National Oceanographic Partnership Program

The National Oceanographic Partnership Program (NOPP) marked its 10th anniversary in 2007. NOPP promotes the goals of assuring national security, advancing economic development, protecting quality of life, and strengthening science education and communication through improved knowledge of the ocean.

NOPP is a collaboration of federal agencies to provide leadership and coordination of national oceanographic research and education initiatives. NOPP facilitates interactions among federal agencies, academia and industry; increases visibility for ocean issues on the national agenda; and achieves a higher level of coordinated effort across the broad oceanographic community. The past decade of NOPP has seen interagency cooperation and cross cutting research projects supported by the federal government.

Long-term Integrated Ocean Observing System

Because the development and continuity of an Integrated Ocean Observing System is one of the NOPP strategic goals, NOPP initiated the U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System, which has now developed its own appropriations and interagency guidance mechanisms. NOPP also played a role in supporting design studies which have led to the Ocean Observatories Initiative, a major National Science Foundation capital investment and research initiative. NOPP has also served as the mechanism for the implementation and successful development of the Argo float system in the global ocean. Named for the Greek mythological character Jason’s ship, the Argo global float array has a strong complementary relationship with the Jason satellite altimeter mission.

Participating Agencies

Arctic Research Commission
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Council on Environmental Quality
Department of Agriculture
Department of Energy
Department of Justice
Department of State
Domestic Policy Council
Environmental Protection Agency
Food and Drug Administration
Joint Chiefs of Staff
Marine Mammal Commission
Maritime Administration
Minerals Management Service
National Aeronautics and Space Administration
National Institutes of Health
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Science Foundation
Office of Management and Budget
Office of Naval Research
Office of Science and Technology Policy
Smithsonian Institution
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
U.S. Coast Guard
U.S. Geological Survey
Lifelong Ocean Education

In efforts to instill in the general public and governmental decision-makers the importance of wise stewardship of the ocean and coastal zones, NOPP supports science education and communication. With the goal of entraining more high school students into ocean science studies, NOPP has supported the expansion of the successful National Ocean Sciences Bowl, an exciting competition for high school juniors and seniors. NOPP also completed studies of the ocean science workforce, the federal oceanographic fleet, and the economic impact of ocean observing systems.

Ocean Infrastructure and Technology Development

In order to modernize ocean infrastructure and enhance technology development, NOPP has funded research to develop sensors for sustained, autonomous measurements of a wide range of parameters in the ocean and encouraged transition of ocean instruments and sensors to commercial application. Research projects include development of new methods for detection of fish populations, development of new technologies for advanced chemical sensing in the ocean, and transitioning technologies for use on autonomous underwater vehicles. NOPP is funding cutting-edge technology development that takes advantage of advances in biotechnology and applies them to the marine environment. Remote, gene-based detection for species-specific identification of marine life will allow for improved coastal water quality monitoring and a better understanding of the marine ecosystem, including algal blooms and coral reef health.

Interagency Partnerships

Through NOPP, the public and private sectors are brought together to support larger, more comprehensive projects, to promote sharing of resources, and to foster community-wide innovative advances in ocean science, technology and education. This philosophy of partnering has created instrumental collaborations at the project level between the more traditional ocean research communities and those of a more applied, or resource-focused, nature to increase scientific knowledge. For example, NOPP has been able to help advance the field of ocean data assimilation through the Global Ocean Data Assimilation Experiment, a multi-agency and multi-disciplinary research project which has provided ocean models to the U.S. Navy and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

The National Oceanographic Partnership Program is managed by a program office at the Consortium for Ocean Leadership through a contract with the Office of Naval Research (#N00014-07-D-0829/0002).

The Consortium for Ocean Leadership is a Washington, D.C. based nonprofit organization representing more than 95 of the leading public and private ocean research and education institutions, aquaria, and industry. Many individual researchers at member institutions participate in NOPP-funded research.