

**HMSC Management Committee Meeting**  
**May 29, 2007, 3:00 PM**  
**NOAA RSF Conference Room**

Attending: George Boehlert (HMSC), Devin Brakob (NOAA-NWFSC), Carol Cole (COMES), Brett Dumbauld (USDA-ARS), Brandon Ford (ODFW), Ken Hall (HMSC); Stephen Hammond (NOAA-PMEL), Mattias Johansson (Hatfield Students Organization), Roy Lowe (USFWS), Bruce Mate (MMI), Walt Nelson (EPA), Patrick O'Connor (OCCC), Cyreis Schmitt (ODFW), Al Stoner (NOAA-AFSC), Jessica Waddell (CIMRS), Janet Webster (Guin Library), Pete Zerr (Ship Operations)

Not represented: Oregon Sea Grant

**Introductions**

Stephen Hammond, Acting Director of NOAA's Ocean Exploration Program and Division Leader of the NOAA PMEL Vents Program, provided a summary of the Ocean Exploration Program's research initiatives and investments., including the \$30 million renovation of a former US Navy vessel to a research ship, named the Okeanos Explorer. The 224-foot long vessel will have a "command central" control room on board, equipped with a high bandwidth satellite communications system, plasma screens, cameras, etc., making it possible for scientists and educators to participate in ocean exploration cruises real-time from land-based receiving sites. HMSC could potentially be such a site in the future. The vessel will be ready for its first ocean exploration cruise in a year.

**Old Business**

**Master Planning at HMSC**

George provided an update on the HMSC Master Plan, which has been publicly presented at several venues over the past few months and has been distributed for comment. The plan is being reviewed by the OSU Provost Council and is awaiting final approval.

George reviewed the role of the HMSC Master Planning Committee (described in Chapter 4 of the plan), which would have responsibility for overseeing future development at HMSC and would review any new construction and major remodeling or renovation project proposals. The committee would include representation from the Port of Newport, City of Newport, Oregon Coast Aquarium, and the community (represented by a HMSC Visitor Center Volunteer), in addition to all of the agencies, research, and educational units represented on the HMSC Management Committee.

Walt Nelson asked whether incidental development/alteration proposals such as, for example, a new outdoor lighting installation would be reviewed by the Master Planning Committee. It was suggested that such cases could be considered and reviewed by the committee via email, if members did not see the need to meet in person.

George and others noted that there are already 5 or 6 potential new building proposals in various stages of planning, including the Oregon Coast Community College Aquarium Science building, the Youth and Family Education building, the Marine Mammal/Marine Science Research building, a proposed expansion of the ODFW building to accommodate growth of the Marine Resources Program, and a possible relocation of the HMSC Facilities department to a location on the perimeter of campus.

Bruce Mate asked how the MP Planning Committee would deal with these proposed new building plans.

**Action:** A call will be issued for committee membership and a committee meeting will be scheduled in September to discuss building plans and potential placement. (Boehlert)

## **New Business / Announcements**

### **Emergency Planning at HMSC**

Randy Walker offered a review of possible investments that had been considered by the HMSC Safety Committee to address issues identified by the 2005 analysis of earthquake / tsunami hazards at HMSC. Funds in the amount of \$50K were acquired through OUS for the purpose of addressing some of the needs, and we are at risk of losing the funding if it is not utilized. Randy asked for committee input on the suggested ideas, which included:

- a mobile storage unit to be placed at the tsunami evacuation point on high ground at the south end of the Yaquina Bay bridge
- a boat to provide transportation across the bay in case of extensive damage to the bridge
- backpacks for all HMSC-OSU personnel equipped with emergency / first aid supplies and basic provisions
- new signage to more clearly indicate evacuation routes and other information relevant to earthquake / tsunami preparedness and response

Comments were made on the benefits and constraints of these ideas, including logistical difficulties of securing off-site storage unit, similar issues with a boat, federal agency guidelines which prohibit provision of emergency supplies to employees (onus should be on individual to take responsibility for personal safety), and cost effectiveness or necessity of additional signage.

Some analysis has been done on site (EPA and OSU buildings) to identify highest risk concerns with regard to both structural integrity and objects such as bookcases and overhead lights and suspended ceilings that could be secured or anchored to minimize hazards during a small to medium size seismic event. It was suggested that prioritization be considered for areas of most frequent or intense use, such as the library, education wing, and visitor center.

Randy noted that in light of the Hurricane Katrina experience where some research labs lost irreplaceable biological samples representing years of research investment, that we might consider the possibility of leasing ultra cold storage off-site, out of the inundation zone.

**Action:** Faded evacuation signage will be replaced in OSU spaces with permanent signs and a plan will be developed to secure library shelving. (Walker)

## **HMSC Visiting Scientist Program**

George reported that we are getting ready to welcome Gordon Kruse from the University of Alaska for a 6-month visit as the first official “Weber Fellow”, supported through the Lavern Weber Visiting Scientist program launched last year. Gordon will have an office at HMSC and will be doing research on recruitment dynamics of English Sole, updating research he did at HMSC during the 1980s. He will also be giving a seminar and teaching during the Fall Fisheries and Wildlife course.

As coordinator for visiting scientists at HMSC, Ken Hall can help facilitate collaborations and is developing mechanisms to make it easier for scientists interested in spending time at HMSC, whether short or long-term. Ken will distribute (for comment) the facilities/space request form that is designed to solicit information from prospective visiting scientists about their needs. There are some fees associated with computer network access and short-term use of labs, tanks, or office space by visitors. Access to certain library resources is also restricted to those with onid accounts, so Ken and Janet are looking at that issue.

Action Item: Anyone who is hosting a visiting scientist for any period of time where there is some collaboration /consultation or use of facilities here is requested to please send Ken Hall an email with a brief description of the purpose of the visit. This information is critical in documenting the many research and education activities that draw visitors to HMSC, which is needed in order to access funding for infrastructure improvements.

## **HMSC Strategic Plan Reporting**

George discussed the status of the HMSC Strategic Plan. Submitted in May, 2004, it was finally approved in February, 2007 by OSU. The implementation, reporting, and updating of the plan will be handled by a small group that will solicit information from across the entire HMSC through various committees related to the four goals in i) education, ii) research, iii) partnerships and infrastructure, and iv) community.

## **Short Updates**

### **HMSC Community/Social Committee**

Discussion of need for a standing committee to handle planning and coordination of events such as the HMSC picnic (traditionally in September) and annual holiday party in December. Cyreis Schmitt said that she thought many of her colleagues in ODFW value the social gatherings as opportunities to interact informally with others at HMSC, and that they serve a need. Others agreed. Recognizing that many people seem reluctant to commit to serve on a standing committee, Ken suggested that an announcement go out to the HMSC community just before the time that planning would need to begin for a social event, and that the response would dictate whether or not the event would be organized.

**Action:** Request updated contact names and initiate email discussions in advance of event times. (Hall).

## **SeaFest**

Ken Hall reported that planning for SeaFest is in the final stages, with the event happening in less than a month. Kick-off event will be a Friday evening lecture on June 22 at 7pm in the Visitor Center auditorium by Steve Hammond entitled “Exploring the Deep Ocean: New Discoveries and Implications for Our Warming Planet” (dessert reception to follow). Saturday’s schedule of events begins at 10AM, and includes a presentation by Oregon Secretary of State Bill Bradbury and other speakers addressing the theme of climate change and the oceans. Researchers are putting together exhibits and activities for the “Science Zone” in the NOAA Barry Fisher building. Effort made this year to bring in greater participation of local school kids. Marine Discovery Tours will be operating the Oregon Rocket (27-foot rigid hull inflatable) as a FREE water taxi service between the Newport Bayfront and the OSU Dock. RV Elakha will be open for tours, and Bruce Mate said that the RV Pacific Storm could be at the OSU Dock if appropriate mooring arrangements can be made. Details and the full schedule of activities are being added to the SeaFest website: [hmsc.oregonstate.edu/seafest](http://hmsc.oregonstate.edu/seafest)

## **HMSC Annual Report**

George asked for input from committee members on the usefulness of the HMSC annual report, and the current strategy of requesting reports from all of the agency and OSU units at the end of the OSU fiscal year (June 30) for compilation into a PDF document that is posted on the HMSC website. The current strategy also calls for producing a glossy hard copy “highlights” version of the report every 3-5 years. This version is professionally designed, makes an attractive external communications piece, and has a longer shelf-life. Stephen Hammond passed around a recent publication from NOAA’s Ocean Exploration Program as another example.

Janet Webster reiterated the value in having a comprehensive report every year that details each unit’s activities and accomplishments, as a record for archival and research purposes, as library users frequently ask for that information. One challenge with the current strategy is getting the report out in a timely manner because not all units are submitting their section of the report when requested. Some units are already writing annual reports for their parent agency or other uses, but at other times of year.

**Action:** The call for the 2006-7 annual report input will occur by late June with more options for material that can be submitted. (Hall).

## **Estuary Trail Status**

Ken reported that cobble beach “dynamic revetment” project to stabilize the eroding shoreline along the northeastern edge of the HMSC campus has been completed. The revetment was put into place in early March, and monitoring of its performance will take place over coming year. Brett Dumbauld asked if monitoring included biological factors. Ken replied that the monitoring would be primarily physical, to see how the revetment responds over time to storms and the hydrologic processes of the bay. Next phase of work on the estuary trail will aim to restore the backshore area by bringing in sand to re-build the artificial dune with plantings of native grasses and flowering plants.

## **Roundtable updates**

Roy Lowe reported on the USFWS Little Nestucca River restoration project, funded by OWEB, which will re-establish tidal wetland functions on 87 acres of formerly diked land at the Nestucca Bay National Wildlife Refuge in Tillamook County.

Cyreis Schmitt reported that ODFW is losing two valued long-time members of the MRP staff - Steve and Lori Parker are moving to New Zealand this summer. Also, hiring for the replacement for Hal Weeks' position is underway.

Bruce Mate reported on Marine Mammal Institute activities, including real time tracking of whales out of Antarctica (a first), genetic analysis of tissue samples from the humpback mother and calf up the Sacramento River, and Jim Rice's work on the gray whale that washed up on the beach at Seal Rock; it is being tested for signs of domoic acid poisoning.