

NERACOOS Board of Directors February 13, 2013 Minutes

Approved by the Board: May 8, 2013

Malcolm called the virtual meeting to order at 9:10 pm and suggested we started with an operations update until we have enough members on the phone for a quorum.

Board Participants: Linda Mercer, Christine Tilburg, Mel Cote, Malcolm Spaulding, Matt Lyman, Al Hanson, Anthony Kirincich, Jim O'Donnell, Fei Chai, Blaine Grimes, Michael Szemerda, and Steve Lohrenz. Other Attendees: Ru Morrison, Cassie Stymiest, Tom Shyka, Jackie Ball, and Curtis Bohlen

Ru led the board in an **operations update**. The Sandy Supplemental included ~\$3 million for IOOS to be distributed amongst the RA's. Majority of the funds will be going to MARACOOS because many of their HF radars were wiped out. Some funds will be coming to NERACOOS to repair buoys in Long Island Sound and to harden the computer infrastructure to ensure that every time we lose power we don't lose the information streams. An RFP in the next month will be released to see this through. Ru noted that it's something we've wanted to do for a while as we're learning to become more efficient when dealing with these extreme events. We were very proactive with the storm that occurred this past weekend, Winter Storm Nemo. We were in contact with the SPI team and other partnered organizations throughout the storm. Prior to the storm we briefed three Weather Forecast Offices of the National Weather Service including: Caribou Maine, Grey Maine, and Taunton Massachusetts. Ru has been sending daily updates to the NOAA office as everything is coming back online. NOAA seems to be appreciative of the reports. Malcolm commented that NERACOOS has done a really great job at providing information to the right parties. Additionally, we are working to upgrade the Great Bay buoy because the data logger has died. As soon as the ice is gone the buoy will be re-deployed. Buoy M is on the loose again, same one that broke loose last year. Neal and his team are working on recovering the buoy. Recovery is looking optimistic, although there's some bad weather this weekend. All of this information has been reported up the NOAA chain. The NOAA Office of Marine and Aviation Operations has been reaching out to Neal and he is coordinating with them to see if they can help. It looks like it's reporting from 250 meters, so it's just broken off at the anchor. Recently we were part of a partnership that installed a tide gauge in Hampton, New Hampshire. On February 6th we issued a press release on this event. This project is a great partnership that's built on inundation forecasting, similar to the Scituate project.

Tom Shyka then provided a **communications update**. We've been busy with numerous activities, especially during the storms. We're seeing more people follow us on Facebook. It's one of the things we're going to be working with the IOOS office on more frequently. There have been various events we've attended in the last month. We attended the Massachusetts Lobsterman's Associations Annual meeting where we co-hosted a booth with Peter Moore from MARACOOS and Jim Manning. One thing we highlighted at the meeting was the new climatologies product. Massachusetts Department of Marine Fisheries was very excited about the product and brought many individuals over to see. Many Fishermen were also very interested in the product since they had such a bizarre fishing season in 2012 that they believe is linked to warmer temperatures. We made a lot of really good connections at this meeting. A highlight from the meeting is the Maine Lobsterman's Executive Director contacted us about showing the Climatologies to her Board and has since shown the product to the Maine Department of Marine Resources. This demonstrates that although we haven't officially launched the climatologies product, it's already getting a lot of use and a lot of good feedback. Additionally, NERACOOS attended the Data Visualization Workshop that the National Marine Fisheries Service hosted at the Gulf of Maine Research Institute. The overall focus was on ecosystem based management and data visualization. There will be a report with links to all the information. Last week Ru gave the keynote address at the Maritime Summit in Gloucester, MA. We also had a booth at the event and were recently highlighted in the Gloucester Times. The article emphasized how everyone enjoyed Ru's keynote and how Ru and Tom were sought after at the meeting. We have numerous events planned in coming months. The winter version of the newsletter will be coming out soon. Cassie will be presenting at the Fishermen and Scientists Research Society meeting in Nova Scotia next week. Cassie and Tom will also be attending the Maine Fisherman's Forum and hosting a seminar on ocean change. There will be a variety of individuals in the seminar from different sectors. The goal is to communicate with the fishing community some of our information and data we've collected. We also want to learn what they're seeing and if there's better ways we can deliver our information to them.

Cassie provided an **education update**. Currently Cassie and Jim Manning are working on building up his drifter program. There will be workshop co-hosted with the Massachusetts Marine Educators with on March 9th and an additional workshop in September with the Gulf of Maine Marine Educators. The NERACOOS website is now displaying drifter tracks and additional information to be used as a resource for teachers, students and parents. Cassie and Jim are applying for the Environmental Literacy Grant. NERACOOS website is hosting follow up material and presentations from the NEOSEC Summit in November. The Right Whale exhibit is in the process of being completed and will be released in April at the Seacoast Science Center. The last Families by the Seaside meeting was held last month.

Malcolm Spaulding presented the **minutes from the December 4, 2012** board meeting for approval. Christine Tilburg motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Steve Lorenz, the board unanimously approved. Malcolm then asked for a report concerning NERACOOS conflict of interest forms. Jackie Ball reported that we have received all but four conflict of interest forms. These individuals are: Avijit Gangopadhyaya, Bruce Carlisle, Fei Chai and Robert Araujo. Malcolm commented that these documents are required to be on file and to please return forms as soon as possible.

Christine Tilburg then presented an update from the **Nominating Committee**. There are two items to discuss today. The first item is that there are seven individuals who have expiring terms this December. These members include: Al Hanson, Anthony Kirincich, Steve Lohrenz, Chris Nash, Malcolm Spaulding, Cheryl Zimmerman, and Marianne Molchan. Cassie noted that is only six individuals, Al Hanson's term has not expired. Board Directors that wish to serve an additional term need to notify the nominating committee (Christine and Anthony) by the May 8th board meeting. Previously it has been required that a letter be obtained from the nominating entity. Jim O'Donnell noted that he is now the President of NEAC and is more than happy to write letters for people. To prevent administrative strain on the NROC staff the NERACOOS staff will compose letters and send to NROC for approval. Anthony presented the second item for discussion. Two candidates from the National Estuarine Research Reserve and National Estuaries Partnerships program are being nominated to the NERACOOS board: Curtis Bohlen and Bob Stankelis. What we'd like to do is send out an electronic board vote in 15 days. Anthony then opened it up for discussion. Malcolm noted that although we have used this method historically for voting we need to ensure all rules are followed and that people respond in a timely manner. Anthony and Christine agreed that the NERACOOS office will be responsible for tallying the electronic votes. Mel Cote noted to the board that although he cannot vote he strongly encourages the board to support the nomination of these two individuals. Adding these representatives will be highly beneficially to all parties. Ru agreed with Mel's statement and thanked him. Jim asked that an email be sent to him, as chair of NEAC, so that he knows who to write letters for.

Linda Mercer presented a **Finance Committee** update. The Finance Committee met by phone on February 11th to review the budget and audit report. With only one grant in effect we're in good financial shape. The audit has been completed. There were a couple of findings that needed to be addressed in a corrective action plan, which was sent to the board prior to this meeting. One issue that was addressed in this plan is to improve the invoicing process. To correct this issue, we are proposing a process of: if an invoice is not submitted by the sub-awardee, then NERACOOS will estimate costs for that month to be included in the audit. The estimates will be resolved after the invoice has been submitted by the sub-awardee. The other finding in the audit has to do with using the proper indirect cost rate. This has to be corrected during the time of the year when the indirect rate changes. Steps will be taken to make sure this process is done properly.

Ru then reported that the **IOOS Summit** was a success. At the Summit observing progress in the last decade and requirements to maintain IOOS for the next decade were reviewed. A consensus was met and all findings will be included in a report. The ~100 white papers that were submitted will act as an information resource that can be accessed by anyone. A commitment was made to see these recommendations happen. A Declaration of this commitment was signed and can be seen online. Draft reports should be available late

February. The reports will then proceed through a vigorous review period before being publicly released. Steve Lorenz noted to the group that he is a part of a sub-committee on ocean observing for the Consortium of Ocean Leadership. The committee will be meeting in early March where Josh Young is expected to attend and give an IOOS Summit update. The committee is composed of self-appointed individuals who represent institutions all over the country. This can be an opportunity to communicate and collaborate with various organizations across the country and will gladly bring anything forward on behalf of NERACOOS.

Ru then moved on to give an **update on NFRA**, the National Federation of Regional Associations of Coastal and Ocean Observing. NFRA has officially changed their name to the IOOS Association. Malcolm and Ru will be going to D.C. in March to attend an IOOS Association meeting. The IOOS office and all IOOS regions will be attending this meeting to discuss a joint planning effort. The hope is that moving forward RA's will work more collaboratively on efforts. Additionally, the Sandy Supplemental will be discussed at length. It was suggested that Sandy could be referred to as an extreme event. By broadening the category all regions could benefit and not only those that experience hurricanes. We are currently waiting for NOAA to submit their spend plan to Congress for the Sandy Supplemental. Ru will be traveling to D.C. this month to attend the DMAC steering committee meeting. While in D.C. there will be a whole day dedicated to the Hill with Staci Lewis from the Consortium for Ocean Leadership.

We then moved onto **partner updates**. Mel gave an **NROC update** on behalf of Betsy Nicholson and Bruce Carlisle. The first NROC meeting this year will be tomorrow in Boston. There has been regular activity since the last meeting in October. Tomorrow we will be discussing the integrated sentinel monitoring effort and Superstorm Sandy. There will be some short presentations from various state representatives on their unique roles they played during Sandy. Most recently there was a federal funding opportunity with NOAA for regional ocean partnerships. There were two focuses, ocean planning and basic capacity building. The proposals were due Monday, February 11th. NROC submitted an application for both focus areas requesting the maximum amount of \$200K. The first focus area funding will be used to support regional ocean planning efforts. The second focus area funds will be used to support three committees. Of this \$50K will be dedicated to supporting the joint NERACOOS/NROC integrated sentinel monitoring effort. The first steering committee meeting was on February 4th. Additionally this second focus area will work on creating an environmental event database. This database will be available to the general public to report odd occurrences/sightings to scientists. If we do receive funding for this effort it won't be seen until after October 1st. These funds would really be for FY14 and FY15. Additionally NROC has a new [website](#) and all this information can be found there.

Fei Chai raised some questions about Sandy Supplemental grant opportunities. There is \$50M that has been put aside for NOAA Laboratories and Cooperative Institutes (CIs). Fei worked with CINAR (CI for region with WHOI as lead) and others to put together a few one pagers. Overall these funds will be used to enhance and to improve three dimensional ocean forecasting. NERACOOS communicated with CINAR during development of their response. Some concerns were raised about the use of CIs for dispersal of funds as this effectively excludes non CI organizations including some most impacted by the storm. Much of the way funds were directed within NOAA came from the interpretation of the language in the act.

There was discussion about the IOOS Coastal Ocean Modeling Testbed funding opportunity. A number of NERACOOS partners participated in initial efforts but were not selected. Fei commented that he is involved with one proposal on the west coast that did get selected for the SURA proposal. Malcolm suggested that we find out who else was selected and how we might partner.

Ru began on the conversation of **membership** by reminding the Board that there's no mention of membership in the NERACOOS bylaws. An action item after the last board meeting was to create a membership structure. As a result we have created a structure based off of the GLOS membership structure, with full approval from the GLOS executive director. GLOS hired a contractor to develop this plan in an effort to successfully engage more people. Ru gave a recap to the group of why establishing a membership program is so important to NERACOOS. These reasons include: advocacy, development of a

new business plan, a reserve, and to update/fix equipment. This membership plan has been shared with a select number of potential members and it was suggested to lower the student and individual membership fee. It's also important to note the affiliate level of membership. This allows organizations to become members even though they are unable to pay dues. The idea being that they would have conversation with NERCOOS on how they could actively contribute without exchange money. Calculations suggest that we could potentially raise \$75K just within the board. Since these funds are non-federal there is more flexibility with how they can be used. Blaine noted to the group that implementation of this membership plan creates an operational component and obligation between the NERACOOS staff and their members. There is an obligation to deliver the benefits as stated and to tend/engage more people. Ru agreed with this statement and explained that as a staff we created benefits we felt we could deliver on. Malcolm also noted that as this membership grows our benefits will evolve and change based on member wishes. Blaine and Ru agreed that this is an evolving document and will change over time. Malcolm suggested that each board member consider potential sustaining members and forward information to NERACOOS staff. After a list of potential sustaining members has been compiled the board and Ru will make a coordinated effort to contact these individuals. Malcolm called a motion to approve the membership structure, Jim O'Donnell approved on the stipulation that he gets a couple of questions answered, seconded by Steve Lorenz. Jim O'Donnell asked where board members are expected to come into this payment structure. Malcolm replied that the goal is to get your organization to go as far up in membership as they can, preferably to a sustaining level. Steve Lorenz questioned if the organizational revenue is calculated by the entire organizations revenue or just the revenue pertaining to NERACOOS research. Malcolm responded that the organizational revenue that's associated with any type of research. The membership structure was unanimously approved.

Al Hanson gave an **SPI team update**. We are planning to have our annual SPI team meeting at the end of April, potentially at the University of Rhode Island. Recently we've been very involved in the de-scope process. We have also responded to various funding opportunities. Al and Ru submitted a proposal with the EPA for \$2.5M for funds to support the development of a nutrient monitoring center in Rhode Island. The proposal included four sub-awardees including: University of Rhode Island, Boston University, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, and Gulf of Maine Research Institute. We will know the results of the proposal in July. There are some other RFP's we were involved in. Both the University of New Hampshire and the University of Rhode Island put in for the NSF's Coastal SEES Program. Al was not involved in the University of Rhode Island effort. Ru provided letters of support for the University of New Hampshire effort. The Research Coordination Network within the National Science Foundation has announced an RFP. Ru and Anthony have been working on putting together a few one pagers for this effort, due March 4th. Ru noted that this could support the sentinel monitoring working group. He has shared information with Mel and Jeff and they agreed it could be a good source of funding. Al then noted another source of funding is with the regional SeaGrant, proposals due February, 22nd. The University of Rhode Island, University of Maine, and University New Hampshire will be putting in something. Potentially some of these proposals can tie in with NERACOOS and we can provide letters of support. University of Rhode Island has submitted a proposal for the National Science Foundation and has asked for NERACOOS's support. Ru provided a letter of support and a small committee within NERACOOS will advise their work if funded. Cassie and Jim Manning are working on putting in a proposal for the Education Literacy Grant. We continue to be on the lookout for more potential funding opportunities.

Mel provided an update on the sentinel monitoring effort. There have been ongoing early efforts with Long Island Sound and Atlantic Zone Monitoring Program in Canada. We are hoping to look at some of these existing efforts and essentially scale them up to a regional Northeast scale, geographically within the NERACOOS region. This effort has also been listed as a priority in the strategic plan following the 2010 Regional Collaboration workshops. The Steering Committee met beginning of last week and it was agreed to proceed with urgency. To move this effort forward we are working on potential funding opportunities. There is an opportunity with the National Science Foundation who has released an RFP. We have also

submitted for a small amount of funding through NOAA. We will be having a conference call in early March to populate the working groups. The working groups will get together this summer to develop an implementation plan to guide this effort. Ru added that it's great to see some things coming out of the 2010 meeting and seeing the joint working group making progress. Ru added that additionally, Jackie is working on moving this effort forward and it's good to support this effort. We are in the early phases of regionally building out the inundation forecasting efforts that are already in effect in Scituate, Massachusetts and Hampton, New Hampshire. Kevin O'Brien has agreed to work with us and there was general agreement on the SPI team that this is a good idea. Jackie will also be helping to move along this effort. John Cannon with the National Weather Service has been coordinating with some social scientists within NOAA. They will be coming up to New Hampshire and focusing around the Hampton area in an effort to bring full circle the idea of communicating science with people. We are also continuing to have conversations with MARACOOS to co-develop numerous things including software and product development. We are currently very close to rolling out the Climatologies product, just need some additional information from Long Island Sound. Jim added that majority of the data has been sent and that since this was an unscheduled and unfunded project it's been difficult to complete. Jim suggested that we should plan for these kinds of things in the future so that the resources are there to get them done. The text-a-buoy product is up and running, but we are having some problems with spam from Twitter. We're currently working on a solution, but all buoys can still be followed on Twitter. Additionally, we're working on putting Jim Manning's drifter data on the NERACOOS website. We are also scoping out how to improve mobile access. The University of Maine is going to start providing satellite data within the region in the next couple of months. We are continuing our efforts developing a regional data management framework and hosting the ocean data partnership.

Summary of action items

1. Vote on nominated board members, Curtis Bohlen and Bob Stankelis.
2. Provide NERACOOS with potential Sustaining Members.
3. Follow up on terms.
4. Ru is going to track down the modeling test bed information.
5. Track RFP responses and notify the Board when we're applying.

Jim O'Donnell motioned to adjourn, Linda seconded motion, the meeting was adjourned at 11:25 am.