

ESA Vegetation Classification Panel  
Annual Business Meeting Agenda  
Friday, August 7, 2020

August 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020

*[meeting times listed in ET]*

Participants: Jill Parsons, Chelsea Fowler, Maria Sharova, Catherine O’Riordan, Este Muldavin, Jack Triepke, Julie Evens, Rachelle Boul, Thomas Wentworth, Alexa McKerrow, Carol Spurrier, Don Faber-Langendoen, Kyle Palmquist, Lisa Kluesner, Pat Comer, Scott Franklin, Linda Spencer, Mario Bretfeld, Michelle DePrenger Levin

**11:00-12:00pm**      **Session one:**

Welcome new Panel members!

- Introductions, Quick VegPanel Overview, Budget Update, FGDC Update (Jill Parsons, Este Muldavin, Don Faber-Langendoen, Alexa McKerrow)
- ESA AM feedback
  - 30 minutes Q&A’s were short, often went over by 20 minutes
  - Attended by 39 people at the peak
  - **Maria** will post video presentations on panel website
  - **Action item: Jill** will find out if we can download the Q&As and any other meeting products (mixer, PSRN presentations, email list from booth, etc.)
  - **Tom** will follow up with presenters to see if they are ok with having presentations uploaded online
  - Hard to know who looked and what the engagement was
  - Q&As were well attended
  - We might need a new kind of training—is there an online field trip option?

Organized Oral Session Debrief (Scott Franklin)

- Presentation Reuse
- Mixer outcome
  - Kyle managed this
  - 40 participants at peak, lively discussion
  - Provide opportunities for DEI, good feedback about how to do
    - Social media is a good way to do this
  - Lisa will be secretary/treasurer, replacing Loretta
  - New student representative, Samuel Jordan PhD student at ASU
  - Who’s taking over next year??
- Booth feedback
  - We received no questions at all, exhibit had a scavenger hunt and that was popular!
- Budget Update
  - Additional 25K from Forest Service to support peer review process
  - Travel support for regional meetings

- USGS extension on budget year and there is 40k remaining in that budget year
- A lot of funding for that agreement is for travel
- Exec committee should discuss divert travel money to staff time
- Travel funds is an end of day discussion—how to pivot travel funds to continue to complete tasks of NVC, we want to keep meeting goals despite not even

#### FGDC Update

- Subcommittee meeting was recent, not a lot of activity
- Henry came from land fire spoke and talked about developing a prospectus for land fire process for data and mapping
- Panel working on a comms plan

**12:00-12:30pm**      **Break**

**12:30-2:00pm**      **Session two:**

#### Education and Outreach Updates (*Pat Comer, Alexa McKerrow*)

- Welcome to Niba and Jasna
- Communications Plan
  - Pat chairs Education and Outreach
  - Parks service suggested a plan not just one webinar
- **Action Item:** bring together education and outreach subcommittee, **Maria** will send a Doodle Poll for late August/early September
- We know what we think is important but we don't know all groups or organizations to get agencies to be interested
- **Action item:** Have Jasna and Niba watch talks from Annual Meeting
- **Action Item: Todd** will share CA vision document—Cal State Northridge did an economic estimate did vegetation assessments and what is involved in that
- **Action item: Maria** attached the draft communication to an email to the panel
- Focus on products as well as plan? What kinds of products?

#### Peer Review Board Updates (*Don Faber-Langendoen*)

- Cross walking for the NVC Updates
  - State cross walking of same species to compare what each state determined was comparable
- Proceeding and Scholastica Update
- The goal is to publish these as formal publications in the Proceedings of the USNVC
  - The Alaskan report (NVC138) has been submitted
  - Great Plains report (NVC125) has just been copyedited and we'll revise and then submit.
  - The other three (WI and MI State Classifications, NE States, Appalachian Forests) are not as far along but we'll be working on those this year. By publishing these reports, we provide references for all concepts that are new to the USNVC as well as being transparent about how the revisions were made.

- Regional meetings and the proceedings
  - There have been several meetings over the course of the year with regional groups
  - **Action item:** Below is a list of volunteers for regional areas for **Don** to contact :
    - **Todd, Lisa** volunteer for Alaska
    - **Scott, Lisa** volunteer for Great Plains
    - **Alexa** Northeast
    - **Kyle** GP or NE
- Peer Review Managing Editor Update (Jill)
  - Don has not been using Scholastica very much, its better suited for small changes
  - If there are more small scale edits in the future it will be helpful
  - Chelsea came up with the new formatting on the proceedings, she came up with style and guidelines for the Singhurst article
  - We are reformatting but there used to be issues, many big ones are now resolved
  - Issues resolved: now you can upload supporting documents
- Peer Review Board members and the Panel
  - Regional editors are static, organized by region and subregion
  - Editors are picked based on collective knowledge
- A major part of the work over this past year or so has been the alliance review process, which was approved in August of 2019 (based on pilot testing of alliance review process in the previous year. The progress between January of 2019 and July of 2020 (with our work in Alaska from 2017-2018 grandfathered in). Doing the math, there are:
  - 16 states (32%) with >95% alliances reviewed
  - 9 states (18%) with ~ 75% of alliances reviewed
  - 6 states (12%) with ~ 50% of alliances reviewed (CA because it already has state alliance concepts in place, but review is needed).

Proceedings have been reformatted

- Can now upload supporting documents through proceedings site
- Additional tweaks to the proceedings are coming in order to make it more usable and recognizable
- **Action item: Jill** will contact the webmaster to list associate editors on the editorial board of the Proceedings

**2:00-3:00pm**

**Break**

**3:00-5:00pm**

**Session three:**

Nomenclature Task Group Update (*Jack Triepke*)

- Group status, challenges, and goals
- Open for people to join
- Revise nomenclature guide to help standardized terminology and common names of type class naming

- Process: reviewed nomenclature rules, revise rules to form terminology review, reviewed list of terms, revised the guide, review, final edits, present to NVC Veg Panel
- Original list of terms came from hierarchy—terms that were already in nomenclature guide were tagged
- Discussion about dedication to scientific naming conventions vs colloquial recognizability
  - What about international recognizability?
  - Consistency is key
- **Next steps** are for Nomenclature to go through a definition phase, through that process consider international recognition, get to full panel feedback
- If there are strong thoughts about rules that will affect classification
- **Action items: Maria** will work with **Jack** to set up the next nomenclature meeting

#### Data Management and VegBank (*Alexa McKerrow*)

- Larger FGDC question
- LANDFIRE
  - Landfire remap—USNVC as a standard
    - 3 options, 1 to map to standards they had and walk to USNVC
    - Use USNVC and crosswalk to ecological systems
    - OR do both independently
  - Conus wide map, the existing vegetation type map is downloadable, or NVC version of the map
  - Started with plot data, developed a key, had a separate auto-key process that plotted to the groups. There were a series of QA steps
  - There is an opportunity to write a prospectus (see draft attached) guided by Veg Panel to do a review of the process for integrating the USNVC into the land fire mapping effort. A lot of downstream products are tied to current classification
  - The first go around with landfire we had not developed the ruderal level of the USNVC so now the way we're handling transitional veg it's using the ruderal concepts. A challenging aspect of land cover mapping but it's a USNVC strength
  - Range maps: plots got labelled, hexagon maps that were labelled with each type. EPA range maps also created.
  - State Level review: Don is working with individual states to crosswalk
  - We need to be aware of small sample sizes—what information is left off? Post mapping reviews: an ecologist would identify types that only occur in certain regions, these are things we would clean up.
  - These are important to consider—data gaps, etc. Not all groups have the same amount of data
  - Evaluation—if panel were to take this on, would this be the first group to evaluate the quality?

- What are the benefits to Veg Panel to be a part of this? Any downfalls? Pros: NVC will get used and applied and we get feedback. If we get consistent hierarchical keys and they are widely used that is a big product and benefit. If we can learn about where plot data are and where they need to be collected. The NVC is probably the best place for people to get involved.
  - **Next Steps** Exec will discuss further and maybe move forward with a subcommittee that works on a prospectus
    - Scott, Pat, Julie, Alexa, and Este
  - **Action Item:** **Alexa** will send out a doodle poll to help lead this
- Wrap-up, Long Term Goals, Next Steps, and Adjourn

- Long Term Goals
  - Landfire
  - Don does not have update about databases—data management committee will figure out aspects that are part of VegBank
  - Sage brush is upcoming in Spring 2021, these funds need to get spent by next July
  - **Action Item:** **Don** will facilitate regional editor meeting, peer review meeting this Fall, **Maria** will facilitate logistics
  - Winter meeting for this panel in December or January
    - Some people have to use airline credits by December—we may lose that money/those credits
    - Technical thoughts about meeting again? Year 2 funding from USGS was extended and using some travel money from year 2 (which will expire in March)
    - **Action Item:** **Jill and exec** will look into travel money reallocation for other purposes as well as expiring flight credits
  - 5 year process for alliance level and changes that may be happening simultaneously, there will be overlap with workshops and independent suggestions/changes. We want to be flexible but we also don't want to change things too much. How are we going to keep people comfortable with changes?
    - Top levels will change rarely, lower levels are dynamic because of the 5 year review, after that is done then groups will be locked down
    - People expect to find this info in provenance, and also communication, websites and things like that
    - People who are on the ground are not necessarily going to proceedings website—it might be helpful to run targeted workshops
    - Where are the dynamics in the classification system happening, and where is there a reasonable part of the country that it would be effective to run a webinar for a whole section of the country
    - Another idea is to make a video for each of those proceedings—ignite style, where videos are 3 minutes each and then people can visit the proceeding to learn more

- **Action Item: Dave** will review **Carol's** crosswalks as will **Todd** for Western
- **Action Item: Linda** can dump out dominant species and run SAA and SRM of species
- **Action Item:** Communication team will work this feedback into communication plan
- Short term
  - Tom wants to write a series of white papers that may go to Congress for funding some visions focusing on sustainability. Tom wants to write one on veg classification and inventory.
  - **Action Item: Tom** will be sending ESA a draft of a white paper and asking for suggestions
- Some presentations were international and what are panels thoughts about international communication should there be
  - 6 weeks from now expect communication for another meeting
  - Extra context: Panel meetings usually happen every 6 weeks, and then annual meetings usually last 2 days and there are work sessions for technical questions/tasks with nomenclature or proceedings