

NPRB Advisory Panel Meeting Summary
April 28-30, 2015
NPRB Board Room, Anchorage, Alaska

The advisory panel met April 28-30, 2015. In attendance were: Jeff Stephan, Dan Falvey, Ed Poulsen, Gary Freitag, Steve Reifensstuhl, and Helen Aderman. Chris Krenz joined the meeting on April 29. Nagruk Harcharek participated via teleconference. Regrets: Michael Macrander, Vera Metcalf, Gay Sheffield, and Philip Zavadil. The meeting was staffed by: Denby Lloyd, Matthew Baker, Danielle Dickson, Jo-Ann Mellish, Brendan Smith, and Susan Dixon.

Tuesday, April 28, 2015

1. Call to Order/Approve Agenda

The Chair called the meeting to order at 8:38 AM and staff provided a safety briefing.

New staff members Jo-Ann Mellish, Program Manager, and Brendan Smith, Communications and Outreach Director, were introduced.

Jeff Stephen was elected Chair and Gary Freitag was elected Vice Chair.

The meeting agenda was accepted without amendment.

Staff reviewed NPRB travel claim regulations.

2. Science Plan

Staff proposed plans to update the NPRB Science Plan to allow incorporation of recent advancements in science. Staff reported that the science panel agreed that the plan, written in 2005, should be updated. Staff outlined plans to include the advisory panel in the process and solicited comments from the panel.

The advisory panel agreed that an update of the plan is timely and expressed interest in participating in the process. Panel members suggested means of seeking stakeholder input as the plan is revised. The panel suggested that certain aspects of the updated plan would benefit from review and comment by the AP and asked that time be allocated on their fall meeting agenda to discuss updating the sections on research approaches & partnerships, human dimensions, and NPRB mission and goals, specifically.

3. Budget Review

Staff reported that the annual audit of the NPRB was successfully completed. Staff explained that NPRB's budget was affected by federal sequestration last year. NPRB submitted a request for Grant 7, including a placeholder for \$4.5 M for the Annual research program and placeholders for funding the Arctic program. Assuming that federal interest rates remain low for the foreseeable future, the NPRB budget is projected to decrease by approximately \$2.5 M per year. The 15% administrative cap is a concern for NPRB capacity in the future.

MOTION: The AP supports the target \$4.5 M for the Annual program RFP and the target of \$7 M for the Arctic program.

Motion passed.

MOTION: After reviewing the budget, the AP recognizes that it may not be possible to fund future substantial IERPs and in that event, the AP asks the board to consider using surplus funds for expanded focus sections to address ecosystem information needs in the Annual program RFP.

Motion passed.

MOTION: The panel suggested that the board consider researching alternative investment strategies, for example, investment of some portion of NPRB funds in five-year bonds instead of ten-year bonds.

Motion passed.

4. Current Funded Research and 2015 Proposals

a. Current NPRB-funded research

Staff provided an overview of research currently funded by NPRB, noting that since 2002, NPRB has funded 351 projects in response to the Annual program RFP, and has awarded a total of \$58 million.

b. 2015 RFP and proposals received

Staff reported that the 2015 RFP for the Annual program was released on October 3, 2014, with a funding target of \$5.9 million. One-hundred and five proposals were submitted by the December 5, 2014 deadline, requesting a total of \$24 million.

c. Proposal review process

Staff reviewed the proposal review process, noting that approximately 25% of peer reviews were provided by international colleagues in 2015.

d. Conflict of interest declarations

AP members present signed the annual declaration stating that they have read, understand, and agree to abide by the NPRB conflict of interest policy.

5. 2015 Annual Program Proposal Review*

The Advisory Panel applied the following "Guidance for Advisory Panel Review" for the 2015 Proposal Review:

“The Advisory Panel Review of proposals is intended to highlight those proposals that have special stakeholder, community and other societal relevance and public interest value. The Advisory Panel will be provided with full proposal materials and the Science Panel summary paragraphs for all proposals that the Science Panel has determined to be responsive to the RFP and to have scientific merit. The Advisory Panel will review Tier 1 and Tier 2 proposals and provide a short summary of the attributes of a subset of these proposals that they wish to highlight as having significant stakeholder, community or other societal relevance. These summaries will be brought to the attention of the Board for consideration. It is not the intent of the Advisory Panel to comment on all Tier 1 and Tier 2 proposals, but rather to highlight those they identify as having special value to stakeholders. The Advisory Panel contribution is also not intended to rank proposals, to provide comment on the scientific merit of proposals, nor the alignment of such proposals with category budgets. Standard Advisory Panel Conflict of Interest procedures will apply with respect to the AP review of proposals.”

The Advisory Panel applied the following "Stakeholder Relevance Considerations" for the 2015 Proposal Review:

1. **Leverage** Does the proposal leverage understanding of larger issues or is it especially useful in resource management issues?
2. **Timing** Does the proposal respond to urgent challenges facing stakeholders or take advantage of an opportune timing event?
3. **Community involvement** How strong is the community involvement section of the proposal? Does it create new, enduring resources for community members or employ novel methods worthy of note?
4. **Stakeholder involvement** Are stakeholders and community members an integral part of the project? Is their role in data collection, project planning or execution noteworthy?
5. **Bang-for-the-buck** Does the proposal leverage additional funds or is it a particularly good value for the stakeholder benefit?
6. **Outreach and education** Is the education and outreach component noteworthy? Will communications education and/or outreach reach relevant communities and stakeholders?

Due to the absence of several AP members, staff summarized each proposal in more detail than has been typical in past years so that participating panel members could better evaluate the relevance of the research to stakeholder interests.

Wednesday, April 29, 2015

5. 2015 Annual Program Proposal Review (continued)*

The AP highlighted 34 proposals for stakeholder relevance, as noted below:

Oceanography and Lower Trophic Level Productivity (**Funding cap: \$500,000**):
Four proposals in this category were highlighted for stakeholder relevance.

Fish and Invertebrates (**Funding cap: \$1.3M**):
Eight proposals in this category were highlighted for stakeholder relevance.

Marine Mammals (**Funding cap: \$1 M**):
Seven proposals in this category were highlighted for stakeholder relevance.

Seabirds (**Funding cap: \$150,000**):
Two proposals in this category were highlighted for stakeholder relevance.

Humans (**Funding cap: \$400,000**):
Three proposals in this category were highlighted for stakeholder relevance.

Other Prominent Issues (**Funding cap: \$200,000**):
Three proposals in this category were highlighted for stakeholder relevance.

Community Involvement (**Funding cap: \$150,000**):
No proposals in this category were highlighted for stakeholder relevance.

Cooperative Research with Industry (**Funding cap: \$400,000**):
Two proposals in this category were highlighted for stakeholder relevance.

Technology Development and Novel Applications (**Funding cap: \$400,000**):
Two proposals in this category were highlighted for stakeholder relevance.

Data Rescue (**Funding cap: \$100,000**):
One proposal in this category was highlighted for stakeholder relevance.

Focus Section: (**Funding cap: \$1.3 M**):
Two proposals in this category were highlighted for stakeholder relevance.

**MOTION: The AP forwards the highlighted proposals for the Board's consideration.
Motion passed.**

The AP asked for space on the agenda of their fall meeting to revisit the AP review criteria and strategy for highlighting proposals. Staff were asked to provide the panel with proposals as soon as the science panel meeting has concluded, as well as a spreadsheet identifying Tier 1 and Tier 2 proposals. The AP also asked staff to investigate developing an online system that would allow panel members to begin crafting statements about stakeholder relevance prior to the meeting.

6. Graduate Student Research Awards*

Staff reported that a total of 38 applications were successfully submitted for the 2015 GSRA program, including applications from 13 Master's and 25 PhD students.

Several applicants were ranked very highly by the science panel. The advisory panel discussed five Master's-level applications that received a score of at least 9 /10 on the academic strength of the student and discussed seven PhD-level applications that received a score of 10/10 on academic strength of the student and at least 9/10 on quality of the proposed research. The AP noted the high caliber of the 2015 applicants.

In evaluating applications, the AP again used the criteria applied in 2014, which focused chiefly on evaluation of the advisory panel members' perspective on the potential for the applicant to become a good scientist, with special attention to initiative, originality, good communication skills, and awareness of the research context. Evaluation incorporated both the probability of student success and project success, with ancillary evaluation of stakeholder relevance. In 2015, the panel put particular emphasis on the applicants' initiative to engage stakeholders and to conduct outreach aimed at audiences most relevant to the proposed research (e.g., local communities, commercial fishermen, Alaska Native organizations).

Following discussion, the AP recommended three Master's and four PhD-level applications for funding (application numbers 1120, 1122, 1116, 1100, 1115, 1119, and 1129). For PhD-level students, application numbers 1100 and 1119 were endorsed more strongly than the others because their outreach plans were phenomenal; application 1115 addressed a timely research question and application 1129 would foster development of a promising social scientist who is interested in addressing matters of pressing concern to communities.

7. Communications and Outreach Update

The new Communications and Outreach Director reported that staff are reviewing the draft communications strategy that was presented to the AP last fall and working on implementing aspects of it. Priorities include developing evaluation metrics for outreach products, improving legacy projects, streamlining workflow, lowering production costs for outreach materials, and improving organizational branding.

Staff provided an update on communications and outreach activities that have occurred since the fall meeting. Highlights included:

- a. Participation in the AMSS Communicating Ocean Sciences Workshop,
- b. Production of the NPRB biennial report,
- c. Distribution of four videos about the Gulf of Alaska Project, and
- d. Completion of Bering Sea Project headlines.

The advisory panel noted that in the NPRB communication strategy resource users and the general public were not included among the list of primary target audiences. Staff pointed out that this reflects a flaw in the layout of the document; throughout the plan specific goals clearly target these audiences.

Staff solicited suggestions from the panel about effective means of communicating with the public and stakeholders and specifically asked the panel whether production of print materials are recommended given that electronic distribution is more economical and, in many cases, reaches a wider audience. The panel recommended a strategy that employs many methods of distribution including electronic and printed materials. The panel agreed that in some cases web-based products are more effective, particularly when the aim is to reach a younger audience, however, they felt that production of some print materials are still advised.

The panel recommended tracking metrics of how NPRB has reached various audiences, particularly students. For example, the number of students reached by NPRB-funded projects that visit classrooms would be one useful metric to gauge the success of NPRB outreach.

Panel members viewed the finalist entries in the 2015 NPRB photo contest and cast their votes for the top three photos in the adult and youth categories.

8. Bering Sea Project

Staff reported that final reports have been received for all 25 BSIERP projects. Twenty of these projects have submitted all required data and metadata and have been closed out and the remaining five projects are expected to be closed within the next two months.

Four special issues dedicated to the Bering Sea Project have been produced and the online Bering Sea Project publication library now contains 157 papers, books, and dissertations, of which 107 are BSIERP publications. The production of the Bering Sea magazine has been delayed and it was not available for distribution at the meeting.

Thursday, April 30, 2015

9. Gulf of Alaska Project

Staff reported that the 6th annual PI meeting was held April 7-11, 2015 in Fairbanks, Alaska. The meeting was designed to integrate the findings of the program, beginning with a review of what has been learned about the transport, early life survival, and recruitment of the five focal groundfish species. Final products of the program are beginning to take shape, and final reports are expected December 1, 2015. A proposal was received in response to the 2015 annual call for proposals to conduct further synthesis of data collected during the course of the project.

Sixteen manuscripts have been submitted for the first special issue in Deep Sea Research II and are in various stages of review. Papers will be published electronically as they are accepted. Two other special issues are planned that will focus on cross-disciplinary analyses and products of synthesis.

Sitka Sound Science Center produced four brief videos about the Gulf of Alaska Project that are available on the project's website and Facebook page (one of these videos was screened for the panel). The project has an active social media campaign, engaging 706 followers on Facebook as of April 17, 2015.

The panel recognized the value of the integrated ecosystem research program approach, noting that the results obtained through the Gulf of Alaska Program would have been impossible to achieve had the individual projects been conducted in isolation.

The panel recommended that an effort be made to ensure that outreach products that communicate the results of the program reach local communities and commercial fishermen.

10. Arctic Program

Staff reported that the Pacific Marine Arctic Regional Synthesis (PacMARS) project final report was received in mid-January and was approved. The report is available on the project website: <http://pacmars.cbl.umces.edu/>. The web-based data inventory hosted by NCAR is now public and may be accessed via the same website. Several manuscripts for a special issue publication are in preparation.

Staff reminded AP members that during the May 2014 board meeting, NPRB decided to allocate \$6 million towards the development of an Arctic program. Staff reported that during their September meeting, the board allocated an additional \$1 million to be held in reserve to fill gaps in the Arctic program following proposal review and selection and also formally expressed their intent to make additional funds available for synthesis for the Arctic program in future years.

Staff explained that since the fall meeting several projects funded by other institutions have committed to integrate with the NPRB Arctic program. These include projects funded by BOEM, NOAA, USGS, NSF, and others. These projects were detailed in an appendix to the draft RFP.

Staff shared drafts of the Arctic program RFP and implementation plan and solicited comments from the panel.

The AP recognized the progress that has been made since the fall meeting and commended staff on the development of partnerships as well as the draft RFP.

A recommendation was made to engage members of the North Slope Borough Baseline Studies Program Steering Committee/NSB Department of Wildlife Management in conversations with the Arctic program's steering committee to ensure that effective exchange of information with communities occurs regularly.

The advisory panel will participate in review of Arctic program pre-proposals during their fall meeting. The AP asked staff to identify how the AP could best contribute to the review of these pre-proposals by providing suggestions for review criteria specific to this program. The AP review criteria used for proposals submitted through the Annual program may not be appropriate, particularly in terms of evaluating how proposals would integrate to achieve broader ecosystem understanding.

11. Other Matters

a. Alaska Marine Science Symposium

Staff reported on the success of the 2015 AMSS and solicited comments on the organization of the meeting, specifically, whether concurrent sessions should be considered. Panel members preferred that the structure of the meeting remain unchanged and made a motion to that effect.

**MOTION: Retain current format of AMSS.
Motion passed.**

b. Annual program progress reports

Staff proposed changes to the Annual program schedule and format for progress reports. Changes included:

- reducing the frequency of reports from twice a year to once per year;
- changing the report deadline to better align with the schedule for invoicing;
- simplifying the required content; and
- implementing an online submission process and restricting access to progress reports.

**MOTION: The AP recommends implementing the changes suggested by staff.
Motion passed.**

The panel suggested that in the event that internet connectivity is problematic, staff should provide a template that would allow alternate means of progress report submission.

c. Appointments to Advisory and Science panels

Three current advisory panel members whose terms are expiring, and who are eligible for reappointment, have expressed interest in reappointment. One new applicant applied for appointment to the advisory panel. The board will make the AP appointment decisions next week.

d. Nomination of fishing industry representative to the board

Staff reported that the board will nominate an individual to represent the fishing industry on the board and will forward their recommendation to the Secretary of Commerce next month.

e. Panel member recruitment and retention

NPRB will need to recruit several representatives to the science and advisory panels next year and existing panel members were asked to nominate colleagues.

Panel members shared concern over the loss of institutional knowledge that will result when several panel members are lost simultaneously. The panel suggested that the board stagger the terms of panel members more deliberately and limit the number of seats that would turnover concurrently. The panel recommended that a third term of three years (or a maximum of three years) be allowable, recognizing that preservation of NPRB institutional knowledge should be a priority. The panel further suggested that the board consider allowing reappointment of sitting members who would otherwise not be eligible for reappointment in the event that a suitable replacement is not identified following solicitation.

Recognizing that attendance has been an ongoing issue for the advisory panel, it was suggested that nominees be asked to articulate what they plan to contribute and to commit to attendance of meetings.

f. Outside funding requests

Staff provided a summary of past and current commitments to provide support for outside meetings. Requests in 2015 exceeded the \$50,000 annual limit that NPRB has set for such support.

g. Meeting schedule for 2015-2016

The advisory panel will meet Sep. 15-17, 2015 and Apr. 25-28, 2016.

The meeting adjourned at 12:38 PM.

*indicates closed session; all other sessions were open to the public