

mab notes

On Oct. 24, 1989, the U.S. MAB Executive Committee reviewed the **U.S. Biosphere Reserve Program Development Plan**, which was written by six members of the old Biosphere Reserve Directorate under the chairmanship of Paul Risser. The plan's major goals include: building functional biosphere reserves (BRs) in the context of regional MAB/BR programs, and focusing research on biodiversity, human dimensions of global change, and integrated landscape development.

The Executive Committee strongly supported developing BR functions, emphasizing programs rather than new BR designations. The new directorates were requested to coordinate the planning of a workshop in 1990 involving BR managers to review and recommend modifications to the plan and opportunities for implementing it. U.S. MAB will consider these recommendations in developing the final plan.

Two significant developments have occurred in the **Southern Appalachian MAB Cooperative (SAMAB)**: the Environmental Protection Agency has joined the six original federal member agencies; and the SAMAB Foundation, a private, nonprofit organization established to receive funds for operating the cooperative, has been chartered in Tennessee. All that remains before the foundation can function is recognition of its nonprofit status by the IRS. Hubert Hinote, SAMAB's executive director, says he has received many calls from other regions requesting information about the cooperative, and his talks with professional groups in the Southern Appalachians have elicited many favorable responses. SAMAB has produced a brochure and a few other informational materials but is not pushing widespread publicity yet. "We want some success stories under our belt first," Hinote says.

One such project is creation of a strategic plan for sustainable development of the Pittman Center area, a small community near Gatlinburg, Tenn. The goal is economic growth, based substantially on tourism, while maintaining the natural and cultural environment that attracts visitors. Other planned projects include monitoring of indicators of global climate change; an environmental education campaign on some aspect of global change; a study to assess the economic feasibility of cultivating the region's medicinal plants to reduce pressure on native populations; and cooperative development by the SAMAB member agencies of a course in the region on resource management for Third World countries.

Other regions are contemplating a cooperative arrangement, perhaps like SAMAB's. On Aug. 8-10, 1989, a **seminar on the MAB program** and biosphere reserves was held at West Glacier, Mont. sponsored by Glacier NP, Waterton Lakes NP, and the Coram Experimental Forest – the three biosphere reserves in the northern Rocky Mountains. The seminar introduced the MAB program to land managers, biologists, historians, and tourism and development representatives from nearby parts of the U.S. and Canada. Bjorn Dahl, superintendent of the North Carolina national forests and chairman of the SAMAB Executive Committee, described the SAMAB cooperative and its benefits to member agencies. Other speakers talked about the biological history and diversity of the northern Rockies and various management issues.

Although somewhat wary of the MAB program when they arrived, the participants went away enthusiastic.

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Tourism officials saw the benefits of cooperating to maintain health of the regional environment. A representative of the Blackfoot Tribe was delighted at the prospect of working more closely with the NPS and USFS on issues such as reestablishment of bison. The seminar also had lessons for future MAB efforts. Laurie Kurth, a Glacier NP ecologist who, as the park BR Coordinator, was one of the seminar organizers, said, "This meeting suggests that we should be talking MAB rather than biosphere reserves. 'Reserves' implies to many people that the whole region will come under preservation laws." One might add that it also suggests that the biosphere reserve concept needs better public explanation. The practical result of the seminar is that local land managers planned another meeting to explore further the possibility of establishing a regional MAB program.

On Nov. 14, 1989, in Boulder, Colo., Bill Gregg, NPS MAB Coordinator, spoke at a meeting of federal and local land managers to explore possibilities for developing a regional MAB/BR program in the **Colorado Rockies**. The present BRs in this region include Rocky Mountain NP, the Fraser Experimental Forest, and Niwot Ridge in the Roosevelt National Forest. The discussion focused on the potential benefits of using MAB as an aegis for developing a coordinated program of scientific and educational activities to help address environmental, socioeconomic, and land use issues facing the central Colorado Rockies, building upon the strengths of the existing BRs in these fields. The group decided to hold follow up discussions to further evaluate options for planning a regional program.

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