Advocacy and Outreach Strategies for IOOS

Building legislative and high level executive support for IOOS and assuring key legislators in each State are familiar with and supportive of IOOS and its Regional Associations.

NFRA Advocacy Focus Areas

- **Administration** including Office of Management and Budget, Office of Science and Technology Policy, Department of Commerce, NOAA leadership, Interagency Ocean Observation Committee (IOOC), and IOOC Agencies.
- **Strategic partnerships** with other non-profit organizations like Ocean Leadership, Alliance for Earth Observations, Ocean NGOs, Friends of NOAA, Maritime Associations, etc.
- **The Hill**, with a focus on the Senate Appropriations and Commerce Committees and House members including the Appropriations, Natural Resources, Science, and Transportation Committees. Note that not all contact with the Hill is “lobbying.” You can also provide educational updates.

Regional Association Advocacy Focus Areas

- **Legislators and staffers** at the legislators’ homes offices, DC offices and through invitations to key observing events in the regions.
- **Stakeholders** who will contact legislators directly and let know how critical IOOS products are and will be willing to write letters of support.
- **Government affairs experts** at regional partners institutions (universities, state agencies, private sector, etc.). They have expertise and contacts that can be helpful.

Annual Advocacy Cycle

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<th>Summer</th>
<th>Fall / Winter</th>
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<td>The Congressional August Recess is a good time to invite members and staff to attend asset deployments, speak at meetings, or visit member institutions. This is also a key development period for strategy for the coming year.</td>
<td>October 1st is the start of federal fiscal year and is the time to ensure partners include IOOS in advocacy, meet staffers in-state, finalize IOOS funding request for following year, and to develop materials for early spring Hill visits.</td>
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**Ongoing advocacy includes press releases, informal communications, and tracking contacts.**

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<th>Early Spring</th>
<th>Late Spring</th>
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<td>The release of President’s Budget in the spring is a key time for Hill visits and for sending Dear Colleague letters and letters of support.</td>
<td>Following the Congressional markup of budget bills, it is critical to follow up with offices.</td>
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What Can Regions Do?

- Create a Liaison Group within your Region that includes members from all states and includes government affair experts in your partner institutions. These experts will have relationship with key staffers and legislators. Keep this group up to date on the happenings within your Region and be sure to invite them to any visits you schedule.
- Research your key legislative member’s interests and focus your messages. Most of the Senators and Representatives have a portion of their Web site devoted to key issues and you can review the Bills they have sponsored to glean their interests.
- Create materials for your Region that focus on the outcomes and products, using success stories and quotes from stakeholders where possible. Hone the message. These meetings are short, so having materials with your key messages clearly articulated is critical.
- When you have an event planned or an asset being launched, create press releases to get the word out to local media and staffers.
- Make contact with local offices, find out who the appropriate staffers are, and set up appointments to inform them of how your activities are making a difference to their constituents. Follow up. If you are asked a question you don’t know the answer to, be sure to follow up with them. You are building relationships with the staff.
- Cultivate users who will provide support (either via a letter, attending meetings, or serving as a reference).
- Keep notes and share with the NFRA community. We are all in this together. It is helpful to let us know what messages work well, what doesn’t,, what concerns you are hearing, etc. We have often heard that the coastal community is fragmented. We need to avoid this.

How Can NFRA Support Regions?

- Access to Leadership Online, a great resource for congressional information. Contact NFRA if you need information or would like to access the website directly.
- Provide feedback to the group on messages that work, strategy, etc.
- Share advocacy materials from other regions and review materials developed regionally as desired.
- Provide up-to-date information on budgets, legislation and other DC matters
- Organize national advocacy strategy sessions.
- Provide “training” for Hill meetings via phone calls prior to visits.
- Attend RA meetings to provide an informational session on why advocacy is important and how to approach it, customized for region.

Messages for 2011-2012 (feedback welcome)

Observations and Jobs: Supporting ocean, coastal and Great Lakes economies.

Safe and efficient marine trade depends on up-to-date information on coastal conditions. IOOS works with regional, state, and local users to facilitate access to data and information products tailored to their business and operational needs.

Providing access to ocean information. Ocean and coastal data is collected, analyzed and distributed by 17 different federal agencies, many universities, state, local and tribal governments, non-profits, and the private sector. As a result of the IOOS data management system, over 50% of the data served by NOAA’s National Data Buoy Center in 2010 came from non-federal sources. IOOS is good, cost-effective government.

“Response-Ready” Regions. IOOS and its partners were among the many responders to the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill. IOOS partners installed radars to track the direction and speed of surface currents in the Gulf and redirected gliders from other projects to the Gulf region to assist surveys of the spill’s subsurface extent. IOOS regional oceanographic models were used by response officials in their daily spill trajectory forecasts. IOOS investment in the Gulf and other coastal regions enabled this rapid, coordinated mobilization of assets to deal with a critical event.