



North Pacific Research Board – Fall 2024 Meeting Minutes
NPRB Conference Room, Anchorage, Alaska
September 23-24, 2024

The Board met at the NPRB office September 23-24, 2024, in Anchorage, AK. The meeting was attended by Board members: Matt Alward (Chair), Joe Anthony, Forrest Bowers, Becca Robbins Gisclair, David Kennedy, Nicole Kimball, Brad Moran, Jamal Moss, Annika Saltman, Emily Shroyer (virtual the morning of September 23), Brad Smith, Dee Williams, Krystyna Wolniakowski, and Wei Ying Wong. Absent was Katrina Hoffman. Ragnar Alstrom participated as a guest as NPRB is awaiting his reappointment to the Board. Also in attendance were Brad Harris, Science Panel Chair, and Caitlin Yeager, Advisory Panel Chair, and Kristin Ciecziel, NOAA Grant Manager for NPRB (on September 23). Attending staff: Matthew Baker, Danielle Dickson, Lily Frey, Jo-Ann Mellish, Lynn Palensky (Executive Director) and Brendan Smith.

Call to Order/Approve Agenda

Chair Matt Alward called the meeting to order at 9:00 am and welcomed new Board members Nicole Kimball, designee for the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, and CDR Joe Anthony, the designee for the US Coast Guard. Lynn Palensky, Executive Director, welcomed everyone and provided an overview of the meeting agenda.

MOTION: Elect Nicole Kimball as Vice Chair.

Action: Motion passed with no objections.

MOTION: Approve the fall 2024 meeting agenda.

Action: Motion passed with no objections.

MOTION: Approve the spring 2024 meeting summary.

Action: Motion passed with no objections.

The Science Panel (SP) Chair, Brad Harris, presented a summary of the Fall SP meeting. He reported that four new members joined the SP and actively participated. The SP focused on recommendations on Core proposals and IERP pre-proposals.

The Advisory Panel (AP) Chair, Caitlin Yeager, presented a summary of the AP meeting. She reported that two new members joined the AP and actively participated. The AP recommended a subset of Core Proposals and IERP pre-proposals. The AP reviewed and commented on all IERP pre-proposals.

Executive Director's Report

ED Lynn Palensky provided a summary of the Executive Committee (EC) meeting held in August, news and accomplishments, outside engagement and outside funding requests since the spring board meeting. That was followed by a short budget report including projected annual funding and audit results. Lynn noted Murkowski's inclusion of \$2.5M in congressionally directed spending for NPRB for the Northern Bering Sea Integrated Ecosystem Research Program (NBS IERP), a progress update on short-term investment of NPRB's EIRF funding before it goes into NOAA grant system, NPRB's draft legislation, the response to the NBS IERP pre-proposal RFP (13 proposals), hiring an AMSS new

coordinator, formalized a funding partnership with Alaska Ocean Observing System (AOOS), and a re-launch of the Photo Awards program. Funding projections are on a general increase from FY 2025 and beyond. The FY 2023 audit is complete and clean.

Partnerships

Matthew Baker, Science Director, provided an overview of our current MOU partners, including the Oil Spill Recovery Institute, Bering Sea Fisheries Research Foundation, Pollock Conservation Cooperative Research Center, and the new partnership agreement signed with Alaska Ocean Observing System. A brief review of the Basin-Scale to Coastal Impacts (BECI) and Indigenous Sentinels Network (ISN) projects was presented. Members asked for a copy of the ISN final report.

Staff reported on developments related to NPRB collaboration with Alaska Department of Fish and Game in the review of research associated with crab disaster funds. Staff provided details on the proposed process.

Core Program

Jo-Ann Mellish, Senior Program Manager, summarized the process for the Board to consider funding 17 Core proposals. The Board funded \$1.3 million in projects in the spring, with \$2 M available for funding projects at this fall meeting. There were 21 proposals submitted, requesting a total of \$8.6 million dollars. Scientific and technical evaluation by external reviewers and the Science Panel narrowed the field to eight Tier 1 proposals and nine Tier 2 proposals. Four proposals were ranked Tier 3 and were not eligible for funding. The Advisory Panel recommended six of the Tier 1 proposals and one Tier 2 proposal for important stakeholder relevance. After discussion, the Board voted to recommend funding six (6) proposals. Motions on main category and flex grants were made separately reflecting the separate funding sources.

**MOTION: Fund proposals 4529, 4610, 4596, 4560, and 4641.
The amended motion passed with no objections.**

**MOTION: Fund proposal 4509 in the flex grants category.
The motion passed with no objections.**

The Board was reminded of upcoming changes to the Core program timeline necessary to accommodate the launch of the new IERP program. The 2025 RFP will remain in effect until September 30, 2026. Main category proposals will be accepted through January 14, 2025. Flex grants will be accepted for the duration of the RFP. The 2027 RFP is anticipated to include all proposal categories with a funding level of \$4.5 million. Given the short period of time and funding level for the main category proposals (est. \$2 million), no topical content was changed from the 2024 RFP to the 2025 RFP. The Board was asked to consider the individual proposal caps for the 2025 RFP.

**MOTION: Set a \$500,000 proposal cap for all categories except flex grants.
Action: The motion failed.**

The caps will remain the same as in the 2024 RFP.

Integrated Ecosystem Research Program

Matthew Baker provided an overview of the Integrated Ecosystem Research Program, its unique goals, and the outcomes of past IERPs that focused on the Bering Sea, Gulf of Alaska, and Arctic. Danielle Dickson, Senior Program Manager, explained the pre-proposal review process and review criteria for the Northern Bering Sea Integrated Ecosystem Research Program (NBS IERP).

Senator Murkowski's office notified staff that NPRB may anticipate an additional \$2.5 million to fund the NBS IERP beyond the \$6.5 million the Board advertised in the RFP, pending Congressional approval. Danielle has reached out to more than a dozen potential funding partners and shared more information about those conversations via the "Efforts to Gather Input" attachment. Members provided potential ideas for funding partners.

The RFP states that, when pre-proposals are invited to submit full proposals, PIs have the option of receiving \$10,000 in funding to support the further development of proposals with Indigenous Co-Investigators. Staff noted that, of the eight pre-proposals that the Board would consider, all indicated interest in these funds and the initiative.

The Board considered eight pre-proposals ranked Tier 1 or Tier 2 by the Science Panel, two of which were endorsed by the Advisory Panel. Five pre-proposals were ranked Tier 3.

MOTION: Invite PIs of pre-proposals 2264, 2268, 2267, 2270, 2274, and 2276 to submit full proposals for consideration.

Action: The amended motion passed with one objection.

The Board confirmed that the budget of full proposals will be allowed to increase by up to 20% of the pre-proposal budget or \$250,000, whichever is less.

Communications & Outreach

Brendan Smith, Communications & Outreach Director, discussed the Photo Awards and the Board voted on the entries.

Updates were provided on other outreach and engagement activities including plans for the Alaska Marine Science Symposium keynotes and Communicating Ocean Science Workshop and the planned exhibit at the Anchorage Museum.

Other Matters

Matthew Baker noted anticipated panel vacancies, including 4 Science Panel members and 2 Advisory Panel members that will conclude their terms in May 2025. Staff requested Board approval to recruit for these vacancies in January-February 2025, to review candidates with the Nominations Committee in March 2025, and to present candidates for review and selection at the 2025 spring Board meeting. The Board confirmed this plan. A member volunteered to join the Nominations Committee.

The Board discussed the Fishing Industry seat. Matt Alward currently sits in that seat and his term ends in October 2024. Legislation may allow renewal for another term, however, if it does not pass, the Board will need to nominate another candidate from the three nominations received. The EC suggested the Board vote to delay nominating the Fishing Industry seat to allow the legislation to be considered during this congressional year. If the Board was amenable, the EC recommended the Board authorize the Executive Committee to make the nomination decision in between the Fall and Spring Board meeting.

MOTION: Delegate authority to the Executive Committee to nominate the fishing industry seat representative on or before the end of the congressional year as follows:

- **Matthew Alward if the NPRB legislation passes.**
- **The top candidate if legislation does not pass.**

Action: The motion passed with no objections.

The spring 2025 meeting will be April 29-May 1, 2025, in Anchorage.

The fall 2025 meeting will be September 17-18, 2025, in Anchorage.

Meeting adjourned at 10:50 am.