McMurdo Area User Committee (MAUC) Annual Meeting Report

Thursday, July 29, 2010 (Teleconference)

The MAUC charter states that MAUC meeting reports will contain the following information in this order:

1. Topics and recommendations of the committees

2. List of attendees and their contact information

The 2010 MAUC Annual Meeting Minutes are also available as a supporting document on the USAP web site.

1. Topics and Recommendations

Meeting Topics – listed in order of presentation

NSF information presented by Jessie Crain

- USAP Support Contract award status
- NSF staffing
- NBP
- Polar Sea
- Palmer transportation logistics
- Budget

Contractor information presented by Sam Feola

- Housing
- Recreation Survey
- Crary security plan
- PQ criteria changes

Review of 2009 annual and ad hoc MAUC meeting topics by presenter

- ECW, access to journals in Crary, energy efficiency education, grantee-specific communication and web portal access, McMurdo infrastructure evaluation - Stacy Kim
- Additional infrastructure discussion – Scott Borg and Jessie Crain
- Housing and Recreation and Wellness program - Lisa VonFumetti
- Dry Valley ASMA Management – Adrian Dahood
- McMurdo storage and staging space – Cara Sucher

Informational Updates

- Two-ship operation at McMurdo with the Oden and NBP – Addie Coyac
- MEC Vehicle Pool – Tony Buchanan
- Tracked Vehicle Location Plan - Tony Buchanan
- Crary Security Procedures Review - Cara Sucher
- Laboratory Instrument Donation, Disposal, and Procurement - Cara Sucher

New Topics

- Ice Core Temperature Storage and Transit Issue - Jeff Severinghaus, Cara Sucher, Julie Palais
- MAUC Meeting Venue Options - Stacy Kim

MAUC Committee Business

- Suggested action item list
- Committee membership discussion

MAUC Recommendations 2010

1. Housing Guidelines:

The MAUC applauds the development of clear housing guidelines that include scientists. Whether the addition of two full time positions was necessary for implementation will become evident in the field season. We suggest that the limitations to internet connectivity be remedied as rapidly as possible by adding wireless coverage to the 203 and MMI dorms. At a minimum, increasing the capacity to handle activating all the room jacks in the 203s, adding jacks to the 203 lounges, and adding jacks to the MMI rooms is needed. We request that grantees be permitted to utilize lounge space in uppercase dorms and 155 to access wireless accessible there, even if they are not housed in those dorms.

We also request that the formal housing rules be posted in a publically accessible web page.

2. Tracked Vehicle Location Plan:

The plan to minimize vehicle damage by not allowing track vehicles in town will strongly and negatively impact science in terms of time and injuries. Consequently the MAUC recommends that an alternative to the plan of parking on the sea ice be found. We support reworking the bond-strand barrier between the helo hangar and the comms shop to allow more direct vehicle access between Crary Lab and the sea ice. The possibility of building an ice road using the ice dock technology and techniques used to maintain the transition can be explored. This would keep the surface wet, minimizing dust that is the biggest issue degrading vehicles. If high enough to cover the bond-strand, the bond-strand would not need to be moved, just protected with a heavier duty bridge structure. Whether an ice-road with large enough thermal mass to last the season is feasible is an open question.

The MAUC recommends that if the repositioning of vehicle parking is implemented, that shuttles be available 24 hours, to allow science teams to work their normal hours. The shuttles need to accommodate large amounts of very heavy gear as well as passengers. The extra loading and unloading twice a day, into and out of the shuttle at each end of each day, will increase the workload, time required, and injury potential for science groups.

The fueling situation should also be considered. Allowing track vehicles to fuel at the sea ice runway will minimize travel-over-dirt time and subsequent vehicle damage. This could be implemented regardless of the parking location of the vehicles. This is dependent on there being a sea ice runway, as driving to Willy Field to fuel would not be as efficient, but still possibly a better alternative than driving through town to fuel at the pass.

3. New PQ Requirements:

The MAUC is concerned that the weight, BMI and fitness limits are discriminatory and not based on medical necessity.

At a minimum, the PQ requirements need to be made publically available and referenced in the NSF solicitation to provide full disclosure and plenty of lead planning time. Potential PIs will thus be advised early on limitations that may preclude participation of specific personnel.

Medical science justification needs to be provided including increased specific risk factors and how they apply to conditions in McMurdo. It is not clear how high weight, high BMI or low physical fitness are directly and specifically limiting factors for Antarctic work, any more than smoking, a family history of heart disease, or several other health risk factors.

4. Infrastructure:

The MAUC would like to become educated about how McMurdo administration works and how decisions within RPSC are made, decisions that often have direct and relevant impact on science. We request a briefing on management structure in McMurdo, how this translates to Denver HQ, and the specific challenges facing each work center. With this the MAUC can comment intelligently on infrastructure/efficiency improvements for McMurdo Station. The briefing could be incorporated into a McM tour for MAUC/interested scientists.

5. IT:

IT security at McMurdo Station seems overly restrictive, compared to IT security measures in place at similar facilities and institutions stateside. The MAUC requests a briefing on technical instrumentation and limitations on use of technology. This will clarify where the restrictions lie, and pave the way for improvements in connectivity and access.

The MAUC suggests that McMurdo add video conferencing capability including Skype and ability to share graphics real time. This would allow better collaboration, enhanced technical support and improved educational opportunities without increasing on-ice personnel. With good video links, remote troubleshooting becomes possible and

would reduce the cost to the program of deploying personnel with specific skills. This will become more and more relevant as science instrumentation increases in complexity.

Please also see housing above: We suggest that the limitations to internet connectivity be remedied as rapidly as possible by adding wireless coverage to the 203 and MMI dorms. At a minimum, increasing the capacity to handle activating all the room jacks in the 203s, adding jacks to the 203 lounges, and adding jacks to the MMI rooms is needed.

6. Training:

Training time in McMurdo has expanded to the point that it is encroaching heavily on research. Minimizing on-ice training can reduce overhead costs and on-ice staffing needs with no reduction in safety. The online courses in Information Security Awareness and Protecting Antarctica's Environment are a trend in the right direction. Some courses involve watching videos, this can certainly be done stateside (e.g. driving, recreation, etc.). Videos can be created for several other courses (e.g. communications, etc.). A further option that can be offered is the opportunity to take hands-on courses at a stateside location prior to deployment (e.g. MEC courses, FSTP courses, etc.), thus allowing the limited time during the summer field season to focus on research. Travel costs for pre-deployment trainings would need to be covered but would likely be less than the cost of personnel and extra days of housing for trainees to do the trainings on-ice. Certain skills can only be acquired on ice, but the bulk of the training can be completed before deployment, perhaps combined with very brief reminder sessions on arrival in McMurdo. The MAUC recommends that pre-deployment training options be established to minimize time constraints during the short summer research season, minimize costs, and maintain safety.

7. Other:

The MAUC recommends that the option of bypassing McMurdo entirely for deep field camps be explored. The Australian program has been using fat tire aircraft landing on non-maintained runways (Airbus 319?). Breaking out of the three-station mentality may benefit the USAP and science groups that are challenged to pursue science in locations inaccessible via the main bases. This will require a change in the now-limiting corporate culture.

2. List of Attendees and Contact Information

Presenters

Science	Stacy Kim	MAUC Chair
NSF	Jessie Crain	AIL Research Support Manager
NSF	Adrian Dahood	PEHS Environmental Policy Specialist
RPSC	Tony Buchanan	RPSC Supervisor, Mechanical Equipment Center
RPSC	Addie Coyac	RPSC Planning Support Manager
RPSC	Sam Feola	RPSC Program Director
RPSC	Lisa von Fumetti	NANA General Manager, Station Services
RPSC	Cara Sucher	RPSC Manager, Laboratory Science

Attendees

MAUC Members			Contact Information
Stacy Kim, Chair	Organisms and Ecosystems	California State University	skim@mlml.calstate.edu
Steve Barwick	Aeronomy and Astrophysics	University of California, Irvine	barwick@cosmic.ps.uci.edu
Ginny Catania	Glaciology	University of Texas at Austin	gcatania@utig.ig.utexas.edu
Frank Rack	Earth Sciences	University of Nebraska, Lincoln	frack2@unl.edu
Jeff Severinghaus	Glaciology	Scripps Institution of Oceanography	jseveringhaus@ucsd.edu

NSF (**Contact Information:** first initial last name(no breaks)@nsf.gov; sborg@nsf.gov)

	Adrian Dahood	Julie Palais
Scott Borg	Alex Isern	Vladmir Papitashvili
Lisa Clough	Roberta Marinelli	
Jessie Crain	Peter Milne	

RPSC (**Contact Information:** first name.last name.contractor@usap.gov; jesse.alcorta.contractor@usap.gov)

Jesse Alcorta	Elaine Hood	Melissa Rider
Leslie Blank	Karen Joyce	Deborah Roth
Tony Buchanan	Liz Kauffman	Dave Scheuerman
Kerry Chuck	Steve Kottmeier	Cara Sucher
Brian Connell	Dave Nelson	Holly Troy
Tom Ellis	Lindsay Powers	Lisa von Fumetti
Sam Feola	John Rand	Jordan Watson
Ross Hein	Peter Rejcek	Dave Zybowski