

# NERACOOS Board of Directors Meeting

May 13, 2009

Gloucester, MA

## 1. Approval of minutes from February 20, 2009 meeting:

Proposed by Spaulding, seconded by O'Brien. Unanimous approval.

## 2. Remarks by NOAA IOOS Office (April Black, Gabrielle Canonico – NOAA IOOS Program)

2A. Current funds flowing to NERACOOS:

Woods Hole - \$1.3M for RCOOS

Woods Hole - \$400K RA planning grant

Woods Hole - Hauke-Kite Powell- \$158K for economic benefits project (final year)

Woods Hole - \$370K Benthic-Pelagic Observatory project

Woods Hole - \$200K QA/QC for ocean obs systems project

2B. Bonus \$125K for HFR in Gulf of Maine from NOAA IOOS.

2C. Next FFO will be advertised in July and will be for one year; project money for geographically targeted work.

2D. Legislative update

## 3. Committee Reports, Finance (Mercer)

Still trying to come up with cash allotment. Amending subcontract with Woods Hole to increase cash flow. Larry: Getting Woods Hole to expedite turnaround time on subawards.

## 4. Conflict-of-Interest Disclosure Statement

4A. Approved at last meeting, additional changes:

1. "Primary occupation *and employers...*"

2. Interested person definition may need to be altered.

4B. Discussion – How far does this need to reach into the organization?

Group agreed on desire to have the conflict of interest signatures reach as far down in the organization as is necessary, understanding that signatories are legally on the hook for this commitment. There was preference for the Board and the SPI Chair to sign the form, and to recognize that the form reflects a policy and does not prohibit someone from participating in a proposal review. Intent of policy is to keep conflict of interest issues on the table and transparent. The focus is to manage conflict, not prevent it. SPI Team was confused about how review process would work and when one would recuse themselves. There is unease that participation on a review team would preclude one from receiving funds. It was stated that reviewers need to understand the conflict of interest policy as the first step of the review process, and that individuals may recuse themselves from a decision that directly involves themselves as a PI or their institution. SPI should

look into reviewers from other regions to lessen conflict and add diversity of perspective to proposal review. COI statement will be on file and can be updated as necessary. Non-voting Board members also sign form (Hare).

4C. ACTION: Board fill out the statement and give them to Ru.

4D. APPROVED unanimously by Board.

**5. Office location and support staff (Morrison)**

5A. Rules– Not at a university, centrally located, synergy with the host organization, no rent.

5B. *Seacoast Science Center* in Rye, NH. – chosen facility

We can use facility unless it does not incur a cost or conflict with their primary role. We have videoconferencing capability. We can have next Board meeting there. They are not a COSEE, but are doing work with UNH as part of a COSEE.

5C. SSC drafted MOU, most recent version was distributed to Board. MOU ask that both organizations are complementary (ocean obs, education). Rent is free. Terms of agreement: SSC would allow Ru to join health care plan. Administrative support: time and materials. SSC is working out firm fixed price/month. SSC will provide administrative support and bookkeeping. NERACOOS has enough resources to augment that support. Other incidentals are small.

5D. Target date for Ru to start at NERACOOS is June 1.

5E. Discussion: Feedback on MOU

Q: Is there enough room for small business meetings?

A: Yes, can use any space they have if there are not conflicts. NH DES at Pease still has meeting space that NERACOOS can use as well.

Q: Is there room to add more staff?

A: Yes, room for one more staff. Space is not big. SSC will help NERACOOS get going. If we get too big, we can separate from them easily.

Q: Private? NGO?

A: Non-profit. Not certain where they get funding. Series of earmarks from Gregg. Was part of NH Audubon until 10 yrs ago, now non-profit. Some from federal grants, some from fee structure. Have fund development person. Interest in knowing that they are financially stable enough for 1+ years. Ru can get more detail.

Q: How long is MOU?

A: 1-year agreement with 30 days notice.

5F. APPROVED: MOU effective June 1.

## **6. RCOOS proposal for year 3 has been submitted** (Trowbridge)

6A. Money support identical to year 3: GOM, LIS moorings, DMAC funds, UMASS inundation simulations.

6B. Discussion of web presence: Working with DIF, NERACOOS and GOMOOS and the roles they should play. \$125K for SPI to plan for next RFP and for contract for web presence. Some of planning resources can start that process. After that, routine improvements will be part of RCOOS grants. Proposal by GOMOOS has been prepared. Shyka has been involved in paperwork, not planning process. Eric as chair of DIF has been in charge. Understands that everyone is happy with GOMOOS getting the work. SPI will come to Board with proposal to spend funds in August. Web presence will be part of this. Board can then raise concerns. Plan will be public and then we can contract with anyone. GOMOOS wants to continue to serve data that NERACOOS is paying to collect. One of the operational principles *could be* that NERACOOS collects it, NERACOOS serves it. MS view is to collect quality data, we serve it, and if someone comes along and wants to serve it for another use, we treat all of those parties the same. NERACOOS just wants to get credit and know how it's being used. Money that would come out of planning grant to fund web presence will go for web presence alone (\$90K), not to improve GOMOOS' other capabilities. Current proposal from GOMOOS for year 3 does not indicate that the funds will be spent on web. Submitted to NOAA. Alignment with DIF objectives is not clear. Quarter of grant is admin. 90K total. Proposal was not modified for third year. Implementation will need to reflect DIF desires. Two sources of funds: \$40K for web presence from planning grant, and \$90K from planning grant for DIF activities from RCOOS grant. It's the RCOOS money that needs to be directed correctly to serve NERACOOS, not GOMOOS. Trowbridge wants help to make sure that GOMOOS spends year 3 funds on web. \*Ru will call a meeting with GOMOOS about this issue to focus them. Need DIF plan done ASAP so we can direct them on how to spend money. Will be approved by Board. DIF plan is late.

6C. If NERACOOS is providing support, than it needs to be in NERACOOS's name, which will be changed in FY10. Discussed branding- should be in alignment with money flow.

## **7. Travel reimbursement**

7A. Close out for last activity (USME held contract), when we had Feb meeting, lots of travel. Evan had money in account due to adjustment of overhead. Said he would cover travel cost for Feb meeting. People submitted travel reimbursement requests and Evan ran out of money. MS collected them, submitted invoice for reimbursement from Woods Hole.

7B. New NERACOOS travel reimbursement form drafted. When we have MOU signed, will have new address of where to send (to Ru who will process). Form and instructions are in package sent via email.

## **8. NERACOOS Cash Flow**

8A. MS: NERACOOS has signed contract with WH for \$375K as initial allocation. MS has invoiced once a month and will get paid in 30 days. Therefore, don't have money

fronted to NERACOOS. Need liquid assets. With 501c3, regulated by OMB with separate provision for non-profits. Interest costs are not reimbursable. You can't bill invoice directly or indirectly for those expenses. They are non-allowable.

8B. Linda has explored whether we can get an advance on funds with Woods Hole. It's possible, but have to go through mechanics of getting it done. Need to figure out amounts. Need to have 3 months cushion. Other option is to minimize cash flow issues by invoicing early and often. Another option is to encourage invoice person to move quickly. MS has requested this. Another option is if folks are ok, submit travel request promptly (3-5 days after event) and be patient.

8C. MS has requested ideas from Board to get creative. Hare suggested to get fronted money from NOAA IOOS to come out of Admin funds. MS – need money to cover cash flow. Mercer: NOAA will allow WHOI to give NERACOOS to give a cash advance. Need to amend sub-award contract to be set up this way.

8D. ACTIONS:

- MS will pursue cash from Zdenka, talk to her about the problem.
- Will pursue early invoice from Woods Hole.

## 9. Buoy Transfer

A 1-page agreement is being reviewed by lawyers that transfers title from GOMOOS.Inc to Univ of Maine. Should have in a couple of days. GOMOOS is eager to transfer. GOMOOS used to sub-contract with UME to maintain, but ownership still claimed ownership.

**Discussion:** GOMOOS still wants to share ownership of data and this is reflected in a provision. Data is publically owned. NERACOOS policy indicates that anyone with legitimate reason to use data can do so. GOMOOS agreement goes for 3 years.

NERACOOS does not own buoy, university owns and operates them on our behalf. This agreement states that UME owns buoy. At end of day, it's a deal between UME and GOMOOS, but we've been able to facilitate.

## 10. NERACOOS 1-pager

10A. MS distributed draft. Solicited folks in region for case stories. Will correct map re: buoys and correctly attribute buoys to organizations.

10B. ACTION: Get comments to Ru.

## 11. NROC meetings results (Morrison)

11A. ACTION: Get list of NE delegation and congressional staff POC for NERACOOS (Nicholson)

11B. ACTION: Keep NERACOOS up to speed on success of NROC appropriations efforts (Nicholson)

11C. Continue to work with NROC in a coordination role. Get the SPI plan in front of NROC when completed.

## **12. Spill of National Significance**

March 22, 2010 in Portland, ME is the next exercise. Expanse of spill would be 450 miles down coast from Portland past the Hudson. Will be led by DHS/USCG, other agencies (fed and state) participate. Opportunity for NERACOOS to showcase our capabilities. Will use HFR, current info from buoys, etc as in real spill response.

## **13. NERACOOS web presence – covered above.**

## **14. Summary of RA conference calls (O'Donnell, Morrison)**

NOAA IOOS Program distributed funds for HF Radar. Contacted NERACOOS for quote. State of CA had a lot of funds to support HF radar. Funds cut. NOAA IOOS gave them \$500K. There is \$125K going to UME for 5 radars.

## **15. NFRA National Meeting (Morrison)**

- Morrison on steering committee
- Implication and implementation of legislation that recently passed.
- Linkages and role between IOOS and the OOI.
- Meeting will happen August 24-27, 2009 in Seattle.

**Discussion:** \$14.55M for RAs and \$6.5M for NOAA IOOS. April Black will send explanations. NFRA should push funds to go to instruments in the water (Jim). Concern that IOOS still does not integrate remote sensing activities. RAs should follow up with this concern (Frank). NOAA will have to identify federal assets as spelled out in legislation. NERACOOS should take lead to tally federal assets in NE region. (Jon Hare).

-APPROVED: Representation to NFRA changed to Morrison and Spaulding.

## **16. Summary of Strategic Planning and Implementation Team and Work Groups (Morrison)**

16A. 45 people participated in all work groups.

16B. Flow of working group day:

1. Overview, opportunities to leverage efforts, Ocean energy, coastal and ecosystem health, coastal resiliency and maritime safety work groups, DIF, SPI Team, education also met.

2. Charge was for groups to fill out common template to come up with strategic plan. Who are stakeholders, needs, gaps, possible products? Economic impact of NERACOOS (Hauke)

3. Groups fleshed out templates and reported out on 2 end-to-end product ideas.

16C. Jim O'Donnell was elected as new Chair to SPI. Nick Napoli from Mass Ocean Partnership is new member. Tom Shyka as alternate for Phillip at GOMOOS. Joe

Salisbury as alternate for Doug Vandermark at UNH. Ru will become a non-voting member of SPI.

16D. Each work group lead will flesh out template, distributed to teams for comment, pulled together by SPI and will become strategic plan in end of July/early August.

16E. Cross cutting themes among groups: NERACOOS role was communication and coordination across region.

16F. Ecosystems: HAB prediction was big theme. Other topics were secondary depending on people's interests. SPI needs to take this into account.

16G. Safety and Security: 1) Implementing approach for predicting surface currents. 2) Improving predictions for mariners and gov't agencies of wind, wave, icing and visibility.

16H. Energy: 1) Energy inventory of the Northeast – where is wind, tide, wave. Work with environmental consultant or developer to use energy platforms for sensors. 2) Groundtruth surface observations with wind sensors above. Opportunity to demonstrate worth of observations.

16I. NFRA is organizing meeting with MMS in Washington in June about collaboration with developers. Agreement states that everything above 10m is proprietary, everything below 10m is not, and is available to put sensors.

16J. RI is able to put \$6.7M towards ocean and coastal planning (received another \$3.4M yesterday). Are also moving buoy from UME to RI.

16K. Discussion on whether NERACOOS should play role of requesting data from developers. Goal is to widely distribute data, and to use their platforms for sensors. Frank suggested we should look into agreements in Gulf of Mexico.

16L. NFRA should also ask MMS about utility of data for aquaculture.

16M. Resilience: Identified NWS as prime user. 1) Couple modeling and forecasts of coastal and offshore areas using system-wide approach. 2) Combine the first idea with inundation and damage forecasting tool (GOMOOS nomogram). Expand this approach beyond Saco, ME.

16N. NERACOOS – NROC project idea: Region-wide monitoring program implemented in pre-construction phase of energy projects. Look to RI as model. Developers have significant resources. Need acoustics, birds (roseate tern), bats, mammals, critical fish habitat data. Could be joint project between NERACOOS ecosystem and energy work groups. Maps well to NROC interests as well.

16O. Modeling work group could be cross-cutting. Rich Signell is currently running group.

## **17. Misc Items**

**17A. New opportunity for FY10** will be advertised in July, due in November. SPI Plan will be reviewed and vetted then in time to influence this opportunity.

**17B. Need new member from UMASS Dartmouth:** Frank will be stepping down as he will leave region in July. Academic consortium would need to work with university to make recommendation to Board for new member.

**17C. NSF funding opportunity** due in August: Idea was proposed to look into combining forces with other RAs on this proposal for another funding source.

**17D. Board Member Alternate** for NOAA is Betsy Nicholson

**17E. Will need Board approval for expenditure plan from SPI.** Will be circulated for vote prior to next meeting.

**17F. Have SPI plan distributed prior to next meeting** to enable focused review at next Board meeting.

## **18. Next Board meeting**

Timing: August 31. Location: Ru is looking into Seacoast Science Center.