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Nebraska Earth Systems Education Network Newsletter – Winter 1996/97

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Winter 1996-1997 Newsletter

Issue Number 13

NESEN Steering Committee Charts New Course: Improving Responsiveness to Membership

The NESEN Steering Committee met Feb. 17 at the Conservation and Survey Division in Lincoln. We were very pleased by the number of K-12 teachers in attendance. Teacher input is critical to our success. Teachers attending included: M. Alfieri, B. Feurer, S. Frack, D. Geise, A. Miner, A. Musson, C. Neumann, Ed Schafer, and S. Wischmeier. Ron Bonnsetter, director of secondary science education at UNL, started the meeting with an overview of the Guiding Principles of the National Science Education Reform Efforts. Dave Gosselin then discussed NESEN's accomplishments of the past year. However, the main activity of the meeting were breakout group discussions. The group discussions focused on questions related to improving NESEN's responsiveness to its members, improving communication among members, promoting national and state visions for science education, and developing additional educational resources. These discussions indicated that NESEN needs to: develop "pods" of members throughout Nebraska who can serve as NESEN representatives and liaisons with other groups, especially ESUs; take workshops on the road; develop means of efficient access to good resources from the Internet and elsewhere; pursue more STEDII-type projects; strive to reach all earth science teachers, especially those without electronic connectivity; and encourage use of and access to the Nebraska Earth Science Video Exchange. We would also like to encourage any members who have ideas concerning NESEN and its activities to contact any steering committee member or Dave Gosselin at 402-472-8919 or gosselin@unlinfo.unl.edu.

NESEN Develops New Look for World Wide Web Site **<http://nesen.unl.edu/nesen.html>**

In February 1997, the "new" NESEN home page went live. In response to many suggestions from teachers to improve navigation and format of the homepage, we have redesigned the homepage. Frames have been dropped and replaced with image maps. These "clickable" image maps improve navigation and enhance the aesthetic qualities of the NESEN home page. Please check out the "new" NESEN home page at <http://nesen.unl.edu/nesen.html>. If you have suggestions for improvements, or have concerns, please contact Duane Mohlman at dmohlman@unlinfo.unl.edu or 402-472-7528, or Mark Mesarch at mmesarch@unlinfo.unl.edu or 402-472-5904.

Second Focused Measurement Period Relates Weather to Topography

by Mark Mesarch, Department of Agricultural Meteorology and the Conservation and Survey Division

The second two-week focused measurement period (FMP), Jan. 20-Feb. 3, involved 26 schools in weather-data collection. Another interesting weather period included warming and cooling. Some snow events provided

discussion topics between students and teachers and among schools. Many schools participated even though they had done so in the fall and spring. Most plan to use their data and other schools' data later in the year. Activities and lesson plans that accompanied the FMP dealt with weather related to topography. Many teachers said that the activities were appropriate and used good materials for intermediate-level students. A summary of data collected can be found at http://nesen.unl.edu/stedii/data_sum.html.

1997 Summer Workshop Series Announced

Included with the newsletter mailing is a list of summer workshops NESEN is offering. Workshops are: **Journey to the Center of Geology Investigating Rocks and Minerals**; **Chili Today, Hot Tamale Let's Look at Nebraska's Weather** (also offered in North Platte!); **Virtual Nebraska Putting Remotely Sensed Data to Work in the Classroom** (new). For additional information, contact Dave Gosselin at gosselin@unlinfo.unl.edu or 402-472-8919, or see the NESEN home page at <http://nesen.unl.edu/nesen.html>.

Feurer Offers Nebraska Earth Science Video Exchange

Editor's Note: Also included with this mailing is a special earth science activity designed by one of our NESEN Steering Committee Teachers, Bob Feuer, of North Bend Central Junior/Senior High School. This is an excellent activity, and we hope that our earth science teacher membership will seriously consider doing this project.

NESEN Ponders "Annual Contribution of Earth Science Lesson Plan/Activity"

To facilitate interactions between NESEN teachers, and to increase the number of earth science lesson plans and activities available to the membership, NESEN has been considering an annual donation of an earth science lesson plan/activity to NESEN. We know that every teacher has a favorite activity. Why not share it with other teachers so it can become their favorite too? We would make these lesson plans available to other NESEN members through our online data base, as well as through the annual NESEN Resources Guide and Directory. Alternative ideas include: a teacher could offer some educational resource, perhaps a unit, CD-ROM, videotape, etc., that would be available on loan to other teachers. What do you think about requiring an annual contribution of an activity as part of being a member of NESEN? We would be interested in your comments about this concept. Please forward comments to Duane Mohlman, dmohlman@unlinfo.unl.edu; or call 402-472-7528.

Lesson Plans/Activities to Include Author's Postal and E-Mail Address

As many of you know, NESEN has been developing a sizeable collection of earth science lesson plans and activities. These are currently available on our home page, but a list will also be available in the next NESEN Resources Guide and Directory. At the suggestion of one of our members, Bob Feuer, we are adding the postal and e-mail address(es) of the teacher(s) who designed the lesson plan/activity at the end of each lesson plan/activity. We hope that other teachers using them will forward their comments and/or appreciation to the teacher(s) who designed them.

NESEN Featured at Nebraska Academy of Sciences Annual Meeting

Duane Mohlman, Mark Mesarch and Dave Gosselin will be giving a presentation entitled "The Nebraska Earth Science Education Network (NESEN): Connecting University Resources and K-12 Earth Science Educators" at the 107th annual meeting of the Nebraska Academy of Sciences. The earth science sessions will be held on April 25 in Olin (Hall) Lecture Hall A at Nebraska Wesleyan at 8 a.m. The NESEN presentation is scheduled for 1:30 p.m.

NESEN Hires Additional Help

As part of NESEN's continuing collaboration with the UNL Teachers College and their preservice secondary science education program, Derek Geise, was hired to assist NESEN in February. He is from Ron Bonnstetter's secondary science methods class, and his duties will include: developing a summary of materials available from our home page. This will be geared toward assisting teachers with use of the home page and should make the home page more helpful and easier to use. Look for changes in our links summaries. This is a great place to find resources. If there are any questions, suggestions, or comments, contact Geise at 402-472-0773 or dgeise@nesen.unl.edu .

NESEN Contacts the 50 National Science Teachers Association State Chapters

NESEN has sent an introductory letter, and our new NESEN Membership Form and Information Brochure to all 50 state chapters of the National Science Teachers Association. In this letter, dated February 17, 1997, NESEN asked each state chapter to include information on NESEN and the NESEN home page address, in their respective newsletters. In return, we hope to receive similar information, including mutual links on our respective home pages. We hope that this "first contact" will generate future interaction between NESEN and the state chapters.

Newsletter was written by Duane Mohlman, Dave Gosselin and Brian Lang; and edited by Charles Flowerday, Conservation and Survey Division, University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Special contributions in this issue by Mark Mesarch, Bob Feurer and Derek Geise (who contributed the writing in the article about his hiring).