

North Pacific Research Board
2016 Fall Advisory Panel Meeting Minutes
September 13–15, 2016
Anchorage, Alaska

The Advisory Panel (AP) met on September 13-15, 2016 in Anchorage, Alaska. In attendance were Jeff Stephan (Chair), Helen Aderman, Ruth Christiansen, Dan Falvey, Gary Freitag, Nagruk Harcharek, Vera Metcalf, Laura Morse, Edward Poulsen, Steve Reifensuhl, and Gay Sheffield. The meeting was staffed by Matthew Baker, Danielle Dickson, Susan Dixon, Denby Lloyd, Jo-Ann Mellish, and Brendan Smith. All Advisory Panel members were present.

Tuesday, September 13, 2016

1. Call to Order/Approve Agenda

The Chair called the meeting to order at 8:37 AM on Tuesday, September 13, 2016.

New panel members Ruth Christiansen and Laura Morse were introduced.

Staff provided a safety briefing.

A motion was introduced to approve the minutes of the Spring 2016 meeting without amendment and the motion passed without objection.

Staff provided an overview of travel regulations and instructions for completing travel reimbursement forms.

The AP Chair suggested that panel members review the minutes of the Fall Science Panel meeting, particularly with respect to the structure of the Core Program RFP and Science Plan as well as the discussion of changes to the Communications Plan and outreach.

A motion was introduced to approve the agenda and the motion passed without objection.

2. Budget Review

Staff provided information about NPRB's operating budget and projections for declining revenues in future years. The Board convened a strategic planning working group that will begin working soon on a strategy for funding the various programs that NPRB supports. Jeff Stephan is the AP representative on the strategic planning working group.

3. Graduate Student Research Awards

Staff presented the Board's funding decisions for the 2016 GSRA competition. The Board selected three Master's and three Doctoral level students from an initial pool of 49 applicants. Five of the six applicants that the Board selected were flagged by the AP.

Announcements for the 2017 GSRA competition are expected to be released in October and the online system will be live in December. The deadline for the 2017 award applications will be 4pm, Friday, February 17, 2017.

The AP discussed updating the instructions in the GSRA RFP regarding Community & Stakeholder Relevance. Currently the instructions ask applicants to indicate how relevant Alaskan communities may

be impacted by and/or benefit from project results. The AP suggested revising the language to explain that the AP is interested in funding strong scientists and developing skills in the next generation of scientists that will, in addition to the current objectives set forth for this program, allow them to better address community interests. Therefore, during review the AP will focus less on the particular subject of study proposed, and the instructions should encourage applicants to communicate their strengths as a student and articulate their plans for outreach and communication. (Currently the GSRA application does not require applicants to articulate outreach plans.) With respect to communications, applicants should be encouraged to describe the relevance of their proposed study to communities in the region of study. The student could be asked to outline how he or she will engage with and inform those in local communities adjacent to the area of study both during the course of the research project and following the conclusion of the project. Applicants should be encouraged to reach out to local community resources for help, such as Marine Advisory Program agents.

The AP suggested that this section of the application should be termed Community and Stakeholder Engagement. Staff explained that this section of the application is limited to 300 words, therefore the AP was encouraged to be specific in their instructions to applicants.

Staff reminded the AP that some students apply in the final years of their graduate work and may not have an opportunity to engage with communities throughout the course of a project. Therefore, it was suggested that the instructions not specifically require it.

The revised language for the GSRA RFP recommended by the AP is as follows:

Community and Stakeholder Engagement:

Indicate how relevant Alaskan communities may be impacted by and/or benefit from project results. Describe how the student will coordinate and communicate with local stakeholders, entities, and communities.

Advisory Panel Review:

The Advisory Panel will add recommendations to the top-ranked applicants based on their community involvement, stakeholder relevance or timeliness. Special attention will be paid to applicants demonstrating innovative approaches to engagement.

4. Core Program

Staff presented the Board's funding decisions for the 2016 Core Program awards and their concurrence with AP recommendations. A total of 22 projects were awarded a total of \$4.2 million dollars. This included 17 Tier 1 proposals, one Tier 2 proposal, and four proposals with the newly-introduced Tier E rank. The Advisory Panel recommended 17 of the 22 proposals selected.

Staff provided an update on active NPRB projects and the close-out of projects that have come to an end. Currently 59 Core Program projects are active, not including the 22 new projects awarded funds in 2016. A total of 19 projects have been closed in the past year, and an additional 19 are expected to close shortly.

Staff explained that the Ocean Workspace implemented by Axiom Data Science is now used to upload and review progress reports for new projects and is working well.

The AP expressed appreciation for the update.

5. 2017 Request for Proposals

Staff presented the draft 2017 request for proposals (RFP) developed by the Science Panel and invited input from the AP. The format of the 2017 RFP has been streamlined as compared to previous years. Staff provided detailed background information about a wide variety of input received from federal and state agencies, universities, industry, and individuals that was taken into consideration when the 2017 RFP was drafted.

The draft 2017 RFP was presented and the AP provided specific comments throughout. The draft RFP was revised to incorporate the comments of the AP and a version that illustrates the AP suggestions in track changes will be provided to the Board. The AP expressed appreciation for the streamlined format.

An AP member suggested changing the term Local Traditional Knowledge (LTK) to Local and/or Traditional Ecological Knowledge to acknowledge that local knowledge is different from Traditional Ecological Knowledge.

An AP member noted that there is currently no place in the RFP where small-scale synthesis proposals could be proposed and that was noted as a gap.

As partnerships with other funding agencies are developed, the AP noted that NPRB should consider how to make space for proposals that are of interest to partners without "swamping" the existing categories. A specific concern was raised over maintaining funding for cooperative research with the fishing industry if other cooperative research proposals are invited under that category. Perhaps the funding amount for that category could be raised in that instance.

Staff introduced two ideas proposed for a Focus Section and AP members thought about them overnight and returned to the discussion on Wednesday afternoon. With respect to sea level rise, an AP member noted that President Obama just established a Coastal Resilience Fund that could address this issue. Another panel member was aware of a sizeable proposal that was submitted to NSF to conduct coastal lagoon work along the Chukchi and Beaufort coasts, but was unsure whether NSF decided to fund it.

One AP member suggested allowing a loose definition of the focus section and encouraging proposals that address a current, timely issue of concern that addresses multiple aspects of the ecosystem (e.g., a surprising anomaly like "the blob").

The consensus recommendation of the AP was as follows: Before listing sea level rise as a Focus Section topic, the AP recommends that NPRB investigate whether a Coastal Resilience Fund recently established by President Obama will address the issue. The AP suggested that the Board consider eliminating a focus section in 2017 and instead list sea level rise and Arctic coastal lagoons as areas of particular concern under the Oceanography & Lower Trophic Levels and Fishes and Invertebrates categories, respectively, and increase the allocation to each of these categories.

Staff explained the 2017 proposal submission process and highlighted updates to the electronic proposal submission system. An AP member suggested the addition of a separate section requiring applicants to articulate the expected products and results; this would facilitate proposal review.

6. Science Plan Update

Staff described recent progress on the Science Plan update, including recommendations from the External Review Committee for significant changes to the structure of NPRB's funding categories. Staff explained the Science Panel's perspective on the proposed new categories and solicited input from the Advisory

Panel. Staff also presented a proposed timeline for completing the Science Plan update. Background information was presented by staff on Tuesday afternoon and the AP discussed the Science Plan update on Wednesday morning.

Wednesday, September 14, 2016

6. Science Plan Update (continued)

The AP recommended that the Board articulate some desired impacts of NPRB funding over the next five to ten years and identify metrics that would be used to gauge NPRB's success.

Individual AP members noted some specific ideas for staff to consider in updating the Science Plan.

- Under Chapter 4, define each program and its intended direction and expected outcomes.
- Define initiatives/approaches including Cooperative Research with Industry, Technology Development, and Community Involvement and identify the unique requirements of proposals that respond to them. This is particularly important if proposals that apply these approaches are encouraged under other categories of the Core Program RFP. For each, define the intended direction, what NPRB hopes to achieve in funding proposals, and metrics for gauging success.
- With respect to identifying geographic areas, an AP member suggested discussing regional boundaries that are relevant to communities and recognizing distinctions between regional areas. With respect to the Arctic, the LME could be called "Arctic" and the description should note that the LME is defined as waters north of 61.5 ° N latitude and includes the Bering Strait, Chukchi Sea and Beaufort Sea.
- An AP member suggested a research priority for keystone species.
- Definitions should be updated to distinguish local knowledge from Traditional Ecological Knowledge. An AP member noted that although the term Indigenous Knowledge is used by the Arctic Council, it is not widely accepted yet. This AP member suggested that Henry Huntington could help with the language. An AP member voiced objection to the use of the words "practical common sense" that currently appear under the LTK section in the draft plan.
- In the appendices to the Science Plan, an AP member suggested providing a list of permit numbers associated with NPRB project numbers. Community members might like to verify that the PIs have a permit for the research conducted in their area. (It was noted that this would be better housed on the website rather than in the Science Plan.)
- Add range extension to discussion of invasive species.

Edward Poulsen is the AP representative on the Science Plan Update working group. When asked for his perspective, he expressed concern over changing the research categories as suggested by the External Review Committee because the benefit is not obvious and the existing structure is adequate. It may not be worthwhile to put work into changing NPRB's categories to align with NPFMC. Another AP member agreed that NPRB deals with much more than Council-managed species.

The AP supports making the Science Plan more concise and agrees with the proposed layout. Now that NPRB programs are fully-developed, it is appropriate for the plan to define the design and desired outcomes of each program.

The AP approved of the idea of soliciting proposals that apply an approach like Cooperative Research with Industry, Community Involvement, and/or Technology Development under the other research categories instead of soliciting them in their own categories.

During discussion, the AP argued that NPRB's objectives can be met with any of the proposed research category structures and the AP objected to aligning with NPFMC categories specifically, noting that

NPRB's scope is much broader than the Council's. The AP expressed concern over a Population Dynamics category that would solicit proposals on all trophic levels under the same category. AP members felt more comfortable with separate categories for each trophic level (e.g., lower trophic levels, fishes & invertebrates, birds & mammals) to ensure that some funding is allocated to each. Proposals that address management questions could be encouraged under categories like Fishes & Invertebrates and Marine Birds & Mammals. If the Board adopts a structure that includes a category like Fisheries Management, an AP member suggested changing the category name to Resource Management to go beyond fisheries specifically.

In discussing options for funding categories presented by staff, the AP consensus was a preference for a structure that includes the following categories: Oceanography & Productivity; Fishes & Invertebrates; Marine Birds & Mammals; Human Dimensions; Ecosystem and Multispecies Interactions; and Data Rescue. Under each of these categories, the AP recommended that proposals be encouraged that address resource management, cooperative research with industry, community involvement, and technology development. The AP further recommended that the Science Plan should articulate objectives and desired outcomes for each funding category.

The AP noted that during RFP development the Board will need to decide how to set proposal caps to ensure that several projects can be funded under a given category.

7. Communications and Outreach

Staff presented a proposed change to outreach for Core Program projects. If implemented, proposers would have the option of submitting an outreach proposal alongside a science proposal that would allow for up to \$15,000 to create strong outreach products. If a proposer does not submit an outreach proposal, he or she will be required to select one of several standard options that have been defined by the Communications and Outreach Director and will allocate \$2,500-5,000 towards outreach. Staff asked the AP for input on the proposed change.

The AP was generally supportive of the new outreach proposal format suggested by staff. Several AP members expressed appreciation for standard options that require robust products of the PIs and encouraged periodic changes to the standard options. An AP member pointed out that many of the standard outreach options steer PIs towards developing products that rely on internet connectivity and it may be difficult to deliver those products to communities with poor internet connectivity. One AP member expressed hesitation about the standard options because NPRB strives to foster relationships between scientists and communities and some of the standard options could be completed from the PI's office and don't require community or stakeholder engagement.

An AP member suggested that Science Plan could include an Outreach Program that interfaces with the other programs. It should then articulate goals and objectives and metrics of success.

Another AP member suggested that applicants could be provided information about how outreach is typically handled in communities regionally. Resources could be provided such as a list of contacts for Tribal Councils, local radio stations, and organizations like Kawerak. However, it would be substantial work to develop and maintain such a list of resources specific to each region. Instead perhaps a list of general recommendations, such as contacting local radio stations for interviews, would be sufficient.

The AP raised a question about what standard evaluation criteria would be developed to evaluate outreach proposals. Generally, AP members felt that perhaps ranking criteria are not necessary and a qualitative review summary would suffice.

Staff unveiled the new NPRB website that went live on September 10. The new design consolidates content in a more user-friendly manner and navigation is more intuitive. Whereas the old website included over 300 pages, the new website communicates the same information in approximately 60 pages.

The AP expressed appreciation for the new website design. A question was raised about internet connectivity requirements given the number of images on the new website and the AP suggested that the site be optimized for users with limited bandwidth. With respect to the photo contest page, AP members cautioned that permit numbers should be displayed with photos of marine mammals taken during the course of research and users should be prevented from using photos for their own purposes.

Staff described plans to produce "spotlight" webpages to highlight given projects, tell a story about the research and the scientist, and present their results. This would replace production of printed synopses. The AP expressed interest in this concept.

Staff also described plans to produce a biennial report in 2017 that will be distributed in electronic form. A dedicated website will be developed that will be dynamic and interactive.

NPRB projects that were highlighted in the media were showcased and links to articles provided.

The AP lauded the new NPRB website and the initiative of the Communications and Outreach Director in proposing a new approach to soliciting outreach proposals.

8. Arctic Integrated Ecosystem Research Program

Staff reported the Board's funding decisions on the Arctic IERP proposals and described the scope of the funded program. A kickoff meeting for the funded Principal Investigators (PIs) was held in late June and a logistics planning meeting will be held in November to prepare for the 2017 cruises. A Steering Committee comprised of the Lead PIs of the five funded projects will work closely with staff to manage the program.

During the kickoff meeting, some gaps in the funded program were identified and NPRB received proposals to fill such gaps. The Steering Committee reviewed the proposals and presented a consensus-based recommendation to the Board to provide additional funds for primary production, microzooplankton, and springtime fish sampling. The Board will make funding decisions during their meeting next week.

Staff presented a Communications Plan for the Arctic IERP developed with the help of an NPRB working group that includes AP member Gay Sheffield. Presentations about the Arctic IERP have already been given to Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission, the Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee, and others. Several presentations for other mammal co-management groups are planned for later this fall, as well as a series of hub meetings in Barrow, Kotzebue, and Nome that will include tribally-nominated representatives from surrounding communities.

The AP expressed appreciation that staff considered the concerns expressed by the AP regarding communication and developed a very strong communications plan. The AP was glad to hear that program kickoff is going well and look forward to hearing more about the program's development.

9. Gulf of Alaska Integrated Ecosystem Research Program

Staff provided an update on closing out the main projects associated with the Gulf of Alaska IERP and shared some results that were presented in the final reports. Staff then discussed the progress of the ongoing synthesis phase. The first of four volumes will be published in *Deep-Sea Research II* this fall and a second volume is currently in production.

The AP appreciated the update and expressed interest in seeing a presentation from the Lead PI(s) similar to the presentation that Mike Sigler gave when BSIERP concluded.

10. Other Matters

a. Executive Director search process

Staff explained that the Board will interview a final candidate recommended by the hiring committee during their meeting on September 19 and plan to announce their decision shortly thereafter.

b. NPRB policy review

The Board will discuss standard operating procedures for NPRB during their fall meeting and will develop an updated version of the SOPs. This is timely given the turnover in Executive Director and several panel and Board members.

c. Strategic planning

Staff reported that the Board will need to begin discussing strategic planning fairly soon given a declining budget outlook. The strategic planning working group had an initial conversation on Sep. 14 and will report to the Board next week on their plans to proceed in the coming year.

d. Meeting schedule for 2017

The spring AP meeting will be held April 25-27, and the fall meeting will be held September 12-14.

A motion to adjourn was introduced at 4:16 PM on September 14, and it passed without objection.