

The most significant recent event on the U.S. MAB front was the workshop held in December 1993 at Estes Park, CO, to develop a draft **Action Plan for the U.S. Biosphere Reserve Program**. Developed by 83 participants, including representatives from 33 biosphere reserves, the plan forms the basis for establishing an integrated U.S. BR program and constitutes a resource for ideas and actions that managers can use in carrying out their own BR objectives. It is a blueprint for moving biosphere reserve reality ever closer to the BR concept. The goals and some of the actions in the plan are the following:

- **Develop the organization and leadership to carry out the mission.** Actions include: Establishing a national BR Directorate with a budget; convening an annual meeting of the U.S. MAB Program; supporting selected BRs to become models for implementing BR concepts.

- **Develop political support and funding for the biosphere reserve program.** Actions include: U.S. MAB communicating with White House offices to include BRs in their policy and planning activities; establishing a challenge cost-sharing and/or competitive small grant program; convening a primarily private sector National Support Group; establishing a Non-governmental Biosphere Reserve Foundation.

- **Foster partnerships and community participation.** Actions include: Developing new, formal and informal communication tools; promoting the "cluster concept" of partnerships among conservation, research, and multiple-use areas; using formal agreements to establish partnerships.

- **Conserve and manage biosphere reserve resources.** Actions include: Exploring the feasibility of adding areas to existing BRs to implement fully the BR model.

- **Improve understanding of relationships between natural and human systems in biosphere reserves.** Actions include:

Establishing standardized monitoring techniques; including demographic and socioeconomic conditions and the values, attitudes, and perceptions of local people in BR inventory and monitoring programs; identifying and improving access to commonly used databases.

- **Promote public awareness and education on the value and benefits of biosphere reserves.** Actions include: Developing and using public media to support the U.S. BR program; developing an aggressive marketing strategy for BRs aimed at potential governmental and private sector sources of funding and in-kind support; establishing a BR communications system based on a worldwide electronic network.

At its January 24 meeting, the U.S. MAB National Committee accepted the draft Action plan and directed the workshop drafting committee under Joann Roskoski and Bill Gregg to prepare a final draft for Executive Committee decision in March. The National Committee also committed to creating a Biosphere Reserve Directorate with representatives from BR managers, agencies with BRs, and stakeholders from the wider community. Internationally, a number of countries, including Australia, Canada, China, Germany, Mexico, and Spain, are reviewing their BR programs to see how improvement can be made.

Bill Gregg, former MAB Coordinator with the NPS, continues his deep involvement with MAB as chief of the international division of the National Biological Survey. Each agency in the MAB program will continue to have a MAB representative. That responsibility in the NPS will reside in the Natural Resource Directorate or some part of the directorate's reconfiguration in the Washington Office reorganization now underway.