

LTERR Executive Board Meeting Notes

January 22, 2020

Join from PC, Mac, Linux, iOS or Android

Additional ways of connecting:

Dial: +1 408 638 0968 (US Toll) or +1 646 558 8656 (US Toll)

Meeting ID: 706 470 284

International numbers available:

<https://ucsb.zoom.us/j/706470284>

The LTER Executive Board meets monthly. Agendas and minutes for current members are available on the [team google drive](#).

See the [Executive Board Committee page](#) for current membership and approved minutes of past meetings.

Attending:

Name	Present	Absent	Minutes approved
Diane McKnight (chair)		x	
Ken Dunton (BLE)	x		
Nick Haddad (KBS)	x		
Jesse Nippert (KNZ)	x		
Oscar Schofield (PAL)		x	
Heidi Sosik (NES)	x		
Emily Stanley (NTL)		x	
Katie Suding (NWT)	x		
Jonathan Thompson (HFR)	x		
Jess Zimmerman (LUQ)	x		
Annette Brickley (EOC-rep)	x		
Dan Bahauddin (IMC-rep)	x		
Frank Davis (NCO)	x		
Marty Downs (NCO)	x		
Corinna Gries (EDI)	x		

December Agenda/Notes

Informational Updates:

- Site review materials are being shared on google drive (for PIs/IMs and Education reps)
- 5 sites have named diversity reps (most at co-PI level) - apologies for pre-empting EB review of request.
- Nothing new from NSF on decadal review
- Synthesis competition outcome. 3 proposals funded out of 13 received. Announcement will be out later this week, with the newsletter. Summaries here::

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1h56y704iv_aNgL9woSkoyFBOfexZH58uysV2lekkTiU

- **Ecological Metagenome-derived Reference Genomes and Traits (EMERGENT)**
PI's: Jeff Blanchard (UMass Amherst/HFR), Janet Jansson (PNNL), Jorge Rodrigues (UC Davis), Lee Stanish (NEON), Margaret O'Brien (UCSB/EDI/SBC), Jason McDermott (PNNL)
- **A global synthesis of multi-year drought effects on terrestrial ecosystems**
PIs: Kate Wilkins (CSU), Osvaldo Sala (ASU/JRN), Peter Wilfahrt (University of Bayreuth), Laureano Gherardi (ASU/JRN), Melinda Smith (CSU/KNZ)
- **From poles to tropics: A multi-biome synthesis investigating the controls on river Si exports**
PIs: Joanna Carey (Babson College) and KathiJo Jankowski (USGS)

DISCUSSION TOPICS

1) Merging EDI/LTER data portals (5 min)

By now you should have had a chance to discuss with your site IM's Corinna's proposal that EDI eliminate the LTER-only data portal. Can we either confirm that we are OK with this approach or make specific, actionable requests for adjustments?

There were initially some minor concerns that have been addressed. The Executive Board agrees that the benefits outweigh any concerns. EDI should move ahead.

2) NEON MoU? (20 min)

The major discussion topic will be: what would we want /how would we benefit from a NEON MOU (or not)? Diane has recused herself from this discussion; Battelle has named a new chief scientist for NEON (Paula Mabee), who won't start until Feb, I think -- but it's still worth having the conversation. To inform the conversation, I've attached a DRAFT MoU provided by Hank Loescher (head of strategic partnerships for NEON). **Please do not distribute further and note that it is only a draft -- a starting point for conversation.** I've also included below links to a few key NSF documents that may inform the discussion.

NEON Dear Colleague Letter: <https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2019/nsf19080/nsf19080.jsp>

NEON Operations Solicitation: <https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2020/nsf20530/nsf20530.pdf>

Discussion:

- The two networks have different structures. LTER is structured around sites; NEON is structured around datastreams. We should identify ways to bridge those differences. Possibly identify site liaisons? That's a good conversation to have with the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STEAC).
- It seems to some that the science is going to bypass the networks. Biological infrastructure proposals are being submitted that involve pieces from both networks without engaging the network offices/structures. MoU probably won't much factor into how the science actually works.

- What the MoU does is recognize that the networks are happening and that we want to be engaged.
- Frank Davis is on the STEAC, but Jonathan Thompson was identified as the LTER-NEON liaison. NEON isn't interested in having two LTER representatives on the STEAC. Frank, Michael Dietze (NEON Steac co-chair), Jonathan and Diane McKnight will work out a solution.
- On the issue of harmonized data products, EDI is already working with NEON on some harmonized data products, without an MoU. Success has been dependent on individual scientists' interests, so it's not clear whether there will be as much cooperation on future harmonization efforts. It's not clear whether an MoU would help.
- Does the committee want more specific tasks or procedures to pin down the relationship with NEON?
- Might this be a model for other similar kinds of relationships we may want to enter into? For example, there is a new Marine Biodiversity Observation Network (MBON) that has been established overlapping with the Northeast Shelf site. They have overlapping scientific and data goals. Should we look for common language that will work across multiple MoUs?
- What difference does the MoU make to Battelle? We can understand how it might benefit Batelle, but how does it benefit LTER?
- Draft MoU doesn't spell out the responsibilities and credit assigned to each party. Maybe we don't want to be that specific.
- With respect to aligning data practices, the message from NEON has been consistent. NEON does what NEON does. So any harmonization needs to accommodate their existing practices.
- Next steps: Frank Davis will talk to Hank Loescher and try to connect with Paula Mabee for answers to these key questions:
 1. What can NEON do with an MoU that they can't do without?
 2. Do they foresee particular benefits to LTER -- we can access the data streams and the assignable assets without an MoU and an MoU involves some time and effort -- what makes it worth going through the process?
 3. Can we identify a process (possibly site science liaisons?) to bridge LTER's site-based structure with NEON's datastream-based structure?
 4. Do we want to be more specific about other kinds of processes for encouraging interaction?
 5. Really EDI is the organization for data harmonization. Either they should be part of this MoU or NEON should have a separate one with them.

3) Science Council 2020 (20 min)

The 2020 Science Council Meeting is set for May 5-7 in Tempe AZ (thanks CAP). But we haven't yet decided whether we want or need an all-day or a half-day EB meeting beforehand. Practice on this has varied over the past few years -- from all day (which can get duplicative with the formal science council meeting) to half-day, to none at all (with any necessary EB decisions handled at the April online meeting). We also don't have a subcommittee, theme, or format set for the 2020 meeting.

LNO will handle logistics with CAP, but the theme and science content are really EB decisions.

Between site updates, field trips, and business meetings, we generally have about 6 hours of time for breakouts and large group discussion. LPIs need to begin identifying which #2 PIs they want to invite -- and that will depend to some degree on the meeting theme.

I've begun brainstorming some potential topics, but need feedback from the committee on their relevance and appeal as well as any additional ideas:

- Potential (and favored approaches/direction) for NEON (and possibly CZ) collaboration
- Evolution (science theme) - probably not alone -- more likely as one of a handful of science themes with broad appeal. What would be the others?
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (operational theme)
- What can marine and terrestrial sites learn from each other?
- What kinds of big science questions are informed by marine and coastal and terrestrial perspectives.

Discussion:

- Can we get the review team there? If so, how would we structure the meeting for maximum impact.
- We could use the whole meeting to address some key management issues, such as diversity and inclusion -- especially with the new committee forming up. We could ask the PIs to invite the new site reps.
- Other operational topics: How are sites integrating schoolyard LTER programs beyond our own sites?
- The 40 year report was pretty retrospective; maybe we could develop a process for making those meetings more prospective. Each site could submit ideas for where their site is going and look for synergy before the meeting.
- We've heard several times now about the importance of integrating an evolutionary perspective. Would enough sites have something to contribute to an evolutionary theme?
- When we do our synthesis across sites -- we are constrained by decisions we made 30 years ago -- maybe this would be the time to start coordinating measurements across the sites. How they do it, how they might do it.

Next steps:

Marty will email site PIs with request for a forward-looking talk and identify a #2 aligned with that work.

To Do's:

Frank will talk to Hank and try to connect with Paula Mabee

Key questions:

6. What can NEON do with an MoU that they can't do without? (ie. why do they want one)
7. Is there some benefit to LTER -- we can access the data streams and the assignable assets without an MoU -- what makes it worth going through the process?
8. Can we identify a process (site science liaisons?) to bridge LTER's site-based structure with NEON's datastream-based structure?
9. Do we want to be more specific about other kinds of processes for encouraging interaction?

10. Really EDI is the organization for data harmonization. Either they should be part of this MoU or NEON should have a separate one with them -- if they think they need one.

Marty will generate an email to PIs about Science Council.

Focus is: what's next?

Choose 1 compelling, forward-looking project from your site -- bring a person relevant to that theme. Focus your presentation on that theme. Let us know what it is.

Breakouts will be structured around themes that emerge from those submissions.

Topics for breakout groups to consider:

- How could we align measurements to capitalize on these themes?

Running List of future discussion topics:

- Science Council priorities/NEON MOU (January)
- NEON/LTER MoU (February?)
- Broader long term research community (lter)
- PI webinars "community of practice"
- Investigator-IM integration
- Education strategic planning
- 40th anniversary activities
- NSF symposium (Fall 2020 earliest)
- Should we reconsider an external advisory council?