

**Draft Summary**  
**North Pacific Research Board**  
**Teleconference**  
**July 14, 2010**

Call to Order/Roll Call

The North Pacific Research Board met via teleconference on July 14, 2010 to discuss the Gulf of Alaska Integrated Ecosystem Research Program (GOAIERP) and the Committee of Visitors (COV) letter of July 1<sup>st</sup>, which expressed concerns about the GOAIERP Program. In attendance at the NPRB Office were Dorothy Childers and Eric Olsen (vice-chairman). Board members joining by phone included Nancy Bird, Doug DeMaster, Ian Dutton (chairman), Michele Eder, John Gauvin, John Hilsinger, Howard Horton, Paul MacGregor, Steve MacLean, Heather McCarty, Gerry Merrigan, and Pam Pope. The COV was represented at this meeting by Chairwoman Lynda Shapiro, Bill Peterson, Hal Batchelder, Robin Anderson and Lisa Webb (COV staff). The meeting was staffed by Clarence Pautzke, Francis Wiese, Carrie Eischens, Tom Van Pelt and Katie Blake. Attending the meeting as visitors were Phil Mundy, Chris Oliver, Pete Hagen, and Bill Wilson.

Chairman Ian Dutton opened the meeting and asked Executive Director Clarence Pautzke to summarize the purpose and objectives of the meeting. Clarence explained to the Board that a letter was received from the COV in the form of an email on July 1<sup>st</sup> indicating that they had serious concerns regarding the GOAIERP. On July 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Board's Executive Committee had a teleconference and determined that expanded comments were needed to understand the nature of the COVs concerns and that the full Board needed to be made aware of the situation in order to determine the way forward. Lynda Shapiro and the rest of the COV were therefore asked to participate in the current meeting to further explain and expand upon their concerns summarized in their letter. From a process stand point, staff are ready to submit the proposals and supporting documents for the GOAIERP program to the Secretary of Commerce. Staff are now waiting on the outcome of this meeting to determine if they can go forward at this time or if they need to wait until the COV concerns are addressed.

Lynda Shapiro was asked to provide further explanation regarding the COVs concerns. Lynda explained that she and the rest of the COV were in Anchorage a few weeks ago reviewing the entire NPRB process and programs. The group is now working on their report but, in brief, they are generally content with the regular annual program and their review of the Bering Sea Integrated Ecosystem Research Program (BSIERP) raised no red flags. However, in terms of the GOAIERP, they saw real fundamental flaws with the program that cannot be fixed. They felt it would be irresponsible of them to wait until their final report was ready to bring their concerns to the Board given where the GOAIERP process is currently. As a result, the letter was drafted and emailed to the Board's chairman. The COV unanimously agree on everything that is in the letter.

Ian asked that Lynda walk the Board through the letter with more specifics. Lynda stated that the COV felt that the individual proposals were not strong and were not well integrated. It appeared that the MTL and LTL proposals were more like service contracts rather than research proposals. Hal Batchelder (COV) together with Lynda stated that the development of the GOAIERP program, with the UTL chosen first, appeared to have limited the intellectual involvement of the MTL, LTL and modeling researchers. They also felt that the GOAIERP does not take into account or address the fact that the controlling factors are on a longer time scale – longer than the three years of the study.

As an example of the weakness of the individual proposals, Lynda stated that the LTL proposal openly admits that with the funding available they do not have the clean techniques needed for the metal (iron) analysis but that they are putting in a proposal to NSF to get funding for that work. NSF generally funds

only about 20% of proposals received and the PIs seem to say that if they don't get that NSF funding then they will do the best they can. Lynda expressed that in her opinion, the lack of appropriate iron measurements made the project suspect from the beginning. They also had a concern about measuring photosynthesis. Static chlorophyll, rather than process, is not the right thing to be measuring for primary productivity. Also, it was their interpretation that zooplankton were only going to be measured in one year.

Lynda then invited other COV members to elaborate on some of their concerns. Hal Batchelder noted that the current program is set up as a very short time scale (three years) to examine a long time scale question of recruitment. It appears that this problem was recognized by the Science Panel at the time of their meeting to review the pre-proposals and is noted in the Science Panel meeting summary. It seemed as though there were divergent views on this UTL proposal within the Science Panel and the point was made that 20 years of work on pollock recruitment still hasn't figured that issue out, while this GOAIERP project will attempt to figure out recruitment of five different species in a four-year program. It appears that the Board is setting up a whole house of cards on a shaky foundation that is bound to fail.

Lynda noted that it is clear that the Board is trying to work within budget constraints but questioned whether with the limited budget it is worth the effort and time to go forward with this. Bill Peterson (COV) also states that the COV sees some problems with leadership within the group and that the coordination and integration within the group is not clear.

At this point, Ian thanked the COV and opened the floor for questions from Board members. Doug DeMaster noted that it is hard to get a sense of whether the COV is aware of all the collaborative programs that are occurring and can be used to extend the time series. The different time series data sets that are available through NOAA (not NPRB funding) are perhaps not well described in the proposal but can be integrated with the NPRB GOAIERP and UAF data sets. It is not fair to say that this is only a three-year study. Doug also states that it would be helpful to hear from Pete Hagen regarding the process and timing of funds coming from the Alaska Regional office.

Pete stated that if Doug is referring to the Secretary of Commerce (SOC) approval process, the SOC is now waiting to see what the Board will recommend as a funding package. It appears, however, that timing could be an issue. If the SOC does not approve the program, then the funds come back to the Board. Since the package has not yet been sent to the Board, they don't have anything to consider at the moment. Doug asked for further confirmation that the funding would not be lost. Pete confirmed this. Pete also stated that it would be difficult to go part way while saying there are still outstanding issues. It would be difficult to start and stop the process, so the Board's recommendation needs to be clear.

Lynda then responded to Doug's question about the COV being aware of the other collaborative programs with which the GOAIERP will be integrated. She did so by asking whether the group felt if more proposals would have been received if those collaborations, opportunities for integration with other programs and the availability of long-term data sets through NOAA had been made clearer in the RFP? Would other groups have submitted proposals? Doug responded that those are good questions to which we don't know the answers.

Gerry Merrigan asked that the COV clarify the point in their letter about the competitive process. Is the COV aware that for BSIERP there were only two groups that submitted proposals and the Board set up the GOAIERP process to try to stimulate more competition? The UTL was done first and had nine pre-proposals. Why does the COV believe this process was less competitive than the BSIERP process? Lynda clarified that the COV believes the process for selecting the GOAIERP UTL was competitive. However, it is the process of competing and awarding the MTL, LTL and modeling components that the COV felt had limited competition and indeed a limited number of proposals were received. Gerry noted

that it was designed that way so that the UTL was chosen first and the other three components needed to support the chosen UTL program. By design, the other three components were constrained by the UTL proposal chosen. The program is also constrained by platforms of opportunity and funding. Lynda acknowledged the funding limitation and stated that perhaps the budget for this program is in fact the problem.

Hal Batchelder stated that through his involvement in GLOBEC he can appreciate the integration problem and congratulated the Board on trying different ways to achieve an integrated ecosystem research program. The part that seems to be lacking in the case of GOAIERP is the team-building aspect. With the BSIERP process, teams self-organized and there was a spirit of cooperation. He felt that this has not developed in the GOA approach. There was a spirit of competition during the UTL pre-proposal stage but thereafter it was more a service contract type of RFP to get the three other components of the program. That is not to say that cooperation cannot develop through the PI meetings, but it is not there from the beginning.

Heather McCarty then stated that she had two questions. The first was for Pete, asking for clarification regarding what he said about not submitting the package to SOC and then changing it at a later date. Pete stated that this is treading new ground, and he was thinking more along the lines of contractual obligations. The Board has already identified 97% of the GOAIERP program, but it would be difficult to start everything and then in six months stop if there is a problem. Once the program has started it would be very hard to change course if it is on the wrong track. In other words it was his advice to not submit anything until the Board had firmly decided how to proceed. On the other hand, he noted that starting the program and then augmenting it later is probably ok.

Heather's second question was for the COV and asked for clarification on the statement that the individual proposals were not very good. Is this true or is it just an integration issue? Do the proposals, separately, not have value in and of themselves? Lynda answered that the COV did not evaluate them as individual proposals but as an IERP. The program has limited funding and is asking a big question which the COV believes cannot be answered with the available funds, so compromises are being made which jeopardize the overall integrity of the program.

Nancy Bird comments that the Board did spend a considerable amount of time after BSIERP to come up with a better means of having a competitive process. Nancy raised the question about intellectual property of the Moss et al proposal and questioned the legal position the Board would be in if they backed out now. Nancy also asked how we could improve the GOAIERP process. In response, Lynda asked other COV members who had been involved in GLOBEC to describe how things were dealt with during that program. Bill Peterson answered that there were a lot of workshops and meetings leading to the development of a solid Science Plan prior to release of the RFP and selection of participants. From the very beginning, there was strong leadership, which had a huge impact. Leadership in academic and federal science communities was a very big driver.

Ian asked the COV to confirm if they believed that the Board ought to start over with the entire GOAIERP program. Lynda Shapiro confirmed that was the case. Ian then asked if any Board member had any other questions for the COV. Doug asked how GLOBEC had dealt with the issue of making proposals public. Hal stated that GLOBEC had followed the NSF example and did not release any proposals to the public until they were completely funded. Hal noted also that because it was a community-driven, bottom-up process, there were times when key pieces were viewed as missing. If those pieces were important enough, a second, specific RFP would be released to try to generate a proposal to fill the gap. Generally those follow-up RFPs were so specific that only one or two proposals would be received. GLOBEC never released any information about proposals until they were assured of funding.

There were no further questions, so Ian asked whether the COV wanted to make any additional comments before leaving the teleconference; Lynda responded that they did not, but that they will continue to be responsive to specific questions from the Board. Ian asked Lynda when the Board would have specific written comments from the COV regarding the GOAIERP. Lynda indicated that the COV is aiming to have report section drafts ready by the end of July. At that point the IERP section would have been drafted by one COV member and reviewed by another, but the entire COV would not see the written section until the middle of August and there could be changes at that point or further down the line when the results of the survey come in. The COV needs to discuss whether, and how, to release draft portions of their overall report.

Ian thanked the COV for their participation and asked that they leave the meeting at this point so that the Board could have some time to discuss how to proceed. The COV then left the call and Ian asked Clarence to summarize the next steps.

Clarence directed the Board to the memo (Appendix 1) distributed prior to the meeting, outlining the consequences of delaying sending the GOAIERP package up to the SOC until after the September Board meeting. Page 3 of the memo outlined an accelerated schedule based on receiving the draft report from the COV at the end of July, although it wasn't clear from Lynda if that was a firm deadline. He noted that it is important that the COV concerns go through the Science Panel, which is meeting the week of August 23. A subgroup of the Science Panel could be put together to review the COV concerns and report back to the Board via a teleconference during that August Science Panel meeting. Clarence suggested that one possibility to speed up the SOC review process could be to submit the GOAIERP package now, so that as soon as the Board hears from the Science Panel at the end of August they can make a decision with the information already in the queue. He stressed that in order to save the 2011 field season the Board has to be ready to jump on this fairly quickly.

Clarence asked Pete if he thought it was a good idea to have things cued up in advance for the SOC., Pete stated that the SOC would respond as quickly as possible and try for a rapid turnaround, but it will be up to the Board to provide a final recommendation, and it is difficult to predict how quick the SOC turnaround will be.

Doug stated that from the perspective of the AFSC, they have already made some major vessel schedule changes to accommodate the GOAIERP and it would be hard to further change things at this point.

Heather stated that the schedule outlined by Clarence is a good one, but that it depended on the COV getting their comments to the Board by the end of July. Heather also stated that she was not sure how useful it would be to "cue up" the SOC with the package but say "hold on until we make our final decision" to review it-- she did not view the "cuing up" as a sensible step. Pete agreed that it would not save any time, although it could be done informally.

Gerry Merrigan asked how the marine mammal issue fit in with all of this. Clarence answered that that is a separate process and staff is working to convene the group of experts, under the auspices of the Science Panel, to look at the marine mammal issue. That group of experts would be coming back to the Board on this issue at the September meeting. This issue is separate from the COV concerns. Doug asked about the participation of the Moss et al group and their interaction with the group of experts. Francis Wiese answered that as per the Board's motion at the last meeting, the group of experts would talk to the Moss et al group. However, there was no plan to have the UTL present at the Science Panel meeting. It was noted that currently there is no set plan, as the group of experts had not yet met to discuss this in detail. As a result, communication might occur by email or phone or WebEx. Doug stated that Moss et al. strongly prefer personal participation in this complicated discussion.

Ian asked for further comments on the concerns raised by the COV. Nancy wanted to know what happens if the Board goes against what the COV has just recommended. If the Board going to ignore their comments, why delay the process? Nancy noted that Clarence referred to resolving the issues raised by the COV but it is not clear if that is possible – either we go forward or we don't. Clarence stated that the Board has this formal letter from the COV that needs a response. At this point, the Board needs to go through a process to determine whether they agree with the COV or not. This process involves hearing what the Science Panel thinks before the Board makes a decision.

Ian asked if any Board member believed the decision to shut down the program should be made now. With no response, the Chairman stated that the Board will decide how to respond to the COV's concerns when it hears from the Science Panel in August (tentatively the 25<sup>th</sup>).

Heather McCarty made the following motion:

*The Board should follow the process outlined on pages 3-4 of Clarence's 13 July memo (Appendix 1) but not forward any documents to the SOC until the process is complete and the Board has decided how to proceed.* The motion was seconded by Eric Olsen.

In speaking to the motion, Heather stated that this timeline of this process depends on receiving more detailed comments from the COV by the end of July. Michelle noted that keeping within this timeline was her concern. What happens if the Board does not receive more detailed comments by the COV by the specified time – does the whole process and program just stop? Heather stated that she is not presupposing any outcome but feels the Board needs the Science Panel's advice in order to make a decision. Pam Pope asked what the ramifications would be if the Board did not follow the COV recommendation. This group of experts has been put together to do an important review for NPRB. How does the Board respond if the decision is not to follow the COV recommendation? Ian stated that we need to let them know about the process the Board has agreed on, and evaluate the decision and its ramifications after August 25<sup>th</sup>.

At this point the chairman indicated that he had a previous commitment and had to leave the meeting. Vice-chair Eric Olsen took over as chair in order to allow for more discussion. Before departing, Ian stated that he would support Heather's motion if put to a vote, then exited the meeting at 2:02 pm.

Gerry asked if it is implicit in the motion that the Science Panel needs to review the COV concerns within the current budget scenario or if they would be able to make recommendations that would include adding more funding to the GOAIERP. If the Board does not limit the funding, then obviously better science could be done with more field seasons, more ships, etc. Gerry also questioned whether the Board is going to make other materials – list of collaborations, etc - part of the package and ask that the Science Panel consider the GOAIERP in concert with those other programs. Heather responded that no, those things were not implicit in the motion but that details of cooperative programs and data sets should be made available to the COV. Her intent was to get the process in place and was not sure about adding some kind of caveat in regards to budget limitations. Steve MacLean noted that the funding issue is an important one and the crux of the problem. He noted that we are adjusting our vision of a GOAIERP to fit within the \$9M rather than adjusting the funding level to fit the vision of a GOAIERP. The question remains – can we have an IERP with the \$9M or do we need to add more funds? What is an IERP going to cost? Eric noted that there is a budget limitation and the Science Panel will have to consider that. Steve stated, and other Board members agree, that the following questions should be posed to the Science Panel:

- 1) Is \$9M enough for an IERP?
- 2) If not, what can we do with the \$9M?

- 3) And if not, what would it cost to do what was originally intended and to address the issues raised by the COV?
- 4) Should we proceed with the current program?

Dorothy Childers raised the question that if the funding is limited to the \$9M, can we still do something that can be built on later. Could this program not be the basis for a Phase 2 down the line? Heather agreed and stated that that is why she asked her questions of Lynda – if this isn't an integrated program than what is?

Eric stated that the process and timeline is very dependent on receiving more detailed comments from the COV and questioned how much flexibility there was in the timeline, given that the COV was fairly soft in their answer regarding when they would share their review with the Board. Heather stated that we have to encourage them to meet the deadline but essentially accept their timeline.

Francis stated that it is a bit frustrating to have a letter from the COV that does not give enough detail to evaluate their concerns, given the implications and ramifications of their concerns and recommendations. He suggested that Board members consider writing a letter to the COV asking them to substantiate their concerns. The ramifications in terms of delaying the SOC by even a month are very substantial. If they can fast-track the IERP section of their overall review and provide the critical comments by the end of July, it would still be possible to get the program going on schedule if that is the eventual Board decision. Michelle echoed Francis' frustration and stated that a letter should be drafted asking the COV to adhere to the schedule in Heather's motion, so that the Board still has all options open. The Board needs this confirmation and commitment in writing from the COV. Eric stated that this is a reasonable request. The Board and other organizations have put a lot of time into this program and it is fair to press the COV to meet the necessary timeline to hear more expanded version of their comments and concerns.

A question was raised by Steve regarding what would happen if they don't provide the information in time. Does the Board just dismiss their concerns and move on if they can't substantiate their concerns on time? These folks have outstanding reputations and that is why they are part of the COV. Can the Board just ignore them? Eric answered that that is the \$9.026M question and the Board will have to cross that bridge when it comes. If they don't respond in time a decision will have to be made.

Heather stated that the intent of her motion was not to have a deadline but a guideline. Michelle stated that she agreed with Eric – we'll have to deal with the situation if it comes to that, but she is concerned by the very soft time commitment that the COV has so far provided. It is her hope that this letter would help. Carrie Eischens then pointed out the consequences outlined in Clarence's memo of delaying a GOAIERP funding decision even by a month. These consequences are not small, but if the timeline outlined by Clarence is adhered to, the program could happen on schedule as planned. Eric asked Francis to summarize those consequences so that the Board could fully understand the implications. Francis stated that the consequences break down into three categories – programmatic, scientific and financial. The biggest consequence of waiting for a decision until after the September Board meeting is that the 2011 field season would be lost. Contracts and MOUs would not be in place in time to have boat charters, personnel, equipment, etc., in place for the spring field work, and since this is a seasonal study, not having spring makes the rest of the year irrelevant, so you would effectively lose the entire 2011 field year. Delaying the program until 2012 is not feasible because the program leverages NOAA surveys that happen every other year, so the program would either be delayed until 2013/2015 or it would be a very different program than the one currently planned.

Eric recommended that these consequences of delaying the Board's decision be included in the letter to the COV so that they fully understand the critical nature of the timeline. Heather stated that she appreciates the review by staff and asked if the question can be called on the motion. Gerry asked if the

motion needed to be amended to talk about the letter. Eric stated that considering the general agreement on the letter he will consider it incorporated into the main motion unless there are concerns about doing so. No concerns were raised.

Clarence stated that Lynda made a caveat about the survey results and waiting to respond for those to come back, but really the connection between the survey results and the COVs concerns about the IERP are not clear. Given that the survey does include GOAIERP specific questions, it seems that this is really not a good reason for holding up the COVs review comments on the IERPs. Clarence also asked Heather whether she was adamant that documents do not go to the SOC until the process is complete, given that Pete said it would be okay to provide them to the SOC informally. Heather confirmed that it is the intent of the motion that no documents go to the SOC until the process is complete and the Board makes their decision.

Eric then asked for any further comments. Hearing none, Eric called the question and asked if there are any objections to the motion. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Eric asked if there are any other matters to discuss. Doug asked Clarence and Francis about the parallel process of the marine mammal issue. Doug stated that Moss and the other PIs on the UTL component are wondering what the process is going to be and what the timeline is for them as they need some lead time to prepare. Clarence stated that the group of experts looking at the marine mammal issue will be in contact with Moss et al. and whomever else they choose to talk to as references. But the “how, when and where” have not yet been determined. This is a busy time of year for people with field work and summer holidays, so the communication details are not clear. Francis noted that the Science Panel and this group of experts are severely taxed and time is short. Fortunately the group has already had one opportunity to meet and the stage has been set so that they understand what is being asked of them. They will meet again by phone this coming Tuesday to figure out their next steps. The expert group will interact with the UTL PIs but this is not likely to happen in person given the geographic spread of the group and the short time frame within which the group needs to answer the questions asked of them. Doug asked for identification of the group of experts. Francis answered that the group was made up of Doug Woodby, Bob Gisiner, Andre Punt, Bill Wilson and Cheryl Rosa from the Science Panel, together with an ad-hoc member, Samantha Simmons (Acting Scientific Program Director for the Marine Mammal Commission).

Finally, Clarence asked Board members to look at their calendars for August 25<sup>th</sup> to have a teleconference with the Science Panel. Staff will be sending out a Doodle poll to determine the best time.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:41pm.