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Remarks of William Gregg to Biosphere Reserve Managers' Workshop,  
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The evolution of the U.S. biosphere reserves ~~program~~ reflects growing awareness of the importance of partnerships and networking <sup>implementing the BR concept</sup> in ~~integrating conservation and development~~. From the ~~first~~ <sup>beginning</sup> BR

~~designations 17 years ago~~, we realized that most individual sites could not fully implement the ~~BR~~ <sup>pairing</sup> concept, and that ~~partnerships~~ <sup>among</sup> complementary sites would be required. This U.S. innovation

came to be known as the "cluster concept", and has since been used in many countries. <sup>Our first 29 BRS in 1978 mostly under 198</sup> At first, the concept involved pairing a

<sup>separately designated</sup> national park, as a core conservation and monitoring area, with an <sup>in the same BGP</sup> experimental forest or range, for ecosystem research and developing sustainable production systems. The NPS and the FS Forest and

<sup>MAB</sup> Range Experiment Stations became the <sup>direct</sup> early custodians of the BR network. <sup>Systemic biogeographic reviews by team of nat. sci. & mgt. led to design. of</sup> Later, clusters often included complementary sites under

many administrators in the same BR. <sup>B.</sup> For the first decade, there was little progress in implementing BR concepts ~~in most of these~~

~~areas~~ because administrators lacked policies or programs for BRs, <sup>we had not yet begun to involve local people (mgt. & science)</sup> ~~and~~ <sup>However, by the mid-1980's, MAB had largely achieved an early goal of</sup> ~~that~~ <sup>establish a BR in each of the countries under BGP.</sup>

The situation began to change in the mid-1980s. UNESCO's Action Plan called on MAB national committees to strengthen the contributions of their biosphere reserves in implementing the conservation, development, and logistic roles. Filling gaps would no longer be a sufficient basis for designation. ~~By the mid-~~

~~1980s, UNESCO nominations~~ <sup>also over</sup> ~~required managers to acknowledge their responsibilities to implement BR concepts.~~



Serious efforts to implement BR concepts in the United States followed. Managers began to see designation as a catalyst for cooperation, rather than an end in itself. Local parties, sometimes helped by small grants from USMAB, began assessing the feasibility of implementing biosphere reserve concepts. Most of these efforts have improved communication and information sharing among the stakeholders in ecosystem management. <sup>Some have led to new BRs, or expansions of existing BRs to include sites under many different names.</sup> Some have led the establishment of regional biosphere reserve cooperatives and associations, such as in the Southern Appalachians and the Central California Coast. These organizations now provide forums for exploring regional issues, such as biodiversity and air quality management, and for developing cooperative information systems, research, education, and demonstration projects. Although individual agencies often provide the funding, the MAB aegis gives the projects a broader constituency than they would have as individual agency efforts. This "value-added constituency" helps stabilize institutional support, especially for long-term activities, increase use of the products, and strengthen political support for management decisions based on the cooperative information products and systems. Most Federal resource agencies, several states and localities, and several private organizations participate in regional MAB organizations. Regional programs are being informally discussed or actively planned in about 15 areas (focus of our case studies).

Intuitively, we feel that we should be able sustainably manage the Greater Yellowstone Area, the Everglades, the Olympic Peninsula,



and other biogeocultural areas to restore and sustain their native biological diversity, while balancing competing human needs for resources. Whether we shall ultimately be able to do this may depend on whether the stakeholders in each of these areas are able to use information and technology to develop a shared understanding that leads to a workable consensus on ecosystem management goals and strategies. Biosphere reserves both symbolize and facilitate this process.

Right now, support for BRs comes mostly from local sources, and very little from regional and national sources. Only the NPS has a formal policy to integrate BR concepts in planning and management. U.S. MAB is providing some support to enable U.S. BRs to participate in international MAB networks, which <sup>are</sup> ~~are~~ beginning <sup>helping</sup> ~~to enable~~ managers of similar ecosystems with similar problems to share data and experience. The core research programs of the MAB Directorates contribute directly to the ecosystem management capabilities of BRs. However, MAB needs the plan we are developing to establish policy and priorities for allocating its limited resources to biosphere reserves.

The time is right to bring biosphere reserves to center stage, and our plan is the vehicle. Biosphere reserves have an important role in our society-- whether the focus is making government more efficient, <sup>linking P.A.S + research sites biog. + mt. 1 to solve problems, C & D problems,</sup> demonstrating cooperative ecosystem management, <sup>developing the theory + practice of</sup> implementing <sup>U.S. responsibilities under the</sup> ~~treaties on~~ biodiversity and <sup>climate countries</sup> ~~global~~ change, helping the new National Biological Survey deliver biological information



to its constituents, or simply empowering local people to solve resource problems. If we didn't already have this unique intergovernmental network, we'd have to invent it. Fortunately, we have 47 opportunities for demonstrating leadership in making the BR concept a management reality.