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### Coordinating Committee Meeting, Key Largo, Florida, April, 2005

Long Term Ecological Research Network

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**LTER CC Meeting**  
**Key Largo, FL**  
**April 6-7, 2005**

Wednesday April 6

**Jim Gosz** called the meeting to order at 8:30 am with a round of introductions.

**Bob Waide** introduced Donata Renfrow, who is working on a short promotional video for the LTER Network, and asked for cooperation from meeting participants to develop the script. Donata will be videotaping interviews with various individuals during breaks in the meeting.

**Dan Childers** discussed meeting and field trip logistics briefly.

**Henry Gholz** presented a report from NSF. The major points were the following:

- Seven site visits will begin in May. These are intense meetings and can be angst-ridden, but they also point out how unique a program LTER is. Henry appreciates the commitment and level of involvement from sites.
- Arden Bement's speeches at NCES and the Biocomplexity PI meeting have drawn heavily on LTER examples, including AND LTER Reflections program, the LTER Site map, urban ecology (BES), the NWT children's book, and ClimDB and HydroDB. However, we need to increase efforts to provide appropriate materials for these talks. These interactions engender much interagency interest, especially in IM. For example, the USDA is considering a long-term Agricultural Research network.
- Funding continues to be problematical. Overall, the LTER budget over 10 years, LTER is \$215-250M, so the program is a major effort of NSF. However, in FY 05, the LTER budget is flat, and projected increases will require the elimination of supplement competitions. Everything else in BIO was cut by 5-6%. SLTER budgets increased, which is a reflection of the directorate's interest in education.
- FY 05 LTER site funding levels are:
  - 2 sites - \$1.2M
  - 14 - \$820K
  - 1 - \$710K
  - 9 - \$700K
  - 1 - \$1.473M
- Continuing grant increments are protected, so reductions have to come out of 7 sites renewed last year. These sites have been working with Henry to find replacements funds. In FY 2006, NSF is slated for a reduction and there are no

renewals to absorb the impact. Capping core projects or budget reduction scenarios require further discussion.

- The visibility of LTER education programs is incredible, including sLTER nuggets (books, websites, statistics), sLTER review, the Grad Student Symposium, and Planning Grant.
- Cyberinfrastructure is the only source of new money at NSF. There is a supplement request for CI activities in the planning grant in preparation. The IM site review guidelines are an important step and will be of interest to other programs. Keep an eye out for the BIO CI report.
- Henry will be at the Planning Grant meeting in Santa Fe. ?????
- Would like more information on models and issues regarding Federal Agency involvement in LTER. Also, additional information on private support and LTER leveraging would be useful. What about a table listing agencies and LTER sites characterizing interactions? Mentioned capping LTER budgets again in reference to targeting new activities. This issue will come up in 2007 budget.

Grove – Can we get a template to encourage us to provide information about agency collaboration?

HG: Yes, can work with Bob to do that.

Gosz: Did you suggest that we should be thinking about a cap for LTER budgets?

HG: Needs to be some kind of strategy, but ultimate decision is made by BIO. The problem that occurred this year may recur in the future. Don't want to enter into policy that will bind you if more funds become available later on.

Rusak: Didn't say much about site visit bullet

HG: Just that site visits are coming up.

**Dan Childers** explained the process of the LNO annual review and discussed the recommendations from the Executive Committee. Since there were no recommendations that required modifications of the LNO Cooperative Agreement, no motion or vote was necessary on the report. There was no discussion of the report.

**Bob Waide** delivered an update on LNO activities during the past year that included a description of the LNO strategy for communicating with the CC and the LTER community. He gave a brief overview of the major LNO accomplishments that were contained in the annual report and focused on two of them, the continued development of the Network Information System and LNO efforts to support site IM activities. He presented a figure that summarized the overall trajectory of the NIS strategy, pointing out

when requested the points at which feedback from sites and scientists are incorporated into the process. He discussed the new hire at the LNO (Inigo San Gil) and presented a series of figures that explained the mechanism to prioritize visits to sites. He discussed the MetaCat query interface briefly and explained the goals of the Grid pilot project being developed with NCSA and ISI. He concluded with a review of progress on other LNO activities.

**Dan Childers** provided an overview of the SLTER Review Criteria that were prepared by the LTER Education Committee and reviewed by the Executive Committee. Henry Gholz mentioned that these criteria would be of most use to LTER sites and of secondary use to proposal reviewers. The document can be used to provide feedback to NSF. Considerable discussion on the purpose and wording of the document followed, which led to the following motion:

Motion: Move to accept original document presented by Education Committee for review of SLTER program. Defeated: 26-0.

Further discussion led to some revision of the document, leading to the following motion:

Motion: Move to adopt amended document titled LTER Site Schoolyard Education Program Guidelines. Passed: 26-0.

The final document will be circulated and posted on the LTER intranet page.

**Jim Gosz** presented a request from the Publications Committee through the Executive Committee to establish an ad hoc committee for the LTER Children's Book Series. Members of this committee will be McKnight, Snow, and Bohanan. Gosz also provided a proposed charge to the committee, leading to the following motion:

Motion: Move to establish an ad hoc committee for the LTER children's book series composed of Diane McKnight, Pam Snow, and Robert Bohanan with the charge recommended by the Education Committee. Passed: 26-0.

**Don Henshaw** provided an update of the activities of the Network Information System Advisory Committee. This update included a list of committee members, an update on the NIS Strategic Plan, and a discussion of strategies to increase data availability, synthetic activities, and knowledge discovery. The relationship between the NIS and the LTER Planning Grant was also discussed. Don also presented a strategy for the improvement of first generation web pages that emphasized data accessibility and usability, site navigation, network identity, and communication of research news. The first steps in improving web pages will include a survey of IM pages and recommendation of design and content standards. Don also led a discussion of the strategies for developing additional NIS modules. The consensus of the discussion was that an offer of resources and a firm deadline would help to prompt the development of new modules.

**Peter McCartney** presented a report from NISAC on the revised Data Access Policy. NISAC was charged by the CC in the fall 04 meeting to update the Data Access Policy to provide consistency across sites. The adoption of the new Data Access Policy and the associated General Use Agreement will permit easier access to multiple LTER data sources. Discussion focused on the kinds of data that would be covered on this policy and specifically on the way that model code and output would be addressed. Other issues included copyright issues for data from federal agencies.

Grove moved and McGlathery seconded the motion: that the network adopt the Data Access Policy and Data Use Agreement to guide the release, access, and use of LTER datasets. Passed: 26-0

**Emery Boose** made a presentation on the Review Criteria for LTER Information Management, which is a document requested by Henry Gholz for internal self assessment and review use. Emery pointed out that eight drafts of the document had been circulated among the IM Committee and NISAC; four of these were reviewed by the Executive Committee. The document being presented for approval represents the consensus of those committees.

Grimm moved and Childers seconded the motion that the network adopt the IM Review Criteria as a guide for future site and proposal reviews.

A few questions ensued about details of the document.

Grimm moved and Porter seconded an amendment to the motion to remove italics around the words “should” and “shall” except in the second paragraph of the document. Passed 26-0

Amended motion passed 26-0

**Jim Gosz** initiated a discussion regarding progress on the LTER Planning Grant activities. He called on **Peter McCartney** to describe the supplement proposal for the creation of a cyberinfrastructure team as part of the planning process. The CI planning team will consist of McCartney, Benson, Brunt, Vande Castle and eight CI specialists from outside the LTER network. Questions revolved around the relationship of the proposal to possible supplemental funding to sites, relationship to NEON, and the timeline for Planning Grant meetings.

**Gosz** reported on the results of the Science Task Force Advisory Committee meeting held in Santa Barbara the week before. Recommendations from the STFAC focused on five goals for the planning process;

- Advancing ecological theory (development, testing, paradigm shifts) – How will this work change the way we think about or do science – How is it *transformational*?

- Extending science to include a serious consideration of the human dimensions in the synthesis effort
- Educating the next generation of scientists to carry out synthesis
- Communicating lessons learned from synthesis to policy makers and the public
- Refining and promoting the culture of collaboration across LTER and beyond

These goals will form the foundation for the presentation of the LTER synthesis effort to the National Science Board. Activities proposed should have the potential to transform the science of ecology (and not just affect the way LTER research is done).

In addition, the STFAC suggested the need to develop of *elevator question*, that is, a short question that would attract the interest of a representative of a funding agency in the time it would take to ride an elevator between floors.

**Gosz** also discussed the need to interact with the NEON formational group by reviewing and commenting on documents and ideas as they come forward.

**Gosz** described the composition and charge of the Governance Working Group. Discussion focused around the importance of determining the instrument by which resources for synthesis would reach the scientists conducting synthesis. The Governance Working Group will be asked to discuss various kinds of instruments and present a range of alternatives.

To address these issues, **Gosz** formed four working groups to focus on the cross-cutting themes that have arisen from the Planning Grant meetings: heterogeneity, thresholds, self-organization, and interactions. Each of these groups was charged with forming a list of no more than 3 questions that can be shown to be integrative, transformational, and that address broader scales. In addition, each group should come up with an elevator question.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 PM so working groups could begin their discussions.

Thursday April 7

**Jim Gosz** reconvened the meeting at 8:00AM. The first item of business was the reports from the breakout groups. Reports from the groups are posted on the web page.

**Jim Gosz** led a discussion of changes to the bylaws that have been developed by the Executive Committee to address procedural issues that have arisen. The discussion suggested that the Executive Committee should make better and more frequent use of other specialty committees. Discussion led to some modification of the proposed changes to the bylaws, which will be circulated for action at the Fall 2005 meeting.

**Jim Gosz** called for the election of two new members of the Executive Committee to replace retiring members McGlathery and McCartney. The bylaws call for the CC to decide if any slots on the ballot will be allocated to provide specific areas of expertise.

Childers moved and Grimm seconded the motion to reserve one of the two open positions on the Executive Committee for an information manager for the purpose of this election only. Passed: 26-0.

**Jim Gosz** called for nominations for the Executive Committee from the floor. None being received, the six previous nominees (Henshaw and Vanderbilt for the IM position and Vose, Grove, Bond, and Kelley for the other position) were entered into the ballot. Grove and Henshaw were elected to the Executive Committee.

**Jim Gosz** led a discussion on the schedule for future CC meetings. The schedule agreed upon was:

Fall 2005 - VCR

Spring 2006 - Cedar Creek

Fall 2006 - ASM meeting

Spring 2007 - PAL (on ice, on boat, or in Virginia)

Fall 2007 - Baltimore

Spring 2008 - Georgia Coast

Fall 2008 - Plum Island

Other suggestions included Andrews for Spring 2009 and North Temperate Lakes, Moorea, McMurdo, and Coweeta for Fall 2009

**Jim Gosz** suggested two other meetings where LTER might be represented. One is the joint meeting of ESA and the Mexican Ecological Society in January 2006 in Merida, Yucatan. That meeting has a globalization theme. Barbara Bond agreed to help put an LTER session together. The other meeting is in Yang Ju China in November 2005. The theme is Ecological Approaches to Sustainable Development. Nancy Grimm is the co-chair of that meeting.

**Karen McGlathery** provided further details on the Fall 2005 CC meeting at VCR. The dates are September 19-21, and the lodging will be at the Sunset Beach Inn. Participants will fly into Norfolk. The science theme will be led by John Briggs and Alan Knapp and will focus on ecosystems and transition.

**Debra Peters** spoke about the proposed synthesis book, Trends in Long Term Ecological Data, whose development she is leading. She will be asking sites for nominations for data sets that they would like to include in the volume. She will contact Oxford to see if they are interested in publishing the book. Initial efforts to find data on web sites have uncovered a series of problems, including difficulty in finding data, difficulty in determining duration of studies, lack of standardization of web pages, and inadequate search tools.

**Bob Waide** reported on the plans for the 2006 All Scientists Meeting in Estes Park. No one has yet volunteered to be Program Chair. We also lack nominations for a program committee. Waide has prepared a contingency budget based on costs of the 2003 meeting. LNO can come up with about 40% of the needed funds if necessary. In 2003, INT and SBE provided \$118K. If they do the same in 2006, we will still need to find \$122K to have a meeting of the same size (around 700 people).

**Jim Gosz** presented a recommendation from the Executive Committee that LTER join AIBS. Advantages of membership include help in meeting with Congressional staff, listing on the AIBS public policy page, and an advertisement in BioScience. If we decide to join, we will need around \$3000 in non-Federal funds per year as dues.

Rusak moved and the motion was seconded that LTER join AIBS to take advantage of opportunities provided by them. Passed: 26-0.

The LNO will look into mechanisms for collecting and managing the necessary funds. Theme and speakers for a meeting on the Hill will need to be identified with a two-month lead time for AIBS to make arrangements.

**Jim Gosz** led a discussion about the proposed closing of the Savannah River Ecological Lab, which led to the following motion:

Motion: that the LTER Network prepare and send a letter in support of SREL. Passed: 26-0.

GCE will determine who at UGA should get copies of the letter.

**Jim Gosz** mentioned that we need to find a theme for the 2006 mini-symposium in Washington. Discussion suggested that the VCR science theme would provide an outstanding topic, and that Briggs and Knapp should be approached to see if they are interested. A stronger effort will need to be made to get agency representatives at the mini-symposium.

The meeting was adjourned at noon.

## **Relevant Documents:**

### [Meeting Agenda](#)

These two documents will serve as the evaluation criteria for SLTER and the Information Management reviews by NSF:

[Review Criteria for LTER Information Management Systems - DRAFT 20-Mar-05](#)

[LTER Site Schoolyard Education Program Review Guidelines - DRAFT 05-Jan-05](#)

Committee Reports:

[NISAC Report to the LTER Coordinating Committee](#)

[Climate Committee Report to the LTER Coordinating Committee](#)

[Graduate Student Committee Report to the LTER Coordinating Committee](#)

[Technology Committee Report to the LTER Coordinating Committee](#)

[Information Management Committee Report to the LTER Coordinating Committee](#)

[International Committee Report to the LTER Coordinating Committee](#)

Other Documents:

[NIS Module Proposal Process](#)

[Results Summary - LNO Survey 2005 \(PDF\)](#)

[Executive Committee Review of LNO](#)

[LTER Network Data Access Policy Revision](#)

[Network Data Access Policy Revision Appendix I: LTER Network Data Access Policy Version 2](#)

[Network Data Access Policy Revision Appendix II: Draft General Data Use Agreement](#)

Products from the Meeting:

[Elevator and Science Questions Interactions Group](#)

[Thresholds Group \(ppt\)](#)

[Heterogeneity \(ppt\)](#)

[Self-Organization Working Group \(ppt\)](#)