

**NOAA Science Advisory Board  
Teleconference Meeting  
February 10, 2017  
4:00-5:30 PM ET**

Presentations for this meeting have been posted on the Science Advisory Board (SAB) website:  
[www.sab.noaa.gov/SABMeetings.aspx](http://www.sab.noaa.gov/SABMeetings.aspx)

**SAB members in attendance:**

Ms. P. Lynn Scarlett, Managing Director for Public Policy, The Nature Conservancy (*Chair*); Dr. Michael Donahue, Vice President, Water Resources and Environmental Services, AECOM; Dr. Everette Joseph Director, Atmospheric Science Research Center, University at Albany, State University of New York (SUNY); Mr. Walter Faulconer, President, Faulconer Consulting Group; Ms. Jean May-Brett, Retired, Louisiana Department of Education; Dr. Stephen Polasky, Professor, University of Minnesota; Dr. Denise Reed, Chief Scientist, Water Institute of the Gulf; and Mr. Robert S. Winokur, Retired (NOAA, Navy).

**Working Group Chairs in attendance:**

Dr. Rong Fu and Dr. Rub Leung, Climate Working Group; Dr. Chris Lenhardt, Data Archive and Access Requirements Working Group (DAARWG); Dr. David Fluharty, Ecosystem Sciences and Management Working Group (ESMWG); and Dr. Dwayne Porter, RESTORE Act Science Advisory Working Group (RSPA WG).

**NOAA senior management and Line Office representatives in attendance:**

Mr. Benjamin Friedman, Acting Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and Deputy Under Secretary for Operations; Dr. Stephen Volz, Acting Assistant Secretary for Environmental Observation and Prediction and Assistant Administrator, National Environmental Satellite, Data and Information Service; Dr. Paul Doremus, Acting Secretary for Conservation and Management; Mr. Craig McLean Acting, NOAA Chief Scientist; and Assistant Administrator, Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research; Dr. Louis Ucellini, NOAA National Weather Service; Dr. Russell Callendar, Assistant Administrator, National Ocean Service, and Dr. Cisco Werner, Acting Chief Scientist, National Marine Fisheries Service.

**Staff for the Science Advisory Board in attendance:** Dr. Cynthia Decker; Ms. Elizabeth Akede and Ms. Mary Anne Whitcomb

**Call to Order**

*Lynn Scarlett, The Nature Conservancy and Chair, NOAA SAB*

The Science Advisory Board (SAB) chair, Lynn Scarlett, had some troubles dialing in to the call. This portion of the agenda was performed later in the call.

## **SAB Consent calendar**

SAB member, Michael Donahue moved to approve the meeting minutes; Bob Winokur seconded the motion. The SAB members on the phone all approved the minutes from the SAB November 2016 meeting.

## **NOAA Update**

*Benjamin Friedman, Acting Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere*

### Summary

Ben Friedman, Deputy Under Secretary for Operations (DUSO), opened the meeting. Mr. Friedman stated that he is the highest career official in the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). After the previous administration left NOAA, he became the Acting Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere. Also in acting roles are; (1) Dr. Steven Volz, Assistant Administrator for NOAA Satellites, is now the Acting Assistant Secretary for Environmental Observation and Prediction; (2) Mr. Paul Doremus, Deputy Assistant Administrator for NOAA Fisheries, is now the Acting Assistant Secretary for Conservation and Management; (3) Mr. Craig McLean, Assistant Administrator for NOAA Research, will take on the role of Acting Chief Scientist; and (4) Mr. Sam Rauch, Deputy Assistant Administrator for NOAA Fisheries, is now the Acting Assistant Administrator for NOAA Fisheries and Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Fisheries.

In general, the transition from the previous administration to this current administration has gone well and it has been “business as usual” at NOAA. In November and December Mr. Friedman and many members of NOAA’s leadership team had the opportunity to meet with members of the new President’s “landing team” for both the Department of Commerce and NOAA to introduce them to NOAA’s mission. The team was very focused on learning about challenges and opportunities. The Trump transition team left on January 20. Since January 20, Schedule C political appointees have settled into their new roles within the Department of Commerce. Wilbur Ross has been nominated as the Department of Commerce Secretary and Todd Ricketts has been nominated as the Deputy Secretary of Commerce. To date there has been no announcement of a nominee for NOAA Administrator. Until Mr. Ross is confirmed, there will not be any changes in the mission or direction of NOAA.

During his confirmation process, Mr. Ross was asked many questions related to NOAA.

- To highlight a few such examples:
  - On weather -- he noted that “weather information is critical” and that as a resident of Florida he is accustomed to being “very sensitive to weather because of the yearly hurricane season.”

- On Science -- Mr. Ross said that “the Department of Commerce should continue to research, monitor and report weather and climate information because that information is essential to everyday commerce and the safety of our citizens and communities.”
    - he also repeatedly stated “that science should be left to scientists” and that he looks forward to “meeting with NOAA scientists to be briefed” on their work.
  - On Fisheries -- Mr. Ross laid out a bold goal: To eliminate the country's seafood trade deficit, in which 90 percent of America's seafood is imported. He said "Given the enormity of our coastlines, given the enormity of our fresh water, I would like to try to figure out how we can become much more self-sufficient in fishing and perhaps even a net exporter of fishing." He later told senators that the objective for domestic fisheries should be the "maximum sustainable yield."
  - On Satellites -- Mr. Ross noted that one of the critical tasks for his administration would be overseeing the “launching of three more NOAA satellites.”
- NOAA leaders were very encouraged to see the level of knowledge the Mr. Ross had on many of these topics; the NOAA leadership team looks forward to working with him and his team.

Mr. Friedman presented additional personnel updates: Nicole LeBoeuf is the new Deputy Assistant Administrator for the National Ocean Service (NOS) and Mary Erickson is the new Deputy Assistant Administrator for the National Weather Service (NWS). Richard Merrick retired after 32 years at NOAA and Cisco Werner is the Acting Chief Scientist for NMFS.

#### Accomplishments

Prior to departure of the NOAA Administrator, Kathy Sullivan, and the Chief Scientist, Rick Spinrad, two reports were published. The first report was the Chief Scientist Annual Report (CSAR); 3200 people accessed the report monthly since its release. The second report was on NOAA Accomplishments, released in January.

Mr. Friedman closed by saying he looks forward to working with everyone while in this role and in his future role in NOAA.

#### **Discussion of SAB Transition and SAB Work Plan**

*Lynn Scarlett, The Nature Conservancy and Chair, NOAA SAB*

#### Summary

Lynn Scarlett said the SAB thought of using the strategic framework developed during meetings over the last few years as a way to describe the focus of the SAB to a transition team. Although committee members agreed with this idea not many were able to contribute new topics and ideas to add to the framework document. Lynn Scarlett made an alternate suggestion of using the existing SAB 101 presentation that describes the SAB and how it functions. She thought the group could use that presentation as well as a list of transition efforts by NOAA leadership to fill in more of what the SAB has done. Lynn Scarlett suggested she and others could brief the new team on what the SAB has done as well as the approaches used to discuss creative ideas for the future mission of NOAA. There is no new team in NOAA yet; so the group has time to work on these materials. The next meeting is April 24-25; if there is a new Administrator before then, the SAB may prepare accordingly.

Dr. Cynthia Decker explained more in detail what is included in the SAB 101 document. The document focuses on the history, rationale for establishing the SAB, the membership process, the Standing Working Groups and how they contribute to the SAB work, reports provided, and ad hoc task forces in the past. The presentation also covers what the Board has done with strategy speakers and five issue papers; it can be revised to provide the story that the SAB wants to tell.

Ms. Scarlett asked after the process for updating the SAB 101 document; Cynthia Decker said the document can be updated and sent out to the SAB for review in the next few weeks...

Action 1: Cynthia Decker will update the SAB 101 presentation and send it out to SAB members for review.

### Discussion

Bob Winokur commented that the strategy papers with their focus on speakers were the interest and product of Kathy Sullivan and Rich Spinrad. The next NOAA administrator might ask the SAB and NOAA about the benefit from having these speakers come and present at SAB meetings. When the SAB first started having strategy speakers a couple of members worked on a strategy paper that described what NOAA was getting out of having such speakers come, not sure what ever happened to the document. The SAB never documented an end product, the answer to the “so what?” question.

Ms. Scarlett agreed that the strategy speakers were a product that Drs. Sullivan and Spinrad had for the SAB and NOAA. It would be great to know if it's possible for NOAA to put together a 1-2 page memo of what NOAA is following up on because of what was presented by the strategy speakers. Mr. Friedman said it is possible for NOAA to develop such a document.

Action 2: The SAB Office will solicit the NOAA Line Offices for actions/activities they have undertaken in response to ideas provided by the SAB Strategy Speakers.

Louis Uccellini stated that National Weather Service is following up with the International Business Machine (IBM) after the Senior Vice President, Dr. John Kelly's presentation at the November 2017 SAB meeting.

Steve Polasky said the SAB put a fair amount of time into the process and heard a number of talks - did the committee ever summarize what was learned? Is it worth trying to summarize what was learned from the process? Lynn Scarlett said after the initial round of talks the SAB updated the framing document. While it might be fruitful to do that for the transition, no one was immediately available to do this work. Instead the SAB discussed updating the SAB 101 and asking NOAA what it is following through on from the speakers.

Dave Fluharty, said, in conjunction with the four themes, was one that dealt with ecosystem-based management. The Ecosystem Sciences and Management Working Group (ESMWG) submitted a report to the SAB on Ecosystem Based Management in fisheries in the United States. This report has led to a change in the NOAA Fisheries EBFM policy and roadmap for implementation. This can be an example of how reports presented by the SAB have been put into practice at NOAA. This might be something to document in the transition document. Lynn Scarlett said in addition to strategy sessions the group has working groups and related information. Should the group turn to NOAA and see if both the strategy presentations and any relevant working group products are follow-up actions from this work?

Cisco Werner confirmed that the EBFM roadmap is being worked on; it's being integrated in different venues. They can provide information on how the suggestions from the SAB have helped define the strategies for implementation of EBFM and assessment processes. Lynn Scarlett took the comments and proposed having both the strategy presentations and any relevant working group presentation that NOAA has engaged with to be a composite of the transition package.

Everette Joseph informed the group that the Climate Working Group (CWG) is having a meeting the following week. Under the new working group protocol how do working groups receive their charge to do their work? There were topics discussed at the November 2017 SAB meeting, should working groups focus on the identified topics?

Denise Reed had a related comment - the framework document and what the SAB plans on doing with it is good but it is important to also identify what the SAB plans to do in the future. Is the SAB going to discuss ideas of things to work on within the next year? In the last meeting Dr.

Sullivan pushed for the group to keep working because it may sometime before the new administration comes in and some time before the SAB gets to meet with the new administration.

Lynn Scarlett commented that it is best to provide an incoming administration with information about what the SAB is - highlight how the board has functioned, include information about the strategy as well as recent working group materials; and then a summary of NOAA next steps that build upon or utilize the highlights. With respect to future, there will be some time before a NOAA administrator is confirmed so the SAB should stay proactive. However, when the new political appointees come, they will set the stage for the type of work and focus they are interested and which will direct the work that the SAB will end up doing in the future. At the next SAB meeting, the group should work with NOAA leadership that is in place at the moment to determine the focus of the SAB in the near term that will have durability in the long term.

Mr. Friedman agreed with Lynn's approach to future work. It's not clear when the new administrator will come to NOAA. Internally NOAA has spent time trying to figure out some activities that can improve things until the new administrator is established and confirmed. The SAB should try and identify some interim activities that can yield quick positive results until the new administration comes and gives more guidance to the SAB.

Denise Reed brought up the seven potential topics presented at the November meeting. She suggested using the points as good place to start; they may not all yield results quickly but they are some rich issues to look at. Lynn Scarlett agreed but suggested limiting the number of topics. She asked the NOAA team to look at these issues, identify gaps, or any priorities to pull out of that.

Everette Joseph stated that the seven topics will serve as the focus of the future activities for the Climate Working Group (CWG). Lynn Scarlett liked the idea of the CWG utilizing the list to shape their future activities. The SAB will reexamine topics from the last meeting, pare them down, and get input NOAA has received from the transition teams in order to guide the SAB short term activities.

Action 3: The SAB will reexamine topics from the last meeting, pare them down, and get input NOAA has received from the transition teams in order to guide the SAB short term activities.

### **Update on Final SAB Subcommittee Concept of Operations and Processes for Standing Working Group Member and Chair**

*Ben Friedman, Acting Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere  
Cynthia Decker, Executive Director, SAB*

### Summary

Ben Friedman said that the SAB Subcommittee Concept of Operations (ConOps) was discussed at the last November meeting. Several working group members expressed their support for the ConOps and made recommendations for some edits. The recommendations have been incorporated in this version of the document, including the process for replacing standing working group members and chairs.

Cynthia Decker added that the SAB, NOAA personnel, and working group chairs have looked at the document and pointed out that a process wasn't set for the replacement of working group chairs. The Environmental Information Services Working Group (EISWG) and the Ecosystem Science Management Working Group (ESMWG) recently used a new process in their member replacement. A similar process has been developed for selecting the chairs and co-chairs for these groups. Now the SAB will consider this version of the document as final and post to the SAB website. Process documents will be developed for review of the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the standing working groups and for development of the WG work plans.

### Discussion

Bob Winokur stated that he had some comments he'd like to provide; the document doesn't state the role of the supporting program office and the role of the working group chair with the SAB if the chair is not a SAB member.

Lynn Scarlett said it is important to tidy things up and get clarity on any questions people may still have. Get in touch with Cynthia if you have additional comments.

Dave Fluharty would like to see a simple timeline for the actions discussed on the call. Also, he'd like to see the ConOps include information about the work plan; possibly have one in place before identifying new topics using the new process discussed. Bob Winokur and Lynn Scarlett both agreed with Mr. Fluharty's comments. Cynthia said that a timeline can be developed by the SAB office however; the timeline will not be included in the ConOps but in the process document that will be developed.

Action 4: SAB members will provide final comments on the revised SAB Subcommittee Concept of Operations after the meeting.

Action 5: Add a notional timeline to the process documents created to implement the SAB Subcommittee Concept of Operations.

### **Public Comment**

There were no public comments.

## **Review of Actions**

*Cynthia Decker, Executive Director, SAB*

1. Cynthia Decker will update the SAB 101 presentation and send it out to SAB members for review.
2. The SAB Office will solicit the NOAA Line Offices for actions/activities they have undertaken in response to ideas provided by the SAB Strategy Speakers.
3. The SAB will reexamine topics from the last meeting, pare them down, and get input NOAA has received from the transition teams in order to guide the SAB short term activities
4. SAB members will provide final comments on the revised SAB Subcommittee Concept of Operations after the meeting.
5. Add a notional timeline to the process documents created to implement the SAB Subcommittee Concept of Operations