

Final Summary  
North Pacific Research Board  
Hotel Captain Cook  
Anchorage, AK  
October 1-2, 2003

1. Call to Order/Approve Agenda/Election of Interim Officers

The Board convened at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, October 1, 2003. Present were Tylan Schrock, Jim Balsiger, Lawson Brigham (for Garry Brass), Robert Gisiner, Earl Krygier (for Kevin Duffy), John Gauvin, Becky Thompson (for Trevor McCabe), Phil Mundy, Walter Parker, Capt. Rich Preston, Bill Seitz, Jev Shelton, Jack Tagart, Chris Oliver and John White. Stetson Tinkham, Howard Horton, Pamela Pope, John Roos and Robin Samuelsen were absent. Clarence Pautzke and Misty Ott staffed the meeting.

The agenda was approved. Tylan Schrock and Jim Balsiger were elected unanimously to serve as interim chairman and vice-chairman, respectively, until formal elections are held in January 2004. The Board meeting summary for May 20-21, 2003, was approved. The Board requested updates on the Alaska Ocean Observing System (AOOS) by its Executive Director, Molly McCammon, at future Board meetings.

2. Projects Approved for 2002 and 2003

Overview of Funded Projects. The Board was presented with a summary of the 47 projects recommended for funding in 2002 and 2003. Just over \$8.2 million in EIRF funds and \$1 million in North Pacific Marine Research Institute funds support that research. The Board noted that project summary tables like those in the meeting notebooks, have been very useful in briefing Senate staffers and others. The summaries should make it clear, however, that the research is performed in Alaska, even though principal investigators hail from around the U.S. and several foreign countries.

Legal Opinion on Confidentiality of Video/Photographic Information. Two projects recommended by the Board for funding in the 2003 RFP have been held up because of an issue of whether video and photographic images gathered onboard commercial fishing vessels may be kept confidential and not used for purposes other than the funded research. The Board requested a legal opinion from NOAA General Counsel, but it was not available by meeting time. The Board discussed the possibility of consulting a private practice attorney and whether such an opinion would be more compelling than that of NOAA GC. The Board decided to wait for NOAA GC's opinion, because NOAA, as the granting entity, ultimately would be the defending agency if legal issues arose.

During public comment, Mark Buckley, Digital Observer, Kodiak (who has one of the approved projects) reiterated the alternative for private industry to purchase the imaging equipment and indicated his plans to speak to a private practice attorney and begin use of videography as early as next summer. Through discussion, it became clear that the main issue is whether vessels are willing to participate in research, at a risk, and whether to base that decision on the legal opinion of NOAA GC or a private attorney. The Board tabled the issue until the next meeting unless it can be handled by the Executive committee or through a conference call before then, depending on how definitive the opinion is.

The Board discussed the need to have a liability waiver in the contracts.

3. North Pacific Science Planning Report.

Two Crow (AKA Jim Schumacher) presented an overview of his science planning report, noting that the primary measure of success of the NPRB will be that research results enhance the ability of resource managers to accurately predict changes to the ecosystem. His four general recommendations, Science Panel responses, and Board comments are presented below. His other recommendations concerning the 2004 RFP are addressed in the Science Panel report under Tab 4 and in subsequent Board action.

1. *Focus efforts on the BSAI region for about 10 years via an integrated ecosystem program (IEP) in concert with the NRC science planning initiative.*

The Science Panel recommended including this as a focus area for the 2004 RFP. The Board also placed considerable, but not sole, emphasis on the BSAI region in the 2004 RFP, as discussed in Tab 4. The Board did not indicate this would be the emphasis for 10 years, considering that a comprehensive science plan is being developed to guide future research.

2. *Establish a Management Advisory Panel (MAP) to provide direction on research priorities, particularly pressing fishery management issues, assess progress of research projects relevant to a given agency, and provide input for generating requests for proposals and project selection.*

The Science Panel recommended that if a MAP is established, it should be advisory to the Science Panel and comprised of mid-level managers from agencies that manage natural resources. The MAP would help to define pressing management issues for incorporation in the annual RFP. The MAP should include fish, marine mammal, and marine bird managers. The Board noted that managers already are represented on the Board and Science Panel and provide for identification of pressing fishery management issues. In addition, the Advisory Panel has fishing industry representatives and provides advice on fishery management issues. The North Pacific Fishery Management Council and its advisory bodies also have direct linkages to the Board through development of research priorities every fall based on recommendations from Council management plan teams. The Board declined to establish a Management Advisory Panel at this time.

3. *Promote potential cooperative research programs.*

The Science Panel recommended that NPRB strive to provide for coordination and communication among major funded science programs, and leverage its funds by supporting cooperation with other funded programs. The Board noted that there may be a need to form a research consortium to better coordinate with other entities and to leverage funds. If such action is taken, it also would necessitate protocols to share decision-making authority in developing joint RFP's and choosing projects to fund.

The Board also indicated strong interest in organizing a salmon workshop that would bring together 20-30 program managers for salmon research in the North Pacific from the upper Yukon to NPAFC areas. This was discussed further under Goal 2 of the request for proposals (see below).

4. *Support continued development of ecosystem-based fisheries management plans.*

The Science Panel concurs with the need for continued development of ecosystems information that eventually would underpin future fisheries ecosystem plans. Several research initiatives are included in the Panel's recommendations for RFP focus areas. The Board included several research areas of emphasis to help build infrastructure for the eventual development of ecosystems plans.

#### 4. Request for Proposals for 2004

The Board received reports from its Science Panel and Advisory Panel. The Science Panel report, available to the Board as item 4(c), was presented by Dr. Vera Alexander, Science Panel vice chairman. The Advisory Panel met on September 29, 2003, and their report was distributed to the Board at meeting time and presented by Heather McCarty (Advisory Panel chairman). AP members Patricia Cochran, Gale Vick, Arni Thomson, and Michael Bradley also attended to help explain AP actions. The Science Panel met on August 25-26, 2003, reviewed a draft RFP for 2004 and discussed the recommendations made by Two Crow, contracted as a science planner to the Board. While not recapped here in detail, the Science Panel agreed in general with many of the recommendations made by Two Crow and incorporated them in a redrafted RFP, in the meeting notebooks as item 4(d), which served as a starting point for Board deliberations. The Board went through the redrafted RFP, line by line, and made the following changes before approving it for release on October 7, 2003: (numbers in parentheses refer to line numbers in the draft RFP)

- (40-41) Board retained a research focus on Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands and entire (vice western) Gulf of Alaska, emphasizing that this was for one year only and may be refocused for 2005. Deleted italicized phrase that interprets “adjacent waters” to include freshwater drainages for Western Alaska salmon stocks only.
- (46-47) Declined to estimate amount of appropriations that may be made available.
- (51-59) Passed motion unanimously adopting a new policy to have a two-component RFP.
- (63-68) Broadened focus for foundational studies to more than just the Bering Sea and Aleutians and added note that project results should apply to marine resource management in all areas under Board purview. Intent is to develop methodologies for all areas because we have knowledge gaps in all areas.
- (71-75) Under Goal 1, added specific tasking language approved by Science Panel (see Tab 4(a) Supplemental in notebooks), but combined forage fish and diurnally migrating mesopelagic species in the eastern Bering Sea into one category at approximately \$500,000 for one or more studies lasting up to one year. Also, added herring as a species of study. Want to address as many listed species as possible for the money allocated.
- (77-86) Under Goal 2, added in specific tasking language approved by Science Panel (see Tab 4(a) Supplemental in notebooks), but reassigned #4 – data protocol workshop – to be outside the RFP and directed by staff. Staff also was directed to convene a salmon workshop that brings together 20+ program managers for salmon research in the North Pacific from the upper Yukon to NPAFC areas. Workshop would examine scope of programs, thrust of research, potential for coordination, gap analysis, and funding levels. NPRB would provide leadership for the workshop effort. The \$25,000 earmarked for the data workshop was reassigned to augment the evaluation of ocean circulation models, bringing the target funding level to \$75,000.
- (88-90) Accepted Goal 3 as written in Tab 4(a) Supplemental, but added a new Goal 4 with a similar synthesis study for Southeast Alaska, defined as south of Cape Suckling, for \$75,000.
- (104-106) Marine ecosystem structure and processes. Add back in from 2003 RFP, the long-term monitoring of biophysical parameters and phytoplankton and zooplankton.

- (109-111) Marine mammals and seabirds. A motion failed to delete the parenthetical note that research focused primarily on Steller sea lions would not be considered, however, the wording was changed to “defer” sea lion funding.
- (113-127) Fish habitat and Pressing fishery management issues. Replaced these two areas with the three research priorities from the 2003 RFP with some modifications in language. More specifically, under fish habitat, added issues of impacts of fisheries on prey abundance and distribution and effects on predators (c.3) and evaluation of fish/habitat associations at multiple spatial scales (c.5); and under bycatch, added studies that improve information relative to lesser known non-target finfish species taken as bycatch (e.4).
- (128-134) Stock assessment and recruitment processes. Limited salmon studies this year to those involving delineations of stock boundaries and contaminants (see below).
- (135) Added contaminants category which includes salmon throughout their life cycles.
- (140-141) Made language on appropriations consistent with that found on lines 46-47.
- (160) Added back in a minimum of \$2,000 for outreach and education.
- (214-215) A motion failed to add in the review of proposals by the Advisory Panel. (See additional explanation below.)
- (221-222) A motion failed to remove the last sentence that public comment will not be taken from current applicants for research funds when the Board makes final funding decisions at its March meeting.

Advisory Panel Role in Proposal Review. After approving the 2004 RFP for release on October 7, 2003, the Board revisited the issue of Advisory Panel review of proposals. A motion was made and seconded to change Advisory Panel policy to allow the panel to review proposals that are judged to be scientifically meritorious by the Science Panel. The Board tabled the motion until the next Board meeting where it would be placed on the agenda as a policy discussion for resolution.

Public Comments. There were only written public comments on release of the 2004 RFP.

#### 5. National Research Council Science Plan

The Board received a status report on activities of the NRC committee that is helping to develop a science plan. The Board will need to schedule a January meeting to receive and discuss the interim report. The Board took no other actions on this agenda item.

#### 6. Other Matters

- The Board approved \$5,000 for the World Fisheries Conference.
- The Board approved the addition of one new member to the Advisory Panel: John Warrenchuk from Oceana will serve on the same term cycle as current AP members. The Board agreed that there would be no further solicitation for Advisory Panel members at this time.
- The Board approved the current Science Panel without adding new members.
- The Board will meet in mid/late January.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 2, 2003.