

NISAC: Annual Report for May 2010 – April 2011

Today's Date: 10 May 2011

Committee: Network Information System Advisory Committee (NISAC)

Chair/Co-chairs: Will Pockman and John Porter (new IM co-chair)

Current committee composition and changes in 2010-11 (since May 2010):

Current membership: Karen Baker (CCE/PAL), Barbara Bond (AND), James Brunt (LNO), M. Gastil-Buhl (MCR), Paul Hanson (NTL), Chuck Hopkinson (PIE), Bill McDowell (LUQ), Will Pockman (Co-Chair, SEV), John Porter (co-chair, VCR), Mark Servilla (LNO), Kristen Vanderbilt (SEV), Bob Waide (LNO), Libe Washburn (SBC/MCR). A list of committee members and their terms can be found at:

<http://intranet2.lternet.edu/content/nisac> on the “members” tab.

Members departing since May 2010:

Information Managers: Wade Sheldon (former co-chair), Kristin Vanderbilt

Site Scientists: John Briggs

New members since May 2010:

Information Managers: M. Gastil Buhl, Linda Powell

Site Scientists: Paul Hanson (incoming co-chair), William McDowell

Planned Meeting Frequency: Quarterly

Number meetings since May 2010: 5 meetings

In-person: Albuquerque, Mar 29-30, 2011 (including joint meeting with IMExec),

VTC: Jun 3, 2010; Aug 20, 2010; Sep 17, 2010; Sep 28, 2010; Feb 11, 2011.

Plans for leadership transitions:

Will Pockman (SEV) will be leaving the committee in the fall of 2011.

Paul Hanson (NTL) will succeed him as science co-chair.

Activities / accomplishments since May 2010:

- May 2010: Presentation on NIS development process at 2010 SC (Bond, Servilla, Brunt)
- Sep 2010: Response to draft LTER network Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP)
- Sep 2010: Revised NISAC membership policy to include 6 site scientists, 4 information managers and 3 LNO representatives, all serving 3 year terms with a possible fourth year for committee co-chairs.
- Feb 2011: Evaluation of 2010 Network Information System (NIS) development milestones completed
- Mar 2011: Review and approval of 2011 Milestones for NIS development
- Mar 2011: Completed draft Terms of Reference document to clarify NISAC mission and activity
- All year: Provided ongoing feedback on NIS development issues.

Plans for 2011-12:

Strategic and Implementation Plan

NISAC will review the implementation table (table 5.6) for section 5 (Information Management) of the Strategic and Implementation Plan (SIP) with particular attention to the Actions associated with each Objective and the Status of these Actions. We have consulted with the LTER Information Management Committee regarding the activities at sites and progress on activities outlined in the SIP implementation tables. They have also given us some recommendations regarding updates to table 5.6 of the SIP, which we have endorsed with minor modifications.

Evaluation of status of SIP Information Management Implementation Table (5.6):

- Objective 1A, Action B. Sites have been using 2010 supplemental funds to prioritize EML compliance and data congruency for signature data. This work will continue, but without additional supplement funding during 2011.
- Objective 2A, Action C. Santa Barbara Coastal (SBC) is actively pursuing ontology development with external funding. Both stream chemistry and ClimDB synthesis efforts are building systems to standardize the description of observations (measurements).
- Objective 2B, Action A. A proposal for using Universal Resource Identifiers (URI) based on EML package IDs as persistent identifiers is being evaluated.
- Objective 4B, Action A. An early initiative of collaboration with the Experimental Forest and Range sites, the ClimDB/HydroDB data harvester and warehouse, includes 19 USFS Sites.
- Objective 4C, Action B. Inigo SanGil's work to cross-walk the LTER EML metadata standard into the NBII Biological Data Profile (BDP) serves as an excellent example of LTER communication and leadership. Action C: Examples of community-wide efforts to integrate data management systems include the emerging EML Best Practices document, the LTER Controlled Vocabulary, and the LTER Units Dictionary. A specific example of mentoring the development of integrated data management systems is the adoption of the IM system in use at Morea Coral Reef LTER by an LTREB project in the US Virgin Islands. The LTER practices and policies were adopted by the LTREB project with only nominal modifications.

Proposed Changes to the SIP Section 5:

- Objective 1B, All Actions. Change all dates to 2012 (correction), change all status to “planned, not funded” . Justification: Procedures for quality assurance are in place at many sites. There are plans to use a funded synthesis proposal (Grassland data synthesis, K. Suding) as a test synthesis project to examine QA/QC approaches and problems with acquired site data.
- Objective 2B, Actions B & C. Change dates to 2013 (correction). Justification: Dates are changed to match PASTA development plans.
- Objective 4C, Action C. Change status to underway (progress column). Justification: Another leadership example includes development of the Software Initiatives proposal and subsequent workshop involving the broader Information Technology/Cyberinfrastructure community; and change “by whom” to “LNO IT personnel and IMs” rather than “LTER Chair, Executive Board, Executive Director”. Justification: This appears to be an error in the original document.
- Objective 5B, Actions A & B. Change “by whom” to LNO IT personnel and site IMs”. Change status to “underway”. Justification: LNO’s work on identity management and restful web services illustrate progress a Tiger Team is established and a working group production workshop is funded on workflows.
- Objective 5D, Action A. Change status to underway (correction). Justification: The introduction and training of LTER scientists on videoteleconferencing and new use of tools such as EVO (<http://evo.caltech.edu/evoGate/>) illustrate work underway.

Other information pertinent to Committee activities:

NISAC met jointly with the LTER Information Management Committee Executive Committee (IMEXEC) in March of 2011. Topics of discussion included the relative roles and responsibilities of NISAC, IMC and IMEXEC.