

Coastal/Local Class Research Vessel Cruise Preparation and Risk Mitigation in the age of COVID-19



Committee Report

UNOLS Council Meeting July 2020

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LUMCON Marine Superintendent

Background

- R/V PELICAN operational pause as Per NSF recommendations March 13 until June 1
 - Cancellations- 33 days at sea- 365K
 - Postponements-36 days at sea- 388K
 - Since COVID operational, cancellations and postponements are due to Scientists travel restrictions.
- Similar Fates: BLUE HERON, RACHEL CARSON, F.G. WALTON SMITH, ROBERT GORDON SPROUL, SAVANNAH

COVID-19 Preparations

- Vessel Operations Prepared COVID 19 Plans, Policies, Checklist, SOPs
 - Vessel Outbreak Prevention Management Plan 1.3
 - LUMCON COVID 19 Screening and Quarantining Doc 1.4
 - Testing Regime, Logistics, Quarantine
 - LUMCON Chief Scientist Consideration Document
 - LUMCON Marine Superintendent Consideration Document
 - Pre-Cruise Planning-Cruise Risk Assessment- Cruise Logistical Considerations
 - LUMCON Cruise Moves Forward Checklist
 - LUMCON Final GAR Risk Assessment Decision
 - Standard Operating Procedures: Clientele, Crew, Procedures at Sea, Galley, Linens, Sanitation, Small boat use, PPE, Response to Persons Suspected COVID While at Sea
- Crew were COVID-19 tested, then completed State of Louisiana Bloodborne Pathogens Training and Airborne Pathogens Training.
- Conducted a COVID-19 Safety Orientation and signed acknowledgment of Policies, Protocols and Procedures Concerning COVID-19
- Set up a handwashing station prior to boarding vessel.
- Added signage through out vessel, sinks, entry ways, heads and safety board.
- Crew voluntary Temperature checks beginning in April.
- Scheduled cruises with time between cruises so vessel can be sanitized.

Update and Risk Assessment

- PELICAN supported two LOW RISK, time sensitive mooring operation cruises since returning to operations June 1st.
 - a) bare minimum scientist with low risk profiles, logistics and each had own stateroom (separation)
 - WHG, 3 day cruise, 5 scientists
 - Proteus Technologies, 4 day, 2 scientists
 - b) operations within 48 hours from nearest port.
 - c) COVID screening, no charge state funded screening/insurance no co-pay
 - WHG Tested prior to returning to work, May 18th (14 days out) and May 28th (4 days out)
 - PT Tested June 8th and June 16th.
 - d) USCG Certified Medical Person in Charge aboard, voluntary temperature checks 14 days out and during cruise for Crew and Scientist.

Lessons Learned

- Testing Centers- State/County Centers and Local Urgent Care Facility.
 - Can be unreliable, run out of test/restrictions of testing asymptomatic persons
 - Results 2-3 days or as long as 5-7 days.
 - Delays in testing results -Holidays, uptick in testing, delivery
 - One lost test
- Recommending testing of additional personnel as relief/subs.
- Is it all worth it? Definitely!!!
 - Kept one COVID positive researcher off vessel
 - Ramifications of positive person.