

Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee
OCEAN POLICY ADVISORY COUNCIL
November 6, 2006 Meeting Minutes (approved)

The committee met November 3, 2006 beginning at 9:00 am in the Barry Fisher Room, Guin Library, at the Hatfield Marine Science Center in Newport, Oregon

Members in attendance included Jack Barth, Ralph Brown, Susan Hanna, Selina Heppell, Dick Hildreth, Jay Rasmussen (Chair), David Sampson, and Craig Young. All members were present. Assisting were Pat Corcoran and Julie Howard of Oregon Sea Grant. Participating was Julie Barr, Oregon Sea Grant. In attendance for a portion of the meeting was OPAC member Paul Englemeyer.

Committee Chair Jay Rasmussen welcomed the group, introduced the guests to the committee, reviewed the agenda and meeting materials, and suggested the following desired outcomes or major goals for the STAC:

- Provide OPAC advice in a way that's fair, complete, and efficient.
- Serve as both information broker and provider

Rasmussen noted that as a result of today's meeting, he hopes that STAC members come away with a good idea of what STAC is, how the committee is going to operate in a variety of situations, and are pleased to be a part of this effort.

Committee members made self-introductions, including education, work background, current position, recent, current, and likely projects related to Oregon's ocean; areas of special interest related to Oregon's ocean; and anticipation of their best/worst case scenarios as a member.

Meeting facilitator Pat Corcoran stated his goal was to be able to move the process of the meeting forward – to take the things that work best and use them to help make the best use of time and come up with the best progress

During the morning session, the group discussed options for developing an operational style, procedures, and roles around the following:

- How does STAC relate, correspond, and respond to OPAC?
- What are the possible forms and formats relative to OPAC?
- Should STAC initiate ideas and approaches, including gaps in information?
- What are the major operational items: e.g., decision-making, staffing needs, role of STAC chair?

The committee reviewed the January 2006 STAC Form and Functions document, which includes details of the Legislative Charge, the Goal, Structure and Membership, and Operation of the STAC. The STAC is meant to advise OPAC, not make policy.

Facilitator Pat Corcoran presented a flow chart illustrating how information is to be exchanged between OPAC and STAC, including feedback, recommendations, the appointment of subcommittees, the management of the process, and deciding on the scientific and technical advice that will be forwarded from STAC to OPAC. Facilitator Pat Corcoran summarized the need to make decisions and give advice in a way that's not personality-identified. He suggested that the way for this body to maintain its integrity is to remember that the purpose of the STAC is "to aid and advise OPAC." The scientific and technical advice that the STAC chair takes back to OPAC isn't policy advice and every time there's a challenge, the group needs to point to the scientific and technical facts behind it. Keep that front and center. Discussion, questions, and suggestions offered by members at this point in the meeting included:

It was noted that often advice from an advisory panel might not be received well, which can result in the science panel becoming the issue of debate. The group should remain cognizant that some won't accept scientific advice and that it will be impossible to provide data that will ever satisfy everyone.

Over a working lunch, the group discussed an informational item, the Regional Research and Information Project, a two-year project to develop a plan for ocean and coastal resource needs. The project team includes members from Sea Grant Programs in Washington, Oregon, California, and the University of Southern California, as well as members from the Coastal Zone Management Programs in California, Oregon, and Washington, the respective Governors' offices in these three states, and the South Slough Estuarine Research Reserve.

Project Coordinator Julie Barr pointed out that this is a good opportunity to identify those future issues or data needs mentioned early. We want to focus on the way forward, understanding that it's a long-term process. Current forthcoming issues include making sure all voices are heard, but keeping realistic boundaries in order to get things done and avoid redundancy. She'll be creating a one-page document that encompasses the project's goals and approach. It's important that everyone's voice to be heard and that the process be transparent, designed so everyone has access to everyone else's comments and to her.

Members asked how the workshops would be designed to ensure full spectrum representation. Also, are the eight thematic areas presented in the attachment still open to revision? Perhaps NOAA's thematic areas should be elevated since evaluations are done according to them. Also, where does socio-economics fit in? It was suggested that Barr should come to some of the Ocean Observing Systems meetings. Rasmussen suggested Barr could also contact each committee member on an individual basis and have this topic come back to the next STAC meeting for further comments.

Barr invited committee members to recommend materials that might help her with this project. One member suggested the 1990s Pacific Northwest Marine Resource Plan, although another member cautioned that some of these plans tend not to include people

who live on the coast. It was suggested that Barr talk with the Western Association of Marine Labs (WAML).

The Committee then reviewed the letter from OPAC Vice Chair Jim Good related to ocean mapping. Rasmussen suggested we use the draft letter for framing how we would respond.

It was understood that OPAC through STAC may need to understand what mapping programs and data exist and in what format, and what it would take to make them useful to a broad audience. Information on mapping ties in with the STAC response to OPAC's request for "advice" on designing and implementing an information system. Spatial information systems are necessary for any space-based management of ocean resources.

Recognizing the need to evaluate existing marine mapping tools, STAC will invite existing marine mapping tools experts to the next STAC meeting for a half-day workshop. Members of OPAC would also be invited to attend. A partial list of mapping experts is: Steve Cops (NOAA NWFSC); California representative (Marine Map, <http://marinemap.org>); Dawn Wright (OSU); Chris Goldfinger (OSU). One possibility would be a project designed to collect existing data and provide input into an ocean information system. Such a system should:

- Include a description of how the information can be used, how it will be available (GIS, web-based, maps and data), and how it will be updated.
- Include spatial management.
- Be a transparent system regardless of the application.

STAC recognizes that a large portion of the information that managers and others might use is not in a readily accessible format (correlative science – look for patterns) and a large part of the information comes from experiments (addresses cause and effect).

Turning to the draft letter from the Marine Reserves Committee led to a discussion on how inquiries to STAC could be structured to allow STAC the best opportunity to respond timely and fully. It was suggested that inquiries should come to STAC through the STAC chair, in bulleted form, clearly expressed and also agreed upon and prioritized by OPAC or its working groups. Discussing the draft letter more for process than content helped develop some draft guidelines for future requests. OPAC must be the prioritizing group. STAC may be able to help frame questions to identify what it is that OPAC would like to know, and why? Two STAC members—Selina and Craig—agreed to work with the Marine Reserve Working Group leaders to help refine the request. The STAC chair will convey that message and convene that meeting.

STAC also briefly discussed its potential role in helping OPAC members better understand what science is and what its limitations are.

It was also further agreed that the STAC could identify people to meet with the OPAC Working Groups and, on a rotating basis, could accompany the chair to OPAC meetings for reporting and for becoming familiar with OPAC members, issues and processes.

After extended discussion, STAC concluded with the following draft Committee guidelines:

- Requests to STAC by OPAC and its Working Groups need to be formal, consensus driven, prioritized, and made through the STAC chair.
- STAC will establish a meeting schedule and communicate that schedule to OPAC. OPAC and its working groups should consider that schedule and the limited capacity of STAC to respond to requests.
- OPAC should understand STAC's need for orderly inquiries and communication and the critical need to manage expectations.
- STAC will depend on its chair, who also serves on the OPAC Executive Committee, to communicate formally with OPAC.
- Invitation of STAC members to attend OPAC or Working Group meetings should be through the STAC chair.
- Individual STAC members speak for themselves rather than for STAC.
- STAC will operate on a consensus basis and, when there is disagreement, it will articulate the areas of non-consensus.
- In its deliberation, STAC will be mindful of three useful categories: What is known? What is unknown? And what is unknowable?
- Only STAC members will review draft meeting minutes, and only approved minutes will be circulated widely.
- STAC meeting minutes should serve as a primary vehicle for STAC members to communicate with OPAC and the public.
- STAC needs to foster good relationships with OPAC and interact informally with the working groups, but not become an advocate for the issue, the question or the response.

STAC agreed to develop a schedule of meetings, three times each year, to optimize time commitments. The group will compare availability in February and March of 2007 to determine a date that would include an informational mapping workshop, sponsored by STAC, with OPAC members invited to attend.

The group gathered for a group photo and adjourned approximately 4 pm.