Summary of Town Hall Meeting on the “US Post-THORPEX Legacy Research Program”

World Weather Open Science Conference (WWOSC), Montreal, Canada

6:00-8:00pm, August 18, 2014

Purpose (text from WWOSC program)

“As the international THORPEX program draws to a close at the end of 2014, three international legacy projects have been established: Polar Prediction Project (PPP), Subseasonal-to-Seasonal prediction (S2S), and High-Impact Weather (HIWeather). There will be several presentations on each of these legacy projects during the WWOSC. In the United States, a first planning meeting was held in Silver Spring, Maryland on June 5-6 2014 to introduce the legacy projects, and for participants to identify critical gaps, common scientific challenges and priorities in the context of these projects. The next stage in the US is to develop a coordinated community project plan that is linked with the three international projects. The purpose of this Town Hall is to engage the US community in a new program, to seek feedback on the path forward, and to welcome contributions from the community to the drafting of the project plan.”

Attendees: About 50 attendees, comprising scientists and managers from US universities, agencies, research and operational institutions, and several from institutions around the world.

Moderator: Dr Sharan Majumdar (University of Miami): Summary from US THORPEX Legacy Planning Meeting, held in Silver Spring in June 2014. The slides presented at this Town Hall have been distributed to about 100 members of the community.

Panelists:

- Dr Randall Dole (NOAA / ESRL / PSD): PPP project overview; Arctic as a National Priority; US involvement in international projects.

- Dr Daniel Eleuterio (Office of Naval Research): Earth System Prediction Capability, importance of process studies and field research. Sea Ice Prediction and S2S.

- Dr Chungu Lu (National Science Foundation): NSF perspective. Division of Atmospheric and Geospace Sciences; Division of Polar Programs.

- Dr Andrew Robertson (IRI / Columbia): S2S project overview. Supported by both WWRP and WCRP, database may be available by 2015. Emphasis on seamlessness.

- Dr Zoltan Toth (NOAA / ESRL / GSD): Summary of accomplishments and shortcomings of US THORPEX, opportunities in post-THORPEX era.

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1 A meeting summary which will be published in BAMS is appended at the end of this document.
Key questions raised by panelists

How should US research community and sponsors most effectively link to the 3 WMO/WWRP post-THORPEX legacy projects?

How do we build tighter links between the insights gained from reanalysis / correlative studies, theoretical or idealized development, field process studies and predictability experiments into forecast skill improvements?

Would a coordinated community program plan for US research benefit the community, and what should be the steps to develop such a plan?

Comments from attendees

Louis Uccellini (NWS Director)
- Positive direction for NWS, new infrastructure and funding (e.g. R2O)
- Pleased to see this development, which NWS needs
- A community document in hand to take to the Hill would be beneficial
- Need to set clear and bold goals and deliverables (e.g. HFIP set quantitative goals)
- Be bold in trying to improve modeling systems
- PPP: Arctic sea ice prediction out to a month is a priority
- S2S: examples include 3-4 week predictions of precipitation in Mississippi Valley
- HIWeather: use “extreme” as opposed to “high impact”, this has more traction on the Hill
- Do not use "promote" in the mission statement, instead something that is actionable

Other comments
- Identify the most critical extreme event types in the US that this research will benefit, map onto national socio-economic and agency priorities
- Agree on goals and deliverables, and define what is needed to accomplish these
- Need to clearly define underlying common infrastructure across different projects
- Identify who should support infrastructure and data archive (NSF/NCAR?)
- R2O must be clearly conveyed, how project will deliver for NWS/NOAA and other agencies
- Advance our ability to work together in the international community
- Keep the 3 projects with their separate identities, as agreed by the international community
- It had been suggested in WMO to carry the idea of unification of the 3 projects forward, but international leadership would be necessary if this is to take place. Name change a problem.
- Seek to avoid ‘stove piping’ where projects do not benefit from related projects
- Possibly include air quality as a hazard