



Summary

Meeting of the U.S. National Committee for the Census of Marine Life March 10-11, 2008

**Consortium for Ocean Leadership
1201 New York Ave. NW, Fourth Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005**

The U.S. National Committee (USNC) of the Census of Marine Life (CoML) held its biannual meeting at the Consortium for Ocean Leadership in Washington, D.C. on March 10-11, 2008. The meeting was lead by Chair Dr. Andrew Rosenberg of the University of New Hampshire and Vice-Chair Dr. Wes Tunnell of the Harte Research Institute of Texas A&M University.

The meeting's major goals was to focus on current and future opportunities for the USNC to increase CoML visibility in all aspects as the synthesis phase begins, from education initiatives to playing a role in the new administration. Finalizing Andy Rosenberg's upcoming presentation to the NOAA Science Advisory Board (SAB) was a main objective as it presented an increasingly important opportunity to make the case for CoML within NOAA. The meeting also focused on the USNC's role and interaction with the global CoML community, the 2010 Synthesis products, and ensuring an overall global unified CoML message. The USNC discussed the current state of affairs with OBIS USA, particularly their role and interaction with International OBIS. Special presentations were made by Dr. Reg Beach of NOAA's Office of Ocean Exploration, who discussed the results of the NOAA Seminar Series and biodiversity research in the federal government, Susan Haynes, Director of the National Ocean Science Bowl (NOSB), who gave a brief presentation on the background of NOSB and potential areas for collaboration with the USNC, and Dr. Nancy Knowlton, who, in her new position at the Smithsonian, talked about CoML opportunities with the development of the Smithsonian Ocean Hall opening September 2008. A briefing was made by Dr. Bob Gagosian, the new President and CEO of the Consortium for Ocean Leadership. Additional guests included Margot Bohan (NOAA OER), Dr. Rebecca Shuford (NOAA IOOS Office) and Kristen Yarincik (CoML International Secretariat).

Bob Gagosian began the meeting by briefing the USNC on the present status of Ocean Leadership, discussing the results of the merger (of CORE and JOI), the recent Ocean Leadership Board meeting, and the recent Ocean Leadership Public Policy Day focused on ocean infrastructure. Bob discussed his desire to increase the communication efforts of Ocean Leadership and also partner more with organizations such as the Smithsonian. Most importantly, he shared his views of the CoML project as a whole, emphasizing its importance and uniqueness as a project with successful international partnerships, also noting he knows of no other project that has been as successful over such a long period of time. He stated that he and Ocean Leadership are willing to help with the next stage of CoML in any way he can.

CoML Program Updates: Vera Alexander presented a brief summary of the February 2008 Punta Arenas, Chile / King George Island, Antarctica SSC meeting. The meeting focused heavily on the CoML polar activities as well as the planned synthesis activities. She mentioned the new Co-Senior Scientist and NRIC Coordinator Patricia Miloslavich from Venezuela and the Caribbean NRIC.

Kristen Yarincik provided an update on the 2020 Science Council which will be tasked with determining the strategies for the program structure and 'glue' funding post 2010. Dan Costa has agreed to chair, but invitations have yet to be sent out. The 2020 Science Council is also facing funding issues as the Sloan Foundation will not fund any activities that plan for CoML post-2010. Many were concerned over the delay in the 2020 Science Council and noted that it is moving too slowly and should not be relied on for U.S. activities and budgets.

Michael Feldman and Jo-Ann Leong reported on the USNC Code of Conduct, which was approved by the USNC during the October 2007 meeting. The code was distributed to the participants at the CoML All Program Meeting in New Zealand in November 2007 and was approved by the Ocean Research and Resources Advisory Panel (ORRAP) for recommendation to the Interagency Committee on Ocean Science and Resource Management Integration (ICOSRMI). The USNC will continue to explore additional opportunities for distribution of the Code, as well as reiterate to all the CoML projects its usefulness as a tool in their research, cruise plans, and documentation of methodologies. It should be stressed that that the code does not provide legal cover. In order to determine if and how the Code is being used, Michael Feldman and Kristen Yarincik will seek feedback on the Code through an online form and the CoML Annual Reports. Jo-Ann has been in contact with the NOAA Coral program, discussing their willingness to host a workshop on the Code. Shirley Pomponi agreed to contact the steering committee for the International Coral Reef Symposium (in Ft. Lauderdale, FL on 7-11 July 2008) regarding highlighting or distributing the Code, as well as supply Liz Tirpak at the State Department, who approves U.S. research on vessels in foreign countries, with a copy of the Code.

Michael Feldman informed the USNC that the Sloan Foundation declined its annual donation for a Census panel at Capital Hill Oceans Week (CHOW). The 2008 theme is climate change. It was agreed that no discussion on ocean biodiversity would be a lost opportunity. Paul Sandifer agreed to mention the potential impacts of biodiversity on climate change and CoML's role in another panel discussion he is participating in. Michael Feldman and Kevin Wheeler will contact Lori Arguelles, National Marine Sanctuaries Foundation, regarding CoML options during CHOW, such as a keynote speaker (possibly Boris Worm from FMAP.)

U.S. Contribution to the Global CoML Program: Kristen Yarincik updated the USNC on the creation of the Synthesis Group, Chaired by Paul Snelgrove (Canadian NRIC). The primary synthesis products will be an integrated book; review article for *Science* or *Nature*; a project synthesis volume and a NRIC synthesis volume. As determined at the All Program meeting in New Zealand, each NRIC is responsible for contributing a chapter to the NRIC volume and disseminating the final Census products within their region. The NRICs will meet at a workshop in Washington, D.C. on 1-2 May 2008 to determine an outline for their contribution (which will be due to Paul Snelgrove by December 2009). Andy Rosenberg and Michael Feldman will be representing the USNC at the workshop. Charles Griffith, of the Sub-Saharan Africa NRIC, has agreed to be the volume editor, and Patricia Miloslavich, Caribbean NRIC, has provided questions and ideas for the NRICs to address during the workshop in order to determine what can be said across NRICs. There was some confusion over what the NRIC volume should cover as the US projects, such as TOPP and GoMA, will be covered in the project synthesis volume. Andy Rosenberg, Wes Tunnell, and Michael Feldman agreed to draft and circulate an outline of a

USNC 2010 Synthesis contribution in preparation for May 1-2 NRIC Workshop, using the USNC Strategy Document as a starting point. Specific additions to the document included efforts to add biological indicators as a component of the Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS). Andy agreed to edit the Strategy document and the US Program Office will circulate it when it becomes available.

U.S. CoML Transition Strategy for a New Administration: After a budget update from Kevin Wheeler, the USNC discussed how CoML fit into the transition plans for a new administration. Many members suggested relating CoML to climate change as it is the hot topic, but others were fearful that too many programs have labeled themselves that way and CoML would only get lost in the pile. The USNC members must continue to convince people, most importantly the political appointees and the new Science Advisor, of the importance of biodiversity in the ocean and must also be prepared to provide the needed advice or information for the transition papers, ensuring CoML is mentioned.

CoML Presentation Opportunities:

- **World Biodiversity Conference (Nov 11-15 2008, Valencia, Spain)**

There will be a CoML presence in Valencia as the SSC is holding their meeting in conjunction with the conference. HMAP will have a planned session and GoMx will attend. The WBC will offer a good venue for disseminating the results of the USNC 2006 biodiversity workshop, as well as connecting with European Census members.

- **AAAS (Feb 12-16, 2009, Chicago)**

Andy Rosenberg suggested the USNC consider a panel or symposium at the 2009 and/or 2010 AAAS meeting, as the marine sessions receive high press attention. The USNC must act quickly as the **deadline for the 2009 meeting in Chicago is 28 April**. Judy Kildow agreed, with help from Margot Bohan, to draft a proposal for a CoML session at the 2009 meeting on regional applications of CoML findings to policy decisions.

- **International Congress of Maritime Museums (Fall, 2009, Annapolis, MD)**

Daniel Finamore noted that the meeting attendees would be non-scientists that would be redefining the missions of the maritime museums. CoML could deliver a project, small or large, on climate change, history of the seas, or the deep sea that the museums could incorporate and expand upon.

- **Other Meetings**

It was agreed that the 2010 Ocean Sciences meeting in Portland, OR would be a good opportunity for the USNC to take the lead and present a major symposium on the CoML synthesis. It was noted that the planning should begin at least a year in advance. Paul Kelly discussed the private and industry sector meetings that are attended by a large mix of offshore oil and gas companies and a smaller mix of marine manufacturers. Most met twice a year with many spring meetings held in Washington, D.C. Paul and Wes Tunnell agreed to determine strategies and opportunities for briefing marine industry associations and presenting at the National Oceanographic Industries meeting. The Coastal Zones 2009 meeting, handled by NOAA and attended by federal agencies and foundation members, was another meeting suggestion for future consideration.

Technology, Education and Outreach: Kristen Yarincik updated the USNC on the CoML Education and Outreach (E&O) members' work with National Geographic, stating that they may name CoML as one of their four thematic pillars for 2010. Pat Halpin is hard at work to determine the mapping and visualization capabilities of Census projects and ensure a coherent look amongst the synthesis products. Sylvia Earle gave an update on Google Oceans, mentioning that the launch date may be announced after the next GO meeting in April. Sylvia Earle asked

everyone to supply her with marine images, particularly historical images for Google Ocean. Melissa Brodeur gave a brief update on the U.S. CoML education initiatives, including the 'Education Featured Link of the Month' (at http://coml.us/?anchor=coml_us_ed), Michael Feldman's presentation during the 'Novel Approaches for Improving Ocean Science Literacy in K-12 Classrooms' session at the 2008 Ocean Sciences meeting in Orlando, FL, and the upcoming opportunity for the U.S. CoML to collaborate with NOSB's 2009 Challenge that will take place in Washington, D.C. As the 2009 competition's theme may be biodiversity, the U.S. Program Office would like the USNC to encourage CoML projects to supply team challenge questions. CoML will be also be highlighted when students from Niceville High School in Florida, which participates with NaGISA, present on their fieldwork in hopes of attracting more high school students to become involved with NaGISA. The USNC members were asked to contact Melissa Brodeur with any ideas for the 2009 NOSB competition in Washington, D.C.

NOAA Science Advisory Board: The USNC reviewed Andy Rosenberg's presentation for the NOAA Science Advisory Board (SAB) meeting on 12 March 2008. The SAB advises NOAA on scientific issues critical to the agency's missions, and the USNC hopes the presentation will encourage the SAB to find linkages between NOAA and CoML. It was the hope of the committee that the SAB would agree to the creation of a working group, along with a few USNC members, to determine the best future steps for integrating CoML and NOAA.

OBIS USA: Andy Rosenberg and Mark Fornwall provided an update on the January USNC Biological Ocean Observing Workshop, which they agreed was very useful and were pleased it was attended by a large crowd that participated fully. An important outcome of the workshop was the decision for OBIS USA to move into a service model that serves needed data instead of being a data repository. The participants helped to identify 10 priority datasets that were believed to be important in any model of a biodiversity system. For those 10 datasets, the interoperability problems need to be determined and resolved, ensuring the data are useful for the IOOS Regional Associations. Mark Fornwall mentioned a possible summer workshop where data standards people from the Univ. of Colorado and the Encyclopedia of Life want to meet to work on the interoperability and linking the 10 biological datasets to physical and chemical data (using samples from those identified datasets). Mark was asked to present on the interoperability of the 10 priority datasets, describing what can legitimately be achieved and what resources are needed to achieve it, at the next USNC meeting. The OBIS USA data standards were submitted to IOOS DMAC (Data Management and Communications), as was suggested at the workshop, and are now being reviewed as a standard of biological data for IOOS. DMAC will meet in May and approve the standards for public comment. Becky Shuford, NOAA IOOS Office, stated the DMAC submission is a fairly new process and asked that the USNC to advertise the process and urge other groups to submit their biological data standards for review. In response to many questions and concerns from the USNC of the costs of obtaining data, developments steps, testing and maintenance, Mark Fornwall was asked to create a draft OBIS USA business plan for the next USNC meeting. It was agreed that a more accurate budget and business plan is absolutely necessary if the USNC is briefing agencies and Capital Hill about OBIS USA and what funds are needed to maintain it. The OBIS USA Advisory Subgroup will also have more frequent conference calls to assist Mark with the business plan and getting the interoperability workshop scheduled and accomplished. Kristen Yarincik noted that International OBIS (IOBIS) does not currently have a business plan either and that the SSC is very concerned. IOBIS is in jeopardy in terms of its renewal proposal to the Sloan Foundation and is being pushed to think in much broader terms of funding and whether the home of IOBIS should continue to reside in the US. The Subgroup will also revisit the idea of renaming OBIS USA to end the funding issues and confusion between OBIS USA and IOBIS.

CoML and the Smithsonian Ocean Hall: Nancy Knowlton, the new Smithsonian Institution (SI) Sant Chair in Marine Science, discussed possible collaborations of CoML and the SI. The new Ocean Hall will have a temporary exhibit space, where the EuroCoML exhibit, 'Deeper than Light', is scheduled in association with the Ocean Hall opening. The Ocean Hall is looking for additional small to large scale events to highlight along with their own high visibility speakers and scientific workshops. Possibilities of U.S. CoML participation include the Ocean Portal, an interactive website that reaches a large range of audiences or showcasing CoML footage on the Oceans Kiosk. It was agreed that presentations of CoML research for the general public would be a great opportunity to showcase CoML's captivating species, mysterious realms, exciting results and new technology. As the AAAS meeting in 2010 will be held in Washington, D.C. it was considered a good idea for COMPASS and/or CoML to hold a reception in the Oceans Hall during the meeting, ensuring many reporters are invited. It was also suggested that the next USNC workshop in 2009 (policy relevance of CoML) could incorporate a 3rd day public symposium at the Oceans Hall or elsewhere at the SI. Nancy agreed to supply Michael Feldman with a calendar of scheduled Ocean Hall events when it becomes available.

2009 USNC Workshop: The USNC discussed the topic for the next major workshop to take place at the end of 2009. It was agreed that CoML's application to policy issues would be a great topic as it would link to federal agency missions and be of interest to foundations that could be interested in funding future applications. This could correlate with the idea to hold a CoML session at the 2009 AAAS in Chicago on regional applications of CoML findings to policy decisions.

USNC Membership and Charter: The USNC welcomed a new member, Ms. Margaret Spring from the Nature Conservancy in Monterey, CA. No membership terms were up for renewal as all members agreed during the meeting to continue their memberships until 2010.

Future USNC meetings: The USNC will next meet on September 22-23, 2008 in Monterey, CA. Judith Kildow and Judith Connor will be hosting the meeting at MBARI.