use of biosphere reserves (namely, Big Bend in the U.S. and Mapimi in Mexico) in addressing the conservation of biological diversity in the Chihuahuan Desert. This symposium might become part of the Third Chihuahuan Desert Symposium, scheduled to be held at Sul Ross University in Alpine, Texas, in November 1988. The Directorate expressed interest in the proposal but deferred recommendation until the Mexican National MAB Committee has provided their comments.

Research Proposals. The Executive Committee's decisions on research proposals to be funded wholly

or in part through the MAB-8 directorate are expected in May. Three look like especially strong candidates at this time.

1) Southern Appalachian Pilot Project. Funding would help establish and conduct work through a MAB cooperative including several regional institutions and the existing Coweeta and Great Smokies Biosphere Reserves. Potential components of the Southern Appalachian project include implementation of the Smithsonian/MAB biodiversity program on collection and monitoring; ecological comparison of pristine and human-impacted sites; a publication on ecological guidelines for economic development in the region; and implementation of the MAB Ecosystem Conservation Database in the Southern Appalachians.

2) Integrated Research on Effects of Global Change in Northwest Alaska. Charles Slaughter, Institute of Northern Forestry in cooperation with Bruce Wiersma. This study would examine climatological changes in the forest-tundra ecotone, probably focusing on a trans-Alaska transect from the coast inland, with a "biosphere observatory" in Noatak Biosphere Reserve. This would tie in with the International Geosphere-Biosphere Program. MAB-6 (Arctic) would be the lead directorate, with participation also of MAB-14 (Pollution), as well as MAB-8.

3) Caribbean Pilot Project. Allen Putney, Eastern Caribbean Natural Areas Program. This project, focused on the Virgin Islands Biosphere Reserve, would emphasize ecosystem rehabilitation and sustainable resource use in areas adjacent to Virgin Islands NP, building on the 4-year MAB research program in the Virgin Islands that is now winding down. It would complement a Unesco and UNEP biosphere reserve development project in the Lesser Antilles, of which the Virgin Islands are a part.

Ecosystem Conservation Database. This project, directed by Wilson Crumpacker of the University of Colorado, has completed several assessments of the adequacy of protection of U.S. ecosystem types, using computer analysis of map overlays of national classifications of potential natural vegetation, ecoregions, and physiography. Four reports are due for publication this year: a preliminary assessment for Federal and Indian lands (accepted in *Conservation Biology*); a comparative assessment of ecosystem representation in the National Park System and other U.S. land management systems (to be published by the National Parks and Conservation Association); a description of project goals, history, and accomplishments (in the forthcoming proceedings of the biosphere reserve symposium at the World Wilderness Congress); and an assessment of potential natural vegetation types on Federal and Indian lands in particular ecoregions, including information on individual states. A more comprehensive assessment of ecosystem diversity and protection status is being conducted for areas in Florida larger than 5000 acres.

Brochure Out at Last! The international brochure on biosphere reserves that was at least three years in the making came off the press in February. We are very pleased with the high quality of reproduction. Prepared by the National Park Service and a contract designer and printed with funds from Unesco, the fold-out brochure explains biosphere reserves on one side and has a map of biomes and reserve locations on the other. Copies will be sent to all biosphere reserve parks, and requests from other sources will be answered as long as our supply holds out. Write or phone Bill Gregg (202-343-8122) or myself (202-343-8136).

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