U.S. IOOS Advisory Committee
Virtual Public Meeting
Meeting Minutes
June 16-17, 2026

Notification and Availability of Meeting Materials
The U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System Advisory Committee (IOOS AC) was announced to the public by the Federal Register Notification and on the U.S. IOOS Advisory Committee Website. Meeting presentations and background material are posted on the IOOS website. Attendees participated virtually via Webex.

U.S. IOOS Advisory Committee Members Present:
Debra Hernandez, SECOORA (Chair)
Eric Anderson, Ph.D., Colorado School of Mines
Sara Bender, Ph.D., Sall Family Foundation
Catherine Edwards, Ph.D., Skidaway Institute of Oceanography, University of Georgia
Glen Gawarkiewicz, Ph.D., Woods Hole Institute
Monty Graham, Ph.D., Smithsonian Environmental Research Center
Barbara Kirkpatrick, Ph.D., Gulf of America Ocean Observation System (GCOOS)
Nick Rome, Center for Ocean Leadership
Steve Woll, Little Creek Applied Science

Kristen Yarincik, IOOS Association (ex officio)

IOOS Leadership and Staff in Attendance:
Krisa Arzayus (DFO) IOOS Office
Courtney Edwards, IOOS Office
Laura Gewain, IOOS Office

Meeting Welcome and Administrative Updates
Krisa Arzayus, U.S. IOOS Advisory Committee Designated Federal Officer and Acting Director, NOAA's U.S. IOOS Office

K. Arzayus convened the public meeting at 11:02 a.m. and welcomed the attendees. After thanking staff for their efforts in organizing the meeting, she reviewed the agenda and discussed housekeeping matters.

Opening Remarks
Debra Hernandez, Chair, U.S. IOOS Advisory Committee

D. Hernandez thanked the IOOS AC members and Program Office for setting up the meeting. She recognized the leads of the working groups - S. Woll, E. Howlett, C. Edwards, N. Rome - and looked forward to finalizing their recommendations.

IOOS Association Update

Kristen Yarincik, Executive Director, IOOS Association

K. Yarincik provided an update on IOOS Association (the Association) activities. After briefly reviewing the structure and objectives of the Association, K. Yarincik discussed the IOOS regional observations funding line in the draft FY27 appropriations budget. While the President's Budget for FY26 and FY27 have proposed a complete defunding of the program, strong support in Congress has resulted in small increases over recent years, with the largest year-over-year increase of $5 million in FY26. It is still early in the FY27 appropriations cycle, with the House mark in mid-May and the Senate markup being delayed while they continue working on the funding bill. The Association has been targeting the most recent authorization level over the last several years in their requests. Their FY27 request was $56 million and framed IOOS as core national operational infrastructure for safety and economic strength. The request highlighted the ways in which IOOS data improves weather and coastal hazard forecasting, supports search and rescue operations, enables safe and efficient maritime and coastal operations, and is relied upon by major sectors of the U.S. economy. IOOS data also underpins the nation's maritime industrial base and national security goals. Given the context of the proposed elimination of the program, the Association emphasized that eliminating IOOS would save relatively little money but would have significant costs to public safety, economic resilience, and NOAA's ability to fulfill its mission. IOOS is fortunate to have broad bipartisan congressional support and have had their highest number of signers ever for the FY27 House and Senate letters. The program's authorization expired at the end of FY25 and the Association is actively working with Congress on reauthorization. The House passed its version of the reauthorization in May with an authorized funding level of $47.5 million; the Senate's version authorizes $56 million and has passed out of committee but is awaiting action either as a standalone bill or as an amendment to the Weather Act. The Senate version calls for 7.5% of the total appropriation to go to each Regional Association (RA). The Association's understanding is that the House is open to the $56 million level and only lowered the number due to House rules. Both chambers view the Weather Act as the best avenue for passing the reauthorization during this Congress.

Q&A

M. Graham asked if all the FY26 funds been apportioned or if there is a role that the Association can still play in helping to guide them. K. Arzayus said the Association does still have a role to play and they have been very helpful with this in the past year, asking questions via Congress when NOAA has been delayed in approving grant actions and NOFO publications. All of the FY26 funds have been appropriated but there have been some challenges and delays due to NOAA offices not receiving their full year allotments in a timely manner, which delays the transfer of funds from other NOAA offices to IOOS to add to the RA awards. The Program Office is in the midst of establishing new five-year awards and is on track to submit these to the Grants Management Division in the coming week.

B. Kirkpatrick asked how the program is responding to the descoping of NSF's Ocean Observatories Initiative (OOI). K. Yarincik said some are worried it signals a broader intent around observing systems, though she was not concerned about this. OOI was likely targeted for its climate focus or messaging. The descoping will have an impact on IOOS, because IOOS

serves and integrates NSF OOI data in some regions. The Association has been part of the discussion and equipping congressional offices with information. She noted that the OOI institutions were not taking a strong advocacy position against these actions prior to the descoping and have since been increasingly coalescing around a message of letting the process play out. IOOS' efforts tend to be more bipartisan than OOI's and she hopes this will put them in a better position. K. Arzayus agreed with this assessment and, while she was unaware of a plan for NOAA to issue a public impact statement, she said they will be evaluating the impacts of descoping OOI.

N. Rome asked which messages have been resonating with this administration and Congress that may inform IOOS AC's recommendations. K. Yarincik suggested making the connection of ocean observations to the economy and public safety, as well as weather forecasting. Concrete examples of their use in states and districts where the legislator is from have been effective. D. Hernandez added that there have been a number of Executive Orders (EOs) about seafood and maritime dominance that require ocean observing infrastructure to enable progress. Linking to these has been valuable with certain elements in Congress. K. Yarincik said the Association will be holding a congressional informational briefing the following week focused on IOOS use cases for the seafood economy.

M. Graham asked if EOs from President Trump's first administration are still in effect. K. Yarincik said some EOs from the first administration have been referenced in the current one, but they would have to look into it.

G. Gawarkiewicz asked if the potential impacts of the El Nino are something IOOS is working into their messaging. K. Yarincik said she has seen this argument made in some of the pushback to OOI's descoping and it could be directly tied to IOOS' work, though they have not yet leaned into it. N. Rome liked this suggestion and said Jan Newton, Executive Director of the Northwest Association of Networked Ocean Observing Systems (NANOOS), had recently appeared in the media discussing the predicted impacts to the Pacific Northwest region.

G. Gawarkiewicz said he was contacted by people from the commercial fishing industry after the OOI decision. Fishermen are sensitive to any loss of real-time subsurface data they can work from, particularly in extreme weather. J. Newton said that when they prepared the impact statement for OOI, they incorporated what they heard from several fishermen about how much they use OOI assets.

Finalize Recommendations for Observation and Modeling Preparatory Working Group (PWG)
All Members

C. Edwards introduced the PWG's proposed recommendations centered on (1) Partnerships, data, national products/impact; (2) Data Management and Communications (DMAC) review; and (3) Modeling strategy. She briefly discussed each of the recommendations and the rationale for their framing. The text of these and other draft recommendations can be found in the meeting materials on the IOOS AC's website. K. Arzayus recommended articulating each of the

recommendations separately in order to better facilitate tracking their implementation. They should also be put into a consistent format, which could be done after the meeting.

On the first proposed recommendation, D. Hernandez said that the two sentences of the first recommendation (identifying the next grand challenges and articulating more effectively the success of ongoing work) seemed like separate recommendations.

G. Gawarkiewicz asked about the extent to which the IOOS Office is empowered to communicate successes. K. Arzayus said it varies from one administration to the next. While there are rules governing what and how they communicate publicly, IOOS has a website, newsletter, and social media presence where they can get their messages out.

B. Kirkpatrick suggested being more strategic around the grand challenges by including about the economy, public safety impacts, or maritime dominance. C. Edwards said the working group discussed how much to tailor recommendations for the moment versus for a program's long-term operations. K. Yarincik suggested adding specific examples that articulate the impact of IOOS on NOAA programs and products/services.

D. Hernandez read Laura Lilly's comments that suggested bolding the main recommendation and adding specifics around what it would look like for IOOS to "find or focus on the success stories and do a better job of taking credit for it." D. Hernandez suggested the committee focus more on the content of the recommendations, rather than how they should be implemented. C. Edwards said the PWG could work on building out the recommendation with sub-recommendations, more explicitly focusing on key successes and what makes IOOS a good partner.

On the second recommendation, D. Hernandez commented that "IOOS should consider a review" is not particularly strong recommendation language. N. Rome also suggested clarifying who "IOOS" is referring to in this case. He also questioned whether the IOOS Program Office had the capacity to conduct a review for AI readiness. M. Graham asked if NOAA already has a superseding AI readiness mandate. D. Hernandez said there is a strategy and plan, but the implementation steps have not yet happened throughout the system. M. Graham suggested recommending that IOOS take on a demonstration of how they are in a position to leverage AI to answer supraregional questions, rather than recommending a review.

B. Kirkpatrick commented on the word "review." The AI landscape is changing so rapidly that by the time a review synopsis was released, things could be radically different. She suggested they recommend to the NOAA Administrator a demonstration process of how AI is facilitated by the IOOS data management system. C. Edwards said the recommendation could be framed as AI readiness being something to prioritize.

On the third recommendation, E. Anderson suggested making the recommendation language ("IOOS and NOS may wish to evaluate") stronger as well. He also asked if the goal of a review is to better understand the challenges in the transition of IOOS community models to NOS and why it takes so long or whether it is to better understand how IOOS can engage with NOS. He

noted that IOOS is not mentioned at all in NOS' modeling strategy and vision. C. Edwards agreed that these are related and it could be better articulated in the language.

E. Anderson also asked if IOOS still has representation on the NOS Modeling Advisory Board or if that should be addressed. K. Arzayus said the board does still have IOOS representatives but it is more of an internal steering committee. If the recommendation is to create more of a community advisory group, that would be a larger lift and have FACA implications. The IOOS AC could recommend establishing a Modeling Working Group as one of their standing subcommittees. D. Hernandez agreed that this would be the simplest approach if NOS and NOAA agree.

These recommendations were continued until the following day's session.

Discuss Interagency Ocean Observation Committee (IOOC) Recommendations
All Members

N. Rome introduced the proposed recommendations on leveraging the IOOC for cross-agency coordination. IOOS is inherently interagency and cannot meet its statutory mandates through NOAA alone. While the IOOC is currently paused, this recommendation suggests reactivating it as an execution pathway for IOOS. He summarized the context for the four recommendations and provided an overview of each. The recommendations include: (1) Reactivate and strengthen the IOOC to fulfill IOOS' statutory mission and prepare for reauthorization; (2) Convene cross-agency execution teams for priority observing challenges; (3) Develop an interagency inventory of observing assets, requirements, and gaps; and (4) Leverage IOOS RAs as implementation partners.

M. Graham wanted to confirm that IOOC is still in hiatus and nothing had changed about its status. He also wondered whether they should make reference to the loss of OOI. N. Rome said even though the IOOC has technically paused, the co-chairs have still been meeting informally on a regular basis.

G. Gawarkiewicz commented that, while the OOI decision has gotten a lot of attention, an interagency re-evaluation of ocean observation gaps at the national level is needed. Economic arguments can be made moving forward to address some of these gaps.

M. Graham moved to finalize the recommendations. B. Kirkpatrick seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Day One Adjournment

K. Arzayus adjourned Day One of the meeting at 1:01 p.m.

Finalize Recommendations for Private Sector PWG
All Members

S. Woll introduced the proposed recommendations for public-private partnerships. The PWG's primary recommendation was that NOAA research, define, and articulate the boundaries between the various component sectors of the national oceanographic enterprise. Under this, the group provided further specifics on this process, the outcome of which would be a road map identifying roles for each component sector of the enterprise, and a description of a possible enterprise construct. The PWG's secondary recommendations focus on NOAA undertaking to research, define, and articulate the standards and requirements required to support the primary recommendation, and what would be needed to make this effort successful. The private sector wants to partner with the agency, but they want to do so wisely. To the extent that NOAA can articulate what the landscape is, what the agency is going to do, what they are not going to do, and where the gray areas are that they are still figuring out, it would be very helpful.

G. Gawarkiewicz said the recommendations do a good job handling a complex topic and applauded the choice of speakers brought in to brief the PWG, especially those that spoke to the downstream financial components. More connections to these sectors would be useful.

M. Graham said there is overlap between these recommendations and a recent report on public-private partnerships created by the Ocean Research Advisory Panel (ORAP) directed to the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy. It may be a good idea to ensure the two are in alignment. S. Woll said he thought these recommendations were consistent with ORAP's report and they might recommend convening a roles and responsibilities committee using the ORAP report as a starting document. D. Hernandez felt the charges of the two efforts were different but have complementary results.

C. Edwards asked how the baseline level would be defined and by whom. She also asked whether the IOOS AC wanted to suggest a process by which to establish that baseline. S. Woll said this goes back to NOAA reconfirming its mission or figuring out how to trim their mission so that they can get it done with the resources that are being allocated. This is an issue any group that is convened on this topic should address. C. Edwards said that confronting risks to the mission should be part of establishing priorities, as well as how to incorporate other add-on benefits that are not fully captured by these metrics. S. Woll agreed that it would require a good faith effort by all involved in scoping this out. B. Kirkpatrick followed up on C. Edwards' comment and expressed concern about suggesting simply funding a "backbone" and nothing else. S. Woll said he expected government funding to start a downward trajectory for a time beyond the current administration and wanted the committee to be part of guiding future decision making in a way that would cause the least harm.

N. Rome suggested clarifying who the recommendations are directed to and what the process should look like.

G. Gawarkiewicz commented on a recent meeting he attended in which a speaker discussed how they have established a process to create research priorities that maximize the impact on the management decisions. This might be a useful model in addressing the question C. Edwards raised.

S. Woll said he would incorporate the IOOS AC's input into the next iteration of the recommendations.

Finalize Recommendations for Observation and Modeling PWG (continued)
All Members

C. Edwards briefly summarized the discussions from the previous day and presented the revised versions of the proposed recommendations. The PWG sought the IOOS AC's approval of their content and would continue to refine the language after this meeting.

D. Hernandez commented that a community modeling meeting was to be held at the end of July that may produce ideas the committee would want to consider before finalizing the recommendations. K. Arzayus said she spoke with Dr. Stephan Smith, the acting lead for NOS' modeling consolidation work, and he was very supportive of the idea of standing up a modeling subcommittee under the IOOS AC, though he was not sure how the idea would be received at the NOAA level. She would continue to inquire about this, but noted that a recommendation from the committee does not require NOAA to take any action.

K. Arzayus asked if each of the PWGs would like to have one more meeting to work through some of their edits, with final recommendations due by August 30. This was agreed to by the members. S. Woll sought assistance from another member to finalize his PWG's recommendations.

S. Woll made a motion to accept the substantive content of both sets of the PWGs' recommendations, subject to further revisions in the coming weeks. C. Edwards seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Future Work Plan Discussion
All Members

K. Arzayus initiated a discussion about the future work of the IOOS AC and what topics the committee wanted to focus on. She also announced that the committee's charter had been approved for the next five years. As a starting point for thinking about the next topics, she presented a list of topics that emerged from the January meeting as well as some topics suggested by the Program Office stemming from recent events: (1) Network/system design, e.g., providing guidance on a process for responding to major changes, including establishing roles; (2) Requirements, e.g., providing guidance on managing NOAA's list of requirements and strengthening governance of national assets; and (3) Branding and marketing, e.g., providing guidance on how to strengthen the messaging around the value of IOOS. K. Arzayus said the

selected topics are intended to be the focus of the committee's work for the next year, rather than here-and-now focus areas.

M. Graham suggested considering what a periodic review of the IOOS system would consist of, to ensure it is delivering everything it needs to. K. Arzayus said NOS has a requirement for all programs to have a review every five years, though this has been put on hold due to staffing shortfalls. She supported the idea and welcomed any input on what that process should include. There has also been talk of holding another IOOS Summit.

G. Gawarkiewicz expressed concern with the first proposed focus area, given the manner in which OOI was descoped. It would be unfortunate for the committee to spend its time on developing a recommended process only to have other factors override their suggestions.

B. Kirkpatrick said there may be common themes in the RAs' five-year proposals that would be useful to consider for future topics and directions. She also wanted to hear the Program Office's feedback on the proposals and K. Arzayus committed to doing this. C. Edwards said it might also be worth considering disruption to RA activities due to funding delays. D. Hernandez thought this was a good idea, but that the Program Office may be too limited in what they are able to say publicly about where things stand. An analysis of the delay would have to come from the RAs. K. Arzayus discussed some of the complexities in trying to ascertain the status of available funding from all of the various sources.

B. Kirkpatrick said they should have the topics decided by the fall in order to have the right speakers present at their January meeting. K. Arzayus said that if the committee envisions a topic with heavy agency engagement, it would be better to have the January meeting in D.C.; if the topic they choose centers more on the field work, they can ask one of the RAs to host.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Public Meeting Adjourned

D. Hernandez adjourned the public meeting at 3:54 p.m.

Minutes Certification

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Debra Hernandez, Chair Date