

The following contribution from Great Smoky Mountains National Park breaks our pattern of reporting just the national MAB news in this column. Our long-term strategy with MAB Notes is to balance reporting the activities of the national MAB committee with park experiences, like this one, related to the MAB program. Accordingly, parks are invited to contribute to this department.

The Southern Appalachian Mountains, in the southeastern United States, is one of the many biosphere reserves designated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). As of January 1994, UNESCO had designated 324 biosphere reserves in 82 countries, with 47 occurring in the United States; the majority (30) of United States Man and the Biosphere Program (USMAB) areas are also national park system areas. Although the Southern Appalachian Biosphere Reserve (SAMAB) includes Great Smoky Mountains National Park, it differs from most USMAB areas, as it comprises protected units scattered over 50,000 square miles in Tennessee, Virginia, North and South Carolina, Alabama, and Georgia.

Created "... to foster harmonious relationships between humans and their environment through programs and projects that integrate the social, physical, and biological sciences to address ... problems," SAMAB presents a complex management situation due to its size. To manage the biosphere reserve cooperatively, six federal agencies with southeastern United States land management re-

sponsibilities signed inter-agency and cooperative agreements in 1988 to form the Southern Appalachian Man and the Biosphere Cooperative. The charter members were the U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Oak Ridge National Laboratory (Department of Energy), and the Economic Development Administration (EDA).

The original partnership has grown steadily and now includes the Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, National Biological Service, Appalachian Regional Commission, and the states of North Carolina, Georgia, and Tennessee. Other federal agencies and states are expected to join in future years. Private sector involvement and support is achieved through the SAMAB Foundation. First chartered in 1990, the foundation was subsequently granted nonprofit status. In 1990, USMAB and UNESCO recognized SAMAB as the first regional demonstration model for other biosphere reserves across the country.

The management cooperative is governed by an executive committee, comprised of one representative from each federal and state member agency and the chairman of the SAMAB Foundation board of directors. Six committees made up of area specialists from the member agencies do most of the work, enlisting the aid of other specialists from member agencies. These committees are: environmental research and monitoring, en-

vironmental education, natural resource management, public affairs, and cultural and historic resources.

Funding for SAMAB comes from the member agencies who, by pooling funds and other resources, sustain the cooperative. The Tennessee Valley Authority and Great Smoky Mountains National Park have been especially supportive. The executive director is a TVA employee assigned fulltime to this function, and the agency has also provided administrative, legal, and financial assistance to the cooperative. The park provides office space and related services to the executive director.

MANAGEMENT UNITS

At the heart of the regional programs are biosphere reserve management units, which are typically geographic areas that are shielded from unbridled development. These units seek cooperative regional programs and share any lessons learned with other management units. Although it started with just two such management units, SAMAB now has five, and expects to add three more in the near future. The current units are the Great Smoky Mountains National Park; the Department of Energy Oak Ridge National Environmental Research Park; the Coweeta Hydrologic Laboratory of the U.S. Forest Service; Mt. Mitchell State Park, which is operated by the State of North Carolina; and Grandfather Mountain, a privately operated environmental park also in North Carolina. Each is recognized by UNESCO as a unit of the

larger SAMAB that is part of the international biosphere reserve network.

While the SAMAB research, education, and demonstration ecosystem management programs center on the management units, they extend outward in a zone of cooperation that embraces the entire biosphere reserve. The zone of cooperation was not chosen arbitrarily; rather, it was identified because it shares common geological, biological, and cultural resources. It also lies within the administrative boundaries of the southeastern offices of the various federal agencies in the SAMAB cooperative.

ISSUES

The SAMAB cooperative has proven its usefulness in exploring solutions to many environmental issues and, although several have related directly to Great Smoky Mountains National Park, three are especially noteworthy:

(1) When the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service launched its program to restore the red wolf in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, they expected public opposition. Through its public affairs and environmental education committees and in cooperation with the NBC Knoxville, Tennessee, affiliate, WBIR, SAMAB developed a campaign that clarified the true nature of the red wolf project and contributed significantly to diffusing the sensitive issue. Posters, teachers guides, classroom packages, brochures, and a TV documentary were all developed and distributed in this initiative.

(2) Concerned about runaway tourist development in park gateway communities, the relatively small, undeveloped, park-abutting town of Pittman Center asked SAMAB to help it plan for future growth. Together with the University of Tennessee and the Economic Development Administration, SAMAB helped Pittman Center develop a strategic plan. This led to additional zoning ordinances in the town, which were implemented after extensive public involvement. A community development plan based upon the Pittman Center model has been prepared and widely distributed. Another Smokies gateway community, Townsend, is using this plan as are communities in Canada and Asia.

(3) Very serious air quality problems led SAMAB to convene a forum in March 1992 to give concerned regional parties an opportunity to discuss conflicting viewpoints on the controversial issue. For the first time, about 125 people from federal and state agencies, industry, universities, and citizen groups participated in the sometimes emotional discussions. A direct result of the conference was the formation of the Southern Appalachian Mountain Initiative, a regional partnership of the state air quality regulatory agencies for addressing southern Appalachian air quality issues. The Environmental Protection Agency has provided more than \$600,000 in support of the program, whose mission is to "... remedy ... effects from ... air pollution on the air quality related values ... of the southern Appalachians...." Many of the SAMAB member

agencies also participate in this new air quality partnership, which will adopt requirements in addition to those of the Clean Air Act in May 1997.

Currently SAMAB is involved in conducting an assessment of environmental conditions in the southern Appalachian region. The assessment is a joint effort of the various federal and state SAMAB cooperative members. The assessment is scheduled for completion at the end of calendar year 1995 and the results are intended for use in making environmental management decisions.

In view of current federal downsizing and even agency deauthorization discussions, SAMAB cooperative members are concerned about the future willingness of agency managers to continue committing funds and staff to SAMAB. Will managers want to "circle the wagons" and focus exclusively on "their own" missions? As a member agency, we hope not. Member agency personnel constitute a valuable pool of knowledge and experience; SAMAB uses these resources as a conduit for sharing, not only with other cooperative members, but also with public and private land managers throughout the region. Let us hope future managers will see the logic in working toward more cooperation, not less.

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