



## Research Priority Planning June 2019 and beyond

### Background

A discussion of the Council and SSC process for reviewing and approving five-year research priorities is scheduled for Monday February 4 under the SSC agenda. This is an opportunity for the SSC and Council to reflect on the current state of the review process and develop a plan for the upcoming June 2019 review and for the long term.

Efforts to streamline and improve management of the large number NPFMC research priorities have been underway for several years and progress is marked by several milestones:

- 2012 -[Research priority database online](#)
- 2014 -[Priority categories redefined](#)
- 2016 -[NPRB coordination initiated](#)
- 2018 -[Research priority process proposal at April meeting](#)  
-[Top ten research priority list adopted at June meeting](#)

The April 2018 research priority process proposal formulated by the Research Priority Workgroup (leadership from Council, SSC, AKRO, and Staff) consisted of three parts: 1) “Critical Ongoing Monitoring” projects are “not up for debate” and would not be reviewed in June 2018, 2) The Council would focus on a “top ten list” of projects selected by the SSC, and 3) “Strategic” projects are not applicable to management in the near term and would not be reviewed in June 2018. The Workgroup further proposed that the Council and SSC work to develop a vision statement to address the periodicity of near-term and long-term research priority reviews.

### Top Ten List

In 2018, a new process for review of the research priorities was initiated which stemmed from a June 2017 proposal to streamline the Council review process. Under this new process, the annual curation of the research priority database proceeded as normal, however; a top ten list was developed from priorities identified as either Urgent or Important in order to reduce the review burden on the Council and to highlight these priorities in our communication with external funding sources and the general public. The SSC reported its intent to use 2018 as an opportunity to test the waters with this new approach, and the February meeting could be an opportunity for determining whether this practice continues in 2019.

### Frequency of Review

The February 2018 CCC meeting in Washington D.C. allowed Council staff leadership the opportunity to compare several of this Council’s processes to those of other Regional Councils. The NPFMC is alone in the nation in its annual review and submission to the SOC of five-year research priorities. The flexibility that is apparently available in fulfilling this MSA mandate opens up the opportunity for the Council to explore alternative intervals for research priority review. Additionally, less frequent review could allow the Council and SSC to explore categories of research priorities in a manner that allows better understanding of the depth of Council research interests within a given research specialty, and, importantly, the outcome of the research and its applicability to Council activities. Interest in greater flexibility in the review process has been echoed by the SSC and Council at April and June 2018 meetings.

## **Coordination with NPRB**

At the June 2016 Council meeting, staff were directed to work with NPRB staff to identify ways to better coordinate the Council's research needs with specific research activities funded through the NPRB process. This has been an ongoing process, and in 2018, the NPRB hired a research fellow whose assignments included cross referencing NPRB projects with those identified in the NPFMC database. Dr Matt Baker of NPRB has made regular presentations to the SSC at the June meeting and in its report from 2018, the SSC noted the importance of NPFMC-NPRB linkages in documenting progress on research priorities to their completion. At the upcoming June 2019 meeting, the NPRB is looking forward to reporting on that exercise.