

Summary
North Pacific Research Board
Hotel Captain Cook
Anchorage, AK
March 17-19, 2004

1. Call to Order/Approve Agenda

The Board convened at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, March 17, 2004. Present were Tylan Schrock, Jim Balsiger, Lawson Brigham (for Garry Brass), Howard Horton, Earl Krygier (for Kevin Duffy), Stephanie Madsen, Trevor McCabe, Phil Mundy, Walter Parker, Pamela Pope, John Roos, Bill Seitz, Jev Shelton, Jack Tagart, and John White. John Gauvin, Robert Gisiner, Capt. Rich Preston, Robin Samuelsen and Stetson Tinkham were absent. Clarence Pautzke and Misty Ott staffed the meeting.

The agenda was approved after switching the order of items 2 and 3. The Pollock Conservation Cooperative Research Center and Alaska Ocean Observing System status reports were postponed until the next meeting. The Board meeting summary for January 27-28, 2004 was approved after two revisions.

2. Proposal Review for 2004

Overview of proposals received in response to 2004 RFP. The Board was presented with a summary of the 87 proposals received, requesting a total of just over \$17 million. Twenty-two proposals responded to Component 1 on specific research needs, and 65 responded to the general research priorities listed under Component 2. Most proposals in Component 2 responded to the categories on marine ecosystems and marine mammals and seabirds. All proposals were evaluated by anonymous technical reviewers and then by the Science Panel.

Science Panel recommendations. Dr. Richard Marasco presented the Science Panel's recommendations and gave an overview of the Science Panel's proposal review process. They identified 24 proposals for Tier 1 which contained "should-to-must" fund proposals recommended by the Panel, summing to \$3.147 million, just over the \$3 million target set by the Board. The Panel also recommended proposals for tiers 2 and 3, to be funded if the Board decided to far exceed their \$3 million target.

Public comments. There were no public comments.

Select proposals for combined funding of up to \$3 million. The Board reviewed its conflict of interest procedures and then proceeded to develop recommendations for funding to be submitted to the Secretary of Commerce for final approval.

A motion was made to adopt Tier 1 proposals, totaling \$3,147,201.

An amendment passed to add proposal #50 for one year at \$171,000 because more information is needed on spiny dogfish, which may be an emergent fishery in State waters. The applicants would need to submit a proposal to the 2005 RFP for a second year of funding, and they should consider using research assistants, if using graduate students was found to be inappropriate.

An amendment passed to add proposal #72 on fur seals for one year at \$244,000.

An amendment passed to increase the funding for proposal #47 for the Arctic synthesis from \$120,000 recommended by the Science Panel, to \$150,000, with \$100,000 earmarked for personal services. (The original proposal requested \$190,681.)

An amendment passed to delete proposal #62 on the photo-identification of Bowhead whales (\$100,000).

An amendment passed to add proposal #75 on tufted puffins for \$131,476.

The main motion, as amended, was passed unanimously, thus recommending approval for 26 projects with combined funding of \$3,623,677.

The Executive Director was authorized to approve some proposal revisions: those revised down to one year from two years requested; adjustments to statements of work for the Arctic Ocean and Southeast Alaska syntheses due to revised funding levels; and two Alaska marine information systems proposals to be combined and funded for a total of \$150,000. Three forage fish proposals (#1, #35, and #56) will be brought back to the Board for review in July. They must be combined into one statement of work for total funding of \$500,000. The revised proposal will be reviewed by a Science Panel subcommittee.

The Board also discussed the overall proposal review process and will consider various approaches for reducing the number of proposals that are received in response to the RFP, for example, by being much more specific in the RFP, grouping issue areas and possibly assigning dollar estimates to each issue area. The Board also noted that Board members could attend Science Panel meetings, which would help inform them how recommendations are developed.

3. Review Draft Science Plan Outline

Plan Team Report. The science plan writing team presented to the Board, abbreviated and expanded outlines of the draft science plan, as well as a more detailed outline of proposed Chapter 4 which focused on a core area from Bering Straits to Kodiak. The Board also received a guidance document that summarizes previous recommendations on the draft science plan by the Board, Science Panel, and Advisory Panel, as well as recommendations developed by the National Research Council.

Science Panel and Advisory Panel comments. Dr. Richard Marasco presented the Science Panel comments which stressed the importance of the plan's conceptual foundation, forecasting limitations and the inclusion of new knowledge into the hypothesis section. The Science Panel recommended caution in dividing the plan among disciplines and emphasized the goal of an interdisciplinary, coherent science program with some concentration on monitoring and modeling and more on process studies and retrospective analyses. Community involvement in data collection, hypothesis setting and establishment of local monitoring schemes and student involvement in monitoring programs, gathering local knowledge and interviewing elders also were recommended. The Board may want to consider supporting a mix of short-term and long-term research, possibly in a proportion of one-third to two-thirds funding emphasis.

The Advisory Panel (AP) comments were presented by Heather McCarty and included recommendations such as the inclusion of workshops, plans and gray literature into the background of the document, emphasis on core area management issues, global warming and climate change for the conceptual foundation, and habitat management issues. The AP noted that categorizing proposals and/or funds by geographic area could be limiting and it should be stated that proposals outside the core area may be considered. Russian programs were recommended to be incorporated in the Coordination with Other Entities and Programs section. The AP pointed out that the term "Traditional and Ecological Knowledge" is limiting and the plan should use the more accurate term "Local and Traditional Knowledge". The AP also recommended the inclusion of Community Involvement in the Education and Outreach section. The AP formed subcommittees and recommended Board members be appointed to work with them for the Local and Traditional Knowledge, Education and Outreach and Community Involvement and Cooperative Research with Industry sections.

Board discussion and direction to team for further plan development. The Board engaged in extensive discussion of the initial outline for the science plan, which focused on a core research area, Bering Straits to Kodiak, where significant commercial fisheries occur. The following concerns were raised with that approach and other components of the outline:

- There is merit in a regional planning approach, especially as it helps characterize research needs in terms of three large marine ecosystems, the Arctic Ocean, Bering Sea and Aleutians, and Gulf of Alaska. However, such a regional approach may result in overemphasis on the core area to the detriment of addressing pressing research needs in adjacent areas over the next 5-7 years. Knowledge is needed in all regions and no other agencies are taking such a broad approach.
- Needs to be formal coordinating mechanism between regional research programs.
- Applied research should be emphasized. This is consistent with the legislative mandates of the Board; it is not fielding a curiosity-based program.
- Short and long term approaches should be identified for each research area and theme.
- Data management policies should be consistent with other research entities and initiatives such as the GEM program, IOOS, etc., and formal coordination mechanisms are needed.
- Russian scientists outside of NPAFC should be involved, and Japanese and Korean programs.
- Science needs to be the main driver of the research program, not the funding limitations; the latter will help shape the implementation of the plan. Need to identify gaps in research.
- Board should consider how to partner with NSF in supporting Long Term Environmental Reserves.

The format of the plan was discussed at length and the Board evaluated six different approaches including regional, major marine ecosystems, marine ecosystems versus applied, ecosystem components, Bering Sea Aleutian Islands Research Plan 1998 research themes, and types of study.

A motion was made to change from the regional approach in the outline, to an ecosystems component approach, and identify the BSAI as a priority core area for the first 5-7 years. An implementation plan would be considered in a separate document. Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands would be the flagship of NPRB research. There was support for the separation of science and implementation and that science planning should be the overall driver of research considerations. However, concern was raised that the plan should not be constrained to focus on just the BSAI for the next 5-7 years. The motion failed.

A motion was made to adopt the ecosystems component approach in place of the core region approach now in the outline. The intent would be that the writing team would ensure an interdisciplinary approach in the implementation plan. The motion passed.

A motion was made to make the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands a priority for the next 5-7 years. The motion failed. Board members commented that the team should identify emphasis areas in each region and research theme and that the findings of NRC site visits should be considered in that regard.

The Board agreed that an annual or biennial report needs to be considered as a requirement.

A motion was made to develop a separate science plan and work plan. The intent of the work plan is to provide focus for implementing the science plan over the next 5 years. It would have more detail, tasks, and activities and would be reviewed annually. Strategic elements would be identified in the science plan, but not embellished there. The motion passed.

The Board discussed a joint meeting with the Advisory and Science Panels, partnering, education and outreach, capacity building, mentoring and community involvement. The Board agreed that it should

seek to partner with other programs to leverage funding and research. Dr. White offered to explore opportunities for partnering with Wild Salmon Center bio-station research program.

A motion passed to create a capacity building section in the Education and Outreach and Community Involvement section of the science plan. The Board may approach this by including a general reference in the science plan and then definitive steps in the implementation plan.

The Board agreed to keep all options available for consideration concerning how to develop local and traditional knowledge (LTK), including those in the outline and those offered by the Advisory Panel.

The Board discussed the issue of balancing long and short term research needs, and agreed that strategies for achieving that balance should be referenced in the science plan, but that actual proportions of long and short term support should be presented as options in the implementation plan. The Board also discussed an approach in developing requests for proposals (RFPs), wherein there could be a directed part of the RFP and a more open-ended portion, much like the 2004 RFP. Protection of longer term studies could occur through a competitive process wherein the Board would seek longer term studies in the RFP through its competitive process, and then fund them for longer periods. The proportion of funds identified for such long term studies would have to be negotiated each year in writing the RFP. It also was noted that the Board needs to examine ways to tightly structure the RFP to reduce the potential for many extraneous proposals that do not respond to the Board's priority research areas.

A motion passed that the Board drop further consideration of NRC recommendation 14-3, creation of a Proposal Selection Committee.

A motion passed to also drop further consideration, based on action taken on 14-3, the NRC recommendations 14-4 ("The Advisory Panel and Science Panel should not be involved in proposal funding decisions because of conflict of interest") and 14-5 ("Since the Proposal Selection Committee will be a panel of experts, the NPRB and the Secretary of Commerce (or his/her representative) should respect their proposal rankings. The NPRB funding decisions should be documented in writing including an explanation of any deviations from the ranking of the Proposal Selection Committee.") The intent of the Board is that the Science Panel will continue to develop its recommendations on proposals and the Board will recommend which proposals to fund to the Secretary of Commerce. The Advisory Panel will not be involved in proposal review, based on actions already taken by the Board.

The Board requested that the plan team consider costs associated with data management and the possibility of outsourcing data archiving to some other entity such as AKFIN.

The Board agreed that it would summarize its responses to each of the NRC recommendations in a transmittal document that would accompany the science plan when it is forwarded to NRC for review.

The Board noted that it would like two weeks to review science plan and implementation documents before the July and September meetings. It also requested to be informed of Advisory Panel workgroup meetings so that Board members possibly could listen in via teleconference, though no Board members are being officially assigned to the AP workgroups.

Dr. Brigham noted that he could help with the Arctic section of the plan and that partnering with other programs, especially in education and outreach, would be very important.

4. Other Matters

- No legal opinion was available on the confidentiality of video and photographic information.
- The preliminary web site interactive research map concept was demonstrated to the Board.
- Sponsorship of conferences and meetings. A motion passed to approve the committee recommendation to place an overall cap of \$50,000 on the amount that will be obligated each year (exclusive of NPRB-initiated workshops, synthesis meetings, and the annual science symposium); delegate the executive director the authority to approve amounts of \$5,000 or less, and report to the Board at the next regular meeting; individual requests exceeding \$5,000 would be brought to the Board for approval. The Board passed a motion to approve \$10,000 for a symposium on what constitutes the best available scientific information for fisheries management, \$25,000 for an international symposium on climate change and the structure of sub-arctic marine ecosystems, and \$5,000 for the American Fisheries Society National Meeting in September.
- A subcommittee (Brigham, Roos, White) was formed to coordinate a salmon workshop to bring program managers together to develop a coherent description of salmon funding sources and research activities.
- The Board will meet in Juneau on July 29-30 (starting at noon the first day) and in Anchorage on September 29-30.
- A motion to give Science Panel members an honorarium was tabled until the July meeting.