

### Ocean Tracking Network Council

### Minutes *of the meeting held on Thursday, June 5th, 11:30 am Atlantic, Ottawa and teleconference.*

**Present: Council Members -** Albert Fischer (by teleconference), Beth Hunter, Bill Casey, Chris Moore, Christine Penney, Dave Gillis, *\*Fred Whoriskey,* Jim Hanlon, *\*Kes Morton,* Leo Muise, Martha Crago, *Nancy Hayter,* Nigel Lloyd,Peter Harrison, *\*Sara Iverson,* Zdenka Willis, *(non-voting, \*staff)*

**Regrets:** *Doug Wallace, \*Kyle McKenzie, \*Nikki Beauchamp*

**The Agenda items:**

**1. Introduction and Approval of Minutes – Peter Harrison:** Council members were introduced andPeter Harrison warmly welcomed two new members of the Council: Beth Hunter from McConnell Foundation who replaced Tim Brodhead, and Christine Penney from Clearwater who replaced Ian Smith.

Zdenka Willis informed the Council that as a result of four years of effort the Federal Register published the final ruling to extend Federal Tort Liability protection to non-federal US Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS) regional associations. Unless there are major issues within 30 days, there will be applications taken to certify these IOOS regions. This ruling should provide boost to the development programs in all facets of US ocean observation, including the evolving Animal Telemetry Network.

The minutes from the previous meeting were approved without change. The agenda was approved unanimously without amendments.

**2. Chair’s Welcome and Remarks – Peter Harrison:** Peter expressed his appreciation of the way that OTN met incredible logistical challenges with its small staff. He also highlighted the impressive the number of young people involved in the research. Bill Casey played an instrumental role in developing side activities around the Ottawa Council meeting, and Peter expressed the Council’s great appreciation especially for his hard work in canvassing MPs to turn out for Parliamentary Reception. Bill in turn noted that Nikki Beauchamp’s telephone campaign was highly effective in getting the Ocean Tracking Network on MPs’ agenda. Peter informed Council that he had been invited by US Secretary of State John Kerry to Kerry’s Our Oceans meeting in DC. Peter assured Council he would be an OTN Champion there.

**3. OTN Management Report – Fred Whoriskey and Sara Iverson:** OTN staff acknowledged and thanked all Council members for the active and ongoing direct assistance with a number of OTN activities. The diverse contacts and capabilities of the Board member have been a tremendous benefit to the OTN. The chief challenge facing OTN at this time is the projected shortfall in funding for staff salary that will effectively remove all CFI-funded staff except for two technicians from the project starting in January 2015. CFI has permitted Dalhousie to make a special funding request for bridging funding. This was prepared by staff and submitted by Dalhousie University to CFI, who will send the document out for peer review and subsequently bring the package to the CFI Board in June 2014 for consideration. CFI will require matching funding for this award. Dalhousie University has approached NSRIT for funding. This is possible, but will take time. Matt Hebb, AVP Government Affairs at Dalhousie University has obtained a letter from the Province showing its interest in providing the matching funding, and this letter will be submitted to the CFI for inclusion in the package going to the CFI Board. Assuming a positive outcome, the case for OTN will be taken to NSRIT for approval.Martha Crago clarified that the university presidents who are the beneficiaries of NSRIT approve funding at a meeting of the beneficiaries, and that this funding cannot be approved ahead of the CFI decision. NSRIT provides $5 million per year for work that has particular value to Nova Scotia. Dalhousie President Richard Florizone can ask for a meeting of the NSRIT to approve the OTN request following the CFI Board decision.

Staff changes include the hiring of a new portal manager, Jonathan Pye, taking over for Lenore Bajona who has been promoted to Data Manager following Bob Branton’s retirement. The OTN internship program has flourished, and recently hosted its first high school volunteer, Taylor Rudolph, who wrote a report on her experience for MP Peter Stoffer’s newsletter which went out to 90,000 households in Nova Scotia.

Operations issues of note include:

* A ship has been found to retrieve the stranded equipment in the Resolute area, and this will be done during summer 2014. Tasmania experienced a 100% acoustic release failure for the line there, and researchers are mounting a rescue mission for the equipment in June. The good news is that the receivers are all active and retain data, despite the release failure.
* OTN has been included in the Atlantos Horizon 2020 proposal in Europe. This will provide funding for European trackers to meet to begin organizing a European Telemetry Network. The full proposal is due at the end of June.
* OTN may also participate with a group in Spain (Oceanides) on a Horizon 2020 Ocean Literacy call.
* Staff have set aside $100K of OTN receivers as leveraging for a 2 million Euro application to Europe’s Northern Periphery Program.
* Fred Whoriskey attended a Florida workshop in May 2014 supported by Zdenka Willis and US IOOS. The objective was to begin organizing telemetrists in this region into a Gulf of Mexico tracking network. There is a tremendous opportunity to establish a fisheries-independent monitoring system in the Gulf of Mexico, extending from US waters to the Gulf of Mexico. There are approximately 600 receivers in the Gulf, and OTN receivers could make strategic contributions to tracking in the Gulf by filling geographical gaps. Timing for this is ideal as the Federal and State government are now beginning to receive funding from the BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill settlement. The US Department of Treasury had to set up final rules on distributing the money to the five affected States, which could eventually total up to several billion dollars. Zdenka Willis pointed out the telemetry workshop cost $10K, so a small amount of money can make a large difference to a network.
* OTN deployments have been completed on the French and US portions of the PIRATA buoy network, which runs from Africa to Brazil and spans the equator. The Brazilian portion will be deployed in the near future PIRATA has been included in the Horizon 2020 Atlantos proposal in which OTN is participating. Sara Iverson just returned from a five week trip to Brazil as a special visiting researcher, and laid the groundwork for the establishment of OTN Brazil. Vemco was concurrently in Brazil and hosted a workshop to train local researchers in use of the equipment. Sara and the local researchers presented seminars at institutions along the coast of Brazil. During her next visit, Sara will probably focus on the Amazon Basin. OTN already has links there with Steve Cooke, the SAC chair, already working there and one of our HQP (Eduardo Martins) is originally from Brazil. All of this should foster the rapid development of the Brazil node. Brazil is starting to recruit research students, and Sara on her return to Brazil will also teach short graduate courses.
* Sara attended a European Research Infrastructure conference in Greece, at which OTN she presented OTN as an excellent example of collaborative infrastructure and research. Gilles Patry, President of CFI gave a plenary talk at this conference, and noted that OTN was a star program at CFI.
* The first OTN Research Symposium to be held outside Halifax was conducted in Ottawa, with an emphasis on networking, policy relevance, and future directions for research. The ISAC meeting focused exclusively on working on the Science paper which OTN has been invited to submit. This paper needs to be submitted by July 2014. Chuck Krueger, the Director of GLATOS (Great Lakes Acoustic Telemetry Observation System) attended the OTN science symposium and gave a presentation on their work. GLATOS is integrating with OTN, linking their database, and they will cohost the ICFT in July 2015 in Halifax.
* Alison Janidlo of NSERC and Sara agreed that the networking symposium in 2015 will be partnered with the ICFT meeting so all of the HQP can attend, and one day of the ICFT identified as an HQP day. While international PI engagement has been facilitated through the ISAC, the 2015 ICFT will be the first chance for HQP engagement across the globe.
* Several items were put forward for Council approval:
  + OTN Management circulated a discussion document to Council indicating how it intended to focus its development efforts over the remaining years of Phase I. Council supported the principles outlined in the document, which would concentrate international development efforts in areas of high traction and opportunity (Europe, Brazil, USA-Mexico), and would see the network adapting to the evolving equipment and deployment needs of the science community.
* Nigel Lloyd moved that: “In order to meet the evolving needs of the network, and to embrace all available technologies, the OTN Council supports management efforts to reconfigure the types of receivers that OTN purchases.” Zdenka Willis seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

*OTN will send this motion to CFI with an accompanying letter that provides more detail for the re-profiling request.*

**4. Governance and Policy Committee – Peter Harrison:** The formation of a Governance and Policy Committee discussed. Peter Harrison noted that the functions of this proposed committee are very ably being carried out by the Council at present, and he was reluctant to change a system that was working so well Council agreed to table the formation of a Governance and Policy Committee at present, recognizing that the issue could be revisited should Council determine there is a need.

**5. Industry Engagement – Fred Whoriskey:** Fred Whoriskey briefly reported on the various aspects of OTN –industry engagement. At this time,there are two companies that have spun off from OTN. OTN has fostered new product development by nine companies, either to meet OTN needs or by giving access to our infrastructure for testing and development. Four industries are enabling our infrastructure development by agreeing to deploy our equipment on their offshore installations, four are using data generated by OTN to meet regulatory/permitting requirements, and we have 12 major suppliers of which eight are Canadian.

**6. Next Meeting:** The teleconferenced next meeting will be arranged by poll. The 2015 in-person meeting will be discussed.

**7. Other Business:** Kes Morton asked for approval by the Council for the attached Operations and Maintenance reports by email following the meeting.

Council unanimously approved the two reports.

Council was then invited to proceed to the OTN Parliamentary reception.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 2 pm.

Minutes prepared by T. Rounds