

Committee on Resources

Full Committee

Testimony Laurel MacLeod, Director of Legislation & Public Policy for Concerned Women for America

Testimony before the House Resources Committee

Laurel MacLeod, Director of Legislation & Public Policy

Concerned Women for America

March 18, 1999

Good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to address you today.

My name is Laurel MacLeod and I am the Director of Legislation & Public Policy for Concerned Women for America (CWA), the nation's largest public policy women's organization. I am here on behalf of our over 500,000 members to testify in *favor* of the American Land Sovereignty Protection Act (H.R. 883).

People often ask me why a women's organization cares about biosphere reserves and World Heritage Sites. Well, for many years, CWA received letters from individuals around the country who claimed their private property rights were being infringed upon. Other letters arrived from individuals claiming friends or family members had been subject to harsh land management practices. The letters used words like "biosphere reserve" and "buffer zone." These members of our organization asked us to investigate. Finally, based on the sheer volume of letters received, we decided to research the subject. Here is what we discovered.

An Introduction to Biosphere Reserves

Biosphere reserves are the brainchild of the U.N. Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), created by Sir Julian Huxley in 1946. UNESCO directs the international Man and Biosphere Programme (MAB), which coordinates the creation and use of biosphere reserves around the world. There are MAB projects in most U.N. member nations. In the United States, we have the U.S. Man and the Biosphere Program (USMAB), run primarily by the Department of State. USMAB nominates land (or water) sites for "biosphere reserve designation," then UNESCO makes the official "designation" (approval) of the site. Incredibly, Congress plays no role in this process.

As you know, biosphere reserves are an area of land set aside for the purpose of conservation and scientific study. They usually consist of a *core area*, or inner circle wilderness area (i.e. Yellowstone National Park) that is set aside for scientific study, "sustainable use" and the "conservation of biological diversity." These areas can be publicly or privately owned. Use of that land is severely restricted because of its designation as a biosphere core area.

Buffer zones are the second circle outside of the core area, and whenever a buffer zone exists, only

significantly limited human activities and dwelling may take place within that zone. In other words, individuals whose private property falls within a buffer zone may not do anything that the land managers believe would in any way "harm" nature. That could preclude them from keeping livestock, growing crops, paving a road, cutting down trees, or developing their land in other ways. Well-known environmentalist Dr. Reed F. Noss (developer of the Wildlands Project) described core and buffer zones as places where ". . . the collective *needs of non-human species must take precedence over the needs and desires of humans.*"

"Normal" human activity (building, transportation, dwelling, etc.) is allowed to continue in Transition Areas, the outside ring. Some U.S. biosphere reserves are composed of a core area only; others have all three. Yet those who believe strongly in creating fully functional biosphere reserves work to ensure that *every* core area has a large buffer zone created around it.

Biosphere reserves are not a new phenomenon. The first one in the U.S. was created in 1976. Now there are 47 biosphere reserves, reportedly comprising a total of almost 44 million acres. The current guidebook for U.S. involvement with biosphere reserves is the "Strategic Plan for the U.S. Biosphere Reserve Program," issued by the Department of State in 1994. And almost every Executive Agency is in some way involved in the biosphere reserve program.

U.S. Biosphere Reserves Linked to the Wildlands Project

In researching biosphere reserves, we found it interesting that they originated as a United Nations ECOSOC blueprint. We also discovered that the environmental "Green" movement is usually the foot soldier -- and often the brains -- behind the biosphere reserve philosophy both here and overseas. National organizations like the Sierra Club actively promote MAB.

Worldwide organizations like the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) serve as official advisors to the United Nations -- and taxpayers are footing the bill for their "advice." For example, in 1995 the State Department reported that IUCN received \$2 million in "voluntary funding" -- tax dollars voluntarily given by our federal government. Many of these same organizations then turn around and grant money to private "experts" for more "scientific studies"; the experts then use those grants to develop programs that are adopted by the United Nations and/or national governments. So, U.S. tax dollars flow freely into projects that further refine the biosphere reserve system. But not all such projects represent the views of most Americans.

The prime example of this is the grant given to Dr. Reed F. Noss by the Nature Conservancy and the National Audubon Society. Using this money, Dr. Noss created the Wildlands Project, an ongoing blueprint for biosphere reserves. This project clearly explains the conceptual framework of the biosphere reserve and biodiversity way of thinking.

The Wildlands Project envisions the connection of existing (and future) biosphere reserves by corridors 50 miles wide -- so that most of what we know today as the United States would be "returned" to nature. "Green revolutionaries" -- and I use that term to distinguish them from conservation-minded environmentalists -- call this "rewilding." They believe rewilding is necessary because the "harmonious" existence of all living creatures together is much more important than the principle of private property.

David Foreman, author of the introduction to the Wildlands Project, reinforces the fact that this biosphere blueprint was driven by an anti-private property philosophy. In his book *Confessions of an Eco-Warrior*, Foreman states:

The only hope for Earth is to withdraw huge areas as inviolate natural sanctuaries from the depredations of modern industry and technology . . . identify big areas that can be restored to a semblance of natural conditions, reintroduce the Grizzly Bear and wolf and prairie grasses, and declare them off-limits to modern civilization.

Indeed, these are frightening words to any American who believes that protection of private property rights are central to the maintenance of a strong Republic.

So, the U.S. biosphere reserve philosophy is linked to the U.N. (via UNESCO) and to private projects like the Wildlands Project. And in turn, the Wildlands Project is in other ways linked to the United Nations Biodiversity Treaty. These links are critical because, taken in their entirety, they demonstrate what can happen if the current U.S. biosphere reserve philosophy is taken to the extremes indicated by the Wildlands Project.

U.S. Biosphere Reserves Linked to the United Nations

As mentioned earlier, the role of the United Nations is troubling because the biosphere reserve blueprint originated – and is still approved – by ECOSOC. The United States is not even an official member of ECOSOC.

Of even more concern is the fact that our *current* United States biosphere reserve philosophy reflects the Convention on Biological Diversity (Biodiversity Treaty) – an *unratified* treaty.

The U.N. Biodiversity Treaty is of concern for many reasons. First, Article 37 says that if a nation signs the treaty, it *cannot* opt out of any specific provision. This is extremely unusual, as nations regularly file "reservations" to U.N. treaties. Those reservations tell the U.N. that the nation in question does not feel obligated to abide by certain sections of the treaty.

Section 8 of the Biodiversity Treaty *requires* each "contracting party" (i.e. nation) to "establish a system of protected areas . . . where special measures need to be taken to conserve biological diversity; and regulate or manage biological resources." The same section also mandates that nations "prevent the introduction of, control, or eradicate those *alien species* which threaten ecosystems, habitats or species [emphasis ours]." The term "alien species" is not defined in the treaty, but some ecologists believe that **people** are the worst threat to nature and should be classified as an "alien species." Therein lies the connection between the more radical elements of the environmental movement and population control. As the ultimate enemy of "Mother Earth," **people** must be eliminated.

If that sounds unbelievable, read the thoughts of David Graber, a U.S. National Park Service research biologist. In a 1989 *Los Angeles Times* book review, Graber said:

Human happiness, and certainly human [fertility], are not as important as a wild and healthy planet. I know social scientists who remind me that people are a part of nature, but it isn't true. Somewhere along the line . . . [people] became a cancer. We have become a plague upon ourselves and upon the Earth . . . Until such time as Homo sapiens should decide to **rejoin**

nature, some of us can only hope for the right virus to come along.

Like other U.N. treaties, the Biodiversity Treaty is purposefully vague. Its lack of precision makes it difficult to implement, so another document was written to clearly explain how to implement of the treaty. That document is called the Global Biodiversity Assessment (GBA).

The Global Biodiversity Assessment was written by the scientific community under the direction of UNEP, after the Biodiversity Treaty became "international law." UNEP knew that the scientific "experts" chosen to write the GBA would uphold the pseudo-scientific environmental agenda of the United Nations. Why? Because UNEP uses the "precautionary principle" as the foundation for its "scientific" work. This principle says that when a nation (region) faces "threats to biodiversity," *action cannot be delayed* because of "scientific uncertainty." In other words, fix an "environmental problem" even if science cannot produce evidence that the problem really exists.

GBA is the key document because it clearly links the disturbing Wildlands Project to the official U.N. Biodiversity Treaty. Section 13.4.2.2.3 of the GBA explains how to manage the "fragments" of ecosystems "reserved" by the Biodiversity Treaty:

This [protection and management of natural habitat] means that representative areas of all major ecosystems in a region need to be reserved, that blocks should be as large as possible, that buffer zones should be established around all core areas, and that corridors should connect these areas. **The basic design is central to the recently proposed Wildlands Project in the United States (Noss, 1992)**, a controversial long-term strategy to [extend] natural habitats and corridors to cover as much as thirty percent of the U.S. land area [the Wildlands project calls for 50 percent].

. . . [T]he actual selection of core areas and of priority areas for reservation can be problematic . . . protection must deal adequately with the threats from the external matrix, and thus includes fencing against stock, prevention of weed invasion, and *degradation by human populations* [emphasis added].

Again, the GBA was written to implement the Biodiversity Treaty, and it clearly states that it uses the same design (for biosphere reserves) as the Wildlands Project. We have already established the links between UNESCO (MAB) and the Wildlands Project. UNESCO created the blueprint for biosphere reserves in the United States. It is a tangled web, but in reality showsthat all of these programs are of one and the same philosophy.

To this point, the *worst* extremes of the Wildlands Project have not been carried out in the United States, but U.S. regulations already restrict U.S. property rights. Executive agencies have been implementing biosphere reserve projects for the last 20 years, even though Congress has not addressed the issue through treaty ratification. The actions of the Executive branch mean that *un-elected* bureaucrats are taking dangerous elements of U.N. treaties and, in effect, making them law because they are able to implement them throughout the United States. This is certainly unconstitutional, but so far it has worked. Congress must get involved in the process in order to provide representation for U.S. citizens.

U.S. Biosphere Reserves in Practice

In order to adequately explain why U.S. citizens are truly harmed by the biosphere reserve philosophy previously described, one must look at an existing biosphere reserve. Look, for example, at the Champlain-Adirondack Biosphere Reserve (CABR).

According to the U.S. Man and the Biosphere Program, CABR is "the largest and most populous biosphere reserve in the United States and the fourth largest in the world." Designated as a biosphere reserve in 1989, its boundaries encompass federal, state, local, and private lands. And CABR includes a "cooperative management arrangement" across the Canadian border. Over 400,000 people inhabit CABR and its "outlying areas." The Core Area of CABR includes New York's Adirondack Park, along with state parks and forests in Vermont. The rest of the biosphere reserve is the buffer zone.

According to the USMAB document, "Biosphere Reserves In Action," the CABR managers are struggling to build a network of "citizen/government partnership[s] for resource conservation and development." In U.N.-speak, this means that the managers of the biosphere reserve are trying to convince the people who live in its buffer zone that they should gladly adopt the environmental biosphere reserve philosophy. Such acceptance, or "partnerships," depend heavily upon the local chapters of national and international environmental groups. These well-organized and well-funded groups are charged with creating a media image. They must also foster general education to further the goals of the radical "Greens." For example, the well-known Sierra Club has its own biosphere project. In 1994, it announced a program of 21 "Ecoregions" that parallel the "Bioregions" of Noss' Wildlands Project.

The managers of CABR are also trying to find "environmentally sound solutions to problems of conflicting uses." In other words, people, industry, consumption and technology are in the way. While USMAB sings the praises of this biosphere reserve, many of the people living within the CABR -- especially those close to the core areas -- sing a very different song.

The core area of the Adirondack State Park is three million acres. But the New York State legislature has, in effect, drawn a buffer zone around the park that encompasses an additional three million acres of *private property* within the "Reserve Boundary." State regulations restrict property owners' use of this land -- without compensation. Reportedly, the fallout has been poverty and unemployment.

Ironically, John Davis, who edited David Foreman's *Wild Earth* publication, lives in the Adirondacks. The environmental watchers who write the journal *Eco-logic* report Davis' response to biosphere criticism. "Human residents need not be asked to relocate," said Davis, "but all people should be required to respect the wildlife of the Adirondacks by refraining from any use of motors, guns, or cows." He envisions "jobs" being created when people are needed to close roads, dismantle dams, monitor water quality and guide birdwatchers.

Obviously, some of the more radical environmentalists are insensitive to the plight of humans who lose their jobs because of excessive environmental regulations. For example, on September 23, 1992, David Brower, former executive director of the Sierra Club, told travelers to a Canadian mountain, "Loggers losing their jobs because of Spotted Owl legislation is, in my eyes, no different than people being out of work after the furnaces of [the Nazi concentration camp] Dachau shut down." Many other radical environmentalists freely admit their belief that *socialism* is the only way to control humans enough to "save" the environment.

Again, the biosphere reserve philosophy of land management is being carried out through Executive Agencies *with no congressional oversight*. This is simply unconstitutional. The U.S. Constitution grants legislative powers to Congress or, in non-federal instances, to state legislatures. Yet decisions that affect private property rights across the country are being made and implemented without congressional oversight or approval. The *American Land Sovereignty Protection Act* would change that. Passage of H.R. 883 would also ensure that the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (Biodiversity Treaty) is not subtly implemented without Senate approval.

World Heritage Sites

World Heritage Sites are another issue addressed by the *American Land Sovereignty Protection Act*. They include the **Statue of Liberty, Independence Hall, Monticello, Yellowstone National Park, the Florida Everglades, the Great Smoky Mountains, the Grand Canyon and Hawaii's volcanoes**, to name a few.

These sites are governed by the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Heritage and Natural Heritage (World Heritage Treaty). According to this treaty -- ratified by the United States Senate in 1974 -- the U.S. is required to choose monuments, buildings, historical sites and "natural heritage" areas for special designation as World Heritage Sites (Articles 4-7). Once designated, our government promises to preserve those sites. And any preservation questions that arise are sent to the "World Heritage Committee," a U.N. body that answers to UNESCO (Articles 8-14). This committee is composed of delegates from 15 nations, representing all world regions and cultures. When one country needs funds for preservation, it simply applies to the World Heritage Fund, which has gathered mandatory and voluntary contributions from every nation.

Although the preservation of World Heritage Sites sounds like a good idea, it has also become very problematic. Here's an example: In 1995, the Crown Butte Mines company decided to begin a mining project that was *one mountain range* removed from a World Heritage Site (and biosphere reserve), Yellowstone National Park. The "Greater Yellowstone Coalition" of 13 environmental organizations sent a letter to the World Heritage Committee. Their coalition requested that Yellowstone be evaluated as a "world heritage site in danger." Page two of their letter to the Chairman of the World Heritage Committee stated their purpose for writing:

The serious danger presented by the New World gold mine is made much more serious by the myriad of threats already confronting the park . . . Any evaluation by the World Heritage Committee should consider these problems, as well as those presented by the New World Mine. Some key threats include: timber harvests . . . home building . . . new population clusters . . . human-bear conflict [which] jeopardizes the threatened grizzly bear . . . [and] ever-increasing levels of visitation [to Yellowstone].

The environmental coalition then asked that the National Forest areas around Yellowstone be used as a buffer zone to "protect" the core area of the park "from incompatible activities" beyond its boundaries. In other words, NO MINING -- despite the fact that 90 percent of the area for the proposed mine consisted of private mining claims -- and only 10 percent included public National Forest Land.

In February of 1995, UNESCO's World Heritage Committee sent a chastising letter to the Clinton

administration. The Interior Department's Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, George T. Frampton, Jr., responded in March by inviting UNESCO to come to the United States and conduct a "first hand preliminary monitoring review by representatives of the international community prior to the completion of our [U.S.] analyses . . ." Frampton said to the United Nations, "I wish to suggest that you and/or other representatives of the [UNESCO World Heritage] Committee, and, in particular, the World Conservation Union (IUCN) make an interim assessment of the New World Mine proposal . . ."

The World Heritage Committee came to the United States and held a hearing. They arrived on September 7, 1995, and held their hearing on September 8th. It is no coincidence that President Clinton had ordered a two-year moratorium on mining claims outside of Yellowstone, just prior to their arrival.

"The United States has a duty to take steps to preserve the Yellowstone ecosystem across administrative boundaries of the park," said Committee Chairman Adul Wichiencharoen of Thailand, during the hearing. "Some 12 million acres of national forest and wilderness that surround Yellowstone must be considered an extension of the national park if the whole system is to be preserved." In other words, a United Nations representative was telling the government of the sovereign United States that a large buffer zone should be built around Yellowstone -- despite the fact that it would certainly encompass private property.

The World Heritage Committee did, indeed, decide that Yellowstone should be declared a "World Heritage Site in danger." Then in 1997 after years of haggling over this issue, Congress appropriated funds to buy the New World Mine. The private property owner who wanted to operate the mine was silenced forever.

Even though the World Heritage Treaty is a ratified document, UNESCO – and certainly many U.S.-based environmental groups – are using that treaty as an excuse to limit the use of private property within The United States.

Conclusion

The over 500,000 members of Concerned Women for America wholeheartedly believe that H.R. 883 is needed to bring Congress back into a process from which it has been too long excluded. As a result of our research, Concerned Women for America has dedicated a portion of our time to educating our membership about biosphere reserves and World Heritage Sites. Only Congress, not UNESCO or the World Heritage Committee, can best represent the needs of the American people and of our land. We applaud Rep. Don Young (R-AK) for his tireless work on this important legislation, and we respectfully request your favorable disposition of this bill. Thank you so much for your time and attention to this important matter.

#