

## **Proposal title: Defining the Schoolyard LTER Program: Priorities, Infrastructure, and Communications**

### **Investigators**

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Karen Baker           | Palmer LTER, University of California Santa Barbara   |
| Stephanie Bestelmeyer | Jornada LTER, Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park           |
| Richard Boone         | Bonanza Creek LTER, University of Alaska Fairbanks    |
| Monica Elser          | CAP LTER, Arizona State University                    |
| Marty Green           | Kellogg Biological Station, Michigan State University |
| Marianne Krasny       | Hubbard Brook LTER, Cornell University                |
| Vicki O. Fabiyi       | Baltimore Ecosystem Study, University of Maryland     |
| Patricia Sprott       | LTER Network Office, University of New Mexico         |

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Schoolyard LTER (SYLTER) program through an annual supplement made available to LTER sites was initiated over three years ago. The program was further expanded when both the Baltimore and Central Arizona Phoenix urban LTERs joined the LTER network and were given the directive to include a significant education outreach component to their program. Over the past three years LTER sites with SYLTER programs have pursued various outreach models somewhat individually, with modest communication and little coordination among sites. Individual programs have included field trips, classroom presentations, outdoor laboratories, and curriculum development. Thus far there has been little communication and little coordination among SYLTER programs. After three years of experience SYLTER sites now are at the stage of seeking consensus on the program's goals, objectives, and national coordination.

Two SYLTER workshops were held at this summer's All Scientists Meeting in Snowbird, Utah: "Models for linking schoolyard ecology with LTER sites: What has worked and what hasn't" (M. Elser, S. Bestelmeyer, and R. Boone, Organizers), and "Learning from LTER data in K-12 classrooms" (M. Krasny and M. Elser, Organizers). Both workshops were well attended (each averaging roughly 35 participants), provided overviews of the various outreach models, and prompted focused and energetic discussions about the purpose of SYLTER and how it can flourish. Attendees, in addition to SYLTER program coordinators, included Dixon Butler (Chief Scientist of the GLOBE program, and also a presenter at one of the workshops), Sonia Ortega (Division of Graduate Education, NSF), Jim Gosz and Patricia Sprott (LTER Network Office), and Bruce Hayden (the former NSF program director responsible for starting the SYLTER program).

Several SYLTER needs were identified during these two workshops and afterwards in small discussion groups:

- Creation of a modular working structure for SYLTER, including communications among SYLTER sites
- SYLTER data management
- Definition of the features of the SYLTER web site

- Administration and oversight of SYLTER
- Evaluation of coordination potential with other national science education programs (e.g., NASA and the San Diego Supercomputer Facility)
- Completion and submission of a “white paper” to NSF (Education and Human Resources, and Division of Environmental Biology programs) describing the development of SYLTER, its accomplishments to date, and what it can offer as a model for science education
- Lobbying efforts to promote the program and provide funding that will allow a truly effective program nationally

The investigators on this proposal include those who organized the Snowbird SYLTER workshops, participated actively in discussions, and have previously shown strong commitment to SYLTER. Our group includes several SYLTER program coordinators, a classroom teacher, and one LTER data manager.

### **Project Description**

We propose to hold a SYLTER planning meeting from November 30-December 2 at the San Diego Supercomputer (SDSC) facility. The goals of the meeting are (1) create an improved structure for SYLTER, (2) further articulate SYLTER objectives (3) define the requirements for SYLTER data management, (4) examine the potential for linkages between SYLTER and the SDSC science education program, and (6) provide input on the content and use of the SYLTER web page. The participants will include the eight listed investigators, perhaps one additional classroom SYLTER teacher, and education staff (Rozeanne Steckler and Peter Artzburer) from the SDSC facility. Through the efforts of Karen Baker, the SDSC facility has agreed to provide a meeting room (with project facilities) at no cost for up to 25 people during the planned meeting dates.

Products from the meeting will include:

- Final version of the SYLTER “white paper” to be submitted to NSF
- Written recommendations on the structure and oversight of SYTLER, including formation of a SYLTER Executive Committee
- Report on data management needs and options for SYLTER, including potential collaborative arrangements with the SDSC facility
- Recommendations on the content and features of the SYTLER web page

The NSF white paper and written recommendations (to the LTER Network Office and Executive Committee) will be submitted within 30 days of our meeting.

**Budget (based on 9 workshop participants)**

|                       |                 |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Meeting Rooms (SDSC)  | 0               |
| Ground transportation | \$540           |
| Air transportation    | \$5400          |
| Hotel                 | \$2980          |
| Food                  | \$1080          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>          | <b>\$10,000</b> |

**Budget Justification**

Meeting rooms: Karen Baker (PAL) has secured the SDSC meeting room at no cost.

Ground transportation: The amount assumes either that people will share a rental car or will travel by shuttle.

Air transportation: The amount allows for up to \$600 for each participant.

Hotel: The amount is based on the cost of 2-bedroom facility at \$149/night for four nights and assumes that two people will room together.

Food: Assumes a per diem of \$40 for each participant.