



**North Pacific Research Board
Meeting Summary
Fall Board Meeting
September 21 - 22, 2021**

The North Pacific Research Board held a virtual meeting September 21 - 22, 2021. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 travel restrictions and health concerns, the meeting was held over Zoom. The meeting was attended by Board members: Ragnar Alstrom, Forrest Bowers, Shannon Carroll, Becca Robbins Gisclair, Katrina Hoffman, Tyler Janowski, Doug Mecum, Andy Mezirow (Chair), Bradley Moran, Tara Riemer, Rex Rock, Jr., Cheryl Rosa, Annika Saltman, Brad Smith, Conor Sullivan and Dee Williams. Matt Alward (Board nominee), Krystyna Wolniakowski (Board nominee), and Kristin Ciciel (NOAA Grants Office) attended in an observational capacity. The meeting was staffed by: Lynn Palensky (Executive Director), Matthew Baker, Danielle Dickson, Jo-Ann Mellish, Brendan Smith and Kayla Wagenfehr. The meeting was also attended by the Science Panel (SP) Chair, Brad Harris and the Advisory Panel (AP) Chair, Ruth Christiansen (9/21 only).

Call to Order/Approve Agenda

Chair Andy Mezirow called the meeting to order at 9:00 am. after determining a quorum was present. Lynn Palensky, Executive Director (ED), welcomed everyone followed by a brief round of introductions from all Board members and Staff.

Kayla Wagenfehr reviewed the virtual meeting protocol.

MOTION: Elect Tara Riemer as Interim Vice Chair.
Action: Motion passed with no objections.

The Executive Director (ED) walked through the agenda and noting key decisions for the Board to consider. The meeting was scheduled to take place over two days.

MOTION: Approve the fall 2021 meeting agenda.
Action: Motion passed with no objections.

The Board was invited to comment on the spring 2021 meeting summary.

MOTION: Approve the spring 2021 meeting summary.
Action: Motion passed with no objections.

Conflict of interest (COI) declarations for proposal review were received from all members.

Prior to the meeting, staff received signed acknowledgment from all Board members that they read, understand, and agree to abide by the current Conflict of Interest Policy, since the COI policy was updated during the spring 2021 Board meeting.



Executive Director Report

- **Budget Report:** The ED provided an overview on NPRB current budget status for both science and administration, grant status and the current investment strategy for the Environmental Improvement and Restoration Fund. The Board was asked to consider funding options to spend a positive balance for several science programs within the Core Program, Artic Synthesis and Northern Bering Sea RFP, Partnerships, and Long-Term Monitoring projects. The specific recommendations were decided upon within the appropriate agenda sections.
- **Report on outside funding requests:** The ED reported that due to pandemic, NPRB has received no additional outside meeting support requests since Spring 2021.
- **Office Update:** The ED reported on the office lease and the office COVID policy. The office lease expires next October 2022, and all tenants plan to continue the lease and sub lease agreements into the future. NPRB staff backed away from plans to return to the office given the current spike in positive caseloads across Alaska. We will revisit the situation later in the year.
- **Good news and announcements:** The ED also provided good news on successes, staff and program commendations, partnerships and funding leveraged from past NPRB funding, all focused on our broad and positive impacts as an organization.

Communications & Outreach

Brendan Smith, Communications and Outreach Director (COD) introduced seven outreach proposals for consideration by the Board. The SP and AP Chairs presented rational for ranking and flagging as appropriate.

MOTION: Fund outreach proposals 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, and 2040.

Action: A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed with no objections.

The Arctic Marine Science Exhibit was described for the Board. The recreation of the R/V *Sikuliaq* as a museum exhibit at the Anchorage Museum is in development. It will include mobile-ready extensions, co-production with an Alaska Native partner, and distance-capable K-12 curriculum.

Overview of NPRB Science Program

In recognition of the arrival of several new members to the Board, Science Director Matthew Baker provided an overview of the NPRB Science Program, including a summary of the goals, mission and Science Plan. The structure of the organization and history was reviewed, and the responsibilities and composition of the panels was detailed. Each of the science programs – Core, Integrated Ecosystem Research, Long Term Monitoring and Graduate Student Research Awards – were introduced and context provided for how these separate programs provide a multifaceted approach to supporting marine science. Examples were provided as to how each program provides a unique approach to address the two main components of the NPRB mission – informing ecosystem understanding and fisheries management.

Core Program

Jo-Ann Mellish, the Senior Program Manager, indicated that the focus of this agenda item was to review the new proposals received in response to the 2021 RFP and to review the draft 2022 RFP.



Staff provided a description of the proposal review process, including the peer, Science Panel (SP) review process, and the Advisory Panel review process.

The Board reviewed 18 proposals, ranked as follows: Tier E (1), Tier 1 (8), and Tier 2 (7), which included four proposals that had been held over from the spring meeting for a final funding decision. Nine proposals were flagged by the AP. Tier 3 (2) proposals are not eligible for funding and were not discussed.

MOTION: Approve funding for all Tier E and Tier 1 proposals: 1977, 1980, 1981, 1985, 2022, 2023, 2026, 2027, and 2029.

Amendment: Add 1968.

Action: Amendment passed with no objections.

Amendment: Add 2024.

Action: Amendment passed with three objections.

**MOTION: Approve funding for proposals: 1968, 1977, 1980, 1981, 1985, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2026, 2027, and 2029 for a total of \$3.1 million dollars.
A roll call vote was taken and the motion, as amended, passed with no objections.**

Matthew Baker presented a review of approaches used to solicit annual research priorities for the Core Program. Approaches included individual online submissions, outreach through the AP, and direct solicitation of research priorities from partner institutions. A summary of research priorities from 10 partner institutions was provided with highlights including impacts of climate change on system production and species life history and distribution, development and application of new technologies, indicators for ecosystems and stock assessment, and methods for integrating Indigenous, local, and scientific researchers.

The Board discussed suggested changes to the reviews provided to the applicants based on the SP and AP recommendations. The SP will increase the word count on the reviewer summary, proposal weaknesses and proposal strengths sections of the SP summary from 100 to 150 words to allow for additional detail to be returned to the proposer. The external peer reviews and individual SP reviews will also be updated to include specific proposal weakness and strengths sections. The AP will apply their existing review criteria to the full proposal rather than just the engagement strategy beginning with the 2022 RFP. A second star will then be applied to the recommendation to recognize outstanding engagement. The Board approved both changes with no objections.

The Board reviewed the draft 2022 Core Program RFP.

MOTION: Approve 2022 CORE RFP as presented by staff and amended by the Board, with a total funding target of \$3.5 million.

Action: Motion passed with no objections.



Integrated Ecosystem Research Program

Senior Program Manager Danielle Dickson and Science Director Matthew Baker provided an update on the Arctic Integrated Ecosystem Research Program which will be wrapping up at the end of September. A Special Issue of *Deep-Sea Research II* including 14 manuscripts was published in 2020 and manuscripts are being accepted for the second volume through January 31, 2022. Final reports are expected by the end of November and outlines have been provided to NPRB that include abstracts of each science chapter.

The Board has committed to a future IERP that will continue integrated research in the Bering and Chukchi Seas with a focus on the Northern Bering Sea (NBS). The Board considered a draft RFP presented by staff that will provide an opportunity for funding a synthesis for the Arctic IERP (backward looking) and an assessment for the NBS IERP (forward looking), neither of which will include new data collection. Staff anticipate releasing the RFP in early October, with a deadline of December 15, 2021. Staff intend to hold an informational teleconference after the release of the RFP.

The RFP will include five research categories:

Synthesis – General

Synthesis – Modeling

Assessment – Science to synthesize existing knowledge/articulate important research questions

Assessment – identification of research needs - commercial fisheries

Assessment – identification of research needs - marine species of subsistence importance

An individual or team of collaborators may submit multiple proposals under any, or all, of the five categories.

MOTION: **The Board approves the draft RFP for Arctic Synthesis and Northern Bering Sea Assessment with a commitment of \$1.95 million in NPRB funding, as presented by staff.**

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

Governance

The ED introduced the recommend updates and revisions to the NPRB’s Statement of Organization, Practices, and Procedures (SOPP).

MOTION: **Approve changes to SOPP as proposed.**

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

The ED also gave an overview on the current working groups (Nominations Committee, Human Dimension Working Group, Strategic Planning Working Group, and Partnerships Working Group) and asked for members to volunteer for vacancies. Several vacancies were filled.



Internal Systems

Matthew Baker provided a summary of updates to the support systems provided by RDI (proposal submission and review) and Axiom Data Science (data archiving and Research Workspace).

Recent developments with RDI include work to better archive proposal and project information, including an automated annual output of past funding investments and enhanced capabilities to track research priorities and funded research. A Unified Proposal View (UPV) overlay portal has been in development by RDI to allow staff a more efficient avenue for accessing historical proposal and project information. This is linked to a database that will allow staff to query the information for retrospective analyses of funding effort. NPRB staff have also worked with RDI programmers to ensure a thorough systems review of the security and efficiencies of NPRB's online presence. This included revisions to service configuration, enhancements to database archival, increased monitoring and approaches to cost management. RDI is also working with staff to create a new proposal and review system to support the IERP program, including the Arctic Synthesis and Northern Bering Sea Assessment.

Axiom Data Science has been focused on the development of a data discovery portal for the Arctic IERP, as well as ongoing metadata review for the Core program. The data portal is intended to ensure that all applicants to the Arctic IERP synthesis and NBS assessment have access to the completed work and associated program data and metadata. This information will also be archived in the national repository, DataOne.

Human Dimensions

The Chair of the Human Dimensions working group and Lynn Palensky, Executive Director, gave an update on the activities of the Human Dimensions Working Group. The group convened once over the summer to discuss IERP RFP draft language, the Arctic Marine Science Exhibit and training opportunities for Panels, Board and Staff. The Board was asked to consider training by the First Alaskans Institute to staff, Panel members, and the Board.

MOTION: Approve funding for training with a strong preference for an in-person emphasis.

Action: Motion passed with no objections.

It was noted that the Executive Committee will meet between the fall and spring meeting to approve details of the training.

Partnerships

Matthew Baker and the Partnership working group members provided a summary of significant progress with partner institutions and discussions from the partnerships working group. In their August 2021 Board Meeting, the PCCRC committed to an MOU for collaborative research and will initiate cooperative research with NPRB in January 2022. Also in August, BSFRF committed \$10,000 to moving forward in partnership and expects to expand on this amount in future years. Ongoing partnerships work is underway with the North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES) and Kawerak.



In general, NPRB may participate in partnerships through an individual institutional MOU or a consortium approach. NPRB has a longstanding partnership with the Oil Spill Recovery Institute and has used that model to develop new partnerships with the Bering Sea Fisheries Research Foundation (BSFRF) and the Pollock Conservation Cooperative Research Center (PCCRC).

MOTION: Approve an additional \$300,000 in funding to support the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission and International Year of the Salmon's 2022 Ocean Research Surveys.
Action: Motion passed with no objections.

Nominations

Matt Baker provided a summary Advisory Panel memberships and an overview on the applications received for the two opening seats on the Advisory Panel, one in the Arctic and one in the Bering Sea/Aleutian region.

MOTION: Approve re-opening solicitation for the vacancy on the Advisory Panel in the Arctic region.
Action: Motion passed with no objections.

MOTION: Approve to offer Paul Wilkins the seat on the Advisory Panel, representing the Bering Sea/Aleutian region for a 3-year term beginning in April 2022.
Action: Motion passed with no objections.

Other Matters

The ED presented information on contributing additional funds to the Long-Term Monitoring projects, similar to the additional funds that were offered to the active CORE projects in Fall 2020 in response to COVID impacts.

MOTION: Approve supplemental funding for the three existing Long-Term Monitoring projects up to \$38,000 total.
Action: Motion passed with no objections.

Brad Moran suggested the Board consider developing an award for ocean research student scientists. The board took no action and suggested that staff discuss possible options for later discussion.

The ED presented an overview of the items that will be coming to the Board for consideration in spring 2022. It was noted that meeting will need to be longer than previously thought. The Board agreed to set aside a full week for both meetings in 2022, until a more specific timeline can be decided upon.

The spring meeting will be April 25-28, 2022, and the fall meeting will be September 19-23, 2022. These dates are subject to be change as needed.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:45pm.