



www.nprb.org

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."

1007 West 3rd Avenue, Suite 100 | Anchorage, AK 99501 | tel 907.644.6700, fax 907.644.6780

North Pacific Research Board

Final Meeting Summary

May 2-6, 2016

NPRB Conference Room

Anchorage, Alaska

The North Pacific Research Board met from May 2 through May 6, 2016 in Anchorage, Alaska. In attendance were Dan Hull (chair), Tara Riemer (vice chair), David Benton, Mike Castellini, Dorothy Childers, Aimee Devaris, John Gauvin, Katrina Hoffman, Jan Jacobs, Paul MacGregor, Mike Miller, Doug Mecum, Gerry Merrigan, Caryn Rea, Brad Smith, Charlie Swanton, and Capt. Phil Thorne.

Seats for representatives from the State of Oregon, the Department of State and the Office of Naval Research were vacant. Steve Davis acted as an alternate for Doug Mecum on Monday.

The meeting was staffed by Denby Lloyd, Matt Baker, Danielle Dickson, Jo-Ann Mellish, Brendan Smith, and Susan Dixon.

Other attendees for various portions of the board meeting included Cheryl Rosa (US Arctic Research Commission), Robert Suydam (North Slope Borough), Dee Williams (Bureau of Ocean Energy Management), Stew Grant (NPRB science panel), Tuula Hollmen (science panel), Chris Siddon (science panel), and Jeff Stephen (NPRB advisory panel).

1. Call to Order/Approve Agenda

Chairman Dan Hull called the meeting to order at 8:30 am, and it was determined that a quorum was present. Staff provided a safety briefing. Aimee Devaris, new board member from the Department of the Interior (Alaska Region of the US Geological Survey), was introduced.

MOTION: Elect Dan Hull chair.
Action: Motion passed with no objections.

MOTION: Elect Tara Riemer vice-chair.
Action: Motion passed with no objections.

The following additions to the agenda were included by consensus: Under Item 6 – Other Matters, include executive (closed) session discussion on recruitment of a new executive director and also discussion of NPRB's Statement of Organization, Practices and Procedures (SOPPs), in particular with regard to the use of alternates in place of board members or their designees; also, at the beginning of Item 4 – Arctic Program, include an overview of NPRB's budget and revenue projections.

The board next moved to approve the meeting summary for the fall 2015 board meeting:

MOTION: Approve summary from September 2015 Board meeting as written (draft of November 16, 2015).
Action: Motion passed with no objections.

The chairs of the science and advisory panels next provided brief reports about their spring meetings, noting in particular the heavy workload involved. Both panel chairs also commended staff for their excellent support of the panels.

Staff provided a summary of NPRB's travel reimbursement regulations, including the need for submission of zero-balance receipts for lodging and the absolute prohibition against purchasing first class airline tickets (even if, by fluke of circumstance, they are less expensive than a coach fare).

2. Science Plan Update

Staff explained the anticipated structure and timeline of the Science Plan update. The external review committee established by the Science Plan Update Working Group will meet in May and may provide further guidance.

The Science Plan Working Group includes board members Mike Castellini, Katrina Hoffman, Gerry Merrigan, and Caryn Rea. Pat Livingston and Edward Poulsen also participate representing the Science and Advisory Panels, respectively.

Board members requested information about how others might be invited to provide input as the Science Plan update is drafted. Board members noted that the external review committee includes mostly representatives of academia or management agencies and does not include representatives of North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) or State of Alaska and recommended that they be included. Additionally, more representation of industry could be included. Staff requested board members to provide suggestions for external review committee members or individuals who should be approached to participate in drafting specific sections of the updated plan.

In discussing the anticipated timeline, staff explained the intent to develop draft language for the science panel to review in August 2016, followed by advisory panel and board review at their fall meetings. Pending board approval, staff will send instructions to panel members regarding drafting language immediately following this board meeting.

The board concurred with the approach to the Science Plan update presented by staff.

3. Internal Operations and Systems

NPRB's new proposal submission, peer review and panel review systems were showcased for the board. Resource Data, Inc. (RDI) had been contracted to perform the programming associated with updating these systems.

Staff explained that the new proposal submission system enforces proposal formatting and helps applicants to ensure that proposals conform to the submission guidelines. The system is accessible via the internet and no longer requires download of a proprietary Java application. The new proposal submission system was used for the Annual, Arctic, and Graduate Student Research Award programs, and comments from applicants have been generally positive.

Staff further explained that a new peer review system was developed this year that has greatly improved staff efficiency in assigning reviewers and monitoring their progress. Science panel members provided their reviews using the same system and it worked seamlessly. The advisory panel greatly appreciated the system developed to incorporate their comments on proposals.

Axiom Data Science has been contracted to manage the archive of data collected by NPRB projects. Axiom has established an Ocean Workspace portal for NPRB. The Ocean Workspace, accessible via the internet, provides principal investigators (PIs) a password-protected portal for sharing preliminary datasets with co-investigators. Tools provided within the Ocean Workspace facilitate the development of metadata that meets national standards and allow submission of progress reports.

The board suggested that a mechanism be added to the proposal submission system for proposers to comment on the system. Board members are interested in staff responding to questions within 24-48 hours.

The board suggested that the proposal submission system prevent submission of proposals that exceed the category funding cap defined in the RFP.

The board asked if data can be exported from the review system to the project browser, and staff answered in the affirmative. The board commended the staff for the innovation and efficiency of the system upgrades.

4. Arctic Program

Staff provided an overview and description of the initiation of the Arctic IERP. This included the program framework and timeline and a planning and partnership update. The proposal review process was outlined prior to active discussion. The linked proposal packages were demonstrated for reference. The science panel summaries and recommendations were presented, and the advisory panel provided their comments.

It was clarified that, according to current budget scenarios, there would be as much as \$6.75 million total (including the partners' funding) available for funding research projects in the Arctic Program. The remaining funding of the intended \$8 million package would be reserved for meetings, outreach, and other program management, as well as data management and communications and outreach. A further \$1 million is to be held in reserve for contingencies in the scientific research program. In the future, an additional \$1.5 million will likely be required to fund a full synthesis for the Arctic Program.

Staff presented several potential recombinations of the proposal packages that had been submitted. These additional combinations were added to the electronic agenda for the board's consideration over the evening, prior to the detailed discussion of proposals to follow the next day.

Arctic partners were given opportunity to address the board. Dee Williams of BOEM noted the agency's excitement to move forward with the program. He also outlined that the steps required for the transfer of BOEM's \$1 million contribution to the program are being defined and should pose no real difficulty.

Robert Suydam from the North Slope Borough gave his regards to the board and acknowledged their challenge in selecting specific proposals for funding. The NSB also indicated that their \$1 million contribution has already been transferred from Shell to NPRB. He noted that there was some expectation that the program would encompass the entirety of the Chukchi and have a strong tie to subsistence resources and activities. With that in mind, he noted that the ASGARD proposal is strong scientifically,

and that the spring surveys are really interesting, but there is also spatial and temporal overlap with on-the-water subsistence activities that could pose difficulties. He felt that the Arctic IES was preferred due to the timing and location, because it is a broad package that can link more strongly with work that other groups have already completed in the last decade.

Staff indicated that Scott Harper at the Office of Naval Research (ONR) was interested in the shelf-basin connections. ONR chose not to endorse any particular project but will meet again next week to discuss the outcome of board decisions.

Each of the 23 submitted proposals was reviewed individually prior to discussion of the linked proposal packages. NPRB staff presented the summary of each proposal, the science panel representatives presented their summary and the advisory panel chair presented their recommendations. Staff then presented eleven optional recombinations of the submitted proposals that could comprise an integrated package for the board's consideration.

There was a brief discussion and then a request for another review of NPRB's budget outlook before resumption of proposal evaluation. The focus of the Arctic Program RFP was reviewed as well, to provide context for final selection of proposals for funding. Discussion then returned to the eleven recombination options developed and presented earlier by staff.

MOTION: **Approve Option 5 (Proposals 2.12, 3.11, and 3.16) plus Proposal 1.2, resulting in \$7.75 million for research; the additional one million dollars above \$6.75 would come from future years' NPRB budgets.**
Action: **Motion passed with no objections.**

The result of this motion is that NPRB has selected the core proposals from two of the linked packages (ASGARD and Arctic IES), plus the upper trophic level fish proposal from the Arctic IES package, plus the social science proposal that was linked to all packages. Geographic scope would be the entire area outlined in the RFP (northern Bering Sea, Bering Strait, and eastern Chukchi Sea); temporal scope would be both the spring ice-out period as well as the ice-free summer and fall time periods.

There was also discussion about a data management contract for the Arctic Program. Bids had been solicited from the three entities that had previously bid on the GOA IERP several years ago, plus a request for proposals had been posted on the NPRB Arctic Program website. Axiom Data Science was the only respondent, and their proposal was ranked good and very good by four external peer reviewers and was endorsed by the Science Panel.

MOTION: **Approve Arctic Program data management contract with Axiom Data Science.**
Action: **Motion passed with no objections.**

5. Budget Overview and Strategic Planning

Staff outlined projections of future revenue from the Environmental Improvement and Restoration Fund (EIRF) which, due to the recent but long period of low interest rates, will decline over the next several years. Thus, NPRB's budget outlook is for gentle but steady declines that will soon require decisions

between funding the annual program (annual RFP) at its current level of about \$4.5 million each year or providing sufficient funds for large integrated ecosystem research programs (IERPs), but probably not both. Staff presented a number of possible planning scenarios, ranging from providing for only an annual program to various alternating schedules where the annual program would be foregone in some years so that funds could be accumulated to also fund IERPs. The board decided to reconvene the Strategic Planning Working Group to consider future options.

There was also discussion about ongoing sequestration of NPRB's prime grant awards, which at the current 6.8% comes out to over half a million dollars each year. It is also of concern that the sequestered funds are apparently not returned to future year funding of NPRB (i.e., rolled back) nor to the corpus of the EIRF, but may actually roll into the agency budget or the general treasury. The board indicated that staff should pursue a firm determination from NOAA and/or OMB about the disposition of funds sequestered from NPRB.

6. Other Matters

The board went into executive session to discuss the recruitment of a replacement Executive Director. Denby Lloyd had earlier announced that he would not be seeking renewal of his contract, which expires in six months (late October 2016). Out of that executive session came decisions to recruit for a senior level executive, with at least ten years of experience at a senior level in research and/or organizational management and five years of program-level supervisory experience. The board also endorsed a procedure to include establishment of a recruitment committee comprising three members of the Executive Committee and three other members of the board.

The board reviewed nominations for seats on the science panel and advisory panel. After consideration of the individual applications, plus advice from the science panel and the NPRB Nominations Committee, the board made the following appointments.

- MOTION:** Reappoint Chris Siddon and Polly Wheeler, and appoint David Hill, Colleen Duncan and Diana Stram to the Science Panel each for four year terms.
- Action:** Motion passed with no objections.
- MOTION:** Appoint Laura Morse to the Advisory Panel for a full three-year term representing the Arctic region.
- Action:** Motion passed with no objections.
- MOTION:** Appoint Ruth Christiansen and Ann Vanderhoeven to the Advisory Panel.
- Action:** Motion withdrawn.
- MOTION:** Appoint Ann Vanderhoeven to a full three-year term on the Advisory Panel representing the Bering Sea region; appoint Ruth Christiansen to a full three-year term on the AP in the at-large seat; and reappoint Gary Freitag, Vera Metcalf, Jeff Stephan and Helen Aderman for one additional year each on the AP.
- Action:** Motion passed with no objections.

The board also reviewed a revised draft of the NPRB conflict of interest policy that incorporated changes made during their meeting in September 2015, plus a few editorial adjustments.

MOTION: Approve revisions to the Conflict of Interest Policy, dated December 2015.

Action: Motion passed with no objections.

The board also reviewed several requests for outside meeting support, and made the following decisions.

MOTION: Approve support of \$10,000 for the 9th International Conference on Marine Mammals of the Holarctic.

Action: Motion passed with no objections.

MOTION: Approve support of \$10,000 each for the 6th International Sea Duck Conference, the PICES International Symposium on Drivers of Dynamics of Small Pelagic Fish Resources, and the 31st Wakefield Symposium on the Impacts of Changing Environment on Dynamics of High Latitude Fish and Fisheries.

Action: Motion passed with no objections.

The board also considered a request from the Prince William Sound Science Center to help defray expenses for the publication of 2016 edition of Delta Sound Connections.

MOTION: Approve support of \$1,000 for publication of the 2016 edition of Delta Sound Connections.

Action: Motion passed with no objections.

Staff also described the upcoming Aleutian Life Forum, to occur August 16-20, 2016 in Dutch Harbor. NPRB is a co-host of the forum, along with the USFWS, ABSI LLC, AOOS, UAF Sea Grant, and local native tribal organizations; NPRB's science director is on the steering committee. The executive director has committed \$20,000 to support of the forum.

The board requested that staff be prepared to illustrate the various Statements of Organization, Practices and Procedures (SOPPs), and other guiding principles that NPRB operates under, at the board meeting in September 2016. The board may wish to update or amend the SOPPs, particularly with regard to the designation and use of alternate board members.

The board also took up the issue of communications and outreach in the developing Arctic Program. The chair will name an Arctic Communications and Outreach Working Group of board and panel members to help guide the program.

7. Communications and Outreach

NPRB staff described the ongoing redesign of NPRB's website, development of the 2015-16 biennial report, creation of a customer relationship management system, and further work on an overall NPRB communications plan. Staff also polled the board members for their preference among finalists for the 2016 NPRB photo contest, which had garnered some 388 entries from 88 different photographers.

8. Gulf of Alaska Integrated Ecosystem Research Program

Staff provided an update on the GOA IERP, especially ongoing work among the synthesis participants. Four main themes have been identified for the synthesis: 1) along-shore connectivity and regional variation in the Gulf of Alaska, 2) in-and-out of bays: connecting inshore areas to the open waters of the

Gulf of Alaska, 3) trophic structuring of the GOA: the role of salmon as predators and competitors, and 4) beyond the gauntlet: connecting GOA IERP to the management of fisheries and ecosystems.

A summary was presented of the first synthesis workshop, held in Friday Harbor, WA March 2-5, 2016. Another workshop will be held in 2017, and a special issue of Deep Sea Research II is contemplated, as well as products that will enhance stock assessments and inform ecosystem considerations in the North Pacific Fishery Management Council process.

9. Annual Program

A total of 112 proposals, requesting just over \$25 million, were received in response to the 2016 annual request for proposals (RFP) which had a funding target level of \$4.55 million.

The science panel ranked four proposals as Exceptional (\$1 million), 37 proposals as Tier 1 (\$7.23 million), 38 proposals as Tier 2 (\$10.08 million), and 33 proposals as Tier 3 (\$6.74 million). Thirty proposals were highlighted for stakeholder relevance by the advisory panel. OSRI expressed interest in supporting one of the proposals should the board recommend it for funding.

Staff and science panel members provided a brief description of each of the proposals that had been ranked by the science panel as either Exceptional, Tier 1 or Tier 2. Those proposals that had been ranked as Tier 3 were not described or discussed. The advisory panel chair described the stakeholder relevance for those proposals flagged during their meeting the week prior.

Given earlier discussions on NPRB's budget projections, the board discussed the appropriate funding level for the 2016 annual program.

MOTION: Reduce FY 16 annual program by \$300,000.
Action: Motion withdrawn.

MOTION: Restrict FY 16 annual program to no more than \$4.25 million.

Amendment 1: Set a target of \$4.25 million for the FY 16 annual program.
Action on 1: Amendment failed, with a vote of 4-1 (yea-nay) of the Executive Committee but a vote of 5-5 (yea-nay) of the remainder of the board.

Main motion action: Motion failed, with a vote of 3-2 (yea-nay) of the Executive Committee but a vote of 5-5 of the remainder of the board.

The board then discussed, via main motion and amendments, the proposals that were ranked E, Tier 1 and Tier 2.

MAIN MOTION: Recommend to the Department of Commerce all Exceptional and Tier 1 proposals received in response to the 2016 annual RFP (\$8.23 million).

Amendment 1: Remove proposal 3.
Action on 1: Amendment passed with one objection and one abstention.

Amendment 2: Remove proposal 35.
Action on 2: Amendment withdrawn.

- Amendment 3:** Remove proposals 10, 29 and 33.
Action on 3: Amendment passed with no objections.
- Amendment 4:** Remove proposal 19.
Action on 4: Amendment passed with three objections.
- Amendment 5:** Add proposal 39 and 46.
Action on 5: Amendment failed, with a vote of 1-4 (yea-nay) of the Executive Committee and 4-6 of the remainder of the board.
- Amendment 6:** Remove proposal 54.
Action on 6: Amendment passed with no objections.
- Amendment 7:** Remove proposal 64.
Action on 7: Amendment passed with one abstention.
- Amendment 8:** Remove proposal 69.
Action on 8: Amendment passed with one abstention.
- Amendment 9:** Remove proposal 73.
Action on 9: Amendment passed with three objections.
- Amendment 10:** Remove proposal 62.
Action on 10: Amendment passed with two abstentions.
- Amendment 11:** Remove proposal 76.
Action on 11: Amendment passed with one objection.
- Amendment 12:** Add proposal 84.
Action on 12: Amendment passed with two objections.
- Amendment 13:** Remove proposal 86.
Action on 13: Amendment failed, with a vote of 0-4 (yea-nay) of the Executive Committee and 7-3 of the remainder of the board.
- Amendment 14:** Remove proposals 91, 93, 100 and 103.
Action on 14: Amendment withdrawn.
- Amendment 15:** Remove proposals 93, 98, 100 and 103.
Action on 15: Amendment passed with one abstention.
- Amendment 16:** Remove proposals 106, 110 and 111.
Action on 16: Amendment passed with three abstentions.
- Amendment 17:** Remove proposal 15; add proposal 59.
Action on 17: Amendment failed by a vote of 3-2 (yea-nay) of the Executive Committee but a vote of 3-5 of the remainder of the board.
- Amendment 18:** Remove proposal 47.
Action on 18: Amendment passed with three objections and three abstentions.

- Amendment 19:** Remove proposal 86.
Action on 19: Amendment failed.
- Amendment 20:** Remove proposal 15.
Action on 20: Amendment passed with no objections and one abstention.
- Amendment 21:** Remove proposal 84; add proposal 47.
Action on 21: Amendment failed by a vote of 2-2 (yea-nay) of the Executive Committee and a vote of 3-6 of the remainder of the board.
- Amendment 22:** Remove proposal 77; add proposal 47.
Action on 22: Amendment failed for lack of a second.

Thus ended the round of amendments to the main motion.

Final action: Main motion passed as amended with no objections.

The net effect of the main motion, as amended, was a recommendation to the Department of Commerce to approve funding of \$4,179,775 to be distributed among 22 specific projects in NPRB's 2016 annual program. The selected proposals include all of those ranked Exceptional by the science panel and only one that was ranked Tier 2.

Staff noted to the board that, with this decision, NPRB had now funded or obligated to be funded over \$100 million since 2002.

10. Graduate Student Research Awards

Staff reported that a total of 59 applications were submitted for the 2016 GSRA program, nine of which were disqualified for lack of a required letter from their graduate adviser and one of which was withdrawn because they successfully obtained funding elsewhere.

Of the 49 remaining applications, 21 were at the Master's level and 28 were PhD-level students. The awards are for \$25,000 each. The board heard SP summaries of the top five MS students and nine PhD students who achieved a minimum ranking from the panel of one excellent or two very goods with regard to student ability and research quality, and who merited a consensus "fund" recommendation from the panel at large. The board also noted that three of these MS candidates and five of the PhD candidates had received a flag from the advisory panel.

Each board member submitted their top three candidates on slips of paper, and those candidates with the highest results were formed into motions for final board vote.

- MOTION:** Award MS student applications 3, 20 and 21.
Action: Motion passed with no objections.
- MOTION:** Award PhD student applications 28, 32 and 40.
- Amendment:** Award 40, 32 plus the winner of a runoff vote via slips of paper.

Action on amendment: Amendment passed with no objections; result of runoff placed 40, 32 and 27 in the main motion

Action on main: Motion passed as amended with no objections.

The combined motions for the 2016 GSRA program result in granting of three MS-level awards and three PhD-level awards, for a total of \$150,000.

Miscellaneous

The board's fall 2016 meeting will be held in Sitka, September 19-23. Meetings for 2017 will include May 1-5 in Anchorage and September 18-22 in Cordova.

The meeting adjourned at 10:45 am, Friday May 6, 2016.