



# 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

### Meeting Summary May 4-7, 2015 NPRB Conference Room Anchorage, Alaska

The North Pacific Research Board met from May 4 through May 7, 2015 in Anchorage, Alaska. In attendance were Tara Riemer (interim chair), David Benson, David Benton, Dorothy Childers, John Gauvin, Katrina Hoffman, Dan Hull, Michele Longo Eder, Paul MacGregor, Carl Markon, Doug Mecum, Gerry Merrigan, Caryn Rea, Charlie Swanton, and Capt. Phil Thorne.

Brad Smith was absent and representatives from the Department of State and the Office of Naval Research were not currently appointed. Mike Castellini and Mike Miller, while nominated for reappointment by the Governor of Alaska, had not yet received notification of their formal reappointment by the Secretary of Commerce; they attended some portions of the meeting that were open to the public.

The meeting was staffed by Denby Lloyd, Matt Baker, Danielle Dickson, Jo-Ann Mellish, Brendan Smith, and Susan Dixon.

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

Interim chair Tara Riemer called the meeting to order at 8:35 am, and it was determined that a quorum was present. Staff provided a safety briefing. Michele Longo Eder, new board member from the State of Oregon (and previous board member representing the US Arctic Research Commission), and Dan Hull, new member representing the North Pacific Fishery Management Council were introduced. New staff members Dr. Jo-Ann Mellish (Annual Program Manager) and Mr. Brendan Smith (Communications and Outreach Director) were also introduced.

**MOTION:** Elect Dan Hull chair.  
**Action:** Motion passed with no objections.

**MOTION:** Elect Tara Riemer vice-chair.  
**Action:** Motion passed with no objections.

Discussion of the number of board members required to constitute a quorum and a presentation by the Alaska Ocean Observing System (AOOS) were suggested for addition to the agenda under Item 11, Other Matters.

**MOTION:** Approve agenda as amended.

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

The board next moved to approval of the meeting summary for the Fall 2014 board meeting:

**MOTION:**                      **Approve summary from September 2014 Board meeting as written.**  
**Action:**                      **Motion passed with no objections.**

The chairs of the Science and Advisory panels next provided brief reports about their spring meetings. John Gauvin provided a brief summary of his visit to the 3<sup>rd</sup> PICES/ICES meeting on Climate Change and the Oceans in Santos City, Brazil.

Susan Dixon provided a summary of NPRB's travel reimbursement regulations, including the need for submission of receipts for each expenditure above \$25 and submission of a completed travel claim within 30 days of travel.

## 2. Science Plan

Staff provided a summary of the current NPRB Science Plan and outlined intentions to update the Science Plan to allow incorporation of recent advancements in science as well as recognition of how NPRB procedures have evolved. The science and advisory panels agreed that the plan, published in 2005, should be updated. Staff suggested that three groups be formed to conduct the update: a Science Plan Working Group comprising board and panel members, an External Review Committee, and a Drafting Team.

Staff clarified that the structure of the science plan is not anticipated to change significantly, rather, elements of the plan would be updated. The science panel chairman noted that advancements could be made to encourage interdisciplinary science.

The board suggested that an incremental approach be considered that would allow the working group and the board to think more broadly about major revisions to the plan. Ideas included consideration of facilitating international collaborations and more carefully addressing how NPRB should fund science that addresses pressing fishery management needs.

The board asked for additional detail from staff regarding the process, specifically, how the science plan working group and the drafting team would interact (a schematic was requested).

The board also suggested that a retrospective analysis be conducted to look for agreement between the science plan and the science that the board has funded. It was further suggested that the National Research Council could be approached to participate in this process, as well as to review drafts of the updated science plan.

Board members who expressed interest in participating on the Science Plan Working Group included: Gerry Merrigan and Caryn Rea. Members of the Science Plan Working Group will be appointed at the discretion of the chair.

**MOTION:**                      **Approve proposal to update the Science Plan, including endorsement of the three groups, with the Science Plan Working Group to bring a plan for action to the board at the fall meeting in 2015.**  
**Action:**                      **Motion withdrawn.**

**MOTION:** Approve plans to update the Science Plan, including formation of a Working Group (four board members, one Science Panel member, and one Advisory Panel member). This Science Plan Working Group would create a scoping document and timeline for update of the Science Plan and make recommendations for membership of an External Review Group, to be considered by the board at the fall meeting 2015.

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

### 3. Budget Review

Staff reported that the annual audit of the NPRB by KPMG was successfully completed.

Staff explained that NPRB's budget was affected by federal sequestration last year. NPRB will soon submit a request for Grant 7, Year 1 including placeholders for \$4.5 M for the annual research program, plus funding for the long-term monitoring program and the Arctic program. The Office of Management and Budget, NOAA central office, and the NMFS Alaska Region Office appear to disagree on how sequestration should affect EIRF funds, including exactly what is available for Grant 7, Year 1 funding and whether or not sequestered funds should ultimately be returned to NPRB or even to the EIRF.

Staff reported that the outlook for the near-term is stable. However, because federal interest rates remain low, the NPRB budget is projected to gradually decrease over the next several years. The 15% administrative cap is a concern for NPRB capacity in the future. Additionally, funds may be lacking to develop future IERPs beyond the Arctic program.

**MOTION:** Approve the proposed budget outlined in Attachment 3a, with advice to staff that the Arctic line item be adjusted as necessary depending upon the final award amount for Grant 7, Year 1.

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

Staff clarified that it is the intent that funds taken from the Arctic line item in Grant 7, Year 1 would later be returned to the Arctic program to retain a total of \$7M for the Arctic program overall.

### 4. Summary of Previously Funded Projects

Staff provided an overview of research currently funded by NPRB, noting that since 2002, NPRB has funded 351 projects in response to the annual program RFP, and has awarded a total of \$58 million. Details were provided regarding the allocation of these funds among research categories and large marine ecosystems.

The 2015 RFP was released on October 3, 2014, with a funding target of \$5.9 million. One-hundred and five proposals were submitted by the December 5, 2014 deadline, requesting a total of \$24 million. Staff reminded the board that it was NPRB's intent to integrate Arctic projects funded through the 2015 RFP with the Arctic program and that NPRB will need to find additional funds to support travel for PIs to the annual PI meetings for the Arctic program, as well as logistics planning meetings prior to each coordinated field season.

In preparation for this board meeting, 835 peer review invitations were extended in 2015 and 310 completed reviews were received. Staff noted that approximately 25% of peer reviews were provided by international colleagues in 2015. The science and advisory panels evaluated the proposals according to the criteria applied in recent years.

It was noted that NPRB could send letters to the supervisors of peer reviewers to acknowledge their service, and this could provide an incentive to peer reviewers. The National Research Council does this for peer reviewers.

The board acknowledged their authority to revise the conflict of interest policy for external peer reviewers, however, no action was taken. It was suggested that double-blind external peer reviews could be conducted to eliminate some conflicts of interest; the science panel chairman noted that this would be very different from the way peer reviews are typically conducted, and removing information that would divulge the applicants' identities would be difficult for staff, given that salary and curriculum vitae are typically required to complete a thorough review.

Board members present signed the annual declaration stating that they have read, understand, and agree to abide by the NPRB conflict of interest policy.

## 5. 2015 Request for Proposals

A total of 105 proposals were submitted in response to the 2015 Annual RFP and the science panel ranked 34 proposals in Tier 1a, 20 proposals in Tier 1b, 20 proposals in Tier 2, and 31 proposals in Tier 3. Thirty-four proposals were highlighted for stakeholder relevance by the advisory panel. OSRI expressed interest in supporting four of the proposals should the board recommend them for funding.

Staff provided a brief description of each of the proposals that had been ranked by the science panel as either Tier 1 or Tier 2. Those proposals that had been ranked by the science panel as Tier 3 were not described or discussed, in compliance with the board's policy to only consider those proposals that the science panel recommend be considered for funding (i.e., ranked Tier 1 or 2). After each staff description, the science panel chair and/or the Science Director provided a summary from the Science Panel's perspective. The advisory panel chair described the stakeholder relevance for those proposals flagged during their meeting the week prior.

The board suggested that it would be helpful to see which science panel members were recused from discussion of each proposal and asked that staff provide that information.

Staff pointed out that a substantial amount of unobligated funds remains on Grant 6 that must be spent by September 30, 2018. Thus an additional million dollars might effectively be included in the 2015 annual program.

The board then discussed, via main motion and amendments, the proposals that were ranked Tier 1 and Tier 2 by the science panel.

**MAIN MOTION:**        **Recommend to the Department of Commerce all Tier 1a and 1b proposals received in response to the 2015 annual RFP.**

**Amendment 1:**        **Remove proposal 3.**

- Action on 1:** Amendment passed with no objections.
- Amendment 2:** Remove proposal 6.  
**Action on 2:** Amendment failed, with a vote of 3-2 (yea-nay) of the Executive Committee but a vote of 4-5 (yea-nay) of the remainder of the board.
- Amendment 3:** Remove proposal 12.  
**Action on 3:** Amendment passed with no objections.
- Amendment 4:** Remove proposal 24.  
**Action on 4:** Amendment passed with no objections.
- Amendment 5:** Remove proposal 29.  
**Action on 5:** Amendment passed with three objections.
- Amendment 6:** Remove proposal 20.  
**Action on 6:** Amendment passed with no objections.
- Amendment 7:** Remove proposal 22.  
**Action on 7:** Amendment passed with one objection.
- Amendment 8:** Remove proposal 40.  
**Action on 8:** Amendment passed with one objection.
- Amendment 9:** Remove proposal 38.  
**Action on 9:** Amendment passed with no objections.
- Amendment 10:** Remove proposal 52.  
**Action on 10:** Amendment passed with no objections.
- Amendment 11:** Remove proposal 35.  
**Action on 11:** Amendment failed, with a vote of 5-0 of the Executive Committee but a vote of 4-6 of the remainder of the board.
- Amendment 12:** Remove proposal 32.  
**Action on 12:** Amendment passed with one objection.
- Amendment 13:** Remove proposal 44.  
**Action on 13:** Amendment passed with no objections.
- Amendment 14:** Remove proposal 61.  
**Action on 14:** Amendment passed with no objections.
- Amendment 15:** Remove proposal 62.  
**Action on 15:** Amendment passed with no objections.
- Amendment 16:** Remove proposal 66.  
**Action on 16:** Amendment passed with no objections.
- Amendment 17:** Remove proposal 69.  
**Action on 17:** Amendment passed with three objections.

- Amendment 18:** Remove proposal 72.  
**Action on 18:** Amendment passed with no objections.
- Amendment 19:** Apply condition to proposal 67 to require a letter of support from community of Yakutat.  
**Action on 19:** Amendment passed with no objections.
- Amendment 20:** Remove proposal 76.  
**Action on 20:** Amendment passed with no objections.
- Amendment 21:** Remove proposal 77.  
**Action on 21:** Amendment withdrawn.
- Amendment 22:** Remove proposal 75.  
**Action on 22:** Amendment passed with no objections.
- Amendment 23:** Add proposal 79 (from Tier 2).  
**Action on 23:** Amendment passed with one objection.
- Amendment 24:** Remove proposal 91.  
**Action on 24:** Amendment passed with no objections.
- Amendment 25:** Remove proposal 86 and add proposal 85.  
**Action on 25:** Amendment passed with no objections.
- Amendment 26:** Remove proposal 89.  
**Action on 26:** Amendment passed with no objections.
- Amendment 27:** Remove proposal 90.  
**Action on 27:** Amendment passed with no objections.
- Amendment 28:** Remove proposal 99.  
**Action on 28:** Amendment passed with three objections.
- Amendment 29:** Remove proposal 103.  
**Action on 29:** Amendment passed with no objections.

The board asked about the importance of synthesis opportunity for GOAIERP and staff provided history about the impetus and process for inviting the synthesis proposal under the 2015 Annual RFP.

- Amendment 30:** Add proposal 105.  
**Action on 30:** Amendment passed with one objection.
- Amendment 31:** Remove proposal 104.  
**Action on 31:** Amendment passed with one objection.
- Amendment 32:** Reinstate proposal 29.  
**Action on 32:** Amendment passed with one objection.

**Amendment 33: Remove project 85.**  
**Action on 33: Amendment failed, with a vote of 2-1 of the Executive Committee but a vote of 2-7 of the remainder of the board.**

Thus ended the round of amendments to the main motion.

**Final action: Main motion passed as amended with no objections.**

It was noted that proposals 27 and 74 would each receive funding contributions of \$50,000 from the Oil Spill Recovery Institute (OSRI). Thus, the net effect of the main motion, as amended, was a recommendation to the Department of Commerce to approve funding of (\$7,005,159 – \$100,000) = \$6,905,159 to be distributed among 32 specific projects in NPRB’s 2015 annual program.

## 6. Graduate Student Research Awards

Staff reported that a total of 38 applications were successfully submitted for the 2015 GSRA program, including applications from 13 Master’s level and 25 PhD level students. The awards are for \$25,000 each. The board heard SP summaries of the five MS students who achieved a score of at least 17/20 and the seven PhD students who achieved a score of at least 19/20.

**MOTION: Award MS student applications 1122, 1116, and 1120.**  
**Action: Motion passed with two objections.**

**MOTION: Award PhD student application 1119.**

**Substitute motion: Award the top six PhD students.**  
**Action on substitute: Substitute motion failed, with two objections from the Executive Committee (because only four Executive Committee members were present, the required three affirmative votes from the committee were not achieved).**

**Action on main: Motion withdrawn.**

**MOTION: Award the top six PhD students 1096, 1100, 1115, 1118, 1119, and 1123.**

**Amendment: Add MS application 1105.**

**Action on amendment: Amendment failed with two objections from the Executive Committee (thus precluding three affirmative committee votes from the four committee members present) and one objection from the remainder of the board.**

**Action on main: Motion passed with two objections.**

**MOTION: Remove MS 1120 and replace with 1105.**

**Action: Motion failed, with a vote from the Executive Committee of 1-3 and a vote from the remainder of the board of 4-6.**

The combined motions for the 2015 GSRA program result in granting of three M.S. level awards and six PhD level awards, for a total of \$225,000.

## **7. Communications and Outreach Update**

The new Communications and Outreach Director reported that staff are reviewing the draft communications strategy (public affairs plan) that was presented to the board last fall and working on implementing aspects of it. Priorities include developing evaluation metrics for outreach products, improving legacy projects, streamlining workflow, lowering production costs for outreach materials, and improving organizational branding.

Staff provided an update on communications and outreach activities that have occurred since the fall meeting. Highlights included:

- a) Participation in the AMSS Communicating Ocean Sciences Workshop,
- b) Production of the NPRB biennial report,
- c) Distribution of four videos about the Gulf of Alaska Project, and
- d) Completion of Bering Sea Project headlines.

Board members also viewed the finalist entries in the 2015 NPRB photo contest and cast their votes for the top three photos in the adult category (there was only a single submission in the youth category).

The board suggested participating in the Young Fishermen's Forum and reaching out to Anchorage high school science teachers.

## **8. Bering Sea Project**

Staff reported that final reports have been received for all 25 BSIERP projects. Twenty of these projects have submitted all required data and metadata and have been closed out and the remaining five projects are expected to be closed within the next two months.

Data and metadata are archived at the National Center for Atmospheric Research, Earth Observing Laboratory. Over 1,000 requests for data have been submitted since the archive was established.

Four special issues of Deep Sea Research II dedicated to the Bering Sea Project have been produced and the online Bering Sea Project publication library now contains 157 papers, books, and dissertations, of which 107 are BSIERP publications. Work on a Bering Sea Magazine, highlighting the variety and results of research conducted under the Bering Sea Project, is nearing completion.

## **9. Gulf of Alaska Project**

Staff reported that the 6th annual GOA IERP PI meeting was held April 7-11, 2015 in Fairbanks, Alaska. The meeting was designed to integrate the findings of the program, beginning with a review of what has been learned about the transport, early life survival, and recruitment of the five focal groundfish species. Final products of the program are beginning to take shape, and final reports are expected December 1, 2015. A proposal was received in response to NPRB's 2015 annual RFP to conduct further synthesis of data collected during the course of the project.

Sixteen manuscripts have been submitted for the first special issue in Deep Sea Research II and are in various stages of review. Papers will be published electronically as they are accepted. Two other special issues are planned that will focus on cross-disciplinary analyses and products of synthesis.

Sitka Sound Science Center produced four brief videos about the Gulf of Alaska Project that are available on the project's website and Facebook page. The project has an active social media campaign, engaging 706 followers on Facebook as of April 17, 2015.

## 10. Arctic Program

Staff reported that the Pacific Marine Arctic Regional Synthesis (PacMARS) project final report was received in mid-January and was approved. The report is available on the project website: <http://pacmars.cbl.umces.edu/>. The web-based data inventory hosted by NCAR is now public and may be accessed via the same website. Several manuscripts for a special issue publication are in preparation.

Staff reminded the board that during the May 2014 meeting, NPRB decided to allocate \$6 million towards the development of an Arctic Program and during their September meeting, the board allocated an additional \$1 million to be held in reserve to fill gaps in the Arctic Program following proposal review and selection and also formally expressed their intent to make additional funds available for synthesis for the Arctic Program in future years.

Staff explained that since the fall meeting several projects funded by other institutions have committed to integrate with the NPRB Arctic Program. These include projects funded by BOEM, NOAA, USGS, NSF, and others. These projects were detailed in an appendix to the draft RFP.

Staff shared drafts of the Arctic Program request for pre-proposals (RFP) and implementation plan, solicited comments, and asked for board approval to release the RFP. After substantial discussion on a variety of points, the board approved release of the Arctic Program RFP as well as the implementation timeline. In addition, the board specified that vessel costs should not be included in the pre-proposal cost sections, although discussion of needed logistics and any intended in-kind contribution to such logistics would be expected.

## 11. Other Matters

### a. Alaska Marine Science Symposium

Staff reported on the success of the 2015 AMSS and solicited comments on the organization of the meeting, specifically, whether concurrent sessions should be considered. The board endorsed preserving the current format of the meeting. Staff also announced that the timing of future AMSSs will be a week later in January, in order to avoid the Martin Luther King Day holiday.

### b. Progress report protocol

Staff proposed changes to the Annual Program schedule and format for progress reports. Changes included:

- reducing the frequency of reports from twice a year to once per year;
- changing the report deadline to better align with the schedule for invoicing;
- simplifying the required content; and
- implementing an online submission process and restricting access to progress reports.

The board suggested a list of events that would require immediate communication with the program manager (as outlined in the subaward agreement). Staff were encouraged to require semi-annual check-box style communication if the full progress reports move to an annual schedule.

c. Appointments to Advisory and Science panels\*

In closed session, the board unanimously approved appointments to the science and advisory panels: reappointing Carin Ashjian and Tuula Holmen to the Science Panel, reappointing Chris Krenz, Edward Poulsen, and Steve Reifenhohl to the Advisory Panel, appointing Melissa Haltuch to the Science Panel to replace Bill Wilson, and appointing Louis Brzuzy to the Advisory Panel to finish the term of Michael Macrander.

d. Nomination of fishing industry representative to the board\*

In closed session, the full board considered a number of candidates for nomination to the fishing industry seat on the board. In past years this nomination had been provided by the Executive Committee without consultation with the remainder of the board. At this meeting, the Executive Committee sought the input of the remainder of the board. However, the Executive Committee and the remaining board members were divided on the choice of nominees. Therefore, after considerable deliberation, the Executive Committee decided to forward its nomination of Jan Jacobs from American Seafoods for appointment by the Secretary of Commerce to serve in the fishing industry seat on the board.

e. Panel member recruitment and retention

The board considered requesting that some Science Panel members whose terms are expiring in 2016, and who are not eligible for reappointment, be asked to extend their membership for an additional year due to concerns over loss of institutional memory if seven panel members depart simultaneously. Three of these seven Science Panel members have expressed interest in renewal and two would agree if necessary.

**MOTION: Extend the terms for Science Panel members Pat Tester, Stew Grant, Pat Livingston, and Tom Royer to May 2017.**

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

The board suggested that one of the new Science Panel members appointed next year begin with a two-year term to even the staggering of panel members.

Staff were asked to present the board with a recommendation for dealing with Advisory Panel membership at the board's fall meeting.

The board recommended that the advertisement for panel members be posted on the NPFMC website.

f. Outside funding requests

The board has a self-imposed limit for outside meeting support of up to \$50,000 per calendar year (based on when the meeting will take place). Requests for 2015 exceed \$50,000 and staff asked for guidance in considering requests once the \$50,000 annual limit is met or exceeded. Staff was instructed that the Executive Committee should be approached about supporting requests beyond \$50,000. The board considered a \$10,000 request by the World Seabird Union and decided not to support it given that the annual limit for 2015 has been exceeded.

g. Meeting schedule for 2015-2016

The board will meet in Kodiak the week of September 21, 2015 and in Anchorage the week of May 2, 2016 (potentially a five-day meeting).

h. AOOS update

AOOS Executive Director, Molly McCammon, provided an update on recent activities. The national program is going through congressional reauthorization, and is stable and growing. AOOS is handling

data management for a number of large projects, including MARES, AMBON, GOAIERP, and the EVOS Gulf Watch Alaska and Herring projects.

NOAA Weather Service provided funding to AOOS for monitoring water levels (observations, models, erosion, sea ice, inundation, flooding) in the Bering Strait and Norton Sound regions.

AOOS has also received grants from National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) and a Kenai fish habitat group to develop a Cook Inlet beluga response tool.

i. Definition of quorum

According to NPRB policy and procedures, three Executive Committee and nine other board members currently represent a quorum for the conduct of board business. According to federal statute, the board needs three Executive Committee votes to take any action. However, for the remainder of the board there often are times when a quorum requirement of nine members is difficult to achieve, especially since the Department of State and U.S. Navy seats have remained vacant for some time. The board considered reducing the number of other board members necessary for a quorum.

**MOTION:**                      **Redefine the NPRB quorum to three of five Executive Committee members and seven of the remaining board members.**  
**Action:**                        **Motion passed with no objections.**

The chair asked if there was any further business to be conducted.

**MOTION:**                      **To adjourn.**  
**Action:**                        **Motion passed with no objections.**

The meeting adjourned at 4:54 pm, six minutes ahead of schedule.