

Final Plan for FY 2003 to Enhance the Fisheries Portion of the Sea Grant Extension Program

December 17, 2002

Introduction

The National Sea Grant College Program Act Amendments of 2002 (i.e., Sea Grant Reauthorization Act) recently signed into law on November 26, 2002 (Public Law 107-299) specifies an annual appropriation for each of the fiscal years 2003 through 2008 of \$3,000,000 for competitive grants for fishery extension activities conducted by sea grant colleges or sea grant institutes to enhance, and not supplant, existing core program funding. In addition to this language, wording in the July 24, 2002 Senate report for the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, The Judiciary, and Related Agencies Appropriation Bill, 2003 for the National Sea Grant College Program (NSGO) (i.e., FY 2003 Sea Grant Appropriations Act) also stipulated the enhancement of the fisheries portion of Sea Grant's extension program capacity by \$3,000,000 of Federal Sea Grant funds. Specifically, the Senate wording stated that no less than \$3,000,000 will be dedicated towards hiring of additional personnel, at the State program level, to act as liaisons between NOAA, Sea Grant Institutions, and the commercial and recreational fishing industries.

With the Congress adjourned until January 7, 2003, a Continuing Resolution in effect until January 11, 2003 (and most likely longer), and the new 108th Congress having to reconsider the FY 2003 appropriations bill, there is uncertainty relative to the eventual Sea Grant appropriation for FY 2003 (the period October 1, 2002 to September 30, 2003). In spite of the specification in the reauthorization bill that \$3,000,000 would be appropriated for enhanced fisheries extension activities, it is not known if any new funds will be provided for this purpose in FY 2003, the current budget period. It is also uncertain as to what, if anything, the appropriations language will eventually say relative to a fisheries extension enhancement mandate. However, despite this uncertainty and recognizing the unambivalent intent of Congress expressed in the Sea Grant Reauthorization Act, the NSGO deems it prudent to proceed with plans to further enhance the Sea Grant fisheries extension program during this fiscal year.

Under the assumption of no additional funds in the FY 2003 budget to develop the program, programmatic trade-off decisions have been made, and other proposed activities such as National Strategic Investments (NSIs), by necessity, will be reduced or delayed. In developing this fisheries extension enhancement plan, the NSGO has sought to minimize Sea Grant programmatic disruptions while at the same time providing for the more rigorous Congressional mandate of hiring new personnel and creating new organizational structures to coalesce Sea Grant fisheries extension efforts within the Congressionally directed programs. Our goals within this plan are to enhance the delivery of fisheries extension services to constituents; promote sustainable US fisheries resources; and fully engage appropriate local, state, regional, and Federal fisheries management agencies.

Assumptions

- The intent of Congress is to increase the capacity of Sea Grant programs (e.g., primarily in the hiring of additional personnel) to conduct fisheries extension activities.
- Enhanced fisheries extension activities would strengthen the Sea Grant network.
- Hiring additional personnel is defined as a new hire or increasing the time devoted to fisheries extension for an existing hire without supplanting core programs.
- Since enhanced fisheries extension is identified in the Sea Grant reauthorization act, the program is viewed as a 5-year dedication of resources.
- For the purposes of this initiative, fisheries extension is considered to be a range of projects and activities that pertain to wild, capture, and recreational fisheries including utilization, conservation, habitat enhancement or protection, technology transfer, stock enhancement, education of user or interest groups, sociology and economic evaluations, and management policy. For the purposes of this initiative, fisheries extension does not include production aquaculture.

Principles

- All state and institutional Sea Grant programs and developing new programs (i.e., U. S. affiliated Pacific Islands, Pennsylvania, and Lake Champlain) may elect to participate in this competition.
- As a program enhancement activity, resources allocated under this program will be excluded from the operating guideline that approximately 50% of base plus merit funding will be distributed for research and education projects awarded by an open, peer-reviewed competitive process.
- Disruptions to ongoing research, education, and extension activities will be minimized while organizing and implementing the program in FY 2003.
- The program will be designed to enhance fisheries extension and outreach to an array of fishery constituencies and therein promote sustainable US fisheries resources.
- To the maximum extent practical, fisheries extension activities will be designed to achieve measurable outcomes and impacts.
- It is expected that an enhanced fisheries extension program will adhere to the best conduct practices for regional Sea Grant extension as articulated in the Assembly of Sea Grant Extension Program Leaders September 2000 *Regional and National Extension Programming* report.
- Initiation of the program will provide the foundation for a long-term, sustained, and expanded Sea Grant fisheries extension program.
- A structure that includes priority setting with flexible local implementation, regional and state planning, and national coordination and leadership is the objective.
- The program will involve meaningful collaboration with agencies such as NOAA Fisheries in the coastal and marine states, GLERL, USFWS, and USGS/BRD in the Great Lakes states, state and tribal resource agencies, regional fishery management councils,

interstate fisheries commissions, and local and community management organizations.

Goals (not in priority order)

- Respond to the needs of fishery constituencies as identified by Congress and the Administration.
- Provide enhanced extension programming over an extended period of time to fishery constituencies that makes a demonstrable difference in understanding and/or actions to promote sustainable US fisheries resources..
- Improve collaboration with Federal, state, and tribal fisheries agencies, regional fishery management councils, interstate fisheries commissions, and local and community management organizations to improve overall fisheries outreach; in particular, enhance the information flow among fishery constituencies.
- Enhance regional and national integration of Sea Grant fisheries extension programming by expanding the fisheries extension infrastructure and increasing information exchange at the national, regional, and local levels.

Resource and Guidance Documents

Reports from Congress and from several fisheries planning exercises conducted in recent years were utilized to organize the program and shape this plan and will help to identify programmatic areas needing expansion at the regional and local levels. These include: 1) The National Sea Grant College Program Act Amendments of 2002 recently signed into law on November 26 (Public Law 107-299) [[http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c107:H.R.3389.ENR](http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c107:H.R.3389.ENR;)]; 2) July 24, 2002 Senate report for the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, The Judiciary, and Related Agencies Appropriation Bill, 2003 [<http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c107:s.2778>]; 3) *The Role of Sea Grant Extension Programming in an Era of Changing Fisheries*, a report to the Assembly of Sea Grant Extension Program (SGEP) Leaders dated July 1997 [<http://seagrants.orst.edu/asgepl/SeaGrantExtProg2.html>]; 4) *Our Nation's Fisheries; a Proud and Troubled Heritage*, a June 2001 report on research and resource needs by the Sea Grant Fisheries Theme Team [<http://texas-sea-grant.tamu.edu/Fisheries%20Theme%20Team/fttfisheriesbook.html>]; and 5) *RecFish 2000: Meeting the Needs of Managers, Anglers and Industry*, a symposium proceedings which focuses on future recreational fisheries issues [<http://www-csgc.ucsd.edu/PUBLICATIONS/PubOtherSG.html>].

In addition, the May 2000 concept paper developed in conjunction with NMFS entitled, *Joint NMFS/Sea Grant Fisheries Extension/Outreach Proposal*, also identified extension programmatic needs related to fisheries management issues. Additional guidance was found in 1) the Assembly's September 2000 *Regional and National Extension Programming* report [<http://seagrants.orst.edu/sgpubs/onlinepubs/q00003.html>]; 2) the July 2000 Andren-Malouf white paper on Sea Grant funding; and 3) the November 2000 Byrne Report entitled, *A Mandate to Engage Coastal Users* [<http://seagrants.orst.edu/sgpubs/onlinepubs/q01001.html>]. These

documents emphasize that extension programs are built from the ground up with substantive involvement by stakeholders, and this most basic organizing principle is central to the planning structure for an expanded fisheries extension program.

Participation

Participation by state and institutional Sea Grant programs and developing new programs (i.e., U.S. affiliated Pacific Islands, Pennsylvania, and Lake Champlain) in this enhanced fisheries extension program is strongly encouraged, but will be voluntary. It should be noted that this will be a 5-year program with no anticipated provisions for mid-term project submissions.

Implementation and Funding

Reallocation of existing funds will be required to accommodate the Congressional mandate. The plan envisions a national competition to fund new capacity in Sea Grant fisheries extension and to provide regional/national coordination and program management. Funds for the competition will include \$600,000 to be provided by state/institutional programs through the reprogramming of existing Federal Sea Grant funds and \$2,400,000 to be provided by the NSGO through the reprogramming and deferring of Sea Grant NSIs.

Consistent with the principles and goals stated above and to provide the opportunity for programs that can successfully demonstrate exceptional need based on clientele demand for fisheries extension services, there will be no limit on the number of projects/program elements and associated new hires that an individual Sea Grant program may request. Programs may also partner with other programs in submitting proposals that would share new hires (requires an identified lead program to serve as grant recipient, with others being subcontractors). In addition, proposals may be submitted for part-time hires (i.e., with their remaining time devoted to other extension or research activities). Programs must collaborate with Federal, state, and tribal fisheries agencies, regional fishery management councils, interstate fisheries commissions, or local and community management organizations in the identification of outreach programs to be addressed by proposals and in their eventual implementation.

An individual Sea Grant program is requested to submit only one overall proposal for all new projects, programs, and hires that it alone wishes to undertake. However, each separate project, program, or hire should be modularized (i.e., with separate budgets, work plans, objectives, intended impacts, collaboration with others) to facilitate review, evaluation, and selection of fundable components. Submissions involving two or more Sea Grant programs should be assembled as separate proposals with a designated lead program responsible for the proposals and other partnering programs listed as subcontractors.

The Federal funds shown in the budget(s) for each proposal will be derived from a split between those provided by the NSGO and those reprogrammed from existing Federal funds by the submitting program or programs in the proportion of 4:1. In other words, for every \$4 provided

by the NSGO, \$1 in Federal Sea Grant funds will be provided through reprogramming by the submitting program or programs. Individual Sea Grant programs will have broad discretion to identify the activities (program development, research, communications, other extension activities, etc.) from which to reprogram funds other than from existing fisheries extension commitments. Note: the \$20K reprogramming specified for fisheries extension enhancement in FY 2002 was a one-year commitment, so these funds within the current year could be available for re-commitment to fisheries extension enhancement efforts. As always, a match of the Federal funds will be required.

At a minimum, to be successful, proposals must identify 1) the size and diversity of the appropriate local, state, regional, or national fishery constituencies, 2) the Sea Grant program's current capacity to supply needed fisheries extension activities, 3) a description of how the additional program element(s) and hire(s) will enhance the ability of the program to deliver fisheries extension services and complement existing fisheries extension programming, 4) a description of the collaboration with Federal, state, and tribal fisheries agencies, regional fishery management councils, interstate fisheries commissions, or local and community management organizations, and 5) a program plan of work which identifies specific extension goals, objectives, and potential activities including an evaluation plan. Projects will be selected for funding out of the pool of proposals following a panel review process.

Provided that progress is maintained and adequate appropriations are received, successful proposals will be funded annually for at least five years. Based on satisfactory performance, need, and the availability of funds, projects may be eligible for renewal or re-competed after five years. To the extent practicable, following satisfactory reviews, geographical distribution will be considered in funding decisions. A programmatic performance review for the entire Sea Grant fisheries extension program will be conducted at the end of year four.

A total of \$150,000 of the \$3,000,000 will be made available to support regional/national program coordination and management, with \$90,000 for use at the regional level and \$60,000 at the national level. The regional extension coordinator, selected by Extension Program Leaders, in each of the six Sea Grant regions will be provided \$15,000 (\$12,000 from the NSGO and \$3,000 from program funds) to cover costs associated with promotion, planning, facilitation, and coordination of fisheries extension activities at the regional level. Cost to be covered by these funds at the regional level would include within-region travel, participation in meetings of the *ad hoc* Fisheries Extension Enhancement Committee, planning and coordination meetings with fisheries extension personnel, collaborating agencies (including NOAA Fisheries in all marine regions and relevant Federal agencies in the Great Lakes region), and fishery constituencies, and generation of annual synthesis reports on fisheries extension accomplishments.

The six regional coordinators will select, from within their group, a national coordinator. This person will receive an additional \$60,000 (with the 4:1 requirement waived) to cover costs associated with his/her responsibilities. The national coordinator will be expected to 1) interact with the regional coordinators, 2) promote, facilitate, and coordinate national workshops

involving representatives from Sea Grant fisheries extension, collaborating agencies (e.g., NMFS), and fishery constituencies, 3) serve on the Sea Grant Fisheries Theme Team, 4) be responsible for assembling annual synthesis reports from all regions and combining them into an annual national synthesis report on all fisheries extension activities throughout the Sea Grant network, 5) communicate fisheries extension accomplishments in conjunction with the Sea Grant communicators and the national media center to the NSGO, collaborating agencies, relevant constituencies, Congress, and others as appropriate, and 6) help develop partnerships with fishery constituencies at the national level.

In order to ensure a more coordinated and informed fisheries extension program within Sea Grant regions, all existing and new fisheries extension personnel will be encouraged to participate in regional network activities.

The NSGO intends to utilize the existing *ad hoc* Fisheries Extension Enhancement Committee, comprised of representatives from the SGA, the Assembly, and the National Sea Grant Review Panel, to provide policy and procedural advice and guidance for the enhanced fisheries extension initiative. In this capacity, the Committee will also function as a steering committee or policy board for the national coordinator.