



MEETING NOTES

North Pacific Research Board Advisory Panel – 2018 Fall Meeting

September 11-12, 2018

NPRB Board Room | Anchorage, Alaska

Advisory Panel (AP) members present: Ruth Christiansen (Chair), Reid Brewer, Dave Gaudet, Melissa Good, Mitch Kilborn, Harley Sundown, Ernie Weiss, Verner Wilson, Caitlin Yeager. Absent: Nagruk Harcharek (Vice Chair), Brian Lynch, Mike Pederson.

Staff: Betsy Baker, Danielle Dickson, Jo-Ann Mellish, Brendan Smith, Crystal Benson-Carlough; Matt Baker joined the meeting on Wednesday.

Tuesday, September 11, 2018

1. Call to Order/Approve Agenda

Advisory Panel Chair Ruth Christiansen called the meeting to order at 1:01 pm, welcomed the four new AP members, and asked all members to introduce themselves. After a safety briefing, introductions focused on which constituencies and regions each member works with most frequently. Four new members joined the AP this meeting: Dave Gaudet, Harley Sundown, Ernie Weiss, and Caitlyn Yeager. Former AP member Matt Robinson was appointed to the NPRB Fishing Industry Seat on the Board last spring so will no longer be on the AP.

Two motions were entered; 1) to approve the meeting agenda and 2) to approve the minutes of the Spring 2018 meeting. Both motions passed with no objections.

2. Long-term Monitoring (LTM) Program Awards (information only; materials on electronic agenda)

Senior Program Manager Danielle Dickson reported that, at its Spring 2018 meeting, the Board reviewed the progress of the three LTM projects – the Seward Line, the Chukchi Ecological Observatory, and the Long-Term Plankton Recorder – and decided to renew funding for them, committing \$2 M over five years. The Board expressed great satisfaction with the progress of the projects and noted that the National Science Foundation designation of the Seward Line as a Long-Term Ecological Research Site represents a significant honor and will raise the visibility of NPRB.

3. Arctic Integrated Ecosystem Research Program (Arctic IERP)

Danielle Dickson also provided an update on the Arctic Integrated Ecosystem Research Program (IERP), reporting that it continues to make very good progress under the leadership of its Science Steering Committee with support from NPRB staff. Principal Investigators (PIs) from all aspects of the research program coordinated to maximize the use of samples collected during the spring 2018 cruise. Details from her report also appear in the staff memo for this agenda item.

**Draft September 17, 2018*

Communications and Outreach Director Brendan Smith presented slides on his involvement in the Arctic IERP ASGARD cruises 2017 and 2018 [R/V *Sikuliaq*] to document and participate in the science as part of the Oceanography team, working with Chief Scientist Seth Danielson.

4. Gulf of Alaska Integrated Ecosystem Research Program (GOAIERP)

Danielle Dickson also provided an update for the GOAIERP program, opening with an overview for new panel members. Details from her report also appear in the staff memo for this agenda item. Responses to several questions about “the Blob” included that, while not directly from the IERP study, information for the GOA in recent Seward Line LTM data have shown temperatures returning to a normal range. In an ecological forecasting project, she is working to connect NOAA with resources from other agencies and organizations to continue studying “the Blob” and its lasting effects.

5. Budget Overview

Executive Director (ED) Betsy Baker presented an overview of how NPRB funds marine research. In response to funding declines detailed in the staff memo, an AP member asked what connections could be built between industry and other funding partners. This point was tabled for the Core Partnerships discussion the next day (agenda item 12). An AP member asked for clarification on the Board’s recent motions on IERPs. The ED summarized the motions as: not affecting the current Arctic IERP; committing \$1M for the Arctic IERP Synthesis phase; stating the importance of IERPs to NPRB’s overall research program; and providing scenarios for considering ideas for a new IERP in 2020 or later.

6. Strategic Planning

The ED provided an overview of the Board’s strategic planning topics for next week. For the past two years, the Board has acted on important procedural decisions to address declining funds (e.g. implementing rolling submissions). AP members suggested changing the number of categories funded, and possibly evaluating the success of funded research as part of future funding decisions.

At its fall 2018 meeting the Board will step back and consider NPRB’s work more strategically. This may involve a decision to engage in a focused strategic planning exercise next year, resulting in a short, usable plan to guide future Board activity. On Tuesday the Board will hear from scientists NPRB has funded or works closely with as part of a session designed to consider trends in funding for marine science generally, and the importance of NPRB funding to research and management. Understanding how NPRB research relates to strategic planning. NPRB’s first Alaska Sea Grant Fellow will be working with the Science Director to develop evaluation metrics, as discussed under agenda item 10.

7. Science Plan Update

The ED provided a brief overview of the updated Science Plan. Intended as an evolving document, it will be available primarily online, with a few copies to be printed for select stakeholders. An AP member commented on the beauty of the plan, emphasizing how the visuals supported its organization.

Before breaking for the day, Panelists were given Outreach Proposal review homework for the evening and asked to champion 1-2 proposals each, write a two-sentence narrative on each of those, including whether they should be considered for funding.

The meeting adjourned for the day at 4:18 pm.

Wednesday, September 12, 2018

Breakfast – NPRB Board Room [8:00 – 8:30 am]

8. Graduate Student Research Awards

While this agenda item was for information only, the Senior Program Manager provided a brief introduction for the new AP members.

9. Core Program – RFP Decisions

Senior Program Manager Jo-Ann Mellish provided a summary of the Board’s spring 2018 funding decisions for the Core Program and a review of the draft 2019 RFP work period process. The Board approved 21 proposals submitted to the 2018 Core RFP for an overall commitment of \$4.6 million dollars, including a co-funding commitment of \$109,820 from the Oil Spill Recovery Institute. The 21 funded projects included 2 Tier E and 19 Tier 1 proposals, and 14 of the 27 proposals the Advisory Panel had recommended.

The Advisory Panel subgroups edited the items of particular interest under each of the four major categories in the 2019 Core RFP, reviewed the narrative for two of the four approaches, and were invited to propose a focus section. The work session was approximately 30 minutes. The discussion period as a panel took approximately one hour. The AP endorsed the proposed focus section. The draft RFP will move forward for review by the Board and reflect AP and Science Panel edits.

A brief review of the upcoming rolling submissions process was provided.

A discussion on enhancing the role of the AP in the Board’s decision making was initiated, prompted by the AP Chair’s conversations with the Board Chair after the spring Board meeting about how the Board can draw better on the wealth of experience represented on the AP. The AP’s recent focus has been primarily on providing comments related to a proposal’s engagement strategy, but AP expertise extends beyond engagement. The AP were reminded of their previously adopted criteria for the engagement strategy section and proposals in general.¹ It was recommended that the AP could add a layer to its current review process that would allow panel members from each geographic region (Gulf, Bering, Arctic) to review proposals tied to those regions, in addition to the review of proposals individual members wanted to champion. The group regional review would use the standard criteria and also consider importance to the region and the constituencies they represent that may extend beyond the standard criteria. A dedicated work period at the AP meeting would follow to allow each regional review group to nominate a few additional proposals, if desired, for consideration by the full

¹ Innovation, extensiveness, applicability to target audiences, return on investment, long-term impacts, effectiveness, evaluation metrics (Review criteria adopted by the Advisory Panel in 2017 and refined in 2018. Not all criteria need to be met to be considered for funding, nor are the criteria exclusive or in any order of priority).

panel. This would result in the usual AP flagging (gold star) of proposals based on traditional review criteria and an additional “double star” designation for proposals that the AP felt were especially important to a region or constituency. The entire AP would then review the list of proposals marked for recommended funding and discuss them after an overnight break to decide which proposals will move forward to the Board with a double star.

The AP were interested in adopting some version of this approach for the spring and looked forward to enhancing their input to the Board’s decision process.

Review of 2019 Core RFP

- Community Involvement. Some AP members expressed concern over RFP language stating that projects must be initiated by communities. They expressed a desire for allowing more room for the approach to welcome projects designed by scientists and supported by communities with more emphasis on outreach. The AP changed the introductory sentence to simply state that a project must be co-designed with a community(s) but not "initiated" by a community(s).
- The AP removed a bullet in the list of topics of particular interest under the Human Dimensions category that invited proposals that include equity considerations in fisheries management. An AP member expressed concern over the use of the word "equity", arguing that the meaning of the word is subjective, and the AP agreed to remove the word.
- **A motion was entered to support the Focus Section and the motion passed with no objections.**

10. Research on research

Science Director Matt Baker provided information NPRB’s process for developing research priorities, as detailed in the staff memo for this agenda item. As discussed, the previous day, NPRB will work with Alaska Sea Grant Fellow Marguerite Tibbles over the next year, starting in September. One of her primary tasks will be to investigate how NPRB has developed research priorities, how partner institution priorities have informed that process, alignment between NPRB priorities and partner institutions, and how priorities address fishery management and inform NPFMC and Board of Fish processes. She will also examine how NPRB research is used and impacts it has. An AP member suggested the Sea Grant fellow look at AP justification for endorsing a proposal, whether it was based on a letter of support from a stakeholder group and whether the project results provided the desired outcome. The AP was invited to suggest stakeholder groups the Sea Grant fellow should target to ask about the impacts of NPRB-funded research.

11. Communications and Outreach [1:00 – 3:30 pm]

Led by the Communications and Outreach Director (COD), each of the 13 Outreach Proposals was reviewed individually, with the abstract, SP review, COD review and AP review presented. This process took about two hours. A panel member suggested that the outreach RFP could add language that a clear connection to the Core project is required.

The AP introduced a motion to recommend outreach proposals 1778, 1779, 1781, 1784, 1785, and 1787 for funding. The motion passed without objection.

Staff invited the AP to comment on the review process for outreach proposals. A range of opinions existed on whether the COD or SP reviews should be provided prior to the AP review because of the potential to bias the AP review. One member wanted the information only after AP review, another asked that the COD and SP summaries appear at the end of the PDF for each proposal.

The COD detailed efforts to put PIs in touch with communications and outreach professionals without promoting individual businesses. An AP member suggested exhibits like a poster session where outreach products are showcased for scientists to connect them with outreach professionals.

The COD presented NPRB's Social Media Plan and the AP supported the plan and its approach. An AP member with experience working with a social media plan for another organization said it was helpful to have a clear set of internal guidelines about appropriate content and timing of posts.

12. Core Partnerships *Moved to before lunch

The Science Director provided an overview of how NPRB has used partnerships to augment financial support for projects NPRB funds. He highlighted the Oil Spill Recovery Institute partnership as a model, and the possibility of a consortium of funders, referring to the staff memo for this agenda item.

The AP supported the consortium idea in part because it might allow for smaller organizations to contribute on equal footing with larger organizations. AP concerns and comments included:

- Larger donors in the consortium might seek certain research focal points.
- If funding can be contributed to a specific category, that could result in the Board shifting of funds to other categories (negating the intended augmentation of overall funds).
- There needs to be a specific commitment to a contribution to make sure that the effort was not outweighing the benefit. The Board had suggested a \$100,000, 5-year commitment for individual partnerships. There would potentially be less of a restriction for a consortium agreement.
- Transparency for funding partners in a consortium is important. Be clear on what each contributor will be adding to the larger pool of funds.
- The potential for additional PI reporting requirements (e.g. to other funders)? Current structure is that NPRB staff absorb the burden of sharing reports with the funding partner.
- PI organizations may not be able or want to accept funding from certain entities in a consortium. Staff suggested that the pool approach would eliminate a direct line of funding.
- The way in which small donors would be able to participate equitably in a consortium, e.g. would the pool allow groups to fund at any level.
- Whether a percentage of what a consortium member provides could support their particular interest, with the rest considered for the greater good.
- How to ensure longevity of funds from donors who might not be able to contribute the same amount each year.

13. Other Matters

The ED spoke briefly about each of the following items

- NPRB's Statement of Organization, Practices and Procedures and related amendments;
- Staff involvement in maintaining international connections with researchers for data exchange and other collaboration opportunities. An AP member suggested regular updates on the outcomes of such efforts as a way for the panel to keep apprised of international research developments
- NPRB's annual \$50,000 fund for outside conference support, with awards ranging from \$2,500 to \$10,000. AP members were encouraged to let their constituencies know about this opportunity and that applications were made by a letter to the ED.
- Dates for AP meetings in 2019
- Alaska Marine Science Symposium. NPRB supports AP travel to this annual event (the last week in January 2019 next year). Crystal will send AMSS notice to Board and Panel members to remind them of dates and accommodation planning.

The meeting was adjourned by motion at 3:12 p.m.