

Meeting Summary
North Pacific Research Board
NPRB Conference Room
Anchorage, AK
December 18, 2007

1. Call to Order/Approve Agenda

The Board convened at 10:05 a.m. on Tuesday, December 18, 2007. Present were Tylan Schrock (Chairman), David Benton, CAPT Michael Cerne, Dorothy Childers, Douglas DeMaster, Howard Horton, John Iani, Earl Krygier, Eric Olson, and Denis Wiesenburg. Attending by teleconference were Michele Eder, John Gauvin, Leslie Holland-Bartels, and Paul MacGregor. Nancy Bird, Jim Eckman, Justin Grubich, Gerry Merrigan, and Pam Pope were absent. Clarence Pautzke, Francis Wiese, Carrie Eischens, Carolyn Rosner, and Nora Deans staffed the meeting. Gary Matlock (NOAA) attended by teleconference and Pete Hagen was present.

The agenda was approved and a safety briefing was given. A summary of the September 2007 Board meeting was approved.

2. Bogoslof Patch Dynamics Proposal

In September 2007 the Board delayed approving the proposals for patch dynamics studies in the Pribilof and St. Lawrence regions, based on there being no comparable study proposed for the Bogoslof Island area. The Board requested Andrew Trites, the leader for those studies, to submit a proposal for that third study. The new proposal was received on November 7 and requested \$3,356,644. On October 17, Trites requested approval of his earlier Pribilof and St. Lawrence proposals so that he could commence planning, hiring, and recruitment of graduate students. The Board was polled on October 19 and approved his request.

At this meeting, the Board reviewed the Bogoslof proposal and two available reviews from Science Panel members. The Board also received a detailed budget analysis which indicated that the Bogoslof proposal was slightly more expensive than the Pribilof study, mainly due to higher personnel costs, and equipment such as seabird tags and echosounding arrays which already were available for the Pribilof study. The staff also presented recommended ways to bring the budget request down to the \$2 million+ range.

A motion was made to approve the staff budget recommendations, but to a level not to exceed \$2.5 million. The intent was that the staff would work with Trites to negotiate a final study plan using the staff recommendations as a starting point. The intent was expressed that commitments of funding to the Bogoslof study would not result in any negative cumulative obligation of funds, nor would there be an erosion of the funds necessary for a robust integrated ecosystem research program in the Gulf of Alaska. Should there be a budget shortfall, fur seals would take higher priority over seabirds, but the Board does not want to drop seabirds.

An amendment passed unanimously to lower the funding limit to \$2.208 million as suggested by staff on p. 3 of their budget analysis.

The amended main motion passed without objection, with Howard Horton recusing and Leslie Holland-Bartells and Denis Wiesenburg absent. The Board noted that if real problems arise in negotiating the final workplan, or if unforeseen opportunities arise, then the issue should come back to the Board.

3. Micro-zooplankton Proposal

In September 2007, the Board approved holding back \$300,000 from the funds approved in June 2007 for the BSIERP and directed towards a special RFP on micro-zooplankton to fill a research gap identified by principal investigators at their first combined meeting in September 2007. A special request for proposals for micro-zooplankton work was released on October 19 and two proposals were received by the November 9 deadline. Applicants were requested to conduct process studies, specifically rate measurements that would constrain the ecosystem models, and examine community composition of micro-zooplankton during summer in the Bering Sea. Two science panel reviews were gathered for each proposal, concluding that the Stoecker proposal was a bit better than the other proposal.

Based on these science panel recommendations, the Board unanimously approved the Stoecker proposal.

4. Ecosystem Modeling Proposal

Last June, in approving the BSIERP, the Board did not approve funding for the eight BTU modeling components as submitted, but did set aside \$2.5 million for modeling contingent on the Ecosystem Modeling Committee (EMC) re-evaluating model needs and recommending how to proceed. The Board directed the EMC to provide preliminary guidance including how to proceed with retrospective studies within six months and to develop a more comprehensive plan within one year. The EMC met in Seattle on August 14-15 and then developed a discussion paper that included 22 key questions. It was sent to the original BTU modelers, seeking a response. The EMC reviewed the response and determined that it was sufficient to hold a meeting with the modelers on November 19-20.

Dan Goodman, who chairs the EMC, reported to the Board at this meeting. Basically the EMC recommended moving ahead with approving funding for modeling, but the statistical framework of the BEST-funded nutrient-phytoplankton-zooplankton (NPZ) component needed to be improved and various project management problems resolved that relate to the whole effort and the modeler interaction with field researchers.

The Board approved \$2.5 million for modeling contingent on the staff being satisfied with the proposal (David Benton objected based on concerns about overall management of the modeling component, and Douglas Demaster recused). The Board noted that all milestones and timelines needed to be clearly identified for modelers and researchers to determine how to best manage the modeling component and its interactions with the field programs.

5. Other Matters

Science Panel Membership. The Board approved Pat Livingston to replace Anne Hollowed.

Advisory Panel Committee. The following individuals volunteered to be on an ad hoc committee to develop a call for nominations for a reconstituted Advisory Panel: John Iani, Douglas Demaster, John Gauvin, Michele Eder, and Dorothy Childers.

Request to Accept Late Proposal. The Board declined to accept a request for consideration of a late proposal from Tom Ravens to the 2008 Request for Proposals.

Michelle Ridgway Request for Funds. The Board had a lengthy discussion of Ridgway's request for funding support to develop a film based on her research of the Bering Sea canyons. The Board wanted to ensure that the film concentrated on the proposed subjects of coral and sponge habitat and sea floor assemblages and biodiversity. The Board approved (excom 5-0 and others 4-3) \$20,000 contingent on

contractual arrangements with all funding partners that NPRB has final editorial control over the film's content. These contractual arrangements would be required before release of the funds. The Board also needs to find out who owns the footage and whether it could legally be used out of context.

Aleutian Starfish Guide. The Board approved \$5,000 in partial support of publication of a book by Stephen Jewett describing Aleutian starfish species.

Habitat Surveys in Bering Sea Canyons. The Board reviewed a letter from the NMFS Region regarding habitat surveys in Bering Sea Canyons. The Board approved planning of the workshop and reporting back in April on plans and budget needs as an actionable item.

EVOSTC support for Seward Line Zooplankton and Continuous Plankton Recorder. The Board decided to hold the funding level of these two items at \$150,000 for now, pursue further contact with the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council, and bring back the issue in April 2008.

Electronic Monitoring Workshop. The Board discussed a potential electronic monitoring workshop. Staff was requested to work with NOAA and staff of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council to develop a workshop sometime this spring or summer.

6. The Board adjourned at 3:41 p.m.