

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Research and Development**

**BOARD OF SCIENTIFIC COUNSELORS
LAND RESTORATION AND PRESERVATION SUBCOMMITTEE**

**Conference Call Summary
January 23, 2006
12:00 noon–2:00 p.m. EST**

Objectives of Conference Call and Overview of Work Accomplished

Dr. Charlie Menzie, Chair, Land Restoration and Preservation Subcommittee

Dr. Charlie Menzie, Chair of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Board of Scientific Counselors (BOSC) Land Restoration and Preservation Subcommittee, welcomed the participants to the conference call and asked them to identify themselves.

Dr. Menzie stated that he was pleased with the draft report overall. In reviewing the draft, he embedded comments that he would like to discuss during the conference call. Subcommittee members' observations on the draft report also will be addressed during this teleconference. Any additional comments from the Subcommittee members should be sent to Dr. Menzie via e-mail no later than the close of business on January 25, 2006. Additionally, the executive summary will be written following today's discussion. The report needs to be reviewed before it is presented at the BOSC Executive Committee meeting, which will take place February 13–14, 2006.

Administrative Issues

Ms. Heather Drumm, DFO, Land Restoration and Preservation Subcommittee, EPA

Ms. Heather Drumm, Designated Federal Officer (DFO) for the Land Restoration and Preservation Subcommittee, stated that the Subcommittee members' travel reimbursements from the face-to-face meeting have been delayed but are forthcoming.

Draft Report Discussion

Land Restoration and Preservation Research Subcommittee

Mr. Tim Thompson stated that, although he read the entire report, he did not have enough time to consider thoroughly the contents and asked if other Subcommittee members had a chance to review the document in detail. Dr. Gene Keating responded that he needed to know what specifically was expected of the Subcommittee members to answer Mr. Thompson's question. Dr. Menzie responded that the group needed to discuss the embedded comments within the document. Ms. Drumm reminded the Subcommittee that the report needed to be ready by the end of this week to be reviewed before being presented at the BOSC Executive Committee meeting in February.

Mr. Thompson asked if the Subcommittee members could share additional comments with the entire Subcommittee via e-mail. Ms. Drumm stated that group communications between more than one-half of the Subcommittee were subject to the rules of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA). Mr. Thompson stated that the Science Advisory Board (SAB) routinely communicates via e-mail as a group and asked about the differences between how BOSC and SAB comply with FACA. It is his understanding that under FACA rules, group communications must be available for release upon request and that should not constrain the group. Ms. Drumm stated that it was her understanding that to comply with FACA, group communications must be in a public forum; she will follow-up with the BOSC DFO to determine if this is the correct policy.

Dr. Barry Dellinger asked if the Subcommittee was responsible for reviewing EPA's internal research. Dr. Menzie replied that the Subcommittee has been tasked specifically with reviewing the Land Multi-Year Plan (MYP).

The title of the report will be changed from "Land Research Multi-Year Plan Program Review" to "Land Restoration and Preservation Program Review."

Dr. Menzie explained that Section 1.1 of the report was an introduction to the Land MYP, and Section 1.2 was an overview of the BOSC review process. Mr. Thompson commented that the statements regarding the long-term goals (LTGs) did not add to the discussion and could be removed from the report. Dr. Keating suggested that those statements could be moved to the section that discusses the LTGs in detail. Dr. Bob Siegrist stated that the Subcommittee did not develop the charge questions or focus areas and that fact should be clarified in the report. Mr. Thompson suggested that the authors listed in each section also be removed so that the final report is a cohesive document presented from the entire Subcommittee.

Section 2 of the report outlines the overarching issues that the Subcommittee members identified at the face-to-face meeting captured in broad categories. Section 2.1 outlines the Land MYP as an organizing roadmap and framework. Dr. Lynne Haber stated that the ideas in this section were not found in the main text and asked if it was acceptable that these items only be mentioned in the front section and not under the specific charge questions. Dr. Menzie replied that these were items identified at the face-to-face meeting that did not fall under any specific charge question and so it was appropriate to keep them in this overarching section. Dr. Jim Clark agreed. Dr. Siegrist thought that including a table summarizing these items would be helpful.

Section 2.2 details emerging issues and EPA's ability to lead cutting-edge research.

Dr. Dellinger recommended that more emphasis be placed on the SAB recommendations that the revised Land MYP did not incorporate. The Land Restoration and Preservation Program is focused on responding to the needs of the program offices, which in turn focus on short-term issues. As a result, the focus of the Land Program does not appear to be long term. EPA may lose its reputation as a leader in this area if the Agency does not focus on long-term, forward-thinking research. Dr. Keating added that it is possible to be forward thinking while performing applied science, because the gaps in applied research can be filled with progressive, basic scientific research.

Development of new scientists, detailed in Section 2.3, can be considered succession planning. Section 2.4 explains the Subcommittee members' concerns regarding the research gaps left by sunseting programs. Dr. Haber stated that she thought the Hazardous Substance Research Centers (HSRCs) and the Superfund Innovative Technology Evaluation (SITE) Program were being sunsetted because they were mature. Dr. Todd Bridges added that it must be recognized that some programs need to be terminated or sunsetted, and some programs have a specific plan for termination. Dr. Menzie responded that he understood from the discussion at the face-to-face meeting that the Subcommittee members thought that the sunseting of the HSRCs and SITE Program may cause research gaps and that EPA should consider how the research gaps would be managed. It was determined that Dr. Dellinger, who could not participate in the entire conference call, was the Subcommittee member most concerned with this issue, and Dr. Menzie agreed to follow up with him.

Dr. Haber stated that some of the points in the section on research related to sociological and behavioral issues also are covered under the charge questions. A Subcommittee member suggested that this be removed as an overarching issue. Dr. Haber agreed that it should be addressed under the charge questions, but it is not an overarching issue. Dr. Clark argued that sociological research touches on many different research issues and, although it may not be considered one of the more important overarching issues, it is an overarching issue. Mr. Thompson suggested that the Subcommittee rank the overarching issues to determine which broad categories should remain in Section 2. Dr. Menzie agreed that the issues should be ranked and some could be combined.

Dr. Haber thought that some of the text in the section of the report on balancing use of performance metrics as research drivers might contradict some of the text about this issue later in the document. She and Dr. Bridges will work together to eliminate any disparities between the two sections.

Dr. Menzie asked the Subcommittee members if they thought that the issues presented under Section 2.8 about defining outcomes should be moved to the overarching section. Dr. Haber responded that she thought that the second paragraph in this section could be moved into the section on relevance (Section 3).

Dr. Menzie asked Dr. Bridges if he was comfortable with Section 3. Dr. Bridges responded that he approved of the text. Dr. Haber stated that the strongest language about performance metrics is in Section 3.3, which will need to be reconciled with the language about performance metrics in Section 2.6.

Dr. Menzie asked if the issue addressed in the first paragraph on page 21 of the draft report (fourth bullet point under Section 3.6) had been demonstrated through Technical Assistance Teams. Dr. Bridges responded that there was evidence of some efforts, but he thought the efforts could be expanded so that these kinds of activities become the cultural "norm" for the Agency. Dr. Menzie asked if the MYP addressed this issue satisfactorily. Dr. Bridges responded that the activities are strongly integrated with the work, and EPA should be encouraged to emphasize this in its plans and expectations.

Dr. Bridges stated that he sent a revised sentence to Dr. Menzie via e-mail regarding to what extent research program staff participate in or contribute to Agency work groups and transfer research products to the program offices, regions, and other clients for inclusion in Section 3.7.

Mr. Thompson commented that the section on relevance was considerably longer than the other sections and asked that the language be made more concise. Dr. Keating objected to decreasing the length of the section.

Dr. Haber commented that the language in Section 4.1 (specifically the last sentence of the second paragraph under Goal 1) held a much different tone than similar issues under the section on scientific leadership (Section 7). Dr. Menzie stated that he intentionally chose language that emphasized that the Subcommittee was making suggestions and recommendations rather than mandates and directives. Mr. Thompson agreed that the Subcommittee's report should not issue mandates, and if the language in Section 7 appears to do so, it should be changed.

Dr. Haber noted that a paragraph that she had written for Section 4.1 appeared to have been deleted. Dr. Menzie responded that the information contained in the paragraph was duplicated elsewhere in the draft report. Dr. Keating responded that he did not think that the paragraph should have been removed; it is for some issues to be in the overarching section of the report as well as in the main body. Dr. Haber commented that without the paragraph that was removed, the text seems to be missing something. Dr. Menzie responded that the duplication was in the section on relevance versus the section on overarching issues and did not appear to belong in Section 4.1, but in light of Drs. Haber's and Keating's comments, he would reinsert the paragraph.

Dr. Haber commented that Section 4.2 could be written more clearly, and Dr. Keating agreed to edit the paragraph. Dr. Haber stated that the second paragraph in Section 4.3 should be deleted.

Dr. Haber thought that Section 4.6 was followup to Section 4.5 and the two sections could be combined. Dr. Keating disagreed, stating that he interpreted the two sections very differently. Dr. Trish Erickson will prepare a paragraph clarifying the award and allocation process of extramural funding and send it via e-mail to Ms. Drumm to distribute to the Subcommittee members, who then can determine how to combine the two sections.

Mr. Bob Phaneuf thought that Dr. Menzie had done an excellent job in summarizing the sections on performance (Sections 5 and 6). He has only some minor edits, which he will send via e-mail to Dr. Menzie. He stated that the sentence in the second paragraph of Section 6.2 on which Dr. Menzie had commented could be deleted from the report. Dr. Haber recommended that the lag of LTG 2 research be addressed. Mr. Phaneuf did not see confirmation from a performance standpoint presented in the posters at the face-to-face meeting, although it is difficult to relate the research on the posters to outcomes. Dr. Menzie asked if Mr. Phaneuf thought the integration was not present at all or if it just was not reflected in the posters.

Mr. Phaneuf responded that he did not see it in the posters, but that may not be indicative that it is not present at all.

Dr. Menzie asked if the views in the report on the 3MRA model in Section 6.2 were the consensus of the Subcommittee members. Mr. Phaneuf will clarify the sentence to reflect the group consensus.

Dr. Menzie stated that the names of the individual scientists mentioned in Section 7.1 should be removed. Mr. Thompson stated that the idea that he was trying to convey was that EPA experts are not being utilized effectively under the current MYP. He will revise the paragraph to state that more clearly without naming individual scientists.

Dr. Keating asked if there was a place in the report that would summarize the positive findings of the Subcommittee. Dr. Menzie agreed to include that information in the executive summary.

Dr. Menzie asked if the EPA staff present on today's conference call had any comments on the draft report.

Dr. Wentsel indicated that, in response to the first sentence under Section 4.4, the Subcommittee members might want to revisit Appendix F of the MYP, where there are two side-by-side tables explaining external review process changes as a result of SAB recommendations. Dr. Wentsel commented that the EPA *Peer Review Handbook*, which the Subcommittee members were provided, would be helpful in answering questions presented in the first sentence of Section 4.7.

Dr. Wentsel stated that the appearance of duplication of research that is mentioned in the second paragraph of Section 7.2 is because mature and complex research issues need a broad network of experts to be solved. These scientists may be working on similar projects but are not duplicating research.

Dr. Wentsel thought that the recommendations on the last page of the draft report (Section 7.3) did not take into consideration that EPA developed basic models on sediment fate and transport, which have been modified by other groups and agencies. As was illustrated in the first sediment poster at the face-to-face meeting, EPA now is investigating which properties make the best models and providing enhanced products with that information. Because this results in enhancements to current models and applied research, Dr. Wentsel urged the Subcommittee members to rethink the wording of the three paragraphs in this section.

Overall, Dr. Wentsel was impressed with the depth of knowledge that the Subcommittee members displayed in reviewing the Land Restoration and Preservation Research Program and appreciated their efforts.

Next Steps—BOSC Executive Committee Review

Dr. Charlie Menzie, Chair, Land Restoration and Preservation Subcommittee

Dr. Menzie asked Ms. Drumm to contact the Subcommittee members via e-mail to get the revised text for the draft report. This will give the Subcommittee members an opportunity to submit clarified, concise text. Dr. Menzie also asked the Subcommittee members if they agreed with the recommendations as conveyed in the draft report. The Subcommittee members agreed that consensus was reached.

Dr. Keating reiterated his concerns about shortening the length of the document. Dr. Menzie stated that he would defer to Dr. Clark on the length of the document.

Public Comment

Dr. Menzie offered members of the public the opportunity to comment. No comments were made.

Dr. Menzie adjourned the conference call at 2:58 p.m.

Action Items

- ✧ Subcommittee members will send any additional substantive and editorial comments to Dr. Menzie no later than close of business on Wednesday, January 25, 2006.
- ✧ Ms. Drumm will query the DFO of the BOSC Executive Committee to determine if group communications need to be in a public forum or if communications only need to be available to the public upon later request.
- ✧ Dr. Dellinger will write a short paragraph about how EPA can be seen as a leader in long-term and emerging issues research and send it via e-mail to Dr. Menzie.
- ✧ Dr. Menzie will contact Dr. Dellinger, who left the call early, to discuss his thoughts on possible research gaps left with sunseting programs.
- ✧ Dr. Haber and Dr. Bridges will discuss performance metrics to reduce disparities between the tones of the various paragraphs on the topic.
- ✧ Dr. Keating will write a short paragraph about defining outcomes and send it via e-mail to Dr. Menzie.
- ✧ Mr. Thompson will make the section on leadership more concise and send the revised version via e-mail to Dr. Menzie.
- ✧ Dr. Erickson will write a paragraph clarifying the award and allocation process of extramural funding and send it via e-mail to Ms. Drumm.

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APPENDIX A

**Teleconference Agenda
January 23, 2006
12:00 p.m.–2:00 p.m. EST**

**U.S. EPA BOARD OF SCIENTIFIC COUNSELORS
Land Restoration and Preservation Subcommittee**

**MEETING AGENDA
January 23, 2006
12:00 pm – 2:00 pm EST**

Monday, January 23, 2006

12:00 noon	Objectives of this Call Overview of Work Accomplished	Dr. Charlie Menzie Chair, Land Subcommittee
12:10 p.m.	Administrative Procedures	Heather Drumm (EPA) DFO, Land Subcommittee
12:15 p.m.	Discuss Draft Report	Land Subcommittee
1:45 p.m.	Next Steps – BOSC Executive Committee Review	Dr. Charlie Menzie Chair, Land Subcommittee
1:55 p.m.	Public Comments	
2:00 p.m.	Adjourn	