

MEETING SUMMARY

MRIP Executive Steering Committee Conference Call

October 26, 2017

4:00 pm – 5:30 pm EDT

In attendance: ESC members and participants-Ned Cyr, Ph.D., Chair; Gordon Colvin, Executive Secretary; Bonnie Ponwith, Ph.D.; Dave Donaldson; Bob Beal; Dick Brame; Josh DeMello for Kitty Simonds; Doug Mecum; Russ Dunn; Emily Menashes. Others-John foster; Lauren Dolinger Few; Dave Bard; Laura Diederick

- I. FY 18 Implementation Plan: Gordon Colvin reported that there were no comments submitted during the ESC review period, and the IP will now be considered final. Gordon reviewed the Plan's organization and highlights. This year's plan follows a new organization that is aligned to the Goals of the MRIP Strategic Plan. The Plan's narrative highlights 2 to 3 high profile tactics for each Goal, and includes a tabular summary of all tactics for which continuing work or new startups are planned.
 - a. Plan Highlights
 - i. Goal 1-Meet Customer Needs: Highlighted items include completing identification of the customers of our data and assessing customer needs and satisfaction with MRIP data products.
 - ii. Goal 2-Provide Quality Products: Highlighted items include initiating a multi-year, multi-topic assessment of baseline requirements (aka "standards") for survey and estimation products. This initial year's subject is data collection. Also under this Goal a new emphasis on documentation, including documentation of survey and estimation protocols and program management policies and procedures, will be initiated. For example, we will complete a fully documented procedure for MRIP certification of survey designs early in the FY.
 - iii. Goal 3-Increase Understanding: Highlights under this expanded Communications and Education Team-based Goal include expanding MRIP involvement in the Marine Resources Education Program, and New Council Member Training, and continuing to complete and execute detailed communications plans for high profile actions. The Fishing Effort Survey Transition will be a key demonstration of this tactic undertaken in FY 18.
 - iv. Goal 4-Sound Science: Highlighted items for this Goal include evaluation of new electronic reporting technologies and continuing peer reviews of survey designs that are on a certification track.
 - v. Goal 5-Operate Collaboratively: Under this Goal we intend to complete and summarize the Regional Implementation Plans. We also plan to undertake a review of the MRIP organizational structure and expect to propose some changes to the Team structure and terms of reference to the ESC later in the FY.
 - vi. Goal 6-Meet Funding and Resource needs: Building on the Regional Implementation Planning work under Goal 5, we plan to complete a national

needs inventory and develop and share criteria for national priority setting and funding allocation.

- b. Changes in Program Management and assignments: Gordon Colvin reported on some recent changes to the ST 1 MRIP program management staff. A new Recreational Statistics Branch was established in ST 1 and John Foster was appointed as Branch Chief. John is now fully engaged with the MRIP teams, in particular with the Team Leads group and the Program Management Team. Richard Cody has joined the program as a contractor and is engaged in program management support. Gordon Colvin will be cutting back on his involvement to part time over the FY.
- c. Discussion: Doug Mecum noted that the AA will soon release the *Priorities and Guidance document for Fisheries for 2018*. He asked whether it would be appropriate to review the IP when the Priorities and Guidance doc is final and make any necessary revisions. It was agreed that the staff will do this.

Doug also noted that a Recreational Summit is being planned for 2018 and asked whether MRIP would be an agenda item. Ned Cyr stated that he felt we had missed an opportunity to highlight MRIP improvements at the previous Summit and hoped we'd be able to do that at the next one. Russ Dunn advised the group that a Steering Committee of recreational stakeholders from around the country is being assembled to develop the Summit agenda. He believed that data issues would certainly be on the mind of the Steering Committee members. Gordon Colvin will be working with the Steering Committee and will keep the ESC and ST informed re agenda development.

- II. Final Strategic Plan and Framework for Response to NAS Review: Gordon Colvin reported that the final Strategic Plan and NAS response Framework had been successfully rolled out at the beginning of the month, and NOAA Audits has been informed that our response to the GAO Audit is now complete. Gordon noted that we received a number of comments on the draft Strategic Plan, most of which were from state and federal partners. A list of the comments and our responses is posted to the MRIP website along with the Strategic Plan. Posting locations for the docs are as follows: [Click here to view Strategic Plan](#); [Click here to view Framework](#). Ned Cyr thanked the ESC subgroup that participated on the Strategic Plan Team, as well as all the Team members for their effort in completing the plan.
- III. Status of Regional Implementation Planning and next steps: Gordon Colvin reviewed the status of development of the Regional Implementation Plans per the attached table (NOTE: the status has changed as of Nov. 2, and an updated table is also provided below). Josh Demello asked whether the Regional Implementation Plans should include regional communications plans. Gordon Colvin responded that the Regional Implementation Teams were not specifically asked to include communications components in their plans, but it would be good if they did so. He also noted that the Communications and Education Team has begun the establishment of Regional MRIP Working Groups, and once they are all up and running, we will want to get them connected with the Regional Implementation Teams.
- IV. FY 18 Spend Plan issues: We do not yet have a draft Spend Plan for FY 18. As requested by the ESC earlier this year, the Spend Plan will include both "Base Funds" and "New Funds" so

the ESC can provide input on priorities for spending across the entire rec stats program. Gordon Colvin reviewed the FY 17 Spend Plan and noted where some significant changes will occur for FY 18. The CHTS-FES benchmarking will end as of January, so we will not need to fund both surveys in CY 2018, resulting in some savings. Also, we have been able to pre-fund FY 18 and part of FY 19 Information Technology support with FY 17 funds, so there will be a savings in that line as well. Together these reductions may allow us to consider some modest investment in research project and implementation funding in the FY 18 Spend Plan. The Team Leads will review Spend Plan options in detail at the December MRIP Retreat and advise the ESC of what the recommended plan will look like at that time. Ned Cyr commented on the importance of relying on the Strategic Plan and Regional Implementation Plans to establish priorities for any decisions on changes in funding distribution.

Dave Donaldson asked whether FIN fees are being waived as has been reported at the regional level. Ned Cyr responded that we do not yet have final guidance on overhead, etc.

- V. Communications Status: CET Team Lead Dave Bard reported on current activities. Dave introduced Laura Diederick who has joined the ST 1 MRIP contractor team to provide full time support to the communications effort.
- a. FES communications: A comprehensive communications plan for the transition to the FES has been completed and will be executed over the next year as the transition rolls out. This is a very high priority for the CET and for the agency.
 - b. Pilot listening tour: The 2016 MRIP Strategic Communications Plan included the conduct of meetings with stakeholders in the field to gather input on making our messages more effective, and improving two-way communications with stakeholders in general. This December, we will conduct pilots of the "Listening Tour" meetings in Massachusetts and east Florida. These pilots will help us to design effective approaches for the full Listening Tour scheduled for 2018.
 - c. Social network analysis: Another component of the 2016 Strategic Communications Plan was a two-step approach to more effective stakeholder communications that began with a Communications Needs Assessment. The second step, now getting under way, is to conduct a Social Network Analysis of the constituent community to determine key influencers and communication pathways. Together, these products will help us to address the most important communication needs directly, and via the most effective and efficient pathways.
 - d. Regional communications working groups: As noted above, the CET is in the process of standing up Regional Working Groups of communications staff that include our regional partners (FINs, Councils, etc). So far, we've initiated groups for the GAR and SER.
 - e. Website: NOAA Fisheries is preparing to unveil a completely redesigned website to go live ca. Jan 1. Laura Diederick has been working with the MRIP staff to assure all of our current web content is successfully migrated to the new website and updated as necessary. We will be able to retain the countmyfish.nonn.gov vanity address. This has been a major effort with kudos to Laura for her effort.

- f. Strategic Communications Plan: Per the MRIP Strategic Plan and our Framework response to the NAS review, we are completing a new, updated MRIP Strategic Communications Plan. This should be available for ESC review soon.
- g. Infographics: As part of the FES Transition Communications Plan, we are developing new infographics on MRIP, including an *Anglers Guide to the Fishing Effort Survey*, for release in the next couple of months.
- h. CET Expansion: Dave also noted that the CET membership has been updated and expended in recent months. The CET now includes members from GARFO, SERO, National Sea Grant, SF, PIRO, Legislative Affairs, and Public Affairs, and is meeting bi-weekly.

Ned Cyr asked the ESC members and the CET representatives to think about how the ESC can be of more help in implementing our communications plans. All are requested to provide feedback on this question to Ned and Dave Bard.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 EDT.