

## BIOSPHERE RESERVES MANAGER'S SURVEY

In preparation for the October 1995 Biosphere Reserves Managers' Workshop, William Gregg of the National Biological Service, surveyed the managers' perceptions about their biosphere reserves.

Twenty-nine of the 47 U.S. Biosphere Reserves (BRs) responded to the survey. Various categories relating to management benefits, stakeholder participation and concerns, and administrative needs were surveyed.

Analysis of the survey found that BRs which reported cooperative programs that identify explicitly with MAB concepts benefited in the areas of ecosystem management, environmental awareness, research, international cooperation, addressing environmental problems, political support, data/information on natural systems, ethic of sustainability, public recognition, and planning/decisionmaking.

Universities and research institutions, federal agencies, state and regional agencies, local governments, conservation groups, and resource users were the most frequently mentioned participants in BR partnerships. There was more participation by biosphere reserve staff, local governments, and groups promoting economic development in BR partnerships when the partnerships were explicitly identified with MAB concepts.

Managers reported that identification with biosphere reserve concepts is greatest among managers, less among staff and partner agencies and organizations, and least among local people.

About half of the responding managers indicated having received expressions of philosophical concerns about biosphere reserves such as:

- the uses of private property
- infringement of economic development
- international influence on local affairs
- traditional uses of resources

These concerns were from local residents, private organizations, resource users, state and local governments, Federal agencies, and visitors.

Managers offered several suggestions to U.S. MAB for enhancing their biosphere reserve programs including: improving politicians' awareness of biosphere reserves; greater U.S. MAB support for managers' efforts to address regional threats; encouraging agency recognition of local staff and time requirements in implementing biosphere reserves; providing clear channels of communication and policy approval for agency participation in MAB activities; and encouraging integrated interpretation of natural resources, history, and cultural resources.

A comparison was made between responses of biosphere reserve managers in 1992 and 1995 on current needs of the biosphere reserves to better meet the challenges of full participation in the biosphere reserves concepts. The managers were most concerned with the need for more staff and monetary resources. Inventory/monitoring, local

constituency, long-term ecological research, and support of existing staff were also mentioned as important.

For additional information on the Biosphere Reserves Managers' Survey please contact:

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