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Site Information Manager-Network Office Exchanges

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What does an LTER Network Exchange mean for LTER Information Managers? In recognition of the benefits derived from having individual LTER site members directly involved with network activities, a mechanism for short-term fellowship support has been identified within the framework of the LTER Network Office. A part of the goal to improve connectivity and communication is addressed by the ongoing collaboration with the National Partnership for Advanced Computational Infrastructure (NPACI) which is working to make high-performance environments more generally available. NPACI Funds have been made available to support individuals to work on projects that will accelerate the accessibility of LTER Network data for modeling and synthesis activities. Two pilot projects supported in this manner include ClimDB and SiteDB which are prototype modules of the Network Information System (NIS).

Access to climate data is critical to many cross-site and modeling studies in the LTER Network. The North Temperate Lakes LTER has served as the test development site for the ClimDB prototype through the efforts of Barbara Benson, NTL data manager, and Robin Stubbs, NTL programmer. Robin migrated the ClimDB prototype from the ORACLE database at NTL to Microsoft SQLserver at the Network Office in February of 1999.

Descriptive information about the sites is another critical component of any modeling effort in the LTER Network. The site description database and interface prototype, SiteDB, addresses this need. The Palmer LTER data manager, Karen Baker, is receiving support to further develop SiteDB by exploring network tools available for database descriptions and co-ordinating with GTOS efforts. Starting in 1999, her efforts also include exploration of communication structures such as the network web structure, working document areas, figure archives, electronic newsletter template, and network registration forms as well as establishment of partnerships between information management and education.

These pilot efforts have focused on NIS development activities, but future projects are not limited to NIS work. The Network Office will strive to identify and make available funds for these kinds of activities. Data Managers working on LTER Network oriented projects may inquire about opportunities for support to James Brunt (jbrunt@lternet.edu) or Robert Waide (rwaide@lternet.edu) by outlining a project that would benefit from

network support in the form of salary support for a site data manager or programmer, travel of network office personnel to the site and/or travel of site personnel to the Network Office. NIS related projects should continue to be routed through the NIS working group and the Data Management Committee.