

The U.S. Man and the Biosphere Program

The First 30 Years



PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

- Focus on complex relationships of humans and the biosphere
- Science in service to society
 - Harmonizing conservation, culture, and development
- Holistic, interdisciplinary, problem-oriented
- Multi-scale
- Visionary
- Catalyst for innovative concepts in conservation and development

Program Characteristics ...

- Voluntary and inclusive
Low budget [max.\$1.2M from 11 agencies in 1994)
- A magnet for commitment
- Biosphere reserves as laboratories for implementing MAB concepts

Assessing Accomplishments

USMAB accelerated and sometimes initiated emerging global processes

- > availability & access to information & experience
- > local to global cooperation
- > use of scientific and indigenous knowledge in decision-making
- > integration of natural and social sciences
- > institutionalization of networks
- > leveraging of capabilities and resources
- > use of biosphere reserves as “landscapes for learning”

The Remarkable Contributions of U.S. > Biosphere Reserves – A “Network of Firsts”

- World’s largest national network – 47 BRs, ~100 units
- Nearly all biogeographical provinces in U.S. represented
- First network of coastal BRs
- Paired parks and research reserves (1970s) to integrated landscape-level multi-site partnerships (1990s)
- > role of protected “core” areas in multi-scale monitoring
- > cooperation between core areas & experimental sites
- > landscape-level interdisciplinary and multi-sector cooperation – e.g., SAMAB Regional Assessment
- Catalyst for evolution in resource management – e.g., ecosystem management, adaptive management
- Transborder and international pairing of BRS –
Mexico, Canada, Russia, Czech Republic, France, Germany

USBR Contributions ...

- **Permanent associations of Federal, state, and private protected areas under the Biosphere Reserve banner, e.g.,**
Central California Coast (13), Carolinian-South Atlantic (13), Southern Appalachians (5)
- **International recognition of regional models for sustainable development, e.g.,** New Jersey Pinelands BR Champlain Adirondack BR
- **Models for sustainable communities, e.g.,** Pittman Center, TN
- **Initiated process of building open-ended “zones of cooperation” (and, by early 90’s, involvement of local people)**
- **New institutions to facilitate the BR concept, e.g.,**
Regional: SAMAB, Mammoth Cave BR, and Colorado Rockies Regional Cooperatives
International.multicultural: International Sonoran Desert Alliance
Non-governmental: SAMAB Foundation, Biosphere Reserve Association

USBR Contributions ...

- **Global and regional databases: ACCESS, BRIM (1991)
MABFlora/MABFauna, MABNetAmericas, etc.**
- **USBR 1994 Strategic Plan -- a model for 1995 UNESCO
Seville Strategy**