

Research Program Manager Report

It has been a busy seven months since the last meeting. The greatest change is that I replaced Katey Walter as the research program manager in March of this year. Because of opportunities for Katey the transition occurred a little faster than originally planned, but I think that we managed to keep most things running smoothly through the transition. Much of my time has been spent trying to learn the new job. As part of the learning experience, I have traveled to a few meetings and attended the NOAA Science of Oil Spills course. An update on some of the projects that I have been working on is provided below.

- 1) FY07 Work Plan – Most programs described in the FY07 Work Plan were implemented. The contracts for continuing programs are in place. Specifics of some programs are provided below.
- 2) Jointly funded projects with the North Pacific Research Board (NPRB) – We recommended jointly funding a proposal from Mary Anne Bishop on acoustic tracking of Copper rockfish and Ling cod. There were no applicants for the socioeconomic topic. With input from groups that we expected to apply we revised the request for proposals (RFP) to enhance the probability of getting strong proposals in the future and will release that RFP in FY08.
- 3) Alaska Ocean Observing System (AOOS) – Because many of our projects are in partnership with the Alaska Ocean Observing System I have been involved with AOOS at several levels. I completed a review of the status of the Prince William Sound Observing System, which was presented to the Scientific and Technical Committee (STC). I worked with AOOS to implement new approaches for improving the web delivery of information for specific groups. I also participated in the review of their implementation plan.
- 4) Jointly funded technology projects – After the dissolution of the Cold Climate Partnership there was still the desire for the partners to work together to jointly fund projects of mutual benefit. None of the partners approached OSRI for possible partnership on a project. An update of the NOAA oil spill tools (to make them provide a mass balance estimate) was discussed by the partners. The decision reached by a couple potential partners is that we should wait until FY08 to continue that discussion. In FY08 OSRI will put together an RFP of its own, in case the partnership opportunities don't materialize. The RFP will be released mid-year to ensure that the funds are expended working on improvements in the oil detection and recovery field.
- 5) Joint Industry Program (JIP) – OSRI has considered working with the Coastal Response Research Center (CRRC) to fund a biologically related program that would run in conjunction with the JIP. As a minor contributor, OSRI cannot bring a whole new program to the table for the JIP, but we can fund programs that will benefit and complement the JIP research. By working with the CRRC we are hoping to stretch the money available. Since CRRC is looking at measuring the fate of oil in ice and the biodegradation of oil encapsulated in the ice, I proposed that we add a treatment to the tests being conducted to see how the treatment would change the physical or biological fate of the oil. The Scientific and Technical Committee (STC) requested a white paper be put together describing the current state of knowledge of the effects of oil-in-ice on Arctic biota, before they would recommend funding a program. I completed a draft of

the requested paper and it is being reviewed by one of the STC members before I submit it to the full STC.

I was able to attend meetings in New Hampshire and Svalbard to work on project design and observe existing JIP projects. The JIP will be meeting in Anchorage in October 2007 and OSRI is helping to sponsor that meeting.

- 6) Oil Spill Recovery Prize – I worked with members of the STC and Advisory Board to write challenge statements on three of the five topic areas brought up in meetings related to this project. Most of the work had been completed and my effort was to ensure that the success criteria were written in a manner that would ensure that a successful solution would meet the intent of the challenge. The first of the three challenges closed at the end of August and we are in the process of evaluation of the solutions at the time that this report is being assembled. A more complete report on this subject will be provided during the Advisory Board meeting.
- 7) AOOS/OSRI drifter experiment – Due to funding delays and cuts to the Alaska Ocean Observing System (AOOS) the scheduled drifter experiment did not occur in 2007. We are still planning for the experiment to occur in preferably 2008 but, for sure, 2009, and have budgeted to get the equipment ready before the summer of 2008.
- 8) Graduate Research Fellowships (GRF) – We had three applications for two positions this year. It was decided to fund Matthew Druckenmiller of the University of Alaska to work on his Ph.D. examining methods to combine geophysical techniques and traditional knowledge to provide ice system maps. Kaitlin Ott was funded for a single year to complete her Master's thesis on the recovery of river otters from the Exxon Valdez oil spill. Jim Alanko also returned as a GRF after a lengthy hiatus due to medical issues.
- 9) Technology scholarship – One GRF was converted to an undergraduate scholarship through the Kenai Peninsula College. The scholarship covers school related costs and provides for an internship project for students in two fields related to oil spill recovery. The scholarship was advertised during the spring and summer, but no students applied. It is believed that the major reason is that we were targeting students starting a two-year program and they did not have time to become adequately informed about the scholarship opportunity and comfortable proposing an internship project. We are currently reworking the program to aim for a January start and the College will be ensuring eligible students are aware of the opportunity.
- 10) Updating the web site - I have put a fair amount of effort into updating the website. My work has focused on getting the content up to date. I still have to work on the grants tab, but the rest have been updated. If you find problems with the website please let me know. I have developed a project profile template to better provide the information about projects funded by OSRI.
- 11) Developing the FY08 Work Plan – Another project that has occupied a significant portion of my time has been the development of the FY08 Work Plan, particularly drafting potential requests for proposals to release in partnership with the North Pacific Research Board.
- 12) I continue to review annual and quarterly reports submitted to OSRI. I am still working to ensure I know when each type of report is due to ensure their timely submission.