

nabnotes

A **biosphere reserve managers meeting** is planned, tentatively for December somewhere in mid-continent. This meeting was recommended by the drafting committee for the biosphere reserve action plan to help finalize this document, and was approved by the U.S. MAB National Committee at its July meeting. The managers will review plans and discuss priorities and coordination of the biosphere reserve program.

This is the first BR managers meeting since the 1984 meeting at Great Smoky Mountains NP. That one, attended primarily by NPS managers, generated considerable enthusiasm and numerous recommendations for the BR program. This year's meeting is expected to provide a similar boost and have wider representation.

The National Committee also approved funding of a number of **research projects**. One was the core program of the High Latitude Ecosystems Directorate – a study comparing caribou management systems in western Alaska and north-central Canada. Completion of the core program of the Temperate Ecosystems Directorate – a comparative study of land use patterns and their ecological effects in the Olympic and Southern Appalachian biosphere reserves – also was approved, along with two projects complementary to the latter on water quality and computer integration of interdisciplinary research for application in land use assessment.

Five additional projects were funded: (1) community involvement in management decision making for the Porcupine caribou herd; (2) long-term sustainability of Atlantic white cedar swamps in the Pinelands BR; (3) optimal design of marine reserves: ecology and economics (with testing of the design approach at Channel Islands NP); (4) social-ecological interaction

in land use decisions in two western Oregon drainage basins; and (5) sustainable forestry at Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve, Mexico (including effects on neotropical migrants and other birds). The U.S. MAB budget exceeded \$1 million for the first time in FY 1992.

Two regions are receiving new MAB-related attention. A feasibility study with interagency funding will examine the linking of BRs with other areas in the **Colorado Rockies** to address regional resource issues. The Nature Conservancy has the lead on this study. Land use changes in the **western Sonoran Desert border area** will be the subject of a "regional forum" Oct. 22-25 at Ajo, AZ. Organized by the Sonoran Institute and the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, this meeting continues the dialog on regional resource concerns begun in the late 1980s by Carlos Nagel under MAB auspices.

The image people have of the biosphere reserve is still varied and often does not match the MAB program's vision. This is revealed in **preliminary results of a survey** conducted by Bill Gregg, NPS MAB Coordinator, and Erica Serabian. Only about a third of U.S. BRs, including NPS and other sites, have responded so far, but certain views can be distinguished. BR designation often is considered a recognition of site significance rather than a framework for cooperation. Also, some managers (not NPS) see their BRs primarily as research sites, operating largely in isolation from their neighbors.

A more balanced view – that of the BR as a place where research and cooperation both are conducted in the service of regional needs – tends to be held by managers of the more recently designated biosphere reserves and those with a history of BR-related cooperation. Perhaps the survey also tells us that the situation and history of each BR are unique, and may favor certain BR functions over others. For some sites, evolution toward a full-fledged biosphere reserve may be naturally slow.

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