**Steering Committee Conference Call: May 10, 2010**

**Participants**

Jim Latimer (EPA), Diane Gould (EPA), Adria Elskus (U.Maine/USGS), Gary Lines (EC), David Keeley (GOMC), Jawed Hameedi (NOAA), Marilyn ten Brink (US EPA), and Susan Russell-Robinson (DOI).

***1 hour has been added as in-kind for all participants.***

**1. Discussion of Spotlight Proposal**

Following a brief discussion about the upcoming ESIP Steering Committee meeting in Portland, Maine (June 10), Christine Tilburg opened the call by stating that the main purpose of the call is to discuss one of the two core proposals that Christine produced for fund development. David Keeley mentioned that he wants to go into a particular geographic area, find some partners, secure some resources, and then approach larger funding organizations. Christine stated that the proposal as drafted continues ESIP's effort with respect to data analysis. David also stated that the project will give better insights into the users themselves and obtain feedback from them.

**2. Objectives**

Currently the objectives of the proposal are:

1. *Produce a synthesis of existing data chosen indicators of environmental quality for a specific geographic area (e.g., a section of coastline, an estuary, a coastal watershed, etc.) that is directly responsive to the partners needs. Work collaboratively with project partners to deliver these products in ways that help them advance their priorities. (Depending on the partners needs these may be one or more workshops/meetings to discuss the findings with the host organization, new web-based materials, articles for local distribution, and other communication/outreach strategies, etc. )*
2. *Monitor the host organization’s progress in using the products and evaluate the results of this project. One specific project outcome is to broaden the scope of people that are knowledgeable about ESIP.*

David asked if the objectives make sense or do they need improvement. Marilyn ten Brink stated that she feels it is important to emphasize how to find data and the project also points to the worth in investing in funding future monitoring efforts. Christine agreed to add this in as an objective. *(Action completed May 11, 2010).*

Jim Latimer asked if the responsibility of locating and obtaining funds is part of Christine's position. Susan Russell-Robinson stated that she felt the Steering Committee and ESIP co-chairs would take this part of the effort as it is a conflict of interest for Christine to try to fund herself as a private contractor. Gary Lines asked if it is important to have funding up front. David replied that the hope is to have "seed" funds and then target larger funding amounts. Marilyn stated that the place by place examples are extremely important in changing decisions.

**3. Feedback**

David asked Christine if she has received any feedback regarding the CBEP, CZM, or EC reports. Diane Gould has sent in the following feedback:

Message from Diane - received May 10, 2010. "Hi David- I saw your question in the draft proposal Christine provided to the Steering Committee today. The analysis of Gulf Watch data she did for CBEP was useful because it allowed CBEP to compare Casco Bay mussel toxics data (collected by Maine DEP) to data from the larger Gulf of Maine region, allowing us to evaluate the relative extent of organic chemical and metal pollution in Casco Bay for the 2010 Casco Bay State of the Bay Report."

David asked Gary if he has any testimonial to add following the production of the climate change EC report. Gary said he would work on an appropriate response.

Gary's message received on May 11, 2010:

In the Fall of 2009, the Regional Director General of Environment Canada Atlantic proposed an Atlantic Coastal Ecosystem approach to delivering on their environmental programs.

The Director General was quoted as saying, “The goal of this new approach is to facilitate collaboration between departmental program activities and external partners to advance integrated management initiatives in the Region. To focus the department's efforts, three priority coastal ecosystems - Bay of Fundy/Gulf of Maine, Northumberland Strait and Halifax coastal zone - and three priority coastal issues - habitat and biodiversity loss, nearshore water quality, and impacts of climate change - have been identified.”

It was proposed that, to highlight the climate change aspect of the approach, climate change indicators be developed for sites in Atlantic Canada so that other programs and activities could base their deliverables and progress on a sound scientific footing.

To begin that process (and while awaiting higher level approval of the approach) a report was contracted to generate indicators for selected sites in Atlantic Canada.

In December 2009, the report was completed by Christine Tilburg of the Ecosystem Indicator Partnership (ESIP) of the Gulf of Maine Council. Christine was uniquely qualified to provide this information given her experience coordinating the ESIP subcommittees tasked with producing relevant indicators for the Gulf of Maine. The results provided key indicators for selected sites including trends in temperature, precipitation and sea level rise.

As the regional process moves forward to link internal programs to the three priority coastal issues, these indicators will inform that process. For example, decisions on coastal habitat loss and conservation must be taken in the light of potential sea level rise in those coastal areas. As well, the impact of extreme precipitation on water quality will be key to how that program moves forward.

Christine stated that she had sent a message to Julia Kniesel requesting feedback. Diane suggested she ask Austine Frawley or Jan Smith also *(E-mails sent May 11, 2010 - replies will be forwarded to David).* David stated that if good anecdotes could be developed the proposal would be significantly better. Jan Smith replied with a suggestion to connect with Jay Baker. Christine e-mailed the report after initial contact with Jay *(report mailed 5/11/10)* and will revise these notes appropriately when a response is received.

**4. Methodology**

Currently the methodology steps of the proposal are:

Task 1: Identify the appropriate suite of indicators based on organization's interest or focus.

Task 2: Identify both ESIP's selected datasets and possible additions from the sponsoring organization's perspective.

Task 3: Analyze appropriate datasets.

Task 4: Review data conclusions with parent organization.

Task 5: Develop a communication strategy and evaluation plans for use during final 4 months of project.

Task 6: Have designer previously associated with ESIP products assist in production of pamphlet or report.

Task 7: Implement communication strategy (e.g., spotlight workshop to discuss data findings and evaluation of usefulness, etc.). ESIP's Indicator Reporting Tool will also be introduced.

Task 8: Initialize four month communication and evaluation period as determined in Task 5 (above).

David asked if the steps make sense or do they need improvement. The group agreed that the need for evaluation is very important. David stated that individuals at the Coastal Science Center have offered to work *pro bono* for the Council and to provide information on evaluation techniques for a proposal. Susan mentioned that at one point the Council was supposed to be doing internal evaluations but ESIP was not included in the projects that moved forward (as ESIP was relatively new when the effort was begun). Marilyn stated that it is important to know the value of information to decisions being made.

It was determined that the Evaluation plan development should precede Task 1 and should discuss and identify decisions that the organization is trying to affect with the indicator information. *(Action completed May 11, 2010).*

Some discussion was had about other appropriate products that would come out of the project. Examples include: showing the organization how to find data using the Indicator Reporting Tool. Jim wondered about new types of data that might be important in a management driven scenario. Susan stated that the difficulty is that we're struggling to finish ESIP 1.0 as we are pushed into ESIP 2.0 and she wondered how this can be balanced.

**5. Potential Partners**

The group then discussed possible partners.

* Maine Cooperative Extension Groups
* NEWIPCC
* ACAP or NEPs (PREP was suggested. However, in many cases ESIP is taking PREP work as part of the indicator analysis. Christine wonders what more ESIP would be able to provide to PREP that they don't already have in hand).
* Gary mentioned that EC is undergoing a change to focus on coastal ecosystems. He's tried to make the link at various meetings between these efforts and the important of coastal indicators. There may be a tie between that effort and the Spotlight Proposal. ACAP groups are expected to be modified with this effort.
* Jim wondered about Massachusetts Bays.
* Gary suggested that an organization within the Fisheries Subcommittee might be appropriate (David suggested the Fisheries Management Council). Susan wondered why individuals at the Council level and involved with Fisheries have not be approached (John Ananla, Mike Fogarty).
* Adria wondered about bigger agencies such as Maine DMR and the Maine Department of Environmental Protection. Assistance might be available for a project that came across as value added
* David also wondered about Stellwagen National Marine Sanctuary.
* NERACOOS
* Adria mentioned Audobon. Susan agreed that there are big foundations such as the Moore Foundation that should be approached but haven't at this time.