

Harmful Algal Bloom Task Force Meeting

Wednesday, April 22, 2020 (9:00am-1:00pm EDT)

WebEx Conference with Public Dial-in

In Attendance: Leanne Flewelling, Jill Fleiger, Don Anderson, Quay Dortch, Dave Whiting, Rhonda Watkins, Charles Jacoby, Duane De Freese, Andy Reich, Sherry Larkin, Barbara Kirkpatrick

Guests: Gil McRae, Meghan Abbott
(Public dial-in, number of audio attendees = 16)

Regrets: None

Meeting Minutes:

9:00-9:15 a.m. Welcome and Introductions

Leanne Flewelling welcomed Task Force members and members of the public calling in, conducted a rollcall logistics check, and reviewed meeting agenda.

Call to Task Force members for changes to the agenda.

None – agenda approved as posted.

Flewelling invited Gil McRae, Director of Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Institute, for opening remarks.

McRae commented on the positive reception of the Task Force's first recommendations document, including from the Governor's office. He described expected financial support going forward and thanked members for their work.

Flewelling introduced Meghan Abbott to provide an update on the HAB health resource guide.

9:15-9:20 a.m. Resource Guide Update

Abbott provided background on the development of the 2009 Resource Guide for Public Health Response Plans to Harmful Algal Blooms in Florida as a joint publication of FWC and FWRI informed by the HAB Task Force Public Health Technical Panel. She gave an overview of plans to update and revise the guide as a digital online resource hosted on FWRI's website.

Questions from the Task Force:

Quay Dortch asked about the role of the Task Force. Abbott noted this was originally created under the auspices of the Task Force and FWRI will continue to report out to the Task Force for information and to seek input as revisions move forward. Additionally, subject experts will be solicited to contribute to specific chapter updates, so many members can expect to be contacted directly requesting their participation as contributing authors.

9:20-9:35 a.m. Task Force and Funding Overview

Flewelling gave a high-level overview of the Task Force's activities to date, expected state budget support in 2020-21, and FWRI grant funding process. She discussed the Task Force's next steps and goal of the current meeting to prioritize recommendations for targeted funding calls.

Flewelling introduced Charles Jacoby to facilitate priority setting.

9:35-9:50 a.m. Priority Setting Process

Jacoby reviewed the prioritization process. He explained the process bases ranking on Attractiveness and Feasibility each reviewed against two measures 1) magnitude of the potential benefits or potential for success and 2) likelihood of capturing benefits or producing success.

The Task Force discussed the importance of ensuring collaborative review and consensus as a group on final rankings.

Jacoby confirmed the process works best when there are as many different viewpoints as possible reflected, and a clear framework of guidelines and questions to consider during the process.

9:50-10:20 a.m. Guidelines Review

Jacoby provided the guidelines for discussion to apply when prioritizing recommendations for this specific funding call in 2020-21. Guidelines included:

- 1-2 years duration (State FY funding cycle, call in May, review June, awards July)
- \$600k/year funding
- FWRI grants - RFP (competitive or targeted)
- Outputs - with substantial/valuable deliverables in each year of project

- Outcomes – short term best (1-3 yrs), medium term acceptable (4-6 yrs), long-term less desirable (>6yrs)

Questions from the Task Force:

Members asked about the call and evaluation elements including if proposals with match contributions will be weighted higher, if complementary efforts of other agencies will be part of evaluation, and if other efforts in progress will be considered.

Flewelling and Jacoby confirmed, the next step will be discussion and sharing of knowledge of what is being done and funded. This step will identify recommendations to pull out from the evaluation process that are not applicable to the set guidelines or are duplicative efforts.

Flewelling called for any final questions. None.

10:20-11:00 a.m. Review of Recommendations

Flewelling listed the 12 recommendations from the initial consensus document #1, for the Task Force to review each individually in list order. (Available online <https://myfwc.com/media/22769/habtf-consensus-1.pdf>)

Public Health Recommendation #1-2

Flewelling invited Andy Reich to comment on the funding the DOH has received for Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) and the current efforts and plans for the funds.

Reich noted the DOH was budgeted \$650k/year for HABs in general (including blue-green algae) beginning in 2019-20 through to 2024. This first year, they have funded universities for research projects focused on public health, direct human health impacts, longer term health impacts, and increasing monitoring abilities related to surveillance reporting to identify real HAB cases. Next year will be a public funding call with a similar process to FWRI grants. He noted the DOH funding focus is on actual research now (recommendation #1) and training and development (recommendation #2) will follow as projects move forward.

The Task Force discussed if and how the Public Health recommendations (#1 & #2) are being addressed by DOH at this stage as well as through other funding, such as brevetoxin neurotoxin exposure studies funded by NIEHS. Members agreed to invite DOH to present at the next Task Force meeting on project plans for the 5 years of funding to determine where complimentary efforts are best served. Members agreed these recommendations need to be addressed cooperatively and collaboratively going forward to be effective, and there can be valuable studies conducted with additional funding but not in the time and scale for the current RFP discussion.

ACTION: Reich, send a 1-page overview of DOH HAB funded project in 2019-20.

Flewelling put forward call to adopt

#1 not include for this cycle and our purposes today. No opposition by Task Force, passed by consensus.

#2 not include for this cycle and our purposes today. No opposition by Task Force, passed by consensus.

Communications #3-4

Members discussed the communications recommendations. The Task Force identified communications as a high priority and highly valuable for the public in addressing their specific needs, and a good use of state funds. They noted the first recommendation is a better fit for this call when broken down by the numbered segments and agreed the first two segments were more applicable at this stage. Members commented on parallel elements with the response section recommendation (#5).

The Task Force agreed the first part of the second recommendation is important but not fitting for outsourced funding and needs to be discussed cooperatively between agencies and the state. Members noted the potential for this call to begin addressing the latter part of the recommendation related to data portal gaps, such as review of data and preliminary design needs prior to implementation, which will be further confirmed through leadership review of call items prior to public RFP.

Flewelling put forward call to adopt.

#3 include parts 1) and 2). No opposition by Task Force, passed by consensus.

#4 include but just consider final data portal portion “as well as develop a data portal to be shared among state...”. No opposition by Task Force, passed by consensus.

Management and Response #5-8

Members discussed the four recommendations under Management and Response. They noted most of a statewide response plan (#5) would not be outsourced but addressed collectively with agencies and partners as we move forward.

The second recommendation (#6) was identified as a targeted item with direct organization funding to regional associations for hosting a workshop to begin plan development that would later be implemented with a range of partners to demonstrate value and feasibility of sensors i.e., test and develop. Members agreed planning for longer term vision of HAB monitoring

ocean observing system should be considered as well as sensor development, which also applies to research recommendation #9.

The third recommendation #7 was determined not to be included at this stage. Members agreed the recommendations needs further discussion to determine related state and federal regulations, and ensure call is not allocating resources where good funding is already supporting these efforts, such as the Mote red tide initiative.

The final management recommendation #8, was discussed. Members noted a range of current studies and funding programs in progress and agreed best to wait a year for those outcomes before supporting new efforts. They noted this will be a necessary issue to address in Florida and the Task Force should be proponents for standardizing methodologies specific to state economy. Agreed efforts will be best served with results of other current short-term efforts to inform needs and action.

Flewelling put forward call to adopt.

#5 not include for this cycle and our purposes today. No opposition by Task Force, passed by consensus.

#6 include for this RFP with two targets 1) workshop for planning observation and monitoring network and 2) develop and demonstrate sensors for HAB cells and toxins. No opposition by Task Force, passed by consensus.

#7 not include for this cycle and our purposes today. No opposition by Task Force, passed by consensus.

#8 not include for this cycle and our purposes today. No opposition by Task Force, passed by consensus.

Research #9-12

The Task Force reviewed the four recommendations in the research section. Members agreed the first recommendation #9 was an expensive big picture item not fitting to address in the scope of this call, and better informed as FWC planning is further developed.

Members agreed the second recommendation #10 required further development of the third recommendation #11 as it drives #10. The Task Force determined further discussion and planning was needed to identify needs in #10 to both forward work with existing models, as well as planning and significant financial support required for developing new models. Members agreed that identifying the data needs preventing further improvements and addition

to existing models as well as development of new models should be included in the goals for the workshop proposed for recommendation #6.

Members agreed that the final recommendation #12 is being adequately addressed through state funded and other initiatives.

Flewelling put forward call to adopt.

#9 not include for this cycle and our purposes today. No opposition by Task Force, passed by consensus.

#10 not include for this cycle and our purposes today, although modeling needs would be addressed in the workshop proposed for recommendation #5. No opposition by Task Force, passed by consensus.

#11 include. No opposition by Task Force, passed by consensus.

#12 not include for this cycle and our purposes today. No opposition by Task Force, passed by consensus.

11:35 a.m. – 12:05 p.m. – Individual Ranking

The Task Force members break to set individual rankings/priorities for funding call using Attractiveness and Feasibility scoring system.

Members provided ranking for 4 recommendations identified to include in this call (2 in communications, 1 in management and response, and 1 in research) for collation.

12:05–12:10 p.m. Feedback on Funding Items

Flewelling asked members to provide recommendations for experts to serve on the proposal review panel to Meghan. She noted reviewers cannot apply for funds and would have to recuse themselves from reviewing applications submitted by their organizations.

Flewelling noted one member of the Task Force will additionally serve on the review panel and requested members send their expressions of interest to Meghan. Final reviewer selection will be made by Gil McRae.

ACTION: All members, send Meghan recommended reviewers and expressions of interest to serve as Task Force representative on panel.

12:10-12:50 p.m. – Discussion of Ranks and Scope of Funding

Jacoby shared collated results of rankings. Results showed:

- Strongest emphasis for the communications recommendation “Review current communication and outreach strategies and tools that address red tides; conduct focus groups and social science studies to identify information needed by the public and the most effective models for messaging and disseminations.”
- Selective emphasis for Management and Response and Research recommendations
 - “FWC should work with the US IOOS Regional Associations to design and develop a robust, statewide, integrated coastal and ocean monitoring system that incorporates emerging technologies to expand multiparameter observations with an emphasis on new sensors for HAB cell and toxins in air and water” as a planning workshop to include monitoring and modeling
 - “FWC, with existing and new partners, should identify projects that will improve or develop and implement capabilities for real-time detection of *K. brevis* in water and brevetoxins in both water and air”
- Limited support for the communications recommendation “develop a data portal to be shared among state agencies and partners addressing water quality”.

Flewelling invited discussion of items for inclusion in an RFP. Members considered priorities by cost within proposed funding envelope:

- \$75k-100k workshop (#3)
- \$100-200k research (#4)
- \$75-150k communications both components (#1 & 2)

Members discussed challenges of limited funding for expensive research elements i.e., item #4 would require applicants to already have a sensor as funding would not support buying one, but still valuable contributions could be made. It was noted to ensure organizations and companies with past funded technologies for beach brevetoxin detection and related items would ensure notified of call for funding. Members also noted challenges for reviewers for diverse scope of projects requiring varying expertise. The Task Force agreed the proposed workshop is targeted and should not be included as part of a competitive call, and with \$75k reserved for workshop remaining \$525k still considerable amount for projects. Members discussed funding the first communications item as one comprehensive proposal from a qualified organization at \$125k, rather than multiple smaller pieces, to leave remaining \$400k for research which could fund at least 2 projects at \$200k max.

Task Force recommendation:

- Fund workshop \$75k-100k
- Do an open call for proposals for #4 research and #1 communications
- Discussion #2 with other state agencies for needs, building together, best approach.

Flewelling put forward call to adopt. No opposition by Task Force, passed by consensus.

Flewelling asked if the Task Force wanted a final review meeting of the drafted RFP or move forward with FWRI developing the call based on Task Force input, and final review from FWRI and state leadership. Members discussed and agreed no further meetings were necessary, FWRI to manage call forward incorporating member feedback received by April 27 on RFP language and evaluation criteria.

Flewelling put forward call to adopt. No opposition by Task Force, passed by consensus.

12:45 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. Action Items and Other Business

Flewelling reviewed action items and recommended the Task Force meet in the first month of each quarter (January, April, July, and October) following the scheduled June 24 meeting. Members agreed.

ACTION Reich:

- send a 1-page overview of DOH HAB funded project in 2019-20.

ACTION All members:

- send comment on RFP language to Meghan by Monday, April 27, 2020
- send comment on evaluation criteria to Meghan by Monday, April 27, 2020.
- send suggestions for external reviewers to Meghan
- send expression of interest to serve on review panel to Meghan
- send Meghan June 24 agenda items you would like included

ACTION Meghan:

- send doodle polls to members to hold dates for quarterly meeting following June 24 (October 2020, January 2021, April 2021, July 2021)
- Invite Kendra, DOH to June 24 agenda for funding presentation along with others

Flewelling thanked members and members of the community who listened by phone.

Meeting Adjourned 1:00 p.m.