

By JOHN G. DENNIS

THE U.S. MAN AND THE Biosphere Program (MAB) of the United Nations Educational and Scientific Organization is alive and well, despite any lack of information about it over the past few issues of *Park Science*. The Washington Office has changed, along with everyone else—Bill Gregg, former Mr. MAB in the National Park Service, is now Mr. MAB in the National Biological Survey; Nape Shelton, former author of MAB Notes, has retired and is touring the United States or world; and I have replaced Bill Gregg as the (acting, of course) associate director's (acting, of course) staff support for NPS MAB.

MAB, itself, has a new chair of the national committee. He is Dean Bibbes, currently Staff Assistant to Secretary Babbitt as director for policy on land tenure. An ex-Bureau of Land Management state director, I believe he also is the first land manager to become national committee chair, an event that I think will greatly benefit the biosphere reserve component of the MAB program, while not jeopardizing the existing strength of the research component.

These MAB Notes will report on some of the key events of the last two national committee meetings—the July 29 meeting of the U.S. National Committee for MAB and the November 3 meeting of the Executive Committee of the U.S. National Committee for MAB.

The July meeting continued support for high latitude, human-dominated systems, tropical ecosystems, and temperate ecosystems directorate core projects and initiated support for the marine and coastal ecosystem directorate core project. While all directorate projects have value to parks and biosphere reserves in

general, the human-dominated, temperate, and marine and coastal projects specifically relate to one or more park-based biosphere reserves and attempt to bring an integrated, natural and social science, focus to their activities. Although the human-dominated project includes New Jersey Pinelands, Virginia Coast Reserve, and South Florida, its focus to date has been South Florida, where it is stirring the pot of thought by bringing together natural, social, economic, and legal specialists to stimulate new ways of thinking about sustaining both natural and human economic livelihoods in South Florida. Contact Mark

Harwell, University of Miami, 305-361-4157 voice, 305-361-4077 fax, or "harwell@rcf.rsmas.miami.edu" on the Internet.

The temperate ecosystems project, which involves comparisons of land ownership-land use characteristics in the Olympic Peninsula of Washington and Southern Appalachians regions, discovered that it had to invest a great deal of time and effort in teaching natural scientists and socioeconomic scientists how to communicate with each other and learn each others' definitions of common words used very differently. Contact Bob Naiman, 206-543-6920 voice, 206-543-3254 fax, "cssuw@u.washington.edu" for more information.

The marine and coastal ecosystems project will stimulate the interaction of ecologists, sociologists, economists, and resource managers to assess effectiveness of existing marine management systems and develop information useful for building partnerships for developing, initiating, and operating marine and coastal resource

protection in areas where management systems will undergo change within the next few years. Although the directorate proposed four areas, there likely will be only enough funding to focus on two, the Florida Keys and Channel Islands, California, both of which contain NPS interests. Contact Michael Crosby, 301-713-3155 voice, 301-713-4011 fax.

Of much more immediate interest to many nation park system areas, the July meeting broke new ground for the MAB program by adopting a strategic plan for the U.S. biosphere reserve program, by adding

a biosphere reserve directorate chair to the national committee, and by allotting

\$120,000 of fiscal year 1994 funds to the biosphere reserve directorate. The essence of the strategic plan is to help "... each U.S. biosphere reserve ... become a full partner in the process of integrating conservation and sustainable development locally, and in sharing information and experience to help address regional and global problems." In putting the biosphere reserve directorate chair onto the national committee, the national committee implemented a strategic plan goal of integrating the biosphere reserve program as an essential component of the MAB program. In allocating the first formal funds to the biosphere reserve directorate, the national committee supported development of a biosphere reserve selection guidelines, review of the biosphere reserve network, regional meetings of biosphere reserves, development of regional feasibility partnerships, an annual managers workshop, a biosphere reserve brochure, and U.S. participation in a EuroMAB meeting of managers.

The November executive committee adopted a new mission statement for MAB and approved proposed RFPs for biosphere reserve catalytic grants and the tropical ecosystems directorate small grants program. They also addressed the need for a biosphere reserve directorate coordinator and how such a need might be filled by a detailed staff person from a MAB agency. Finally, they established an ad hoc commission to review the structure, orientation, and substance of the MAB Program, and received a report on the EuroMAB managers meeting.

The new mission statement is short and sweet: "The mission of the United States Man and the Biosphere Program is to foster harmonious relationships between humans and the biosphere through domestic and international cooperation in interdisciplinary research, education, biosphere reserves, and information exchange."

The biosphere reserve catalytic grants program is intended to support workshops and partnership-building activities. It is to be a competitive process that focuses on projects that produce short-term tangible results. As scheduled at the meeting, it would require applications for available funds to be submitted by January 15, 1995, and would announce awards in the spring 1995.

The ad hoc commission likely will conduct its deliberations through the 1994-95 winter and provide a draft report to the national committee by March 1995. The purpose will be to reexamine MAB in terms of the new context presented by both domestic and international changes that have occurred. These changes include complexities of managing large-scale land-

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scapes through ecosystem management principles, acceptance of scientific evidence of environmental issues, and pressures for government reinvention and interagency cooperation. The informally constituted commission will be asked to review the progress of past U.S. MAB efforts, assess the capabilities of the present organization to contribute in the future, suggest what to keep and what to change, and propose new program areas that should be pursued.

The U.S. delegation to the Euro-MAB managers meeting provided a good cross section of the U.S. biosphere reserve program. The delegation participated in discussions on the challenges and opportunities marine areas provide to the MAB program and developed recommendations for making EuroMAB biosphere reserves more effective partners.

These notes obviously touch on only some of the highlights of the MAB program. I will be glad to help as I can with specific questions or collaborations, and I encourage all of you who participate in biosphere reserves or other MAB activities to share information about your activities as much as possible, and to look ahead to participating in biosphere reserve managers meetings as they are convened.

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