

on-line ecological data and an early leader in developing ecological metadata standards.

The LTER Associate Director for Information Management recently attended a meeting at the USGS Center for Biological Informatics (CBI) in Denver with some of the NBII staff to outline some of the mutually beneficial results to be had from an interaction between LTER and BRD/NBII. During the meeting, four areas of possible collaboration and cooperation were discussed:

#### **Ecological Metadata Development**

- ♦ NBII is leading the BDWG that is developing FGDC compatible biological metadata standards
- ♦ Both LTER and NBII are working on methods of making disparate metadata interoperable

#### **Education, Outreach, and Training**

- ♦ NBII metadata training efforts
- ♦ LTER data management training efforts

#### **Regional Collaboration Possibilities**

- ♦ NBII is taking the approach of developing regional nodes to support their data clearinghouse function
- ♦ Would fit with the LTER model of regional data centers

#### **National Collaboration Possibilities**

- ♦ Partner and cooperate in critical and applicable areas
- ♦ Leverage existing limited funding
- ♦ Reduce reinvention
- ♦ Share technical information
- ♦ NBII participation in the nascent bioinformatics consortium
- ♦ Individuals within NBII can serve as PI's on collaborative grant proposals

As a result of this discussion two initial action items were identified: 1. LTER will have representation on the BDWG. John Porter (VCR) will be the unofficial representative until the Information Management committee can appoint one. 2. NBII will have an opportunity to interact directly with LTER information managers.

Anne Frondorf, National Program Manager for NBII, will attend the LTER Data Management Committee Meeting in August, 1999 and present information about the NBII effort to the broader data management group. At this meeting a subgroup will work with Anne to try and develop the details of some of the broader participation in the areas outlined above. ♦

## **LTER Information Manager–Network Office Exchanges**

*Karen Baker, Palmer LTER and James Brunt, LTER Network Office*

The LTER Network Office and the National Partnership for Advanced Computational Infrastructure (NPACI) have developed a mechanism to support short-term fellowships for Information Managers from LTER Sites to work at the Network Office. Direct involvement in Network-level activities, improving connectivity and communication, and making high-performance computing environments more generally available are the goals of the fellowships.

Participating individuals will work on projects that will accelerate the accessibility of LTER Network data for modeling and synthesis activities. Two pilot projects targeted for this activity include ClimDB and SiteDB, which are prototype modules of the Network Information System (NIS). The exchange is to permit data managers to work on projects together with the network office. ClimDB and SiteDB were two ongoing projects in immediate need of coordination with the Network Office so these projects will be the first to benefit from the exchange.

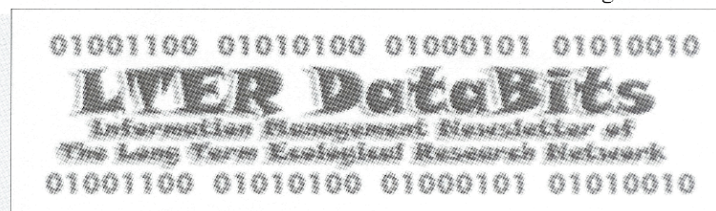
Access to climate data is critical to many cross-site and modeling studies in the LTER Network. The North Temperate Lakes LTER has served as the test development site for the ClimDB prototype through the efforts of Barbara Benson, NTL data manager, and Robin Stubbs, NTL programmer. As a part of the fellow-

ship program, Robin moved the ClimDB prototype from the ORACLE database at NTL to the Microsoft SQLserver at the Network Office in February of 1999.

Descriptive information about the sites is another critical component of any multi-site modeling or synthesis effort. Karen Baker, the Palmer LTER data manager, and Darrell Blodgett, the Bonanza Creek LTER data manager, are developing the Site Description Database (SiteDB), which will address this need, in coordination with Network GTOS efforts. Karen Baker is receiving support for SiteDB work as well as support for exploring communication structures such as the LTER Network Web organization, working document areas, figure archives, electronic newsletter templates, and registration forms. She will also work on ways to establish 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). Interested data managers should submit an outline for a project that would benefit from network support. Include details regarding the use 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 will continue to be defined and coordinated through the NIS working group and the Data Management Committee. ♦



### **New Design for DataBits**

DataBits, the LTER Data Manager newsletter, has been revived. The newsletter was developed in 1990 as a mechanism for the LTER sites to share information. Publication continued through 1994 under the editorship of John Porter (VCR). A visit by Karen Baker (PAL) to the Network Office catalyzed the plan to recreate DataBits. A prototype was devel-

oped, built upon the concepts of modular design, online publication, co-editorship as well as both inreach and outreach opportunities. The redesign for Spring99 DataBits was developed in conjunction with Marshall White (NET), a part-time graphic designer, who works with Patty Sprott (NET) to produce the online version of the LTER *Network News*. ♦