



# 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 – Spring Advisory Panel Meeting Minutes April 24-25, 2018 NPRB Board Room | Anchorage, Alaska

The NPRB Advisory Panel (AP) met April 24-25, 2018 at the NPRB offices in Anchorage, AK. The meeting was attended by panel members Reid Brewer, Ruth Christiansen, Nagruk Harcharek, Mitch Kilborn, Brian Lynch, Edward Poulsen, Steve Reifensstuhl, Matt Robinson, and Verner Wilson. Mike Pederson was absent and Melissa Good attended only the morning of April 25. The meeting was staffed by Betsy Baker, Matt Baker, Crystal Benson-Carlough, Danielle Dickson, Jo-Ann Mellish, and Brendan Smith. Members of the public: Ernie Weiss attended public sessions on April 24 and the morning of April 25.

### Tuesday, April 24, 2018

#### 1. Call to Order/Approve Agenda

Executive Director Betsy Baker welcomed the panel members and all others in attendance, and AP and staff members introduced themselves. A safety briefing was provided.

- **A motion was entered to elect Ruth Christiansen as chair and Nagruk Harcharek as vice-chair and passed with no objection.**

The AP and staff thanked Edward Poulsen for his service as chair.

- **A motion was entered to approve the agenda and passed with no objection.**
- **A motion was entered to approve the minutes of the fall 2017 AP meeting and passed with no objection.**

Panel members signed statements acknowledging receipt and review of the NPRB Conflict of Interest policies. Additional conflict declarations were made throughout the meeting as needed and are on file in NPRB offices.

#### 2. Budget Overview

The Executive Director presented an overview of the NPRB budget, including projections from last fall through 2023 based conservatively on an assumed sequestration and a 2.10% yield on the ten-year treasury notes in which the Environmental Improvement and Restoration Fund (EIRF) is invested. The Board will see an updated version of those projections at its spring 2018 meeting next week. Staff explained that, at that meeting, the Board will continue to discuss strategic planning and the balance of available funds among the various programs that NPRB supports in light of the continued decline in the EIRF-based grants.

### **3. Graduate Student Research Awards - GSRA**

The AP expressed concern over lack of details in the engagement strategy in some proposals; Staff were asked to make sure that instructions are clear that details are desired. Staff explained that AP engagement strategy instructions in GRSR RFP are different from the Core Program RFP because AP felt students may not have experience to know who the relevant stakeholders groups are and AP didn't want that to hinder applicants. Given the AP's focus on the topic instructions should be more specific. The AP agreed that the AP chair should convey to the Board that the AP only flagged those GSRA proposals that stood out.

- **A motion was entered to star five GSRA proposals for the Board's consideration, four Ph.D. students and one Master's student and passed with no objection.**

The AP agreed to the following language for inclusion in the 2019 GSRA RFP:

Page 1, para. 10. Community & Stakeholder Engagement. Indicate how relevant Alaskan communities may be impacted by and/or benefit from project results. Include specific details on how the student will coordinate and communicate with local stakeholders, entities, and communities. Please also refer to the Advisory Panel review under Section 2. Maximum 300 words.

Page 3, para. 2. Advisory Panel Review. Recommendations will be added to the top-ranked applicants based on their community involvement, noting those that have specific stakeholder relevance or timeliness. Special attention will be paid to applicants demonstrating clearly defined, meaningful engagement with communities and stakeholders. Applicants are encouraged to visit the NPRB Communications and Outreach Resources webpage for ideas on how to creatively engage audiences.

### **4. Core Program**

The AP discussed Tier E and Tier 1 proposals first, then considered other proposals for possible flagging with a star for Board consideration. Panel members discussed their reasons for flagging proposals, then held a work session to write their justifications of these decisions for the Board.

**Wednesday, April 25, 2018**

### **4. Core Program, continued**

The AP considered justifications for additional proposals. After reviewing all proposed titles and revisiting some justifications, the panel agreed to star/flag 31 Core proposals for the Board's consideration: 2 Tier E, 25 Tier 1, 4 Tier 2.

- **A motion was entered to accept all conflict declarations made in connection with the meeting proposals and passed with no objection.**

- **A motion was entered to star/flag 31 Core proposals for the Board's consideration and passed with no objection.**

### **5. Panel and Board Nominations**

The Executive Director walked through the nominations process for the Advisory and Science Panel and the Fishing Industry Seat, with little discussion of the latter since it is a closed Board decision. She requested input on how to avoid large numbers of AP members cycling off in any given year, which is next a problem in 2020, and on soliciting more nominations to represent the Arctic region. One AP member suggested NPRB strive for even balance of representation for each LME and plan for only two people to cycle off in any given year. If a panel member steps down early, the replacement should only serve out the term of the original member. Regarding the Arctic seats, an AP member suggested that NPRB reach out to Arctic marine mammal co-management groups.

The AP members listed their respective areas of expertise and looked for gaps. The AP suggested more representation for Arctic, ocean productivity, seabirds & marine mammals. One member felt that regional representation on the AP is most important and that the SP deals with research categories. Living or working in a region should make representatives well-versed in the current issues of concern.

### **6. Gulf of Alaska Integrated Ecosystem Research Program**

The Senior Program Manager provided an update on the Gulf of Alaska Integrated Ecosystem Research Program (GOAIERP), noting that the synthesis is scheduled to conclude July 31. Staff provided a list of publications currently in progress. Staff also provided a report summarizing the outcomes of a workshop held in conjunction with the 2018 American Geophysical Union Ocean Sciences conference in which the scientific community recommended avenues for future research in the Gulf of Alaska and identified additional ways that data collected by the GOAIERP could be leveraged. Staff explained that during the workshop participants discussed the results of recent research and identified anomalous events at various trophic levels that were likely affected by anomalously warm water conditions in the region that the community has termed "the blob".

The AP appreciated the report and commented on the value of the integrated approach to research.

### **7. Arctic Integrated Ecosystem Research Program**

The Senior Program Manager provided an update on the Arctic IERP, noting that 2017 cruise reports, including one by a community participant from Little Diomedes, are available on the Preliminary Results page of the Arctic IERP website. She also reported on the very successful 2018 Principal Investigator meeting that occurred in Anchorage in March. Representatives of several Arctic communities actively participated throughout the meeting. Participants discussed anomalous conditions that were observed in 2017 and their predictions of the potential for even more extreme anomalies in 2018 given the sea ice conditions during the winter of 2017-18.

The AP expressed interest in the preliminary results and several AP members commented on the unique value of the IERP approach. The AP appreciated that Arctic community members are actively participating in the research.

### **8. Science Plan Revision**

The Science Director presented a brief history of the Board's work to revise the 2005 NPRB Science Plan, including the work of the Science Plan Revision working group and the External Review Committee. While the revised plan is still in draft form, an AP member commented on the layout, noting it was "top-notch" and would appeal to a broad audience. The draft of the revised plan includes research categories in Ch. 3 and research approaches in Ch. 5, with an effort to emphasize in both chapters that topics like tech development, data rescue and cooperative research with industry (CRI) may be considered relevant to both in any given year.

The advisory panel recalled its earlier strong endorsement for shifting CRI to an approach that could be applied under any research category. It was noted that the AP made such a motion in Fall 2017 as reflected in the notes from that meeting just approved under agenda item 1. Several AP members noted that this distinction was more logical and would enable NPRB to integrate these important approaches throughout a broader range of research areas. One AP member noted from personal experience submitting a proposal to NPRB that having to choose between categories – i.e., Fish and Invertebrates versus Cooperative Research with Industry – had proved difficult. In this panelist's view, allowing the AP and the Board to evaluate whether proposals met the criteria associated with research approaches would support better research in these areas and be welcomed by researchers. AP members felt no need for a new motion but stated that the Panel still supports a shift of CRI to an approach as long as cooperative research proposals receive greater weight when funding decisions are made.

### **9. Long-Term Monitoring**

The Senior Program Manager provided a report on the Long-Term Monitoring program and explained that the Board will be asked to decide if they will renew funding for the existing three projects for another five-year term. Staff gave a brief overview of the three projects, the Continuous Plankton Recorder, the Seward Line, and the Chukchi Ecosystem Observatory, and reported that all of them are performing well.

An AP member noted that none of the three projects is focused on the Bering Sea and asked if the results of the existing projects apply to the Bering Sea LME. The Senior Program Manager and Science Director articulated how the projects are relevant to the Bering Sea LME. The AP member who raised the question was satisfied with the answers provided by staff. The AP suggested that additional Board investment in the LTM program to add a project focused on the Bering Sea LME would be welcome. The AP expressed interest in seeing the same presentations by the Principal Investigators that were requested by the Science Panel.

- **A motion was entered to express the Advisory Panel's support for the Board's continued funding of the three existing long-term monitoring projects and the motion passed with no objection.**

#### **10. Strategic Planning/Rolling Submissions**

The Executive Director summarized the strategic planning questions facing the Board at its spring 2018 meeting next week, including allocation of diminishing funds between the Core, Integrated and other research programs, and rolling submissions. In discussing rolling submissions and the feedback from the AMSS 2018 special session on that topic, comments and questions included the potential for seeing a reduction in funding requested or granted; and meeting the proposer's need for certainty by being explicitly clear when their submissions will be considered and the status of their proposals throughout the process.

Ruth will replace Edward on the Strategic Planning working group.

#### **11. Communications and Outreach**

The Communications and Outreach director asked the AP to review the Outreach RFP for fall 2018 and to revisit the review criteria the AP adopted last year. Comments included that it should be clear the criteria are not in any order of priority; that uniqueness always changes so someone should not be marked down for using a tried and true approach; Innovation may be a better term than uniqueness. The AP's suggestions will be incorporated into the RFP for final review and approval at the fall AP meeting. The AP also concluded that it should review the proposals responding to that RFP as a group rather than only with assigned partners, given the potentially subjective nature of some of the criteria.

The director reviewed highlights of NPRB's developing communications strategy and tactics and social media plan that the AP will see in greater detail at its next meeting. He also briefly reviewed the many communications and outreach activities since the last AP meeting.

#### **12. Partnerships in the Core Program**

The Science Director briefly presented the work of the Board's Core Partnerships two-member working group, which has met once since it was established in Fall 2017. The WG is refining criteria for possible partners, suggesting a standard application form, among other ideas. The outgoing AP chair suggested that the Board consider a different partnership model than currently used; one that could attract a broad consortium of funders who value NPRB's work generally, including its processes for selecting proposals. Partners reflective of the Board's makeup would contribute to a general aggregate fund at various levels to support NPRB's goals and objectives generally, without expectation that specific research be funded, removing any potential pay-to-play scenarios. Such a fund might also help offset administrative costs. Another AP member suggested that sustainability as an organizing principle for the consortium could be very appealing. The idea is in its very preliminary stage and the AP suggested that staff present it to the Core Partnerships working group before the Board meets in Fall 2018.

### **13. Other Matters**

The Executive Director began by thanking Edward Poulsen and Steve Reifentuhl for their exemplary service on the Advisory Panel. She also summarized NPRB recent financial support for outside meetings; staff development, the 2018 Alaska Marine Science Symposium, and legal work on issues of NPRB governance.

**The next Advisory Panel meeting will be in Anchorage September 11-12, 2018. The 2019 dates will be circulated once the Board sets its 2019 meeting schedule.**

Mitch Kilborn volunteered to replace Steve Reifentuhl on the Nominations Committee.

- **A motion was entered to state the full AP's support of the five GSRA proposals flagged for Board consideration under agenda item 3 and passed with no objection.**

The results of the AP voting on the photo contest were announced.

- **A motion to adjourn was entered and passed with no objection.**

The meeting adjourned at 3:54 pm.

**ADJOURN**