

Annual Committee Report (May 2020-November 2021)

Communications Committee

1. **Date of report:** October 2021
2. **Name of Committee:** LTER Communications Committee
3. **Name and site affiliation of the Committee Chair (or co-chairs or Executive Board):** Sarah Garlick, Hubbard Brook; Lina DiGregorio, Andrews Forest
4. **List of current members:** Sarah Garlick, Clarisse Hart, Lina DiGregorio, Marty Downs, Alexandra Rose, Lauren Wood, Peter Groffman, Gabriel De La Rosa
5. **How membership is determined (identified by sites, voluntary, appointed by the Executive Board, etc)** Voluntary
6. **Meeting frequency:** every two months
7. **Major activities or accomplishments for the year:**
 - a. *Ecosphere* Special Feature: “Forecasting Earth’s Ecosystems with Long-Term Ecological Research”
<https://esajournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/toc/21508925/2021/12/5> and related communications which resulted in various press pieces:
 - i. <https://www.esa.org/blog/2021/05/17/slow-research-to-understand-fast-change/>
 - ii. <https://theconversation.com/climate-change-is-already-disrupting-us-forests-and-coasts-heres-what-we-were-seeing-at-5-long-term-research-sites-164906>
 - iii. <http://news.unm.edu/news/sevilleta-project-uses-past-data-to-predict-future>
 - iv. <https://www.news.ucsb.edu/2021/020329/long-view>
 - b. The committee hosted an LTER Network-wide workshop on “communicating LTER identity” on May 13, 2021, with a goal of creating a collection of “key messages” scientists and outreach staff use to communicate about the LTER network and the value of LTER programs to various audiences, including reporters, university administrators, students, and scientists. The idea was to produce a resource that the Network Office and LTER scientists can use to communicate more effectively and consistently about the LTER.

- c. Community of practice/communications workshops: Two committee meetings were used to support the Network Office by “workshopping” the LTER Network News and Science Updates e-newsletters and the Community Platform to discuss how these tools are received and being used by LTER site scientists and staff.
- d. AISL proposal — a number of committee members collaborated on a National Science Foundation Advancing Informal STEM Learning (AISL) proposal submitted in January 2021 to advance evidence-based public engagement with science across LTER sites. The proposal was not funded in 2021 but the group is revising and resubmitting in January 2022. One of the central activities of the proposal is to build out a public engagement community of practice for LTER scientists and staff.

8. Currently active subcommittees or working groups: NA

9. Priorities for the coming year:

The goal of the LTER Communications Committee is to develop resources and strategies to communicate about the LTER Network as a whole. The committee is a working group of participants from across the Network with interest and expertise in science communication and stakeholder engagement, including PIs and other researchers, students, postdocs, and education and outreach professionals. Because most work in science communication and stakeholder engagement occurs at the individual site level, this committee serves as an important mechanism for supporting science communication and stakeholder engagement work at the cross-site and network levels. The LTER Communications Committee seeks to play a supportive role for both the LTER Executive Board and LTER Network Office on issues related to science communication and stakeholder engagement.

For the coming year we plan to adopt a Community of Practice model to workshop topics that are relevant to the Network.

Priorities include:

- 1. Working with the Network Office and the DEI Committee to build from the “communicating LTER identity” workshop to create resources for sites for talking points for press releases, interviews, and presentations.
- 2. Convene a workshop on policy relevance across the network to possibly spur a larger workshop proposal. For example:

- a. Carbon accounting, engagement with The Nature Conservancy
 - b. Engagement with agencies
 - c. Biden-Harris administration goals
 - d. Organize an open meeting to bring in a national-level science advisor or panel to speak about priorities relevant to LTER science.
3. LTER Network support: input on website, possible support of synthesis working groups, advanced media training, focus on core areas

10. **Any recent or upcoming changes in leadership, purpose, or process:** Sarah Garlick (HBR) and Lina DiGregorio (HJA) serve as co-chair. DiGregorio will rotate off in Fall 2021 and the committee is working to find a new member to take over as co-chair with Garlick.

11. **Do you see specific opportunities for improving network coordination (or coordination with other networks) that are of interest to your committee?**

If so, are there specific ways that the network leadership (PIs, LNO) could support your committee to realize those opportunities?

One of the key roles of the Communications Committee is to support communication about the LTER Network as a whole. Activities that involve a Network-level perspective fall into a gap for communication. These activities are often hard to promote through individual LTER site's university public relations (PR) channels and the Network Office is not allowed by NSF to directly engage in PR efforts. We would like to continue to work with Network leadership to identify solutions to this gap. We would also like to promote cross-Network engagement opportunities like the policy workshop described above.