**Annual Steering Committee Meeting June 6, 2017**

**Participants**

Bill Appleby (ECCC), Adria Elskus (USGS), Jim Latimer (EPA), Matt Liebman (EPA), Ellen Mecray (NOAA), Peter Murdoch (USGS), Kathryn Parlee (ECCC), Susan Russell-Robinson (Senior Advisor), and Christine Tilburg (GOMC).

**Update on GOMI Project**

Following greetings Christine Tilburg kicked the meeting off with a discussion of the Gulf of Maine Initiative project (GOMI) that is currently funding ESIP. She mentioned that water sampling and analysis was done for 2016 that matches 2 previous years in analytes (salinity, dissolved oxygen, Secchi depth, chlorophyll *a*). Jim Latimer described the type of modeling that the team hopes to do for the 6 embayments of interest. The modeling work is based on a 2010 effort scaling down from the SPARROW model. Kathryn Parlee mentioned that she did a contract that pulled together DFO and Provincial information on estuary characteristics that might be of interest **(*Action to be taken: Follow up with Kathryn on this item).***

Christine brought the group up on some of the work the sediment team has undertaken. That group is looking at sediment samples collected in 2015 in the hopes of producing a peer reviewed article. She mentioned that there are interesting patterns that have popped out even in the initial analysis. St. Croix and Tin Can Beach are grouping together for many analytes. Christine is particularly interested in looking at the sediment samples versus Gulfwatch samples.

**ICUC**

The group also discussed re-starting the ICUC effort. A focus could be on celebrating Canada’s 150th anniversary. Susan Russell-Robinson thought there might be a possibility of producing an article for Downeast Magazine **(*Action to be taken: Follow up with Susan regarding Downeast Magazine).***

The group also discussed the 10 sites donated by Susan when she retired from GOMC. Christine said there has been no movement on these sites despite prodding and deadlines. The Steering Committee decided to verify there are no site suggestions from the States and Provinces. If that is the case the Steering Committee will select 10 sites and move forward on this effort. **(*Action to be taken: Site selection once verified no state or provincial suggestions).*** Some suggestions include Snowflake Falls as a Maine location. Susan also suggested McLaughlin Gardens where phenological changes could be based on using the landscaped lilacs as indicators. Other possible uses include images for leaf out. Jim mentioned that efforts with Lee Sochesky resulted in a fairly thorough business plan drafted by Lee, Susan, Kathryn, Christine and himself. **(*Action to be taken: The business plan will be mailed to all Steering Committee members for discussion during the August conference call).***

Adria Elskus began a discussion of a potential effort that could combine the ICUC app with work Ben Lecher is doing involving headwater streams. Ben and Matt Ely (associate director of USGS New England Water Science Center) are excited at the potential of using the ICUC smartphone app for monitoring stream height/flow. They envision users visiting local headwater streams frequently and submitting photos. They had a couple of questions about the app that Adria related below:

1. Are users able to upload images directly to a folder? Christine: Right now images are stored on the webpage and users can download from there.
2. Are images easy to grab and download? Christine: Yes.
3. How are the ICUC images stored? Christine: I believe via Cloud and then to GOMC server.
4. How easy is it to retrieve images? Christine: Very easy.
5. Can metadata be “customized by the user? Christine: Not sure about the user but the questions can be changed on the back end. Plus there is a comment field.
6. Can user get all the images easily in 1 place? Christine: All images are available on the webpage. Perhaps a WMS can be created to also make things easier for the project team.
7. Can it be ‘self-sorting’? Christine: I believe so.

The group suggested that a follow-up call with Ben and possibly Matt would be very useful. **(*Action to be taken: Ask Adria to set up a follow-up call).***

The Steering Committee also brainstormed the other groups that ESIP might potentially partner with. Some ideas were school programs, video gamers, USGS/river gauges, and the Northeast Coastal Stations Alliance. Adria showed the group an app that she really likes called the “Whale App”. Christine mentioned that she really appreciates not just the information available by the ICUC App but also the idea of growing the next generation of scientists.

**ESIP & Climate Network**

Ellen Mecray and Bill Appleby then kicked off a discussion of the Climate Network’s current activities. Ellen emphasized that the Climate Network provides climate resources and information on studies. In addition, she discussed the Climate Outlook that is released quarterly. The Steering Committee discussed the importance of combining Canadian and US resources. The group also discussed the highly successful kick off for the Climate Network and the potential to hold another meeting. Ellen discussed some of what was funded by the Atlantic Ecosystem Initiative. Part of that work focused on IDF (Intensity, duration, and frequency) databases. The Climate Network also worked on the King Tide programs which sought to turn Sea Level Rise into something more significant in people’s lives (aka, looking at sunny day flooding). Ellen also mentioned that the reason the Climate Network and ESIP have been so successful for GOMC is because they both had staff dedicated to the programs. Bill likes that the Climate Outlook now includes a section on the ocean (e.g., sea surface temperature information). Bill mentioned that there is the potential for including other climate indicators. The group discussed the importance of keeping the Climate Network and ESIP linked together. It was suggested that perhaps some of the indicators for ESIP 2.0 can include parameters/measurements that have been determined to be important by the Network. Susan also wondered if there could periodically be an ESIP box on the Climate Network to inform new users about ESIP. **(*Action to be taken: The Climate Network and ESIP should periodically converse so that the information link between the two programs remains strong).***

The group discussed some of the concerns with FY2018 on the US side. Individuals discussed whether there will be a true budget or would the federal government be funded on a Continuing Resolution. The group discussed why the Chesapeake Bay project and Everglades projects were suggested as budget cuts.

**ESIP 2.0**

Jim briefly updated the group with respect to ESIP 2.0 and ecosystem services indicators. He mentioned that on the EPA-side work is proceeding. If ESIP funding arrives, he thinks there is value in thinking about ecosystem services and appropriate beneficiaries. He gave an example from EPA’s work on anglers as one beneficiary and walked everyone through possible ecosystem service indicators. The group discussed how indicators can be made more personal. Adria described some tactics she learned from an “Alan Alda Center for Communicating Science” workshop.

**Funding**

The group spent a significant amount of time discussing potential avenues for funding. Some of the opportunities might include the Moore Foundation and Bar Foundation. The Bar Foundation links art and creativity to science. As an example, the King Tide effort included a lot of input regarding arts. The group also discussed the Takagi Fund which might support workshops. Ellen pitched the idea of a “tools café” produced for citizen scientists. She thinks groups are overwhelmed with how many tools are available and could use some assistance on the best tools that are most appropriate for their needs. Things that might be included in a “tools café” are the Monitoring Map (as a catalogue) and ICUC smartphone app.

Other brainstorming included ideas on how to bring new users to GOMC products. Kayakers, students, and citizen scientists could be valuable partners. The group also discussed what communities are the most vulnerable. Ellen stated that small towns don’t have all the information they need for planning.

The group also discussed how the Gulf of Maine Council does not support projects that they previously created. There is a sense of extinction about GOMC. Susan stated that GOMC is the only group that truly is binational. This allows for conversations between the jurisdictions that can be very valuable. Matt Liebman also brought up NERACOOS. Susan stated that NERACOOS is not binational. It is almost entirely US. ESIP has clients that are both US and Canadian.

Kathryn Parlee suggested another avenue. She thinks that the ICUC app could be used to evaluate restoration efforts…to see if there is success when a restoration project is completed. The group liked that idea but wondered how a funding agency would define success.

**Annual Gulf Pulse & Importance of ESIP**

Susan has taken on the project of producing the 2017 Gulf Pulse (thank you Susan!). The group brainstormed possible topics for the newsletter. The following topics were suggested:

* ICUC sites: how they could use the app on summer travels.
* 10th year of ESIP!
* GOMI Project: brief discussion of anomalies (heterogeneity?) in the sediment. Focusing also on filling in the data gap (for contaminants? I can’t remember what this was about) and building a network using standard protocols.

The group also discussed some of the successes of ESIP. What has been accomplished in the 10 years?

* 7 Fact Sheets
* Monitoring Map only place for monitoring category of its kind for Canada and US Gulf of Maine/Bay of Fundy.
* Obtain and Post to website Testimonials: Maybe Donald Killorn and Levi Cliché (partnering in project to build capacity for monitoring).
* Favorite Journals (Christine needs to look up favorite journals)
* Rick Wahle and collaboration with ALSI.
* Chris Feurt and testimonial regarding ESIP and classes.

**(*Action to be taken: Christine will connect with Susan to build on these ideas).***

**2 Year Plan**

The day ended with some preparation for the GOMC meetings to follow on Wednesday and Thursday of the same week (June 7 and 8). The group proposed projects that could be based on the funding situation. Some potential projects include:

* ICUC third phase
* ICUC and GeoTour project
* ESIP 2.0 Symposium
* Webtool Updates
* EIUI Project
* Update fact sheets
* Further develop business plan for ICUC
* Gulf Pulse

Thank you to everyone that was able to make this meeting. The annual meeting is so helpful for gathering up information on ESIP successes and projects.