

**North Pacific Research Board – Advisory Panel
September 15 - 17, 2015
Anchorage, Alaska**

Tuesday, September 15, 2015

The Advisory Panel (AP) met on September 15-17 in Anchorage, Alaska. In attendance were Jeff Stephan, Gary Freitag, Nagruk Harcharek, Helen Aderman, Steve Reifenstuhl, Chris Krenz, Vera Metcalf and Phil Zavadil. Dan Falvey attended on Sep. 15 and Louis Brzuzy joined the meeting on Sep. 16. Gay Sheffield attended via phone. Not in attendance: Edward Poulsen. The meeting was staffed by Matt Baker, Danielle Dickson, Jo-Ann Mellish, and Susan Dixon. Denby Lloyd joined the meeting on Sep. 17.

1. Call to Order/Approve Agenda

The Chair called the meeting to order at 8:35 am on Tuesday, September 17, 2015. Staff provided a safety briefing.

The agenda was approved without amendment.

MOTION: Approve the meeting agenda.

Maker: Steve Reifenstuhl

Second: Gary Freitag

Motion passed.

The summary of the spring 2015 meeting was approved.

MOTION: Accept minutes from the spring 2015 AP meeting.

Maker: Gary Freitag

Second: Steve Reifenstuhl

Motion passed.

Louis Brzuzy was appointed to the AP to fill the oil & gas industry seat vacated by Michael Macrander. Louis introduced himself and was welcomed to the AP when he joined the meeting on September 16.

2. Conflict of Interest Policy

Staff summarized the conflict of interest policy and ensured that all AP members have signed a statement certifying that they have read, understand, and agree to abide by the policy.

3. Budget Review

Staff provided a brief update on the budget.

In light of NPRB's declining annual monetary awards for research due to inflation and low return on investment of the endowment monies, the AP recommends that the NPRB Board evaluate and examine options for lowering the limit on indirect costs for grant awards. The intent is to maximize money directed to research.

For reference, the current NPRB policy is as follows:

Indirect Costs: The Budget Summary may include an amount for indirect costs if the applicant has an established rate for indirect cost with the federal government. The total dollar amount of the indirect costs proposed in an application under this program must not exceed the indirect cost rate negotiated and approved by a cognizant federal agency prior to the proposed effective date of the award, or 100% of the total proposed direct cost amount in the application, whichever is less. If applicable, a copy of the current, approved indirect-cost agreement with the federal government must be included. Note that the indirect rate indicated at the time of proposal submission is the indirect rate that will apply through the duration of the project should the proposal receive funding.

MOTION: The AP recommends that the NPRB Board evaluate and examine options for lowering the limit on indirect costs for grant awards. The intent is to maximize money directed to research.

Maker: Steve Reifentstahl

Second: Nagruk Harcharek

Motion passed.

4. Annual Program

Staff provided a summary of the projects funded by NPRB in spring 2015. Thirty-three proposals totaling \$7 million were funded. NPRB allocated \$700 K for a Gulf of Alaska Integrated Ecosystem Research Program synthesis project and added an additional \$1 M to the Annual Program in 2015. Staff provided statistics about funding by large marine ecosystem and research area.

Staff explained that the Science Panel decided to adjust their review criteria in 2016 to eliminate the A/B ranking within Tier 1 and to move instead to an "Exceptional" ranking to identify particularly exceptional research that meets criteria related to urgency, innovation, and impact.

The AP again raised the idea of considering the implementation of a small grants program, and discussed the merits of reactivating the small grants working group to suggest a strategy for implementing such a program. The AP envisions that a small grants program would issue small grants for proposals that would not be subjected to the same rigorous review as the proposals that are submitted for the Annual Program. Applicants might include community-based groups, members of the fishing industry or other similar entities. No further action was taken.

5. 2016 Request for Proposals

Staff summarized the process for developing the draft 2016 RFP for the Annual Program and pointed AP members to supporting documents detailing recommendations received from a variety of agencies and organizations.

Staff presented the draft RFP category by category and also explained plans to ask the Board to consider creating an integrated research category that would allow proposers to apply for funds

from multiple categories (Oceanography & Lower Trophic Levels through Human Dimensions). The AP was enthusiastic about the integrated research category idea and suggested that the Board consider review criteria that would give integrated proposals added weight. The AP recognized that developing integrated research proposals would require more work than a proposal in a given category. Additionally, the risk associated with such integrated proposals may be high because they will need to be strong in multiple areas of science and will request large sums of money. In the absence of added emphasis from the Board, the AP suggested that proposers may hesitate to develop such integrated proposals. The AP also suggested that the language describing the integrated research category state that the Board intends to fund more than one proposal in each other customary category to ensure that individual research projects are also funded.

MOTION: The AP strongly supports the concept of including an integrated research category in the Annual RFP. Encouraging interdisciplinary research will be valuable and will allow such research to occur outside of the IERPs. It should be made clear that NPRB intends to fund more than one proposal in each other customary funding category so that a single integrated research proposal does not take all of the money available in a given category.

Maker: Gary Freitag

Second: Phil Zavadil

Motion passed.

AP members suggested that climate change and emerging issues should both receive more emphasis and description in the RFP, perhaps in the introduction of the RFP. For example, under the Marine Mammals category, the AP noted that accessibility to marine mammals due to changes in sea ice is a much more pressing issue than depleted or declining marine mammal populations. Perhaps this might be a good topic for an integrated research project or a focus section. The research could include the adaptation of communities to subsist on fish instead of marine mammals. Collection of data on recent relocation and distribution of animals such as fish in light of climate change would also be valuable. An AP member suggested that more expedient communication between rural coastal communities and management agencies and the broader scientific community about emerging issues is needed, and wondered if NPRB could play a role in addressing this, perhaps by funding work under the Community Involvement or Other Prominent Issues sections.

The AP made specific recommendations for edits to the draft RFP throughout. Under Human Dimensions, the AP suggested including emphasis on human adaptation to climate change, resiliency, and food security.

Under Fishes and Invertebrates, an AP member suggested also highlighting ocean acidification in sub-category v. and suggested rewording the title to "Responses of fish & crab stocks to environmental variability, climate change, and ocean acidification". Additional language was also suggested under the sub-category for bycatch.

An AP member noted that while NOAA is interested in the use of automated image analysis systems for fishery monitoring, it is not necessarily an interest of the fishing industry; therefore,

perhaps this topic is not appropriate to be considered under the Cooperative Research with Industry category. A topic that addressed a risk assessment statistical approach would be more useful in the case of some fisheries.

The AP expressed an alternate point of view with respect the Science Panel's assertion that research related to oil spills is not well aligned with NPRB's mission, and suggested that emphasis be placed on food security and the effects of oil on marine life. The draft text focused on the direct effects of oil on wildlife, and the AP felt that indirect effects were also worthy of inclusion.

The AP noted that the Technology Development and Novel Application category is consistently over-subscribed and suggested that the Board consider a cyclical approach to sub-categories within this category.

In terms of the Focus section, the AP saw merit in all three of the ideas proposed in the draft RFP (anomalous warming in the North Pacific, a.k.a., "the blob"; Pacific salmon early marine life history, marine distribution and ocean capacity; and issues associated with anticipated sea level rise). The AP noted that the anomalous warming and sea level rise ideas would address emerging issues, whereas salmon would not, and noted that these emerging issues have implications for salmon. Anomalous warming is transitory, and this could be the appropriate time to address this topic. Several AP members felt that salmon was an issue that is more relevant to industry stakeholders and merits the large allocation that the focus sections allows. Ultimately, the AP consensus was that the salmon focus section was the one that the AP would like to endorse over the other two.

The AP also raised the alternative that the focus section could be dropped so that these funds could instead be allocated to the main research categories of the RFP. The AP would appreciate a discussion and consideration of the effectiveness and value of this option for future years. AP members noted that the Science Director stated in his introductory comments that few suggestions were received for focus area topics in the past two years. Perhaps the focus section could be funded on a cyclical basis. Another option might be to save money for a focus section until a pressing emerging issue arises that warrants funding. This would allow NPRB to be nimble in responding to an emerging issue. The AP also briefly discussed a preference that only Tier 1 proposals be funded in the focus section.

Discussion surrounded the question of whether NPRB could consider an open focus section with undefined research priorities that would make a relatively large sum of money available, noting some specific review criteria, therefore, providing the responsibility to the proposers to justify the importance of an emerging topic. This could also be done under the Other Prominent Issues category. The AP notes that this option may create a difficult situation in terms of fielding questions from proposers, identifying reviewers, and conducting Science Panel review.

The AP supported saving money for emerging pressing issues or future large programs and not funding the \$600 K focus section annually.

MOTION: The AP endorsed the salmon focus for the 2016 RFP.

Maker: Steve Reifentuhl

Second: Gary Freitag

Motion passed with one objection.

Discussion: NPRB funded a "blob"-related project in 2015; sea level rise is a less pressing issue. Salmon research will build on GOAIERP and has implications for stakeholders. The AP briefly discussed the fact that the salmon focus is relatively limited to a specific stakeholder group.

An AP member noted that emerging issues from different regions should be included for consideration when the RFP is drafted.

The AP recommended that the Board direct staff to include a discussion of restructuring the focus section of the Annual Program RFP in the agenda for the spring meeting. The AP has interest in: maintaining funding for the Annual Program that keeps pace with inflation; reserving funds so that the Board can act nimbly to react to pressing emerging issues (need criteria to define); and saving money for IERPs. The AP appreciates the cyclical approach to the Annual Program RFP.

The AP noted that in the event that a pressing emerging issue arises, often a federal or state agency allocates funding that could be leveraged, and perhaps this could be a criterion for identifying a pressing emerging issue. Marine mammal unusual mortality events were cited as an example.

Wednesday, September 16, 2015

6. Communications and Outreach Report

The Director of Communications and Outreach is developing a communications strategy document that the SP, AP and Board will review in the spring. NPRB is investigating an outside contract to assess the effectiveness of NPRB's outreach to various audiences.

The NPRB website is in the process of a redesign to improve ease of use. NPRB is now tracking metrics of website traffic, including the number of viewers and length of time that users spend on a given page.

Great progress has been made in finalizing synopses of past Annual Program projects and that legacy project is nearing completion.

NPRB continues to serve on the steering committee for the Communicating Ocean Sciences workshop that is held annually in conjunction with the Alaska Marine Science Symposium.

The Bering Sea Project magazine was distributed to the AP, as well as highlights of outreach products produced by other projects. Press clippings about NPRB projects were also shared with the AP.

7. Graduate Student Research Awards

Staff presented an update on the Graduate Student Research Award (GSRA) program and reported that the Board decided to fund nine awards in 2015 instead of the typical six, including three Master's and six Ph.D. awards.

A new proposal submission system will go online in December and the deadline will be in February. The structure of the application has been adjusted somewhat to provide information more relevant to the review criteria (demonstrated ability of the student and scientific merit of the proposal). The AP will continue to review the outreach aspects of the proposals and the Science Panel will be asked not to comment on the outreach.

8. Gulf of Alaska Integrated Ecosystem Research Program

Staff provided an update on the Gulf of Alaska Integrated Ecosystem Research Program (GOAIERP). Final reports for the core program are due Dec. 1, 2015 and staff have worked with the Gulf of Alaska Board of Investigators (GABI) to develop detailed outlines of the reports to ensure that they reference one another and illustrate integration among program components.

Ten out of sixteen papers have been accepted for the first special issue in Deep Sea Research II and the first paper for the second special issue is in review.

The Board funded the GOAIERP synthesis project in 2015 and the first workshop is scheduled for early March 2016. The synthesis is due to be completed in 2018.

The AP expressed the desire to see a presentation on GOAIERP similar to the synthetic talk that Mike Sigler presented about BSIERP. Staff will discuss this idea with the GABI. The GABI is also putting together an abstract for a talk at the Alaska Marine Science Symposium in January 2016.

9. NPRB Internal Systems: Data & Metadata Management and IT

Staff provided an overview of an ongoing overhaul of NPRB's data management and information technology (IT) systems. Contractors have been engaged to develop new systems for proposal submission, data management, and other IT. Staff also demonstrated the new online proposal submission system for the AP.

The AP expressed their appreciation of staff's concerted effort to increase the sophistication of the services and products provided to PIs and the research community. The AP appreciated the staff's initiative to revise the proposal submission system. Advisory Panel members were impressed with the format and functionality of the system and also recognized the need for the revised system. AP members were also supportive of efforts to centralize approaches to data and metadata management and the archiving and dissemination of data.

10. Arctic Program

Representatives of the Collaborative Alaskan Arctic Studies Program (CAASP; formerly known as the North Slope Borough/Shell Baseline Studies Program) joined the AP meeting for the Arctic discussion. They included CAASP members Robert Suydam (NSB Dept. of Wildlife Management), Willard Neakok (Point Lay), Qaiyaan Harcharek (Barrow), and AP member Louis Brzuzy.

Staff presented an overview of program development to provide context for the discussion of pre-proposals received in response the RFP released in May. Staff provided an update on conversations that have occurred since the spring meeting with a variety of potential partner organizations, including NSF, NASA, BOEM, ONR, and NOAA.

An overview of the pre-proposals was provided by staff. Seventy-nine pre-proposals were submitted and the Science Panel ranked 51 pre-proposals in Tiers 1 or 2. The RFP offered \$6.75 million and the 51 pre-proposals seek a total of \$42.1 million and offer a total of \$19.7 million of in-kind support.

The AP heard comments from the North Slope Borough about concerns over access to Hanna Shoal given USFWS restrictions on industry in 2015, and the Board is encouraged to consider those comments.

The AP heard brief summaries of each of the 51 pre-proposals ranked Tier 1 or 2 by the Science Panel and discussed the ones that the Advisory Panel felt had particular relevance to stakeholders.

Thursday, September 17, 2015

10. Arctic Program (*continued*)

Discussion of the Arctic program pre-proposals continued on Thursday morning. The AP ultimately flagged 14 pre-proposals that the Advisory Panel felt had particular relevance to stakeholders and brief comments on each of these pre-proposals appear in a separate document provided to the Board. Within that document, the AP recommended that the Board request that modeling proposals articulate how global-scale models would be down-scaled to address local-scale processes that would lend themselves to discussion with local community members.

MOTION: The AP adopts the separate document that the AP prepared for comment to the Board on the Arctic pre-proposals.

Maker: Steve Reifentuhl

Second: Vera Metcalf

Motion passed.

The use of community input to guide the Arctic Program was encouraged by the AP, and attention to effective outreach was emphasized. The outreach strategy should include local, state, national, and international scales. Representatives of CAASP volunteered to help develop an effective outreach strategy for the program.

11. Science Plan Update

NPRB staff reported that a preliminary review of the 2005 Science Plan has been initiated, and several areas that require revision have been identified. An overview of those areas was provided to the AP. The Board will discuss the extent to which the plan will be revised during their meeting next week. Staff suggested that the AP's advice would be particularly valuable with respect to the review of the approaches to Community Involvement and Cooperative Research

with Industry. Staff suggests an ambitious timeline for updating the Science Plan that would involve preparation of a draft plan in time for the spring 2016 meetings, and final draft by the fall 2016 meetings.

The AP suggested that the science plan revision team think about the changes that are anticipated to occur in Alaska over the coming decade, as well as potential emerging issues, and consider framing the new plan in that context. Specifically, research that addresses climate change should be included among NPRB's research priorities.

Staff will ask the Board to determine the type of external review they prefer for the updated Science Plan. Staff have investigated formal review by National Research Council (NRC) and suggested that an NRC type of review would delay the timeline for release of the final plan. Less formal alternatives for review will also be explored. AP members suggested that a formal NRC review may not be necessary or crucial to a rigorous and relevant update of the Science Plan. The AP suggested that the objective of updating the Science Plan could likely be accomplished by organizing a process that may be less materially and organizationally time consuming and complex than engaging the NRC. That is, NPRB might more effectively and efficiently achieve the high standards of this important objective by organizing the study itself, and contracting an individual or entity to organize the selection of reviewers and the conduct of the other elements of the NPRB Science Plan update. The AP expressed concern over the lack of local Alaska perspective that tends to be characteristic of NRC-style reviews managed at a national level. An AP member suggested a comment period for NPRB's current contact list (i.e., PIs, peer reviewers, AMSS registrants).

MOTION: The AP supports the approach presented by staff. The AP would like to see an external review. but the details of that review need further discussion. The AP encourages consideration of other options in addition to the engagement of the NRC. Any approach should include expertise relevant to understanding the diverse ecosystems, socio-economic and cultural considerations in Alaska, but also allow for the inclusion of fresh perspectives.

Maker: Steve Reifenstuhl

Second: Nagruk Harcharek

Motion passed.

The AP recognized that they will be tasked with reviewing full proposals for the Arctic program in addition to the proposals for the Annual Program in preparation for their spring meeting and expressed concern over the workload associated with also revising the science plan during the same timeframe.

MOTION: The AP recommends amending the schedule for science plan revision proposed by staff to review the draft plan during the fall 2016 meetings.

Maker: Steve Reifenstuhl

Second: Gary Freitag

Motion passed.

12. Other Matters

a. Science and Advisory Panel term rotations

Staff explained that the AP will experience high turnover in coming years, and that the Board will consider adjustments to the terms of Advisory Panel members. Some AP members who are not eligible for reappointment after their current term expires expressed a desire to continue their service on the AP. The AP discussed the merits of term limits and AP members expressed different viewpoints. The AP acknowledged the Board's ability to make an exception to the existing policy to renew the term of an individual AP member who would otherwise not be eligible for reappointment.

MOTION: The AP recommends that AP members serve three consecutive 3-year terms so that ideally no more than four individuals rotate off in any given year.

Maker: Steve Reifentuhl

Second: Nagruk Harcharek

Motion passed.

b. Meeting schedule for 2016

The AP will meet next on April 25, 2016 @ 10 AM through April 29, 2016 @ 5 PM.

The AP's fall meeting was scheduled for September 13, 2016 @ 8 AM through September 15, 2016 @ 5 PM.

MOTION: to adjourn entered at 1 PM.

Maker: Helen Aderman

Second: Gary Freitag

Motion passed.