

Final Summary
North Pacific Research Board
NPRB Conference Room
Anchorage, AK
September 27-28, 2007

1. Call to Order/Approve Agenda

The Board convened at 9:15 a.m. on Thursday, September 27, 2007. Present were David Benton (who was asked to chair the meeting in Tylan Schrock's absence), Nancy Bird, CAPT Michael Cerne, Dorothy Childers, Michele Eder, John Gauvin, Leslie Holland-Bartels, Howard Horton, Earl Krygier, Paul MacGregor, Gary Matlock, Gerry Merrigan, Chris Oliver, and Pam Pope. Douglas DeMaster, Jim Eckman, Justin Grubich, John Iani, Tylan Schrock, and Dennis Wiesenburg were absent. Clarence Pautzke, Francis Wiese, Carrie Eischens, Carolyn Rosner, and Nora Deans staffed the meeting. Denby Lloyd (ADGF) and Pete Hagen (NMFS) also attended.

The agenda was approved after moving the item 4 (Bering Sea Integrated Ecosystem Research Program) after item 6 (2008 RFP), and a safety briefing was given.

Summaries of the April and June 2007 Board meetings were approved later in the meeting after members had an opportunity to review them.

2. Advisory Panel Policy

In April 2007 the Board received a report from the outgoing Advisory Panel chair and vice-chair indicating that they were disappointed about not being able to review proposals and raising issues about the continued relevance of the panel to the NPRB process. The Board responded that it would agenda a full discussion of the role and future of the Advisory Panel for its September 2007 meeting. Currently the Advisory Panel has 10 members, of which four seats are unfilled.

The Board discussions centered on receiving adequate stakeholder input. Some members suggested that the various stakeholder interests were represented directly on the Board through its membership, while others placed great value on the additional input from the Advisory Panel and the Local and Traditional Knowledge Committee. During the Board meeting, an ad hoc committee of David Benton, Nancy Bird, Paul MacGregor, Pam Pope, John Gauvin, and Earl Krygier, was asked to meet to develop recommendations on the future of the Advisory Panel. The committee met and developed the following recommendations:

- An Advisory Panel is still relevant and needed
- Panel should continue to provide advice on other things such as research priorities, but continue the current policy of not reviewing proposals
- The AP and LTK committee should be blended together
- A workgroup of the Board should consider the geographic spread and interests and make recommendations for developing a solicitation that is focused to get the right people
- Board should work through the Native communities to get nominations
- Nominations should be ready for April 2008 meeting so they can meet ahead of the Board
- Chairman Schrock should pick workgroup members after they are allowed to volunteer

- The new Advisory Panel should be involved in programmatic reviews and retrospective reviews of projects to ensure they are meeting the Board's goals and objectives. This would include reviewing progress on the BSIERP and other ecosystem research
- Both the AP and LTK committee should be notified that they did a great job and that we are merging the two groups.
- The Board should be looking for natural resource coordinators and subsistence coordinators in the various communities to be nominated to the revised Advisory Panel

The Board unanimously accepted the ad hoc workgroup's recommendations.

3. Budget Review

The Board received a status report on the yield from the Environmental Improvement and Restoration Fund which was roughly \$8.65M for FY2007. The Board also received a review of directed funding decisions made at their September 2006 and April 2007 meetings and expenditures made to date from Grant 2. These were status reports and no formal actions were taken by the Board.

4. Bering Sea Integrated Ecosystem Research Program

A summary of the BSIERP-BEST program approved in June 2007 was presented. In June the Board tentatively approved \$2.3 million for the patch study, and requested a statement of work from Andrew Trites. He submitted a statement of work for \$2.385M for St. Lawrence and the Pribilof Islands, but did not include any study component for Bogoslof Island as requested. The Board expressed concern that there would not be a comparative study in that region for contrast to the Pribilofs.

A motion was made to request a statement of work for a comparative field study for Bogoslof for 2009 and possibly for 2010, and for a third year of patch dynamics study at the Pribilofs and St. Lawrence. After intensive discussion about the costs of such a study, the motion was withdrawn.

A motion was made to ask Andrew Trites to prepare a statement of work and budget for field studies on Bogoslof Island in 2008 and 2009. The Board would decide whether to approve the additional study at a special meeting in December. The intent would be to not use funds now identified for the GOAIERP. The motion passed with one objection (Gauvin). Leslie Holland-Bartels and Howard Horton recused themselves.

The Board suggested that the meeting be held during the week of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council meeting, perhaps during an evening session on December 7 or 8th.

Because Bogoslof had not been included in the submitted patch dynamics proposal, the Board did not consider the proposal to be fully responsive and decided not to give final approval to the statement of work submitted by Andrew Trites for the St. Lawrence and Pribilof studies. Instead, they decided to seek Science Panel review and make the decision in December.

The Board reviewed a revised statement of work for the local and traditional knowledge component and approved it unanimously.

The Board received a presentation of how best to address current research gaps in the BEST/BSIERP program, which currently are epibenthos, zooplankton, and chlorophyll. The Board approved \$300K to be held back from the funds approved in June 2007, to be directed towards a special RFP on zooplankton and to direct fund an epibenthos camera survey as well as sediment traps for year 1. The Board will work

with NSF to address years 2 and 3 for the epibenthos survey and sediment traps as well as all years of the chlorophyll studies.

5. Summary of Previously Funded NPRB Research

The Board received an overview of previously funded research which includes some 172 projects totaling almost \$29M since 2002, out of which 76 are now completed. Almost 7% of the funds have gone to efforts in the Arctic, 57% to the Bering Sea and 36% to the Gulf of Alaska. There was no action required or taken on this agenda item.

6. 2008 Request for Proposals

The Board received an overview of a draft 2008 Request for Proposals (RFP) developed by staff based on research priorities identified by various organizations and institutions over the previous six months, research priorities and funded projects in past RFPs, and the Board's 2005 Science Plan. This draft 2008 RFP was reviewed by the Science and Advisory panels which provided their recommendations. Their reports are available at <http://www.nprb.org/meetings/index.htm>.

After a thorough discussion of the draft RFP and panel recommendations, a motion was made to use the Science Panel- recommended RFP as the basic starting point for consideration, but revise certain research priorities and funding targets as follows:

- a. Reduce directed funding for monitoring from \$300,000 to \$150,000, with the flexibility to use the \$150,000 for either or both the GAK line or Continuous Plankton Recorder (CPR) activities. The EVOSTC would be asked to share in funding the GAK and CPR, possibly as prorated in the spill area. If the EVOSTC does not want to share funding, the full \$300,000 could come out of the GOAIERP. That decision would be made in April 2008 by the Board. The \$150,000 would come from the 2008 GOAIERP budget line of \$500,000. CPR could be used in 2008 and GAK in 2009 based on their current funding. The Board also should determine who else is providing funding for those two activities.
- b. Delete the sea ice chart priority (1.a.iii) that had been recommended by the Science Panel, but declined by the Advisory Panel.
- c. Concerning euphausiid biology (1.a.vi), the intent is that there be no overlap with the BSIERP and BEST programs.
- d. An amendment passed to delete the research priority (1.a.ii) on seasonal and interannual variation in primary and secondary production in southeast GOA.
- e. Fish habitat research priority was clarified in that the intent would be to constrain research to being within the Northern Bering Sea Research Area as defined by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, and that it be consistent with the results of the mapping workshop. It would focus on field studies to assess habitat types, substrates, associated invertebrates, and habitat forming epifauna.
- f. Research priority on nutritional ecology (1.c.iii) was revised to skate nurseries.
- g. It was noted that the discussion of seabird bycatch mitigation measures on p. 9 in fish and invertebrates priority 1.c.v.b did not accurately reflect the current situation and needed to be revised for next year.
- h. An amendment was passed to delete the fifth sentence for 1.d.ii on Steller sea lions which focused on the current state of the populations, rather than the factors that contributed to the population decline. The emphasis was retained on vital rates and other population dynamics indices to compare with similar indices for other mammal populations. The emphasis was changed from examining carrying capacity to determining whether the population is at or near equilibrium in abundance. Studies could include retrospective studies of long term data such as historical and

archaeological information regarding Steller sea lion abundance and concurrent changes in the ecosystem.

- i. Under Pacific walrus studies (1.d.iii), it was noted that BP only supports research in the Beaufort Sea, not the Chukchi, and therefore the reference to partnering with the oil and gas industry should be deleted for the Chukchi region. The situation is the same for polar bear research (1.d.iv) and that for those types of study, researchers should consider obtaining funding not only from NPRB, but from industry groups and NGO's. The specific reference to oil and gas industry should be deleted.
- j. For seabirds, an amendment passed to reinsert 1.e.i on ecosystem relationships, delete the current 1.e.iii on foraging strategies in relation to different environmental conditions and 1.e.iv on other seabird research, and replace them with a new 1.e.iii on spectacled eider distribution and seasonal habitat usage emphasizing winter habitat such as open water polynyas near St. Lawrence and St. Mathew Islands, with links to BEST and BSIERP benthic and patch studies if possible.
- k. For humans, an amendment was passed to delete 1.f.iv concerning efficacy of bycatch mitigation measures, because it is covered already in the fish and invertebrates section.
- l. Under humans, the phrase "and methods for assessing the economics and social costs" was added to the end of 1.f.iii, replacing "co-ops, IFQs", after discussion of the implication of removing 1.f.iv (item 11).
- m. For contaminants, a clarification was made to add marine mammals to the list in parentheses under long term programs with regard to developing sampling and analytical protocols for monitoring contaminant trends in the environment.
- n. For ecosystem indicator studies, an amendment passed to move all three components to a revised Section 6 focused just on the Aleutian Islands.
- o. For the OSRI collaboration (Section 3), an amendment passed to add special emphasis on oil spills in 3.a on socioeconomic studies, and revise the language of the contaminants section and add an emphasis on domoic acid.
- p. For cooperative research with the fishing industry (Section 4.a), language was added under gear modification (4.a.i) to not limit modifications to trawl gear, but also to include any gear used in or near rocky areas.
- q. For cooperative research with the oil and gas industry (Section 4.b), an amendment was made to delete 4.b.ii - long-term monitoring, 4.b.iv - ice dynamics and conditions, and 4.b.vii-ix regarding walrus, belugas, and gray whale tagging in the Chukchi Sea, and limit polar bear studies to Beaufort Sea. In section 4.b.x concerning the influence of oil and gas development on marine bird distribution, migration, and habitat use, this priority was limited to the Beaufort Sea, and salmon distribution was added as a topic.

The main motion, as revised above, passed unanimously.

Though it was not part of the main motion, there was discussion of the Board joining with NPFMC to sponsor a workshop on electronic monitoring.

Concerning shipping risk assessments, the Board suggested that its staff may want to attend the risk assessment planning meeting scheduled for late October by the U.S. Coast Guard.

7. Gulf of Alaska Integrated Ecosystem Research Program

The Board received a status report on planning for the Gulf of Alaska integrated ecosystem research program. During the last discussion in April 2007, the Board had decided not to launch the GOAIERP in fall of 2007, but rather to postpone it until spring or fall 2008. It also concluded that just supporting studies up to forage fish would not result in a truly vertically integrated program and that partnerships

with other organizations such as EVOS should be explored more thoroughly. The Board also wanted time to evaluate the BSIERP process and determine whether it was suitable for the Gulf of Alaska.

The Board concluded that it needed to take a different approach than the large multidisciplinary team approach used in the Bering Sea. The Board requested further development of a modular approach outlined in the Science Panel summary. The Board will consider the approach at its meeting in April 2008.

8. Other Matters

The Board approved reappointments of the following Science Panels for another 2-year term: Vera Alexander, Jim Berner, Tom Royer, Pat Tester, and David Witherell. The Board will seek a replacement for Anne Hollowed who declined to serve another term because of other commitments.

The Board approved \$15,000 to support a research assistant to produce two reports on climate impacts on the ocean survival and distribution of Pacific salmon.

The Board also approved \$5,000 for support of the Pacific Seabird Group meeting in February 2008.

The Board approved \$1,000 for four small awards (~\$250) for best student presentations at the Alaska Marine Science Symposium to encourage and reward high quality informative talks by graduate students (2 for MSc and 2 for PhD), as recommended by the Advisory Panel.

The Board also adopted an Advisory Panel recommendation to make available up to five awards of \$20,000 each to qualified masters and doctoral students for an opportunity to address scientific, technological, and socio-economic issues identified in the NPRB science plan through a Graduate Research Award. These awards will be available on a competitive basis to students admitted to or enrolled at accredited colleges and universities. The individual award amount is \$20,000 in one year that may be used for tuition and research related expenses. Students will be limited to one award per degree.

For long term meeting scheduling, the Board will attempt to leave at least a week between the Board and Council meetings because many members are involved in both activities. The executive directors will coordinate to avoid scheduling conflicts.

The Board adjourned at 4:23 p.m. on Friday, September 28, 2007.