

**Board Members Attending:** Todd Callaghan, Pam DiBona, Janet Freedman, Dave Hebert, Regina Lyons, Todd Morrison, Andy Pershing, Joe Salisbury, Tom Taylor, John Trowbridge, Dave Ullman, Mike Whitney, and Chris Williams

**Other Attendees:** Rob Cardeiro, Carl Gouldman, Julianna Mullen, Jackie Motyka, Tom Shyka, Emily Silva, and Josie Quintrell

#### Approval of the Minutes

Janet Freedman motioned to approve the minutes from the December 5, 2019 board meeting, seconded by Andy Pershing. The December board meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

#### NERACOOS Operations Update

The NERACOOS staff provided the operations update. This morning, Rob sent new NERACOOS guidelines relating to COVID-19 and how the staff will be operating for the foreseeable future. The staff are working from home at this time, Rob and Emily are coordinating with each other to stop in the office once per week to receive mail and process invoices and checks, and staff calls are scheduled weekly. A system will have to be determined to have checks signed in a convenient and safe manner.

Julianna has updated the system operators map which is included in the Annual Impact Report as well as other outward facing collaterals. The map this year highlights the projects and assets that are a part of the Closing the Gaps Campaign, including gliders deployed in the Gulf of Maine, continuation of nutrient monitoring, two new HFR stations, and a glider monitoring baleen whales in the Gulf of Maine.

Coastal Ocean Modeling Testbed (COMT) is funded by the Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS) COMT program and focuses on coupling the hydrodynamic model in the Northeast Coastal Ocean Forecast System (NECOFS) operated by University of Massachusetts Dartmouth (UMassD), and a hydrologic model operated by the University of New Hampshire (UNH) and is aimed at improving forecasting where rivers meet coastal waters. As part of this project, there are various upgrades which will be implemented to NECOFS, and UMassD and UNH are also working with NOAA National Water Model (NWM) within this project.

Ocean Acidification (OA) Thresholds is a project funded by NOAA National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS) and NOAA Ocean Acidification Program (OAP) and connects many partners in the region. The goal of this project is to work within NECOFS to create a biogeochemical model for the region while working with stakeholders to assess regional needs. The stakeholder aspect of this project will be postponed for a short time due to COVID-19 while the partners readjust the strategy and discuss how to move forward.

The Integrated Sentinel Monitoring Network (ISMN) Marine Biodiversity Observation Network (MBON) project is funded through the IOOS MBON program. Sampling for this project had begun in December and was to continue for 11 months, however, again due to COVID-19, this schedule will have to be readjusted. In the meantime, work on the data management part of this project has begun, significant effort has been put into integrating historical biological data sets in the region, this will eventually be available through the NERACOOS system and MBON portal.

The Cape Cod Physical Oceanographic Real Time System (PORTS) project is funded through the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and started with one wave buoy in Cape Cod bay operated by Woods Hole Group (WHG). The second asset is an Acoustic Doppler Current Profiler (ADCP) on the Massachusetts Maritime Academy (MMA) pier, after an initial testing phase, some issues were seen and it was sent back to the manufacturer for repairs. WHG was planning on redeploying the ADCP in early April but this may be impacted by COVID-19. There is now potential to deploy another buoy in Buzzards Bay to provide sea-state information for commercial mariners approaching the Cape Cod Canal.

Mayflower Wind is a joint venture between Shell New Energies and EDP Renewables and they have deployed an oceanographic buoy south of Martha's Vineyard. They have asked that NERACOOS integrate the data from this buoy into our system so it will be publicly available. This buoy includes standard meteorological and oceanographic sensors as well as a LIDAR system. The data management team at Gulf of Maine Research Institute (GMRI) has been working with the Mayflower Wind buoy operator, Fugro, to get that data into the NERACOOS system. The current location of this buoy is not permanent, it is outside their lease area and will be moved inside the lease area at some point, but this is a long-term deployment, not just until the wind farm is constructed.

The Mariner's Dashboard is a new product NERACOOS has been developing with GMRI. This will be an update to the NERACOOS buoy map in terms of user interface and the backend as well. The Dashboard is in the final testing stages and will be released as a beta product in the near future. Tom will share a link to this with the board for feedback.

Julianna and Emily attended the Ocean Sciences meeting in San Diego. This meeting had over 4000 attendees with a wide range of topics for the daily sessions and presentations and provided a great opportunity to connect with project partners and colleagues. Soon after Ocean Sciences, Julianna and Emily also attended the Maine Fishermen's Forum which takes place in Rockport, Maine. This is a two-day trade show for fishermen, lobstermen, and others who work in and alongside that industry. NERACOOS has a booth there each year to provide information about the organization, show useful tools on the website, and connect with this group of stakeholders. In January, Tom attended the American Meteorological Society annual meeting in Boston and provided a presentation about NERACOOS and what we do in regard to ecological forecasting.

The Ocean Acidification Information Exchange (OAIE) is doing very well and just received an additional year of funding from NOAA OAP. As of last week, the OAIE reached 1,000 members and is gaining more teams as well. The OAIE has also received funding from NOAA OAP to host a micro-grant opportunity for OAIE members. Three proposals have been received so far. The OAIE steering committee is also considering options for diversifying the funding to the site for long-term sustainment.

The ISMN was started several years ago and recently established an oversight committee. The oversight committee is now working on messaging and ways to firmly establish the ISMN in the region including developing a website and writing white papers demonstrating how the ISMN would be useful to stakeholders in the region.

NECAN has been continuing its work. The Steering Committee has monthly calls and an in-person meeting was scheduled for April, though that will be a virtual meeting now. During

this meeting the Steering Committee will take the time to plan out the goals and activities for each of the working groups in 2020. The implementation plan has recently been revised, the 2019 webinar series concluded in December, the 2020 series is being planned now. Many working group and steering committee members attended the Gulf of Maine 2050 International Symposium in Portland, Maine and the outcomes and recommendations from that meeting will help guide NECAN activities moving forward.

Communication and Engagement efforts continue. Julianna has almost wrapped up the ocean and coastal acidification infographics, funded through Connecticut Sea Grant. There are four models, each with their own URL, Julianna will share these with the board. There is another ocean acidification model coming up which will be funded through the OA Alliance. Social Media is ongoing. Julianna has been working on a new NERACOOS website for the informational pages, the data products will remain the same for the time being, the new pages will be easier to navigate and provide a better understanding of what NERACOOS is about and the projects in which we engage.

In March, Tom attended the IOOS Spring Meeting and congressional visits in Washington, D.C. This was a successful visit which included a constituent coffee meeting with Senator Collins of Maine. Tom also met with staff of other delegates from Maine, as well as New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut. All of the staffers Tom met with are very supportive of NERACOOS and IOOS, some were already very aware of what we do and others were open to learning more about these organizations.

NERACOOS celebrated 10 years in 2019 and plans to celebrate that in new collateral. Julianna has created a smaller communication piece which Tom was able to bring on his hill visits and NERACOOS will be able to use for various outreach. These communication materials are beneficial for meeting with congressional staffers, stakeholders, and others to provide them with a succinct overview of what NERACOOS is and what we do.

Jackie showed a slide of submitted and upcoming proposals which include OAIE FY20 support, IOOS Ocean Technology Transition, NOAA Small Business Innovation Research Program, IOOS Harmful Algal Bloom Network, NCCOS Prevention, Control, and Mitigation of HABs (PCMHAB), NOAA OAP Regional Vulnerability, Office of Naval Research Shark Tagging, and the upcoming NOAA IOOS five-year award. Please reach out to the NERACOOS staff if there are any questions regarding these proposals.

#### NERACOOS Five-Year Proposal Process

IOOS Program Office has let us know that they will be releasing the Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity (NOFO) in late April or early May and proposals will likely be due at the end of December. NERACOOS staff has drafted the RFP that will be used to solicit mini proposals. An Advisory Committee has been established to assist NERACOOS staff in reviewing proposals and making recommendations. The Advisory Committee is Steve Couture, Matt Lyman, and Todd Callaghan, and they will meet in early April to discuss the timeline, review the draft RFP, and other details. For the full proposal timeline, please reach out to the NERACOOS staff.

To prepare for this proposal, over the last year, Jackie and Tom have been conducting interviews with key stakeholders, staff has attended relevant meetings and workshops, and NERACOOS has conducted web-based surveys to help determine important observation and research gaps and stakeholder needs. In summary NERACOOS data is very important to

a great diversity of stakeholders. Some key gaps or needs included: near-shore monitoring, additional product development for real-time analysis, HAB monitoring, water level stations, glider deployments, and integration of external data sources.

#### Executive Director Search Committee Update

John Trowbridge provided the update for the ED Search Committee. Philip Trowbridge, nominated to the Vice President position on the board in December 2019, has stepped down in that capacity due to taking an interest in applying for the Executive Director post for NERACOOS. The NERACOOS Board of Directors conducted an action without a meeting per the by-laws and voted to have Pam DiBona step in as Vice President to finish out Philip's term. Following this, an Executive Director Search Committee was formed and consists of John Trowbridge, Janet Freedman, Steve Lohrenz, Steve Couture, and Rob Cardeiro. These individuals were chosen so there was a diversity of representation on the committee between present and past members of the board and NERACOOS staff. There were a large number of applicants, the Search Committee chose five for phone interviews, at this time four of the five phone interviews have taken place. After these phone interviews, one to three will be chosen for what would have been in-person interviews but will now be virtual interviews. These will be all day virtual webinars to include a presentation from the candidate, sessions with the board of directors, NERACOOS operators, the search committee, Carl Gouldman and Josie Quintrell, and will provide opportunities for Q&A and conversation. A form will be provided for people to submit feedback after each virtual interview, the search committee will analyze these responses, along with their own comments and recommend a candidate for the Executive Director position.

#### IOOS Program Office Update

Carl Gouldman provided the update for the IOOS Program Office. The Neal Jacobs confirmation hearing took place last week, Carl has not heard the results of this yet. Carl recently met Jeff Runge of UMaine and a NERACOOS PI, at the Ocean Sciences meeting in San Diego. Wind energy seems like it would be a great opportunity for IOOS and the regional associations, LIDAR is a new type of data for IOOS and will need to work with the National Weather Services to process this data. There has been an increase for the Filling the Gaps funding and IOOS has asked the regions to describe how they might use additional funding, these responses will be reviewed shortly, and calls will be set up with each of the regions in the next few weeks. The annual release of funds is planned for mid-April, which is a few months before the usual deadline in June. Staff updates for the IOOS Program Office include a new Regional Coordinator, Oriana Villar, a new SeaGrant fellow, Derrick Snowden is in the final stages of interviews for a new National Ocean Service Modeling Portfolio Manager, and there will be a new HF Radar Program Manager. Jessica Snowden has taken another position as the Deputy Director in the NOAA Global Ocean Monitoring and Observing Program and will be leaving the IOOS Program Office. On Tuesday, there was a call with all of the RA Directors, and we heard about how they are adjusting and working through COVID-19, it is a good idea to keep lists of ways offices and projects are impacted during this time in the event any supplemental funding opportunity becomes available. Jackie has already created a google doc for PIs to document impacts to project work.

#### IOOS Association Update

Josie Quintrell provided the update for the IOOS Association. The congressional budget request has been the focus of the IOOS Association efforts since January. The presidential budget for FY21 had cuts to the IOOS regional line by around 50% which emphasizes the need for the IOOS Association and Regional Associations to support the Closing-the-Gaps

campaign, appropriations requests, dear colleague letters, and hill visits. Closing-the-Gaps is a successful effort because of the focus on a few specific expansions such as gliders and high frequency radar (HFR). The request this year is for \$45.25M, \$6M more than the FY20 request, this is a scalable request which can be implemented for gliders and HFR even if the whole amount is not received. There are two budget lines, one is the Regional Line which is what funds the Regional Associations. The other is an internal line of funding for the IOOS Program Office and this fiscal year is the first that the IOOS Association has asked for increased support to the Program Office. Josie also hosted the IOOS Spring Meeting and attended hill visits, these meetings went very well. In addition to appropriations requests each year, the IOOS Association works with congressional staff on 'Dear Colleague' letters which senators and representatives send to their committees to show support for specific programs. Under normal circumstances congress would have passed all budget bills by October with a continuing resolution, now due to COVID-19 things are a little more uncertain. During the IOOS Spring Meeting there were discussions on how IOOS can align their priorities with what is taking place regionally and nationally in regard to the UN Decade of Ocean Science, the Decadal Vision for Ocean Science and Technology, the White House Summit on Ocean Partnerships, the Presidential memo on ocean mapping, and NOAA's strategic plan for Artificial Intelligence, cloud computing, and unmanned systems. The IOOS Association is now planning strategically for the next ten years and will be working with Jeremy Phillips on this plan. Other projects the IOOS Association is working on include a 'Map the Gaps' informational handout, an economic valuation of the regional data, and working with Ocean and Atmospheric Research (OAR) on ways to collaborate with the IOOS Program Office and representatives from the regional associations with a series of workshops.

The Futures Committee is composed of a few members from various regional associations and assists the IOOS Association in thinking more broadly about opportunities and strategic planning, the structure of IOOS, how to fulfill the original vision, how best to engage other federal agencies. The committee had their first meeting during the IOOS Spring Meeting, Josie will keep NERACOOS and the board up to date on their progress.

The economic valuation survey is still up on the NERACOOS website. The results that have come in so far are very interesting to look at, to see how people use the data to make critical decisions when going out on the water every day.

#### Finance Committee

Janet Freedman provided the finance committee update. Rob sent out the FY20 budget and the balance sheet to the board this morning. Janet reviewed these documents for the board. If any clarification is needed, please contact Janet or Rob. There was no finance committee before this call but looking forward to getting one scheduled before the next board meeting. Chris Williams has offered to join the committee and Rob extends that invitation to the board.

#### Nominating Committee

Emily Silva provided the update for the nominating committee. Currently John Trowbridge is the only member of the committee, please let John or Emily know if you are interested in participating on this committee. In January there was an electronic vote for vice president as John mentioned earlier in this meeting. Pam DiBona was elected by majority vote and will be finishing out Philip Trowbridge's term which began in December 2019 and goes until December 2021, at that time, Pam would be eligible to start her own term if nominated. Regina Lyons and Jason Goldstein volunteered to join the nominating committee.

Executive Committee

Rob Cardeiro provided the update for the executive committee. Prior to this meeting, Rob circulated a proposed policy update for the NERACOOS Employee Handbook. The policy changes include updates to the Distracted Driving Policy to reflect current laws; Hours of Work Policy which reflect how the NERACOOS office currently works Attendance and Punctuality Policy to include a standard expectation for employees; and Life, Short-Term, and Long-Term Disability Insurance, since the previous policy had a cap to the amount of life insurance the organization would pay for, changes would include eligibility for benefits equal to the annual salary of full-time employees. Policies being added to the NERACOOS Employee Handbook are a Parental Leave Policy and Expenses and Reimbursements Policy in regard to mobile phones used for work. Gender Identity has been added as a protected class in New Hampshire and will be included in the NERACOOS Employee Handbook as well. All of these policies were reviewed by legal counsel. Todd Callaghan motioned to accept these changes and additions to the NERACOOS Employee Handbook, seconded by Todd Morrison. The updates were unanimously accepted.

Next Board Meeting

Teleconference on June 10, 2020 from 9:30 to 12:00.

Todd Morrison motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Todd Callaghan. The meeting was adjourned at 11:48 AM.