

## Minutes of the June 2009 RISG SAC meeting

Members in attendance: Ronald Baird, Kevin Chu, Ames Colt, Ben Cuker, Shelley Dawicki, Christopher Deacutis, Dennis Esposito, Kristen Fletcher, Grover Fugate, John Hoey, Ambrose Jearld, Eugene Lyman, Jim Miller, Dennis Nixon, Rick Rhodes, Eric Scherer, Bob Smith, David Smith, Michael Sullivan, Judith Swift, Phoukham Vongkhamdy, Robert Weygand

Ex-officio members in attendance: Monica Allard Cox, Dave Bengtson, Dorn Carlson, Barry Costa-Pierce, Alan Desbonnet, Susan Farady, Jennifer McCann, Heather Rhodes, Laura Skrobe

Guests: Meredith Haas, Tiffany Smythe

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Barry Costa-Pierce opened the meeting with a discussion of Rhode Island Sea Grant's actions from a local to a national level. RISG has been nimble in changing work plans to address emerging issues.

**National:** Met with Leon Cammen after the opening of the OSEC building on campus:

NOAA is in strategic planning now. Its three priority areas will be:

1. Marine Spatial Planning. This in context of ocean renewable energy is an emerging issue in Rhode Island. RI poised to play national role, with only 3 states in pre-application phase with MMS for leasing for offshore development.
2. Fisheries Disasters (measures of privatization in Northeast, incl. Catch-shares and sectors)
3. Climate Change (NOAA has new climate service, climate extension groups are forming). RISGis involved in research on climate change, also extension – sea level rise policies, etc.

### QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Weygand: How much are SG programs participating in NOAA strat plan? Possible to do too much too soon?

Costa-Pierce: Moving quickly is important; stimulus money is having a major impact. Additional OMB resources coming. Active engagement of the nonprofit corporation the Sea Grant Association with NOAA and Congress makes SGA an important portal. SAC could play increased role in making recommendations to the SGA as other advisory bodies at other universities do.

Hoey: Jane Lubchenko announced in April \$16 million to be spent - \$10 million supporting the transition to sectors, \$6 million for cooperative research. Reed earmarked additional \$10 million including cooperative research and direct assistance that NEFSC will be handling. Moving \$4.5 to 5 million as grants. The Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation at URI is a likely recipient of a significant award to continue supporting the competitive award program they manage with URI Sea Grant. NEFSC also has \$2 million for vessel bids for surveys and other research projects.

Money is going to Cooperative Institute for North Atlantic (caps overhead), of which URI is not a part. URI was part of a competing group that was not selected. URI is host for CESUs, and NOAA may sign MOU for using CESUs for transferring money.

Costa-Pierce: RISG has been engaged with CFRF on running a competitive research panel and may work with them in the future.

Nixon: Was any money in Lubchenko's proposal for permitting?

Hoey: That will be separate pool of funds. Funding is very targeted to output control.

### **Regional**

Regional entities lack resources to make progress on thematic priorities

- NART: NOAA North Atlantic Regional Team
- NROC: NE Govs \$6 million appropriation request to Congress; \$1.5 million to Sea Grant for regional science implementation
- ROSC: Gulf of Maine – strat plan finished; and NY Bight – may have more urban flavor
- NESGC: All 7 host institutions signing NE Sea Grant Consortium to attract gov't money to this region. Host institutions to receive and disburse without subcontract fees in hope of generating new business

### QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Baird: HR21 up for hearings; would support regional efforts

Costa-Pierce: We should not reinvent wheel – should develop regional learning communities on issues

### **Local**

Increasing costs and declining budgets prompted RISG to make the decision to keep programs but cut back administrative costs, eliminating an administrative unit position and spreading the tasks

Testified at URI's research match bill in the General Assembly asking RI to provide match where match is required. Decision – better to stand as part of URI than as part of Land Grant/Sea Grant bill as in past.

Program is looking to enhance administrative teams' communications skills to share duties.

Education: We are committed to training coastal leaders. 5 years ago – TAT on education. Now: Hired Meredith Haas to lead up education efforts and partner with URI.

Provided handouts on strategic plan, business framework.

Looking to narrow priorities.

Introduced Tiffany Smythe, new hire in coastal program

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Desbonnet : Recap omnibus, Handed out proposal summaries

- Collaboratives not looking at congregation of researchers but collaborations that would synthesize information and pull scientific information into outreach public could use

- 14 full proposals to be evaluated by panel in August. Narrowed focus = fewer proposals. More reviewers declining due to all SG programs being on same time frame requiring reviews.
- SNECRI panel provided good model for including stakeholders in review panel for “relevancy check.” RISG will be doing this.
- \$50K committed to Gulf of Maine regional SG effort
- \$2.16 million requested; \$1.77 in funds anticipated

#### QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Rhodes: Incentive to reviewers?

Desbonnet: No, does not seem to make a difference in success rate

Cuker: Question on focusing research

Desbonnet: National Office is engaging us more in reporting on impacts; by focusing research we can target to areas we’re telling SG we’re responsible for – this will help target outreach and other elements.

Cuker: You might consider allocating some funds to innovative research that will give you input of ideas and help see what’s coming.

Colt: Is the decrease in research funding due to increases in administrative personnel costs?

Desbonnet: To some degree; this budget is based on worst-case scenarios.

Costa-Pierce: We have led network in staying at 50% research

Desbonnet: This RFP requires researchers to work with outreach, grad students to participate

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Grover Fugate presentation on Ocean SAMP

- The Ocean SAMP is a result of long-term discussions regarding energy and other ocean spatial usage issues.
- June 12 Presidential executive order pushing marine spatial planning
- Congress: CZMA indicates states should be developing ocean plans; RI state statutes align with this
- RI is only state to zone waters out to three-mile limit in 6 categories with policies for each. RI is reaching into federal waters through federal consistency.
- SAMPs – ecosystem-based plans, 7 in RI
- Marine Resources Development Plan requires CRMC to target all of shoreline with SAMPs; RI leads nation in SAMP development. With this Ocean SAMP, asking NOAA to include that SAMP area in CRMC’s purview.
- Why wind turbines? RI does not have a lot of tidal/wave action; offshore wind is viable now
- RI one of first states to adopt climate change policy
- Study area = 30 miles offshore

- Small scale project off Block Island and larger project in federal waters proposed
- **Screening analysis** for time data sets as well as physical dimensions to focus where to invest resources. Exclusions in this analysis include hard constraints, technology of jacketed development to 60 meters. Geologists developing ease-of-construction map, vessel traffic data indicating areas to avoid, areas further refined by visual impacts and other analyses = all analysis narrows area to examine in western area of the SAMP.
- Will be spending \$5 million on research
- Coordinating with MMS and Army Corps
- 2011 = possible permit for small farm off Block Island

#### QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

B. Smith: How much has been done re: 70-knot gales/hurricanes and effects on turbines?

Fugate: All design standards to 100-year events; developer indicates they will exceed those standards.

Cuker: Does this open opportunities for aquaculture?

Fugate: Research by MMS on these structures includes that these seem to act as mini-sanctuaries

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### **Program Updates – Omnibus Plans**

Legal Program – Susan Farady

We will continue:

- Teaching
- Convening experts
- Leveraging strengths among institutions

Law Fellows have worked on a variety of projects that have benefitted them and the clients; now need to be strategic on how projects funded to allow more opportunities.

1. Client/constituent groups \$1,500
2. Funding from Sea Grant in omnibus proposal
3. Law School

Also looking to integrate more with URI faculty and RISG with student projects. Proposing fellows colloquium.

Looking for hard money to fund staff, soft money for projects.

Renewable energy – legal program could be hub of information for Northeast through collaborative

#### QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Swift: Take advantage of getting events out to media to educate public

Weygand: Suggest promoting Law Fellows through web site – opportunities as well as what they've done

Baird: How do you relate to other Sea Grant law programs?

Farady: Informal frequent conversations

Chu: Do you have provisions for interns?

Farady: We work with career services and students informally; working to make career services more aware we're there and that a lot of students come to RWU for joint-degree program

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#### Fisheries Program – Laura Skrobe

Conducted 2-day planning meeting to get input on next 5 years as well as omnibus. Condensed 6 priority areas. Omnibus:

- Innovative management not limited to sectors
- Seafood Safety – training to allow fishermen to sell directly to consumers
- Harvesting efficiency = more than bycatch reduction
- Shell disease – 2010 Baird Symposium. Have synthesis paper; 2010-12 will include more synthesis
- Enhance marketing – reinvigorating/reestablishing Seafood Council (new name) if needs of stakeholders are there
- Fisheries-dependent research – address sampling gaps (inshore, pot surveys)
- Sharing the ocean – Literature search on effects of sound on fish, ID gaps, put out publications on vulnerable points in species life
- URI Fisheries Institute
- Institution Building – CFRF has legs due to being in Commercial Fisheries Center, which was aided by RISG

Looking to hire new person to replace Dave

#### QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Nixon: Concerned about strength of your team to handle workload

Skrobe: Putting in proposals with multiple researchers (tapping into other resources)

Jearld: Missing opportunities (red. Hoey comments)

Colt: Bob Ballou's move to DMF may create opportunities for collaboration

Bengtson: Kathy Castro's Fisheries Institute idea answers that – bring things under one umbrella to take advantage of opportunities

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#### Coastal Communities and Ecosystems Program – Jennifer McCann

Omnibus goal: Vibrant and Diverse Waterfronts

1. Focus on Newport Harbor, SAMP on West Side of Aquidneck Island
2. Ports and Harbors inventory

#### Newport Harbor

Locals invited RISG to work with them on concerns, including lack of public access. RISG working with locals to:

- Recognize working waterfronts
- Encourage coordination among decision makers in harbor area
- Address problem of people making decisions on perceptions, not numbers

Working with Frank Mahady to develop an economic baseline and scenarios for development

#### Ports and Harbors Inventory

- Survey effort turned into GIS maps
- Can tell how many parcels are vacant, are there deed restrictions, who owns the parcel, etc. Helps municipalities better design their waterfronts, state to make decisions. Bays & Watersheds program added seed money to expand the effort to include recreational uses

#### Ocean SAMP

- Emphasis on ecosystem-based management, other issues besides turbines
- RISG team us ensuring transparent, fair process and information sharing
- Close collaboration with researchers

#### Omnibus for 2010-12:

- Communicate lessons learned from SAMP
- SAMP served as vehicle for bringing researchers together, plan to continue that

#### QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Nixon: How is this funded?

McCann: \$3.2 million from the state to gather existing info, write document. MOU among URI, CRMC, EDC, with money coming to URI. Fugate is project manager. CRMC also received a Reed earmark through DOE for \$600K, sole-sourced to URI. An additional \$2.8 million is potentially coming from EDC. These two sources of funds will be used to generate new information. Also calculating URI contributions - professors' time, Endeavor time

Nixon: Need for financial transparency

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Desbonnet: We are rethinking program administration – Communications as “job shop” no longer viable. Communications duties must be spread across many offices. Impacts reporting is key. Team approach to documentation

Education: TAT report = finally moving to initiate some of these recommendations.

Meredith Haas: Fellowship program – focusing on undergraduate education – early state of their career development, they would “give back” in mentoring

- Potential first fellowship in journalism – looking for dual majors
- Potential opportunities: Business, web, coastal spatial planning, legal.
- Marine affairs fellowship mimicking Knauss Fellowship but locally

#### QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Cuker: Might consider goals/objectives – need to be measurable. Will help some of these things to fall into place. e.g., diversity? Will help ID partners, timeframe. Could match graduate student mentors with undergrads for peer mentoring.

Nixon: This is like Coastal Fellows program. Is this a competing program?

Costa-Pierce: We are not talking about a new undergraduate coastal fellows program at Sea Grant.

Desbonnet: Not always clear that coastal fellowships available to students from non-science majors.

Dawicki: Could train early-career scientists to speak to the public through podcasts, etc. Flip side of Metcalf Institute.

D. Smith: We are working with journalism department in Kingston to do this for GSO students.

Swift: Coastal Fellows a great program but how to make students aware of it (outside of CELS students) and that it relates to them?

Chu: Can you take the points made and enhance existing programs at URI and then see if there is a need for something else.

Dawicki: Collaborate – leverage resources between RISG and NEFSC – Lubchenko and her communications director want to get science out to public.

Costa-Pierce (to Haas): Discuss with Coastal Fellows program and identify what RISG has been supporting formally and informally.

Swift: Undergraduate/graduate research awards – should be a dynamic web site re: what these students’ interests, experiences, and outcomes are. Tap into alumni association to sponsor students.

Desbonnet: We need more conversations about what role we play. We were looking at this to provide more opportunities to students.

Colt: Take advantage of existing administrative mechanisms (as with coastal fellows program)

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Costa-Pierce discussion of Baird 2009, moving it out of the international/aquaculture arena and focus regionally/locally on topic of relevance and importance. Fisheries sectors or Renewable energy are two possible themes.

Chu suggested NOT pursuing sectors; too many such efforts already underway.

Colt suggested renewable energies focus, and the NROC might be a sponsoring partner. He agreed to pursue the partnership possibility.

After further discussion Costa-Pierce noted that the Baird 09 symposium would focus on a regional perspective of renewable energy development.

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Costa-Pierce reviewed the Program Development section of the 2010-2012 Omnibus proposal, noting efforts in Diversity and in Sustainable Seafood.

Several members suggested that funds be set aside in PD for “emergency” efforts and to be able to address unanticipated but “hot” topics/issues as they come along. It was also suggested that perhaps Sea Grant could partner with Land Grant to jointly have a pot of money available through which to fund efforts in fast breaking but critical issues. There was no agreement on how much money to set aside for such an endeavor.

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Costa-Pierce adjourned the meeting at 4:10PM.

Next SAC meeting planned for 02 December 2009