

# MINUTES

## NORTHERN GREAT PLAINS INVENTORY & MONITORING NETWORK BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Conference Call

9:00-10:00am MT, July 28, 2003

### Members Participating

Dan Licht (lead) – Network I&M Coordinator  
Phyllis Adams – Regional I&M Coordinator  
Ruthann Knudson – Agate Fossil Beds NM  
Andy Banta – Fort Union Trading Post NHS  
Brian Kenner (on behalf of Bill Supernaugh) – Badlands NP

### Members Absent

none

### Also in Attendance

none

### Call Purpose and Background

The call was a periodic call to update the Board on developments and status of the I&M Program. Licht emailed out a list of talking points prior to the call.

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Licht discussed FY04 funding and the uncertainties regarding the monitoring funds, i.e., whether the amount of Vital Signs funds would be \$150k, \$250k, or some other amount. He stated that the inventory funds would be \$197k in FY04; however, that would be the last year of those funds.

Licht discussed the possibility of Mt. Rushmore as a permanent home for the program. He stated that Superintendent Striker was very supportive and excited to make Mt. Rushmore the permanent home for the I&M Program, and that Superintendent Striker had some long term plans that would provide the space needed by the I&M Program. Licht asked the other Board members if he should continue to pursue the park as a permanent home. They said he should.

Licht stated that after many months of flip-flopping that personnel in the MWRO had decided they would only classify the Data Manager position at a FPL GS-11. Licht

proposed not pursuing the GS-12 grade any further, and to use the benchmark GS-11 Data Manager PD from the Resources Career website. The other Board members supported that proposed action. Licht said he would start on it right away. Knudson and Banta recommended that Bill Supernaugh discuss with the MWR Regional Director the problems the I&M Program has been having in hiring the type of personnel they feel they need to complete the job.

Licht stated that he had offered the Biological Technician position to Dr. Marcia Wilson and that she accepted. He stated that her EOD was September 7. Adams proposed that she be asked to attend the National I&M Conference in Washington D.C., scheduled for the week of August 18. Licht said he would contact her in regards to it.

Licht stated that they need to act soon on the Network Coordinator position, but he felt he needed to not be directly involved because of potential conflict of interest. Adams agreed to work with Bill Supernaugh to get the paperwork started.

Licht stated that he had requested from all Superintendents in the Network a representative for the Technical Committee. He stated that a few park Superintendents had still not responded.

Licht stated that the Heartlands I&M Network was considering significant reorganizing. Such reorganizing could affect the structure of the Prairie Cluster Long-term Monitoring Program (LTEM), and hence, the ongoing monitoring efforts at Scotts Bluff NM and Agate Fossil Beds NM. Licht stated that when he was at a recent Heartlands workshop he strongly stated that both parks would like their monitoring by the LTEM program to continue uninterrupted until the Northern Great Plains I&M Program is fully operational.

Licht asked if the current level of communication and coordination with the Board was adequate. He stated he wanted to keep them involved, but did not want to burden them. He also asked if regularly scheduled conference calls were needed. The Board responded that the current level of coordination was adequate and conference calls on a as-needed basis would suffice.

Licht stated that Dr. Amy Symstad of USGS-BRD had offered to develop the plant portion of the Vital Signs monitoring plan. Dr. Symstad would be able to work on the project almost full time between now and next spring. Knudson and Banta recommended that Licht develop a formal agreement for Dr. Symstad's involvement in the project. Licht also stated that he had decided to develop an agreement with Dr. Nels Troelstrup of South Dakota State University to develop the aquatic portion of the plan. The Board was supportive of this, especially in light of the poor response by other potential investigators. Knudson and Banta recommended that Licht develop a plan and timetable for completing the Vital Signs plan. Licht said he will do so.

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## **Followup**

Licht contacted Marcia Wilson and she volunteered to attend the National I&M Conference. She attended the conference with the I&M Program picking up her expenses. She completed a volunteer form for Mount Rushmore NMEM.

Licht shared with Superintendent Striker of Mount Rushmore NMEM the Board's interest in the park being the permanent home of the I&M Program. Licht and Striker agreed to continue to work together on the issue.

A formal agreement was developed between Dan Licht of the NPS and Dr. Amy Symstad of USGS-BRD for purposes of Dr. Symstad's developing the vegetation component of the Vital Signs monitoring plan. The agreement is in the I&M Program files.

Bill Supernaugh sent a detailed email to Chris Bernthal, Associate Regional Director for Administration, about the problems the I&M Program has had in classification and recruitment (e.g., not being able to hire at the grades they feel they need, long delays in classification).

As of the writing of these minutes, Licht had not completed a timetable or plan for development of the Vital Signs monitoring plan.

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**Drafted by:** Dan Licht  
**Drafted on:** 9/11/2003

**Finalized by:**  
**Finalized on:**