Dear members of the Luquillo LTER site review team,

Below is my attempt to clarify the information previously provided to you as guidance for the site visit and to help orient you as you begin to review the materials about the Luquillo LTER.  I have included an overview of the task in front of you, a historical timeline of the current LTER proposal from Luquillo to provide context for your review, and a report template that specifies the five topic areas for the body of your report as well as individual assignments for the team members.

The overarching objective of the site review team is to prepare an evaluation for NSF of the Luquillo LTER performance. NSF, in turn, will share your report with the site PI with the expectation that the report provides constructive advice as the LTER team continues with the activities described in their proposal and prepares their next renewal proposal.  This means that your primary focus during much of the site review is to obtain the information from the LTER team that you need to write the report.  The report is your collective document and this is your collective review – NSF is present as an observer. As such, you all share in the responsibility for the content of final document, much in the way that panelists agree on the content of a panel summary, and this also means that you have ultimate control over the agenda.  You may ask for any logistically reasonable modifications to the agenda that you deem necessary to complete your task.  I have shared with the Luquillo LTER PI my concern that the schedule is heavily weighted to field trips. He has told me that the field trips include multiple stops with presentations designed with the goal of providing you with the information you will need for your report. There will be an opportunity prior to the poster session on day 1 for you to discuss with the LTER leadership team whether the agenda as designed is meeting that goal and to request adjustments if necessary.

The 2015 renewal proposal that was approved for funding and that has been shared with you was submitted approximately 2 years after a prior renewal proposal for six years of funding was declined by the LTER Program at NSF. That decline placed the Luquillo LTER site on probation, a process unique within NSF to the LTER Program. Under probation, a site receives full funding for 2 years, during which time they revise and submit a new renewal proposal for 4 years of funding. Because of the probation period and other site-specific reasons beyond the control of the Luquillo LTER team, the duration of the award for the 2015 renewal proposal was 36 months and the start date was 01 January 2016. This means that your mid-term site review visit to Luquillo comes roughly 1.25 years after the award was made. It also means that the Luquillo LTER site PIs have another year or so after your report is completed before their next renewal proposal will be submitted.

The main body of your report will have 5 sections:

1. **Site-based Research**, including the conceptual model, long-term experiments, modeling as a tool for insight, and the collection of long-term data in the 5 core areas of primary production, population dynamics and trophic structure, organic matter accumulation, inorganic inputs and movements of nutrients through the ecosystem, and patterns and frequency of disturbances.

2. **Information Management**, including activities that address the 2 essential objectives of Information Management at a LTER site: (1) the collection and analysis of data necessary to complete the proposed research activities and (2) the availability of data and other relevant digital products to science, education, and general public users.

3. **Network-Level Participation and Synthesis** activities including any cross-site research.

4. **Education, Outreach and Training**, including REUs, graduate students, post-doctoral scholars, and the schoolyard LTER activities.

5. **LTER Site Management** including leadership structure and decision making, fiscal accountability and budgets, site security and management, engagement of new investigators, promoting diversity of the scientific team.

            Logistically, as there are 5 sections of the report and 5 team members, I think it makes sense for each member of the team to have the responsibility of writing the initial draft of one of the sections.  These section drafts need to be assembled into a cohesive whole, and that will be the role of the site review team chair.  I have asked Chris Neill to be the chair of the site review team and he has accepted that assignment. The primary roles of the chair are to assemble the draft sections of the report into a cohesive whole and to be the spokesperson for the team when the team wishes needs to communicate with the Luquillo PI team about the schedule, any requests for additional information, and the final report out on the last day of the site visit.

I have made some preliminary assignments as I think it is helpful for your review for each team member to know what section of the report they will be writing as they review the site materials in advance of the visit.  The assignments are as follows: Site based research, Niall; Information management, Jonathan; Network-level participation and synthesis, Chris; Education, outreach, and training, Alan; and LTER site management, Christy.  These assignments and the idea that each individual should take primary responsibility for the initial draft of a report section are only suggestions. If you feel particularly uncomfortable with your assignment or believe there is a better model for distributing the workload, please let me know and communicate this to Chris. My primary concern is the report you will write.  I am willing to leave the details of how that is accomplished up to the team to decide through consensus.

The Luquillo LTER PI is preparing a progress report that will be distributed to you by NSF prior to the site visit.  This should be more heIpful for your review than the annual report that was sent to you, and I have asked that the structure of that progress report match the structure of the main body of the report you will write with the same 5 subheadings.

I want to thank all of you in advance for you participation on this site review team.  I encourage anyone who has not registered on Fast Lane, made hotel reservations, or worked with Adtrav to get your flight tickets to do so soon.

I look forward to being with all of you in Puerto Rico.

Best regards,

Lou

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