4-1-2004

Coordinating Committee Meeting, Santa Barbara, California, April, 2004

Long Term Ecological Research Network

Minutes of the Spring 2004 CC Meeting
Santa Barbara, April 28-29, 2004

Wednesday April 28

The mission for the LTER Network Information System (NIS) is to provide the IM/IT infrastructure to facilitate and promote advances in collaborative and synthetic ecological science at multiple temporal and spatial scales.

Action Item 1:

Grimm moved and McGlathery seconded that the Network adopt the NIS mission statement developed by the NIS Advisory Committee. The motion passed 22-0.

Action Item 2:

Moved to empower the NISAC to determine and make recommendations to the CC on a process or series of processes to identify desired NIS expansion and identify new NIS science modules or network databases or additional components to existing network databases (e.g., ClimDB). The motion passed 19-2.

LTER Network Coordinating Committee Meeting
May 7-8 2003
Kellogg Biological Station

Motion: that the network adopts a strategy of a tiered trajectory toward improved IM functionality for synthesis. The trajectory increasingly incorporates common, structured metadata. The network adopts a general goal of improving each site's position in the trajectory. The NIS Advisory Group will develop metrics for assessment of progress at site and Network levels. Approved 23-0.

Motion: that individual sites commit to populate and update existing basic network databases (ClimDB, HydroDB, SiteDB), where applicable. This commitment would also apply to any new network databases agreed upon by the coordinating committee in the future. Approved 22-1.

Motion: that NIS Advisory Group continues as a standing committee. Approved 23-0.

LTER Coordinating Committee Report
Luquillo LTER site
April 22-24, 1999

Future of LTER Information Management

The importance of planning for the future of LTER data management was the inspiration for this working group. Increased funding for information technology is a priority at NSF, and the LTER Network needs to

develop strategies for interacting with new initiatives. We will need to target our efforts based on LTER science priorities, while we foster sophisticated approaches to information and analysis and provide integrated access to diverse ecological data.

Achieving new levels of functionality, while maintaining core activities, will require additional resources. There are currently only ~1.5 FTEs in data management per site. These people have a wide array of educational backgrounds and tend to be generalists rather than specialists. They are often expected to conduct a diverse array of site support tasks beyond basic data management (e.g., GIS, technical support)

Basic strategies include:

- vBNS (Internet II) connection to ALL LTER/BON/NEON sites
- Training grants & Distance learning modules
- Use partnerships in context of consortium to increase IM resources at sites
- Find ways to increase both quantitatively and qualitatively the personnel involved in LTER IM
- Develop partnerships in the context of an EcoInformatics Consortium
- Leveraging positions between LTER and other institutions
- Use NET support to subsidize activities by site information managers working on network activities
- Write new proposals to NSF for additional resources
- Prepare for BON, NEON etc. so that we are well positioned to acquire additional resources
- Increase PI involvement with LTER IM activities
- Use training efforts to leverage increased resources

Action Items

- White paper to BioScience – 1999: Future of LTER IM (Peter McCartney et al.)
- Begin building consortium
- Increase PI participation
- Continue and expand NET<->Site Exchange program
- Continue tool development with partners; incorporate PI and scientific community in the "testing" of the tools
- Training grant (IGERT)
- Prepare for BON and NEON at Annual LTER IM meeting
- Work with LTER CC on call for ideas that need synthesizing; NPP workshop will be first candidate
- Standards paper with John Porter, Ray Smith, and Bob Parmenter

The Consortium Approach

This working group discussed the strategy of developing consortia between LTER and institutions like the National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis, the San Diego Supercomputer Center, and the Organization of Biological Field Stations. The Network Office is already involved in developing a consortium with NCEAS, SDSC, and the University of Kansas KDI program in the area of bioinformatics. Involvement in this consortium will allow LTER to compete for funds in information technology and training. The mission of this proposed consortium is to promote advances in ecology and systematics through cooperative initiatives in bioinformatics. The working group endorsed the development of the consortium.

In discussing the bioinformatics consortium idea, the working group identified a need for closer cooperation between information managers and the Coordinating Committee in calibrating research efforts. It became clear that science themes and information management initiatives were developing without cross-consultation among the scientists involved in these efforts. The working group suggested that the LTER community needs to prioritize for data managers what LTER Network datasets need to be available for scientific initiatives. The working group identified the following action items (with responsible entity in parentheses):

- Request LTER community to list priority projects - NET
- Rank these projects by importance – Committee on Scientific Initiatives
- Authorize data managers to proceed to integrate high priority data sets- CC
- Authorize NET to support effort - CC
- Start with NPP as pilot effort - DMAN