



# NORTH PACIFIC RESEARCH BOARD

*"Building a clear understanding of the North Pacific, Bering Sea, and Arctic Ocean ecosystems that enables effective management and sustainable use of marine resources."*

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## North Pacific Research Board

### Final -- Meeting Summary

September 22-26, 2014

Bear Mountain Conference Room, Alaska SeaLife Center  
Seward, Alaska

The North Pacific Research Board met from September 22 through September 26, 2014 in Seward, Alaska. In attendance were Tara Riemer (vice chair), David Benson, Michael Castellini, Dorothy Childers, Katrina Hoffman, Paul MacGregor, Carl Markon, Doug Mecum, Mike Miller, Chris Oliver (on behalf of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council), Caryn Rea, Brad Smith, and Capt. Phil Thorne.

Charlie Swanton, John Gauvin and Gerry Merrigan arrived on the second day; Cheryl Rosa (on behalf of the US Arctic Research Commission) arrived on the third day; David Benton called in for the Arctic agenda item; and representatives from the State of Oregon, the Department of State, and the Office of Naval Research were not currently appointed.

The meeting was staffed by Denby Lloyd, Matt Baker, Danielle Dickson, Susan Dixon, Carrie Eischens, and Abigail Enghirst.

### 1. Call to Order/Approve Agenda

Acting chair Tara Riemer called the meeting to order at 1:03 pm and welcomed the board to Seward. She then provided a safety briefing. Chris Oliver, interim representative for the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, was introduced. Ian Dutton, Chief Operating Officer for Rasmuson Foundation, was welcomed as a visitor.

The NPRB executive director was asked to preside over the election of an interim chair.

**MOTION:** Elect Tara Riemer as interim chair.  
**Action:** Motion passed with no objections.

Tara Riemer was elected interim chair, to serve until the regularly scheduled officer elections at the annual spring meeting. Dr. Riemer resumed presiding over the meeting.

**MOTION:** Elect Dave Benson as interim vice-chair.  
**Action:** Motion passed with no objections.

A presentation by Ian Dutton was added under agenda item 1. Discussion of nominations for a fishing industry representative for the board and a fisheries expert for the science panel (SP) were added under agenda item 10, Other Matters.

**MOTION:**                    **Approve agenda as amended.**  
**Action:**                    **Motion passed with no objections.**

Staff announced that Carrie Eischens, Chief of Operations, and Abigail Enghirst, Communications and Outreach Director, had submitted their resignations. Both expressed their regret to be leaving NPRB but also that they were looking forward to new challenges. Various board members noted Carrie and Abby's substantial contributions to NPRB; the entire board thanked them for their service and wished them the best in their future endeavors.

Ian Dutton provided a brief update to the board on the work that the Rasmuson Foundation is doing that may align with NPRB interests.

The board deferred approval of the meeting summary for the Spring 2014 board meeting, but on Friday, September 26 a motion to approve was made:

**MOTION:**                    **Approve summary from April-May 2014 Board meeting as written.**  
**Action:**                    **Motion passed with no objections.**

## 2. Conflict of Interest Policy

Staff provided the board with a brief overview of amendments to the conflict of interest (COI) policy that the board had made during the spring meeting. The revised policy was provided for reference.

The Advisory Panel (AP) chair reported that the AP had passed a motion to ask the board to amend the AP portion of the COI policy, to change the unit of recusal so that the organizational subunits triggering recusal for universities be narrowed to the divisional level. The board clarified that for UAF School of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences, the divisions include Institute of Marine Sciences, Fisheries Division, and MAP/Sea Grant. The board did not take action to amend the AP portion of the COI policy.

Board members were reminded that they are required to sign a form annually stating that they have read, understand, and agree to abide by the NPRB COI policy. Those board members who had not already signed the form during the spring meeting were asked to sign it at the beginning of this meeting and submit the form to staff.

## 3. Budget Review

Staff provided an update on the status of the NPRB budget and projections into the future. Staff particularly noted that the Department of Commerce has recently required NPRB to shift the salary associated with communications and outreach from the science portion of the budget to administration, therefore increasing the body of expenditures that are subject to the legislative cap on administrative expenditures of 15%.

Staff also reported that the NPRB budget was subjected to 6.62% sequestration for FY 15. Thus the second year of Grant 6 (NA13NMF4720105) was reduced from the \$9,332,712 that otherwise would have been available from earnings of the Environmental Improvement and Restoration Fund (EIRF) to \$8,714,803.

Board members expressed concern over the Department of Commerce mandating the shift of personnel costs for the communications and outreach staff from science to administration. The board deferred action on this item, but under agenda item 6 (Communications and Outreach) the board considered a motion on Friday, September 26:

**MOTION:**     **Send a letter to NOAA Alaska Regional Administrator recommending that the C&O Director salary be allowed to be reinstated to the science portion of the NPRB budget.**

**Action:**       **Motion passed with no objections.**

Staff also indicated that funds have been accumulating and, given the five-year nature of each major grant, a substantial amount needs to be obligated. In particular, staff recommended that the board consider obligating up to an additional \$2 million to a combination of the 2015 request for proposals (RFP), the developing Arctic Program, or some other set of subawards. Further discussions was deferred to the specific agenda items.

#### 4. Summary of Previously Funded Projects

Staff provided a summary of the projects funded by NPRB in spring 2014. Twenty-four proposals totaling \$4.7 million were funded through the annual program (2014 RFP) and three proposals totaling \$1.86 million were funded through the long-term monitoring (LTM) program.

Staff explained that NPRB typically receives proposals asking for an average of 4.5 times more than what is being offered in the annual RFP. Overall (all RFP categories combined) the success rate of reviewed proposals has ranged between 20-35% over the last nine years (average of 29%).

An analysis of the number of “new” researchers (i.e., first time applicants) that submitted proposals in response to the 2013 and 2014 RFPs was presented to describe the degree to which NPRB is drawing new participants into the NPRB process. New applicants, defined to include principal investigators and co-investigators who hadn’t previously submitted proposals, made up 42% and 33% of applicants in 2013 and 2014, respectively. Of these new applicants, 24% in 2013 and 19% in 2014 were successful in obtaining funding.

The board asked staff to investigate what percentage of new applicants that were successful collaborated with PIs who have been funded by NPRB before. The board was also interested in why those new applicants who were not funded were unsuccessful (i.e., how did these proposals rank in the tier structure).

Staff provided metrics of NPRB funding distributions since 2002 by large marine ecosystem (Gulf of Alaska, Bering Sea, and Arctic), institution type (academic, government, private, etc.), and research theme. To date, 263 projects (\$41.7M) funded through the annual research program have been completed and another 87 projects (\$16.2M) are currently ongoing. Additionally, updates on the status of data and metadata as well as publication of peer-reviewed papers produced by NPRB funding were provided.

## 5. 2015 Request for Proposals

Staff introduced the draft 2015 request for proposals (RFP), reminding the board that during the spring meeting they had decided to proceed with the cyclical approach to funding in 2015-16. The SP and AP recommended creating a Human Dimensions sub-category under general priorities for ecosystem research that would replace the former Humans sub-category and include Local and Traditional Knowledge (LTK). They also recommended a focus section on Aleutian Islands synthesis. The panels both recommended Arctic cod as an alternative focus section topic.

Staff explained that OSRI had expressed interest in co-funding research related to their priorities (up to \$100 K) as in previous years.

"Other" sub-categories were included in most funding categories in the draft RFP. The language had been edited by the SP to state more clearly that NPRB welcomes such proposals even though such specific topics had not been defined in the RFP.

The board recognized that the RFP refers proposers to the NPRB Science Plan that is ten years old and suggested softening that language and also urged staff to plan to update the science plan soon. Staff voiced intent to begin work on revising the science plan this year, noting that constraints on staff resources preclude a complete revision by next year.

The discussion of the draft 2015 RFP continued on Tuesday. The board recommended that the topics under Oceanography and Lower Trophic Levels be broadened to allow research in any large marine ecosystem (LME) in Alaska waters. The board directed staff to spell out abbreviations throughout the RFP (e.g., ABC, OFL under Fishes and Invertebrates). Under the Fishes and Invertebrates sub-category, the board added a topic on estimating discard mortality rates, incorporating a suggestion from Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G) that studies on discard mortality rates of recreational fisheries be included. Under the Marine Mammals sub-category, the board discussed including a topic on synthesis of Steller sea lion telemetry data as related to critical habitat.

With respect to the Human Dimensions sub-category, the board noted that the language was overly broad and did not provide specific guidance about the types of proposals NPRB is interested in funding. The language in the LTK section should require written statements of formal collaboration or expressed interest from communities. A board member suggested calling the sub-category "Human Ecology" instead, yet ultimately "Human Dimensions" was retained.

Under Cooperative Research with Industry, the board recommended adding a marine mammal-fisheries interactions topic (moving it down from the Marine Mammals sub-category). The board discussed moving the ideas captured under the topic Toxicity of industry-associated discharges to the Contaminants section and eliminating this topic from the Cooperative Research with Industry category. The board noted that the tone of the cooperative research sections for the fishing industry and for other maritime industries is very different and that the tone of the other maritime industries section should be more inviting to attract industry partners. The topic regarding noise in the marine environment was removed and the board suggested revisiting this once a board member has been appointed to the Office of Naval Research seat.

With respect to the potential focus section, staff presented the rationale for the two categories that the panels recommended the board consider (Aleutian Islands synthesis and Arctic cod). During

discussion of the Aleutian Islands synthesis the board raised a question about the availability of data to complete the synthesis. During discussion of Arctic cod a question was raised about why this work would be conducted separately from the Arctic program that NPRB is developing, and noted that individual proposals on Arctic cod could come in under the Fish and Invertebrates sub-category.

The board began discussion on Wednesday, September 24 with the Gulf of Alaska IERP presentation (agenda item 8) and discussion of a GOA IERP synthesis proposal, then returned to the discussion under agenda item 5, draft 2015 RFP.

The board suggested the Focus Section in the 2015 RFP be titled "Synthesis" and include two categories with separate caps, Aleutian Islands = \$600 K and Gulf of Alaska IERP = \$700 K. In order to differentiate the two, the Aleutian Islands focus could be termed "retrospective analysis" and GOA IERP could be termed a "synthesis."

The board decided to move the topic related to toxicity of industry-associated discharges from Cooperative Research with Industry to Coastal Contaminants (under Other Prominent Issues). The board raised the funding allocated to Other Prominent Issues to \$200 K.

The board revised the funding allocated under each category in the draft 2015 RFP as follows:

Oceanography & Lower Trophic Levels = \$500 K  
 Fishes & Invertebrates = \$1.3 million  
 Marine Mammals = \$1 million  
 Seabirds = \$150 K  
 Human Dimensions = \$400 K  
 Other Prominent Issues = \$200 K  
 Community Involvement = \$150 K (\$100 K proposal cap)  
 Cooperative Research with Industry = \$400 K  
 Technology Development and Novel Applications = \$400 K  
 Data Rescue = \$100 K  
 Focus section(s)  
 Aleutian Islands = \$600 K  
 Gulf of Alaska IERP = \$700 K

TOTAL = \$5.9 million

The board discussed the funding for the 2016 RFP cycle (which will be advertised in the 2015 RFP) and decided to advertise a total funding level of \$4.55 million. The funding for Community Involvement in 2016 was increased to \$150 K.

**MOTION: Adopt a 2015 RFP with the categories and amounts listed above, for a total of \$5.9 million, and \$4.55 million proposed for 2016.**

**Action: Motion passed with no objections.**

**The board also recommended that the 2015 RFP be explicit in notifying proposers that Arctic projects may be required to integrate with the Arctic program that NPRB is developing.** Proposals will not be required to include funds specific for collaborating and the board acknowledged that money may need to be found to supplement these awards to fund activities such as participation in PI meetings.

On Friday, September 26, the board passed a motion to accept the draft 2015 RFP as revised by staff in consideration of the board's discussions and action above:

**MOTION: Adopt the draft 2015 RFP as revised by staff, for a total of \$5.9 million, and \$4.55 million proposed for 2016.**

**Action: Motion passed with no objections.**

In addition, the AP Chair presented a proposal for NPRB to develop a stakeholder study-design award program and board members recognized merit in the idea. The board discussed this approach and wondered if it would accomplish building the capacity that the AP intended. A model like the graduate student research award (GSRA) program could be used to implement the idea. The board discussed whether a workshop or planning grant opportunity in the annual RFP might be viable approaches as well. A suggestion was made for an annual webinar to introduce the RFP and explain the types of work solicited under the LTK, community involvement, and cooperative research categories. **The board decided to reactivate the small grants working group to develop this idea and make future recommendations to the board.**

## 6. Communications and Outreach Report

On Friday, September 26, staff provided an update on communications and outreach, including work in progress on a biennial report for 2013-14. Board members were asked to complete a form answering some questions, including "How has NPRB-funded research benefited/been of value to your specific organization or helped to move the field forward?" A selection of these statements will be included in the report.

Staff presented a new strategic plan for communications (public affairs) for NPRB that includes improving communication of research results to stakeholders, agency managers and policy-makers. A number of specific goals were laid out in the strategic plan, including:

- a) develop formal engagement structure between NPRB and key management agencies, research organizations, and marine scientists,
- b) deliver relevant research findings to communities who would otherwise not have access to them,
- c) participate in informal marine education and promote ocean literacy to the general public,
- d) cultivate a cohesive NPRB identity that positions the agency as a trusted source of marine science research, and
- e) maximize impact of outreach funds.

The strategic plan for communications included "spotlight issues" that could be highlighted each month to raise awareness and staff solicited ideas from the SP, AP, and board. The board suggested 1) results of interesting research projects and why they matter, and 2) highlights of individuals to put a face on the research (e.g., profile on a fisherman). Board members mentioned that The Nature Conservancy recently supported production of an article and film on the salmon excluder device used in the pollock fishery and perhaps that could be highlighted.

The board recommended that in the legacy section of the strategic plan the document highlight discussion of the Alaska Marine Science Symposium.

The board requested that staff give a presentation to the NPFMC, perhaps during their December meeting, to provide an update on NPRB and remind participants of opportunities to provide input into the annual RFP process. Board members also suggested that IERP programs be invited to present posters at the NPFMC meetings, perhaps organized by NOAA AFSC. The Young Fisherman's Forum was recognized as another forum for presenting results.

Staff explained that at times researchers who are funded through the annual program have good ideas for outreach but neglect to budget more than the minimum budget required for outreach (\$2000) to implement them. Staff asked the board for authorization to earmark a portion of the NPRB communications and outreach budget to supplement these projects instead of asking PIs to shift money away from research activities. Funds would originate from the communications line item in the NPRB budget. Staff suggested that \$10 K might be adequate, yet \$15-20 K would allow staff greater flexibility. **The board agreed that this would be worthwhile and authorized staff to allocate up to \$20 K at the discretion of the Executive Director.**

Staff also explained that at times adequate in-kind support has been provided by other institutions, yet NPRB has mandated that \$2000 of NPRB funds be allocated to outreach. Staff suggested that as long as the NPRB brand and quality of the outreach does not suffer perhaps this requirement could be softened. **The board agreed with this approach.**

The board suggested that staff develop a resource that provides guidance about the costs of specific types of outreach materials so that proposers can develop more realistic budgets from the outset.

The board discussed making a formal request to U.S. Department of Commerce to authorize moving the budget for communications and outreach staff support back into the science portion of the NPRB budget, as opposed to its recent allocation in the administrative budget. **The board passed a motion to that effect (see Motion under agenda item 3).**

## 7. Graduate Student Research Awards

Staff provided an update on the graduate student research award (GSRA) program, reminding the board that in spring 2014 the board reviewed 57 applications (21 Master's and 36 PhD students) and selected six proposals for awards. Alaska Sea Grant would like to explore the possibility of funding an additional four students by routing their money (\$100 K) through the NPRB process. The science panel asked staff to clarify whether or not these awards would be limited to University of Alaska students and staff have confirmed that Alaska Sea Grant would not impose any such restrictions. While a collaboration with Alaska Sea Grant might not be possible in 2015, staff agreed to follow up with Sea Grant to determine the potential for collaboration in the future.

## 8. Gulf of Alaska Integrated Ecosystem Research Program

The board had received a summary of the GOA IERP earlier in the meeting (under agenda item 5, 2015 RFP), in order to provide context for the discussion of a potential GOA IERP synthesis focus section. Subsequently, most of the discussion on Wednesday, September 24 was centered on crafting language for a GOA IERP synthesis request.

## 9. Arctic Program

Staff provided a brief summary on prior board actions in preparing for an Arctic program. Staff then provided some details on more recent work with the Arctic Working Group and potential funding partners. Then staff reviewed draft documents outlining a potential Arctic Program, including geographic scope, major research questions, and timelines.

The board, referring to Attachment 9e, discussed placing funding limits or caps on specific portions of the potential Arctic Program. The component parts were:

- Part A: Patterns in subsistence use and potential shifts in response to ecosystem change
- Part B: Physical, biological and ecological drivers of the distribution and life history of subsistence and/or keystone species, and thresholds/tipping points
- Part C: Influences of sea ice dynamics and advection on the phenology, magnitude and location of primary production, phenology of secondary production and match-mismatch; influence of winter conditions and system reset
- Part D: Pelagic-benthic coupling
- Part E: Modeling
- Part F: Other areas of research that align with priorities indicated above

**MOTION:** Prepare a draft Arctic Program RFP for a total of \$6 million in NPRB funds (plus an additional \$1 million to be unadvertised but used for contingencies), plus funds from potential funding partners, based on input from staff and the Arctic Working Group, with Part A limited to \$750,000, Part F limited to \$250,000, and the remainder dedicated to Parts B-E.

**Action:** Motion was bifurcated.

**Motion A:** Add \$1 million to the \$6 million already committed, with the \$1 million to be held in reserve for contingencies (e.g., to fund research needs or fill gaps in the program that might be identified after review and selection of proposals submitted to the original RFP).

**Action:** Motion passed with no objections.

**Motion B:** Initially apportion \$6 million Arctic RFP with Part A at \$750,000 and Part F at \$250,000, with remainder to Parts B-E.

**Action:** Motion failed, with a 3-yes to 2-no vote of the Executive Committee but a 5-yes to 6-no vote of the remainder of the board.

**In additional discussion, the board clarified that funds for a synthesis stage of the Arctic Program are expected to be allocated in the future above and beyond this \$7 million commitment to the Arctic RFP and contingencies.**

The board concurred with the recommendations of the AP on the Arctic Program and encouraged staff to use them as guidance. The board also urged staff to pursue partnership discussions with the U.S. Coast Guard and the State Department. And, the board considered a recommendation of the science panel to add Lloyd Lowry to the Arctic Working Group.

**MOTION:** Add Lloyd Lowry, of the SP, to the Arctic Working Group.

**Action:** Motion passed with no objections.



The board briefly discussed whether or not the program should be branded as an IERP and decided that for now it should not be branded as such.

The board suggested the Arctic Working Group discuss the data embargo policy and consider eliminating any embargo for the Arctic program.

## 10. Other Matters

### a) Bering Sea Integrated Ecosystem Research Program update

Staff reported that all projects associated with BSIERP are being closed out and final reports are under review. Reports will be available on the BSIERP page on the NPRB website as they are accepted. NPRB is working on outreach products through a grant from NSF.

### b) Long-term monitoring program

The three projects that the board decided to fund last spring (the Seward line, the continuous plankton recorder, and the Chukchi mooring) have been procured and are making progress.

### c) Alaska Marine Science Symposium

Planning for the 2015 AMSS is underway. The AMSS website has been redesigned and abstract submission, registration, and payment may all be completed online. The plenary talks will begin on Mon., Jan. 19, and Gulf of Alaska, Bering Sea, and Arctic presentations will be given on Jan. 20-22.

A board member suggested that AMSS be themed and suggested "Bridging the gap between research and management." During discussion it was noted that many presentations do often address these issues. Perhaps keynote speakers could be invited to highlight this specifically.

### d) Outside meeting funding requests and process

NPRB provides up to \$50 K per year to support outside meetings. Staff suggested that the board standardize the schedule for allocating these funds and do so based upon the date of the meeting (rather than, say, the date of the request or date of decision) and calendar year (rather than fiscal year). **The board agreed with this approach.**

The board considered two requests for support of outside meetings. The first was a request for \$10,000 to support a workshop at the ESSAS meeting at the University of Washington in June 2015. The other was a two-part request for support for PICES conferences (\$25,000 for conference in Brazil, \$15,000 for an early career scientist conference in 2017). Staff noted that the board pre-authorized supporting the PICES conference in Brazil at \$15,000 at a previous meeting, so the board was asked to consider adding \$10,000.

**MOTION: Approve support of outside meeting requests for the following: 2015 ESSAS Workshop in Seattle on the Role of Sea Ice in the Ocean (\$10,000), 2015 PICES/ICES/IOC 3<sup>rd</sup> Symposium on Effects of Climate Change on the Ocean in Santos City Brazil (\$15,000), and 2017 PICES Early Career Scientist conference in Korea (\$5,000).**

**Action: Motion passed with no objections.**

A total of \$10,000 would therefore remain for other outside meeting requests in 2015.

The board discussed participation in the PICES/ICES/IOC climate change symposium in Brazil and decided to encourage board members to participate.

**MOTION: Approve support of up to \$4,000 for each of five board members to attend the 3<sup>rd</sup> Symposium on Effects of Climate Change on the Ocean in Santos City Brazil in March 2015. Friendly amendment changed this to four board members and one member of the science panel.**

**Action: Motion passed with no objections.**

The board indicated that staff members could also attend, at the Executive Director's discretion. Board members must submit written requests to participate to the Executive Director and board Chair by Friday, October 3.

e) Science panel nomination

Dr. Steve Jewett declined his appointment to participate on the NPRB science panel and someone with fish and fisheries expertise was needed. The science panel recommended the board consider appointing Dr. Phil Mundy. The nominations committee concurred with the SP recommendation.

**MOTION: Appoint Dr. Phil Mundy to fill a fish/fisheries seat on the Science Panel.**

**Action: Motion passed with no objections.**

f) Fishing industry representative on the board

David Benson is the current fishing industry representative on the board (and Executive Committee) and the term has been determined by the Secretary of Commerce to be three years (current term expires July 2015). The Executive Director has not found any written policy stating that an individual in this seat cannot be reappointed for a consecutive term. The board discussed the fact that it takes significant time (two years or more) for an Executive Committee member to learn the operations of the NPRB and limiting the representative in this seat to one term could cause internal disruption. The board therefore recommended that staff urge interpretation of the policy to allow for reappointment of the fishing industry seat on the board. Staff recommended that the board write a letter from the Chair asking for clarification and justification of this issue.

**MOTION: Direct the Chair to write a formal letter to the NOAA Regional Administrator seeking clarification on the question of whether or not the fishing industry seat on the board can be reappointed after serving a three-year term, recommending that reappointment be allowed, and requesting justification for any alternative interpretation of policy.**

**Action: Motion passed with no objections.**

According to the standard operating procedures of NPRB, the Executive Committee needs to nominate a board member for that seat during the spring meeting. Staff made recommendations for soliciting nominations for this board seat, plus nominations to fill expiring terms on the science panel and the advisory panel, prior to the spring meeting.

g) Meeting schedule for 2015–2016

The AP Chair invited the board to meet in Kodiak for their fall meeting in 2015 and suggested a number of site visit opportunities that would be relevant to the board. The board also discussed Sitka as an option, noting that some AP members are located there. The board discussed the increased costs associated with meeting in more remote locations and also recognized the opportunity for outreach to communities and stakeholders that these meetings present. The board tasked the board members who advocate meeting in a given location with arranging site visits to maximize outreach and opportunities to educate the board during such trips.

**MOTION:** Approve meeting in Kodiak for the fall 2015 board meeting, during the week of September 21, 2015.

**Action:** Motion passed with no objections.

**MOTION:** Approve meeting in Sitka for the fall 2016 board meeting.

**Action:** Motion passed with no objections.

With thanks to Tara Riemer and the staff at the Alaska SeaLife Center, at 11:55 am:

**MOTION:** To adjourn.

**Action:** Motion passed with no objections.