

# MAB Notes

The Sonoran Institute recently sponsored a regional forum on "Land Use Changes in the Western Sonoran Desert Border Area." The 150 participants—including representatives from U.S. and Mexican agencies, the Tohono O'odham Nation, and citizens from local communities—met in Ajo, AZ in October and reviewed major resource issues facing the region, including the implications of the North American Free Trade Agreement. The "town hall" approach was an outgrowth of discussions over the past several years to consider ways to implement the biosphere reserve (BR) concept in this multi-cultural region.

The possible imminent establishment of a large BR in the Pinacate-Gran Desierto area of Sonora (adjacent to the Organ Pipe Cactus NM BR) provides incentive and opportunities for strengthening transborder linkages among BRs.

Bill Gregg addressed the forum on cooperative approaches to coping with borders. In his keynote, Hubert Hinote, Executive Director of the Southern Appalachian MAB Cooperative, discussed the experience of the Southern Appalachians in organizing cooperative projects to meet regional needs. The forum resulted in a consensus on the need for improved mechanisms for trilateral cooperation in generating and sharing information on regional issues, and a recommendation for follow-up assessment to see how this could be accomplished.

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In September, the International Union of Forestry Research Organizations, in cooperation with U.S. and Canadian agencies and organizations (including the NPS) sponsored an international symposium on "Ecology and Management of Larix Forests." The symposium drew participants from more than a dozen nations and provided a comprehensive review of the state of knowledge of the ecology, genetics,

and management of Larix forests, which occur in boreal and alpine environments throughout the northern hemisphere.

Gregg and Pat Halpin (U/VA) gave a poster, focusing on opportunities for cooperative research in BRs. The poster identified 20 BRs containing one or more species of Larix, and included results of potential life zone shifts in Larix BRs, based on various global circulation models. Gregg and Stan Krugman, BR coordinator for the USFS, co-chaired a seminar on BRs, emphasizing the ongoing small watershed research program in BRs in the U.S. and the former Soviet Union, and the EuroMAB biological inventory database.

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The EuroMAB pilot project to prepare biological inventory databases in BRs is underway. The project was finalized at a July meeting of MAB representatives from countries participating in the *Biosphere Reserve Integrated Monitoring Program*, which Mike Ruggiero attended. The formats for the NPS Biological Inventory Status (BIS) and the biological inventory (NPFLORA and NPFAUNA) databases were adapted for use in EuroMAB BRs. The formats are being used to prepare pilot BIS and vertebrate inventory databases for a selected BR in Canada, the Czech and Slovak Federated Republic, France, Germany, Russia, Rumania, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the U.S. The MAB Secretariat has sent each country instructions for preparing the databases, which were scheduled to be returned to USMAB by the end of 1992. The experience of preparing the pilot databases will help EuroMAB countries determine a future strategy for preparing and managing biological inventory data from BRs.

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