

NERACOOS Board of Directors May 8, 2013 Minutes

Approved by the Board: August 21, 2013

Malcolm Spaulding called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m.

Board Attendees: Christine Tilburg, Chris Nash, Jon Pennock, Blaine Grimes, Steve Lohrenz, Jim O'Donnell, Al Hanson, Curtis Bohlen, Betsy Nicholson (non-voting), Matt Lyman, Linda Mercer, Malcolm Spaulding, Bob Stankelis, Fei Chai, Cheryl Zimmerman, Mel Cote (non-voting), Anthony Kirincich, Marianne Molchan **Other Attendees:** Ru Morrison, Tom Shyka, Cassie Stymiest, Jackie Ball, Scott Kuester, Carl Gouldman, Gabrielle Canonico, Josie Quintrell, and Charly Alexander

Jon Pennock motioned to approve the February 13, 2013 Board Meeting Minutes, seconded by Christine Tilburg and Fei Chai, unanimously approved.

Jackie Ball was then asked to give an update on conflict of interest forms. Jackie replied that we have all conflict of interest forms except from Avijit Gangopadhya and Robert Araujo. Malcolm responded that this is a very serious matter in regards to our audit and this needs to be translated to them. If they're unwilling to sign the conflict of interest form they cannot remain on the board. Jackie is to contact them one more time and let them know of the seriousness of this matter.

Christine Tilburg provided the **nominating committee** report. There are three topics that we need to discuss today. We need to amend the December minutes. At the December election the board terms were noted as 2012-2016, but should read 2012 -2015. Christine **motioned to approve** the editing of the December minutes, seconded by Jon Pennock, unanimously approved. Secondly the following individuals have terms expiring this November: Cheryl Zimmerman, Chris Nash, Marianne Molchan, and Steve Lohrenz. Chris Nash will not be serving a second term, working with Ted Diers to fill seat. These individuals will need to notify the nominating committee by August of their intentions. The third issue to be addressed today is that both Malcolm and Anthony are currently serving as officers until 2014 and their term as directors will end in 2013. Malcolm as a current officer is eligible to be elected to another three years as a director so he can serve out the time as an officer. Anthony, who is currently a replacement, is eligible to be elected to his first term in his own right. Jackie will send out a spreadsheet that tracks board terms to the board.

Linda Mercer proceeded to give the **finance committee** update. Linda reviewed the finance report, which was distributed to everyone prior to the meeting, adding that this does not reflect non-federal funds. All membership funds will be considered non-federal as of right now we have \$3k. There is now one primary source of federal funding. In the future there will be an increase in non-federal funds to reflect the membership dues coming in from the new membership program. We are expecting FY13 funds June 1, but we do not have official numbers from NOAA yet. Indications are that NERACOOS will be receiving an additional \$340k for HAB work with the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, WHOI. This money is originally from the sensor innovation line in the IOOS budget. This will be the first sub-award with WHOI. NERACOOS is also expecting \$257k from the Sandy Supplemental Bill which will be used to harden computational infrastructure and to repair observational assets in Long Island Sound. There will also be an additional \$75k from Long Island Sound Study coming through NERACOOS to help Jim O'Donnell.

Currently the office is preparing to roll out the membership program. Right now we have one sustaining member at \$3k, RPS ASA. It's also important to note that since the last board meeting the financial policy has been amended and the sub-award agreements will be amended to reflect the audit findings.

During the last finance committee meeting, May 6th, it was discussed that we need a certificate of authority that authorizes the executive director to enter into contracts on behalf of NERACOOS. This came about while working on a contract with New Hampshire Department of Environmental Science. To precede the board needs to authorize a general certificate of authority for contract. Yesterday Ru sent out a memo to review this issue with the board. Linda **motioned to approve** that the board "delegate authority to the Executive Director as detailed in the bylaws so that he may enter into contracts on NERACOOS' behalf (including the one with NH Department of Environmental Services)", seconded by Christine. Jim asked that it be clarified that the executive director makes the board aware of all contracts NERACOOS enters into. Malcolm commented that the executive director will be responsible for notifying the executive committee of all contracts. The executive committee will then notify the board. The board unanimously approved motion.

Ru updated the board of the new NERACOOS **membership** program. We now have our first member RPS ASA, thanks to Malcolm and Eoin. Ru also thanked the board for taking the time to have one on one conversations with him this past quarter. These conversations have been extremely beneficial and productive. Since our last meeting we have slightly revised the membership tiers and letter. This change was recommended by the funding development committee of the board. Ru thanked those members for their input and time. Once these changes have been approved, hopefully by next week, the NERACOOS office will send the Board hard copies along with the new NERACOOS booklet. As discussed in the individual conversations we will need to have all board directors and officers become NERACOOS members by the August board meeting. Phase II of this

membership program is to bring in new members, including from recommendations from the board. By making these connections with the board we can tap into people who believe in the NERACOOS mission. Bob Stankelis asked Ru how the conversations went with the board and if people have the ability to contribute. Ru replied that it varied with organization, but overall we have commitments from majority of the board to contribute. Those that couldn't give cash are donating in-kind support. Next steps will be to document these commitments and having a document signed. Bob asked Ru what the ratio is of people who can give cash contributions. Ru replied that he's not sure, but majority will be contributing cash.

Blaine added that an adjustment needs to be made to the membership tiers. The associate level membership needs a minimum threshold, Blaine suggested \$50.00. Jim asked if there were any implications to membership and changing the by-laws. Ru replied that this has been reviewed and nothing needs to be changed. Jim then asked if you need to be a member to be part of the board. Ru replied that this was correct but, it's also to note that there's affiliate membership. Steve asked if there are any conflicts of interest with membership and voting. Ru replied that no we don't have any issues at the moment, but we need to remain clear and transparent so this doesn't become an issue.

Betsy Nicholson then provided a **NROC** (Northeast Regional Ocean Council) update. The next NROC meeting will be May 30th at Pease. Everyone is welcome to join and Betsy invited Ru to attend to provide a NERACOOS update. The focus of the meeting will be on Superstorm Sandy. Specifically to discuss how Sandy Supplemental funds will be spent. The goal is to attempt at influencing the states of where the moneys spent. The Army Core has \$20 million to spend. They have asked us to weigh in on how to spend it. NROC will be hosting a round table with state agencies to discuss policy changes since Sandy.

Betsy told the group that NROC has a newsletter which offers opportunities for partners to share their big news announcements. Betsy will make sure the NERACOOS board is added to the recipient list. Betsy then asked Mel to give an update on the ecosystem health committee. Mel stated that he co-chairs the joint NERACOOS and NROC ecosystem health committee with Brian Thompson with Connecticut Department of Environment and Energy Protection and Jeff Runge of the University of Maine and Gulf of Maine Research Institute. There are currently five projects that the ecosystem health committee is working on. The most significant in effort is the sentinel monitoring project for climate change. The concept is to develop a regional effort, in the northeast United States and Canada. A Steering Committee of 15-16 people was formed back in January and we had our first meeting in February. Since then we have met two times via conference call. Currently the Steering Committee is putting together working groups. These working groups will meet at the Seacoast Science Center for a workshop on June 27th. Mel added that there is some concern about the lack of current resources for this effort except for good faith and ideas. At the workshop the process and goals of this project will begin. This will hopefully put us in a better position to pursue larger grant opportunities in the future. NROC has included \$60k in the current Regional Ocean Partnership proposal to kick-off this effort and create an implementation plan. Mel added that there is a lot of urgency within the community, but the reality is that it's going to take a few years to get started.

Betsy then continued with the Regional Planning Body update. NROC has continued their ocean planning work by traveling state to state and bringing the recreational boating surveys back to the communities to see what the public opinion is. This more accurately re-iterates the boating surveys, fishing surveys, and baseline assessment work. NROC will have 10 public meetings across New England to receive feedback on goals. The desire is to get something meaningful accomplished by 2015 and then move into an implementation plan. A stakeholder engagement working group has been formed to create an efficient and meaningful plan. We have all ten federally recognized tribes participating in this working group. Since the original formation there is a lot more comfort and participation from the tribes, overall there has been a real shift in perspective. The working group has composed three high level goals, which are to: reflect ocean policy, healthy ocean and coastal ecosystems, and compatibility among past, current and future ocean uses. All decisions need to be made in a larger context. Ru and Tom suggested sending the public meeting schedule out to the NERACOOS mailing list. Betsy added that the NROC website will be updated on Friday with all this information. Right now there is opportunity for anyone to shape this, input is desired.

Josie Quintrell provided an **IOOS Association** update to the Board. Previously known as the National Federation of Regional Associations of Coastal and Ocean Observing, the name was changed to promote consistent messaging. An IOOS Summit report from the November 2012 meeting is now circulating. The IOOS Association is encouraging communications with federal agencies. The spring 2013 meeting in Washington D.C. was the first very successful meeting with the IOOS Program Office. Josie added that this is a new era of joint planning and organizations working together. With the IOOS Association trying to keep the visibility of IOOS, both federally and on the Hill, we need to remind people of the importance of this effort. A recent event that demonstrated the effectiveness of IOOS is hurricane Sandy. The Northeast provided concrete information to divert and help emergency responders. This received a lot of national attention, providing an example of why we need to improve our capacity. Josie added that they are currently still monitoring the Sandy Supplemental, and the FY14 budget. Recently the IOOS Association was able to get in front of the appropriations committee. Combined with Ru's Hill visits these efforts have all been critical to maintaining the IOOS system, it's been a hard fight. There was a great showing this year from northeast delegation in the dear colleague letters. Working to increase support from Massachusetts and the Republican Party in general.

The ICOOS (Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observing System) Act is up for reauthorization this year and we are working on strategies for co-sponsors. A primary concern is that each region is operating at about \$2 million a year. The program was initially estimated with operating cost would be \$10 million per region. We need to work on increasing the funding in each region to meet this goal. There will be a retreat this year to strategize on how to get IOOS more funding in the coming years, while also being sensitive to budget issues. We are hoping to have more details put together for FY14. There has also been some joint planning efforts with the IOOS Program Office and integrating the DMAC system. Good news is that we are going in at a really great position in the president's budget at \$19.52 million. Included in the FY13 spend plan is \$5 million to go to HFR, \$1 million to sensor validation, \$1 million to the national modeling test bed, and another \$1 million to kick off the technology and innovation grant. There is also the possibility for competition of more funding in the field of technology innovation next year. The increase in IOOS funding this year signifies that the program is resonating with NOAA and others.

Josie opened the floor to questions. Jon Pennock asked about re-authorization for ICOOS. Josie replied that ICOOS authorization will be up end of this year. Currently we are working on revising the legislation with the NOAA IOOS office, legislative affairs, and strategic partners. Overall it was decided not to take an aggressive change. There were some small edits, and draft has been circulating the Hill. Jon then commented that re-authorization for Sea Grant is a real concern. Josie replied that ICOOS is in a similar position and they are working on ways to improve this. Jim asked Josie if she could expand on the role of her office with distributing the Sandy Supplemental funds. Josie replied that there were lots of different elements. Ru worked hard with Gerhard to brief many people on the Hill and NOAA on behalf of IOOS. Ru replied that ultimately additional funds were absorbed in the NOAA spend plan. Right now the spend plan is very unclear and is currently under great scrutiny. There is a \$6 million line item that may reflect the CINAR (Cooperative Institute of the North Atlantic Region) effort, if these funds come out they will have to be competed. CINAR hasn't been able to provide any more insight into the spend plan. Jim asked Josie how he can be more effective at advocating for funds on the Hill. Josie replied that the University of Connecticut has a lot of delegation support on the Hill. Josie offered to continue these discussions off line. Josie closed the IOOS Association update by adding that Ru has been really a great help to them as a co-chair. As a whole we are seeing a national transition.

Carl Gouldman gave an **IOOS Program Office** update. Currently waiting on the FY13 spend plan final approval on the Hill, hopefully for resolution soon. We have dollar amounts from appropriations so we do know our cuts due to the sequester. For FY13 there is \$28.5 million dedicated for regional observing, although it's important to note that in negotiations things may change. The break down is that \$2.11 million in reductions due to the sequester, reduces these funds to \$26.4 million. Excluding radar we have \$18.1 million, which translates to a \$104 k increase to each region. The HFR budget increased this fiscal year from \$4.625 million to \$5 million. The new funds will be used for one new radar for the Caribbean region, as well as funding archival of seven years of data. Funds will also be allocated to sea surface temperature program, \$250k from NOAA and \$250k from NASA. \$3million is dedicated to marine sensor innovation, which will be research dollars and have a small tax. The U.S. Coastal modeling test bed will receive funds as well. This is a \$944 k of new funds this year. This money will fund ocean acidification work on the west coast and HAB work in the northeast. To receive additional funding for FY14 we need positive results from FY13. Ru thanked Carl and added that he reinforced what Josie said. In the future NOAA will be requiring more strict reporting requirements. Ru then asked Carl what the schedule is to hear of final budget approval. Carl replied that we are expecting final approval any day.

Charly Alexander then gave an update on the IOOS spring meeting and joint planning meeting. At the meeting the Program staff and regional directors met to discuss accomplishments and plans for the next twelve months. Holly Bamford was also able to join us for the opening of the meeting to provide her context and vision. The spring meeting was different this year, instead of individual updates it was driven by topical discussions under the joint planning initiative. Discussion topics of the day included: data management, ocean and coastal modeling, extreme risks, ocean acidification, marketplace requirements, and ocean biodiversity. Two observational groups from NOAA, the National Data Buoy Center and the Center for Operational Oceanographic Products and Services, were able to join us for a three hour session to strategize on how to increase our collaborations. This overall was a terrific meeting. The discussion topics were jointly prepared to spur discussions. These discussions brought together the regional directors and IOOS program office to identify priorities, join plans, and regular and timely reporting on projects. What was recognized at the meeting is that there is a pressing need to work together on priorities, and to synchronize our joint planning effort. These discussions were the first step in synchronizing our efforts. Overall the feedback was tremendously positive. As a follow up five regional directors and the IOOS Program office have bi-weekly calls to discuss key themes and planning details. These calls have been extremely productive and insightful to discuss the coming fiscal year. Ru added that the IOOS Association is also heavily embedded in the joint planning process. Ru then thanked the Program office for joining us. Charly added that if there are follow up questions or materials everyone is more than welcome to contact them.

Ru introduced the operations update. We are receiving base funding as well as additional funds from the Sandy Supplemental, IOOS Program Office, HAB ESP work with WHOI, and LISS EPA for a UCONN mooring. NERACOOS is expected to see a \$776 k increase in federal funds for FY13, which is a 40% increase in funding.

Important to note that until final approved all of these numbers are still tentative. Ru thanked everyone who made this possible. Part of the discussion at the SPI meeting last week was to develop a better plan of how to spend these funds. Ru was asked if any of these additional funds will be used to pay for the retrieval of Buoy M. Ru replied no, that money was pulled from unused money from the FY12 administrative line. Ru then added that NERACOOS has worked hard for this money by attending numerous meetings.

Tom Shyka gave an **outreach and communications** update. Recent efforts have been invested in improving how we share our information. An insight into our constituency can be seen through our newsletter statistics. Using these statistics we can refine our newsletter content. Compared to others in the non-profit industry we have a relatively greater percentage of opens. The greatest success of this past year was the Climatology product. While attending the Maine Fishermen's Forum, Senator Angus King from Maine sat down and played with the climatology tool. It's also important to note that Angus King put together the Senate dear colleague letter. Josie added that she can't stress how great the Maine Fishermen's Forum is to make contact with delegation. Tom added that at the NH/ME port safety meeting a pilot contacted us about one of his stories. This story was then forwarded to the national level. IOOS wants to take Ru's coffee mug image to a national level. Tom also informed the board that NERACOOS will be co-sponsoring a World Oceans day event highlighting ocean acidification on June 8th at the Seacoast Science Center. Mel inquired if there was a flier on the world ocean day celebration. One will be circulated to the board as soon as it is ready.

Cassie Stymiest then provided an **educational** update. The primary focus has been working with Jim Manning and his drifter program. Recently hosted a workshop at Woods Hole where we built 6-7 drifters. At this workshop NERACOOS sponsored a drifter for the Global Learning Charter School Students. NERACOOS has also been continuing to work with NEOSEC, the New England Ocean Science Education Collaborative, there is a governing council meeting next week. Steve added that students from the Global Learning students are coming this summer to SMAST, adding that he would like to collaborate with Cassie on this. Cassie will contact Steve to work on this effort. Jon asked if educational efforts will be affected by the presidents' budget. Cassie replied that Jim's drifter project isn't funded by any education grants.

Malcolm added that during our next board meeting in August we will need to discuss the December annual meeting, as well as a potential retreat. At the last two annual meetings we've handed out awards. We would like to make it more formalized and get a committee from within the board to create nominations and elections. Ru then asked the board if anyone was interested in joining this committee. Ru added that if you want to participate let Malcolm or himself know. If no one volunteers to join committee the executive committee could absorb this responsibility. Jim volunteered to be part of this committee. Malcolm decided that the executive committee will ask the board for nominations, conduct an evaluation, and complete a recommendation to the board. The board will vote on the recommendation and the award will be given at the annual meeting. Malcolm added that our December board meeting will be the 4th. We are considering hosting an informal workshop before the formal board meeting. December 5th will be the NERACOOS Annual Meeting. Ru added that if there are any upcoming meeting NERACOOS should attend please let us know. Mel added that there will be a NROC meeting on May 30th. Jon added that the Northeast Sea Grant Consortium November 18-20th. Jim mentioned the Gordon Conference at the University of New England on Coastal Ocean Circulation, June 9-14.

Al gave the board a **SPI update**. Last week we had a SPI meeting at the University of Rhode Island. Included in the day were discussions on strengthening the NERACOOS data system, the NERACOOS Data Policy, and alternative funding. The NERACOOS data policy is currently under review within the SPI team. Mel asked Ru, after reviewing the draft NERACOOS data policy, if the recipients of NERACOOS funding are required to have a non-federal match. Ru replied that there is no requirement from the funded partners. Ru added that it doesn't need to be adopted by the Board. If it comes to the point where it doesn't work we'll come to the board, but right now it's not necessary. Christine suggested adding the data policy to the terms of subaward agreements.

NERACOOS's largest success of this year was the development of the Climatology product. NERACOOS has also been working a new mobile version. Although this product is still in test, it will be released soon. NERACOOS staff will send the link to the Board so they can test this version. Malcolm asked if the long term hindcast statistics are available on the NERACOOS website. Jim replied no they aren't available on the NERACOOS site. Chen discussed this topic at the SPI meeting last week where he stated it would take years to upload all this data. Malcolm replied that the Army Corps of Engineers has a program that puts out data in discrete locations. Ru added that he will reach out to the Army Core once again. Malcolm then asked Tom if there have there have been suggestions and improvements to the Climatologies product. Tom replied that we have a list of these and are currently in the process of creating a survey to prioritize the list. Malcolm suggested externalizing this effort to different areas and regions so that they can pass it along.

Ru gave the group an overview of some recent ocean acidification efforts. Dwight Geldhill from the NOAA Ocean Acidification Program challenged us to create a Northeast Coastal Acidification Network, NECAN, similar to C-CAN, the California Current Acidification Network, a collaboration of scientists and industry. Since then we've had two calls to discuss our options. Overall there's a lot of enthusiasm from with the group. Ru has since spoke with the NROC ecosystem co-chairs about working this effort into the sentinel monitoring network. Currently there are too many people working on this NECAN effort. We are working on downsizing

the group and finding a source of funding. We are hoping to host a NECAN workshop early next year. Steve added that there is currently a lot research going on in this field within the region. Ru agreed and added that the focus of the workshop will be to get a better inventory of what's going on within the region. Although it has not been discussed at length NECAN will most likely focus on both near shore and off shore. Jim added that he'd like to be involved, since he's been trying to find money for ocean acidification work in Long Island Sound. Fei also added he'd like to be involved. Fei attended last years' global ocean acidification network meeting and plans on attending this year as well. Christine added that ESIP is definitely interested as well. Ru will keep everyone aware of this effort, if anything significant happens Ru will notify everyone.

Malcolm congratulated to the NERACOOS staff all of whom have done a great job this year. Malcolm entertained a motion to adjourn, seconded by AI, agreed unanimously. Meeting was convened at 13:38.