

Fisheries Extension Enhancement Initiative (FEE) Panel Task Group Report



*National Sea Grant College Program
Review Panel Task Group*

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Executive Summary

In 1999, the National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) were asked by Congress to develop a proposal to improve communications with and among fisheries constituents. Sea Grant and NMFS submitted a Fisheries Extension Enhancement (FEE) proposal with a \$4M budget to increase Sea Grant's fisheries extension capacity and NMFS' outreach capabilities. The proposal was not funded by Congress.

The following year, Congress inserted guidance into Sea Grant's appropriation, requiring that the NSGO allocate \$3M for fisheries extension enhancement programming. This led to a one-year (2001-2002) NSGO reallocation to fund Phase I of the FEE project. The following year, Congress indicated that it would like Sea Grant to utilize the funding to have additional agents to work more closely with fisheries constituencies (Phase II). Further, in the appropriation language, Congress recommended that Sea Grant reallocate an additional \$3M but no less than \$2M to such an initiative. The NSGO then committed to a five-year project funded at \$2M/year (\$1.6M from NSGO; \$400K in state program reallocations). This phase of the FEE Initiative expires in FY09.

The NSGO requested that the National Sea Grant Review Panel (NSGRP) conduct a review of the Initiative. To this end, the NSGRP's FEE Initiative Review Task Group (Task Group) has completed its review of the FEE projects and addressed two principal issues: 1) how has the FEE Initiative performed; and 2) should the program be continued beyond fiscal year 2008, and if so, how?

The Task Group reviewed the briefing book ("Fisheries Extension Enhancement Review") prepared by the Assembly of Sea Grant Extension Leaders' Fisheries Extension Coordination and Enhancement Committee (FXCEC), and met with the FXCEC in April 2008 to discuss aspects of the programmatic self-assessment. It also heard testimony from regional constituents, and had discussions with the Director of NMFS, the Sea Grant Association, and the Sea Grant Assembly.

How did FEE Perform?

The Task Group agreed that the FEE Initiative has significantly increased extension capacity at the local, regional, and national scale and that the resources dedicated to the Initiative were sufficient to make significant impacts on extension delivery. Eighteen (18) extension agents were hired in NOAA's six national regions. The Task Group agreed that the focus of the Initiative – fisheries and fisheries management – has been effective and established a strong base for future collaborations. New and strengthened partnerships were established involving NMFS offices and science centers, Regional Fisheries Management Councils, as well as Interstate Fisheries Commissions. Furthermore, FEE-supported state programs have strengthened ties with state fisheries management agencies and encouraged regional collaboration. In support of FEE Initiative projects, NMFS contributed over \$1M dollars toward fisheries enhancement projects and research.

Should the FEE Initiative be continued beyond FY2008, and if so, how?

The Task Group is of the opinion that Sea Grant's investment in the Initiative produced substantial returns and clearly demonstrated that added FEE staff will produce expanded functional relationships and valuable impacts.

Despite FEE's effectiveness, the demonstrated need for expanded research/extension programming addressing fisheries, and the well-documented positive clientele response, the Task Group, however, suggests that the Initiative be phased-out over a two-year transitional period. The primary reasons being the lack of congressional funding, the small likelihood of obtaining new funding, and the growing demand for Sea Grant dollars to address other critical issues.

The proposed approach would maintain the current funding (\$1.6M) level in year 1 of the transitional phase of which half would be used for existing (legacy) state projects and the remaining half would be opened to the entire Sea Grant network for re-competition. Any newly funded projects would be no more than two-years in duration and all state programs, including those with current FEE awards would be allowed to participate in this competition. Year 2 of the transitional phase would continue in the same fashion but with overall funding reduced by 50 percent.

I. Introduction and Background

In 1999, the National Sea Grant College Program (NSGCP) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) were asked by Congress to develop a proposal to improve communications with and among fisheries constituents. The congressional concept was to enhance the partnership between Sea Grant and NMFS by developing a regionally-coordinated, constituent-based fisheries extension and outreach program that would respond to the growing demand for fisheries extension services. In response, Sea Grant and NMFS submitted a Fisheries Extension Enhancement (FEE) proposal with a \$4M budget; \$2.4M to Sea Grant to increase fisheries extension capacity and \$1.6M to NMFS to increase its outreach capabilities. The proposal was not funded by Congress.

The following year, Congress inserted guidance into Sea Grant's appropriation, requiring that the NSGCP allocate \$3M for fisheries extension enhancement programming. This led to a one-year (2001-2002) NSGCP reallocation to fund Phase I of the FEE project. The following year, Congress indicated that it would like Sea Grant to utilize the funding to have additional agents to work more closely with fisheries constituencies (Phase II). Further, in the appropriation language, Congress recommended that Sea Grant reallocate an additional \$3M but no less than \$2M to such an initiative. The NSGCP then committed to a five-year project funded at \$2M/year (\$1.6M from NSGCP; \$400K in state program reallocations). This phase of the FEE Initiative expires in FY09.

On January 10, 2008 the Director of the NSGCP, Leon Cammen, formally asked the Chairman of the National Sea Grant Review Panel (NSGRP) to establish a FEE Initiative Review Task Group (Task Group) to review the operation, management, impacts and outcomes of the FEE Initiative. NSGCP Director Cammen charged the Task Group, comprised of John Woeste, Chairman, Jeff Stephan and Rollie Schmitt, with addressing two principal issues: 1) how has the FEE Initiative performed and, 2) should the program be continued beyond fiscal year 2008, and if so, how?

The Task Group met during April 22-24, 2008 in Silver Spring, MD (see Agenda—Fisheries Extension Enhancement Review) to conduct a thorough review of the FEE Initiative, and to develop findings, recommendations and a report that addressed the two principal issues that were submitted to the Task Group by Dr. Cammen. As part of the review process, the Task Group met with the Fisheries Extension Coordination and Enhancement Committee (FXCEC), a committee of the Assembly of Sea Grant Extension Leaders (Assembly). The FXCEC conducted a self-assessment of the FEE Initiative over a period of six months, which culminated in a briefing book entitled "Fisheries Extension Enhancement Review" (April 1, 2008). The FXCEC briefed the Task Group on the FEE Initiative generally, and on specific elements of the FEE initiative that were incorporated in the self-assessment. The Task Group also heard testimony from regional constituents, and conducted interviews with the Director of NMFS, the Sea Grant Association, and the Assembly.

II. Issues and Findings

The following is the Task Group's report. It is organized in a manner that succinctly responds to the questions posed by NSGCP Director Cammen in his charge letter to the Task Group.

Section A. How has the program performed?

1. Has the program been effective at increasing extension capacity on a collective and national basis?

The Task Group agreed that the FEE Initiative has significantly increased extension capacity on a collective and national scale. In Phase II, and in direct response to a congressional request for more Sea Grant extension agents on the dock, 18 extension agents were hired in NOAA's six national regions. The following examples are illustrative of Sea Grant's increased fisheries extension capacity that was created as a result of the Phase II investment.

South Carolina Sea Grant used Phase II FEE funds to hire a new fisheries extension specialist. Prior to obtaining FEE funds, the South Carolina program had no fisheries extension capabilities. The new fisheries extension specialist eventually became the southeast regional coordinator for the FEE Initiative, and initiated a number of new regional and multi-state fisheries extension projects.

On the west coast, California Sea Grant used Phase II FEE funds to hire two new fisheries extension agents with training in the social sciences, thereby adding relevant expertise to the capabilities of California Sea Grant that had not previously existed in the program. Similarly, Maryland Sea Grant and Alaska Sea Grant used Phase II FEE funds to add social science expertise to their respective fisheries extension capabilities.

Other Sea Grant programs, including Florida and Alaska, used the incremental Phase II FEE funds to place agents in locations where a distinct need existed for fisheries extension capacity, but where no such capacity existed prior to the Phase II investment.

Other examples of Phase II enhancements of fisheries extension capacity included:

- Attainment of new levels of collaborative work with NOAA programs, states, and tribes;
- Greater inter-college program interaction on a regional and national scale that resulted in an expanded base of expertise that is capable of better serving local communities;
- Success at leveraging Phase II FEE funds with other public and private sources to support new federal and regional fisheries extension program initiatives.

As a result of FEE funding, functional working relationships built upon mutual trust materialized among an array of new groups and agencies. While it is difficult to quantify the outcomes of such relationships, stakeholder feedback consistently affirmed the importance of the friendship and cooperation FEE agents and specialists engender. According to one interviewed stakeholder, Sea Grant's "bottom up" approach is a major factor in obtaining the confidence and trust of NOAA customers. This statement was resoundingly endorsed by the other stakeholders who were involved in telephone interviews with the Task Group.

2. Has the focus of the program – fisheries and fisheries management – been effective in enhancing Sea Grant fisheries’ partnerships?

The Task Group agreed that the focus of the Initiative – fisheries and fisheries management – has been effective, and has established a strong base for future collaborations. New and strengthened partnerships were established involving NMFS offices and science centers, Regional Fisheries Management Councils, as well as Interstate Fisheries Commissions. Furthermore, FEE-supported state programs have strengthened ties with state fisheries management agencies and encouraged regional collaboration. It is important to note that NMFS contributed over \$1M dollars in support of many fisheries enhancement projects and research activities that were part of the FEE Initiative.

In addition to expanding fisheries extension staffing and partnerships, FEE funds were leveraged with those from other sources to increase programmatic coverage. Thus, capacity-building included not only adding people, services, and partnerships, but also introduced new areas of focus, and a means of testing or demonstrating new concepts and approaches through cooperative means.

The carefully defined nature of the Initiative guided “bottom-up” projects that increased the potential for meaningful impacts. For a relatively small investment, the Task Group finds that the FEE Initiative produced very identifiable and significant impacts.

3. Are the fiscal and human resources dedicated to the Initiative sufficient to make a significant impact on extension delivery?

The fiscal and human resources that were invested in the FEE Initiative were sufficient to make significant improvement on the delivery and impacts of fisheries extension activities. In response to congressional intent for Sea Grant to create a larger presence “on the docks,” the FEE Initiative created 18 FTEs, which represented more than a \$1,630,000 annual investment in fisheries extension and outreach capacity. In addition, five regional coordination projects were competitively funded through the FEE Initiative, significantly enhancing interaction and collaboration among the states.

The FEE Initiative delivered impacts in carefully targeted areas, and provided many meaningful solutions to NOAA customer-defined problems. While the Initiative produced a number of major success stories (see Briefing Book--Executive Summary—pages iii through v), recent national-level examinations of fisheries-related issues (Pew Oceans Commission and US Commission on Ocean Policy) point to a growing list of unmet needs. So, although the Initiative has been successful, and has made valuable contributions to fisheries extension, additional requests for assistance by government officials, concerned citizens and other NOAA customers has created a demand for fisheries extension services that are orders of magnitude greater than the current capacity.

Section B. Should the Initiative be continued beyond FY2008, and, if so, how?

The Task Group is of the opinion that Sea Grant's investment in the FEE Initiative has produced a substantial return, and has clearly demonstrated that the additional fisheries extension staff funded through the FEE Initiative will:

- Produce valuable impacts that address critical fisheries issues; and
- Result in expanded partnerships with other federal and state agencies, NGOs, and industry groups.

There has been a substantial pay-off in the form of increased public service and collaborative research that have resulted in significant benefits to the fishing industry. FEE has demonstrated that collaborative efforts and the leveraging of human and fiscal resources can address critical resource issues by bringing about changes in fishermen's behavior and practices, improved citizens' understanding, and better informed local and state policy making.

Despite the demonstrated effectiveness and beneficial impacts and outcomes of the FEE Initiative, and the well-documented and positive response from NOAA customers, it is the Task Group's opinion that this successful initiative should be phased-out over a two year period. The recommendation for a phase-out of the FEE Initiative is based on several factors, including the lack of congressional funding, the small likelihood of obtaining new funding from Congress or agency sources, reductions in inflation-adjusted and real dollar budget allocations and congressional appropriations to the NSGCP (i.e., ongoing reductions in the actual purchasing power impact of current and anticipated NSGCP funding), etc. Moreover, the Task Group is aware that there is, and has been, an ever-increasing demand for the NSGCP to invest its funds in several other programmatic areas where there is a justifiable need to address many other extant and emerging issues of critical national importance and regional interest. The FEE Initiative was originally explained as, and anticipated to be, a five-year demonstration project. Providing for a two-year phase-out for the FEE Initiative that extends beyond its anticipated end date of April 30, 2009, would provide for an orderly transition for this special and productive Initiative, and enable the NSGCP, the Sea Grant network, and others to seek additional funding sources to address the programmatic, operational and personnel needs that are related to fisheries extension and outreach activities.

4. The initiative was put in place in two phases. Phase I (FY2002) made regional awards, enhanced each state's extension program and included a relative small number of larger competitive awards. Phase II (FY2003-2008) included small regional awards for coordination and a large number of competitive, but smaller in amount, awards. What are the advantages and disadvantages of these different approaches?

Phase I of the FEE Initiative was a one-year effort funded by the NSGCP and designed to focus on regional fisheries extension collaboration. Six regional projects were funded. Phase I regional projects were submitted jointly by two or more state programs. Results of the Phase I FEE investment included three workshops, four newsletters and brochures, ten outreach/educational projects, the employment of two part-time fisheries extension specialists, two new fisherman-scientist collaborations, two value-added fishery products, a variety of other

information and research initiatives, and training for decision makers. The major advantage of the Phase I approach was the immediate funding of the regional programs, including some financial support (travel, materials, etc.) for those taking on the task of serving as coordinators, and the implementation of small regional fisheries extension projects. The major disadvantage of the Phase I plan was that the short, one-year duration provided little time to submit, award, and implement grants. Additionally, such short-term grants proved very difficult to monitor and evaluate because of limited startup time.

Phase I did enhance interactions and collaboration among the state Sea Grant programs, and resulted in some limited growth in fisheries extension and outreach initiatives that stemmed from the small infusion of Phase I funds, together with an impressive effort that was put forth by - existing Sea Grant staff. Nevertheless, Phase I funding was insufficient to provide for the needed growth of fisheries extension staff and capacity, or to effectively respond to the critical fisheries concerns that were articulated by local, state, and regional publics, NOAA customers, and elected government officials.

Phase II funding differed from Phase I funding in that Congress required that no less than \$2M of existing NSGCP funds should be dedicated to the employment of additional fisheries extension personnel. At about the same time, Congress reauthorized the National Sea Grant College Program, and included language authorizing (but not appropriating) an expenditure of \$3M annually for five years for competitive grants to Sea Grant institutions for enhanced fisheries extension activities. As a result, the NSGCP issued a request for proposal (RFP) for five-year, state-based projects, combined with regional coordination projects. In an effort to address the intent of Congress to increase the number of fisheries extension agents, the bulk of the Phase II funds were invested in competitively awarded, state-level projects. Phase II FEE Initiative projects resulted in the employment of 18 new fisheries extension staff across all NOAA regions.

The fisheries extension staff that was added as a result of the Phase II investment developed functional working relationships with local constituents and other NOAA customers, which further demonstrates the value of Sea Grant agents as credible, neutral facilitators with appropriate scientific expertise. These skills ultimately allow for a more effective diffusion of science-based information, acceleration in the adoption of new or changed technologies, and can ultimately help change citizens' behavior. In many instances, the outcome of Phase II funding was confirmed by the number of citizens who were willing to support new management programs and greater levels of voluntary compliance. This finding was reinforced by testimony from Fisheries Management Council and Fisheries Commissions representatives whose names and affiliations appear in the meeting agenda for the April 22-24, 2008 Fisheries Extension Enhancement Review.

This approach significantly jump-started the "people on the docks" mandate from Congress, while still maintaining a regional focus. It enabled some state programs to rapidly upgrade existing fisheries extension efforts, and others to quickly start new ones. The improved engagement with the fisheries community enabled the identification of an expanded and broader research agenda relevant to fisheries. The most significant disadvantage was that not enough time was allowed to train and optimally use the new hires. In addition, no exit or transition

strategy was developed for what would occur with the new hires once the projects' five-year funding ended. Too, no congressional funds were provided for Phase II, thus, the redirection of funds to support the FEE Initiative created significant hardships for other Sea Grant program initiatives, and for other NSGCP strategic investments. It is likely that NMFS would have greatly increased their national involvement in the Phase II FEE Initiative if the original NSGCP-NMFS proposal for \$4M would have been congressionally funded. It is likely that a greater level of congressional funding for the Phase II FEE Initiative, including an increased investment from NMFS, would have resulted in a reduced level of concern for the associated shift in NSGCP programmatic priorities.

5. If you recommend continuation of the program, what are your recommendations with respect to approaches other than the two described above, such as fully competitive award systems, equal apportionments to the state programs (much like the CCD initiative) or a hybrid which has a competitive part and an enhancement part?

From the Task Group's perspective, there is a demonstrated need for expanded research/extension programming addressing fisheries. State programs have taken risks and expanded staffing in the course of conducting FEE Phase II projects. This approach has resulted in valuable impacts and generated functional relationships and collaborative efforts with and among federal, state, and local groups, NGOs, NOAA customers and the general public. Yet, the Task Group recognizes that other critical Sea Grant needs exist, making it imperative that any additional FEE initiative funding be strictly transitional. The Task Group is of the opinion that this momentum generated by the FEE Initiative should be sustained, and that state programs ought to be provided with funding to transition from predominantly Sea Grant federal funding to other funding arrangements. This will create the opportunity for an orderly transition to other funding sources, and would free up scarce federal NSGCP dollars for investment in other NSSCP programmatic initiatives.

Therefore, the Task Group recommends a two-year extension and phase-out of the FEE Initiative. The proposed approach would maintain the current funding level in year 1 of the transition, providing half of the \$1.6M to existing (legacy) state projects, and opening up the other half to the entire Sea Grant network for re-competition. Newly funded projects would have a maximum of two-years duration, and all state programs, including those with current FEE awards, will be allowed to participate in this competition. Year 2 of the transition would continue in the same fashion, but with overall funding reduced by 50 percent. This means that any new two-year projects awarded in year 1 will need to prepare a budget that reflects a 50 percent reduction in funding for the second and final year of the transition. Legacy projects will need to account for a 50 percent reduction of their FEE Phase II budget for year 1, followed by another 50 percent reduction in year 2. The successful states' re-programming requirement established under FEE Phase I and II (\$1 for every \$4 of federal funds) should be continued under all award scenarios. This scenario is purposely designed to facilitate an adequate transition period for fisheries extension FTEs to develop new funding sources. After this two-year transition, direct funding for the FEE Initiative from the NSGCP would be discontinued unless new congressional funds are specifically made available for fisheries extension activities. The two-year transition would end on April 30, 2011.

Table 1 illustrates the funding allocations in each of the two years to each of the two types (legacy and competitive new) of projects.

**Transitional Phase
National Sea Grant College Program
Fisheries Extension Enhancement Program**

	NSGCP Contribution	Combined NSGCP Contribution	Individual Program Contribution	Combined Individual Program Contribution	Total FEE Investment	Total FEE Investment
	(Million \$s)	(Legacy Funds + Competitive Funds) (Million \$s)	(Million \$s)	(Legacy Funds + Competitive Funds) (Million \$s)	(NSGCP Contribution + Individual Program Contribution) (Million \$s)	(Legacy Funds + Competitive Funds + NSGCP Contribution + Individual Program Contribution) (Million \$s)
Year 1						
Legacy Projects (Phase II recipients)	0.80		+	0.20	=	1.00
All State Programs (Competitive Funds)	0.80		+	0.20	=	1.00
TOTAL YEAR 1		1.60	+	0.40	=	2.00
YEAR 2						
Legacy Projects	0.40		+	0.10	=	0.50
All State Programs	0.40		+	0.10	=	0.50
TOTAL YEAR 2		0.80	+	0.20	=	1.00
YEAR 1 Plus YEAR 2		2.40	+	0.60	=	3.00

Notes: (1) "Legacy Project" funding is designed to afford an orderly transition for the funding of Phase II staff to other funding sources; (2) It is presumed that core funds will be "re-programmed" to provide for the "Individual Program Contribution".

Transitional Year 1:

1. Total Transitional Year 1 FEE funding remains the same as Phase II FEE Funding (i.e., \$2 M).
2. "Legacy Projects" are allocated 50% of Transitional Year 1 FEE funding (i.e., \$1 M) through a \$1 M allocation that will be distributed among existing projects based on the same proportion as Phase II.
3. "All Programs" are eligible to compete for 50% of Transitional Year 1 FEE funding (i.e., \$1 M).

Transitional Year 2:

1. Total Transitional Year 2 FEE funding is established as an amount that is equal to 50% of Transitional Year 1 FEE funding.
2. The Transitional Year 2 FEE funding formula will result in the availability of \$8 M to the NSGCP (i.e., \$8 M that was otherwise previously allocated to Phase II FEE funding, and also previously allocated, under the transitional recommendation, to Transitional Year 1 funding).
3. "Legacy Projects" are allocated 50% of Transitional Year 2 FEE funding (i.e., \$5 M) through a \$5 M allocation that will be distributed among Legacy Projects according to the proportional distribution between Legacy Projects that is evident in Transitional Year 1.
4. "All State Programs" are eligible to compete for 50% of Transitional Year 2 FEE funding (i.e., \$5 M) through a \$5 M allocation that will be distributed among All Sea Grant Programs (i.e., including Heritage Programs) through a competitive RFP process.

Regional Coordination: The NSGRP FEE Program Review Task Group intends that "Regional Coordination" activities will be continued within the funding structure and mechanism that has been recommended for Transitional FEE funding.

RFP Focus: (1) 2-year grants (Programs may submit 1-year proposals); (2) It is anticipated that Legacy Projects and New Projects will submit proposals; (3) Proposals should include a Research Integration component; (4) Proposals are encouraged to include (a) a Regional Projects component, and (b) a National Projects component?; (5) Funding for Transitional Year 1 and Year 2 will not exceed \$3 M.

The Task Group agreed that a two-year extension and phase out of the FEE Initiative would enhance the already strong leveraging record of the FEE Initiative, and ensure that the significant impacts that have been accumulating will continue to grow. Sea Grant's investment of \$7.3M in Phase II led to \$8.5M in additional investment; thus, every dollar invested by the FEE Initiative has resulted in a leverage of \$1.20 for every federal dollar invested.

Sea Grant's mission could be further enhanced if the RFP for new projects that the Task Group has proposed as part of the two-year transitional phase-out were designed to focus on initiatives in fisheries extension research and regional activities. An explicit focus on research would compel grant applicants to seek meaningful research projects, particularly those that lead to "in the water testing", and adoption and application by industry. The Task Group strongly recommends such an approach.

6. Relative to a future program, what are the recommendations for improving the impact and leverage of the Initiative? In particular, what is your advice with respect to improved communication, coordination and potential funding from our fisheries partner, NOAA Fisheries?

Developing coordination at the operational level has produced commendable examples of integrating multi-agency resources for enhanced services to the public. The extent and power of these partnerships is testimony to the effectiveness of the FEE Initiative model.

Notable examples include the Port Liaison Project, a partnership between the NMFS Northwest Science Center and Oregon Sea Grant, which supported 25 cooperative research projects along the west coast. Another NMFS partnership dealt with the seabird bycatch problem in the North Pacific longline fisheries. Other federal, governmental, and international partners include the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), NMFS' Southwest Fisheries Science Center (SWFSC), NMFS Southeast Regional Office (turtle exclusion devices and bycatch reduction devices), the Atlantic and Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commissions, the South Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, and New England Fishery Management Councils, the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, and the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission.

Details of these partnerships and additional examples of these collaborative efforts are provided in the FEE Briefing Book (page 30+).

Beyond encouraging meaningful cooperation at the operational level, joint funding initiatives to address critical national fisheries should be explored. There appear to be many issues requiring immediate attention that can be effectively accomplished, in an acceptable time frame, through collaborative efforts between Sea Grant and other NOAA Fisheries partners.

The FEE Initiative clearly affirms and directs attention to the research/extension paradigm. Examples of significant impacts from integrated research and extension programming include reduction of seabird bycatch in the Alaskan longline fisheries, the turtle excluder device adoption in the Gulf of Mexico, and the introduction of the haddock separator trawl in the New England groundfish fisheries.

7A. What other recommendations do you have with respect to impact, visibility, and enhancement of Sea Grant's mission with respect to a re-constituted Initiative?

Based on the findings of the Task Group, the following suggestions are offered:

- Examples of inter-agency cooperation and partnerships need to be highlighted and distributed to leadership within NOAA and other cooperating agencies;
- Encourage NOAA and Sea Grant leadership to recognize and reward those leading meaningful and very productive inter-agency collaborations at the operational level;
- Continue to place NMFS staff members in the NSGO as a signal of commitment to inter-agency cooperation;
- Sea Grant and NMFS should explore multi-unit program budget proposals to capitalize on the demonstrated capacity for greater service that was generated through the FEE demonstration initiative.

7B. Are there ways to enhance the connections with the Sea Grant and NMFS research portfolios?

There are several ways to enhance the connection between Sea Grant and NMFS research:

- Establish a national meeting between the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries (NMFS Director) and the Director of the NSGO to discuss upcoming and long-term research initiatives, and identify and establish priorities for joint programming;
- Both directors should disseminate identified priorities to their respective field leadership;
- Sea Grant programs and NMFS leadership should interact with counterparts to discuss opportunities to set and meet national and regional research priorities;
- Sea Grant and NMFS leadership should look into field staff exchange programs to familiarize each other with field research work;
- Sea Grant and NMFS should conduct scheduled program evaluations on progress with collaborative research and arising new research issues.

III. Conclusions

The Task Group wishes to thank all Sea Grant personnel for their efforts to make the FEE Initiative successful. In particular, we would like to thank the individuals responsible for the FEE Initiative Briefing Book and the FEE Regional Coordinators that briefed the Task Group. It is the view of the Task Group that the FEE Initiative was a success in its five-year duration, and should serve as a model for other Sea Grant time-certain programmatic initiatives.

IV. Recommendations

If funding ultimately becomes available, the FEE Initiative should be reconsidered and made a permanent addition to the Sea Grant fisheries portfolio. If such a scenario were to take place, we would offer the following recommendations:

- z If additional FTE's are involved, the nature of the employment commitment must be clearly stated and include a built-in phase-out plan to help transition employees should funding ultimately end;
- z Any new project must include periodic evaluations to allow for changes or modifications and assure accountability;
- z The roles and expectations of regional coordinators must be clearly defined if additional FEE projects are funded;
- z A national program coordinator should be designated either by utilizing one of the regional coordinators or assigning an NSGO individual, such as the national extension leader.

The FEE Initiative produced impressive impacts. These impacts need to be compiled, packaged, and aggressively disseminated within the Sea Grant network, NOAA, and to congressional members and their staff.

We encourage continued dialog between the NSGCP and NMFS leadership. We found NMFS leadership to be understanding and appreciative of the cooperative efforts developed through the FEE Initiative. Indeed, there were tangible results in terms of demonstrated commitment on the part of NMFS regional offices and science centers. The FEE Initiative leveraged more than \$1M from these sources, and such participation was obviously critical to realizing many of the projects' objectives. While resource constraints within NMFS complicate the potential for joint national funding of fisheries extension programming, we feel that possibilities do exist, and recommend continued exploration of arrangements for further national-level joint initiative funding.

V. Appendix

Fisheries Extension Enhancement Review

NSGRP Task Group

John Woeste, Chair

Jeff Stephan

Rollie Schmitten

April 22-24, 2008

SSMC3, Room 5836 and 8817

Tuesday, April 22

- 9:00 - **Introductions and Charge**
John Woeste, Chairman, FEE Task Group
- 9:15 - **Background and Context**
Leon Cammen, Sea Grant Director
Jim Murray, Deputy Director
- 9:45 - **Overview of Briefing Book and National Perspective**
Kathy Castro, FEE Coordinator, Rhode Island Sea Grant
- 10:30 - **Regional Coordinator Presentations (Session 1)**
- Ken La Valley, Northeast
Commercial Fishing, Technology Specialist, New Hampshire Sea Grant
 - Bill DuPaul, Mid-Atlantic
Acting Director, Virginia Sea Grant
 - Amber Von Harten, Southeast
Fisheries Specialist, South Carolina Sea Grant
 - Rex Caffey, Gulf of Mexico
Acting Extension Leader, Louisiana Sea Grant
- Noon **Working Lunch (Q&A with above Regional Coordinators)**
- 1:00 **Regional Coordinators Presentations (Session 2)**
- Fred Snyder, Great Lakes
Sea Grant Extension Co-Coordinator, Ohio Sea Grant
 - Paula Cullenberg, Alaska
Program Leader, Alaska Sea Grant
 - Paul Olin, Pacific
Sea Grant Extension Director, California Sea Grant
- 2:00 **Additional Discussions with Regional Coordinators**

- 3:30 **Constituent Feedback (Session 1 - West Coast and Alaska)**
- Steve Scheiblaue
Monterey Harbor Master (call-in)
 - Thorn Smith
Executive Director, North Pacific Longline Association (call-in)
 - Arne Fuglvog
U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski's Office, Alaska

4:30 **Additional discussions (if needed)**

5:00 **Adjourn**

Wednesday, April 23

- 8:30 **Constituent Feedback (Session 2 – Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, Southeast)**
- David Goethel or Carl Bouchard
New Hampshire (call-in)
 - Albert Spells
*U.S Fish & Wildlife Service
Chesapeake Bay/Susquehanna River Ecosystem (call-in)*
 - Kris Van Orsdel
Louisiana Recovery Authority
 - Suzanne Faerber
Women's Fishing Initiative, Ohio (call-in)
 - Kim Iverson
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (call-in)

10:00 - **NMFS: Advice for the Future**
Jim Balsiger, Acting Director, NMFS
How has FEE worked from NMFS' viewpoint? Should it be continued? If so, what adjustments, if any, should be made to the program?

11:00 - **Sea Grant: Advice for the Future**
LaDon Swann, Sea Grant Association
Nancy Balcom, Assembly of Sea Grant Extension Leaders
Does the FEE model work? Should it be continued? If so, how should it be structured?

12:30 - **Lunch**

1:30 - **Task Group discussion (Closed Session - Drafting of Report Begins)**

5:00 - **Adjourn**
NOTE: Tomorrow the Task Group will meet in Room 8817

Thursday, April 24

SSMC 3 #8817

- 8:30 - **Task Group discussion (Closed Session)**
- 9:00 - **Task Group report drafting (Closed Session)**
- Noon - **Lunch**
- 1:00 - **Report drafting (Closed Session)**
- 5:00 - **Adjourn**