

**Summary  
NPRB Advisory Panel  
September 6-7, 2012  
NPRB Conference Room, Anchorage, Alaska**

The Advisory Panel (AP) met on September 6-7 in Anchorage, Alaska. In attendance were Jeff Stephan, Dan Falvey, Phillip Zavadil, Edward Poulsen, Gary Freitag, Mike Macrander, Steve Reifentstahl, and Rex Snyder and Gay Sheffield attended by phone. Not in attendance: Helen Aderman, Mark Gleason, and Vera Metcalf. The meeting was staffed by Cynthia Suchman, Francis Wiese, Carrie Eischens, Nora Deans, Tom Van Pelt, Crystal Benson, and Danielle Dickson.

**THURSDAY – September 6th**

**1. Call to Order/Approve Agenda**

The meeting was called to order at 08:31 a.m., Thursday, September 6, 2012. Members introduced themselves. New AP member Steve Reifentstahl was welcomed. The first order of business was the review and approval of the agenda for the current meeting.

**MOTION: Agenda Approved**

**ACTION: Motion passed unanimously**

The meeting summary from the Spring 2012 meeting was approved.

**MOTION: Accept minutes from May 2012 AP meeting**

**ACTION: Motion passed unanimously**

The Advisory Panel was given a safety briefing.

New AP member Steve Reifentstahl introduced himself and gave a brief summary of his background.

A brief summary of staffing changes was presented by the Executive Director. Staff members Thomas van Pelt (Bering Sea Project), Nora Deans (Communication, Education & Outreach), and Crystal Benson-Carlough (Alaska Marine Science Symposium) will be transitioning to contract work. NPRB is advertising positions for a communications specialist and an administrative assistant.

The AP recognizes the NPRB staff for their hard work and dedication in support of the Mission of the NPRB, for their friendly and helpful demeanor and for their invaluable assistance to the AP in aiding us to meet our responsibilities.

The AP wishes to welcome Mr. David Benson as a member of the NPRB Board, and we wish Mr. Benson well as he begins his role as a member of the NPRB Board of Directors.

### **Conflict of interest policy**

A summary of the major points of the Conflict of Interest policy was provided and AP members were asked to sign a statement that they have read and agree to abide by the policy.

### **2. Social Science Working Group**

Staff presented a brief history of the evolution of the social science working group and a report from the working group. A social science focus section was included in the draft 2013 RFP and was discussed in detail during the discussion of the RFP.

### **3. Long-term Monitoring**

Staff presented a brief history of the NPRB's approach to funding long-term monitoring-type projects and the need for a strategy to address these funding objectives. A long-term monitoring working group was convened last year and presented a strategy to the Board. The Board will consider the strategy during their September 2012 meeting.

The AP suggest that the LTM definition presented on page 1 of the LTM action memo:

*“Long-term monitoring programs are those that aid in understanding ecosystem variability and the effect of this variability on subsistence and commercial marine resources. In order to understand these processes, projects will need to address appropriate temporal and spatial scales, be interdisciplinary, and have links to subsistence and commercial marine resources.”*

is overly broad and may result in a rejection of some proposals that are submitted to the regular RFP that NPRB may otherwise want to consider. The AP noted that the definition should target projects that collect time series.

An AP member pointed out that ‘monitoring’ projects demand an already-established understanding of the system, so that the variables to be measured are already well-defined. It was suggested that the NPRB should be wary of LTM proposals that are speculative. There was general agreement to this point.

The AP had a discussion about how the boundaries of LTM proposals would be handled. For example, if a proposal came in under “cooperative research” under the regular RFP, and if such proposal appeared to staff to be an LTM proposal, would such proposals be moved by staff to the LTM RFP stream, or would it be rejected? Staff noted that the timelines for the RFP and review process will be different for the annual RFP and the LTM RFP. The AP suggested that the boundaries should not be fixed at this time—that is, for the future, it may be that a special LTM RFP be established; however, such LTM-type proposals should also be allowed in the regular RFP. The AP recommended further discussion on the relationship between future proposals which may contain some aspects of LTM and the regular RFP process. If these future proposals are to be excluded from the regular RFP process, then clear criteria should be developed to permit the clear identification of which types of projects, or project characteristics, will be disqualified.

An AP member suggested two different options for encouraging collaboration with industry. The first option would be to simply encourage proposers to seek collaborators. The alternative option is NPRB could facilitate coordination to develop consortia for successful pre-proposals. If NPRB planned to facilitate the development of consortia, then industry organizations could budget funds for these type of projects and then participate as projects apply to their respective missions (it becomes difficult for industry to find money to contribute to a specific project if the timing is offset from their fiscal year). This approach would alleviate the burden on organizations to respond to proposers directly but would increase the burden on NPRB staff.

Staff presented a draft timeline for a LTM RFP process. There was discussion about a potential 6-week summer turnaround time for pre-proposals. The AP consensus was that six weeks should be adequate time to prepare a brief pre-proposal, and that summer timing should not be too problematic.

**MOTION:** The AP endorses the proposed \$400,000 funding level for a long-term monitoring RFP process that is separate from the regular RFP. We support the SP recommendations for duration and funding caps of LTM projects, their suggestion for a pre-proposal process, and the recommendation to continue considering LTM projects on an ad-hoc basis in the current RFP. We recommend a timeline that releases the pre-proposal in June 2013, and awards final proposals in May 2014. The AP further asks the Workgroup to continue to develop the RFP language that contains a broad definition of potential projects and encourages collaborative funding and stakeholder engagement. We also recommend further discussion on the relationship between future proposals which may contain some aspects of LTM and the regular RFP process. If these future proposals are to be excluded from the regular RFP process, then clear criteria to identify which projects will be disqualified must be developed.

**ACTION:** Motion passed unanimously.

#### **4. Summary of Previously Funded Projects**

Staff provided status of 2012 Projects, concordance of Board with SP recommendations since 2002, and overall summary of ongoing research projects.

The AP asked for a summary of the Board's funding of proposals highlighted by the AP as having stakeholder relevance. Staff agreed to provide this information during future fall meetings.

#### **5. 2013 Request for Proposals**

Staff provided a brief history of the RFP, including an overview of research themes and inputs for research priorities.

The AP reiterated the recommendation that was made last year that the Board consider incorporating mechanisms to limit the administrative costs associated with proposals that are submitted to the annual RFP cycle. This may include a cap on indirect and overhead.

The AP made a general recommendation that the annual RFP might be clearer in stating that cooperation with industry can be included in proposals under any category, and that cooperation with industry may

provide the basis for a more favorable review than if proposals did not otherwise include such industry cooperation.

The AP suggested that staff consider the additional task of detailing and tracking other supplementary support (i.e., matching funds, leveraged funds). This would provide additional information to help evaluate value-for-dollar of NPRB funding, and also provide some insights into the relevance of NPRB-funded research.

Staff provided a broad overview of all RFP topics, noting significant changes from the previous year.

The AP broke for lunch at 12:05.

The meeting was reconvened at 1:15 pm.

During discussion of a proposed section in the draft RFP on ecological risk assessment, a suggestion was made that the NPRB should consider carefully if the organization should promote the use of a precautionary approach to management.

**The AP recommended that staff highlight Focus Section item 1 as a good opportunity for a linkage to the long-term monitoring program. NPRB could have results from a study funded under item 1 appear under a future LTM RFP.**

**The AP endorsed a small grant program under community involvement, supporting the SP's action on this topic as written in the SP August meeting summary. AP members Gay Sheffield, Phil Zavadil, and Rex Snyder volunteered to participate in a "small grants working group".** AP members noted some examples of model programs, including programs run by the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, the Alaska Humanities Forum, and the Alaska Federation of Natives (marketplace grants).

**After extensive discussion, the AP agreed on a set of additions and enhancements to the draft 2013 RFP. Those changes were captured in Appendix 1 (the draft 2013 RFP with AP changes).**

**MOTION: The AP recommends the Board consider the 2013 RFP as presented by the Science Panel (Item 5C) with the modifications included in Appendix 1 (2013 RFP with AP changes).**

**ACTION: Motion passed unanimously.**

The AP agreed that the process that was utilized to review the RFP during this meeting was effective, and would like to follow the same approach in the future. That is, the approach utilized was to discuss and incorporate AP recommended modifications directly within the context of the draftRFP, while still retaining a bulleted list as a summary.

**Meeting Adjourned: 5:15 p.m.**

**FRIDAY– September 7th**

**Meeting called to order: 9/7/12 8:00 a.m.**

## **6. Budget Review**

Staff presented information under Item 6, describing budget status and forecasts. The AP discussed the balance between setting aside funding for future IERPs and funding current RFPs, noting the increasing cost of doing fieldwork.

**MOTION: The AP requests that the NPRB Board form a budget working group and, for planning purposes, that such working group consider inflation when setting future funding levels for the annual RFP.**

**ACTION: Motion passed unanimously.**

## **7. RFP Boilerplate**

### *Stakeholder engagement*

**The AP agrees that the proposed wording suggested by the SP is acceptable for the 2013 RFP. The AP supports the Board appointment of a stakeholder engagement working group to include members from the AP (Gay Sheffield, Helen Aderman, Rex Snyder, and Phil Zavadil), SP (Polly Wheeler and Vera Alexander) and Board (Dorothy Childers) who will work on expanding the stakeholder engagement language in the 2014 RFP. The AP welcomes the opportunity to work with the SP and Board on this matter.**

### *Policy on Proposal responsiveness to priority category choice*

**The AP supports the current process to restrict proposals to consideration only under the sub-category in which the proposal was initially submitted. The AP recommends the submission system generate a message to prompt the proposer to verify that they have selected the correct sub-category.**

**The AP agrees with the SP suggestion that proposers be explicitly required to consult the NPRB project database, and to describe other projects that similarly focus on topics and objectives that are comparable to that which is intended for submission by the proposer .**

### *Policy on Proposals with formatting errors (action item)*

**The AP recommends enforcing the current policy.**

The AP suggested that perhaps the online submission system could auto-generate a PDF for proposers to review that restricts the document to a pre-set page limit. Staff explained that an approach like this has been tried before, but the programming involved is onerous. The AP agreed that the investment of staff time in developing and engaging with this type of programming may not be warranted, and that the burden of compliance with the current formatting policy should most logically rest with the proposers.

### *Education and Outreach funds*

The AP agrees with the policy that funds budgeted for education and outreach that are not spent for that purpose will be withheld at the close of a project.

### *Advisory Panel process for reviewing proposals*

The AP discussed the process that was utilized by the AP during their Spring, 2012, AP meeting with respect to developing and illustrating the stakeholder-relevant characteristics that the AP submitted to the NPRB Board for proposals that were ranked as Tier 1 and Tier 2 by the Science Panel, including the utilization of the “Significant” and “Noteworthy” indications that were attached to such proposals. Moreover, the AP expressed their interest to provide the NPRB Board with “Stakeholder Relevant” comments and observations that would best fit with fulfilling the needs and expectations of the Board as they evaluate proposals. Additionally, the AP expressed interest in receiving whatever suggestions the Board may wish to provide to the AP, for incorporation in their Spring, 2013, AP meeting, with respect to the AP development of proposal-specific comments that address stakeholder relevance.

**MOTION:** The AP endorses the concepts embodied in the following comments, and the changes suggested in the boilerplate action memo:

The AP invites suggestions from the Board with respect to the manner in which the AP may most meaningfully contribute to or improve the proposal review process as the AP exercises its RFP responsibility.

The AP suggests that the RFP boilerplate should incorporate the six criteria that the AP used during their Spring, 2012, AP meeting to determine the stakeholder relevant characteristics of proposals that are submitted in response to the RFP

**ACTION:** Motion passed unanimously.

### **8. Education and Outreach Report**

Staff gave a presentation on education, communication, and outreach activities.

### **9. Gulf of Alaska Integrated Ecosystem Research Program**

Staff presented an update of the Gulf of Alaska Integrated Ecosystem Research Program, highlighting ongoing data collection, progress in data management efforts, and a recent meeting of the project modelers.

### **10. Bering Sea Integrated Ecosystem Research Program**

Staff presented an update of the Bering Sea Integrated Ecosystem Research Program. Staff reported that a close-out plan for the program is under development that will include an assessment of the program management aspects of this collaborative program with NSF that will identify lessons learned.

## **11. Strategic Planning**

The AP supports the strategic planning concepts embodied in the action memo, including revision of the NPRB Science Plan, including a facilitated discussion including the Board and the Advisory and Science Panels during the 2013 AMSS, to establish the goals of the organization for the future, and an assessment of the impacts of NPRB's activities.

A suggestion was made that the strategic planning effort should include an economic analysis by an expert consultant. Further, the strategic planning effort should establish benchmarks for the future direction of the NPRB.

One AP member suggested that an Alaskan-owned small business would be preferred when consultants are considered. ISER was mentioned as a resource.

AP discussion surrounded the concept that NPRB should investigate a strategy for establishing partnerships, while still protecting the brand of NPRB. By extension, a strategy for seeking other mechanisms for funding is also needed.

## **12. Arctic**

The AP suggested that staff should be careful when describing the scope of the project (U.S. Arctic, offshore). Russia should be included whenever possible. AP member Gay Sheffield recommended some contacts that may be helpful in connecting with ongoing Russian efforts in the Bering Strait region.

The AP inquired about the Arctic legislation introduced by U.S. Senator Begich, and the potential impact on, or linkage to, the proposed NPRB Arctic Synthesis activities. Staff responded that NPRB is proceeding with development of the NPRB Arctic program, and not waiting for the outcome of the draft legislation. The Arctic program will be designed to be scalable and responsive.

Staff presented background information on the NPRB's past involvement in Arctic research. Staff then proceeded to describe the history of the Arctic Synthesis phase I and phase II efforts, including an update on the PacMARS project (phase I).

AP member Rex Snyder provided three comments: (1) he knows an Inupiaq translator who is available; (2) there will be a big celebration bringing lots of North Slope villagers together in February that will make it difficult to schedule other meetings during the same time; and (3) the Northwest Arctic and North Slope Boroughs should not be described as Alaska Native Organizations (ANOs).

During the discussion the AP highlighted the mixing zone where the Beaufort and Chukchi Seas meet, and noted strong influences from this mixing on water characteristics and animal populations. The AP recommended that this mixing zone be included in the Phase II scope. The AP further noted that while it is reasonable to focus on the Chukchi for practical reasons, there are many important issues (e.g.

migrating Bowhead whales) that span the Beaufort and Chukchi that also need to be considered. Staff noted that the current Phase II plan does include a statement highlighting linkages outside of the main study area.

The AP further noted the invaluable contribution that coastal communities have had in educating visiting researchers, and requests that this contribution and activity be added to the introduction of the Phase II plan.

**MOTION: The AP extends its compliments to NPRB staff for their approach and success with respect to tackling the complex Arctic research issue. The AP endorses the Arctic Plan Phase II approach presented by staff.**

**ACTION: Motion passed unanimously.**

### **13. Graduate Student Research Awards**

Staff provided the AP with an overview of the recommendations provided by the GSRA working group.

#### ***2013 GSRA guidelines***

There are many qualified applicants. What can the AP add beyond an evaluation of the strength of the student-submitted scientific proposal, and the capabilities and potential contribution of the student? The concept of whether and how to incorporate Stakeholder Relevance considerations into the evaluation of GSRA proposals was discussed. Discussion surrounded whether Stakeholder Relevance as it applies to GSRA proposals is an important consideration, given that the main focus of GSRA may be considered to be the training of future excellent scientists, while still providing important consideration to the topic of the project in which the student plans to engage.

The AP noted that there is evidence to suggest that many researchers might benefit from a more acute awareness, understanding and focus with respect to communicating with and engaging with the public. The results of successful GSRA funded proposals, as well as the NPRB Mission itself, would be significantly advanced if students who submit GSRA proposals were to include meaningful elements and activities that address community engagement and communication in their proposals, and in the exercise of their projects.

The AP recommends that (1) the community involvement language be clarified to include outreach in addition to community involvement; (2) students be coached in the areas of outreach and community involvement for the purpose of fostering improved communication and relevance to social issues. The AP would be interested and available to assist in identifying projects and suggesting project components that enhance community involvement and outreach.

**MOTION: The AP recommends addressing the GSRA proposals according to the same process that was utilized during the Spring, 2012, AP meeting, and that the GSRA proposal application instructions include the addition of the six stakeholder relevance considerations that the AP utilized during their Spring, 2012, AP meeting.**

**ACTION: Motion passed unanimously.**

#### **14. Other Matters**

a) ***Panel memberships, attendance, and nominations committee***

This item was not discussed due to lack of time; the AP was encouraged to review the action memo.

b) ***Arctic legislation update***

This item was covered during the Arctic discussion.

c) ***CoV response***

This item was not discussed due to lack of time.

d) ***Alaska Ocean Observing System update***

Molly McCammon, the AOOS Executive Director, presented an overview of the AOOS evolution and current activities.

e) ***Alaska Marine Science Symposium and associated events***

This item was not discussed due to lack of time.

f) ***Outside funding requests***

This item was not discussed due to lack of time.

g) ***Meeting schedule for 2013-2014***

The second week of September is preferred (week of 9 September, 2013) for the Fall, 2013, AP meeting. However, if the AP meeting must occur earlier, the AP recommends that the AP meeting be scheduled during September 5 (Thursday) and September 6 (Friday).

The AP suggested that a joint AP/Board work session may be helpful in identifying how the AP may best contribute to the work of the NPRB Board, and is prepared to meet at the same location as the Board if there is a functional advantage to doing so.

**MOTION: To Adjourn at 5:26 p.m.**

**ACTION: Motion passed unanimously.**