



Smithsonian Institution

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Proceedings of the Board of Regents Meeting held on September 20, 1982

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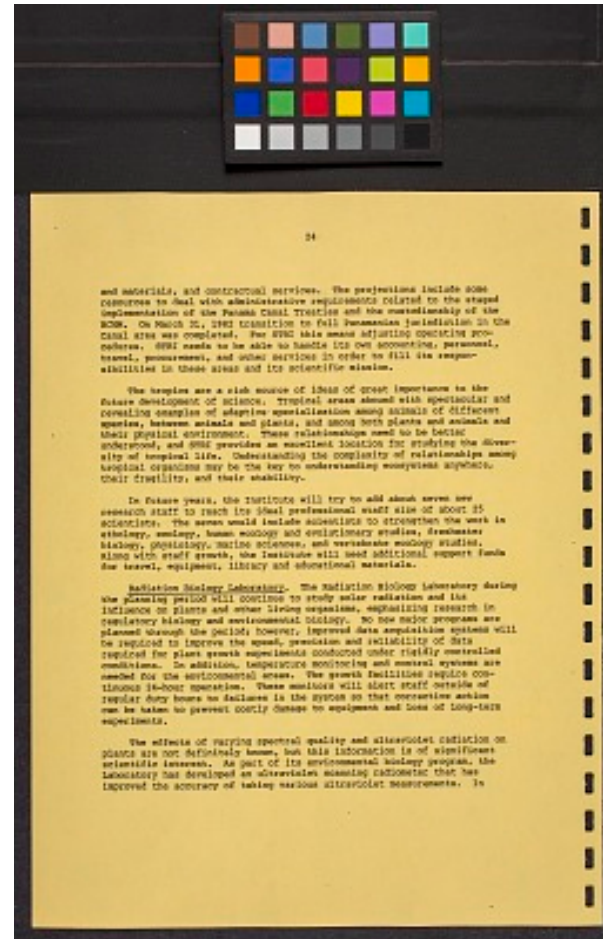
and materials, and contractual services. The projections include some resources to deal with administrative requirements related to the staged implementation of the Panama Canal Treaties and the custodianship of the BCNM. On March 31, 1982 transition to full Panamanian jurisdiction in the Canal area was completed. For STRI this means adjusting operating procedures. STRI needs to be able to handle its own accounting, personnel, travel, procurement, and other services in order to fill its responsibilities in these areas and its scientific mission.

The tropics are a rich source of ideas of great importance to the future development of science. Tropical areas abound with spectacular and revealing examples of adaptive specialization among animals of different species, between animals and plants, and among both plants and animals and their physical environment. These relationships need to be better understood, and STRI provides an excellent location for studying the diversity of tropical life. Understanding the complexity of relationships among tropical organisms may be the key to understanding ecosystems anywhere, their fragility, and their stability.

In future years, the Institute will try to add about seven new research staff to reach its ideal professional staff size of about 25 scientists. The seven would include scientists to strengthen the work in ethology, ecology, human ecology and evolutionary studies, freshwater biology, physiology, marine sciences, and vertebrate ecology studies. Along with staff growth, the Institute will need additional support funds for travel, equipment, library and educational materials.

Radiation Biology Laboratory. The Radiation Biology Laboratory during the planning period will continue to study solar radiation and its influence on plants and other living organisms, emphasizing research in regulatory biology and environmental biology. No new major programs are planned through the period; however, improved data acquisition systems will be required to improve the speed, precision and reliability of data required for plant growth experiments conducted under rigidly controlled conditions. In addition, temperature monitoring and control systems are needed for the environmental areas. The growth facilities require continuous 24-hour operation. These monitors will alert staff outside of regular duty hours to failures in the system so that corrective action can be taken to prevent costly damage to equipment and loss of long-term experiments.

The effects of varying spectral quality and ultraviolet radiation on plants are not definitely known, but this information is of significant scientific interest. As part of its environmental biology program, the Laboratory has developed an ultraviolet scanning radiometer that has improved the accuracy of taking various ultraviolet measurements. In



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