

NSGRP Meeting

Conference Call

July 15, 2008

Attendees:

Peter Bell
John Byrne
Robert Duce
Nancy Rabalais
Jeffrey Stephan
Rolland Schmitt
Judith Weis
Bill Stubblefield

Frank Kudrna
John Woeste
Richard West
Jim Murray
Leon Cammen
Paul Anderson
Robin Alden

- **FEE Committee Report – J. Woeste, J. Stephan, R. Schmitt**
 - Tasks Group's report: The FEE committee was impressed by relationships that were developed, the positive impacts achieved, the demonstration of the integrated research/extension model, and the ability of FEE personnel to leverage and work with other NOAA agencies. However, there is no congressional mandate or additional funding and it is unlikely there will be any in the foreseeable future. Because there are many other deserving programs initiatives, the committee concluded it is best to phase-out FEE through an orderly transition. There is a strong possibility that the current 18 FEE FTEs could continue by funding from other sources.
 - Recommendation: To approve the recommendations in the report including phasing-out the FEE program over a two-year period.
 - **Motion to approve report (Byrne).**
 - **Second (Stubblefield).**
 - **Approved unanimously**

Discussion:

- NMFS was a player in the initiative but there is also potential for additional national/regional collaborative work between NMFS and Sea Grant in fisheries extension in the future.
- What are the merits of competitive vs. non-competitive approaches for future initiatives? Competitive programs that have a "sunset" might not be as sustainable or generate as many partnerships as programs like the non-competitive CCD program.
- Whether future programs are competitive or non-competitive, there needs to be a built-in evaluation and implementation plan at the very beginning of the project as well as a phase-out plan.
- There also needs to be a program review mechanism built into each initiative, even for shorter-term programs to provide feedback.
- There needs to be a strategy developed for how to capitalize on the many FEE achievements and partnerships.

- Now that the report has been approved and is public, the NSGO Director should have a decision on how to proceed with the program by the end of August.

- **Update on the November Panel Meeting in Baton Rouge** – J. Murray

- Hotel will be downtown Baton Rouge.

Members arrive Monday for evening reception. Asked Panel to provide comments on speakers and agenda details ASAP. Tuesday night, there will be a reception at the Camelot club next door. There will also be an LA stakeholder session that day. Wednesday is the field trip, which Mike Liffmann will help organize. Thursday morning there will be a wrap-up and a closed administrative session.

Discussion:

- Other attendees? Regional coordinator, Buck Sutter has accepted an invitation to attend. He will also be invited to attend the field trip. Nancy Rabalais will request a presentation on LA coastal issues by the coastal affairs representative from the LA Governor's Office.
- Nancy Rabalais and Chuck Wilson should coordinate their (with the Governor's Office if needed, regarding the important coastal issues facing LA.
- Suggestion for a report from LaDon Swann or Buck Sutter on LASG's extension/outreach conference (Aug. 12-13).
- Paul Anderson will attempt to be at the meeting all day Tuesday and can put Dick West on SGA meeting schedule that Thursday.
 - It might also be nice to have an update from the Assembly.

- **Update on Sea Grant Re-authorization**

- House version. Approved July 14. Senate still needs to take it up. House and Senate staffers are getting together today.
- Senate added language eliminating funding for Knauss class trip. Language on cap remains at 5%.

- **Other**

- **Procedures manual:**
 - Procedures manual should address two issues:
 - Definition of minimal active participation.
 - Direct relationship with a single SG program by a Panel member.

Discussion

- In the past, formal Panel participation with a single Sea Grant program was allowed with certain caveats, but the issue deserves another look.
- Bell and Stephan will work on draft guidelines over the next few weeks with feedback from the Panel. The final draft should be available for consideration at the November meeting. Might be better for a small group to handle this and then make suggestions.
- Murray will look into what the Panel had previously decided on this issue.

- **Focus team updates:**
 - Heath and Stephan sent out updates on the focus team meeting, which was a productive and useful exercise. Teams are now working to refine performance measures and strategies.

Discussion:

- Concern over whether Sea Grant can afford focus teams.
- Weis (Healthy Coastal Ecosystems) is taking the lead on having a presence at the International Marine Conservation Congress at George Mason University in spring 2009 to present on Eco-system-Based Management in Sea Grant and at the Coastal and Estuarine Research Foundation in Portland, OR in the fall of 2009. A call has gone out to the network for research and extension projects that might be considered for participation in these conferences. Responses have not been overwhelming.
 - Panel members are asked to present 10 minute update on their focus team at the November meeting as well as periodic updates on progress for the newsletter.
- **Murray and West's visit with Stu Levenbach to CT and RI Sea Grant Programs**
 - OAR will have a different examiner.
 - It is clear that Sea Grant is competing for a very small pool of funds. There is a lot of focus on consolidation of coastal issues within OMB.
 - Good experience for program directors to hear about OMB and the challenges they face.
 - Levenbach encouraged Sea Grant to better articulate how it is crucial to federal government's mission. Panel could provide advice on how to articulate this message.
 - Levenbach also expressed interest in Sea Grant's new implementation plan and performance measures. As soon as these documents are finalized in August, a copy needs to go to OMB.

Discussion:

- Sea Grant should be clear in answering OMB's questions—this exercise should be more than just protecting turf. Kudrna will bring up the issue with the SAB.
- Anderson will ask RI and CT to report back to the board. This issue will be discussed at the retreat (how to craft message for OMB and Congress). The network might also want to focus on how Sea Grant collaborates with other offices rather than overlaps. Anderson will try to gather a few stories that might be of use in D.C.

- **Panel assignments and liaison roles need to be reviewed and determined (perhaps at the next meeting?)**
 - **Motion that Woeste, Byrne, and Rabalais will review NOAA Education Plan and submit review to Panel August 28th for approval via email (hopefully by the middle of August) (Woeste).**
 - **Second: Byrne**
- SAB discussed setting up an evaluation of the state of NOAA research. The reviews of the various parts of NOAA have been very diverse. There will probably be some discussion as to uniformity of metrics.
- **Adjourn**