Loessfest, continued from previous page

we should recognize a minimum num-
ber of prerequisites when using such
records. Several authors cautioned
against ‘wiggle matching’ without suf-
ficient background data on and from
the site, the selected proxy itself, and on
the time series. In this context, a convincing
case was made for the use of paleope-
dology and soil micromorphology in
both climatic reconstruction and as a
means of ensuring the reliability of any
chronology. Several papers showed
how these techniques make it possible
to delineate a stage by stage record of
loess sedimentation and its frequently
complex patterns of diagenesis, informa-
tion that is crucial for reliable dating. Yet
other work in this section showed how
good quality optical dating has success-
fully delineated the impact human oc-
cupation has had upon the loess over the
past 1000 years.

There were several studies on the
characterization of modern dust fall
events and their climatological implica-
tions. The subtleties involved in estab-
lishing a link between present-day at-
mospheric dust events and climate, on
the one hand, and the interpretation of
the Pleistocene record of dust accretion
and paleoclimate, on the other, were
also explored. This discussion was a
precursor to several keynote talks, sev-
eral papers and a plenary discussion
designed to involve the loess commu-
nity in an initiative to establish a terres-
trial eolian sediment data-base for the
Last Glacial Maximum. The meeting
strongly endorsed this DIRTMAP
project (see page 6), which will involve
the formal participation of both the
INQUA Loess Commission and IGCP
413, as a means of gathering, synthesiz-
ing and collating data on dust, includ-
ing loess, in a form capable of testing
and improving global models of aeolian
dust accumulation (Figure 1). Dr. Karen
E. Kohfeld (Database Coordinator) has
already set up a DIRTMAP website at
http://www.bgc-jena.mpg.de/.

Taken over all, the meeting re-em-
phasized the value that the extended
and semi-continuous nature of loess-
paleosol sequences offers as the basis
for terrestrial stratigraphical studies of
longer-term Quaternary paleoclimates.
At the same time, it brought out a num-
er of caveats on the use (or abuse) of
climatic proxies and the land-sea corre-
lations based on them. A strong mes-
sage that emerged is that considerably
improved understanding of the under-
lying physics underpinning every cli-
matic proxy’s phase relationship with
climatic parameters is needed.

Selected peer-reviewed papers pre-
sented at “Loessfest’99” will be pub-
lished as special issues of two interna-
tional scientific serials: Earth Science
Reviews (keynote reviews) and Quater-
nary International. The aim is to publish
both by the summer of 2000.

“Loessfest’99” was a rich cocktail of
scientific data and ideas on almost the
whole spectrum of global loess research.
The initiatives noted above, including
the major international effort required
to maximize the value of the DIRTMAP
project, are some measure of the pro-
gress recorded by “Loessfest’99” and its
potential as a springboard for further
advances in loess research.

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LUCC–PAGES–DIS

BARCELONA, SPAIN, 17–20 NOVEMBER, 1998

Data strategies for Research on Historical
Dynamics of Land Use

The outcomes from a joint LUCC–
PAGES–DIS working meeting on His-
torical Land Use/Land Cover Change
and two Working Group ‘break-out’
sessions held during the LUCC–DIS
Data meeting are summarised on the
The proposals outlined there are also
consistent with the outcome of planning
sessions devoted to developing the “ter-
restrial” aspects of PAGES Focus 3 (Hu-
man Interactions in Past Environmental
Changes), and strengthening the contri-
bution of PAGES–LUCC interactions.
One of the most concrete outcomes has
been the establishment of an initiative to
reconstruct land cover for 300 years ago
– “BIOME 300”. Although, in many

parts of the world, major land cover
changes predated this, the period since
AD 1700 has seen the greatest human-
induced transformations on a global
scale. This will involve establishing,
from all the sources available ranging
from cartographic and documentary to
paleynological, the best possible empiri-
cal basis for reconstructing land cover
around that time. It is seen as a first step
towards a longer term program on land
use/cover change designed to trace the
major transformations in each region
right up to the stage where document-
ary, statistical and satellite-derived

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IGBP Congress

SHIONAN VILLAGE, JAPAN, 6–13 MAY, 1999

A report covering “PAGES at the IGBP
Congress” will appear in the next IGBP
Newsletter.

At the occasion of a PAGES social
gathering during the Congress, Claude
Lorius presented a poem about PAGES
and human dimensions:

Il faut me pardonner
Mais pour mieux m’exprimer
Je dois parler français
Ce que je voudrais dire
Ne prête pas à sourire
La terre pourrait mourir
Les leçons du passé
Que PAGES veut étudier
Disent qu’il faut espérer
L’homme a su s’adapter
Et il saura trouver
Comment s’organiser
Notre communauté
(C’est de PAGES qu’il s’agit)
Ell a bien su trouver
Les thèmes qu’il faut traiter
Il y a l’homme aussi
Il se sent bien ici
Dans ce cercle d’amis

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