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Coordinating Committee Meeting, Seattle, Washington, April, 1991

Long Term Ecological Research Network

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LTER Coordinating Committee Meeting Minutes
4/21/91 • Seattle • Washington

IN ATTENDANCE:

LTER site representatives: Linda Blum (VCR), Liz Blood (NIN), Emery Boose (HFR), William Bowman (NWT), Carl Bowser (NTL), Nel Caine (NWT), Tim Fahey, (HBR), David Foster (HFR), Jerry Franklin (NET/AND), James Frew (PAL), James Gosz (SEV), David Greenland (NWT), David Grigal (CDR), David Hartnett (KNZ), Bruce Hayden (VCR), John Hobbie (ARC), Bill Lauenroth (DPR), John Magnuson (NTL), Judy Meyer (CWT), Kurt Pregitzer (KBS), Langdon Quetin (PAL), Phil Robertson (KBS), Bill Schlesinger (JRN), Fred Sklar (NIN), Phil Sollins (AND), Wayne Swank (CWT), Fred Swanson (AND), Keith Van Cleave (BNZ), John Vernberg (NIN), Les Viereck (BNZ), Robert Waide (LUQ), James Welsh (CPR), Robert Woodmansee (CPR)

LMER site representatives: James Hollibaugh (Tomales Bay), David Jay (Columbia River Estuary), Michael Kemp (Chesapeake Bay), Charles Simenstad (Columbia River Estuary), Steve Smith (Tomales Bay), Ivan Valiela (Waquoit Bay)

NSF representatives: Caroline Bledsoe, James Schindler

Agency representatives/Guests/Experts (addresses available from the Network Office: Dale Bruns (DOE Parknet), Frederic Fournier (SCOPE/UNESCO, France), Robert Naiman (University of Washington Center for Streamside Studies), Steve Paulsen (EPA EMAP, Corvallis), Dave Peterson (National Park Service), Stephen Rawlins (US Department of Agriculture), Chuck Slaughter (USDA Forest Service, Alaska), Dan Sulzbach (San Diego SUPER Computing Center), John Turk (USGS WEBB Program). Each gave a brief presentation.

Network Office: Lynne Hendrix, Stephanie Martin, Rudolf Nottrott, John Vande Castle, Adrienne Whitener

International meetings:

Future IGBP meetings. It was suggested that LTER have official representation at the meeting in Rio as well as the Stockholm meeting.

Regional Scale - June 1991 Focus 2 meeting in Norway. Jerry received the invitation; it was suggested that Bruce Milne or John Vande Castle attend to represent LTER.

IGBP GCTE Meeting, UK (Bob Woodmansee). Few researchers in IGBP appear to be interested in collaboration. No funding commitments have been secured for global change research within IGBP. Perhaps much of the meeting would have been better if more participation were possible (travel was restricted due to the Gulf war). Future meetings in Norway and Brazil may involve more LTER participation. In general, many of the global change initiatives are being run by agencies rather than scientists, more by the established physical studies than biologically related programs. (A copy of the proceedings will be sent to PI's following the meeting.)

Executive Committee Election

Bill Lauenroth and John Vernberg, who had been asked by the LTER/EXEC to act as Nominating Committee for the Executive Committee election, presented a slate of candidates drawn from nominations from the sites prior to the meeting. The election was held to replace John Magnuson, whose three-year term has expired. Nominees were: Jim Gosz, Bill Schlesinger, Tim Seastedt and Bob Waide. Jim Gosz was elected as the new Executive Committee member; Tim Seastedt was elected alternate. (The alternate attends Executive Committee meetings in place of any regular member who is unable to attend.)

Strategic Plan Adoption

Revised summaries of the Long-Range Strategic Plan for LTER (developed originally in 1989 at Harvard Forest) were distributed and, when a vote was taken, the plan was approved unanimously. One site requested that item 1 page 3 of the synopsis read: "Sites need to identify what data and core data sets are available, and to document data sets and their use." rather than "document these." Copies of the final document will be sent to the sites.

Climate Committee

(David Greenland) The Climate Committee is developing a standard climate graph for the revised site description "bluebook" which will show comparisons across the Network. David Greenland asked for data from BNZ, ARC, HFR, HBR, KBS, LUQ, VCR, SEV, and PAL sites for which he did not yet have the necessary data and all agreed to get it to him within 15 days of the meeting. Data is needed for the 30-year period 1951-1980, including maximum field capacity, monthly maximum and minimum temperature, and monthly precipitation. If not available specifically for the site, data should be obtained from the nearest weather station. Greenland also noted that the final chapter from the Climate Monograph, recently published in cooperation with the USFS Southeastern Experiment Forest Station, has been accepted by the Bulletin of the Ecological Society of America, and will be available from the Network Office after June 1991.

Technological Working Group (GIS)

(David Foster) A draft report based on a survey conducted by Emery Boose has been sent to the sites and will be published at the Network Office as part of the proposed LTER publication series. The report provides the current status and results of the NSF tech supplements and makes recommendations for future programs and projects. Following the meeting, the draft report will also be sent to the site PI's via electronic mail. It should be noted that the report is a snapshot which is already outdated, and that it will be difficult to differentiate funds from technical supplements from other sources, LTER site funding or non-LTER funding.

Global Change Book

(Jim Gosz and Caroline Bledsoe, editors) Gosz reported that Island Press has expressed interest if the site perspectives and capabilities papers can be reduced by half. An outline has been completed and a "model paper" identified (CPR's comes closest in its present form. As well as being around the right length and format, it includes possible questions/topics for future research.) It was suggested and agreed that the Antarctic site and the four Land-Margin Ecosystem Research (LMER) Program sites should be included. A poll of site representatives was taken and all agreed to cooperate in providing revised/updated papers.

Expanded Site Directory/"Blue Book"

(Keith Van Cleve) All descriptions now on disk at the Network Office. Stephanie had prepared a sample chapter of the revised "Blue Book" format. Group decided that the cover should carry the new logo (currently being developed) and remain blue, but that the size should be changed to 8 1/2" x 11". The site map illustrations created for each site for use in the newsletter will be used, plus two black and white photos, one showing geographic location, the other some area of current research. At the end of each site description will be a listing of site investigators, latitude & longitude, contact person, phone, fax and email addresses. Each will also include an author (s) credit line. Also included will be the mean monthly temperature and precipitation record for climate comparison. Stephanie will aim to get a chapter draft out to each site by June 3. The final product is slated for completion by October, 1991.

Expanded LTER Slide Set

(Caroline Bledsoe) Most slides collected from the sites are now at the Network Office. In total, there are about 164 slides depicting core areas of research. A listing of the slides will be provided via electronic mail once the final selection is completed. In a poll taken at the meeting, nine sites indicated they want the complete set. NET will provide duplication cost information and bill those sites.

LTERR Publications Series

(Stephanie Martin) LTER Publications will be developed to have a recognizable, "standardized" look, and will be numbered in a series, picking up significant past publications. This plan resulted from LTER/EXEC discussions with NSF about producing LTER publications at the Network Office with additional support from NSF. Supplemental funds have been requested for this activity. LTER publications may also be placed on-line via the LTERNET server. Jim Schindler noted that NSF can make particular use of LTER publications for future planning of research projects, especially those in the global change arena.

LTERR Visibility

Bill Schlesinger (JRN) suggested that, since so many LTER researchers already give presentations on LTER, an LTER speaker should be listed with Sigma Xi, and an LTER-based lecture series should be developed to increase the Network's visibility in the science community. Sites will be polled by e-mail to see who would be interested/available. The group also discussed the need to develop a higher LTER profile and presence at the next ESA meeting. ~~Working group, to recommend an action plan within four to six weeks: Fred Swanson, Jim Gosz, Bill Schlesinger, Bill Lauenroth, Carolyn Bledsoe, Bruce Hayden and John Magnuson (chair).~~

LTERR Synthesis

John Hobbie gave a brief presentation addressing the need for LTER to implement syntheses. In the active discussion that followed, Bill Schlesinger commented that the earth system science community is expecting this of LTER now. James Schindler noted that synthesis proposals are difficult to fund, that generally they don't make their case well and they require a higher level of understanding. However, he also noted that the system was ready for proposals which address solutions.

A roll call revealed that at least eight to nine sites are already doing some synthesis. Bob Waide proposed that LTER needs to set collective priorities in this area and shouldn't be put off by a lack of support from NSF. John Magnuson proposed that this topic be put on the agenda for the next LTER/CC to explore vehicles to support synthesis proposals.

Remote Sensing Acquisitions

John Vande Castle gave an overview of the status of site acquisitions. Most scenes should be acquired by the end of the year, barring unsuccessful passes that have to be repeated. He suggested that a remote sensing working group might be needed to develop a synthesis approach to acquiring common acquisitions for the Network in future.

Data Management

(John Vande Castle and Rudolf Nottrott, for Susan Stafford) Bill Michener (NIN) has submitted a proposal to NSF for support of a symposium to develop a distributed climate database for LTER, in collaboration with the Climate Committee. Since the All Scientists Meeting, the site data policy (proprietary rights) document has been distributed to the sites. The "Improving Natural Resource Management Through Monitoring" workshop, originally scheduled for May 6-8 at Oregon State University LaSells Stewart Center, has been postponed indefinitely. The annual Data Managers' meeting is scheduled for August 1-3, preceding the ESA meeting in San Antonio, Texas.

Balanced Programming

Liz Blood and John Vernberg (NIN) urged that information provided to the sites about developing programs and projects involving aquatic systems not be overshadowed by that about terrestrial systems. Jim Schindler (NSF) noted in response that BSR can't support initiatives that aren't proposed from the sites, that the sites have a responsibility to propose directions for research.

Upcoming LTER/CC Meetings

Next meeting of LTER/CC is Trout Lake, Wisconsin, (tentatively) Feb 21-24, 1992. The fall '92 LTER/CC will be in Alaska, August 1-9, with field trips to both the Bonanza and Arctic sites. Since the 1992 ESA meeting in Hawaii is scheduled for Aug 9-13, it was suggested that the Network Office explore the possibility of obtaining special "triangle fares" to cut down on the cost of attending both meetings. The Alaska meeting will require about nine days and costs will likely double those of the average LTER/CC meeting. Nevertheless, the importance of visiting all sites was stressed by several site representatives and, when a poll was taken, the meeting plan was unanimously approved. Keith Van Cleve (BNZ) noted that reservations for the Alaska meeting should be made this July, since the area is a peak tourist destination in August. It was also agreed that the meeting will be a "fixed program" in which all representatives agree to follow a "packaged tour." In other words, those who attend will be expected to go on the field trips as well as the meeting. The next LTER/EXEC meeting will be October 21 in Washington, D.C., with a proposed field trip to the Virginia Coast Reserve following.

1993 All Scientists Meeting

The next All Scientists Meeting will be held in 1993. Organization Committee: John Vande Castle (chair), Tim Fahey, David Hartnett, Nel Caine and Carl Bowser.

Renewal Review Comments

PI's from sites recently reviewed for renewal funding will share review comments within LTER, both to help the sites who will next be up for review and to get feedback. Copies will be sent out following the meeting.

NSF Overview:

(James Schindler, BSR) "LTER is not viewed as an ecosystem program, rather as a division program or activity. The technical supplements are now under consideration. Not all will be funded; New or MSI requests have the best chance. There may be SCI-TECH money next year, and consideration will be given to funding for long-term study sites (including LTER) involved in database activities. The five sites not visited and reviewed last year due to NSF travel cuts will be visited this year. NSF needs specific publications to show to compete for federal program dollars. Although peer-reviewed publications are especially useful, specific "grey literature" (LTER Network publications) is also useful. As Caroline Bledsoe leaves NSF, the Senior Associate for LTER position will be changed from a research coordination emphasis to one with program direction emphasis. (Jim Reynolds will replace Jim Schindler next year, for one year.)

(Caroline Bledsoe) Caroline Bledsoe proposed the following and received the full support of the Committee: An LTER research coordinator position should be retained and should include the potential for cross-directorate coordination. Jerry Franklin suggested that a working group meet on this issue and report back later in the meeting (Working group: Liz Blood-chair, Caroline Bledsoe, Judy Meyer, Phil Sollins). Later, the group reported that they had drawn up a letter to Mary Clutter at NSF strongly requesting that a liaison position be retained with larger responsibility for extra-LTER collaborative research development as well as LTER cross-site efforts).

Global Change "Upgrade"

Another working group was formed to address how to ~~upgrade~~ the Network for global change research. Since LTER has been criticized for not properly representing ecosystems for global change, the committee would be responsible for proposing additional sites or projects to address these specific criticisms. Working group: Jim Gosz, John Magnuson, Bill Schlessinger, and Fred Swanson. In a January letter to NSF from Jerry Franklin, the LTER/EXEC requested that a competition for additional sites be considered.

Consider a tutorial for adding new LTER sites under a GC context.

San Diego Super Computing Center

Dan Sulzbach from the San Diego Super Computing Center attended the LTER/CC primarily to learn more about LTER, encourage interaction and get biologists more involved in computationally intensive research. He provided a handout on current research activities at the Center. (A copy will be on file at the Network Office.)

Technical Supplements

Technical supplements were submitted by most sites (except PAL), three larger ones by SEV and KBS. SEV submitted one for computer conferencing, KBS for prototype climate database development, and NIN for more Global Positioning Systems. All sites agreed to share their supplemental proposals after decisions were made on them. Vande Castle will ask the sites to send in prescribed media for distribution.

Chinese Exchange

The exchange of Chinese and LTER research site representatives has been scheduled for May 8-24, with visits to the Network Office, AND, KNZ, KBS, and SEV. Jim Gosz (SEV) and Beryl Leach (National Academy of Sciences) wrote proposal to NSF for funds and are coordinating the visit. The Chinese are interested both in technical and scientific interactions, including networking. An overview of Lter in China written by Beryl Leach is available from the Network Office.

Scientific Reports

Site representatives were given the opportunity to report on current science at their sites. Reports were given by the following: Liz Blood (Hurricane Hugo Effects, North Inlet), Carl Bowser (Hydrology Using Stable Isotopes), Tim Fahey (Whole-tree Harvest & Sandbox Experiments), James Frew (Antarctic Site Development), James Gosz (El Niño Effects), Bruce Hayden (CO₂ Emissivity Over Deserts), David Hartnett (Konza Fire Event), Bill Lauenroth (Belowground Processes), James Schlesinger (Soil Warming Experiment), Phil Sollins (Decomposition Study, and Intersite Comparison, of Nutrient Loss Dynamics), Bob Waide (Hurricane Hugo Effects, Luquillo). ESA Symposium: Liz Blood and Bob Waide agreed to plan a symposium on Hurricane Hugo synthesis at the August ESA Meeting.

Foreign representatives:

(Mike Sikes, Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, Merlewood Research Station, UK) There are plans for long-term funding for five lead sites which will initially form the UK network. The network will develop somewhat along similar lines to LTER with system standards and data sharing.

(Frederick Fournier, UNESCO, France) Support for research is currently limited to five years, with no real commitment for longer-term. This works against promotion of the idea of "networking" sites. However, greater interaction with developed Networks like LTER may help to change the situation.

College of Forest Resources, University of Washington, Luncheon Presentations

Following an introduction by Jerry Franklin, three site research presentations were given to CFR faculty and students in the Forest Club Room of the College: Judy Meyer (Stream Research), David Foster (Disturbance Research), Philip Robertson (Alternative Agriculture)

Field Trip

After the meeting, a majority of representatives traveled out to the Olympic Peninsula and Kalaloch Lodge via Port Angeles for an all-day field trip. The next morning Jerry Franklin led the group into the Hoh Rainforest along the South Fork of the Hoh River, accompanied by an Olympic National Park naturalist and two Park biologists. He provided information about characteristics of old-growth Douglas-fir forests and current research in that area, and vegetation studies involving elk exclosures. Robert Naiman, Director of the University of Washington's Center for Streamside Studies, took over in the afternoon and provided information on river and stream research, leading the group on the trip out to debris flow sites outside the Park which had resulted from heavy winter rainfall and roadbuilding practices.