STEAC MEETING REPORT

(12/20/2023)

The members of the STEAC met on December 20, 2023, with a quorum of eight members attending (Henry Bart, Rich Fiorella, Shannon LaDeau, Steve Petruzza, Sydne Record, Daniel Rubenstein, Shawn Serbin, and Adrienne Sponberg). Five NEON-Battelle staff attended (Nico Franz, Darcy Gora, Claire Lunch, Paula Mabee, Chris McKay, and Kate Thibault).

The meeting was virtual, and the following topics were discussed: I. Approval of the minutes, II. January meeting cancellation, Spring meeting scheduling. III. Macrosystems Biology and NEON Enabled Science PI virtual meeting in February. IV. Data skills webinars - experience and looking ahead. V. NEON Ambassadors/Postdocs 2.0

I. **Approval of previous minutes for 11/15/2023.** Minutes approved

II. **January meeting cancellation, Spring meeting scheduling.** NEON and the STEAC discussed meeting planning for 2024, which required the cancellation of the first STEAC meeting of the year on January 17th, 2024. The cancellation was required to make room for NEON to meet with NSF Program Managers and host a “NEON Days” event to present the current work and plans for the Observatory with NSF. The next STEAC in-person meeting dates were discussed and the STEAC was polled for optimal dates in April or May.

III. **Macrosystems Biology and NEON Enabled Science PI virtual meeting in February.** The STEAC was provided an update on the upcoming MSB-NES PI virtual meeting to be held 2/7-2/8/24. During the meeting, there will be a discussion around the impact of the loss of the Macrosystem Biology and NEON-enabled Science program macrosystems biology science wherein NSF Program Officers will serve on a panel to answer any questions attendees of the meeting have. The meeting will showcase MSB-NES science and there will be a cross-journal special issue coming out of the meeting that highlights the research from the meeting. NEON staff (Claire Lunch and Michael San Clements) will present at the meeting to provide data and observatory updates.

IV. **Data skills webinars - experience and looking ahead.** NEON presented new statistics to the STEAC regarding their efforts to host data science/data skills webinars for the community. NEON reported that attendance at virtual webinars has been waning, but attendance at hosted events (e.g. scientific meetings) has been increasing slightly. There is evidence for a large viewership of recorded webinars in self-directed training and tutorials are the most popular format that the community is engaging with, with tutorials covering the use of specific data products being most popular. As a result it was discussed with the STEAC that NEON was exploring adding additional specific quick-start guides for additional NEON data products to try and increase usage of the wider breadth of NEON data in publications and synthesis efforts. NEON is also considering additional scripted videos. The STEAC generally agreed with NEON’s plans to increase tutorials and also inquired into how trainings are held at meetings and when they are typically scheduled. NEON reported that they tend not to be able to control the scheduling (before or at the end of a conference) but they often still have strong

attendance even if held after a conference ends. The STEAC provided a recommendation that NEON consider small seed funding opportunities that would let PIs, particularly early and mid-career PIs, cover some of their time via a grant to learn how to use NEON data in their future research. The suggestions would be to have NSF administer the grant similar to the previous doctoral dissertation improvement program.

V. **NEON Ambassadors/Postdocs 2.0.** Time was short but a quick summary of the recent NEON-LTER strategy meeting was provided to the STEAC however there was not sufficient time for a substantive discussion of the outcomes. It was recommended that the STEAC cover that topic in their next meeting. With the time left in the meeting from not covering this agenda topic, there was a quick report out on the NEON-LTER synergies presented at the December LTER PI Monthly Meeting. In particular, there seemed to be good synergies for data harmonization (e.g., ecocomDP) and opportunities between the NEON biorepository and LTER PIs (given the new specimen collections requirements for LTER renewal awards).