

North Pacific Research Board
2017 Spring Advisory Panel Meeting
Summary April 25-27, 2017
NPRB Board Room, Anchorage, Alaska

The meeting was attended by panel members, Ruth Christiansen, Dan Falvey, Gary Freitag Nagruk Harachek, Vera Metcalf, Laura Morse, Edward Poulsen, Gay Sheffield, and Jeff Stephan. Helen Aderman and Steve Reifentstahl were absent. The meeting was staffed by Betsy Baker, Matt Baker, Susan Dixon, Jo-Ann Mellish, and Brendan Smith.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 am on Monday, April 25, 2017. As prior chair, Jeff opened the meeting. Executive Director (ED), Betsy Baker, introduced herself to the group, as it was her first meeting with the advisory panel (AP). Laura Morse updated the panel on her new position, having moved from Alaska to Massachusetts to work on offshore wind energy.

MOTIONS: Elect Edward Poulsen as AP chair and Nagruk Harcharek as vice chair. Both motions passed without objection.

An AP member noted that there should be consideration of when the officers are elected to allow for new members to have a vote. The ED noted that she had also raised the issue of when elections should occur with the Executive Committee. It will be discussed further at the board meeting. An AP member noted that there is some sense to electing chairs in the fall cycle rather than the spring because the chair's involvement with the writing of the RFP would provide continuity between the RFP creation and proposal review cycle. The AP member suggested confirming officials again in the fall but considering new timing. An AP member suggested having a handover period to allow new chairs to consult with the exiting chair.

The AP expressed their gratitude and appreciation to Jeff Stephan for his service as chair over the last six years, and said he had elevated the influence of the AP and led the group to be more assertive and independent. Gary Freitag was also thanked for serving as vice chair.

MOTION: Agenda approved.

MOTION: Fall meeting summary approved.

The ED noted that NPRB's Statement of Organization, Practices, and Procedures (SOPPs) have been updated and included in the electronic agenda.

The spring Science Panel meeting report was provided for reference.

Conflict of Interest documents were signed by all members. An AP member requested that UAF departments be added to the conflict of interest matrix to make it easier to identify conflicts.

2. GSRA

Staff provided an overview of the process of evaluating GSRA applicants. An AP member suggested that all Master's students be considered as a group before reviewing the doctoral students to avoid

potentially being overshadowed by the more advanced applicants. Science panel summaries were read to the AP and, if requested, the community outreach section was read. Selections were flagged, and panel members wrote comments explaining their rationale, noting that the comments would be useful to showcase what are good proposals from the perspective of the AP. An AP member suggested that the online review page dashboard include outreach and stakeholder involvement, and that it would be good to include metrics on resubmission and success rate of resubmissions for GSRA and the Core Program.

The AP flagged 4 Master's and 5 PhD application: MS (1541-Bland, 1553-May, 1560-Junes, 1571-King) and PHD (1547-Bringloe, 1565-Fournet, 1566-Steinglass, 1568-Kusel, 1584-Cyr).

The AP recommendation from the previous meeting were read:

“AP suggests that the Board include language in the GSRA solicitation that will clearly draw the applicants' attention to the AP's desire to see student initiative to engage stakeholders and to conduct outreach aimed at audiences most relevant to the proposed research”.

3. Budget

Betsy Baker provided an overview of budget projections. An AP member suggested that the two AP meetings be combined into one to save cost. Staff pointed out that the RFP would not be ready to review in the spring meeting, and welcomed ideas such as this. The ED said she did not want to undercut the AP's contribution by eliminating a meeting. AP members suggested that the next fall would be an important opportunity to incorporate new members and ensure knowledge transfer. It was also suggested that the fall meeting be used to review AP protocols and provide a formal list of recommendations for future activities. It was noted that the RFP has been revised to a more standard format and that the AP comments were most relevant in the spring proposal review and less work was necessary in the fall. Therefore, AP members recommended that future fall meetings be reduced in scope and held remotely. The recommendation was for a shortened remote meeting with Anchorage and Seattle hubs and video conferencing provided to other members. This rationale is to reduce time investments and costs. An AP member asked how much grants are impacted by a 0.2% interest rate change, and the ED said that it was significant. An AP member asked for an explanation of the sequestering of funds mentioned in the ED's overview. The ED explained that it was mandated by the Budget Control Act passed in the wake of the 2008 recession, and mentioned that the new administration has expressed interest in having Congress repeal the act.

4. Communications & Outreach

Staff noted the large number of Companion Outreach proposals. An AP member wondered how much this was in response to PIs being required to have outreach if their proposal involved coastal communities, rather than including outreach because of their interest in it. It was noted that the language might have led to confusion and that the requirement for requiring companion outreach proposals in research related to coastal communities might be revised. Brendan Smith provided an overview of the recent changes to the Core Program RFP with respect to outreach. Researchers submitting proposals for the Core Program had the option to submit a companion outreach proposal that could be funded for up to \$15,000, or to include a standard outreach approach without separate funding. Companion outreach proposals were mandatory for research proposals dealing with coastal communities. A total of \$80,000 is targeted for the companion outreach cycle. A total of 44 companion outreach proposals were submitted, requesting \$563,949.

The Advisory Panel was presented with a summary of how the Science Panel conducted their endorsements, and how only Core Proposals ranked Tier 2 or higher that also had companion outreach

proposals were reviewed. Of the 44 proposals submitted, the Science Panel reviewed 33, and flagged 18 for endorsement. The Advisory Panel developed their own criteria to evaluate companion outreach proposals (not ranked by order of priority): 1) uniqueness; 2) extensiveness; 3) applicability for target audience(s); 4) return on investment; 5) long-term impacts; 6) effectiveness of delivery; and 7) evaluation metrics. Overall outreach goals for the companion outreach program were derived from an Advisory Panel intent to promote awareness, foster transparency, improve scientific literacy, encourage working relationships and convey utility among stakeholders and target audience(s). The Advisory Panel used the same flagging system as the Science Panel for endorsing companion outreach proposals, and selected a total of 16 for consideration.

The AP expressed strong support for the expanded outreach program, noting that it highlights the importance of outreach and allows for a focused review that is difficult when embedded in a research proposal. The AP also expressed support for the layout of deliverables and assessment goals, and suggested that proposals should have a link that makes sure the outreach is addressing the stakeholders that are impacted by the problem solving of the core project. It was noted that the goals of the outreach proposal should be to **promote awareness, ensure transparency and convey utility to stakeholders, encourage scientific literacy, encourage working relationships between scientists and stakeholders.** The RFP language should more closely reflect these criteria for the next funding cycle of outreach proposals.

The AP suggested that outreach should be evaluated according to its feasibility and applicability (e.g., is it an effective way to reach target audiences). Curricular development should not be a “come and find it”, but developed together with a particular teacher to improve uptake and ensure it has meaningful and relevant impact. It was also noted that data rescue projects have great potential for community outreach and the utility and availability of those data resources should be conveyed to the appropriate audiences, especially those that have connections to the data in question. The AP also noted that more options should be discussed for how the AP can provide other than positive feedback to proposal PIs. It was agreed that some of these issues should be addressed in drafting the RFP at the fall meeting. It was suggested that the AP should develop an explicit protocol to include in the RFP and NPRB outreach materials for general approaches to effectively engage with communities.

There were 33 proposals to be reviewed, with funds sufficient to fund 6-8 proposals. Panelists were randomly assigned 11 proposals each through an approach that ensured 3 AP members reviewed each Outreach Proposal. The chair noted that many of the proposals were good but a few were truly unique and they should focus on the best. The AP supported 16 outreach proposals and drafted statements of support for each flagged proposal.

MOTION: Move forward 16 selected outreach proposals and associated comments.

5. Internal Systems Update

Matt Baker provided an overview of the recent system updates and future planned upgrades. Over the past two years, Resource Data Inc. (RDI), Axiom Data Science and Arctic IT have been contracted. RDI has developed an updated proposal submission, peer and panel review systems. Aspects of these have been presented to the Panels as they have been developed. Overall, there has been positive feedback from both internal and external users on the efficiency of these additions. Axiom Data Science has created an online Research Workspace tool, initiated a project catalogue and have assumed data

storage and review responsibilities. Arctic IT has been contracted to manage all internal hardware and computer services. Additional details on each of these services are provided in memo documents.

The AP remarked that the developments were excellent and surpassed expectations. It was noted that the new systems and approaches have increased accessibility and efficiency. The AP noted NPRB has come a long way in recent years and appreciation for the vision, planning, and work that has gone into these developments.

6. Core Program

Jo-Ann Mellish presented an overview of the proposals received in response to the 2017 RFP with an advertised target funding level of \$4.55 million. One hundred and forty proposals were submitted by the deadline of December 16, 2016. One proposal was disqualified due to subject matter and one proposal was withdrawn by the applicant. A total of \$32 million was requested by the one hundred and thirty-eight proposals that moved forward to peer review. A funding agreement plan is under development for potential funding partners for the 2018 cycle. The existing agreement with the Oil Spill Recovery Institute (OSRI) will remain in place for the 2017 funding cycle. OSRI met on March 24th, and reviewed eight proposals of interest. Three proposals were selected as candidates for co-funding (19, 28, 132) up to a total of \$100,000.

The full listing of proposals, conflicts of interest and review assignments were provided in the memo and supplementary materials. Staff presented SP summaries for all Tier 1 proposals and read the titles of all Tier 2 proposals in sequence. The AP discussed proposals and assigned members to develop statements of support for Tier 1 proposals. AP members subsequently advance Tier 2 proposals of interest and the same protocol was followed.

MOTION: Accept all 28 gold-starred proposals.

The AP noted that new means to provide feedback to the SP and proposers should be identified. The new review process is more focused on timeliness and stakeholder relevance and the separation of the Outreach proposal allowed a focus on timeliness and stakeholder relevance – this new approach was appreciated and streamlined the process allowing AP to determine whether and how proposals meet the AP criteria. The AP requested that the community and stakeholder relevance section be included in the summary page in future review cycles. The new electronic portal was well received and helpful for moving the process efficiently. The AP would like time to consider the language for the guidelines to AP review protocols in the RFP at the fall meeting.

7. Panel membership

Betsy Baker introduced the details on the process and status for nomination for the AP positions and the positions to be filled. It was discussed that it was not appropriate for the Panel to give specific endorsements on candidates, however, individual panel members were encouraged to provide staff with recommendations.

8. Arctic IERP

Matt Baker presented the current activities of the Arctic Integrated Ecosystem Research Program (IERP), including a description of the funding of gap projects, communications with stakeholders, work plans, and recent meetings. The Science Panel had recommended several projects to the Board in the fall of 2016 to fill observed gaps in the program. These included five additional studies covering aspects of

phytoplankton, microzooplankton and fish. The new PIs have been integrated into the larger study and were included in the November 2016 logistics meeting and March 2017 Annual PI meeting.

To date, NPRB has hosted five presentations by Arctic IERP PIs and staff to various stakeholder groups, as well as hub meetings (Kotzebue, Nome) and a community meeting in Utqiagvik/Barrow. Hub and community meeting reports are included in the memo materials. The goal of the hub meetings is to develop a framework for communicating research throughout the process and to improve engagement, as well as avoid impacting subsistence activity. An integrated work plan was prepared by the Arctic IERP Steering Committee that describes the scope and sampling design of the project. This document is available on the NPRB website. A draft communications plan is also available. NOAA has secured a vessel for the summer cruise and the spring cruise on the Sikuliaq will commence in June. An AP member noted that NOAA is developing a communications plan for communicating with coastal communities and provided staff with information.

9. GOA IERP

Matt Baker provided a summary of the final stages of this program. All awards were closed in fall 2016. The final reports and the first special issue of *Deep-Sea Research II* are available on the NPRB website. A second special issue is in final review. The Gulf of Alaska IERP synthesis group continues to have monthly calls and is currently scheduled to run through early 2018. A workshop to share information on findings and facilitate synthesis was held in February 2017. The agenda and report on the workshop are provided in memo materials. Advances include species profiles for the five focal groundfish, lessons learned in implementing IERPs, a summary of main findings, and the development of a draft conceptual model. The AP noted the added value of integrating new data and analyses (e.g., salmon), new collaborations (e.g., Gulf Watch, NOAA FOCI program), and advances in informing stock assessment and the Ecosystems Chapter of the NPFMC SAFE reports. The AP also noted an interest in learning more on the species-specific IBM results, critical habitat designations, and life history results as well as the oceanographic mixing and ocean dynamics. An AP member provided information relevant to the Navy that might provide additional funding to promote results and continue analyses in the Gulf of Alaska.

10. Partnerships in the Core Program

Matt Baker provided an update on the progress of establishing new partnerships for funding within the Core program (e.g., separate from the development of IERP partners). Three institutions in addition to OSRI have approached NPRB with interest in collaborative funding. At the direction of the Board, staff are developing a standard protocol to ensure consistency in outreach, engagement and protocol across a diverse suite of potential partner institutions. The Panel was asked for their recommendations on how to solicit and consider engagement from potential agency, industry, community and sector partners. It was noted that Alaska Native corporations and CDQs are currently missing. The Coast Guard and the shipping industry and Pew were all noted as potential partners. In response to potential concerns about industry influence in the direction of research, an AP member noted that Shell-funded studies were sometimes driven by research topics of specific interest to communities. Another member noted that research groups such as Bering Sea Fisheries Research Foundation appreciate the independent review of the research done by NPRB. It creates another level of neutrality. The AP suggested staff should consider whether this would be a passive effort or active solicitation and noted that there are administrative costs with these agreements that might be recovered through partner funds. Staff noted that the Board may be investigating the ability to charge the 15% administrative fee. The AP expressed interest in pursuing partnerships, noting staff and Board attention to potential issues related to conflict of interest and other considerations.

11. Science Plan Update

Matt Baker presented the history and justification for the ongoing Science Plan update. Recent efforts were summarized, including the fall panel and Board decisions, along with a report of the external review committee meeting in January. It was noted that several significant outstanding issues (e.g., structure of research categories, relative investment in programs and budget concerns) had emerged in discussions with the panels, board and External Review Committee that had yet to be resolved, such that significant effort at this meeting might not be warranted. There was general comment that the fewer, broader topics for the RFPs recommended by the board in the fall would allow more flexibility. AP members also noted that the NPFMC has a management focus and direct alignment of NPFMC and NPRB research priorities in the RFP would be too narrow as the NPFMC is not involved in state issues (e.g., herring, salmon, coastal habitat and social science and communities). AP members noted the benefits in the aggregated categories recommended by the Board in the fall, such that monies were not spread across as many categories and a new section made available to support research that crosses discipline and/or ecosystem components. AP members also raised the prospect of stratifying proposals according to cost of proposal, such that proposals would only compete within a certain cost category

13. Strategic Planning

Betsy Baker presented the background for the continued strategic planning exercise. Matt Baker provided a summary of the prior IERPs and the history of their development. The concepts of a smaller-scale geographic focus (e.g., Cook Inlet) and a process focus such as climate change and multidisciplinary research were also presented. The AP noted that a benefit in revising community involvement and cooperative research to approaches is that it would allow encourage this type of research across all categories and in all years but that attention should be paid to ensure these approaches were encouraged. Several AP members suggested that any potential modified cycle for rotating RFP research categories in alternate years should include fish and invertebrates every year and cycle out the others. An AP member noted that aggregating research categories might encourage large proposals or more proposals in certain categories in a manner that led to inefficiency or lowering the bar for exceptional science. AP members also suggested that ideas of implementing a pre-proposal process.

14. Other Matters

Betsy Baker presented the status of Advisory Panel seats to be filled due to upcoming vacancies. There was a break to recognize the efforts of panelists terming out: Jeff Stephan, Vera Metcalf, Gay Sheffield, Gary Freitag, Dan Falvey and Helen Aderman (not present). Betsy presented each member with a commemorative plaque. Several issues were raised for consideration in the fall meeting, including: defining the elements of good outreach, defining “coastal communities”, streamlining review criteria for the community and engagement section, including outreach proposals on the online portal, determining means for AP to provide direct feedback to both the Science Panel and PIs in the review process, improving the RFP with more robust instructions on community and stakeholder engagement and including that information in the proposal summary pages.

MOTION: End meeting. Meeting adjourned at 3:55 pm.