

OPAC Executive Committee Meeting
May 2, 2006
Summary

Attendees: Jim Good, Scott McMullen, Jay Rasmussen, Jessica Hamilton, Greg McMurray, Michael Harte (OSU Marine Resource Management Program)

Funding Status – Greg reported on reallocation of \$23K in FY06 Coastal Zone Management funds for Michael Harte and the Oregon State University Marine Resource Management Program to support the NMS process (see entry below), and another \$20K allocation in DLCD’s FY07 budget to support NMS process and/or other OPAC direct costs during the July 1, 2006-June 30, 2007, period. The Executive Committee saw this as a very positive development. Jessica reported that, based on her initial inquiries, foundation funding is quite unlikely to be found to support the NMS process, but may be more likely to be found to support OPAC’s marine research reserves planning.

GNRO position on the NMS proposal – Jessica responded to requests to better clarify the GNRO position on the NMS proposal. The policy flows directly from the Governor’s letter to OPAC dated December 13, 2005, directing OPAC to provide advice to him about designating a NMS off of Oregon’s coast. OPAC should consider and thoroughly evaluate how a NMS can advance the state’s (and OPAC’s) objectives, and if a NMS may not meet those objectives, be prepared to offer alternative management structures that may be more effective in accomplishing those goals. The Governor will carefully evaluate any advice given by OPAC. Jessica agreed to draft and release a concise briefing document on this topic. Basically, she said this will largely reflect the original letter, with timing flexibility on the report back to the Governor.

OSU Marine Resource Management Support for OPAC NMS Process – Greg reported on recent efforts to fine-tune an existing contract between DLCD and Oregon State University to directly support development of the National Marine Sanctuary report to the Governor. Michael Harte, Director of OSU’s MRM Program, attended the meeting to report that with this funding, he would be able to supply two very capable graduate students in the summer and fall quarters (July 1-December 31, 2006) to support the OPAC NMS process under the direction of the appropriate OPAC Committee, with Greg acting as contract officer and sole point of contact. Michael and Greg will get the paperwork finalized shortly. It is anticipated the MRM graduate students will initially assist with the NMS Public Meeting Process, starting in July—attending, assisting with facilitation, and summarizing public comment.

OPAC’s NMS Public Meeting Process – Jim Good reported briefly on the Outreach Committee’s March 23 meeting and follow-up discussions. Originally, we had hoped to get started with meetings in May 2006, but because start dates for public meetings were deemed dependent on getting funding for the process, they were delayed. Funding is now in place, but not until July 1, 2006; consequently, meetings will be shifted to summer and fall. Jim noted the difficulties of doing this during the summer, so meetings will likely be

mostly in the fall. Exceptions to that will be where we can guarantee to reach our audiences earlier. The benefit of this is that we will continue to learn more and be able to include that in our process. Greg will revise the work plan timeline to reflect this.

Executive Committee Roles and Responsibilities – The group reviewed the OPAC operating procedures and recent meetings and agreed that the Executive Committee is functioning as intended by the council. We also agreed that it will be important to get Executive Committee notes out to all OPAC members so that they can keep up with activities in the interim between full OPAC meetings.

STAC Status Report – Jay reported that he had three nominations for a marine ecologist/fish behaviorist, and eleven for someone with practical, experiential knowledge. Jay and Scott will present the lists at the next meeting, for approval by the council.

OPAC Committees or Working Groups – The ExComm had a lengthy discussion of the optimal structure for accomplishing the nitty-gritty of OPAC. We agreed that while meetings were important for discussing ongoing and new issues, actual work needed to be done in smaller, more focused groups. We would call these groups “working groups” to differentiate them from OPAC and standing committees, such as the STAC. We discussed the potential roles, responsibilities, and structure for OPAC’s working groups. All agreed that it was also necessary for a complete reporting from all active working groups at each regular OPAC meeting. Jay proposed that we establish three working groups at the next meeting: (1) a marine sanctuary working group; (2) a marine research reserves working group; and a (3) wave energy working group. These were top-ranked issues from our meeting in January. Other committees would be established as and when needed. Greg agreed to put out a memo prior to the next meeting asking for volunteers for those working groups, each of which could have OPAC members (voting and nonvoting), public members and technical members (on the advice of STAC).

OPAC Meeting Process Postmortem – The ExComm reviewed some of the things that unexpectedly took more time than anticipated at the last meeting. The ensuing discussion identified a number of problems and solutions. Mainly, we are trying to do too much at a single meeting. There is much work to do, but it was agreed we needed to limit the number of issues on a single agenda. Meetings can be improved by instituting the following:

- limit agenda to realistic times/add more time for key items;
- more carefully observe time limits;
- discourage repeat comments from the public during public testimony;
- discourage OPAC members from getting drawn into discussion or responding to public testimony; instead, OPAC members should simply listen, only asking clarifying questions when needed—this will save a lot of time;
- encourage written public comments if people have more to say than allotted time will allow;
- the group agreed that the Vice-chair, backed up by staff, would assist the chair by serving as “agenda timekeeper”, cuing the Chair appropriately to keep the meetings on schedule; and

- ask OPAC members to suggest “consensus” on issues after thorough discussion, so that we can move toward decisions more quickly; again, when the Chair deems consensus is not possible after discussion, we will move to traditional voting procedures. Building a consensus-building primer into the visioning workshop (below) was also deemed a good idea.

Visioning Process – Jessica opined that it is still very important for OPAC as a whole to have an Executive Session—a “retreat” from a public setting—to go through the process of identifying a shared vision for Oregon’s Territorial Sea and the Ocean beyond. The group agreed that this should be facilitated and groundwork laid with the council to make the time most productive. After the shared vision is achieved, a SWOT (strengths-weaknesses-opportunities-threats) analysis can be performed. The Executive Session for visioning will be conducted on the evening of Thursday, June 22, and OPAC will report out to the public with the results at the regular OPAC meeting on Friday, June 23. The Executive Committee will work with the Oregon Attorney General’s Office to assure that all public meetings laws are addressed appropriately.

Next ExComm Meeting – the OPAC Executive Committee plans to meet again about two weeks before the next OPAC meeting, that is, in early June.