



February 21, 2007

Dear Colleagues:

The November 2006 meetings of the Association of Ecosystem Research Centers (AERC) brought together ecosystem scientists, congressional staff, and agency representatives to consider the challenges posed as ecosystems around the world approach ecological tipping points. In a packed briefing room, we listened to examples of tundra, coral reefs, and the Arctic Ocean ecosystems poised on the verge of irreversible transformation. The final presentation involved a discussion of using the National Ecological Observatory Network as a continental scale instrument for forecasting ecological change. The annual AERC symposium covered these subjects in greater depth, and also included presentations on threats to arid ecosystems. A report on the congressional briefing will appear in the March issue of *Watershed & Wet Weather Technical Bulletin* and a synthesis of the symposium has been submitted to *BioScience*.

These meetings were to further AERC's mission to promote the use of ecosystem science to address environmental problems. AERC advocates support for ecosystem-scale research, provides information for scientists and policy makers, promotes training opportunities in ecosystem studies, and fosters collaboration among member institutions (see: [www.ecosystemresearch.org](http://www.ecosystemresearch.org)).

**The 2007 AERC meetings have been scheduled for September 27-28 at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington DC.** We chose September rather than our traditional November dates to improve our access to congressional staff. Details will be announced later, but we plan to hold our annual business meeting as well as a symposium and congressional briefing on a topic of concern to ecosystem scientists. We are still considering the choice of topic and welcome your suggestions.

AERC continues to work closely with the American Institute of Biological Sciences (AIBS). The AERC President is an ex officio member of the AIBS Public Policy Review Committee. AIBS distributes a Public Policy Report by email every two weeks. We recommend that you subscribe to these free reports by going to [www.aibs.org](http://www.aibs.org).

The need for ecosystems research has never been higher and judging from the response to our 2006 meetings, policy makers' interest in ecosystems science is increasing. We must work together to ensure that sound science informs policies on resource management, energy, and climate change. I hope you will join us at the annual AERC meetings this September.

Best wishes,

Thomas E. Jordan  
AERC President 2007

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