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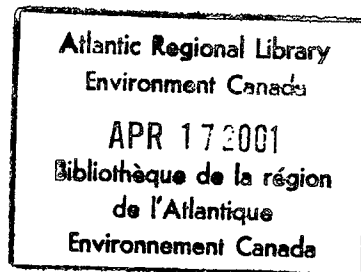
Environmental
Studies
Research
Funds

UPDATE
UPDATE

HIGHLIGHTS OF ITEMS IN THIS ISSUE:

- ⇒ *Current studies update*
- ⇒ *The 2001 study program*
- ⇒ *2002 priorities*
- ⇒ *Website Update*

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Mandate of the Environmental Studies Research Funds

Section 76(2) of the Canada Petroleum Resources Act sets out the purpose of the ESRF: *"The purpose of the Funds is to finance environmental and social studies pertaining to the manner in which, and the terms and conditions under which, exploration, development and production activities on frontier lands authorized under this Act or any other Act of Parliament should be conducted."*

Current Studies Update

The Environmental Studies Research Funds (ESRF) Management Board met 6 times in 2000. Major progress has been made in re-establishing the profile of ESRF and interest in the program.

On 8-9 May 2000, ESRF sponsored a workshop in St. John's on Cumulative Environmental Effects Assessment and Monitoring on the Grand Banks and Scotian Shelf. The workshop was initiated in response to recommendations from the 1997 Terra Nova Environmental Assessment Panel on the need to address cumulative effects of offshore oil and gas development. Sixty-five representatives of the oil and gas industry, federal and provincial governments, fishing industry, researchers and non-governmental organizations participated. The workshop provided an opportunity for stakeholders to discuss approaches to cumulative effects assessment and monitoring, and to transfer and adapt knowledge developed in western Canada and other offshore oil and gas producing areas. The workshop report was published as ESRF Report 137, **Workshop on Cumulative Environmental Effects Assessment and Monitoring on the Grand Banks and Scotian Shelf**.

Offshore oil and gas production on Canada's East Coast has been accompanied by public concern for the effects of these activities on seabirds and seabird populations. Canada's East Coast hosts large and globally significant resident and migratory populations of these birds. In 1999-2000, a study was undertaken into how effects upon seabirds might be monitored from offshore installations and from support vessels of opportunity. The study was conducted by the oil and gas industry on the East Coast under the oversight of the ESRF Management Board and was published as ESRF Report 138, **Seabird Attraction to Offshore Platforms and Seabird Monitoring from Offshore Support Vessels and Other Ships (Literature Review and Monitoring Designs)**.

On 7-8 September 2000, ESRF sponsored a workshop in Halifax to develop methodologies to conduct research on the effects of seismic exploration on the East Coast fishery. The proceedings of this workshop will be published shortly as ESRF Report 139.

Three new projects were approved for 2000. ESRF has entered into a contract with

- the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) to update the CSA Offshore Structure Standards
- Jacques Whitford Environment Limited for the identification of ecologically and commercially important areas in the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence.
- the Arctic Institute of North America to further their abstracting of existing studies and reports related to the oil & gas development in the North.

The 2001 Study Program

In October 2000, the ESRF Management Board agreed to fund studies for eastern offshore areas in 2001 on the following topics:

- Benthic Habitats
- Effects of Hydrocarbon Discharges on Seabirds
- Cumulative Effects - Air Shed Monitoring on Sable Island
- Iceberg Scouring
- Deepwater Benthic Communities
- Evaluation of Mud Dispersion Models

The Management Board also recognized the importance and potential impact of renewed industry exploration activity in the North and added the identification and evaluation of gaps in our existing northern environmental and socio-economic database as a priority for 2001.

On the basis of these priorities, proposed levies were calculated, approved by the Management Board, and forwarded to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and the Minister of Natural Resources Canada to raise the money for work in the proposed study areas. Both Ministers have approved the levy schedule, and invoices have been issued. Requests for Proposals (where applicable) to undertake work in these study areas will be issued in the near future. If you would like to receive a copy of the Requests for Proposal, please forward your name and address to the ESRF Secretariat.

2002 Priorities - Your Input is Requested

The Funds are available to support environmental and socio-economic research that has a direct application to activities authorized by the National Energy Board, the C-NSOPB, the C-NOPB or DIAND. Annually, the Management Board will publish a list of ESRF priorities to provide more specific guidance on research areas the Management Board believes will address current issues. Basic research of general applicability is not eligible for ESRF funding; similarly, projects whose primary purpose is commercialization of existing equipment or methodologies are excluded. ESRF projects should provide value to a number of operators in a region and should not be used to fund research or monitoring that is a direct requirement for a single company's E&P activity.

The Management Board is requesting input from the public to assist it in establishing priority study areas for 2002. You are invited to suggest research or study areas consistent with the ESRF mandate as described on page one of this issue. To provide greatest benefit, your submission should include a description of the need for the work, the management questions that should be answered by the research, and if possible, your assessment of the impact of not undertaking work in the study area. The Board is **not** looking for specific research proposals at this time. The Management Board plans to establish priorities for 2002 by early summer of 2001. When budgets and levies for 2002 are approved, the Secretariat will develop Requests for Proposals (RFPs) which will be tendered on a competitive bid basis in early 2002. Studies may be single year or multi-year as deemed appropriate by the Management Board. **The deadline for submissions on suggested priority areas for 2002 is April 30, 2001.**

ESRF is on the Web!

ESRF is pleased to announce its presence on the World Wide Web. Please visit us at www.esrfunds.org. Some of the things we plan to place on our site are Requests for Proposals, electronic copies of UPDATE, summary minutes of Management Board meetings, requests for input on priority areas, as well as general information on the ESRF program and the Management Board. If there are areas of interest you would like to see added to the ESRF website or if you would like a link to our website, please contact Kym Hopper-Smith at khoppersmith@neb.gc.ca.

The ESRF Management Board wishes to establish links to other research programs to maximize benefit from limited research funding. If your research coincides with or complements an area of ESRF work, please take time to get in touch by phone or e-mail and provide us an update. Forward your ideas and comments or requests for information/publications to:

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There are currently two vacancies on the ESRF Management Board due to the recent resignations of a government nominee and an industry nominee. The ESRF Management Board wishes to express its appreciation to Hiram Beaubier of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and David G. Taylor of D.G. Taylor Inc. for the efforts which they made as members of the Management Board. We regret that the ESRF will no longer benefit from their insight and guidance and wish them both every success in their future endeavours.

