

STEAC MEETING REPORT

(11/02/2021)

The STEAC met on November 02, 2021 with a quorum of nine members present (Sara Bevins, Anne Giblin, Peter Groffman, Rob Guralnick, Karen Lips, Sparkle Malone, Kim Novick, Steve Petruzza, and Shawn Serbin). Seven NEON-Battelle staff attended (Darcy Gora, Tristan Goulden, Mike Kuhlman, Christine Laney, Claire Lunch, Paula Mabee, and Chris McKay). ASU (Nico Franz).

The meeting was virtual, and the following topics were discussed: I. Approval of previous minutes; II. Recommendations for responding to the challenges of using NEON data in publications; III. Issue log redesign; and IV. STEAC Business.

I. Approval of previous minutes: Minutes approved.

II. Recommendations for responding to the challenges of using NEON data in publications: The paper, “Poor relationships between NEON AOP data and field based measurements”, was accepted for publication in Ecology and highlights some challenges in using NEON AOP data in short stature ecosystems. The authors used NEON data products that have been discontinued due to discrepancies in algorithms. NEON’s canopy height model and ground-based measurements of canopy height do not work in canopies <2 m tall and the sites used in this analysis are grasslands. The STEAC felt that some type of traditional response, e.g., a “rebuttal” published in the Journal is a good and necessary idea. They also felt that a more aggressive response with the Journal would not be productive. A “blog” posting, or some type of announcement or acknowledgement of the paper, and the NEON response on the NEON WWW site might also be a good idea. In a broader perspective, the STEAC acknowledges that this manuscript provides an opportunity for NEON to initiate a community challenge to develop algorithms for a canopy height product. Hosting a special issue for teams contributing algorithms will engage the remote sensing community. The STEAC also encourages members of the AOP TWG to consider writing a manuscript on best practices for using AOP data, to facilitate algorithm development.

III. Issue log redesign: NEON is interested in improving the accessibility of the issue log for data products. Right now, the log is on the website and is included in a readme file. In a prior STEAC meeting, there was a brief discussion about whether including it in the readme might be limiting accessibility. Flags exist in the data files and users have to reference the log for details on data issues. The STEAC agrees that the flag and the log together are adequate, but there are limitations to including the log in a readme document that is usually more static than an issue log. Having a separate document would make it easier to find this information and to provide updates on current issues.

IV. Vaccine Compliance: Battelle apologies for an unexpected email sent to the STEAC from Intelleges seeking survey responses about COVID-19 vaccination status and protocols, linked to Executive Order compliance. Questions about the survey can be directed to Mike Kuhlman.

V. STEAC Business: The final report for the fall meeting is available. The STEAC is in need of a secretary. Kim will contact senior STEAC members to consider the role and Karen is willing to work with the secretary to learn and help manage responsibilities (Send meeting reminders, send the call for agenda items, share preparatory materials for meetings, and organize the minutes).