

NERACOOS Board of Directors February 8, 2012 Minutes

Approved by the Board May 9, 2012

Participants: Rye, NH: Christine Tilburg, Malcolm Spaulding, Mel Cote, Pete Jumars, Jonathan Pennock, Betsy Nicholson, Ted Diers, Anthony Kirincich (WHOI), Matt Liebman (EPA), Ben Cowie-Haskell (NOAA-SBNMS), John Cannon (NWS), PJ Johnson (Pilot, Portsmouth), Jim McPherson (Coast Guard), Bob Thompson (NWS); BIO: Peter Smith; UConn: Jim O'Donnell, Al Hanson, Matt Lyman, Ron Rozsa (Contract Support), Art Allen (USCG); Phone: Linda Mercer, Gabrielle Canonico (IOOS), Evan Richert

Minutes from **November 28, 2011** were approved (John P. moved, Pete J. second).

Conflict of Interest Update: It was requested that all who have not submitted COIs for 2012 do so at this time. It was requested that Cassie notify all who have not submitted at this time **[Action]**.

Finance Report: Linda Mercer provided an update following Jan. 26 call. Linda mentioned that Kevin O'Brien's term has expired and someone needs to be recruited for that spot (Finance Committee member). The 2007 and 2011 awards were discussed (information sent with meeting materials). In addition, Linda provided an update on the audit which is in the final review process. It was determined during the audit that there were some small discrepancies with how accounts receivable around year end were handled. The NERACOOS office knows how to remedy this. Ru commented that the Financial Policy, specifically the purchasing policy, is still being finalized and will work with the Finance Committee to complete this. When ready a revised version will be sent to the Board. In addition, Malcolm mentioned the need to spend more time on the cost-sharing / indirect rate policy. The Board formally adopted the policy distributed before the meeting. (Motion by Linda M. and second from Pete J.) A rate equivalent to the Other Sponsored Activities Off Campus rates was established. All were in favor, none opposed.

Nominating Committee Report: Pete J. provided an update- a group of people can no longer participate in the Board and therefore a replacement slate was suggested: John Trowbridge to be replaced by Anthony Kirinich with alternate Aleck Wang, Justin Huston to represent Canadian Provincial point of view, and an additional CT industry individual Robert Araujo. Pete moved to accept. Christine second. Vote approved new members.

US IOOS Update: Gabrielle C. provided latest news and mentioned a formal letter indicating amount of FY12 NERACOOS funds. Revised statement of work is due March 5. There was some discussion of roll-out of FY13 President's budget. In addition, the comments on the certification process were discussed (due 2/13). This process will be further discussed Feb. 28-29 when RA directors are in DC. Gabrielle thanked Ru for his efforts to beef up the program office's website information on buoys. Gabrielle took questions. Malcolm wondered about the budget cuts. Gabrielle stated that she doesn't expect NERACOOS numbers to move more than 5%. Ru mentioned that as part of the award, some of the funds are directed to fund HF radar and CO2 measurements.

NFRA Update: Ru provided the NFRA update (using Josie's slides). Slide 1 dealt with tight budgets and the funding outlook. Slide 2 dealt with highlights including upcoming Hill visits (2/28-3/1) and synthesis of regional buildout plans for all regions. IOOS is celebrating its 10th year with a 4-day summit event in November.

NERACOOS Update

Ru mentioned that the descope letter had arrived. He stated that there has been 1 call for the SPI Team. A descope package needs to be produced. There appears to be level funding from FY10. The descope document needs to be done by 3/5. Ru also stated that NERACOOS has had a successful audit.

Ru discussed that the Performance and Evaluation Team is continuing to work together, with a focus group to be held at the upcoming Maine Fishermen's Forum. Ru mentioned Hauke's work on estimating the worth of NERACOOS (\$1.8 million dollar investment yields \$5 million in benefits). The Board was very interested in this work. It was agreed that other RA's should try to make similar estimates.

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NERACOOS representatives have participated in a variety of meetings (GOMC, NROC, World Ocean Council, CBEP, GMAC, and Gulf of Maine Ecosystem Research Workshop). Meetings coming up include the MFF, Ocean Data Portal Working Group, and Ocean Sciences.

Ru discussed the quarterly newsletter and Facebook information. The group discussed issues with the NERACOOS webpage. Although the front page looks good the pages underlying the front page need to be better integrated across subregional efforts. Jim and Malcolm both felt that this needs work. Ru stated that they are working to get consistency on the webpages. Jim stated that before cutting all links to the older pages he would like to see a plan. Jim also mentioned that there are things on the site that could be improved. Malcolm stated that the guiding principle should be that the user is able to get data. Malcolm mentioned that the tools should have the same look and feel.

There was some discussion of the IOOS DMAC Steering Team work and collaboration with other groups. Ru stated that he feels NERACOOS should be taking the lead with this.

In House Business

- The group discussed impressions from the Annual Meeting in November with the general consensus being that everyone appreciated the format and information presented. Mel stated that the presentations were well balanced.
- Meeting schedule: Malcolm proposed that the three video meetings be moved to straight conference calls and webinars. This will save money (on travel) and annoyance (with technology issues). Mel stated that he thinks there is value in networking. He proposed keeping one of the three as video at satellite locations. The group decided on: 2 webinar / conference calls (Summer/Winter), 1 in person annual meeting (Fall) and 1 videoconferencing at satellite locations (Spring).
- Voluntary contributions: Malcolm stated that there is still a need for non-federal dollars to be received for purposes of lobbying. Memberships were discussed. It was agreed that a clear definition of what a membership would be was needed. The group suggested that the Finance Committee determine what ramifications of membership would be and make suggestions. **[Action]**.
- Change of date in next meeting approved. Moves from Nov 7 to December 5. This will be an in person meeting.

The New England-Canadian Maritime Collaboration Planning Initiative: Evan Richert presented slides over the phone looking at possible merging or collaborations between 4 entities (RCOM, GOMC, NROC, and NERACOOS). He mentioned that two of the entities were created by the same organizations (GOMC and NROC). Often the groups are discussing similar issues and there is a lot of fatigue from some of the states: Mass, NH, and Maine. It appears that the roles of GOMC and NROC are overlapping. The programs are not duplicative.

He discussed merger opportunities between NROC and GOMC while acknowledging that they involve different legal entities and jurisdictions. Merging would dilute the voices of the Canadians who are quite invested in GOMC. Evan suggested that it might be possible for GOMC to focus on information exchange and knowledge sharing by moving several programs (Gulfwatch, ESIP) to NROC. Also, some committees of NROC and NERACOOS could be combined. Finally, the US Association could give administrative functions to NERACOOS. It's unclear where NeCODP would fit in.

The group discussed reactions from the various groups. Evan stated that GOMC appeared to be taken aback. Malcolm wondered what the reactions have been. Evan stated that some agencies were deeply skeptical. Malcolm wondered if it is possible that the National Ocean Plan work will take over these entities. Jim stated that there is awkwardness associated with the way things are set up now but he doesn't know if that can be fixed. The major themes behind the programs are different. The problem is broader than as presented. Jim would not support bringing more administrative work into NERACOOS.

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Mel stated that he is a regional person and member of the three entities. He sympathizes with the states that have the most overlap. He is trying to maintain an unbiased view. He originally thought that a merger was a good idea but now is having second thoughts. Canadians would have a lot to lose. In addition, moving Gulfwatch and ESIP would be awkward given that much of the work is in Canada. Committee consolidation does make sense.

Ben stated that there is still a 5th overarching body that isn't included - the Regional Planning Body for the Northeast. Evan stated that NROC will likely be the workhorse behind that entity. Mel stated that the Regional Planning Group will likely be NROC + Tribes + Fisheries Management groups. Ted Diers stated that he's involved with all of the groups and the groups need to be pragmatic about their level of resources. He stated that there needs to be an ability to ebb and flow with the work between groups.

Ru suggested that the discussions continue within the working groups and committees move forward with merging. Malcolm stated that it could make sense to merge the administrative units also.

Marine Operations Forum: Capt. Jim McPherson (Coast Guard) gave a presentation on what Search and Rescue capabilities and needs are in District 1 (NERACOOS region). He stated that the geography covered by SAR is quite large and they have a variety of vessels and aircraft at their disposal. He mentioned the value of predictions (particularly with respect to weather and water temperature) to SAR. He gave an example of predictions for surf (?) training in particular. Icing of aircraft and vessels also are important but he was unsure if this could be predicted.

NERACOOS assets and data were also discussed by Jim O'Donnell. He stated that most of the assets are clustered close to shore. Buoys close to shore tend to be highly used to check conditions (by sailors, fishermen, etc). NECOFS was discussed as possibly of use to the Coast Guard. In addition, U Conn makes 12 hour forecasts available using national data. Higher resolution data (from HF radar) is also of potential interest.

Ben stated that the Boston SAR area extends beyond the 200 mile limit and wondered if an international agreement is in place (answer - yes.). He also wondered which vessels have internet access (answer - some of the cutters). Ben wondered if the cutters collect any meteorological or oceanic information. Jim M. stated only the most basic information. Ben suggested that these vessels be used as vessels of opportunity (using the International Seakeeper Society system). The average cutter is in the water 200 days/year so there is the possibility of a vast amount of data. Jim M. wondered about security issues (ex: giving position information away to drug smugglers). Pete J. wondered what information is most needed geographically. Jim M. stated that there is a lack of data Downeast. Malcolm suggested that Jim looks at the model out of Canada (not sure which one - sorry) to see what NERACOOS could do to make it more useful. Peter agreed that the Scituate models and splash models could be modified for this specific purpose.

It was agreed that there is a huge opportunity for collecting important information through the Seakeeper Society protocol. It was agreed that follow-up is needed on this issue **[Action Item]**. Along with putting data collectors on vessels, Jim M. mentioned that information is collected on buoys that are dropped at SAR sites. That information is already available within the Coast Guard but not outside the firewall. Art (?) agreed to look into making this information available **[Action Item]**.

Outside of SAR, PJ thought that NERACOOS could have a huge impact if NERACOOS data was made available and worked into NMFS calculations for what days at sea are open for shrimp season. He stated that fishermen go out in very dangerous weather to fish when only certain days are available to them - regardless of how dangerous the conditions are. He stated that lives could be saved by choosing dates that are likely to have better conditions.

Partner Updates

- Ben Cowie-Haskell (**Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary**) presented information on the real time Right Whale Listening Buoys that are displayed on the NERACOOS webpage. He mentioned that Stellwagen is the only NMS in New England. He stated that ship impacts to right whales used to be a

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significant problem. Two LNG deep water ports were sited near the sanctuary. As part of the permit process they had to fund the buoy work. Globally Stellwagen was a historical hot spot for ship strikes. The buoy system allows for notification if a right whale is heard calling within 24 hours of the buoy. Due to results from research at Stellwagen they were able to shift the Boston shipping lane. Since then, there have been no ship strikes that Ben is aware of. Ben also apprised the group of a proposal to make a portion of Stellwagen a no-take reference zone. Malcolm wondered how much the whole buoy system will cost. Ben stated ~\$20 million for 20 years. The possibility that the LNG vessels could be International Seakeepers was brought up. Anthony K. mentioned that he has a colleague who is testing hydrophones on gliders. He's wondering if that project could work with the listening buoy **[Action-follow up]**.

- Mel Cote provided an update on **NROC**. He mentioned that a workshop is coming up on LIDAR data. There is also an ocean planning workshop in March (March 12-13). The Data Portal work continues.
- Ru provided an update on **NEOSEC** as Cassie was not available. He mentioned a mini-grant to enhance the Tofu exhibit at the Seacoast Science Center. He also mentioned that NERACOOS is working on the Ocean Literacy Summit (November 1-2 at URI) and the Families by the Seaside project.
- Ru also mentioned that the **NeCODP** is still awaiting new leadership and consequently no work has been accomplished. Malcolm suggested that the NeCODP be brought into NERACOOS.

SPI Team: Jim stated that the SPI team is moving forward to form a new agenda. The planning work is over for a period of time.

Notes submitted by Christine Tilburg