

Meeting Summary
North Pacific Research Board
Science Panel Meeting
Anchorage, Alaska
August 26-27, 2008

The Science Panel met on August 26-27, 2008 at the North Pacific Research Board conference room in Anchorage, Alaska. The meeting was chaired by Doug Woodby and the following other members were in attendance: Vera Alexander, Shannon Atkinson, Dick Beamish, Jim Berner, Michael Dagg, Pat Livingston, Seth Macinko, John Piatt, Andre Punt, Tom Royer, Mike Simpkins, Pat Tester, and David Witherell. The meeting was staffed by Nora Deans, Carrie Eischens, Clarence Pautzke, Carolyn Rosner, Tom Van Pelt, and Francis Wiese.

1. Call to Order, Approve Agenda, Safety Briefing

The agenda was approved as is, and staff gave a safety briefing.

2. Summary of Previously Funded Projects

Carrie Eischens gave a status report regarding the 25 competed projects totaling \$4.1M approved or conditionally approved for funding in April 2008. Of the seven conditionally approved projects, five have satisfactorily responded to issues raised by the Science Panel and have received final approval. One project was withdrawn (824), and one (807- testing the localized depletion hypothesis) is on hold pending permits and additional funding. Carrie Eischens also presented a comparison between funding recommendations made by the Science Panel and the Board's funding decisions. Since 2002, 89% of the proposals funded by the Board had been recommended by the Panel (either in Tier 1 or 2), whereas 11% were Tier 3 proposals which were given conditional funding pending applicants satisfactory response to Science Panel and reviewer comments. Staff also gave an overall update on the status of projects in progress and those that have been completed, including their publication records in the primary literature. Finally, the Panel was given a summary on metadata and data submission which showed substantial improvement from the status at the time of their last meeting, especially in the number of no-communication projects that went down from 27 and 36 to 8 and 9 for metadata and data, respectively.

3. 2009 Request for Proposals

Basis for Research Priorities in Draft 2008 RFP

Francis Wiese reviewed the documents that were used as the basis for developing research priorities for the 2008 RFP. Research priorities identified by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, U.S. Marine Mammal Commission, the State of Alaska, Alaska Fisheries Science Center, Department of Interior, US Coast Guard, Prince William Sound Science Center, Bristol Bay Native Association, LTK and Contaminant workshops, the NPRB Science Plan and other entities and sources all served as the basis for the research priorities in the draft 2009 RFP. It was noted that the shark-specific language in the draft RFP was developed by the shark working group led by Pat Livingston, and also that the Bering Sea Canyon placeholder currently in the draft RFP will be replaced by outcomes from the Bering Sea Canyon Workshop scheduled for September 11, 2008, in Seattle. It was also noted that the draft RFP contains research priorities from the Electronic Monitoring Workshop held in Seattle on July 30-31, 2008.

The Science Panel discussed all sections of the draft RFP presented by staff. Changes were made to sections as appropriate during these discussions and have resulted in the current draft RFP and associated

funding targets provided to the Advisory Panel and Board for their consideration. Based on a brief budget overview presented by the Executive Director, the Panel has recommended target amount for sections to add up to an overall funding level of \$3.7M.

The Science Panel also agreed that research priorities for Pacific Salmon would be considered during calendar year 2009 for potential inclusion into the 2010 RFP.

4. Gulf of Alaska Integrated Ecosystem Research Program

Building on recommendations received by Staff during April 2008 Science Panel and Board meetings, Staff gave the Panel a presentation on creating a GOA-IERP using a modular programmatic approach. Staff presented background and an overall introduction to the modular approach concept, then presented detailed examples of four modular approaches, including pros and cons and using the BSIERP as a concrete example to show how those modular approaches would divide a vertically integrated study.

Panel and Staff discussed GOA-IERP design and implementation in great detail, including whether or not to go ahead with this IERP at all at this time. In the end, the following recommendations were made:

1. The GOA-IERP should go forward this fall.
2. New work proposed in response to this RFP must be built on top of existing data to create adequate temporal scope to allow climate-change and other long-term processes to be addressed.
3. Implementation of the IERP should be based on a combination of the Palm Tree and MULDUNE modular approach presented by staff, but happen synoptically, i.e. not as sequentially implemented modules.
4. Comparative approaches should be encouraged (and could take on a variety of forms), but are not required.
5. In order to broaden the scope of the study, field seasons should be reduced from 3 to 2, with only 1 year of synthesis at the end. This would result in a fall 2009 to December 2012 timeframe.
6. The RFP should call for pre-proposals focused on upper trophic species of management interest but also including a non-quantitative description of how critical drivers including feeding and lower-trophic linkages could be addressed.
7. Proposals must clearly identify management applications of the proposed outcomes of the study.
8. Following review and selection of pre-proposals for the upper trophic level focus, full proposals for the upper-trophic level studies would be invited concurrent with invitations for full proposals to address key drivers of the target upper trophic species, with a focus on the forage base.

The Panel also discussed the issue of ship time in terms of availability of platforms, resources to fund them, and organizations to provide them as matching support. The Panel agreed that the availability of ship time is still a serious issue and may limit the program. It is possible that a GOA-IERP may have a focus that is closer to shore than BSIERP, but that ocean conditions and locations of communities in the Gulf of Alaska could allow for the employment of smaller ships to conduct the research. On the other hand arguments were made that smaller ships (i.e. under 100ft) may not be adequate for interdisciplinary sampling and that this program cannot just be done with nearshore observations since the source of nutrients for the coastal region is the central Gulf of Alaska. Understanding the cross shelf transport of these nutrients thus seems imperative to the GOAIERP. It was pointed out to staff that a possible ship source is UNOLS (www.unols.org). If requested by NPRB, perhaps a temporary transfer to Alaska could take place since the financial support for these academic fleet ships is weak. Such an arrangement was done in the 1970s and 1990s with ships in Alaska and Hawaii.

As a result of the discussion above, the Science Panel went through the draft pre-proposals RFP language brought forth by staff in great detail and made changes accordingly. In anticipation of this process, which with the inclusion of pre-proposals calls for an extra meeting in February, the Science Panel has tentatively scheduled their next meeting for 11-12 February 2009.

5. Bering Sea Integrated Ecosystem Research Program

Staff provided the Science Panel with an update of the BEST-BSIERP project status and activities. Action was requested from the Panel on the Ecosystem Modeling Committee's recommendations that additional direct funding be provided to: i) Yi Chao for model expansion to compare to Herman and Bond's model, and ii) Franz Mueter for updated time series of the Hare and Mantua indices. The Panel concurred with the EMC's recommendation on both points and indicated that these projects combined should not exceed \$100,000.

Following up on previous Panel recommendation to form an Advisory Group to provide review and advice to the BEST-BSIERP project, Staff presented outcomes of the BEST-BSIERP Scientific Advisory Board discussion at their June 2008 meeting. The SAB had discussed the terms of reference drafted by a Panel subcommittee and recommended that a Science Panel Advisory Group should be established, made up of six people from the Science Panel and the EMC. The Advisory Group would be invited to observe the October PI meeting in Girdwood, Alaska, followed by an initial formal meeting at the AMSS in January 2009. Panel members were asked to volunteer to join the Advisory Group. Clarence Pautzke pointed out that Advisory Group members will have an important and long-term role. Vera Alexander and Seth Macinko volunteered to participate; final designation of this group will be determined after follow-up discussion with Panel and EMC members.

6. Long-term monitoring

Since long-term monitoring was removed from the RFP and as a specific item for the pre-proposal GOA-IERP, discussion under this agenda item focused on the request from PICES in regard to forming a Consortium to support the Continuous Plankton Recorder Program in the North Pacific. The Panel recommends that the NPRB join the Consortium per the terms laid out in the PICES invitation and contribute \$50,000 per year for five years, after which the program should be re-evaluated. It was also noted that if this recommendation was carried forward, the CPR group could not apply for additional funds through the annual NPRB RFP during the five years of NPRB contribution to the Consortium.

7. Long-term planning

Clarence Pautzke presented an overview of a long-term planning discussion paper, stemming from the April 2008 discussion of the Board. The discussion paper is focused on i) the rationale for a long-term planning review/evaluation, ii) the kind of review that is needed, and iii) who would perform the evaluation. The Panel provided input, with consensus that a reviewing group put together directly by the NPRB--perhaps with help from a subcommittee of the Board-- may be most effective, compared to NRC or private industry alternatives. It was suggested that the eventual reviewing group should consider including one or more of the 2002-2004 12-member NRC reviewing committee. A key focal point for the evaluation should be taking a look at the scientific accomplishments from NPRB funded projects in relation to the overall objectives of the Board.

8. Special Workshops

Staff provided a summary of the Electronic Monitoring Workshop held on July 30-31, 2008, and moved the draft section in the RFP relating to this topic to the 'Cooperative Research' research priorities for consideration by the Board.

Staff noted that the 2009 Alaska Marine Science Symposium is scheduled for 19-22 January 2009; as before, all Science Panel members were invited and encouraged to attend.

9. Other Matters

Nora Deans and Carolyn Rosner presented an overview of Education & Outreach activities.

This was the last meeting of Shannon Atkinson and Mike Simpkins as Science Panel members. They were both presented with recognition plaques for their services to the NPRB by Executive Director Clarence Pautzke. Mary Pete will also no longer be part of the Science Panel, leaving a total of 3 places open.

Meeting Schedule for 2008

The next meeting for the Science Panel is tentatively set for either 11-12 February 2009 or 18-19 February 2009 in Seattle. This extra meeting would be to review GOA-IERP pre-proposals and formulate GOA-IERP full proposal RFP and invitation language, and is contingent on launching GOA-IERP this fall.

The next regular meeting for the Science Panel is tentatively set for 15-17 April in Seattle, to review proposals responding to the regular 2009 RFP.

The 2009 summer Science Panel meeting is planned for 25-27 August 2009 in Anchorage. This meeting would help set 2010 research priorities and make funding recommendations on all full proposals submitted to the GOA-IERP.