



**North Pacific Research Board
Meeting Summary
Fall Board Meeting
September 17-19, 2019**

The North Pacific Research Board met September 17-19, 2019, in Anchorage, Alaska. In attendance were Board members Forrest Bowers, Dorothy Childers, John Gauvin, Becca Gisclair, Doug Mecum, CDR Jon Kreischer, Mike Miller, Brad Moran, Matt Robinson (vice chair), Brad Smith, Dee Williams, Cheryl Rosa as US Arctic Research Commission alternate for David Benton, and Scott Pegau as OSRI alternate for Katrina Hoffman. Pending confirmation of the Alaska academic seat, Dr. Moran did not vote. Dee Williams was absent on September 19. Bill Britt, Heather Mann, Gerry Merrigan, Andy Mezirow, and Tara Riemer were absent for the entirety of the meeting. Panels: Brad Harris (Science Panel Vice Chair) attended; neither the AP Chair or Vice Chair were able to attend. The meeting was staffed by Betsy Baker, Matthew Baker, Danielle Dickson, Jo-Ann Mellish, Brendan Smith, and Kayla Wagenfehr.

Tuesday, September 17, 2019
NPRB Board Room, 1007 West 3rd Avenue, Anchorage

1. Call to Order/Approve Agenda

Matt Robinson chaired the meeting and called the board to order at 8:30 a.m. It was determined that a quorum was present (three Executive Committee members and seven other voting Board members, the exact number required by the NPRB Statement of Organization, Practices and Procedures, §4.B). An eighth voting member arrived shortly after 9:30 a.m. After a safety briefing, welcomes, and introductions, a vice chair was elected. It was noted that conflict of interest declarations for the Core program had been received from all members prior to the meeting, and that the Board would be discussing the COI policy as required every three years on the last day of the meeting. The travel claim process was reviewed by the Program Support Specialist.

MOTION: Elect Forrest Bowers as Vice Chair for the meeting.
Action: Motion passed with no objections.

MOTION: Approve agenda with no amendments.
Action: Motion passed with no objections.

MOTION: Approve the minutes of the fall 2018 NPRB meeting.
Action: Motion passed with no objections.

The Science Panel (SP) Vice Chair provided a brief summary of that panel's August meeting. He conveyed the panel's positive response to the rolling submissions process, as it has allowed for a more thorough review and discussion of all issues before the panel. It has also allowed additional time for development of the Focus Sections for the Core Program RFP. The SP found that separating the outreach and Core program proposals improved the review process. The SP discussed the importance of developing metrics for assessing how NPRB achieves both aspects of its mission (addressing pressing fishery management and ecosystem information needs) and suggested NPRB track its role in developing the next generation of scientists. The SP also discussed ways to incorporate local, traditional, and indigenous knowledge, one of which would be the addition of a panel member who is an Alaska Native scientist.



No Advisory Panel (AP) officer was able to attend. The Executive Director (ED) reported that the AP had an engaging and productive meeting. The AP discussed the draft engagement strategy guidance at length and found the document thorough and very useful. Throughout the Board meeting, the ED delivered relevant Advisory Panel input and results under each agenda item.

2. Budget Overview

The Executive Director provided a budget update. This year's grant was the smallest NPRB has received to date, \$6.6 million compared to, e.g., \$9.9 million in 2011. The grants are expected to remain within the range of \$6.5 to \$7 million through 2025. The ED is in regular contact with the Office of Natural Resources Revenue (ONRR) at the Department of the Interior to discuss investment options. ONRR manages the Environmental Improvement and Restoration Fund (EIRF), from which 20% of the interest generates funds for NPRB grants, awarded through the Department of Commerce. By law, the EIRF may only be invested in interest-bearing obligations of the United States. ONRR invests the EIRF in ten-year Treasury notes twice a year to avoid being locked into any given rate for too long. This laddered approach has resulted in a cumulative yield of 2.313% as of August 15, 2019, which exceeds the yields reported this summer of 1.46 to 2.08.

Although the grant funds NPRB received this year are the lowest yet, funding levels are relatively stable and staff are investigating options to augment them (e.g. partnerships, and updating MOU between NPRB, NOAA and the Alaska Sea Life Center). On September 5, 2019 the ED met with NOAA officials in Washington DC to discuss options for augmenting current grant levels.

3. Communications and Outreach

The Communications and Outreach Director (COD) provided an overview of the outreach proposal requirements and the panel's reviews. Two outreach proposals were received, for a total request of just under \$40,000. For comparison, \$60,000 was awarded in 2017 (5 recipients) and \$130,000 in 2018 (7 recipients). At the Board's request the review process includes staff and panel assessments and recommendations. Both proposals were considered using the criteria set out in the Outreach RFP.

MOTION: Fund outreach proposal 1883.

Action: Motion passed with no objections.

At the spring 2019 meeting the AP requested and the Board tasked NPRB staff to develop a draft engagement strategy guide. The purpose of the guide is to help proposers improve and strengthen the engagement strategies submitted in the Core proposals. It was noted that the engagement strategy is a draft and staff will still solicit outside expert opinions before releasing it to the public.

Principal Investigators (PIs) on Core proposals that were awarded funding for this fall will have the opportunity to submit an Outreach proposal for Board review in spring 2020. (Later in the meeting the board selected nine Core Program proposals to recommend for funding; all of which are eligible to apply for this separate outreach award). Anticipating the possibility that in some years not all \$130,000 designated for outreach awards may be used, staff offered several options for other outreach uses of those funds, which the board discussed.

The Board also discussed the possibility of allowing funded Core PIs to submit Outreach proposals after the completion of a project.



STAFF TASKING: Provide options to the Board at the spring meeting on how to allow outreach proposal submission associated with Core program projects that are within two years of their end dates.

4. Arctic IERP

Staff provided an update on the Arctic IERP, noting that the program is completing its third and final season of field data collection now. Data collection is progressing on schedule. Over lunch on Tuesday, the Science Director provided highlights from the Arctic IERP Cruise that was currently underway as part of the IERP's last field season. He and the Communications and Outreach director had each joined a different leg of the research cruise this summer.

The first volume of a special issue in *Deep-Sea Research II* that will present the results of the Arctic IERP is already underway. Staff will provide links to the papers as they are published online.

Staff referenced the Board's existing commitment to provide at least \$1 M for a synthesis that will follow the Arctic IERP field program and suggested some possible directions for the synthesis. When the Arctic IERP was funded, the Board solicited modeling proposals but decided to focus initially on field data collection and stated the intent to reconsider modeling projects during the synthesis phase. The data collected, in particular by the ASGARD project, should provide information that would be useful to developing ecosystem models for this region. Staff explained that the Gulf of Alaska IERP synthesis involved a series of workshops that were useful for facilitating cross-discipline discussions and finding practical application for the data in fishery management. Staff highlighted such workshops as opportunities to include Alaska Native community members in the Arctic IERP synthesis. The SP and AP passed motions to encourage the Board to use the Arctic IERP synthesis as an opportunity to use the data collected by the program to make recommendations for the design of a future IERP that would be centered in the northern Bering Sea. The Science and Advisory panels recognized the urgent need for renewed research in this region in light of the contraction of the northern Bering Sea cold pool and the movement of commercial fishes northward.

The Board discussed the suggestion to use the Arctic IERP post-synthesis to double as a pre-synthesis for a future IERP centered in the northern Bering Sea, and expressed broad support for the idea. The Board tabled further discussion of this topic until the Strategic Planning session the next day (agenda item 8). After the strategic planning discussion on Wednesday, the board voted unanimously to augment by \$400,000 the \$1 million already set aside for the Arctic IERP synthesis to not only leverage the IERP's data and insights for new analyses in the Arctic, but also serve as a pre-assessment phase for a new IERP that would continue integrated work in the Bering and Chukchi Seas centered in the Northern Bering Sea. **For the full text of the Board's motion committing synthesis and future IERP funding, and a statement of the Board's intent for the future IERP, see agenda item 8, below.**

5. Graduate Student Research Awards (information only)

Staff reported that the Graduate Student Research Award program is due for a comprehensive review and requested a working group be created to evaluate the program. The last evaluation was conducted in 2011 by a working group with one member each from the SP, AP, and Board. The Panels and the Board continue to request guidance on balancing student qualifications and the scientific merit of their proposed research. One board member expressed an interest in information on residency. Brad Smith and Doug Mecum offered to serve on the committee.



MOTION: Establish a working group to evaluate the GSRA program structure and review process.

Action: Motion passed with no objections.

6. Core Program

The Senior Program Manager provided a review of the submissions to date and the evaluation process. A total of 16 additional proposals received two or more external peer reviews in time to be considered by the Science Panel, which concluded with the following distribution: Tier E (2), Tier 1 (3), Tier 2 (5), and Tier 3 (6). The AP starred three proposals and approved a single proposal for a two-star status. The Board also considered the three proposals that had been held over from spring meeting.

MOTION: To fund all Tier E and Tier 1 proposals including those held over from spring 2019: 9, 11, 1813, 1817, 1867, 1869, 1874, 1875.

Amendment: Add proposal 1817.

Action: Amendment passed with one objection.

Amendment: Remove proposal 1813.

Action: Amendment failed.

Amendment: Add proposal 6.

Action: Amendment passed with no objections.

MOTION: Approve Core Program proposals 6, 9, 11, 1813, 1817, 1867, 1869, 1874, 1875.

Action: Motion passed, as amended, with no objections.

Combined, the Board selected nine projects to recommend for funding totaling \$2,219,937, including \$100,000 through the Oil Spill Recovery Institute. Two Tier E (Exceptional), five Tier 1, and two Tier 2 proposals were funded. Including the five projects funded in the spring, this brings the full 2019 RFP funding amount to \$3,603,613. The 2019 Core RFP target funding level was \$4,000,000. It was agreed to discuss how to use the balance of roughly \$400,000 under Strategic Planning (agenda item 8). In 2019, the overall success rate was 38%, which was higher than in past years. In 2019, Tier E and Tier 1 proposal success rate was 100%, whereas in the past it was typically less than 50%.

The Board discussed the 2020 Core RFP at length. The overall funding level for the RFP was discussed under Strategic Planning, agenda item 8. Board members expressed concern with the lack of Human Dimensions proposals for the 2019 RFP and with the Science Panel's capacity to adequately evaluate social science proposals and Indigenous Science, the latter being specified as an "issue of particular interest" under the Human Dimensions category. Staff reminded the Board of the SP recommendation to add an Indigenous scholar to the Science Panel. The Board returned to these suggestions under agenda item 11, Nominations, and agenda item 12, Other Matters.

Staff and the SP Vice Chair summarized four draft focus sections which, at the Board's request, the SP had further revised at its fall 2019 meeting: Aleutian Islands, Wild-hatchery interactions, Cold Pool, and Indigenous stewardship of marine ecosystems. The ED relayed that, while the Advisory Panel supports all four sections, its members expressed the strongest collective support for the cold pool topic. No proposals were submitted under



the 2019 RFP Focus Section “New approaches to fishery Independent survey design and implementation” so the Board also considered extending that focus section into the 2020 RFP.

Staff encouraged the Board to review the draft 2020 RFP overnight, paying attention to the Issues of Particular Interest under each category, the draft Focus Section ideas, and category caps.

The Board Chair encouraged Board members to consider possible uses of funds that remained on the table following the 2019 Core Program funding decisions and suggested this be discussed under the Strategic Planning agenda item the following day.

Wednesday, September 18, 2019

USGS Glenn Olds Building, on the Alaska Pacific University campus

Staff provided a safety briefing at the new venue, the USGS Alaska Science Center.

6. Core Program (continued)

On Wednesday morning, the Board returned to the discussion of the draft 2020 RFP for the Core Program. The Board discussed and finalized the issues of particular interest for each category based on the language proposed by the SP and AP. The Board then turned to discussing the options for focus section topics.

MOTION: Include the Cold Pool as a focus section topic in the 2020 RFP.

Amendment: Add a separate and distinct focus section on Human Dimensions to include the issues of particular interest recommended by the Science Panel and Advisory Panel under the human dimensions category in the draft 2020 Core RFP, in addition to funding development of methods to inform the process of developing RFPs in that category.

Action: Amendment passed with no objections.

Amendment: Strike “in addition to funding development of methods to inform the process of developing RFPs in that category”.

Action: Amendment passed with no objections.

MOTION: Approve the Cold Pool and Human Dimensions as two separate focus section topics in the 2020 RFP, with the latter consisting of the Issues of Particular Interest recommended by the Science Panel and Advisory Panel under the Human Dimensions category in the draft 2020 Core RFP.

Action: Motion passed, as amended, with no objections.

Staff invited the Board to review Frequently Asked Questions for rolling submissions and provide comments, and the section was adjusted accordingly.

NOTE: The following two motions on funding levels for the 2020 Core RFP were made later in the day, after the Strategic Planning discussion on how to use the 2019 Core Program RFP balance of roughly \$400,000 left after all Core funding decisions had been made. These motions are included here rather than under strategic planning (agenda item 8) for ease of reference.



MOTION: In the 2020 Core Program RFP, fund categories at the following levels: Oceanography and Productivity \$450,000, Fishes and Invertebrates \$1,100,000, Marine Birds and Mammals \$850,000, Human Dimensions \$300,000, Interdisciplinary Studies \$400,000, Focus Section (Human Dimensions & Change) \$400,000, Focus Section (Cold Pool Dynamics) \$500,000.

Amendment: Increase oceanography and productivity to \$600,000.
Action: Amendment passed with no objections.

Amendment: Reduce Human Dimensions focus section by \$100,000 and Marine Birds and Mammals by \$50,000 to achieve a \$4M RFP.
Action: Amendment passed with two objections

MOTION: Establish the category funding targets for the 2020 Core Program RFP as Oceanography and Productivity \$600,000, Fishes and Invertebrates \$1,000,000, Marine Birds and Mammals \$800K, Human Dimensions \$300,000, Interdisciplinary Studies \$400,000, Focus Section (Human Dimensions & Change) \$300,000, Focus Section (Cold Pool Dynamics) \$500,000.

Action: Motion passed with one objection.

To finalize the 2020 Core Program RFP, Staff was tasked with 1) converting the human dimensions focus section from bullet points to narrative form with an introductory sentence, and 2) having a subset of board members review the new format and language. The Board also tasked the Executive Committee with approving the language after those steps were completed and expressed its support for the RFP being published once that approval took place.

7. Evaluation of NPRB Research

The Board agreed to move this agenda item to the following day. Notes appear on page 7, below.

8. Strategic Planning

Cheryl Rosa, Chair of the Strategic Planning working group (SPWG), led the discussion and began by thanking the Communications & Outreach Director for creating a public version of the Strategic Plan adopted May 1, 2019. She and the Executive Director then presented the draft Implementation Plan 2019-2020 to the Board. In discussing implementation priorities and tasks, the Board agreed to the following changes: In tasks under Priority 1.3, "Continue efforts to more fully incorporate Indigenous and local knowledge into NPRB programs", reference the need to explore mechanisms to incubate partnerships and projects between Indigenous knowledge holders and the science community, and capture the SP recommendation to include an Indigenous scholar on the Science Panel. A Board member suggested specifying metrics for evaluation, a comment that Staff noted that an AP member had also made. The SPWG was tasked with evaluating the needs for metrics and suggesting them where appropriate.

MOTION: Approve the Implementation Plan for the Strategic Plan with the Board's changes to the draft language reflected in the final version.

Action: Passed with no objections.

Discussion of the motion included Board member comments that the implementation plan is an impressive document and appreciation for the work that the working group and staff put into developing it.



Returning to the discussion begun under agenda item 4, Arctic IERP, the Board continued to flesh out the suggestion to use the Arctic IERP post-synthesis funds to also provide a pre-synthesis for a future IERP *centered* in the Northern Bering Sea. In discussing the strategic plan's priority relating to "balancing core and integrated research and synthesis programs", the Board acknowledged that almost \$400K of the \$4M advertised for the 2019 Core Program RFP remained unspent after the Board made its funding decisions (agenda item 5). It was suggested that those funds be used to augment the \$1M already committed by the Board to the Arctic IERP Synthesis and that the funded work double as a pre-synthesis for a new IERP centered in, but not limited to, the Northern Bering Sea. Language for a draft motion was proposed for the Board to consider overnight and revisit the next day.

Science Talks from Guest Speakers

After a brief tour of the Fisheries, Aquatic Science, & Technology (FAST) Laboratory at APU from its Director Brad Harris (SP Vice Chair), the Board then moved to the Carr Gottstein Board Room on the Alaska Pacific University campus and concluded Wednesday afternoon with science talks. Board member **Dee Williams, PhD**, USGS, provided a welcome and brief opening remarks on John Wesley Powell's role in shaping the early use of science in federal management and innovative approaches to watershed management. **Vanessa von Biela, PhD**, USGS, spoke on Fish responding to warming in Alaska: heat stress in Yukon River Chinook salmon; long-term change in Beaufort Sea nearshore fish communities, and effects of extreme heat wave on forage fish in Prince William Sound. Two NPRB-funded scientists then presented their work: **Markus Horning, PhD**, Alaska Sea Life Center, NPRB Project 1711, on Pacific Sleeper Shark Energetics: Black is the new orange: bringing the poorly understood cryptic Pacific sleeper shark into temporary captivity for controlled studies, and **Brad Harris, PhD**, Alaska Pacific University FAST Lab, NPRB Project 1319, on Benthic Impacts of Raised Ground Gear for the Eastern Bering Sea Pollock Fishery.

The next day Board members acknowledged the value of incorporating science talks into its regular meeting schedule and expressed appreciation for the excellent presentations.

Thursday, September 19, 2019

NPRB Board Room, 1007 West 3rd Avenue, Anchorage

The Board reconvened back at the NPRB Board Room and agreed to the Chair's proposed agenda revisions for the morning: brief discussions of items 7, 9, and 10, before returning to agenda item 8 Strategic Planning.

7. Evaluation of NPRB Research

Staff provided a briefing on the work NPRB has supported to date to evaluate impacts of NPRB-funded research and shared a draft scope of work for continued investment. Board members noted the ambitious scope of work and asked about the biggest challenges to moving ahead with the evaluation. Staff responded that limited staff time requires prioritizing items in the scope of work and that ensuring strong data access would lay the groundwork for additional work when more staff time is available. The Board offered suggestions on internship possibilities and other mechanisms for engaging additional support from graduate students or other individuals who could commit more than a year to the project.

8. Strategic Planning, continued, see p. 8 below



9. Governance Update and MOU review

Staff reported that NPRB continues to work with NOAA lawyers and the Venable law firm in Washington DC to finalize revisions to the 2001 NPRB-ASLC-NOAA MOU. Federal government shutdowns and other scheduling conflicts have delayed the project, but it is anticipated that the Board will be able to vote on approving the revised MOU at the Spring 2020 meeting.

10. Partnerships

The Science Director gave an update on partnerships. The ED relayed that the AP felt the consortium approach should also accommodate organizations that do not have the same level of funding as larger entities. The SP Vice Chair expressed SP support for further exploring the partnerships discussed. There was additional discussion about augmenting partnerships with in-kind contributions of ship time and how NPRB could augment funds by addressing topics relevant to the Blue Economy and cooperative research with industry.

8. Strategic Planning, continued

The Board returned to the idea of combining the Arctic IERP synthesis with a pre-synthesis for a new IERP proposed the day before. After the proposed motion was withdrawn and considerable discussion, the Board passed the following series of motions and amendments:

MOTION: The Board wishes to augment by \$400,000 to the \$1 million already set aside for the Arctic IERP synthesis to not only leverage the IERP's data and insights for new analyses in the Arctic, but also serve as a pre-assessment phase for a new IERP that would continue integrated work in the Bering and Chukchi centered in the Northern Bering Sea. An amount equivalent to the approximately \$400,000 in unallocated monies from the 2019 Core Program will be used to augment this joint post-synthesis/pre-assessment. Items of interest include how shifts in environmental conditions and processes may influence species of commercial, ecological and subsistence importance, and implications for state and federal fisheries management and communities that depend on these resources. These dedicated funds, and this express commitment by the NPRB Board to fund a future IERP, will be used by staff to leverage additional financial and other support from potential partners.

Amendment: Strike the second sentence.

Action: Amendment passed with no objections.

MOTION: The Board wishes to augment by \$400,000 the \$1,000,000 already set aside for the Arctic IERP synthesis to not only leverage the IERP's data and insights for new analyses in the Arctic, but also serve as a pre-assessment phase for a new IERP that would continue integrated work in the Bering and Chukchi centered in the Northern Bering Sea. Items of interest include how shifts in environmental conditions and processes may influence species of commercial, ecological and subsistence importance, and implications for state and federal fisheries management and communities that depend on these resources. These dedicated funds, and this express commitment by the NPRB Board to fund a future IERP, will be used by staff to leverage additional financial and other support from potential partners.

Action: Motion passed, as amended, with no objections.



Board intent. The Board agreed that the language quoted below should appear in the minutes immediately following the motion above:

“It is the Board’s intent that this new IERP will examine important dynamics related to shifts in environmental conditions, physical dynamics, biological production and phenology, and related effects on upper trophic level species distribution and production in the Bering-Chukchi shelf system. The Board has an explicit interest in examining how the shift in environmental conditions and processes will influence species of commercial and ecological importance and the implications for state and federal fisheries management and communities that depend on those resources. NPRB intends these analyses to inform resource assessment relevant to fishery management of Bering Sea groundfish and crab stocks.”

11. Nominations

The SP Vice Chair summarized the SP recommendations for the nominees for the openings on the SP. The ED expressed the AP’s recommendations for the nominees for the openings on the AP. Both panels noted that all names forwarded to the Board were well qualified, commenting on the strength of the nominations received. The Board entered executive session to discuss the nominees.

In Executive Session, by separate motion for each panel, the Board appointed the following panelists to begin their terms in Fall 2020:

MOTION: **Appoint for three-year terms Nicole Kanayurak and Vera Metcalf to serve on NPRB’s Advisory Panel.**

Action: **Motion passed with no objections.**

MOTION: **Appoint for four-year terms Doug DeMaster, Suresh Sethi, and William Sydeman to serve on NPRB’s Science Panel.**

Action: **Motion passed with no objections.**

The Board concluded its executive session and turned to two additional Nominations matters:

Upon learning that an SP member had to step down one meeting early, the Board voted as follows:

MOTION: **The Nominations Committee shall solicit applications for an open social sciences seat on the Science Panel and provide recommendations to the Executive Committee, which shall select a new SP member in time for the appointee to participate in the Spring 2020 cycle of meetings.**

Action: **Motion passed with no objections.**

The Executive Director presented a plan requested by the Board in past meetings to help reduce the number of AP members rotating off at the same time.

MOTION: **Approve the Advisory Panel Rotation Plan.**

Action: **Motion passed with no objections.**



12. Other Matters

Staff reminded the Board that, by its terms, the Conflict of Interest policy is to be reviewed every three years. The ED had solicited comments from both panels and the Board in advance of their meetings this cycle and no concerns or comments were received.

MOTION: Approve continued use of the current NPRB Conflict of Interest Policy, as previously approved May 6, 2016.

Action: Motion passed with no objections.

The Board tasked the Executive Director with circulating a brief survey to all Board and panel members regarding the of the Conflict of Interest policy for review at the Spring 2020 Board meeting.

The ED summarized the outside meeting requests that have been approved for calendar year 2019, noting a balance of \$10,000 for use this year.

The spring meeting cycle was shifted several weeks to accommodate a conflict arising from unusual timing of a NPFMC meeting. The Board spring 2020 dates are set for April 21-23, 2020. In Fall 2020 the meeting cycle will return to the more usual schedule, with the Board meeting September 15-17, 2020 in Anchorage.

The Board moved to disband two working groups that have accomplished their taskings:

MOTION: Disband the Arctic Communications and Outreach Working Group and the Science Plan Working Group.

Action: Motion passed with no objections.

The Board then returned to earlier discussions about the need to strengthen NPRB's ability to adequately review and attract social science proposals.

MOTION: Establish a social science working group with the ability to consult with and include outside experts.

Action: Motion passed with no objections.

This new working group should have a minimum of one member from each Panel and two from the Board.

The Board thanked Matt Robinson for assuming the role of Chair for this meeting, and staff for its support. The Executive Director thanked the Board for its continued dedication of volunteer time to NPRB's work, and the staff for its excellent support of the ED and the Board.

MOTION: Adjourn meeting.

Action: Motion passed with no objections.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.