

Notes from Coweeta LTER 2009 Winter Meeting

January 27, 2008

- New UGA Coweeta LTER Staff:
 - Sheila Cladis (Lab Tech II; replaced Cindi Brown in summer 2008 – Cindi is the new Analytical Lab Manager following the retirement of Jim Deal)
 - Jason Meador (Research Tech III; filled position in Jan 2009 after departure of Greg Zausen)
 - Dr. John Chamblee (Information Manager; filled position in Jan 2009 after retirement of Barrie Collins)
 - Jason Love (Site Manager; filled position in Oct 2008 after departure of Brian Kloeppe)
 - Jennifer Love (Coweeta LTER Schoolyard coordinator (part time position))

- Coweeta USFS overview by Jim Vose
 - In 2008 Coweeta had about 30 fewer publications compared to 2007
 - Jim reminded PIs to give Kathy a copy of their recent Coweeta-related publications so they can be accounted for
 - Funding issues (i.e., no money available) make it very unlikely that cooperative research agreements can be worked out this fiscal year
 - Coweeta will be putting up an eddy flux tower in 2009
 - Jim Vose is on sabbatical at Duke University until October 2009; Kitty Elliott will be acting Coweeta USFS Team Leader; Jennifer Knoepp will be the acting USFS-LTER liaison; and Barry Clinton will be the acting facilities manager during Jim's sabbatical

- Coweeta LTER move to Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources
 - We are still working off of 2008 funding
 - Coweeta LTER will be making the transition from Odum School of Ecology to Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources officially on July 1, 2009; discussions with Dean Clutter have been very positive and a smooth transition is expected
 - Delaying the transition provides ample time to transfer vehicles, procurement cards, accounts, etc. from Odum to Warnell
 - The change will mean dealing with a different set of staff –Warnell has more specialized staffing than Odum so there is a person responsible for travel, a person for personnel, etc. However, they also do more of their business processes electronically. If you have questions about who to talk to, Ted will be able to help out during this transition period
 - All UGA vans will be disposed of as they are expensive to operate and not used very intensively. Field vehicles at Coweeta will not be affected. Necessary transportation can be arranged through Fleet Services, and possibly using the Warnell fleet of vehicles (same cost as using UGA fleet).

- USFS Coweeta Analytical Lab-Use Policy
 - USFS has developed an Analytical Lab-Use policy to avoid ambiguity in how non-USFS researchers associated with the Coweeta LTER can submit samples for analysis.
 - A near-final draft was distributed to everyone at the meeting that will become available very soon on the Coweeta LTER's web page
 - Non-USFS researchers affiliated with the Coweeta LTER can request analysis of samples directly related to actively funded LTER projects
 - To request an analysis, investigators must fill out a "Request for Analytical Service" form (which will be available on the Coweeta LTER website) and send it to Cindi Brown
 - Once approved, investigators will be notified with a anticipated date of completion
 - Approved samples must be delivered to the lab pre-prepped (sieved, filtered, milled, etc.); it may be possible to have students/technicians use space in the Analytical Lab to prep samples on site.
 - Please notify the lab as far in advance as possible of large, "pulse" sampling events
 - To be posted along with the "Request" form will be a) an updated analytical "cookbook", b) a sheet showing the types of analyses the lab can run, c) the analytical lab QA/QC document that includes sample shelf life to ensure analytical results are of the highest possible standard, and d) a table detailing the minimum amount of material needed to perform each type of analysis.
 - Current analytical cookbook (last updated in 2002) is available at: <http://coweeta.ecology.uga.edu/webdocs/1/pdf/AnalyticalLabCookbook15Jan2002.pdf>

- NSF Site-Level Data Availability Requirements
 - LTER at NSF is starting to really crack down on site-level data availability. Coweeta is ahead of the curve relative to most sites, but there is still much to be done and several key datasets that need to be placed on the Coweeta LTER website.
 - LTER at NSF is particularly interested in site-level data being properly identified as "core data sets". While the term is ambiguous, some decision and justification must be reached on which Coweeta LTER datasets qualify as core.
 - These issues will come up at the Coweeta LTER mid-term review in 3 years as it is already part of "jacket documents."
 - The Coweeta Science Advisory will be proactive on the issue and make some determinations during the coming months in preparation for the Summer 2009 Meeting about data access, QA/QC procedures, metadata, and other relevant aspects of our data legacy. They will also reassess several long-term data collection projects (e.g., Joyce Kilmer) to determine the value of continuing collections.
 - Jason Love, as Coweeta LTER Site Manager, also needs to determine what research is still active at the Gradient Plots so that the eco-trash (e.g., canopy boardwalks?) from projects that have ended can be removed.

- White Papers
 - There needs to be better record keeping for LTER projects. The departure of the former Coweeta LTER Site Manger revealed that much of the knowledge of the “who, what, when” was never written down, making reconstruction of the frequency, exact methods, site location, location of field notes, QA/QC procedures, location of electronic spreadsheets, cooperators of the project, etc. difficult.
 - For on-going and future projects, the details of projects that are typically stored in memory should be formally written down so that the process of the “who, what, when”.
 - These documents would be available to all via the Coweeta website and help link from proposal and addenda to actual activities on the ground.

- Synthesis Papers
 - Coweeta LTER is distinct in having such a broad array of disciplines and research questions.
 - A few good synthesis papers would help capture the breadth of research and help show NSF that the research is connected despite seeming somewhat disparate
 - **We still need to follow up on what to synthesize and who will take the lead on these papers.**

- Synoptic Sampling
 - During the afternoon session, much of the focus was on the upcoming synoptic sampling
 - It was determined that having a full array of stream sites, would act as “bookends” to be included during the synoptic sampling
 - There was concern that the weirs on Ball Creek and Shope Fork disrupt sediment transport, making assessment of that particular metric troublesome
 - An initial suite of 57 stream sites were chosen, based on previous research (i.e., Katie Price's study, the LINX2 study, Hazard sites, etc.), access, and cover type (e.g., forested, traditional valley development, mountain development)
 - Sites in GA were avoided as much as possible, simply because landcover data and Rabun County parcel map data isn't as up to date as NC data layers, making GIS modeling troublesome
 - These sites were mapped at the meeting in ArcGIS by John Chamblee, with input from Jack Webster, Rhett Jackson, and Jennifer Knoepp to create a table to match site number with site name
 - John Chamblee will produce maps that break the synoptic sample sites into 3 sections - upper Little T, mid Little T, lower Little T
 - Maury Valett and David Leigh worked on producing a materials and protocol list for the sample collection and site characterization.
 - It will require 3 groups of 6 people each to carry out the sampling scheduled for February 8-11. If it rains more than a half an inch, sampling will have to be rescheduled

- There will be a meeting early May at Coweeta to carry out an initial assessment of the findings from the first sampling in preparation for the second sampling likely to be scheduled around the first week of July.
- **Still to do:**
 - 1) **Determine who will help with the February sampling**
 - 2) **Name a team leader for each group**
 - 3) **Make sure necessary equipment is available**
- Other
 - A video conferencing tool was tested at the meeting – while there are some technical issues to resolve, the group used it effectively and with some practice it could prove a very useful indeed. Pearson, Fraterrigo and Bradford all joined the meeting at different points, and Maerz, Heppinstall and Pearson used the "breakout group" function to hold a focused discussion on sampling birds.
 - The Coweeta Science Advisory will be meeting on a monthly basis at least up until the Summer 2009 Meeting to resolve several outstanding issues pertaining to data access and management, ongoing research activities, and future planning.
 - The Coweeta LTER Summer meeting will likely take place end of June or beginning of July most likely to coincide with the second synoptic sampling event. The group will be polled to make the final determination.
 - The LTER All Scientists meeting will be held in Estes Park, CO on Sept 13-16. The schedule has not yet been released, but should be available soon. No information is yet available on central funding to support travel to the meeting, but as in years past it is very likely that it will target graduate students. There will be some site-level funding available as well.

PIs Present:

Jackson
 Gragson
 Hepinstall
 Heynen
 Leigh
 Pringle
 Bolstad
 Elliott
 Knoepp
 Ford
 Band
 Vose
 Webster
 Maerz
 Mohan
 Swank
 Depken
 Valett
 Clark

Other staff: Love, Meador, Chamblee, Harper, Cladis, Poindexter