

Final Summary

North Pacific Research Board
Advisory Panel Meeting
EVOSTC Conference Room
Anchorage, Alaska
May 19, 2003

The Advisory Panel held its inaugural meeting on May 19, 2003, starting at 10 a.m. Present were Cora Crome, Gale Vick, Heather McCarty, John Gerster, Michael Bradley, Patricia Cochran, Paul MacGregor, Shirley Kelly, and Simon Kinneen. Arni Thomson could not attend. The meeting was staffed by Clarence Pautzke and Paula Banks. The Board meeting notebooks for May were used as the basis for the Advisory Panel meeting. The AP took the following actions.

Election of Officers

The Panel will elect officers at its next meeting. The Panel approved Heather McCarty to present this meeting summary to the Board.

Decision on Staggered Terms

Shortly after introductions and an overview of the NPRB and its activities, panel members drew lots to determine who could be reappointed for a second term after the first 2-year term expires. The Board has established a policy that terms will be staggered to provide continuity during changeovers in membership and requested the panel to draw lots at their first meeting. Here are the results:

1. One two-year term and cannot be reappointed immediately:
Thomson, Crome, Vick, MacGregor, and Kelly.
2. One two-year term and can be reappointed immediately to second two-year term:
McCarty, Gerster, Bradley, Cochran, and Kinneen.

Tab 3: Confidentiality of Video and Photographic Information

While no specific action was taken on this issue of confidentiality, the panel recognized the importance of resolving it if commercial fishing vessels and owners are going to participate in cooperative research sponsored by the Board. Industry needs to be given complete assurances that video and photographs of deck operations will be protected from Freedom of Information and other requests which may result in the materials being used for purposes other than the intended research. The AP also talked about the participating vessel owners paying for and thus owning the video equipment and videos as one way to maintain confidentiality.

Tab 5: Draft Research Priorities for 2004

Review of Proposals. The AP would like to be involved in the review of proposals. The panel recognizes that the Board must maintain high scientific standards in the research it funds and that the scientific merit of each proposal will be established through the technical review process and by the Science Panel, but believes it could play a very useful role in advising the Board on whether a particular proposal adequately addresses the Board's mission and goals. This review would be performed after the Science Panel has established the scientific merits of a proposal. The AP would be provided the confidential technical and Science Panel reviews and would develop its own report on the proposals.

Native Science. The AP discussed the need for Native science input to the Board process and requests that the Board add up to two Native scientists to the Science Panel to help review proposals. In an aside, several members indicated dissatisfaction with the level of NRC committee interaction with Native interests. The AP also anticipates that there will be additional Native representation on the AP itself with the naming of an additional 10 members this coming fall.

Ecosystems Definitions. The AP recognizes that fisheries management will be moving toward ecosystems-based management in the coming years and that research will need to develop information that is responsive to those management needs. The AP requested additional information on the meaning of ecosystems-based management and the definition of “ecosystem.”

Revisions to the Annual RFP Cycle. The AP reviewed the annual request for proposals and would like the Board to consider possible adjustments, given that there have been drastic reductions in the availability of funds for research as a result of low yields on 1-year Treasury bills. The Board may want to consider alternating years for gathering proposals on particular subjects or regions. For example, the Board might call for contaminants proposals every other year, or spotlight one region such as the Bering Sea, in one year, and other regions in alternating years, to reduce the number of proposals.

The Board may also want to consider a pre-proposal process wherein only summaries are submitted and then screened, and then full proposals are requested only for those proposals that pass the initial screening in terms of being responsive to RFP priorities and the Board’s mission and goals statement.

Another approach to reducing the number of proposals and focusing research, is to have the Board and the AP keenly aware of other science programs, funding, and research activities, so that the Board’s funds can be channeled to areas of need and possibly leveraged with funding support from other sources. The Executive Director referred to the project underway by Two Crow to provide that information. The AP discussed the fact that the NPRB was originally designed to be a coordinative body for marine research in the North Pacific. For example, the Board may not want to fund projects in the GEM area of the Northern Gulf unless they were co-funded with GEM monies.

The AP also discussed using a team approach to a research theme, combining several researchers in the same field to attack a problem. They also discussed an approach where the RFP was issued to solicit answers to a series of very specific research questions.

Draft Research Priorities for 2004. The Panel had a lengthy discussion of which priorities should be deleted from this coming RFP because of substantial reductions in funding. While the Panel recognizes that the breadth of current priorities needs to be narrowed, it is unable to determine exactly which ones to eliminate at this meeting. The Panel would like to review the priorities once again after all the NRC site visits have been completed and summaries furnished to the AP. The Panel will review the summaries at a meeting scheduled tentatively for June 25, starting at 10 a.m.

Although no consensus was reached, there was much discussion of eliminating Invasive Species and Contaminants from the list of research priorities. Several AP members were very opposed to eliminating Contaminants, as this is a huge concern in coastal Alaska communities, especially amongst subsistence users.

The Board may want to consider establishing a small committee of Board, AP and Science Panel members to develop recommendations for this fall. And rather than reworking all the research priorities at this time, the Board may want to consider just sending out alternate approaches for reducing research categories (as noted above, alternating priorities, regions, etc.), and wait until this fall to make the actual deletions or changes in the RFP.

Tab #6: NRC Process

The AP discussed means of adding AP input into the Science Plan.

The Advisory Panel adjourned at approximately 5:20 p.m.