
mab notes

Selection panels are being formed to recommend new Biosphere Reserves for two regions of North America. A panel dealing with the Acadian Boreal Coastal Region, which extends from Cape Cod to the Strait of Belle Isle between Labrador and Newfoundland, will have its first meeting in early November, pending confirmation that representatives of MAB Canada can join the session. The California Biogeographical Province, which includes chaparral and grassland communities, will come under scrutiny at a panel meeting to be held in November at Los Angeles in conjunction with an international symposium on chaparral ecosystems.

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Bill Gregg, NPS MAB Coordinator, and two other U.S. representatives attended the second meeting of the MAB Science Advisory Panel for Biosphere Reserves in La Paz, Bolivia, Aug. 18-24. Major agenda items included review of a draft "operational guidelines" for Biosphere Reserves; recommendations to the MAB Bureau on new areas nominated to become Biosphere Reserves; discussion of a paper on "model" Biosphere Reserves around the world; and assessment of results of a detailed questionnaire sent to all Biosphere Reserves to collect information on their status and activities. In connection with the latter, Bill expresses deep appreciation to the managers of U.S. Biosphere Reserves for their response: as of Aug. 10, 39 of 43 had replied.

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A MAB symposium on temperate forest ecosystem

management, held July 5-11 at Changbai Mountain Research Station in northeastern China, may have opened up interesting new avenues for U.S.-Chinese scientific collaboration, including projects linking Biosphere Reserves in the two countries. Peter White, former director of the NPS-CPSU at the University of Tennessee who was one of three American participants, reports that the Chinese are particularly interested in future cooperative research on similar ecosystems in the U.S. and China, methods of long-term vegetation research and monitoring, and conservation management. He suggests that Changbai and Great Smoky Mountains Biosphere Reserves might be paired in conducting comparative research on temperate deciduous and spruce-fir forests.

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A Southern Appalachian connection may also be developing with West Germany. A letter from the chairman of the West German MAB Committee endorses cooperation with the Southern Appalachian BR on prototype studies of integrated small watershed ecology. This would involve primarily Oak Ridge National Laboratory, but possibly also Great Smokies.

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The MAB inventory of U.S. reserves 5000 acres or larger is launching its pilot test in Florida. A questionnaire is being sent to all such public and private reserves in the state to obtain data on management objectives. The information will be used to determine levels of protection provided to natural ecosystems.

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Development of a process for collecting and managing species data for Biosphere Reserves and other biologically rich areas is the purpose of the Smithsonian MAB Biological Diversity Program, directed by entomologist Terry Erwin. The first step in this program – development of protocols for biological survey data management, collection and storage of voucher specimens, and training, primarily of Third World biologists, on how to do the first two – will be assisted by Francisco Gomez of Venezuela, recently hired as a research associate at the Smithsonian for this purpose. The program will then conduct surveys of Biosphere Reserves and other species-rich areas, recording all flora and fauna including less-collected groups such as invertebrates and lichens. Population changes over time will be measured on permanent plots established in Biosphere Reserves. Among other benefits the program should give a major boost to our knowledge of the immense tropical biota. Bill Gregg would appreciate receiving information on existing species data base systems in Biosphere Reserves that might be useful to this MAB program

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