

Sovereignty International, Inc.

**USA-UN Man and Biosphere & World
Heritage Sites**

THE U.S. MAN AND BIOSPHERE PROGRAM

The U.S. Man and the Biosphere Program (USMBP) has been a part of an international network of biosphere reserves administered by UNESCO. The program is administered in the U.S. by the Department of State through Memoranda of Understanding. To date there has been no Congressional oversight other than providing funds for its administration. The goal of the USBRP is to have a minimum of one biosphere reserve in each Biogeographical Province of America. That goal has been nearly met (upper map).

UNESCO's Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves mandates three zones for each biosphere reserve:

- 1) "A legally constituted core area or areas devoted to long-term protection, according to the conservation objectives of the biosphere reserve, and of sufficient size to meet these objectives;
- 2) A buffer zone or [Protected Areas] clearly identified and surrounding or contiguous to the core area of areas, where only activities compatible with the conservation objectives can take place;
- 3) an outer transition area [Zone of Cooperation] where sustainable resource management practices are promoted and developed."

There are presently 47 biosphere reserves in the U.S. Even though the minimum goals for the USBRP are essentially met, there has been no decline in federal efforts to rapidly expand the program through the mid-2000s. This is due, in part, to the fact that a single biosphere reserve does not adequately represent the huge variability inherent in a Biogeographic Province. UNESCO's Statutory Framework mandates that reserves "should encompass a mosaic of ecological systems representative of major biogeographic regions, including a gradation of human interventions." This is supported by the Mission Statement in the Strategic Plan for the USMBP: "establish and support a U.S. network of designated biosphere reserves that are fully representative of the biogeographical areas of the United States."

Far more biosphere reserves will be needed to meet the USMBP's mission. The lower graphic is a representation of what it would take to conservatively represent the variability within the biogeographical zones depicted in the upper right graphic. The USFWS Ecoregion Map was used to stratify the Biogeographic Provinces into less variable units. Since Ecoregions also have tremendous variability, at least three biospheres were located in each ecoregion. Based on what environmentalists are demanding in different parts of the country, this represents a very conservative estimate of future potential biosphere reserves.

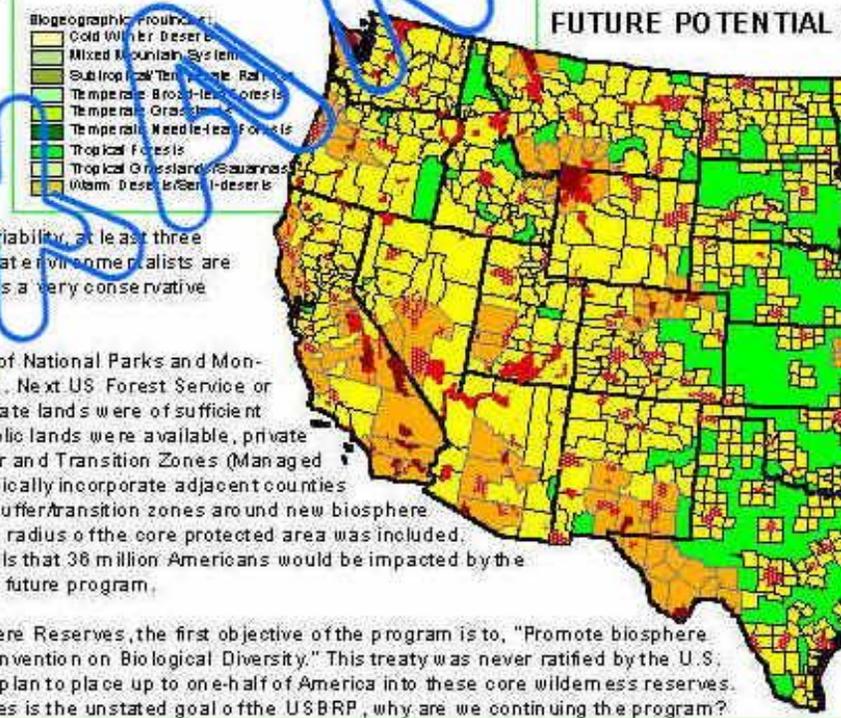
New Core Reserves (Protected Areas) are made up first of National Parks and Monuments, Wilderness Areas, and USFWS Wildlife Refuges. Next US Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management lands were designated. If state lands were of sufficient size and location, state lands were used. Finally, if no public lands were available, private land was designated as a future biosphere reserve. Buffer and Transition Zones (Managed Use and Zones of Cooperation) of existing biospheres typically incorporate adjacent counties up to 50 to 75 miles away. Methodology for establishing buffer/transition zones around new biosphere reserves was straightforward. Any county within a 10 mile radius of the core protected area was included. The lower map is the result. The 1996 U.S. Census reveals that 36 million Americans would be impacted by the existing USMBRP and a total of 171 million people by the future program.

According to UNESCO's 1995 Seville Strategy for Biosphere Reserves, the first objective of the program is to, "Promote biosphere reserves as a means of implementing the goals of the Convention on Biological Diversity." This treaty was never ratified by the U.S. Senate because it was proven the treaty was based on a plan to place up to one-half of America into these core wilderness reserves. If placing one-half of America into core wilderness reserves is the unstated goal of the USBRP, why are we continuing the program?

EXISTING U.S. BIOSPHERES



FUTURE POTENTIAL



Existing U.S. Biosphere Reserves

1. Aleutian Islands, AK	11. Champlain-Adirondack, NY/VT	21. H.J. Andrews Exp. Forest, OR	31. New Jersey Pinelands, NJ	41. Southern Appalachian, VA, WV, KY, TN, NC, SC, GA, AL
2. Beaver Creek, AZ	12. Channel Islands, CA	22. Hawaiian Islands, HA	32. Niwot Ridge, CO	
3. Big Bend, TX	13. Coram, MT	23. Hubbard Brook, NH	33. Noatak, AK	42. Stanislaus-Toulumne, CA
4. Big Thicket, TX	14. Denali, AK	24. Isle Royale, MI	34. Olympic, WA	43. Three Sisters, OR
5. California Coast Ranges, CA	15. Desert, UT	25. Jornada, NM	35. Organ Pipe Cactus, AZ	44. Univ. of Michigan, MI
6. Carolinian-South Atl., SC, GA	16. Everglades, FL*	26. Konza Prairie, KA	36. Rocky Mountain, CO	45. Virgin Islands Nat. Park, St. John and Hassel Islands
7. Cascade Head, OR	17. Fraser, CO	27. Land Between the Lakes, KY/TN	37. San Dimas, CA	
8. Golden Gate, CA	18. Glacier, AK	28. Luquillo, Puerto Rico	38. San Joaquin, CA	46. Virginia Coast, VA
9. Central Gulf Coastal Pln., FL	19. Glacier Bay-Admiralty Is. AK	29. Mammoth Cave Area, KY	39. Sequoia-Kings Canyon, CA	47. Yellowstone, WY, MT, ID
10. Central Plains, CO	20. Guanica, Puerto Rico	30. Majoave & Colorado Deserts, CA	40. South Atlantic Coastal Plain, NC	

*Biospheres in blue are also World Heritage Sites

Detailed maps of Biosphere Reserves and individual states are available from [Environmental Perspectives, Inc.](#)

About Biosphere Reserves and World Heritage Sites

According to the Executive Summary of the [Strategic Plan](#) for the US Man and Biosphere Program, "The Man and the Biosphere Program (MAB) of the United Nations Scientific, Educational, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is based on the concept that it is possible to achieve a sustainable balance between the conservation of biological diversity, economic development, and maintenance of associated cultural values. The validity of this concept is tested, refined, demonstrated, and implemented in the Biosphere Reserves."

Likewise, the World Heritage [Operational Guidelines](#) states, "The cultural heritage and the natural heritage are among the priceless and irreplaceable possessions, not only of each nation, but of mankind as a whole. The loss, through deterioration or disappearance, of any of these most prized possessions constitutes an impoverishment of the heritage of all the peoples in the world. Parts of that heritage, because of their exceptional qualities, can be considered to be of outstanding universal value and as such worthy of special protection against the dangers which increasingly threaten them." The Convention is designed to help protect these unique places.

On the surface, these are lofty and noble goals that most, if not all Americans could support. As with all contentious issues, however, the devil is in the details. There are numerous mandates in these various documents that have caused alarm in a rapidly growing number of Americans -- especially when signs are erected at the entrances of our parks declaring them to be *a United Nations Biosphere Reserves and/or World Heritage Site*. As this alarm has spread, incomplete knowledge of these programs has

spawned cascading rumors. These rumors only muddy the debate and weaken the real reasons these agreements and treaties are potentially dangerous to the very freedoms and prosperity in America that are envied by the rest of the world.

One of the biggest rumors being circulated about the USMAB and World Heritage Convention concerns the loss of national sovereignty. Although there is a loss of national sovereignty, the United Nations *does not* have control over how our parks and forest lands having a MAB or World Heritage (or both) designation are managed. Documents concerning these programs specifically state that each nation maintains its own sovereignty. Furthermore, there is *no direct evidence* that UNESCO, in which both programs reside at the international level, has *ever directly dictated national policy* concerning any Biosphere Reserve or World Heritage Site in the United States.

However, direct sovereign control by the United Nations is not the issue. The issue lies in UN program mandates and implementation and how these programs link to other treaties and agreements, which, if accepted by Congress, could lead to direct loss of sovereignty. When an international treaty or agreement is signed, we agree to the terms and conditions of the agreements, and by default *we have ceded a portion of our national sovereignty in order to meet those terms and conditions*. And while the agreements do not specifically state that the United Nations has direct sovereignty, they do permit "partnerships" and other forms of cooperation between the US and the UN that provide the UN access to the sovereign policy decision making process of the United States in direct conflict with the Constitution of the United States.

This type of "cooperation" was demonstrated in 1995 when the Department of Interior invited the World Heritage Committee to visit [Yellowstone National Park](#) for the expressed purpose of declaring the park a World Heritage Site, *In Danger*. Such a designation mandates the US to correct the problem or face withdrawal of the Park by the UN as a World Heritage Site, accompanied by much publicity and world scorn. And since only the World Heritage Committee can remove the *In Danger* classification, the US is forced to abide by its recommendations, *thereby indirectly giving up its sovereign right to govern itself*.

Rightly or wrongly, by ratifying the [World Heritage Convention](#) in 1972, the US Senate knowingly agreed to give up a portion of US sovereignty to achieve what it perceived at the time to be a larger benefit or need. The US Senate is authorized to do this under Article II, Section 2 of the US Constitution. Under Article VI this treaty becomes the supreme law of the land to which state law must comply.

The World Heritage Convention

Although the Senate reviewed and ratified the World Heritage Convention in 1972, the Senate would likely be alarmed with how this program is actually being implemented by UNESCO if it fully understood how the treaty is being used to achieve goals other than those stated in the Convention itself. For instance, the *original* World Heritage Operational Guidelines specifically state:

"To avoid possible embarrassment to those concerned, states parties should refrain from giving undue publicity to the fact that a property has been nominated for inscription pending the final decision of the committee on the nomination in question. Participation of local people in the nomination process is essential to make them feel a shared responsibility with the state party in the maintenance of the site, but should not prejudice future decision-making by the committee."

Paragraph 14 of the [*Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*](#), UNESCO. (Note: the February 1997 revision of the Operational Guidelines excluded the underlined portions in this paragraph, for obvious reasons, perhaps because it has caused so much outrage by local citizens and the US Congress--see discussion below. It is likely however, that the policy has not been changed in practice, but has simply gone "underground" where the abuse won't be so blatantly obvious.)

Buffer zones "should include sufficient areas immediately adjacent to the area of outstanding universal value **in order to protect the site...from direct human encroachment and impacts of resource use outside of the nominated area.** The boundaries of the nominated site may coincide with one or more existing or **proposed protected areas**, such as **national parks or biosphere reserves.**" Paragraph 44b-vi of the [*Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*](#), UNESCO.

Since most land surrounding a U.S. World Heritage Site is private property, enforcement of this provision would demand the federal government take jurisdiction of human activity outside the site--in direct violation of the United States Constitution. This possibility became reality in 1995 when the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, a group of environmental organizations, along with the US Department of Interior specifically invited the World Heritage Committee to visit Yellowstone to review the site to determine if it should be declared a World Heritage Site *In Danger*. The reason was a proposed gold mine about six miles north of the northeastern corner of the Park. Neither the environmental community nor the Department of Interior wanted the mine to be developed, even though 1) over ninety percent of the area considered for development was privately owned, 2) there was a mountain range between the Park and the proposed mine, 3) the valley where the mine was proposed had been mined for 150 years, 4) the company developing the new mine had engineered environmental protection safeguards into every aspect of the project, 5) the

company had already spent millions of dollars cleaning up pollution created by past mining activities by other companies, and 6) the mine development proposal was undergoing a full Environmental Impact Statement.

Simply stated, the request for the committee to review Yellowstone was an end-run around US law and regulatory procedure and was designed to be the club that not only would stop the development of the mine, but give the Department of Interior greater leverage in deciding the fate of other land use activities on private land outside of the park. Such federal power is in direct contradiction of the Constitution of the United States and violates the very meaning of the sovereign and free society with a republican form of government intended by our Founding Fathers.

As stated in Paragraph 14 of the original Operating Guidelines, the September, 1995 visit by the World Heritage Committee was kept low-key, and very few local citizens were initially aware of what was happening. If it hadn't been for a few concerned citizens living in the area raising the alarm about the visit, the World Heritage Committee might have come and gone without the local citizenry even knowing about their visit and why they were reviewing Yellowstone. When the committee was finally backed into a corner, it did hold a public hearing on the issue, but as directed in Paragraph 14 of the Operational Guidelines, the hearing had little impact on their final decision. In December, 1995, Yellowstone was declared an World Heritage Site *In Danger*. Although the issue is still not finally resolved, the company developing the mine withdrew its proposal with a promise from President Clinton of a \$65 million payment and a permit to develop another mine in an unspecified "less environmentally sensitive area" of the United States. Such an area may be difficult to find in the political climate of today.

The US Man and Biosphere Program (USMAB)

As stated in Paragraph 44 of the World Heritage Operating Guidelines, there is a close link between the concepts now driving the World Heritage Program and the Man and Biosphere Program. According to the Introduction of the [Strategic Plan](#) for the USMAB,

"each biosphere reserve includes three types of areas: one or more securely '**Protected Areas**,' [Core Reserves] such as wilderness areas or nature reserves, for conservation and monitoring of minimally disturbed ecosystems; '**Managed Use Areas**,' [Buffer Zones] usually surrounding or adjoining the protected areas, where experimental research, educational activities, public recreation, and various economic activities occur according to ecological principles; and '**Zones of Cooperation**,' [Transition Area] which are open-ended areas of cooperation, where managing agencies, local governmental agencies, scientists, economic interests, non-governmental

organizations, cultural groups, local citizens and other biosphere reserve stakeholders educate one another in the process of linking conservation, economic development, and cultural values."

To justify biosphere reserves, the Strategic Plan asserts that,

"Promoting sustainable development and associated cultural values in areas surrounding the protected areas is a primary means for building the local constituency for conserving biological diversity in the landscape. As UNESCO's International Coordinating Council for the Program on Man and the Biosphere recently noted . . . '*Connected by corridors judiciously linking different ecological units within the urban-rural and terrestrial/marine landscape, biosphere reserves could provide the most viable means for the long-term protection of biodiversity.*' By offering society a framework for cooperation, biosphere reserves enable stakeholders to plan types, levels, and patterns of protection and human uses that optimize conservation opportunities,..."

Policy formation, policy implementation and the relationship of government to citizens would be radically altered from historic norms as defined in the [Strategic Plan](#) for the USMAB. The USMAB, through non-elected "local constituencies" advocates a totally planned society, with federal government directing all land use development and activity under a smokescreen of local control. Yet, unlike the World Heritage Treaty, Congress has never had *any* opportunity to have input into the US Man and Biosphere Program. It was created through by a Memoranda of Understanding between the US Department of State and UNESCO in 1974 and now includes 47 Biosphere Reserves in the United States occupying over 51 million acres of U.S. soil potentially impacting 36 million Americans. But the MAB program is still incomplete. When fully developed, the program could occupy well over 100 million acres and impact over 170 million Americans! (See [map](#)).

The American Lands Sovereignty Protection Act. According to Congressional Hearings for the American Lands Sovereignty Act in 1996, local citizens know nothing about a proposed Biosphere Reserve until *after* unelected bureaucrats sign the Memoranda of Understanding with one or more federal agencies. Often years go by before local citizens hear about a biosphere reserve in their back yards. Many citizens first become aware of the designation when new signs appear stating that the park is a United Nations or UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. Because of this, *the U.S. House of Representatives passed HR 901--The American Lands Sovereignty Protection Act of 1997. This act is designed to give Congress, who represent the people of the United States, control over how these programs are implemented.* The U.S. Senate still must pass a companion bill.

There are good reasons for these concerns. According to the Executive Summary of the Strategic Plan for the USMAB,

"U.S. Biosphere Reserves are important areas for developing the data, technology, and experience needed to **implement the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development that relate to global issues, such as biodiversity, climate change, desertification, forest management, and sustainable development.** Implementation of the Plan will enable U.S. biosphere reserves to contribute more effectively to U.S. leadership on these issues."

Except for the Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United States Senate has not ratified any of these Conventions (treaties) nor has Congress passed any law concerning sustainable development. So **why are we busily implementing the key provisions of these treaties when there is no legal basis for doing so?** This is especially alarming when our federal agencies have made such implementation official goals--totally bypassing Congress in the process. An August, 1993 EPA Internal Working Document states,

"Natural resource and environmental agencies... should...develop a joint strategy to help the United States **fulfill its existing international obligations (e.g. **Convention on Biological Diversity, Agenda 21**). . . .the executive branch should direct federal agencies to **evaluate national policies...in light of international policies and obligations, and to amend national policies to achieve international objectives.**" (EPA internal working document, August, 1993, pp. 9)**

This effort is being made under what is known as the "[ecosystem management](#)" program. Not only are these goals being implemented, but American Citizens are being reduced to mere "biological resources,"

"OBJECTIVE/PURPOSE: All ecosystem management activities should ***consider human beings as a biological resource...***" (BLM Internal Working Document, Prepared for: BLM Summit 3/30/94)

In fact, the very descriptions used in the Strategic Plan for the USMAB (see above) sound exactly like the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Wildlands Project, which call for setting aside up to ***one-half of America*** into these wilderness core reserves and interconnecting corridors. This linkage is confirmed in UNESCO's [Seville Strategy](#) Biosphere Reserves, where one of the primary objectives for the program is to

"Promote biosphere reserves as a means of implementing the goals of the [Convention on Biological Diversity](#)".

Likewise, UNESCO's [Statutory Framework](#) of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves states,

"The [Biosphere Reserve] Network constitutes a tool for the conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of its components, thus *contributing to the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity and other pertinent conventions and instruments.*"

As Americans are beginning to be aware of the dark side to the USMAB program, there has been a growing clamor that this and other UN programs are eroding our national sovereignty. When asked point blank about this loss of sovereignty by Sara McClendon during the March 7, 1997 Press Conference, President Clinton responded in a strange way,

"...there is a not insubstantial number of people who believe that there is a plan out there for world domination and **I'm trying to give American sovereignty over to the U.N.** There was a --I read in our local Arkansas newspaper, one of them the other day had a letter to the editor saying that, there I go again, there's Clinton out there trying to give American sovereignty over to the United Nations. Let me just say this: For people that are worried about it, I would say, *there is a serious issue here that every American has to come to grips with,...*and that is, *how can we [the United States] be an independent, sovereign nation leading the world in a world that is increasingly interdependent,* that requires us to cooperate with other people and then to deal with very difficult circumstances in trying to determine how best to cooperate.... *[W]e live in an interdependent world. We have to cooperate with people. We're better off when we do. We're better off with NATO. We're better off with the United Nations.* We're better off when these countries can work together. So I just think for folks that are worried about this out in the country, they need to be thinking about how -- *we're not going to give up our freedom, our independence, but we're not going to go it alone into the 21st century either.* We're going to work together and we have to."

According to President Clinton, *we are giving up national sovereignty* in his quest to assume leadership in "global cooperation." We do live in an interdependent world, but many Americans are correctly questioning the need to give up national sovereignty to cooperate. Furthermore, to one has adequately explained how the USMAB program solves international problems? President Clinton assures us that we will not give up our freedom, our independence, yet every single treaty he supports for ratification by the US Senate, does exactly that. The revised Convention on [Climate Change](#) that will be before the US Senate for ratification in 1998 has a real potential for destroying our economy. The [Convention on Biological Diversity](#), which President Clinton signed in 1993, would have *mandated* the MAB concept be implemented across every acre of

America, with up to one-half of America set aside in core wilderness reserves and corridors. Fortunately the Biodiversity Treaty was stopped from being ratified, mere hours before the Senate was scheduled to have the cloture vote. Where is the congressional outrage for being illegally by-passed by the Clinton Administration? How can Senators and Congressmen accept this illegal usurpation of their Constitutional powers?

The MAB Living Example--The Champlain Adirondack Biosphere

Reserve. Although the Strategic Plan for the USMAB, and UNESCO's [Seville Strategy](#) and [Statutory Framework](#) outline major changes and impacts to local citizens, officials for the USMAB claim there will be no impact on local citizens. But, if nothing is going to change, why even have the MAB program? The program is wasting taxpayer dollars. In the same manner, these officials also claim that there has never been an encroachment on property rights within a Biosphere Reserve.

This may be technically correct, but citizens living around the Champlain Adirondack Biosphere Reserve and others have given testimony to Congress that tends to dispute that claim. For instance, the Adirondack State Park represents a living example of how a biosphere should operate. The Adirondack Park Act prohibits all development within the six-million acre park (of which less than half is owned by the State of New York) without review by the Adirondack Park Agency. The Agency is governed by 11 commissioners appointed by the Governor, six of which are from outside the park boundaries. This non-elected, non-representative commission have instituted zoning that requires some 53 percent of the *private land* within the park to have 42.6 acres per home! An additional 40 percent of privately owned lands has zoning that requires 3 to 9 acres per home. Only 7 percent has no zoning restrictions. It typically takes three months to many years for an individual to even get a building permit from the Adirondack Park Agency-- and then only after spending thousands or tens of thousands of dollars in environmental studies to meet continuously changing requests mandated by the Agency. The only exception to this harassment of local residents is when friends of the Agency seek a permit, which is typically granted within a few weeks.

As an example of a fully integrated biosphere reserve, the Adirondack Park has proven to be a disaster for the local citizens. So little has changed in the park that when one drives through it, they are taken back to a landscape frozen in time, with little to no modernization in most communities. These communities are dying a slow economic death.

And, as if this were not bad enough, a study group dominated by environmentalists was commissioned by Governor Mario Cuomo to study what additional changes were needed. The resulting *The Adirondack Park in the 21st Century* report published in

April of 1990 and supported by the governor, recommended that 1) the already draconian zoning regulations be tightened even more, 3) additional land be put into Forest Preserve status, 4) the inclusion of a "transition zone" around the park "to safeguard [the park's] open space quality," and 5) the "transfer of development rights" that would eventually move people off of their private property within the park to areas considered more appropriate for development. Only a bitter fight by local citizens and key legislators stopped these incredible provisions from being enacted into law.

While the MAB program has not been directly responsible for the Adirondack horror story, the non-elected commission and the requirements mandated in the Adirondack Park Act are identical to those envisioned in the USMAB Program. Worse, the Adirondack Park Act typifies what can be expected not only for other biosphere reserves, but for every acre of land within the entire United States if the [Convention on Biological Diversity](#) is ever ratified by the US Senate.

[More detailed information on the World Heritage Treaty and MAB](#)

General Information on the Man and Biosphere Program

[World Heritage Program Home Page](#)

[World Heritage Treaty](#)

[World Heritage Operational Guidelines](#)

[The US Man and Biosphere Strategic Plan](#)

[The Statutory Framework for the Man and Biosphere Program](#)

[The Seville Agreement for the Man and Biosphere Program](#)

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For more information and color maps illustrating Biosphere Reserves in the United States, visit [Environmental Perspectives, Inc.](#)

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