**Annual Steering Committee Meeting – June 2015**

**Participants**

Bill Appleby (EC), Jim Latimer (EPA), Abe Miller-Rushing (DOI), Kathryn Parlee (EC), Susan Russell-Robinson (USGS), and Christine Tilburg (GOMC).

**1. Update on Council Projects**

* Climate Network: Bill Appleby (Canadian chair of the GOMC Climate Network) updated the ESIP Steering Committee on recent Climate Network activities. The next version of the Quarterly Outlook will be available shortly. Bill discussed the logistics of getting outlooks approved and released. Bill also discussed the King Tides webpage (<http://www.gulfofmaine.org/2/climate-network-homepage/king-tides-photo-contest/>). Susan Russell-Robinson mentioned that the Council was supposed to have a workshop on culverts, etc. The Climate Network itself will be leading a workshop in the fall.
* Integrated Sentinel Monitoring Network: Matt Liebman was not available to present information on the Integrated Sentinel Monitoring Network (previously called the Integrated Sentinel Monitoring Plan). Susan and Christine Tilburg provided information on the project as they have both participated in the effort. The project covers from Long Island Sound up to Maine. The original focus of the effort was climate but the scope increased. A lot of effort has been spent on defining what a sentinel indicator is. Susan mentioned that as the Gulf of Maine is not a classified impaired water body there are not a lot of funds coming to the region. One good outcome of the plan has been to elevate the profile of the Gulf of Maine.
* BoFEP Ocean Health Index Project: The Steering Committee wondered where this project is in terms of implementation. Kathryn Parlee stated that they received Environment Canada funds and Scott Kidd is the contractor working on the project. Christine reminded the group of ESIP’s role at the start of the OHI project. As different regions are using different parameters the main value of the OHI is through repetitive analysis over time.

**2. Update on ESIP Projects**

* Gulf of Maine Initiative: Christine provided an update on where the Gulf of Maine Initiative project is. The project expands current ESIP-supported water quality sampling (with Eastern Charlotte Waterways in New Brunswick) to other portions of the Bay of Fundy. In addition sediment sampling has been conducted at Gulfwatch sites throughout the Bay of Fundy.
* EPA-ORD Watershed Project: Jim Latimer updated the group on the current project with EPA to look at watersheds and estuarine condition. The project builds off of ESIP’s eutrophication subcommittee effort. Susan wondered what happens to the estuarine condition when dams are removed. Research shows that the sediment plume is gone in approximately 18 months. Susan also mentioned that a lot of estuaries will be changed as sea level increases (as an example: Mount Desert Island is projected to become 3 islands). Kathryn mentioned that there is an Atlantic Canada Water Quality group that the watershed project might wish to speak to **(*Action to be taken: Connect with Atlantic Canada Water Quality Group).***
* ICUC: Kathryn updated the Steering Committee on the ICUC smartphone app request for quotes and responses. Currently the group has asked Tesera (the sole company to provide a quote) for a phased plan. Tesera has also worked with St. Mary’s University on a smartphone app.

**3. Update on IT changes and Proposals**

* Jim Cradock presented some changes recently made to the Indicator Reporting Tool. He stated that he is currently working on improving the graphing function within the tool. He is also working on making the web version of the tool more mobile ready. The Steering Committee stated that after these changes a web video might be necessary to help users navigate the tool **(*Action to be taken: Need to create a web video to introduce users to the Indicator Reporting Tool).*** Abe Miller-Rushing wondered if it might be possible to determine how usable the Tool is for users. The group discussed using a “user experience company” to assess the webtool. **(*Action to be taken: If funds are available connect with a “user experience company”).***

**4.0 ESIP 2.0 Direction**

Jim Latimer led the conversation with the Steering Committee on the ESIP 2.0 Direction. The group discussed how ESIP 1.0 was really a hybrid version of the DPSIR and that ESIP’s directional Committee suggested that ESIP 2.0 include more ecosystem service-type indicators. Ecosystem Services are separated into Provisioning, Regulating, and Cultural. The ESIP Directional Committee also suggested including emerging issues. Abe mentioned that ecosystem services are a big priority for parks. The group discussed how complicated ESIP 2.0 is likely to be. As an example: if “Forestry and Agricultural” ecosystem services are discussed the conversation will include conservation activities versus agricultural uses. Abe wondered if it is possible to find indicators of balance. The group liked the idea of determining an issue or concept and then going back to ESIP 1.0 indicators and increasing the number of indicators with ones that also include service-type indicators. Examples might include: clean and abundant waters, human health, clean air, economic impacts from extraction. Abe mentioned that there is a Downeast education network that researches the economic impact of conservation and education in the region. Abe mentioned that recreational access versus preservation might be an important topic. Jim wondered how people might be enticed to participate. Susan mentioned that it would be helpful to tie the issues to the GOMC 3 action plan goals. Susan suggested that ESIP put in a proposal for workshop funds to do a kick off activity (similar to the meeting that launched ESIP 1.0). Abe thought that the idea would be good for NSF funding. **(*Action to be taken: Need to be looking for workshop funds).*** **The group discussed how Campobello might be a good location for kick off meeting.** The meeting could have an opening session in the afternoon of the 1st day, visitors would be encouraged to hike and explore after the first session with evening break-out sessions also included. The participants could then reconvene in the morning of the 2nd day to outline next steps.

**5.0 Workplan Draft**

The group then discussed ESIP’s 18 month plan. Kathryn mentioned that ESIP’s 18 month plans are based on ESIP funding. **The work plan needs to include Phase 1 of ICUC. Other topics that should be covered in the 18 month plan include: kickoff workshop for ESIP 2.0, water quality and sediment work, EPA/ORD project, update webtools, indicator development and accessibility online, webinars to exchange information.** Abe also wondered if there would be funds available for data synthesis with a focus on communication. USGS’s Status and Trends program was suggested. These funds are one of the least competitive available from USGS.