

Final Summary
North Pacific Research Board
NPRB Conference Room
Anchorage, AK
April 29-30, 2009

1. Call to Order/Approve Agenda

The Board convened at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, April 29, 2009. Present were Nancy Bird, Michael Cerne, Ian Dutton, John Gauvin, Leslie Holland-Bartels, John Hilsinger, Howard Horton, John Iani (by phone to establish quorum), Michele Longo-Eder, Steve MacLean, Paul MacGregor, Gary Matlock (for Doug DeMaster), Gerry Merrigan, Eric Olson (Vice Chairman), Pam Pope, and Denis Wiesenburg. Clarence Pautzke, Francis Wiese, Carrie Eischens, Tom Van Pelt, Nora Deans, and Carolyn Rosner staffed the meeting.

The agenda was approved after reversing the order of items #2 and 3 (proposal review and budget review, respectively). A safety briefing was given. Eric Olson chaired the meeting for election of officers. Ian Dutton was elected Chairman for a one-year term and subsequently took over as chair for the rest of the meeting. Eric Olson was elected Vice Chairman for a one-year term.

The Board approved the summary of their March 2009 meeting.

2. Proposal Review for 2009

Overview of current research funded by NPRB

Since 2002, NPRB has funded 200 regular projects for a total of \$33.3M. To date, 122 (\$20.9M) of these have been completed. Tables were provided to the Board showing how projects have been assigned to a primary ecosystem priority, recognizing that many projects may be relevant to different ecosystem components. A status report also was provided on transfer of metadata and data to NPRB.

Overview of 2009 Request for Proposals and proposals received

The 2009 RFP was released on October 3, 2008 with a funding target of \$3.7 million for marine research in the NPRB study area commencing in 2009. Eighty-five proposals were successfully submitted by the December 5, 2008 deadline, requesting \$13.5 million. One proposal (#54) was subsequently withdrawn by the applicant due to the inability to obtain legally binding signatures from all institutions involved with the proposal. As in past years, NPRB staff conducted an initial evaluation of the remaining 84 proposals to determine compliance with 2009 RFP guidelines and whether proposals were responsive to the chosen research priority. Staff rejected four proposals based on non-compliance with formatting guidelines. Staff identified eleven other proposals as potentially non-responsive to the RFP category the applicants chose to compete under, and an ad-hoc committee of the Science Panel helped evaluate their scientific responsiveness. This process resulted in eight proposals considered non-responsive to the RFP research priority chosen by the applicants.

Thus, 12 proposals (4 due to formatting and 8 due to responsiveness) were returned to the applicants without further processing. The remaining 72 proposals were sent out for anonymous review. The goal was to obtain at least two but ideally three high quality technical reviews for each proposal. A total of 182 outside technical reviews were obtained, with only one proposal with one technical review, 36 with two reviews, 31 with three reviews and four with four reviews.

Science Panel recommendations

Science Panel Chairman Doug Woodby provided the panel's recommendations based on their meeting on April 15-17, 2009 in Seattle, Washington. Of the 72 viable proposals, the panel recommended 26 for Tier 1 funding, totaling \$3.4M, roughly \$300,000 less than the amount of funding available for this year's RFP. The panel also created a second tier of 14 proposals, totaling roughly \$2.4 million, which deserved consideration if specific concerns with the research plans were addressed.

Public comments

There were no public comments.

Develop funding recommendations for Secretarial approval

The Board reviewed its conflict of interest procedures and then proceeded to develop recommendations for funding to be submitted to the U.S. Secretary of Commerce for final approval.

A framework motion was made to adopt the tier 1 recommendations of the Science Panel, and to set an overall cap on funding of \$3.550M.

An amendment was made to delete proposal 84 for \$65,276, an integrated fisheries risk assessment method for ecosystems. It passed with one objection.

An amendment was made to delete proposals 75 and 76, but was later withdrawn.

An amendment was made to delete proposal 71 for \$287,810, a study of colonization and growth of corals and sponges on new seafloor at Bogoslof volcano. It passed with Denis Wiesenburg recusing.

An amendment was made to add \$5k to proposal 65 for training. It failed (excom 2-2; other 6-4).

An amendment was made to request a revised scope of work and analysis for proposal 63. It passed unanimously.

An amendment was made to delete proposal 53 on disease severity in Chinook salmon. A substitute amendment was made to fund all three tier 1 proposals (48, 51, and 53) in the marine disease category, but reconsider training on Unalaska. It failed (excom 2-2; other 9-1). The original amendment to delete 53 then failed (excom 1-3; other 1-8, with Wiesenburg recusing). This left all three tier 1 marine disease proposals 48, 51, and 53 funded.

An amendment was made to add proposal 46 concerning diets in threatened eiders. It passed with Dutton recusing.

An amendment was made to add proposal 23 concerning straddling stocks of pollock after science panel recommendations were addressed. It passed with Wiesenburg recusing.

An amendment was made to add proposal 17 to assess giant Pacific octopus. It passed with one objection.

An amendment was made to delete proposal 24, genetic studies of Pacific cod. It passed with two objections.

An amendment was made to delete proposal 12 on assessing age of salmon sharks. It passed with one objection.

An amendment was made to add proposal 7, a retrospective analysis of production, diversity and abundance of marine fish, birds, and mammals in Bering Sea canyons and surrounding slope areas. It failed (excom 1-3; other 5-5).

An amendment was made to add proposal 1 concerning linking fresh water inputs, nutrients and fronts in the Gulf of Alaska. It failed (excom 0-4; other 3-7 with Bird recusing).

An amendment was made to add proposal 12 at \$20,000, which concerned salmon shark aging. It failed (excom 1-2; other 6-5; with Hilsinger recusing).

An amendment was made to add \$5k for training to proposal 65 concerning storm surge and remodeling of a sandy beach in the eastern Bering Sea. It passed with two objections.

An amendment was made to add proposal 84 concerning an integrated risk assessment. It failed (excom 2-2; other 2-8; with Wiesenburg recusing).

An amendment was made to add proposal 20 concerning a comparison of methodologies for estimating annual catch limits. It failed (excom 1-3; other 2-9).

The main motion on funding proposals to the 2009 RFP, as amended above, then passed unanimously at 11:17 am, Thursday, April 30. As a result, the Board recommended 25 new projects for funding totaling \$3,466,235. The Board recommended the requested funding levels for 24 proposals and increased the funding for 1 proposal (65).

The Board applied the following stipulations, most of which were recommended by the Science Panel:

Funding Revisions and Stipulations

Proposal 17: Revise statement of work to address Science Panel and technical reviewer comments. Specifically, the experimental design needs to be clarified and documented in the research plan, and prior work on pot development by ADF&G needs to be taken into account.

Proposal 21: Revise statement of work to address Science Panel and technical reviewer comments. Specifically, the investigators must provide assurance of vessel commitment for this project before commencing this work.

Proposal 23: Revise statement of work to address Science Panel and technical reviewer comments. Specifically, investigators need to address the technical concerns by the in depth peer review, clarify the Russian data availability (especially the survey data), describe how validation of this data will be conducted, and make steps to better integrate the biology, perhaps by adding a pollock biologist.

Proposal 63: Revise statement of work to address Science Panel and technical reviewer comments. Specifically, investigators must provide a detailed description of the model with inputs and outputs explained and clarified.

Proposal 65: The Board revised the funding level for this project by increasing the budget by \$5000 to ensure that sufficient funds were available to travel to the communities to train community members who

will be conducting the field work. Investigators must provide revised budget narratives and summary sheets to staff before proceeding.

Proposal 72: Revise statement of work to address Science Panel and technical reviewer comments. Specifically, the experimental design and analysis must be more clearly detailed and investigators must indicate how their work will be integrated and what the plan for long-term monitoring of the study site entails.

The Chairman requested Board members to submit suggestions on how to improve the requests for proposals beginning next year. The suggestions will be reviewed at the Board's September 2009 meeting when developing the 2010 RFP. In discussion of this year's RFP, it was noted that there needs to be improvement in the section that deals with polar bears so we receive more viable proposals, and also that it may be informative to have a separate column for matching funds even if they are not required. These two items also will be considered in September. Similarly, regarding the lack of viable proposals in the marine mammal section of the RFP, it was noted that, in the next RFP, it will be important to either increase the funding level of this category or be clearer and more realistic about the type of research the Board would like to pursue with the limited funding amount.

3. Budget Review

Audit Report

An audit report was not available.

Grants Status

The Board was provided a status report on two active grants. Grant 2 for \$19.8M covered Board activities for FY2007-2008 and was spent with about 8% going to administration and about 92% going to science. Grant 3 for \$16.5M is supporting current activities and in FY2010. About 12.9% is projected to go toward administration and the remaining 87% to science activities.

The Board reviewed and approved unanimously a proposed budget for the first installment of Grant 4 (\$10,290,000) which will partially fund science activities in FY 2010 and 2011. No administrative activities will be supported by this first of two installments for Grant 4.

Funding Projections

The Board also received updated earnings projections through 2019. It was noted that interest earnings on 10-year Treasury notes have gone down substantially and thus the projected amounts are considerably lower starting in 2013 than earlier projections provided to the Board. The Board was informed that it still had the financial ability to fund a potential \$9M GOAIERP and have robust annual RFPs in the \$4-5M range. The Board will need to keep a close eye on interest rates in this current economic environment to see how they may impact the Board's programs.

Travel reimbursement

Since inception, official travel on behalf of the Board has been reimbursed based on actual expenses in accordance with the provisions of the legislation. To reduce some difficulties in monitoring acceptable expenditures, the grants managers at the Alaska SeaLife Center have recommended that per diem be used as a basis for reimbursement for travel expenses. The Board unanimously approved the change to per diem for travel expenses to cover meals and incidentals.

4. Integrated Ecosystem Research Programs

The Board received brief status reports on the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska integrated ecosystem research programs. Board members indicated that they would like to be kept informed of the BSIERP cruise schedules and fall principal investigators meeting so they could participate if possible.

Concerning the GOA IERP, the Board was informed that three full invited proposals for the upper trophic level component were received by the April 23, 2009 deadline. They will go out for technical reviews, the Science Panel will meet on May 20 and the Board will meet May 28-29 to make final decisions. The Board was asked whether it was appropriate for the Advisory Panel to review the three upper trophic level proposals. The Board indicated that the panel should be involved to speak to the pros and cons of the three proposals and their relevance to stakeholder interests.

No other actions were necessary or taken by the Board on this agenda item.

5. Data Collection by Unmanned Aircraft

Robyn Angliss, NOAA Alaska Fisheries Science Center, reported on the use of unmanned aircraft in the Arctic using as an example, detection of ice seals on ice floes.

6. Graduate Students Awards

At their 2007 September meeting, the Board approved creation of the NPRB Graduate Student Research Awards. Annually, up to five awards of \$20,000 each will be awarded to qualified master and doctoral students for the opportunity to address scientific, technological, and socio-economic issues relating to the research themes identified in the 2005 NPRB Science Plan. Students are limited to one \$20,000 award per degree. Each year, two awards will be given to each degree level with the fifth award given to the next most outstanding applicant from either group.

The 2009 Graduate Student Research Awards were announced November 7, 2008 with online application submission available as of December 15, 2008 and an application deadline of February 13, 2009. Twenty-seven applications were received by the deadline, 13 from masters students and 14 from Ph.D. students. Two applications were subsequently rejected because they exceeded the 5-page research plan limit. Each of the remaining 25 applications was reviewed by 2 Science Panel members and then the full Science Panel as well as the Advisory Panel. These reviews and the recommendations from the Science and Advisory panels were provided to the Board, along with the full student applications.

A main motion was made to support six graduate student proposals (thus supporting recommendations made by the SP and the AP) - 96 (Nathan Jones), 102 (Megan Winton), 109 (Jill-Marie Seymour), 111 (Rachel Orben), 100 (Helen Esh), and 114 (Jodi Pirtle) - but keep the overall annual goal as just five awards. After much discussion, but no amendments, the motion passed unanimously.

7. Workshops and Symposia

Arctic research workshop summary

The Arctic Research and Monitoring Workshop was held in Anchorage on January 23, 2009. The goal was to share information and promote collaboration among the many entities with increasing activities in marine research and monitoring in the region, including the oil and gas industry, local, state and federal agencies, and non-governmental and academic organizations. Molly McCammon and Francis Wiese provided a summary of the workshop.

International arctic fisheries management symposium: status report

The international arctic fisheries management symposium is scheduled for October 19-21, 2009, in Anchorage. Nancy Hemsath of the Institute of the North provided a status report on planning for the symposium. Board members wish to be kept informed of the symposium as it develops and members CAPT Michael Cerne, Michele Longo Eder, and Eric Olson, remain the contacts on the Board, along with Clarence Pautzke.

Climate change effects on fisheries workshop support request

ICES and PICES will convene a symposium on Climate Change Effects on Fish and Fisheries: Forecasting Impacts, Assessing Ecosystem Responses, and Evaluating Management Strategies, in Sendai, Japan on April 26-29, 2010. The symposium will provide a forum for international fisheries scientists and policy makers to discuss potential climate impacts on marine resources and their uses and strategies that society can take to be prepared for them. They requested NPRB support to ensure participation of BSIERP and BEST scientists in the symposium, inclusion of BEST/BSIERP scientific contributions in the publication, and global recognition of the contributions of NPRB. A total of \$39,198 was requested, with \$23,898 to PICES and \$15,300 to NOAA.

The Board approved \$30,000. The Board deducted the approximate costs of \$1600 for someone to attend the 2011 Alaska Marine Science Symposium, \$4,000 for education and outreach and symposium website, and \$2,173 for indirect costs, because it believes these should be supported by the symposium sponsors. The Board would have preferred that the symposium did not conflict with the Board's meeting in April 2010.

Independent data workshop support request

The Board was asked to provide support for a symposium on using fishery information for management and science, which will have three main emphases: fishery-dependent data requirements for management and policy, sources of fishery dependent data and data collection methods, and analysis and interpretation of fishery-dependent data. The request was for \$5-10k, but the Board declined to provide support unless more detailed information on the workshop is provided.

8. Other Matters

Pending shortage of stock assessment scientists

The Board was briefed on the issue of a projected shortage of stock assessment scientists in the next 10 years and the need for 180-340 new scientists, though apparently only 160 new researchers will graduate in that time. These figures were in a report presented to Congress last fall. The Board discussed how to engage more students in pursuing stock assessment careers. At its coming September meeting, the Board will consider placing an emphasis on stock assessment training in its annual RFP or in its Graduate Student Research Award program.

Confirmation of new science panel and advisory panel members

The Board approved Dr. Elizabeth Andrews for a two-year term on the Science Panel to replace Mary Pete. The Board requested summary profiles of current panel members. It requested that staff solicit a molecular biologist as suggested by the panel, and use the four names provided by the Science Panel as a starting point.

The Board will advertise for a new AP member for the AI region and one for the North Slope.

Alaska Ocean Observing Systems status report

Molly McCammon, Executive Director of the Alaska Ocean Observing System, presented a status report on the AOOS program.

Education, outreach and communications: status report

Nora Deans and Carolyn Rosner provided a status report on education and outreach efforts.

Photo contest: judge pictures and announce winners

The Board received over 204 photos to compete in the 2009 NPRB Photo contest, including 11 in the youth category. The field initially was narrowed to 188 photos because of formatting errors or non-responsiveness. Then, with advice from a panel of professional judges, the field was narrowed further to 12 adult and 5 youth finalists. The Board and Advisory Panel voted jointly to select the following winners in each category:

Adult: First Place, \$1,200: **John Schwieder**; Second Place, \$600: **Mark Rauzon**; Third Place, \$300: **Mark Kelley**.

Youth: First Place, \$600: **Gates Failing**; Second Place, \$400: **2008 Pribilof Marine Science Camp**; Third Place, \$200: **Gates Failing**

Long-term planning

The Board received a status report on long-term planning. All accomplishments since 2001 are being summarized in a major 8-year report which will be completed during the summer. The project summaries will provide the basis for a long-term evaluation of the Board's program by an outside committee of scientists. Names for the evaluation committee will be gathered over the summer and the committee will commence its work this fall after the 8-year report is completed. Ian Dutton and John Hilsinger were joined by Denis Wiesenburg and Eric Olson to participate on the Board's planning committee for facilitating this evaluation. They will report back to the Board at the September meeting.

Meeting schedule

The Board was apprised of upcoming meetings in 2009 and 2010. It indicated that it would meet from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Friday, May 29, 2009 to select the upper trophic level component for the GOAIERP. At the May meeting it will determine the exact dates of the late December 2009 meeting to select the other components of the GOAIERP.

The Board briefly discussed the selection process for the fishing industry seat, noting their concerns. The Board suggested that a memento be sent to David Benton thanking him for his service on the Board the past three years.

The Board adjourned at approximately 4:40 pm on Thursday, April 30, 2009.