



## Phenology Network Leaders Agenda and Discussion Guide

**1 hour discussion –via GoToMeeting**  
**Meeting began – 10:00 a (AZ Time)**

### **Present on the call:**

LoriAnne, Sandy DiSimone (Audubon Starr Ranch), Jody Einerson (Oregon Season Trackers), Esperanza Stancioff (Signs of the Seasons Maine), Kerissa Battle (New York Phenology Project), Mary Goshorn (Denver Botanic Garden)

### **Celebrate an achievement!**

- Sandy - Audubon volunteers have been contacting her with concerns about data accuracy. They want to make sure they are doing everything correctly and feel as though they'd like more information on data standardization, QA/QC, etc. Exciting to see them very serious, loving science, and understanding the scientific method.
- Jody – She did an evaluation with the students she worked with during this school year - exciting to see how meaningful this citizen science project is to them and how involved they became. She made a connection to a researcher, and they really felt they were part of a bigger program. Half-year participation for high school kids and younger kids did all year.
- Esperanza – of all the years of training (5 season) training time to entry of data, this has been the best group so far – it has been hard to get volunteers to keep going for more than one year. The team feels they have done a better job training and personally checking in with people. They also spent more time during training on data entry. They also were able to do a phenology hike up Cadillac Mountain in Acadia NP with researchers who are looking at historical data sets and compare it to current data. 2-3 hour trainings.
- Kerissa – experimented with new training – spoke at a conference contacted by orgs who wanted to help set up a monitoring program. Talked about benefits of regional network. Asked one of the sites to host a workshop and do an installation with leaders of each org who wanted to do their own. She designed it as a step by step how to and train the trainer program. Planned to sign everyone up online with NN, start inputting data, everything worked really well except for technology fail b/c the internet was not strong enough for everyone to be online. What worked well? – going out with tags, piloting the trail, set up beforehand on the phone and was a great experience.
- Mary – Did some recent trainings with folks and has had a lot of new interest. Also used an outdoor session that worked really well.

### **Announcements:**

- **Reminder** we selected the first Friday of every month as our standing date for this meeting. We are having this meeting early because next Friday is a holiday.

### **Discussion Topic: Training Methods and Materials**

- Jody – seasonal timing is difficult during certain times of the year. What to do? They created several pages that have observation/data sheets with pictures of the plants in each phenophase. They have students work through it in the classroom instead of going outside. Curious to know how people get volunteers comfortable in one session that lasts 2.5 hours? People are still really uncomfortable after the workshop it seems
  - Esperanza also uses [phenophase definitions and photos with the datasheets](#), with each side by side– Similar to the [California Phenology Project photo guides](#). They also take samples some of the hardest species and force it to grow (forsythia). They use this in class to go through each phenophase in great detail. They also do a simulation of animals and leave lots of time for questions. Also her team connects cohorts. They have contact info, send out monthly updates and make themselves available, reaching out individually to people who may have struggled a bit during the training.
- Sandy – Do vols go to a certain location with a trail for the training and after? (Esp) No, vols mostly go home to their backyard, schoolyard, community areas. 80% are in their own yards. They also send an online survey for feedback. People often then submit photos of their own with questions about phenophases they are seeing and her team takes the time to answer them – finding info from a variety of sources including botanists and other staff.
- Sandy – Doing an advanced training is a good idea. Birds are a lot easier to ID phenology. Plant phenophases are harder. Photos really help them understand what they are seeing. They find that going outside with trainees builds their confidence when

calibrate with staff. Over the next couple of seasons and years, host advanced trainings in the field a few times.

- Kerissa – She hosts a big indoor session at the beginning of the season before phenology begins to happen, then hosts a follow up field session within a few weeks of the initial training. She builds these field session dates into the schedule ahead of time so participants know to expect that they will come back with structure of support over the next few months. Emails from site admins help with tips about what, phenologically, is coming up – they are creating an almanac of all the species so that people can see what’s on the list and what is coming. Having photos of what is coming is super helpful.
- LA – Have you found that the initial session can/should be about 2-4 hours, with field component and then follow up sessions for about 1.5? Yes, seems to be about right.
- Kerissa – plays the “phenology genie game” during the get to know you session – go around (under 15 people)- each person shares what got them into nature/observation - a person or experience. Then, asks them to each describe what the landscape looks like around the time of their birthday. Has the group guess what the exact date of each person’s birthday is based upon what they describe. Works out pretty well. Goes of the species on the list in the powerpoint. Have a meal together during the session if time allows.
- Jody also likes meal too. Native plant id game during lunch – gets them a sense of how well they are doing with species id, guides the afternoon. Starts at 10 am and has time for lunch built in.
- General, vetted by us, structure of workshops
  - o **Ice breaker** (Esperanza uses the calendar activity. Long piece of paper with the months of the year. Ask they to create phenology calendar for their area. She can send us the activity. On the SoS website – resources for educators. Kerissa-genie game).
  - o **PPT slides** tailoring to local area, using local examples, climate change communication in in there. Ecological and biological connections.
  - o **Break or lunch with activity**
  - o **Activity** – with going through the process of recording data, hands on – either indoors or out. Include animal examples
  - o **Online data entry** – laptops maybe. But often just one example in front.
  - o **Eval/Survey** verbally, follow up email within 2 days, share resources, stories of local phenology, materials in writing – guide produced, following the NPN stuff
- Question from Esperanza – more vols wanting to use the mobile app and they’ve been having problems with the data syncing. LA will send out some info from Sara on temporary fix, although our contracted app designer is working on the issues now. Maybe in the interim, remind participants that if they are using the app to go back into the computer to make sure it is in there.
- Jody - Also asked them for a log in at the beginning of each session for shared apps. LA said she had added that to the list.

#### **PRO-TIPS**

- Photo guides help
- Personal communications
- Accept photos with questions so that vols can feel more comfortable
- Follow up field sessions scheduled ahead of time
- Forced blooming in the classroom is a great idea. Makes it easier to see variation
- Too hard to have group more than 10 do registration online during the session

**Meeting adjourned 11:04 a (AZ time)**