



Director's Update July 2012

This week the REACCH PNA project held two enjoyable and important activities for our membership and our stakeholders: a teachers' workshop and a project-wide field tour.

Partnering with Idaho EPSCoR and ICE Net (NASA Intermountain Climate Education Network) the REACCH PNA project co-hosted a three-day workshop for high school teachers on integrating agriculture and climate change topics into their curricula. The Northwest Climate Education Resources Workshop included lectures, hands-on activities, tours and discussions for teachers of earth science, environmental science, chemistry, physics, agriculture, biology from schools in Idaho and Washington. The teachers learned about the scope of REACCH and the climate science that supports it. They were exposed to resources for climate education and adventure learning. During a visit to one of our field sites at Cook Agronomy Farm they learned about eddy covariance flux towers and chambers to measure greenhouse gas emissions from wheat fields and saw these instruments in action. Hands-on activities included assessing insect biodiversity in wheat agroecosystems and participation in place-based learning exercises. REACCH personnel and the teachers discussed plans to post additional teacher resources on the ICE Net and REACCH websites and ways to provide teachers access to some REACCH datasets. Feedback on the workshop was enthusiastically positive. Several of the teachers will be back next year and we expect a good turnout of new teachers to join them.

We certainly enjoyed the energy, commitment, inquisitiveness and professionalism of these fine teachers. It was a pleasure to meet them and to have the benefit of their insights.

As if that were not enough for one week, we also held our first Summer Field Tour for REACCH scientists, students, undergraduate summer interns, stakeholders and advisors. The two-day event, June 19 and 20, included stops at REACCH experiments in St. John, WA, Cook Agronomy Farm, the Wilke Farm in Davenport, WA, the Jirava Farm near Ritzville and the Curtis Henning Farm. At each stop we learned about the different cropping systems experiments underway. While on the bus, we participated in exercises designed by assessment specialist, David Meyer, to help us improve project integration. The excursion was designed to meet a need expressed in our first annual meeting for more time to meet, exchange ideas and learn about the full scope of the project. It was a success on all of these counts. On the evening of June 19, the REACCH band came out of the woodwork again, this time with some of our own numbers – popular tunes with climate and agriculture-themed lyrics including “CropSyst Blues” and “Wonderful World”. All I can say is, you had to be there to understand the continuing appeal of this band.

Sanford Eigenbrode, REACCH Project Director