

Engaging Arts and Humanities in LTER Programs – A Report of Progress into 2013

The LNO funded workshop with the title Engaging Arts and Humanities in Future Scenarios Work (award year: 2010) was held at Andrews Forest LTER May 6-8, 2011. This gathering greatly accelerated arts-humanities-science collaborations generally across at least half of the LTER sites and initiated network-scale activities for the first time. Since then many site programs have blossomed, some have expanded their scope beyond LTER (to other topics and funding sources), and programs to exhibit and critically discuss this work have been presented.

On-line Ecological Reflections: an important outcome of the workshop has been the www.ecologicalreflections.com webpage to publically share profiles of ca. 20 sites/programs that engage arts and humanities. Many are LTER sites, but sites more rooted in the arts, humanities, and/or education are also represented. The common theme is attention to place, the long view, and our place in the natural world. We have been told that this information about many other sites doing this work in very different ways has facilitated other sites beginning this work – the validation of strong interest and outcomes elsewhere, blueprints for many ways of doing this work, and the inspiration of vigorous programs and robust products. We frequently learn of new start-up programs.

Art exhibits, symposia, workshop concerning Ecological Reflections arts-humanities-science collaboration – activities that involve multiple LTER sites:

- NSF2012. Art works and creative writing from Bonanza Creek (BNZ), Harvard Forest (HFR), and North Temperate Lakes (NTL) LTER sites were displayed at NSF March-June 2012. The opening corresponded with the annual LTER Mini-Symposium hosted by NSF.
- ESA2012. A sampling of the NSF2012 collection of art pieces (photographs, sculpture, fiber arts, poetry) continued on to the Ecological Society of America (ESA) meeting in August in Portland, OR, where it was viewed by over 400 meeting attendees over 4 days.
- Organized Oral Session at ESA. A half-day Organized Oral Session with 10 speakers was presented at ESA with a majority of presentations coming from the Ecological Reflections program. Presenters included artists, a poet, an LTER PI, and other scientists; up to 90 people were in attendance during the session.
- Workshop at ESA. We conducted a noon-hour formal ESA workshop on how to engage arts and humanities in environmental science programs. Approximately three dozen attendees took part in spirited discussions and drafted plans for programs at their own sites.
- Workshop at the 2012 LTER All-Scientists Meeting (ASM) in Estes Park CO. A half-day workshop at ASM gave an opportunity to share progress, challenges, inspiration among ca. 30 participants from quite a few sites plus NSF. See ASM workshop report. This was the third consecutive ASM with an arts/humanities workshop.
- Art/writing exhibit at 2012 LTER ASM. A subset of the art exhibited at NSF2012 and ESA2012 was displayed at ASM, sparking quite a bit of discussion and interest in developing new programs.
- NSF2013 exhibit. A second exhibit of art and writing will be displayed at NSF Feb 28-March 1, 2013, with works of 39 artists and writers from 11 LTER sites.

In addition to the above network-scale efforts, many individual sites furthered their own work. Some work was reported in public outlets, such as a *High Country News* story about art student participation in the REU program at SEV. Several of the better established site programs have reached into new

thematic and funding arenas; for example, the Joint Fire Science Program (multi-agency federal program supporting research on wildland fire) funded public outreach activities using art at BNZ (The Art of Fire program, <http://www.frames.gov/partner-sites/afsc/projects/art-of-fire/#.USGYBo5wleA>) and work on the place of written expression in dealing with wildland fire issues through the AND program (Words on Fire). The Ecological Reflections program has also contributed to expansion of such collaborative work in other (often overlapping) networks of long-term research properties, such as the US Forest Service's Experimental Forests and Ranges and the Organization of Biological Field Stations sites.

These Ecological Reflections network activities have been accomplished by a team composed of Terry Daulton (artist and environmental educator associated with NTL), Clarisse Hart (Outreach Specialist, Harvard, HFR), Mary Beth Leigh (Assoc. Prof. Microbiology and dancer, Univ. of Alaska-Fairbanks, BNZ), and Fred Swanson (geologist (retired), US Forest Service, AND). These sites were given supplemental funding to their respective LTER site grants several years ago, which greatly advanced the capacity and interest levels at these sites. Support of the ecologicalreflections.com webpage has been donated by the AND site through support of the US Forest Service and a private endowment to the Spring Creek Project for Ideas, Nature, and the Written Word in the School of Religion, Philosophy, and History at Oregon State University.

Critical next steps are to find funding to support both site and network activities.

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