

ILTER Executive Board meeting notes

February 28, 2017

Approved March 27, 2017

Attending (please make any needed edits and signify approval by adding initials before your name)

Peter Groffman (chair)
SLJ- Sherri Johnson-AND
Anne Giblin-PIE
Steve Pennings-GCE
Eric Seabloom-CDR
Kari O'Connell-EOC rep
Wade Sheldon (IMC-rep)
Frank Davis (NCO)
Marty Downs (NCO)

Not attending: Michael Gooseff-MCM, Michelle Mack/Roger Ruess-BNZ, Dan Reed-SBC, Sally Holbrook-MCR, Charles Driscoll-HBR

- 1. January/February meeting notes (2/2/2017) approved**
- 2. Science Council meeting**

The board continued a discussion from the early February meeting on the best ways to frame and motivate a discussion of the nature of the LTER network at the May Science Council meeting. What do we do well as a network? How can we encourage more of that and articulate the value of the network?

Quick logistical item #1: do we know who the second person is from each site?

NCO will request that PI's designate someone.

Quick logistical item #2: The EB meeting will begin at 1:30 on Tuesday and will run into/through and possibly after dinner. This may allow some people to travel to Hubbard Brook on that day.

Quick logistical item #3: Be sure to include Science Council Business Meeting. The new sites will be welcome to attend this meeting. The Site PI meeting on Friday will have more of a focus on welcome and orientation for the new sites. We need to encourage the site PIs to think about things the new sites need to consider.

NCO will reach out to new sites and invite them to come and ask about what they would like to hear from current PIs.

Brief discussion of how site overviews might be structured. Will we provide a template? Are we asking presenters to answer specific questions? (not resolved)

Steering Committee is considering inviting a couple of additional cross-site (or even outside the network) presentations on the disturbance theme as mini-keynotes to inspire synthesis discussion. One potential speaker, Eric Sokol, has been identified and they are requesting additional suggestions. If we are aiming to produce a paper addressing “Insights about ecological disturbance from the LTER Network” it will be important to set the stage for this very clearly right at the start. An outside speaker might be helpful for that.

On the other hand, we have avoided inviting outside speakers in the past because this takes up a lot of time. There is also concern about losing the energy from the site talks.

Suggestions:

- Prime the process with a request to site PIs for a second person willing to (interested in) lead a breakout group.
- If ideas come up during the meeting -- develop own synthesis group moving forward.
- Last year, steering committee polled sites several times about possible topics.
- Previous year, speakers were asked to include topic suggestions in their slide templates
- Site topic lead may be able to bring data

3. Discussion about the nature/value of our network

In light of occasionally contradictory messages from NSF, it seems especially important for us to grapple with our own vision of the value of the LTER Network, including (as a starting point) such topics as the geographic distribution of LTER sites and the role of cross-site synthesis.

The time slot on Thursday afternoon from about 4:15 pm to dinner would provide an opportunity for discussion. How can we launch it in a way that will get us somewhere useful?

- General agreement that such a discussion would be valuable
- Maybe a speaker could (briefly) present some highlights of past cross-sites research? Ecotrends network?
- How do we categorize the things that have been most impactful? How do the sites handle cross site research?
- KO offered that they do social network analysis in her shop -- may be able to help with that.
- Reminder of 2010 paper in Professional Biologist on the Evolution of Collaboration in the LTER Network:
https://www.fs.fed.us/pnw/pubs/journals/pnw_2011_johnson002.pdf
- And another result of cross-site collaboration:
<http://andrewsforest.oregonstate.edu/pubs/pdf/pub4725.pdf>
- Start with a list of cross-site papers?

- Many cross-site efforts are not just research. They also involve IMs and Education and Outreach structures that made them work
- What has made past synthesis efforts successful? Can we characterize the most “successful” efforts in some way?
- We’ve done lots of things as a network - not just scientific synthesis. What are the cross-site network level activities that we want to pursue?
- Many successful examples of cross-site work in education -- several big grants have been successful.
- It’s important to not be so insular - and define LTER influence more broadly.
- LTER data sets may only be 10% of the data -- but often LTER is the best data.
- Do we want to discuss spawned networks -- NutNet, GLEON? LTER has produced people who are interested in synthetic questions, tapping into larger data sets.
- Have done synthesis (post-hoc). Have had trouble with cross-site designed experiments. Is there a way for us to do cross-site science going forward? One well-funded, successful example: LYNX
- What is the purpose of this discussion? We need to be very clear about the purpose and then do some homework ahead to have an effective discussion.
- This is a place we could be clever -- macrosystems is envisioned as a way to use NEON data, but NEON doesn’t have any research questions. LTER does.
- Should include research, education and IM.
- **Sherri Johnson offered to help organize this discussion (PG too) at the SC meeting (potentially in place of outside speakers)**

NEON-LTER Meeting

Scheduled for March 28-31 at NCO in Santa Barbara

The workshop will explore 4 topics:

1. How does LTER science provide geographic context for NEON science?
2. 5 core areas -- How will NEON help LTER achieve its goals for the core areas?
3. Conceptual models - should NEON sites or NEON network have conceptual models?
4. Predictive models and prediction in general.

Ultimately -- produce documents laying out here’s what NEON is; here’s what LTER is; here’s what they each do best and how they can complement each other.

Discussion reflected thoughts about ways to appeal to NSF’s interest in flashy new things while being true to the strengths of the Network. Do we need to present more streaming data? More large scale experiments? More distributed ecological experiments?

Committee Structure

MD will circulate proposal for discussion at March meeting, aiming for bylaws revisions to be ready by May Science Council meeting

IM/EDI:

Data policy guidelines are nearly ready to circulate. Will circulate to EB and plan to discuss at March meeting, aiming for Science Council approval in May.