1. Meeting called to order at 3:15 by Chair Phil Robertson; members present: Peter Groffman, Morgan Grove (joined at 4 pm), Don Henshaw, Sarah Hobbie, Sally Holbrook, Chuck Hopkinson, Sherri Johnson, Berry Lyons, Steve Pennings, Dan Reed, Bob Waide; members absent: none; others present: John Vande Castle.

2. Minutes from May 17, 2007, meeting approved by consent.

3. Science Council 2008
   a. Results from the query of SC members with respect to preferred dates for the 2008 SC meeting in Baltimore were shared and discussed briefly; potential date with the fewest conflicts (3 members unavailable) is the week of May 5, 2008. Suggestion was made that Robertson float this date to SC and finalize if no additional members say they are unavailable; he'll do this by end of week.

   b. Science theme for meeting was discussed, and consensus decision is to formulate a workshop format based on the 3 research plan themes now being formalized by the research plan's writing team (see June 19, 2007, SC Minutes). Suggestion was made and consensus agreed to recruit openly for the organizing committee, i.e. to not limit leadership to writing team members. We won't know exact theme titles until September but Robertson will put out a call for organizing-committee nominees shortly. Committee will also include a member from host site BES.

4. Social science funding in renewals
   This is a follow-on item from the prior EB meeting where the potential for coordinating social science questions among the 6 sites renewing in 2008 was discussed, with the aim of bringing new SBE funding to the network. Robertson synopsized a follow-on discussion he had had with Henry Gholz, and Gholz's opinion that new SBE funding for core LTER activities was unlikely to materialize in time to be included in the next round of renewals (funding discussions would have to be initiated, negotiated, and finalized by this September 1), especially in light of SBE's budget situation and their not having before participated in core LTER funding. Gholz did say, however, that a new social science component could be used to justify the next set of step funding increases; currently all sites are at the same level of base funding ($820k/y) but for the two augmented sites ($1.1M). Inflation is not now considered sufficient justification.

   Discussion centered on the best strategy for positioning sites for ISSE participation, for justifying some portion of a step increase (dismay was expressed at NSF's not taking inflation at face value), and on the danger of promising ISSE results with only incremental funding. Consensus is that we should work with Gholz to explore SBE participation in core funding activities in the future (Robertson and Gholz will meet with AD Lightfoot and other SBE officers in mid-July to explore potentials); that we should encourage renewing sites to approach SBE about research funding through existing programs such as CHNS – i.e. not through LTER; and that it would be reasonable in the EB's view to use as justification for step increases the establishment of additional intellectual, education, and IM infrastructure at renewing sites to support social science integration and thereby start to lay a foundation for ISSE activities. Robertson will share this message with Ted Gragson (see May EB minutes) and Gholz.

5. LNO renewal proposal

This is a continuation of discussion at prior EB meeting about the upcoming network office renewal proposal, due to NSF on March 31, 2008. Waide shared a 1-page synopsis of the results of the LNO survey completed by sites last winter, with a particular focus on major site needs with respect to LNO services. Discussion centered on role of EB in proposal development and timelines. Consensus is that EB will work with Waide and Robertson to develop an outline that incorporates prioritized needs as identified by the EB and sites, in addition to needs identified by the LNO. Outline will be developed by the time of the August EB meeting, where it will be approved by the EB and then circulated to the SC with the minutes from that meeting. Waide and Robertson will circulate a revised outline shortly for EB input during July-August. Outgoing NISAC chair Henshaw will solicit NISAC input on the cyberinfrastructure portion of the outline.

The overall expected proposal timeline is to have a revised outline to the EB by Sept 30, with EB comments back by Oct 15; an initial full draft to EB by Dec 15, a penultimate draft by March 15, and submission on March 31, 2008. NSF will likely make a decision December 1 following a fall site visit, with funding projected to start March 1, 2009.

6. LNO Performance Review Process

This is a continuation of prior discussions at several EB meetings last year centered on the adequacy of the current review process, mainly based on site surveys. Bylaws require that the EB conduct an annual review of LNO performance. Discussion centered on the adequacy of the current evaluation instrument and its frequency. Consensus is that the survey should be divided into two instruments, one to evaluate site needs vis a vis LNO performance (what do the sites need from the LNO) and the other to evaluate how well these needs are being met; that a professional survey firm be engaged to streamline the survey and ensure its adequacy; and that the survey should be administered once every 2 years, coordinated with the 6-year LNO renewal cycle (which means the next survey should go out in late 2008). On off-years the evaluation will be done by the EB based only on the LNO's annual report and Network goals (the bylaws note 3 review criteria: annual report, site surveys, and Network goals). Robertson will draft a letter for the current year shortly. [Robertson NB: current bylaws require an annual survey administered in October of every year; this will need to be addressed at next SC meeting.]

7. NISAC Report

Prior to this meeting EB members received the May 2007 NISAC report (now available on the network intranet). In light of reported remarks by NSF's Peter McCartney to NISAC, Groffman raised the issue of whether the CI strategic plan overlaps too strongly with other networks' plans, and in particular LTER's goal to develop CI for sensor networks when this will be done by NEON and likely detract from effort that would otherwise go into improving LTER scientists' ability to work with existing diverse data sets. Discussion ensued, including comments from NISAC members Henshaw (chair), Hopkinson, and Waide. It was suggested that McCartney's remarks were not reported accurately in the report (Hopkinson); that more recent discussion suggests that McCartney feels complementarity is possible and likely to be fruitful (Waide); and that regardless

of what NEON does a number of LTER sites are heavily invested in sensor networks and will be needing CI support (Henshaw, Johnson). A lack of time prevented resolution of the issue, which will require further discussion. Additionally there are 3 recommendations in the NISAC report that will require action.

8. Strategic Plan Approval Process (new business)

An important issue emerged from the NISAC discussion related to strategic planning: the EB is not clear on the process by which the Network approves the planning documents that will be submitted to NSF on September 30. The submission will include plans for research, education, and cyberinfrastructure. The research plan hand-off was discussed at the May EB meeting (item 11), and will include approval by the EB following SC review in early September. However we do not have a plan in place for the CI or Education plan; discussion consensus is that Robertson will solicit EB members willing to review the CI and Education plans in July-August and make recommendations for their acceptance to the EB at the August meeting, after which the plans will be circulated to the SC for comment at the same time that the research plan is circulated. Network bylaws make the EB responsible for developing and updating the network's strategic plan.

9. Next meeting dates

Members will be queried for a meeting date in late August, and also for regular meeting times during the year. Robertson suggested monthly meetings beginning September, and there was general agreement that shorter, more frequent meetings are desirable. The LNO will query members for preferred dates and times.

10. Items for future agenda

Hopkinson requested that NISAC's recommendation for data access auditing be placed on a future agenda. Other items for a next agenda include NISAC recommendations, LNO-funded workshops (budget and process), and strategic planning topics not covered by the planning grant (see March EB minutes).

11. Meeting adjourned at 5:15 EDT.