

STEAC MEETING REPORT

(03/15/2023)

The STEAC met on March 15th, 2023, with a quorum of twelve members attending (Meghan Avolio, Henry Bart, Rich Fiorella, Shannon LaDeau, Sparkle Malone, Jackie Matthes, Kim Novick, Steve Petruzza, Sydne Record, Daniel Rubenstein, Shawn Serbin, and Adrienne Sponberg). Eleven NEON-Battelle staff attended (Nico Franz, Keli Goodman, Darcy Gora, Nick Harrison, Christine Laney, Claire Lunch, Paula Mabee, Chris McKay, Bonnie Meinke, Cove Sturtevant, Kate Thibault).

The meeting was virtual, and the following topics were discussed: I. Approval of previous minutes, II. Improving user understanding of NEON data practices, and III. NEON 2023 conference plan.

- I. **Approval of previous meeting minutes:** The previous meeting minutes were discussed, reviewed and approved.
- II. **Improving user understanding of NEON data practices:** Claire Lunch and Nick Harrison presented a summary of a NEON dataset mis-use case that they discovered in a recent publication. The dataset was published in a Nature journal ("Scientific Data") and focused on analyzing the NEON streamflow and stream discharge to provide a summary of "data reliability," as assessed by the article authors. The author's main message was primarily a word of caution regarding the quality of NEON streamflow data and recommendations for data users to identify which observation periods to utilize. NEON provided a detailed summary of the fundamental errors made in the journal article, including that the results were based on clearly-labeled "Provisional" datasets that have since been updated. The members of the STEAC generally felt that the article's analysis wasn't appropriate given the use of provisional data, and that NEON should consider publishing a reply to the article explaining the possible mis-use of provisional data. The STEAC discussed additional ways in which NEON could possibly improve the communication of "Provisional data" including, differentiating these data more clearly on the portal, more clear data versioning, or possibly no longer providing provisional datasets. One possible issue with providing additional information on the portal raised by the members of the STEAC was the use of the NEON API, which may not report this information in the use-log, and NEON reported they are working on providing more detailed information with the API to report data issues, including if the data is provisional. NEON also reported that in some cases (eddy covariance) that the API provides code version numbers which is helpful to data users to understand what version was used for the data they download.
- III. **NEON 2023 conference plan:** NEON provided the STEAC members with an updated list of planned meetings and conferences they were expecting to attend in 2023 and asked the STEAC to indicate the conferences in their plans to both enable in person connections where possible and identify potential venues for NEON to consider for the future.