



March 18, 2013

<http://www.ecosystemresearch.org>

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Dear Colleague,

As the new president of the AERC, I wanted to make contact with each representative of our member institutions to share with you the discussions of your AERC Board of Directors during our monthly conference calls, introduce your new board member, follow up on past president Dave Smith's letters describing some new activities the board has been trying that we hope improve the services provided by the organization to members—in addition to existing services, and to ask for your input and involvement in running the organization as a critical member.

First, though, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to our immediate past president, Dave Smith, for his strong leadership in making some major improvements to the operation of and services provided by the AERC to its members, that I outline below. I also would like to thank him, as well as past presidents of the AERC, for mentoring me in my new role.

Here are some of the highlights and improvements that were implemented during the last two years; we have:

- Re-vamped our Web site (www.ecosystemresearch.org).
- Experimented with ways to broadcast and record for future viewing the Congressional Briefing (via speaker's slide presentations)/Research Symposium (live Webcast: <http://www.ecosystemresearch.org/2012-meeting/index.htm>) along with our Annual Business Meeting (live Webex-type login) to Association member representatives who are unable to attend these meetings in person.
- Sponsored two Briefings/Symposia that have explored important scientific and social issues; that is (i) the Importance of Ecosystem Services to this Country (2011), and (ii) the Role of Ecosystem Science in National Security (2012).
- Coupled our 2012 annual meeting with NEON's annual meeting to create a more efficient and collaborative joint meeting atmosphere for our members and colleagues.

The Board would like to continue these activities, although joining with NEON can only occur when its annual meeting also takes place in Washington D.C.

At our 2012 Business Meeting held on the morning of 19 October, the Board and a number of representatives from AERC member organizations met at the Smithsonian's Ripley Center. It was great to have another six or so members logged into the meeting remotely.

A key event at the meeting was the election of Nancy Huntly to the Board of Directors as Member at Large for a two-year term. Nancy is the Director of the Ecology Center at Utah State University and recent NSF

Program Officer in the Division of Environmental Biology. The AERC will benefit tremendously from her long experience and activity in ecosystem science, and I welcome her enthusiastically. We also said good-bye to Member at Large Kristen Vanderbilt (University of New Mexico) who served on the Board during the last couple of years and injected new ideas for improving the AERC Web site during her time. I wish her well and hope she will remain involved in the AERC. Nomination for service as a volunteer on the AERC Board is open to anyone in any AERC member organization.

Another major topic of discussion at the 2012 business meeting, and during the past couple of years (and one that will likely continue), has centered on examining AERC's mission and services provided to the ecosystem sciences community (i.e., our members), and (a) how to get people from member institutions more involved in on-going activities (annual Congressional Briefing and Symposium in Washington DC) as well as (b) adapting and expanding the activities of the organization to enhance the effectiveness of the AERC. For example, some possibilities include: sponsoring a symposium or special session at the annual meeting of the ESA, annual fall meeting of the AGU, or the new (begun in 2012) AGU Science Policy conference; creating a booth presentation on the AERC that can be taken to society meetings and manned by AERC members attending these meetings; or holding an evening social/mixer at ESA, AGU, or other society meetings.

We are asking you and other AERC members from our 35 member organizations for help in selecting speakers from our own ranks for our upcoming October 2013 Congressional Briefing and Symposium. AERC Board is presently in the process of identifying a topic and possible speakers. The board specifically seeks your input in this process. The Board would like to continue AERC's tradition of inviting great speakers from the large pool represented within AERC member institutions. Typically, topics are chosen to highlight the importance of ecosystem science (broadly defined) to policy discussions that the U.S. Congress and the administration are, or will be, having in the current year. The topic presently being discussed among Board members relates to "The Role of Ecosystem Science in Adaptation to Climate Change". Examples of topics of past Briefings/Symposia, and speakers we've had, can be seen on AERC's Web site (<http://www.ecosystemresearch.org>).

The focus of much of the discussion among AERC Board members has been to identify ways to encourage input and regular participation of AERC's membership, especially you. The Board would like to hear your thoughts on how we can improve our effectiveness in meeting our stated mission (www.ecosystemresearch.org), or perhaps how the mission should be changed, and whether membership should be expanded to include environmental sciences other than ecosystem science specifically.

Finally, I would like to thank you for the advice and perspectives you may have shared with me or other members of the AERC Board on ways to improve the effectiveness of the AERC. As you know, we've implemented some of these during Dave Smith's presidency, and I look forward to initiating several new activities.

So, thanks again for your continued involvement in AERC! I look forward to keeping in contact, and please do not hesitate to contact me for any reason.

With best regards,



John ("Jay") A. Arnone III
AERC President