STEAC MEETING REPORT
(10/18/2023)

The members of the STEAC met on October 18th, 2023, with a quorum of ten members attending (Michael Dietze, Rich Fiorella, Shannon LaDeau, Sparkle Malone, Jackie Matthes, Steve Petruzza, Sydne Record, Daniel Rubenstein, Shawn Serbin, and Adrienne Sponberg). Five NEON-Battelle staff attended (Darcy Gora, Steve Jacobs, Claire Lunch, Paula Mabee, and Kate Thibault).

The meeting was virtual, and the following topics were discussed: I. Approval of the minutes, II. Appreciation of outgoing STEAC members. III. Selection of new chair and co-chair. IV. Update on default download behavior change. V. Global Core Biodata Resource application and insights into users of NEON data, samples, and infrastructure

I. **Approval of previous minutes for 09-20-2023.** Minutes approved (Unanimous vote).

II. **Appreciation of outgoing STEAC members**: Paula Mabee and ongoing members of the STEAC thanked the departing STEAC members. NEON will be sending appreciation certificates in the mail to departing STEAC members who may request a frame for the certificate if they so desire.

III. **Selection of new chair and co-chair:** Outgoing Chair Sparkle Malone nominated Sydne Record, who accepted the nomination. The STEAC voted to have Sydne be the next chair of the STEAC. The current Co-Chair, Kim Novick, is also cycling off the STEAC, so a request was made for a new Co-Chair. The Co-Chair role supports the chair person by organizing information prior to meetings and working with the secretary to ensure the minutes and information for the meetings come out in a timely fashion. Daniel Rubenstein volunteered to be Co-Chair, and a vote approved his self nomination.

IV. **Update on default download behavior change:** The data portal download behavior has been changed. Provisional data is still available, but now its an "opt in" not an "opt out" default to include provisional data. If users do not 'opt in' for provisional data, then the release data are the default data downloaded. Sparkle used the new data download at a recent NCEAS/LTER working group and noted that the new data download options were very clear with regards to provisional data downloads. The CRAN/R packages will be updated to handle the new download options. However, the STEAC noted that direct API calls will not change, just the access layer on top of the API will change. NEON staff will check to make sure that provisional AOP data are not on Google Earth Engine. NEON staff asked what would be a reasonable timeline for updated communications on releasing the provisional change, and the STEAC agreed that one week's notice would be sufficient.

V. **Global Core Biodata Resource application and insights into users of NEON data, samples, and infrastructure:** Paula Mabee has been representing NEON on the Global Core Biodata Resource group that focuses on setting up core biodata resources for the world, including best practices/principles. Paula has been to two meetings focused on new models for data sustainability. Global Core Biodata Resources currently has a contest for an organization to win a 5-star rating in open data. NEON submitted an application to the contest, which has a pre-proposal and then full proposal stage. As part of the application process, the question came up as to whether NEON was a global versus national resource. Dan Rubenstein mentioned the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute's ForestGEO program as a good example of a global resource. With

regards to NEON's international status, Mike San Clements at NEON recently received an award as PI for a NEON NSF Accel-NET award to build out the network of networks of ecological observatories globally.

To further explore the extent to which NEON has a national versus global presence, NEON presented insight into users of NEON data, samples, and infrastructure. This presentation by Kate Thibault was also an opportunity for the STEAC to give feedback before the same presentation would be given to NSF who had requested such information. The presentation focused first on user privacy, proxies, and caveats. User accounts are voluntary and private/secure. IP addresses provided by Google are only proxies for users and their physical locations. IP addresses are limited in that they cannot filter out NEON staff working remotely, even if using the VPN, and cannot link data downloads directly to grant support. Specific statistics were given on data downloads and usage based on IP addresses and user accounts. NEON publications were quantified using two datasets: i) Dimensions and ii) the Global Biodiversity Information Facility. An interesting take home was that only 60% of author records from this analysis were from the USA. The STEAC had questions about the publications classified by discipline and wondered about the way that the two datasets (i.e., Dimensions and GBIF) were defining or binning different fields.