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Gulf Watch Alaska Long-Term Research and Monitoring (GWA-LTRM) – Comments provided by H. Coletti (NPS), Nearshore Component Lead

Value of GWA-LTRM Integrated Program Management (IPM):

Overall, the IPM provides many key fiscal, coordination, logistical, and scientific functions for GWA-LTRM. Lack of funding for IPM would erode those important roles significantly and would absolutely reduce the value of the program as a whole. The value of a coordinated program far exceeds that of a collection of independent projects.

a. Logistical/Administrative Importance:

- i. NOAA grant administration for our non-Trustee agencies and organizations (e.g., UAF, many others). Efficient administration, relative to project-by-project contracting.
- ii. Play a huge role in program coordination (e.g., proposal, report, and budget organization; meeting coordination; general oversight and accountability, etc)
- iii. Facilitates outreach including the website which highlights reports, papers, and resource briefs.
- iv. Leads engagement with spill-affected Native and local communities.
- v. Organizes GWA-LTRM science review panel activities and supports their travel.
- vi. Provides fiscal support for costs of publications and other products.
- vii. Leverages much in-kind support from agencies for Program Management (e.g., salaries for Program and Science Leads are provide by NOAA)

b. Scientific Importance:

- i. The power of the program depends on the integration of the many data streams (synthesis papers are a recent example). Loss of the IPM would be a dissolution of GWA into independent projects and a huge reduction in science coordination, leveraging and synthesis. It would result in significantly reduced opportunity for PIs to interact, work together, and amplify the impact of their work.
- ii. The IPM facilitates collaborations with external partners, which has proven to be hugely valuable scientifically, results in efficiencies for science funding/leveraging, and increases societal impact of the program.
- iii. The IPM facilitates science synthesis within and outside the program. The value and importance of this cannot be overstated, as these syntheses have proven critical for

understanding how the system functions and how change (e.g., the Pacific heat wave) are expressed across marine biomes. This includes the monitoring of injured resources still recovering from the spill.

iv. Importantly, IPM funding includes support for science synthesis, which would support students, post-docs, and/or early-career scientists to lead synthesis products as required in the Invitation.

v. On a related note, a goal of GWA-LTRM has been to contribute to mentoring and development of young scientists, to help carry on important, relevant work beyond the limited timeframe of GWA-LTRM. The IPM coordinates that and provides funding.

vi. Science synthesis products are used regularly by management agencies (e.g., the annual NOAA ecosystem indicators report to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council).

In Summary:

The program, as a whole, has been very productive scientifically (e.g., the recent set of synthesis papers) and the data become more valuable with each additional year. The program includes heavy investment, as in-kind, by DOI agencies, due to the strong contributions to agency missions, including under the IPM. The program has contributed significantly to management of DOI lands and trust species. Societal value of this work is high. Data are used to forward science, manage land/species, as material for public education and outreach, and to provide opportunities for students, early-career scientists, and spill-affected or underserved communities.

All this is possible because of the role of the IPM in coordinating and managing Gulf Watch LTRM.