



**National Association of Marine Laboratories
c/o Marine Biological Laboratory, Woods Hole, MA 02543**

**Secretary/Treasurer
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**Joint Meeting
NAML and OBFS
Capital Hill Suites; Board Room 108
February 27, 2000**

Lavern opened the meeting with introductions and thanks to those who attended. He had everyone around the table introduce themselves. All together there were eleven people. The top officers of NAML and OBFS (Organization of Biological Field Stations) were either pleased or wary of their new positions.

Art McKee initiated this meeting as a result of attending last year's BOD Meeting as a representative of OBFS. He asked Lavern if it were possible to have a joint meeting of the officers of both organizations to discuss the possibility of having a joint meeting of the Boards in 2001. Art was impressed with NAML's organization and programs and thought that OBFS might learn from NAML's experiences. Although OBFS is quite different from NAML and not as well coalesced in its initiatives in Washington, there are however, many mutual interests between the groups. Art expressed his belief that NAML's initiatives and program of "On-The-Hill" meetings was a good model for OBFS to follow, especially in attracting attention and getting an awareness for the groups by people on the Washington scene. Art mentioned that he was hoped being able to work together with us on this issue would help tremendously toward getting OBFS on track.

Lavern gave a brief history of NAML'S organization including the regional structure of all the _AMLs. The Winter meeting is now traditionally held in DC to meet with Agency and Staffers from the Hill Lavern stated. Senators and Representative visits are also included but usually these are done on an individual basis by directors to their own Congressmen or agency directors. The next full meeting of the association will be its Biennial Meeting held in Oregon and hosted by Lavern. Lavern hopes to include K-12+ education as a major agenda item on that meeting schedule. Lynda Shapiro will also be included in the next meeting by hosting a visit to her lab.

Lynda Shapiro stated that OBFS and NAML have different personalities but similar missions in reaching Congress. The personality differences that Lynda outlines were that NAML is more high tech and OBFS is more casual and field oriented in its agenda and thinking. Many times field trips are included in the meeting agenda which often contain LTER presentations also. Tom Malone indicated that he was struck by the fact that (the majority of) marine labs are really NOT field stations. Most marine labs are too large in comparison to typical OBFS field stations. However, in countering Art McKee's thoughts about NAML, Tom related that he thinks NAML has not yet learned to make use of its collective resources. We haven't really figured out how to coalesce the organization into something bigger and more influential. The early roots of SAML's beginnings were to help marine lab directors carry out their daily tasks which centered on a variety of nuts-and- bolts issues. From that beginning, NAML is now recognized but is still waiting for our collective contributions to make the "whole greater than the sum of its parts". LabNet is or maybe will be that first step. Many agency, program leaders and political people are still looking for us to move significantly forward.

Art McKee said he invited Bill Michener, currently from NSF to come to this meeting to perhaps recommend how we might put this kind of cooperative arrangement between the two associations together. OBFS officers hoped to be able to do it by next year or the year after. Art Brooks thought that it is pressure from individuals and not necessarily from an organization of individuals that attracts attention and spreads influence. He has found that because of sheer numbers, individual congressmen look to the needs of their home constituency almost entirely. CORE has the Admiral to attract attention and because of his connections and influence on the Hill from his years of service and stature, CORE has been successful. It takes the larger sized and funded labs of the Oceanographic community to financially support CORE and its presence in Washington. However, several people countered that the smaller institutions comprising NAML and OBFS do fill in the gap in the middle and can have considerable influence. OBFS currently has some 160 members in the continental US; NAML over 110. OBFS also has an international scope as well. NAML is totally US based by design but does interact with the European equivalent, MARS as well as the Caribbean association. Lavern hopes that the K-12+ program will be useful to bind the two groups. It was also noted that NAML interacts well with NASULGC and the National Sea Grant Association. When the question arose, Tom Malone mentioned that the Council of Aquatic Sciences (CAS) started by ASLO is still in existence. OBFS interacts to some degree with AIBS. Tom related that he still hopes that LabNet will bring NAML into the forefront perhaps by centering on the Health of the Oceans program or maybe with biodiversity programs.

Bill Michener mentioned there is an NSF Task Force on the Environment report that is coming out soon and that along with other PCAST reports are pushing information transfer technology. Jane Lubchenco would be good person to invite to any joint meeting. It was felt that networking the two groups together would most likely be the key to making an opening and channeling federal funds to this area; especially aspects related to information transfer.

OBFS tried as a proof-of-concept trial an amphibian and reptilian biodiversity census from its members. It drew modest support and participation and was of modest success. Congressional people were impressed with the report, while scientists were upset by the lack of rigor of the census criteria and quality of the data collection. It was mentioned that Jim Gause was approached to help establish a network link through LTER and some OBFS stations. This effort got some funds committed to start this information exchange and transfer of technology. Tom thought that the land-based, LTERs are more numerous and therefore are in a good position to make this work. Art Brooks said that the NOAA Coastal Lab in Charleston SC supports NAML's LabNet as the server site. Everyone agreed that metadata, whether terrestrial or marine is still the major problem to be reckoned with. Much of this kind of data is currently collected in many different formats.

Lavern thought and it was the consensus of those present that the idea of the joint meeting between OBFS and NAML should be brought up at the NAML BoD Meeting the next day. Bill Michener suggested his OBFS meeting in the Fall would be a opportunity for a planning session. A joint meeting of both groups will be targeted for next February 2001. Tom Malone recommended a Steering Committee be formed to suggest or devise the "product" to be presented next year. Lavern and Hilary Swain as association presidents will head the committee for their representative organizations.

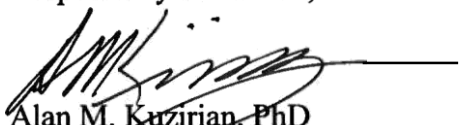
Further discussion that followed centered on the topic that it is always difficult to predict attendance at our Congressional Receptions. Hilary mentioned that AIBS holds round-table workshops at the National Press Club. They are usually well received and sometimes foster spirited interactions with congressional and agency members. Bill suggested a "good, topical idea" would be needed to attract them along with good notification alerts given to the desired people. The topic of invasive species was suggested. It was agreed that this topic would be a good bridge between OBFS and NAML. Art Brooks mentioned that NAML had included that issue in our Staffers' Forum as well as HABs. Both drew good interest and responses. Conservation organizations should also be included in

invitations so that they may be able to contribute insights into the most effective strategy to use. Organizations with a DC-presence are also good at targeting issues and anticipating the proper timing of when to introduce various topics. Sierra Club interaction with OBFS is taking place informally and they have been helpful in relating positive aspects of their strategies. It was mentioned that the Ocean Caucus in the House was started last year by CORE and others to promote their issues before Congress. Lynda Shapiro stated again that she thinks NAML needs a solid "Agenda Item or Program issue" to raise the flag higher so NAML will appear on the radar screen as a major player. Art McKee told everyone that a composite depicting the locations of NAML and OBFS members was done by their webmaster. It was really impressive to see the amount of area covered. Our potential influence could be the same.

The meeting adjourned for the dinner hour had approached. A consensus was reached that led to the following:

Action Item: Lavern would recommend to the BoD that NAML and OBFS move toward establishing a working association. That cooperation would take the form of NAML representation at the fall OBFS meeting and developing plans for a joint meeting open to both societal members occurring at the NAML BoD Meeting in 2001. The association may also carry over to mutual involvement of both associations in the NAML Biennial hosted on Oregon in the Fall of 2001.

Respectfully submitted,



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ATTENDEES
NAML - OBFS Meeting Capital
Hill Suites, Board Room-108
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