

The World Council For The Biosphere/International Society For Environmental Education

The effort to mount a World Campaign for The Biosphere, promoted so eloquently and persistently in the pages of *Environmental Conservation*, has stimulated the creation of The World Council For The Biosphere/International Society For Environmental Education (WCB/ISEE), primarily to be responsible for the Campaign. This coordinated dual association, founded on the firm conviction that 'the creation of ecologically sustainable societies in every region of the world is the most critical environmental challenge of our time', has now assumed full responsibility for The World Campaign for The Biosphere and will foster and promote its objectives henceforth in every possible way, with full dedication enshrined in the slogan *Education for Ecologically Sustainable Development*.

There seems to be general agreement within the international environmental community that environmental education has not kept pace with advances in ecological knowledge over the eleven years since the 1972 Stockholm Conference. New knowledge and understanding about the structure, function, and limits, of our ecological life-support systems have not found their way into the decision-making process of governments and industry. The Executive Director of the United Nations Environmental Programme, Dr Mostafa K. Tolba, stated this problem bluntly in his opening address to the UNEP Governing Council's 1982 'Session of a Special Character' in Nairobi. He lamented that 'governments have not matched... developing environmental knowledge with deeds', and warned that 'the magnitude of the problems we are facing cannot allow a repeat lacklustre performance on the scale we have seen over the previous years.'\* Dr Tolba challenged the Special Session delegates to consider how our expanding knowledge of the environment can be converted into improved political and economic decision-making, and they responded with the Nairobi Declaration that reaffirmed a commitment to the Stockholm Declaration and Action Plan and called for an increase in 'public and political awareness of the importance of the environment through information, education, and training.'

The formation of the *World Council For The Biosphere/International Society For Environmental Education (WCB/ISEE)* is intended to mobilize the international community of environmental educators and concerned decision-makers, to link these educators and decision-makers to some of the world's foremost experts on the environmental problems of our time, and to promote and support the development of a new generation of environmental education materials and concomitant programmes. This new generation of materials and programmes will focus on the issues involved with development (under-development as well as over-development) and the maintenance of our global life-support system—The Biosphere.

The rationale for forming this new dual international organization at the present time is threefold:

1. We believe that the most critical environmental challenge of our era is the 'creation of ecologically sustainable societies'. To do this we must: (a) reorient

\* See the reports in *Environmental Conservation*, 9(2), pp. 113-4 and 169-70, 1982.—Ed.

our efforts to include development, both over-development and under-development, in our frame of reference; (b) establish dialogue and cooperation with those who are interested in developing the resources of our planet; and (c) create educational programmes and materials that will address the problems which we will encounter as we strive for ecologically sustainable development.

2. We believe that we are tapping a source of energy and talent that has thus far been largely inactive in the international environmental arena. This source of energy and talent is the global professional environmental education community. Environmental educators are trained to communicate, to inform, and thus to educate. They are specialists in curriculum development for formal education of school-age children and in programme development for non-formal education of juveniles, leaders of business and industry, government decision-makers, and the general citizenry. Many of these educators are active in research and other scholarly pursuits on environmental issues that range from pollution to resource depletion, and from overpopulation to the challenge of providing an acceptable quality of life for all the peoples of the world. Thus, their interests extend throughout The Biosphere and when necessary far beyond. It is particularly important that professional environmental educators become involved in global issues, and many are anxious to do so; *ISEE* will provide them with an arena for such involvement. Already no fewer than nine regional and national environmental education societies have affiliated themselves with this new international organization.

3. We believe that the field of environmental education was partially crippled in its first decade by a lack of focus and a poorly-defined self-identity. This can be seen on reviewing the early EE literature and the programmes of early EE conferences. The EE community recognizes this problem and is striving to define itself within the larger communities of environmentalists, other scientists, and general educators. We are suggesting that a major focus, indeed the major focus of environmental education during the next decade, should be *Education for Ecologically Sustainable Development*. Such education must place development in its proper perspective in different regions, societies, and cultures. We believe that this new focus will lend renewed vigour and purpose to the field of environmental education.

The *WCB/ISEE* is a coordinated dual organization governed by a Joint Coordinating Committee and administered by a single Secretariat. It consists of the following components and may take on others in the future:

1. **THE WORLD COUNCIL FOR THE BIOSPHERE:** This body ultimately will consist of about 20 outstanding individuals selected for their concern for biospherical issues, their global perspectives, their areas of expertise, and their geographical backgrounds. The Council will serve as a forum for the consideration and discussion of issues at the interface of development and The Biosphere. It will be charged with resynthesiz-

ing our understanding of the relationship between development and the complex dynamics of the life-support system of our planet; with generating new approaches, new ideas, and new ways of knowing and understanding; with establishing dialogue, coordination, and cooperation, between scholars and practitioners of development and scholars and practitioners of Biosphere preservation. The Council will advise the members of ISEE on the topics, issues, concerns, and problems, that should be addressed by new educational programmes. It will also advise on target audiences for such educational programmes.

To date we have seated six Councillors and hope to seat some more by early 1984. The six (in alphabetical order of family names) are:

*Reid A. Bryson* (USA), Professor of Meteorology, Director of the Institute for Environmental Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Wisconsin

*Lynton Keith Caldwell* (USA), Arthur F. Bentley Professor of Political Science, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana

*Mohamed Kassas* (Egypt), Ecologist, President of IUCN, Professor of Botany, University of Cairo

*Nicholas Polunin* (Switzerland), Biospherical Environmentalist, President of the Foundation for Environmental Conservation, Geneva

*M.S. Swaminathan* (India), Geneticist, Director-General, International Rice Research Institute, Manila, Philippines

*John R. Vallentyne* (Canada), Limnologist, Canada Centre for Inland Waters, Burlington, Ontario

2. **THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION:** The Society will serve as an instructional network, gathering information, organizing it into educational materials and programmes, and disseminating the results to a wide variety of target audiences throughout the world.

*Thus, the Council and ISEE are widely complementary; the Council serves ISEE by providing content, purpose, and direction, while ISEE serves the Council by 'putting the message over' globally.*

The first general meeting of WCB/ISEE is scheduled for 23-29 February 1984 in New Delhi and Udaipur, India. This meeting is designed to be small, not more than fifty participants, and productive. The first three days' sessions will be held in New Delhi and will be devoted to organizational matters, deliberations of the Council, and formal presentations of invited papers and reports. After a day set aside for travel and more leisurely deliberations, the last three days will be spent in a more informal setting in Udaipur, where we can roll up our sleeves and get some work done on setting goals and initiating our first educational projects. If you are suitably qualified and interested in being involved with WCB/ISEE and/or participating in the first meeting, please contact the undersigned.

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**International Aspects of Proposed Amendments to the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act**

The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) was signed into law by President Carter on 2 December 1980. The legislation apportioned 41,684,000 ha of land for management under the following conservation regimes: national parks, national monuments, national preserves, wildlife refuges, wild and scenic rivers, and national forests. Passage of the legislation was marked by extensive political wrangling among pressure-groups, governmental officials, and politicians. The debate was initiated in section 17(d) (2) of the 1971 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, which called for setting aside over 32,000,000 ha of land for study as potential conservation reserves. Conservation arrangements codified in ANILCA in the end reflect compromise and accommodation among all interests that participated in the lengthy legislative debate (Wayburn, 1983—cf. also Cahn, 1982; Fenge, 1982).

The Alaskan conservation system is, however, threatened by proposed amendments to ANILCA forwarded by Senator Stevens (bill S49 in the United States Senate) and Representative Young (bill HR1493 in the United States House of Representatives). These amendments would downgrade nearly 4,800,000 ha of the land in national parks and monuments to national preserves, in order to increase the amount of land available for sport hunting (Wayburn, 1983). Eight of the ten national parks in Alaska would be affected by the proposed amendments (Table I).

While the proposed amendment of ANILCA is clearly a matter for Americans to resolve, the debate has an international flavour, for some of the national parks are of widely-recognized international importance. For ex-

TABLE I  
*The Impact of Bills S49 and HR1493 on National Parks established by ANILCA.*

<i>National Park</i>	<i>Total area (ha)</i>	<i>Area altered to Preserves by S49 and HR1493</i>	<i>Percentage Reduction</i>
Aniakchak	55,752	35,552	64
Denali	980,104	616,504	63
Gates of the Arctic	2,849,000	2,059,996	72
Glacier Bay	211,292	86,456	41
Katmai	418,948	418,948	100
Kenai Fjords	229,068	229,068	100
Lake Clark	985,356	414,100	42
Wrangell-Mt St Elias	3,291,388	938,088	29
	9,020,908	4,798,712	48

ample, the Wrangell-Mt St Elias National Park is, with Kluane National Park in Yukon, Canada, designated a World Heritage Site under the World Heritage Convention. These conservation reserves were jointly nominated for World Heritage status by the two national governments in 1979.

The letter of application to the World Heritage Committee, signed by the Canadian Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs and the American Secretary of the Interior, notes that the conservation reserves together are: