*Loessfest, continued from previous page*

we should recognize a minimum number of prerequisites when using such records. Several authors cautioned against 'wiggle matching' without sufficient 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 paleopedology 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 patters of diagenesis, information that is crucial for reliable dating. Yet other work in this section showed how good quality optical dating has successfully delineated the impact human occupation 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 implications. The subtleties involved in establishing a link between present-day atmospheric 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, several papers and a plenary discussion designed to involve the loess community in an initiative to establish a terrestrial 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, synthesizing and collating data on dust, including 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-emphasized 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 number of *caveats* on the use (or abuse) of climatic proxies and the land-sea correlations based on them. A strong message that emerged is that considerably improved understanding of the underlying physics underpinning every climatic proxy's phase relationship with climatic parameters is needed.

Selected peer-reviewed papers presented at "Loessfest'99" will be published as special issues of two international scientific serials: *Earth Science Reviews* (keynote reviews) and *Quaternary 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 progress 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 Historical Land Use/Land Cover Change and two Working Group 'break-out' sessions held during the LUCC–DIS Data meeting are summarised on the PAGES Website at *http://www.pages.unibe.ch/activities/focus3/forum3.html*. The proposals outlined there are also consistent with the outcome of planning sessions devoted to developing the "terrestrial" aspects of PAGES Focus 3 (Human Interactions in Past Environmental Changes), and strengthening the contribution 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 palynological, the best possible empirical 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 documentary, statistical and satellite-derived data provide an increasingly secure basis for land cover mapping. Colleagues interested in contributing to BIOME 300 should, in the first instance, contact Frank Oldfield.

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## IGBP Congress

**Shonan 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 français parler*

*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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