

**Summary Minutes of the
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
Science Advisory Board (SAB)
Ecological Processes and Effects Committee (EPEC) Augmented for the Advisory
on EPA's Ecological Research Program Multi-Year Plan
Teleconference, June 13, 2008**

Committee Members: See Committee Roster – Appendix A

Date and Time: Friday, June 13, 2008, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time

Location: By telephone only

Purpose: The purpose of this teleconference was to discuss the Committee's draft report (dated 6-3-08).

Attendees: Committee Chair: Dr. Judith Meyer

Committee Members: Dr. Fred Benfield
Dr. Gregory Biddinger
Dr. Ingrid Burke
Dr. G. Allen Burton
Dr. Peter Chapman
Dr. Loveday Conquest
Dr. Terry Daniel
Dr. Wayne Landis
Dr. James Oris
Dr. Charles Rabeni
Dr. James Sanders
Dr. Kathleen Segerson

EPA SAB Staff: Thomas Armitage, Designated Federal Officer

EPA Staff: Herbert Fredrickson, EPA/ORD
Rick Linthurst, EPA/ORD
Susan Lundquist, EPA/ORD
Deb Mangis, EPA/ORD
Wayne Munns, EPA/ORD
Kathryn Satterson, EPA/ORD

Others Present: Nancy Bettinger, Massachusetts Department of
Environmental Protection
Maria Hegstad, Reporter, Inside EPA

Meeting Summary

The discussion followed the issues and timing as presented in the meeting agenda (Appendix B).

Convene Teleconference

Dr. Thomas Armitage, Designated Federal Officer (DFO) convened the teleconference at 1:00 p.m. He stated that teleconference was being held in accordance with Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) procedures. He stated that summary minutes of the teleconference meeting would be prepared and certified by the Chair. He noted the Committee's compliance with ethics requirements and stated that the SAB Staff Office had determined that there were no conflict-or-interest or appearance of lack of impartiality issues for any of the advisory committee members participating on the teleconference. He noted time had been reserved on the agenda for public comments, but no requests had been received from the public to offer comments.

Purpose of the Call and Review of the Agenda

Dr. Judith Meyer, Committee Chair, thanked the members for participating on the call. She reviewed the purpose of the call and agenda. She stated that the purpose of the call was to discuss the Committee's draft advisory report (dated 6-3-07) on the EPA Ecological Research Program Multi-year Plan (Plan). She noted that individual Committee members had provided comments on a previous draft of the report, and that their comments had been incorporated. She asked that members focus their attention and discussion on additional revisions that should be incorporated into the report before it is sent to the Committee for final concurrence.

Dr. Meyer stated that she would first like to consider any changes needed in the body of the report and then discuss the draft executive summary and letter to the EPA Administrator.

Discussion of the Draft Advisory Report

The Committee discussed the draft advisory report. Dr. Meyer stated that she thought the June 3rd draft report needed only a few changes. She suggested a specific addition to the report. She reminded Committee members that at the Committee's previous meeting, EPA's Deputy Assistant Administrator for Water, Michael Shapiro had called for an effort to connect the Ecological Research Program Multi-Year Plan to EPA's regulatory and non-regulatory program activities. Dr. Meyer suggested that this recommendation should be included in the report as an additional bullet in the response to the first charge question (drafted by Drs. Burke and Biddinger). The Committee agreed with this suggestion. Dr. Meyer stated that she would prepare draft text and send it to Drs. Burke and Meyer for review.

Dr. Meyer asked the Committee whether any changes were needed in the text containing comments on EPA's long-term goals (in response to charge question #1). No changes were suggested by the Committee.

Dr. Meyer asked for Committee comments on the sections of the report responding to charge questions 2-6. A member noted that parts of the response to charge question # 4, (identifying the challenges facing EPA) were somewhat redundant because some of the issues discussed in this section had been discussed in the responses to other charge questions. However, he stated that changes were not needed. He noted that redundancy was useful to emphasize the Committee's concern about the key challenges facing EPA.

Several members commented on the figure on page 27 of the draft report (in the response to charge question #5). A member stated that he thought the figure did not clearly reflect points discussed during the Committee's deliberation. The member stated that the figure should provide additional detail concerning the ecological and social/ cultural research components of the research program. He also stated that, to clearly illustrate the role of the Ecological Research Program, the figure should show the connection of research to policy decisions. Another member agreed. She stated that it was important to clearly illustrate the program components. In addition, she noted that the figure in the draft report was confusing because it placed valuation in a separate box from assessment of human health and well-being. Another member suggested that the figure should clearly illustrate the integration of ecological research with social and economic value assessments. A member suggested to show this integration, the ecological research and valuation components in the figure could be closer together or overlapping. He noted that although the ecological and valuation elements in the figure could be separately identified, the figure should show that they are integrated within one box or paradigm.

Dr. Meyer suggested that the Committee consider removing the figure from the report if it was too confusing. Another member stated that he thought it was very important to keep the figure in the report. He suggested that some text could be added to the figure to provide more detail describing elements in the boxes. Another member suggested that the figure be moved to the front of the report to provide context for the following discussion. A member agreed but reiterated that it was important to show the relationship between the research program and policy decisions. A member stated that the SAB Committee on Valuing the Protection of Ecological Systems and Services (CVPESS) had discussed this issue and addressed it in their report. She suggested that the Committee might look at the CVPESS report. Dr. Meyer stated that she did think the figure should be moved to the front of the report because it provided context for the discussion in the response to charge question #5. She suggested that several Committee members consider the points discussed on the teleconference and develop a revised figure that could be included in the response to charge question #5. Drs. Daniel, Landis, and Segerson stated that they would work on a new figure and send it to the DFO to be included in the report.

Dr. Meyer asked Committee members if any additional changes were needed in the body of the report. There were no additional changes suggested

Remarks from EPA and Public Comments

There were no requests from the public to provide comments, so Dr. Meyer asked Dr. Rick Linthurst of EPA's Office of Research and Development if he wished to offer remarks to the Committee. Dr. Linthurst thanked Dr. Meyer and the Committee for their work to develop the draft report. He stated that that ORD was beginning to work on more specific implementation plans for the Ecological Research Program and that the advice provided by the SAB would be useful in developing these plans. He also noted that it would be useful to continue receiving input from the SAB as the implementation plans were developed. In addition Dr. Linthurst briefly discussed the issue of linking ecological research to EPA's regulatory and non-regulatory programs.

Several Committee members responded to Dr. Linthurst's comments. A member stated that he recognized the importance of linking EPA's new research direction to regulation but noted that this would be challenging. He stated that the SAB had the luxury of providing scientific advice that did not necessarily consider all of the implementation challenges posed by a bureaucratic environment. He stated that research to further the scientific understanding of various problems may not always line up directly with regulatory program needs. Dr. Meyer agreed with this statement but stated that it was important for the research program to provide guidance to EPA's regulatory programs. She noted, however, that the research program should not be limited by the regulatory programs.

Another member stated that he was hopeful that the new focus of the ecological research program would effectively serve regulatory processes. He stated however that it would be necessary to build a bridge connecting ecological risk to ecosystem services. Dr. Meyer thanked Dr. Linthurst for his comments and stated that she would next like to discuss the executive summary of the report and the transmittal letter to the Administrator.

Discussion of the Executive Summary and Letter to the Administrator

Dr. Meyer called for Committee comments on the executive summary and letter to the Administrator in the draft advisory report. Members had no comments on the executive summary and were in agreement that no changes were needed.

The Committee discussed a number of changes in the letter. A member stated that the letter should recommend that the Plan more clearly articulate the ways in which the concept of ecosystem services could provide guidance to the Agency's regulatory programs. Other members agreed with this suggestion. A member suggested that, in addition to calling for a more transparent explanation of the process of site selection for place-based projects, the letter should talk about the opportunities for data comparisons that could be provided by selection of appropriate sites. A member stated that the principles for site selection on page 19 of the report already discussed this. He suggested that the letter should recommend that EPA use the procedure outlined in the report to select place-based sites. Other members agreed with this suggestion. A member stated

that the letter did not talk about transboundary issues. He suggested that the letter specifically recommend research with international partners to understand transboundary conditions and connections that extend across national borders. He stated that this recommendation could be included as a separate bullet in the letter. Dr. Meyer agreed with this suggestion. Dr. Meyer then asked Committee members if they had additional comments on the letter. There were no additional comments.

Discussion of Next Steps

The Chair thanked the Committee members for their comments on the draft advisory report and summarized the next steps that would be taken to complete the report. She stated that: 1) Drs. Landis, Segerson, and Daniel would revise the figure in the report and send it to Dr. Armitage for incorporation into the next draft. 2) Since there were no objections to the proposed changes in the first draft of the report these changes would be accepted and incorporated. 3) Dr. Armitage would revise the letter to the Administrator to incorporate all of the changes discussed (i.e., changes concerning guidance to the Agency’s regulatory programs, transboundary issues, and selection of place-based projects). 4) Dr. Meyer would write additional text concerning the need to strengthen the connections between concepts in the Ecological Research Program Multi-year Plan and EPA’s regulatory and non-regulatory programs. This text would be inserted into the response to charge question #1 and the executive summary. Dr. Meyer would send this text to Drs. Burke and Biddinger for review before it is included in the report. 5) Dr. Armitage would incorporate all of these changes into the third draft of the report and send it to the Committee for concurrence to transmit it to the Chartered Science Advisory Board for final approval.

Dr. Meyer noted that, following concurrence by the Committee, the report would be transmitted to the Chartered Science Advisory Board for quality review before it is sent to the EPA Administrator. She stated that she wished to send the report to the Board by July 10th so it could undergo quality review at the next quarterly Board meeting on July 28th. Members had no additional comments so the Chair adjourned the teleconference.

Respectfully Submitted:

Certified as True:

/Signed/

/Signed/

Dr. Thomas Armitage
Designated Federal Officer

Dr. Judith Meyer, Chair
SAB Ecological Processes and
Effects Committee

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Committee Roster

Appendix B: Teleconference Agenda

Appendix A –Committee Roster

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Science Advisory Board Ecological Processes and Effects Committee

Augmented for the Advisory on the EPA Ecological Research Program Multi-Year Plan

CHAIR

Dr. Judith L. Meyer, Distinguished Research Professor Emeritus, Institute of Ecology, University of Georgia, Athens, GA

ECOLOGICAL PROCESSES AND EFFECTS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dr. Fred Benfield, Professor of Ecology, Department of Biological Sciences, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA

Dr. Ingrid Burke, Professor, Department of Forest, Rangeland, and Watershed Stewardship, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO

Dr. G. Allen Burton, Professor and Chair, Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences, Wright State University, Dayton, OH

Dr. Peter M. Chapman, Principal and Senior Environmental Scientist, Environmental Sciences Group, Golder Associates Ltd., North Vancouver, BC, Canada

Dr. Loveday Conquest, Professor and Associate Director, School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences, University of Washington, Seattle, WA

Dr. Wayne Landis, Professor and Director, Institute of Environmental Toxicology, Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA

Dr. James Oris, Professor, Department of Zoology, Miami University, Oxford, OH

Dr. Charles Rabeni, Leader of the Missouri Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, U.S. Geological Survey, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO

Dr. Amanda Rodewald, Associate Professor of Wildlife Ecology, School of Environment and Natural Resources, The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH

Dr. James Sanders, Director and Professor, Skidaway Institute of Oceanography, Savannah, GA

Dr. Ivor van Heerden, Associate Professor and Director, Department of Civil and Environment Engineering, LSU Hurricane Public Health Research Center, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA

OTHER SAB COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dr. Gregory Biddinger, Coordinator, Natural Land Management Programs, Toxicology and Environmental Sciences, ExxonMobil Biomedical Sciences, Inc., Houston, TX

Dr. James Boyd, Senior Fellow, Director, Energy and Natural Resources Division, Resources for the Future, Washington, DC

Dr. Terry Daniel, Professor of Psychology and Natural Resources, Department of Psychology, Environmental Perception Laboratory, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ

Dr. Otto C. Doering III, Professor, Department of Agricultural Economics, Purdue University, W. Lafayette, IN

Dr. William Moomaw, Professor of International Environmental Policy and Director of the Center for International Environment and Resource Policy, The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, Medford, MA

Dr. Kathleen Segerson, Professor, Department of Economics, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT

SCIENCE ADVISORY BOARD STAFF

Dr. Thomas Armitage, Designated Federal Officer, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Washington, DC

Appendix B – Teleconference Agenda

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY SCIENCE ADVISORY BOARD

Ecological Processes and Effects Committee (EPEC) Augmented for the Advisory on
EPA's Ecological Research Program Multi-Year Plan
Public Teleconference
June 13, 2008, 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. (Eastern Daylight Time)

AGENDA

1:00 p.m.	Convene Meeting	Dr. Thomas Armitage Designated Federal Officer EPA Science Advisory Board
1:10 p.m.	Purpose of the Call and Review of the Agenda	Dr. Judith Meyer, Chair
1:15 p.m.	Discussion of draft SAB EPEC Report, Sections 4.1 – 4.6 - Comments on strategic direction - Comments on Long Term Goals 1 – 5 - Comments on the logic model approach - Comments on anticipated challenges - Comments on measuring progress - Comments on leveraging resources	Dr. Judith Meyer and Committee
2:45 p.m.	EPA Remarks	Dr. Rick Linthurst, EPA Office of Research Development
3:00 p.m.	Public Comments	Dr. Thomas Armitage Designated Federal Officer
3:15 p.m.	Discussion of draft SAB EPEC Report Executive Summary and Letter to the Administrator	Dr. Judith Meyer and Committee

3:50 p.m. Summary and Discussion of Next Steps Dr. Judith Meyer

4:00 p.m. Adjourn