

Minutes of the LTER Executive Board Meeting  
October 14, 2008; 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm EDT; by Videoconference

1. Meeting called to order at 2 p.m. by Chair Phil Robertson; Members attending: Ted Gragson, Corinna Gries, Sarah Hobbie, Sally Holbrook, Berry Lyons, Steve Pennings, Dan Reed, Bob Waide, Mark Williams; Unavailable: Peter Groffman, Dave McGuire.
2. Minutes for September 8, 2008, meeting approved by consent.
3. Updates
  - a. Phil Robertson presented update on 2009 Minisymposium plans on behalf of co-chairs Peter Groffman and Deb Peters. Most speakers are confirmed and plans are well in hand.
  - b. Bob Waide provided update on 2009 ASM plans. The program committee has created a number of subcommittees that are now working out speaker, workshop, and other details.
  - c. No written word yet on LNO proposal site review.
  - d. NSF recently announced a major Math and Science Partnership award to a cross-site education group (SGS, SBC, BES, KBS; PI John Moore), based largely on environmental literacy goals outlined in decadal plan.
4. NSF Concerns about site-level data availability, cont.

Corinna Gries presented the EB subcommittee's report and recommendation for addressing NSF concerns about site-level data availability. Since the prior EB meeting, subcommittee members (Gries, Ted Gragson, Peter Groffman, and Sally Holbrook) visited every LTER web site and report wide variance in the accessibility and presentation quality of site-level data. In several cases there are impediments to learning what data are available (e.g. catalogs hidden behind multi-level menu, or a site's requiring a completed permissions form just to view the table of available data sets), and in most cases site data sets are organized in idiosyncratic ways often without keyword search capabilities.

The group suggested a set of recommended best-practices to improve site-level data accessibility: In the short term, recommendations include on each site's home page a one-click direct link to data (displayed prominently as a "Data" link); and then on the topmost data page:

- identifying signature datasets that best represent the site's research goals;
- providing a dataset search capability (by creator name, LTER core areas, keywords);
- providing a capability to dataset browse by LTER core areas;
- a prominent link to LNO MetaCat;
- a prominent link to network wide databases (ClimHydroDB, SiteDB, etc.); and
- a prominent link to Eco-Trends data website.

In the longer term the group suggests that site data be accessible via a data download link in the EML file that is accessible via the LNO MetaCat system. Additionally, the group suggested three activities that will improve dataset discoverability but will require site and network level resources to implement: 1) data access tracking for LNO MetaCat, 2) creation and implementation of an LTER controlled vocabulary for keyword searches, and 3) implementation of an LTER units dictionary.

**Action:** Following extensive discussion the EB charged Robertson and Waide to discuss with NSF whether the short-term solution would address the Foundation's immediate concerns about data accessibility. Robertson will place the issue on the next EB meeting for potential action

(recommendation to sites). The subcommittee will put together a sample page as an example to be included with a cover letter from Robertson.

5. National Phenology Network (NPN)

The National Phenology Network has proposed a memorandum of understanding to foster research collaboration among NPN and LTER researchers. A draft memorandum has been developed over the past year with Bob Waide's input, and was shared with EB members and discussed briefly. The memorandum will be placed on next month's EB agenda for potential adoption. .

6. Upcoming Meetings

- a. November 11 Tuesday 12-2pm EDT
- b. December 11 Thursday 12-2pm EDT
- c. January 22, 2009 Thursday noon-2pm EDT
- d. February 24-26, 2009 Washington DC (Minisymposium Thursday Feb 26)
- e. March, April meetings tba
- f. May 12-14, 2009 EB/SC Meeting San Diego

7. Meeting adjourned 3:40 p.m.