Joint HSRP and IOOS FAC Statement

September 24, 2018

In welcoming us to the joint meeting of the IOOS Advisory Committee (IOOS AC) and the Hydrographic Services Review Panel (HSRP) in Juneau Alaska, Lieutenant Governor Byron Mallott eloquently articulated Alaskan's affinity for the ocean and the importance of ocean data and information to their daily lives.  He highlighted the cultural foundations of collaboration and cooperation that are necessary to meet the challenges Alaskans face.

The importance of coordination was well illustrated by the special joint session on Alaska Water Level Partnerships. The session was bookended with presentations by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA) Center for Operational Oceanographic Products and Services (CO-OPS) Director Richard Edwing and Alaska Ocean Observing System (AOOS) Executive Director Molly McCammon that bridged the two committees’ interests and underscored the connectivity of ocean observing across NOAA programs.  More significantly, representatives of the Alaska Region National Weather Service and Alaska Department of Natural Resources, who are both data providers and data users, described how their close collaboration on management and integration of the data was leveraged with other data to create improved weather predication and alerts as well as management of coastal hazards at the local level.  CO-OPS’ National Water Level Observation Network (NWLON) is well known as the gold standard of water level data quality. However, one area that both the HSRP and IOOS AC can jointly monitor and discuss going forward is how to deploy and test innovative sensors in Alaska and throughout the United States coastal areas that may not be quite as robust as the NWLON sensors, but still fulfill the basic requirements for nearshore coastal processes. The AOOS is beginning initial efforts to develop an integrated data portal and visualizations for the NOAA Tiered Data Policy for water level data that can be exported to other regions as needed.

The joint session established that substantial benefits can accrue to the IOOS AC and the HSRP from planning additional joint meetings across the NOAA observing programs and other advisory panels, with the goal of identifying potential common issues and opportunities. The two panels working together can jointly provide the best of wide-ranging expertise and advice to NOAA and ensure our ocean observing system is being designed and operated at maximum safety and efficiency.