

## **DRAFT PROSPECTUS FOR LTER CHILDREN'S BOOK SERIES**

Draft title for series: The Schoolyard Series of NSF's Long Term Ecological Research Network

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The LTER community recognizes the importance of outreach to elementary through high school students (K-12) as part of the LTER community at the individual research sites. The LTER science community is drawn from a network of 26 long term research sites, and includes academic and government scientists and educators, graduate and undergraduate students, and professional staff. The research conducted at LTER sites is diverse, encompassing all aspects of ecology and ecosystem science, as well as investigations in atmospheric science, hydrology, and geomorphology.

The underlying "schoolyard" approach emphasizes the connection to local communities, for which the LTER site can serve as a "schoolyard" for understanding ecology and environmental science. This approach is particularly consistent with the development of empathy for their local environment ("Environmental Empathy") discussed by Zobel as a basis for teaching elementary age students.

The three major main themes of the LTER network that are important for development of a children's book series are;

- 1) Integration of ecology and earth science within the individual sites and across the site network
- 2) Long-term perspective.
- 3) The schoolyard approach.

The research groups at each site strive to make advances at the frontier of the specific scientific areas of research while continuously integrating new results into an evolving and expanding understanding of the ecosystem. Further, the LTER site scientists work towards a monitoring program for their ecosystem that will provide understanding of how ecosystems function at decadal and century time scales, trying to anticipate the future in the design and upgrading of their monitoring programs.

The design of the LTER Children's Book Series should reflect these three successful themes of the LTER site network.

### **II. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LTER CHILDREN'S BOOKS**

Based on the success and format of *My Water Comes from the Mountains*, and the next book on the publishing plan which will be published in 2006, *The Lost Seal*, the proposed series will consist of 9 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 10 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inch illustrated hardcover books intended for children ages 5-10. The multi-tiered market for the books will include schools, libraries, and the general book trade, as well as specialty distribution through such outlets as Scholastic Book Clubs, school fairs, and specialty re-binders. However, because of funding limitations in most school districts, it is expected that the LTER sites will help support the introduction of the series into the educational market by purchasing books for donation for school library and classroom use, and developing curriculum guides for teachers. There are several ways that the LTER site can partner with Moonlight

Publishing to help underwrite a project that meets the unique needs of their community, and some guidelines are detailed in Attachment A.

Participating LTER sites should consider this as an opportunity to interpret their sites for their constituents, keeping in mind that arcane or very regional subjects stand the least chance of succeeding in the marketplace. Ideally, a book might also have international appeal, increasing the possibility for translated editions that would further spread the LTER site's message.

The books should be strictly interpretive and not advocate any particular point of view. Furthermore, this is not the place for anthropomorphism, though authors and illustrators should strive to make the books as pleasurable and accessible as possible. A storyline that connects a character, animal, or situation is ideal. The storyline or narrative should have a beginning and an end, and should be based on real environmental relationships, or a real incident or situation. The books should have realistic illustrations and may also incorporate children's artwork and comments. Once agreed upon, a mission statement will be printed on the copyright page of each book, stating the LTER site's commitment to accuracy in both the text and illustrations.

### **III. OVERSIGHT: BOOK PROPOSAL PROCESS**

The LTER network will establish an editorial review board of three members who will prepare a mission statement for the series and review each proposed book project. The editorial board will work with Moonlight Publishing in preparing and updating the publishing plan for the series, which will be based on 1-3 books per year.

It is strongly suggested that before an LTER site begins putting together a formal proposal, that a preliminary idea for a book project, with the approval of the lead principal investigator(s), be submitted to the editorial board for consideration. A few short paragraphs detailing the idea for the book is sufficient for the preliminary review.

The formal review process shall begin with the proposal first submitted to Moonlight Publishing. A proposal will consist of a draft text manuscript, an example of illustrations, a timeline for preparation of the text and illustrations, and a detailed plan (see attachment B for guidelines) with projected costs for the funding and distribution of books to local schools, as appropriate. If children's artwork is to be incorporated in the book, a plan for that activity and integration with the LTER site's website should be included. The publisher will review the proposal for marketability and overall fit within the series, and then recommend the project to the editorial board for further consideration.

The editorial board will then review proposals for content and appropriate material, and ensures that the subject matter and presentation is in line with the mission statement for the series. The board will then accept or reject a proposal for inclusion on the publishing plan for the series. If a proposal is rejected but the board feels that with some re-working it could be accepted for publication at a later date, the editorial board can recommend appropriate changes.

#### **IV. PUBLISHING PROCESS AND EXECUTION**

After the editorial board recommends a project for placement on the publishing plan, Moonlight Publishing will evaluate what publishing season and year to publish the book in, add the title to the publishing plan, and draft a schedule accordingly. Schedule dates can only be upheld if all materials are turned in on time and all parties agree to hold to the schedule dates that include participation from them. It is the responsibility of the principal investigator or co-principal investigators for the participating LTER site to ensure that the schedule is met.

##### **Fall Publishing Schedule:**

January 1: receipt of manuscript and art

February 15: Author review of edited manuscript and queries from copyeditor

March 1: Final copyedited manuscript returned to Moonlight

April 1: Author/Illustrator review of page proofs from designer

May 15: Final pages and files from designer

June 1: Ship files to printer

July 1: Color corrections

August 1: Books Print

September 15: Books in warehouse

##### **Spring Publishing Schedule:**

June 1: receipt of manuscript and art

July 15: Author review of edited manuscript and queries from copyeditor

August 1: Final copyedited manuscript returned to Moonlight

September 1: Author/Illustrator review of page proofs from designer

October 15: Final pages and files from designer

November 1: Ship files to printer

December 1: Color corrections

January 1: Books Print

February 15: Books in warehouse

The schedules outlined above may vary due to sales and marketing opportunities for individual titles, but the timelines will be consistent.

Moonlight Publishing will make all vendor decisions for each project.