



# **SAMAB 2015-2020**

## **Strategic Plan**

Southern Appalachian Man and the Biosphere





## ***SAMAB 2015-2020 Strategic Plan***

### **Overview**

The Southern Appalachian Man and the Biosphere (SAMAB) Cooperative has a long record of success working to promote ecologically and economically sound land management practices in Southern Appalachia. SAMAB was the first regional biosphere reserve and serves as a model for similar organizations. Its emphasis on cooperation, science and education has visibly helped communities protect their natural resources at the local level.

Over the course of its history, SAMAB's two prevailing concerns have been the conservation of biological diversity and promotion of sustainable development. It has done this by sponsoring regional conferences focusing on critical environmental, social and economic aspects of life in the Appalachians, maintaining open communications with stakeholders, and by supporting regular meetings of the Cooperative membership. These efforts have led to a number of projects and partnerships among member agencies over the last 25 years. SAMAB has been in a unique position to make a difference in the evolving story of land management and conservation in the region. SAMAB's legacy of connecting the landscape, culture and people of the Southern Appalachia through trusted science and decision support information has given voice to the membership and respect across the communities served.

### **Mission**

To encourage wise use of the area's natural resources and promote environmentally sound economic development; and to foster and support integrated environmental research, education and training, especially in relationship to national and global changes and their effects upon the region.

### **Vision**

SAMAB will concentrate its efforts with the primary goal of promoting effective social action through understanding of sustainability as an integrated process of development involving all levels of social and governmental organization in an environment defined by natural, social, built and economic concerns.

## Goals

1. Promote communication on key issues important to SAMAB members that are focused on sustainable decision making in the Southern Appalachians by leveraging efforts with others.
2. Promote information sharing and education about key issues with local governmental officials and individuals interested in promoting sustainability and land conservation.
3. Promote coordination among biosphere reserve units.

## SAMAB Cooperative Charter Members

Appalachian Regional Commission  
Atlanta Regional Office U.S. Economic Development Administration  
Georgia Department of Natural Resources  
North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources  
Oak Ridge National Laboratory U.S. Department of Energy  
Southeast Region National Park Service  
Southeast Region U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
Southern Region USDA Forest Service  
Southern Research Station USDA Forest Service  
Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation  
Tennessee Valley Authority  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
U.S. Geological Survey  
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

## SAMAB Cooperative Affiliates

Blue Ridge Parkway National Park  
Cradle of Forestry Interpretive Association  
Southern Appalachian Man and Biosphere Foundation  
University of Tennessee Knoxville  
USDA Agricultural Research Service  
Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation

## Biosphere Reserve Units

Coweeta Hydrological Laboratory  
Grandfather Mountain Inc.  
Great Smoky Mountains National Park  
Mt. Mitchell State Park  
Oak Ridge National Environmental Research Park

## Action Plan

1. **Promote communication on key issues important to SAMAB members that are focused on decision making to foster sustainability in the Southern Appalachians by leveraging efforts with others.**
  - a. Sponsor conferences and lectures in cooperation with other organizations.
    - Action Item: Discover Life In America conference, April 2015
      - Lead: Scott Gain, USGS
  - b. Help create and disseminate information, such as federal agency research and biosphere reserve science, impacting the Southern Appalachians to regional decision makers, local communities and landowners.
    - Action Item: Create a web tool incorporating the WNC Vitality Index and expanding to cover the same extent of the Southern Appalachian Assessment Report, including key metrics from the USDA Forest Service Southern Forest Futures study.
      - Lead: Judy Francis, NCDENR
  - c. Enhance communication about research and management needs and priorities in the Southern Appalachians to agencies and organizations engaged in developing research and management agendas.
    - Action Item: Integrate with Appalachian Landscape Conservation Cooperative
      - Lead: Rick Durbrow, EPA
  - d. Increase communication outreach regarding key issues through web-site postings, blogs, news articles, twitter, and other social media outlets that convey information critical to the long term sustainability of the region.
    - Action Item: Develop Revitalization Communications Campaign
      - Lead: Gary Peeples, USFWS
    - Action Item: Revitalize website working with Steffi Rausch, contractor. Coordinate communications team.
      - Lead: Gary Peeples, USFWS
2. **Promote information sharing and education about key issues with local governmental officials and individuals interested in promoting sustainability and land conservation.**
  - a. Sponsor or present at workshops to increase understanding about key social/economic/environmental issues.

- Action Item: SAMAB Vitality Index workshops
  - Lead: Ian Johnson, NEMAC
- b. Create virtual series of webinar and/or training opportunities to educate partners about issues that are important to the sustainability of the region.
  - Action Item: Pisgah Field School
    - Lead: Adam DeWitte, CFAIA
- c. Provide support in the development of sustainable decision tools for local government and organizations in the region.
  - Action Item: WNC Vitality Index
    - Lead: Judy Francis, NCDENR

### **3. Promote coordination among biosphere reserve units.**

- a. Engage biosphere reserve managers and other SAMAB partners to promote increased understanding about management activities occurring on and around the reserves.
  - Action Item: Create a trifold biosphere reserve engagement brochure for internal audiences educating on the benefits of each Biosphere Reserve. An updated electronic map of the reserves will be included.
    - Lead: Neil Giffen, ORNL and Susan Schexnayder, SAMAB Fndt.
- b. Discuss key issues in relation to biosphere reserve management and the landscapes surrounding the reserves.
  - Action Item: Establish regular communication between reserves
    - Lead: Neil Giffen, ORNL
- c. Expand the reach of biosphere research-based management and sustainability information to communities of decision makers in the Southern Appalachians.
  - Action Item: Consult reserves
    - Lead: Neil Giffen, ORNL