

STEAC MEETING REPORT

(03/20/2024)

The members of the STEAC met on March 20, 2024, with a quorum of eight members attending (Meghan Avolio, Henry Bart, Rich Fiorella, Shannon LaDeau, Steve Petruzza, Sydne Record, Daniel Rubenstein, Shawn Serbin). Six NEON-Battelle staff attended (Darcy Gora, Paula Mabee, Tanya Maslak, Kate Thibault, Michael SanClements, Zoe Gentes).

The meeting was virtual, and the following topics were discussed: I. Approval of the minutes, II. NEON Assignable Assets rebranding, III. NEON Bimonthly Newsletter, IV. April In-person Meeting, V. NEON Ambassador Program 2.0, VI. Strategic plan.

- I. **Approval of previous minutes for 02-21-2024.** Minutes approved (Unanimous vote).
- II. **NEON Assignable Assets rebranding:** The STEAC discussed the rebranding/renaming of the NEON “Assignable Assets” program. It has been acknowledged that the name of the program was misleading given the full scope of the Assignable Assets program, that includes the re-deployment/deployment of NEON instrumentation as well as research support for PIs and guest instrumentation. Given the desire to reduce the confusion around the scope of the program and provide a clearer directive to NEON and the user community, the STEAC recommends a change from “Assignable Assets” to the new name NEON Research Services or NEON Research Support Services. Both names will be suggested to NSF by NEON to see which of the two they prefer.
- III. **NEON Bimonthly Newsletter:** NEON updated the STEAC on their outreach efforts through the bi-monthly newsletter. This newsletter is used to keep the NEON community up-to-date on NEON/NSF activities, as well as new funding opportunities and related efforts from other US Government Agencies that could be relevant to NEON data users/researchers. They indicated that they have about ~5,000 subscribers, but that at the time of the discussion the STEAC membership was low. The STEAC suggested auto-enrollment or that new STEAC members be notified of the newsletter during onboarding. NEON also discussed the challenges with engagement through the newsletter and how to increase the subscriber pool. There were concerns about auto-enrollment for anyone who has downloaded data, issues with the newsletter being labeled as spam, and ideas for re-designing the newsletter to reduce text and increase the use of images/links for those who want to engage further. It was decided to continue the conversation at the next STEAC meeting in the broader context of community engagement.
- IV. **April In-person Meeting:** Final travel and meeting logistics were discussed. The STEAC was asked for agenda items to discuss before the meeting in Boulder.
- V. **NEON Ambassador Program 2.0:** NEON presented a plan to re-imagine the NEON Ambassador program to the STEAC. The first set of Ambassadors was recruited in 2021, with a total of 20 selected out of the 50 total applicants. The selected applicants provided a good breadth of background, experiences, and expertise. The first cohort produced a workshop and a manuscript that provided community guidelines for derived data products. NEON is now advertising for a new cohort with applications opening in April/May 2024. NEON informed the STEAC they plan to select 5-7 candidates who currently use or will use NEON data in their research, focusing on early career scientists. NEON is taking inspiration from the National Radio Astronomy Observatory (NRAO)

Alma Ambassador model for the new version of their Ambassador Program. They asked the STEAC who their target audience should be for the program, how to get the word out, additional incentives to increase applications, and other requirements. The STEAC will provide more feedback at the in-person meeting.

- VI. Strategic plan:** Briefly discussed with a plan to discuss in more detail at the April in-person meeting in Boulder.