

Draft Summary  
North Pacific Research Board  
NPRB Conference Room  
Anchorage, AK  
September 22-23, 2005

1. Call to Order/Approve Agenda

The Board convened at 9 a.m. on Thursday, September 22, 2005. Present were Tylan Schrock (Chairman), Nancy Bird, Dorothy Childers, Douglas Demaster, Leslie Holland-Bartels, Howard Horton, John Iani, Earl Krygier, Michelle Longo Eder, Paul MacGregor, Stephanie Madsen, LT Alan McCabe, Gerry Merrigan, Pamela Pope, and Denis Wiesenburg. John Gauvin, Robert Gisiner, Robin Samuelsen and Stetson Tinkham were absent. Clarence Pautzke, Francis Wiese, and Ramona Brown staffed the meeting.

New members Douglas Demaster (NOAA Alaska Fisheries Science Center) and Michelle Longo Eder (U.S. Arctic Research Commission) were introduced. The agenda was approved after adding a request for support from the Alaska Native Science Commission for the Snowchange Conference under agenda item 6, Other Matters. Stephanie Madsen was elected as Vice Chairman to fill the unexpired term of Jim Balsiger who resigned from the Board in August and was replaced by Douglas Demaster as the representative of the U.S. Secretary of Commerce. The Board meeting summaries for March 15-17, 2005 and May 13, 2005 were approved.

The Board also received a safety briefing on procedures for exiting the building in case of an earth quake, fire, or other emergency.

2. Review of NPRB Planning Documents

Science Plan. The Board received a pre-publication draft of the science plan, which will be used during the meeting as a reference for developing the 2006 request for proposals. The finished document should be available toward the end of October.

Four-Year Implementation Plan. The Board was provided a copy of the 2005-2008 implementation plan, which was revised for 2005 to reflect funding decisions made last March. The Science Panel recommendations were shown for 2006. The entire plan will be updated next March after the Board makes funding decisions in response to the 2006 RFP.

Budget Review and Policy on Carryover of Administrative Funds. The Board briefly reviewed the budget situation. The Minerals Management Service reported that earnings on the EIRF for FY2005 are \$6,835,676, slightly less than the planning figure of \$6.9 million. That interest will be applied to Board programs in FY2007. Budget figures and projections through 2008 were shown in a spreadsheet. A planning target for FY2006 for the continuing, directed and general RFP components of the implementation plan is still \$6.4 million. The Board will be able to revise that number based on actual expenses in FY2005, after the accounting ledgers are closed through September 30, 2005, later this fall. A revised budget outlook will be available at the March meeting. The Board also will know the outcome of the Senate-House conference on appropriations where \$2 million is earmarked for FY2006.

Concerning the transfer of administrative funds to science, last March the Board approved using all of the appropriations for FY2005 for science, transferring \$438,626 from administrative to science. The Board also approved a transfer of all administrative funds remaining in the first grant to science at the end of FY2006 (estimated at \$163,718). A policy issue arose in March on whether to adopt a standard procedure

for rolling estimated excess administrative funds into science, but still keeping a buffer to protect the administrative structure for at least one out year. The Board requested staff to draft a policy for its review in September. The Board considered adopting the following policy:

*“The Board will consider keeping in reserve at all times at least two fiscal years’ requirements for administrative funding. It will review budget needs each March for the coming two fiscal years and consider whether to redirect excess administrative funds to science and research activities.”*

The Board adopted the policy after deleting “consider whether to.” The policy as adopted reads:

*“The Board will consider keeping in reserve at all times at least two fiscal years’ requirements for administrative funding. It will review budget needs each March for the coming two fiscal years and redirect excess administrative funds to science and research activities.”*

### 3. Other Bases for 2006 Research Priorities

The Board was presented with a series of informational documents that contributed to the development of the draft 2006 request for proposals by the Science and Advisory panels. The Board received a summary of each document and the recommendations of the panels. It took actions as described below.

#### Oil Spill Recovery Institute

An NPRB-OSRI collaboration would include a funding commitment over some period. Last March the Board indicated a funding commitment of \$100,000 from each organization annually, but would consider renewing it annually. Staff identified three potential topics for consideration:

- Role of forage fish in the Northern Gulf of Alaska and Prince William Sound.
- Tracking and monitoring of marine organisms.
- Long term ecological research (LTER) site in Gulf of Alaska (NPRB, OSRI, AOOS and NSF).

NSF has not shown much interest in collaborating on an LTER, and tracking and monitoring of marine organisms may be addressed in other parts of the 2006 RFP. Therefore, the Science Panel recommended forage fish in Prince William Sound and the Northern Gulf of Alaska as a research priority for a potential collaboration with OSRI. The Advisory Panel recommended looking beyond the Gulf of Alaska at potential risks and impacts of oil spills in the Aleutians and along the Great Circle Route.

A draft protocol for working with OSRI also was provided to the Board. Nancy Bird, executive director for OSRI, indicated that her Board was most interested in research in or near the vicinity of Prince William Sound, even though their geographical purview covers the entire State of Alaska.

The Board stated its intent to adopt the draft protocol as a five-year umbrella agreement, the details of which would be worked out by staffs of OSRI and NPRB. As described below, the Board identified the OSRI collaboration on forage fish as a component of its 2006 RFP.

#### Bering Sea Integrated Ecosystem Research Planning

The Board received a report from an interagency working group that has been meeting since April to develop an integrated program for ecosystems research in the Bering Sea. While the overall initiative will involve a collaboration of several agencies and entities (e.g. NOAA, AOOS, FWS, USGS, NPRB, NSF, etc), with each having its own plan and priorities, the central issue will be how the Bering Sea and its living marine resources may be impacted by potential changes in climate, mediated to great extent by the

anticipated reduction in or overall loss of seasonal sea ice cover over the next 30 years. The working group recommended that the NPRB 2006 RFP focus on retrospective, process and modeling studies on the six key research questions focused on components of the Bering Sea ecosystem and how they might respond to climate change. There is also the potential for collaboration with the National Science Foundation which has issued a call for proposals on a wide variety of arctic priorities, including the Bering Ecosystem Study (BEST). NPRB is referenced in the announcement.

The Science Panel recommended allocating \$1.2 million to the BSIERP in the 2006 RFP, requesting retrospective and modeling studies over 1-2 years. Individual proposals could not to exceed \$200,000. This would allow some studies to proceed, while during the next 6-8 months, the Board convenes several workshops and a core work team to develop the details of a 5-year implementation plan for input into the 2007 RFP. This would involve earmarking \$100,000 for supporting travel and some salary for team members, developing the implementation plan, and another \$200,000 for a model oversight group that would develop the conceptual models and linkages between models, determine data gaps, and establish standards for statistical robustness of the models and the validation of results. The Advisory Panel recommended adding an indigenous and an industry representative to the interagency working group. It also recommended moving \$200,000 from this category down to Other Prominent Issues to fund contaminants work.

The Board noted that additional modeling studies that may be funded under the 2006 RFP will need to comply with the design criteria developed by the model oversight group. The staff suggested that the principal investigators of modeling projects selected in March 2006, should be required to meet with the model oversight group and adjust their projects to be responsive to the design criteria.

#### International Polar Year 2007-2008

The Board received a description of International Polar Year programs, noting that most of NPRB's initiative in the Bering Sea and Arctic would be a contribution to IPY. The Science Panel is not recommending any special set-aside of funds for integrated planning for the Arctic until after the Arctic research synthesis, NPRB Project 503, is completed in 2006. The Advisory Panel recommended working in collaboration with the Institute of the North and participation in the Inuit Circumpolar Conference planned for June 2006 in Barrow.

#### Alaska Ocean Observing System

The Board received a status report from Molly McCammon, Executive Director of AOOS. The Science Panel recommended that NPRB continue another year of support for the continuous plankton recorder project (\$100,000), the Bering Sea biophysical moorings (\$200,000), and for the Seward GAK line (\$400,000). The Advisory Panel concurred.

#### Education and Outreach

Mike Illenberg, the Alaska SeaLife Center contractor to the Board for education and outreach for the past two years, provided an overview of their activities. They have developed exhibits, brochures, and other outreach materials, as well as fact sheets for many of NPRB's project for posting on the website. The Science Panel recommended that they be carried over another year at \$100,000 to maintain the continuity of the program, and that another \$50,000 be earmarked for additional education and outreach materials as needed. The Advisory Panel concurred with the Science Panel and offered several suggestions for increasing education and outreach activities.

### Local and Traditional Knowledge

The Board received a report of the Local and Traditional Knowledge (LTK) Committee which met on June 27-28, 2005 and recommended three approaches to LTK research. The first approach is to insert in the 2006 RFP a general call for LTK-related proposals at the level of \$100,000-250,000. The second approach is to sponsor activities such as workshops that will help generate specific questions and hypotheses for future RFPs. The third approach is to cooperate with other agencies to explore the potential for a system for recording observations, as part of the International Polar Year.

Last March, NPRB authorized the LTK Committee to work with staff to develop pilot projects up to a total of \$80,000, and work with NSF to further develop community-based observations systems as a proof of concept. The LTK Committee and two applicants that earlier had submitted proposals for the pilot projects (Alaska Native Science Commission and Gulf of Alaska Coastal Communities Coalition) thought this would be premature and that the \$80,000 would be insufficient for any substantial projects. Therefore, no pilot projects were funded over the summer.

The Science Panel recommended that pilot projects for a community-based observation system and a request for LTK-related studies be incorporated in the 2006 RFP for a total target funding level of \$300,000. The Advisory Panel concurred with the Science Panel recommendations. The Advisory Panel also recommended that a permanent LTK seat be appointed to the Science Panel and that there be a provision for an ad hoc review group of three to four native scientists to review LTK and community involvement proposals and make recommendations to the Science Panel and the Board in time for the 2006 RFP review cycle. The Advisory Panel also supported focal workshops to develop 3-4 research topics to guide the 2007 RFP at a funding level not to exceed \$80,000.

### North Pacific Fishery Management Council

The Board received a report from the North Pacific Fishery Management Council identifying their research needs. The Science Panel reported that most of them, except for development of adaptive management experiments to address Steller sea lion protection issues, were addressed in the 2006 RFP. The Advisory Panel concurred. The Advisory Panel also recommended that the Board and Council develop an adaptive management program for the 2007 RFP. The Board discussed such a course of action but did not take definitive action.

### Southeast Alaska Synthesis Report

Ginny Eckert presented the results of a workshop that was held on March 30-31, 2005, funded by NPRB as project 406. The purpose of the workshop was to identify research priorities for Southeast Alaska. The Science Panel recommended that \$100,000 be set aside for integrated planning for the Gulf of Alaska during the next 8-10 months to lay the foundation for one or more integrated programs in the Gulf starting in 2007. The Advisory Panel agreed with that recommendation.

The Board discussed the need for ecosystem planning in the Gulf and whether to adopt a general guideline of apportioning its overall science and research funding 10% to the Arctic, 60% to the Bering Sea and Aleutians, and 30% to the Gulf of Alaska. The Board received a summary of its research expenditures to date by region, but did not take action to adopt an apportionment guideline.

### Evaluation of Ocean Circulation Models

The Board received a report on the workshop funded under NPRB Project 402 to evaluate ocean circulation models for the BSAI. The Science Panel recommended that modeling proposals be requested under the BS integrated ecosystems research program component of the 2006 RFP. The Advisory Panel concurred. The Board asked that the evaluation be posted on the Board's website.

### Salmon Research

The Board considered whether to include a salmon component in the 2006 RFP. The decision hinged on whether the Board needed to wait for the June 2006 completion of the salmon funding and research analysis being performed under NPRB Project 504 (Eric Knudsen). Also bearing on this issue is the Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim Sustainable Salmon Initiative which recently released a salmon RFP for \$3.5 million. Third, with funding under NPRB Project 321, the Bristol Bay Science and Research Institute is evaluating alternative reasons for the collapse of Kvichak sockeye runs, the work to be completed in June 2006. Fourth, the North Pacific Anadromous Fisheries Commission was funded by NPRB Project 303 through June 2007 for analysis of open ocean stock structure and tagging in the Bering Sea. The Science Panel recommended not having a salmon component for the 2006 RFP. The Advisory Panel concurred.

#### 4. Develop 2006 Request for Proposals

The Board received an overview of the research priorities in previous requests for proposals, and then the recommendations of its Science and Advisory panels. Some of those recommendations have been summarized above. There was one public comment.

### Funding Apportionment by Marine Region

The Board discussed whether to adopt guidelines on apportioning funds by large marine ecosystem (LME) for the three LMEs off Alaska. The discussion centered on whether a guideline such as 10/60/30 to the Arctic/Bering Sea and Aleutians/Gulf of Alaska would be too binding. It was also noted that non-RFP-related activities should be added in also, for example, integrated ecosystem research planning activities in the Bering Sea and the Gulf. The Board did not adopt the guidelines, but requested information each March when making funding decisions, on how projects relate to LMEs and the overall funds being spent in each region.

### Identify Projects for Directed or Continuing Funding

The Science Panel recommended \$1.4 million in funding for continuing projects as part of the implementation plan:

• Continuous plankton recorder	\$100,000
• Bering Sea buoys M2 and M4	200,000
• Seward GAK line monitoring	400,000
• Gulf of Alaska LME IERP planning	100,000
• Bering Sea LME IERP planning	100,000
• Ecosystem model development and oversight	200,000
• Education and outreach	150,000
• Coordination	50,000
• Data management	50,000
• Community involvement	50,000

The Advisory Panel concurred, but increased community involvement support to \$100,000.

The Board passed a motion to adopt the Science Panel recommendation totaling \$1.4 million for continuing and directed projects as shown above. It was noted that the Advisory Panel community involvement committee needs to meet to develop the program.

#### Identify Research Priorities for 2006 RFP

The Board considered the draft RFP recommended by the Science Panel and revisions suggested by the Advisory Panel. A main motion was made to approve the Science Panel recommendations. It passed with the following amendments:

Bering Sea Integrated Ecosystems Research Program. An amendment was offered but failed that would have decreased the target funds for the Bering Sea integrated ecosystems research program (BSIERP) to \$1.0 million.

An amendment was made to strike the language on p. 4 of the Science Panel's recommended RFP text, which indicated that proposals "...may not exceed \$200,000 per study." A substitute amendment passed stating the intent of the Board to fund up to \$200,000 in each of the major research question issue areas. The Board also noted that proposals would not be rejected if they exceeded the \$200,000 target amounts, but that collaboration and leveraging would be encouraged.

The Board then considered the second major section of the RFP: General Research Priorities on Ecosystems Components.

Ocean Monitoring. An amendment passed to reduce the ocean monitoring component from \$400,000 to \$300,000, with the Board noting that it had already approved \$700,000 in continuing monitoring projects above.

Lower Trophic Level Productivity. An amendment passed to delete the "plankton as contaminant monitors" section and move the \$100,000 down to "other prominent issues – contaminants."

Fish Habitat. A friendly amendment was accepted to change the marine habitat mapping technology conference to a workshop with actual products identified. The Board also stated its intent that specific research priorities, if listed, should be excluded from the more general research priority under a particular topic. For example, research priority *iii. Other Fish Habitat Research*, is a very general priority that includes all research priorities identified in the habitat-related table in the science plan. The Board intends that no proposals be allowed to that general topic if they are meant to address the more specific priorities listed above: *i. Recovery and resilience of fish habitat*, or *ii. Marine habitat mapping technology workshop*. This same rule should be applied to other major research categories as well.

Fish and Invertebrates. An amendment passed to delete *iii. Abundance and distribution of forage fish*. A friendly amendment was accepted to add forage fish to the list of items within the subcategory *other fish and invertebrate general research priorities* so that it is not completely lost as a priority for 2006.

An amendment passed to add Bering Sea and Aleutian Island king, Tanner, and snow crab as a specific priority, including a funding limit on individual proposals of \$300,000, though the funding target for the specific priority will remain unspecified. The amendment would include last year's language blended with that of the Advisory Panel recommendation to cover such topics as developing and improving current stock assessment methodologies, life history, ecology and fluctuations in crab stocks.

An amendment passed to add the NPFMC recommended priority on stock assessment and life history of rockfish and other species, including sharks, skates, sculpins and octopus.

An amendment passed to add a priority on reduction of bycatch and bycatch rates, with a limit on proposal amounts of \$300,000.

An amendment passed to increase the total target funding for the fish and invertebrates category to \$1.150 million. The Board again stated its intent not to have specific priorities allowed if applying for the last general priority that covers all items listed in the fish and invertebrate research table in the science plan.

Concerning salmon research, the Board passed an amendment specifically excluding salmon research from the fish and invertebrate research priority, using language similar to that provided in the 2004 RFP which noted that other salmon research was being supported by the Board, the existence of the Northern Fund to support salmon research and the AYKSSI, and the fact that the Board is supporting a complete analysis of salmon research and funding in Alaska that is due in June 2006. It was noted, however, that there could be salmon-related research under fish habitat.

Marine Mammals. An amendment passed to add specific research priorities under this component, including distribution and abundance of ice seals and walrus, distribution and abundance of North Pacific right whales, in addition to a general subcategory of "Other marine mammal issues". The Board will state in the RFP that priority this year will be given to ice seals, walrus, and North Pacific right whales. Steller sea lion and fur seal research is not excluded as it may come in under the general "other" subcategory.

Seabirds. An amendment passed to delete *iii. Development of survey and census methods for determining population size*, as this was believed to be the responsibility of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. An amendment passed to reduce funding of the seabird category to \$300,000.

Humans. An amendment passed to reduce funding for humans to \$50,000.

NPRB-OSRI Collaboration. The Board offered no changes to the recommendation of the Science Panel concerning funding a forage fish proposal for \$100,000 from each organization. They left completion of the protocol to the discretion of the respective staffs to work out the details.

LTK. The Board offered no changes to the Science Panel recommendations.

Other Prominent Issues. An amendment passed to add language from the science plan and the Advisory Panel recommendations concerning contaminants, along with reference to shipping risks assessments, and a consideration of workshops to further define research needs and priorities for a potential contaminants program supported by the Board. This contaminants priority would be funded at \$300,000.

#### Policy for Proposal Screening Using an ad hoc Science Panel Committee

In screening proposals submitted in response to the 2005 RFP, the staff convened an ad hoc committee of willing Science Panel members to read proposals that had been identified by staff as not being responsive to the RFP and provide their opinions. The Board indicated last March that it would like to see a draft policy to that effect for addition to the 2006 RFP. The Board adopted a policy change as shown in italics below:

Initial Screening of Applications. Upon receipt, the NPRB staff will screen applications for conformance with requirements set forth in this notice. This review will consider not only whether the proposal meets the format and structure requirements in this RFP, but also whether it

is responsive to NPRB enabling legislation and criteria and adequately addresses one or more of the research priorities and program needs listed in this notice. *The Executive Director will request an ad hoc committee of available Science Panel members to help in the initial screening. Those proposals that are found by the Executive Director and the ad hoc committee to not comply with the requirements of the RFP will be rejected without further processing.*

Cooperative Research. The Board added general language to the preamble of the RFP encouraging proposals that involve cooperative research with industry.

Evaluation Criteria. The Board noted that evaluation criteria should include a power analysis as appropriate along with the experimental design.

With the above actions, the Board approved release of the 2006 RFP on October 7, 2005. Proposals will be due December 9, 2005.

#### 5. Future Science Planning and Coordination Activities

The agenda item was intended to provide an additional opportunity for the Board to identify its future activities under a number of topics that were already discussed above. The Board noted that most of the topics had been adequately addressed in developing the 2006 RFP and approving continuing and directed activities such as integrated ecosystems research planning. The Board did state its intention to postpone Aleutian Island planning to the 2007 RFP after the North Pacific Fishery Management Council has had the opportunity to determine whether it will provide for a special management area in the Aleutians. The Board also noted that AOOS and NPRB should have shared data systems.

#### 6. Other Matters

##### First Annual Report of NPRB

The Board was informed that staff will be developing an annual report on the activities of NPRB. This first one will cover accomplishments from 2001 through 2005. Annual reports published by other scientific organizations will be consulted to identify a good model.

##### Requests for Conference Support

The Board approved funding support of \$20,000 for a PICES international symposium on "Climate Variability and Ecosystem Impacts on the North Pacific: A Basin-scale Synthesis."

The Board was informed that the Executive Director had approved \$5,000 in support for the Alaska Native Science Commission and its conference on snow change.

##### Annual Science Symposium

The Board was informed that the annual marine science symposium will be held the week of January 22, 2006 in Anchorage. The Board will support travel and lodging for members that wish to attend.

##### Science Panel Memberships

The Board reappointed the following six Science Panel members to 2-year terms: Vera Alexander, James Berner, Anne Hollowed, Tom Royer, Patricia Tester, and David Witherell. The Board noted that with the resignation of Dan Goodman and Don Bowen, two seats remain open and will need to be filled. The

Board is seeking at least one well-qualified marine mammal expert and possibly an expert on harvesting, community involvement, and local and traditional knowledge, though it is not the Board's intent to designate a mandatory seat for LTK on the Science Panel.

Support for Alaska Regional Research Vessel

The Board approved sending a letter to OMB in support of the proposed Alaska Regional Research Vessel, using the draft language provided by Dr. Tom Royer of the Science Panel.

Meeting Schedule for 2006

The Board will meet next for 3 days sometime during the last two weeks of March to review proposals and consider other issues as appropriate. There will not be any January meeting, though Board members are encouraged to attend the science symposium.

7. Adjournment

The Board adjourned at approximately 3:35 p.m. on Friday, September 23, 2005.