

MLSOC Summer Telcon- DRAFT MINUTES
15 August 2013

Executive Summary

The MLSOC committee held their summer 2013 meeting via a WebEx telcon with the UNOLS Office as facilitator. The meeting was well attended with all MLSOC members present with the exception of two members.

Minutes

Dale Sawyer, MLSOC Chair opened the meeting at 1 pm Eastern with a welcome and introductions. Dale just returned from a successful cruise aboard the R/V Marcus Langseth working in the Atlantic Ocean off of Spain.

Agency Reports/NSF- Candace Major, Donna Blackman, Holly Smith and Matt Hawkins from NSF were present. They did not have a specific agency report but were available to answer any questions. There was a question on whether the new target proposal date to submit ship time requests has had any negative effects on the MG& G community. It was felt that this community is more used to long lead times for getting programs funded and to sea and that the August 15th proposal date was not having any negative impact. Candace reminded us that the August date for submitting ship time request is a guideline and not a strict policy.

Holly Smith/NSF reported that NSF had a meeting with the Marine Mammal Commission (<http://www.mmc.gov/index.shtml>) this past spring to continue work on permitting issues. Dr. Rebecca Lent is the new Executive Director. Holly also reported that BOEM and NMFS are planning a workshop to be held October 15-17, 2013 in Arlington (Ballston), VA. Although it is being funded by industry, it is a BOEM/NMFS workshop on Acoustic Modeling.

ONR- Tim Schnoor provided an update that he is working with LDEO and the US Navy in trying to secure dock space at the Navy Piers in Newport, RI for this coming fall and winter for the Langseth. Tim also stated that the KNORR will be operating until the end of 2014 and therefore the A-Frame which is part of the Long Core System will not be available until the KNORR is removed from service. A question was asked whether ONR was still considering the Thompson as a possible host vessel for the WHOI Long Core. NSF has instructed ONR not to include in their midlife design efforts the use of the Long Core on the Thompson.

UNOLS- Jon Alberts provided an update on recent activities within UNOLS. This included recent news that the current UNOLS Office has been recommended by the UNOLS Council and the federal agencies to remain at the Univ. of Rhode Island for a second five year term, (May 2014 to April 2019). An update on recent ship replacement activities was shared as well as vessels which have been removed from service.

Committee Business

The current make-up of the MLSOC membership was reviewed. We do have a vacancy on the committee created when Michael Enachescu finished his term. As stated in the MLSOC terms of reference, the committee needs to have an industry representative. We have one nominee from industry and this is particularly important now as Sean Higgins reminded us that the Centrex System on the Langseth is 20

years old, and that Lamont has all the parts that exist. A replacement system is going to need to be planned for in the not too distant future. Having an industry-type person on the committee is important now to advise us on new technologies available.

We need to be careful that by choosing an industry person, that this company will have an advantage when it comes time to procure a new system. It was felt it is important to have the technical skills and not the executive skills in the industry person. Question was asked whether we could have both on the committee, i.e. an academic-industry person and an industry executive. We only have one opening and don't expect a second opening until late 2014. It was also suggested that since MLSOC is a science oversight committee, maybe it makes more sense to have an industry data interpretation type of member.

Industry is invited to our meetings which are open meetings. Several of the UNOLS meetings have industry reps present, especially winch manufacturers.

Dale suggested we set up a sub-committee to help identify some viable candidates. Nathan Bangs volunteered and Bill Lang said he could try and identify some possible candidates.

New Seismic system-

Additional discussion centered on the need to plan for a new seismic system continued.

Dale suggested we put together a working group to help develop a plan for acquiring this new system. Dale will develop a charge for this subcommittee. Nathan Bangs and Jeff Rupert were volunteered to help on this.

Broadening MLSOC Outreach/Planning for the AGU Workshop and MLSOC Meeting

The UNOLS office has received funding to develop an MLSOC workshop for early career scientists to attend the MLSOC meeting at AGU. This year the MLSOC meeting will be Sunday December 8th and one option would be to hold an early career workshop on Saturday Dec 7th in the afternoon. The DESSC model was described. We need to get working on this as time is short and there are many other events planned around AGU. One model which has worked well is to have the early career scientists submit a one page application describing their research and what they would like to learn about marine seismic research. The UNOLS Office can help organize this and we have funds to help with travel costs.

As a committee, we need to decide if we are trying to reach scientists who are interested in data acquisition and field work or those interested in data and data processing. Jon suggested we are trying to engage the next generation of seagoing scientists, those that will write proposals to use the Langseth. Dale suggested a subcommittee work on this and Dave Scholl volunteered to help. The UNOLS office will also facilitate this workshop.

MLSOC Meeting- The annual MLSOC meeting will be held as usual on the Sunday before AGU, on December 8, 2013. Last year we did the business portion of the meeting starting at 10 am and then in the afternoon we had a combination of recent cruises and data results by Steve Holbrook and Nathan Bangs cruises, followed by short presentations from 4 early career students who had been on the Langseth.

The committee liked this format and we decided to use this format again. There will also be a Geoprisms meeting going on at the same time and we need to carefully schedule our agendas.

UTIG Meeting-

Jamie Austin is planning a workshop at University of Texas in Austin on November 4-6, 2013. Jamie is Chair and Nathan Bangs and Suzanne Carbotte are on the executive committee. There are two main goals of the workshop.

- Bring together academics and industry representatives to discuss the use of seismic data already available for new projects.
- Work on ways to collect new data, asking industry to help use the Langseth, to support projects.

They expect approximately 80 people, half from industry and half from academia. The application process is just an e-mail sent to Jamie Austin expressing interest in attending. Deadline is end of August. Steve Holbrook encouraged this workshop remember the Incline Village workshop which was held in January 2010. Nathan said they would build on the work already done at Incline Village.

NMFS – New Acoustic Criteria

Bill Lang reported that the NMFS are working on new standards for active acoustic sources. It looks like the new standards will not be all/nothing standards but will work off a curve. This will mean there may be more estimated “takes” which will increase mitigation requirements and possibly more strictly preclude doing research in some areas/times. The permitted level for disturbance (Level B) may go as low as 120 dB, as demanded by some groups, which will affect other sonars such as multibeam and sub-bottom profilers. Naturally industry is concerned about this as this may increase and change mitigation procedures.

These standards will go out for public review and comment. The MLSOC will have an opportunity to provide input.

The paper written by Southall et al, Aquatic Mammals, Volume 33, Number 4, 2007, ISSN 0167-5427, titled: “Marine Mammal Noise Exposure Criteria, Initial Scientific Recommendations” is a good source for more information on this. This will be provided by Debbie. However, to some extent, these 2006 recommendations to NMFS are now dated, and the NMFS statements (provided in attachment) in an a draft ARCTIC PEIS for Arctic G&G Activities better reflect NMFS intentions.

Open Access Model

Dale asked Steve Holbrook to bring the committee up to date on the “Open Access” cruise Steve led in 2012. This was a cruise on the Langseth from July 12-23 2012 out of Astoria. There were 5 PIs and 12 early career students/scientists. This cruise provided lots of training at-sea on data acquisition and processing. A lot of data came out of the cruise and other PIs got funded to write-up the data. Other people are looking to use this. A student used the multibeam data for a geology paper. Great proof of concept – it educates people on how to use the LANGSETH and also makes the most of the data and proves the open-access cruise works. Everyone who participated think it was a great success.

The Greg Mountain cruise in 2014 will follow a similar model.

NSF cautioned that any judgments on the success of this model are preliminary. It is good but cautions that we will really not know if this is successful for several years. They are thinking positively. One comment they hear from reviewers is that there are concerns with the planning. The range of objectives makes it difficult to review this. It is important that the terms used to describe this model be

carefully used. Community v. Open Access v. Regular. There are different levels. There are challenges about how to design experiments by community.

LDEO Operator's Report

Sean Higgins provided the LDEO report and a detailed Power Point Presentation, See appendix. He covered the following topics.

- Update on the Office of marine Operations and Staffing
- 2013 Schedule and preliminary data for the Canales and Sawyer cruises, as well as plans for the Hey cruise.
- 2014 Schedule and Science Plans and shipyard and maintenance planned
- Glosten Winch Plan and Long Core
- Update on Ship Maintenance, proposed equipment upgrades.

At present the Langseth only has two funded programs in 2014 for a schedule of 80 days. This is not a sustainable model of operation. They need to be in the 200 day range to be functional. Question was asked why the schedule was so weak. In simple terms the weak federal budget and the sequestration are hurting us. Losing ships, long core capability maybe an existential problem and we may be losing various science capabilities. The committee asked what we can do about this.

There is a new decadal survey being planned by NSF for Ocean Sciences and the MLSOC is encouraged to get involved in this. The MLSOC recognized the seriousness of this situation and the need to broadly communicate this to our users.

The USGS has a program in the Atlantic that they would like to do, but again a shortage of federal funds is getting in the way.

Ship Improvements

Work continues to improve the general oceanographic capabilities of the Langseth. The winches from the Wecoma are being installed. Glosten is being funded to do design work to add sponsons to the side of the ship. The Long Core system is being considered for the Langseth.

Closing Remarks

Dale closed the meeting by thanking LDEO for a successful cruise despite the port main engine casualty. He shared that the technical support on his cruise was spectacular and he was very pleased with the support he received. They achieved over 90 % of their track lines.

Dale also wanted to thank NSF, namely Rose Dufour and Donna Blackman for allowing an 18 day extension be added to make up for lost time due to engine failure. There are 78 OBS's still out there which will be recovered from the German R/V Poseidon.

Meeting Adjourned: 3:45 EDT