

CHAPTER 16: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

C.M. Laney, K.S. Baker, D.P.C. Peters, and K.W. Ramsey

INTRODUCTION

The EcoTrends Project was initiated to aid researchers interested in synthetic studies of long-term continental scale and national-level patterns in ecological drivers and responses. Hundreds of standardized, documented datasets from many sites and scientific fields were needed to meet this organizational goal. Generating comparative data at many sites across several organizational networks and finding novel solutions to technical and organizational challenges required dynamic, collaborative work with all project participants, including researchers and information managers (e.g. Lee et al. 2006, Edwards et al. 2007, Star and Lampland 2008, Carpenter et al. 2009, Bowker et al. in press, Baker and Millerand in press). The lessons learned from this collaborative effort contributed to our understanding of contemporary ecological information management (i.e., the management of digital ecological data via interconnected organizational, social, and technical arrangements and systems). Based on these lessons learned by EcoTrends participants – project leaders, researchers, and network- and site-level information managers – we present recommendations in this chapter for site-level information management and for future synthesis projects. Acronyms used in the chapter are included with their associated websites in Table 2-2 of Chapter 2.

In EcoTrends Book (in press 2010)

Long-Term Trends in Ecological Systems: A Basis for Understanding Responses to Global Change. Peters, DPC, Laney CM, Lugo AE, Collins SL, Driscoll CT, Groffman PM, Grove JM, Knapp AK, Kratz TK, Ohman MD, Waide RB, and Yao J. 201X. USDA Agricultural Research Service Publication No. XX. Washington, D.C.

Contents

Introduction (Chp 1)

The History and Organization of the EcoTrends Project (C.M. Laney, D.P.C. Peters, K.S. Baker, K.W. Ramsey (Chp 2)

Cross-site comparisons of ecological responses to global change drivers (Chp 3-10)

Long-term trends in global change drivers and responses at site and continental scales (Chp 11-14)

Management and policy implications of cross-site, long-term studies (K.M. Havstad and J.R. Brown) (Chp 15)

Recommendations for Data Management (C.M. Laney, K.S. Baker, D.P.C. Peters, and K.W. Ramsey) (Chp 16)

Long-term research across sites, ecosystems, and disciplines: synthesis and research needs (D.P.C. Peters) (Chp 17)