

Biosphere Reserves and Sovereignty: A Story for the United States Man and Biosphere (MAB) Community

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INTRODUCTION

This story from annotated documents describes the conflict between proponents of biosphere reserves and groups which claimed biosphere reserves were instruments of the United Nations to take control of lands and private properties in the United States. It is prepared now to remind members of the Department of State, the National Park Service and other agencies in the MAB community of the events of this difficult period, and of lessons that could be useful today

Biosphere reserves are special places dedicated to discovering and demonstrating approaches to conservation and sustainable development. There are now 640 biosphere reserves in the world, and in March 2016 several more will be designated. The United States has 47 biosphere reserves, and played a lead role in the development of the international program, but in the mid to late 1990's, Sovereignty International, Inc., founded and chaired by Henry Lamb, led efforts that resulted in the U.S. Congress to cutting funding for the U.S. MAB program. Lamb was opposed to all United Nations programs. He attended United Nations meetings around the world and was the leading opponent of biosphere reserves, which he referred to as "UN reserves." He was a consultant on UN affairs to Fox News. He and his allies convinced members of Congress to cut funding for the U.S. Man and Biosphere (MAB) Program in spite of testimony by Administration officials who supported the program. For example, Rafe Pomerance, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, testified to the Committee on Resources, U.S. House of Representatives on June 10, 1997, that "Continued international collaborations under MAB are of importance to the Department of State because they further the Administration's goal of fostering wise environmental stewardship around the world while at the same time strengthening relations between the U.S. and key counterpart nations."

Lamb was successful largely because he knew about the UNESCO requirements for biosphere reserve qualification and management. On June 10, 1997, he testified before the House of Representatives Committee on Resources in support of the American Land Sovereignty Protection Act. He said, "The American people have been told by Administration representatives that the United Nations does not have any authority to affect federal land management decisions within the United States." Lamb pointed out that the *Seville Strategy* requires each biosphere reserve to meet a minimal set of conditions to be admitted to the World Network, and that the conditions include establishing buffer zones and mechanisms to manage human use and activities in buffer zones. He cited this as the way the UN affects land management decisions in the United States because of the Executive Branch's commitment to meet the conditions. This proved to be a powerful argument against biosphere reserves, and it

continues to be so today. In order to qualify as a biosphere reserve, UNESCO and the MAB International Coordinating Council still require a biosphere reserve area to be zoned, and that policies, plans and mechanisms should be established to manage human use and activities in the buffer zone areas.

The following documents and accompanying notes describe some of the history of the biosphere reserve program, how Henry Lamb and I met, and found some common ground.

Several thousand people were involved in the meetings and activities described in these documents, and though we failed to revive the U.S. MAB program, there are useful lessons for those involved in efforts to renew the program today.

BACKGROUND

A number of groups in the United States oppose UN programs, and they actively influence the political process. The groups unite in the theme that the UN system is leading to global governance. They believe that Agenda 21 is an international intrigue, which poses a real danger to individual freedom, property rights, free markets, and ultimately to national sovereignty.

A leading anti-UN organization, Sovereignty International, was formed in 1996 to spread word the UN was headed toward global governance with its blueprint called Agenda 21, and to counter the influence of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and natural Resources (IUCN), which works closely with the UN. The President of Sovereignty International described Agenda 21 as “a 40 chapter socialist plan to control the world.”

“It is high time that the UN policy makers realize that “civil society” includes thousands of organizations that cherish national sovereignty more than global governance; free markets more than managed trade; and individual freedom more than managed societies.” (Environmental Conservation Organization, eco-logic, January 1997)

Lamb was Executive Vice President of the Environmental Conservation Organization, and Chairman of Sovereignty International. He wrote many articles and web stories about the UN and biosphere reserves, contending that an expanding UN system and biosphere reserves posed a great danger to individual freedom, property rights, free markets, and ultimately, to national sovereignty. He wrote that the Southern Appalachian Man and Biosphere (SAMAB) Program was designed to “seduce or coerce state and local governments to impose land use policies that originate with the UNESCO Committee in Paris, France. He often stated that only the U.S. Congress could stop the relentless drive toward global governance. (I first met Henry Lamb in 2005, but for several years before that I had read his articles and informed the MAB Secretariat in Paris about him and his opposition to biosphere reserves.)

DOCUMENT 1, September 14, 2003: Knoxville News Sentinel article. There were many efforts by proponents of biosphere reserves to counter the claims of Sovereignty International and members of Congress that biosphere reserves were being used by the United Nations to take over lands in the United

States, but the opponents prevailed and the U.S. program became inactive, so it was a surprise when President George W. Bush announced in September 2002 that the U. S. would rejoin UNESCO and participate in its programs. I wrote the following article, published in the Knoxville News Sentinel, to support this initiative. Other groups including the John Birch Society were asking their supporters to contact Congressional representatives to support an amendment to H.R. 1950 (Foreign Relations Authorization Act, FY 2004 and 2005) that would block the U.S. from rejoining UNESCO.

News Sentinel Citizen's Voice

It's Time for the United States to rejoin UNESCO

By V. Gilbert, September 14, 2003

Nineteen years have passed since the United States withdrew from UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), but on September 12, 2002 President George Bush made the following announcement to the world:

"As a symbol of our commitment to human dignity, the United States will return to UNESCO." He said that America would participate fully in its mission to advance human rights and tolerance and learning. First Lady Laura Bush emphasized the importance of the President's decision when she stated on February 13, 2003, "Education is the most important long-term investment we can make in our future. Education reflects our love and belief in freedom. It is freedom itself. And with UNESCO's leadership, freedom can be realized throughout the world with the promise of Education for all."

However, the timing of our return to UNESCO is critical since approximately \$20 million of the U.S. dues amount must be released by October 2003 for the U.S. to become eligible to participate in the upcoming UNESCO Executive Board elections. Congress must provide the funding, and there is strong opposition by some members.

Why should we care about a matter that has received so little public attention? The United States' return to UNESCO presents the United States with the opportunity, once again, to play a significant part in promoting sustainable human development and peace through UNESCO's programs in education, the sciences, culture and communications. UNESCO was established, after WW II with U.S. leadership, to foster peace-building. Much of the capacity and responsibility to achieve peace and a sustainable future is concentrated in the United States, and UNESCO provides a forum that we need, one that is not available elsewhere, especially for working with developing countries. I have firsthand knowledge of this because I have worked with the UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Program (MAB) in more than a dozen countries.

MAB deals with the conservation and rational use of the resources of the biosphere (the portion of our planet which supports life).

A part of MAB is devoted to the development of an international network of biosphere reserves, which provides a framework for countries to cooperate in conserving the world's significant natural areas. As the project began in 1974, I suggested that it should be included in the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. Summit discussions. This resulted in the 1974 Summit Agreement and Joint Communiqué by President Nixon and General Secretary Brezhnev of the U.S.S.R. to:

“Designate certain natural areas as biosphere reserves for protecting valuable plant and animal genetic strains, and ecosystems, and for conducting scientific research needed for more effective actions concerned with global protection.”

The Agreement received international acclaim, and most members of Congress applauded it. There were also frequent consultations with members of Congress regarding the development of the program to assure that U.S. interests were fully met. The Great Smoky Mountains National Park, which fostered a collaborative approach to working with neighboring agencies, institutions and communities, was used as an example to describe the concept of biosphere reserves, and the Park became one of the first areas to be designated a biosphere reserve. Other units in the southern Appalachians have also been designated, including the Oak Ridge National Environmental Research Park, the Coweeta Hydrologic Laboratory, Mt. Mitchell State Park, Grand Father Mountain, and the Tennessee River Gorge Trust. This has resulted in significant benefits to the region, largely through the collaborative research, monitoring, education, and community activities that have been carried out under the Southern Appalachian Man and the Biosphere (SAMAB) Program.

There are now 425 biosphere reserves in 95 countries that serve as landscapes for collaborative research, conservation and education. As UNESCO assumes a lead role in the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, these areas will be valuable laboratories for education toward sustainability. The United States must take an active part in this program, and benefit from it. Our Mexican and Canadian biosphere reserve colleagues recognize the value of collaboration. They have asked us to collaborate in protecting, conserving and enhancing the natural environment and the biodiversity that our countries share, and to deal with issues such as our trans-boundary flow of air, water, and species. At the Fifth Conference of Science and the Management of Protected Areas Association (SAMPAA), held in Victoria, BC, Canada in May, 2003, 450 participants unanimously resolved to support the biosphere reserve program as a practical means to achieve collaborative conservation, and to establish an effective and functional North American Biosphere Reserve Network. Canadian and Mexican biosphere reserve representatives have been invited to the Southern Appalachians in the spring of 2004 for further planning toward this goal.

How much is it worth for the United States to take part in programs such as these? The annual cost of our participation in UNESCO is estimated to be about 25 cents per person. I write about

the program that I know best, but there are others that can help us to expand local, national and international cooperation. These are described at UNESCO's web site: www.unesco.org.

Please take the time to let your House and Senate representatives know that it will cost us more in international relationships if they vote to keep the U.S. out of UNESCO. Let them know that you believe they should support the authorization and appropriation of the funds needed for full U. S. participation.

(V. C. "Tom" Gilbert is a native and resident of Knoxville. He has retired from the National Park Service but remains active in southern Appalachian and international conservation initiatives. He recently joined others in SAMAB to establish a non-profit U.S. Biosphere Reserves Association, which assists in planning a new U.S. biosphere reserve program.)

DOCUMENT 2, Background paper for MAB Visioning Workshop.

I prepared the following paper as background information for a U.S. MAB Visioning workshop hosted by the Missouri Botanical Garden, St. Louis Missouri. It describes events which led to the reestablishment of the MAB National Committee, a 2003 Survey of Biosphere Reserve managers, and how planning renewal of the U.S. MAB program got underway.

Revitalizing the United States Biosphere Reserves Program

V. (Tom) Gilbert

U. S. Biosphere Reserves Association, February 1, 2004

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1. Biosphere Reserves and the U. S. Biosphere Reserves Association

Biosphere reserves are special places dedicated to discovering and demonstrating approaches to conservation and sustainable development. Worldwide, there are 425 biosphere reserves, including 47 reserves in the United States, designated as such by UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Program (MAB). Ninety-five countries now participate in the program, but the U.S. biosphere reserve program, once a leader in the international program, has been inactive for more than 10 years.

On February 5, 2003, I met with the USDA Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment, Mark Rey, he agreed that plans could be developed to renew the U.S. biosphere reserve program. This action would support President Bush's decision that the United States

would rejoin UNESCO, and participate fully in its mission. It would also set the stage for responding to a request from the Canadian Biosphere Reserve Association to U. S. and Mexican biosphere reserve representatives to explore the feasibility of establishing a North American network of biosphere reserves. Mr. Rey emphasized that the U.S. program would have to be reconfigured to foster greater local community involvement and collaboration in achieving biosphere reserve goals. The creation of a U.S. Biosphere Reserves Association was discussed as a means to assist USMAB in developing this approach.

The United States Biosphere Reserves Association was incorporated in April, 2003, as a non-profit organization to provide leadership and support for the U. S. biosphere reserve program, by fostering public and private partnerships, and conveying factual information about the purposes and activities of biosphere reserves.

The U. S. government has rejoined UNESCO and expressed a commitment to participate fully in its mission, so there is an opportunity for the United States to play, once again, a leading role in the development of the biosphere reserve program. The Association will help in the following ways:

- Working with the USMAB Committee to plan a revitalized biosphere reserve program.
- Affiliating with groups locally and nationally to promote biosphere reserve concepts, goals and activities.
- Encouraging and assisting individual reserves to develop cooperation plans similar to those in Canada, which focus on public-private partnerships and community-based activities.
- Planning collaborative activities with Mexico and Canada in collaboration with UNESCO and the international network of biosphere reserves.
- Performing periodic surveys and assessments of U. S. biosphere reserves to determine how they are carrying out their functions.

The U. S. Biosphere Reserves Association activities to date have included:

- Meetings and discussions with key U.S. government officials that resulted in commitment to plan for the renewal of the U.S. Biosphere Reserve Program.
- Conducting a U. S. Biosphere Reserves Survey to seek the input of biosphere reserve managers regarding the status of their biosphere reserves, the reserves' capacity for participating in a renewed U.S. program, and their interests in developing collaborative activities with Canada and Mexico.
- Planning a Spring 2005 meeting to develop strategy options for the biosphere reserve network.
- Provide background information to the first meeting of the reconvened National Committee.

2. U. S. Biosphere Reserve Survey Results: 2003 and 1995

The 2003 survey, conducted July 22–September 22, was carried out to assess the opinions of biosphere reserve representatives about their biosphere reserves, and their interest in renewing the program. There are 47 U.S. biosphere reserves, 10 of which have multiple units, so there are about 92 biosphere reserve sites or units. The managers' responses, are now being used to guide early planning for revitalizing the biosphere reserve program.

In introducing the 2003 survey the reserve representatives were reminded of the functions of biosphere reserves: conservation, sustainable development, and capacity building to support conservation and sustainable development. A summary of information from the 2003 and the 1995 surveys, and of the conclusions follows:

A. Responses of the biosphere reserve representatives:

- **2003**- 96% (45 of 47) reserves responded. 78% of the units (72 of 92) responded.
- **1995**- 67% (29 of 47) reserves responded. 46% of the units responded.

B. Do the reserves have programs: 1) that identify explicitly with biosphere reserve goals? 2) that are consistent with biosphere reserve goals?

- **2003**: Explicit: 46%; Consistent: 86%
- **1995**: Explicit: 49%; Consistent: 48%

C. Management benefits of biosphere reserves: (Respondents rated 15 types of benefits derived from biosphere reserve status)

2003: Using a five point scale, respondents reported that the most significant benefits are the improvement in public recognition of resource significance, encouraging research, and increases in environmental awareness. Of 15 categories of benefits listed, respondents reported totals of highly significant benefits- 60; significant- 134; obvious- 258; possible minor- 193; no benefit- 162.

1995: The average significance of management benefit categories was higher. (This could be attributed to more active biosphere reserve programs during that period.) Respondents listed the four most significant benefits as facilitating ecosystem management, promoting environmental awareness, encouraging research, and facilitating international cooperation.

D. Identification with Biosphere Reserve goals

2003: The survey respondents were asked who, among the parties that interact with biosphere reserves, understands and identifies with the goals. Respondents report that they, themselves, do understand and identify with biosphere reserve goals. There is less understanding from their staff and partner agencies, and little understanding of the goals by local people.

1995: Results are similar to those in 2003.

E. Who participates?

2003: There were 18 categories of participants in both the 2003 and 1995 surveys. Universities and other research organizations, federal, state and regional agencies, local staff, and conservation groups are substantially involved. Local governments are involved substantially in 36% of the units. Among organizations not substantially involved are religious and service organizations, foreign governments and international agencies, and other biosphere reserves. The latter indicates that there is little collaboration and information exchange among biosphere reserves.

1995: Results are similar to those in 2003.

F. Who's concerned or opposed?

2003: The extent of concern or opposition cannot be determined because the respondents were not asked to report the number of expressions of concern within a specified period of time. Based upon the phrasing of the question, even an isolated expression of concern at any point in the reserve's history would have caused units to fall into the category of those that received expression of concern. Concerns were reported mostly from federal agencies (24%), local governments (17%), private organizations (14%) and visitors (14%). However, only 4 units (7%) reported some organized opposition. About 90% of the respondents report that support could be increased for a renewed biosphere reserve program.

1995: Concerns were reported more often from local residents (24%) and private organizations (21%), and less often from resource users (14%) and state and local governments (10%), and least often from federal agencies (7%) and visitors (7%).

G. What's needed?

2003: Respondents rated nine categories of potential needs. Top needs are additional funds and staff support. The next relate to publication education and support, information exchange among biosphere reserves, and policy and guidance from home/host agencies/organizations. Biosphere reserves with multiple units have special needs in that they require communication and coordination among their units to function effectively. Respondents in both 2003 and 1995 offered additional suggestions important to enhancing the biosphere reserve programs in their specific areas.

1995: Responses were very similar to those in the 2003 survey, except managers viewed as less important the policy and guidance from home agencies.

H. Interest in future participation

In the 2003 survey 91% of respondents (51) indicated their area would participate in planning a renewed biosphere reserve program; 79% said they would be interested in planning collaborative activities with Canadian and Mexican Biosphere Reserves.

I. Conclusions

Both surveys indicate that managers see important benefits in the biosphere reserve designation and concept. This is particularly notable in 2003 since the program has been inactive for almost a decade. The respondents to both surveys identified what is needed to develop successful programs- additional resources, enthusiastic local constituencies through education and participation, better communication among BRs, and policy and guidance from host agencies. Most (90%) of the respondents to the 2003 survey would participate in planning a new program.

Most of the respondents (79%) would help in planning collaboration activities with Canada and Mexico, and specific areas of interest were suggested for 40 BR units.

3. United States, Canadian and Mexican Biosphere Reserve Collaboration- Meeting Objectives

Well-planned collaboration with Canada and Mexico is needed, especially in our shared ecosystems- land, lakes and oceans.

In December 2002, the Canadian Biosphere Reserve Association (CBRA) invited U. S. and Mexican biosphere reserves representatives to join in a meeting to explore the potential of establishing a North American Biosphere Reserve Network.

On May 12, 2003, representatives of the U.S. Biosphere Reserves Association took part in a meeting on biosphere reserves held during the Fifth International Science and Management of Protected Areas Association (SAMPAA) Conference in Canada. The discussions and recommendations of this meeting resulted in the Conference (450 participants) unanimously passing the following resolution:

Participants at the Fifth Conference of Science and Management of Protected Areas Association (SAMPAA), held in Victoria, BC, Canada, May 12-16, 2003, acknowledge the value of the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve program as a practical means to achieve collaborative conservation of biodiversity, through integrated ecosystem-based management with the participation of local communities and indigenous cultures. We recognize the efforts to strengthen a network of biosphere reserves in North America have been initiated by biosphere reserve representatives from the three North American countries of Mexico, the USA, and Canada. We, the participants at SAMPAA 5, hereby resolve to support these efforts for the timely establishment of an effective and functional North American Network of biosphere reserves.

U.S., Canadian and Mexican biosphere reserve representatives will be invited to a meeting in the Southern Appalachians during the late summer or fall of 2004 to begin planning of a North American biosphere reserve program with the following goals:

- Taking stock of trends and threats shaping North American ecosystems, e.g. habitat fragmentation and destruction, species loss, alien invasive species.
- Promoting cooperation to address threats and conserve ecologically significant regions, migratory, marine, and trans boundary species.

- Facilitating data and information sharing and promote integrated monitoring and assessment to increase understanding of North American biodiversity and ecosystem health.
- Increasing communication, networking, training, and identification and sharing of best practices. Identify and share information about existing programs and agreements for bilateral and multilateral networking.
- Developing better capacities to assess progress in biosphere reserve programs.

Next steps:

- Hold discussions within each country to identify priority projects and develop strategies to generate interest and support for ones that seem doable.
- Schedule the meeting in the Southern Appalachians. A 4 day meeting, with field trips, will be to get to know each other, discuss priorities, decide goals for the next few years, and develop plans to initiate collaborative projects. The Presidents of the Mexican MAB Committee and the Canadian Biosphere Reserves Association both think this would be an important opportunity to plan specific cooperative activities. This meeting is also an opportunity to discuss and exchange information about how our different governments carry out their responsibilities in biodiversity conservation.

DOCUMENT 3, May 2004: U.S. MAB Visioning Workshop at Missouri Botanical Garden.

The following is a summary of the workshop held at the Missouri Botanical Garden at the invitation of Dr. Peter Raven, Director of the Botanical Garden. At that time hopes were high about renewing the U.S. MAB Program, but Henry Lamb found out about the meeting and plans to renew the U.S. biosphere reserves program, and he expressed his concerns to his friends in the U.S. Congress.

US MAB Visioning Workshop Summary, May 2004

A US Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Workshop was held on May 4-6, hosted by the Missouri Botanical Gardens, St. Louis, MO. The sponsors of the workshop were USDA Forest Service Research and Development, the Southern Appalachian Man and the Biosphere Foundation (SAMAB), and the US Biosphere Reserves Association. The objectives of the workshop were to explore ways of rejuvenating the US MAB program.

Workshop attendees were drawn from diverse backgrounds including Federal and State agencies, academia, and local communities and had past, current, or proposed future involvement with the US MAB program. The format included plenary presentations and breakout group discussions on specific topics chosen to help inform future investments in the program and shape an update of the strategic plan.

Steps to Success

The US has one of the finest sets of preserved areas and laws relating to biodiversity, but US MAB does not have long-term funding and most Federal agencies do not have mandates to work worldwide. Biosphere reserves are places where people can work and live within the biosphere in a sustainable manner. A fully funded MAB program would constitute a strong contribution to where we need to be in the future.

The recommended vision of a future US MAB program includes the following:

- Invert the MAB model, making humans the core of the program.
- Encourage private sector engagement.
- Strengthen and support the Biosphere Reserve network.
- Focus on ecosystem services but also look at the human factor, including influences and the impacts.
- Be proactive and address the issue of changing ecosystems holistically and urgently; help society understand how to manage these changes.
- Increase the number of synthesis contributions.
- Refocus on the urban and non-urban landscapes/systems interface, looking at landscape and jurisdictional fragmentation.
- Highlight US MAB accomplishments to assist in marketing and future planning.
- Contribute to, and be part of, the explosion of “Informatics” in the next decade.
- Become involved in other landscape scale and long-term science programs.

Recommended Actions

Local Level - Bring together practitioners to discuss how to: best achieve the potential of biosphere reserves; obtain new resources for the BR’s from the NEON initiative; build a communication forum for BR managers; achieve recognition and build a record of accomplishments for the institutional memory and continuity of local MAB. This can be accomplished through multiple actions: hold a national conference; make connections with the NEON program to investigate linkages; update the website into a useful tool; and determine the US BRA role in facilitating communication and information exchange between managers. To discover and share best practices, be aware of, and have a presence in, other major programs of related and/or overlapping missions and interests, such as NEON and LTER. Documenting and developing a network to share “best practices” among Biosphere Reserves is a “unique-to-MAB” activity that could facilitate cross-Reserve, cross-community information and idea exchange. Practices of interest are those with a human component and where peer-to-peer learning is employed.

National Level – The 30th anniversary of US MAB is in 2006 and discussion was geared toward what could be accomplished before a national anniversary conference is convened. For example, build and support the BR network; redefine US MAB emphasis areas; facilitate collaborative work; set-up new directorates; serve as repository of information generated

through the BRs; and serve as the primary contact with EuroMAB and the central office in Paris. To accomplish these tasks, the key objectives of the US MAB program need to be defined, the directorates need to be reconstituted, the BR communication network strengthened, and stronger links to private corporations need to be forged. Networking, visibility and marketing were key features to be accomplished by updating the website as a central information forum and highlighting MAB at a number of upcoming scientific conferences and in professional journals.

International Level – US MAB needs to re-engage. There are many existing activities that will help accomplish this, including participation in the UN Decade for Education for Sustainability, the Ongoing dialogue between US Biosphere Reserves Association and Mexican and Canadian Biosphere Reserve groups, and many other existing international agreements that the US government is a party to. To accomplish this, a strategy should be developed to reinvigorate our international partnerships, including inviting the current MAB director to the US for talks and a tour of some of the BRs and increase US MAB representation at important national and international meetings.

Build Capital - US MAB needs: a clear statement of where it is going; a training program for building political and community support; a budgetary planning effort; a directory of locations looking at the interface of urban sustainability and environmental conservation, a review process of BR activities; identification of key players; and review the selection criteria for BR's to look at community support and address community concerns. Long-term tasks include developing permanent funding and reviewing more BRs as requested and where appropriate.

Concluding Thoughts

- Listen and learn from all perspectives on MAB, positive and negative – what is working, what the problems are, and how can we address them constructively. Remain apolitical and bipartisan and stay away from inflexible approaches and perspectives.
- Look at the current and future situation and challenges (ecological, institutional) from a fresh perspective – try and look beyond traditional concepts and look for innovative approaches and solutions. Identify the guiding philosophies that US MAB has to offer today, which embody integrated research and education efforts that engage biological, physical, and social scientists, and two-way communication between scientists and the public so citizens can meaningfully engage in decision making about the management of natural systems.
- Support the BRs as a unique component of the MAB program – living laboratories for learning and demonstrating sustainable management successes.

DOCUMENT 4, briefing for Pete Roussopoulos, U.S. F.S. , new chairman of the U.S. MAB Committee

After the 2004 Visioning Workshop at Missouri Botanical Garden a steering committee was established to guide planning, develop a website and a MAB

brochure. Progress was slowed when Representative Richard Pombo, Chairman of the Committee on Resources, had his Oversight and Investigations staff conduct briefings with Dr. Barbara Weber, Chair of the U.S. MAB Committee and her Forest Service staff. The briefings conducted by Kurt Christensen and Rob Gordon were difficult, and abusive to Forest Service staff. Barbara took the brunt of the criticism. (I was not aware of it at that time, but Henry Lamb kept in close touch with Kurt Christensen, who was very critical of Forest Service involvement in MAB.)

On January 3, 2005, Barbara wrote to me that this was her last day with the Forest Service, and that Pete Roussopoulos would be officially designed as her successor as Chair of U.S. MAB. She suggested I start bringing him into the loop, so with help from the SAMAB office, I prepared the following briefing for Pete.

Key USMAB activities: 2000-2005
V. Gilbert, February 2005

2000-2001: 27 years after US MAB was organized under the Department of State (1st National Committee convened 1973), responsibility for the program was transferred from State Dept. to USFS in Oct. 2000. USFS established MAB Executive Director and Program Officer positions. Candidates were interviewed, but Undersecretary Rey put hold on positions.

2002: April, Doug Crandall, National Forest Foundation, and I discussed the USMAB situation at Conference on Environmental Regionalism, Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, Cambridge, MA. I proposed SAMAB as a case study area: *The Southern Appalachian Man and the Biosphere Program: An Example of Environmental Regionalism* (Tab 2), and suggested renewal of the U.S. biosphere reserve program could be a means to promote environmental regionalism. Doug suggested he could arrange a meeting with Mark Rey to discuss prospects for USMAB.

President Bush announced in September that the U.S. would rejoin UNESCO. In November the Director General of UNESCO met with John Marburger, Science Advisor to President Bush; Rita Colwell, Director of NSF; and Norman Neureiter, Science Advisor to Secretary of State about U. S. participation in UNESCO's programs. The DG's theme was "promoting peace and security through education and science."

In December the Canadian Biosphere Reserves Association proposed meeting to explore collaboration with U.S. and Mexican Biosphere Reserves. I proposed a strategy, which I sent to Doug Crandall, who offered to arrange meeting with Mark Rey.

2003: January a draft proposal, describing accomplishments of MAB and USFS involvement, was sent to Mark Rey (Tab 4), and a meeting set for February 5th. Meetings were also arranged with representatives of NPS, and the UN Association of the USA..

Mark Rey agreed Feb. 5th to the recommendation for renewing a biosphere reserve program in support of President Bush's decision that the U.S. would rejoin UNESCO, and approved preparation of a plan for collaboration with Canada and Mexico. Barbara Weber was identified as contact person. Conditions were to justify MAB in terms of in terms of GPRA, and to "reconfigure" the program with less central control, and more local community involvement- the "Collaborative Conservation" approach. I said that we would establish a U.S. Biosphere Reserves Association to assist in achieving these goals.

In meeting with John Dennis and Mike Soukup, NPS, it was suggested that an assessment of biosphere reserves might be done using NPS funds.

February 10-16, a high-level UNESCO mission, led by Assistant Director-General for Natural Sciences, visited U.S. and met with senior representatives of State Department, Office of Science and Technology Policy, other governmental departments and leading representatives of U.S. scientific bodies to discuss cooperation with U.S. scientific community in context of return of U.S. to UNESCO membership. The unifying theme of discussions was... ***"UNESCO's contribution to peace and human development in an era of globalization, through education, the sciences, culture and communication."*** Ecological and Earth sciences, including MAB and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves were considered important parts of this mission, and it was suggested that U.S. side would have discussions about becoming a member of the MAB International Coordinating Council. The Columbia University-UNESCO Biosphere and Society Program (CUBES), based at the Earth Institute at Columbia University and managed in cooperation with the UNESCO New York Office, was referred to as a key activity in the U.S. program. (CUBES has innovative work on urban areas in the U.S., and comparative work on the grasslands of Southwestern U.S., Mexico, and East Africa.)

In April the U.S. Biosphere Reserves Association (USBRA) was incorporated. (Tab 6) Consultations were held with Barbara Weber, USMAB committee members, community leaders and biosphere reserve managers. In May representatives of USBRA participated in the Fifth Conference of Science and Management of Protected Areas Association (SAMPAA), held in Victoria, BC, Canada. A report on the USMAB status was given, and a resolution was unanimously passed by 450 participants acknowledging the value of Biosphere Reserves as ***"a practical means to achieve collaborative conservation of biodiversity, through integrated ecosystem-based management with the participation of local communities and indigenous cultures."*** Participants resolved to support efforts for the timely establishment of an effective and functional North American network of Biosphere Reserves.

June 24-28, I participated in a UNA-USA Conference in Washington, D.C., including the Conference "Day on Capitol Hill", in which I met with Rep. John Duncan (TN), and staff in Senators Frist's and Alexander's offices about renewing the USMAB program. All meetings

were positive. (See report of meetings and statement, which was widely distributed at the Conference. (Tab 7)

July-September, the USBRA, with support from the SAMAB Foundation, conducted a survey to seek the input of U.S. biosphere reserve managers and representatives regarding the status of their biosphere reserves, the reserves' capacities for participating in a renewed U.S. program, and their interests in developing collaborative activities with Mexico and Canada. A report, *United States Biosphere Reserves Survey, 2003* was produced in October. Ninety one percent of the respondents indicated they would assist in planning a new program, and many of them reported obvious, significant or very significant advantages to their areas because of their biosphere reserve status. (Tab 8)

A "Citizen's Voice" article, "It's Time for the United States to Rejoin UNESCO" was published, September 14th in the Knoxville News Sentinel. This resulted in an invitation to a ceremony in Washington, D.C. regarding U.S. return to UNESCO. (Tab 9)

October 1st, after an absence of 19 years, the U.S. rejoined UNESCO. First Lady Laura Bush, head of the U. S. delegation to the General Conference, declared in her address: "The United States Government will once again be a full, active, and enthusiastic participant in UNESCO's important mission to promote peace and freedom, and the people of my country will work with our UNESCO colleagues throughout the world to advance education, science, culture and understanding."

In November, Barbara Weber, keynote speaker at SAMAB Fall Conference, outlined her vision for renewing USMAB. A special meeting was arranged with Jack Fobes, former Deputy Director General of UNESCO and founder of the organization, Americans for the Universality of UNESCO. Jack offered to do what he could to help USMAB.

2004: The MAB National Committee was convened in January, and confirmed the mission of MAB to support a network of biosphere reserves that represent the ecological diversity of the United States and serve as centers of innovative and effective conservation, education, and progress toward sustainability.

In February-March I visited with biosphere reserve representatives in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona in support of USMAB planning.

A Visioning Workshop was held May 4-6, hosted by the Missouri Botanical Garden, St. Louis, MO, sponsored by USFS, SAMAB Foundation, and USBR Association. The meeting was productive. According to Bruce Potter, President of the Island Resources Foundation, it was "the most involved and dedicated group he had been with in years." (Summary-Tab 10)

Robb Turner was appointed to the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves in May. The Committee has statutory responsibility for ensuring the scientific and technical legitimacy of biosphere reserves, assessing nominations for new reserves, and overseeing periodic review reports. Robb participated in a meeting of the Committee in June, and reported on the status and concerns of the U.S. program.

In June I talked with Jacques Prescott from the Ministry of Environment, Quebec, Canada, who suggested that USMAB consider use of the *Guide to Developing a Biodiversity Strategy from a Sustainable Development Perspective* in our efforts to renew the U.S. biosphere reserve program. This could be adapted to be a useful tool, which could be applied along with an ecosystems approach. (Tab 11)

A grant agreement was completed in June between the NPS and the CESU at U. of Tennessee to assess the functioning of Mammoth Cave Biosphere Reserve and S. Appalachian Biosphere Reserve units to determine how best to renew U.S. Biosphere Reserve activities consistent with U.S. action to rejoin UNESCO and participate fully in UNESCO. (Tab 12) During the next few months, background information was prepared for the project and interviews were conducted at Coweeta, Oak Ridge, Great Smoky Mountains National Park and nearby communities, and with the Mammoth Cave Biosphere Reserve Advisory Council. A proposal was also developed for conducting a Lincoln Institute Environmental Regional Clinic in the Southern Appalachians.

Plans for reconvening the USMAB Committee, scheduled for September 15th were postponed. Political problems surfaced with House Resources Committee staff. Kurt Christensen, Office of Oversight and Investigations, and Frank Vitello, Legislative staff, Subcommittee on National Parks and Public Lands, asked Barbara Weber to brief them about biosphere reserves, including the Southern Appalachians, and Land Between the Lakes. Christensen reportedly keeps in touch with Henry Lamb, founder of Sovereignty International, 1996, and the Environmental Conservation Organization, 1988. These are anti UN organizations. Lamb was called as an expert witness by the House Resources Committee to testify in favor of the American Land Sovereignty Protection Act in 1997. Lamb has focused on terminating the Biosphere Reserve program. (Tab 13) My comments. (Tab 14)

Rep. Pombo wrote, August 3, to Ishwaran, Director of UNESCO's Division of Ecological Sciences, to learn more about the process for establishing and terminating biosphere reserves as well as the monitoring UNESCO requires for these designations. Ishwaran answered the questions, but he did not explain that the Statutory Framework for the World Network of Biosphere Reserves encourages states to develop their own criteria to take into account to the special conditions that exist in each country. (Ishwaran's letter and Pombo's remarks, Tab 15) I asked Doug Crandall's advice about USMAB establishing a process to evaluate U.S. biosphere reserves to determine which ones should be kept on a basis of real merits and benefits, and from the evaluation proceed to develop a program that would satisfy the concerns of the Resources Committee. Doug thought it would need to be a strong Administration proposal with Senate support.

A Cooperative Agreement between the Forest Service and the USBRA was signed in September for designing a USMAB brochure and initiating a USMAB conference. (Tab 16)

October 25-29, Barbara Weber, Robb Turner and I participated in the MAB International Coordinating Council Meeting, UNESCO, Paris, and we met with Ambassador Louise Oliver and Nancy Cooper, Science Officer, U.S. Delegation to UNESCO. There is positive support for U.S.

participation in MAB by the Ambassador. She said she would separate MAB science and U.S. politics and deal with them as separate issues.

November- I informed Doug Crandall that meetings in Paris went well, and suggested an evaluation of U.S. biosphere reserves to answer key questions, such as: Does the program serve U.S. interests, locally, regionally and internationally? (TAB 17) He forwarded the suggestion to Mark Rey, and said if Mark thought it made sense, he would forward it to Frank Gladics. Rey agreed it was a good idea, and he and Gladics agreed to meet with me in January.

December- After discussions with Barbara Weber, Robb Turner, Ishwaran, the Mammoth Cave Biosphere Reserve Coordinating Council and others including community leaders near the Gt. Smoky Mountains National Park, I prepared a proposal and background materials in preparation for meetings in Washington, D.C. I asked Matt McKinney, University of Montana Policy Research Institute, and Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, about the possibility of doing an assessment of U.S. biosphere reserves, rather than proceeding with further planning of a Clinic in the Southern Appalachians. He indicated interest, and suggested the Lincoln Institute might contribute financially.

2005: Jan.10-11 I met with: 1. Doug Crandall- House Resources Committee; 2. Frank Gladics- Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee; 3. Mike Soukup and John Dennis- NPS; 4. Marguerite Sullivan, Melba Crawford, Guinnevere Roberts, Antoinette Condo, and John Dennis- U.S. National Commission for UNESCO, Department of State and NPS; 5. Mark Rey- USDA. Discussion points, proposals, and background materials used in the meetings are included in Tab 18.

Key points:

1. Crandall thinks a letter from Ishwaran to Pombo addressing Pombo's concern would be a good idea. He also thinks an assessment of U.S. biosphere reserves by Lincoln Institute would help build needed credibility for the MAB program.
2. Gladics knows about the MAB Program and said that its political problems originate from the House. He compared the biosphere reserve approach to the Forest Service's program to build partnerships for conservation in the New York New Jersey Highlands. (Lincoln Institute and USFS conducted a clinic on building partnerships in this region in 2004.) Gladics said he would "digest" my proposal and background materials, and then discuss it with Mark Rey and with Doug. He suggested that he would think about members of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee who might be interested in supporting MAB.
3. With Mike Soukup and John Dennis, we discussed the status of the assessment of Mammoth Cave and Southern Appalachian Biosphere Reserves. Both will attend the George Wright Conference in March, and will participate in the MAB session during the evening of 16 March. Both agreed that a clear statement from the State Department indicating that participating fully in UNESCO's mission included the MAB program would help in generating congressional support for MAB.
4. At the meeting with the U.S. National Commission for UNESCO, I described the efforts being made to renew the USMAB program, and said that it would help to generate support for the effort if the State Department and the Commission made it clear that the President's commitment to participate fully in UNESCO included the MAB Program. It was suggested that

the expected cooperative agreement between NASA and UNESCO might be a way to involve MAB. Ms. Sullivan said that advocates for the MAB program would have to build local and congressional support. She also said that the USMAB Committee would have to be reconstituted within the framework of the Commission. (See follow-up questions and answers, Tab 19)

5. Mark Rey said that it would be up to the USFS to support MAB. He suggested that it might be better to work with the Senate Environment Committee, and that he would discuss this with Frank Gladics. He said that he would discuss my proposal with Gladics, send my package to Pete, and that Pete and I should get together. I agreed and thanked him for his considerate response.

DOCUMENT 5, 2005: Description of the U.S. Biosphere Association's role and activity.

By this time, the U.S. Biosphere Reserve Association had become an important means for sustaining interest in biosphere reserves. The following document provided an up-date on its activities and plans at that time.

The United States Biosphere Reserves Association

-United States Biosphere Reserves-

2005





The United States Biosphere Reserves Association

The United States Biosphere Reserves Association (USBRA) is a non-profit organization incorporated in 2003 to provide leadership and support for the United States biosphere reserves program, and to convey factual information about the goals and activities of biosphere reserves.

Biosphere reserves are special places dedicated to exploring and demonstrating approaches to conservation and sustainable development. Worldwide, there are 459 biosphere reserves, including 47 in the United States (Map, page 1), recognized by UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Program. Ninety-seven countries participate voluntarily in the program, but the U.S.'s biosphere reserve program has been largely inactive for more than 10 years. Now the U. S. has rejoined UNESCO and has committed to participate fully in UNESCO's science, education and cultural programs. This brings an obligation for the United States to renew its biosphere reserve program to achieve the following program goals:

1. Develop and use biosphere reserves as models for conservation of natural and cultural diversity through voluntary cooperative programs.
2. Use the areas as models of land management and sustainable development.
3. Develop and demonstrate the capacity to support conservation and sustainable development through voluntary collaborative activities of public and private sectors and individuals, taking appropriate account of and respecting the interests of persons and organizations who own properties in the biosphere reserve areas.

The aims of the Association are to:

- Work with the USMAB National Committee to plan and develop a national biosphere reserves program, making local community participation the core of the program.
- Foster community understanding and appreciation of Biosphere reserve concepts and opportunities, and facilitate the participation of local communities in planning, coordinating, and implementing cooperative programs and activities that benefit the environment, the economy, and local people.
- Affiliate with groups locally and nationally to promote biosphere reserve concepts and goals, and convey factual information about the program so that people understand that the MAB program respects the rights and interests of property owners and that all individuals and groups participate voluntarily.
- Assist individual biosphere reserves to develop cooperation plans to achieve their goals, focusing on community-based, public-private partnership activities.
- Plan and develop collaborative activities with Mexico and Canada in a North American Biosphere Reserves Network, in collaboration with UNESCO and the international network of biosphere reserves.
- Perform periodic surveys and assessments of U. S. biosphere reserves to determine how they are carrying out their functions.

Activities to Date

- Consultations with key Federal agency officials, US MAB Committee members, Biosphere reserve managers and local community leaders about strategic planning approaches for the renewal of the U.S. Biosphere Reserves Program.
- Participation in the Fifth Conference of Science and the Management of Protected Areas Association (SAMPAA), held in Victoria, BC, Canada, May 2003. A resolution was unanimously passed by 450 participants acknowledging the value of the Biosphere Reserves as a practical means to achieve collaborative conservation of biodiversity, through integrated ecosystem-based management with the participation of local communities and indigenous cultures. Participants resolved to support efforts for the timely establishment of an effective and functional North American network of biosphere reserves.
- Conducted a United States Biosphere Reserves Survey to seek the input of biosphere reserve managers regarding the status of their biosphere reserves, the reserves' capacity for participating in a renewed U.S. program, and their interests in developing collaborative activities with Canadian and Mexican biosphere reserves programs. A report, *United States Biosphere Reserves Survey, 2003*, summarizing the survey results, was prepared in October 2003. Ninety one percent of the respondents said they would assist in planning a renewed program and they identified ways to improve the program. Most reported significant management benefits to their areas because of their biosphere reserve status, and they believe support for the program can be increased.
- A workshop of biosphere reserve managers and key advisors to initiate planning of a revitalized USMAB and Biosphere Reserve program was held May 4-6, 2004 at the Missouri Botanical Garden. The Association sponsored the meeting in cooperation with the Forest Service and the Southern Appalachian Man and the Biosphere Program (SAMAB). The Missouri Botanical Garden hosted the meeting.
- Activities Planned

- Assist the USMAB Committee in planning a USMAB program, including design of a new MAB brochure.
- Conduct a special session on USMAB at the George Wright Society Biennial Conference, March 16, 2005, Loews Philadelphia Hotel. Biosphere Reserve colleagues from Canada and Mexico will participate.

USBRA Information

The Association is a member-driven, non-profit organization supported largely by volunteers. Copies of the Association's by-laws and 501(c)3 documentation are available at samab.org/usbra; or by writing the Association at 314 Conference Center Building, Knoxville, TN, 37996-4138; or calling 865-974-4583.

DOCUMENT 6, March 16, 2005. MAB Steering Group Workshop in Philadelphia.

In January 2005 I met with representatives of the NPS, Forest Service and key staff in the House and Senate. They agreed that organizing support for the renewal of U.S. MAB would be easier if the Department of State would affirm that "participating fully in UNESCO's programs" included the MAB program. (First lady Laura Bush had declared the United States would be a full, active and enthusiastic participant in UNESCO's important mission when she addressed the General Conference in October 2003.) I met with Marguerite Sullivan, Executive Director of the U.S. National Commission for UNESCO and representatives of the State Department to confirm that participating fully in UNESCO programs included MAB and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. She answered that it did not, and that it would be up to MAB advocates to develop support in the Congress. Her position was confirmed by congressional liaison officers, who said, until MAB received congressional recognition, the State Department would remain on the sidelines. This was contrary to the position of U.S. Ambassador to UNESCO, Louise Oliver, who had told me she was in favor of participating in MAB, and that we should separate the political and science aspects of MAB and deal with them as separate issues.

With the prospect of the State Department remaining on the sidelines until there was Congressional recognition of MAB, we began to rethink the MAB strategy. Some of this is reflected in the Executive Summary of a report of the MAB Steering Group meeting in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, held in conjunction with the George Wright Society.

Executive Summary

The Steering Group for the U.S. MAB Program met on March 16, 2005 in conjunction with the George Wright Society's biennial meeting in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to review progress to plan next steps in renewing the U.S. MAB and biosphere reserves program. Special guests from the UNESCO MAB office and the Canadian Biosphere Reserves Association contributed to the meeting.

A focus of U.S. MAB activity has been the development of communication tools—a website and a brochure. The draft website developed by Dan Neary, USDA Forest Service, was presented for review and will be made public after reviewers' suggestions are incorporated. Developing the brochure is "on hold" until the U.S. National Committee meets. Reconstituting the U.S. National Committee has been a key initiative, and the US MAB coordinator, Deb Hayes, USDA Forest Service, has been communicating with current federal agency members about a suitable date for meeting. Consultations have occurred with the US National Commission for UNESCO about reestablishing the committee and the procedural requirements.

Pete Roussopoulos (USDA Forest Service), the new chairman for U.S. MAB, endorsed the ongoing review of the Biosphere Reserves and the drafting of criteria for U.S. Biosphere reserves as positive steps in moving U.S. MAB forward. He identified the reestablishment of an active national committee and a communications strategy as essential next steps on the path.

Natarajan Ishwaran, the Secretary for MAB at UNESCO, offered encouragement to the U.S. in defining its connection to the MAB program. Presentations outlined UNESCO organization and priorities made clear the relationship of MAB to UNESCO focal areas. The information is beneficial in planning and seeking funding for U.S. proposals.

Other opportunities to strengthen the program discussed by participants include tapping an urban constituency interested in MAB and developing partnerships with related NGOs and large-scale research activities like the National Science Foundation's National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON) and Long-term Ecological Research (LTER) Network. The consistency of objectives of the MAB program—especially biosphere reserve program that emphasize community direction—and the administration's focus on Cooperative Conservation (Executive Order No. 13352) helps affirm the direction of the U.S. MAB program. Better tailoring the biosphere reserve program to U.S. conditions is the objective of developing U.S.-specific biosphere reserve criteria and V.C. (Tom Gilbert) of the US Biosphere Reserves Association discussed this effort. And lastly, Glen Jamieson of the Canadian Biosphere Reserves Association discussed the Association's efforts to foster communication across biosphere reserves and in communities hosting biosphere reserves. The Canadian Association, the U.S. Biosphere Reserves Association, and Mexican counterparts have been discussing the benefits of North American cooperation and will continue discussions at subsequent meetings.

The Plan Forward

Pete Roussopoulos became the chairman of U.S. MAB early in 2005, after Barbara Weber's retirement. Roussopoulos confirmed the objective of the meeting as to determine how to transform U.S. MAB into a functioning program, including identifying and planning how to proceed with necessary steps and tasks.

Roussopoulos was positive about activities that have occurred in the last year saying, "there's a good path illuminated here and I'm ready to get my shoulder to the wheel." Among the positive steps are the review of network, which is well timed and producing good information, and the steps to develop U.S.-specific criteria for the Biosphere Reserves, as is allowed by the MAB convention. Subsequent steps require the reconstitution of the committee (a meeting is planned for April).

Roussopoulos assessed the value of the MAB program (especially BR program) as stronger today than previously because of inherently transboundary issues like invasive species, global warming, globalization of markets, and even land management activities. Roussopoulos noted that the May 2004 meeting had confirmed the emphasis on people with their relationship to biodiversity and other ecological values. This parallels the ground swell of interest in ways to remunerate people for ecosystem services with the end result being sustainability.

Roussopoulos proposed to apply three questions now and at subsequent steps in the progression of the U.S. MAB program. They are

- What value are we trying to create with the activity/project?
- What internal capacity do we have to create it?
- What external relations are necessary to do it?

Important activities in this year include the reestablishment of the national committee. This is a prerequisite to the full implementation of any other steps. Roussopoulos and other participants advocated the inclusion of non-Federal members on the national committee because they broaden perspective and help to build political constituency. The National Committee will meet in April 2005 with the Federal members only, as this is the fastest, most direct path to reconstitution. Deb Hayes noted that because the national committee will serve under the auspices of the U.S. Commission for UNESCO, FACA requirements (for meeting announcement/openness) are not of concern.

Roussopoulos also noted the appropriateness of redesigning the criteria for U.S. biosphere reserves. Tom Gilbert noted that participating countries are encouraged by the Statutory Framework for the World Network of Biosphere Reserves to establish nation-specific criteria. A re-review of biosphere reserves will follow upon acceptance of the new criteria.

A critical need Roussopoulos noted is that of an explicit, sustainable communications strategy. Calling such a strategy an "untapped resource" for the program, Roussopoulos noted that the

specifics of the strategy—who, what, when, where, how—can be determined after the National Committee is in place. Roussopoulos' meetings in Washington, D.C., scheduled to follow this meeting are an important step in U.S. MAB communications. His key message now is that we are rebuilding the U.S. MAB program and we want all input. Coupled with the need for a communications strategy is a need for a congressional relations strategy. Glen Jamieson noted that the Canadian Biosphere Reserves Association is focused on communication with the communities, government and other constituencies.

Building the capacity of the program is essential, and reestablishing the committee and implementing a communications strategy are key. Funding and key supporters will assist, as well. Having supporters like Bill Gregg and Jack Waide (USGS) within the agencies is helpful, and Roussopoulos and Gilbert speculated that the program has natural links to USDA Forest Service's state and private forestry section, where Roussopoulos is currently acting director. Gilbert noted that the Forest Service (research) has two US MAB positions "on the books" that remain unfilled. Within the State Department the Office of ES has responsibility for MAB, with some oversight coming from the International Office.

Another in way is the Executive Order and White House conference on cooperative conservation. John Twist, Forest Supervisor on Black Hills National Forest, is the Forest Service's planner for this conference. The cooperative conservation concept is well aligned with the goals of biosphere reserves. Deb Hayes proposed that SAMAB and USMAB present a poster jointly at the conference. Hayes will discuss this with Twist.

As in the May 2004 visioning workshop, the importance of establishing appropriate links to LTER sites, and the NEON program was discussed. Establishing a refined network of locations at which to pose key questions is important, and Roussopoulos asserted that having scientific questions that can be answered by the US MAB program at US Biosphere Reserves is what will "kick off" the program. Another potential alliance is with the National Association of Conservation Districts, which is connected well with rural America and, like MAB, emphasizes people.

DOCUMENT 7, June 23, 2005, Letter to Representative Pombo

On May 24, 2005, Rep. Richard Pombo, Chair of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Resources wrote a letter to Mark Rey, Under Secretary of Natural Resources and the Environment, U.S. Department of Agriculture, asking Mr. Rey to have the Forest Service turn over every record relating to U.S. MAB dating back to January 2001 when the Forest Service took over lead responsibility for the program. This was to include meeting agendas, notes and records, emails, phone logs-everything. These records were for an official investigation of the MAB program, to be conducted by Kurt Christensen and Rob Gordon of the Committee's Oversight and Investigations staff. (This followed the meetings

Christensen and Gordon had with Barbara Weber and her staff.) Barbara retired on January 3, 2015, after these episodes, and wished me the best in work with the Biosphere Reserve Association, but I knew the investigation of MAB would not be fair, so I wrote to my Representative on the House Resources Committee, John Duncan Jr. and to Rep. Pombo. The following letter was to Pombo.)

U.S. Biosphere Reserves Association

2228 Island Home Boulevard

Knoxville, TN 37920

June 23, 2005

Honorable Richard W. Pombo

U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Resources

2411 Rayburn House Office Building

Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Pombo,

I am writing to assist you and the Committee on Resources by offering to provide first hand information about the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Program to the Committee. I have a great deal of experience with the MAB Program, having served as the US MAB Program Coordinator for two years, and before that international specialist for MAB in UNESCO, and as a consultant on MAB in several countries. I organized the expert panels that developed the criteria and guidelines for the Biosphere Reserve Program, and proposed the Nixon-Brezhnev summit agreement on Biosphere Reserves in 1974 to *“Designate certain natural areas as Biosphere Reserves for protecting valuable plant and animal strains, and ecosystems, and for conducting scientific research needed for more effective actions concerned with global protection.”* The Department of the Interior presented the Distinguished Service Award to me for this work with MAB.

I appreciate the concerns that you and the Committee have about the rights of property owners neighboring the core areas of U.S. biosphere reserves, and I have discussed these with my Congressman John Duncan. Respect for the rights of property owners is a key tenet of all U.S. biosphere reserves, and participation is entirely voluntary. The intent of the Program is to foster collaborative conservation and exchange of information that will help property owners and other stakeholders to sustain their natural and cultural resources and the economic value of

their land. I understand that in some areas implementation of UNESCO's guidelines have caused confusion and concern, and I know there has not been enough communication with local people. Since there are these concerns, special criteria for U.S. biosphere reserves should be developed. The Statutory Framework of the International Network of Biosphere Reserves encourages member-States to elaborate and implement national criteria for Biosphere Reserves, which take into account the special conditions of the member-States concerned. I believe that taking such action would help to address your concerns.

I formed the U.S. Biosphere Reserves Association to work closely with the US MAB Committee in implementing the biosphere reserve concept and goals, and to foster the necessary partnerships to achieve the goals. The United States played a significant part in developing the international MAB Program and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, which has grown to 459 areas in 97 countries. The cumulative experience of these areas and of the thousands of people who contributed to their development over the past 33 years is a valuable resource for the United States, and for advancing conservation and sustainable development in significant representative ecosystems throughout the world. Many biosphere reserve programs in other countries, including Mexico and Canada want to renew cooperative MAB activities with the United States, so I hope that we can discuss this sometime soon to find a way to address your concerns, and to reinvigorate the US MAB Program.

Sincerely,

Vernon C. Gilbert

President, U.S. Biosphere Reserves Association

DOCUMENT 8, October 2005, Proposed approach for a meeting with Henry Lamb

In a September 3, 2005 web article for WorldNetDaily entitled "Biosphere Reserves- who needs `em?" Lamb asked why the U.S. participates in a UN program that requires the creation of "... a mechanism to manage human use and activities" in biosphere reserves." Lamb knew this was a provision of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, and he used this to help convince members of Congress to oppose biosphere reserves.

As I expected, Representative Pombo did not reply to my letter, but I had several conversations with Rep. Duncan's staff and his staff. They w put me in touch with Kurt Christenson, who was conducting the investigation of MAB. Kurt told me that Pombo's letter to Mark Rey had been copied to M. Sullivan in the State Department. He also said had asked her to disband the U.S. MAB Committee.

The following briefing for Pete Roussopoulos describes some of my conversation with Kurt, and the approach I thought we should take in a meeting with Henry Lamb.

To: Pete Roussopoulos
From: Tom Gilbert, October 17, 2005

Subject: Meeting with Henry Lamb and Tom McDonnell

The following notes suggest an approach toward possible agreement with Henry Lamb and Tom McDonnell on some issues. Reaching agreement may be difficult, but it is worth trying. I met with Congressman Duncan in Knoxville last week to inform him about US MAB. I asked him to support a fair assessment of the program and to learn firsthand about SAMAB. I believe that he will.

After an exchange of emails with Scott Fischer of Rep. Duncan's staff, and Kurt Christensen, Kurt called me on October 4th to talk about US MAB. He suggested that I should meet and "break bread" with Henry Lamb, who is influential with some members of Congress, and has helped on legislation such as the endangered species bill. I agreed to meet with Lamb, but said I would like you to join us. Kurt thought this was a good idea, so he contacted Lamb, who replied that he and Tom McDonnell have an interest in meeting with us for one day. Lamb suggested the following agenda, which Kurt and Scott refined and considered relevant. (They asked if we have ideas to add.)

1. Clarify purposes and goals of Biosphere Reserves
2. Discussion of Tom McDonald's (McDonnell's) report- How does the US go about reexamining all current BR's to determine if they conform to current MAB and domestic considerations?
3. How does the program secure support from state and local governing bodies?

Kurt wrote on Oct. 12 that Chairman Pombo and Congressman Duncan are happy such a dialogue is in the works.

Background:

Henry Lamb is Executive Vice President of the Environmental Conservation Organization, and Chairman of Sovereignty International. He has written many articles and web stories about the UN and biosphere reserves. He contends that an expanding UN system and biosphere reserves pose a great danger to individual freedom, property rights, free markets, and ultimately, to national sovereignty. He wrote recently that the SAMAB program is designed to "seduce or coerce state and local governments to impose land use policies that originate with the UNESCO Committee in Paris, France." He often states that only the U.S. Congress can stop "... the relentless drive toward global governance." Lamb formed Sovereignty International, Inc. in 1996 to counter the influence of IUCN (World Conservation Union) and major NGOs, and to "...bring educational information to the international policy debate."

In a September 3, 2005 web article for WorldNetDaily entitled Biosphere Reserves- who needs `em? Lamb asks why the U.S. participates in a UN program that requires the creation of "... a mechanism to manage human use and activities" in biosphere reserves.

Tom McDonnell is a member of the Board of Directors of Sovereignty International, Inc., and a consultant to the American Sheep Industry Association and to several state governments. He was formerly a vice president of the American Sheep Industry Association, the national organization representing 64,000 sheep producers in the U.S. McDonnell prepares articles and analytical reports about the UN, using selective quotes to show that biosphere reserves present dangers to property owners and the free enterprise system in the U.S.

Common ground?

The following areas may be common ground for some agreement:

1. Rights of property owners: In his book, *This Land is Our Land. How to end the war on private property*, Congressman Pombo advocates incentives and rewards for property owners to participate in species conservation and land stewardship. He states "... Rewarding people for species conservation and good land stewardship is the key to strengthening the Endangered Species Act. It is that simple." Pombo also claims that the balance of wildlife protection has swung too far away from meeting the needs of people of this country for food, clothing, housing, fuel, and other vital public needs. Henry Lamb asks in a recent article, "How does the United States, and more particularly the people who live within these biosphere reserves benefit from the U.N. designation?" We need to show that biosphere reserves foster activities that benefit property owners, and that rights and interests of property owners in biosphere reserve areas are respected.
2. Management of human use and activities in biosphere reserves. Lamb asks why does the U.S. participate in a U.N. program that requires the creation of "... a mechanism to manage human use and activities" in an area such as the Southern Appalachian Biosphere Reserve and 46 similar areas across the nation? In witness testimony before the Committee on Resources, June 10, 1997, regarding the American Land Sovereignty Act (HR 901), he states "...The United Nations derives its authority to affect land management through the Executive Branch's commitment to meet these criteria and conditions which are established by the United Nations, not by the Congress of the United States." (He refers to the Seville Strategy, which provided recommendations for developing effective biosphere reserves. Comment: UNESCO recognizes that many biosphere reserves lack the authority to manage use and human activities in biosphere reserve areas, so alternative approaches have been developed to encourage cooperation. The Canadian Biosphere Reserve Cooperation Plans, for example, have been shared by UNESCO as a model for achieving cooperation of landowners and other partners in biosphere reserve areas. The Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves encourages States to elaborate and implement national criteria for biosphere reserves, which take into account the special conditions of the State concerned. (Ishwaran agrees, and suggested case studies in U.S. and several countries.)

Proposed meeting agenda:

Discussion of McDonnell's report should be first for it may help with the other two items. His report is the Analysis of the Evolving Nature of the United Nations Environmental, Scientific & Cultural Organization's Man & Biosphere Reserve Program, and United States Compliance with its Statutory Framework, August 15, 2005. Some key points are:

- "The United States may find itself, like the United Kingdom, having to either modify existing reserves, or withdrawing them from the program completely. (p. 1)
Comment: Decisions to do so should be based on a thorough assessment of the benefits of the program, and potential benefits for a renewed program. Certain recommendations of the Seville Strategy and criteria of the Statutory Framework do not apply in the United States. Steps are underway to elaborate and implement criteria which are suitable in the United States, similar to what the Canadians have done.
- McDonnell makes reference (p. 2) to the First Biosphere Reserve Congress in Minsk, USSR, and recommendations to involve local people in the development of regional perspectives centered on biosphere reserves. Comment: I was there and made the recommendation based upon a "Cooperative Regional Demonstration Projects" that we had started with USAID support in the mountains of Rwanda. It focused on participation of local farmers and meeting their needs, as well as conserving Mt. gorilla habitat.
- McDonnell says (pp 5 and 6) that over the course of twenty years biosphere reserves went from being areas of conservation, research and education to being theaters for reconciling people and nature on a regional basis. He implies linking biosphere reserves with poverty reduction and equitable development may conflict with the U.S. Constitution and the free enterprise system. Comment: This interpretation seems to conflict with Chairman Pombo's thesis that wildlife conservation has swung away from meeting the needs of people (see above). The general authority for agencies to participate in MAB is NEPA, which declares that the Federal Government should use all practicable means to fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations; and to assure for all Americans a safe, healthful, and productive environment. McDonnell also says that the Seville Strategy mentions the original role of biosphere reserves in research and monitoring only once in its key directions. Actually, the importance of research and monitoring is recognized in the ten key directions for regional biosphere reserves. No. 4 is "Reinforce scientific research, monitoring, training and education in biosphere reserves since conservation and rational use of resources in these areas require a sound base in the natural and social sciences as well as the humanities." No. 5 is "Ensure that all zones of biosphere reserves contribute appropriately to conservation, sustainable development and scientific understanding." McDonnell (p 8), like Lamb, points out that the Statutory Framework lays out criteria for management of biosphere reserves. We should acknowledge that strict compliance by the Administration with certain articles could potentially cause problems in the United States, and that the USMAB Committee will take steps to correct this.
- McDonnell says (p 10) that no new biosphere reserves have been designated in the U.S. in the last 14 years because local opposition has blocked the nominations. New nominations have not been made because the US MAB Committee and program

have been inactive because of political opposition in Congress, but we are now back in UNESCO and can benefit from participating effectively in the biosphere reserve program. The Tennessee River Gorge Trust, a 27,000-acre area along the Tennessee River in the Cumberland Mountains, applied for designation as a biosphere reserve unit with the support of local landowners. No action has been taken, but the area has functioned to carry out the goals of the program, and James Brown, Executive Director of the Trust, reported that the biosphere reserve program has brought the following significant management benefits to the area. Facilitation of international cooperation was described as a highly significant benefit. A biosphere reserve nomination from Puerto Rico was submitted, but was withdrawn because of objections by the House Resources Committee. The Puerto Rico nomination has substantial local support. When the MAB National Committee is reconstituted under the U.S. National Commission for UNESCO, procedures should be developed whereby worthy nominations can be made, preferably with Congressional oversight.

- McDonnell points out that UNESCO documents show that the acreage of existing U.S. biosphere reserves has been expanded from 43,560,254 in 1994 to over 77.4 million acres in 2005, equating to the 5th largest state, New Mexico. These large areas are intended to be zones of cooperation, but Lamb and McDonnell will not accept this explanation. It is time to revise the program, and develop an approach that clearly fosters voluntary cooperation among partners around biosphere reserve core areas.
- McDonnell says (p 11) that a report from the U.S. should be due in November, but that to date there has been no indication that such a report has been, or is being prepared. Technically, these reviews are prepared under authority of the US MAB Committee, but the Committee has not been reconstituted.
- McDonnell (p 12) points out that the Statutory Framework, Article 7, Section 2, states that biosphere reserves should be given appropriate and continuing promotion, but that the U.S. MAB reserve program is one of the least known programs in the U.S., and that few of the reserves disseminate information material about the reserve. He says this puts them in non-compliance with the Statutory Framework. Comment: This is a clever approach. They succeed in influencing Congress to cut funds for MAB and biosphere reserves, the program becomes inactive in most areas for a decade, and then is criticized for not adhering to the criteria in the Statutory Framework. However, managers who responded to the BR Survey in 2003 recognize the need for better communications about BRs, their functions and benefits, and some areas have been able to keep the program going. In the Mammoth Cave Biosphere Reserve, where political support was strong enough, the program has been given appropriate and continuous promotion, and the program has achieved numerous public benefits. Jack Eversole, Coordinator of the Mammoth Cave Biosphere Reserve Council, states "...The Mammoth Cave Area International Biosphere Reserve has produced direct and tangible benefits to local landowners without any infringement on their sovereignty. (Report of U.T. CESU: Mammoth Cave and Southern Appalachian Biosphere Reserve.)
- McDonnell says (p 14) as a result of the Seville Strategy a "bait and switch" has been done on the U.S. Actually, the Seville Strategy was created with U.S. participation, and it encourages flexibility and innovation to improve the biosphere reserve program. Leaders in UNESCO and the ICC recognize that biosphere reserves

should serve local as well as national needs. Gonzalo Halffter, President of the MAB International Coordinating Council, has been a pioneer in developing programs, which serve local needs in Mexican biosphere reserves.

DOCUMENT 9, November 2005: Paper prepared about potential areas of common ground for meeting with Henry Lamb and Tom McDonnell on November 8, 2005, V. Gilbert, November 5, 2005.

Mr. Lamb proposed the following agenda topics for our meeting. Kurt Christensen (Congressman Pombo's staff) and Scott Fischer (Congressman Duncan's staff) reviewed them. I replied that I thought these were good topics for discussion.

1. Clarify purposes and goals of Biosphere Reserves
2. Discuss Tom McDonnell's report- how does the U.S. go about reexamining all current BR's to determine if they conform to current MAB and domestic considerations?
3. Discuss how the program secures support from state and local governing bodies.

Tom McDonnell's report of August 15, 2005, *Analysis of the Evolving Nature of the United Nations Environmental, Scientific & Cultural Organization's Man & Biosphere Reserve Program, and United States Compliance with its Statutory Framework* (<http://sovereignty.freedom.org>) contains recommendations that might provide common grounds for agreement. The following discussion relates to issues and concerns described in McDonnell's report.

- A review of the relevance of the U. S. Biosphere Reserve program is needed. If any U.S. biosphere reserve is not relevant to U.S. interests, its program should either be modified, or the reserve should be removed from the international list. However, the review should not be based on a strict interpretation of the articles in the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The Statutory Framework articles are flexible, and are intended to encourage and promote good working examples of biosphere reserves. De-listing procedures are an exception to this basically positive approach. The Statutory Framework states that individual biosphere reserves remain under the sovereign jurisdiction of the States where they are situated, and that States take the measures they deem necessary according to their national legislation. The Statutory Framework encourages States to elaborate and implement national criteria for biosphere reserves, which take into account the special conditions of the State concerned. The U.S. government should take this approach toward determining whether or not the biosphere reserve program is relevant.
- Involvement of local people in biosphere reserve activities is needed. McDonnell notes that the importance of involving local people in the development of regional perspectives began to form at the First International Biosphere Reserve Congress held in

Minsk in 1983. Actually the idea of involving local people began earlier in 1974 with the MAB Task Force on 'Criteria and Guidelines for the Choice and Establishment of Biosphere Reserves,' which recommended establishing councils with local landowners, and environmental education programs with local institutions. Further development of this idea at the First Biosphere Congress in 1983 was based largely on a proposal that I presented... "Cooperative Regional Demonstration Projects: Environmental Education in Practice." This concept was based on biosphere reserve projects in Rwanda, Mexico and Kenya, which demonstrated how government officials, scientists, and local people were working together to sustain the natural resources of their regions, and at the same time, to improve the economic and social standards of people living in and around these biosphere reserves.

- Congressman Pombo, in his book, "This Land is Our Land: How to end the war on private property," advocates providing incentives to property owners who participate in species conservation and land stewardship, and he states that the balance of wildlife protection has swung too far away from meeting the needs of people. Many biosphere reserve programs today contrast with traditional conservation programs in that they do focus on meeting the needs of local people as an essential part of the program. In Rwanda, for example, it is essential for local people to participate in saving the Mountain gorilla. Conservation of this unique resource benefits local people and others throughout the world.
- Over the course of twenty years, biosphere reserves went from being areas of conservation, research and education to being theaters for reconciling people and nature on a regional basis.
- It is in the best interests of the U.S. for the biosphere reserve program to renew its focus on conservation, research, and education. A vision for the USMAB program and biosphere reserves should be developed that focuses on research and education, with an emphasis on interactions between people and their natural resources, and potential solutions for conserving natural resources and sustaining communities. This would comply with a key direction for international biosphere reserves to... "Reinforce scientific research, monitoring, training and education in biosphere reserves since conservation and rational use of resources in these areas require a sound base in the natural and social sciences as well as the humanities."
- The U.S. does not comply with the Statutory Framework, Article 7, Section 2, which states that biosphere reserves should be given appropriate and continuing promotion.
- U.S. biosphere reserves should disseminate accurate information about the reserves and their goals and functions. In responding to a survey of U.S. biosphere reserve managers in 2003, managers recognized this need, and acknowledged that most people do not know about biosphere reserves. The managers understand that public understanding and support for reserve programs is essential. However, most programs have been inactive for a decade because Congress prohibited several agencies from funding MAB activities. In some areas, such as the Mammoth Cave Area Biosphere

Reserve, where political support remained strong, the biosphere reserve has been given appropriate and continuing promotion, and government officials and landowners acknowledge that the program has produced many direct and tangible benefits.

Conclusion: The U. S. biosphere reserve program should be reviewed to determine its relevance to the United States. Such a review should also be used to help determine how the program can be improved for the benefit of the United States, and local landowners who wish to participate. Relevance of the biosphere reserve program to the United States should be evaluated, not just on the basis of whether or not individual reserves meet Statutory Framework criteria, but on benefits, and potential benefits, of a national program; and of U.S. participation in the international program. The benefits of collaboration with other countries must be considered, especially with Canada and Mexico, where conservation of ecosystems and natural resources is a shared concern. The role of biosphere reserves throughout the world in conserving genetic resources that humans need now and in the future must be considered- from wild gene pools of economically important forest and aquatic species, to conservation of genetic resources that are important to agriculture.

Participating in the international network of biosphere reserves would enable the United States to benefit from the synergy and experience of others, and improve relations with other countries, particularly those whose boundaries and ecosystems and migratory species we share. As a basis for the review, United States criteria for biosphere reserves should be elaborated and implemented to:

- Clarify the objectives of United States participation in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, and the role of U. S. reserves in conservation, research and education.
- Clarify that biosphere reserves in the United States remain under the sovereign jurisdiction of the United States and the legal authorities that administer the designated reserve areas, and that the United Nations has no authority or interest in dictating land use policies, or practices, in any U.S. biosphere reserve area.
- Clarify that U.S. biosphere reserves foster voluntary cooperative activities to achieve the reserve goals and functions; and that biosphere reserve managers do not have the authority to prescribe management policies, plans, or mechanisms to manage human use in zones outside their core areas.
- Clarify that participation of federal, state and local government agencies, non-governmental organizations and local landowners in U.S. biosphere reserve programs and activities is encouraged, but is strictly voluntary.
- Insure that each U.S. biosphere reserve respects the rights and interests of property owners, and to the extent possible, fosters activities that benefit local communities and property owners.
- Insure that each U.S. biosphere reserve disseminates informational material about the reserve, its purposes, goals and activities.

Congressional oversight to regularly evaluate the process under which the United States designates and operates biosphere reserves should be conducted to improve the value of the program to the United States.

In a September 3, 2005 web article for WorldNetDaily entitled "Biosphere Reserves- who needs 'em?" Lamb asked why the U.S. participates in a UN program that requires the creation of "... a mechanism to manage human use and activities" in biosphere reserves." Lamb knew this was a provision of Article 4 of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. These Article 4 criteria, on which biosphere reserve performance is based, continue to be a problem today.

DOCUMENT 10, November 2005: Report of the meeting with Henry Lamb and Tom McDonnell

Three days before the meeting with Henry Lamb, Pete Roussopoulos called me to say that he could not attend the meeting, and that he could not tell me the reason. I suspected he had been instructed not to attend by Forest Service officials in Washington, D.C. This proved to be correct because of this development. On November 2, 2005, Ann Bartuska, Deputy Chief for Research and Development, USFS, wrote a letter to Marguerite Sullivan, Executive Director of the U.S. National Commission for UNESCO, that the FS, R&D would no longer participate in the MAB. The letter stated the FS was returning the program leadership to the State Department. (The USFS had taken over leadership for U.S. MAB from the State Department on October 11, 2000.) Dr. Bartuska asked Ms. Sullivan to let the USFS know to whom the records and other documentation should be submitted. (To my knowledge, there was never a reply to Bartuska's letter, and the MAB records and documents were kept in unlabeled boxes for years, and were retrieved by Dr. William Gregg.)

The following is a report of my meeting with Lamb and McDonnell.

Meeting of Henry Lamb, Tom McDonnell, and Tom Gilbert, November 8, 2005 at the Alexis Inn, Nashville, Tennessee, on November 8, 2005 to discuss the following topics:

1. The purposes and goals of Biosphere Reserves
2. Tom McDonnell's report, Analysis of the Evolving Nature of UNESCO's Man and Biosphere Reserve Program, and U.S. Compliance with its Statutory Framework. (<http://sovereignty.freedom.org>). How does the U.S. go about reexamining its biosphere reserves to determine if they conform to current MAB and U.S. domestic consideration?
3. How does the program secure support from state and local governing bodies?

1. Purposes and Goals of Biosphere Reserves

Gilbert described the history of the MAB Biosphere Reserve program, and how U.S. leaders had helped to shape the program. For example, Stanley Cain, ecologist and former Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior, had a major role at the Biosphere Conference held in Paris in 1968. Dr. Cain called for conservation of natural areas, and for multi-agency, public-private joint planning. This theme persisted and guided the 1974 Task Force on '*Criteria and Guidelines for the Choice and Establishment of Biosphere Reserves,*' which set out the following goals and purposes:

- Conserve the diversity and integrity of biotic communities of plants and animals within natural ecosystems
- Provide areas for ecological research
- Provide facilities for education and training

The U.S.- Soviet Union Summit Agreement on Biosphere Reserves in July 1974 provided a major boost for the program when both countries agreed to designate areas as biosphere reserves for protecting valuable genetic resources and ecosystems, and for scientific research. The Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the Coweeta Hydrologic Station were designated for these purposes, and it was agreed early on in the program that the traditional buffer zone concepts would not be applied in this and other U.S. regions. Several other examples, including biosphere reserves in Mexico, Rwanda, and Kenya, were described to illustrate how the biosphere reserve program worked to protect valuable genetic resources.

2. Tom McDonnell's report

Recommendations in this report provided a basis for discussion and agreement about what is needed to make sure the U.S. Biosphere Reserve program complies with U.S. domestic and international interests and considerations. For example there is general agreement in the following areas:

a. A review of the relevance of the biosphere reserve program is needed. The review should be done based upon both U.S. domestic considerations and international interests. The Statutory Framework for Biosphere Reserves encourages States to elaborate and implement their own criteria, which take into account the special conditions in the State concerned. This should be done in the United States.

b. Local people should be encouraged to participate in the development of biosphere reserve programs.

It should be the policy of all biosphere reserves to foster participation of local people, recognizing that participation in the program is voluntary. Participation can be encouraged in various ways, such as participation in local biosphere reserve associations, or councils. This was a major goal and purpose of the U.S. Biosphere Reserves Association.

c. The focus on research and education should be renewed in U.S. Biosphere Reserves.

Such a renewal of the biosphere reserve program would be relevant to U.S. interests, and would also comply with one of the key directions of MAB international program, which is to "...Reinforce scientific research, monitoring, training and education in biosphere reserves since conservation and rational use in these areas require a sound base in the natural and social sciences as well as the humanities."

3. How does the program secure support from state and local governing bodies?

Biosphere reserve managers recognize the need for securing support from state and local governing bodies and have attempted to do so in various ways. However, most programs have been inactive for more than a decade because Congress prohibited several agencies from funding MAB activities. In some areas, such as the Mammoth Cave Biosphere Reserve, there was a firm structure for securing support through the Barren River Area Development District. In this area local officials and many landowners acknowledge that the program has produced numerous tangible benefits.

4. Conclusions

We agreed there are beneficial aspects to U.S. participation in the biosphere reserve program. We recognized the role of biosphere reserves in conserving genetic resources of importance to agriculture. We recognized the need for collaboration with biosphere reserves in other countries, especially with Canada and Mexico, whose ecosystems and resources we share. However, Mr. Lamb and Mr. McDonnell expressed deep concern about the potential of the U.S.

biosphere reserve program to violate the rights of property owners in biosphere reserve areas, if the U.S. Administration complies with provisions of Article 4 of the Statutory Framework.

Mr. Lamb suggested that a way to resolve the issues would be through Congressional legislation to authorize the MAB Biosphere Reserve program. We agreed we would propose to the House Committee on Resources to form a small group of 4- 6 persons to draft such legislation. We agreed that with appropriate legislation, regular Congressional oversight to evaluate how the U.S. designates and operate biosphere reserves could result in a more relevant and valuable U.S. program.

DOCUMENT 11, January 14, 2006: Email correspondence with Lamb..

To: Henry Lamb from Tom Gilbert

Subject: Reply to your email of 1/11/06

Henry,

The first thing we need to do is to determine whether or not Chairman Pombo and Congressman Duncan will support our proposal to draft legislation to authorize the U.S. biosphere reserve program. Kurt said that they were happy that our dialogue was in the works, but will they support our efforts if we, and they, agree on objectives we want legislation to achieve? Procedures should be established with their guidance after this question is answered.

My approach has been to seek potential areas of common ground. I thought our meeting on November 8 was productive, but your response to my draft summary indicates that you did not agree on several important points, so this leaves me in doubt that confronting areas of disagreement head-on will work. We should determine if we could agree on a few basic issues.

One of these is that the U.S. Biosphere Reserve program is a component of the UNESCO international program and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. You insist that the U.S. does not comply with articles of the UNESCO Statutory Framework, but then say that your group will be reluctant to have the U.S. program attached to UNESCO. You say that you agree that biosphere reserves can be beneficial in conserving genetic resources of importance to agriculture, but seem to deny that participation with other countries in the international network can be a useful means to achieve this goal. It is unrealistic to think that we could create a new and separate U.S. program to achieve this goal.

One basic area where I think we agree is that legislation authorizing U.S. biosphere reserves, along with U.S. criteria for participating in the program, could help to clarify the U.S.- UNESCO relationship; and that proper authorities in the U.S. authorities would always govern U.S. biosphere reserve programs and land use decisions without UNESCO interference.

We cannot agree on some of the issues you raise in your response to my draft summary report of our November 8 meeting, but the Congress and the Administration should deliberate these. I will respond below to some of the areas where you stated that we did not agree:

Item 2 a: Tom McDonnell's report. He concluded that a review of the relevance of the biosphere reserve program is needed. I agreed, but said that the review should be based upon both our U.S. domestic and international interests; and that U. S. criteria should be elaborated and implemented, as is encouraged by that the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. I thought we agreed to this because Tom McDonnell described the serious problem of eroding genetic bases of certain genetic resources important to agriculture. He also expressed concern about control of aggressive invasive species.

I said that these were to large extent international issues, and that the biosphere reserve programs provide a means to accomplish these goals, as well as to sustain other natural resources such as migratory species and ecosystems that we share with other countries.

These benefits will not be available unless the U.S. is an active participant in the World Network, and it is unrealistic to think that we can create a separate, detached, U.S. program. I am not aware of any "constant source of U.S. bashing by the international community" because of U.S. non-compliance to Statutory Framework articles. To the contrary, I have met and corresponded with delegates from many countries who are very pleased that the United States is planning to participate, once again, in UNESCO MAB programs. I know from firsthand experience in many countries that the MAB program provides us with ways to share knowledge and make friends, and that we will lose more respect in the international community if we decide not participate in MAB.

Item 2b. Local people should be encouraged to participate in the development of biosphere reserve programs.

I said it should be the policy of all biosphere reserves to foster participation of local people. We do agree that all local and state-governing authorities affected by a biosphere reserve should approve it, but you state that you cannot support any biosphere reserve program that promotes sustainable development among the local citizenry. If local people and their elected authorities decide that protecting natural and cultural resources of an area is a desirable or necessary goal, it is their right to develop programs and regulations to achieve their goals. Certainly this should be done with proper respect for the rights and legitimate interests of property owners, but this should be the case, whether or not it takes place in a biosphere reserve.

Conclusions.

You state that you do not agree that there are "beneficial aspects to the to participation in the (U. N.) biosphere reserve program," as it has evolved; but you agree that biosphere reserves can be beneficial in conserving genetic resources of importance to agriculture, and that you are willing to participate in the drafting of legislation to define the scope and purposes for a U.S.

biosphere reserve program. This could be a good start. As I have said, UNESCO authorities encourage us to develop and implement U.S. criteria for biosphere reserves.

We need Congressional authority and oversight for the program. Legislation would establish the appropriate authority, such as a MAB National Committee to guide the program, but we can recommend certain principles. However, state and local areas designated as biosphere reserves, or biosphere reserve units, must be allowed to continue to participate in the program if they choose to do so, as is the case in the Mammoth Cave Area Biosphere Reserve and a number of others.

DOCUMENT 12, April 25, 2006:

To: Henry Lamb from Tom Gilbert

Subject: Conservation of genetic resources

When I sent our ideas for biosphere reserve legislation, I suggested that a biosphere reserve program in the United States could benefit property owners such as farmers and ranchers. Congressman Pombo stated that private property owners are the true stewards of the land. This is the hope. Biosphere reserves can only be a small part of the solution, but they can help property owners who wish to participate to become better stewards of the land. Some of the Canadian Biosphere Reserves are demonstrating how this can be done.

When we met in Nashville last fall, you and Tom McDonnell acknowledged that biosphere reserves may have a role in conserving genetic materials that are important to agriculture and food supplies in the United States. Many biosphere reserves throughout the world contain priority genetic resources, and conduct associated research and education, and the United States should participate actively in this effort

You suggested that our effort to work together to resolves differences and reach common objectives could be precedent setting. You are right. If we succeed, it could be of great benefit to society.

I look forward to further exchange, and a visit with you sometime this spring.

DOCUMENT 13, October 2006 Presentation to the MAB ICC Conference

Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity: Panel 1, MAB/ICC Conference, UNESCO, October 25, 2006

Panelist Vernon (Tom) Gilbert, United States Biosphere Reserves Association addressed the following topics:

- 1. The experience of biosphere reserves, and lessons learned, particularly in the United States.**
- 2. The approach to zoning in biosphere reserves.**
- 3. Setting a new course to biodiversity conservation based upon lessons learned**

Experience of biosphere reserves, and lessons learned, particularly in the United States.

The United States participated actively in the Biosphere Reserve program. The U.S. – U.S.S.R. Summit Agreement on Biosphere Reserves in 1974 benefited the entire international program. For more than 10 years the U.S. developed cooperative activities with other countries, particularly Mexico and Canada. I have fond memories of our cooperative efforts with Dr. Halffter in the biosphere reserves in Mexico, and I appreciate how much he and the Institute of Ecology have contributed to conservation of biodiversity and improving the well being of people in and around biosphere reserves.

We had a good program but it was stopped. What went wrong? Determined groups, led by Sovereignty International, which my colleague Cathie Adams is representing, were concerned that UNESCO programs, Biosphere Reserves and World Heritage sites, were violating the rights of private property owners in the United States. These organizations convinced members of the U.S. Congress that this was a real danger, and in 1996 the Chairman of the House Resources Committee, Don Young, wrote a letter in to his colleagues in Congress, which read:
Is Boutros Boutros-Gauli Zoning Land in Your District?...Now we find out that an area on U.S. soil the size of the state of Colorado has been designated as part of the United Nations Biosphere Reserve program. ... This program operates without any legislative direction and no authorization from Congress. A "Biosphere Reserve" is a United Nations experiment within sovereign U.S. Borders.

The Congressman went on to state that the lid was about to come off this "One World Zoning Enterprise," and the Congress proceeded to cut funds for U.S. MAB by amending agency authorization and appropriation bills.

The current Chair of the House Resources Committee, Richard Pombo, has also opposed biosphere reserves, and his staff is currently investigating the program. Mr. Pombo wrote a book in 1997 called, "This Land is Our Land: How To End The War On Private Property." In it he states, "The rights and privileges of owning a piece of property represent a major step toward fulfillment of the American dream." He describes private property owners the true stewards of the land, and says, "America is both a land and a people. Neither should be sacrificed for the benefit of the other."

Statements such as these provide common ground for both proponents and opponents of biosphere reserves. During the past year, with encouragement from Congressman Pombo, I have met with Henry Lamb, the leader of the opposition to biosphere reserves. Our dialogue has been constructive. I have said that MAB attempts to put welfare of humans at the core of its programs, but I have also learned about mistakes that have been made, and how a revitalized biosphere reserve program could be more effective in conserving biodiversity resources.

Mr. Lamb, in his invited testimony before the House Resources Committee in June 1997, regarding the American Land Sovereignty Protection Act, identified a significant problem regarding biosphere reserves. He testified, "This Committee, and the American people, have been told by the Administration representatives the United Nations does not have the authority to affect federal land management decisions within the United States." Then he said, "The United Nations derives its authority to affect land management decisions within the United

States through the Executive Branch's commitment to meet the criteria and conditions which are established by the United Nations, not by the Congress of the United States."

He was referring to buffer zones in biosphere reserve areas, and calls for management plans and policies to manage human use in buffer zones.

Approach to zoning in biosphere reserves.

The current approach to designating core, buffer, and transition zones is too compartmentalized in spatial terms, and it cannot be realistically applied in reserves, which have multiple jurisdictions, land uses, and private properties. If biodiversity resources are to be conserved and managed sustainably, it will have to be achieved through cooperative processes, starting locally, and extending as far as the problems extend. The tendency to regard zones as fixed ignores the reality of the changing natural and social operating environments. The Canadian Cooperation Plan model is much more appropriate for most areas. It is "grass roots" in organization, and its focuses on partnerships, both from the public and private sectors, to participate in the attainment of biosphere reserve objectives. The term "biosphere areas" as used in Sweden would also be more appropriate in most areas today. The rights and interests of property owners in biosphere areas should be dealt with as a serious issue. We should emphasize cooperative processes to address the biodiversity conservation issues that concern both public and private sectors in an area.

It is rarely pointed out that the Statutory Framework for Biosphere Reserves emphasizes the need to be flexible and adaptive, and that it encourages States to "elaborate and implement national criteria for biosphere reserves, which take into account the special conditions of the State concerned." The MAB Council and the Secretariat need to emphasize this point, and encourage States to develop their own criteria. This is what we plan to do in the United States.

Setting a new course based upon lessons learned.

In the United States our dialogue with the opponents of biosphere reserves has been civil and constructive, and we are now cooperating to draft legislation dealing with biosphere reserves. Mr. Lamb said that he thought our efforts to resolve conflicting interests could be precedent setting, and might provide an example for others to solve problems in their own communities. So far we have agreed to the following important points:

- Protection of the rights of property owners in biosphere reserve areas is essential.
- Biosphere reserves can contribute to conservation of landscapes, ecosystems, species, and genetic diversity. Government agencies cannot achieve this alone, nor can it be done solely in protected areas.
- Private property owners should participate voluntarily, but should not be coerced. Incentives such as education, training, and technical assistance could be provided. Benefits from ecosystem goods and services, control of air and water pollution, and spread of invasive species are interests of property owners. Such problems cannot be solved by individual owners, agencies, or countries, or through isolated courses of action.

In setting a new course of action, the MAB Council should consider that the majority of the landscapes and ecosystems in biosphere reserve areas include private properties, and that most of the priority species valued for food production, timber, medicine, and natural resources for

industrial use, require habitats that are found on private lands, so greater efforts should be made to involve private property owners in biosphere reserve programs.

Biosphere reserves should help to solve such problems by bringing more ecosystem services benefits to private property owners. If biosphere reserves were to focus more on conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources of value to farmers and ranchers, e.g. food crops and livestock, timber, medicines, and industry; and research and education related to these functions, this would provide incentives for their participation.

In situ conservation should be carried out in close cooperation with ex situ programs (seed banks, arboreta, plantations, farms, and other live collections), but to date I do not know of any areas where these compatible approaches are linked through deliberate planning and action. This function of biosphere reserves could be strengthened by close collaboration with farmers and ranchers, and with institutions that focus primarily on sustaining the resources that are important to agriculture, such as the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) Centers.

I did a quick check of biosphere reserves to determine what I could find on wild crop relatives, and traditional crop priority species the reserves contain. The species included rice, potatoes, tomatoes, beans, onions, cabbage, coffee, bananas and plantains, apples, mangos, avocados, peaches, plums, citrus and many other species. A more thorough survey could help to determine what species are most important to people in the reserve areas, and what strategies might be developed to sustain them. Harvard biologist Stephen Jay Gould said, "We will not fight for things we do not love." I would add that we cannot love things we do not know or understand. Without knowledge and understanding of the links between ecosystem goods and services and human welfare, there will continue to be a large gap between conservation theory and practice. Research, education and demonstration programs that focus on the value of conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources in biosphere reserve areas would help narrow this gap.

DOCUMENT 14, May 2007

The following is the draft bill that Henry Lamb and I submitted to the House Committee on Resources. It had been widely review and approved by biosphere reserve representatives and Lamb's associates before it was submitted to Representatives Duncan's and Pombo's staff.

DRAFT

May, 2007

A Bill to authorize the United States Man and the Biosphere Reserves Program

Section 1. SHORT TITLE.

United States Biosphere Reserves Authorization Act

Section 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES

Findings. Congress finds the following:

- (1) The United States Man and the Biosphere (US MAB) Biosphere Reserve program, with appropriate Congressional authority and oversight, can make a significant contribution to the conservation of landscapes, ecosystems, species, and genetic diversity. The program can foster cooperation among government agencies and the private sector in the United States, as well as cooperative conservation activities with other nations. This would contribute to efficiency in government, cost savings, and therefore, to the primary objectives of the Government Performance and Results Act.
- (2) The Statutory Framework for the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, adopted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) encourages participating States to elaborate and implement their own national criteria for Biosphere Reserves, which take into account the special conditions of the State concerned. United States Biosphere Reserve criteria described in this Act can enhance the effectiveness of Biosphere Reserves in the United States, and help to strengthen understanding, communication and cooperation at local to international levels.
- (3) The World Network of Biosphere Reserves, now some 500 areas in 103 countries, should be utilized more effectively to address the loss of genetic resources of importance to agriculture, forestry, industry, and medicine. This indicates a need for effective United States participation in the international program.

(B) Purposes.

- (1) A Biosphere Reserve in the United States is defined as a geographic area that is proposed by a federal, state, local government, or private authority as described in the following United States criteria for Biosphere Reserves, for the following purposes:
 - A. To contribute to the conservation of landscapes, ecosystems, species, and genetic variation;
 - B. To provide a focal area for research, monitoring, education and training regarding methods and procedures to enhance conservation of landscapes, ecosystems, species, and genetic variation;
 - C. To provide for the creation of a management and funding mechanism and body for each designated area.
- (2) To provide Congressional authorization and oversight to the federal agencies administering and participating in the U.S. MAB Program, and guidance to state and private areas participating in the program.

- (3) To provide incentives, such as technical assistance, education and training, to private property owners, and others, who voluntarily participate in the Biosphere Reserve program
- (4) To ensure that each United States Biosphere Reserve respects the rights and interests of citizens living in or near Biosphere Reserve areas.
- (5) To provide the authority, and define the process, under which the United States may designate and operate Biosphere Reserves, as part of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves; and to ensure the United States participates effectively in activities such as acquiring data on the status and geographic distribution of priority species, encouraging cooperation with local institutions, and individuals, such as farmers and ranchers; and fosters research and education to conserve priority species in Biosphere Reserve areas.

Section 3. AUTHORITY

Congress authorizes, and establishes in the Department of Interior, the United States Man and the Biosphere Program, in accord with the following criteria and regulations.

The US MAB Program should be overseen by a national committee, consisting of federal agency representatives and state or local elected officials, as determined by the Secretary of Interior.

Section 4. CRITERIA FOR UNITED STATES BIOSPHERE RESERVES

The following articles describe the criteria and regulations for Biosphere Reserves in the United States:

(A) Definition

Biosphere Reserves in the United States are areas of terrestrial, aquatic and coastal/marine ecosystems or a combination thereof, which are recommended by the national committee, and approved by the Secretary and the Congress.

(B) Jurisdiction

Individual Biosphere Reserves in the United States remain under the sovereign jurisdiction of the United States, and the authorities that administer the designated reserve areas.

Designation of an area as a Biosphere Reserve shall not supersede existing laws, or other

authorities, nor convey any use restrictions to included areas or impose any obligations upon third parties, including private parties, nor does it convey any restrictions or requirements upon private properties within the area or adjacent to the area. Use of eminent domain to acquire properties adjacent to a biosphere reserve cannot be justified based on an area's status as a biosphere reserve. Recognition as a Biosphere Reserve in no way affects United States sovereignty over such area. Federal, state and local government agencies, non-governmental organizations and local residents all participate voluntarily. Each U.S. Biosphere Reserve will respect the rights and interests of persons with ownership or other legally recognized interests in land or other natural resources within or adjacent to the designated reserve area.

(C) Goals and Functions

United States Biosphere Reserves explore and demonstrate cooperative approaches to:

- (1) Contribute to the conservation of landscapes, ecosystems, species and genetic variation.
- (2) Provide logistic support such as research, monitoring, education and training regarding local, regional, national and global issues related to conservation of ecosystems and of the genetic resources they contain, and to foster cooperative activities among public and private sectors.

(D) Conditions

For an area to qualify for, and maintain Biosphere Reserve status in the United States, the following conditions apply:

- (1) The area is owned by the entity or entities proposing the designation, and encompasses ecologically significant landscapes, habitats, and ecosystems in the United States.
- (2) It has significant value for conservation of natural resources and genetic diversity, or for related research.
- (3) It provides opportunities to explore and demonstrate approaches to land/resource use practices for conservation.
- (4) It has the capacity to serve as a center to advance knowledge of conservation practices, including private property owner stewardship practices, and provide technical assistance to those who participate.

- (5) It includes a mapped core or focal area, which may be a legally constituted as a park, forest or other designation and have management plans that address its conservation goals and logistic functions, but the spatial extent of cooperation to conserve ecosystems and landscapes will depend upon the issues that the Biosphere Reserve addresses, and the changing environmental, social and cultural conditions that exist in the area.
- (6) Each Biosphere Reserve area will establish a Cooperation Council, which will be responsible for preparation for cooperation plans and funding mechanisms. The Council should be established to take into account the special conditions of the area concerned, but should generally consist of agency representatives, property owners, and state or local elected officials, or their designees, from within the designated areas. Plans will be prepared in each United States Biosphere Reserve to implement its conservation goals and logistic functions. The Cooperation Councils, with participation of public and private sectors, and elected officials, will prepare the plans, with assistance as needed from the United States Biosphere Reserves Association, and other non-government organizations.
- (7) The participating agencies and other entities may provide financial and other support to the Biosphere Reserve, which may include grants, contracts, interagency, and cooperative agreements to support the Biosphere Reserve's activities.
- (8) Local government entities may opt out of the planning process, and may choose not to participate in the implementation of the Biosphere Reserve Plan.

(E) Designation and Modification Procedures for United States Biosphere Reserves

- (1) Nomination of new United States Biosphere Reserves:
 - a. Nominations based on the above criteria for a U.S. Biosphere Reserve may be advanced by public or private entities, with approval of the majority of local governing authorities within the designated area.
 - b. The National Committee review nominations and make recommendations to the Secretary who may approve the nomination. Then, based upon request by the nominated Biosphere Reserve, and approval by the Secretary and the Congress, the National Committee may forward the nomination to the UNESCO MAB Secretariat for designation as an international Biosphere Reserve.
- (2) Modifications to existing United States Biosphere Reserves.

Within four years after enactment of the Act, each of the existing 47 U.N. designated Biosphere Reserves in the United States will reorganize its structure to conform with the

requirements of this Act, or the Secretary will request that UNESCO remove the Biosphere Reserve from the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

(F) Participation in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves

United States Biosphere Reserves may participate voluntarily, as appropriate under United States laws and regulations, in the World Network. This may include scientific research, information exchange, education and training. The appropriate authorities make available the results of research, associated publications and other data, taking into account intellectual property rights, to maximize the benefits from information exchange.

The United States particularly encourages the development of collaborative Biosphere Reserve activities with Canada and Mexico, Central American and Caribbean countries to:

- (3) Take stock of trends and threats shaping North, Central American, and Caribbean ecosystems, landscapes, species and genetic resources.
- (4) Foster cooperation to address these threats, especially in trans-boundary areas, and regarding migratory species.
- (5) Increase communication, training, sharing of information, and promoting best practices among Biosphere Reserve areas.
- (6) Develop the capacity to monitor and assess progress in Biosphere Reserve programs.

(G) Periodic reviews

The status of each Biosphere Reserve is subject to a review every 10 years. The United States Biosphere Reserves Association will assist in this review based upon the United States and international Biosphere Reserve criteria. Modifications, as needed, will be recommended to each area and the U.S. National Committee to enable the reserve to carry out its intended functions. If the National Committee determines that the a Biosphere Reserve cannot make the necessary modifications to meet international criteria, the Committee may recommend to the UNESCO MAB Secretariat that the U.S. Biosphere Reserve should be removed from the World Network list.

DOCUMENT 15, August 2007.

Lamb and I prepared the following statement in support of biosphere reserve legislation.

Legislation to Renew the United States Biosphere Reserve Program

Henry Lamb
Sovereignty International Inc.

Vernon (Tom) Gilbert
U. S. Biosphere Reserves Association

August 2007

Biosphere Reserves

Biosphere Reserves are areas recognized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for promoting and demonstrating conservation of ecosystems and species through research, education and training related to significant local, regional, national and global issues and needs. There are 47 United States Biosphere Reserves, but most of these have been inactive in recent years because of controversies about the program. Since its inception, Sovereignty International, Inc. has opposed the designation and existence of Biosphere Reserves in the United States. The most important objection was that the United States Biosphere Reserves were created without the approval of Congress, or, of state legislatures or other governmental bodies of elected officials. There was also concern that UNESCO's guidelines for establishing buffer zones around Biosphere Reserve areas could affect land management decisions and private properties within the United States. Therefore, Sovereignty International's goal was to stop further implementation of the program without the specific approval of Congress and of the legislative bodies of the states and communities that were affected.

On the other side, the United States Biosphere Reserves Association's goal was to renew the United States Biosphere Reserve program in support of the United States return to UNESCO, and to foster better understanding of the conservation, research and education goals of the Biosphere Reserve program.

Finding Common Ground

In 2005, the Chairman of the House Resources Committee Richard Pombo, and Representative John J. Duncan Jr., suggested that these opposing sides (Sovereignty International and the Biosphere Reserves Association) should meet to see if there was common ground. That meeting, between Henry Lamb, Tom McDonnell (Sovereignty International), and Tom Gilbert (U.S. Biosphere Reserves Association) took place in November 2005, and it resulted in more than a

year and a half of constructive dialogue that addressed the concerns of both sides. Issues, such as the rights and interests of private property owners living in or near Biosphere Reserve areas, and the participation of local elected officials were addressed. Both sides eventually agreed that a renewed United States Biosphere Reserve Program, with appropriate Congressional authority and oversight, could make a significant contribution to the conservation of ecosystems, species, and genetic diversity in the United States, and improve cooperative conservation activities with other nations, thereby contributing to efficiency in government and to cost savings.

Proposed Legislation

The proposed bill defines precisely what a U.S. Biosphere Reserve is, and it clearly defines the authority for the program, its goals and functions, and the conditions for an area to qualify for, and maintain, Biosphere Reserve status in the United States. The bill emphasizes that participation in the program is voluntary.

The bill reflects a unified solution that we hope that members of Congress will support. Passage of this bill will help set the course for establishing a more effective Biosphere Reserve program in the United States, and for renewal of our leadership in the international program.

Signed by Lamb and Gilbert

DOCUMENT 16, Mark Leighton, Harvard University, and Tom Gilbert meetings on U.S. MAB, Washington, D.C., June 23-27, 2008.

By this time, Kurt Christensen was pleased with the progress that Henry Lamb and I had made, so he decided to end the investigations of MAB. We were now focusing on getting some members of Congress to support the legislation Lamb and I had submitted to the House Resources Committee. Numerous letters in support of MAB had been sent to various members of Congress.

Meetings were held with the following officials and Congressional staffers. A package of information about MAB, the Madrid Action Plan, and a draft authorization bill was given to each person.

1. Kelly Siekman and Ross Corotis (U.S. National Commission for UNESCO)
2. Jennifer Barrett (Rep. Mark Udall, Democrat, Colorado)
3. Leslie Ann Duncan (Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands)
4. Ben Miller (Rep. George Miller- Democrat, California)
5. Ray Wanner and John Daly (Vice Presidents- Americans for UNESCO)
6. Melinda Kimble, Ray Wanner (U.N. Foundation), John Daly (Americans for UNESCO), Leonard Hirsch (Smithsonian)
7. Michelle Miranda (Senator Ron Wyden, Democrat, Oregon)
8. LaTonya Miller (Senator Lamar Alexander, Republican, Tennessee)
9. Thomas Lillie (Republican Professional Staff- Committee on Energy and Natural Resources)
10. Rachel Kondor (Rep. Raul Grijalva, Democrat, Arizona)
11. Bert Frost and John Dennis (NPS)
12. Alexandra Thornton (Director of Public Policy, Jane Goodall Institute)
13. Ashley Palmer (Senator Bob Corker, Republican, Tennessee)

Summary

Kelly Siekman and Ross Corotis thought a meeting on the benefits of renewal of U.S. MAB should be organized, and that Congressional staffers should be invited. This could be held in September. Ross is finishing his term as Science Advisor, but will be available as a consultant to State Department. The need to include biosphere reserve representatives from states and non-governmental organizations was discussed.

Jennifer Barrett, Deputy Legislative Director for Rep. Mark Udall, was positive about MAB, but the Congressman is now running for the Senate. We explained that the biosphere reserves in Colorado, which were active in past years, had helped develop the international mountain activities of MAB.

Leslie Duncan, House Subcommittee acknowledged that progress has been made with opponents of biosphere reserves, but thought there was little chance for a bill to be introduced this year. She suggested it would be best if a Republic introduced the bill.

Ben Miller, Legislative Director for Congressman George Miller, said they have a full plate, but that he would help. He thought a briefing for Congressional staff was a good idea, and suggested that the International Conservation Caucus should be contacted about helping.

Ray Wanner and John Daly suggested that their newly elected Congresswoman, Donna Edwards (Maryland), might support MAB legislation. They said Americans for UNESCO would prepare transition papers for the next administration. This could be a way to communicate the need for U.S. reengagement in MAB.

The meeting with Melinda Kimble, Ray Wanner, John Daly, and Leonard Hirsch was all positive. Melinda will try to locate funding to support U.S. reengagement in MAB. She said the U. S. biosphere reserve/university linkages are important, and should be emphasized. We mentioned that Knute Nadelhoffer, Director of the U. of Michigan Biological Station, and Philippe Cohen, Director of the Stanford University, Jasper Ridge Reserve, had agreed to contact their representatives about MAB. Finally, we discussed the idea of combined in situ and ex situ conservation and management of priority genetic resources in biosphere reserves.

Michelle Miranda, Natural Resources Counsel for Senator Ron Wyden, is currently working with Dr. Jerry Franklin, long-time U.S. biosphere reserve leader, on forestry legislation. She said that Senators Ron Wyden and Lamar Alexander (Tennessee) work well together, and that they might support a U.S. MAB bill.

LaTonya Miller, Legislative Assistant for Senator Alexander, thinks that a briefing for Congressional staff is a good idea. She may help make arrangements for the meeting.

Tom Lillie was positive about MAB and thought a briefing for Congressional staff was a good idea. He said it should be held in the Capital building, and linked with an important occasion or anniversary if possible.

He thought that Deputy Secretary of Interior, Lynn Scarlett, and Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Lyle Laverty, would support MAB, and that they should be briefed. (Ms. Scarlett coordinates Interior's policy initiatives to implement President Bush's executive order on cooperative conservation. Lyle Laverty has extensive experience in natural resource and park management.)

Tom said he was pleased to talk with Miguel Cleusner-Godt when Miguel was in D.C.

John Dennis, National Park Service, who attended the Madrid Congress, arranged our meeting with Bert Frost, Associate Director, Natural Resource Stewardship and Science. His predecessor was co-chair of the U.S. MAB National Committee. Bert will brief Deputy Secretary Lynn Scarlett and Assistant Secretary Lyle Laverty about MAB before the proposed September MAB meeting.

Alex Thornton, Director of Public Policy, Jane Goodall Institute, worked for ten years as counsel and senior advisor to former Senator Tom Daschle. Alex said she would help. (She would be excellent on strategies for legislation, and editing briefs that will be needed.) Alex recommended contacting the prestigious Wilson Center about possibly hosting a briefing for Administration officials.

Ashley Palmer is Legislative Assistant to Senator Bob Corker (Tennessee), who is a member of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. Senators Alexander and Corker work closely on issues of importance to Tennessee, so benefits of the Southern Appalachian Man and the Biosphere Reserve Program (SAMAB) were described.

DOCUMENT 17, Paper prepared for briefing Congressional staff, a meeting that was to be hosted by Senator Ron Wyden.

With funding and assistance from the U.N. Foundation, final arrangements were made for briefings of Congressional staffers, and I had prepared the following background paper, but our timing could not have been worse. The economic crisis was causing panic, and the Congress was focused on a bailout bill. We knew that MAB would not be a priority, so decided to cancel the meeting, and reschedule it if there should be a suitable time in the future.

UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Background

V. Gilbert, U.S. Biosphere Reserves Association

Congress staff briefing, October 3, 2008

Having been involved in MAB for 36 years, I will describe a few highlights, and outstanding people who played major roles. There is no doubt that U.S. can benefit from the cumulative experience and synergy of the many who contributed to the development of MAB over these years.

Slide: "Planet in Peril", the 1968 UNESCO Biosphere Conference

- The needs of society increase every generation, while large areas of the globe deteriorate. A long-term intergovernmental program on the rational use and conservation of the natural environment and its resources is needed.

Slide: Dr. Stanley Cain (Assistant Secretary- Department of the Interior)

- "We have come to a period of human history when there is a great need for...a multidisciplinary, multi-agency, public-private joint planning that can stem only from a recognition of the existence and nature of natural and human ecosystems. Essentially it is ecological planning." ... "Although the vision may have been glimpsed, it is not a promised land that lies somewhere awaiting human enjoyment- a Utopia or Garden of Eden that can be moved into."

Slide: Dr. Frank Fraser Darling (distinguished British ecologist)

- “Ecologists can scarcely afford to be optimists. But an absolute pessimist is a defeatist, and that is no good either. We see there not be complete disaster and if our eyes were open wide enough, worldwide, we could do much towards rehabilitation.”

Slide: The World takes notice- Biosphere Reserves

- Distinguished scientists prepared for the choice and establishment of Biosphere Reserves in 1974. The U.S. and USSR agreed in Summit Conference to “Designate certain natural areas as Biosphere Reserves for protecting valuable plant and animal genetic strains, and ecosystems, and for conducting scientific research needed for more effective actions concerned with global protection.”(Nixon/Brezhnev, 1974). Dr. Jerry Franklin was appointed chair of U.S. side.

Slide: Natural regions in danger

- Experts were concerned that major segments of the world’s biota and valuable genetic resources were being lost. An assessment of the world’s natural regions revealed that many biologically diverse regions had few or no protected areas. Since then, more than 90 biosphere reserves have been established in these regions. Today, there are 531 biosphere reserves in 105 countries, which can contribute to conservation, research, education and capacity building to improve land use and make human development more sustainable, but the United States is not an active participant.

Slide: Forest Service and National Park Service Cooperation (photo in State Dept.)

- The first U.S. biosphere reserves were officially established in 1976, with Forest Service and National Park Service cooperation. The agencies co-chaired the Biosphere Reserve Directorate, and the program flourished. The Chief Scientist of the NPS remarked that the cooperation under MAB was the best that he had known in his career.
- In 1979, the Executive Office of the President, Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), directed federal agencies to participate fully in MAB and cooperate in its development and management, citing that it was “an excellent opportunity for international cooperation and provided a focus for the coordination of domestic programs aimed at improving the management of natural resources and the environment.” Interior and Agriculture Departments were directed to develop the domestic program, and State, the international component.

The panel will have additional examples of progress in MAB, so I will take the remaining time to describe how the U.S. program was diminished and almost terminated in the late 1990’s.

- Some groups and members of Congress alleged that Biosphere Reserves violated U.S. sovereignty and property rights, and a well organized campaign succeeded in terminating almost all U.S. MAB activity.
- Three years ago several of urged the Administration to renew MAB in support of the U.S. return to UNESCO, and I asked my Representative (J. Duncan, TN) to support the necessary steps. He and the former Chairman of the House Committee on Resources, R. Pombo, suggested that I meet with Henry Lamb, Chair of Sovereignty International, Inc., opponent of MAB, to see if we could resolve differences. To our surprise, meetings over the last three years have been mostly constructive, and we found common ground. We have recently agreed that U.S. biosphere reserves are under public stewardship, and will likely remain so in the future, but long-term conservation and sustainable use of natural resources in these areas will depend upon the voluntary support and involvement of private citizens, and local elected officials. We believe this can be achieved, and that a renewed U.S. biosphere reserve program, with Congressional oversight and authority, can make a significant contribution to ecosystems, species and genetic diversity in the United States. We also believe that involvement in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves will enable the U.S. to benefit from the synergy and experience of others, and improve international relations.
- By reengaging in MAB the U.S. will benefit from improved coordination of domestic programs, thereby saving money, and renewed exchange with other nations would be a valuable contribution to UNESCO's mission to advance human welfare and transition to a more sustainable world.
- Authorizing legislation, or a resolution, is needed if the MAB program is to be renewed. NEPA (as amended 1994) could provide the general authority for Federal agency participation in MAB if the Congress chooses, and supports funding of the program. The language of NEPA is very appropriate to MAB. In NEPA Congress declares it is the policy of the Federal Government, in cooperation with State and local governments, and other concerned public and private organizations, to use all practicable means and measures, including technical and financial assistance, in a manner calculated to foster and promote the general welfare, to create and maintain conditions under which man and nature can exist in harmony, and fulfill the social, economic, and other requirements of present and future generations of Americans. In NEPA, Congress recognizes the worldwide and long-range character of environmental problems, and directs Federal agencies to support initiatives and programs designed to maximize international cooperation in anticipating and preventing a decline in the quality of mankind's world environment. NEPA also directs Federal agencies to make available to States, counties, municipalities, institutions and individuals, advice and information useful in restoring, maintaining, and enhancing the quality of the environment. If Congress resolves that NEPA is appropriate authority for MAB, then clear policies, guidelines and criteria for selection and management of biosphere reserves could be established by the Administration with approval of Congress, thereby resolving the concerns about sovereignty and property rights.

Document 18, paper on Biosphere Reserves and the World Food Crisis prepared for a MAB meeting in Canada.

By this time Henry Lamb and I realized that our efforts to get a bill in support of MAB was futile. He wrote to me on September 16, 2008 that we should wait for an opening in the new Congress next year, and that if we found the opening he could do a series of articles to promote the idea and explain our work. This opening never came, so I thought that focusing on the role and value of biosphere reserves in relation to food might be a way to generate support for biosphere reserves. I sent the following draft to Henry because he and Tom McDonnell had agreed on that biosphere reserves had value for conserving genetic resources of importance to Agriculture. McDonnell had been Vice President for Policy of the American Sheep Industry Association.

Henry replied on February 11 that this was not just an interesting project, but that it was at least a very important project. He said that Tom McDonnell had accepted a position as executive director of the Idaho Cattleman's Association, and that he might have time to participate in projects like this.

-Draft Discussion Paper-

Biosphere Reserves and the World Food Crisis: Long-term Solutions

Canadian Biosphere Reserve Association Workshop, February 25-28, 2009 Nottawasaga Inn, Alliston, Ontario, Canada

Vernon (Tom) Gilbert, United States Biosphere Reserves Association

vernongilbert@comcast.net

February 20, 2009

Purpose

The purpose is to encourage discussion about how the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, which now contains 531 areas in 105 countries, can help to address the global problem of accelerated loss of food species and long-term food security. It is suggested that a pilot program should be initiated in selected biosphere reserves in North and Central America and the Caribbean.

The World Food Crisis

The World Bank predicts that demand for food will rise by fifty percent by 2030. The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) estimates that approximately ¾ of the genetic diversity of crops has been lost over the last century, and of 6300 animal breeds, approximately 1350 are endangered or already extinct. The US National Academies, in a series of reports such as

“Lost Crops of Africa” (three volumes, 1996- 2008) and “Lost Crops of the Incas” (1989), describes how hundreds of traditional grains, roots, fruits and other food plants have been neglected by modern research and development, and that may be lost. A similarly threatened heritage of ancient foods still persists in North America as well, especially in the MesoAmerican region.

Remarkable advances in agriculture have been made in recent years, but the sustained production of our global food supplies will still depend on plant diversity in natural areas and traditional agricultural landscapes. Canada and the United States are especially dependent on crop genetic resources that originate outside these countries, so greater efforts should be made to provide assistance for conserving these resources in their native habitats. The continuing loss of genetic resources, plus the fact that nearly 40% of the world’s landmass is now used to grow crops or graze animals, indicates the need for more effective conservation in natural areas, combined with deliberate collaboration with local communities, farmers and ranchers, and institutions that specialize in agriculture.

Sergio Guevara and Javier Laborde, are strong advocates of this type of landscape approach.¹ They describe that Latin American countries contain more than half of the world’s biodiversity, but that today more than fifty-five percent of industrialized agriculture in Latin America is devoted to production of two introduced species: sugar cane and coffee, and that almost seventy percent of the cultivated land in the region is sown with crops that are non-native to the Americas: sugar cane, coffee, banana, rice and wheat.²

Biosphere Reserves

Biosphere reserves are especially suited to the landscape approach, and as sites to assess and understand the inter-linkages among food and water security, energy and climate change. The expert panel, which designed the criteria and guidelines for Biosphere Reserves in 1973-4, emphasized that biosphere reserves would be a means to “keep options open and prevent to the best of our ability, the depletion of the genetic diversity of life.” They concluded that biosphere reserves should conserve a diversity of genetic resources to improve cultivated and domestic species, to develop nutritious foods, and to protect against outbreaks of insects and disease. They predicted that this would become even more important because of the expanded needs of larger populations in the future. “As knowledge grows and needs change, we are likely to have to return more and more to wild stocks to satisfy them.”³

¹ Sergio Guevara is President of the MAB Ibero-American and Caribbean Community Network. Javier Laborde is a forest ecologist.

² S. Guevara, and J. Laborde, “The Landscape Approach: Designing New Reserves for Protection of Biological and Cultural Diversity in Latin America,” Institute of Ecology, Xalapa, Mexico, 2008)

³ MAB Expert Panel on Project 8: “Conservation of natural areas and of the genetic material they contain,” MAB Report series No. 12, UNESCO, Paris, 1973.

The Third World Congress on Biosphere Reserves, held February 4-8, 2008, in Madrid, Spain, attended by 829 participants, concluded that biosphere reserves would be the principal instruments through which UNESCO would demonstrate its commitment to sustainability through site-based research, capacity building and demonstrations, and three challenge themes were identified:

- Loss of biodiversity and ability of ecosystems to provide services essential for human well-being
- Climate change with consequences for societies, ecosystems and biodiversity
- Urbanization and environmental change.

A special partnership meeting of 30 representatives from Canada, Mexico and the United States resulted in enthusiastic support for transnational cooperation focusing on these challenges.

Re-enforcing this movement, the Director-General of UNESCO, Mr. Koichiro Matsuura, stated recently that UNESCO would rely on the Network of Biosphere Reserves to better understand rural and agricultural approaches, and conduct projects “to analyze and further develop existing linkages between culture, local identities and site-specific patterns of sustainable development in many rural agriculture-based biosphere reserves and then test and promote these approaches in other areas facing similar development challenges.”⁴

The International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) also concluded that agriculture should rely more on local natural processes and ecosystems, and that there should be more emphasis on small farmers and family-based agriculture.⁵

Biosphere reserves are well suited for this for the following reasons:

- The Network serves as mechanism for information exchange and education, especially among communities that have similar problems.
- The reserves help preserve the traditional knowledge and experience of farmers, and underutilized and neglected crop species.
- They protect a wide array of species with unique traits, such as plants that can survive drought, heat, or increased salinity.
- They provide habitats for a diversity of pollinators such as bees, birds and bats, which affect more than a third of the world’s crop production. Native pollinators account for the bulk of non-grain food sources, success in preserving native habitat is critically important.
- The reserves serve as experimental areas for study and control of invasive species, which afflict natural and agricultural ecosystems. For example, Argentine ants are a major invader in Mediterranean ecosystems and they are also a significant threat to particular agricultural systems such as citrus crops.

⁴ K. Matsuura, “UNESCO and the global food crisis: the need to think outside the box,” *Science and Technology Review*, UNESCO, Paris, January 2009.

⁵ UNESCO Press release about the IAASTD, November 2008

These ants also have the capacity to significantly disassemble native ecosystems through the elimination of many native invertebrates, especially native ants.⁶

The network of biosphere reserves contains a great diversity of landscapes and genetic resources that are important to agriculture. I did a preliminary information search that revealed biosphere reserves contain a variety of wild relatives of crops including rice, potatoes, tomatoes, beans, onions, cabbage, coffee, bananas and plantains, apples, pears, grapes, mangoes, avocados, peaches, plums, citrus, and nut species. Many of these reserves also support research and education to improve management of these resources.

Biosphere reserves, with their emphasis on working cooperatively with neighboring communities, are especially well suited to demonstrate how in situ conservation can be combined with conservation and improved utilization of important genetic resources on farms, in botanical gardens and arboreta, and in seed banks. Such programs are compatible, but have never been planned to work together on regional or international scales. The World Network of Biosphere Reserves provides this opportunity, and by implementing such improved agricultural practices, biosphere reserves can make a significant long-term contribution toward solving the world food crisis, as well as providing immediate benefits to local communities around the world.

Suggested steps toward developing a program

The first step could be to identify persons interested in forming a project team, which would organize workshops to develop the goals, objectives and strategy for a pilot project. At the same time the UNESCO MAB Secretariat should outline the goals and framework for a global program, begin identifying partners, and gathering information from biosphere reserves. For example, the Seville Strategy Goal 1 is to use biosphere reserves to conserve natural and cultural diversity, within which is an objective is to use the reserves “for in situ conservation of genetic resources, including wild relatives of cultivated and domesticated species, and consider using the reserves as rehabilitation/reintroduction sites, and link them as appropriate with ex situ conservation and use programmes.” The next periodic review of biosphere reserve performance, due to be conducted in 2009, should ask which wild relatives and traditional varieties of crops the reserves already contain, and what opportunities there are for linking with local peoples and use programs as well as with ex situ activities.

We should also identify the innovative programs and agricultural practices that exist in biosphere reserves, as a basis for information-sharing program within regional networks and the World Network. Canada, for example, has several innovative projects, including the Clayoquot Biosphere Reserve multi-year project on “Practicing Sustainability,” which will commence in 2009, and contain a Healthy Food, Healthy Communities initiative. They will look to build knowledge and local capacity around food security, food access, food cost

⁶ Personal communication (2/17/09) from Philippe S. Cohen, Administrative Director, Jasper Ridge Biological Reserve, Stanford University, Stanford, CA 94305-5020.

issues, nutrition awareness, traditional diets analysis and promotion, marine and forest gardening potential, etc. Many communities, including ours in the Southern Appalachians Biosphere Reserve, will be interested in exchange with this project.

Periodicals and programs that might assist biosphere reserve managers should also be identified. For example, the Center for Information on Low External Input and Sustainable Agriculture and the ILEA website (<http://ilea.leisa.info>) has information on sustainable family farming, climate friendly crops and reports on agriculture and climate change, could be useful in biosphere reserve areas. The Canadian-based International Development Research Centre supports research and education designed to adapt science and technology to the needs of less developed countries. Their sector on agriculture has vast experience in working with farmers, and could be a valuable ally in a global biosphere reserve program.

The first steps of project organization, information gathering, and sharing could be done without great expense, and this could provide a basis for deciding priorities, developing proposals, and marshalling resources for more expensive on site activities such as:

- Ecogeographical surveys to determine the status and geographic distribution of priority species, and gap analysis to determine need for specialized reserves.
- Analysis of in situ and ex situ activities in selected areas, and information on organizations, institutions, and individuals interested in participating in landscape and species management.
- Identification of research and education needs and opportunities for collaboration and capacity building with local institutions and stakeholders.
- Development of improved agricultural practices and technologies appropriate for individual biosphere reserve areas.
- Planning and establishment of monitoring systems to tract sustainability programs.
- Information and educational materials to help local authorities and communities to establish collaborative in situ and ex situ conservation programs, and improved agricultural practices.
- Improved education and training throughout the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Expected results

A significant result of the proposed project would be education. Biosphere reserves would contribute to better public understanding of the importance of ecosystem goods and services to human welfare, and make a transition toward sustainability easier to achieve. In addition, local peoples would have increased (economic) incentives to continue and expand their traditional food ways. Our food and its origins is one of the most interesting subjects we could choose.

CONCLUSION

All these efforts to revive the U.S. MAB Program were unsuccessful, and the experience described above indicates it will take an extraordinary effort to succeed today. Henry Lamb said he hoped we could demonstrate a civil, constructive approach to resolving differences, and that this could be precedent-setting, and help people discover a new way of approaching problems they may have in their own communities.

We did succeed in getting the House Resources Committee ceased their investigation of MAB. Representatives Pombo and Duncan were pleased that we had found common ground. However, we did not succeed in getting support for the bill we submitted. Henry wrote in March 2009, "With all the crap that's occupying Congress, there's little chance that anyone will even think about Biosphere Reserves or private property for a long time." He said that since his hospital stay and subsequent problems, he had lost influence with the property rights crowd. Henry died in 2012.

In light of this experience, it would be better to link the U. S. MAB program with priority Administration programs such as food security. In this way, the significant resources of biosphere reserves could be harnessed for conserving, restoring and utilizing an amazing variety of food genetic resources. This could then be developed as an educational component of the UNESCO and Asia Society initiative on Global Citizenship Education- one of the most needed international programs today..

