

Important issues addressed at the July 19-20 meeting of the U.S. MAB National Committee included the upcoming managers' workshop and funding of several research projects. The **U.S. Biosphere Reserve Action Plan Workshop** will be held Dec. 6-10, 1993 at Estes Park, CO. Of the 47 U.S. biosphere reserves (BRs), 44 expressed interest in participating in Plan development and planned to send representatives to the workshop. Beginning with a skeletal draft action plan, participants will produce a final draft action plan to guide biosphere reserve activities over the next decade or so. This will be the first national biosphere reserve managers' meeting since 1984, and will have broader representation, since the earlier meeting consisted largely of NPS biosphere reserve managers.

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**Research projects funded** for FY 1993 included three that involved NPS biosphere reserves. The Human-Dominated Systems Directorate Core Project, Ecological Sustainability and Human Institutions, will characterize ecological sustainability, using case studies of the south Florida region, the Virginia Coastal Reserve, and the New Jersey Pinelands.

The Circumpolar Biosphere Reserve project will initiate several cooperative surveys and data exchanges and an exchange of managers between Archipelago Sea National Park in Finland and Glacier Bay NP and Preserve in Alaska. Both of these BRs face important challenges to commercial and Native subsistence fisheries management issues.

Biological, Socio-Economic and Managerial Concerns of Harvesting Edible Mushrooms on the Olympic Peninsula and in the Southern Appalachians will complement the core research of the Temperate Ecosystems Directorate, which will provide information to "...manage temperate landscapes for diversity, resilience, productivity, and sustainability for the long-term.

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The **Mammoth Cave Area Biosphere Reserve's** power to take regional action has been greatly strengthened by a cooperative agreement between Mammoth Cave NP and the Barren River Area Development District (BRADD). The Economic Development Administration has granted BRADD \$50,000 for sustainable economic development studies in the BR area, and the Soil Conservation Service is administering a \$5 million program in the area focusing on protection of

groundwater integral to cave resources. The BRADD board of directors--the city and county officials directly affected--has voted to more than double the BR's present size of 80,000 acres.

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Great potential for MAB regional and international cooperation has arisen with the establishment on June 10 of a biosphere reserve in northwest Sonora, Mexico. Three core areas totaling more than 1 million acres are included: the volcanic Pinacate region; Gran Desierto de Altar, a vast, mountain-studded area of sand dunes; and the Colorado River delta with some adjacent waters of the Gulf of California.

Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt attended the dedication ceremony at Puerto Penasco, joining Mexico's President Salinas and Mr. Colosio, head of the Secretariat of Social Development, which will administer the reserve. Several Mexican government bodies are jointly developing a management plan. On the Arizona side of the border, Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument and the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge provide large protected areas that could be part of an international regional MAB program. On-going community-based "town meetings," facilitated by the Sonoran Institute, are exploring ways to promote cooperation and implement biosphere reserve concepts in the region.

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EuroMAB is making good progress with its **Biosphere Reserves Integrated Monitoring Program (BRIM)**. The purpose of BRIM is to "harmonize" the collection, reporting, and accessibility of scientific data from the 32-country, 175-unit EuroMAB biosphere network, which includes Canada and the U.S. Biological inventory data are the primary initial focus for developing the broad-based network.

Twenty-five inventory databases for birds have been completed and many more are expected. Biological records in some BRs span several centuries. A few BRs in the Czech Republic have floristic collections dating from the 16th to the 18th centuries. A computer program called MABBird has been designed to allow users to efficiently access, edit, and retrieve information contained in BR bird survey databases. Peace Corps volunteers may assist with computerization of inventory data in Eastern European biosphere reserves.

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