



Charge to the Ad Hoc Climate Impact Committee

Chairs Virginia Herrmann and Andrew Vaughn

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It has long been recognized that climate degradation in the form of air pollution, fire, and flooding poses serious threats to cultural monuments central to ASOR's mission. The accelerating climate emergency calls for ASOR to uphold this mission by addressing the contribution of its own activities to this global problem. A poster presentation by Lucas Stephens and Virginia Herrmann at the 2019 Annual Meeting, "[Mitigating the Climate Impact to the ASOR Annual Meeting](#)", provided some first steps in this process. The poster performed an analysis of the carbon emissions of travel to the annual meeting from 2013 to 2018 based on attendees' points of origin and the destination city, finding that emissions varied considerably based on the city and number of international attendees, and proposing several strategies to reduce travel emissions. The Board of Trustees has engaged in conversations about this issue over the past two years and working toward a carbon neutral Annual Meeting by 2025 is one of the goals of the 2021-2025 Strategic plan.

With these considerations in mind we are establishing an Ad Hoc Committee on the climate impact of ASOR activities with particular attention to the Annual Meeting. The committee is charged with the following specific tasks:

- 1) to assess the carbon footprint of the Annual Meeting and ASOR's other activities;
- 2) to evaluate the feasibility of the goal to make the Annual Meeting carbon neutral by 2025; and
- 3) to make recommendations to the Board of Trustees on how this might be achieved.

While the carbon footprint of ASOR is not limited to the Annual Meeting, the meeting is likely the largest direct contributor to it. We therefore ask the committee to focus primarily on recommendations for reducing or eliminating the climate impact of the Annual Meeting. Additional discussions, study, analysis and recommendations for reducing the climate impact of other areas of activity (such as day-to-day operations, publications, and even ASOR-affiliated fieldwork) will be gratefully received, however, and may lay the groundwork for future initiatives.

It is envisioned that a starting point for the committee can be the 2019 study of Stephens and Herrmann, supplemented potentially by additional data and by comparison with studies of other academic conferences and mitigation efforts of other societies. In formulating its



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recommendations to the Board, the committee should consider the lessons learned from the 2020 virtual and 2021 virtual-component meetings, including issues of logistics, sustainability, finances, participation, and member experiences. The service of ASOR Executive Director Andrew Vaughn as committee co-chair will facilitate the incorporation of these details, but information and input should also be sought from the Program Committee and Director of Meetings and Events Arlene Press. In addition to considering future virtual, hybrid, and/or distributed meeting modalities, the committee should also explore ways to incentivize members to shift toward more sustainable travel and consumption options.

We ask the committee to present a report answering the questions of whether and how the Annual Meeting can become carbon neutral by 2025 for the Fall 2022 Board of Trustees' meeting. It is hoped that an interim report might be available for Board discussion at the Spring 2022 Meeting in May.