
mab notes

The U.S. Biosphere Reserve program is in high gear. In April two new reserves were approved by the Paris MAB Bureau: the Carolinian-South Atlantic BR, a multi-site reserve that includes Cumberland Island NS and Cape Lookout NS, as well as a variety of other areas under Federal, State, and private administration; and the Glacier Bay-Admiralty Island BR. The Bureau also approved expansion of the Mojave and Colorado Deserts BR to include part of the San Bernardino National Forest. A U.S. MAB selection panel has produced a draft report on a proposed Chesapeake Bay BR that would include estuarine portions of five rivers and two special interest areas. Each river has important research sites or stations and a core area that is protected. The entire Chesapeake Bay estuarine system would be a "zone of cooperation."

Several site managers' workshops have been convened or are planned, to discuss establishment or expansion of biosphere reserves. In December 1985 a workshop discussed linkage of Great Smoky Mountains and Coweeta BR's to form a Southern Appalachian BR, and the addition of Oak Ridge National Laboratory and several State and Forest Service areas. Tommy Gilbert, former NPS MAB Coordinator, has developed a detailed plan for this biosphere reserve as the center of a regional demonstration project on environmental research and management. A workshop was held in March to discuss formation of a Cumberland Plateau BR that would include Big South Fork NRA and several non-NPS areas. Another was held in May on a proposed Central Appalachian BR comprising Shenandoah NP and parts of two national forests. This summer other workshops are scheduled for site managers to discuss formation of biosphere reserves recommended by a selection panel for the Lake Forest Province. The only NPS areas included are Isle Royale and Voyageurs, as parts of a 4-unit reserve along the Minnesota-Ontario border.

MAB selection panels have a biogeographic classification of U.S. coastal areas for use in identifying potential biosphere reserves, but refined methodologies for making such selections are needed. A pilot project headed by G. Carleton Ray of the University of Virginia is being planned to develop a

MAB classification of representative ecological areas in the Caribbean or another regional sea as a model for similar projects elsewhere. The principal products of the study will be a geographic information system, strategic assessment, classification of the study region, and recommendations for MAB guidelines and criteria for selecting biosphere reserves in dynamic coastal/marine areas.

The MAB inventory of U.S. reserves 5000 acres or larger is classifying all such protected areas, public and private, according to management objectives and ecological communities. The project will make this information available both graphically and in backup files, will identify deficiencies in the U.S. protected area system, and will provide an information base for use in planning, management, and impact assessments. This summer the inventory methodology will be tested using the whole state of Florida, where natural diversity is high, development pressures are a threat to ecosystems, and information on protected areas is good. The revised methodology will then be applied to other regions of the U.S. as funding becomes available.

A workshop on coastal protected areas in the Lesser Antilles was held July 8-12 in the U.S. Virgin Islands. The objective was to discuss selection, establishment, and management of coastal protected areas, and to use practical experience in the region to draw lessons for the future. The Virgin Islands BR was the focus for part of the workshop as well as an important case study.

Bill Gregg, WASO, and Bob Stottlemeyer, NPS/CPSU, Michigan Technological University, attended the European MAB Conference on Biosphere Reserves and Ecological Monitoring, March 24-28, in Czechoslovakia. The principal purpose of the conference was to report activities and identify opportunities for carrying out the MAB Action Plan for Biosphere Reserves in Europe. During and after the conference, several possibilities for U.S. cooperation were explored, including NPS fire management and other expertise, and woodland caribou reintroduction, with Finland; resumption of bilateral ecological monitoring in biosphere reserves, with the Soviet Union; and long-term integrated ecological research on small watersheds, with the Federal Republic of Germany and Czechoslovakia.

Bill Gregg and Peter White attended a meeting at Oak Ridge National Laboratory on April 10 that further explored opportunities for collaboration between the US and the Federal Republic of Germany in long-term ecological research, monitoring, and specimen banking. US and FRG representatives agreed to share expertise in setting up a program of these activities in West Germany. American experience with integrated watershed research should be especially valuable. In the other direction, a West German specimen banking program to provide early warning of persistent changes in ecosystems associated with chemical pollutants, should benefit the US, which lacks such a program. Cooperation between specific biosphere reserves in each country also was recommended.

Peter White of the NPS/CPSU, University of Tennessee, attended a symposium on temperate forest ecosystems held at China's Changbai BR, July 5-11. Opportunities to develop cooperative activities in ecologically similar temperate forest biosphere reserves, and building a system of protected areas in China were principal items on the agenda.

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