STEAC MEETING REPORT

(09/16/2026)

The members of the STEAC met on September 16, 2026, with ten members attending (Kelly Aho, Ben Baiser, Kin Onn Chan, Jennifer Edmonds, John Kochendorfer, Sydne Record, Samapriya Roy, Dan Rubenstein, Adrienne Sponberg and, Xi Yang). Six NEON-Battelle staff attended (Keli Goodman, Darcy Gora, Tanya Maslak, Chris McKay, Hojun Song, and Kate Thibault).

The meeting was virtual, and the following topics were discussed: I. Call to order, approval of minutes, II. NEON Ambassador Highlight-Alexi Besser, III. NSF NEON Mid-Award Review recommendations, IV. Appreciation for our outgoing members, and welcome to new co-chair.

I. **Approval of previous minutes for 07/15/2026 monthly meeting:**
   A. Previous minutes approved

II. **NEON Ambassador Highlight-Alexi Besser:**
   A. Dr. Besser presented an overview of her research background and education, much of which involved LTER sites.
      1. Postdoctoral research was originally in Aeromicrobiology at AZ State University (ASU) and (currently) in Decomposition Across Drylands (DeAD); Biorepository also located at ASU
      2. The Biorepository provided beetle samples from Toolik Lake for use in the IsoCamp. Delta 13 C and delta 15 N were analyzed from beetle bulk tissue. Data will be published on IsoBank and linked to the Biorepository
      3. The STEAC asked about availability of funding to support research. Tanya Maslak explained that NEON Operations funding was not available to fund research.
   B. Tanya Maslak provided an overview of the direction and current state of the Ambassador Program. There were about 50 applications received with 9 selected for support.

III. **NSF NEON Mid Award Review recommendations:**
   A. Dr. Thibault provided a status update and summary of the panel's report. The formal NSF recommendations are still forthcoming, but thus far the panel recommended continuing to:
      1. devote attention to the commercial use of NEON data.
      2. transition towards deeper, "high-touch" engagement
      3. prepare for AI use
      4. focus on resilience and continuity

IV. **Appreciation for our outgoing members:**

   A. Goodbye's were said.