

Final Notes September 24, 1997

IMPLEMENTATION TEAM
CONFERENCE CALL MEETING NOTES

September 11, 1997, 9:00 a.m.
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE OFFICES
PORTLAND, OREGON

I. Greeting and Introductions.

This special conference call, convened to discuss the draft Scope of Work, qualifications, contracting process and funding for the Implementation Team/Executive Committee facilitator, chaired by John Palensky of NMFS, was held September 11. Participants in the call included John Palensky and Lynne Krasnow of NMFS, NMFS consultant Ed Sheets, Alan Ruger of the Bonneville Power Administration, Patrice Baker from BPA's procurement office and Tom Cooney of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. The following is a distillation (not a verbatim transcript) of items discussed at the meeting, together with actions taken on those items.

The discussion focused on the most recent draft of the scope of work document (Enclosure A). Palensky noted that changes to Enclosure A, made in response to comments received at and following the last meeting of this group, were highlighted in bold. The group spent a few minutes going through this document, discussing the changes and providing a few further comments. Cooney asked that Item 3 under "Scope of Work" be revised to say that the facilitator would "...facilitate the prioritization of activities to ensure timely decisions;" the rest of the group agreed.

Palensky asked whether the other meeting participants were comfortable with the items under "Role of the facilitator;" after some minutes of review, no comments were made on this section. Moving on to the "Qualifications" section, Palensky said Doug Arndt of COE had asked that the fourth paragraph from the top be revised as follows: "Demonstrated responsible experience directly appropriate to facilitating discussions and managing meetings among multiple principles with diverse responsibilities, viewpoints and objectives." The group agreed that this was a good change. Ruger suggested that the words "resource-related" be deleted from the second-to-last item under "Qualifications;" the group suggested that, instead, the sentence read "public policy issues."

In response to a question, Baker said there really is no such thing as a "typical" BPA procurement process for securing this type of service. Alan's and my thought was that we ought to be able to do this fairly simply, using a market survey-type approach, she explained. That would mean contacting people directly and soliciting proposals, preparatory to a more detailed interview process.

After some minutes of further discussion, Palensky asked whether the other meeting participants are comfortable enough with this revised draft Scope of Work to submit it to the full

Implementation Team at that group's September 25 meeting. Hearing no objections, Palensky suggested that the discussion move forward to the question of funding for the facilitator position.

Ruger spent a few minutes describing the two main funding authorities BPA uses to fund fish and wildlife-related activities; basically, he said, we need to get the facilitator funding into the CBFWA and Power Planning Council prioritization processes soon, because we don't want to go all the way through the procurement path, only to find that there are still questions about funding.

Palensky said NMFS is hoping that the first year's contract for the facilitator can be paid for from BiOp funding. Subsequent years will be re-evaluated based on how useful the Regional Forum participants feel the facilitator has been. I'll talk to Bob Lohn and let him know he can expect a call from NMFS, to work out the first-year funding details, said Ruger.

Assuming that funding is available, and given the fact that everyone here, at least, is comfortable with this scope of work, what happens next? asked Palensky. The market survey is the next step, replied Baker – the initial proposals will tell us who we want to interview, but the real evaluation and ranking of candidates will take place during the interview process. And how will the initial list of potential contractors be developed? asked Krasnow. Typically, we rely on the program offices, who are dealing with these people on a daily basis, Baker replied. I would simply like to be sure that the outreach for this process is as wide as possible, although I agree that the time factor involved is justification for limiting the range of the search somewhat, Krasnow said.

In addition to what Lynne said, IT and EC members are free to suggest candidates; we could also broaden the scope of the effort, if people desire, by contacting the national association for facilitators, said Ruger. And I would be surprised if, between the memberships of the IT and EC, we didn't get a list of at least a half-dozen interested firms or individuals, added Palensky.

Moving on to the development of questions for the interviewees, Palensky suggested that a subgroup, similar to this one, might be the appropriate entity to take on that task. We can check that with IT at the September 25 meeting, he said. The same subgroup could put together a ranking process. The market survey will probably take place simultaneously with the development of interview questions and the ranking process, Baker said. In response to a question, she said the market survey process should not take more than a month to complete. The review of responses to the market survey could probably be done in less than a week; I would suggest a panel of IT and/or EC members conduct that review, she said. The actual interviews would most likely be conducted by a formally-designated evaluation team, including members from BPA as well as other IT and EC participating agencies.

There are two things we need to do, said Palensky – designate an IT subgroup to develop the interview questions and ranking process, and designate a second, related group who will conduct the actual interviews. The only thing I would suggest, said Ruger, is that we get both Montana and the Tribes involved in this process right away – if they feel that they've played a role in making the forum work better, they'll be more likely to participate in the future. Palensky said he had sent a copy of the scope of work to Stan Grace, one of Montana's NPPC Members, and Sheets had talked with Rob Lothrop of CRITFC. We'll be talking to both Montana and the Tribes again during the coming weeks, Palensky replied. In response to a question, he added that travel reimbursement would likely be available for the participants in this process.

Palensky spent a few minutes going through the details of the basic time and cost estimate he has prepared for the facilitator position. The group discussed travel costs, which were not included in this initial estimate; it was agreed that it may be desirable to limit the geographic area of the facilitator search to the West Coast. It was also agreed that the number of hours needed to fulfill the facilitator's duties may have been underestimated, given the complexity of the task this person will be expected to undertake. After some minutes of further discussion, Palensky suggested that a more detailed description of the task should probably be included in the scope of work distributed to potential contractors; Ruger agreed to work with Palensky and Krasnow to draft this additional description.

Palensky said he would incorporate the comments made at today's meeting into a revised Scope of Work and time/cost estimate, and provide the revised document to Ruger and Baker, so that they can begin work on the contracting process from BPA's end. He reiterated that the Scope of Work will be on the Implementation Team agenda on September 25; we should try to have this package in final form by then, he said. With that, the meeting was adjourned. Meeting notes prepared by Jeff Kuechle, BPA contractor.