

NAS Report Cites Urgent Need for National Biological Survey

The National Research Council, National Academy of Sciences, report, "A Biological Survey for the Nation," was released in early October. It proposed that the National Biological Survey provide leadership for a program that pulls together public and private organizations for gathering information to prevent costly environmental confrontations over the nation's plant and animal life. The federal government spends about \$1 billion each year on environmental biology research, but the committee found "significant gaps" in the efforts of current national research programs.

"The National Academy of Sciences report underscores the urgent need for an agency within the Department of the Interior to provide leadership in the life sciences area; that agency is the National Biological Survey," said Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt. "The report wisely focuses on establishing true partnerships and on the need to support and expand relationships with existing biological research organizations."

The report recommends that the many public and private entities involved in current

research on biological resources should work together under the auspices of a new organization, the National Partnership for Biological Survey, to provide comprehensive information that will be useful for decision-makers at all levels of government and outside government.

"The NAS report will be extremely valuable to the National Biological Survey. The National Academy's support for a federal partnership with states, universities, and private organizations will ensure that the new agency becomes a truly collaborative effort," said George Frampton, Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, who also will oversee the NBS.

Although somewhat philosophically similar to current NBS implementation efforts, a number of the recommendations contained in the report are much broader in scope than can be covered by existing fiscal and personnel resources of the NBS. The recommendations of the NAS are still under review by Department of the Interior and NBS officials.