

**SUMMARY**  
**North Pacific Research Board – Science Panel Meeting**  
**March 30 – April 2, 2015**

The Science Panel met March 30 - April 2, 2015, at the Sheraton Hotel in downtown Seattle, WA. The meeting was attended by the following panel members: Milo Adkison, Vera Alexander, Jim Berner, Courtney Carothers, Stew Grant, Tuula Hollmen, Patricia Livingston, Lloyd Lowry, Phil Mundy, Tom Royer, Chris Siddon, Suzann Speckman, Pat Tester, Polly Wheeler, Bill Wilson and David Witherell. Carin Ashjian was absent, however, she provided her primary and secondary reviews of the 2015 RFP and graduate student proposals prior to the meeting. The meeting was staffed by Matt Baker, Danielle Dickson, Susan Dixon, Denby Lloyd, Jo-Ann Mellish, and Brendan Smith.

1. Call to Order and Approve Agenda

The new Science Panel member, Phil Mundy, was introduced. The Science Panel introduced themselves to the group to begin the meeting. New NPRB Annual Program Manager, Jo-Ann Mellish, and Director of Communications and Outreach, Brendan Smith, were introduced. Tom Royer was re-elected as Chair, followed by re-election of vice co-Chairs Tuula Hollmen and Stew Grant. The meeting agenda was approved. Susan Dixon reviewed travel claim regulations to ensure efficient processing of expenses.

2. Science Plan

Matt Baker introduced the existing science plan from 2005 and a proposal to revise and update this document. The current plan is used to assist in drafting the annual RFPs and serves to articulate the NPRB mission, identify scientific priorities and needs, describe research approaches and outline the means to develop partnerships. It was noted that the plan has been in place for almost 10 years. While much of the plan remains relevant, each category should be revised. The five original chapters were presented and reviewed, including notations of where each could be updated. A 5-year revision cycle was suggested for future consideration. New issues, areas of research, advances in knowledge and methodology, and means to facilitate and accommodate targeted interdisciplinary collaborations will be explored. New means to identify and develop potential partnerships will also be identified. The revision will also review existing standards, guidelines, and the articulation of the NPRB mission and approach. This would be an opportunity to think more broadly on specific research needs, data gaps for the ecosystem components, and means to identify and facilitate research. Matt Baker noted that Science Panel members should also continue the conversation and provide input into the process at any point. The Science Panel noted that there have been a number of scientific discoveries since the original 2005 plan and they are pleased that preparations are underway to refresh the plan.

Three science plan revision teams were suggested:

1. Drafting Team: 4-8 people, including Science Director, Annual Program Manager, Science Panel Chair and Science Panel members. This team would review the existing plan and identify areas that need to be revised.
2. Working Group: 5-7 people, including members from the Board, the Executive Director, one Science Panel representative and one Advisory Panel representative.
3. External Review Committee.

A timeline for the revision was proposed, with completion in approximately one year. The Science Panel requested more information on plans to integrate stakeholder input. A multi-tier review system

including agency review was suggested. There was also discussion about a new approach to interdisciplinary projects. In addition, it was recommended that new Science Panel members be recruited with participation in the Science Plan revision in mind.

### 3. Current Research Funded and 2015 Proposals

Matt Baker provided an overview of the research previously funded by NPRB. The panel was also updated on the status of data, metadata and publications (Attachment 4c, total 513).

A total of 105 proposals were received on December 5, 2014. Over \$24 million in support was requested in comparison to the \$5.9 million of available funds. A brief overview of the number of proposals and amount of money requested for each sub category, compared to the amount targeted in the 2015 RFP. A brief review of the topics was also provided.

Jo-Ann Mellish introduced a brief update on review success statistics. External peer review invitations were initiated on January 12, 2015. Science Panel members were given access to proposals two weeks earlier than in prior years, on Friday, February 27, 2015. The Science Panel responded positively to the extra time allotted for review. A total of 17 proposals were flagged for responsiveness review, however, ultimately all 105 submitted proposals were put forward for review. Staff provided a brief update on review success (Attachment 3f), and described the international composition of external peer reviewers (75% US-based researchers, 10% Canada, 15% elsewhere).

Jo-Ann further provided a general overview of peer and Science Panel review processing. Proposal ranking in particular (Tier 1a, 1b, 2, 3), was reviewed. There was a specific reminder to the Science Panel that the Board will not fund proposals ranked Tier 3. The Science Panel opted to designate 1a or 1b during the initial process given the large number of proposals to be discussed. Science Panel members were requested to provide summaries of the peer and Science Panel reviews for the Board to Matt Baker, using the provided template, by Wednesday, April 8, 2015. Panel members were asked to ensure that the summaries reflect the tier assignment and to explain any differences in the Science Panel and peer review rankings. Summaries should include details about any shortcomings of the science. Science Panel reviews are transmitted to the Board, but are typically not transmitted to the applicant, unless they are substituted for peer reviews in the event that insufficient peer reviews were submitted. Note that a system glitch in 2015 interfered with transmitting the timeline and milestones of some proposals to peer reviewers. Reviewer criticism of lack of timeline and milestones should be discounted, as that was the fault of NPRB and not the proposers.

Conflict of interest declarations were noted in Attachment 3k (staff COI) and 4a (Science Panel). Each participant in the room was requested to sign Attachment 3j, Conflict of Interest signature page, prior to proposal discussions. This year the Science Panel COI declarations were overlaid on the primary and secondary review assignments in a single document for ease of reference.

### 4. 2015 Annual Program Proposal Review

The primary Science Panel reviewer provided a summary of the peer evaluation of the proposal, their own evaluation followed by comments from secondary Science Panel reviewer. Finally a consensus tier ranking was assigned (Table 1). A total of 34 proposals were given the highest rank of Tier 1a, comprising \$7.3 million dollars. The remaining proposals were split into twenty proposals ranked Tier 1b (\$4.6 million), twenty proposals ranked Tier 2 (\$4.8 million), and thirty-one proposals in Tier 3 (\$7.3 million).

**Table 1.** Summary of 2015 RFP categories, proposal distribution and Science Panel tier ranking.

<b>2015 RFP Category</b>	<b>Funding Target</b>	<b>Proposals Submitted</b>	<b>Tier 1a</b>	<b>Tier 1b</b>	<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Tier 3</b>
Oceanography	\$500,000	\$2,565,175 11	\$1,084,870 4	\$246,013 1	\$813,641 4	\$420,651 2
Fishes & Invertebrates	\$1,300,000	\$5,885,187 20	\$2,047,240 7	\$1,195,093 3	\$1,339,349 6	\$1,243,505 4
Marine Mammals	\$1,000,000	\$7,120,281 28	\$1,726,291 6	\$1,053,837 5	\$864,208 3	\$3,347,945 14
Seabirds	\$150,000	\$461,801 5	\$408,087 4	\$0 0	\$0 0	\$53,714 1
Human Dimensions	\$400,000	\$1,302,705 9	\$664,379 5	\$239,350 1	\$200,893 2	\$198,130 1
Other Prominent Issues	\$200,000	\$863,621 5	\$0 0	\$675,602 4	\$0 0	\$188,019 1
Community Involvement	\$150,000	\$98,622 1	\$0 0	\$0 0	\$98,622 1	\$0 0
Cooperative Research with Industry	\$400,000	\$497,626 3	\$153,329 1	\$98,781 1	\$0 0	\$245,516 1
Technology Development	\$400,000	\$3,729,043 19	\$458,854 4	\$1,113,329 5	\$705,458 3	\$1,451,402 7
Data Rescue	\$100,000	\$199,420 2	\$199,420 2	\$0 0	\$0 0	\$0 0
Focus: Ecosystem Synthesis	\$1,300,000	\$1,298,641 2	\$599,137 1	\$0 0	\$699,504 1	\$0 0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$5,900,000</b>	<b>\$24,022,169 105</b>	<b>\$7,341,607 34</b>	<b>\$4,622,005 20</b>	<b>\$4,781,675 20</b>	<b>\$7,276,882 31</b>

Nine proposals were considered for joint funding by the Oil Spill Recovery Institute (OSRI) (8, 19, 27, 74, 75, 82, 84, 97, 104). Four were discussed extensively, in order of priority: 27, 104, 74, 75. It is also noted that OSRI they may choose to invest their \$100,000 contribution into the Arctic program rather than the annual program.

#### 5. Graduate Student Research Awards

A total of 38 applications were received for the 2015 GSRAs, including 13 Master's level and 25 Doctoral level students. The Science Panel opted to discuss only proposals that received a minimum of one very good or higher ranking. Ratings were given for student qualifications (1-10) and proposal merit (1-10). There was a request from the Science Panel to provide a revised review template for the 2016 GSRAs that integrated the dual scale more explicitly. It was also suggested that students be required to provide a letter of recommendation from at least one member of their advisory committee in future years. Masters proposals were discussed first, followed by Doctoral students.

Four of the thirteen Master's level students did not meet the above minimum discussion criteria. Of the remaining nine students put forward for Board consideration, one received an excellent rating and full 10 score on both consideration criteria. Eight students received mixed reviews and ratings.

Four of the twenty-five Doctoral level students did not meet the above minimum very good/excellent criteria for discussion. Of the remaining twenty-one students put forward for Board consideration, six received an excellent rating and full 10 score on both criteria. Fifteen students received mixed reviews and ratings.

#### 6. Communications and Outreach Update

Staff provided an update on communications and outreach activities since the fall 2014 meeting. Highlights included:

- Website visitation of 1,800 users monthly
- ~100 participants at the Communicating Ocean Sciences Workshop at AMSS
- GOAIERP now has 703 Facebook followers
- The GOAIERP overview video was screened for the Science Panel
- USB drives containing the Bering Sea headlines and special issue publications were distributed to the Science Panel
- See meeting materials for specific project highlights, including focus on projects 1319 (highlighted at AMSS) and 1316, Project Jukebox (website now active).

#### 7. Bering Sea Project

Matt Baker provided a brief review of the program. Almost all projects have now been completed. A total of 352 datasets are now archived with associated DOIs. There have been 4 special journal issues associated with this project. The final special issue is underway, with 33 manuscripts available online prior to print (expected December 2015). The online portal now houses 157 publications.

#### 8. Gulf of Alaska Project

Danielle Dickson provided a summary review of the GOA project. It was noted that there was a synthesis proposal included in the annual program by the GOA PIs. Four videos created for the

program by the Sitka Sound Science Center were described, and one was shown as part of the Communications and Outreach update in item #6.

The GOA PIs have created a list of pending manuscripts that they are committing to prepare. A total of 16 have been submitted to date and an additional 25 are pending. Staff noted that this year's PI meeting, to be held the week of April 6, 2015, was to have a different structure than meetings in prior years. The first day will have focus presentations and the second day will include responses to information provided in day one. The third day will have small breakout groups, and the fourth and final day will consist of management applications. This will be the last official PI meeting for the GOA project.

#### 9. Arctic Program

Danielle Dickson provided an update on the PacMARS program which now has an accepted final report and completed synthesis. The report will be available online in the next few days. There was some discussion regarding the difficulties in comparing data over time, but it was noted that this baseline will provide an essential resource. Metadata and data used in the program are housed in the NCAR host, and a special issue publication is in preparation.

Matt Baker outlined the timeline for the development of an Arctic program. Partners in this endeavor were listed (as noted meeting documents as well as in the draft RFP), with special note of the participation of Science Panel members Vera Alexander and Lloyd Lowry. A pre-proposal will be issued to gather ideas from the scientific community. The Board has committed \$6 million to the program. A reserve of \$1 million will be applied after proposals have been funded to allow for a targeted call to fill any research gaps. NPRB is not seeking to be the sole source of research fund in the Arctic, rather, they are building upon its prior experience in serving a coordinating role.

The draft RFP was introduced for discussion (see meeting documents, Attachment 9b). The five overall topics were briefly discussed and then the floor was opened to the Science Panel to make recommendations.

The Science Panel discussion included concern that the hypotheses will be driven by very specific expertise rather than fostering an integrative approach. There was a recommendation to clarify the text in the draft RFP to ensure that topics noted are suggestions and not requirements. There was a comparison of procedures employed for the GOA and BSIERP programs, and a conversation of how a modified approach will be applied both during implementation and closure of the program. It was noted that there would be a 4-day PI meeting within one month of funding decisions to foster an integrated hypothesis development.

The award cycle for this program is intended to parallel the annual RFP program to allow for leveraging of funded proposals between the two funding opportunities. The original deadline of January 8, 2016, was considered logistically difficult and moved to January 15, 2016, to allow for sufficient processing time in consideration of the holidays and institutional closure. The benefits and drawbacks of including modeling as an independent category were discussed at length.

#### 10. Other Matters

Denby Lloyd provided statistics in the Agenda item relating to the AMSS in 2015. The dates are to be delayed by one week beginning in 2016, in order to avoid the Martin Luther King holiday.

The Captain Cook continues to be a venue. There was resounding approval of the continued single session approach, as it allows a bigger picture, integrated view of the research.

The upcoming meeting schedule was discussed, including shifting of the spring Science Panel meeting 2016 to one week later to allow for concurrent review of the Arctic and Annual Programs. The Science Panel noted their wish to revisit the tier selection process for the annual program (primarily the Tier 1a and 1b designations), the instructions for the GSRA review (to include a 10/10 rating system), and ways to improve the efficiency of the GSRA discussion process. These discussions will take place during the fall 2015 Science Panel meeting.

Jo-Ann Mellish provided an overview of a proposed modification to the existing semi-annual report protocol for the annual program. The proposal (Attachment 10b) included four independent recommendations and justifications: 1. reduce the reporting requirements from semi-annual to annual, 2. shift the July deadline from July 15 to July 31 of each active project year, 3. adopt a revised reporting template, and 4. establish an online reporting portal. The Science Panel responded favorably to the modifications, however, there was some split among the Panel regarding the frequency of reports. There was also discussion of the security concerns associated with the online posting of interim reports.

It was noted that there is potential for up to nine members of the Science Panel to be up for rotation off the panel in 2016. Seven of the nine are not eligible for return under current regulations. There was a discussion to gather ideas on how to recruit new members, as well as to consider a temporary moratorium or limitation on the number of members that could be replaced in any given year.

Bill Wilson was presented with a plaque to recognize his contribution to the NPRB Science Panel.