

Draft Summary
North Pacific Research Board
Science Panel Meeting
Anchorage, Alaska
August 29-31, 2007

The Science Panel met on August 29-31, 2007 at the North Pacific Research Board conference room in Anchorage, Alaska. The meeting was chaired by Rich Marasco (via phone) and Doug Woodby and the following other members were in attendance: Dick Beamish, Jim Berner, Michael Dagg, Anne Hollowed, Tom Royer, Pat Tester, and David Witherell. The meeting was staffed by Nora Deans, Carrie Eischens, Clarence Pautzke, Carolyn Rosner and Francis Wiese.

1. Call to Order, Approve Agenda, Safety Briefing

The agenda was approved as is and staff gave a safety briefing.

2. Budget Review

Clarence Pautzke presented a review of the NPRB budget, including a cash flow of the IERP funds, and pointed out that the target amount for the 2008 RFP should be \$4 million.

3. Summary of previously funded research

Francis Wiese gave a status report regarding the projects funded in April 2007 pointing out that all but one project that had received conditional funding had submitted satisfactory revised statements of work. The exception was project 721 entitled "Changing movements, distribution and population dynamics of polar bears as a reflection of Arctic Marine Ecosystem Health" which failed to secure the required matching funds, and was then canceled.

The Science Panel also received an update on all ongoing research projects. Staff pointed out that the Board has funded 172 projects totaling almost \$29 million since 2002, out of which 76 are now completed. An update on data and metadata records transferred from these projects to NPRB was also provided. The Science Panel noted that it may be useful to summarize past projects in the same ecosystem components used to develop the RFP, and said they would also like to see a list of Principal Investigators funded to date. Staff referred this discussion to agenda item 7d. Principal investigator profiles.

Carrie Eischens gave the panel a quick summary of the 63 peer reviewed publications that have resulted from NPRB funded research so far, and Nora Deans and Carolyn Rosner presented the Education and Outreach efforts thus far, including the new research summaries and project synopses.

4. Bering Sea Integrated Ecosystem Research Program

Staff provided the Science Panel with a summary of the June 2007 Board funding decisions regarding BSIERP and updated the Panel on the status of the ecosystem modeling, patch dynamics, LTK, and project and data management components. Nora Deans presented some initial ideas regarding education and outreach for BSIERP.

The next step in the implementation of the program is the BEST/BSIERP PI meeting on 17-19 September in Seattle and Board approval of the patch, LTK and modeling approaches developed. Science Panel members involved in the BSIERP review process were asked if they would be willing to review the new

statements of work for the patch dynamics and LTK study as they become available. Jim Berner pointed out that the Aleut International Association had just received \$615K from NSF to conduct an LTK study that may be relevant for BSIERP.

The Science Panel inquired about their future role in the BSIERP process. Staff pointed out that there is a plan to form an annual review team for BSIERP on which some of the Panel members may serve, but noted that the exact composition of such a group has not been clarified.

5. Gulf of Alaska Integrated Ecosystem Research Program

Staff gave the Panel an update on the GOA-IERP implementation which they commented on during their April meeting. They were briefed on the fact that the Board in their April 2007 meeting reviewed the Panels suggestions and concluded that (1) just going up to forage fish does not give a fully vertically integrated program, (2) staff should explore a partnership with EVOS to determine if a program more in line with BSIERP can go forward in the Gulf, and that (3) process issues should be re-evaluated and lessons learned from BSIERP before launching this next large initiative.

Having gone now through the proposal selection process with BSIERP, the Panel reflected upon the approach taken and lessons learned. There was general consensus to not repeat the large group, winner-take all approach, but to also not follow the NSF individual proposal approach. Instead an intermediate strategy that is directed, has more control, but still is competitive, should be explored. Staff suggested a modular approach where all modules that would make up an IERP are previously identified by the NPRB and roughly defined (like was done for LTK and patch dynamics components of BSIERP). Modules would be process oriented and could be competed openly, followed up by focal meetings like those done for the patch dynamics and LTK components, which proved to be extremely valuable and productive. Such an approach would give control, ensure competition, leave space for creativity within defined modules and prevent any group or institution from dominating. Such a modular approach could also deal with the issue of insufficient funding, depending on available partnerships, as well as ensuring a high quality, comprehensive and integrated program comparative to BSIERP. Core modules could be identified to be funded together in a first instance with additional modules designed ahead of time to be added as more funding becomes available. The Panel endorsed this idea and added that relevant long-term datasets should be identified and their availability determined to ensure a level playing-field in terms of data access for all applicants. Panel members pointed to the PMEL metadata archive (<http://www.pmel.noaa.gov/np/mdb/index.html>) as a starting point.

Staff had met with Michael Baffrey, executive director of the *Exxon Valdez* Oil Spill Trustee Council, prior to the meeting and updated the Panel on the potential for a partnership between EVOS and the Board. Issues to consider are topical areas, timing and funding commitments.

6. 2008 Request for Proposals

Basis for Research Priorities in Draft 2007 RFP

Francis Wiese reviewed the documents that were used as the basis for developing research priorities for the 2008 RFP. Research priorities identified by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, U.S. Marine Mammal Commission, the State of Alaska, Alaska Fisheries Science Center, Department of Interior, LTK and Contaminant workshops, and other entities and sources, all served as the basis for the research priorities in the draft 2008 RFP.

The Science Panel discussed all sections of the draft RFP presented by staff. Changes were made to sections as appropriate during these discussions and have resulted in the current draft RFP and associated

funding targets provided to the Advisory Panel and Board for their consideration. The Panel is recommending an overall funding level of \$3.7M. When the directed funding recommendations discussed below are added in, the total amount of new research funded would be \$4M as shown in the attached table. The Panel stated their strong position again that any proposal to a particular category that exceeds that category's funding cap, should be returned unprocessed.

Directed Funding for 2007. The Panel discussed at length on how to proceed on long-term monitoring. It was decided at their April 2007 meeting, and followed up in August 2007, that forming a committee to develop long-term monitoring criteria for review by the Board in April 2008 would be the best strategy. Staff has started a document that outlines some of the necessary criteria already and select Panel members would work from this over the winter to develop a plan for the Board. This plan will help inform the structuring of any long-term monitoring component in the 2009 RFP and beyond. In the meantime, for the 2008 RFP, the Science Panel recommended continued funding for two important on-going monitoring projects that the Board has supported. These include the continuous plankton recorder and zooplankton collections along the Seward Line.

Science Panel recommends direct funding Sonia Batten CPR for \$100,000 and Russ Hopcroft Seward Line for \$200,000. The Science Panel will develop criteria and long-term monitoring strategy for NPRB by April 2008.

7. Other Matters

a. Steller Sea Lion Study Design

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council held a three-day meeting in early August 2007 to discuss and review the May 2007 draft of the Steller sea lion recovery plan. Council Motion 5 adopted the Scientific and Statistical Committee recommendation on prioritizing actions and developing the Implementation Plan designed around a multiple hypothesis testing framework. NPRB staff was considering the feasibility and opportunity to fund and coordinate a discrete scientific panel to design a multiple testing hypothesis study. The Panel suggested that the Board should not get involved in this issue unless specifically asked to.

b. Cook Inlet Beluga Whale Workshop

The Panel was given an update on activities relative to this workshop. In July 2007, it came to staff attention that the Alaska SeaLife Center has requested funding to also hold a beluga workshop. Currently we are awaiting further information from the SeaLife Center coordinators as to the scope and timing of their meeting. It is the intent to collaborate in a joint meeting rather than have two separate meetings.

c. Arctic Study Design Workshop

The Panel was given an update on activities relative to this workshop and staff noted that the current plan is to hold this workshop in the first quarter of 2008.

d. Principal Investigator Profiles

The Panel discussed the usefulness of creating PI profiles to have additional information when evaluating proposals. The Science Panel made some recommendations regarding what to keep track off, mainly scientific productivity and programmatic compliance and noted that this PI profiling process should be

disclosed in the RFP and information gathered as part of the proposal application process (e.g., similar to the “Results from Prior Support” section of an NSF grant proposal).

Science Panel Membership

Members with terms expiring on September 30, 2007 are Vera Alexander, James Berner, Anne Hollowed, Tom Royer, Patricia Tester and David Witherell. These members were asked to let the executive director know sometime after the meeting whether they wanted to be reappointed.

Alaska Marine Science 2008 Symposium

The dates for the Alaska Marine Science 2008 Symposium have been set for January 20-23, 2008. As before, all Science Panel members were invited and encouraged to attend.

Meeting Schedule for 2008

The next scheduled meeting for the Science Panel is tentatively set for the week of April 14-18, 2008. This meeting will focus on development of the GOAIERP and review of proposals to the 2008 RFP.