



Summary

Meeting of the U.S. National Committee for the Census of Marine Life November 14-16, 2006

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Corpus Christi, Texas 78412**

The U.S. National Committee (USNC) of the Census of Marine Life (CoML) on November 14-16, 2006 held its biannual meeting at the Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies (HRI) in Corpus Christi, TX. This served as the first meeting chaired by Dr. Andy Rosenberg, taking over for Dr. Daphne Fautin, chair of the USNC since the program's inception in 2002.

The meeting's major theme was to determine the future goals for the USNC and the lasting legacies of the CoML program within the United States. Special presentations were made by Dr. Darryl Felder, who discussed the Biodiversity of the Gulf of Mexico project, and Dr. Tom Shirley, who informed the Committee about WWII shipwrecks in the northern Gulf of Mexico and their use as surrogates for artificial, deep-water reefs. Additional presentations were made by CORE President, RADM (ret.) Richard West who spoke to the committee about the current state of the oceans within Washington, DC, and A. Rosenberg discussed the History of Marine Animal Populations project (HMAP) as a lasting legacy of CoML.

Members of the USNC were joined in their discussions by representatives of the US Regional OBIS Node (Mark Fornwall), the Sloan Foundation (Jesse Ausubel), NOAA's Office of Ocean Exploration (Margot Bohan), the University of Texas Marine Science Institute (Lee Fuiman), the Mote Marine Laboratory (Brad Robbins), CORE (Richard West, Jerry Miller, Nina Young), and the CoML Secretariat (Kristen Yarincik).

Global CoML Program Update: Kristen Yarincik provided a CoML highlights summary and a review of the recent SSC meeting in Nara, Japan. Recent developments included the new NRIC coordinator, Kirsten Martin, who had met with the NRIC leaders in Japan and will be developing an implementation strategy for the February SSC meeting, and a new CoML database, expected to be online by the end of the year. It was also noted that the 2007 All Program meeting will be held in November in Auckland, New Zealand. All USNC members were encouraged to comment on the current draft agenda.

2007-2010 Outreach Strategy: The USNC reviewed the 2007-2010 Outreach Strategy, with the intention of assigning members to implement the specifically outlined tasks. Before approving the strategy and moving forward, the committee decided that they would need to determine: 1) the legacy of the USNC program in 2010, 2) the goals of the US CoML program, and 3) the advantages to affiliating with CoML. Andy Rosenberg and Michael Feldman will draft a document addressing these items to help better approach the federal and/or regional funding sources. This will be a major discussion item for the next USNC meeting.

CoML Interaction with on-site local community: Jo-Ann Leong addressed issues concerning securing permits for expeditions in the newly formed Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine National Monument. Of particular concern is the lack of follow-up by PI's to the local community. As a result, it's becoming increasingly difficult to receive clearance to do research in the National Monument protected area. The USNC will recommend to the SSC to require PIs on all expeditions to develop and implement a strategy for reporting expedition results to the local community, to highlight the benefit of continued ocean research.

Federal Activities Update: The USNC discussed the current status of the Ocean Research Priorities Plan (ORPP) and the National Ocean Partnership Program (NOPP). The USNC needs to look for opportunities participate in both if CoML expects to continue beyond 2010. It is hoped that the finalized ORPP will influence the FY10 budget.

Capitol Hill Oceans Week 2007: After a brief discussion of the impact of the 2006 Capitol Hill Oceans Week (CHOW) panel on CoML visualization technologies, the USNC made recommendations for potential 2007 topics, including the joint themes of Ocean Observing and Biological Observing. The US program office will contact the CHOW organizers with these suggestions.

Industry Interests: Tom Fry led a discussion on how the USNC can better engage industry partners, emphasizing the need for CoML to proactively seek out potential alliances. Outside the United States, successful industry partnerships have centered on: 1) improving public relations, and 2) gaining access to a list of credible experts. Penny Dalton, Pat Halpin, and Clarence Pautzke will develop a concrete process along with selling points for US CoML appropriate for approaching industry. Even though Tom Fry is rotating off the USNC, he agreed to provide 5-6 companies and/or contacts that may be receptive to partnerships with CoML.

2006 Workshop review/ 2007 workshop Recommendations: Co-Chair of the 2006 USNC Biodiversity workshop, Paul Sandifer, reviewed the workshop findings for the committee. The organizers and plenary speakers plan to submit a policy forum piece to a major scientific publication in the coming weeks. Earlier in the meeting Richard West spoke to the Committee about Ocean Observing as one of the most important issues in ocean policy today, and suggested the USNC become more involved. The USNC agreed,

proposing that the 2007 Workshop will focus on the Census of Marine life as the biological/biodiversity component of the Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS). Daphne Fautin, Mark Fornwall, Pat Halpin, and Andy Rosenberg agreed to serve on the workshop steering committee and to work with the US program office in the coming months to identify additional steering committee members, a workshop agenda, and potential funding sources. The tentative target date for this workshop is June 2007. The USNC also identified the topic for a 2008 workshop on using the Census to promote public interest and ocean literacy.

OBIS: Mark Fornwall, of the US Regional OBIS Node, recommended that the USNC become a more active participant in the development and operation of OBIS USA by helping guide the node's direction, focus, and capacity as the project becomes operational. The Committee expressed several concerns as to the current direction of OBIS, adding that the recent renewal proposal won't be a long term solution to maintaining OBIS into the future, but rather OBIS should look to partner with the data management piece of IOOS . For the next meeting, Paul Sandifer, Wes Tunnell, and Mark Fornwall will draft a strategy on how to align OBIS regionally within the US and better relate the information from OBIS to IOOS.

USNC Membership: The USNC agreed to extend the terms of Andy Rosenberg, Pat Halpin, Penny Dalton, and Wes Tunnell an additional year so as to alleviate excessive membership turnover in a single meeting. The Committee also discussed and voted on new members to start their term at the spring meeting, the results of which will be announced in the coming weeks. There was also an announcement regarding a position on a USNC nominations committee, with the goal to maintain broad representation among future USNC nominations.

Future USNC meetings: The USNC will next meet in the spring of 2007 in Washington, DC. Exact dates will be selected in the coming weeks. The program office will invite JSOST and SIMOR co-chairs, along with other federal and educational representatives to the next USNC meeting. Andy Rosenberg will host the following meeting in New England, tentatively scheduled for October 2007.