

## Minutes of the 12 November 2008 Fall RISG SAC Meeting

Members In Attendance: Dave Bengtson, Kevin Chu, Ames Colt, Shelley Dawicki, Dennis Espisito, Kristen Fletcher, John Hoey, Ambrose Jerald, Sunshine Menezes, Brad Moran, Dennis Nixon, Stephen Olsen, Rick Rhodes, Richard Ribb, Caroly Shumway, Dave Smith, Judith Swift **NRCS PERSON**

Ad hoc Members In Attendance: Monica Allard-Cox, Barry Costa-Pierce, Alan Desbonnet, Susan Farady, Jennifer McCann, Heather Rhodes, Malia Schwartz, Laura Skrobe

Guests: Mark Bertness, Kathy Castro, Teresa Crean, Scott Nixon, Pam Rubinoff

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1. Barry Costa-Pierce opened the meeting at 10:15am with welcomes to all and a review of the agenda for the day, then proceeded into programmatic updates:

- Authorizing legislation for the Sea Grant program was passed in Washington.
- There is a new National Sea Grant Strategic Plan. RISG will align to this plan within the four new Focus Team areas defined. Costa-Pierce is engaged in the Coastal Ecosystems Focus Team. Dennis Nixon congratulated BCP on his appointment to the Focus Team.
- Action Items/Accomplishments from last SAC meeting:
  - RISG funded researchers are being invited to attend SAC meetings,
  - 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Baird Symposium was very successful,
  - Input for the 2010/2012 Omnibus RFP has been gained from discussion with many stakeholder groups, including NRCS and NPS,
  - Two new MOUs have been signed (Partnership Principles memo was distributed) with ANAI as a first iteration of an International Sea Grant Program and with the New England Sea Grant Consortium for regional Sea Grant interactions. Sunshine noted possible interactions with IGERT. Ambrose noted possible interaction with Minority Service Institutions as well.

2. Legal Program Update (Susan Farady):

- 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Law Symposium was very successful and very timely. Grover Fugate was presented with the RISG Lifetime Achievement Award in a closing ceremony. A blog for the event is still ongoing online, keeping the dialog open.
- 24 students are enrolled in the URI/RWU joint degree program.
- Fisheries for the Bench is in the planning for spring 2009.
- The current MOU between RWU and URI is being extended a year, allowing time for discussion of change, if any, to a new MOU.
- A number of Sea Grant Law Fellows are working on the Ocean SAMP.
- Students are working on a comparative analysis of ongoing Ocean “Zoning & Planning” exercises in RI and MA.

3. Coastal Extension Update (Jennifer McCann):

- Teresa Crean, a new hire to the RISG Coastal Extension Team, was introduced.
- A handout on the Aquidneck Island SAMP process was provided. This planning process will integrate with the AI Master Plan and ongoing SAMP planning for Newport Harbor.
- A handout on the Commercial Ports & Harbors Project was provided. An outcome will be an inventory of RI commercial ports and harbors in GIS format. Towns, CRMC, DEM and EDC are all awaiting the final product for use in planning.
- Over 40 people from URI and RWU are engaged in the Ocean SAMP process. Building an environmental inventory and knowledge base are the current tasks; basically pulling together “what we know” about the offshore waters. Fletcher queried what agencies are involved; McCann replied that all applicable federal agencies have been met with and are aware of the effort, though Army Corp and Minerals Management are major players at the moment—a meeting in early 2009 is being planned to get all federal agency stakeholders together at one time in one place to discuss the project. Fletcher suggesting posting “success stories” as they occur so that they can be use by groups to further SAMP-like processes and partnerships. Dennis Nixon suggested better clarification of the map in the 1-pager handout on the SAMP so that federal waters vs. state waters vs. the broader “red line” region are put into the context of legal authorities and planning needs.

#### 4. Fisheries Extension Update (Laura Skrobe):

- A handout was provided, Laura noting that she wanted to set the stage for afternoon discussions and focus a bit less on updates.
- A Code of Conduct has been adopted by RI and NMFS, bringing on a paradigm shift that reflects that the seas do not hold inexhaustible fisheries resources, and that extension is the way to move towards sustainability; collaborative and integrated efforts are the way of the future.
- A good example of an integrated approach is the Lobster Shell Disease Initiative. The collaborative approach will be the topic for discussion in the afternoon session.

#### LUNCH

---Costa-Pierce opened the afternoon session by providing further programmatic updates:

- An NRAC proposal to implement nutrient tracking in aquaculture software has come successfully through the newly formed MOU between northeast Sea Grant programs; the proposal is coming through RISG. The major benefit is that for regional proposals, only the host university takes overhead.
- Lobster Shell Disease Initiative symposium is next week at Alton Jones.
- RISG is conducting the RFP process for the Southern New England Cooperative Research Initiative.
- A New York Bight regional initiative is in play, lead by Connecticut Sea Grant.
- 7<sup>th</sup> Baird Symposium outcomes show that we have good modeling capabilities and a good handle on circulation in Block and RI Sound, but there needs to be more clarity regarding interaction of water from the north (e.g., Nantucket Shoals) with RI Sound. The Connecticut

River has a large impact on circulation dynamics in Block Island Sound. There are good indications that ecological change seen in Narragansett Bay is mirrored in Block and RI Sound, but more information is needed to verify this.

- 8<sup>th</sup> Baird Symposium planning is underway, with the topic being integration of aquaculture with offshore renewable energy, for early November 2009.
- An Early Career Researcher Initiative will be part of the 2010/2012 Omnibus RfP, in collaboration with EPSCoR, to address a national issue as noted by NSF and other major science funders.

## 5. Integrated Collaboratives Discussion

- Costa-Pierce introduced the topic, noting that RISG is looking for proactive ways to leverage its dollars and to produce more integrated projects; we must know “what is the need for new information?” to direct where research funds should be targeted. A collaborative is one way to integrate outreach and research around areas where new information is needed. We are looking for IGERT-like proposals that combine community-based outcomes and impacts with research having both education and outreach components. Coastal and Fisheries Extension will now be looked at in light of where might we go in a collaborative manner.
- A. Coastal Collaborative (Pam Rubinoff)
- Examples on flip charts were used to start a conversation revolving around a “climate change collaborative.” Should the collaborative focus on adaptation to climate change or mitigation? Any collaborative will need to work at multiple scales, and must bridge research/education/outreach; implementation is a must. What might the scope and scale and partners be for a coastal collaborative? What might be the management questions that are to be addressed?
  - Swift noted adaptation and mitigation must go together.
  - Fletcher noted a need to define both much more clearly because there is considerable mixing of the terms in lay terms. Also, since resources are limited there is a need to define what issues are to be addressed—climate change is too large. Once this is done then partners can be identified.
  - Olsen suggesting working at multiple sites so that a comparative analysis can be conducted on process and outcomes.
  - Shumway questioned funds available. Costa-Pierce suggested about \$300,000 per year, hopefully bridging two omnibus periods, for a total of four years. The intent would be to leverage that amount considerably.
  - Farady noted a need to consider the transferability of findings and outcomes to other geographic area as this would improve leveraging possibilities.
  - Moran suggested not overlooking the private sector, particularly around energy; partnerships with the corporate world where core funds could be leveraged would be a good way to proceed.
  - Colt noted that managers need rigorous science information to use as a foundation for regulation, and that existing groups and collaborative efforts should be considered before new ones are formed. Colt noted that while RISG does a good job announcing

funded research (e.g., via Program Guide), it needs to do a better job at announcing outcomes of completed research, making information available via the web; this information could then play directly into management.

- Bertness suggested that building such collaborative will create too much bureaucracy, and given the limited funds available, money will be gobbled up by overhead of overly large, integrated teams (assuming they are multi-university which is the goal). The result will be less funds available for funding good ideas for basic research.
- Scott Nixon agreed, stating that the proposed collaborative approach sounds like a sure fire way to reduce funds going to research, since the collaborative funds will have to be used for education and extension as well, even though separate extension funds are already available. Given a steady decline in funds available to research, is this a sensible way to proceed?
- Costa-Pierce responded that it is unclear what the need for new information is, therefore looking to fund collaborative efforts around known important issues is intriguing, and reasonable.
- Bertness stated that the need for new information is huge; most ecological knowledge is based on enclosure experiments, with presents a limited picture of the ecological world and its functions. Toss in a rapidly changing ecology due to climate change and the need for new knowledge is enormous.
- Costa-Pierce wrapped up the conversation by noting that the intent is to leverage the available funds through collaborative efforts. If done correctly, more funds should become available in the future for research; it may not happen in this or the next omnibus RfP, but that is the long-term ideal.

#### B. Fisheries Collaborative (Cathy Castro)

- Castro opened by noting that collaborative efforts have been done by fisheries extension in the past, and they have been successful; they do not have to be a single, large-scale collaborative to be successful—research focused collaboration can be very effective at small scales on specific issues.
- Shumway noted a big need for trophic analysis research that would improve understanding of fisheries food webs.
- Dawicki noted a need for information about the impacts of cold water moving south from the arctic—how might that impact fisheries ecology?
- Fletcher suggesting looking more deeply into recreational fishing and impact on commercial fisheries and ecosystem—this was posed in the previous omnibus but no efforts are ongoing in this arena, and issues are still largely unresolved.
- Farady noted there is much need for legal components in all the research, particularly around ITQs, property rights and sectors.
- Shumway noted a need for better information on fisheries relative to offshore energy development. Rubinoff interjected a need for better information that could be used to integrate aquaculture with offshore energy development as well.
- Jerald noted a need for fisheries research and extension to integrate with sustainable food production for minorities at local production scales.

- Rick Rhodes suggested that sustainable fish production should be a curriculum focus, and could have great impacts in grooming the next generation; it would be a great challenge to create such a curriculum however.
  - Fletcher noted that Fisheries Extension has a long history in gear technology improvements, and that this should not be overlooked or lost.
  - Hoey noted that traditional outreach coming from research is not working. There is lots of new gear that would improve fisheries but is not being used because no one is out there helping fishermen make the transition by educating them about using the new nets and other technologies. The Eliminator Trawl is just one example—there is a need for an Eliminator Trawl User Guide that a fisherman could pick up and use to modify their operations to use that net technology. There is a huge need for new ideas for new selective gear technology.
  - Chu suggested integrating fishermen in the research process right from the start so that science can move more readily into management, and at a much faster rate.
- C. Transitional Sea Collaborative (Barry Costa-Pierce)
- Costa-Pierce opened by noting that there is a need for ideas to form a regional proposal around the theme of Block Island and RI Sound, and that more funds are needed than can be garnered from just RISG, though it would take the lead on leveraging funds. A group is being pulled together to take this idea further.
  - Scott Nixon noted that such an initiative would provide very useful information on a very critical area, particularly to fisheries ecology.
  - Costa-Pierce suggested that time on the Endeavor be considered. Dave Smith responded that an open competition is run for time on the Endeavor, so a proposal would need to be developed; leveraged funds go a very long way in such a proposal.
6. Costa-Pierce wrapped up the discussion and meeting, noting the RISG needs to clearly identify its role to the URI administration and that it needs to better consolidate and disseminate past program accomplishments. The future for RISG will be developing ways to foster partnerships, collaborative efforts and integrated initiatives that will leverage core funds.

**Next SAC meeting will be on Thursday, June 25<sup>th</sup> 2009 from 10:00am to 4:00pm.**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:50pm.