

IAB council meeting March 15, 2022

Attendees: Jessica Budke, Bernard Goffinet, Itambo Malombe, Juan Larrain, Rafael Medina, Catherine Reeb, Lars Söderström (I think), Michael Stech, Juan Carlos Villarreal.

Excused: MvK, MP, DQ, CG, AF.

Invited: John Brinda

1. John Brinda (Missouri Botanical Garden):

2022: 40th anniversary of Tropicos (digital database of bryophyte nomenclature), presented a brief history of Tropicos, started by Marshall Crosby and Bob Magill. Currently focus is on cleaning data and develop a new website (Bryophyte Nomenclator; <https://www.bryonames.org>). Currently concept model of what can be done; motivated by strong use of the database. The database is maintained by John Brinda and John Atwood. The challenge is to keep the database up-to-date; currently the database refers to $\pm 20,000$ accepted names of bryophytes.

Appeal: IAB to serve as contact point and organizing group, for the effort to be an IAB, bryophyte community, project. Proposal for IAB to sanction, endorse and engage in the initiative, and hence feature IAB on the website.

Questions:

BG: Clarify what IAB can or should do? What is meant by this is an IAB project?

Who has curatorial privileges?

JB: The taxonomic and floristic expertise fundamental to this effort resides within the IAB community. The experience from across the world, is essential to the accuracy of the database, which should integrate regional knowledge. The curation of the database starts with surveys of the bryological literature by John Atwood and Bill Buck; colleagues publishing nomenclatural or taxonomic novelties should share the pdf of their publication with the curators. Note that Tropicos does not have a list of accepted names. Currently JB makes the decision of what could be the accepted name (as indicated in Bryophyte Nomenclator), and while he aims to make the most informed decision, he is not necessarily an expert for all groups.

JL: How should feedback be shared?

JB: Currently feedback goes to the curator and bryophyte ones are forwarded to JB. Easier to send directly to JB, who aims at correcting entries promptly. It is important to share the website to trigger further feedback.

KT: Is the website based and maintained by MO?

JB: Tropicos is on a Garden website. Bryoname not hosted by MO, build, maintained and sponsored by JB.

BG: MvK volunteered to be part of the working group with JB and Michelle Price. This group should perhaps compose a short document laying out how IAB can support this, sponsor the website, and come back to the council with a proposal. Whether the council will need to vote on this is not clear. The enthusiasm to support this great initiative is obvious. We should aim drafting the concrete steps needed to move forward.

JL: is there a conflict between the classification adopted by Bryoname and that by Goffinet et al. 2009.

JB: The classification is descendant with Goffinet et al. 2009. He makes changes when needed, but various problems remain and await input from community experts.

BG: The community would benefit from a unified system, i.e., classification, acknowledging that none is right or perfect. The need is particularly for an annotated classification, and Bryophyte Nomenclator offers the opportunity for the integration of the information in the classification.

2. Introduction of new council members: Itambo Malombe and Jessica Budke.

Itambo introduced himself.

3. Fund raiser

BG: BL2021 meeting generated a profit of about \$6,000. Should this amount go to the operational fund or be allocated to students, etc... Proposal to use this sum or a portion of this, e.g., \$3,000 as matching funds for any donation (based on the concept of matching funds). At this point Catherine Reeb may be interested in developing this. A committee needs to be established.

KT: we need to identify specific targets for which funds are raised.

BG: indeed. The next IAB meeting will be in Madrid (2024). The committee may propose that funds should be sought to enhance student active participation, for example.

MS: How much should be used as matching funds? Should we use \$3,000 or \$6,000?

BG: No decision was made. The number put forward was simply as an example. Fund raising is a long-term initiative. \$3,000 may be a good way to start.

4. Bryophyte Diversity and Evolution

BG: Last year we had a special issue composed of invited contributions, all provided with open access. The basis for this, was that this issue may draw attention to the journal, draw contributions to subsequent issues, and hence enhance the impact factor.

MS: last year was a good year, with two issues published, with a total of 19 scientific papers, 366 pages. We should aim for 20 articles per year over several years for the journal to qualify for an impact factor. Processed the backlog of earliest pending manuscripts. Update editorial board on the website following confirmation with board members. Remaining problem: low submission of the manuscript; a single manuscript was submitted and it was rejected. Solutions: post on bryonet, but unlikely to be effective. Impact factor alone can not be the issue.

Also needs to diversify editorial board, discuss the content and structure of the journal, establish a campaign to encourage community to submit their research outcomes.

BG: for the new members of the council: summary of recent history of editorship of the journal. At a prior council meeting we decided that the IAB council serves as an advisory board. At prior meetings the council discussed the need to have a solid calendar with a deadline for a decision about the future of the journal. Arguments (fide MvK) for the journal: lost cost of publication. Should we have issues focused on special themes?

JV: May need to post the number of citations for the special issue. The impact factor should not be of concern to all colleagues, who may thus be willing to contribute and support the journal. We need to set a deadline for decide on the future of the journal.

MS: thematic issues could be considered periodically, but may not be the long-term solution to the survival of the journal.

JL: The scopes of the journal as posted, suggest that checklists may not be considered unless they include analyses of the data. Yet, checklists are citable articles, and hence should be considered.

MS: Checklist and floristic articles are worthy of publication but should ideally include some analysis.

JL: OK, but these publications do provide critical data, and certainly fall within the spirit of the forefather of the journal, i.e., Tropical Bryology.

BG: What is the scope of the journal? Should we be a journal of everyone or be more focused? Maybe the first task for the editorial board is to assess what we wish the journal to be, what niche it could fill or contribute to? We should consider articles based on their potential longevity, such as classifications.

MS: We need a unique selling point, identify our niche, reduce competition with other journals.

JV: What about invited reviews, based on the model of the Bryologist? Would such reviews count toward the minimum needed for obtaining the impact factor? Reviews could be related or not to special issue theme.

MS: Thinks so.

JV: would be good to know citation numbers of articles (BG: numbers as by May 25, 2022 are provided below; download numbers not retrievable from website, but all papers downloaded 100 or more times).

CR: Should we consider changing the name of the journal? This could be a marketing strategy.

BG: IAB promoted the best they could the last special issue. Perhaps this effort needs to be a long-term effort. Reviews in The Bryologist: initiated by Vitt: Invited reviews and Frontiers. Reviews are a good idea but depends on our success in recruiting authors. Papers focused on frontiers may be more of interest. Key may be personal connections, potential authors.

JC: We should be more proactive, and classification may be an initial focus. E.g., Funariaceae, Dicranidae,...

MS: Submissions do not come in on their own, proactive recruiting effort may be critical to success. Perhaps the strategy is indeed to get some special issue going.

JC: Willing to reach out to people to solicit reviews, on topics to be decided on.

BG: Jessica Budke and David Meagher offered to help with editorial task. Encourage MS, JV, etc, to draft a document outlaying the vision to submit to the council. Topics to consider for special issue: Aquatic bryophyte biology.

JL: How far are we from the journal being indexed?

MS: a couple of years of the journal meeting the criteria in terms of number of issues published, and the number of research papers included, to convey continuity.

JL: Is the journal of tract?

MS: previous issue may not have met the criteria. The journal needs to show steady output.

BG: With regard to Heinrichs issue: bryological community has always come together to honor colleagues.

JV: For example, an issue honoring Jeff Duckett, would be something to consider, could be attractive to potential colleagues.

MS: Two ways to move forward: 1. Design the issues ourselves, special issues, review, honoring issues,... 2. (re)define the scope or niche of the journal to target contributions, particularly those hard to publish elsewhere.

BG: The journal is not the responsibility solely of MS; editor cannot control what is submitted but can encourage submissions, on a specific topics, honoring a colleague etc... One could consider two issues for the year, one on aquatic bryophytes and one honoring Jeff Duckett. We need to move on either option.

KT: Was the recent special issue accessible to all, including non-members.

MS: yes special issue completely open access.

IM: Does the journal offer on-line first option? May be critical to students who need to publish in a timely manner.

MS: Yes, accepted papers are promptly posted on-line first.

BG: Encouraged MS to engage other board members to develop and move on ideas for upcoming issues.

5. Social media and web strategies (chairs: RM and JL)

RM: A document was shared with the council members. We have the potential and it should remain a goal of our international society to reach out to all bryologists, globally. Three outlets: 1. website (RM is webmaster); please contact RM for anything related to bryologically to post on the website. 2. The IAB blog: it was originally developed by Efrain DeLuna. RM sought to contact bryologists on various continents for contributions, but the effectiveness of the effort is dubious. Blogs may not be as popular as a decade ago. Perhaps we should use only the new section of the website to disseminate news. 3. Social media: RM & JL opened an Instagram account, and then linked Twitter, Instagram and Facebook account through a platform called Buffer. Technically any post on Buffer is distributed via the three outlets. These three outlets work differently, and need some consideration to move forward. We need dedicated contributors, perhaps need to create new content, dedicated community managers for each outlet, ... RM & JL can continue to lead the current effort, but it may be better to identify colleague excited about this role, acting as official community manager, to realize the full potential of social media.

JL: Agrees with RM, adding young, engaged bryologists, may be most appropriate to lead the social media effort. We should advertise to recruit someone to fill these positions.

RM: Successful social media sites: 1. new content posted regularly (1/week), and 2. Engage with the community, by replying to bryological posts.

BG: Good points. If we recruit we should as RM pointed out, clarify what the expectations are. Ask RM & JL to compose an ad to be posted. Perhaps someone out there would be delighted to raise to the occasion to promote bryology.

RM: called for anyone interested to pursue the discussion to reach out to him.

BG: AF offered to help. Great for adding banner on homepage. Serving the community: is there place for the community to go to find educational resources. Perhaps something for IAB to consider, something like this may benefit the community.

JB: offered to look into this.

BG: Perhaps also a content topic for the Bryological Times.

BG: council agreed to have a virtual meeting in 2023. Perhaps a one day event. We must identify someone interested in organizing this event. Ideally, this meeting should or could be organized by someone outside of North America and Europe. BG has notified members of the organizing committee of the IBC in 2024, that IAB will be participating.

Thank you all for attending.

Respectfully,

Bernard Goffinet

Information added after the meeting (by BG) to reveal the number of current citations of articles published in last year's special issue (note it is still too early to assess the impact of the papers) and the currently now number of citations is in sharp contrast with the 100+ downloads for ALL papers of the issue.

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