Ocean Observatories Initiative (OOI) Public Meeting University of Rhode Island Coastal Institute November 15, 2010, 5:00 – 8:00 PM

OOI Participants:

Jean McGovern, National Science Foundation
Sue Banahan, Consortium for Ocean Leadership
Al Plueddemann, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution
Oscar Schofield, Rutgers University
Adrienne Fink, Tetra Tech
Timothy Feehan, Tetra Tech

Community Participants: See attached attendance list.

Jean McGovern provided opening remarks and introductions. In response to a request raised during the October 5, 2010 micro-siting meeting, the OOI project team invited representatives from the Coast Guard and the US Army Corps of Engineers. Jean thanked them for their participation and agreement to provide input to the meeting, specifically in the area of regulatory authority. Jean provided an update of the Action Items from the October 5 public meeting.

Those updates are:

- The OOI team is working to address the comments received on the Draft Site-Specific Environmental Assessment (SSEA); those comments, including a socioeconomic analysis of impacts, will be addressed in the final SSEA.
- Micro-siting discussions for the Pioneer Array moorings were planned for this meeting.
- The micro-siting public meetings will continue as needed.
- NSF is stating that the agency has no interest in seeing fishing areas closed by deploying OOI, and will continue to emphasize this point with its US Coast Guard contacts, state officials, and the public.
- The NSF contacted the USCG First District, Waterways Management to get clarification on the
 potential for the USCG to restrict fishing around Pioneer Arrays moorings. The USCG representative
 stated that USCG has no statutory authority to close areas off to fishing or navigation beyond the 12
 nm limit. NSF and USCG agreed to the following actions to prevent collision or entanglements with
 Pioneer Array infrastructure:
 - Pioneer moorings will be included on the Light List and Local Notice to Mariners (LNM).
 - The OOI project will work through the USCG, via the permit path, to get mooring locations on NOAA charts.
 - The OOI project will work with the USCG to develop guidance (to appear in LNM or chart annotations) regarding the suggested distance (as voluntary "areas to be avoided") from Pioneer moorings to prevent gear entanglement.
 - The OOI project will give advanced notice to the USCG of glider/AUV deployments, operating area, instructions if found, and a point of contact.

• An OOI Environmental Compliance website has been established and contains updated information regarding past and future public meetings.

Al Plueddemann presented the science and operation requirements and objectives for the Pioneer Array and provided several options for micro-siting the Pioneer moorings within the proposed box that will meet the science and operational requirements. All information presented in the power point file will be posted on the OOI website (www.oceanobservatories.org).

Al presented the descriptions and approximate locations for two proposed At-Sea Test 2 (AST2) mooring deployments tentatively scheduled for July 2011. One deployment is proposed to be on the shelf break in 275 fathoms and will consist of two test moorings, a surface mooring and a wire-following profiler mooring. The other deployment may consist of a hybrid profiler mooring in a deep ocean site at 13,560 fathoms. The proposed test deployment duration would be from July 2011 through spring 2012. The project is developing plans for this test deployment.

The sections below provide a summary of the overarching comments made during the meeting and action items for OOI. Note that numbering used is for reference purposes only and does not imply any prioritization.

- Some members of the audience wanted a written/legal assurance from NSF that the no fishing
 restrictions will be requested or imposed as a result of Pioneer Array installation and operations.
 NSF indicated that it had no interest in restricting fishing and no regulatory authority to do so. The
 meeting participants requested that NSF provide written assurance that no other federal agency
 could restrict fishing near the Pioneer Array. Their concern is that another Federal agency could
 impose restrictions. If written assurance was provided, certain fishermen agreed to participate in a
 micro-siting process.
- 2. USACE indicated that its agency does not restrict fishing.
- 3. The Coast Guard representative repeated the information from the USCG call (noted above) and explained the difference between "closed areas" (which are enforceable) and "areas to be avoided". He explained the Coast Guard role in enforcement.
- 4. A fixed gear fisherman indicated willingness to micro-site the moorings as the ocean could be easily shared. He expressed a concern for the mobile gear fishermen and he wanted them to weigh in.
- 5. The mobile fishermen communicated that their concern was that the spacing of the moorings is too close for trawling to take place between moorings in the cross-shelf line. They further stated that there is potential for gear entanglement and potential vessel safety issues. The 70-80 fm isobaths were of greatest concern to them.
- 6. Some members of the audience asked about the possibility of whether compensation would be available for lost/damaged fishing gear, citing a proposed arrangement like the Oregon Fishermen's Cable Committee (OFCC). OOI team members explained that the OFCC has a defined membership of trawl fishermen and undersea cable owners, and that working with the OFCC is required by Oregon State law as a precondition to installing undersea cables.
- 7. An audience member expressed criticism of the scope of Pioneer Array. That individual thought the science is too narrow and the meetings did not provide enough discussion or demonstration of the

relevancy, applications, and benefits of the Pioneer Array to fishery science and real world management. It was explained that the purpose of the micro-siting meetings was not to discuss the merits of the science behind the OOI. The audience was then directed to the www.oceanobservatories.org website for further details concerning the science plan and the research network design.

- 8. Many comments at this meeting were repetitive of those from the October 5th meeting. The repetitive comments extracted from the October 5th minutes include:
 - a. The members of the audience felt that an economic analysis should have been included in the Draft Site-Specific Environmental Assessment (Draft SSEA).
 - b. Several fishermen commented on their lack of trust for federal agencies.
 - c. Some members of the audience wanted written assurances and/or legal guarantees that the Pioneer Array will not result in fishing restrictions.
 - d. Audience members felt that the OOI team did not reach out to them early enough in the project planning process. It was requested that NSF establish a separate committee for fishermen.

Actions:

- 1. The OOI project and NSF will work to complete the Final Site-Specific Environmental Assessment.
- 2. NSF will author a letter to the public in January explaining the NSF responsibilities with respect to the OOI project and fishing regulations.
- 3. The OOI project, (including Woods Hole) will design the proposed moorings and buoys utilizing best safety practices. The proposed design will be reviewed and evaluated to address potential vessel safety issues.
- 4. The public will be invited to provide written micro-siting suggestions this winter. Another spring micro-siting meeting will follow.
- 5. The OOI project is working to define communication mechanisms and tools for the proposed operational phase of the OOI. This will be presented at the spring meeting.

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Community Participants:

- 1. John Moore, Newport, RI
- 2. Roy Campanale, Narragansett, RI
- 3. Bradford Bowenski, Gilford, NH
- 4. Kevin Kotelly, USACE
- 5. David Spencer, Atlantic Offshore Lobstermen's Association, Bedford, NH
- 6. Edward G. LeBlanc, USCG
- 7. Peg Parker, Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation
- 8. Bonnie Spinazzola, Atlantic Offshore Lobstermen's Association, Bedford, NH
- 9. Tim Timmermann, EPA
- 10. Kathryn Ford, MA Division of Marine Fisheries, New Bedford, MA
- 11. John Reardon, New Bedford, MA
- 12. Joyce Rowley, Acushnet, MA
- 13. Conor Walsh
- 14. Matt Brinkmann
- 15. Fred Mattera, Narragansett, RI
- 16. Glen Gawarkiewicz, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute, Woods Hole, MA