

United States Forest Service  
Land Between The Lakes (LBL)  
Advisory Board Meeting Minutes  
November 18, 2010

The Land Between The Lakes (LBL) Advisory Board convened at 9:30 a.m. on November 18 at the Administration Building at 100 Van Morgan Drive in Golden Pond, KY. The meeting was open to the public. Two members of the public and 13 Forest Service (FS) employees were in attendance.

**Advisory Board members present:**

Vernon Anderson (P)	Ed Clebsch (A)	Jesse Thomas (P)
Joe Baust (P)	Steve Morgan (P)	Jim Wallace (P)
Pat Brandon (P)	David Smith (P)	Della Oliver (A)
Ben Helen Burkeen (P)	Bob Smith (A)	Paul Ryan (A)
Terry Calhoun (P)	Ben Stone (A)	

**Advisory Board staff present:**

Jerome Thomas, Advisory Board Chairperson  
Bill Lisowsky, Designated Federal Official (DFO)  
Jared Baker, Facilitator  
Kylie Urquhart, Advisory Board Administrative Liaison  
Linda Taylor, Executive Assistant (Liaison Trainee)

Kathryn Harper introduced the new website to everyone in attendance and also mentioned that it placed second in the KY Tourism Traverse Awards.

Jared Baker opened the meeting by introducing himself and asking everyone in attendance to do the same. He reviewed the purpose of the board, which is to provide advice on Environmental Education (EE) and a means of promoting public participation for the Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP). After reviewing the agenda and providing general logistics information, *Jerome welcomed everyone and commented about how the information obtained through these meetings are being used by the Forest Service, and that the Regional Forester is very aware of the board's accomplishments. This board has accomplished much toward the established mission it has been given. He spoke of the concern for EE. He was also hopeful that the necessary clearances and USDA member selections will be done before our next meeting. He thanked the board for their patience in getting the charter approved by the Secretary.*

Jared then asked the outgoing board members for comments and thoughts they might want to pass onto the incoming members.

-Joe Baust feels there is latent potential here and he feels the culture of the Advisory Board is the reason for this. He commented that the outgoing members felt they needed to take charge and he challenged each incoming member to do the same and to also press onward and ask those questions that need to be asked. How can changes be made for the betterment of LBL? He would like to see LBL go to new heights. Economically we are in a world of hurt, but if we partner we can get through this together. The intellect of the board needs to be used. He also has a greater admiration for those that work at LBL. LBL is a place to be proud of and he has seen how LBL does more with less.

-Ed Clebsch commented to the incoming members to speak very honestly to each other during the meetings and deliberations. He also stated that he was very sorry that the board members cannot discuss any issues outside of the Advisory Board meetings. (*alluding to FACA requirements*) He also stated that the first charge was in helping the public to be involved in creating the new LBL management plan. He made the comment that this board was “pushed” hard and responded well. We offered more help than was used and you, the new board members, need to tap the resources of the public.

-Ben Helen Burkeen spoke of being positive and not negative. Whatever the task is, give it your best to accomplish and pursue all things in a positive manner. We did have outreach to the public.

-David Smith challenged the new members to learn about the heritage of LBL. Visualize the people that lived here, their homes, their heritage and what was lost when TVA took this from them. We owe a great debt to those people and to LBL. Those people gave us what we now have. Respect the sacrifice of these people so that we can all enjoy this land. In response to Jared’s question, “Is there anything we need?” to which Bob answered, “We need a great abundance of monies and resources to make this place grow.”

-Vernon Anderson made the comment that with the development of this land; it offers more with EE than any place around. The dynamics of a healthy forest can be seen here through the efforts of the staff at LBL.

Jared then opened the floor to the incoming members to ask questions of the outgoing members. Patricia Miller asked about EE. Joe Baust responded by telling her, “We need to get the kids outside which will help to protect our environment. Only 4% of elementary schools get time outside. We need to resource with LBL and the schools. In order to take care of our natural elements, LBL needs to harness the need to get these children outside.”

-Jim Wallace stated that in the 1970’s and 80’s we had children here all of the time. Then in the late 1980’s TVA wanted out of the area due to their financial status. Then the school safety issue of the 1990’s caused the school system to question the safety of traveling with the school children to places such as LBL and other field trips. LBL is one of the most unique geographical areas in our country and worldwide. We have a great place that offers multi-purpose and multi-use of this area. He saw the sacrifice of the people that gave up this land and is working to make it worth it.

-Joe Baust commented on how the people at LBL “walk the talk” and that no “child should be left inside.” There are legislative proposals that may help in this arena, if passed.

-Ben Helen said it was a great honor to serve. She continues to learn a lot from the staff and other members. Meetings are wonderful, informative sessions, which enable her to answer questions. She thinks it is important to be informed and to be an ambassador for LBL.

-David Smith said that a deep love for LBL comes across from the members. So many times you put forth your ideas and nothing happens, but in this setting the board has seen things happen and that provides a sense of accomplishment. The FS has proved themselves to be good stewards.

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The FS staff does “more with less” than any organization he has seen; they are to be commended for that and he appreciates what they do.

-Vernon Anderson said it was an honor to serve. He has seen some things come to fruition that he was skeptical about at the beginning. Thanks to Bill and the staff, things are improving.

-Steve Morgan appreciates the staff and everything they have worked hard to do at LBL. He likes the opportunity to discuss general issues being heard. As representatives of the surrounding counties, Board members get a lot of questions. He understands the scope and focus of the board, but likes the opportunity to learn about other issues and be able to answer questions. He appreciates the EE programs and likes to hear feedback from the schools.

-Jim Wallace said it is an honor for him to serve. As a former educator, he has had an interest in EE since the beginning. This Board has helped put a little energy back into EE and it is moving in the right direction. He sees positive results with the change of management – communication lines are open and he feels they’re listening.

-Bob Smith enjoys serving as an alternate on the Board. He liked the suggestion about the cemeteries, and also the new mobile panel to explain the benefits of prescribed burning.

-Jesse Thomas has seen a lot of things happen at LBL and sees us working closer together. He thinks things are going in the right direction. The staff is competent and interested.

-Pat Brandon believes this Board is a good thing. He hears broad ideas from the Board, and the staff comes up with specific ways to apply them.

Bill Lisowsky shared the significant accomplishments of the past five years, of which there were many, and expressed his appreciation to each of the outgoing members. Jerome then recognized those whose term was ending – Joe Baust, Ben Helen Burkeen, David Smith, Vernon Anderson, Steve Morgan, Ed Clebsch, Pat Brandon, James Ford, Gary Cook, Ron Fox, Jim Wallace, Marvin Wilson, Julie Boyd, Louis Buck and Bobby Cassity. He presented an Advisory Board thank you memento to those that were in attendance. Those not present will receive one in the near future.

The Advisory Board took lunch and then the meeting reconvened at 12:45p.m.

Jared Baker reopened the meeting with introductions of the new and continuing Board members. Members were asked to briefly discuss their background and their relation to LBL.

-Paul Ryan was appointed by the Lyon Co. Judge Executive due to his extensive familiarity with LBL.

-Terry Calhoun works for Veterans Administration. He grew up in LBL and loves the area, and wants to use his education and his efforts on the Board to advance the stewardship of LBL.

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-Della Oliver grew up “between the rivers” and has served on the Advisory Board since LBL came under the management of the Forest Service (served for 5 years as a primary and has served as an alternate since). She values her time on the Board and has enjoyed seeing perspectives changed and sharing different ideas in order to make a difference for EE and stewardship. She said she feels like the Board is losing a great deal through departing members whose terms have ended. She thanks the Forest Service for doing a remarkable job in maintaining the land. She is looking forward to more great things and welcomed the new members. Appointed by Lyon County Judge Executive.

-Patricia Miller is a native of North Carolina and has lived in TN since 1978. She has a Master’s in Interpretive Biology and Technology from UNC; has worked at 6 different museums and nature centers throughout the country; has worked at an environmental management company; and has been an Aquatic Educator at TWRA for several years now. She is very active with Every Child Outdoors Coalition in support of No Child Left Inside Act. She feels this is an unusual but delightful experience to be part of the LBL Advisory Board, and is sorry to see members go. Looking forward to working with the group. Patricia has already been looking at the EE programs offered at LBL and is excited to work more with the staff.

-Tim McGinnis recently retired as superintendent of Trigg County schools. He lives in Canton, KY and considers LBL his backyard. He is concerned about the issues of child obesity, diabetes, and spending too much time indoors. He understands the frustrations and concerns that teachers face in getting children outdoors. Tim has fond memories of LBL and wants to create opportunities for future generations. Appointed by Trigg County Judge Executive.

-Tim Morgan was a military kid, and has fond memories of LBL as he came here often while growing up. After he and his wife graduated college, they worked in the DC area, but moved back to Tennessee after a few years and enjoy living in the area again. He wants his children and the future generations to enjoy LBL the way he did. Appointed by the Stewart County Mayor.

-Steve Elkins grew up in Smyrna, TN. He was appointed as an alternate by the Governor of TN. He worked for the Governor for four years and soon will begin working for Aid & Assist at Home. Went to UT Knoxville, lived in TN all his life, and is excited to be part of the Board.

-Bob Smith lives in Trigg Co. A native of East KY and biologist with TWRA, he always wanted to start something from the beginning and see it finished. He worked for LBL when it was under TVA, and after retirement took a job with the University of Tennessee in Wildlife Biology and Forestry—took a second retirement and began consulting work. He has a strong background of affection and interest at LBL. Started out as a primary on the Advisory Board.

-Mark Cramer works for the KY Department of Fish & Wildlife, served 5 years on the Board as a primary, and now serving as an alternate. He grew up in MI, got his bachelor’s degree and began working in the field of wildlife resources. He received his master’s degree in KY and was employed by KYDFW in the ‘80s. He has worked in several different roles at the Department, and retired in 2008 as the Deputy Commissioner; back now as a Program Coordinator.

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-Ben Stone retired from Austin Peay State University in 2002 after 42 years of service. He served 22 years as the Department Chair and Director of Biology. His team did initial surveys of flora and fauna at LBL. He helped with the development of the Center for Field of Biology, founded in 1986. His primary role was to serve as an advocate. He thinks LBL is a wonderful area for college students to study environmental factors and biology. Ben was born in LBL; his family once owned a farm where Brandon Spring is now located. Enjoys spoofing a lot, but is very serious about his opinion and input about LBL. Now an alternate on the Advisory Board.

-Jerome Thomas is the Deputy Regional Forester for Region 8; his responsibility is over Forest Management and Natural Resources in the region. He has been with the FS for 23 years, earned a Doctorate in Forest Biology and Wood Science, has a Masters in Plant Physiology and a Bachelors in Soil Sciences. He worked with TVA in the 1970s and did a lot of work and research in their laboratory.

-Bill Lisowsky and the rest of the Forest Service staff briefly introduced themselves and their positions with the Forest Service.

Jared Baker began the Orientation of LBL Advisory Board using PowerPoint presentations.

- Discussed LBL Protection Act as it relates to the Advisory Board
- Regional Forester is designated chairperson, represented now by Jerome Thomas
- Discussed functions of the Board and its responsibility—focus is environmental education
- Discussed meetings and the Charter, including what members may and may not do relative to their positions
- Role of members is to advise; USDA maintains responsibility for decisions
- Nine members are required for a quorum; a simple majority vote is required to pass recommendations
- DFO & Chairperson set the agenda
- The Board and public may submit comments for discussion items; items must relate to Board
- Discussed bylaws and required attendance. Reminded members to please notify Bill Lisowsky when they are unable to attend
- Minutes and records of meeting are kept, sent to the Board and open for public review
- Meetings are open to public, but access is controlled; discussed meeting access in bylaws. *Bill added that the process of submitting comments from the public for the Board agenda has been developed carefully by the Board over time.*

Jared moved on to a discussion about FACA, its purpose, and how it governs the Boards and Committees in USDA. Bill discussed the role of the public in being a part of what happens in the Board meetings, making public aware (what FACA is intended to do). Jared discussed preparatory and administrative work under FACA. *Bill said that some of the orientation*

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*topics may be confusing; informed members that we will take feedback on what they would like to discuss more in future meetings.*

Bill began presentation on background and other aspects of LBL. Started by discussing the history of the Forest Service

- FS was established in 1905 and manages 193 million acres throughout the US. It is the largest natural resource research organization in the world.
- Often people confuse the FS with the Park Service, FS is part of USDA.
- Discussed the history of how LBL came under management of the FS. LBL was acquired in 1963 by eminent domain and managed by TVA until 1999 when the FS took over. Della Oliver commented that LBL is unique in that other areas are not under the Protection Act.
- Bill went on to discuss visitation.
  - 1.7 million visits annually, includes more than 100,000 visits to environmental education facilities.
  - Number one visitor attraction in KY and number four in TN; LBL is a big tourist attraction in both states
  - Discussed the LBL mission—very specific mission for a very special place
  - Discussed some key facts about LBL, being the cornerstone of a lucrative tourism industry and key trends in LBL visitation—not just from KY and TN, but nationwide
  - Discussed the range of recreation and EE opportunities at LBL
    - Respect the Resource—EE program that informs, changes behaviors and provides a message to each visitor.
    - LBL uses the RTR logo as the “branding” key to communicate to visitors that there is something to learn about “going on”.
  - Discussed “who works at LBL”—FS staff, trainees, volunteers, partners, contractors, resident attendants, law enforcement.

-Tim McGinnis asked about the difference between the Park Service and a NRA.

*Primarily, the mission. NPS mission is preservation, FS mission is conservation. LBL has a subset of the national mission of the FS. The Forest Service is a multiple use agency with a national director for recreation; the Park Service does not have this same mandate.*

Barbara Wysock presented the Land and Resource Management Plan.

- Vision—overarching vision for the future for where the public wants to be in 10-15 years. We want LBL to be a sustainable, multiple-use resource area; we supply and support recreation and EE. During the planning process, public asked for more individual (dispersed) recreational and EE opportunities. We want to weave EE into all program areas at LBL. Have a nature watch demonstration area for EE, wildlife and recreation. We are carrying forward the directive in the LBL protection act that LBL will support the surrounding region—demonstration authority to try new things via

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demonstration for programs to present to the FS or government as a whole. Key focus is to improve the ecological diversity to support not only wildlife and forest health, but also EE and recreation. Briefly discussed use of prescribed fire, timber harvest, native grasses and forbs, and agricultural practices. Discussed native grasslands to support wildlife.

- Discussed the LRMP goals—prioritize and integrate projects; emphasize partnerships with organizations and agencies; provide EE message to every visitor; reduce erosion and improve riparian conditions; maintain/restore wildlife habitats; export demonstration projects; enhance dispersed recreation and EE; support national strategic goals.
- Discussed the goals and objectives in recreation and environmental education—special projects will benefit recreation and EE as well as stewardship; complete one interpretive project annually; address user impact challenges (respect the resource), 80% of our communications should have an EE message.

Barbara strongly encouraged members to read over the LRMP to become more familiar with the plan. It is available on the website; we can also get members a paper copy if desired.

-Mr. McGinnis asked who approves the plan

*It is approved by the Regional Office and reviewed by the Washington Office*

-Bob Smith mentioned that new info at GPVC is very informative and interesting to read. Barbara briefly discussed the fire management program and how it is useful in restoring much of the native grasslands.

*Jerome discussed the complexities of developing a Forest Plan. Starting from scratch to developing a plan in less than 2 years is a major accomplishment. LBL set a precedent for completing the forest plan in this time frame, which other forests in the region are now working toward. Desire is to have plans revised every 10 to 15 years.*

Barbara added that we just finished the 5<sup>th</sup> full year of plan implementation and we are in the final stages of completing a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) report. This report will highlight any areas in which we need to change direction. M&E report provides direction in what needs to be amended in the forest plan. *Bill added some additional details about how we know whether our plan is still working efficiently and when it needs to be changed or tweaked. When we decide to revise the plan, we will reengage the public in the process.*

-Dr. Calhoun asked Bill if LBL is burning as much as we would like to.

*We are happy with where we are, but would like to do more and our program is slowly growing. We are learning from each burn project, utilizing the demonstration areas to adapt to what we should do, when, and where in the future. We believe we could do more treatment in the future based on many of the lessons we have learned in the last few years.*

-Tim McGinnis asked about air and water quality work.

*We do air quality work and that is an important aspect of every decision that we make; we do a lot of water quality work in the LBL area and with partners of other agencies.*

-Bob Smith said that if you haven't been to the Visitor Center to see the programs they offer, each member should make a trip to see. Mentioned that professionals in other areas brag on LBL and the work they are doing.

Sharon Waltrip began the next item on the agenda with an introduction and background on EE. LBL was just starting to implement the LRMP when Sharon began at LBL. Sharon was delighted to jump into the process of developing the EE Strategic Plan and to involve the Advisory Board in the planning and development.

- Discussed goals of EE and educational process—awareness, knowledge, and motivation
- LBL has a Master Plan for EE—not just in and of itself, but tiered under LRMP as well as the national strategic plan. Language in EE is unique to the Forest Service—it is why we exist at LBL. Master Plan includes the strategy from the Advisory Board. Discussed briefly and reiterated the LRMP and goals specific to EE.
- Discussed goals of Master Plan—Provide EE that gives visitors basic understanding of the environment (natural and cultural) of LBL; a unifying force, crossing programmatic and provider boundaries; supports LBL's commitment to multi-use recreation and natural resource management. Informed members that they can access the Master Plan online.
- One focused and specific goal is to increase and enhance EE partnerships
- A variety of opportunities for EE at LBL—discussed facilitated and self-guided tours
- It has been proven through different studies that EE and outdoor recreation benefits students—improves learning, test scores, critical thinking, creativity, and behavior. Principals have seen improvement in test scores after students visit LBL
- Field Trip Grant Program. Coordinated by Friends of LBL, goal is to provide an incentive for schools to send their students to LBL to experience benefits of outdoor recreation and EE. Students are encouraged to stay overnight at Brandon Spring for a better experience. Grant program can often take the edge off of the financing for schools and also encourage them to find matching funds and other ways to raise money for outdoor field trips. Grant program has allocated an average of \$14,426 over the last five years to an average of 1,788 students.

-Della Oliver asked about money TVA left over for EE.

*We have used some of that money to benefit school grants and other EE program opportunities. We don't want to make people dependent on that money, but we continue to monitor its use to assist with various programs.*

Richard Lomax continued EE presentation about Brandon Spring—Richard has been at Brandon Spring for 19 years.

- Discussed Brandon Spring Group Center—a full service, overnight facility. Contains 128 beds in 8 dormitories. Houses a complete dining facility; LBLA supplies the staffing. A large activity building is available for “rainy day” activities.

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- Richard sees Brandon as a dual activity resource; provides educational opportunities for bridging what is taught in classrooms with the experience of learning in a natural setting.
- A variety of groups visit Brandon. Approximately 20,000 annual overnight visits. Visitation was down this year; only received about 80 groups, mostly due to economic hardships in the school systems.
- Passed out brochures that we will be distributing to the public to get the word out about Brandon Spring in hopes that it will get the public excited about opportunities and generate more visits. Open to any comments the Board has regarding the brochure before it is presented and distributed to the schools. Richard also added that that 90% of Brandon's groups also visit the day-use facilities.

Darrin Samborski continued with the presentation—Has a degree in forestry/forest management but was always interested in teaching these subjects. Darrin now works with the staff at the day-use facilities.

- Woodlands Nature Station offers several activities and programs that involve kids—helps them gain an understanding of their relationship with the environment. Offers live exhibits, investigative activities, excursions, slide shows, literature, and also serves as the “hub” for the nature watch area
- Over 450 groups request staff-guided programs—investigative programs are popular. Staff present over 1,000 interpretive programs throughout the season, varied from short programs to more in-depth workshops
- Annual visitation is 35,000-40,000. Darrin stressed personal contact with visitors is the key.
- Special events bring out big crowds, and, specific topics draw visitors interested in such topics. Guided trips such as the canoe trips bring visitors in contact with LBL's resources. Scouting days are very popular—can help meet badge requirements.
- The Homeplace Living History Farm—visitors get an idea of what a mid-19<sup>th</sup> century farm was like; skills, resource management, etc., all provided by interpreters. Facilitates visitors in remembering where they've come from. Visitation is similar to Nature Station. School groups often visit. Over 500 demonstration programs offered to an average of 450 groups annually. Darrin encouraged advisory board members to visit the Homeplace for special events, programs, or holiday activities.
- Golden Pond Visitor Center and Planetarium - The Visitor Center is primary information stop for LBL visitors. The Planetarium is attached to the Visitor Center, so there are a variety of events and programs offered. The exhibit outlines a timeline of LBL history.
- The Planetarium is the largest planetarium within a 2 hour drive; annual attendance is 15,000, including 2,600 students. Programs are designed to move students through timeframes appropriately; there are several different programs to choose from. There is

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an observatory behind the planetarium; Western KY Amateur Astronomers offer programs for anyone interested in astronomy

- Discussed Respect the Resource—thematic program to help people understand the management approach to why programs or restrictions are there. Stresses resource management messages, recycling program, and sustainable operations. Student volunteers helped install monofilament fishing line containers at recycling locations.
- Nature Watch Demonstration Areas provides nature viewing opportunities for visitors of various skill levels. Many visitors come and are curious or less experienced—programs are available for them, as well as for the more advanced or “aspiring” nature viewers. On the website, maps of nature watch areas are available and printable for visitors

*Sharon Waltrip added that next Saturday is Cub Scout day, and announced that Patrick Holcomb is in Las Vegas for the National Association of Interpretation to represent LBL and the region. He is being recognized for a national award in EE and interpretation.*

Jared Baker stated that there were no public comments and no bin items for the meeting. Bill had three topic suggestions for next meeting—site visits to see EE programs being delivered for better understanding of what happens at LBL; follow-up on past topics to discuss or finalize; history of the area to help folks who do not have a great depth of understanding of LBL.

Choices of next meeting dates are Thursday, April 21, or Thursday, April 28. Asked Board members to please let us know your availability on these two dates as soon as possible.

-Patricia Miller asked what will happen between now and next meeting—feels members need a charge or mission to prepare for next meeting and take action between now and then.

*Jerome stated that former members felt underutilized on the Board. Sharon Waltrip expressed that the ambassador role is a need; encouraged members to talk to local schools about LBL and whether or not they have visited—act as a relational ambassador for gathering information for LBL on the area. Bill and staff will create a challenge for members to provide resources or contacts for LBL’s benefit to continue developing relationships and partners for the mission.*

-Tim McGinnis mentioned the visitor center in Dover and asked about partnership with LBL  
*We are working with the center in Dover for some exhibits and video projection screens to promote the region and what it offers. LBL literature is already in place.*

-Dr. Calhoun asked Bill about the Northern Bobwhite Quail

*Numbers are declining and it is a species of concern. There are only a few left at LBL*

-Ben Stone asked about website and educational activities and programs for visitors to adequately address concerns or interest.

*Kathryn encouraged members to explore website and decide if it is adequately providing the information as intended. Mr. Stone said the website should regularly update the programs available in EE and recreational opportunities for educators.*

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*Richard answered that LBL is working on updating this part of the website. Sharon added that a program guide is currently available on the website with correlations for different grade levels. LBL educators can tailor programs to particular groups. Bill asked for the website to be displayed again at the end of the meeting; charged members to go onto the website to explore the EE section for a future discussion.*

-Ben Stone asked about doing teacher education workshops  
*Sharon discussed what LBL has been doing with this*

Jerome Thomas welcomed Patricia Miller, Tim Morgan, Steve Elkins and Tim McGinnis to the Advisory Board committee and presented each a certificate of appreciation along with a padfolio that contains background information for the Advisory Board. Jerome thanked the members for making this board a priority, their service and the commitment they have made to be part of the Board.

Bill Lisowsky discussed the global problem with disposal of plastic water bottles and amount of resources used to create each bottle of water. Only 20% of all plastic bottles are being recycled. Each member was presented “Respect the Resource” reusable water bottle as appreciation of being “part of our EE staff” and to help them encourage others to do the same.

Jerome Thomas concluded the meeting at 3:20pm.

Certified by:

*/s/Jerome Thomas*  
JEROME THOMAS  
LBL Advisory Board Chairperson

*12/17/2010*  
(Date)