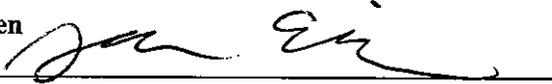


Site review team's  
Review of the  
Wisconsin Sea Grant College Program  
April 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> 2011

Jonathan Eigen



Chair, Federal Program Officer

9/8/11

Date

Frank Beal



Co-Chair, National Sea Grant Advisory Board Member

9/8/11

Date



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**SRT AGENDA**

## INTRODUCTION

The Site Review Team (SRT) review of the Wisconsin Sea Grant Program took place April 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> at the University of Wisconsin's Madison Campus.

The SRT members included:

Jonathan Eigen (Chair) National Sea Grant College Program Bethesda MD	Frank Beal (Co-Chair) Sea Grant Advisory Board Member Chicago, Illinois
Dr. Penelope Dalton Director, Washington Sea Grant College Program	Peg Brady National Marine Fisheries Service Silver Spring, MD
Ginger Hinchcliff NOAA Coastal Services Center Charleston, South Carolina	

Prior to the beginning of the SRT visit, and in conformance with National Sea Grant College Program guidelines, the Wisconsin Sea Grant College Program issued a public notice of the upcoming SRT visit by inviting interested parties to send written comments to the SRT Chair. The public notice was distributed online via the Wisconsin Sea Grant Program website. The SRT Chair received 6 letters in response to the public notice. The letters were highly supportive of the Wisconsin Sea Grant Program and came from a variety of stakeholders including the director of the Great Lakes Office for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and representatives from the Wisconsin Cooperative Extension Service. During the review, the SRT met with the management and extension staff of the Wisconsin Sea Grant Program, representatives of the University of Wisconsin system, including Stephen Kolison, Associate Vice President for Academic, Faculty and Global Programs and Martin Cadwallader, Vice Chancellor for Research and Dean of the Graduate School.

The report of the SRT follows the guidelines of the Site Review Team Procedures Manual. The SRT reviewed and discussed broad issues related to the Wisconsin Sea Grant Program's: 1) Organization and Management of the Program; 2) Stakeholder Engagement; and, 3) Collaborative Network Activities. Within each of these areas, the SRT report presents the findings and recommendations of the SRT.

### I. ORGANIZING AND MANAGING THE PROGRAM

The leadership of the Wisconsin Sea Grant Program (WSG) is outstanding. The Director, Professor Anders Andren has been responsible for the program for many years and has developed a cadre of dedicated professionals whose competencies complement each other. The senior leadership of the program, including Mary Lou Reeb, Phil Moy, Dan Marklein and Moira Harrington have over 60 years of combined experience with the program and allow the director

the freedom to use his considerable talents for developing policy and the strategic direction of the program, while leaving the day to day operations of the Finance, Extension, Communications and Education programs under the stewardship of these outstanding professionals. The organization has benefited from stable and experienced leadership for a long time. However, as the principals in the program are approaching retirement age, it might be desirable for the director and the University to think about a plan of succession to insure the continued success of the program.

The director is to be commended for his early adoption of, and investment in, information technology infrastructure. The program has invested considerable time and resources in developing its information management systems, iPRO and iPROPOSE. Based on the results, these were well worth the effort. The development of clear management principles and objectives by the director has given staff the tools and confidence to carry-out the Sea Grant mission.

WSG resides under the auspices of the Aquatic Sciences Center, which is under the direction of Prof. Andren. The Center houses two programs, the Sea Grant Institute and the Water Resources Institute. The co-location of these two programs under a single umbrella has given the University the opportunity to benefit from economies of scale by sharing staff for both programs, particularly in the information technology and administrative arenas. It also gives each program unique access to one another's resources and capabilities—something not seen in other states with both a Sea Grant program and a Water Resources Institute. The Aquatic Sciences Center is located on the University of Wisconsin, Madison campus and the Director reports to the Vice Chancellor for Research and Dean of the Graduate School, Martin Cadwallader. The team met with both the dean and the Associate Dean for Administration of the Graduate School, James Knickmeyer, and both were highly knowledgeable and supportive of the program. WSG receives direct financial support from the State of Wisconsin through the University. The funding is not a separate line item dedicated to Sea Grant from the legislature, but it is clear that the University values the program as this support has remained stable despite the state of Wisconsin's funding crisis and resultant funding cuts within the University. The program utilizes an advisory council with members appointed by the University. The council is active and informed and is used primarily for strategic planning and program review. Some members of the council suggested that the program might benefit if members were appointed with specific terms and term limits since membership is currently open ended. This could encourage more turnover and prevent the council from getting stale.

## **II. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

**Based on the criteria descriptions and the considered questions, in this section, please explain how the Program addresses each of the following:**

The program is to be commended for its work with the business community. WSG has developed strong partnerships and has supported research and technology that has led to job

creation and viable new markets. Their outreach and continuing technical assistance is clearly appreciated and valued by the business community. Fred Binkowski's work with yellow perch has been instrumental in the development of the perch aquaculture industry in the state of Wisconsin. The SRT benefited from the time taken by Will Allen of Growing Power and representatives from Bell Aquaculture who spoke to the team about their interactions with WSG.

The WSG staff has earned a reputation as a trusted source of unbiased scientific information. The program's grounding in the university and the rigor of its research allows other agencies and organization to rely on Sea Grant to serve as a provider of credible information on scientific matters throughout the Great Lakes. The staff is to be commended for its leadership role on state and regional boards and organizations. These leadership roles demonstrate the level of trust, credibility, and engagement developed over many years with the community in solving issues. The appreciation stakeholders held for staff contributions was clear. Their abilities to facilitate the inclusion of various perspectives and views into problem-solving forums are recognized and appreciated.

Kudos are also given to the communications staff led by Moira Harrington. This group has developed a thoughtful and comprehensive communications effort. The communications group has been integrated into and works in parallel with the research and extension programs, providing both a translation for scientific information and marketing service. Their exploration of how to best use social media and other more creative mechanisms to send the message is impressive.

The effectiveness of extension efforts is demonstrated in the maturity of outreach and training programs which engage and partner with stakeholders to the point where the stakeholders are now implementing many of the programs. This transition shows the relevance, trust and value of WSG extension programs. An outstanding example of this is the Clean Marina Program which demonstrated the extension programs ability to communicate with Marina owners on the mutual benefits of being environmentally proactive.

Wisconsin's Water Library is an excellent example of recognizing a need and being responsive to it. Although not a "classic" Sea Grant activity, taking advantage of the opportunity to be creative in promoting water resources to non-traditional audiences is to be commended.

The education program is applauded for supporting both teachers and students. The work with the Sturgeon Bowl is an excellent example of challenging students to excel in understanding the relevance of marine studies and promoting higher learning. The experiential learning and field trip portion of the program clearly enhanced the students understanding and retention of the information and serve to inspire both the teachers and the students. The program's emphasis on reaching out to underserved audiences is especially commendable.

WSG's work across the state is well aligned with the "Wisconsin Idea" and serves to distribute University expertise and benefits to students and communities across Wisconsin. This approach increases both the accessibility and integration of extension specialists in communities throughout much of Wisconsin.

### **III. COLLABORATIVE NETWORK/NOAA ACTIVITIES**

The Wisconsin Sea Grant Program has done a very thorough and outstanding job of partnering with local NOAA entities in the region. As an example, WSG staff members Jim Hurley and Gene Clark worked collaboratively with partners to provide support for the designation of the National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS) site, the Lake Superior Reserve, in October 2010.

The Sea Grant director collaborates regularly with regional research institutions to identify research priorities and works collaboratively with the region's other Sea Grant institutions to partner and leverage funds to support these research priorities, increasing the efficiency of the Sea Grant network.

The Great Lakes Regional Research Information Network (GLRRIN) is a voluntary network of 23 US & Canadian governmental (including GLERL), academic (including WSG) and private programs involved in Great Lakes research. Collaboratively, they develop a comprehensive regional research and information plan designed to focus research, technology transfer and outreach efforts on the highest priority issues.

WSG staff members network routinely with NOAA Great Lakes Regional Coordinators, Jennifer Day and Heather Stirratt, especially to provide support and expertise to the multi-agency Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI).

WSG has devoted considerable time and effort to enhancing relations with Cooperative Extension. Following years of poor communications, the two entities appear to be on a path to enhanced partnerships and leveraging of their programs and activities.

During the site review, the SRT interacted with key regional and federal partners (e.g., EPA, USGS) who identified key contributions of the WSG to the region's research and outreach needs. Judy Beck of EPA gave a particularly moving presentation on the value of WSG's efforts, noting that she could not carry-out her mandate without the program's help. Some other examples include Gene Clark's representation on the Great Lakes Commission's Regional Sediment Management Team and the Great Lakes Dredging Team, and Phil Moy's efforts as chairman of the Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species.

The Wisconsin Coastal Atlas (WCA) is a cooperative endeavor of WSG and the Land Information & Computer Graphics Facility at the University, the Wisconsin State Cartographer's Office, the Robinson Map Library and Cartography Lab in the Geography Department at UW-Madison, Oregon State University, and the Oregon Coastal Management Program.

They successfully partnered to create a coastal spatial data infrastructure for the state of Wisconsin. The aim of the WCA is to become a node in the national (e.g. NOAA's Coastal Services Center) and international networks of coastal web atlases.

#### **IV. FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS and SUGGESTIONS**

NOTE: The SRT may not have any recommendations or suggestions.

##### Findings

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##### Recommendations (items the Program must consider)

- NONE

##### Suggestions (ideas the Program may want to consider)

- A member of the WSG Advisory committee suggested that the program is positioned to provide expertise and capabilities in support of NOAA's National Climate Program, particularly at a regional level. The National Sea Grant Office and WSG may wish to explore the potential for collaborating and utilizing WSG as a pilot "climate resource and research center".
- The program should explore and document opportunities to reach beyond current stakeholders to gain input for its strategic plan. WSG has an excellent process for engaging stakeholders in its strategic planning process. The program is encouraged to intentionally and systematically reach out beyond their current pool of stakeholders to reach audiences that have not had the benefit of working with or being supported by Sea Grant activities in the past.
- The program should consider revising the terms of reference for its advisory council. The current document states while members are appointed annually, incumbents may be reappointed. The SRT feels that having a council with the length of terms set in the charter would help WSG maintain a fresh perspective.

#### **V. BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES**

- Investment in information technology, particularly development of the iPRO and iPROPOSE systems
- WSG continuously surveys and tracks its former graduate students
- Clear management principles and objectives. There is a very clear focus in the roles of the extension staff.
- Principal Investigator workshop with extension staff to provide guidance for full proposal development and to connect PIs with WI Sea Grant outreach and communication staff.