



LTER



*Long Term Ecological Research
Network Office*

**Supporting, Facilitating,
and Enhancing Synthesis**

THE THIRD DECADE OF LTER: A DECADE OF SYNTHESIS

Goals for the next 10 years:

- A. Maintain the quality of science and integrity of core measurements at all LTER sites
- B. Increase the pace of synthesis through activities such as site volumes, network-wide synthesis projects, multi-site synthesis projects, and database development**
- C. Increase experimental and comparative cross-site research
- D. Facilitate/increase multidisciplinary/interdisciplinary research and synthesis efforts with other disciplines (e.g., physical, social, economic, computer sciences)**
- E. Extend use of LTER knowledge in education, policy-making, management and public understanding

Increase the pace of synthesis

- All Scientist Meetings – every three years
- Annual science themes at CC meetings, including production of value-added databases
- Multi-site syntheses and working groups (6-8 a year)
- Site volumes (24 by the end of the decade)
- Database development and informatics – a global IT infrastructure
- Ongoing planning effort for site and cross-site synthesis

Increase the pace of synthesis

- **All Scientists Meeting 2003**
 - The LNO took the lead in organizing, funding, and carrying out the fifth LTER All Scientists Meeting, held in Seattle, WA
 - 700 scientists
 - 66 working groups
 - 400 posters
 - 27 requests for follow up support
 - 16 funded

2006 ASM



The next 25 years of LTER:
Contributions to understanding
ecological change

YMCA of the Rockies
Estes Park, CO

September 20-23, 2006



Progress to Date

- Venue selected and reserved
- Dates agreed upon
- Program Committee and sub-committees formed and two teleconferences held
- Basic program agreed upon
- Meeting organizers contracted
- Partial funding achieved

ASM Program Committee

Tim Seastedt – Co-Chair

Bob Waide – Co-Chair

Tiffany Gann – Grad students

Chelsea Crenshaw – Grad students

Bill Michener - IM

Kristin Vanderbilt –
IM/International

Brian Kloeppel – International

Matt Wilson – Social Science

Ali Whitmer - Education

Gene Kelly - Science

Hugh Ducklow - Science

Tim Hollibaugh - Science

Sarah Hobbie - Science

Jill Thompson - Science

John Vande Castle - LNO

21) Number of concurrent working groups

About right 53.2% 

Too many 29.4% 

Left unanswered by 17.4% of respondents

22) Number of concurrent posters

About right 53.6% 

Too few 0.4% 

Too many 28.7% 

Left unanswered by 17.4% of respondents

23) Amount of unscheduled time

About right 58.5% 

Too little 22.3% 

Too much 0.4% 

Left unanswered by 18.9% of respondents

Informed by survey

Key Points

- Plenaries will focus on goals set out by LTER strategic planning activity
- Working group time flexible (1, 2, 4 hours)
- Different classes of working groups (information, product, brainstorming)
- Site information through posters and informal lunch meetings
- Posters all day, organized by core area with additional “grand challenge” theme

Increase the pace of synthesis

- Annual science themes at CC meetings
 - Climate-disturbance interactions – Chapin
 - Ecosystems in transition – Knapp/Briggs
- Multi-site syntheses and working groups
 - Five funded in 2005
- Site volumes (24 by the end of the decade)
 - Funding to assist sites with indexing and figures
- Database development
 - TRENDS book
- Support of the Network Planning effort
 - managing finance and logistics of multiple meetings
 - collaborating with the STF
 - participating in working groups (Science/Social science, Governance, Cyberinfrastructure)
 - conducting surveys and analyses of infrastructure and needs
 - providing technical support

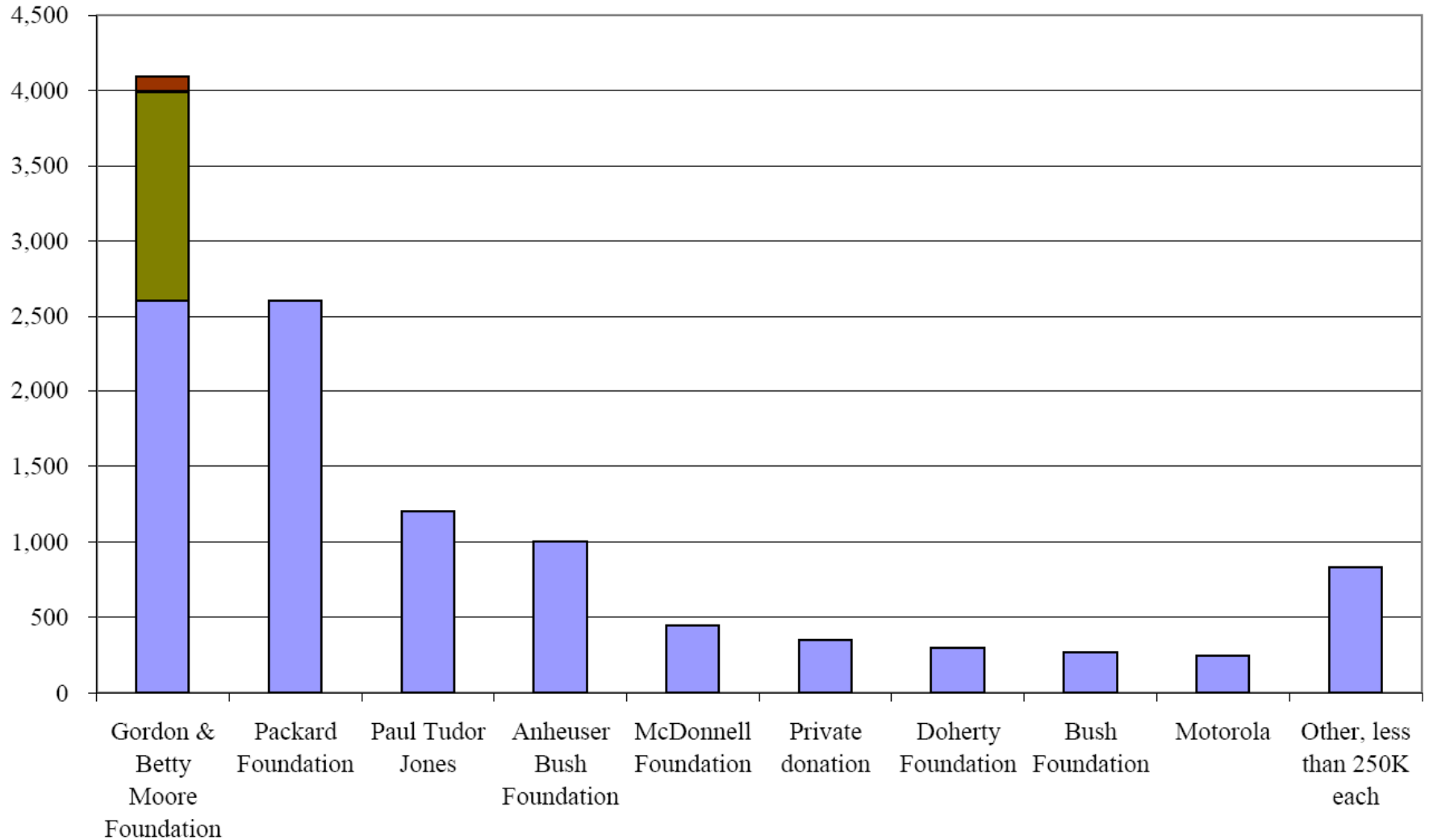
Proactive efforts by the LNO to increase the pace of synthesis

Support

- **Grow the pot**
 - Triple available funds in LNO by fund-raising, re-allocation, and economies
- **Use existing monies more effectively**
 - Smaller awards, but more of them
- **Leverage other meetings to piggyback synthesis activities**
 - Add time to CC meetings for interested groups
- **Continue conversations with NCEAS**
- **Try to score big**
 - Foundations, other NSF programs, other agencies

Support by Foundation

Thousands

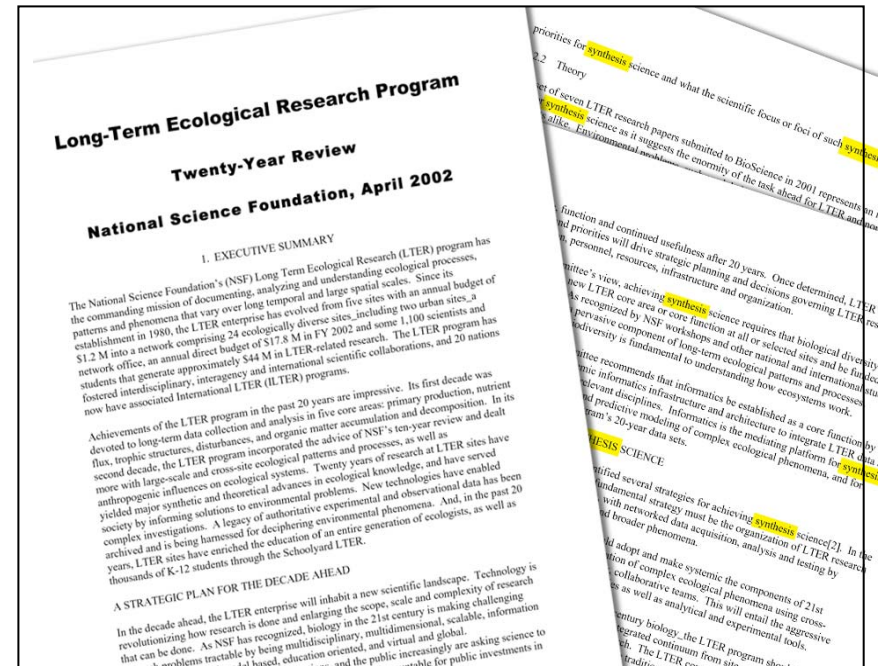


Facilitate

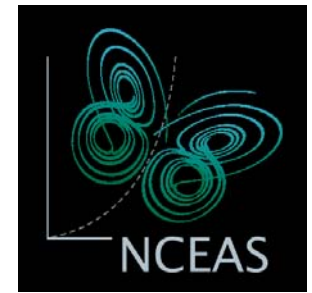
- Fund and implement the Polycom bridge and encourage use of technology
- Facilitate use of other interaction technologies like collaboration portals and wiki pages
- Help define and implement the steps leading to effective collaboration
- Help plan and build relevant databases
- Facilitate proposals focusing on synthesis
- Use the training lab
- Implement lessons learned at NCEAS

Do we need NCEAS-like Centers?

- We are entering an era of collaboration and synthesis
- Time to focus, concentrate is difficult to carve out
- Massive amounts of data will become available
- Complex knowledge required for comprehensive solutions
- Similar centers evolving
- ...NCEAS has become an important element in the intellectual infrastructure of this and allied disciplines



Why does it work ?



- Provides opportunity scientists knew they wanted/needed
- Actually encourage synthesis, analysis – “here to do this”
- Give work, not money
- Proximity of scientists – especially from many disciplines
- Intellectual ambience stimulates creativity
- Neutral, distant location
- Good people, free time – front end management
- Lowers activation energy - logistic support, comprehensive computing and analytical assistance
- Internal social control
- Serendipity

Enhance

- **Construct and implement Plan B**
 - Incremental approach to Planning Grant goals
- **Encourage continued strategic planning beyond the end of the Planning Grant**
- **Reach out to decision makers to make Planning Grant goals achievable**
- **Stimulate discussions of new governance structures that put the coordinating back in the Coordinating Committee**

Summary

