



GCOOS Summer Board Telecon - Meeting Notes

Date: August 27, 2025 **Time:** 14:04 CST – 15:27 CST

Attendees:

- Kim Yates
- Marcus Ogle (Staff)
- Antonietta Quigg
- Brian Roberts
- Dave Driver
- Emily Hall
- Jan van Smirren
- Jorge Brenner (Staff)
- Kirsten Larsen
- Nan Walker
- Nick Shay
- Pat Hogan
- Rafael Ramos
- Ruth Perry
- Sara Graves
- Suraida Nanez-James

1. Welcome & Agenda

The meeting was called to order at 14:04 CST. A motion was put forward to approve the meeting agenda, which passed with no opposition.

2. Voting: New Treasurer

It was announced that **Jan van Smirren**, who has served GCOOS for 20 years, will be stepping down as treasurer this fall. **Rafael Ramos** was nominated to step up into the role, and no other

nominations were put forward. Sara Graves moved to approve the nomination, and Jan seconded the motion. The motion passed with no opposition, confirming Rafael Ramos as the new GCOOS treasurer. All attendees extended a significant thank you to Jan for his dedicated service.

3. Funding Update (Presented by Jorge Brenner)

Jorge Brenner provided a comprehensive update on the GCOOS funding status. He noted that IOOS is actively fighting to support the GCOOS network with members of Congress. The **UAL AI project**, which was paused in the spring, has now been re-instated. Regarding the **TA1 FGBNMS Buoy Project (\$115,000)**, those funds were repurposed by the new administration; however, it appears GCOOS may still be able to support this project by re-purposing funds from other projects. The **TA2 OA Observatory (\$1M, USGS Mike Lee)** is still moving forward. Kim Yates, an original Co-PI, is retiring from USGS but will remain associated with the project via GCOOS.

GCOOS was awarded **\$1.3M for the BIL2 (now IIJA - Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act)**, which covers the first two of the three proposed years. Funding for Year 3 is not yet secured and will be considered as part of the FY26 budget. These funds will cover HFR O&M plus one new station, new sensors and two new gliders with additional missions and O&M, and up to eight new webcams across the Gulf.

For the **GCOOS MAIN Award**, the project period started on July 1. IOOS has confirmed that GCOOS is "fully funded" at **\$4.2M for FY25**, though the official award has not yet been received. This total includes \$2,499,000 in core funding and add-ons for Navy Gliders, GCAN, OAP (USM), NTL, CETACEAN and Sea Turtle Atlas, Nutrient Sensors (ULL), Code Sprint 2026, and an adjustment to base funds (\$45k). With this confirmation, GCOOS can now proceed with developing the budget and sending award letters to PIs.

4. Finishing Out 2025

Key priorities for the remainder of the 2025 calendar year were identified. These include rehiring for the GIS Administrator and Developer positions, managing Year 5 of the Main Award, and preparing for the new 5-year funding cycle, for which GCOOS will make an announcement next week. Other priorities include conducting the Strategic Plan Review and organizing the upcoming Fall Meeting, which will also celebrate the **GCOOS 20th Anniversary**.

5. Strategic Plan (2026-2030) Review

GCOOS is restarting the review process for the next 5-year strategic plan (2026-2030). Reviewers will use a 6-question template to evaluate existing projects, referencing the current plan and a summary of PI project reports provided at the Spring Meeting. One board member is needed to "champion" and lead the review for each focus area. Kim Yates suggested names, and board members present confirmed or adjusted their assignments. Anyone else who wishes

to commit is asked to reach out by next week. The review must be completed by the **deadline of September 30th**.

During the discussion, Brian Roberts suggested that when defining "achievable" goals, the plan must include the caveat that "funding is needed to achieve the goal" and that metrics for success should include funding. Antonietta Quigg asked if stakeholder feedback would be available, to which Kim confirmed that PI reports include this feedback and stakeholders have been invited to the fall meeting. Pat Hogan expressed concern over the September 30th deadline, but Kim clarified that the deadline is intentionally early to ensure all results can be compiled before the fall meeting. Nick Shay asked about the timeline for LOIs (Letters of Intent), and Jorge replied that a process for this will be outlined next week. Nick also asked if the review should consider GCOOS expansion or new directions. Jorge affirmed this, stating he will reach out next week to discuss new priorities, emerging topics, and national-level topics of interest (e.g., water level sensors, webcams). Nan Walker asked if the buildout plan should be reviewed in addition to the Strategic Plan. Kim confirmed that while all documents should be reviewed, the focus is on the Strategic Plan. Finally, Nan suggested that members of the different review groups work together, which Kim agreed would be very helpful for discussions at the fall meeting.

6. Other Agenda Items

Several other items were discussed. It was noted that Jim Kendall will not be allowed to participate as a GCOOS board member until after his official retirement on December 31. The board discussed options, including leaving the position unfilled, and asking Tom Wissing to continue serving in the interim, or confirming with lawyers whether an "emeritus" status with BOEM would allow Jim to remain on the board. Kim Yates extended her thanks to Suraida Nanez-James and Stephan Howden for agreeing to serve on the GIS interview panel. Regarding the TAMUG and HFR site visit, the team is still awaiting date availability from Senator Weber's office. Jorge concluded with two reminders: new board terms do not officially start until the Fall board meeting, and Marcus Ogle began his new role leading the Operations and DMAC team on August 1.

7. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Suraida Nanez-James and seconded by Emily Hall. The meeting was adjourned at 15:27 CST.