McMurdo Area User Committee (MAUC) Annual Meeting Minutes

Thursday, July 29, 2010

Welcome and Introductions

General NSF Info (Jessie Crain)

- USAP Support Contract award status – no information available
- NSF staffing
  - Will Colston – new director for AIL
  - Polar Environmental Health and Safety (PEHS)
    - Mike Montopoli – recalled to Navy (position is officially open)
      - Michael VanWort initially stepped in to cover position, but has left OPP
      - Sue LeFratta is now the acting Director of PEHS
  - Alex Isern
    - Moved to ANT as the new Earth Sciences Manager
    - Her vacated position, AIL Research Support Manager, is open
- NBP
  - Charter expires in 2012
  - Procurement process for a replacement vessel is in progress
    - This process is being managed by RPSC
    - NBP and similar vessels are under consideration
    - Length of new charter will be 5 years
- Polar Sea
  - Currently in dry dock
  - Problems with vessel engines are under investigation
- Palmer transportation logistics
  - Assessment team includes UNOLS and Palmer personnel
  - Use of a UNOLS vessel for movement of Palmer cargo and personnel is under consideration to free the LMG and NBP for other work.
- Budget
  - Increased ARRA funding in 2009 allows:
    - A greater number of science projects to be funded this year than last year
    - Additional infrastructure initiatives including -
      - Heat trace replacement
      - New vehicle purchases
  - Future years – money may be tight
    - Fewer science dollars and fewer support dollars

General Contractor Concerns (Sam Feola)

- Housing
  - Housing assignment guideline has been revised

    - Full time housing coordinator hired – Curtis Harry
    - RPSC will coordinate with military and other agencies to better manage peak population periods, and will use the South Pole population model to track McMurdo population
    - Due to additional funded activities, the McMurdo population will be as high/or higher than last year's peak population numbers
- Recreation Survey
    - Survey results have been presented to NSF who will institute some of the recommendations this year
    - Survey will be made available to the public at a future date
- Crary security plan has been updated
- PQ criteria changes
    - 3 major focus areas
        - Weight of 350lbs or more = NPQ
        - BMI of 35 or greater = NPQ
        - Physical fitness test (self test feature)
    - Implemented – as of 1 week ago
    - BMI will be determined by RPSC medical

*** Editorial note:** As of 8/8/10, the implementation of the Weight, Body Mass and Physical Conditioning medical guideline in the USAP is deferred for a year to permit time to collect additional information and develop a communication plan to USAP participants.

Review of 2009 MAUC and 2009 ad hoc MAUC Meeting Topics

2009 Recommendations and Action Items Status (Stacy Kim)

- ECW: It is now clearly written as to what is available and what needs to be provided by the deploying participant
- Access to journals in Crary has improved
- Energy efficiency education has been addressed -
    - A new slide has been added to the energy training
    - Field camp users can request extra training from the MEC on how to use renewable energy resources if needed.
- Communication – NSF is working to improve web portal access
    - No formal process exists to communicate procedural changes to grantees
    - The MAUC requests that a "grantee all" email distribution list be created for this purpose

Housing/Recreation (Lisa VonFumetti)

- **Housing**
    - McMurdo station population will be either the same or higher than last year and current reports forecast an average of 1100 in McMurdo during the 2010-11 season

- NSF has recognized the significance of McMurdo population management issues and approved funding for two new full time housing positions
  - Population management analyst – Myrna Gary
  - Housing manager – Curtis Harry
- On-ice Rooms Coordinator contract position will be Matt Kurt
- Housing Policy Definitions
  - Transient
    - 1-7 nights
    - Does not include those working in McMurdo full time
  - Temporary
    - 8-21 days
    - Most science groups fall in this category
  - Permanent
    - 22+ days
- Housing assignment guidelines
  - 203A,B,C – primary housing for grantees
    - If PI requests other lodging, eligibility for that housing will be based on housing points
  - PIs are eligible for a single room with last to-fill-status in the MMI
  - Point system
    - ~70+ points = uppercase dorms (actual point requirement depends on the seniority status of the population on station)
    - Every month with the USAP = .25 points (1 month = 15 days or longer)
    - 1 month of on-ice time = 1 point
    - Military points count

- **Recreation and Wellness (R/W)**
  - Purpose of program: to improve morale, quality of life, employee retention rates and safety performance, etc.
  - Revised staffing – 2 positions are pending approval including a full time R/W manager and an on-ice R/W coordinator
  - R/W program goals
    - Foster enhanced communication regarding R/W programs
      - Post the R/W implementation plan to the internet and email a link to the plan
      - Provide signage on buildings that includes the building name and number (not likely implemented this year)
    - Update and better manage current spaces
      - Gallaghers and the Coffee House – operate as 24 hour community centers
        - Alcohol “hours” will not change
        - These spaces cannot be reserved as meeting sites; however additional meeting space in Crary can be reserved

            - Dorm lounges – institute management programs for these such as “Friend’s of the lounge” or “Adopt-a-lounge”
        - Provide a balanced and well rounded R/W program for all personality types and various sized groups to promote learning, fitness, sports, etc.
        - Make R/W programs and equipment available for field camps
            - Standard box for each size field camp
            - Can be introduced this year
        - Implement a formalized health program

    - The MAUC requests that support for year-round operation of the Greenhouse be considered as a R/W program
        - Further clarification from NANA:
            - The present building is unsafe for summer operations
            - Greenhouse operations are currently funded for winter only
            - Preparation of a proposal to build a new greenhouse is under consideration

Dry Valley ASMA Management Plan (Adrian Dahood)

- Currently there is a joint effort with NSF and ANZ to review this plan and update it as necessary
- NSF (Adrian) is seeking input from the grantee community for this review and requests that any grantees who would like to participate contact her via email
- NSF will also include the MAUC committee members on related email distributions for this review.

Staging Space (Cara Sucher)

- Building 156 – second floor contains approximately 2000 ft^2 of staging space and an equipment hoist for grantee use
    - FEMC is checking the building to ensure it is safe for this type of occupancy and will install outlets as needed
        - Asbestos abatement is planned for WINFLY 2010
        - Building may be available for use as early as January 2011
    - RPSC requests that the MAUC provide input on how to best utilize the space to meet grantee needs

Infrastructure Evaluation (Stacy Kim)

- Infrastructure should be developed and maintained to support science projects
- Flexibility is a critical element of both hard and soft infrastructure to insure that the infrastructure is able to meet the changing needs of science over time
- Soft infrastructure (human resources) suggestions include:
    - Personnel - contractors and station managers must be service-oriented
    - Communication – must be enhanced between scientists, NSF, and the support contractor(s)
- Hard infrastructure (building-related) suggestions include:

    - A cohesive plan for a staged approach for overhauling the McMurdo Station infrastructure is essential because the size of the station precludes replacing the station in it's entirety as was done at South Pole
    - Commitment of full funding will be required to complete the plan in a reasonable amount of time
    - Utilization of city planning resources to identify optimal design features for the infrastructure replacement plan should also address additional concerns such as:
        - Improving station layout to allow roadways to be more direct and thus minimize the corresponding wear and tear on tracked vehicles driven on the dirt
    - Construction and renovation of buildings should include moveable interior walls to allow for the interior space to be reconfigured as the needs for the space change over time.
        - Floor to ceiling walls should be:
            - Insulted for sound and temperature
            - Moveable
            - Allow access to heat, electricity, and internet
- Current infrastructure needs identified by the grantee community include:
    - Space to assemble DNF cargo
    - Space to safely charge large quantities of batteries
    - Improved sediment handling facilities in Crary (or in a new building if this is not possible in Crary)
- The MAUC committee also believes that because the support contractor entertains suggestions from multiple science groups each season, they may be aware of additional science requests for specific infrastructure unknown to the MAUC.

Additional Infrastructure Information (Scott Borg)

- A two-pronged review of NSF infrastructure has been mandated by the budget department and will include:
    - High level science review – organized by Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP)
        - Principally a review of science documentation which will not require a visit to the Ice
        - Will be conducted in spring of 2011
    - Logistics review
        - To be started by spring 2011 and finalized later in the year
        - Tasking included in the FY14 budget request
- This review will not affect current building renovation plans

Informational Updates

Two - Ship Operation (Addie Coyac)

- NBP and ODEN in McMurdo this year

- ODEN
  - Arrives Jan 14
  - Involves 37 scientists and logistics personnel who will remain onboard on Jan 14 and will redeploy MCM-CHC on Jan 15
  - Tasking includes offloading scientific equipment and assisting with channel breaking operations
  - Additional tasking may include using the helicopter onboard to support McMurdo science projects; analysis of this is underway
- NBP
  - First 2011 McMurdo port call Jan 16 – Jan 19
    - Involves an exchange of 40 grantees and logistics personnel
    - Incoming personnel will arrive CHC-MCM Jan 16 and replace outgoing personnel who leave the ship on Jan 17
    - Tasking includes offloading equipment and hazardous waste from Palmer Station
    - NBP begins next cruise (11-01) on Jan 19
  - Second 2011 McMurdo port call on Jan 28 for 6-8 hours of fueling
    - Minimal cargo and pax will be exchanged at this time
  - Third 2011 McMurdo port call Feb 16-19
    - Personnel swap for the (11-02 cruise)
    - Tasking includes fueling operations and cargo exchange

- Impacts of both vessels in McMurdo may include an influx of scientists in and around Crary; however scientists from the vessels will not be given dedicated office space in Crary

MEC Vehicle Pool (Tony Buchanan)

- Dedicated vehicles
  - Requests for dedicated vehicles exceed the supply of available vehicles
  - Each proposal will be reviewed on the ice to reassess project requirements as needed
- Vehicles on stand-by
  - There will be a limited supply of vehicles on stand-by due to the high volume of requests, and the MEC may not have one ready when groups need them
  - To address this, the MEC will request that the VMF repair and service science vehicles as soon as possible when needed
- Flexibility
  - Grantees need to be flexible and patient regarding unexpected schedule delays for vehicle assignments
  - It will be helpful if grantees with dedicated vehicles inform Tony when their vehicle is not in use
- Fleet statistics
  - 9 Pisten Bullies; 4 Mattracks
    - Pisten Bullies new on station – 2001 vessel
    - Current planning to extend the vehicle life for 10 more years

- Future of vehicle purchase and use
    - Science traverses are considering purchasing their own vehicles so as not to take from the fleet
    - Examples of vehicles purchased by large science projects include a tucker for PIG and a GPR traverse vehicle under consideration for WISSARD

Tracked Vehicle Location Plan (Tony Buchanan)

- Problem
    - McMurdo vehicles have sustained more degradation than South Pole fleet
    - Damage due to caustic volcanic dust and excess vibration from rock and dirt surfaces
- Solution (plan in design phase and still under review)
    - Proposing all tracked vehicles are parked out at sea ice runway/LDB (vehicles moved to LDB when the sea ice runway closes) to prevent them from driving on dirt
        - Fuel tanks for fueling the vehicles - available at the runway/LDB
        - Possible alternative option – park vehicles at the transition(s)
            - Early season - VXE-6; later season – Scott Base transition
        - Two additional shuttle drivers - to transport people to the "parking line"
            - Shuttle drivers will need to be available during extended hours and night shift
- Alternatives for temporary coverings of the vehicle/tracks are being researched
- Science community concerns
    - Time - adds time for groups that transport a lot of gear
    - Safety - extra moving of equipment places strain on personnel
- Science community suggestions
    - Remove bond strand between the Helo hangar and Crary to decrease the distance on dirt that the vehicles travel to access to phase 3 of Crary

Crary Security Procedures Review (Cara Sucher)

- MAUC comments that the areas slated to be locked do not seem to be a problem
- Key cards can be programmed
- Sign in/escort
    - If a volunteer is working with a project, they need to sign in but do not require an escort during Crary business hours
    - If a volunteer will be working after hours, they need an escort
        - Notify Crary staff
        - Grantee is responsible for signing them in and out
    - If the volunteer is just meeting the group in Crary to depart for the field, no check-in is necessary

Laboratory Instrument Donation, Disposal, and Procurement (Cara Sucher)

- Replacement Instruments requested include:
    - Current meters
        - S4's are old and difficult to support

                - Cost estimate (from 1995) $18000-$25000
                - Perhaps best option for pooled use
            - ADCP
                - More expensive than the S4
                - Better for individual group use
                    - i.e. ANDRILL is purchasing these with grant funds
            - Advantages to both approaches and both types of meters
            - Requested by: Ainley, Kim, Dry Valley researchers, ANDRILL
        - Echo sounder
            - Current one available in Crary is not fit for use, and therefore is not used often
- Suggestion by Stacy Kim - for the contractor to install a current meter and provide current meter data for those needing it (similar to automatic weather station data available for general use)
            - Response by Peter Milne:
                - It is incredibly expensive and difficult to maintain systems of this sort
                - Costs can eat into research budget for data that might not be used/required by everyone
                - Perhaps one group submits a proposal to do the current meter data
- NSF concern – that the grantee community prioritize instrument requests with respect to the greatest science need and to instrument maintenance and inventory space requirements

New Topics

Ice Core Temperature Storage and Transit Issue (Jeff Severinghaus)

- Jeff requests that ice cores be stored at -50 Celsius as opposed to -25C in the ICTF in McMurdo
    - Current research suggests that ice core chemistry records are degrading in cores stored @ -25C
- Things to consider:
    - Can the temperature in the ICTF be lowered to -50C and if so, how might this affect other samples stored there?
    - How valuable is the colder storage if the cores are not stored at the colder temperature in transit or in long term storage facilities?
        - At what temperature are the cores stored at NICL?
    - Next use of the disc drill may be at South Pole where the cores will be colder
    - Is it better to do cold core analysis in McMurdo or transport very cold samples?

MAUC Meeting Venue Options (Stacy Kim)

- Teleconference

- Pro's
  - Meetings seem to have been working fine over the phone
  - Allow for broader participation with less time commitment
  - Reduced costs and hassles of travel
  - Reduced carbon footprint
- Con's
  - Reduced time/opportunities for the exchange of ideas that occur outside of the actual meeting when individuals gather in one location

- Face to face meetings
  - Preferred venue when addressing large/specific/or pressing issues
- Video conferencing
  - State of the art video conferencing facility at McMurdo could be a solution for this in the future, and it would also be an excellent resource for outreach purposes as well - per Jeff Severinghaus and Frank Rack

MAUC Committee Business and Wrap-Up

2010 Meeting Action Items

1. Contractor to research the creation and management of a "grantee all" distribution list to use for consistent and timely dissemination of information to the grantee community.
   a. Accepted by: Karen Joyce, Steve Kottmeier
   b. Suggested due date: August 15

2. Contractor to investigate internet availability in rooms in MMI and the installation of land lines in the 203 lounges and related support issues - including upgrading the link from JSOC to 203 which is currently restricted to 6mb.
   a. Accepted by: Karen Joyce
   b. Suggested due date: Mid-September
   c. Frank Rack encourages long term thought about this – higher bandwidth will improve the quality of service the contractor provides.

3. Contractor to research the option of providing white boards and markers to individuals requesting these for conducting project meetings in their rooms and in the lounges in 203A,B,C if needed.
   a. Accepted by: Cara Sucher
   b. Suggested due date: TBD

4. Contractor to compile a list of the grantee requests for infrastructure support related to science needs that they have received and make this available to the MAUC for further consideration
   a. Accepted by: Leslie Blank
   b. Suggested due date: September 1 (initial draft)

5. MAUC to complete an evaluation of McMurdo infrastructure and make recommendations to help ensure that it can support a variety of projects in the future and can be easily redirected as needs change.
    a. Accepted by: Stacy Kim
    b. Suggested due date: TBD
    c. May incorporate contractor suggestions (see AI # 4)

6. MAUC committee requests a briefing from Will Colston on McMurdo development plans addressing questions including:
    - Will one building at a time be upgraded based upon immediate need, or is there a plan for a more major overhaul?
    - Will the NSF commit to finishing the plan, and to completing it in a timely manner?
        a. Accepted by: Stacy Kim (will initiate the contact with NSF)
        b. Suggested due date: TBD
        c. Jessie Crain will advise Will Colston of this meeting request

7. MAUC to compile a prioritized list of general use equipment replacement requests.
    a. Accepted by: Stacy Kim
    b. Suggested due date: September 1
    c. MAUC members are advised to poll research communities by science discipline for their equipment recommendations, and to specifically include Christine Foreman and Dan Costa in these discussions.

8. Contractor to investigate ICTF temperature range options (fold into the infrastructure discussion)
    a. Accepted by: Cara Sucher
    b. Suggested due date: TBD

9. MAUC request for the contractor to conduct tours of McMurdo Station focused on infrastructure issues
    a. Accepted by: Cara Sucher to coordinate with Mel Moore and station management as needed
    b. Suggested due date: Tour arrangements to be determined ahead of the start of Mainbody if possible; tours to be conducted a few times during the McMurdo field season
    c. Cara Sucher and Stacy Kim to talk offline to determine the type of tour and information required

10. MAUC to express tracked vehicle location concerns to Gary Cardullo and George Blaisdell
    a. Accepted by: Stacy Kim
    b. Suggested due date: September 1
    c. Stacy to compile information from MAUC members and present this via email to Gary and George

11. MAUC to initiate an email with links to the home pages of existing and proposed MAUC members and to submit membership votes to the committee chair via email.
    a. Accepted by: Stacy Kim and MAUC members
    b. Suggested due date: September 1

12. Determine how MAUC members can contribute their suggestions to the McMurdo infrastructure discussion
    a. Accepted by: Jessie Crain
    b. Suggested due date: TBD
    c. Possible options for this exchange of information – per Jessie Crain:
        i. Use advisory committee structure to present views and ideas
        ii. Provide written suggestions to RPSC for their review, and request that RPSC evaluate these suggestions and provide a comprehensive recommendation to NSF if needed.

Committee Membership Discussion

- New member selection suggestions
    - For Ocean and Atmospheric Science
        - Matt Lazzara
        - Terry Deshler
    - For Integrated Systems Science
        - Bob Bindschadler
        - Sridhar Anandakrishnan
        - Tim Stanton
        - Jill Mikucki
        - Slawek Tulaczyk
        - Steven Warren
- 2011 Member status updates:
    - Stacy's last year as chair
    - Steve Barwick will fill his position for another year
    - Diana Wall, Ginny Catania, Steve Barwick – 2011 final year
    - Frank Rack - 2012 final year
    - Paul Morin and Jeff Severinghaus – 2013 final year
    - No need to replace Peter Doran; Diana Wall represents this discipline