**LTER Communication Committee Conference Call**

September 23, 2016, 2:00-3:30pm EDT

**ATTENDEES**

Jonathan Walsh (BES), Julie Doll (KBS), Marcia Nation (CAP), Lina DiGregorio (AND), Clarisse Hart (HFR), Charlie Driscoll (HBR), Sarah Garlick (HBR), Marty Downs (NCO)

**OVERVIEW**

The group discussed plans for the LTER mini-symposium, a brainstorming session for site science video abstracts, and the NCO website (including personnel databases).

**ACTION STEPS**

* Video abstracts: MDowns will work with JDoll to organize a phone conversation within LTER in mid-November. JDoll will make a Doodle poll and draft the framing email.
* Mini-Symposium: MDowns is still open to ideas about speakers for this year and the future – and suggestions for agency connections. Looking for people who are good at setting context and bringing in elements from other work across the Network.
* Let Sarah Garlick know if you would like to be added to AAAS TrellisScience.com.
* Site databases: MDowns is working on the question of whether to maintain Personnel-db and site-db. **If you have particular thoughts about what the cost of letting databases go would be, from a communications point of view, please share.**
* The NCO has launched an [interactive map of the LTER sites](https://lternet.edu/sites/map). Site IMs have access, if updates need to be made.
* MDowns welcomes comments on the draft of the [NCO website RFP](https://docs.google.com/a/nceas.ucsb.edu/document/d/1y-aR65N7UCFAGsUDztI11Rk-CFsT0Pe6-e-YGpF3UWs/edit?usp=sharing); can add directly to the document in google drive.

**DETAILED NOTES**

Agenda item #1: Report-out from ESA.

CHart updated the group on outcomes of ESA 2016 – lots of interest in the new Science Communication Section and related presentations. ESA 2017 in Portland will be well-attended and could be an opportunity for LTER to communicate science to a large media audience.

Agenda item #2: Video Abstracts

* We weren’t able to pull together a training before ESA, but would like to send an all-LTER email asking if anyone has done this and wants to help contribute to a community of practice.
* MNation: CAP gave their summer undergraduates the option of doing a video and none of them wanted to do it.
* JDoll: the videos KBS has made in the past go on the journal’s website with a newly published article.
* LDiGregorio: One of the things AND is working on is a basic formula – maybe from the journals – to make the process more approachable.
* CHart: For an all-LTER email, it might be nice to highlight a link to journals with video abstracts, to show that this work is a value-added element within the audiences we already work in.
* MNation: there has to be some middle ground between a talking head and an expensive, produced video. She said she’s hesitant to encourage LTER to do videos because they get so stressed out about production value. But if there was a formula…
* SGarlick: At HBR, she’d need some pretty solid numbers about the value-added of the video that show the rationale.
* JDoll: When we ask journals about guidelines, we could also ask about some stats. IUP said their video abstracts were their most highly viewed content.
* **MDowns suggested having a conversation within LTER in mid-November. JDoll will send around a Doodle poll for anyone who is interested, and then draft the framing email. And she will talk to a couple of publishers about it.**

Agenda item #3: NCO Report-Out

* MDowns on the 2017 LTER Mini-Symposium:
  + NSF agreed that they are interested in having a mini-symposium this year, in March. They liked the theme ‘resilience and vulnerability’ best. The format, based on feedback from the working group, is not so different from previous years: five twenty-minute slots with some Q&A included, and a panel discussion afterwards that includes people from NGOs and agencies who can talk about how the data might be used. They talked about follow-on activities that would allow for some NSF interaction. In the afternoon, they’re planning individual visits with agency folks. Agency folks will be invited to the mini-symposium but they’d meet with key people who were not able to make it. And, potentially there will be some sort of evening event in DC. So, the event is 2 nights. But they are not trying to tie it to an EB meeting. The goal is to be sure that NSF is familiar with the substance of the resource that LTER represents – and also to ensure that we are connecting that resource with as many people as possible. Marty has been on the phone with a number of potential speakers. Probably there will be a dry-lands state change talk by Brandon Bestlemeyer. There will be a coastal talk – probably Karen McGlathery. Forest talk – possible Charlie Driscoll on de-acidification. Something about fires – still talking with people at Bonanza Creek about that. And possibly Emily Stanley on safe operating space for agriculture and lakes**. She’s still open to ideas about speakers for this year and the future** – **and suggestions for agency connections**. Looking for people who are good at setting context and bringing in elements from other work across the Network.
    - CHart asked about press; MDowns said NSF is the focal audience. But press could be invited to the evening event. And feature writers may be particularly interested in the topic.
    - MNation: regarding speakers, vulnerability and resilience are important elements of socioecological research – CAP does a lot about urban heat and human vulnerability.
    - CHart asked how sites on probation would be handled – is the mini-symposium an opportunity? MDowns said it could cut both ways, but that it’s definitely on their radar.
* MDowns on the new NCO Education Lead – Sam Norlin.
  + He has worked at a couple of LTER sites; for the last 6 years, he’s been at UAF developing curriculum and running informal ed with Native and other local communities. He is going to stay in Alaska. He is only 30% FTE. The NCO got a lot of good applications for this position. His top priorities include data literacy, a cross-site REU program, figuring out the Education Digital Library (K-12 curriculum). In terms of communication, should we be looking at partnerships that could maintain our branding but have a bigger reach?

Agenda item #4: New Business

* SGarlick: AAAS is building out a new science communication platform called [TrellisScience.com](https://www.trelliscience.com/#/site-home). You have to be invited – but she’s happy to invite everyone. They have very lively discussions. Most of these folks are science communication practitioners and social scientists who study learning and communication. It would be neat to link up this group. [NABI](http://broaderimpacts.net/) is another (CHart knows the organizer of this group).
* MDowns: Alan Tessier, who is the NSF DEB Division Director, paid the NCO a visit, since it’s been a year. One of the positive outcomes is that it’s possible that NSF will pay for a lot of the travel for the mini-symposium. They also got a little bit of signal that they can request additional funding to manage the databases, which have been a big concern, with the change to EDI (the Environmental Data Initiative). It includes PASTA plus the initiative from the LTER group in Wisconsin. EDI is much broader than LTER. LTERs are being viewed as a lot more mature in terms of their data management capability – and EDI has an interest in bringing others up to LTER’s level. One question is Personnel-db and site-db. Those databases are central to the way the Network functions, but if we’re going to maintain them, we need to ask for some additional funding. It would be possible although not advisable to just create a website for the Network that tells the story of the Network and links out to the individual websites for the sites, and let the databases go. So the NCO is going to put in a proposal. **If others have particular thoughts about what the cost of letting that go would be, from a communications point of view, it would be helpful to share.** It is true that each site has as better list than the personnel database. Marcia said that when she gets messages from Marty, she forwards it to her site. MDowns said it works either way; communicating to everyone is less of a challenge than communicating with committees (that could be Google Groups) but groups like Site PIs, or students are tougher. A lot of sites are using the personnel database as their student list. Some sites are very enmeshed in the personnel DB. Others aren’t. The NCO needs to get a sense of who is using what. Marcia said she could ask her site. Lina asked what the benefits of maintaining the personnel db are. Marty said there could be different levels of access depending on different roles.
* MDowns: They’ve been able to make an [interactive map of the LTER sites](https://lternet.edu/sites/map). Site IMs have access, if updates need to be made.

Agenda item #5: NCO Website RFP

* MDowns reported on the RFP for the NCO website:
  + *Intended Audiences*: consider adding decision makers/land managers/advisors to the list. MDowns noted that it is good to consider this group, but only if we have the content for them. Depending on if the NCO has the personnel database, the website could be helpful to link this audience to scientists they can contact.
  + The committee liked how the site functionality and site components were laid out, and liked that Organizational Peers were included. Suggested clarifying if these are actually websites you like/want to pull aspects from, or if this is solely a list of similar organizations. Check if CZO has a website.
  + Desired Site Components: For the image gallery, have the option for high resolution download and have caption and photo credit information included. JWalsh and MNation noted that at the site level we would be willing to populate the LTER website gallery with photos from the sites.
  + MDowns welcomes comments on the draft, can add directly to the document in google drive.