

February 1996

SAMAB Signatories Express Enthusiasm

On February 15, signatories of the SAMAB Interagency and Cooperative Agreement were briefed in Atlanta. They were informed of SAMAB's accomplishments over the past year, but the principal focus of the briefing was the Southern Appalachian Assessment (SAA) which is nearing completion. The signatories, such as regional directors/administrators, are the persons responsible for the creation and operation of SAMAB.

Originally scheduled for release by the first of the year, the SAA's reports were delayed by the unexpected furlough of government workers and by inclement weather that recently plagued the region. According to SAA co-chairman Charles Van Sickle, the reports should be available shortly after March 1.

The four teams completing their reports are Aquatic, Atmospheric, Terrestrial, and Social/Cultural/Economic. A less-technical summary report especially designed for the general public is also planned.

A preface intended for each of the reports was used to describe how the assessment was conducted and what it achieved.

"It is an ecological assessment," the paper noted, "a description of conditions that goes beyond state, federal, or private boundaries. In using Southern Appalachian Assessment data, land managers can base their decisions on the natural boundaries of ecosystems rather than on the artificial boundaries of counties, states, or national forests."

The preface also points out that the assessment "was accomplished through the cooperation of federal and state natural resource agencies" and was "coordinated by the Southern Appalachian Man and Biosphere (SAMAB) Cooperative." The five reports will be available in printed form and via the Internet. "By providing direct access to assessment materials via Internet," the preface states, "we hope that users can obtain information more quickly and at lower-cost."

At the briefing, assessment team representatives gave brief overviews of their findings.

Bill Jackson, Atmospheric Team Leader, said the team focused on five key pollutants, sulfur dioxide, nitrous oxides, particulates, ozone, and volatile organic compounds. Particulates from sulfates are the greatest hindrance to visibility in scenic areas such as the Great Smoky Mountains, he said.

Jack Holcomb, co-leader of the aquatic resource team, emphasized the value of having several agencies involved in the exercise. "We learned of data sets we didn't know existed," he said. Holcomb also said the assessment turned up data gaps and indicated that future activities can seek to fill those gaps.

Glenn Gaines of the Terrestrial Team said public participation in team meetings was especially beneficial. The team identified such things as forest cover types, non-forest cover, and rare species. Data was summarized in several ways - by states, by region, and by biological units.

Reporting for the Social/Cultural/Economic Team, John Peine pointed out that "the human dimension is essential

to the whole process" of the assessment. Among team findings: Since 1970, wages are up an average of \$10,000 per household, there has been a 30 percent population increase in the region, the poverty level has been nearly halved, and, whereas 15.4 percent of homes in the region lacked indoor plumbing, only 1.7 percent do now.

Peine also noted there was increasing concern for the environment but a marked lack of knowledge about causes and solutions.

Karl Hermann of the National Biological Service reported that each team had a Geographic Information System representative to assimilate the tremendous amount of data and present it in a visual way. The data will be available via the SAMAB Homepage in the near future.

Stephanie Neal reported on activities of the Public Affairs sub-team. Public focus meetings were held to get public input, and all team meetings were open to the public. A newsletter was widely distributed reporting on the structure and progress of the assessment. All this, she said, gives the Southern Appalachian Assessment outstanding credibility.

Robert Baker, a leader in the establishment of SAMAB who had been out of the region for a while serving the National Park Service in its Denver office, seemed to express the sentiments of the group when he said "I am amazed at the progress SAMAB has made. The assessment is exactly the type of thing that SAMAB was established to do and I give it my enthusiastic endorsement. We must now get its results out to the public and continue to identify and fill in the gaps."

Randy Phillips to Chair SAMAB Executive Committee

Randy Phillips, Forest Supervisor for the National Forests in North Carolina, was unanimously elected to chair the SAMAB Executive Committee at the committee's regular meeting February 15 in Atlanta. Karen Wade, Superintendent of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, was chosen as vice-chair. There were no other nominees.

Charles Van Sickle had been scheduled to become Executive Committee chairman this year, but his decision to retire from the U.S. Forest Service made him ineligible. Van Sickle will be leaving his post soon as Assistant Director of the Southern Research Station in Asheville, NC.

Phillips succeeds Briane Adams, who served as Executive Committee chairman for the past three years. Adams expressed appreciation for the cooperation accorded him by all the Executive Committee members and others in the SAMAB organization. Adams is Administrative Assistant for water resources in the U.S. Geological Survey, Atlanta.

Phillips and Wade were selected by a nominating committee headed by Van Sickle.

Phillips joined the SAMAB Executive Committee in 1993. He attended Oxford College of Emory University, Florida State University, and the University of Montana. He holds degrees in Political Science and in Forest Resource Management.

He entered the Forest Service in 1978. He is a member of the Asheville Chamber of Commerce, Blue Ridge Bicycle Club, and the Society of American Foresters.

End of an Era: Thanks!

Many SAMAB accomplishments have resulted under the command of Briane Adams, such as the Southern Appalachian Assessment. Briane, you greatly contributed and helped promote the central theme of SAMAB, cooperation. We all want to express our thanks to you for a successful three years. Your dedication, enthusiasm, and hard work significantly contributed to SAMAB's success.

SAMAB Annual Planning Meeting Set for April

SAMAB's Annual Planning meeting will be held on April 24-25 beginning on the 24th at the North Carolina Arboretum in Asheville, NC. Make your hotel reservations promptly. Two Hotels/Motels are close by (just off of exit 2 of I 26) -- Comfort Suites Hotel 704/665-4000 and the Hampton Inn 704/667-2022. Registration for the meeting is \$25. Checks should be made to the SAMAB Foundation.

SAMAB to Reaffirm Agencies' Support

At the Executive Committee meeting February 15, Executive Director Hubert Hinote called on SAMAB's signatory agencies to reaffirm their commitment to SAMAB. They need to reaffirm their commitment to the basic Interagency and Cooperative Agreement as well as their financial and in-kind support of the program.

Bob Baker, Director of the National Park Service's Southeast Field Region, was asked to prepare a letter to SAMAB agencies to determine the extent of their financial support of SAMAB in fiscal year 1996.

This action is needed, Hinote said. Several new agencies have joined the cooperative since the original six signed the SAMAB Interagency and Cooperative Agreement. SAMAB now consists of twelve federal agencies and three states since the Natural Resources Conservation Service has agreed to join.

Briane Adams, outgoing chairman of the Executive Committee, also appealed for financial support from the member agencies.

Internet Offers Assessment Data

Most people who use the Southern Appalachian Assessment reports will be primarily interested only in certain sections that fit their particular circumstance. Extracting these sections will be much simpler on the Internet. Also, the Internet material, unlike the printed versions, can be quickly updated or revised.

In-depth versions of assessment data will be made available on CD-ROM and in the SAMAB Homepage on the

World-Wide Web. CD-ROM sets are primarily in ARC/INFO* formats.

Internet versions of the assessment will be accessible through both the SAMAB Homepage (<http://www.lib.utk.edu/samab>) and the Forest Service Homepage (<http://www.fs.fed.us/>)

Although the assessment data is presently not accessible through the SAMAB Homepage, Karl Hermann and Phill Gibson have added many items such as past SAMAB newsletters and a "What is SAMAB" document. The SAA data should be available on the Homepage by March 1996.

After the Assessment, What?

The SAMAB Executive Committee at its last meeting discussed the need for getting results of the Southern Appalachian Assessment widely disseminated. This will be necessary if the assessment is to have any meaningful impact on the general public.

Charles Van Sickle, co-chair of the assessment, said the exercise provided a much-needed benchmark to guide future activities of SAMAB. It identifies research needs that merit careful follow-up.

Robert Baker of the Park Service strongly urged SAMAB to get assessment information out to the general public, and not just to technical people. Dennis Barnett of the Corps of Engineers suggested that each agency prepare materials and get it to their various constituency groups.

Cory Berish of the Environmental Protection Agency said EPA plans to put in writing what it plans to do with the assessment data.

SAMAB's new chairman, Randy Phillips, asked SAMAB's standing committees to refine suggestions made at the Executive Committee meeting and present them at the Spring Planning Meeting.

The SAMAB Public Affairs Committee will assist member agencies in publicizing the assessment.

To illustrate one way assessment results can be delivered to a wider audience, John Peine cited a class of graduate students that he and Karl Hermann are teaching at the University of Tennessee. Using data from the assessment, they encouraged the students to broaden their approach and embrace a regional perspective.

Others at the Executive Committee meeting suggested getting assessment information into the hands of environmental education teachers. The opportunities are unlimited, but SAMAB must choose its targets carefully and zero in on a few "do-able" projects, Executive Director Hubert Hinote said.

Everyone was urged to bring their best ideas for assessment follow-up to the SAMAB Spring Planning Meeting.

Welcome to SAMAB's Newest Member

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service has signed the interagency and cooperative agreement to become SAMAB's newest member. Outgoing Chairman Briane Adams made the announcement at the Executive

Committee meeting in Atlanta.

Dwight Holman, Regional Conservationist of the SE Regional Office in Atlanta, Georgia, is the signatory for the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Charlie, Thanks!

Charles Van Sickle has been a tremendous asset to us all. He has been a huge contributor to the SAMAB Cooperative and a great friend. Charlie played a key role in the creation of SAMAB. He is also a member of the U.S. MAB Biosphere Reserve Directorate, representing the USFS. His wisdom, hard work, and enthusiasm has helped put SAMAB on the map. Charlie, good luck with your new endeavors! You will be deeply missed both professionally and personally!

News from the Committees: 3 Proposals Made

Three SAMAB committees presented proposals to the Executive Committee in Atlanta February 15.

Larry Luckett of the Forest Service, chairman of the Resource Management Committee, asked that SAMAB recognize landowners who are cooperating with the Little Tennessee Watershed Association by correcting environmental problems on their land. This recognition would be in the form of outdoor signs calling attention to their cleanup work. The Executive Committee approved \$500 for the project.

Public Affairs Committee Chairman Terry Seyden of the Forest Service in North Carolina proposed that SAMAB join in sponsoring an annual university conference for presentation of papers addressing quality-of-life issues in the region.

Several universities would host the meetings on a rotating basis. There would be no financial obligation to SAMAB. The proposal was approved.

Joe Abrell, representing Gene Cox of the Environmental Education Committee, asked for funds to reprint copies of a brochure entitled, "Landscaping with Native Plants", and to publish a manual on controlling exotic plant species. The Executive Committee endorsed spending \$300-\$500 from the committee's existing budget for the project, with the recommendation that the SAMAB logo be included on the publications and that its scope be broadened to include the SAMAB region.

Executive Director Reports:

National MAB Wants 20 "New SAMABs"

The Biosphere Reserve Directorate of the National Man and Biosphere (MAB) program, which I have the privilege of chairing, met in Riverside, California, in January.

The directorate hopes to launch a campaign called "20 in 2000" in which it proposes to establish 20 new Biosphere Reserve programs, patterned after SAMAB, by the year 2000. This is gratifying to all of us associated with SAMAB because it reflects the tremendous success we have enjoyed since this cooperative was established.

I see it as a strong reaffirmation of SAMAB's role as the model for the rest of the nation. And, the credit goes to all of you who have worked so hard to make SAMAB successful.

On another topic, Phill Gibson, Environmental Planner and my assistant, submitted a proposal to the U.S. MAB. He was awarded a grant which will be used for developing a workshop to identify environmentally related human health issues in Southern Appalachia. Regional health leaders of state health departments, local health education centers, researchers in the field of rural health, and social scientists will be sought to participate in the workshop. Kieran J. Fogarty of the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences co-authored the proposal and will be assisting with workshop development. This workshop is especially timely in view of the fact that the National Institutes of Health recently joined the US MAB program.

Another workshop has been proposed that would bring together the NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) coordinators of the SAMAB agencies. NEPA coordinators have the task of seeing that an agency's activities are environmentally sound. Phill Gibson and I, working with agency NEPA Coordinators, will develop plans for the workshop.

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May 1996

Spring Meeting Enthusiasm

A Bold New Era Ahead for SAMAB

Building on a solid record of past achievements, including the Southern Appalachian Assessment, SAMAB is entering a bold new era filled with fresh challenges. This was made clear by speakers at the annual Spring Planning Meeting in Asheville April 14-15.

Randy Phillips, new chairman of the Executive Committee, said the meeting has "given us a sense of where we're going. Now we must move ahead."

Addressing the question of "Where do we go from here," Karen Wade challenged SAMAB to "focus on things we can uniquely do -- and then do them." Ms. Wade is vice-chair of SAMAB's Executive Committee. She suggested that the Cooperative's standing committees identify and list items that SAMAB, with its mission, can perform in a unique way, and then recommend areas that the organization should focus on in the coming year.

"To accomplish that," she said, "we may have to go beyond the present committee structure." This might mean bringing in new committees, phasing out some existing committees, and forming ad hoc committees for specific tasks.

Responding to her challenge, SAMAB's present committees in separate meetings considered "things SAMAB can uniquely do." Some identified projects that went beyond the individual committees' normal scope. For details, see the committee reports.

Executive Director Hubert Hinote sees this as evidence that "SAMAB is embarking on a whole new era."

"What I sense from this year's Spring Planning Meeting is a new enthusiasm, a new fire to meet the challenges that lie ahead of us," Hinote added.

One of these challenges will be to communicate to the right people the results of SAMAB's monumental Southern Appalachian Assessment, now near completion. A vital component of this new vision is the need for SAMAB Foundation development. While the Foundation serves as a successful mechanism for facilitating efforts such as conferences, the SAMAB Annual Conference, and public meetings, there is a need to reach beyond and bring the foundation closer to the heart of the SAMAB program. Also, there is a need to move ahead with the development of the SAMAB associated universities and colleges.

Implementing the Assessment: A Plan of Action Takes Shape

SAMAB's Public Affairs Committee has prepared a "rollout plan" to disseminate the results of the Southern Appalachian Assessment to top-level officials in the federal and state governments, to educators, and to the

public. (See details in the story on Page 2).

Charles Van Sickle reported that three of the four major technical reports from the assessment are in the final draft stage, as is the summary report. He displayed a draft of the Aquatic Team report to give the audience an idea of the high quality of presentation to be found in the finished documents.

Van Sickle described the assessment as "an ecological description of conditions and trends in the natural resources of Southern Appalachia. He added that the various agencies now need to zero in on the specifics. For example, all agencies involved in aquatic health will need to apply the broad findings of the assessment to individual watersheds under their stewardship. He reminded SAMAB that the assessment, which has consumed much of the energy of the cooperative's member agencies for the past 18 months," is the start of a process, not the end. And it will play a major role in SAMAB's future direction.

SAMAB vice-chair Wade suggested, as a follow up on the Southern Appalachian Assessment, to keep three long-term goals in mind:

1. Development of a good work program to guide implementation;
2. Improved communication among agencies so each will know what the other is doing; and
3. Acquiring the resources to do on-the-ground projects.

Special Thanks to the NC Arboretum and to George Briggs

SAMAB extends a very special thank-you to George Briggs, Executive Director of the North Carolina Arboretum, for hosting the SAMAB Spring Planning Meeting. This was the third time that the meeting has been held at the Arboretum, which offers possibly the most scenic, beautiful and congenial setting SAMAB has ever had for this annual function.

In welcoming SAMAB, Briggs described progress made since the Arboretum's dedication last year. An attractive entry plaza has been completed, and so have the grand garden promenade, the stream garden, and the quilt garden. As a result, many more visitors are expected this year than last. Briggs said work has started on an irrigation system and several new roads and trails. Indicating even more growth in visitation, Briggs announced that in the year 2000, the North Carolina Arboretum will host meetings of the International Botanical Gardens Association Congress and the American Association of Botanical Gardens and Arboreta.

Thanks again, George, for providing such fine surroundings for our meeting.

Southern Appalachian Assessment Raises Policy Issues

A number of policy issues related to the Southern Appalachian Assessment (SAA) were discussed by the

Executive Committee during the Spring Planning Meeting.

"We need to define and address those issues that are beyond the scope of any single working committee," Executive Director Hinote said. "We need to identify the high priority actions needed and determine who should tackle them.

As a result, the Executive Committee took action on the following issues:

Forest Health. Bob Anderson of the Forest Service said sustainability is the major concern and that criteria for forest health indicators need to be developed. A draft policy statement has been prepared. It will be reviewed by SAMAB's Resource Management Committee, which will make recommendations for action to the Executive Committee.

Air Quality. Karen Wade said the Southern Appalachian Mountains Initiative (SAMI) should let federal and other land managers know what it is doing and answer questions such as, What level of air pollution reduction is needed not only in Class I areas but throughout the region? It was decided to invite SAMI representatives to the Executive Committee's July meeting. The purposes would be to promote more interaction and to seek timely solutions to SAMAB's concern about air quality in the Southern Appalachians.

SAA Policy Team. The question was raised: Should this team continue to operate now that the assessment is about finished? Charles Van Sickle said it should continue, but Brian Cole said this might be premature because of doubts about continued funding. No action was taken.

Getting results of the SAA to other organizations. There was extended discussion of this question. Dodd Galbreath of the Tennessee Environmental Policy Office suggested that a SAMAB representative could sit in on meetings of selected groups, such as the Southern Rivers Council, the North Carolina River Assessment, and North Carolina Year of the Mountains initiative, to stimulate more interaction with SAMAB. Because of concerns about SAMAB getting too bogged down in meeting with other groups, it was decided that all the SAMAB agencies will identify key partners and give Hubert Hinote a list of these before the July meeting.

How can SAMAB develop a closer relationship with the private sector? The private sector could help SAMAB identify issues and priorities, and would be useful for generating support for SAMAB. The Executive Committee will develop a strategy to accomplish this.

In other actions, the Executive Committee set up a subcommittee that will lay out a process for handling requests for technical assistance from SAMAB.

Reports From the Committees

Spreading News of the Appalachian Assessment

The SAMAB committees spent time in break-out meetings on both days of the planning session. They reported as follows:

Public Affairs

Terry Seyden, chairman, said his group focused on a roll-out strategy for communicating results of the Southern Appalachian Assessment. The strategy includes local and national news releases, public workshops, Congressional briefings, reports to state natural resource agencies and other regional contacts, and organization of a small group of assessment leaders who can make presentations to targeted groups such as newspaper editorial boards.

Randy Phillips suggested that briefings be offered to state governors in the SAMAB region. The governors can then designate who should be involved.

Cultural and Historic Resources

Ruthanne Mitchell is the new chairperson of this committee. She is the Resource Manager for the Little River Canyon Natural Preserve in Fort Payne, Alabama, a new unit of the National Park Service. The committee is working on two short-term projects: a directory of cultural resource specialists who can provide services to local communities, and a directory of libraries, museums, archives, and universities that possess reports and other information about SAMAB.

Two long-term projects are planned: a comprehensive list of cultural heritage sites and facilities and community awards for work in historic preservation. Ms. Mitchell suggested that SAMAB committees, as well as the SAMAB agencies, would benefit if they developed greater cultural diversity.

SAMAB Executive Director Hubert Hinote said, "Ruthanne and her committee are outstanding examples of the fresh, enthusiastic approach all the committees will need to take if SAMAB is to continue as a model for the region.

Research and Monitoring

Karl Hermann said this committee will generate a report on what is needed in follow-up to the assessment. A draft will be presented at the July Executive Committee meeting.

Resource Management

Joe Abrell responded to Karen Wade's charge to determine what SAMAB can uniquely do to follow-up on the assessment. He suggested that an environmental education campaign, centering around the assessment reports, be offered. He also suggested that SAMAB could fund an international training institute dealing with environmental issues.

Environmental Education and Training

Gene Cox said his committee may prepare a poster based on the Southern Appalachian Assessment. It will also consider preparation of lesson plans based on the assessment for use by classroom teachers. Cox expressed frustration with the fast turnover occurring in committee personnel 80 percent since his committee's last meeting. He indicated that other committees also may be experiencing this problem and suggested that the Executive Committee see what it can do to help.

Sustainable Development

John Peine, chairman, said SAMAB can make a unique contribution to the region by sponsoring a community

technical assistance program for sustainable development. This would involve identifying sources of information on sustainability. Peine's committee is preparing a brochure on managed growth for communities. An on-the-ground technical assistance program would follow-up on that. Peine suggested that individual agencies in SAMAB could establish technical assistance partnerships with communities in an ongoing program.

States Members: What They Expect From SAMAB

What do the three states that are members of SAMAB expect from the cooperative? Speakers from each state gave answers to that question in a symposium at the Spring Planning Meeting.

Leading off was Russ England, assistant chief of fisheries in the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, who is on the SAMAB Executive Committee. He said that sustainability and ecosystem management are of high interest to him. He also would like to get all stakeholders involved in addressing these issues.

England said SAMAB could become the model for "a sustainable culture in the region.

There are conflicts within the state. For example, some want growth, others want to limit growth. Consequently, he sees SAMAB as an "attempt to define reality and to take it to the communities. In the future, England would like to see SAMAB provide the specifics needed for local application of the principles of sustainable development. Redefine progress to get away from the idea that communities must "grow or die.

Additionally, England said he would like to see SAMAB look deeper at how the quality of life is measured at the federal level; e.g. net worth vs. gains in the Gross National Product.

Paul K. Muller, regional air quality supervisor in the Division of environmental Management in North Carolina, outlined two things his state expects of SAMAB. First, that the cooperative serve as a database repository, tracking data for various parameters. Secondly, he said SAMAB should do all it can to address issues raised during the observance of "Year of the Mountains" in North Carolina.

The Year of the Mountains started last year and is to continue until next July. Its purpose is to focus statewide attention on problems and issues in the North Carolina highlands and to encourage new partnerships and initiatives to address these.

Muller said he would like to see SAMAB encourage growth planning, but warned that "zoning" is a hated word in this region.

Dodd Galbreath of the Tennessee Environmental Policy Office spoke next. He said his state is a leader in the southeast in several areas, including ecosystem delineation, wetlands conservation, biodiversity, and gap analysis.

He said a fundamental issue SAMAB should address is how to deal with growth, since every state in the region is experiencing growth pains and related quality-of-life issues. Tennessee, for example, "is consumed by social issues" such as welfare reform, he said.

Galbreath suggested that SAMAB set standards for approaching growth problems, perhaps sponsoring pilot

projects to demonstrate effectiveness of the SAMAB approach. He also suggested a "Bill of Responsibilities" to balance prevailing concepts of the "Bill of Rights."

Galbreath praised SAMAB for putting the states on the agenda .

NC Governor's Task Force Reports on Sustainability

A task force appointed by the Governor of North Carolina examined the sustainability of that state's hardwood forest resources and came up with "a rather comfortable picture."

That was how Fred White, speaking at SAMAB's Spring Planning Meeting, described the results. He said the Task Force focused on four issues:

- Is the forest resource sustainable?
- Will it yield continuing economic value?
- How can the resource be protected?
- How can partnerships be encouraged to ensure forest sustainability?

White said that while the outlook was generally good, some problems were identified. These include pine regeneration, and an unexpected increase in hardwood mortality.

Major changes affecting demand for forest products, White said, include a shift in policy on national forests resulting in increased softwood harvest, a sharp increase worldwide in demand for forest products, a rapid increase in North Carolina's population, increasing fragmentation of forest ownership, and a growing public perception that forest management is harmful to the environment. The task force study, which lasted a year, brought 42 specific recommendations. One recommendation was for a "right-to-burn" law allowing controlled fires. The final report awaits only the governor's signature, and then it will be published.

Four Receive Special Awards

Special plaques were presented to three key players in the Southern Appalachian Assessment at SAMAB's Spring Planning Meeting. In addition, Briane Adams was presented a color photo of an Appalachian mountain scene for his work while chairman of the Executive Committee.

Plaques were presented to Charles Van Sickle, Forrest Carpenter, and Cory Berish, who co-chaired the Southern Appalachian Assessment. The awards cited their "excellence in service" to the assessment effort.

Executive Director Reports:

A Sustainable Future, An Exciting Future

SAMAB continues to receive national and international exposure as a demonstration model. Over the past month, I had the pleasure of speaking to two international groups that were visiting the area: a group of eight foresters and park managers from Honduras, and 27 Hubert Humphrey Fellows representing 22 countries. The Hubert Humphrey Fellowship program is a part of the Fulbright Exchange Activity and is sponsored by the U.S. Information Agency; these fellows spend a year studying in the U.S..

I was also a speaker at the 1996 Nicholas School of Environment Alumni College at Duke University. Among those on the program were Katy McGinty, Chair, Council on Environmental Quality, and Jack Ward Thomas, Chief, U.S. Forest Service. The subject of the program was "Conflicts and Cooperation in Environmental Management." The focus of my presentation was on SAMAB's role in coordination, cooperation, and integration.

During May, SAMAB will be on the program of two national conferences. The Smithsonian Institution is sponsoring its second annual environmental conference. The conference will concentrate on the issue of public lands and their purpose and effectiveness today; I will be part of a panel discussing actual experiences and local participatory efforts.

Also in May, "The Wilderness and Natural Areas in Eastern North America; Research, Planning and Management" Conference will be held in Gatlinburg. I will be a speaker at one of the plenary sessions and Charles Van Sickle will be the moderator of a panel discussing the Southern Appalachian Assessment.

I hope all of you are as enthusiastic about SAMAB's future as I am. As you can see from the articles in this newsletter, these are exciting times as SAMAB grows toward maturity.

Events like the NEPA Coordinator's workshop, the Southern Appalachian Assessment, and building upon existing relationships is key to finding solutions to regional issues. If we are to achieve a "sustainable future", we must continue to build on our commitment of 'coordination, cooperation, and integration'.

Black Bear Rehab Center Is Planned

The outlook for black bears could be as dark as their fur if more isn't done to help them, says Joel Zachry. And he's doing his best to provide that help. Zachry is associated with the Appalachian Black Bear Rehabilitation and Release Center, a nonprofit organization.

The center takes in orphaned or abandoned cubs and tries to rear them until they can be returned to the wild. Zachry spoke at the Spring Planning Meeting of SAMAB. The Center now operates in temporary facilities near Townsend, Tennessee, but a \$1 million permanent structure is planned. Eventually it is to be equipped to care for 12 to 20 cubs at a time.

Zachry said there are an estimated 500 bears in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Poaching occurs because the bear's body parts can be profitably exported. In addition, there is competition for food among bears, so some are abandoned or orphaned when the mother bear dies. Left alone, cubs cannot survive.

The center will not be open to the public since all human contact must be minimized.

Interestingly, Zachry noted that while a number of bears are killed by humans, there is no record of a human ever being killed by a Smokies bear.

Conservation Trusts Now Growing in Numbers

More and more land trusts are appearing in Southern Appalachia, and at least one of them wants to build a closer relationship with SAMAB.

Chuck Roe, who directs the Conservation Trust of North Carolina, spoke at the SAMAB Spring Planning Meeting. He suggested that SAMAB plan a workshop and invite representatives for the 10 to 15 private land trusts now operating in the region. Federal and state land management agencies could also be invited.

The workshop would be mutually beneficial since the objectives of both groups often overlap.

Roe said the workshop could help the land trusts to coordinate their efforts, avoiding duplication. It could also help the federal and state land management agencies in SAMAB to understand better what land trusts are doing.

SAMAB Executive Director Hubert Hinote welcomed Roe's suggestion and said an effort will be made to include this workshop on a future agenda of the executive committee or at the Fall Conference.

"The number of land trusts in Southern Appalachia is growing," Hinote said. "There are obvious benefits in our building a closer relationship with these organizations."

New Committee Created to Help Facilitate Technology Transfer

A Technology Transfer Committee was established to deal with technological issues involving information transfer. The committee will initially focus on use of the World-Wide-Web with enhancements to the SAMAB Southern Appalachian Home Page and it will deal with workshops involving the use of GIS and the Southern Appalachian GIS Data Base. The committee will work closely with the education committee and others. The committee will consist of Karl Hermann, Phillip Gibson, and Terry Seyden.

SAMAB to Sponsor NEPA Workshop in Knoxville

SAMAB will sponsor a workshop for all NEPA coordinators in the six state SAMAB region on May 31, 1996, at the Hilton Hotel in Knoxville, TN. Ray Clark, Associate Director for the President's Council on Environmental Quality, will open the workshop at 9 a.m..

The objectives of the workshop are to improve interagency cooperation and coordination in NEPA and show how to implement Section 101. Section 101 contains language promoting concepts that today would be recognized as sustainable development: fulfilling the responsibilities of each generation as a trustee of the environment for succeeding generations to assure a safe and healthful environment, preserving historic, cultural, and other aspects of our natural heritage, achieving a balance between population and resource use, and enhancing the quality of renewable resources.

Although not widely recognized, the purposes of the Man and the Biosphere Program are consistent with and nearly identical to those of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Over ninety NEPA coordinators from around the SAMAB region have been invited. A database of all NEPA activities is planned for the future from the SAMAB Coordinating office.

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August 1996

SAMAB News

The Southern Appalachian Assessment is On the Streets!!

The SAA, finished in August, was SAMAB most ambitious undertaking to date, involving hundreds of employees in 14 state and federal agencies. It evaluates the health and potential of land, air, and water resources in seven Southern Appalachian states.

"Results of the assessment will be of inestimable value to natural resource managers in the states covered by the assessment," said Hubert Hinote, SAMAB's executive director. "Not only a that, but it will undoubtedly be used in other states as a model."

Five handsomely printed reports on the assessment are now in the hands of the public and the news media. Perhaps the most popular one for the general public will be the summary report, an 118-page document that presents in easy-to-understand language the far-reaching results of the assessment.

Four technical reports are also finished, covering forest health, air quality, social/cultural/economic history, and aquatic environments of the Southern Appalachians.

These will be especially useful to natural resource managers and technicians and to municipal planners. The baseline information in the reports will allow resource managers to make their decisions in a broader, ecosystem-wide context.

It will be of special value to managers of the five national forests in the SAMAB area which are about to begin revisions of their Forest Management Plans.

The public was involved throughout the assessment project. Numerous public meetings were held in various locations to get input.

Randy Phillips, Chair of the SAMAB Executive Committee, and Karen Wade, Vice-Chair, conducted briefings on the study for Congressional delegation from the seven states involved in the assessment and for the White House Office of Science and Technology.

The Southern Appalachian Assessment reports are available in hard copy by contacting the National Forests of North Carolina at (704) 257-4200. They also are available on the Internet from any of three web sites: <http://www.lib.utk.edu/samab> (SAMAB's Home Page); <http://www.ffs.fed.us/> (the U.S. Forest Service's Home Page); and <http://www.fs.libs.uga.edu> (the Info South Home Page).

SAMAB's Annual Fall Conference Set for Nov.

6-8

The call for papers has gone out for SAMAB's Seventh Annual Fall Conference November 6-8. Sessions will be held in the Holiday Inn in Gatlinburg.

The objective of this year's conference is to further spread information from the Southern Appalachian Assessment. The theme is "Working Together," emphasizing the need for SAMAB agencies to work harder to resolve economic, cultural, and natural resource issues in the region.

The conference will also recognize the 20th anniversary of the designation of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the Coweeta Hydrologic Laboratory as Biosphere Reserve Units.

Those wishing to present papers at the conference should call the SAMAB office at (423) 436-1701. For hotel reservations contact the Holiday Inn at (423) 436-9201.

European Land Managers "Czech Out" Southern Appalachia

A delegation of land managers and scientists from the Czech Republic spent several weeks in the SAMAB area visiting with officials at Oak Ridge National Laboratories, Mount Mitchell State Park, Grandfather Mountain, TVA, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, and the U.S. Forest Service.

They came to learn about management practices from their American counterparts and to make presentations about their home areas. The delegation was led by Frantisek Pelc, Director of Protected Areas in the Czech Republic. His position is roughly equivalent to the Director of the National Park Service in the United States.

Funding Problems Continue to Plague The SAMAB Foundation

At the SAMAB Executive Committee July meeting in Oak Ridge, TN, Bob Kerr, President and CEO of the SAMAB Foundation, explained problems that continue to dog this important part of SAMAB.

SAMAB was set up to raise funds for and to play the role of advocate for SAMAB. However, Kerr explained, it has been very difficult to attract private funding for activities that are viewed as federal or state activities that should be supported by traditional appropriations.

Recently, Representatives Charles Taylor and Newt Gingrich agreed to propose a \$1.5 million direct federal appropriations to SAMAB, but Kerr noted that competition for appropriations is keener than ever "so that may be a long shot."

The SAMAB Cooperative and the Foundation are thus stuck with a "chicken-or-egg" situation: on the one hand,

it isn't easy to raise money for an organization (the Foundation) which has not yet developed recognition for accomplishing major tasks without reliable funding.

SAMAB Vice-Chair Karen Wade, Superintendent of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, called for SAMAB's member agencies to help the Foundation "get off the dime." "Otherwise," she said, SAMAB may need to change its vision."

The Executive Committee resolved to identify obstacles to funding and to redefine SAMAB's expectations for the Foundation.

Executive Committee Gets an Update on SAMI Activities

The SAMAB Executive Committee received an update on activities of the Southern Appalachian Mountains Initiative (SAMI) at its July 17 meeting in Oak Ridge, TN.

SAMI Executive Director Bob Kerr and Coordinator Leslie Cox gave the progress report. Cox described SAMI's progress towards an assessment of air pollution sources, how pollution is transported, and what effects this has on air quality.

SAMI is a cooperative agency formed in 1992 to develop a regional strategy for improving regional air quality. It is made up of regulatory agencies, industry, educational institutions, and other stakeholders from eight states.

Its study of air quality is to cost an estimated \$3 million, with the money coming from several sources. All the funding has not been nailed down, however.

The schedule for completing and implementing the SAMI assessment is as follows:

(1) finish the Integrated Assessment framework by 1997; (2) run the most promising models for emissions management and publish results in 1997; (3) develop emissions control and reduction recommendations and publish these for the states and the public in 1998; (4) design outreach materials to publicize SAMI's recommendations on a continuing basis from 1996 to 1998; and (5) provide implementation support to the states from 1998 to 2000.

Kerr acknowledged that there has been some frustration with SAMI's rate of progress. He pointed out that participation by all parties in SAMI is voluntary and some of the control options being developed will likely be quite expensive to implement.

Nevertheless, there has been progress.

Executive Committee Chair Randy Phillip emphasized that the SAMI initiative already has borne fruit. "The progress we have seen is that the states have begun getting new air quality permitting applications to land management agencies earlier in the process. So communication, at least, has been improved."

"Any progress is better than none," he added.

Reports from the Committees

Sustainable Development

Phill Gibson reported for Chair John Peine of the National Biological Service. The committee, he said, expects a \$5,000 grant from the State of Tennessee to compile and publish a catalogue that lets communities and individuals know how SAMAB can help them develop sustainable management practices.

This could make SAMAB a sort of clearing-house for sustainable development information, possibly bringing other agencies together to work towards sustainable development.

Peine has prepared a brochure and related materials for communities that can make Southern Appalachian Assessment data more "user friendly" and applicable to local needs.

Research and Monitoring

Karl Hermann of the National Biological Service will become co-chair of this committee, serving with TVA's Dr. Betsy Smith, chair. The committee plans to use the Southern Appalachian Assessment to identify needs for new approaches for monitoring and inventorying, and then develop an action plan to fill data gaps.

Environmental Education and Training

Gene Cox of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, who chairs the committee, said his group has completed design of six new environmental education posters. They focus on endangered species, exotic species, aquatic species, cave/karst resources, neotropical migratory birds, and riverine habitat. About \$3,000 will be needed to fund printing of the posters, he said.

The committee also plans to sift through the Southern Appalachian Assessment data for anything that would lend itself to educational programs.

Resource Management

Chair Larry Luckett of the USFS reported that his group is revising the boundaries of the SAMAB zone of cooperation so they will be consistent with international criteria recently adopted by the U.S. Man and Biosphere program. As a result, it is possible that 11 counties in West Virginia may be added to the zone. Luckett's committee is studying the ecological classification of the counties to see if they meet the criteria.

Luckett also reported on the status of three new potential Biosphere Reserve Units. SAMAB has approved the Tennessee River Gorge and awaits action by the U.S. MAB and UNESCO, which must approve. Roane Mountain State Park's nomination is meeting some resistance in Congress, Luckett said. Nomination papers for Mt. Rogers, in southwestern Virginia, are still being prepared.

Luckett recommended that the committee no longer be involved in preparing nominations for new units but

should limit itself to reviewing proposed additions to existing reserve units.

Executive Director Report

Yes, SAMAB Has An Exciting Future -- If...

On my last report, the headline said: "A Sustainable Future, an Exciting Future." The article beneath the headline said we can achieve a sustainable future if we build on our commitment of cooperation, coordination, and integration.

Such commitment is essential. And some are giving it all they have. For example, federal agencies, especially the U.S. Forest Service, and the Cooperative's state members were strongly supportive of the Southern Appalachian Assessment.

But there is one outstanding area in which commitment has flagged, and that is support for the SAMAB Foundation. (See the related article titled "Funding Problems Continue to Plague The SAMAB Foundation"). The Foundation is struggling to "be all it can be," and we are very sympathetic to the Foundation's President and CEO, Bob Kerr.

With SAMAB's previous accomplishment to build on, surely we can build further and support the Foundation. I encourage every member of SAMAB to give serious thought to this and give Bob any ideas you have to help him in this dilemma.

On other matters:

You read elsewhere in this newsletter of the visit to our region by leaders of the Czech Republic. We also had visitors from South Africa. This again points out the fact that SAMAB is a recognized model -- we are being closely watched. We must live up to the expectations of those who are watching us.

The NEPA workshop SAMAB sponsored last May was well attended and has resulted in a proposal for SAMAB to organize another committee -- the NEPA Coordinators Committee.

I spoke at the Smithsonian Institution's Second Environmental Conference which focused on the issue of public lands, their purpose and effectiveness.

The next Executive Committee meeting is scheduled September 18 in Franklin, North Carolina. On September 17 there will be a meeting with the Land Trusts of North Carolina.

The Annual Fall Conference will be November 6-8, and a bio-control workshop will be held September 26-27 at the North Carolina Arboretum (see related article "Wanted! Information on Killer Bugs").

Yes indeed, we have "an exciting, sustainable future before us."

Wanted! Information on Killer Bugs, Viruses,

and Fungi

The National Biological Service (NBS), with SAMAB's assistance, is looking for advice on how to control insect pests in southeastern forests biologically -- that is, without chemicals.

To that end, a workshop will be held September 26-27 at the North Carolina Arboretum in Asheville from grants received by NBS and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Biological Control Institute. It will be a cooperative affair, with the University of Tennessee and The Nature Conservancy as principal partners and other participants to assist in the goals of the workshop.

The workshop will bring together bio-control experts and resource managers to address the possibility of implementing a broad-scale biological attack on priority pests of Southern Appalachia.

Dr. Charles Parker of the NBS, stationed in Gatlinburg, is setting up a working group to facilitate the fight against the main insect pests of the region. He said that one objective is to reduce duplication of effort in the field of bio-control.

Dr. Parker is asking land managers from the state and federal agencies and the private sector -- especially those who are knowledgeable of the pest problems in their forests -- to participate in the workshop.

The workshop will develop priorities for controlling insect pests based on two things -- their potential impacts and their susceptibility to biological controls. There will be a \$35 registration fee for the workshop.

For further information, contact Dr. Parker at (423) 436-1704 or Phill Gibson at the SAMAB office, (423) 436-1701 or 7496.

'Year of the Mountains' Seeks Quality Growth

North Carolina's "Year of the Mountains" is nearing its end, and its sponsors hope the result will be quality growth for the western region of the state.

In a report to Governor James N. Hunt Jr., Hugh Morton, Chairman of the Year of the Mountains Commission, said, "We want the beauty, charm, and advantages of the mountains protected and improved, and everything that we have advocated has been crafted with that in mind."

There was extensive public participation in the whole process.

In addition to the printed commission report, a videotape was prepared for showing on public television, in schools, and to clubs and other groups.

"This," Morton said, "will enable the commission to thank...our sources of financial report. It will also provide wide exposure for the recommendations" made by the commission.

The Year of the Mountains Commission was established to assess the critical issues facing western North Carolina communities and to promote quality growth in the region. It also sought to develop and publicize policy

goals for addressing the issues of quality growth and development, natural resource protection, and preservation of the cultural identity of the mountain region of the state.

Through it all, a major objective was to open the way for local governments and citizens to achieve sustainable and healthy communities with viable employment opportunities.

The SAMAB Executive Committee will meet September 17-18 at the County Recreation Department in Franklin, North Carolina. The session starts September 17 at 1 p.m. and is to end September 18 at 3 p.m.

A bloc of rooms has been reserved at the Franklin Motel in downtown Franklin for the night of September 17. Rates are \$34.20 plus tax or \$38.00 plus tax for the newer part of the motel.

Call and make your reservations right away.

The session on September 17 will focus on how to gain cooperation to achieve better public/private land protection. It also will seek to determine the extent of and necessity for protecting public land assets.

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September 1996

SAMAB News

News of Assessment Spreads; Many are Impressed

Congressional staff and Executive Branch agencies have been briefed on the Southern Appalachian Assessment that was completed last August.

Feedback indicates they were greatly impressed by the unprecedented scope and thoroughness of the assessment.

Among those briefed on the assessment were regional congressional staff members, the White House Office of Science and Technology, and the Department of Agriculture.

Forrest Carpenter, who participated in some of the briefings, said they went "extremely well."

Executive Committee Chair Randy Phillips said many of those briefed seemed to be in the early stages of the learning curve, but as they look over the printed reports that were left with them they will doubtless learn a great deal more.

Additional briefings are planned for the Council on Environmental Quality and others.

"There is room for a lot more educating of people," said Hubert Hinote, SAMAB Executive Director.

Plans are under way for community briefings at the same locations where town hall meetings were held during the course of the assessment.

It is hoped that these meetings can be completed during October and November.

Plans Shape up for Fall Meeting at Gatlinburg

SAMAB's annual Fall Conference is scheduled September 5-8 at the Holiday Inn in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. Pre-registration and poster setup are scheduled November 5, and the conference itself gets started the next day.

The conference program has not been finalized, but some important features are clear.

Results of the Southern Appalachian Assessment, sponsored by SAMAB and completed early this year, will be reported. The conference will recognize the 20th anniversary of the designation of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the Coweeta Hydrologic Laboratory as Biosphere Reserve Units.

The Hinote Award will be presented to the individual and to the group whose activities in the past year best

reflect the ideals of SAMAB. Other awards also will be presented, including awards for achievements in sustainable development.

Other program highlights include a summary of the 104th Congress by Bob Herbst, TVA's Washington representative.

Checks should be made payable to the SAMAB Foundation and sent to Phill Gibson, SAMAB, 1314 Cherokee Orchard Road, Gatlinburg, TN 37738.

The theme of the Fall Conference is "Working Together."

Executive Committee Meets November 5

The next meeting of the Executive Committee is scheduled November 5 at 1:30 p.m. at the Holiday Inn in Gatlinburg. Please get suggestions for agenda items to Hubert Hinote as soon as possible.

Land Trusts Seek Closer Ties with SAMAB

About a dozen representatives of land trust organizations met with the SAMAB Executive Committee September 17 in Franklin, North Carolina.

The objective was to develop a better understanding of what these private organizations are doing to protect important land assets in the Southern Appalachians and whether SAMAB can be more involved with them. The conclusion was yes -- SAMAB can and will work more closely with them.

"Many of their goals coincide with SAMAB goals," Executive Director Hubert Hinote said, "so we should be working with them."

Tom Hatley of the Southern Appalachian Forest Coalition and Chuck Roe of the Conservation Trust of North Carolina led off the morning-long discussion about land trusts. They noted that there are hundreds of land conservancies all across the nation. Since public lands account for just 20 percent of all land holdings, the key to conservation lies with the private sector. Public and private land holders are natural allies, Hatley noted.

Hans Neuhauser, director of the Georgia Land Trust Service Center based in Athens, Georgia, explained that land trusts are private, nonprofit, citizen-based organizations. "All are directly involved in protecting open space," he said.

And they supply a service government can't, because government cannot simply buy up all the open land that needs conserving.

How do land trusts operate? Some buy land outright. But there is a growing trend, Neuhauser said, for obtaining easements that limit development of open space.

Easement agreements are made with private land-holders and are legally binding on both parties. Typically, Neuhauser said, the agreements (1) identify the parties involved and describe the affected property; (2) give the

purposes of the agreement; (3) spell out the rights relinquished by the land-owner as well as those retained; and (4) spell out the rights and obligations of the land trust, such as for monitoring the terms of the agreement.

An attractive feature of most agreements is that they qualify the land-owner for tax breaks.

Roe noted that some land trusts raise money for land acquisitions from the private sector, but they also often work with government agencies.

In any case, there are benefits for both the private and public sector. For example, the Tennessee Foothills Conservancy acquires land to provide a buffer between the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and adjacent property.

Lynn Cox of the Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy noted that community life is enhanced when private land-owners work with the trusts because the result is that land values are preserved.

Neuhauser indicated that an alliance between SAMAB and the land trusts would be of mutual benefit. If SAMAB identified land that needs conservation, the land trusts could target those lands for acquisition. He said the trusts could also play a major role in fund-raising.

In the ensuing discussion, several possibilities for formalizing a SAMAB relationship with the land trusts were suggested. Bob Kerr, President of the SAMAB Foundation, asked that the trusts nominate someone to sit on the Foundation Board and on the SAMAB Executive Committee.

Forrest Carpenter of the U.S. Forest Service spoke for many when he said there is a "wonderful opportunity" for closer cooperation between SAMAB and the land trusts.

Executive Committee member Nancy Stoll of the U.S. Forest Service noted that SAMAB is supposed to be a public-private partnership but that so far private participation has been very limited. Hence, the land trusts offer a good opportunity for increasing private participation in SAMAB.

Executive Committee Chairman Randy Phillips suggested a formal structure for cooperation between the two groups. Charles Van Sickle agreed, saying a coordination strategy is needed.

Phillips said three follow-up actions will be taken:

- The Executive Committee will work with Kerr to add a land trust representative to the Foundation board.
- An improved directory of the land trusts will be compiled to include skills available in each one.
- A presentation from the land trusts will be included on SAMAB's annual Fall Meeting agenda.

Hinote said SAMAB appreciates the land trusts eagerness to work with SAMAB. "These folks will bring a lot of energy to the table," he said. "What they are doing is very much in line with SAMAB's goals and objectives."

Reports From the Committees

Agencies Following Up Well on Regional

Assessment

Chairman Terry Seyden reported for the Public Affairs Committee. Much effort is going into follow-up work on the Southern Appalachian Assessment.

Requests for copies of the assessment report are still coming in. A slide program explaining the assessment is almost finished and will be available soon for presentation to constituency groups.

Community workshops are planned to spread the acquaint people with assessment results and to encourage local follow-up activities. Assessment team leaders will participate.

(Much already has been done to spread the word. See related story "News of Assessment Spreads; Many are Impressed")

Tom Nessmith of the Environmental Protection Agency Region IV suggested that workshop participants be given specific suggestions for follow-up community action.

Other committee reports follow:

Sustainable Development

Phill Gibson reported for this committee, chaired by John Peine. Funds are being sought from the State of Tennessee to publish a catalogue for communities to use in developing sustainable development strategies.

A colorful planning guide for Franklin County, Tennessee, was displayed. It is entitled, "Managing Natural Resources -- A Planning Guide for Franklin County." Its publication was funded by the Tennessee Conservation League.

The Executive Committee showed great interest in the publication, which is packed with information. Randy Phillips said other communities could well use similar material to encourage sustainable development practices. Charles Van Sickle said he would like to show the planning guide at a meeting of the Western North Carolina Development Committee.

In response to suggestions that SAMAB promote publication of similar materials in other communities, Hubert Hinote was assigned to determine what the chart cost, identify needs and opportunities, and report back at the next Executive Committee meeting.

Research & Monitoring

Karl Hermann reported that a meeting is planned to follow-up on the Southern Appalachian Assessment.

Environmental Education & Training

Terry Seyden reported for the committee in the absence of Gene Cox, chairman. He said two exhibits dealing with the Southern Appalachian Assessment are available to SAMAB agencies. Contact Terry for details.

Cultural Resources

Hubert Hinote reported for this committee. He said an inventory of the region's cultural and historic resources is being compiled and printed. It was recognized that much of the data is available in the Assessment data base.

Committees Getting Help From the Top

Executive Committee Chair Randy Phillips has assigned members of the Executive Committee to work with each of the standing committees.

The objective is to improve communication so that the Executive Committee has a better feel for what is going on, and the standing committees have a clearer idea of what the Executive Committee's priorities are.

The assignments are:

- Public Affairs: Randy Phillips.
- Sustainable Development: pending.
- Research and Monitoring: Nancy Herbert and Dave Shriner.
- Environmental Education & Training: Karen Wade.
- Cultural and Historic Resources: pending.
- Resource Management: pending.

SAMAB to Consider Forming a New Committee

The Executive Committee at its next meeting will decide whether to add to its roster of standing committees a new one designated tentatively as the Environmental Coordinating Committee.

The proposal was made at the September 18-19 Executive Committee session in Franklin, North Carolina.

Harold Draper, a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Specialist for the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) first suggested that SAMAB form a NEPA Coordinators Committee.

Federal agencies are required to follow NEPA procedures in all projects and activities. This means assessing the environmental impacts of an action, then preparing an Environmental Impact Statement, if necessary, for public discussion.

While states are not covered by NEPA, most have similar programs in place.

After discussion, the name of the new committee was changed to broaden its scope.

SAMAB Executive Director Hubert Hinote commented that Section 101 of NEPA has language remarkably similar to SAMAB's objective statement. Karen Wade noted that formation of the new committee could help SAMAB's state members through greater information-sharing.

SAMAB Supports Adding Hiwassee to

Monitoring Net

At its September 17-18 meeting in Franklin, NC, the Executive Committee endorsed adding a site in the Hiwassee River watershed to the U.S. Geological Survey's network of streams monitored for water quality.

Briane Adams of USGS requested the action. He said other sites were being nominated.

Executive Director Hubert Hinote will write an endorsement letter to USGS.

Marc Danby of TVA reported on a September meeting of the Hiwassee Ecosystem Management Project in Murphy, NC. He said attention was focused on water quality problems in parts of the river. A plan for dealing with these was drafted. Although SAMAB is not currently involved, most of the agencies in the SAMAB Cooperative are participating.

Jon Loney of TVA agreed to determine the further role for SAMAB in helping resolve issues on the Hiwassee.

Coincidentally, an attractive full-color brochure on the Hiwassee watershed was distributed at the SAMAB meeting. The brochure, published by TVA, calls the Hiwassee River "an asset clearly worth protecting."

The Hiwassee drains 2,700 square miles in western North Carolina, north Georgia, and east Tennessee. It is one of the 12 major watersheds that drain into the Tennessee River.

Copies of the brochure are available from TVA.

Executive Director's Report

It's Time To Get Our Act (ion Plan) Together

The current Action Plan for SAMAB expires this year and a new one is needed. Once again, your Executive Director needs input from all those associated with SAMAB to make the new plan meaningful.

The plan must project our goals and objectives for the next three years. Keep in mind that, as always, adequate funding to meet these goals and objectives is essential.

Besides looking ahead, we need to look back. What have we accomplished in the past three years? A great deal, I'm sure you will agree. The Southern Appalachian Assessment was a historic achievement. And there have been others.

We need to be looking for gaps in the Southern Appalachian Assessment and figuring out how we can fill those gaps.

I appreciate very much the expressions of support from our chairman, Randy Phillips. He will be working with me to come up with a complete financial statement and budget for next year.

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November 1996

SAMAB News

150 Attend Fall Conference, 'One of Best Ever'

The Seventh Annual Fall Conference is being hailed as one of the best ever, particularly in the quality of presentations. The conference served to re-emphasize the reason for SAMAB's existence and its tremendous value to the region.

"We live in a society where we can't be concerned with just what happens in our 'backyard'," said Randle Phillips as he opened the conference. "Our actions affect other people's 'backyard.' As our population increases, we must work together to sustain a good quality of life."

He cited SAMAB's success in identifying emerging issues and its success with the recently completed Southern Appalachian Assessment (SAA).

Phillips said nine new biosphere reserves were established worldwide in 1996 and they followed the model set here in Southern Appalachia. "So this model is being extended over the planet," he said.

Executive Committee Vice-chair Karen Wade, Superintendent of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, spoke of the need for continued cooperation and partnerships. "We realize," she said, "that no one agency or no one person can maintain the vitality of our ecosystem . . . Very strong partnerships are needed." And SAMAB, made up as it is of three state agencies and twelve federal agencies, "is a very strong partnership," Wade added. She encouraged a continued cooperative effort to address ecological issues facing the region.

Following are some of the highlights of the conference.

Environment and Development

Justin Wilson, commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, challenged the region to provide economic opportunity to newcomers by allowing economic development while protecting natural resources.

"We need industry," he said, "but we need to be careful how we recruit industry because pollution is still a problem."

Wilson called the beauty of the region "our greatest asset," which supports a thriving tourism industry.

In a question and answer discussion, Wilson said the main focus of the state in the future will be to redirect its efforts to ensure better environmental protection. He also said the state will "absolutely" move forward to improve the air quality in the Smoky Mountains.

Sustainable Forestry

Carlton Owen, Director of Wildlife and Resource Issues for Champion International Corporation, said his

company owns more than 5 million acres, but 70 percent of its timber comes from private owners. For that reason, he said, his firm gives technical assistance to private owners and works with loggers to help land owners make sound decisions for long-term sustainability of their timber assets. He said Champion is trying to institute mandatory training of loggers.

USGS Looks to Future

Katherine Lins, Eastern Regional Director of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) spoke next on the theme, "The New USGS and Its Future." While the central mission of USGS is unchanged, she said, priorities have changed.

The Information Age requires that economic decisions depend more and more on environmental considerations and on the natural resources available. So the USGS mission now features, among other things, enhancement of the quality

She said the recent merger of the National Biological Service with USGS was done for administrative efficiency. The Biological Service still pursues scientific excellence, she said. She noted that the Biological Service has 10,000 employees in all 50 states as well as U. S. territories.

Poor Mountains: Poor Valley

Mike Huston of the Oak Ridge National Laboratory spoke on "Poor Valley and Poor Mountains: Ecology and Economics in the SAMAB Region." He noted a geographical pattern of poverty in the United States, but said improvement occurred between 1970 and 1990. Huston said that for some reason, the incidence of rare plant species is highest in places where the land is dry and unproductive. The same is true globally, he said.

He noted that the Southern Appalachian Assessment indicates that making a profit from the land is not a high priority with private land owners of the region, but ecology is.

Congress Discussed

Robert L. Herbst, Chief Executive Officer of the Global Environment and Technology Foundation in Arlington, Virginia, enthusiastically dissected the 104th Congress. A former Assistant Secretary of the Interior, he said sustained life on the planet is now threatened and the key to survivability is research.

The public, he said, must be educated to correct its own bad habits. And that is why the Man and Biosphere program is so valuable.

In his assessment of the past two years on Capitol Hill, Herbst said, "I have never before seen such partisanship, such anti-government and anti-environment" activity.

He said government employees had been "insulted" and "treated like dirt - to the point of damaging the country. All sides hope that the next session will be less strident," Herbst said.

During the first year of the 104th Congress, the speaker said, no environmental bills were passed. In the last year, he said, some action occurred, first in passing the Farm Act that will phase out commodity price supports. He cited environmental benefits of this legislation, such as the conversion of highly erodible lands to improve soil and water.

Also passed, he said, were the Safe Drinking Water Act and the Food Quality Protection Act which reformed

pesticide management.

Looking ahead to the 105th Congress, Herbst said he sees little cooperation and little progress on environmental issues. "The chasm between the Congress and the White House will grow," he said.

He urged the audience to "fight for the things you believe in or else they will cease to exist."

Health Impacts

Phillip Gibson of the SAMAB office spoke on the potential impacts of natural resource management on human health. Gibson said many of the infectious diseases now emerging can be attributed to environmental change. For example, the emergence of hantavirus, attributed to rodents, and its spread may be stimulated in part by land management practices.

"Natural resource management, climate change, urbanization, political and socio-economic change -- along with other environmental variables -- have demonstrated their roles in the transport and increase of emerging infectious diseases," Gibson said. He urged researchers to continue to cooperate in their efforts and to integrate their findings within the discipline of natural resource management.

Gibson will coordinate a workshop on Feb. 3-4 (rescheduled from December 3-4). The workshop will encourage cooperation between natural resource managers and health experts, and will include representatives from the National Institutes of Health, Harvard's Center for Health and the Global Environment, Center for Disease Control, East Tennessee Regional Health Department, and others. There will also be a discussion of the SAA and how it may be used for linking environmental change to potential health hazards.

Off-Road Vehicles

An interesting presentation was made by Murray Cail of the Southern Region, National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council in Rome, Georgia. He said ordinary people including nature lovers and family groups enjoy off-road excursions on bicycles or motorized vehicles. He said off-road trails need to be kept in good shape environmentally and that training is needed to encourage responsible enjoyment of the sport.

Hiwassee Ecosystem Project

Janice Cox of TVA, an environmental scientist on TVA's River Action Team, described the Hiwassee River ecosystem project. It's a big project and involves many of the SAMAB agencies. The watershed embraces 2,700 square miles in North Carolina, Georgia, and Tennessee and includes 4,000 to 5,000 miles of streams, eight TVA reservoirs, and three national forests. Earlier, the SAMAB Executive Committee had reaffirmed its endorsement of the Hiwassee River project.

Cox said at least four of the eight projects planned on the Hiwassee will benefit from findings of the Southern Appalachian Assessment, but will go beyond the assessment to provide information needed for remediation of specific problems.

Ecosystem Forestry

Richard H. Odom Jr. of Westvaco spoke of Westvaco's ecosystem-based forestry program. In its timber harvesting operations, he said, the firm is careful to protect water quality, special areas that include rare animals

or plants, natural areas, and scenic views. Nature trails are maintained and when trees are harvested, care is taken to leave a border of trees and vegetation to protect the scenery.

Phillips Leaving SAMAB; Wade Assumes Chair

Randle Phillips announced on November 5 that he is departing as chairman of the SAMAB Executive Committee. The reason: He is being transferred to Washington, D.C., where he will become coordinator of program and budget for the National Forest Service.

Phillips will be replaced by Karen Wade, superintendent of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, who has been serving as vice-chair.

"We hate to see Randy leave us," said Executive Director Hubert Hinote. "He provided outstanding leadership for SAMAB."

"At the same time we are happy for Randy because he has been given a challenging new assignment at a higher level in the Forest Service. It's a fine promotion for him."

"Karen will do an excellent job," said Hinote. "Busy as she is with running the nation's premier national park, she has devoted an enormous amount of time and energy to SAMAB. We are confident she will continue to serve this region with distinction."

(Good luck Randy, you will be sorely missed!)

20th Anniversary of Biosphere Reserves is Celebrated

SAMAB celebrated the 20th anniversary of the founding of the first two Biosphere Reserves in this area at its Annual Fall Conference November 5.

It was in October 1976 that the Coweeta Hydrologic Laboratory and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park were designated as Biosphere Reserve Units by the Man and Biosphere program.

Tommy Gilbert, now retired from the U.S. Park Service, was the main speaker for the celebration. He traced SAMAB's roots to the writings of conservationists in the 1930s.

In 1968, he said, an international conference came up with the Man and Biosphere concept, but it was slow developing. In 1973 he was seconded by the National Park Service to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Paris France to assist in developing the MAB program. Following that,

he worked with the State Department and other agencies in Washington to get planning started that led to establishment of the Coweeta and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park Biosphere Reserves in 1976.

Before that, Gilbert said, he saw an article in the International Herald-Tribune in which then-President Nixon said he wanted to get with the Russians to discuss environmental issues. So Gilbert asked then Secretary of State, Christian Herter, to get Biosphere Reserves on Nixon's agenda. This was done.

Against that historical background, Gilbert saluted SAMAB and encouraged the cooperative to extend its experience to other parts of the globe by establishing an international training institute where "people from all over the world can draw on SAMAB's wealth of experience."

Gilbert said there must be vigorous follow-up to the Southern Appalachian Assessment and that SAMAB must have more financial support to fulfill its mission.

"SAMAB has a good record," Gilbert said, "but not good enough." "We now have well defined issues (from the assessment)," he said, "but strong follow-through is needed."

Roger Soles, Executive Director of the U.S. MAB Secretariat, followed Gilbert. He said legislation had been introduced by Congressman Young of Alaska to ban the designating of Biosphere Reserves on U.S. lands. It failed to pass, but the effort will likely continue.

"Somehow people have the idea that sovereignty is involved," Soles said. He noted that Georgia's Rep. Newt Gingrich abstained from voting on the Young bill.

He said the National MAB Committee met recently and is moving to educate people on the realities of the Man and Biosphere program. He recommended similar educational activity on the local and regional level.

Reports From the Committees

New Committee Formed -First in Four Years

SAMAB has a new standing committee -- the Environmental Coordinating Committee. It was approved by the Executive Committee at its November 5 meeting in Gatlinburg.

The establishment of this committee is the result of the NEPA Coordinators workshop that SAMAB sponsored last May. (See the September, 1996, SAMAB newsletter).

Harold Draper of TVA, who made the recommendation, pointed out that there are many similarities between SAMAB and NEPA. Both are concerned with interagency cooperation to address environmental issues.

Briane Adams of the U.S. Geological Survey said calling it the NEPA Committee would tend to narrow its focus. Others agreed, so the name, "Environmental Coordinating Committee," was chosen. Draper agreed to chair this committee.

The following summarizes reports made by other standing committees:

Research & Monitoring

Dr. Elizabeth Smith said the committee met October 22 to identify information gaps found in the Southern Appalachian Assessment and to identify priority projects as a follow-up. The plan is to get input from SAMAB member states on issues that need further attention. As many as seven workshops may be held, she said. In addition, Dr. Smith said, the committee will work more closely with the Environmental Education and Training Committee because of mutual concerns.

Sustainable Development

Chairperson John Peine said that Washington officials of the Department of Interior who were briefed on the Southern Appalachian Assessment earlier this year may be invited to the SAMAB region for a workshop on community sustainable development.

Planning also is underway for a Sustainable Communities Information Fair at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, and for production of a catalogue that would help communities implement sustainable development programs. The committee also wants to produce a publication that could help communities plan for sustainable development. Executive Director Hubert Hinote suggested that the committee consider sponsoring a sustainable development forum or workshop at the Spring Planning Meeting next April.

Environmental Education & Training

Chairperson Gene Cox reported that new environmental posters are being produced.

Six ecosystem educational posters that SAMAB is partially funding are at the printer. The posters will focus on endangered species, non-native species, neotropical migratory birds, riverine habitat, cave/karst ecosystems and aquatic species.

Resource Management

The idea of adding 11 West Virginia counties to the SAMAB Zone of Cooperation is still alive. Chairperson Larry Luckett led a discussion of the issue. The main problem with adding the counties has to do with administrative boundaries of SAMAB member agencies, particularly the U.S. Forest Service. Executive Committee Chair Randy Phillips said this situation has changed and it may be time to re-address the question. Phillips said he would look into it and report back at the next Executive Committee meeting.

On other matters, Luckett said the committee is prioritizing several issues and will produce an action plan for addressing them.

Cultural, Human Resources

Ruthanne Mitchell, chair of the committee, said two projects are in the works: (1) Production of a directory identifying cultural and human resource leaders in the region, and (2) Publication of papers dealing with cultural and human resources that were presented at the 1994 SAMAB Fall Conference.

In addition, Mitchell said there were deficiencies in the Southern Appalachian Assessment report on cultural and

human resources. Executive Committee Vice-Chair Karen Wade suggested that Mitchell's committee develop information to plug any gaps in the report.

Public Affairs

Demand for copies of the Southern Appalachian Assessment continues high, according to Terry Seyden, who chairs the committee. The additional 1,000 copies previously ordered will be well used, he said.

The Southern Appalachian Assessment continues to enhance its reputation as a model of environmental assessment from the standpoint of getting the job done efficiently and at low cost.

He said Department of Interior staff had asked whether Congress funded the assessment effort and were surprised when they were told it had not. This, said Wade, may indicate that SAMAB should seek Congressional funds in the future.

Seyden said Town Hall meetings to spread results of the assessment have been delayed but will be scheduled soon.

Smokies Park, Coweeta Given MAB Awards

Also, at the fall conference, Roger Soles, Executive Director of the U.S. MAB Secretariat, presented a 20-year award of Recognition to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the Coweeta Hydrologic Laboratory.

Karen Wade, superintendent of the park, accepted the award "for all the employees" of the park. "They really care for this place," she said. She credited park professionals for any progress that has been made.

She said areas like Biosphere Reserves are needed "as barometers of ecological health." And in defense of the Biosphere Reserve designation in the Smokies, she added, "I am not going to let anyone intimidate me into being ashamed of that sign that says the park is a Biosphere Reserve." "The 20th anniversary of Biosphere Reserves means we've come a long way," Wade said. "There is hope for the future, but we still have a long way to go."

The Coweeta Hydrologic Laboratory, was also honored as one of the first Biosphere Reserve Units. Wayne Swank, project leader, was unable to attend the conference, so the award was accepted by Dr. Katherine Elliott, research ecologist at Coweeta.

Dr. Elliott said the lab has hosted more than 20 groups from other countries. Lab personnel have also visited other countries and helped establish a million-acre Biosphere Reserve in the Caucasus Mountains of Russia.

Many Thanks to Our Conference Sponsors!

The following are those who helped make the 1996 SAMAB Annual Conference the "best ever": The Chevron Companies; The National Center for Environmental Decision-making Research; Beneath the Smoke, Gatlinburg; and Old Smoky (Flyfishing) Outfitters, Gatlinburg.

Also, thanks are extended to Cherokee storyteller Driver Pheasant, Appalachian storyteller Charles Maynard, and musical entertainment by the "Woodpickers."

Land Trusts Explain Role To SAMAB

Land trusts are becoming an increasingly important force for conservation of environmentally important land. For that reason, representatives of four land trusts were on the program for SAMAB's Seventh Annual Fall Conference to explain their activities.

Jim Brown of the Tennessee River Gorge Trust at Chattanooga, served as moderator. He said his trust was formed 16 years ago to protect the resources of the 26-mile-long scenic gorge. It now protects 12,500 acres.

Land trusts, Brown said, can do things government agencies can't do -- for example, lobby and raise money.

And local citizens are willing to give money to protect scenic beauty, he said. The trust raises \$350,000 a year from local sources. These funds paid for 5,000 acres of land that is now part of the River Gorge Trust.

Don Morrow heads the southeastern regional office of the Trust for Public Land, a national organization. He emphasized that land trusts are part and parcel of the local community and they can work more closely and quickly to acquire land.

He gave this example: When a government agency wanted to buy private land at the headwaters of the Chatuge River, red tape prevented it. But the land trust could -- and did.

Land trusts can be very creative, Morrow said. When the need arose to acquire some federal property on Fontana Lake, the Trust for Public Land worked with TVA and the Forest Service to exchange pieces of property, with approval by the land owners and the developer. As a result, the tax base of the county will increase 25 per cent.

Lynn Cox, director of the Southern Highlands Conservancy, said it is good to give land owners options rather than single choices. For example, if an owner doesn't want to sell property outright, an easement may be appropriate. This lets the land stay in the owner's hands, but any future development is limited by terms of the legally binding easement. In many cases, she said, the land owner gains a tax advantage under an easement.

"It is amazing how people love the land," she said. "They want to protect it."

Brown said the presentations given at the conference were "just an overview." He said more dialogue is needed between conservancy groups.

Executive Director Hubert Hinote said SAMAB is planning a directory of land trusts in the region that will

provide more information on land trusts and specify how many acres each one holds. This will be distributed when available.

Panel Discusses Quality Growth, Sustainable Community Issues

Growth means different things to different people, and these differences were discussed at length on the second day of SAMAB's Fall Conference.

Dodd Galbreath, Environmental Coordinator, of the Tennessee Environmental Policy Office, moderated the discussion. He said the Southern Appalachian region is expected to grow 15 per cent in population in the next 15 years and to some that will mean loss and stress.

"The big question," he said, "is how can we grow 'smart' and 'safe'."

Galbreath introduced panel members Dr. Olin Ivey, Executive Director of the Georgia Environmental Organization; Annette Anderson of the University of Tennessee; Linda Caldwell, Director of Tennessee Overhill; and Todd Holt, of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park Community Alliance.

Dr. Ivey, a member of the President's Council on Sustainable Development, said "a whole new chapter about sustainability" has been opened in Georgia. He said a roundtable planned within the next two years will define a strategy for sustainability in Georgia, and a "Sustainable Communities Initiative" is already in the works.

The plan for the Sustainable Communities Initiative calls for sessions in 10 different communities. A team will work with each community for two years to plan for sustainable development.

Ms. Anderson followed, focusing on development of a "Futurescapes" plan for the town of Pittman Center, Tennessee. The town incorporated to try to avoid the unbridled development going on in nearby Pigeon Forge and Gatlinburg, she said.

Citizens are actively involved in efforts to keep the area much as it is, but the community is not averse to all development. Ms. Anderson said they would like to see among other things small-scale tourism development, with bed-and-breakfast facilities and specialty farming of gourmet products. A community development corporation is planned to guide growth while preserving the natural atmosphere of the town.

Ms. Caldwell of the Tennessee Overhill Organization said her group works in three counties and is focused on heritage tourism that features local historical sites. Tennessee Overhill began in 1990 with a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. One highlight of her presentation was that the organization uses rustic signage to direct tourists to key spots.

Holt, an alderman on the Sevierville City Council and a member of the Sevierville Planning Commission, concluded the panel discussion. He heads the Community Alliance that supports the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

Holt said 26 communities that border the park are members of the alliance. The alliance plans to incorporate as a civic government agency. It will address issues related to the park through five committees that deal with transportation, environmental issues, community partnerships and cooperation, and education.

Galbreath closed the discussion, pointing out that many communities in Tennessee are asking for "smart growth" assistance.

How is the Southern Appalachian Assessment Being Used?

Two sessions at the Fall Conference attempted to answer the question, How is the Southern Appalachian Assessment (SAA) being used?

Karl Hermann chaired the first session, with three speakers: Gary Pierson, head of planning and program development for the U.S. Forest Service, Jerry Dobson, scientist at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, and John Peine, of the Biological Resources Division of USGS.

Pierson said the SAA was "the most successful to date" in cost-effectiveness and in the way it strengthened relationships among the participants. He said problems "can't be solved with technical solutions alone; we must have people working together."

Pierson also said the SAA will be a big help in developing new planning documents for the national forests. "This is the first time we will have broad-scale information to put into the plans," he said. He added that the SAA puts issues into a context where each agency can identify what it needs to do. For the Forest Service, he said, it will improve the consistency of the planning process. He also said the SAA is influencing assessments in other regions, specifically in Oklahoma and Arkansas.

Dobson's presentation focused on the National Center for Environmental Decision-Making Research, with which he is affiliated. The center is in Knoxville, Tennessee, and was set up to "improve the way society faces environmental problems and decisions."

The center was created with funds from a National Science Foundation grant. It is viewed as a place where local, state and regional environmental decision-makers can find help from experts who analyze a problem, then provide the right decision-making tools for solving the problem.

John Peine of the U.S. Biological Service followed. He said the SAA could be used in a variety of ways. One way the SAA could be utilized is to provide county resources atlases where planning for a sustainable future is just getting underway. He also said that SAMAB might sponsor a field test that would apply lessons learned in the assessment to a specific site.

Michael Gilbrooks, a consultant with HDR Engineering, described studies being done for a transportation corridor across north Georgia. He said the SAA proved to be very useful in the study, and that 14 of the 28

variables identified in the corridor plan came directly from the SAA.

Gilbrooks said the corridor is being planned so that it will have minimum environmental impact.

Key Findings Of Assessment Are Summarized

At the Fall Conference, Forest Carpenter of the U.S. Forest Service and Cory Berish of the Environmental Protection Agency reviewed results of the Southern Appalachian Assessment (SAA).

Eleven federal and state agencies were involved, Carpenter said. "The best minds available" were used to determine the status of the region's terrestrial, aquatic, and atmospheric resources, as well as the social, economic, and cultural assets of Southern Appalachia.

Teams were assigned to study each of these four areas, with a coordinating team overseeing the effort. Public involvement was one of the keys to success for the SAA, he said. Private land owners and the general public were involved throughout and will share the benefits of the assessment.

There were town hall meetings and working sessions open to the public. A special newsletter kept others posted on progress of the assessment.

Carpenter pointed out that the first assessment of the region's resources occurred in 1901 during the administration of President Theodore Roosevelt, an avid conservationist. He read excerpts from a report at that time which described the poor condition of the natural resources. By use of color slides, Carpenter demonstrated the tremendous improvements that have occurred since then.

Here are highlights from Carpenter's and Berish's review:

Social, Cultural and Economic. The region's population is now much more diverse. In some counties, population is up more than 50 per cent. New residents want the natural resources conserved. Farming has decreased and industry has increased. Employment is up 65 per cent. The tourism industry has doubled.

Terrestrial. Seventy percent of the assessment area is forested. There are 51 species of animals classified as threatened or endangered, with 65 per cent of these located in eight communities of rare specimens. Wild turkey population is way up. The bear population has increased. Many important tree species are threatened by pests and exotic species that compete for space. Infestations of gypsy moths are causing decline in oak trees. This pest's range will reach into north Georgia by the year 2010.

Aquatic. Berish said that water pollution continues to be a problem in many areas. For example, one particular campground is heavily used by a public that doesn't realize the stream flowing by the camp is heavily polluted. In summary, he described how strong new partnerships had been developed during the SAA as people from different agencies worked together. This, he said, was one of the best results of the assessment.

SAMAB To Help County Planners

SAMAB is investigating the opportunity to meet with selected county planners and demonstrate how the SAA may assist them in their county development plans.

Due to past experiences with Franklin County Tennessee, the Tennessee Conservation League has proposed a partnership with SAMAB in addressing the needs of Polk County Tennessee, according to Hubert Hinote, Executive Director.

Special Awards Given to Three Supporters

Special awards were presented to three individuals at the Fall Conference for their contributions to SAMAB.

The second annual Hinote Award went to Tommy Gilbert, called the "father and mother" of SAMAB. It was Gilbert who came up with the concept for designating special natural areas in the US and the USSR in the Nixon-Brezhnev Communique of 1974. Tommy's later work led to the creation of SAMAB in 1988.

"What a nice surprise!" Gilbert exclaimed in accepting his award from Randle Phillips, chairman of SAMAB's Executive Committee. In brief remarks, Gilbert emphasized how useful SAMAB has been as a successful model for MAB programs all over the world.

Gary Everhardt, superintendent of the Blue Ridge Parkway, was also recognized with a Hinote Award for his work on the study team that developed SAMAB. Karen Wade, superintendent of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, called Everhardt "an institution in this part of the world." She mentioned his vast knowledge about, and deep understanding of, the people of the region, which have contributed so much to SAMAB.

Forrest Carpenter, co-chair of the SAA Policy Team, presented the Leadership Award for Sustainability to Karl Hermann. Carpenter said Hermann was "probably the most valuable person in SAMAB . . . for educating all of us."

Hermann developed the CD-ROM data base for the SAA. His knowledge of Geographical Information Systems and his ability to apply this technology to projects "are without equal," Carpenter said.

Unfortunately, SAMAB is losing Hermann's expertise. He has accepted a position with EPA in Colorado. (Good luck Karl. You will be missed!)

Executive Committee Meeting To Be Held in

Atlanta

The next meeting of the SAMAB Executive Committee is tentatively scheduled in Atlanta, February 10, 1997. The time and specific location will be announced later.

Attractive Poster Salutes Assessment

An attractive new poster is being used extensively to call attention to the historic Southern Appalachian Assessment sponsored by SAMAB.

The poster calls attention to the four areas covered by the assessment: terrestrial, atmospheric, aquatic, and social/cultural/economic.

It is 10 inches wide and 27 inches deep and is suitable for framing. Contact the Executive Director's Office for copies.

8th Annual SAMAB Conference Set; Mark Your Calendars!

The 8th Annual SAMAB Conference has been set for November 5-7, 1997 at the Holiday Inn-Sunspree in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. (Same as the 1996 Conference.)

Assessment CD-ROMs Exhausted

Due to the interest in the Southern Appalachian Assessment, the supply of CD-ROMs containing data from the SAA are exhausted. A proposal was made at the Executive Committee meeting that additional copies be obtained. Briane Adams of the USGS is working on obtaining additional copies.

Executive Director's Report

Why Not Have A 'Volunteers For SAMAB?'

Many other organizations make use of volunteers to augment their professional staffs. In SAMAB, we have two people on the staff, myself and Phill Gibson, my assistant. We could use some more help.

Why not, then, have a "Volunteers for SAMAB" program? I received much encouragement for such an initiative at our Fall Conference. For example, two retired persons Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Olson, told me they would welcome the opportunity to serve as volunteers. I am sure there are many others who feel the same way. So I will suggest that the Executive Committee and other friends of SAMAB give some serious thought to organizing a "Volunteers for SAMAB" program. Your thoughts and comments on this idea would be welcomed.

Most of you know that allegations continue that the Man and Biosphere Program is a tool of the United Nations and that somehow people's private property rights are at risk. Nothing could be farther from the truth. U.N. sponsorship of the Man and Biosphere program in no way reduces local control of the SAMAB program. The public is involved in what we do from start to finish.

We all need to spread the word about what SAMAB really is and to allay any fears that private property rights are endangered by SAMAB in any way, shape, form or fashion. SAMAB's fundamental purpose is clear: We try to encourage a balance between development and a healthy environment.

Following is a summary of some of the things your Executive Director has done since our last report:

- Attended the second EUROMAB Biosphere Reserve Managers Workshop in the Slovak Republic where the SAMAB experience was shared.
- Visited two Biosphere Reserves in the Czech Republic where the Czechs asked for an exchange program of students and scientists.
- Met with other groups interested in sustainable development: Franklin County, Mississippi; and a group at Clemson University in South Carolina.
- Attended the National MAB Executive Committee meeting. The National Committee is developing a strategy on how to deal with the allegations made about the designations of biosphere reserves.

My special thanks to everyone who made this Annual Conference the "best ever."

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