

Minutes of the LTER Executive Board Meeting
June 22, 2009; 12pm-2 pm EDT; Videoconference

1. Meeting called to order at 12:10pm by Chair Phil Robertson; Members attending: Nick Brokaw, Hugh Ducklow, David Foster, Ted Gragson, Corinna Gries, Sarah Hobbie, Sally Holbrook, Dave McGuire, Steve Pennings, Bob Waide, Mark Williams; Unavailable: none.
2. Minutes for 12 May 2009 and 17 June 2009 were approved by consent.
3. Updates
 - a. ASM 2009. Planning is on track, with 30 working groups proposed so far (of 60 desired), and a strong poster response.
 - b. 30-y review. Robertson reported that the 30-y review committee is still being formed, with the provisional chair now unavailable. NSF is in need of review team nominations. Robertson will alert SC to nominate members directly to Henry Gholz and Todd Crowl.
4. Communication Plan Participants

Waide requested suggestions for names of potential participants in the development of the communication strategic plan; we need several senior LTER participants with an appreciation for the breadth of network stakeholders. Will require participation in 1-2 videoconferences in coming months. EB members should send names of nominees to Bob immediately; self-nominations very welcome.
5. LNO Renewal Proposal Budget

As a follow-on to the May EB meeting, Waide provided a written, detailed overview of the 6-year LNO renewal budget covering three major categories: 1) recurring core funds, i.e. those funds contained in the renewed Cooperative Agreement (\$8.9M); 2) non-recurring core funds, i.e. stimulus-act funds to cover a 6-year 15% cost-of-living increase (\$1,350,000 M); and 3) non-recurring decadal plan (DP) funds, i.e. stimulus-act funds to be used for DP synthesis, cyberinfrastructure, and core services (\$5.3M).

Robertson proposed that a subcommittee be appointed to review the DP portion of the budget in light of new developments and priorities that have emerged since the proposal budget was reviewed and approved by the EB in Fall 2007. The committee will be charged with reviewing the budget and recommending changes to the EB/LNO.
6. LNO Annual Review Process

As a follow-on activity from the May EB meeting, Robertson presented a preliminary listing of goals, outcomes, and metrics to use for the annual evaluation of LNO performance. The goals are recast from the LNO renewal proposal, which spells out the activities of the LNO in five areas as approved by the EB during the development of the renewal proposal in 2007: (1) increase the pace and scope of scientific synthesis in the LTER Network; (2) support decadal plan cyberinfrastructure goals; (3) support Network governance and operations; (4) improve information flow within LTER and between LTER and the broader community of scientists, educators, and the public; and (5) create productive collaborations that lead to funding, research, training, and other opportunities for

the Network and that improve interoperability with other networks. Each of the 5 goals has 2-6 proposed outcomes, and preliminary metrics are presented for several of these.

Consensus is that this approach for evaluation is basically on-track, providing a tangible set of explicit expectations that will be revised annually. Robertson will appoint a subcommittee to work with Waide to ensure the 2009 outcomes are complete, appropriate, and achievable and to recommend specific metrics by which outcomes can be judged successful. The committee should also consider the evaluation reporting calendar, as the NSF annual report is no longer on a calendar year basis and it may be more efficient to align the EB review with the NSF reporting calendar.

7. EcoTrends Vision and Resource Needs

Robertson presented for discussion the report “Ecotrends Project Vision and Resources Needs” requested from Deb Peters and colleagues in early May. The 22-page report outlines a vision for maintaining its importance as a functional, easy-to-use web site designed by and for scientists to support cross-site synthesis, but sufficiently usable, accessible, and understandable by a diverse group of users. Four current limitations are described: database structure, web site functionality, site participation, and data entry and updates. Two recommendations address these needs: one for resources (ca. \$1.8M for 4 years) and one for governance.

Discussion centered on the relationship of EcoTrends to the Network Information System (NIS), and on the tension between allocating resources to foundational NIS activities that underpin derived products such as EcoTrends vs. activities (such as EcoTrends) that provide the derived products. There was broad agreement that both activities are important and crucial to Network success. There was also concern about staging – whether moving full-forward with development of a derived product prior to having the NIS foundation fully in place would present major problems at a later date.

Robertson proposed that a subcommittee be formed to examine the report in detail and make recommendations to the EB with respect to its adequacy, the organizational structure proposed, the recommended budget and its justification, and, if judged high priority, what steps might be taken to address the recommendations of the report.

8. Upcoming Meetings

- a. July 16, Thursday, 12-2pm EDT
- b. Aug 31, Monday, 12-2pm EDT
- c. Sep 13, 1-5pm, Estes Park; pre-ASM
- d. Oct-Dec TBD

9. Meeting adjourned 2:10 p.m.