

Global Change and Biosphere Reserve Workshop Held

By Stephen C. Nodvin

A three-day NPS workshop on global change and on biosphere reserves was held at the University of Tennessee (UT) in Knoxville in August. The workshop was organized and moderated by Bill Gregg of the NPS Washington Office (WASO). Arrangements in Knoxville were made by the Cooperative Park Studies Unit at UT with assistance from the UT Department of Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries.

Global change was the focus of the first day's discussions. Featured speakers included John Firor of the National Center for Atmospheric Research who gave an excellent overview of the mechanisms of the greenhouse effect. Robert Peters of the World Wildlife Fund discussed the implications of global climate change to biodiversity. Harry Lins of the USGS discussed agency plans and priorities that are being formulated by an interagency working group: the Committee on Earth Sciences (CES).

Other agencies' plans and strategies relative to global change were discussed by: Stan Colof, Bureau of Land Management; Tom Callahan, National Science Foundation; Anthony Janetos and Laretta Burke, EPA; Michael Fosberg, USDA Forest Service; and Robert Van Hook and Monica Turner, DOE and Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

Gregg discussed current efforts and plans by the NPS Wildlife and Vegetation Division relative to national planning for global climate research. Ray Herrmann of the NPS Water Resources Division discussed the role of long term research and of the NPS Watershed Program within the global change arena. Stephen Nodvin discussed plans by the UT CPSU to identify potential global climate problems at park units within the Southeast Region and plans by the Southeast Region Office to assemble a global climate change assessment team.

The second day of the workshop focused on Biosphere Reserves. Perspectives on the evolution of the Man and the Biosphere program and the Biosphere Reserve concept were given by Gary Everhardt, Superintendent BLRI; Vernon Gilbert, former NPS MAB Coordinator; Roger Soles, Executive Director, U.S. MAB Secretariat; and Gregg, NPS MAB Coordinator. Other highlights included discussions of regional MAB efforts in the Southern Appalachians, public education and community involvement, and discussions of many biosphere reserve programs including and ranging from Champlain-Adirondack, the Central California Coast, and Death Valley NM.

Concurrent workshop sessions were held the third morning on: 1) the role of NPS in global change research, 2) the role of WASO, regions and parks in MAB, 3) coordinator of NPS with other agencies on global change and biosphere reserves, and 4) public education relative to the workshop's topics. Session leaders summarized each group's discussions and recommendations during the final afternoon session. Session leaders were given the charge of preparing a report of each group's recommendations for review by the workshop participants.

At the meeting's closing, Bill Gregg thanked all participants and observed that problems due to climate change may present NPS with some of its greatest challenges relative to research and the management of natural and cultural resources.

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