



## Certification Call Recap

11 messages

Josie <jquintrell@comcast.net>

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To: Kerkering Heather <heather@mbari.org>, Taylor Brian <taylorb@hawaii.edu>, Newton Jan <newton@apl.washington.edu>, Boicourt Bill <boicourt@hpl.umces.edu>, Martin David <dmartin@apl.washington.edu>, Thomas Julie <jot@cdip.ucsd.edu>, Thoroughgood Carolyn <ctgood@udel.edu>, Francisco Chavez <chfr@mbari.org>, Manninen Christine <manninen@glc.org>, Toll Ray <RAYMOND.F.TOLL.JR@saic.com>, Hernandez Debra <debra@secoora.org>, Watlington Roy <rawatlington@earthlink.net>, Spaulding Malcolm <spaulding@oce.uri.edu>, Terrill Eric <eterrill@ucsd.edu>, Durette Cassie <cassie.durette@neracoos.org>, McCammon Molly <mccammon@aooos.org>, Corredor Jorge <jorge.corredor@upr.edu>, Kudrna Frank <fkudrna@kudrna.com>, Bird Nancy <nbird@pwssc.org>, Ostrander Chris <chriso@hawaii.edu>, Dodge Dick <dodge@nova.edu>, Rabalais Nancy <nrabalais@lumcon.edu>, Morrison Ru <Ru.Morrison@neracoos.org>  
Cc: Luther Mark <luther@marine.usf.edu>, Glenn Scott <glenn@marine.rutgers.edu>, Paige Kelli <kpaige@glos.us>, Jochens Ann <ajochens@tamu.edu>, Kosro Mike <kosro@coas.oregonstate.edu>, Dugan Darcy <dugan@aooos.org>, Dillon Amanda <adillon@ucsd.edu>, Tamburri Mario <tamburri@umces.edu>, Seim Harvey <hseim@email.unc.edu>, Read Jen <jread@glos.us>, Cohen Chris <ccohen@ucsd.edu>, Morrel Julio <julio.morell@upr.edu>, Trembl Megan <megan.trembl@gmail.com>, Sheldon Susannah <susannah@secoora.org>

To: NFRA Board of Directors and RA Directors  
cc: Jen Read, Kelli Paige and Ru Morrison  
Re: Discussion of Certification Standards

Hi,

I wanted to provide a quick recap of the conversation with the RICE Certification Working Group from yesterday as there is a critical issue that must be dealt with soon. The Working Group includes: April Donnelly (IOOS), Timi Vann (NOAA Regional Coordinator), Doug Wilson (NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office) and Nick Rome (COL). Scott Kuester was also at the meeting. Ru Morrison, Jen Read and Kelli Paige participated by phone.

### Major Issue: Definition of RICE

The Working Group and the NOAA lawyer are interpreting the definition of RICE and RA in the law to mean that there could be more than the 11 designated RAs. This was a complete surprise to us and is a major concern. If other entities can be certified a RICEs, the concept of a one entity working to coordinate and pull together the region on an ecosystem basis would be derailed. It is counter to the intent of regional IOOS and the regional approach endorsed by the National Ocean Policy (which has proposed a similar regional framework). It's not hard to picture the scenario as subregions splinter to form their own RAs. Funds are already stretched thin, let alone if the money were to be further divided into subregions.

We spent 2 hours reviewing our comments. They listened and we entered into some good dialog but in the end, I remain concern about the need for flexibility and simplicity in the certification standards, particularly given the current budget climate. They still have not thought through how certification will be implemented - who will do it (the IOOS staff, independent reviewers, etc) and by what mechanism. Another major issue is the data partner certification that will be tied to the RA Governance certification. No one on this committee was conversant about what would be required for those.

Jen, Ru and I all think immediate action is necessary to clarify the definition of how many RAs there are. Since it involves the NOAA lawyer, I suggest we draft a letter to the IOOC (full committee, not just the co-chairs), Zdenka, Holly Bamford and Dave Kennedy. NOS is responsible for implementing CMSP on a regional basis and should have a keen interest in making sure that IOOS is aligns with their other priorities. It may take some action for the NOS leadership to work with the lawyer on this issue.

If there is support for this idea, I will draft a letter for your review.

Josie

Josie Quintrell, Director  
NFRA: National Federation of Regional Associations for Coastal and Ocean Observing  
205 Oakledge Road  
Harpwell, ME 04079  
[207-725-8143](tel:207-725-8143) (office)  
[207-798-0857](tel:207-798-0857) (mobile)  
[jquintrell@comcast.net](mailto:jquintrell@comcast.net)  
[www.usnra.org](http://www.usnra.org)