Authorship for data packages in SBC - LTER

Determining the appropriate authors for a data package is a crucial aspect that impacts the credibility, accountability, and usability of the data. The selection of authors should adhere to certain well-defined criteria to ensure that the data package is accurately represented, properly documented, and reliable for potential users.

1. **Expertise & Contribution:** The authors should possess significant expertise in the specific domain covered by the dataset. Their contributions should extend beyond nominal involvement, reflecting substantive intellectual and practical inputs into the data's creation, collection, and supervision.
2. **Responsibility & Accountability:** Authors have responsibility for the accuracy and integrity of the dataset. This involves being available to address inquiries from users, verifying data accuracy, and maintaining a proactive stance toward addressing any potential discrepancies.
3. **Data Management Skills:** Proficiency in data management ensures meticulous data documentation, adherence to formatting standards, proper version control, and the application of data preservation techniques.
4. **Transparency & Documentation:** Authors are responsible for accurately documenting all aspects of the dataset. This includes comprehensive information about data sources, collection methods, variable definitions, data transformations, and potential limitations or biases present in the dataset.
5. **Ethical Considerations:** Authors are expected to maintain high ethical standards throughout the entire data lifecycle, with a primary emphasis on obtaining the necessary permissions for conducting the data collections.
6. **Acknowledgment:** In addition to the list of authors in the data package, acknowledging other primary contributors can foster a comprehensive understanding of their contribution. This acknowledgment can be documented in the "associated party" section of the metadata document, along with their specific roles.
7. **Review & Validation:** The data manager at SBC will review the data and the metadata for accuracy, consistency, and credibility. Authors should be open to receiving feedback and incorporating necessary corrections recommended by the data manager. For ongoing datasets, the authors should periodically review the dataset and its accompanying documentation to ensure continued accuracy, relevance, and usability as time passes.
8. **Past Creator**: For ongoing time series datasets, in the event that the original creators of the dataset leave the project through retirement or other events, at least one active member of the project, who meets the aforementioned authorship criteria, will be added as co-author. The past creator(s) will maintain their position in the author list, and their contact information will be adjusted to reflect their status. This adjustment recognizes their historical contribution and maintains dataset continuity.