



US National Committee

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1. 2006 ACCOMPLISHMENTS & SCIENTIFIC HIGHLIGHTS

2006 was a year of transition and growth for the USNC. Highlights include hosting the recent Biodiversity workshop, producing a US program brochure and quarterly newsletter, participating on a panel at the Capitol Hill Ocean's Week symposia, beginning the development of a outreach strategy, and identifying a new USNC chair and program coordinator. All of the activities over the last year have served to increase program visibility, name recognition, and build upon the growing reputation of CoML in the United States, particularly on Capitol Hill and the federal ocean agencies.

The USNC held a workshop from Sept. 11-13, 2006 in Washington, DC entitled “Approaches for Researching the Roles of Marine and Coastal Biodiversity in Maintaining Ecosystem Service” Over 70 scientists and program managers from all over the US and Canada gathered to discuss the effect of marine diversity as a predictor of ecosystem function. Participants agreed that there are evolutionary / ecological differences in diversity among systems that affect ecosystem resilience. In particular low diversity systems are at risk because of low functional redundancy, whereas high diversity within a system results in more ecosystem resilience. Additionally, biogenic habitat complexity plays a key role in determining biodiversity and ecosystem functioning, specifically the extent a single dominant species/ top predator plays a role in the regulation of food webs. The workshop concluded that although additional research and analysis is needed to map and determine the correlation between biodiversity and marine ecosystem management, it’s clear that biodiversity is an essential factor in recognizing and maintaining the health of the oceans.

The workshop featured plenary talks by many top scientists, as well as NOAA Assistant Administrator Jack Dunnigan, and two White House representatives, Gerhard Kuska and Dan Walker. The workshop steering committee plans to submit an article to a major scientific magazine and also publish a workshop report for presentation to the Joint Subcommittee on Ocean Science and Technology (JSOST) and the Subcommittee on Integrated Management of Ocean Resources (SIMOR), both of which were created under the President's Ocean Action Plan, to assist in determining the future direction of biodiversity research and study within the agencies and the federal government.

Additionally, in April, several members of the USNC participated in a public workshop organized by the National Science and Technology Council’s JSOST to gather input into the Ocean Research Priorities Plan. The USNC provided comments, including a list of research priorities that highlight the strengths of CoML within the U.S.

This fall, a USNC brochure was produced and published. The brochure’s objective is to inform an audience who has little to no knowledge about CoML in an effort to build support and increase awareness of CoML activities, particularly on the Hill and at conferences and meetings. The brochure provides a brief overview of the CoML program, the activities of the USNC, related CoML projects, and the ongoing and future needs of the program.

The USNC and its scientists have actively participated in the NOAA National Marine Sanctuaries Foundation sponsored Capital Hill Ocean Week (CHOW) each of the last two years. This year the USNC hosted a panel discussion on visualization technologies developed under CoML projects. The panel was moderated by USNC member and incoming chair, Dr. Andrew Rosenberg, and featured presentations by three CoML project scientists.

In August, the first issue of the USNC quarterly newsletter was distributed to an audience that included US agencies, CoML projects, and other relevant ocean leaders. The newsletter was also circulated among the other NRICs, in an effort to not only update them on recent US activities, but to increase awareness and collaboration for the future. For a copy of this newsletter, please see www.CoML.US.

At its spring 2006 committee meeting, the USNC began work on an outreach strategy (see appendix 3) to further refine the long-term U.S. vision for CoML past 2010. The USNC agreed

to focus their efforts in four essential areas: 1) raising awareness and strengthening visibility in Congress, 2) expanding programmatic collaborations with federal agency programs, 3) furthering knowledge of CoML within research institutions, and 4) improving communication to the private sector and general public. Success in these four areas will be integral to the longevity and the overall mission of the USNC.

Lastly, Dr. Andy Rosenberg, an HMAP project leader will become the next USNC chair, and will replace Dr. Daphne Fautin at the next USNC meeting in Corpus Christi in November. Dr. Fautin has been of the USNC chair, since the inception of the US Program in 2002.

2. SOCIETAL BENEFITS, IMPACT & APPLICATIONS

The majority of the USNC activities over the last year have focused their efforts on expanding the audience of CoML supporters. Increased CoML awareness and visibility, particularly within the US Congress and the US federal agencies is critical to the future success of a sustained CoML program in the United States. In addition:

- US CoML projects, like TOPP, have generated data that is used to develop conservation and management measures for highly migratory species in the western, central, and eastern Pacific Ocean.
- The USNC is actively promoting OBIS and pursuing new data sets that can be used by resource managers to develop effective marine policy.
- The Biodiversity workshop held in September, hopes to steer the future direction of biodiversity research and study within the agencies and the federal government.
- Comments and input the USNC provided for the Ocean Research Priority Plan attempted to bring CoML efforts to the foreground of the US ocean research agenda.
- Members of the USNC were instrumental in the creation of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine National Monument. At nearly 140,000 square miles, the monument is the world's largest marine conservation area, established to permanently protect the area's pristine coral reefs and unique marine species.

3. WORK PLANNED FOR 2007

A primary goal of the committee of the next year is to finalize and implement the outreach strategy, and in turn increase awareness within the Federal Agencies and Congress. Representatives of the USNC plan to present/ meet with ORRAP (October), JSOST, and SIMOR (December/January), as well as once again participate in Capitol Hill Ocean's Week (June). For a more details on the plan, plan, please see the attached outreach strategy for building stakeholder support from 2007-2010 (Appendix 3).

Other USNC activates over the next year include:

- Corpus Christi USNC meeting, November 14-16 (focus on outreach strategy, and program management)
- Spring USNC meeting, Washington, DC (Dates TBD)
- Capitol Hill Oceans Week 2007 (plan to host panel discussion for 3rd year in a row)
- 2007 Workshop/Planning

- USNC quarterly newsletter (Nov, Feb, May, Aug)
- Work with new OBIS representative, Dr. Jim Ammerman (with the goal of integrating OBIS better into the planning of the US component of the Global Ocean Observing System)

4. EDUCATION & OUTREACH

As outlined before, the Outreach Strategy originally developed and presented during the March 2006 USNC meeting in Washington, DC, has evolved and expanded, projecting future USNC activities through 2010 and the end of the “First Census.” The USNC believes that its primary goal is to ensure that the CoML program lives within the US well beyond 2010, and the Outreach Strategy is the means by which to accomplish this goal.

The USNC Brochure and the Quarterly newsletter are effective tools for increasing CoML awareness and interest.

The U.S. CoML website (www.coml.us) continues to provide a brief view of the U.S. component of the CoML program. The program office hopes to improve upon the existing structure, and draw greater attention to program sponsors and improve linkages to CoML partnerships with NOAA’s Office of Ocean Exploration (particularly the NOAA Ocean Explorer website), Minerals Management Service (the offshore and revenue minerals programs), and USGS’s NBII (home of the US OBIS node).

Finally, the USNC was represented at several other major conferences and events in the last year, including the 2006 AGU/ASLO/TOS Ocean Sciences conference in Honolulu Hawaii and the recent 2006 MTS/IEEE conference in Boston, MA this September. The USNC plans for similar effort in the coming twelve months.

5. GEOGRAPHIC EXPANSION

The USNC is not actively engaging in efforts to expand the geographic scope of CoML, rather it is directing its efforts towards the outreach strategy. However, the USNC continues to support the existing CoML projects in their efforts toward geographic expansion. This year, besides promoting growth of the US RON, and the affiliated GoMx project, the USNC continued to work with the CReefs project to expand their efforts, highlighted by the creation of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine National Monument, the world’s largest marine protected area.

The Southeastern Regional Taxonomic Center (SERTC), located in Charleston, SC, submitted an application for CoML affiliation (using the approved CoML affiliation documents). After review and discussion, the USNC determined that SERTC would be better served aligning with OBIS and SERTC was put into contact with Mark Fornwall of the US RON. Dr. Elizabeth Wenner, who submitted the application also attended the Biodiversity workshop in September and should be a strong CoML supporter for the future.

In the upcoming year, the USNC feels that IPY will provide opportunities for major growth, within the ArcOD and CAML projects. The USNC will continue work with POST and other CoML scientists and researchers on the Ocean Tracking Network conservation project.

6. PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATION

a. Partnerships

Organization Name	Point-of-Contact (Name)	Nature of Relationship
National Biological Information Infrastructure (USGS)	Mark Fornwall	NBII is home to the US RON
OBIS SEAMAP	Pat Halpin	Member of the USNC

b. Links to CoML Ocean Realm Projects

Project Name	Liaison or Cross-over personnel	Nature of Relationship
ArcOD	Vera Alexander	Member of the USNC
CReefs	Jo-Ann Leong	Member of the USNC

c. Links to other CoML National and Regional Implementation Committees (NRICs)

None to report.

d. Liaisons to CoML Cross-Cutting Groups

Project Name	Liaison Name & Institution	Nature of the Relationship
OBIS	Daphne Fautin, Pat Halpin	International OBIS Steering Committee member, OBIS-SEMAP Project PI
HMAP	Andrew Rosenberg	HMAP project PI
FMAP	Andrew Rosenberg	
E&O	Michael Feldman	Maintains consistent communication

e. Effectiveness of the Partnerships and collaborations

While the USNC has stepped back from regular involvement with the CoML Ocean Realm projects, as they already report to the international CoML Secretariat, the USNC will discuss mechanisms to promote greater support of PIs and Ocean Realm projects. Sharing an office and working closely with the SSC, the US program office's need to collaborate with other CoML groups is diminished, and as a result, not very effective. The USNC is increasing efforts however for more communication with the other NRICs (as well as the E&O Network and OBIS) through the new, quarterly USNC newsletter.

-Draft 10/1/06-

OUTREACH STRATEGY FOR BUILDING STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT in 2007-2010
U.S. National Committee of the Census of Marine Life
November 2006

ACTION: The USNC may wish to 1) discuss and agree on the long-, and short-term goals of this strategy, 2) discuss and agree on 3-5 priority activities to reach each of the stakeholder groups identified, and 3) establish a working group within the USNC to lead and coordinate these activities.

INTRODUCTION

The Census of Marine Life (CoML), formally initiated in 2000, has evolved in size and organizational structure. The U.S. National Committee (USNC) was established in 2002 to guide the development and implementation of national activities and collaborations. Shortly thereafter, its members established a four-phased approach to implementation of the program:

- Phase I: Planning and pilot projects
- Phase II: Program support, setting priorities, and initiating implementation
- Phase III: Continued implementation and expansion
- Phase IV: Ten-year data analysis and contribution to global assessment

At the conclusion of Phase I in 2004, the USNC adopted a program framework that identified the mission, goals, and objectives of U.S. program activities, taking into account national priorities defined by the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy.

Program Mission: To assess and explain the changing diversity, distribution, and abundance of marine species, as well as the functional role of marine biodiversity, in the United States and its territories and commonwealths, in the past, present, and future, and to serve as an unbiased source of sound scientific information to support the needs of the nation.

Since its inception, USNC members have expanded, on an ad hoc basis, financial and institutional support for CoML activities with a broad U.S. community. However, to date, there is no formal strategy for such activities. There is a great need for USNC members to reach out to stakeholders in Congress, federal agencies, research institutions and non-governmental organizations to raise the profile

of the program and garner support of CoML activities. This strategy will guide the near-term (2007-2010) outreach activities of USNC members towards this goal.

LONG-TERM GOAL

- Build broad U.S. community support sufficient to establish a sustained federal external research and monitoring program for marine and coastal biodiversity, to support the science, technology, and resource management needs of the nation.

2007-2010 STRATEGIC GOALS

- 1) Raise awareness and visibility in Congress, federal ocean agencies, non-governmental organizations, universities and the public for the continued support for external CoML research activities on marine and coastal biodiversity.)
- 2) Expand programmatic collaborations with federal ocean agencies and identify federal funds to support of CoML research activities.
- 3) Prepare Congressional legislative proposals and Administration appropriations requests, to support CoML activities (e.g. include CoML in agency budget requests, develop legislative language to codify the program in a particular agency, and identify other funding opportunities).
- 4) Enlist the assistance of lobbyists from academic institutions to support USNC efforts to secure long-term funding.

2007-2010 PRIORITY ACTIVITIES TO BUILD STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT (4 Tables by stakeholder categories)

Table 1. CONGRESSIONAL OFFICES

ACTIVITY	TIMELINE	USNC LEAD	EXPECTED IMPACT
Institute an annual briefing of House and Senate Congressional staff on CoML activities, focusing on activities that support the development of resource policy and conservation and management measures.	Annually March/April	To be determined (TBD)	Increased awareness by Congressional staff / Improved support for external CoML research activities in the appropriations process
Participate in panel discussions, exhibits, and events during Capitol Hill Oceans Day/Week	Annually (June , 07, 08 09, and 10)	TBD	Increased awareness by Congressional staff, federal funding agencies, and others in attendance
Establish and maintain a process for sending electronic updates to Congressional offices on CoML activities	Quarterly	Chairman/Program Office	Increased awareness by Congressional staff
Hold annual lobby week and meet with House Science, House Resources, Senate Commerce, House Oceans Caucus, House and Senate Appropriations Committee, and key Members (e.g. , those with projects in District) to garner support for legislative proposals and appropriations.	Spring 08, 09, 10 (Done in conjunction with annual briefings)	TBD	Increased awareness of Congressional staff of legislative intent / Increased information for advancing legislative proposal and securing appropriations.
Collaborate with the National Governors Association, Coastal States Organization, Sea Grant Association, and other state organizations to broaden support to CoML activities.	Spring 07-2010	TBD	Increased awareness by Congressional staff and States / Improved support for external research in the appropriations process and for advancing legislative proposal

Table 2. ADMINISTRATION OFFICES

ACTIVITY	TIMELINE	USNC LEAD	EXPECTED IMPACT
Influence the science and technology research priorities of federal ocean agencies through the Joint Subcommittee on Ocean Science and Technology (JSOST) (initially through Ocean Research Priorities Plan)	Summer (2006) Fall 2006 and Winter 2007	To be determined (TBD)	Increased awareness of CoML research priorities for S & T, and those supporting regulatory applications / Increased funding for identified priorities / Improved support by federal agencies for legislative proposal and appropriations request.
Brief federal ocean agencies through the Subcommittee on Integrated Management of Ocean Resources (SIMOR) highlighting CoML activities of particular relevance to the SIMOR agenda	Ongoing 2007 and 2008	To be determined (TBD)	Increased awareness of resource management relevance of CoML activities / Increased funding for relevant CoML activities / Improved support by federal agencies for legislative proposal and appropriations request.
Update the Ocean Research and Resource Management Advisory Panel (ORRAP) on CoML activities with the intent that ORRAP convey support to federal ocean agencies at the SIMOR and JSOST level	Annually (Spring)	TBD	Increased awareness and support for CoML activities / Increased influence on federal ocean agency program priorities and budget requests / Improve ORRAP support to federal ocean agencies at the SIMOR and JSOST level for appropriations and legislative proposals
Encourage broad federal ocean agency participation in USNC coordinated workshops, with a particular focus on issues of policy relevance.	Fall 07, Fall 08, Fall 09	TBD	Increased funding sources and amounts for CoML research priorities / Improved multi-sectoral plans for research and monitoring / Growth in the number of collaborations with public and private partners
Brief federal ocean agencies and seek to build collaborations between CoML research and federal research programs	Ongoing 2007 through 2010		Improved collaborations with federal ocean programs / Increased awareness of S & T, and resource management relevance of CoML activities / Increased funding for relevant CoML activities through office budget requests

Table 3. RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS

ACTIVITY	TIMELINE	USNC LEAD	EXPECTED IMPACT
Coordinate Congressional outreach activities with external affairs departments of research institutions	Ongoing	Chairman / Program Office	Increased awareness by research institutions of CoML activities, outcomes, and impacts / Expanded community support for legislative proposal
Provide electronic updates of CoML activities to member institutions of the Consortium for Oceanographic Research and Education (CORE)	Quarterly (through CORE newsletter)	Program Office	Increased awareness by research institutions of CoML activities, outcomes, and impacts / Expanded participation in CoML research / Expanded community support for legislative proposal

Table 4. NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

ACTIVITY	TIMELINE	USNC LEAD	EXPECTED IMPACT
Develop research collaborations to broaden support for program activities and outcomes, while maintaining independence of CoML research (e.g. conservation organizations, industry)	Ongoing 2007-2010	TBD	Incorporation of marine biodiversity research into existing and new research plans / Expanded CoML research activities / Increased funding for CoML activities / Expanded support for legislative proposal
Develop public relational collaborations to raise public awareness of program activities and outcomes (e.g. zoo, aquarium, museum exhibits; radio, cable, i-casts; industry publications)	Ongoing 2007-2010	TBD	Incorporation of marine biodiversity information and program outcomes into informal education to the general public / Increased awareness of CoML activities and impacts / Expanded support for legislative proposal
Develop education collaborations to broaden support for program activities and outcomes (e.g. ocean literacy campaigns, COSEE Center educational materials)	2007-2010	TBD	Incorporation of marine biodiversity information and program outcomes into formal education materials / Increased impact of CoML outcomes / Expanded support for legislative proposal