

Ocean Resources Enhancement and Hatchery Program Ocean Resources Enhancement Advisory Panel Meeting Minutes

Friday, December 8, 2023

Time: 11:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Location: Microsoft TEAMS Video Conference Link

Attendees:

Ocean Resources Enhancement Advisory Panel (OREAP) members and alternates participating by video conference: John Ballotti, Gary Burke, Ken Franke, Luke Gardner, Jim Hendricks, Rachele Lopez, Merit McCrea, Keith Moret, Josephine Pemberton, Kirsten Ramey, John Riordan, Rob Ross, Tony Vaught, and Dallas Weaver

California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW): Kathryn Johnson, James Steffey, and Valerie Taylor

Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute (HSWRI): Mark Drawbridge, Mike Shane, and Ruairi MacNamara

Members of the Public: Keith Lambert and Steve Santen

1. Introductions and announcements (10 mins.)

Valerie Taylor and John Ballotti

- All OREAP members and alternates' (except Merit McCrea's) terms expire on May 10, 2024.
- Starting early next year CDFW will put out a notice for applications; there is no limit to the number of terms a member can serve.

2. Discussion and possible vote on OREHP Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) approved motions from the SAC November 6, 2023, meeting (20 mins.)

John Ballotti, Valerie Taylor, and OREAP

- CDFW Genetics Research Laboratory (GRL) (Bryan Barney) submitted a proposal to the SAC for the CDFW GRL to take on the work as described in the RFP.
- SAC approved motion to have CDFW GRL develop a full scope of work (SOW) to present to the SAC at their December 18, 2024, meeting.
- John Ballotti – Called this meeting to inform OREAP on what is going on with the genetics study. SAC believes that the CDFW GRL is qualified and can do the genetics work within the budget constraints.

- John Ballotti - Timeline for completion of the study is October 2025. Looking at a two-year study with updates along the way. No need for a motion, but just wanted to make sure everyone is aware of the progress.
- Steve Santen – Concerned if CDFW has the resources to do this? Isn't this too close to the sunset clause?
- John Ballotti –SAC has concluded that CDFW is fully qualified. If we went to a private independent lab, timeline would be extended because we would have to go through a competitive bid process.
- Valerie Taylor– CDFW could start immediately; otherwise, project would be delayed until probably August or September.
- Steve Santen – What happened with all the genetics work that has already been done? Meeting minutes haven't been published.
- John Ballotti – Previous genetics data will be available to CDFW. However, if we went to a private lab, they (SCDNR) would not release that information.
- Steve Santen – What is the sunset date?
- Valerie Taylor – Sunset date is January 1, 2028; report to the California state legislature due July 2027.
- Rob Ross – Scope of work (SOW) is going to go to the SAC to vote on at their December 18 meeting. Does this mean that the SAC is advisory to us or are we advisory to them? Shouldn't OREHP members be the final ones to approve?
- Valerie Taylor – OREAP has already approved \$350,000 to be allocated to do genetics work. Does the OREAP feel comfortable enough with the SAC approving the SOW to move forward?
- Rob Ross – I think we should see the SOW.
- Valerie Taylor – The SOW should be submitted to me by next week. The SAC Genetics RFP Subcommittee will meet on Wednesday of next week. The SOW will be available for public review and voted on at the next SAC meeting.
- Discussion about having another OREAP meeting to review the SOW.
- John Ballotti – Do we have anyone on this panel with a genetics background?
- Steve Santen – We are just being told that this is what's happening.

- John Ballotti – The scientists that we trust are telling us what is going to happen.
- Valerie Taylor – We are behind schedule with finalizing and approving the SAC meeting minutes; however, I can be contacted directly and can send meeting notes to whomever is making the request.
- Luke Gardener – Full confidence in the SAC. Do not want to hold up the process, but also thinks it's understandable and reasonable that the OREAP is allowed to look at the SOW.
- Rob Ross – Seems like the SAC is going to see a SOW, discuss it, and approve it. Can't we see the SOW too? Don't want duplication of the HSWRI and South Carolina Department of Natural Resources Saltonstall-Kennedy Grant (S-K grant) project. There's an issue of whether the SAC is advisory to us and the Director.
- Valerie Taylor – SAC meetings are public. The agendas are on the webpage.
- Kirsten Ramey – Both SAC and OREAP are providing recommendations to the Director.
- Rob Ross – Cooperation and coordination so that the OREAP knows what's going on. The S-K grant is a two-year project.
- Kirsten Ramey – Maybe it's a future conversation; John participates in the SAC meetings. It's a public meeting; everyone is welcome to participate.
- Gary Burke – Agrees with John Ballotti that the SAC is qualified to approve SOW; let them do their stuff.
- Merit McCrea – Redundancy is part of the scientific process. I don't think that we should fear it if someone is trying to find out the same thing in a different way.
- Steve Santen – There should be an approval and request that the CDFW coordinate their efforts. There's not an unlimited amount of money. Is that something that the OREAP would like to do?
- The OREAP requests that CDFW work with the other scientists and coordinate with the outside lab (South Carolina Department of Natural Resources and HSWRI).
- Valerie Taylor to work with the OREAP to schedule a meeting in January to review the SOW.

3. Public comment on agenda items and closing of meeting

Valerie Taylor and John Ballotti

- No public comments

Questions about the meeting or agenda can be directed to the OREHP Coordinator, Valerie Taylor, at Valerie.Taylor@wildlife.ca.gov or OREHP@wildlife.ca.gov.

Meeting agendas and minutes can be found at <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/OREHP/Advisory-Panel>