

Final Summary
North Pacific Research Board
NPRB Conference Room
Anchorage, Alaska
May 29, 2009

1. Call to Order/Approve Agenda and Meeting Summary

The Board convened at 10 a.m. on Friday, May 29, 2009. Present were Ian Dutton (Chairman), Nancy Bird, Geron Bruce (for J. Hilsinger, ADFG), Dorothy Childers, Douglas DeMaster, Michelle Eder, John Gauvin, Leslie Holland-Bartels, Howard Horton, John Iani, Paul MacGregor, Gerry Merrigan (phone), and Eric Olson (Vice Chairman). Clarence Pautzke, Francis Wiese, Carrie Eischens, Tom Van Pelt, Nora Deans, and Carolyn Rosner staffed the meeting. The agenda was approved and a safety briefing given. The Board approved the draft summary of the April 2009 Board meeting.

2. Gulf of Alaska Integrated Ecosystem Research Program

Staff gave a review of the intent and implementation of the GOAIERP up to this point, indicating that of the 5 upper trophic level (UTL) pre-proposals invited to submit full proposals in March 2009, one had withdrawn and two had merged into a single proposal. As a result, three full proposals were submitted by the April 23rd, 2009 deadline. All three proposals were reviewed by three technical peer reviewers which included a review of each individual proposals and a comparison analysis between all three. All proposals had been reviewed by the Science Panel in the same fashion with the consideration of the technical reviews included in their review. The proposals also were reviewed by the Advisory Panel.

Staff then summarized each of the three proposals received and the pros and cons of each as identified by the technical reviewers. Staff indicated that it was important to evaluate each proposal based on what has been presented by the applicants and not based on what we might like the proposal to be. Staff also noted that the addition of components to an already proposed project would have budgetary effects that may or may not be possible given the financial constraints. In all instances, however, it is always possible to fine-tune projects as is done with the regular proposals.

Next the Science Panel and Advisory Panel comments were presented by their respective representatives: Tom Royer and Bill Wilson for the Science Panel, and Gale Vick for the Advisory Panel. The Science Panel recommended funding the Moss et al. proposal entitled Surviving the Gauntlet: A comparative study of the pelagic, demersal and spatial linkages that determine groundfish recruitment and diversity in the Gulf of Alaska ecosystem. The Advisory Panel also endorsed the Moss et al. proposal, but encouraged inclusion and/or consideration of salmon biology, inclusion of an LTK and/or community involvement aspect as possible, extension of the ocean sampling grid offshore, and more explicit integration of fishing pressure on upper trophic level focal species.

The Board then proceeded with its deliberations on the three proposals. A main motion was made, but later withdrawn, to fund the Moss et al. proposal providing that modeling include the effects of fishing, that LTK and community involvement be included where possible, and that the U.S. Marine Mammal Commission be notified and updated on the status of the work. There also was discussion of including a provision for consultation with the Alaska Native sea otter and Steller sea lion commissions as an alternative to using LTK.

A main motion then was made to support the Moss et al. proposal, without any additional stipulations.

There was discussion of informing Moss et al. that there should be explicit links to fisheries, that sampling further offshore was encouraged and that the Native marine mammal commissions should be briefed periodically regarding the program. Though these discussions were not developed further into formal amendments to the main motion, the Board did note that fishing pressure effects on the five focal species need to be incorporated in the modeling or other aspects of the program as appropriate.

The main motion passed unanimously (excom 3-0, others 9-0).

The Board noted that to further ensure open competition, staff should facilitate two webinars (mid-July and early September) in which the funded PIs would present, in more detail, their proposed work and answer questions from applicants to the other components in an open forum, thus allowing similar information to be communicated to all potential applicants.

The Board indicated that it would meet on January 14-15, 2010 to review the other components of the GOA-IERP. It noted that the Advisory Panel would not be included in the review of the other component proposals.

The Board adjourned at 3:49 p.m.