

January 27, 2026 Joint Methods & CI Working Group Call

Attendees: Josie Hughes, Jody Peters

Regrets: Brittany Barker is most likely not available, Mike Dietze, Jake Zwart

Agenda:

NOTE: Since only Josie and Jody were available, we'll save the main discussion of working group activities for the February call

1. [EFI2026 Conference](#) in Toronto on August 4-7.
 - a. Reminder to consider submitting an abstract for the symposium on challenges to spatio-temporal model evaluation that Josie Hughes (ECCC) and Eliot McIntire (NRCan - CFS) are co-organizing.
 - b. The session aims to highlight innovative and practical approaches for addressing the challenges of spatio-temporal model evaluation. In applied contexts, spatio-temporal models are often informed by data that is both sparse and biased. Modelers must therefore find ways to evaluate model “wrongness” and uncertainty across both space and time using imperfect data. We aim to bring together researchers from a variety of contexts and backgrounds to share insights, challenges and solutions around this topic. We are particularly interested in methods for evaluating models that inform decisions.
 - c. If you're interested in participating or have any questions, please reach out to Carina Firkowski at carina.firkowski@gmail.com to express interest. While the general call for abstracts is open until April 15th, **symposium organizers are hoping to have confirmation of participation with a draft abstract by February 13th**. Abstracts should be sent directly to Carina.
2. Operationalizing Biodiversity Forecasting with BON in a Box - European EFI Chapter seminar from Jan 14.
 - a. Recorded talk: <https://youtu.be/szjla5mPSiU>
 - b. Paper just out about it: <https://doi.org/10.1093/biosci/biaf189>
 - c. BON in a Box platform: <https://boninabox.geobon.org>
 - d. Provides an essential biodiversity variables (EBV) framework - a standardized set of variables to assess the status and trends of biodiversity
 - e. Provides an open analysis platform to streamline and simplify the calculation of EBVs and indicators via the pipeline engine - a user interface to build, parameterize, and run analysis pipelines and to view their outputs in an interactive dashboard
 - f. Forecasting analyses are currently not included in the pipeline
3. Potential future CI/Methods working group activities - ideas discussed on the December call and that have come up more recently
 - a. Parul Patil, student of Leah Johnson, has a new paper in press on "[Gaussian process forecasting of sparse ecological time series](#)." There was a workshop and Parul had a poster on this at the EFI2025 Conference that received a lot of interest. Perhaps this group could

read/discuss the paper on an upcoming call. If Parul and/or Leah are available, it would be fun to talk more with them about the paper.

- b. There was interest in continuing to discuss topics related to forecasting spatial data and thinking about data storage methods relevant to spatial forecasting. Here are some of the examples that came up. Do cogs make sense for a data format? What has worked for people who are working on a project at scale? What have they learned? And would it be good to circle back to the Forecast Standards paper to think about provenance and storage of lots of forecasts? With spatial data that can produce unlimited amounts of data/forecast - what needs to be kept, what needs to be reproducible, what needs to be documented so that others can reproduce?
- c. Working with stakeholders and NGOs in a time of limited public funding. Mike SanClements' name came up and his work at NEON forecasting stream pollutants. The topic the group was interested in was that NGOs have a different perspective on what to focus on when things get tight, what do they wish ecological forecasters would do vs what do forecasters focus on.
 - i. Dave/Jody - reached out to Mike
- d. Methods for delivering forecasts. The group was interested in discussing differences in sharing forecasts, e.g., R Shiny, other methods with Leaflet and Java servers, etc. Are there tools that are user-friendly and aren't slow?
- e. The [METplus project](#) was shared by Caroline. This project has use cases around spatial data. It would be interesting to connect with the group to see if anyone on the project has an ecological perspective.
- f. The [Data to Science program](#) was shared by Dave. The idea was to check in with Jinha Jung about the potential to present in a NEON science seminar that could also double for one of the CI/Methods working group calls. It sounds like the NEON seminar series is booked pretty far out, so this may be something to wait on.
 - i.