

In accordance with notice to members of the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council's Ocean Special Area Management Plan (SAMP) subcommittee, a meeting of the subcommittee was held on Tuesday, May 14, 2009 at 6 p.m. at the University of Rhode Island (URI) CACS Room 111 in Narragansett, R.I.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Michael M. Tikoian, Chairman
Paul Lemont
Don Gomez
David Abedon

STAFF PRESENT

Grover Fugate, CRMC Executive Director
Laura Ricketson-Dwyer, CRMC Public Educator
and Information Coordinator
Brian Goldman, CRMC Legal Counsel

Others present: Jen McCann, URI/Coastal Resources Center and RI Sea Grant; Kate Manning, URI/CRC

Call to order. M. Tikoian called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Item 1. The subcommittee reviewed the minutes of the previous meeting, and accepted them unanimously.

Item 2(combined with 3 and 4). G. Fugate gave the subcommittee an overview of the third quarter progress report from the Ocean SAMP management team, including explanations on the budget, at the suggestion of M. Tikoian. He told the subcommittee that this report was presented in a new format, with graphs and pie charts, according to the previous recommendations from the Ocean SAMP Subcommittee. There is also a summary in the beginning of the report listing major accomplishments for the time period. K. Manning presented the budget for the time period to the subcommittee, adding that the cumulative totals for all project quarters so far were changed to periods. M. Tikoian asked how the monies for both years of the SAMP development are budgeted; if there are extra funds left over from one time period, can they be rolled into the following period, and if there are over-expenditures, can funds be cut elsewhere to compensate? K. Manning said that depends on the individual tasks, and that whatever is remaining will be spent. M. Tikoian asked how the subcommittee could ensure that spending is on-target and said he'd like to see a cash-flow projection. G. Fugate said that is part of the MOU document and also shown in the first quarter report. M. Tikoian compared projections and actual spending in the three quarters/periods to-date and asked for explanations on the differences in amounts. G. Fugate explained that because the researchers missed the field season during the first year because of the Ocean SAMP start-date, the spending projection and actual spending were off slightly. There were also some big contracts underway in February for the spring field season that are shown in the third quarter/period budget. M. Tikoian noted that the third quarter/period budget shows mostly salary, student costs and fringe and not equipment costs, and wanted to look at those figures in more depth. K. Manning explained that there is a breakdown of each

account in the report, and she showed the subcommittee where those funds were going; for example, sub contractors were filed under the heading of “encumbrance.” D. Gomez suggested that encumbrance should show what has been spent and not been spent. K. Manning said she could supply the subcommittee with that information. M. Tikoian said that if there is money left, that the SAMP team should not simply spend it, but possibly re-allocate it elsewhere. D. Gomez asked if there is a positive line item and a negative line item, can funds be shuffled around. G. Fugate said that it would need authorization from the PIs, but could be done. D. Gomez asked where that would be done, and G. Fugate said usually at a management team meeting, but that at this point in time, no deficits are projected. P. Lemont asked what the process was for moving funds to other accounts and asked whether the budget should be padded for such occurrences. G. Fugate said that as project manager, it is ultimately his decision on moving funds and that the cash flow projections actually leave very little room for adjustment.

P. Lemont expressed that the chain of command in making these types of decisions was unclear, and said that since the CRMC is the lead agency on the SAMP development, it would be prudent for the subcommittee to be aware of any issues as they arise. D. Gomez echoed his sentiments, and said he was uncertain as to the role of the subcommittee, and questioned whether the subcommittee should be executing more control over the process. M. Tikoian voiced his concern over the workload that G. Fugate was incurring with the SAMP, and suggested pulling another CRMC staff member into the process to work closely with him. D. Gomez suggested it might be beneficial for the subcommittee to meet more often than quarterly. He said that the subcommittee needs more information on the science, the risk areas, shortfalls and other topics. The graphs and charts are helpful he said, but suggested again the quad chart for mapping progress and potential problems. P. Lemont said the issue is one of communication.

G. Fugate explained that the planning timeframe is so fast that nearly 80 percent of the product comes due at the end. This is also a learning process for everyone involved, as no one has ever done an Ocean SAMP before. It’s a difficult process, time-consuming and with a timeline that’s on the fast-track, it’s not easy to communicate every meeting or decision, nor get the subcommittee’s approval on every single action. P. Lemont said the subcommittee was not interested in micro-managing, but simply wants to be well-informed. D. Gomez suggested a weekly short summary to the subcommittee to inform them of news and developments, and a need to prioritize any problems that might arise. At the request of M. Tikoian, J. McCann gave an overview of the duties of a number of people at the University of Rhode Island, its Coastal Resources Center and R.I. Sea Grant, and their role in the SAMP’s development.

J. McCann told the subcommittee that the team is working with URI researchers to ensure that the team has the bulk of the information they collected by November so work on the chapters can begin, with the expectation that the chapters will be submitted to the subcommittee and then the CRMC process can commence, with an August 2010 approval.

D. Gomez asked if there were any issues that would halt development of the SAMP. G. Fugate said that at this point it is still too early to know the answer, since there is a lot of outstanding data on a variety of research areas.

G. Fugate told the subcommittee that because of the quick pace of the SAMP development, by the time the subcommittee views the quarterly/period reports, more

work has been done beyond that not reflected in the report. The subcommittee members said they would like frequent, brief updates to supplement the reports to keep the information current.

Item 5. B. Goldman reported on the status of the SAMP legal matters. He said he has met with members of the Ocean SAMP legal advisory task force to clarify the direction of the task force, and is awaiting a draft memo on that topic. The task force will then hold a meeting. B. Goldman said he will be working extensively with the task force this summer.

Discussion. G. Fugate reported that there is a draft introduction chapter for the SAMP that will soon be submitted to the subcommittee for review. G. Fugate said that as soon as data comes in from researchers, more chapters will be written; the expectation is that the subcommittee will be able to review a number of draft chapters in the fall. M. Tikoian said he'd like to hold a subcommittee meeting during the summer, and asked that it be scheduled.

P. Lemont made a motion to have G. Fugate sign off on the Period 3 report on behalf of the subcommittee. The subcommittee voted unanimously in favor. P. Lemont discussed possible agenda items for the next meeting, and J. McCann said she would work with D. Gomez on additional changes to the report format.

ADJOURN. The subcommittee voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by

Laura Ricketson-Dwyer, CRMC public educator and information coordinator