28th Annual Science Vessel Coordination Workshop

JANUARY 11, 2024

Action Plan for the coordination and management of Science Vessels

- First developed in 1999
- Stemming from identified need to better coordinate, manage and fund science vessels
- Based on findings/recommendations from science vessel workshops in 1997 and 1998

Earlier efforts highlighting the need for Science Vessel coordination

- ***Great Lakes Research Vessels Information Directory***
  Great Lakes Basin Commission, 1979
- ***Great Lakes Vessel Inventory***
  IJC Water Quality Board, 1983
- ***Public Forum on the future of Great Lakes Science***
  Held in conjunction with October 1995 IJC Biennial Meeting, Duluth, MN

1999 Action Plan Categories

- Communications/Information Sharing
- Institutional/Administrative Requirements
- Program Development/Coordination
- Funding
- Advocacy/Coalition Building

Communications

- **Recommendations:**
  - ✓ *Form an Ad Hoc Committee to develop a science vessel coordination communications program*
  - ✓ *Establish a science vessel website to provide information on the Great Lakes fleet*
  - ✓ *Provide an ongoing forum for sharing information with operators, managers and scientists*

Institutional/Administrative Requirements

- **Recommendations:**
  - ✓ *Formalize a project steering committee for planning and implementation*
  - ✓ *Create a consortium of agencies for the coordination, scheduling, operation and maintenance of science vessels (i.e., UNOLS-like organization)*
  - ✓ *Establish lake committees for higher/finer level coordination of vessels*
  - ✓ *Establish IJC Committee or Work Group to focus on science vessel needs and coordination*

Institutional/Administrative Requirements

- **Recommendations (continued):**
  - ✓ *Create formal mechanisms for training, crew sharing, licensing, resource and supply sharing, etc.)*
  - ✓ *As needed, develop MOUs, technical assistance agreements, cooperative agreements, interagency agreements, mutual aid agreements, etc., to improve efficiency and promote collaboration*
  - ✓ *Create a "brokerage" (public-private partnership) to provide a full-range of services including sharing equipment, operational needs (e.g., maintenance, repair, dockage, shore support and customs-related issues)*

Program Development and Coordination

- **Recommendations:**
  - ✓ *Develop a binational research and monitoring program*
  - ✓ *Fleet assessments should be undertaken by federal agencies, state/provinces and universities*
  - ✓ *Develop a formal program for vessel procurement and replacement*
  - ✓ *Develop a plan for vessel operation and maintenance requirements*
  - ✓ *An assessment of crew requirements should be undertaken and a plan for crew recruitment and retention should be developed*

Funding

- **Recommendations:**
  - ✓ *Secure long-term dedicated funding for science vessel operation and maintenance*
  - ✓ *Seek short-term funding to support the project steering committee and implement the Action Plan*
  - ✓ *Secure funding for the operation and maintenance of the science vessel website and vessel inventory*
  - ✓ *Explore shared-funding opportunities (through interagency agreements) to pool resources and leverage funds*

Advocacy/Coalition Building

- **Recommendations:**
  - ✓ *Develop a strategy to articulate the importance and value of the Great Lakes science vessel fleet in advancing research and monitoring priorities*
  - ✓ *Expand partnerships with Congress, Parliament and agency administrations to promote the value and needs of the Great Lakes science vessel fleet*
  - ✓ *Expand partnerships with business, industry and other private sector groups*
  - ✓ *Develop partnerships with non-research-oriented agencies and industry groups*

Things to consider for an updated action plan

- Celebrate successes – a lot has been accomplished since 1999
- Understanding changes since 1999 - AUVs/ROVs/ smart technology, etc.
- Incorporating lessons learned from the many new builds and retrofits occurring since 1999
- New challenges for vessel operators and managers post-Covid
- Taking advantage of the renewed emphasis on the importance of science (i.e., IJC decadal science strategy)

Questions?

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