



## **GCOOS Board of Directors Summer Telecon**

**24 August 2023**

Meeting Minutes (C. Simoniello)

Attendees

Board: Alyssa Dausman, Dave Driver, Sara Graves, Pat Hogan, Kirsten Larsen, Bill Lingsch, Ruth Mullins-Perry, Suraida Nanez James, Antonietta Quigg, Nick Shay, Jan van Smirren, Joe Swaykos, Tom Wissing, Nan Walker, Kim Yates

Staff: Jorge Brenner, Bob Currier, Laura Caldwell, Felimon Gayanilo, Chris Simoniello, Jen Vreeland

Missing: Stephan Howden, Kate Hubbard,

Kristen: quorum check: nine board members present at 12:04 start time so quorum reached; the agenda was reviewed; the vote on the bylaws was tabled until next meeting because 30-day notice for discussion is required prior to vote.

**JORGE**

Bylaws: Two bylaw changes previously discussed with the Board/Excomm will be put to a vote next meeting: 1) The four government sector reps will no longer have to be allocated evenly between federal and non-federal government; and 2) Candidates for the Board ballot must first be vetted by the Excomm. The discussion regarding expanding the board to include international members is ongoing. No changes will be made at this time. Kim commented that we need to reach out to other RAs to see how they handle international members. In the bylaws, international members cannot vote. She will check with other RAs. She does not think it is fair to let them participate and expend time and energy but not be allowed to vote. Action: Can Jorge check with the IOOS office to see if international members can vote?

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funds: BIL projects started February 2023. 3 new projects: 2 hurricane-related supplements to repair and replace equipment and 1 that is research focused. BIL funding was approved in January- \$1.069M to modernize and recapitalize infrastructure/existing network of observations; 2 yr project-1 new partner (Catherine Hancock, FSU); only first two yrs of funding currently guaranteed; see Improvements table below for assets, improvements and partners. Funds also support DMAC to modernize with new servers and modeling capacity. HFR-site scoping and permitting is underway. Glider support is intended to increase capacity for missions by overcoming limited battery supply issues.

## Improvements

### Key strategy aspects:

- **Calculated risks:** 1) one new HFR station in FL, 2) 1 spare HFR station
- **Innovation:** 1) resiliency is a big portion, 2) GCOOS DMAC cloud test bed and server needs

Asset	Improvement	Network	Institution(s)	State
<b>HFR</b>	Rechargeable battery		TAMU	TX
	Modems, AIS, Rx antenna	CenCOOS	USM	MS
	Spare station	CenCOOS	USM	All states
	New station		FSU	FL
<b>Glider</b>	Lithium battery		TAMU, USM, USF	TX, MS, FL
	ADCP	CenCOOS	USM	MS
<b>Coastal station</b>	Mooring, met station, modem & ADCP	CenCOOS	USM	MS
	ADCP	ARCOS	DISL	AL
<b>DMAC</b>	Server, cloud	GCOOS	TAMU, TAMUCC	All states

Inflation Reduction Act (IRA): we are still waiting on the official notice to be released by IOOS.

\$60M-IOOS Technology accelerators, NOFO is out now

\$55M will be split across 11 RAs in a non-competitive process (~\$5M each over 5 yrs)

\$45M will be competitively allocated for cross-regional projects (IOOS internal review)

### Inflation Reduction Act & NOAA

IRA FY23-26: Coastal, Economic, and Climate Resilience

Climate Ready Coast – Coastal Communities and Climate Resilience (\$3.3B)

- Enable **communities** to prepare to extremes and other changing conditions
- Support **natural resources** that sustain coastal and marine resources dependent communities
- Support marine **fisheries** and **marine mammal** stock assessments

Kirsten asked if Carl Gouldman specified what we should focus on for IRA funding—Jorge shared slide about priorities (see below); he has discussed ideas with other RAs for the portion of funds that require partnerships-- inundation sensors and offshore wind seem to be high priorities for many. There is still time for the board to share project ideas and priorities.

## IOOS priorities under IRA (i.e., plan)

**Ocean-Based Climate Resilience Accelerators: \$60M (competitive)**

**Other partnership projects: \$40M (competitive)**

- Ocean Technology Transition program (OTT)
- NCCOS Sea Level Rise Program
- Climate Program Office
- MBON
- OAP's Marine CO2 Removal Plan

**Coastal Resilience Services: \$100M (non-competitive RFAs)**

Themes?: coastal hazards, ecosystem change, harmful algal blooms, offshore wind development, and navigation safety needs.

- 1) Regionally specific needs (i.e., RA needs) \$55M (\$5M each)
- 2) Pan-regional and national needs \$45M (inter-RA collaborations)

## Current IRA NOFOs

Office of Coastal Management:

**Climate Resilience Regional Challenge**

Launched on June 20, \$575M (competitive)



LOIs:

- Inundation sensors (Sea Grant)
- CR & AI (IOOS)

IOOS:

**Ocean-Based Climate Resilience Accelerators**

Launched on July 11, \$60M (competitive)

Phase 1: 9 mo \$250k + Phase 2: 4 yr \$10M

- Ocean renewable energy
- Carbon sequestration
- Hazard mitigation and coastal resilience
- Ecosystem services, including change analysis and adaptation

<https://www.noaa.gov/inflation-reduction-act/inflation-reduction-act-funding-opportunities>

NICK: there remains a great need for high resolution observations offshore and around ports to support port operations but NOAA doesn't seem interested; has this been discussed? We included this need in our documents with Jack Harlan many years ago; Jorge acknowledged the need to work with COOPS and shared examples of projects that might help address some of this (e.g., USF Sargassum and Center for Ocean Mapping and Innovative Technologies mapping work).

Do others have ideas to share for projects with additional funding? If so, send to Jorge.

Ruth is working on NOAA planning and regulatory issues and shared thoughts about data applications for blue water observations. Much of GCOOS's work has been on HABs and nearshore activities. Given recent interest in species like Rice's Whale, information about critical habitat on the GoM slope is needed; this also has applications for GoM aquaculture plans, MBON development, renewable E, carbon capture, OSW, offshore hydrogen and others. May be an opportunity to expand blue water obs in a more systematic way that addresses a variety of issues with ties to climate. How can we use the opportunity to leverage GCOOS around more planned blue water data observations? Jorge will add these items to the list and share with the board. Filling mooring and buoy gaps and identifying glider locations on the shelf and in deep water are ways we can increase our capacity. Kim thinks these ideas sound promising for the inter-RA pot of money, especially with SECOORA and CARICOOS. For finer resolution data around ports, it was suggested that we need to find contributors for cost-sharing.

Nick used Hurricane Ian as an example of the need for local-scale information. Had HFR measurements been available, it would have taken the guess work out of identifying the forces impinging on Sanibel Bridge; “the need for local information is where the rubber hits the road.” The same information would help resolve ocean currents, thus also help track nutrients from the Caloosahatchee, HABs, etc. Many societal benefits would result. Profiling floats are also an option for blue water—they can be deployed for a long time, collect T, S, Z but also can add biological sensors; Kim agrees with Nick about adding profilers to the suite of platforms and asked if for the smaller scale obs, there is potential to collaborate on HFR with FEMA or ACOE. Nick is not sure. He unsuccessfully sought funding from the Department of Homeland Security to address the issue.

Kirsten asked if the funding allocated is only for equipment or if it includes money for analyses and getting data into models and products. Specific information has not yet been released but Jorge thinks it is both—because the goal is to support Climate Ready Nation priorities. Pat had a similar question related to carbon sequestration and OA. Will funds just support measuring certain variables or something more? For example, if carbon is removed, what is the acidification impact on the ocean? Will carbon be precipitated, pumped into wells...? It is unclear what Marine CDR and sequestration through the IRA and BIL calls mean for IOOS and GCOOS. Jorge said there is a need to start with spatial planning—need to be able to track progress. Thus, need integration of information and not just data collection. Kim said the key to this is that monitoring will be needed before regulations are made and then be ongoing. This is the reason why a lot of the technology and observing pieces are ramping up first. The assets are being put in place knowing that mCDR is coming.

GCOOS will be reaching out when specific language in the NOFO is released. Nick has already talked with SCCF about getting HFR in SW FL. They have existing relations with FEMA and USACOE. The current system is complex there— islands, barrier islands, river confluence—many things are affected. SCCF has a lot of local support so was able to ramp up even when the IOOS hurricane supplement stalled. Nick has one VHS radar but needs deployment and O&M support. Two or more stations would be needed to do an accurate job on the current field. Jorge will add this to the list to be included in the funding discussion. For IRA, GCOOS is also scoping core observation needs and needs of existing and new partners (e.g., NERRs, NMS, ports...). The plan for other future funding opportunities includes the Hurricane Ian Disaster Supplement (pending-estimate submitted for SCCF & Mote Marine Lab in 2022); and 2024 NOFOs: BIL years 3-5; IRA OTT; and IRA MBON.

Cetacean Project: Jorge shared a slide and summarized the project goal which is focused on building a database of population and threats data for use mainly by restoration managers. The project is managed by the NRDA Open Ocean TIG and implemented by NMFS. Jorge came onboard in 2021 when NOAA was unsure if they wanted to proceed with the project. They opted to resume activities in 2023. GCOOS used remaining Y2 funds for Grant Craig to complete a needs assessment with managers and to develop a process going forward. We are in the process of hiring a marine mammal specialist to lead data discovery, cataloging, standardization and publication over the next 2 years. Once complete, the plan is to work with the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries and MBON to build a report card-based dashboard.

Community Empowerment Task Team (formerly the DEIA Task Team): Chris provided an update on the status of the TT. In order to be in compliance with Texas (88(R) SB 17) and Florida (FL S.B. 266 (23R)) legislation, the task team name was changed and the charter amended. Activities had been on hold until anti DEI legislation concerns could be addressed in a conversation with TAMU Drs. Shari Yvon- Lewis and Dr. John Cooper. Armed with the most up-to-date information and with many of the original concerns alleviated, Antonietta agreed to be the board liaison to the TT. The charter membership includes Jeanne Allen (EPA), Kristen Laursen (NOAA Regional Collaboration Team), Suraida Nanez James (Gulf

Reach and GOMA), Maeesha Saeed (GRP), Monica Wilson (Sea Grant), Kristen Yarincik (IOOS Association) and GCOOS staff, Jorge, Uchenna and Chris who is the acting Chair until the team meets to vote for a representative. The team will work to build synergy in equity initiatives throughout the GoM and identify GCOOS-specific actions to enhance accessibility to data, products and resources that advance environmental justice.

The new TAMU president is keeping the oceanography department in College Station. GERG will remain there too, likely as a program in that department. Tony Knap retired from GERG in July. He will stay on as a contractor to close out projects. Steve DiMarco is interim lead. The previous president wanted to move the department and GERG to Galveston.

FALL MEETING (virtual): there will be a day between the open and closed meetings. The open meeting will be from 1-5 pm ET on 10 Oct 2023. The board needs to decide on the format they'd like—are breakout rooms needed? How do we want to engage participants? Send ideas to Kim and Jen. Sara commented that breakout groups in a virtual space are typically awkward. The closed meeting will be from 1-5 pm ET on 12 Oct 2023. Input is needed for the agenda. Current items include continuing the OSW discussion, an IOOS Association work group update and improving engagement with private operators.

#### SPRING Meeting

The purpose of having a virtual fall meeting is to save money so that we can have an extended spring meeting. There is agreement to meet in Galveston. Antonietta volunteered to help secure space at TAMU-Galveston. Depending how many people can be accommodated, we might also consider FGBNMS. We previously stayed at the Tremont House but it is costly—about \$187/night. Discussion of activities included an evening boat tour and a visit to Artist Boat. The idea is that evening social activities can bring in new partners and strengthen existing ones. There is interest in focusing on the blue economy to get local businesses and maybe students to participate. How can we make the meeting most beneficial to participants? Is a one-day public meeting too rushed? Nick would like the opportunity for PIs to share their work—maybe via a poster session.

Ruth said there are opportunities for conversations around biodiversity—the island has groups working on sea turtles, fishing industry issues and other relevant topics. She thinks Galveston is a great option, especially with GOMCON in Tampa and ASLO that same week in NOLA. GCOOS may hold its staff retreat in conjunction with GOMCON. It would be helpful to determine who will be at those meetings. Nick said to consider Sanibel for the 2024 spring meeting—the island is starting to return to business. Jen gave a heads-up about the new TAMU tax exemption documentation needed for activities in TX—including car and room rentals, food, etc. Bill asked how we might work with the media to get television coverage to encourage people to attend.

What topics/groups do we want to include? The group mentioned OSW, the Galveston NOAA Fisheries Lab, mapping activities in FGB, work associated with mesophotic deep communities, the marine mammal rehab facility, an update on coral health, ocean and atmospheric heat, SST products (e.g., people are asking how hot it's going to get and what's the hottest the ocean has ever been). Nick said regarding OHC, despite SST in the 90s, it's crazy how the isotherms have not yet changed. There are a lot of questions for the "hot" topic of SST vs OHC for the Gulf and Caribbean. Pat said the real Gulf Coast problem impacting people is insurance—especially in FL and LA. Is there a way to package that in an apolitical way to fit the format of the meeting because it is of great public interest. Tom asked if we can share information about improvements to 2023 hurricane forecasting as a result of GCOOS observations. Suraida asked how we engage and include frontline communities and indigenous people when making decisions about what or how data are collected. How accessible is it? Do we know how it is being used? How can we do better to include traditional ecological knowledge?

Bob said that Gandalf is good for public updates, especially with Saildrone integration. Some models are hosted directly on GANDALF. They showcase the observations in a way the public can explore. Felimon suggested we include an update from the UGOS team at the spring meeting, including improvements to hydrodynamic models. Joe also expressed interest in PI posters to showcase what they are doing and what they have planned. The board was asked to send additional agenda ideas to Jorge, Kirsten, Chris and Jen.

Meeting adjourned.

