

Improving Internet Connectivity for the Coweeta Field Station and Coweeta Schoolyard LTERs

Current Status of Internet Access for Coweeta Schoolyard LTER Program— Our experiences in this first year (1998-99) of our Coweeta Schoolyard initiative were quite positive. All five teachers involved (3 at 6th grade, 1 at high school, and 1 at community college) gave positive reviews of the activities and had overwhelmingly positive responses from the students involved. A summary of the people involved included 5 teachers, 6 Coweeta research staff members, and 42 students.

For more information, please see the Coweeta Schoolyard LTER Web Site:

<http://coweeta.ecology.uga.edu/webdocs/school/>

We also wish to initiate Schoolyard LTER activities with Habersham County, GA science instructor Andrew Sorraco. We propose to assist Andrew with initiating a biodiversity monitoring project that will enable high school teachers, students, and private individuals to monitor school and private property for plant and animal biodiversity over multiple years. Andrew was a former field assistant for Dr. Joshua Laerm who was a small mammal ecologist in the Coweeta LTER program. His field experience with Josh has prepared him well for this proposed biodiversity project that will benefit not only other teachers and students, but also the private property owners in Habersham County, GA.

Internet access is currently available for Schoolyard instructors and students at Rabun Gap High School (Seehorn) and Southwestern Community College (Oppermann). However, no internet access is available for instructors and students at Macon County Middle School (Garrison, Guy, and Hubbs) or at Habersham County High School (Sorraco). Both schools anticipate working with their local school boards to secure funding for updated computers, establishment of a LAN, and internet access, but this will likely take three years before instructors and students have internet access.

Proposed Internet Access for Coweeta Schoolyard LTER program

A. Logistics of Connection

We propose to provide the four instructors (listed above) and their students with internet access by purchasing a classroom computer with modem for each instructor along with providing telephone line and dial-up internet access for three years until the school systems can provide the students and staff with full internet access. Both schools have local internet dial-up providers in their communities (Franklin, NC and Tallulah Falls, GA) to provide these services without incurring long distance telephone charges.

B. Benefits to Coweeta Schoolyard LTER Program

This basic service would greatly enhance the capabilities of the four Coweeta Schoolyard instructors and their students to access online information and data sets about Coweeta as well as the web sites of other LTER sites. Email correspondence with instructors and students in Schoolyard LTER programs at other LTER sites would also be possible. Online access would also help to greatly facilitate the coordination of the Coweeta Schoolyard activities by Coweeta LTER Researcher and Site Manager, Dr. Brian Kloeppel.