

Draft Summary

North Pacific Research Board
Advisory Panel Meeting
NPRB Conference Room
Anchorage, Alaska
April 23-24, 2007

The Advisory Panel (AP) met on April 23-24, 2007. Present were Heather McCarty (Chairman), Michael Bradley, Patricia Cochran, Ron Hegge, and Steve MacLean. The meeting was staffed by Clarence Pautzke and Francis Wiese.

1. Call to Order/Approve Agenda

The meeting was called to order at 11:00 a.m. on Monday, April 23, 2007. The meeting agenda was approved as proposed. The AP was given a safety briefing

2. Proposal review for 2007

This was an informational item only. The AP noted that on April 20, 2007, the NMFS announced the intent to list Cook Inlet Beluga Whales as endangered under ESA and that this process may make a workshop on research priorities re belugas as proposed by the Science Panel earlier this month no longer necessary.

The AP was happy to see a developed cooperative research section in the RFP with highly ranked proposals, and Heather McCarty noted that the PCCRC may be interested in developing some cooperative research with the Board in the future.

An AP member noted that the community involvement segment is still relatively weak.

3. Bering Sea Integrated Ecosystem Research Program

This was an informational item only. The AP received a staff presentation on the status of the BSIERP. The AP discussed the socio-economic component of the BSIERP, including community involvement. The staff noted that one of the five external reviewers will be a social scientist – and also that the program proposals are required to have at least \$100,000 dedicated to education and outreach, and one of the proposals allocates \$300,000 for this aspect.

4. Gulf of Alaska Integrated Ecosystem Research Program

The AP received a staff presentation on the status of the GOAIERP. The AP noted that this was really the first time they have had a chance to comment on this document and that they wanted to be more involved in the process.

On the topic of inclusion of the GAK line into the IERP, the AP agreed with the recommendation made by the Science Panel and suggested that applicants be required to address how they were planning to use this long-term data set in their program, but not to budget for it if they did require those data for their research.

On the topical areas, there was general consensus that the SP recommendation to focus on the forage fish in this first IERP as the basis for future programs was sensible, given the lower level of funding for the GOA. It was also felt that this would lead to better more focused research for the upper trophic levels later on. The AP passed a motion (MacLean moved, Cochran seconded) to support the focus the GOA IERP on forage species and ecosystem carrying capacity, and since social science and community-based issues are not addressed in the IERP, to specifically address social science and community-based issues in the GOA in the general RFP.

On the latter point the AP also suggested that the other 6 topics initially identified by the science planning process for the GOAIERP be viewed as focal areas in the regular RFP, and that some of the funds in the 2008 RFP be reserved for the GOA to that effect.

The AP received a briefing on Tom Weingartner's proposed statement of work to make GAK-1 real time and supported this effort. It was pointed that this information would be very helpful to many stakeholders in addition to scientists.

Regarding a possible collaboration with EVOS, the AP encouraged the staff to proceed with caution given the politics that sometimes threaten to make radical changes in the EVOS program through the EVOS Trustee Council. It was pointed out that there have been a lot of positive changes at EVOS and that a collaboration regarding long-term monitoring in the Gulf could be beneficial.

5. Contaminants

The AP reviewed the January workshop summary in detail and discussed priority areas and activities the NPRB could focus on in consideration of past efforts and the results of this workshop. It was noted that from a community standpoint, people are most concerned about the safety of the subsistence foods they are eating. This is not necessarily the same as an ecosystem monitoring program for contaminants in Alaskan waters, but both issues should be considered. It was pointed out the AMAP and ACAP developed new monitoring and research priorities at their recent meeting (March 2007) in Norway, and that it might be most beneficial to coordinate Alaskan monitoring efforts with this larger pan-Arctic group. It was also noted that contaminant levels on the Commander Islands and in Chukotka are extremely high and that this might be due to runoff of Asian Pacific Rim countries – an issue likely to increase with climate change and increasing populations. Levels in Alaskan populations have not been as high, but there is a lot of concern that sampling has not been random.

As a result the AP recommended that the NPRB dedicate \$500K in the next RFP to contaminants and focus its efforts on (a) coordinating and collaborating with the Arctic Council groups to conduct a general survey of the source and movement of contaminants in the ecosystem in accordance with pan-Arctic protocols, and (b) support the measuring of contaminant levels in subsistence resources through a community based monitoring program. It was noted that this second effort should likely occur on an annual basis but that the first topic may be addressed by a survey every 3-5 years. A review of all the resources and entities involved in contaminant monitoring in the NPRB regions should first be undertaken. The amount of funding for contaminants may be distributed differently among years.

6. Budget Review

The AP received a brief overview of the NPRB budget. This was an informational item only.

7. Other Matters

Graduate Research Fellowship

The AP received an update by the staff on the planning of the graduate research fellowship as well as on the SP recommendations made on this topic. The idea of having best student presentation and poster awards at the Marine Science Symposium was fully endorsed, but it was felt that there was still a place to support and encourage students through a fellowship program. A partial support of students, even as one time awards, would still be extremely helpful, even if there is not full support throughout the student's career as initially intended. After much discussion, the AP passed a motion (MacLean moved, Cochran seconded) to provide up to \$50,000 per year total for three awards: two for graduate students involved in marine science research in one of the three LMEs, and one for an undergraduate student from one of the three LMEs involved in studies with a focus on marine science.

Education and Outreach

The AP received a status report from Nora Deans and Carolyn Rosner on education and outreach activities for the Board. The AP commended these efforts, and was especially interested to hear that only a few of the researchers do most of the effective outreach. As a result they asked staff to re-evaluate whether assigning \$2K per proposal is the most efficient manner to achieve the E&O goals, or whether it might be more effective to pool this money for similar project and have a professional and/or a staff person develop the program to deliver the message.

The AP also asked staff to consider how to specifically reach rural communities. They fully supported the communication workshop at the January Marine Science Symposium, and the planned focus on rural community communication at the upcoming January 2008 workshop.

Photo Contest

The AP ranked the 14 finalists into their top six. Results will be revealed during the Board meeting!

Community Involvement and LTK planning in the Bering Sea and Aleutian region

The Panel received an overview of the December 2006 LTK Committee meeting. The AP continues to be supportive of sponsoring community workshops and hopes they will occur as soon as possible. They endorsed the idea of having the LTK committee member be the liaison between the NPRB staff and the communities but that an event coordinator may also need to be hired in each community of interest.

Regarding community involvement proposals, the AP had a lengthy discussion of how participation may be improved and how they may be most appropriately reviewed, as the number of proposals received in this category in the RFP continues to be low and the reviews are often unfavorable. The AP continues to believe that perhaps a more active role of the AP in the review of these proposals would be beneficial, as has been suggested to the Board in the past. In terms of encouraging more community involvement the AP passed the following motion (Hegge moved, Cochran seconded):

In the general RFP, and in the specific aspects of the upcoming GOA IERP, a proposer is required to identify the level of relevance of the research to the communities in the region, and, if

the relevance and importance is high, the proposer is required to involve the communities in the planning and execution of the project.

Mr. Hegge spoke to the motion by saying that the AP is concerned that a whole aspect of the program is not being addressed adequately, and a whole segment of the population is not being included under current practices.

In terms of setting social science, LTK and community involvement research priorities, the AP also suggested that staff use the detailed list of topics outlined in the LTK committee meeting report as a starting point, perhaps complemented by the snow change report which specifically addressed community related climate change issues.

Approve Advisory Panel memberships

The AP pointed that there are four open positions on the AP, and that the Board should ask for more nominations and thus defer this decision until September. They noted that they will make efforts to help increase the pool of nominees. (Note: it might not work to delay the choice of new AP members until September, as there would then be no members for the September meeting – would need to be done in a special meeting)

Meeting schedule for 2007-2009

The AP scheduled their fall meeting for September 17-18, 2007, and their other upcoming meetings for April 28-29, 2008 and September 22-23, 2008, each of them on the two days prior to the Board meeting.

Alaska Ocean Observing System status report

Molly McCammon briefed the AP on the current funding status of AOOS as well as on recent activities regarding data management, sea ice databases and the Prince William Sound field experiment, now deferred to the summer of 2008 due to funding. She also pointed out that AOOS is currently working on an Implementation plan for each of three LMEs with a plan to have them completed by the fall of 2007. It is the intent that this implementation plan be scalable depending on future funding situations. Ms McCammon asked to be able to give a presentation about this plan during the September meeting of the AP to solicit feedback.

Closing comments by AP members

In general the AP feels that it is not being used in the most efficient way by the Board. After much successful input during the initial development phase of the Board that led to inclusion of education and outreach funds in proposals, the establishment of community involvement and local and traditional knowledge committees, the final version of the Science Plan and the current RFP structure, the AP felt that it may be time for the Board to re-evaluate the role it thinks the AP should play in the NPRB process.

AP members expressed that they were proud to be part of the NPRB but that there may be more effective ways to actively integrate their advice.