



**North Pacific Research Board
Meeting Summary
Fall Advisory Panel
September 15-16, 2020**

The Advisory Panel held a virtual meeting September 15-16, 2020. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 travel restrictions and health concerns, the meeting was held over Zoom. The meeting was attended by panel members: Reid Brewer, Ruth Christiansen (Chair), Gary Freitag, Melissa Good, Nicole Kanayurak, Mitch Kilborn, Vera Metcalf, Ernie Weiss, and Caitlin Yeager (Vice-Chair). Attending staff: Matthew Baker, Danielle Dickson (was absent for a portion of the meeting), Jo-Ann Mellish, Lynn Palensky (Executive Director), Brendan Smith and Kayla Wagenfehr.

1. Call to Order/Approve Agenda

Chair Ruth Christiansen called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. Matthew Baker, the Science Director, welcomed everyone and expressed appreciation for the patience during these unique times. He thanked staff, the chair and vice-chair for putting the virtual meeting together. Matt then provided an overview of the agenda. Noting the CORE and Outreach proposals reviews and CORE RFP would be discussed. Updates on the Arctic program, Long-Term Monitoring, Partnerships, and COVID impacts to the research communities would be presented. As well as, the Human Dimensions and Graduate Student Working Groups. The panel members were also provided information on internal systems and NPRB research for review at their own discretion. Kayla Wagenfehr reviewed the virtual meeting protocols. Panel members and staff briefly introduced themselves.

The meeting was scheduled to take place in blocks, from 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. on Tuesday, September 15, and from 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. on Wednesday, September 16, 2020.

MOTION: Approve the fall 2020 meeting agenda.

Action: Motion passed with no objections.

MOTION: Approve the spring 2020 meeting summary.

Action: Motion passed with no objections.

2. Core Program

The Panel reviewed all of the Tier 1 proposals (7) and several of the Tier 2 proposals by request. Tier 3 proposals were not discussed. A brief narrative for each recommended proposal was compiled by the proposal champion and approved by the panel.

MOTION: Approve to star 1937, 1933, 1885, 1942, 1934, 1939.

Action: Motion passed with no objections.

3. Graduate Student Working Group

Dave Gaudet, the Advisory Panel representative was absent from the meeting. Jo-Ann presented the recommendations of the WG and the subsequent discussion at the Science Panel.

The WG executive summary included the following recommendations to the Board:

- awards should be given only to U.S. students at U.S. institutions;
- update language to the 'personal statement' to better address the intentions of the awardee;



- increase the value of each award by \$1,000 to directly cover travel expenses to the Alaska Marine Science Symposium; and
- revise the Science Panel evaluation protocol, part of which would emphasize student ability for MS applicants; and emphasize scientific merit for PhDs.

Advisory panel members agreed with the Science Panel in that they were reluctant to limit to grants to only U.S. citizens at U.S. institutions, saying it would inhibit international cooperation and participation. The panel also discussed the evaluation metrics for Masters versus Doctoral level applications and felt that all proposals should be evaluated on scientific merit, in line with the recommendation of the Science Panel.

4. Arctic IERP

Danielle Dickson, the Senior Program Manager, reminded the AP of the scope and purpose of the Arctic IERP, noting that program seeks to address: “How will reductions in sea ice and associated changes in the physical environment influence the flow of energy through the ecosystem in the Chukchi Sea”. She acknowledged significant contributions from partner and participating organizations.

Matt Baker shared science highlights, including observations of bottom temperatures exceeding 0 °C and 2019 sea surface temperatures that exceeded forecasts for mid-century (20 years out). There have been surprises with sub-arctic stocks of Pacific cod and walleye pollock being seen north of 60° N. Many 2020 surveys planned by other organizations (e.g., NOAA Fisheries) have been constrained or cancelled due to COVID. Matt discussed how the Arctic IERP is facilitating collaboration with Russian scientists. He described a collaborative paper published in Nature Climate Change earlier this year that included Arctic IERP data and the papers published in the first volume of the special issue in Deep-Sea Research II. The second volume of the special issue will open in September 2020.

Danielle noted the NPRB Board’s commitment to augment the \$1 million set aside for the Arctic IERP synthesis by \$400,000. NPRB plans to release an RFP to synthesize data collected in 2017-2019 during Arctic IERP studies in the Bering and Chukchi seas and also provide an assessment that will inform the Board as they develop a new IERP centered in the Northern Bering Sea. Danielle explained that NPRB is beginning to coordinate with other entities with interest in the region and described workshops that NPRB helped organize at the Alaska Marine Science Symposium and Alaska Forum on the Environment during winter 2020 to invite input.

5. Long-Term Monitoring

Danielle Dickson provided updates on the three projects funded through NPRB’s long-term monitoring program and explained that they have continued to gather data in 2020 despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

- a) Chukchi Ecosystem Observatory** – The observatory collects data using autonomous moored instruments. The principal investigator (PI) expected the instruments to be retrieved and redeployed by a cruise aboard the NOAA ship *Oscar Dyson*, however, a positive COVID-19 test prevented some of the science team from joining the cruise. NPRB and other consortium funding organizations provided supplemental funds to allow a separate charter in October 2020.
- b) Continuous Plankton Recorder** – The CPR is towed by commercial vessels that have continued to operate on schedule. Analyses may occur at a slower pace due to limitations on laboratory access. NPRB funding is allocated only towards analysis of samples collected in the North Pacific (i.e., Gulf of



Alaska). The PIs will work to secure funding to continue sampling in the Arctic and hope to coordinate their analysis of Arctic samples with other NPRB-funded scientists.

- c) **Seward Line/Northern Gulf of Alaska Long-Term Ecological Research** – Sampling has continued, but on a more limited scale. The National Science Foundation (NSF) has provided the vessel R/V Sikuliaq for the spring, summer, and fall cruises in 2020. During spring, the science team was limited to three individuals who conducted the basic suite of oceanographic measurements to preserve the time series. During summer and fall cruises, approximately 12 scientists will participate (under normal circumstances more than 20 scientists participate).

Danielle explained that a special issue in Deep-Sea Research II entitled “Understanding Ecosystem Processes in the Gulf of Alaska” will publish the results of several research programs, including the Seward Line/Northern Gulf of Alaska Long-Term Ecological Research project, the Continuous Plankton Recorder (CPR) project, the Gulf of Alaska IERP synthesis, and the EVOS-funded Gulf Watch Alaska program. This represents volume 3 of the series initiated during GOAIERP.

6. Communications & Outreach

Brendan Smith, Communications and Outreach Director (COD), led a discussion on four outreach proposals under consideration for funding. After discussion, two proposals were flagged for funding consideration by the Panel:

Motion: Flag proposals 1952 and 1955 for funding consideration.

Action: Motion passed with no objections.

For the other two proposals (1953 and 1954), the AP expressed concerns and will pass those along to the Board. The AP noted, however, that despite these concerns the proposals still retained fundable qualities.

Brendan observed that NPRB has a 50% response rate in PIs submitting proposals. He requested input from science panel members on how to boost the numbers of proposals, perhaps by allowing previously funded parties to submit proposals. There was discussion among panel members. The panel suggested the idea of allowing a resubmission option for outreach proposals.

COD briefly addressed the Engagement Strategy Guide. He gave an overview on some community feedback and will be moving forward with the comments.

Meeting recessed for the day at 2:58 p.m.

Wednesday, August 19, 2020

The meeting reconvened at 9:02 a.m.

7. Human Dimensions Working Group (formerly the Social Science Working Group)

Lynn Palensky provided an overview of the Human Dimension Working Group activities since it was reestablished in Fall 2019. The spring Board meeting approved tasking for the group to move forward



with a detailed plan on how to incorporate LTK and co-production approaches into our processes. The group met three times to develop a comprehensive list of Problem and solutions in the areas of Membership/perceptions/relationships, review process and RFP. The priorities for moving forward were outlined from that list and include: exploring training and education for staff/board/panels and PI's, on co-production, tribal history and awareness, and LTK; explore options for developing a new RFP section for next year to support co-production planning grants; ensuring we have qualified reviewers with expertise in Social sciences; and take a co-production approach to any IERP or NPRB-initiated project.

Comments from the AP focused on ensuring consistency in the use and application of terminology (e.g. co-production, LTK, TK).

8. Partnerships

Matt Baker led a discussion on progress and opportunities to further existing partnerships and develop new ones. He provided a review of the criteria, benefits and types of partnerships and highlighted information provided online (<https://www.nprb.org/nprb/partnerships/>). Matt reiterated that NPRB is interested in further developing institutional relationships with new institutions, including Alaska Native tribal and regional entities, industry cooperatives and research foundations, universities and research institutes, national and international science and research agencies, organizations, and foundations. He noted the opportunity not only to leverage funding towards research of mutual interest but also to solicit the insights, expertise, and priorities of partner organizations. Matt reviewed the types of partnership endorsed by NPRB, including an individual partnership and the opportunity for multiple smaller entities to join into a consortium. Reviews of recent discussions with partners (OSRI, BSFRF, PCCRC) in May, July, and September were conveyed as well as a review of the Partnerships Working Group discussions and recommendations in September. Updates were provided related to the impacts of COVID and potential partnerships in both the Core Program and the IERP planned in the Northern Bering Sea. The Advisory Panel noted important progress in securing partnerships and the Advisory Panel Chair thanked staff for all work and dedication in this area. An Advisory Panel member asked a question related to how NPRB establishes partnerships with organizations with differing or conflicting missions as well as the criteria by which the Board uses to enter a partnership. Matt reviewed the different types of partnerships and noted that partnerships are also represented in the composition and representation on the Board and panels. Advisory Panel members were asked for their ideas on other opportunities to further partnerships. Several Advisory Panel members expressed willing to leverage their respective contacts in the pursuit of partnerships, including Nicole Kanayurak (North Slope Borough) and Caitlin Yeager, who also suggested exploring discussions with the North Pacific Fisheries Foundation (<http://npfisheriesfoundation.org/project-reports.php>).

9. COVID Impacts

Jo-Ann Mellish shared how NPRB is working to adapt its operations to COVID. In the spring, they sent messages to PIs, to let them know staff were working virtually, but still working. Staff are working on ways to keep projects moving forward. A survey was sent to PIs in early August to help inform the Board on what stakeholders are going through, with 27 of 42 PIs contacted responding. For example, 96% of respondents said there has been a negative impact to their NPRB project due to COVID. There have been significant impacts to both field plans and lab efforts that varies by project. A second survey was sent last week to address more specific funding needs.



Jo-Ann also outlined a two-part staff proposal to the Board to provide a supplemental funding opportunity to currently open projects and using the 2021 RFP Focus section to encourage smaller, shorter projects that may have resulted from changing plans due to COVID.

10. Core Program

2021 RFP: Jo-Ann said the RFP is a long-term document requiring less editing each year, after the major structural overhaul in 2018. Each RFP research category includes long-term general topics of interest as well as topics of particular interest that are updated every year. It is the intent to review and revise, as needed, the general topics of interest every four years. This year the category under review is Oceanography and Productivity. The Panel reviewed this section as revised by the Science Panel and made no additional suggestions.

Panel members self-selected into breakout rooms to discuss this year's topics of particular interest as derived from website suggestions in the following categories: Oceanography and Productivity, Fisheries and Invertebrates, Marine Birds and Mammals, and Human Dimensions. The panel as a whole reviewed the edited comments and agreed on modifications and endorsements by consensus.

Jo-Ann asked for input on the use of the Focus category to try out short-term projects to be responsive to COVID situations. Panel members expressed support for this approach.

11. Other Matters

2021 Schedule: The next Advisory Panel meeting is currently scheduled April 27-28, 2021.

2022 Schedule: NPRB staff put forward a potential change in the meeting schedule starting in 2022. NPRB asked the Advisory Panel for input on moving their normal spring meeting to one week earlier. The panelists did not have a preference.

MOTION: Adjourn the meeting.

ACTION: Motion passed with no objections.

Meeting adjourned at 11:31 a.m.