**Steering Committee Conference Call: October 29, 2013**

**Participants**

Adria Elskus (UMaine and USGS), Heather Breeze (DFO), Jawed Hameedi ( NOAA), Matt Liebman (EPA), Abe Miller-Rushing (NPS), Kathryn Parlee (EC), Susan Russell-Robinson (USGS), Marilyn ten Brink (EPA), and Christine Tilburg (GOMC).

**1. Finalize Criteria**

The Steering Committee opened with a continuation of the indicator criteria discussed in previous calls. Christine Tilburg asked if there are any criteria in the Excel file sent with the agenda not currently used by ESIP that should be included. The group thought that the criteria: “Can be measured and studied feasibly?” should be included. In addition, the criteria: “Data publicly available and transparent” should also move up. Matt Liebman asked if an indicator chosen by ESIP has to meet all of these criteria. Christine replied that criteria are used to sift through lists of indicators but an indicator does not need to satisfy all of the criteria. Matt mentioned that for the Long Island Sound program they use ranking along with their criteria. Marilyn ten Brink stated that some of the indicators are necessary and some are nice but not critical.

Adria Elskus mentioned that for ESIP 2.0 there is an emphasis on looking at the entire system. She stated that criteria reflecting this would be helpful. Keeping this in mind, she suggested that: “Ecosystem properties fundamental to ecosystem structure and function” be moved up. The group also discussed adding a new criteria in: “Is it bringing us to a new level of understanding?”***(Action to be taken: the criteria list needs to be shortened down to just ESIP and include the four items above.)***

**2. Funding Ideas**

Kathryn Parlee then discussed with the Steering Committee results from the last Working Group meeting with respect to the new fund developer. She stated that ESIP needs to think of funding needs (both large and small) and provide the ideas to the Working Group and Council in December. Kathryn, along with Christine and Jim Latimer, had created a list of funding needs earlier in the year. She wanted to get the Steering Committee’s response with respct to the following three ideas:

* I See/You See app: An ESIP app that will enable citizens to quickly and easily access synthesized scientific monitoring data on environmental conditions in the Gulf of Maine, and using location based services. The app will enable citizens to input their own daily, weekly, and/or monthly observations, through photographs and text, about weather, invasive species, beach erosion, and other environmental conditions at ESIP-designated sentinel sites to provide valuable information for scientists monitoring environmental conditions in the region. In addition, sharing to social media sites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, and Tumblr) will be implicit in the design of the app so that peers can instantaneously see what their friends are “seeing” in the environment.
* Communications and Outreach: At the June Steering Committee meeting, the Steering Committee discussed updating ESIP’s Communication Plan. In addition, it would greatly benefit ESIP to have access to a part-time communications and outreach individual to connect with ESIP members through (new to ESIP) forms such as Facebook postings, annual newsletter, etc. Another idea from the call would be to ask users what they wish they could have available.
* Revamp ESIP Webtools: The ESIP Steering Committee has repeatedly discussed obtaining funds for outside assistance to improve upon the ESIP webtools (in particular the Indicator Reporting Tool). Abe Miller-Rushing also mentioned during the call that perhaps more funds should be directed to IT since it is a lot of work to keep up with ESIP’s webpage and tools.

The Steering Committee felt that these three ideas would be appropriate.

**3. Think tank for ESIP 2.0**

The group then discussed forming the “think-tank” committee. This committee is intended to “… produce a conceptual model to address the cross-cutting indicators that might look at the ecological integrity of the system. In this context ecological integrity will be assessed through an evaluation of whether all of the important structural and functional components are in place to ensure ecosystem resiliency in response to natural and anthropogenic drivers and pressures.” It was agreed that the invitation should state what the committee would be doing and time frame under discussion.

Christine wondered how large the Steering Committee felt this committee should be. Susan Russell-Robinson stated that there is quite a lot of research that committees of five to seven individuals work best in this time of situation. Abe stated that this would argue for hand-picking individuals. The examples of David Page and Jeff Hyland were suggested. Christine thought that maybe having each Steering Committee member submit two to three individuals for the November conference call would create a nice list for discussion. ***(Action to be taken: Christine will request this list in early November).***

Matt wondered if others had ever looked at the document “Advancing an Ecosystem Approach in the Gulf of Maine.” Authors include: Steven Hale and Maxine Westhead. Heather Breeze stated that there are a diversity of papers/subjects in the document. Susan wondered if Hilary Neckles might be a good person to include.

**4. New Webpage**

The group then discussed changes recently made to the ESIP webpages: (<http://www.gulfofmaine.org/2/esip-homepage/>). Abe and others stated that it is a huge improvement. Christine wondered if ESIP can release a statement now – or would the Steering Committee prefer to wait until all links are available? The group wanted to move forward now. Christine will craft an announcement and pass it through the Steering Committee the first week of November so that it can be released the second week of November. ***(Action to be taken: Draft note for approval and make short-term changes below).***

The following long and short-term changes were suggested:

* Make the top bar larger so that it is easier to find (short term)
* Take out “co-chairs” from the list of the Subcommittee. Use bold to highlight the US and Canadian co-chair and include the subcommittee chairs. Title should be “ESIP Steering Committee.” (short term).
* Relabel buttons for Indicator Reporting Tool and Monitoring Map (short term).
* Write out acronyms in the subcommittee member pages (short term).
* Have a message stating that the webpage is transitioning from an older version and might not be fully functional (short term).
* Have a button for “I’m a novice” and another for “I’m experienced.” The user could then be sent to the user’s manual or other areas of the webpage (long term).
* Zoom scale not visible in Indicator Reporting Tool (short term).
* Close box is not visible when select various pins (short term).
* GRTA still listed for all chlorophyll a sites (should only refer to GRTA sites) (short term).
* Not sure about the little squares background behind the “priority indicators” area. (short term).