

US National Interagency Research Program on Marine Mammals and Sound

Proposed to Advisory Committee on 4-21-05

A research program should be established to support extramural research to understand interactions between marine mammals and all sources of sound in the world's coastal and global oceans. This should be an interagency program with a co-ordination mechanism established to allow the participating Federal agencies to make optimal decisions with regard to disbursement of funding. In the first place this should be established as a US national program but there would be an expectation that it would be expanded to be an international activity in the near future.

A national commitment should be made to support this program for ten years, at which time a thorough review of accomplishments would be made. The total program should be grown to reach ~\$25M per year over a 3-4 year period.

All grants made under this program would be competitively selected using established peer review procedures. Each year a Program Announcement will be published defining the priorities for the program. The content of this program announcement would be agreed to by the agency program managers, but would be based upon priorities determined by a community-based national steering committee. This steering committee will be populated by representatives of all interest groups, but will be charged with giving recommendations on research program priorities only. The steering committee will be staffed by a national program office that will aid with public outreach and co-ordination.

Participating agencies in this program should include NSF, Navy, NOAA, MMS, FWS.....
New appropriations to these agencies will be needed to support this activity.

Initiation of this activity will be achieved by the calling of a national workshop that will be charged with taking the research recommendations from the MMC report and converting them to an implementation plan, and with the establishment of the community-based steering committee that will be charged as the primary source of advice for the program.