

# Strategic Plan 2002



## **Vision—**

*SAMAB fosters a harmonious relationship between people and the Southern Appalachian environment.*

## **Mission—**

*SAMAB promotes environmental health, and stewardship and sustainable development of natural, cultural, and economic resources in the Southern Appalachians. It encourages community-based solutions to critical regional issues through cooperation among partners, information gathering and sharing, integrated assessments, and demonstration projects.*

## **Core Values—SAMAB members and partners agree to:**

- *Work together across geographic, organizational, and cultural boundaries*
- *Respect the ideas and time of others*
- *Understand the mandates of all partners*
- *Share information*
- *Exercise an ethic that respects the environment*
- *Seek community-based solutions through involvement, interaction, and participation of communities*
- *Foster sustainability of linked ecological and economic systems*
- *Respect the past*
- *Plan for the future*

## **Strategic Plan 2002 for the Southern Appalachian Man And the Biosphere (SAMAB) Program**

**T**he Southern Appalachian Man and the Biosphere Program—SAMAB for short—was established in 1988 to help the area's public land managers to work together on some very serious problems that they all shared. The region's population and its industries were growing rapidly, and ways were needed to encourage growth without jeopardizing the magnificent scenery and natural resources of the region.

SAMAB grew into a **Cooperative** of 11 Federal Agencies and three States and a **Foundation** made up of university, private sector, environmental, and corporate interests. Perhaps its greatest accomplishment in the 1990's was the publication of a widely acclaimed assessment of the region's natural resources. This information has been shared with and used by many in the public and private sectors.

As the 20<sup>th</sup> Century waned, however, it became clear that SAMAB needed to make plans and set overall direction for the first decade of a new century. Setting overall direction was difficult because SAMAB's member organizations differ widely in their missions and goals. Agreement was possible because of a general commitment to people and to the environments in which they live.

This publication outlines a 10-year strategic plan for SAMAB. It provides an overall vision for the program, a clearly stated mission, and a listing of core values. It also describes goals, objectives, and strategies.

The vision statement clearly reflects commitment of SAMAB members to serve people and to wisely manage the natural and cultural resources of the region. The mission makes SAMAB a forum where people and organizations can communicate, do research, and cooperate to achieve desirable results. Success depends heavily on adhering to a set of core values.

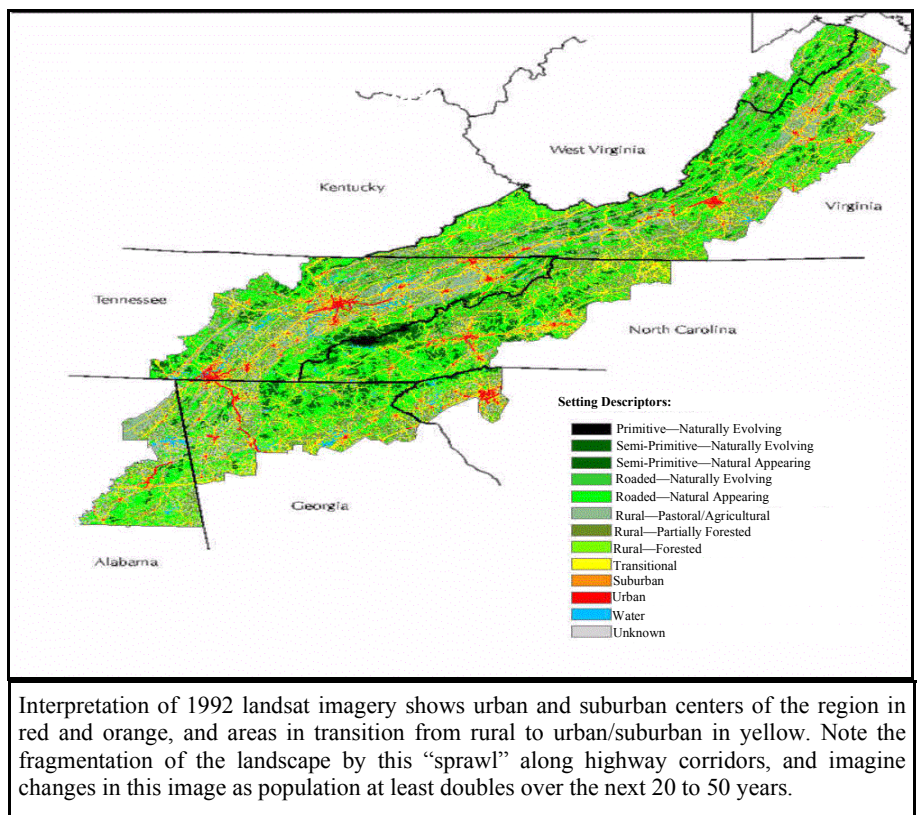
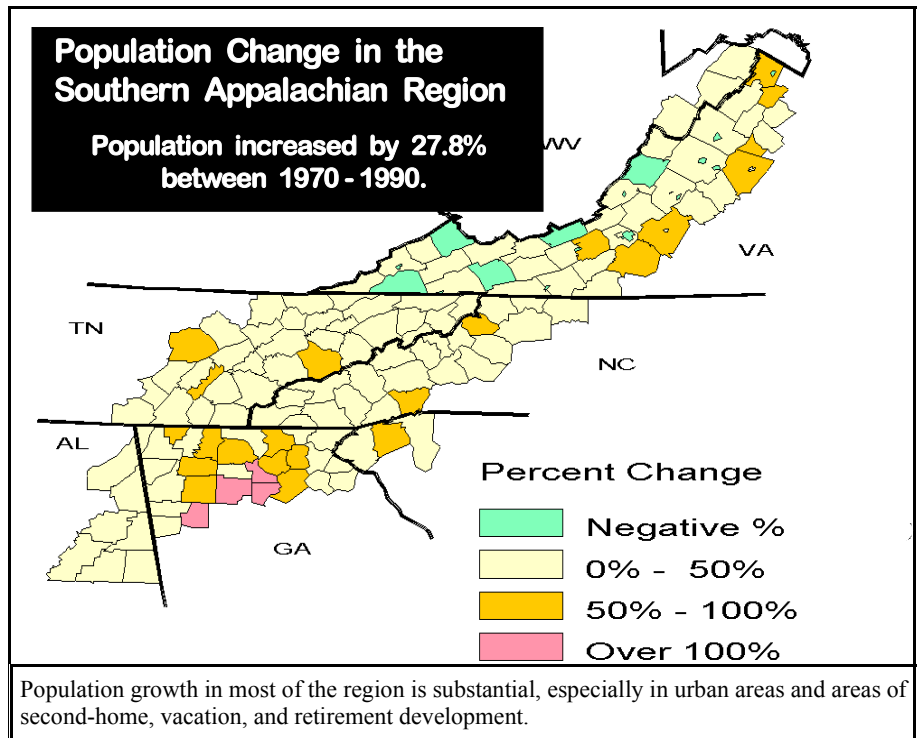
This plan is a dynamic, living document, to be updated annually in response to changing agency and community needs. Please bring your comments and suggestions to the SAMAB Coordinating Office or any SAMAB representative.

## Background and Context

The Southern Appalachian region is one of the most beautiful, biologically rich, and diverse areas in the world. More than 16 percent of the land in the region is publicly owned. That percentage is larger than in most of the South, but much lower than in the West. Private landowners in the Southern Appalachians tend to be strong advocates of private property rights.

The area's natural beauty and pleasant climate are attracting visitors and residents in increasing numbers. More and more people are moving to the region and building their homes in previously undeveloped areas. Increasing demands for services in previously rural areas are testing the infrastructure and financial resources of local communities and governments. Differences in attitudes toward conservation and use of the region's natural resources have led to conflicts including legal battles.

Public land managers in the Southern Appalachians struggle to meet their legal mandates and the widely divergent desires of local and national publics. Increasingly, public land managers must consider conditions and activities on neighboring land to effectively manage resources on public land. With limited budgets and increasingly complex goals of managing for the sustainability of ecosystems, agencies are finding it necessary to work with other agencies to accomplish their mission goals.



At the same time, communities are trying to cope with the demands of rapidly growing human populations while maintaining that natural beauty that drew many residents here. Federal and State agencies have information, services, and programs that can help communities to cope with increasing demands and plan for their future. Often, these communities are unaware of the resources that are available to them.

The SAMAB Program was created in 1988 to help managers in natural resource agencies to address the complex problems they were facing. The zone of cooperation includes portions of six States—Virginia, North and South Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, and Alabama. (Although Appalachian Kentucky and West Virginia are currently outside the official SAMAB regional boundary, these areas share many of the same needs and have participated in SAMAB activities.)

The SAMAB organization includes a Cooperative Executive Committee and a Foundation Board of Directors. A Coordinating Office includes an Executive Director and supporting staff. Committees, initiatives, projects, and other activities are initiated as needed to

accomplish SAMAB goals and objectives. (See SAMAB Organization Chart on last page of this document.)

The SAMAB Foundation is incorporated as a 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization in the State of Tennessee. It currently receives limited staff support from the Coordinating Office. The Foundation recently has hired a development director whose duties include raising funds in support of the SAMAB Program.

## Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Vision and mission statements can be interesting or even inspiring, but questions remain about what an organization hopes to accomplish and how it plans to succeed. Insights into these matters are provided by stating goals, objectives, and strategies. In this plan, **goals** 1-3 address enduring needs of the region, **objectives** denote activities needed to approach the goals in a 10-year time frame, and **strategies** describe means for achieving each objective. Strategies are targeted for the next 1 to 5 years. Goal 4 addresses how SAMAB plans to accomplish its objectives and strategies.

### **Members of the SAMAB Cooperative—**

National Park Service

USDA Forest Service

- \* Southern Region: National Forest System and State and Private Forestry

- \* Southern Research Station

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Tennessee Valley Authority

Economic Development Administration

Appalachian Regional Commission

US Environmental Protection Agency

US Fish and Wildlife Service

US Army Corps of Engineers

US Geological Survey

- \* Water Resources Division

- \* Biological Resources Division

Department of Energy's Oak Ridge National Laboratory

The States of:

-Georgia

-North Carolina

-Tennessee

### **SAMAB Foundation Board of Directors—**

- Charles Van Sickle (pres.), retired USDA Forest Service
- David Reichle (vice pres.), retired Oak Ridge Nat'l Lab
- Bob Shepherd (sec./treas.), Land of Sky Regional Council
- Bryan Baldwin, Southern Company
- George Briggs, The North Carolina Arboretum
- Michael S. Clark, Yellowstone Heritage Trust
- Thomas Hatley, past dir., S. Appalachian Forest Coalition
- Lark Hayes, Southern Environmental Law Center
- Kevin Johns, Parsons
- Larry Osborne, Carson Newman College
- Mike Pelton, University of Tennessee
- Danny Sells, retired USDA-NRCS
- Ed Tucker, Duke Energy
- Bob Williams, Blue Ridge Paper Products

Ex officio:

- SAMAB Cooperative Executive Committee Chair (Jon M. Loney)
- SAMAB Executive Director (Robert S. Turner)
- Southeast Natural Resource Leaders Group liaison (D. Briane Adams)

**Goal 1—Discovery and Assessment: Understand and describe the status and dynamics of the natural, economic, and cultural resources of the Southern Appalachians and the benefits of ecosystem management and sustainable development.**

**Objective 1**—*Characterize geographic patterns and trends in key environmental, socio-economic, and cultural attributes that can serve as indices of conditions in the region. Evaluate historic trends and plausible future scenarios. Examine linkages among attributes, including natural and social dimensions of the landscape. For key attributes, establish thresholds from which environmental-quality goals can be set.*

**Strategies—**

- Determine what indicators are being monitored in the region and identify and prioritize gaps and needs.
  - Review the indicators in the Southern Appalachian Assessment to determine which ones need to be tracked in the future to support community planning.
  - Review ongoing and planned activities of member agencies, such as forest health monitoring, water quality assessments, air quality monitoring, toxic release inventory, forest inventory and analysis, National Park Service resource inventory and monitoring, sampling of 303D-listed streams, monitoring of carbon sequestration, recreation user surveys, surveys of sensitive and invasive species, and surveys of archaeological sites and cultural resources in the region. Prioritize gaps and needs.
  - Evaluate existing standards and models as a framework for standardizing indicators and organizing data.
- Coordinate and support monitoring and assessment of key regional resources.
- Evaluate patterns and trends for key social and natural indicators; evaluate linkages between and among indicators.
- Employ simulation models to predict future scenarios for key indicators and to test and highlight relationships.

**Objective 2**—*Work with communities and partner organizations to identify and characterize regional patterns and trends as opportunities for and constraints on various human uses.*

**Strategies—**

- Evaluate, select, and develop indicators of community sustainability.
- Work with communities and partner organizations to characterize issues and possible responses.
- Use workshops and information technology (including the Southern Appalachian Regional Information System [SARIS]) to begin dialogue with communities; try to link communities with agency programs.
- Work with communities and partner organizations to understand and employ methods of ecosystem management and sustainable development.

**Objective 3**—*Identify attributes that make places suitable or unsuitable for particular uses, such as urban development, timber production, preservation, restoration, or recreation.*

**Strategy**—Work with regional partner organizations and communities to identify key needs and areas.

**Objective 4**—*Document the philosophy, methods, and technologies for, and case studies of, ecosystem management and sustainable development.*

**Strategies—**

- Develop a bookshelf and toolkit for SARIS.
- Identify cases of sustainable activities in the region, such as organic farming and other sustainable agricultural practices, residential development, alternative transportation, recycling, composting of solid waste, and green energy utilization.

**Goal 2—Education and Outreach: Foster greater public awareness of the status and dynamics of natural, economic, and cultural resources in the region through innovative communication and education. Encourage use of this awareness to improve decision making throughout the region.**

**Objective 1**—Support a state-of-the-art, easily accessible information system that facilitates information integration and dissemination, including agency and stakeholder inquiry.

**Strategies—**

- Develop and support SARIS.
- Integrate SARIS with other agency and private-sector information systems.

**Objective 2**—Develop, implement, and support key components of a regional environmental education program that inspires people to take positive action in the stewardship of local and regional resources.

**Strategies—**

- Survey existing environmental education activities. Evaluate effective examples, such as Parks as Classrooms, Project Wild, Georgia Regional Education Centers, the Pisgah Institute, Envirothon, the Ecological and Physical Sciences Study Center, the Great Smoky Mountains Institute, and the Cradle of Forestry. Identify key needs and actions that SAMAB can take to enhance environmental education in the region.
- Develop and implement key components of the region's environmental education program.
- Participate in technical exchanges with other regions and nations.

**Objective 3**—Provide forums that encourage dialogue about, clarification of, and resolution of environmental issues.

**Strategies—**

- Hold annual meetings and topical workshops. Develop SARIS as an electronic virtual forum.
- Convene stakeholders to provide input for prioritizing focus of information and education projects of SAMAB. Projects of interest will include those related to community sustainability, watershed restoration, management of invasive species and native plants, or other key issues that may emerge.
- Convene workshops for community leaders and planners to identify and discuss community sustainability indicators and the potential use of SARIS.

**Objective 4**—Maintain a communications program that builds an awareness of SAMAB and the Southern Appalachian environment.

**Strategies—**

- Develop a communications strategy that raises the visibility of SAMAB and provides specific communications support to each of the SAMAB initiatives.
- Foster public/stakeholder engagement in developing awareness of resource stewardship opportunities and responsibilities.

**Goal 3—Demonstration and Application: Identify, prioritize and support opportunities for cooperative resource management, sustainable, ecologically sound economic development, and research needed to fill knowledge gaps.**

*Objective 1—Undertake cooperative resource-management initiatives that have a scope that is regional or crosses boundaries and that address key issues.*

**Strategies—**

- Annually poll the regional leadership of SAMAB member agencies to identify priority issues on which each would have SAMAB facilitate dialogue and otherwise concentrate its efforts.
- Conduct and support management and restoration projects on selected watersheds, such as the Clinch-Powell, the Conasauga, the Chattooga, the Etowah, the Hiwassee, the Little Tennessee, and the New River. Coordinate work with the Southeast Natural Resource Leaders Group watershed committee and the Southeast Watershed Forum.
- Support and expand use of the Southeast Ecological Framework, which includes greenway corridors linking protected areas.
- Support reintroduction of extirpated species, such as elk, river otter, peregrine falcon, fish and aquatic invertebrates, and others.
- Extend the application of the Blue Ridge Parkway watershed analysis to other areas in the region, such as the Appalachian Trail, the Foothills Parkway, the Cherokee Skyway, the Cumberland Gap, or others as appropriate.
- Support development and implementation of Southern Appalachian Mountain Initiative recommendations for improving air quality in the region.
- Develop and share strategies for assessment and control of invasive exotic plant species.
- Provide information on native plants of the Southern Appalachian region that are suited for use in landscaping and available from local/regional nurseries. Work with nurseries to increase sources or supply of native plant material and seeds.

*Objective 2—Identify and prioritize sustainable, ecologically sound opportunities for economic development.*

**Strategies—**

- Convene partners to evaluate and support implementation of regional transportation plans.
- Promote studies of ecotourism and green energy initiatives.
- Work with SAMAB partners including States to identify, evaluate, and promote ecologically sustainable economic development opportunities.

*Objective 3—Support cooperative research and development needed to achieve sustainable economies and effective resource management.*

**Strategies—**

- Conduct cooperative research to increase understanding of watershed-level processes.
- With representatives from member agencies, universities, and stakeholders, develop a National Science Foundation National Ecological Observatory Network proposal to provide infrastructure for an ecological observatory in the Great Smoky Mountain National Park and in satellite sites around the region, such as Oak Ridge National Environmental Research Park and Coweeta Hydrologic Laboratory.
- Explore options for pooling resources and combining efforts to improve inventories and monitoring of plant and animal populations across the landscape, including proposed, threatened, endangered, and sensitive species and other species of concern.
- Assess habitat viability for proposed, sensitive, threatened, and endangered species.

## **Goal 4—Organizational Capacity: Develop and maintain a strong SAMAB organization that has the capacity to accomplish its mission.**

***Objective 1**—Link Federal, regional, State, tribal, and local governments in the SAMAB Cooperative, and link individuals and other organizations in the SAMAB Foundation. Establish and maintain leadership, a comprehensive set of planning and decision-making processes, and funding for joint projects. Coordinate activities across Federal and other public agencies as appropriate. Integrate program delivery at the community level whenever it is appropriate to do so.*

### **Strategies—**

- Invite Federal Highway Administration, the Cherokee Nation, and the States of Virginia, South Carolina, Alabama, Kentucky, and West Virginia to become members of the SAMAB Cooperative or participants in regional cooperative activities.
- Develop Foundation membership.
- Develop mechanisms for public and private partnership in planning, coordination, and implementation of activities.

***Objective 2**—Develop and maintain a staff with the leadership qualities, functional expertise, support, facilities, and lines of authority, responsibility, and accountability necessary to plan, accomplish, and evaluate goals established with them.*

***Objective 3**—Establish and monitor roles, responsibilities, lines of authority, and accountability within and among SAMAB organizational components and staff.*

**Strategy**—Develop position descriptions that clearly define expectations, and implement system for reviewing performance of staff members.

***Objective 4**—Clarify amounts and means of financial and in-kind support available from member organizations, the SAMAB Foundation, and outside contributors. Pursue innovative and diverse multi-year financial strategies to provide for administrative and project needs.*

### **Strategies—**

- Track opportunities and implement mechanisms for agency funding and in-kind support of administrative and project needs.
- Create and maintain a Foundation development program to provide complementary financial support for SAMAB administrative and project needs.

**Goal 4 (cont)—Organizational Capacity: Develop and maintain a strong SAMAB organization that has the capacity to accomplish its mission.**

*Objective 5—Develop and maintain an organizational culture that earns public recognition and attracts and develops outstanding paid staffers, volunteers, collaborators, and sponsors.*

**Strategies—**

- Foster proactive support from member agencies and partner organizations to accomplish SAMAB activities.
- Provide activities and opportunities that lead to an exciting and stimulating organizational image—become a crucible for community-agency creativity in governance.

## SAMAB Program Organization Chart

