

Northeast Consortium

University of New Hampshire

University of Maine

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution

October 19, 2011

Capt. Paul Howard
Executive Director
New England Fishery Management Council
50 Water Street
Newburyport, MA 01950

Dear Capt. Howard,

The Northeast Consortium has facilitated an independent technical evaluation of the project development award:

“Pilot project to assess need and initialize a methodology to groundtruth existing multi-beam and side-scan sonar seafloor charts.”

This project received funding from the Northeast Consortium in FY2005 (\$25,000) to utilize fishermen’s knowledge of the ocean environment to validate seafloor charts of the U.S. Geological Survey and to test methods for groundtruthing areas that needed additional substantiation. Dr. Sal Genovese of Northeastern University led the project in partnership with the Massachusetts Fishermen’s Partnership, Capt. BG Brown, Dr. Madeleine Hall-Arber of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Anthony Wilbur of the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management

I am pleased to submit the evaluation documents to the New England Fishery Management Council. This includes the final report and two evaluation reports.

The Review:

The evaluation served as a formal assessment of the project. Two independent scientists each conducted a mail review of the project, providing comments and suggestions, which while occasionally critical, were made with the intent to improve the research, applications of the data, and future research. The reviewers were asked to focus on the final report, but supporting documents were included in the review package to give further perspectives on the project. The evaluation reports were sent to Dr. Genovese in September, 2011. Although he will not be submitting a written response at this time, he may be contacted for questions.

Evaluation Criteria:

The evaluation criteria are listed in the enclosed document that describes the Northeast Consortium general review process. Reviewers were asked to focus on the second criteria, certification of results, i.e. whether the experimental design was appropriate and if the conclusions are well supported by the data.

Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality:

Each reviewer signed the Northeast Consortium's conflict of interest and confidentiality policy for the technical evaluation of projects. The evaluation reports submitted do not necessarily reflect views of the Northeast Consortium, the reviewers' employers, or governments. The review comments are being submitted to the Council anonymously. However, I am always willing to act as a liaison for questions of the reviewers regarding any aspect of the evaluations.

The Northeast Consortium values this collaborative research project and the contributions that it can make to fisheries management and our collective knowledge of the Gulf of Maine and Georges Bank ecosystem. Thank you in advance for your consideration and assistance in ensuring the appropriate use of the study and the evaluation reports in the management arena. Do not hesitate to contact me with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,



Rachel Gallant Feeney
Communications and Information Coordinator
603-862-2276
rachel.feeney@unh.edu

CC:

Pat Fiorelli, NEFMC
Chris Glass, Northeast Consortium

Enclosures:

- The Northeast Consortium's guidelines for the final technical evaluation for collaborative research projects, including evaluation criteria.
- Genovese, S. "Pilot project to assess need and initialize a methodology to groundtruth existing multi-beam and side-scan sonar seafloor charts." Final report submitted to the Northeast Consortium, September 2008.
- "Technical evaluation report." Submitted to the Northeast Consortium November 8, 2010.
- "Technical evaluation report." Submitted to the Northeast Consortium September 26, 2011.