

IAC Meeting May 6 2020

Attendees: Cat, Deb, Gil, Molly, Jillian, Erica, Allie, Ryan Allen, Diego Barroso, Norine Yeung, Jen Yost, Bruce Liebermann, Katie Pearson, David Blackburn, Ashley Dineen, Petra Sierwald, Andy Miller, Mike Denslow, Natalya Lopez, Amy Kaesemeyer, Jen Zaspel, Matthew Pace

Agenda/Discussion

Summit 2020

- Summit will be virtual/remote
- Will be ADBC Summit
 - Biodiversity summit cancelled/postponed to 2021
 - Sept 23-25, with 22nd being optional
- Trying to keep it to two hours per day to conserve mental bandwidth
- NOT asking for presentations from retired TCNs
- Brief presentations from active TCNs
- Last day we have commitments with Reed Beaman and Peter McCartney to be a part of the conversation, generate questions

COVID19

- How has the pandemic affected workflows across the TCN sphere?
- Many tasks require in-person activity, going into the office/university/museum, but that is not possible in many locations now - what now?
 - Georeferencing, transcribing, virtual outreach for education and engagement
- Common themes of tension, worry about the future, worry about students (what will happen to students? Interns?), worry about when we're allowed back to work, will it be too soon, will we be forced, will it impede progress even further?
 - Expecting a lot of disruption upon going back to work
- Image backlogs are turning into a blessing in disguise for some, e.g. BRIT
 - 55,000 image backlog with BRIT, collaborating with UTexas at Austin, utilizing students that would otherwise be out of work to transcribe all of these images
 - Big hurdle is people who cannot get into the herbaria, people waiting on imaging stations that have yet to arrive, or needing equipment that they cannot buy
- Topic of "going back to work" is becoming a plenary session at SPNHC 2020 virtual conference - it's a hot topic, everyone is affected and worrying/speculating
- Imaging with oVert is effectively ceased, but there is a backlog
 - Very large increase in data downloads
 - Tenfold increase from last quarter in Morphosource downloads
 - Huge uptick in value in digital data being produced - likely from more people working remotely on data
- InvertEBase has done similar; direct collection work has stopped
 - Taking specimens out of the museum physically takes time, paperwork, permissions, is dangerous to the specimens - children, pets, other environmental hazards found at home that aren't present in museums
 - Focus on georeferencing - delivering more than promised as a result
 - Another focus on database cleanup

- If people work at home, they may need access to the institution's IT system, which can pose issues both legally and institutionally due to necessary permissions for access to internal networks (VPN)
 - Imperative to have this VPN access if working from home for the long term
- Image uploads also in progress, but takes a lot of time - file renaming, linking to the correct records. Taking longer than expected, but doable at home
- Keeping track of how efficient these activities are to determine which activities are most efficient when done at home vs which activities are inefficient at home
- CAP reports advantage of having the collections managed live in Symbiota portal
 - Transcriptions, georeferencing easily and effectively done from home
- Getting servers up has been challenging, especially in the case of PILSBRY - issues with imports from China due to the pandemic, made worse by shipping to Hawaii - takes a lot of time
- Volunteer work, especially via Notes from Nature, useful for transcribing

Plans to re-open?

- Field Museum detailing doorknobs to determine how often they get touched and by how many people
 - Measuring distances between workstations, strictly controlling who will be working there
- Many museums closed until at least the end of the month - possibly longer
 - Phased releases for people coming back in, but unlikely to have a full release of all employees at once anytime soon
- TCNs with many participating institutions won't have uniform back to work patterns due to institutions spanning many states
- Some institutions have rotations - some employees coming in 2 days per week, not allowed more than 3 hours inside a building at a time
- COVID testing? Some institutions offering it, some are not (yet?); will it be mandatory?
- Will social distancing be built into workflows? What will in-person/in-institution work look like after we are allowed back to work? One person per room? Staggered time in rooms? Time limits?

What next?

- We (iDigBio) want ideas on what can be done - including what we can do - to help the community during these times
 - Spreadsheet to submit ideas for ADBC activities - we want input!
 - We don't want to lose momentum despite travel being halted indefinitely
 - Workshops, webinars, sharing virtual resources, virtual collection tours, etc - anything to keep momentum and to keep making progress within our community
- How is this affecting the timeline for notifications for 2020 TCN awards?
 - Theoretically, no change in announcements for funding, awards, etc
 - Most program officers are doing remote panels currently
- An online class associated with CAP has been launched this quarter - an option for those at herbaria, students pick a species, research it, georeference records for that species, and score phenology on the images
 - Students provided R scripts so students can plug taxa in and look at flowering time shifts with climate data
 - Way to keep people in the collections and generate student effort, interest, engagement
 - Willing to share the curriculum so it can be modified for other institutions' uses
- iDigBio EODI has been trying to compile resources for online education and outreach