

*May 1994*

## **Critical Issues a Big Issue for SAMAB**

At the annual spring planning meeting April 20-21, it became apparent that the biggest task facing SAMAB is to find a better way of identifying critical issues that merit the organization's attention and resources.

As has been noted many times before, SAMAB has established a solid reputation as an action-oriented agency by selecting "targets of opportunity" that have broad popular interest. But the time has come for developing a more orderly approach.

For that reason, the Executive Committee, meeting last March in Chattanooga, assigned Tom Nessmith of EPA's Region IV to form a special committee to look at the issues and report back.

He and Cory Berish, also of EPA, made their report at the spring planning meeting, which was held in the North Carolina Arboretum in Asheville. They focused on the following issues:

- Degradation of terrestrial habitats.
- Degradation of aquatic habitats.
- Degradation of air quality.
- Loss of biodiversity as a result of the introduction of exotic species.
- Government's support for development that is obviously not sustainable.
- Insufficient public education.
- Degradation of archaeological sites.
- Degradation of historic structures and landscapes.
- A diminishing of traditional lifestyles.

Nessmith led a discussion of possible approaches to dealing with such issues and the process SAMAB could expect to go through: first, an assessment of issues in an open forum involving the public, and, based on that, the selection of specific tasks for SAMAB.

In that connection, SAMAB plans to sponsor a mail survey and public forum for identifying and prioritizing critical issues that fall within the organization's mission. An effort to obtain funding from a private foundation for this purpose did not succeed, but Executive Committee Chairman Adams said the project will go forward anyway.

Nessmith suggested that committees be formed to flesh out plans for addressing each issue/task identified. He also recommended that when SAMAB decides to tackle a particular issue/task, it try to get a firm budget from its member agencies and other sources. There was general agreement to this approach.

TVA's Buzz Buffington said a window of opportunity is now open for developing an ecosystem-based program for the Southern Appalachians. Executive Committee Chairman Briane Adams of the U.S. Geological Survey recommended an aggressive effort be developed to implement such an ecosystem-based program.

Based on discussion at the spring planning meeting, Nessmith's committee will refine its report and present it at the June 16-17 Executive Committee meeting to be held at Grandfather Mountain, North Carolina.

## Welcome to SAMAB's Newest Member

The National Biological Survey (NBS) has signed on as the newest member of the SAMAB Cooperative. Eugene Hester, acting director, made it official at the spring planning meeting by signing the Interagency and Cooperative Agreement.

Signing for SAMAB were Briane Adams of the U.S. Geological Survey and Charles E. (Buzz) Buffington of TVA.

The NBS is a newly formed bureau within the U.S. Department of Interior. It was created to consolidate the department's scientific research functions.

Hester gave an interesting account of how NBS was created and what it hopes to accomplish. He said that when Interior Secretary Babbitt announced formation of the new bureau, "it was kind of like opening the door and throwing in a hand grenade." The effect of Babbitt's action was to separate the science work of Interior from the management side. Funding, formerly managed by the various bureaus, was taken out and put under NBS.

Hester said NBS will seek a national partnership with other agencies to integrate available scientific information dealing with biological species. He hopes to make such information more accessible to local, state and federal government agencies at all levels.

The new bureau is off to a fast start. It plans to issue an ecological trends and issues report this fiscal year to give what he called "the big picture" on biological issues such as threatened and endangered species.

He indicated that NBS wants to get ahead of this latter issue and head off problems before survival of a particular species is in jeopardy. At the same time, he said, NBS will encourage "wise development" as well as biological protection.

Hester discussed the concept of "ecosystem management" and said he felt that an ecosystem boundary can be defined with about 90 percent precision. He expressed concern about the other 10 percent, but said he is comfortable with the 90 per cent.

Administratively, NBS plans to have four regional offices. In Washington, he said, there will be four main sub-groups: research, inventory and monitoring, information and technology services, and budget and administration.

James E. Weaver, director of the Biological Science Center of NBS at Gainesville, Florida, will represent NBS on the SAMAB Executive Committee. His address is 7920 NW 71st Street, Gainesville, Florida, 32606. His telephone number is (904) 378-8181.

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## Arboretum Hosts SAMAB, Breaks Ground for Gardens

The North Carolina Arboretum in Asheville hosted SAMAB's spring planning meeting and at the same time launched some important new projects of its own.

A groundbreaking ceremony April 20 marked the start of the arboretum's multi-million-dollar expansion

program, which will include its first major demonstration gardens, reflecting the newest trends in landscape design, plants, and materials.

In addition, there will be a terrace garden where visitors can get an overall introduction to the arboretum, and water gardens that show the relationship between water and plants, particularly aquatic and wetland plants.

There are many other elements to the expansion plan and several will be completed during the next year.

On hand for the groundbreaking were representatives from the North Carolina Legislature, the Western North Carolina Development Association Board, the North Carolina Arboretum Society, and SAMAB.

The Arboretum's own work crew was allowed the privilege of turning the first spades of earth to prepare for the new projects. Visiting dignitaries then took their turn with the shovels.

George Briggs, the Arboretum's executive director, was master of ceremonies for the groundbreaking ceremony.

SAMAB's spring meeting was held in the handsome and spacious Visitor Education Center at the Arboretum.

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## **Sandra Bryson - May Her Tribe Increase**

As everyone knows, the people who do much of the vital work in SAMAB, as in any other large organization, are unsung heroes. From its beginning, SAMAB has sought to honor those who work hard behind the scenes to make the work of this organization a success.

Such is the case with Sandra Bryson, a secretary with the U.S. Forest Service at the Southeastern Forest Experiment Station in Asheville, North Carolina. Sandra serves as administrative assistant to Bob Thatcher of the SAMAB Foundation Board. Bob has the job of keeping the minutes not only of Foundation Board meetings but of the Cooperative's Executive Committee meetings as well.

"Without Sandra's hard work, I simply couldn't get the job done," said Thatcher.

At the spring planning meeting, Bob Kerr, Foundation president, presented Sandra with an attractive plaque expressing appreciation for her work.

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## **Senators Hear Of SAMAB's Ecosystem Role**

Executive Director Hubert Hinote testified on April 14 before a U.S. Senate subcommittee that is exploring cooperative efforts across the country for implementing principles of ecosystem management.

The Subcommittee on Agricultural Research, Conservation, Forestry, and General Legislation had asked for SAMAB's participation. Four other organizations also were invited, representing private industry, the Forest Service, the Wilderness Society, and a local nonprofit organization from California.

SAMAB was represented by Hinote, Executive Committee Chairman Briane Adams, and Foundation Board President G. Robert Kerr.

Hinote told how SAMAB originated and what its purpose was, explained its organizational structure, and gave three examples of SAMAB activities that involve ecosystem management.

The first example was SAMAB's 1992 air quality forum, which prompted the formation of an eight-state Southern Appalachian Mountain Initiative (SAMI) made up air quality regulators and various constituencies. Additional air quality monitoring stations have since been established in the Southern Appalachian region.

Reintroduction of an endangered species, the red wolf, into the Great Smoky Mountains was the second example. Hinote told of the massive public education campaign SAMAB sponsored in connection with this project.

Finally, the Pittman Center Project, which resulted in a model program for community planning, balancing development with conservation, was described.

Hinote went on to tell of SAMAB's future plans, citing the current effort to identify and prioritize critical issues in Southern Appalachia. This exercise, he said, will help SAMAB achieve sharper focus over the next three years. It has three goals:

- "To capitalize on SAMAB's past successes" by reducing resource-management conflicts in the region and by facilitating even better cooperation for achieving common goals of resource management and economic development.
- "To improve our communication with vital constituencies" by pursuing linkage with major national initiatives such as the Interagency Task Force on Ecosystem Management and others.
- "To fine-tune the SAMAB program to better meet stakeholders' needs," mainly by identifying the region's critical issues and setting priorities for their resolution.

"The SAMAB program has succeeded beyond its dreams," Hinote told the senators. "We are very excited by the prospect of achieving an even more effective program, one that is clearly focused and capable of solving some of the major ecosystem management challenges facing our region and the nation."

The subcommittee expressed appreciation for SAMAB's participation and indicated that the SAMAB experience will help shape future legislation regarding ecosystem management.

More detailed written information about SAMAB was made a part of the subcommittee's record.

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## Got Your Copy Of Business Plan?

A draft business plan for SAMAB (also called an action plan or a strategic plan) has been completed. Executive Director Hubert Hinote and Bob Thatcher of the SAMAB Foundation Board led this effort. Copies were provided at the spring planning meeting and comments have been requested. If you would like a copy, contact either Hinote or Thatcher. The plan will be presented to the Executive Committee for approval at its June meeting.

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*August 1994*

## **Ecosystem Management Initiative**

### **Capitol Team Surveys Southern Appalachia**

A six-member survey team designated by the White House visited Southern Appalachia in July. This could result in the selection of the Southern Appalachian highlands (the SAMAB region) as a major national demonstration area for ecosystem management.

The following background information is important for understanding the significance of this visit and its implications for SAMAB:

The White House this year established a Federal Ecosystem Management Task Force made up of assistant secretaries from 12 departments and agencies as well as representatives from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the Office of Science and Technology Policy.

This task force is now implementing the ecosystem management recommendation contained in Vice President Albert Gore's National Performance Review. One of the most far-reaching environmental recommendations made by the Vice President was to develop "a proactive approach to ensuring a sustainable economy through ecosystem management."

The goal is to restore and maintain the health, sustainability, and biological diversity of ecosystems while supporting sustainable economies and communities.

The Task Force identified seven ecosystems where cooperative interagency activities were already under way in the field of ecosystem management. One of these was the Southern Appalachian highlands, where SAMAB has a strong record of interagency cooperation. All seven of these areas were seen as mature models for broader application of ecosystem management principles nationwide.

The survey team that visited the SAMAB region sought answers to two basic questions:

- What can be learned from the experience gained in Southern Appalachia?
- How can the Task Force support the effort here and facilitate more effective performance?

The USDA Forest Service and SAMAB served as joint coordinators for the team's visit. The visit began in Atlanta July 11 with a meeting with various regional offices of the SAMAB partners and environmental groups. It ended at Knoxville July 15 with meetings with TVA and the Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

In between, the survey team met with various local groups, researchers, state government representatives, and other federal representatives.

The team will prepare a report to the White House Task Force. This report and reports from the six other survey teams will be used to map a national ecosystem management implementation plan for federal lands and federally

managed programs. It is expected that this will lead to an integrated agency budget request for fiscal 1996 to fund ecosystem management activities.

SAMAB Executive Director Hubert Hinote said it appears there were two main lessons that were learned from the Southern Appalachian study: (1) An organization will be designated to coordinate and facilitate the initiative in each of the seven designated ecosystems, and (2) subsequent ecosystem management activities will be determined largely by the particular issue needing to be addressed. The issue will, in turn, determine the scale of response required.

Members of the team visiting Southern Appalachia were Diane Gelburd of the U.S. Soil Conservation Service, and Bill Sexton, of the U.S. Forest Service, who served as co-leaders of the team; other team members were Susan Huke, Soil Conservation Service; Terry West, Forest Service; Ray Clark, President's Council on Environmental Quality; Ted Boling, Department of Justice; and John Dennis, U.S. Park Service.

The team focused on structural and process issues such as how to achieve more effective collaboration and how to facilitate public participation in ecosystem management initiatives. Local coordinators for the visit were Hinote, Charles Van Sickle of the Southeastern Forest Experiment Station, and David Meriwether, of the Forest Service's Southern Region.

The other six study areas besides the Southern Appalachian highlands are the Anacostia River watershed, the Great Lakes (Lake Superior and Glacial Lake Chicago Crescent), the coastal Louisiana wetlands, the South Florida ecosystem, the Pacific Northwest forests, and Prince William Sound.

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## **Ecological Society Features SAMAB on Convention Program**

The Ecological Society of America held a joint meeting with several other groups in Knoxville August 7-11 with about 3,000 attending. One afternoon was devoted to the SAMAB program.

John Peine served as chairman for the SAMAB presentation. Executive Director Hubert Hinote gave an overview of the SAMAB program.

The SAMAB Executive Committee will meet September 22 at 10:00 a.m. at the TVA office in Norris, Tennessee.

SAMAB Asks Regional Leaders to Support Demonstration Briane Adams, chairman of the SAMAB Cooperative Executive Committee, made a presentation in Atlanta August 15 seeking support for a SAMAB regional demonstration of ecosystem management. He addressed the Natural Resource Leaders, representing federal agencies that have land management responsibilities in the southeastern United States.

The proposed demonstration would provide a number of tangible products plus a better understanding of ecological processes and how these are affected by environmental stress. It would also serve to strengthen the cooperative interaction of SAMAB's member agencies.

Adams called for the following actions by the Natural Resource Leaders, once stakeholders agree on the key issues:

Letters of support from each agency accepting the Southern Appalachians as the demonstration area.

Formation of an interagency team to refine the strategy, identify immediate and long-range needs, and create a multi-year budget.

Endorsement of data-sharing among the represented agencies and other SAMAB partners.

Commitment of specific FY95 resources (budget and/or staff) to support the initiative, along with commitment to a long-term process.

Participation in a collective briefing of regional heads of agencies, Washington agency officials, and national leaders in the Executive Branch and Congress.

Products expected from the proposed demonstration would include:

The integration of research results from existing SAMAB initiatives supporting both a healthy environment and economy.

Identification of Best Management Practices as well as new management techniques derived from "adaptive management."

Improved data collection and dissemination.

Enhanced tools for decision makers, including GIS technology, graphic representations of the interactions between natural resources and their stressors, access to environmental and economic data bases, sample ordinances and guidelines aimed at protecting the environment while maintaining economic strength.

Hands-on training for decision-makers in the use of these tools.

Adams said there would be additional products and benefits from such a demonstration, including:

Educational and awareness programs involving the public.

Partnership models demonstrating effective cooperation among corporations, universities, planning districts, and non-government organizations.

Strategic options for "gateway communities" that want to benefit from economic growth but maintain a high-quality natural environment and protect their natural heritage.

An annual report documenting the status of special projects and the current condition of natural resources.

A compendium of information to be used in other regions of the country to improve land-use planning and resource management.

Adams said 10 recognized themes would be followed in the SAMAB demonstration. These are a multi-scale approach, the use of ecological rather than political boundaries, the maintenance of natural biodiversity, better use of existing data and collection of additional data to fill existing information gaps, monitoring to measure success or failure, use of adaptive management techniques, interagency cooperation, commitment to change (formation of an interagency committee), recognition of the fact that socioeconomic pressures influence ecological

processes, and awareness of societal values in reaching ecosystem management goals.

The presentation was made in Chattanooga. It was an outgrowth of many months of effort within SAMAB to establish priorities and focus on the most important issues. This required a preliminary assessment of the condition of the ecosystem and the defining of various risk factors. EPA's Tom Nessmith laid much of the groundwork for Adams' presentation by making this preliminary assessment.

SAMAB is coordinating its demonstration proposal with an ecological assessment initiated by the Forest Service. Executive Committee member Charles Van Sickle and Forrest Carpenter of the Forest Service Regional Office in Atlanta are co-leaders responsible for this activity. SAMAB also is coordinating with other members of the cooperative; for example, EPA, which has taken prime responsibility for identifying and addressing environmental risks in the Southern Appalachian region.

The Forest Service has scheduled three forums to begin public involvement in its assessment process. These are as follow:

Tuesday, August 23, 6:30 p.m. at the Asheville High School in Asheville, North Carolina.

Thursday, August 25, 6:30 p.m. at the Sheraton Airport Inn in Roanoke, Virginia.

Saturday, August 27, 9 a.m., at Gainesville College, Gainesville, Georgia.

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## **Bartuska to Keynote Fall Conference**

Ann Bartuska, newly appointed special assistant to the chief of the U.S. Forest Service, will be keynote speaker at the SAMAB Fall Conference November 14-17 at the Kanuga Conference Center in Hendersonville, North Carolina.

This was announced by Chuck Hunter of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, who led planning for this year's conference.

Jack Ward Thomas, chief of the Forest Service, and Ron Pulliam, director of the National Biological Survey, have been invited to speak at dinner and luncheon functions.

The theme of the conference will be "Ecosystem Management: Crossing the Borders," the idea being that good ecosystem management requires crossing agency lines, state lines, and habitat lines.

Critical issues to be discussed fall in six categories: biodiversity: the impending crisis; water quality; air quality; land use degradation; cultural resources; and unsustainable development: the debate.

There will in addition to formal presentations be informal but facilitated discussion sessions to develop action plans for addressing these critical issues.

The keynote speaker, Ms. Bartuska, formerly directed the Forest Service ecosystem management program and more recently was on assignment to the National Biological Survey. She at one time was assigned to the Southeastern Forest Experiment Station at Asheville, North Carolina, where she headed the research program for the Forest Service input to NAPAP (National Acid Precipitation Assessment Program).

The fall conference has been a fixture on the SAMAB agenda since 1990. It provides a forum for addressing policy and management implications of environmental and cultural issues that affect ecosystem sustainability in the southeastern United States. It encourages interagency programs of research, education and action on environmental issues.

Further information about the fall conference may be obtained by calling Hunter at (404) 679-7130, or faxing inquiries to (404) 679-7081.

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## **Data Coordinator Coming**

One of SAMAB's newest members, the National Biological Survey (NBS), will have a full-time person assigned to the Southern Appalachian region by September to develop data-sharing capabilities among the cooperative's agencies. NBS has funded the position for three years. TVA will provide this person with an office at its facilities in Norris, Tennessee.

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## **Bibles to Chair U.S. MAB; Seeks Stronger Network Of Biosphere Reserves**

D. Dean Bibles has been appointed as the new chair of the U.S. Man and Biosphere (MAB) National Committee, replacing Frank H. Talbot who resigned for health reasons.

Bibles is director of policy on land tenure in the U.S. Department of Interior and a special assistant to Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt. Bibles has more than 37 years of land management experience with the U.S. Bureau of Land Management.

He has been active in promoting maintenance of biological diversity, expanding research on ecosystem management, and protecting historical and cultural resources.

Meanwhile, the national MAB has approved a strategic plan for the national Biosphere Reserve program. One result of this was creation of a Biosphere Reserve Directorate with SAMAB's Executive Director Hubert Hinote serving as acting chair.

Hinote said that one of the first priorities of the strategic plan is to complete the Biosphere Reserve network in the United States. Efforts are being made to strengthen developing MAB programs, using SAMAB as a model. To help accomplish this, another national workshop is planned for Biosphere Reserve managers and a new brochure will be printed by MAB.

Hinote said Bibles supports the effort to strengthen the land management thrust of the MAB program. He wants to improve linkages among the various Biosphere Reserve Units and between these units and the national MAB program. Bibles also is interested in expanding MAB's international role.

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## **Colorful New Logo Available for SAMAB Use**

Two versions of a new SAMAB logo, approved by the Executive Committee, will be used in future SAMAB newsletters, on SAMAB stationery, and in other appropriate ways. The attractive, multicolored logos were designed and produced by Thomas Fairclough of Antista Design, Atlanta.

Executive Director Hubert Hinote said a new design for SAMAB stationery and the newsletter is being prepared and will incorporate the new logo. In time, the logo will be used in SAMAB exhibitry, brochures, and other materials.

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*October 1994*

***Executive Director Reports:***

## **Action Plan Approved; Committees to Be Revitalized**

At its September 22 meeting, the Executive Committee approved the SAMAB Cooperative's draft Action Plan. This will help a great deal in guiding our future direction. In particular, it will help in the preparation of a realistic annual budget for SAMAB, something we have not had in the past.

Here are some highlights of the Action Plan:

- SAMAB's No. 1 goal is to develop a more focused program of work to meet stakeholder needs. We must identify and prioritize the region's key issues relating to natural resource management and economic development. As you know, we have made much progress in this area already, and many on the Executive Committee have put in long hours identifying the issues.
- The second goal is to improve our communication with policy-makers, decision-makers, and other stakeholders. Again, much has been accomplished. One major step in this direction came at the Southeastern Natural Resources Leaders seminar in Chattanooga on August 15-17. This group agreed to send their respective agency heads a resolution strongly supporting SAMAB and encouraging their support and help.
- Still more is needed. For example, we need to beef up networking with community leaders, congressional leaders, and state legislators, and to share with them timely reports about what SAMAB is doing. The aim is to get these leaders to use SAMAB for resolving some of their resource/development problems.
- The third goal is to get the resources - the people and the money - essential for carrying out the SAMAB program successfully. Last year, more of the SAMAB members increased their financial support and new members joined the cooperative.

The Action Plan is dynamic, which means there will be ongoing changes. However, it gives us a basis to move ahead on a more solid footing.

One very important element needed to make the plan successful is the revitalizing of our working committees. These committees, composed of committed volunteers from member agencies, have been responsible for much of the progress we have made to date. But they now need - and are beginning to get - stronger support.

At the last Executive Committee meeting, Chairman Briane Adams asked members to nominate people as soon as possible to serve on the revamped working committees so that appointments can be made and the committees brought to full strength by November 14. That is the day that SAMAB's annual Fall Conference begins. Briane wants a plenary meeting with these restructured committees during the conference.

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## **Executive Committee To Meet November 14**

The next meeting of the SAMAB Executive Committee will be held November 14 at 1:00 pm at the Kanuga [samab.org/Pubs/.../news\\_1094.html](http://samab.org/Pubs/.../news_1094.html)

Conference Center in Hendersonville, North Carolina. The meeting will coincide with the annual SAMAB Fall Conference.

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## **Newsletter, Stationery Getting New Look**

You'll notice a difference in this issue of the SAMAB newsletter. It sports a new look which the Executive Committee feels will better reflect the cooperative's new maturity and stature.

The newsletter is now printed in federal blue ink on white recycled paper, and features the SAMAB logo that was approved by the Executive Committee at its June 16 meeting. The logo, you may remember, was designed and produced without charge to SAMAB by Thomas Fairclough of Antista Design in Atlanta. Thanks again to Mr. Fairclough!

This issue of the newsletter prints the logo in blue type. Future issues will have the logo in full color.

SAMAB's stationery has also been redesigned using blue on white, just like the newsletter, and will also be on recycled paper. It too will use the new logo in full color. Federal and state members of the Cooperative are listed in each issue of the newsletter and on the new stationery. New members are expected to be added in the coming months, and these will be listed in subsequent issues.

Mark McNeely, education specialist in TVA's Technology Transfer program, and Dick Green, a member of SAMAB's Public Affairs Committee, designed the newsletter and stationery formats. The Executive Committee approved the new designs at its September 22 meeting in Norris, Tennessee.

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## **Congressional Team Surveys Eco-Development Progress**

A team from the General Accounting Office (GAO) visited Southern Appalachia September 8-16 to learn about SAMAB's current and potential future role in ecosystem management.

Ralph J. Domenick, senior evaluator in the Resources, Community and Economic Development Division of GAO, headed the team, which conferred with Executive Committee Chairman Briane Adams, Executive Director Hubert Hinote, and many other SAMAB cooperators.

The team wanted to know particularly how SAMAB dealt with three barriers to ecosystem management which GAO had identified in an April 28, 1994 report. The report was entitled Ecosystem Management: Additional Actions Needed to Adequately Test a Promising Approach. It identified the barriers to government-wide ecosystem management as (1) problems with data, (2) problems with interagency coordination, and (3) insufficient collaboration with non-federal parties.

The team was interested in how SAMAB approached these barriers and what could be done by Congress to address them.

The team's visit was at the direction of the Congress. It paralleled an earlier visit to the region by a White House team that surveyed the status of ecosystem management initiatives in Southern Appalachia.

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