

Minutes of the LTER Executive Board Meeting
October 17, 2011; 12:00 – 2:00 p.m. EDT via conference call

Meeting called to order at 12PM EDT by Chair Scott Collins; Members attending: Dan Childers, John Blair, Emory Boose, Nick Brokaw, Karen McGlathery, Emily Stanley, Hugh Ducklow, David Foster, Nichol Kaplan for John Moore, Steve Hamilton, Phil Robertson, Bob Waide

Unavailable:

Also attending from NSF: Saran Twombly and Matt Kane

1. Approval of the minutes from 1 August 2011 EB meeting – SLC

Approved

2. Report from NSF – Saran Twombly

Role of LTER Program Director – Goal for the NSF management team is to make sure the program succeeds. Needs to be fully successful to justify the investment. This is not meant to be punitive and argumentative. NSF needs up-to-date information to understand what LTER is up to, the research that is being done, and long-term goals.

30-year review – Report has been received and noted by the BIOAC. The AD will not provide a comment to the report, but the working group (WG) must draft a report of the 8 recommendations, and establish priorities. There are recommendations in the report that the WG does not agree with. The WG response will allow us to interpret the report in light of NSF's priorities. Uniquely defining what LTER does is a priority, defining research questions that cannot be answered without long-term data. Cross-site activities are emphasized. One recommendation relates to when it is appropriate to include Social Sciences research in LTER. There is a recommendation about education. The WG must make realistic prioritization for resources in LTER. Issues regarding the leadership role of LTER among the proposed network of networks – viewed as an opportunity, but this is a touchy subject being discussed by the WG. The concern is that such a leadership role may dilute what LTER does.

IM requirements for renewal proposals – Goals, deliverables and milestones. Actions toward full realization of the IM plan. Access to data and metadata fully across sites. Easily accessible and compared. Metadata on line. So this is towards full compliance with that plan. These recommendations come out of the recent review of renewal proposals and the 30-yr review. Not all data are available at sites. Sites should include a timeline, with milestones over which they will complete these various activities.

3. Organizing Committees and Chairs – SLC

Minisymposium update – Dan Childers (Chair). Still trying to get titles from the speakers. We will have an LTER-focused art show at NSF (3rd floor) during the symposium. The exhibit will stay up for longer than a month. Will focus on art from three sites. This is being organized with help from Gayle Pugh at NTL. Breakout rooms for the EB and NAB meetings have been secured.

Science Council update – Karen McGlathery (Chair). Not much happening until minisymposium firmed up. Will invite some of the same plenary speakers. Some challenges with regard to timing and organization of SC meeting. Hosts want the meeting at AND, which means flying in and out of Eugene. The meeting will have to be compressed into 2 full days (Wed Thurs, EB on Tues) with two evening sessions – one is the Lead PI dinner, the second is the Business meeting. This allows us to get people home on Friday.

ASM Update – Waide Updates: committee had its first teleconference with about ½ the members attending. The large committee has been divided into 7-8 subcommittees. Tentative theme is, “The Unique role of the LTER Network in the Anthropocene: comparisons across scales.” Plenary speakers will include invitees from other networks/centers, with a goal to increase collaboration and cooperation with other networks/centers. The ASM web page being developed will include a place to provide comments about how the meeting should be organized. LNO will work through the payer model for attendance.

4. Pilot Project Update – Waide, Kaplan IMs from SGS, CWT and BNZ are working on producing a “table” or database for the potential contractors to make it clear what tasks are going to be performed at each site. These documents should be done by 1 Nov. The IMs are creating an inventory of all LTER-related data at each site and describing the status of aspects of those data. The goal is to put data into a format that can be reported on, and is consistent across sites. Inventory items include status of data (priority), format of data (digital), metadata available (compliant?), QAQC status, special handling instructions, PI contact, estimation of time to bring data to expectations of NSF. What does “PASTA ready” mean? An: Accessible on line and documented such that it can be ingested into NIS. This does not address QAQC. Metadata congruency checker will address some QAQC, but this checker is not going to be ready for use in the pilot project. A list of quality standards that the contractor can use is being developed. This will be built into an automated metadata checker.

5. Education committee reports – Collins These issues will be discussed during the November EB meeting
staffing
request for slot on EB

6. Guidelines for what counts as an “LTER publication”? – Collins
Some sites have a big confusing mix of LTER pubs. LTER annual reports should just include pubs that acknowledge the LTER grant. Some feel this is too restrictive. NSF takes a more conservative approach than the LTER Network preferring quality over quantity. This is a reviewer issue – too few vs. padding the list with clearly unrelated publications. Publications need to at least mention LTER to be listed in an annual report. The EB will take up this discussion with NSF Officials at the next EB meeting in DC, including complex issues such as credit for data syntheses from outside the LTER Network that use LTER results.

7. Status of survey results – Waide Will follow-up with survey contractor. We need to prioritize the sub – analyses.

8. Call for working group proposals. Topics to emphasize? – Collins. We will continue to give preference to proposals that focus on a specific product, and on themes from the four prospectus documents, but without being too restrictive or proscriptive. Call will be issued by 1 Nov, deadline 10 Dec, 10 Jan review by EB, announcement by 17 Jan. \$100k or so is available for working groups. There will be a postdoc competition. Proposes will be encouraged to link working group themes to some activities at ASM. Preference given to follow-on meetings as part of ASM to provide some longevity on these activities.

9. Brief announcements – Collins, Waide, Others?

Arts & Humanities collaborations – Growing within the network check out www.ecologicalreflections.com

SRN with NCEAS – Working on the partnership. Planned conference call with Frank Davis at NCEAS

Earth-Sky proposal status – Declined, resubmission encouraged. Submitted to Informal Science Ed

LTER MAPS projects – working group being hosted by LNO to generate tools to get an image from each site that could be used in powerpoint presentations. Background maps are mostly from NA LTER sites. US States, relief maps, vegetation, what else should be included?