

**Meeting Summary**  
**North Pacific Research Board**  
**NPRB Conference Room**  
**Anchorage, Alaska**  
**September 17-18, 2009**

1. Call to Order/Approve Agenda and Meeting Summary

The Board convened at 9 a.m. on Thursday, September 17, 2009. Present were Ian Dutton (Chairman), J. Hilsinger, Dorothy Childers, Douglas DeMaster, Michelle Eder, John Gauvin, Leslie Holland-Bartels, Howard Horton, John Iani, Paul MacGregor, Steve MacLean, Heather McCarty, Gerry Merrigan, CDR Shane Montoya (for CAPT Cerne), Eric Olson (Vice Chairman), and Denis Wiesenburg. Sue Aspelund set in for J. Hilsinger on Friday, September 18. Clarence Pautzke, Francis Wiese, Carrie Eischens, Tom Van Pelt, Nora Deans, and Carolyn Rosner staffed the meeting. Heather McCarty, the new fishing industry representative on the executive committee, was introduced. The agenda was approved and a safety briefing given. The Board approved the draft summary of the May 2009 Board meeting.

2. Budget Review

The executive director reported the status of Grants 3 and 4, noting that Environmental Improvement and Restoration Fund earnings for 2008 have been reduced from \$10,290,000 to \$9,321,804, to reflect the real EIRF earnings which were lower by about \$969,000 than an earlier estimate provided by NOAA. He also reported the earnings for 2009 were \$9,641,062. Therefore, Grant 4 now totals \$18,962,867. It will fund one year of administrative activities in FY2011, and the rest will go to science and research in 2010 and 2011.

A report also was given to the Board with new funding projections using lower estimated returns on 10-year Treasury notes. An earlier table of projections was found to have an error in it that overestimated earnings from the EIRF under the laddered bond structure. The new table provides more conservative estimates of EIRF. The Board also was informed that the KPMG audit for the year ending September 30, 2008, was completed satisfactorily.

The Board took no actions on this agenda items, other than to receive the finance reports.

3. Subaward Compliance Policy

In March 2009, the Board approved a new subaward compliance policy, directing the staff to append it to future requests for proposals and make it part of new subaward agreements beginning in 2009. All universities and organizations accepted the policy in signing subaward agreements for the 900 series projects, with the exception of the U.S. Department of Commerce, which argued that Commerce cannot have two clients on this issue – NPRB and its own federal scientists – so it would protect its scientists and not give any legal advantage to NPRB by adopting or even recognizing the Board's compliance policy.

After consulting with the executive committee during the summer, Douglas DeMaster volunteered to develop a letter that would demonstrate his understanding of our policy and commit him to making sure all projects with NPRB were completed successfully, even if the Federal Government could not sign onto the policy. A draft of the letter was provided to the Board.

After much discussion of the overall issue, the Board accepted the letter to move forward with signing the memorandum of understanding with NOAA which allows projects to go forward, with the intent that Dr. DeMaster also would request the director of the Pacific Marine Environmental Lab to sign a similar letter

for NPRB-funded projects with PMEL. Dr. DeMaster was asked to look into the potential for a blanket letter from higher up in NOAA that would cover all NOAA components that may receive awards from NPRB.

The Board requested that formal resolution of this issue be placed on the January 2010 meeting agenda and that there be a detailed comparison of the provisions of the standard NPRB-NOAA MOU and the compliance policy, and that the MOU be reworked to include problem resolution procedures from the compliance policy.

#### 4. Summary of Previously Funded Projects

The Board was provided with a summary of 228 previously funded projects (\$37.3 million) and an additional 27 projects under the BSIERP for \$16.1 million.

The main issue under this agenda item was support for long-term monitoring. Dr. Wiesenburg had asked the Board to reconsider its decision to support long-term monitoring only within the integrated ecosystem research programs. He noted that time series data are important for understanding long term changes, and that he is concerned particularly about funding the Seward Line if it is not supported within the Gulf of Alaska integrated ecosystem research program. He also noted that UAF has spent about \$90,000 to help support the Seward Line.

In Board discussion that ensued, it was noted that (1) there will be gaps in support for moorings M2-M8 in the Bering Sea when the BSIERP field seasons are over beyond 2010, (2) it's a NOAA agency mission to fund observing systems and that ocean observing systems around the U.S. are not being funded adequately, (3) we will not be able to understand the impacts of climate change without ocean observations on a continuous basis, and (4) the Board has been requested repeatedly to fund long term monitoring because NOAA has not been unwilling to.

After this discussion, the Board decided to place this issue on the January 2010 meeting agenda when discussing the GOAIERP. The Board's science director will ask the applicants for additional information on how such monitoring is treated within their proposals. Then the Board will decide how to proceed in terms of supporting Seward Line monitoring.

#### 5. 2010 Request for Proposals

The Board received an overview of a draft 2010 Request for Proposals (RFP) developed by staff. The research priorities were based on 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. It was noted that in light of the target funding amount and all the current and planned activities and potentially two active IERPs in the coming year, that a more focused RFP should be considered and possibly only some of the trophic levels featured in the RFP for 2010. In addition, the draft 2010 RFP was reviewed by the Science and Advisory panels which provided their recommendations. Their reports are available at <http://www.nprb.org/meetings/index.html>.

A main motion was made to adopt the draft RFP, based largely on Science Panel discussions, that was available as item 5a in the meeting notebooks. The following revisions to the draft RFP were made through amendments adopted to the main motion:

- a. The scope of the benthos section (priority 1.a.iii) was revised so that smaller scale taxonomic compilations would not be precluded (passed unanimously), and then the topic was moved to

- Other Prominent Issues. The \$400,000 target funding for Oceanography and lower trophic level productivity (priority 1.a.) was left at \$400,000 (passed with one objection).
- b. The Ocean acidification in Alaskan waters subtopic under priority 1.a. was revised to allow proposals to address one or more of the subtopics a-c, rather than all of them as implied in the draft language (passed unanimously).
  - c. Under Fish and Invertebrates, subtopic Stock assessment support (1.c.ii), the Board added climate change under the priority on development of optimal survey designs under changing climate conditions (1.c.ii.3). They also added ocean acidification as a source of uncertainty to be studied under 1.c.ii.4 concerning the development of analytical tools. They also added a seventh category of research to conduct a baseline assessment of Arctic fish and crab stocks. All three amendments passed unanimously.
  - d. Under fish movement (1.c.iii), the Board added assessment of spawning ground identification as related to management boundaries, seasonal changes and responses to environmental variability (passed unanimously).
  - e. Under fish and invertebrates, a new category (1.c.vi) was added focusing on ocean acidification impacts on fish.
  - f. Under marine mammals, 1.d.i was revised to focus on declining or small populations (rather than small or declining populations) and the phrase “to small population sizes” was removed from the end of the first sentence under that subtopic. (passed unanimously)
  - g. The heading of marine mammal priority 1.d.ii was revised from ice-dependent seals to ice-dependent pinnipeds so that walrus would be included. The text was expanded to include both Arctic and Bering Sea pinnipeds, and a reference was added to “...better understand their foraging ecology and potential effects from groundfish fisheries.” A new category 1.d.iii Short-term Steller sea lion movement patterns was added. The amendments passed unanimously.
  - h. Southeast Alaska sea otters and supporting language were added as a priority under 1.d.Marine Mammals (passed unanimously).
  - i. The seabird subtopic 1.e.iii was rephrased to “Declining or small populations.” (Passed unanimously)
  - j. Under Humans, the first subtopic on social and economic studies of bycatch and bycatch mitigation was slightly revised to include Advisory Panel language. Subtopic 1.f.ii on implementation studies of management actions was revised to include studies of cumulative impacts of regulatory decisions on fishing communities. Under subtopic 1.f.iii, “community resilience to ecosystem change” was changed to “community adaptability to ecosystem change.” These amendments passed unanimously.
  - k. Under Other Prominent Issues (1.g.), the contaminants category was removed (passed with 3 objections), and the invasive species subtopic (1.g.iii, revised to ii) was augmented with language about risk assessment due to marine vessel activity (e.g. ballast water discharge), excluding passenger vessels, and vessel traffic from fishing and cargo vessels, the former being higher priority. Marine spatial planning was added as a subtopic under Other Prominent Issues. (all amendments passed unanimously)
  - l. Under section 2 on local and traditional knowledge, the requirement was added that proposals should include specific plans for communicating research results back to the appropriate communities. (Passed unanimously)
  - m. Under 4. Cooperative Research with Industry, the emphasis on cod and Bering Sea crab was removed from 4.i.1 Gear Modification. The subtopic on “fisheries interaction, especially bycatch”, was removed in favor of adding topics on handling mortality, fishery monitoring, and crab life cycle and rehabilitation. (passed unanimously)
  - n. Under the oil and gas industry priorities, polar bears were added under 4.ii.1 Species of special concern in the Arctic.
  - o. At the end of the discussion and amendments, the Board passed amendments to add \$75,000 to 1.d. Marine Mammals, reduce 1.e. Seabirds by \$125,000, add \$75,000 to 1.f. Humans, add

\$75,000 to 1.g. Other Prominent Issues, reduce 6. Technology Development by \$50,000, and reduce 7. Ecosystem indicators and data rescue by \$50,000. The amendments, all passed unanimously, retained the original RFP overall target funding level at \$3.8 million.

The main motion, as amended, passed unanimously.

6. Gulf of Alaska Integrated Ecosystem Research Program

The staff gave a status report on development of the Gulf of Alaska integrated ecosystem research program. The upper trophic level component proposal had been approved on May 29, 2009. After discussing potential funding levels for the lower and middle trophic level components with potential applicants during a webinar on July 17<sup>th</sup>, the staff provided a new estimate of target funding of \$1.75 million for each component to make the proposed work more viable. The staff also delayed the submission deadline for the remaining proposals by 10 days, due to scheduling conflicts and substantial field work being carried out by several interested parties during September. The extra 10 days will not impact the review timelines and will provide applicants the opportunity to develop more polished proposals which will now be due October 12<sup>th</sup>. The only action the Board took here is to reiterate that we should ask for comments from applicants concerning the need for monitoring along the Seward Line in their GOAIERP proposals.

7. Bering Sea Integrated Ecosystem Research Program

A status report on the Bering Sea integrated ecosystem research program was presented to the Board. No actions were taken, but the Board did indicate that it would like to be kept informed about planning for the principal investigator meeting in October so members could attend if they so desired.

8. Arctic Planning

A report was presented on the outcomes from the January 2009 Arctic workshop jointly organized by NPRB and the Alaska Ocean Observing System. The workshop goal was to share information and promote collaboration among the many entities with increasing activities in marine research and monitoring in the region. The next step for the Board will be development of its own research strategy for the Arctic. The Board passed a motion based on a recommendation from its Advisory Panel as follows:

“There is increasing interest in the high Arctic Ocean and potential use of natural resources as the ice cover declines in coming years. Sustainable use of Arctic resources, both living and nonliving, must be based on objective, scientific understanding. Multiple agencies and organizations are funding or planning to fund research in the Arctic and/or have strong interest in sustainable resource management.

A possible role for the NPRB could be to facilitate communication, collaboration, and coordination of research as appropriate in the Arctic environment, while seeking to determine its own role in funding Arctic research. In pursuing such a role, NPRB must be very careful to work closely with other agencies and organizations, both national and international, to build a positive working relationship, while fully recognizing their individual missions and goals.”

The Board will strive to develop its Arctic program in 2010 so it can be addressed in the 2011 RFP in September 2010.

9. Program Review and Long-term Planning

The Board was provided with a draft work plan for NPRB program review and long term planning. It discussed the levels of program review and types of questions that might be asked, as well as ways to go about conducting such a review and a potential schedule during 2010. Board members were requested to provide individual comments over the next two weeks. The Board requested that staff check with the National Science Foundation and the Center for Independent Experts to determine if either organization would be willing to nominate members to a program review committee. The Board also suggested we contact ISER to possibly conduct the survey of principal investigators and other stakeholders concerning their perception of Board programs and performance. A cap of \$100,000 would be placed on conducting the review. Dr. Holland-Bartels requested to be placed on the steering committee. She has just finished participating in a National Biological Program Review.

10. Other Matters

The Board considered and took actions as indicated on the following issues under Other Matters:

a. International Arctic Fisheries meeting on October 19-21, 2009

The International Arctic Fisheries Symposium will be held on October 19-21 at the Hotel Captain Cook here in Anchorage. The purpose is to initiate international discussions on conserving and managing future fisheries in a presumably more ice-free Arctic Ocean. Board members were encouraged to attend this important meeting.

b. Request for support for ESSAS Open Science meeting 2011

George Hunt is working with PICES to stage a meeting in June 2011 on Ecosystem Studies of Sub-Arctic Seas (ESSAS) which is a scientific program that is comparing methods for developing predictions of how climate change may affect the sustainability of several sub-arctic seas such as the Bering Sea, Barents Sea, the Newfoundland/Labrador Shelf, and the Okhotsk Sea/Oyashio region. He requested up to \$50,000 support and the estimated budget overall is about \$200,000. The Board approved \$30,000 for the meeting.

c. Education, outreach, and communications: status report and funding alternatives

Nora Deans and Carolyn Rosner reported on their activities. The Board discussed the need for training new stock assessment scientists and voted to assign two of the five graduate student research awards for 2010 a stock assessment priority. The Board also approved \$20,000 for a workshop on biodiversity and ecosystem resilience at the 2010 Alaska Marine Science Symposium, and to place language in the 2010 request for proposals next fall that would allow for pooling of education and outreach funds for projects if that was the preferred way forward, rather than each project applicant coming up with his or her own idea of how to address education and outreach needs.

d. Science Panel memberships – extend terms for two years

The Board approved the following current Science Panel members for another 2-year term starting October 1, 2009:

Vera Alexander, UAF, Fairbanks  
Jim Berner, Alaska Native Health Consortium, Anchorage  
Pat Livingston, NOAA AFSC, Seattle

Tom Royer, professor in oceanography emeritus, Maui  
Pat Tester, NOAA NOS, Beaufort, NC  
Dave Witherell, NPFMC, Anchorage

e. Advisory Panel memberships – call for nominees for 7 positions

Our Advisory Panel has 13 members, though the Arctic position has never been filled. Justine Gundersen resigned last spring, and Ron Hegge, Shirley Kelly, Arni Thomson, Gale Vick, and Frank Kelty are term-limited. In effect, we have seven slots open and need to recruit for them over the next few months.

Board members made two motions, one to extend the current members for 1 year and the other to change the Advisory Panel policy to allow three consecutive 2-year terms, rather than the present 2 consecutive terms. Both motions were withdrawn. The Board will reassess its policy for the Advisory Panel in January 2010.

f. Meeting schedule for 2010 and 2011

The Board reviewed its meeting schedule for 2010 and 2011 and made the following decisions:

Special GOAIERP proposal review meeting: Move ahead from January 14-15, 2010, to January 6-7, with potential spillover to January 8<sup>th</sup>. The executive committee will meet on January 8<sup>th</sup> concerning the NPRB program review process.

Spring 2010 Board meeting: Postpone from April 28-30, 2010, to May 5-6 with spillover to May 7<sup>th</sup>, so Board members would be free to go to the climate change impacts on fisheries conference the week of April 26<sup>th</sup> in Sendai, Japan.

Fall 2010 Board meeting: Scheduled for September 22-24, 2010.

Spring 2011 Board meeting: Scheduled for April 28-29, 2011.

Fall 2011 Board meeting: Scheduled for September 15-16, 2011 to leave a week between the NPRB meeting and the North Pacific Council meeting which is scheduled for the week of September 26<sup>th</sup> in Dutch Harbor.

Board members were informed about the Alaska Marine Science Symposium the week of January 18, 2010, the Alaska SeaLife Center Marine Gala on January 17, 2010, and the PICES annual meeting in Jeju, South Korea, October 26-30, 2009.

The Board adjourned at 3:49 p.m.