**Steering Committee Conference Call: February 22, 2011**

**Participants**

Adria Elskus (UMaine/USGS), David Keeley (GOMC), Jim Latimer (EPA), Susan Russell-Robinson (USGS), Marilyn ten Brink (EPA), and Peter Wells (Dalhousie/Acadia).

**1. Participants: ESIP-NERACOOS Workshop**

Christine Tilburg began the call with a discussion of the April 7 ESIP-NERACOOS workshop. The webtools workshop will focus on a hand-on discussion of ESIP's webtools and other indicator web delivery systems. Susan Russell-Robinson stated that it is ESIP's responsibility to build a participant list. Susan mentioned that it is important to focus on the right individuals. Adria Elskus stated that the problem is that she doesn't know who uses web tools. Marilyn ten Brink suggested that maybe some of the focus should be on inviting people that are influential in municipal organizations. She suggested someone from Friends of Casco Bay. Marilyn thought that one of the goals for the workshop should be to initiate word of mouth about the tools. Susan suggestions that Lisa Richter at NESCOM would be a good suggestion. *(Action to be taken: Christine will add individuals as discussed).*

David Keeley thought that another approach would be to work through the ESIP theme areas. He thought maybe someone from the New England Management Fisheries Council or Atlantic States Marine Fishermen might be appropriate. David also suggested that Natalie Landry from DES (or her replacement) would be a good person to include. Christine wondered if it would be helpful to e-mail each subcommittee for suggestions. The group agreed with that idea. *(Action to be taken: Christine will e-mail each of the seven subcommittees).*

Marilyn stated that with the number of participants limited some individuals that won't be able to attend might want the opportunity to request other training/venues. Adria thought that including a schedule of where ESIP is presenting soon (like the "out and about" list on this agenda) might be a good way to connect with these individuals. *(Action to be taken: Christine will include the future presentations in the save the date note).*

The group then discussed the desire to include newspaper reporters/associations (like the associations of environmental journalists) in a separate effort. Christine wondered if groups like that would appreciate receive a packet of information about ESIP and the fact sheets. Susan stated that these groups would be more likely to participate in a webinar.

**2. ESIP Out-and-About**

ESIP will be attending quite a few meetings this year. The following is a list of confirmed or potential meetings/workshops where ESIP will be presenting:

GOMC Working Group Meeting: March 14-15

Fishermen and Scientists Research Society (invited): March 24-25

COMPASS-MOP Indicators Workshop (invited): March 30-31

ESIP-NERACOOS Meeting: April 7

Georges River Tidewater Associate (invited): Tentative April

NEIWPCC Nonpoint Pollution Meeting: May 17-19

GOMC Working Group/Council Meeting: June ?

NAC-SETAC: June

Coastal Zone 2011: July 17-21

BoFEP: October 5-7

SETAC: November 13-17

The group discussed other meetings that might be of interest including NEERS in May (Fort Jefferson). Adria discussed some of the "green team" initiatives at the SETAC meeting in November. She's on a committee that will be bringing AP high school students to the meeting for 1/2 day. Christine mentioned that she gets quite a few inquiries from college students that are trying to use ESIP's webtools with course projects. She stated that she'd be very interested in participating in the SETAC student workshop. Adria thought that sounded great.

**3. Funding Priorities**

The group then discussed the latest version of the ESIP work plan. David Keeley has requested that the Steering Committee identify the top 2-3 priorities out of the nine tasks listed under ESIP 2.0. He stated that he needs more detail on the top projects. A next step would be to identify several individuals within the Steering Committee to assist with writing proposals. Adria mentioned that there is quite a bit of overlap in the tasks. David thought that some of the tasks describe different ways of connecting to key individuals ESIP wants to get materials to. Marilyn agreed that some probably target users while others target champions.

Susan mentioned that there is a stable platform of funding for Christine and IT work through summer 2012. Now the group needs to look at the ideas outside of the funded scope of work (ie the ESIP 2.0 tasks) and determine what has good fund raising potential. Jim Latimer stated that outreach cuts across at least 1/2 of the items. David updated the group that the Council is now thinking about developing a more effective communication strategy which would undoubtedly include ESIP.

The group agreed that voting on the priorities would be a good between call step. David agreed to put together a table and forward it to Christine. Marilyn stated that all of the ESIP 2.0 ideas are important and should be considered "on the table" in case an ideal funding situation arises.

Susan stated that many organizations have gotten to the point where we are at with ESIP. In the past efforts have fallen apart at this difficult stage. It is critical that we finish the ESIP 1.0 tasks. We also need to build our user community. We need organizations to recognize that the monitoring they do is valuable to efforts such as ESIP's. Jim agreed with Susan and stated that we need to make States and Provinces aware of ESIP.

**4. June Meeting: Agenda Items**

At the end of the call the group discussed how several of the ESIP 2.0 tasks overlap and could broadly be described as attempting to put together an index or means of summing up ecosystem health in the Gulf of Maine. Peter Wells stated that he is of the opinion that this is something ESIP needs to start looking at. Adria remembered that the contaminants subcommittee had certainly discussed this idea in detail. *(Side note from Christine: Previous discussions had focused on how the State of the Gulf effort would more ideally fit this need).* Jim mentioned that the notion of an integrative index has been discussed but the Steering Committee in the past did not like the idea of putting ratings ("good", "bad", etc) on the index. Susan thought that this would be an excellent topic for the June Steering Committee meeting. She mentioned that the ESIP led panel and cafe session at Coastal Zone Canada 2010 had a lot of discussion on indexes and ratings. Nancy Stalder-Salt did a wonderful presentation on why the effort in the Great Lakes has moved away from indexes and scorecards.

**Next Conference Call: March 22, 10:00 AM ET**