



NFRA Annual Meeting
Monday, August 24, 2009
Urban Botanic Center, University of Washington
Seattle, WA

NFRA Chair Molly McCammon called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m.

Attendees

GCOOS: Ann Jochens, Buzz Martin
GLOS: Jen Read, Christine Manninen
NERACOOS: Ru Morrison, Jim O'Donnell
SECOORA: Cliff Merz, Harvey Seim, Debra Hernandez
SCCOOS: Julie Thomas
PacIOOS: Chris Ostrander, Brian Taylor
AOOS: Molly McCammon, Darcy Dugan
CeNCOOS: Heather Kerkering, Steve Ramp
NANOOS: Jan Newton
MACOORA: Judith Krauthamer, Bill Boicourt
CaRA: Roy Watlington, Jorge Corredor
Josie Quintrell, NFRA Executive Director

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the May 21, 2009 NFRA Board conference call were approved.
Motion by Jorge Corredor, second by Bill Boicourt. Approved unanimously.

Director's Report

Josie Quintrell presented the NFRA Executive Director's report. The last year was a big year for IOOS with the passage of the IOOS Authorization legislation after 8 years of work. NFRA continued its work on increasing support for IOOS nationally and improving coordination among the RAs. Accomplishments for the last year include: a congressional briefing in early March 2009 featuring users of ocean observing information, dinner and a welcome letter to the new NOAA Administrator Jane Lubchenco, a IOOS support letter signed by more than 175 users in all 11 regions, comments on IOOS reports such as the National Surface Current Plan, Data Management and others.

Several subcommittees have been active this past year: 1) Education and Outreach; 2) Modeling and Analysis; 3) Data Integration Framework (supported by NOAA-IOOS Office); 4) Industry (currently dormant). The Education and Outreach (E&O) subcommittee has been very active, regular monthly calls, workshop held in January 2009, display at July 2009 NMEA Conference. Rich Signell (NOAA IOOS) has been working on a Model Interoperability Project. All regions now have THREDDS server capabilities, which allow model output to be shared. RAs expressed concern about who has responsibility for these tasks.

Some of the challenges that NFRA faces in the coming year include: the continued low funding for IOOS, the lack of performance metrics for IOOS, a lack of a solid justification for the budget ask for IOOS, including what the \$55million for the regions will product, staff changes at NOAA IOOS Office (need to rekindle cooperation), communications/coordination, and the fact that only 5 out of the 11 RAs are providing funding and/or support for advocacy.

NFRA priorities for the coming year: increase funding for IOOS, national synthesis of regional plans, improve our public policy strategy, work with NOAA on performance metrics and reporting requirements, implementation of the legislation and taking advantage of opportunities to further the goals of IOOS as they arise (e.g., providing testimony for the White House Task Force on Ocean Policy, etc.).

Josie is requesting support for part-time administrative assistance and has spoken to Ru Morrison of NERACOOS about sharing administrative assistant. Josie wants to spend more time should focus on key advocacy issues and how NFRA can build a stronger presence in D.C. Potentially partnering with other regional NOAA programs (i.e., Sea Grant, CZM) to express priorities to NOAA was suggested.

Treasurer's Report, Adoption of Operating Budget for FY10

Josie presented the Treasurer's Report, on behalf of Rick DeVoe. The FY09 operating budget will close out at the end of September and Josie is predicting that there will be about \$71K in carry over. NFRA asked for 2 year's worth of dues in FY09 to bring the dues requests in line with the IOOS funding cycle. The new NOAA grant is \$100K, however \$50K of this amount is to support the 2009 IOOS Regional Coordination Workshop held in Seattle.

The FY10 Operating Budget contains a restricted and non-restricted parts. The income for FY10 restricted budget is projected to be \$221,365 which includes \$71K of carry over from FY09, \$50K from membership dues (restricted), and \$100K from the NOAA grant. Expenses include an salaries for an Executive Director and a part-time administrative assistant; Workshop costs (for NOAA grant); directors insurance; travel (increased from FY09 by \$5K); meeting and materials. The income for the nonrestricted funds is projected to be \$13K, with \$8K in carry over and \$5K in FY10 non-restricted dues. Expenses of non-restricted dues are expected to be \$5K.

The NFRA travel budget has been increased to allow for more travel to D.C., the regions and to reach out to other user groups that NFRA/IOOS might not ordinarily interact with (e.g., National Floodplain Managers). In unrestricted funds, only 5 RAs are currently contributing. Largely, this is due to the RAs not having a clear source for nonfederal funds. These funds would have to come from member dues, corporate donations or other. CaRA brought the issue up to its Board and the Board members individually contributed. Brian Taylor noted that the FY10 budget is not sustainable into the future given that is relies on the \$71K for carryover from FY09.

The motion to approve the FY10 operating budget was moved by Ann Jochens, second by Jan Newton.

The motion carried with a vote of 10 in favor and 1 opposed.

Report of the Nominating Committee

Harvey Seim presented the Nominating Committee report on behalf of Bill Boicourt and Heather Kerkering and Harvey Seim.

NFRA Officers:

The four nominees for officers were:

Molly McCammon, Chair
Ru Morrison, Vice Chair
Julie Thomas, Treasurer and
Christine Manninen, Secretary.

The officers are being elected to two-year terms, expiring at the NFRA annual meeting in summer/fall 2011.

The motion to approve this slate of officers was moved by Ann Jochens, second by Steve Ramp. The slate of officers were unanimously approved.

NFRA Executive Committee Members:

The Nominating Committee also suggests adding additional members to the Executive Committee to afford broader regional representation and to increase NFRA/IOOS face in D.C.

Nominees for the Executive Committee were:

Debra Hernandez
Jan Newton
Steve Ramp and
Ray Toll.

The motion to approve was by Roy Watlington, second by Julie Thomas. Passed unanimously.

NFRA Finance Committee:

The Nominating Committee recommended reconstituting the NFRA Finance committee

Nominees include

Julie Thomas (ex officio),
Rick DeVoe, and
Chris Ostrander.

Motion to approve by Jan Newton, second by Brian Taylor.

Discussion: A charter for this committee needs to be developed. It was noted that while Rick DeVoe was no longer a NFRA Board member, he could still serve on a committee, per the NFRA by-laws. The South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium, of which Rick is the Director, remains the fiscal agent for NFRA.

The motion passed unanimously.

Honorary Board Members.

The Nominating Committee put forth two recommendations for Honorary Board Members: Mark Luther and Paul Siri.

Paul has been a huge supporter of NFRA, now hired by the State of California to work on a statewide level with the two California RAs. California is currently drafting a lobbying campaign to enhance surface currents data. NFRA views a partnership with Paul as an important strategic opportunity.

Mark Luther has been an honorary director of NFRA for a few years. He is the President of the Alliance for Coastal Technologies (ACT), a sister program in the IOOS family. Mark is also involved in GCOOS and SECOORA and has been instrumental in IOOS for quite a few years.

According to NFRA bylaws, honorary directors can be unlimited in number and they cannot vote.

Motion by Julie Thomas, second by Brian Taylor.
Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion: Harvey suggested that the Executive Committee give some thought about how to better use the potential for Honorary Directors. The Honorary Director slots provide the organization with the opportunity to reach out to others who are supporters of IOOS. Some suggestions for honorary members were discussed: Shirley Ponponi, Sally Yozell (TNC), Emily Woglum (TNC – leading marine spatial planning initiative), Kristin Fletcher (CSO), Adm. Gaffney, head of Google Oceans, an official from Apple Computer, etc. NFRA should have a plan/strategy for recruiting and engaging honorary board members.

Molly McCammon made a motion to invite Sally Yozell and/or Emily Woglum to join the board as an honorary TNC member to NFRA. Christine Manninen seconded.
Passed unanimously.

The NFRA Nominating Committee will keep a list of future nominees.

It was suggested that David Martin and Rick DeVoe be appropriately acknowledged for their contributions to the Executive Committee.

Action: Review Options to Increase NFRA Presence in Washington, D.C.

Molly led a discussion to review options for increasing NFRA's presence in D.C. The newly appointed Executive Committee will be charged with reviewing options and making recommendations pertaining to increasing NFRA's presence in D.C. and exploring other sustainability options.

Motion by Bill Boicourt, second by Harvey Seim.
Unanimously approved.

Discussion: Public Policy Strategy for 2009-10

Molly and Josie led a discussion on the proposed Public Policy Strategy for NFRA. The primary goals are to increase IOOS funding in FY11 and FY12, and ensure that coastal ocean observing is recognized in appropriate legislative initiatives (energy bills, coastal legislation, climate legislation, etc). NFRA efforts must focus on both Congress and the Administration/NOAA. Much of what is being proposed is considered an outreach strategy and not direct lobbying.

NFRA and the regions must have a coordinated campaign for collecting letters/testimonials from users so that these testimonials are on hand when needed and are not confusing users with multiple requests. RAs should cultivate these contacts and develop strong, on-going relationships with them. For those regions with multiple states, there should be a key congressional contact in each state.

NFRA also needs to be more sophisticated in our approach to congressional members. The briefings should be customized to the interests and responsibilities of the member (e.g., IOOS is in support of marine ops in the following ways...). Members are very responsive to their constituents. Taking advantage of press opportunities is important. Josie and staff will compile a calendar of congressional deadlines/votes.

On the national level, government relations experts from each region will be tapped. Based on the U.S. Ocean Commission report, \$138M was proposed for IOOS. The more realistic “ask” that NFRA has promoted is \$96M. This is \$50M regions and \$46M national. The \$46 million, as outlined in the Ocean Commission Report, is not just for NOAA but for all of the national IOOS program including build out of the backbone system. Since the \$46 million is not part of the President’s request, NOAA (nor any other federal agency) cannot say how the money will be spent. This is confusing to many partners and something that we need to make clear.

NFRA is considering trying to diversify funding by approaching other federal agencies. For example, NFRA is exploring the possibility of seeking support for the National Surface Current Plan from the Department of Homeland Security and/or Department of Energy. The pros and cons of such action need to be carefully considered.

NFRA will develop a strategy for seeking a programmatic request for IOOS in 2009 in both the House and the Senate. If RAs can’t participate in advocacy activities, they need to find another organization or individual to partner with to help with this critical action. The regions are encouraged to partner with the developing governors’ associations. Surface current mapping (HF radar and other means) might be a unifying priority that NOAA IOOS and the regions could champion. NFRA is already promoting four thematic areas, to hone in on the commonalities and target our messages. The unique role of the regions in making IOOS work needs to be promoted. The National Weather Service is still a worthy example to follow. In many ways, NOAA itself should be thought of as another stakeholder, as many NOAA programs leverage IOOS. The key is showing WHY/HOW IOOS will help to address the NOAA administrator’s priorities (i.e., climate change, ocean acidification, etc). IOOS needs to demonstrate that it is more than just a data integration program but that remains a critical need to augment the observing capabilities. The same infrastructure (when built) can serve multiple uses. This is a key selling point for IOOS. We should be able to call out what is of highest priority to the Administration and not have to re-tool the entire IOOS program each time.

Discussion: Determining NFRA Priorities

The highest priorities for RAs won’t always be match and there will be conflicting priorities. The goal will be to move forward on issues that assist the majority of the regions and the program as a whole. This same issue happens between different states within an RA.

Discussion: Recommendations for FY10 Regional Funding

Molly provided an overview of the IOOS funding scenarios for FY10. The budget is still being considered. The President’s budget includes \$21.2 million for IOOS (\$14.6m for regions/ \$6.6m for NOAA IOOS); the House Appropriations Bill includes \$26.5m for IOOS (\$20m for regions/\$6.5m for NOAA IOOS) and the Senate Appropriations Bill includes \$34 m for IOOS (\$20 for regions/\$4.5 for a model test bed in the southeast; \$3 for ACT; and \$6.5m for NOAA IOOS). The House numbers would effectively level fund the program. In addition, the category 2 & 3 projects ended in FY09 and so approximately \$2.2 m may become available for regional programs in FY10.

NFRA has endorsed a policy of fully funded the RA planning grants and support RCOOS infrastructure in all regions. NFRA has an opportunity to state a preference for how the \$2.2 m that was going to the category 2&3 projects might be allocated in FY10. (NOAA will be making this decision, with or without input from NFRA). The suite of options include: splitting the amount equally among the 11 RAs, supporting special projects such as surface current mapping, bringing all regions up to a sustainable amount (3 regions current get less than \$1 m for planning and RCOOS

moneys combined), and other options. Offering NOAA a suggestion on how the monies should be divided can only be helpful to NOAA.

A long and heartfelt discussion ensued. Five RAs are competing this fall for RCOOS money. NOAA has set the maximum amount for the grants at \$3m, similar to previous years. While this is the maximum amount, it is doubtful that any RA would receive the full amount because of the overall funds available to IOOS. Many RAs such as CaRA expressed concern that if their RA doesn't get additional systems monies to put assets in the water, they will have a real problem justifying the RA to their constituents and satisfying their expectations. NANOOS, though among the better-funded regions, expressed similar concerns. NOAA has to be sensitive to the needs of IOOS users. The RAs will be losing credibility if this funding scenario continues.

In FY11, NOAA will institute a new round of competitive grants for the regions that will likely combine planning grants and RCOOS funding.

The outlook for other RAs:

CeNCOOS – \$280,000 for HF Radar will maintain the system for an additional 4-6 months.

GCOOS – Has money through the \$400K planning grant for establishing the RA and maintaining a data portal. No money for assets in the water.

GLOS – \$475M in President's budget for a Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. There is money in the GLRI for GLOS, although the final appropriation is unsure at this time.

MACOORA – Will be competing this year. Expects to be level funded.

NANOOS – Will be competing this year. Will face great difficulty if level funded. NANOOS had no previous earmarks so all assets in the water have been built in the last two years so it will be difficult to start removing assets and disappointing stakeholders at this stage in the build-out. Even \$300K would make a tremendous difference for NANOOS.

NERACOOS – NOAA might still see HF Radar as a high priority and designate the extra funds for this. The

CA system doesn't currently have forecasting capability. Making the HF Radar consistent in this capability may be seen as a priority for NOAA.

PacIOOS – Is only serving the needs of about 10% of their region. But this region would still advocate for a minimal base level of funding for all the regions.

SCCOOS – Would advocate for a minimal base level of funding for all the regions. \$500K is not feasible to maintain and grow an RA.

SECOORA – Can sustain on existing resources for another year. Would expect additional funding in FY11. The second entity that received RCOOS funding within the SECOORA region has been asked not to submit additional proposals. The region may still get the same amount of money but it may all be passed through the RA.

AOOS – Not confident subsequent NOAA funding will come through. Building relationships with NSF and other partners.

The general consensus seems to be that NFRA recommend that the \$2.2M be used to bump up the three RAs that are currently below \$1M in total funding, level fund the \$400,000 planning grants to all RAs, and, where possible, NOT remove assets that are currently in the water. It's important for NFRA to package the recommendation in the context of the national federation...i.e., there has to be some minimal base level of funding to each of the 11 regions in order to sustain the regional association of coastal observing systems. The regions should be given the ability to decide which regional assets are most important to maintain, in accordance with the needs of stakeholders.

There was discussion about how the surface current network would be sustained. Will the money for this come from the region allocation? What if surface currents are not the top priority of the region and yet is a priority for the national program? NOAA IOOS and other fed partners need to answer this question.

Discussion: Emerging Issues and IOOS

Additional highlights from the RAs:

SECOORA – a workshop on fisheries was held and how best to integrate their data

CaRA – a data interoperability workshop exploring ways to partner with the private sector will be held soon. CaRA's new buoy is working well and they are expanding HF Radar coverage in the area (through non-IOOS funds).

MACOORA – The interpretation of the real-time data proved important in response to the Hudson River plane crash.

PacIOOS – Partnership with City of Honolulu packaging water quality data. A lightening detection program is developing (PacIOOS has been doing R&D), will go global at least in the northern hemisphere. Will help to forecast lightening strikes over ocean and land.

NERACOOS – Partnership with CaRA has been a great example of technology transfer between regions. Interoperability is increasing, melding real-time data with modeling output.

GCOOS – Cleanup of a minor oil spill in the Gulf was aided by IOOS data. Board expanded from 12 to 15 members. Sensor placed on wind turbine, tracking hypoxia blooms in the Gulf. New HAB plan being developed, gulf-wide. "Significant wave height" is not well understood, especially by boaters in small craft. Two workshops held for educators, coupled with GIS data sets, developing

CeNCOOS – new CeNCOOS web site, live ship tracking using AIS is a very popular service. CeNCOOS has an AIS receiver.

GLOS – 3D hydrodynamic model has been developed for the Huron-Erie Corridor/St. Clair River. A dye study was conducted in August 2009 to test the validity of the model.

SCCOOS – A Coast Guard training session will be held to illustrate how waves and currents data from IOOS can be used.

AOOS – For two weeks real-time data was streamed from a concentrated network of HF Radar, buoys, gliders. Public meetings with CEQ and NOAA administrators are being held, most recently in Anchorage.

SECOORA – regional depiction of oceanography has been pursued by several groups.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Christine Manninen, NFRA Secretary