

Meeting Notes - LTER Executive Board

January 19, 2018

Approved at the LTER Executive Board Meeting March 6, 2018

Attending:

Name	Present	Absent
Peter Groffman (chair)	x	
David Foster (HFR)	x	
Michael Gooseff (MCM)		x
Sally Holbrook (MCR)	x	
Steve Pennings-GCE	x	
Dan Reed (SBC)	x	
Michelle Mack/Roger Ruess (BNZ)		x
Eric Seabloom/Sarah Hobbie (CDR)	x	
Katie Suding (NWT)	x	
Jess Zimmerman (LUQ)	x	
Kari O'Connell (EOC-rep)	x	
Wade Sheldon (IMC-rep)	x	
Frank Davis (NCO)	x	
Marty Downs (NCO)	x	
Corinna Gries (EDI)	x	

December meeting minutes: approved with proposed changes accepted

Current Discussion Items

NCO Review at NSF

The Network Communications Office just returned from a mid-term reverse site visit at NSF. The NCO prepared a formal self-assessment, which is available on the Executive Board google site for the EB to review. At some point soon, the NCO would like to schedule a discussion with the EB to assess their perceptions of progress to date. While the NCO answers directly to NSF, it is important to hear candidly and directly from the EB/LTER community.

NSF program officers treated the review in a relatively formal way, as they would a site review. Frank Davis and Marty Downs presented in-person, with Matt Jones, Mark Schildhauer, Jenn Caselle, and Sam Norlin on videoconference.

The review consisted of a brief presentation on each of the program areas, followed by discussion of each area: communications, synthesis, governance, education, training. The reception appeared to be positive and the formal review was deemed completed on Wednesday night. Thursday morning presented an opportunity to speak with Acting Division Director in the Division of Environmental Biology (DEB) Alan Tessier and Acting Deputy Division Director Matt Kane.

Although there was no firm information about a renewal process for the NCO, there are some important changes in leadership. Lou Kaplan is rotating out as the program officer for the LTER NCO. John Schade will be the new NCO program officer. John Schade, Dave Garrison, and Doug Levy will remain the primary connections for the LTER program.

There was quite a bit of discussion on the upcoming decadal review. They would like to see LTER really present a coordinated view of how long-term research is advancing ecological theory, but they do not yet have a clear statement of how the review process will go.

LTER Network Website

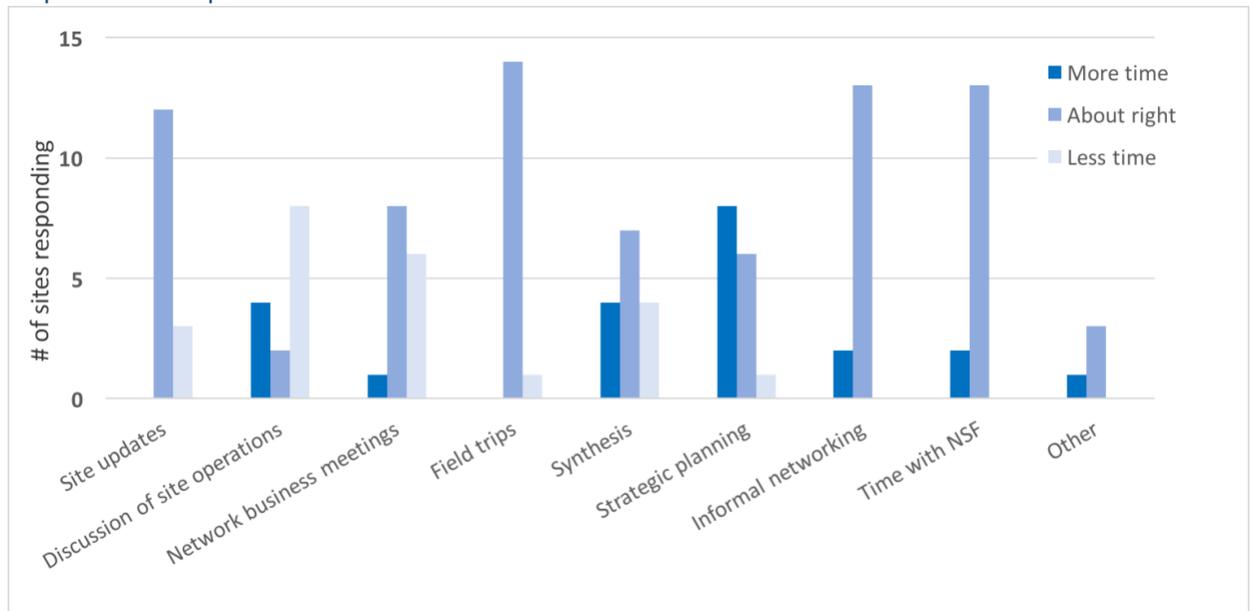
The LTER Network website has been launched. It includes a scaled-back and reorganized document archive, up-to-date listings of committee membership, working group descriptions, photo galleries, table of links to site-level education activities, Network events calendar, and rotating research stories.

An updated bibliography is still in process, as is an experiments database.

Science Council 2018

Date: May 15-18 at North Temperate Lakes LTER
 Theme will be organic matter.

The NCO surveyed PIs regarding where they would like to spend more time. Results from 15 respondents are presented below:



An organizing committee can synthesize the information and make specific plans. Good options would be people who do organic matter research.

The question came up of whether there should be some time for the PI's to get together that doesn't include program officers. There was a strong sentiment that PIs have a lot to learn from each other and would benefit from sharing information about how they handle specific situations.

Suggestions:

- Organize a PI dinner for the night of the Executive Board Meeting.
- Make the role of the second site representative more explicit. At least some of these participants should expect to do some of the heavy lifting on synthesis. Invite some second representatives with an eye to developing new site leadership and some with an eye to synthesis that might come out of the meeting.
- The organizing committee should also exercise some leadership on the science products.

Affiliate sites? Question from Bradford Wilcox at Texas A&M

Background: Brad Wilcox, from Texas A&M, proposed an LTER site as part of the 2017 new site competition. Although NSF declined to fund them, they have been able to obtain substantial long-term funding through their university. They think it would be beneficial to belong to the Network (attend meetings, learn about data protocols, etc.)

Discussion:

- Is a University really funding this at a sustainable level? It takes internal resources of about \$600K/year.
- We should try to understand what they want. Do they want to come to the Science Council Meeting, All-Scientists Meeting, participate in synthesis, what else?
- Would we want them to contribute data to the LTER data repository? At what level are they supporting their data management?
- Lots of sites have long term funding. How do we want to involve sites that aren't LTER sites? If we open the door, there will be many sites with different levels of funding and different willingness to meet our mandates.
- What about International LTER sites? None of them are funded as well as we are in the US.
- Maybe we could establish different levels of affiliation that would meet different standards.
- How does NSF feel about it? Should we reach out to NSF? Would they be unhappy with some type of membership. Frank Davis has contacted NSF and will hear from them soon.