

**Minutes of the Executive Board Videoconference**  
**December 5, 2006**  
**11:00-2:00 pm EST**

**Participants**

John Magnuson, Chair  
Phil Robertson, Chair-Elect (by phone)  
Peter Groffman  
Morgan Grove  
Don Henshaw  
Charles Hopkinson  
Berry Lyons (by phone)  
Deb Peters (by phone)  
Dan Reed  
Bob Waide (by phone)  
James Brunt (by phone)

**Executive Board Members Not Present:**

Sherri Johnson  
Scott Collins  
Mark Ohman

**Announcements**

ISSE: The Science Task Force (Collins, Childers, Benson Whitmer, Gragson, Grove, Magnuson, and Robertson) are in the process of redrafting the ISSE initiative (Integrative Science for Society and Environment) to broaden it to the ecological science community and be less LTER centric. This has resulted in having to change the schedule of our preparation of the ISSE and the subsequent Proposal (see appendix II). The writing team for the proposal is now complete (see Appendix IV). The writing team is the STF plus additional natural and social scientists, and education and cyberinfrastructure people.

**Approval of minutes from EB Videoconference meeting on October 31,, 2006**

Approval of the minutes was postponed to the next Executive Board meeting because some of the letters for the committee chairs were not yet written.

**Response on the two action items in the October minutes under STFAC.**

Action item: Follow up with Tom Baerwald, NSF Program Director in SBE: Morgan Grove reported he and Ted Gragson are preparing a written report to Baerwald about the ongoing research on social science that is going on in the LTER network.

Action item: Follow up with Henry Gholz regarding possible synthesis funding from 2007-2008 supplement funds. This has occurred and Henry has yet to make his decisions.

### **Supplement Funding Discussion and Action**

We discussed the importance of various uses of supplemental funds from NSF that were important to the LTER sites and network. The funding for the Trends project was valued highly by the Executive Board. Deb Peters had made a request for support for the Trends project in the 2007 supplements (see appendix I). The board endorsed the idea that supplemental funds be used to make significant steps forward on Trends during 2007. The board also endorsed the view that flexibility in site requests for supplemental funds was important. Often the sites when asked tend to prioritize needs for supplements based on individual site needs. The Executive Board believes that it would be valuable to have the Science Council consider what the most constructive use of supplements would be to science at the LTER network scale.

**Action: John Magnuson will call Henry and pass on the endorsement of the EB for the Trends project and flexibility in site requests.**

### **NEON meeting report (Peters)**

The NEON Response meeting held in Las Cruces, NM Nov. 29-Dec. 1, 2006 was briefly presented by Peters. Over 90 people attended the meeting from 17 LTER sites (including the LNO) and 19 of 20 COREO domains. The group agreed to submit five linked responses to the RFI: an overview document, two based on climate (inland, coastal), one on invasives, and one on land use. These themes were based on the NEON overarching questions and drivers. LTER PIs will co-lead all five documents. RFI responses are due to NEONinc by Jan. 5, 2007.

### **Review of Post-ASM Proposals (Waide/Brunt)**

The EB discussed at length the 31 reviewed and ranked proposals for Post-ASM working group funds from the network office. Bob Waide suggested the cutoff point at which funds were available in a matrix which he made available in advance. Discussion centered on a group of potentially meritorious proposals near that cutoff point that had at least one very low score. The reviewer scoring each proposal was asked to make a case for denial or in the event that reviewer was not present the reviewer making the highest score was asked to make a case for funding. In either case all reviewers were given an opportunity to comment and acceptance or rejection was by consensus. Some of the proposers will be asked to make minor modifications and some proposals will be reconsidered for other funds based on major modifications. A total of 15 proposals were recommended for immediate funding (See Appendix III), 4 proposals will be requested to consider combining into only 2 proposals because of their similarity; otherwise provide adequate justification why this should not be done. 1 proposal is to be funded separately under the planning grant activity, 1 proposal will be reconsidered for other funding with major revision of scope, and 10 proposals were declined because of a combination of ranking and the availability of funds.

**Action: James Brunt will prepare letters to PI's with further instructions, reviewer comments and funding statistics to go out before the holidays.**

### **Review of LTER ad hoc and standing committees (Magnuson)**

Discussion of committee draft letters 5a5 (Graduate Students) 5a6 (International), 5b2 (Information Management), and 5b3 (Technology, Geographic Information Systems, Remote Sensing, & then Climate) were postponed to the next EB meeting. Magnuson agreed to ghost write the Graduate student committee letter for Scott Collins.

**Action: James Brunt will prepare approved letters under John's signature to committee chairs to go out as soon as possible.**

### **LTER Network Office Survey (Groffman and Hopkinson)**

Groffman and Hopkinson led a brief discussion on progress towards revision of the Annual Survey. This agenda item will be revisited in the January videoconference.

**Action: Peter Groffman and Chuck Hopkinson will highlight suggested alterations and make suggestions for additional questions or will provide guidance to the EB on a different course of action.**

### **Next Meeting place, time, and agenda items.**

Magnuson made the point that we may need another Executive Board meeting in late January or early February. Otherwise the next scheduled meeting will be in March. Items yet to be acted on are a few of the letters to committees mentioned in item 5 above, the LNO Survey, and Strategic Analysis for the LTER network to supplement the planning grant efforts.

**Action: James Brunt will discuss potential dates with John Magnuson and send out a request for availability.**

### **Motion to adjourn**

There was a motion to adjourn, which was passed by voice vote.

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix I**

#### **TRENDS Committee Endorsement Letter**

Henry,

In response to your email requesting input on 2007 LTER Supplement money, we would like to request an allocation of \$250,000 to the Trends project prior to the distribution of funds to the individual sites. The Trends project is clearly one of the most important synthesis products coming out of the LTER Network, as indicated by the enthusiasm and excitement generated by this project in informal discussions and workshops at the ASM. This cross-site, network-wide project includes all 26 LTER sites in addition to linking with other state (University of Arizona) and federal agencies (USDA-FS, USDA-ARS, DOE, USGS). The synthesis products, in particular the book to be published by Oxford University Press, will be a critical part of the LTER Strategic Plan.

The support provided by the 2006 LTER Supplement has been invaluable in allowing us to meet our goal of completing the book within a short time period. However, we have been overwhelmed by the positive response by LTER sites in providing data and figures to the Trends project, and a considerable amount of work remains before the web page development can proceed. The book will contain a small subset (< 20%) of the total number of data sets submitted by LTER sites alone (> 400). Two major tasks need to be completed in the next year that relate to the development of the Trends web page. Both tasks are required before the potential of Trends can be realized by the dynamic harvesting and updating of data.

1. All data sets, not just the ones in the book, need to be error-checked and converted to a standard format and standard units to make them accessible on the Trends web page. Many of the datasets have unique properties that require individual attention before standardization can occur. There will be a number of standard formats depending on the type of data that were collected. In addition, metadata need to be developed for the derived data that characterize Trends.
2. Analysis tools need to be developed for the Trends web page. Users need to be able to download data at different time intervals for different lengths of time for multiple sites. We will use readily-available software packages and tools developed by others when possible, however, these tools will need to seamlessly incorporated into the Trends web page. Based on discussions at the ASM, users also need some analysis tools, such as regression and time series analysis, as well as graphing options.

Each task is a major project in itself, but both are critical to the success of Trends. We estimate that each task can be accomplished with \$90,000, primarily for 2 fulltime technical staff working for one year on each task. We also request \$20,000 to offset the cost of color graphics in the Trends book. Although we will use black and white graphics when possible, the book will be defined by the high quality color graphs that illustrate the importance of long-term data and comparisons among a network of sites. Including these graphics without offsetting their cost will likely make the cost of the book prohibitive to many potential users.

Thus, our total request for Trends is:

\$90,000	salary and fringe for 2 fulltime technical staff to error-check, format, and standardize LTER data sets
\$90,000	salary and fringe for 2 fulltime web developers to add functionality to the Trends web page (e.g., queries, sorts, statistical analyses, graphs)

\$20,000	offset the cost of color graphics in the Trends book to allow the book to be affordable to more students, faculty, researchers, and land managers
\$50,000	Indirect costs (25%)
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\$250,000	total

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Sincerely,

The Trends Editorial Committee

Deb Peters (JRN)  
Christine Laney (JRN)  
Ariel Lugo (LUQ)  
Scott Collins (SEV)  
Mark Ohman (CCE)  
Morgan Grove (BES)  
Peter Groffman (HBR, BES)  
Tim Kratz (NTL)  
Charlene d'Avanzo (education)

Bob Waide (LNO)  
James Brunt (LNO)  
Ken Ramsey (JRN, IMEXEC)  
Mark Servilla (LNO)  
Wade Sheldon (NISAC)  
Inigo San Gil (LNO)  
Don Henshaw (NISAC)

**Appendix II**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Draft Schedule for preparation of the Planning Grant Initiative and Proposal (Feb 24, 2006)**

Initiative

1 Nov 9, 2006: formally increase size of the STF (Science Task Force for the Planning Grant), Scott Collins-chair, Magnuson and Robertson – chairs of Science Council, Ali Whitmer, Barbara Benson, and Dan Childers (until he joins NSF) – original members of STF, Morgan Grove and Ted Gragson – Social Scientists, Waide ex officio.

2. Nov 10, 2006: finalize membership of the writing team,. (Collins & Magnuson)

3. Nov. 13. Marjorie McConnell arranges contracts with Taylor and Pessino. Waide Collins and Magnuson remind STFAC for report timeliness for us to meet NSF deadlines.

4. December 2006: Scott Collins presents initiative to additional programs at NSF

5. Nov 27 to Dec 1, 2006: prepare penultimate draft of the initiative (Collins in New Mexico, Magnuson, with feedback from ISSE subcommittee of conference committee and STF)

6. Dec 1, 4, 5, 6 (Window): Expanded STF discuss penultimate draft of Initiative Document via polycom- or tele- conferences and produce final penultimate initiative document.

\* action item. ask Geroge Garcia to schedule a conference call/polycom conference for the expanded STF (Collins, Magnuson, Robertson, Benson, Whitmer, Childers, Gragson, Grove, Waide).

7. Dec 5-7 (window) 2006: Send initiative document to writer (Pete Taylor) and graphics person (Monica Pessino) to make an attractive eight page document from the full ISSE document. Collins

Also send the draft document to all LTER sites and writing team. Garcia

8. Jan 8 2007: Send polished initiative document (long and short) to NSF, all LTER sites, STFAC, relevant scientific societies, etc. Collins and Garcia

9. Interact with NSF, ACERE (April; Gholz & Stafford), Geo Science, AIBS/Congress. Collins, Magnuson, Robertson, Whitmer.

#### Proposal

1. Nov 22 2006; Send letter to all sites requesting their best ideas on research plans that they could address within the “Social and Natural Science Feedback Loops” framework at their sites. Up to three feedback loops should be on topics that they think they and other sites might be able to participate in as equal partners. A loop diagram and page of text for each is what is needed. Sites can also send a more site-specific feedback loop and rationale as well. These products should be returned to the expanded STF by Jan 15, 2007. Let the sites know that the penultimate daft of the initiative document will be available soon.

2. Jan 22, 2007: Sites send their ideas to Science Task Force.

3. Jan 30 - Feb 1, 2007 (Albuquerque): expanded STF meets with the 30<sup>th</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> also as travel days plus half day meetings.

a. to analyze and aggregate site responses, ASM products, the existing draft 1 of the proposal, and send the information back to all sites and the writing team.

b. to prepare an outline of the overarching structure and smaller components of the proposal for review and feedback by the writing team and Science Council.

c. to develop several alternate organizational structures for the proposed research to ensure continuity of leadership, accountability, connectivity, creative planning at the site and network (intersite) levels, and sustainability of the vision in the science. Submit these to the Executive Board for discussion and a subsequent recommendation to the Science Council.

4. April 4-5 2007 with travel days being the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> (Florida?):

a. Science Council members or their designee meet to develop the transdisciplinary science projects.

- b. Ad hoc subcommittee continues dialog on the governance approaches for the proposed transdisciplinary research.
  - c. STF stays after to prepare a draft outline along with instructions and assignments to the writing team to prepare drafts on the overarching logic and the pieces of the proposal including education and cyberinfrastructure.
5. April 14 – May 4 (window) 2007: Writing team prepares draft of pieces and submits them to Collins for compilation into a draft 3 proposal.
6. May 7 – May 8 2007 (Madison WI): draft 3 compiled by STF and sent to writing team by May 11. Collins, Magnuson and Benson for sure as a subcommittee and any others on the STF that wish to participate.
7. May 17, 18, 19, 2007 (Portland): Writing team meeting to prepare a draft 4 of the proposal at the Science Council Meeting. The Science Task Force is dissolved; leadership is assumed by the Science Council with help from the Writing Team, the Executive Board, and the LTER Network Office.
8. June-September (window) 2007: The proposal is reviewed by the Science Council and Executive Board for comment and suggestions. The Writing Team aggregates the comments and revises the proposal to a 5<sup>th</sup> draft. Robertson and Collins,.
9. August or later the LTER proposal is submitted on request to NSF.

**Appendix III**

**Funded Proposals:**

PI	Title
Cavender-Bares	Linking phylogenetic history, plant traits, and environmental gradients to understand community organization at local and continental scales
Shah/Fargione	Effects of N-fixing plants on diversity and species interactions
Rusak/Gragson/Foster	Interactions between ecosystem function and human behavior: paleoecological and socioeconomic dynamics of altered ecosystems
Shah/Huryn	Metabolic Theory of Ecology and stream ecosystems
Henebry	Phenology across LTER

Schmidt	Catalyzing cross-site comparisons of microbial diversity and function
Sheldon/Henshaw/Ramsey	Workshop to define quality management standards for data completeness in derived data products
Caldwell	Polyphenols across the LTER: assessing fractions, forms and functions
Christian/Johnson/Waide	Characterizing the nature of the LTER network
Porter	Exploring the effect of scale-dependent processes on ecological systems using networked sensors
Bestelmeyer	Collaborative Research on Desertification between the Jornada Basin and Mongolian LTERs
Kaplan, et al	Grasslands Data Integration of aboveground net primary productivity across sites and time
Boone/Grove	Ecology and Environmental Justice Research across the LTER Network: long-term and multi-scale understandings of past, present, and future
Peters	Trends in Long Term Ecological Data Working Group
Stapp	Toward a synthesis of LTER studies of small mammal populations and communities in arid and semiarid ecosystems

## **Appendix IV**

### **Writing Team for Science Proposal**

From: "Robert B. Waide" <rwaide@lternet.edu>  
Date: November 22, 2006 12:19:34 PM CST  
To: stf@lternet.edu  
Subject: [LTER-stf] New alias for writing team

The Planning Grant Writing Team has a new e-mail alias, write@lternet.edu. I suggest a test message before key posts are sent to this group. Members include:

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- ¥ Anderson, Charles (andya@msu.edu) - KBS
- ¥ Benson, Barbara (bjbenson@wisc.edu) - NTL
- ¥ Boone, Christopher (Christopher.G.Boone@asu.edu) - BES

¥ Brunt, James (jbrunt@lternet.edu) - LNO  
¥ Carpenter, Steve (srcarpen@wisc.edu) - NTL  
¥ Childers, Daniel (childers@fiu.edu) - FCE  
¥ Collins, Scott (scollins@sevilleta.unm.edu) - SEV  
¥ Covich, Alan (alanc@uga.edu) - LUQ  
¥ Ducklow, Hugh (duck@vims.edu) - PAL  
¥ Foster, David (drfoster@fas.harvard.edu) - HFR  
¥ Gragson, Ted (tgragson@uga.edu) - CWT  
¥ Grimm, Nancy (nbgrimm@asu.edu) - CAP  
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¥ Gross, Katherine (kgross@kbs.msu.edu) - KBS  
¥ Grove, Morgan (jmgrove@gmail.com) - BES  
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¥ Moore, John (jmoore@nrel.colostate.edu) - SGS  
¥ Ogden, Laura (Laura.Ogden@fiu.edu) - FCE  
¥ Peters, Debra (debpeter@nmsu.edu) - JRN  
¥ Polasky, Stephen (polasky@umn.edu) - CDR  
¥ Reed, Dan (reed@lifesci.ucsb.edu) - SBC  
¥ Robertson, G. Philip (robertson@kbs.msu.edu) - KBS  
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¥ Waide, Robert (rwaide@lternet.edu) - LNO

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