Monday, March 24 @ 1:30 pm

Introduction – Don Scavia

- Michigan Sea Grant has taken a new approach to the research program beginning the request for pre-proposals in January 2006. At this point we are not accepting proposals to undertake state of the art scientific syntheses or investigations or proposals that address fundamental questions of science. The new focus of the research program is on integrated assessment (IA) which is guided by specific policy questions to provide input for decision makers. (For more information on IA, please see http://www.miseagrant.umich.edu/ia/index.html)

- In the RFP we have identified six questions of the kind amenable to the IA process in concert with policy makers. Proposers are not, however, restricted to these six topic areas and are free to put together another topic in consultation with relevant policy makers.

- Sea Grant is also working to identify other funding partners to expand the potential resources available to support IA projects. For example, the RFP directs proposers to the Great Lakes Fishery Trust strategic plan with the idea that, if a project that addresses an area where they have an interest is well reviewed, the Trust would be willing to entertain funding part or the entire project as well.

Overview of Potential Procedural Issues – Jen Read

Timing:

- Pre-proposals are due via web-form (http://www.miseagrant.umich.edu/research/rfp/pre-proposal.php) on Friday, April 4 @ 5 pm (eastern); we intend to notify Principal Investigators (PIs) of pre-proposals we invite to full proposal by mid-April; full proposals are due on Friday, May 23 @ 5 pm (eastern). Submission details will be provided at the time of notification relative to pre-proposal status.

- Full proposals are sent out for mail peer review and a review panel is convened at the end of the process, typically in September. Successful PIs will be notified that their proposals are being included in the Michigan Sea Grant Omnibus proposal to the National Sea Grant College Program. Typically funds for the next fiscal year lag a few months on the official start date (February 1) and do not arrive at MSG until June. We would not be able to provide funds for these projects until we receive them from NOAA.

Pre-proposal Submission Procedure:

- Pre-proposals are submitted via a web form and you attach a pdf file of your pre-proposal text to that from.
Key Pre/Proposal Elements and When Required:

• Non-federal match ($1.00 for every $2.00 requested from Sea Grant) is required for each Sea Grant proposal unless otherwise specified, however confirmation/documentation of the match is not required until the full proposal stage. Note that it is important to specify match contributions carefully to be able to demonstrate sources and amounts. Any match contributions identified by investigators are subject to federal audit that may result in additional costs to their institution.
  o **Non-federal match:** Match may be in the form of selected "in-kind" services or additional funds from a specified institution, agency, industry, or nonfederal program. No funds from federal agencies can be used as match.
  o **Can an existing field program be used as non-federal match?** Yes, if it is NOT federally funded, is ongoing during the project period (at least the amount you are claiming as match) and you are able to document its direct relevance to the project.

• Letter from policy/management contact (for the six identified questions, the name given) indicating their willingness and ability to participate with the project. Please note that this is not an endorsement of the proposal’s merits at this point. This is to ensure that you have at least touched base with the agency contact or, in the case of IAs not on the list, that you have someone willing and able to participate on the project. These people will be asked to review the pre-proposals, therefore they cannot comment on a project’s merit as that would place them in a conflict. At the full proposal stage, PIs will be required to have a letter endorsing the project and project team/approach from the pollyc/management contact. They will not be involved with the full proposal selection process.

Funding:

• The National Sea Grant College Program is realigning the national programs and, as a result, Michigan Sea Grant is soliciting, one time only, three year proposals for up to $140,000 each. We anticipate that the next call for pre-proposals will be in January 2011.

• PIs are free to charge overhead up to the federally negotiated rate of their institution – your sponsored research office will have the latest numbers for you to use. Be sure that you include this in your budget estimate for the pre-proposal. Please note that detailed budget information in NOT required for the pre-proposal.

Eligibility:

• PIs must be from Michigan institutions of higher education which have offices for sponsored research and be recognized by these offices as someone who is able to submit proposals through them. These include, public and private universities and four-year colleges as well as community colleges.

• PIs are free to put together IA teams, however, that draw upon all the relevant entities – local, state and tribal agencies, consulting firms, other non-governmental organizations. Federal
agencies can partner however they can neither receive funds nor use their resources as project match.

Questions from those on the call:

- **How does Sea Grant define research/what will the project funds support?** This opportunity is designed to provide decision support in the context of socio-economic, natural/physical sciences and policy/management activities and is not intended to support fundamental scientific research. As such we will not be supporting collection of field data. We expect researchers to tap into the wealth of data available (through partnership and other means) and make use of that information. We will support the development or refinement of models and other tools that use extant data. We anticipate that the IA will identify data gaps and potentially research agenda for future studies.

- **Is Sea Grant looking for government participation at a particular level, e.g., local, state or federal?** No, we are looking for governments that are well-engaged and ready to use the results of the study. Our current projects are engaged at a number of levels from local (village/township) through federal (EPA).

- **Is there a particular type of model that is better suited to IA than another, in particular for modeling causes and consequences?** IAs can employ both or either quantitative or qualitative modeling techniques, the topic and data will likely dictate the right approach. In some cases, the IA team might need to use the stakeholder group to develop normative scenarios that are primarily qualitative, while for other projects the team might be able to combine very strong quantitative modeling with qualitative elements.

- **Are existing policy constraints relevant for determining policy options against which to forecast?** This is not necessary, in fact it is perfectly valid to provide options that would require a re-evaluation of current constraints. This activity should be guided by the stakeholder group, to a large extent, they will identify where the real political and economic constraints lie and help the team develop a series of policy options that are implementable.

- **Are other Sea Grant Programs supporting IA?** Not at this time. We have discussed the idea with them, especially the other Great Lakes programs and it’s possible that this national realignment will enable us to collaborate on larger IAs across state lines. However, we are the only program currently undertaking this kind of effort.