

Minutes of the LTER Executive Board Meeting
February 27-29, 2008; NSF; Washington, DC

1. Meeting called to order at 1:00pm by Chair Phil Robertson; Members attending: Peter Groffman, Morgan Grove, Don Henshaw, Sarah Hobbie, Sally Holbrook, Chuck Hopkinson, Sherri Johnson, Dan Reed, Bob Waide, Steve Pennings; Not attending: Berry Lyons. Also present for parts of meeting: Henry Gholz, Dan Childers, Roberta Marinelli, Alan Tessier, Peter McCartney, Elizabeth Blood.
2. Minutes for January 28, 2008, meeting approved by consent with one revision to item #4.
3. Reports from NSF (highlights; does not reflect complete discussion)
 - a. Henry Gholz discussed current budget situation with NSF: flat funding for 3rd year in a row; no divisional budgets yet, but LTER budget (\$26M) likely ok because FY08 is not a renewal year. Supplement requests this year included 22 SBE requests, including one 5-site proposal; total supplement requests = \$2.8M (as compared to \$2.7M last year). Looking ahead to 2009 budget, 7 sites plus LNO are up for renewal; if funding is flat again then 2009 will be a very lean supplement year. Decadal plan being discussed in various venues and capacities; looking for synergies with other programs and initiatives is key for moving it forward.
 - b. Roberta Marinelli discussed relationship between LTER and Office of Polar Programs; noted that the relationship is solid; no need at present for top-level development with respect to Decadal Plan.
 - c. Alan Tessier discussed current directions and plans of the internal working group and external advisory committee for Environmental Research and Education (ERE), a cross-directorate group that reports to the Director; noted that the AC/ERE is working on a new Green Book initiative, expected to be in partial first-draft for their April meeting, and that may intersect with parts of the decadal plan.
 - d. Peter McCartney discussed IM issues held in common by all environmental observatory networks, both NSF (e.g. NEON, OSS, WATERS, LTER) and non-NSF (e.g. NPN, GLEON, OBFS). A national workshop earlier in week appears to have been highly successful in finding and defining interoperabilities that will allow synergies and avoid duplication (LTER was formally represented at the workshop by Tim Kratz and James Brunt). The workshop report is expected to be delivered in May and distributed by NCAR.
 - e. Liz Blood discussed NEON progress; noted importance of co-development and co-location of infrastructure, both CI and sensors; also noted new 1-year delay of NEON to allow a new final design review prior to construction (required of all new MREFC projects to minimize risk of overruns).
4. Decadal Plan Progress and Strategies
 - a. Research plan. Robertson described progress to date with SBE, including current status of social science workshop (now in hands of Tom Baerwald) and David Lightfoot's interest in having a report in early summer to facilitate decisions about reverted HSD funding. We hope to learn more via meetings with ADs later in week.
 - b. Don Henshaw reported on NISAC's progress with respect to the CI implementation plan; expectation is to have a first draft ready in mid-March.
 - c. Education. Robertson reported on prior week's roundtable discussion at NSF between LTER education committee members and EHR and other NSF program officers with education portfolios. LTER group (Charles (Andy) Anderson, John Moore, Ali Whitmer, Robertson) met at NSF prior week (David Campbell of EHR hosted) to raise profile of LTER within education community at NSF and to solicit advice on education plan implementation. One outcome is invitation for group to submit a workshop proposal to NSF to formulate a formal implementation plan in light of other initiatives at foundation.
5. LNO Renewal Proposal
 - a. Changes since last iteration. Bob Waide described current status of LNO renewal proposal (due March 30) and in particular changes made since last discussed by EB – a) making clear distinction between on-

going activities and new activities related to decadal plan, b) keeping budget for on-going activities to a 15% increase as suggested by Henry Gholz (to keep in line with site increases). Discussion of specific funding priorities was deferred until NSF provides further funding guidelines – if submitted budget is reduced by NSF then the EB will meet to decide specific budget priorities. NSF feedback will likely occur in September, so decision was made to schedule an October meeting (face to face) for this purpose and for other EB business.

- b. Morgan Grove moved, seconded by Steve Pennings, that the EB approve the approach, list of tasks, and budget as presented for the LNO cooperative agreement renewal.** The motion passed unanimously.

6. National Advisory Board (NAB) Preparation

- a. Discussion of format and feedback desired from the NAB, which will meet Feb 28-29; we will meet twice with the group: on Thursday afternoon alone and then on Friday morning with ADs Collins and Lightfoot, in addition to a report-out session just before noon Friday.
- b. Robertson noted that Peter Arzberger has agreed to remain on as NAB chair for a transition year; as per bylaws, the EB is responsible for recommending and inviting the new chair; Robertson will work with Arzberger to bring his input to an upcoming EB meeting.

7. Network Survey

- a. Bob Waide summarized survey consultant's evaluation, and her recommendation that we provide the survey to all LTER participants and that it be web-based with a decision trees to limit the exposure of respondents to irrelevant questions. Consensus is that this is a good idea that we should pursue for subsequent year surveys. For this year the existing questionnaire should be lightly edited and sent out in time to review at the May EB meeting.
- b. **Chuck Hopkinson moved, seconded by Steve Pennings, that we distribute the existing survey, amended by Bob Waide and Phil Robertson, to each of three target groups at each site (lead PIs, Information Managers, and Student Representatives) to be completed and returned by early April.** Motion passed unanimously.

8. Publications

- a. Ecotrends. Peter Groffman brought the group up to date with respect to EcoTrends publication, including a draft manuscript.
- b. New Publication Policy. Robertson presented the recommendation of the Publications Committee (as presented in a formal written report from chair Alan Knapp) with respect to a new Network Publication Policy. Key elements include three distinct book series within the US LTER Book Series:
- i. *The US LTER Science and Synthesis Series* based on site and multi-site syntheses, methods and standards, and other science products supported by the US funded LTER Program. Oxford University Press (or any other press contracted with in the future) would be the encouraged outlet for these volumes, but volumes published by other presses would be included so long as they are approved by the EB. Proposed volumes for this series would be vetted initially, and primary oversight would be provided, by the Publications Committee. The EB would approve volumes for formal inclusion in the LTER Book Series, acting on recommendations from the Publications Committee.
 - ii. *The ILTER Book Series* would include volumes based on research conducted primarily at ILTER sites. These would be vetted and primary oversight would be provided by an ILTER Network committee. Thus, ILTER would oversee its own series with guidelines for publication. However, it is likely that at least some of these books will also be appropriate and meet guidelines for inclusion in the US LTER series. For these books,

authors will need to follow the same guidelines as below for the US LTER Science & Synthesis series.

- iii. *The LTER Children's Book Series* will continue to be published by publishers determined by the authors. These books would be vetted initially and primary oversight would be provided by the LTER Education Committee, with recommendations provided to the PC and the EB for formal inclusion in the LTER Book Series.

For all three series, official designation for inclusion in the LTER Book Series by the EB would require that these books include the US LTER Logo on their covers. This logo, rather than publication by any particular press, would signify that a volume is part of the US LTER Book Series.

There would be two principal criteria for determining that a proposed volume is appropriate for the LTER Science and Synthesis series: 1) Information content - quality and quantity of the science, and 2) the volume's relationship to the US NSF LTER Program. In principle, the latter guideline means that for a book to be appropriate for inclusion, its content would be based primarily on research and resources provided by the LTER Program. Thus, disciplinary volumes by LTER scientists in which the content was not primarily dependent on LTER science, or books largely about non-LTER sites, would not normally be appropriate.

Peter Groffman moved, seconded by Sally Holbrook, to accept the recommendations of the Publications Committee as described above and in more detail in the written report. The motion passed unanimously. The Publication Committee's report will be reformatted into a web-friendly format, posted, and the information distributed to sites.

9. Science Council (SC) Meeting in May (Baltimore)
 - a. Morgan Grove, program committee chair for the May SC meeting, provided an update on the schedule, format, and science program for the upcoming meeting. After discussion, consensus converged on scheduling the business meeting for a dinner meeting on day 2, thereby freeing Friday for departures (especially valuable for west coast returns). Decision was also made to start the EB meeting at 9am on Tuesday, and the decision to have the field trip on the afternoon of Day 1 was re-affirmed.
 - b. A revised program will be distributed within 2d, with a request to sites to bring a social scientist as a secondary representative if possible.
 - c. Robertson discussed items for the business meeting, including potential for bylaws changes, EB membership rotation (BNZ, NWT, and CWT rotate on; BES, PIE, and AND rotate off, as does the IM representative).
 - d. The format for the EB/SC chair election was discussed but not resolved.
10. Joint meetings with NAB and NSF Staff
 - a. A first joint meeting with the NAB was held from 1:30-3:30 pm Thursday Feb 28, following the minisymposium on Thursday morning. Robertson a) reported on how we responded to the NAB's recommendations last year at this time; b) described how we have been promoting the decadal plan since its submission on October 1; and c) requested specific advice on how best to advance the plan within and potentially outside of NSF. Substantial discussion followed.
 - b. A second joint meeting with the NAB was held from 10 to 10:40 Friday morning for a roundtable discussion with ADs Jim Collins and David Lightfoot. DEB Director Bob Sterner, SBE's Tom Baerwald, Henry Gholz, and Dan Childers also joined the group. Discussion centered on decadal plan progression. The NAB met separately with NSF staff from 10:40 to 11:30.

- c. A third joint meeting was held at 11:30 to hear the NAB's verbal report-out to the EB. A written report of the NAB meeting will be submitted by chair Peter Arzberger within a few weeks.

11. Other

- a. next meetings
 1. Mar 25, Tue, 2-4 pm EST videoconference
 2. Apr 15, Tue, 2:30 - 4:30 pm EST videoconference
 3. May 6 (EB), 7-8 (SC) - Baltimore

12. Meeting adjourned at 12:10 Friday, February 29.