



United States Department of Interior
U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

Western Fisheries Research Center
6505 NE 65th St.
Seattle, WA 98115



Minutes for the Western Fisheries Research Center, IBC Meeting – December 16 2025

Meeting called to order at 9:02 AM

- There were no member conflicts with any of the meeting materials.
- The minutes from the April 22, 2024 meeting had been previously reviewed and approved by the IBC.

Items on the agenda were completed as the following.

1. The Member Conflicts Policy and Identity of Conflicts from the WFRC IBC Charter was presented (Section 8.1 of the WFRC Charter). This was done as a reminder to members of the conflict of interest policy for the IBC as mandated by the NIH OSP.
2. The Function and Format of the IBC meeting (Section 6.4 of the WFRC Charter). The format for how the IBC members review, discuss, and voted upon applications and policies were reviewed as a reminder.

Old Business. There was no old business to discuss.

New Business

- Introduction to Jeff Potts, the USGS Biosafety and Biorisk Management team. Jeff gave a short presentation on his background and his role in the USGS. Jeff explained how biosafety will be handled for the individual centers in the future. He emphasized that this is an ongoing project with many of the details yet to be finalized. He also addressed the new NIH guidelines for IBC transparency. He emphasized that all IBC meeting minutes are to be published on a public-facing website for meeting that occurred after June 1 2025. WFRC has such a website and these minutes will be posted there.
- John Allen gave update on the continuing effort to automate the chlorination system to treat wet lab effluent. Monitors and dosing pumps are in place and functioning so far.
- Review of Paul Hershberger's change application to add *Vibrio pectenicida* to his core application. The bacterium has been shown to be the causative agent for sea star wasting disease. Because it causes disease in normal sea stars, it is classified as a RG2 agent and all work with it in sea stars is to be performed at ABSL2. A vote was called to approve the change application and approved by unanimous vote.

Regular business was concluded at 9:50 AM. At this point the meeting was opened to the public for comment/questions.

Public Comments

WFRC Scientist, Evi Emmenegger, commented on whether Piper Schwenke holding the position of the non-affiliated IBC member constitutes a conflict of interest. Piper is employed by NOAA. NOAA is currently renting laboratory and office space from Western Fisheries. This question was posed to NIH OSP and they concluded that there was indeed a conflict of interest. Piper Schwenke has been notified and the process of

identifying her replacement is underway. The IBC would like to thank Piper Schwenke for her service to the committee. The IBC would like to thank the public member for pointing this out.

Evi also commented that there was no distinguishing between public meeting participants and non-IBC, WFRC staff members in the IBC Charter. According to the charter, all non members of the IBC are treated as uniform group: that is, the same rules apply to all non-members. Therefore, the IBC sees no reason to distinguish and categorizes them as public public participants

Written comments submitted to the IBC, and formal responses from the IBC are available from the IBC chair upon request. Contact Steve Libby slibby@contractor.usgs.gov.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:02 AM.

IBC Members in Attendance

Steve Libby
Piper Schwenke
Carl Osberg
John Hansen
John Allen
David Koelle
Nichole Lewis

Roles and/or Affiliations

IBC Chair and BSO
NOAA Forensic Molecular Geneticist Non-affiliated member
WFRC Evolution and Conservation Genetics
WFRC Fish Molecular Biology and Immunology
WFRC Facilities Manager
Public Member University of Washington Virlogy
WFRC Attending veterinarian

Center Director

Michael Schmidt

WFRC Center Director and RO

Invited participants

Jeff Potts
Paul Hershberger

USGS Biorisk Manager
WFRC Fish Health

Public participants

Evi Emmenegger

WFRC Fish Health