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(NOAA) Science Council Meeting Minutes, Sept/Oct 2021

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**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**  
**OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC RESEARCH**  
**Silver Spring, MD 20910**

December 16, 2021

Re: FOIA Request DOC-NOAA-2022-000198

This letter is response to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request which was received by our office on 11/16/2021, in which you requested:

A copy of the meeting minutes from the most recent two meetings of the NOAA Science Council.

We have located two documents responsive to your request. You are granted full access to those records, and a copy is enclosed. Your request is now completed.

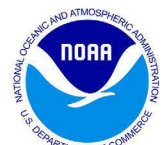
You have the right to file an administrative appeal if you are not satisfied with our response to your FOIA request. You may appeal by mail or electronically.

If you would like to submit an appeal by mail, please send it to the following address:

Assistant General Counsel for Litigation, Employment, and Oversight  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
Office of General Counsel  
Room 5875  
14<sup>th</sup> and Constitution Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20230

If you submit an appeal by mail, you must include the words "Freedom of Information Act Appeal" on both the envelope and the appeal letter.

If you would like to submit an appeal electronically, you may either send an e-mail to FOIAAppeals@doc.gov or use FOIAonline, our request tracking database, at <https://www.foiaonline.gov/>. If you submit an appeal by e-mail, you must include the words "Freedom of Information Act Appeal" in the subject line and text of your e-mail.



To be complete, a FOIA appeal must include

- a copy of the original request;
- our response to your request; and
- a statement explaining why the withheld records should be made available, and why the denial of the records was in error.

FOIA appeals must be received within 90 calendar days of the date of this response letter. We receive correspondence only on business days, from 8:30 am to 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time. FOIA appeals received after normal business hours will be deemed received on the next business day. If the 90<sup>th</sup> calendar day for submitting an appeal falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or legal public holiday, then an appeal received by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on the next business day will be deemed timely.

FOIA grants requesters the right to challenge an agency's final action in federal court. Before doing so, an adjudication of an administrative appeal is ordinarily required.

The Office of Government Information Services (OGIS), an office within the National Archives and Records Administration, offers free mediation services to FOIA requesters. OGIS may be contacted in the following ways:

Office of Government Information Services  
National Archives and Records Administration  
Room 2510  
8601 Adelphi Road  
College Park, MD 20740-6001  
Email: [ogis@nara.gov](mailto:ogis@nara.gov)  
Phone: 301-837-1996  
Fax: 301-837-0348  
Toll-free: 1-877-684-6448

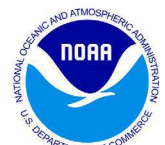
If you have questions regarding this correspondence, please contact Bruce Pate at [bruce.pate@noaa.gov](mailto:bruce.pate@noaa.gov) or at (301)-734-1191. Alternatively, you may contact the NOAA FOIA Public Liaison, Tony LaVoi, at (843)-740-1274. When contacting us, please refer to your FOIA request tracking number DOC-NOAA-2022-000198.

Sincerely,

PATE.BRUCE.ED  
WIN.1114976276

Digitally signed by  
PATE.BRUCE.ED/WIN.1114976276  
Date: 2021.12.16 09:42:39 -0500

Bruce Pate  
FOIA Liaison, Oceanic Atmospheric Research





**National Oceanic and  
Atmospheric Administration**  
Science Council

**NOAA SCIENCE COUNCIL MEETING**

**September 21, 2021**

**10:30 AM to 12:30 PM EST**

**Google Meet**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**ATTENDEES**

*Executive*

Craig McLean, Chair  
Cisco Werner, Vice Chair  
Emma Kelley, Exec Sec  
Isha Renta, Exec Sec

*Principal*

Mitch Goldberg, NESDIS  
Gary Matlock, OAR  
Steven Thur, NOS  
Stephan Smith, NWS  
Evan Howell, NMFS  
Lindsay Averill for Randall Tebeest, OMAO

*Advisory*

Eric Bayler, Unified Modeling Committee Co-Chair  
Frank Cantelas, NOPP-C Chair  
Cynthia Decker, Scientific Integrity Committee and NOAA Science  
Advisory Board  
Hendrik Tolman, Council of NOAA Fellows

*Other Attendees*

Roxie Allison-Holman, GC  
Francis Choi, OAR  
Sarah Davis, OAR  
Gina Digiantonio, OAR  
Jennifer Fagan-Fry, OAR  
Fiona Horsfall, OAR  
Ishrat Jabin, OAR  
Shellby Johnson, OAR  
Melissa Yencho, NMFS  
Jessica Cross, OAR  
Joan Browder, NMFS  
Lauren Talbert  
Stephanie Bolden, NMFS

Neil Weston  
Libby Jewett  
Richard Feely  
Christian Meinig  
Karen Bohnsack, NOS  
Kelly Wright, OAR  
Edward Myers  
Nicole LeBoeuf, NOS  
Andrew Peck  
Laura Newcomb, OAR  
Eric Vichich  
Deirdre Clarkin, Library  
Shannon Louie, OAR  
Natasha White, OEd  
Brooke McHansen  
Chris Kelble, OAR  
Dorothy Koch  
Jennifer Zhuang  
Monica Grasso  
Richard Methot  
Tiffany Atkinson, OAR  
Yan Xue  
Chris Beaverson  
Patrick Hogan  
Brian Gross  
Daniel Melendez, NWS  
Jennifer Mahoney, OAR  
John Dunne  
Leah Dubots  
Jason Link  
Jessie Carman  
Tavia Cummings  
Youngsun Jung

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES AND REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS**

Notify Exec Sec at [oar.rc.execsec@noaa.gov](mailto:oar.rc.execsec@noaa.gov) within two weeks of the following meeting if any changes to the minutes are needed. Minutes from the August 10<sup>th</sup> NOAA Science Council meeting were approved. The Chair reviewed all current action items (TAB 3). It was acknowledged that the Environmental Justice Fact Sheet was developed timely, before the end of Dr. Rick Spinrad's 100 days in office.

**BRIEFINGS** - Briefing materials are available in the Science Council Meetings 2021 folder on Google Drive.

### ***South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force – Nicole Leboeuf, NOS***

A team from the Task Force (TF), which included Nicole Leboeuf, Lauren Talbert, Chris Kelble, Joan Browder, Stephania Bolden and Karen Bohnsack, provided an overview of the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force's history, NOAA's role, the NOAA Offices involved, their strategic approach, research, results and plans. Nicole Leboeuf represents the Department of Commerce on this Task Force (TF). Coral studies and HABs are on the radar of the TF, they also study the Everglades, and they provide HAB forecasting, restoration efforts and climate connections, among others. Please visit the slides for additional information.

### ***Discussion***

The NSC Chair thanked the briefers and opened for questions. The timescales that are being considered for sea level rise are looking out to 2080, but the projected levels are uneven as the incorporation of sea level rise is not uniform. NESDIS asked if there was a detailed 30 year plan, for which the briefers explained that there is one called the "yellow book", which is an integrated delivery schedule that goes out to 10 to 15 years. The changes in administration impacts the speed and specific projects on the state and federal level. In recent years it has been moving faster with state and federal funding.

### ***NOAA's Carbon Dioxide Removal Research Interest – Jessica Cross, OAR***

Dr. Cross provided a briefing that discussed the efforts on behalf of the CDR Task Force. This is an effort of 12 agencies, led by NOAA and DOE, however, funding is needed to continue these collaborations. This topic is a priority of the current administration. NOAA is well positioned to support ongoing and new CDR research through observations, technology development, modeling, planning and others. Please visit the slides for additional information.

**Discussion:** NOS asked about CI partners and grant programs. Academic partners are essential and there are CI participants. The NSC Chair stated that 50% of OAR's capacity comes from CIs and that he looks forward to being a steward for these activities. NOPP-C Chair mentioned that this is on their radar screen as a potential project for the NOPP-C. NSC Chair discussed how funding can be designated to NOPP-C but designed across multiple agencies. Strategy is forthcoming followed by an implementation plan.

### ***Unified Modeling Committee – Eric Bayler and Jennifer Mahoney, UMC***

Craig introduced this topic with the history of EPIC. Jennifer Mahoney and Eric Bayler presented a briefing to discuss where the Unified Modeling Committee should reside. They provided the background and vision of the UMC, with a proposed change to reconfigure the UMC as a NOAA Modeling Board (NMB) working committee. Co-Chairs of the Modeling Board, Brian Gross and Dorothy Koch were present.

### ***Discussion***

NSC Chair: This topic was to introduce the issue and no final decisions were made. NOS asked if the NMB was willing to take the UMC? Dorothy agreed. They also brought up that there is a fair but not complete overlap between the UMC and the NMB: could the parts that fall outside be retained by the NSC? NWS supported the change from the modeling and NOAA coordination perspective. They also brought up the limited number of SMEs to attend and staff these meetings. They asked how active is the UMC? How will this committee be staffed to make sure they are effective? Bayler mentioned that the UMC has operational and R&D components with a more working level expertise. Hendrik stated that NMB supports this move. NMFS suggested a transition plan on how to bring these together to build what NOAA needs. NSC Vice Chair stated that there are narrower and broader modeling discussions, how do we ensure that each forum can contribute as needed? Beyond the WWCB? What does NOAA need for modeling? Dorothy liked NMFS' idea of developing a transition plan, and seeing if there are any gaps or items needed to be retained under the NSC. **Action:** Ask Brian, Dorothy, Jennifer and Eric to write a path forward based on the input from the NSC, followed by a review from the NSC Council and from the WWBC. This was agreed among UMC Co-Chairs and LO reps to the NSC.

### ***Transition Plans – Craig McLean, NSC Chair***

NSC Chair brought into discussion that Dr. Rick Spinrad met with each transition manager and with Dr. Gary Matlock as the LOTMC Chair. From the NRDD there seems to be transition plans that are not up to date, some are incomplete legacy entries. It may be good to know why some of these transitions stalled or stopped. Gary stated that it may be good practice to not identify a project as a transition project in NRDD if it doesn't have a plan. NOS mentioned that the NAO does not require transition plans, but recommends them. Maybe transitions with high cost may be the ones that are identified. NWS is working hard on this. **Action:** Ask the LOTMC to do a summary of what they have that needs updating and clean up the stray reports. Craig will get back on recommendations on how we do reviews.

### ***NOAA Responses to the Science Advisory Board Products – Cynthia Decker, SAB***

Dr. Decker requested input from the NSC to help with the LOs responses to the SAB reports. This would be a new approach with the NSC providing the LO POCs for the SAB reports. Previously, the responses would fall through the cracks. **Action:** NSC will send this as a tasker to test it out.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- The next NOAA Science Council meeting is on October 29th at 1:00pm – 3:00pm ET via Google Meet.
- The Climate Resilience Risk Workshop is scheduled for October 5th

## ACTION ITEMS

| Action Number | Title                | Assigned To                                              | Due Date                    |
|---------------|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 09/21/2021    | Future of the UMC    | Brian Gross, Dorothy Koch, Eric Bayler, Jennifer Mahoney | COB on Friday, October 22nd |
| 09/21/2021    | Transition Reports   | LOTMC                                                    | COB on Friday, October 15th |
| 09/21/2021    | SAB Report Responses |                                                          | COB on Tuesday, October 5th |



**National Oceanic and  
Atmospheric Administration**  
Science Council

**NOAA SCIENCE COUNCIL MEETING**

**October 29, 2021**

**1:00 PM to 3:00 PM EST**

**Google Meet**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**ATTENDEES**

*Executive*

Craig McLean, Chair  
Cisco Werner, Vice Chair  
Isha Renta, Exec Sec  
Ishrat Jabin, Exec Sec

*Principal*

Mitch Goldberg, NESDIS  
Gary Matlock, OAR  
Steven Thur, NOS  
Stephan Smith, NWS  
Evan Howell, NMFS  
Randall Tebeest, OMAO

*Advisory*

Deirdre Clarkin, NOAA Libraries Advisory Committee Chair  
Cynthia Decker, Scientific Integrity Committee and NOAA Science  
Advisory Board  
Jameese Sims, S&T Synergy Committee  
Hendrik Tolman, Council of NOAA Fellows  
Natasha White, OEd  
Shannon Louie, CI

*Other Attendees*

Sarah Davis, OAR  
Gina Digiantonio, OAR  
Fiona Horsfall, OAR  
Laura Newcomb, OAR  
Melissa Yencho, NMFS  
Alek Krautmann, NESDIS  
Daniel Melendez, NWS  
Julie Price, NESDIS  
Katie Robinson, OAR  
Kathryn Carria, OMAO  
Lindsey Kraatz, NMFS  
Lindsay Averill, OMAO  
Wayne Mackenzie, OAR

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES AND REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS**

Notify Exec Sec at [oar.rc.execsec@noaa.gov](mailto:oar.rc.execsec@noaa.gov) within two weeks of the following meeting if any changes to the minutes are needed. Minutes from the September 21st NOAA Science Council meeting were approved. The Exec Sec reviewed all current action items (TAB 3).

**BRIEFINGS** - Briefing materials are available in the Science Council Meetings 2021 folder on Google Drive.

### ***NOAA's Tops Three Challenges and Opportunities – Cisco Werner, Vice Chair***

These slides were to be presented to Dr. Rick Spinrad and unfortunately he could not join the NSC meeting today. Therefore this will be a dry run of the topic and plan the best way forward to present to Dr. Spinrad in the near future. Each LO representative discussed their three top challenges and opportunities.

#### ***Discussion***

NOS asked about the context for today's discussion. Exec Sec clarified that the scope was left open on purpose per the Policy Team. NSC Vice Chair suggested using this as an NSC advantage to scope the message we want to send to Dr. Spinrad since he could not be with us today. **See slides for content.**

- NESDIS presented first. He did a survey through NESDIS to get the bullets for the slide. First challenge is that staffing has eroded (the billets) and most of the scientists are now managers. Existing workforce is now mid-career, team lead and are stretched thin. They would like to hire younger people, well trained in AI machine learning, etc. They would also like to get billets to move in the right direction of demographics. Second challenge is the big satellite acquisition programs. Need better coordination on user readiness from supply to utilization with mission service areas and external partners due to data overload. Under opportunities, they should be able to figure out connections between supply and utilization, also to balance low and high risk research, as they are doing too much low risk. There is a need for innovation and high risk research for the future.
- NOS' approach was to think beyond funding, but it is imperative to convey that there is a lack of funding. What can be done more corporately? Grant programs have grown, internal science has now grown as much. Current employment is 50% contractors that have worked here for 15+ years. In the new Blue Economy, what can be done for customers receiving that information? They have received strong support from the Hill, but most of the support is for grants and it is expected that it will continue to increase.
- NMFS mentioned that one challenge is to sustain observations, lack of assessment/science in new environments like wind farms. Also getting a vibrant trained workforce. Looking at things from an ecosystem perspective as a new way to make management decisions, and develop acclimate ready capabilities. There is currently more stakeholder support.
- NWS pulled the list from the strategic planning conversations. There is a lack of capacity in software engineering, as lots of prototypes get built but need operational products and the workforce is not ready to address it. Social science shows that people make better decisions when presented with probabilities, therefore the future is not deterministic. The Service Equity Assessment pushed the NWS to look at gaps in the Weather Ready Nation vision as it should address all people of all demographics.
- OAR did not do a data call. Used lab reviews and the Risk Register. Challenges on the HPC for software, hardware or cloud have not yet been overcome. There is no far looking HPC strategy and it is needed to guide us in the future. The workforce is aging and also our instruments and equipment, and there is no good structure. On the opportunities, there needs to be community agreement on the Earth System Model concept to further the ability to forecast. Social sciences need to be integrated in our decisions (probabilistic vs deterministic forecasts). Emerging technologies like AI and UxS change the way we do things in ways we have never done before.

On the workforce topic: we know what we need to do and what we need to accomplish, we can change the demographics and the age as we have the capability to do so.

- OMAO does not have issues like other LOs, their challenge is people, as articulated by RDML Hann at the Hill. Recruiting a diverse workforce has proven challenging. Maintaining diversity is also challenging. There needs to be an increase in the HBCUs and MSI relationships to create a pipeline that has not existed before to expose them to our programs. There are certain types of employees needed to fit the type of work. They are also working on creating a better quality of life for their employees. Vacancies need to be filled after COVID impact, it is a different environment now. Involves minimum crews.

The Vice Chair mentioned the opportunity to revise this before meeting with Dr. Spinrad and asked *What do you think Dr. Spinrad heard after these 6 slides? What message did we deliver?*

- NMFS highlighted the similarities in the challenges and opportunities, maybe creating the top three challenges and opportunities from the NOAA Science Council. It needs a summary slide.
- NESDIS was curious as to why OAR didn't bring the issue of personnel. Is it because OAR has billets and can hire from CIs? OAR stated that they were told not to bring the issue of funding, which includes billets. If they get more money, they can hire more people, but there has to be the commitment to hire diverse employees.
- S&T Synergy Committee proposed that they provide a slide with the top three challenges and opportunities as most of the LOs mentioned AI and/or Machine learning. There are also issues on their end to implement these strategies. NSC Chair supports the creation of their slide.

**Action: The S&T Synergy Committee will create a slide on their top three challenges and opportunities**

- NWS has aging leadership, love the routine. Folks not in that group prefer the flexibility of teleworking. Can't imagine going back to the building as opposed to the leaders. NOAA is competing with the private sector for highly trained people and bigger salaries.
- OMAO: We have different expectations of the people coming to the workforce right now
- OAR is hiring more federal employees now than in the last 10 years. We will get passed COVID and deal with the teleworking as it comes. For a long time they have had a mix of contractors/feds

#### ***FY24 Strategic Research Guidance Memorandum – Craig McLean, Chair***

Cisco opened the discussion and Craig took over. Craig would like to bring the draft SRGM to Dr. Spinrad as soon as possible.

#### ***Discussion***

- NESDIS asked for the next steps for the Antarctic since the POCs are being requested. The POCs will be reached out by the Exec Sec. Is the deadline Mid-December since it is the FY24 formulation?
- Also the Power Team report is not due until December, and it may be good to include parts of it to be consistent. It needs to be approved by the SAB in order to be official.
- Craig stated that the House is looking into a package that could put a large amount of funding into NOAA, due to this we need to coordinate ahead. The SRGM is Spinrad's idea. The NOAA Chief Scientist act is a reflection on how certain members of Congress viewed how NOAA was treated. Who fills in when no Chief Scientist is assigned? This bill includes a full time staff for

the Chief Scientist. We are breaking out of the funding limitations. \$9 billion is coming our way. How ready are we with the draft SRGM? And asked each LO representative about it. Try to meet in the middle in the document, a communal approach, not everything will be applicable to every LO. **Action: SRGM draft ready by next week. COB Thurs Nov 4th.**

- NMFS wants to read it based on the context Craig gave. There are pieces that they feel strongly about. I Want to give it more work. Good for discussion today. Will look at it more critically. Can work on having something for next week. Will look into NMFS language in the document.
- NESDIS wants more time to look through the document and provide comments. Brought the topic that there are LO specific topics like social behaviour/economic research. Shouldn't it be broader? Page 2 societal areas - may have missing information.
- NWS stated that the document is ready.
- OAR agrees with NWS. We can spend more time and lose the potential impact of the budget. Would rather have something not perfect.
- OMAO goes on the internal infrastructure perspective, being aspirational as like the UxS, there may be more opportunities in this section, how we use those tools moving forward - methodology

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The next NOAA Science Council meeting is on November 9th at 10:30am - 12:30pm ET via Google Meet.

#### ACTION ITEMS

| Action Number | Title                                                             | Assigned To                 | Due Date          |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| 20211021 – 1  | FFY24 SRGM Draft Review                                           | Science Council             | November 4th 2021 |
| 20211021 - 2  | NOAA's Challenges and Opportunities - S&T Synergy Committee slide | S&T Synergy Committee Chair | TBD               |