

Southern California Coastal Ocean Observing System (SCCOOS)

Senior Advisory Committee Meeting

27 May 2008

SCCWRP

Costa Mesa, CA

MINUTES

Committee members present:

Chris Crompton, Southern California Stormwater Monitoring Coalition and County of Orange RDMD; Jeff Crooks, Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve; Mas Dojiri, City of Los Angeles; Linda Duguay, USC Sea Grant; Leslie Ewing, California Coastal Commission; Roberto Garcia, NAVAIR; Dominic Gregorio, State Water Resources Control Board; Larry Honeybourne, Orange County Health Care Agency; Samuel Johnson, US Geological Survey; Dick McKenna, Marine Exchange of Southern California; Dave Panzer, Minerals Management Service; Jonathan Phinney, NOAA Southwest Fisheries/PaCOOS; George Robertson, Central Bight Water Quality Working Group; Sheila Semans (for Sam Schuchat), California State Coastal Conservancy

Attendees:

Tom Barnes, California Department of Fish and Game; Russ Davis, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, SCCOOS Executive Steering Committee; Burt Jones, University of Southern California, SCCOOS Executive Steering Committee; Libe Washburn, UC Santa Barbara, SCCOOS Executive Steering Committee; Dan Rudnick, Scripps Institution of Oceanography; Suzanne Skelley, NOAA IOOS Program Office; Steve Weisberg, SCCWRP, SCCOOS Board of Governors; Julie Thomas, CDIP/SIO; Eric Terrill, SCCOOS; Stephanie Peck, SCCOOS

1. Welcome and Introductions

Stephanie Peck welcomed everyone to the meeting, and introductions were made by all attendees.

2. Update of SCCOOS activities and direction

Eric Terrill gave an update of SCCOOS operations, product development and recent efforts:

- History, programs (CalCOFI)
- COCMP, HB06
- HAB surveillance efforts
- LA/LB harbor website
- ROMS model usage - being tested by George Robertson currently
- Asset map for Southern California region - user selectable zoom in and out; in development; begin organizing in a way to be usable for customer and interested parties

- Website usage - 500,000 hits in Dec 07; 20,000 recurring users in one month; from public perspective - wind forecast, COAMPS lots of use
- Development of tailored interface pages
- Projects page

Burt Jones provided an overview of HABs effort; Steve Weisberg also provided update. Workshop was held, question asked “What are impediments to develop statewide HAB alert system?” Regional observing system has opportunity to become that focal point. Is SCCOOS going to be a data provider or become the focus of data system? Either one could work. It is the exact time to be asking these questions. Timing - all this has been developing in the last two weeks, thinking in statewide perspective. Sheila Semans indicated that pier sampling will be a website; a manager will then be able to take that data and incorporate into their management. Setting site up so that anyone who wants to put into it can; format so that excel would be sent in. We’re first group doing this - model and test bed for how to do it. Will do detailed analysis but provide quick looks at primary variables, within a week. Reporting, sampling, and measurement protocols to handle inputs - done last week. Steve Weisberg indicated that from the statewide perspective, this question is one of impediments to setting up a statewide system. Methodology “bake-off” - assess capability.

3. NOAA IOOS Update

Suzanne Skelley, Chief of Staff, NOAA IOOS Program Office, provided an update on IOOS development and status of regional component. The regional components of IOOS are very important to the national IOOS. The February 2007 establishment of the formal IOOS office and budget were important steps - gives formalized way to request funds for IOOS and regional systems from the budget office. Regarding interoperability: idea is that user makes one data request and pulls through all platforms through a service layer that sits on top (theoretically less effort to do this). Ms. Skelley displayed the current Data Integration Framework (DIF). Regions contribute to DIF, interoperability, DMAC standards (submit and adopt existing standards), DMAC capability (looking forward, envision this to fully implement DMAC), HF radar (already strong commitment in California; NOAA’s focus has been on national servers; dedicated project manager, Jack Harlan, effort to create HF radar national plan.)

Planning taking place now is for FY2011, working internally now at NOAA. CR is expected through election and likely until Jan 09. Work on FY10 is completed. FY09 should plan on FY08 levels.

FY08 was first year that IOOS/RA funding was in President’s budget; continuing to make argument to increase President’s budget for IOOS and regions. FY08 “full” bill was \$42 mil (to fully fund all proposals); \$20.4 actually went out.

Ms. Skelley discussed performance based, value chain - until this is demonstrated to OMB and on the Hill, it will be very difficult to get needed funding. Must relate back to NOAA’s mission and goals. Performance measures will be focus of December regional coordination workshop. Waves and surface currents have been added to the five core variables.

Re. IEA - idea was to regionalize information sources. When it came up, it was a way to achieve ecosystem based management.

3. State Updates

Sheila Semans provided an update on COCMP and HF radar direction: focus has been on developing operational funding. Implementation phase ends about the end of the year. Trying to figure out short- and long-term solutions.

Questions to ask: 1) what are the applications that have been most successful? Will help to sell the program. 2) help with O&M cost estimates - what will this system include and what will it cost to run?

Overall ocean observing efforts: OSA - no staff and funding; figuring out what next steps will be for management perspectives of ocean observing. RFP going out for consultant to help move discussion along. What are the management needs: information products most needed? What infrastructure most needed for that? What investment is needed?

Issues:

- ocean energy
- oil spills (how to officially integrate HF radar)
- maritime safety
- salmon collapse (start looking at biological questions that need to be addressed, and that can be through ocean observations about conditions)
- MPA monitoring (funding baseline monitoring for Central Coast MPAs; process will begin in Southern California; what kinds of technologies can be applied? Susan Golding, at last OPC meeting, wants to know what is out there and available.)
- Seafloor mapping - consider this part of ocean observing efforts

These are the issues they are currently working with and that consultant will work with.

West Coast Governor's Agreement - will be signed. Look at some of the issues along the West Coast.

4. Discussion: SCCOOS development and priorities

Discussion topics:

- Priority products
- SAC representative updates of activities and information needs
- How does SCCOOS continue to sustain operations and grow given current and anticipated resources?
- Strategies for additional leveraging and funding mechanisms

Eric Terrill walked through the priority data products the SAC derived at its last meeting.

Russ Davis stated that the general idea of SCCOOS comes out of the NOAA process; we've been thrown a curve ball. In the beginning, RAs were to serve a broad class of users. Now, focus has changed and there's a lot of talk about priorities. We've tried to be pretty broad and we've been hammered by it. NOAA evaluation process was looking for products that would help federal agencies, not regional users. Have to be

useful to NOAA and sell it to NOAA. Water quality, in general - maybe not so good to NOAA. HABs - okay, because NOAA is doing it. In moving from congressional directives to competitive funding. Being able to demonstrate positive benefits; with this kind of funding, what can you really demonstrate as an end-to-end system?

Ms. Skelley stated that there is an inherent tension between federal funding for regional efforts. Question that gets asked is "What is the return on investment for our agency?" Regarding water quality, it is important for EPA, a federal partner, though maybe not to NOAA's mission. In interagency realm, it is growing and getting more partners on board. Water quality may get more traction from EPA partners. What are important tractions for regions? All regions had thought they'd be funded at \$8-10 mil. What is meaningful to regions and what are other sources to leverage dollars?

Sheila Semans stated that given the federal climate and constraints, she would have thought that the collaboration with the state would be at a greater level. Never saw the proposal before it was submitted. CeNCOOS involved the state, designed proposal that would involve the state more.

Steve Weisberg suggested that three questions be addressed by the Committee: what does this community want of SCCOOS? Do you feel adequately informed about what SCCOOS is doing, do you feel engaged? Are you going to be satisfied with what Eric laid out? Do you feel that what you told us last year was input into the process, does the proposal reflect that input? Steve also suggested that the Committee revisit its decision to not elect a chair.

Dominic Gregorio recommended electing a Committee chair.

Eric Terrill stated that to develop an even better dialogue, we'll be developing a communications plan. Libe Washburn mentioned that he would like to have more communications and interaction between the ESC and the SAC; perhaps find a way to meet more often than they have.

Jonathan Phinney asked how to really engage folks, as people are so busy? Sent out a plea to others to engage in proposal development. What about reaching out to each other? As opportunities comes up, he would like to engage the SAC.

Libe Washburn stated that it would be helpful to get feedback on how useful or not useful those products are to folks. We've invested a lot of time in the product development, and it'd be good to know this.

George Robertson suggested putting together a working group to help prioritize a workplan or action plan.

Dominic Gregorio stated he doesn't feel really engaged, but he's not sure it's SCCOOS's fault. He gets emails from Stephanie, but he can't always get to the emails. Really happy to see projects SCCOOS we're working on. Online products - impressed with what we have up there. Didn't know some of this was up online. Opportunities for SCCOOS involvement:

- SWRCB, ASBS - part of the Bight program being developed, dedicated to water pollution in those areas. Looking at storm runoff and NPS pollution. He put SCCOOS on the agenda of the next meeting. They are measuring water quality at this site. Any idea of inputs from up coast or down coast from that site?
- SCCWRP and SWRCB are sampling for NOAA mussel watch program. Could use collaboration with SCCOOS; could use information on influences for study

of tissue. Water monitoring amendment, what about this? Could use some SCCOOS collaboration - desal - 10% of background: salinity. SCCOOS data was really useful to respond to wild comments at public hearings.

- Model monitoring - this information is great. It would be great to have training program - one day for permit writers; would be very useful. Ocean observations and water quality - how to access all this information.

Mas Dojiri indicated he doesn't feel all that engaged, but more his fault than SCCOOS's fault. He recommended Committee meet semi-annually. SCCOOS does a lot of work; an update of what's being done every 6 months would be good. With respect to opportunities, from perspective of municipalities, what strikes Mas the most is that the public is interested in bacterial information, dry and wet weather, where flow is going, how long beaches will be closed. 2nd most of interest; EDCs, hot topic now. Look at biological affects. This is tied with HABs, getting a fair amount of press. City is really interested in this. Public isn't tied in to MPAs yet.

Dominic Gregorio noted that MPAs are definitely a way to link this. How MPA process addresses water quality - his committee is asking this. Connected to prohibiting discharges in ASBSs.

Dave Panzer - one concern is that there is a hole in the HF radar system at Pt. Conception. Concern is that of all places to have a hole in the system, Pt. Conception is not the place to have it. Goes to SCCOOS website now. Good oceanography, one stop shopping. This is what they are going to use in the future. Dave's #1 priority is to plug that hole. Like Dominic, training or orientation on the website products, to navigate effectively on it, would be great. He'd like that for MMS.

Discussion about the previously NDBC-supported buoys that were funded by MMS in previous decades. Ceased funding them. He is receiving a lot of emails about this; concern is that NOAA defunding those two buoys. Is there some data set to support decision about which two to de-select? NOAA found 1-2 years to fund them. Dave wants the decision to be based on science, not on money. If taking 2 of 4 out, base it on the data.

Leslie Ewing - they have used a lot of HF radar data after Cosco Busan spill, especially for clean-up. Agrees about need for training; would like to have Coastal Commission staff trained as well. One area that seems lacking is sand - beach itself is a source of nutrients getting into the water. Likely a connection between sand, nutrients, and coastal water. Other primary issues of concern to them is energy and desal.

Dick McKenna - we're the end user. Will always have needs for this information. Julie Thomas has been good about getting people together. They use SCCOOS/CDIP products. Buoy data is worked in - key points for the pilots. Harbor Safety Committee - all waterways represented on the website. Localized to pilots and ferry service. Perfect vehicle for SCCOOS to lead into. Priorities: oil spill prevention; navigation-related products; bacterial TMDL in harbor (City of LA is going to environmental monitoring.); stormwater from San Gabriel, main one is LA River; circulation patterns, Cabrillo Beach (inner beach area).

A question was asked about NWS. Eric met last week with National Weather Service folks in San Diego. They are clearly office that would use SCCOOS data.

Tom Barnes indicated the potential for SCCOOS to help inform the MPA siting process and long term monitoring. Still a lot to know, and still not sure what we need to

know. As DF&G is charged with managing a number of species, SCCOOS data could be explored to help with this. Characterize the conditions that exist before the designation. What is it they are actually protecting? Another area - monitoring population and environment through time. General oceanographic conditions. Larval transport - need to see if time/space connectivity issues. Fisheries management question; nearshore transacts for egg and larval. Suited to look at nearshore, untapped area. Help to inform.

Jeff Crooks - from his perspective, estuarine systems and wetlands: choke points and importance of monitoring this. Other nexus in terms of value of the data - wetlands restoration. What should be planned for with respect to sea level rise? - this is informed by ocean observing. Habitats they are trying to restore . . . function of tidal prism. Getting the habits right is key when developing these restoration plans. Need to understand ocean influences in the long term.

Stephanie Peck asked the Committee about ideas to diversify. NOAA and the state are looking to have less reliance on them for funding. Need to continue to leverage as much as possible and diversify founding sources.

It was noted that some of the areas discussed are within our reach. Others are a stretch right now. "Prioritize" - too many users and priority needs.

Mas Dojiri asked if proposal should be geared toward the feds? Consistent with what they want?

Regionally, what are the agencies interested in doing? Would expect SCCOOS to know everything about it - question of contaminants. However, could do some ground truthing and send chemical guys to do it. SCCWRP could coordinate that. Other municipalities would be interested. Could fund SCCOOS's portion of it from the municipal funders, get monetary contribution. Cities would benefit from this.

This is how it works with the Stormwater Monitoring Coalition - members agree to cooperate and fund particular projects they're interested in. This is one model of how to do this. Leveraging their ability to say they participate in it.

A question was asked about whether SCCOOS is funded to do the special projects. This comes out of leveraging the NOAA or COCMP, not in the case of HB06, funding. What about baseline funding to keep in existence and then to answer regional questions?

Sam Johnson talked about USGS being a science agency, a different kind of agency than some of the others. They need information to help them do their science better. Interested in sediment transport from dense array - want to have enough background to constrain and inform their work. Interested in:

- Developing and maintaining long-term time series. Must collect and archive in a way that can be used.
- Do have Tijuana River Estuary experiment happening next winter.

Multi-agency effort. Could become like a HB06 experiment.

Julie Thomas mentioned the inundation work with Robi Garcia and Pt Mugu.

Chris Crompton - with respect to SCCOOS website - most popular site. Where is greatest public interest? Eric Terrill stated we had 35,000 users in May. Tracking of website usage and statistic, kind of information the SAC would like to know.

Robi Garcia stated that 500 times a year he uses this data. He accesses sea state, currents, temperatures, unusual ocean conditions. To the SCCOOS community - keep doing what we're doing. Wants to keep teaming to get right instruments in there.

George Robertson encouraged SCCOOS to maintain assets that are in the water. Sees climate and ecosystem variability as priorities. A lot falls out from this, including water quality and HABS.

- Transport issues
- EDCs
- Plume tracking

Needs basic data sets or models, then say [to SCCOOS], we want to look at _____, for example. Can you do it? This is what it would take. Need other funding and partnerships out there.

Russ Davis - call the first two “users” and get your priorities.

Value added - ecosystem variability, times series.

What about involvement with Bight 08? Yes.

Dave Panzer - original charter, not discrete tasks. Advise better to ESC.

Sheila Semans - willing to meet if something more specific to meet on.

5. Wrap-up and Summary

Summary of SAC recommendations:

- SAC is interested in better engagement and enhanced opportunities for collaboration.
- There is a need to keep the existing observing system assets operational. No presently funded observation was deemed useless or considered for removal.
- SCCOOS is requested to provide training for existing web-based products directed at management staff.
- Of the four priority theme areas - water quality/HABS, climate/ecosystems, marine operations, public uses - designing a system for climate and ecosystem variability was considered to meet the needs of the majority of the other product theme areas. If SCCOOS needs to consolidate efforts to be competitive with NOAA, this might be a reasonable approach.

Meeting presentation (ppts), agenda and minutes will be posted on SCCOOS website.

Meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.