

United States-Canada Hydrographic Commission

International Hydrographic Organization



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Report to the Fourth Meeting of the Inter Regional Hydrographic Coordination Committee Singapore June 7-8, 2012

- 1. Co-Chairs:** Dr. Savithri (Savi) Narayanan (Canada)
CAPT John E. Lowell Jr. (USA (NOAA))
- 2. Members:** United States of America, Canada
- 3. Last Meeting:** 35th Meeting of USCHC, Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada, May 14, 2012

4. Background:

The United States / Canada Hydrographic Commission (USCHC) was established through a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signed by the National Hydrographers of the United States of America (U.S.) and Canada (the Director of NOAA's Office of Coast Survey and the Dominion Hydrographer / Director General of the Canadian Hydrographic Service (CHS), respectively). Senior staff from each organization and representatives from the Royal Canadian Navy, Canadian Coast Guard, the U.S. National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA) and the U.S. Navy participate in the Commission meetings. The International Hydrographic Bureau is invited as a regular contributor to USCHC meetings, as well as representatives from other Hydrographic Offices, should they be interested to do so.

Commission meetings are held annually, alternating locations and Chairs between the U.S. and Canada, to address common regional issues related to charting, research, hydrographic data collection, and sharing of expertise.

Before each Commission meeting, the USCHC Charting Advisors Committee (CAC) convenes to review the programs and activities of the two agencies. The CAC makes the initial identification of areas or programs where a cooperative approach could be beneficial and recommends actions for implementation. The CAC is co-chaired by the Deputy Director, NOAA's Office of Coast Survey, and the CHS National Director of Products and Services.

5. Commission Organizational Updates

Captain John E. Lowell, Jr. will retire in June 2012 as Director of Office of Coast Survey and National Hydrographer of United States.

Rear Admiral Christian Andreasen will retire in June 2012 as the Chief Hydrographer of the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency.

The Hydrographer of the U.S. Navy and Commander of the Naval Meteorology and Oceanography Command (CNMOC) will also change in summer 2012.

The United States will be announcing new Officers to these positions.

6. USCHC Charting Collaboration

ENC Transboundary Project

As reported last year, a high priority for the USCHC continues to be “elimination of ENC overlaps” in its shared transboundary areas.

Technical and policy challenges related to the use of two languages within Canadian waters, presentation of boundary areas, management of intellectual property rights, product maintenance, product distribution, and stakeholder communication were resolved and the first collaborative ENCs released in December 2011. In accordance with decisions of the 34th USCHC, the following summarizes progress to-date in addressing transboundary ENCs in four regions:

- Phase 1: Pacific Ocean region pilot – Juan de Fuca and Haro Straits - the Juan de Fuca series of Transboundary ENCs was released in December 2011.
- Phase 2: Pacific Ocean region continuation – Dixon Entrance – the Transboundary ENCs schemes were agreed on April 5, 2012 and they are scheduled for release in the summer of 2012.
- Phase 3: Atlantic Ocean region – Gulf of Maine & Bay of Fundy - the Transboundary ENCs schemes were agreed on April 5, 2012 and they are scheduled for release in the summer of 2012.
- Phase 4: Great Lakes region including the St. Lawrence River & Seaway – development of approved ENC schemes is ongoing with anticipated release for late 2012 or early 2013.

Complementary ENC Transboundary extensions

ENC collaboration in the Beaufort Sea

Canada and United States have agreed to leverage their experience and momentum in the ENC Transboundary Project and extend the process to the boundary waters of the Beaufort Sea. Canada and United States will initiate discussion including engagement of Member States of the Arctic Regional Hydrographic Commission with the goal to present a proposed Beaufort Sea ENC scheme at the 3rd meeting of the ARHC in October 2012.

Harmonization of ENC Catalogue Information

ENCs in the USCHC transboundary waters had traditionally aligned with paper chart coverage. This has now changed with the Transboundary ENC collaboration resulting in ENC cells being adjusted or withdrawn to eliminate overlaps and present the best single agency coverage. Recognizing the need to accurately cross-reference the status of current ENCs and paper charts in these affected regions, the USCHC will investigate and implement changes to their respective chart catalogues. The updates to the respective national chart catalogues may be paper and/or web based.

7. USCHC35 Discussion and Recommendations related to matters of interest to the IHO Inter-Regional Coordination Committee

WEND Working Group (WENDWG) area of responsibility

USCHC discussed how to achieve the original objectives of WEND and put forward the following:

- Recommendation: As per the XVIII International Hydrographic Conference decision, USCHC supports WENDWG revision of language of the proposed Amplifying Annex to the WEND Guidelines. USCHC supports a proactive role of the Regional Hydrographic Commissions to achieve consensual solutions to addressing ENC gaps or overlaps in their area of responsibility.
- Recommendation: WENDWG to consider methodologies and best practices for RHCs to assess the risks associated with ENC gaps or overlaps in their area of responsibility. Additionally, USCHC supports discussions on appropriate communications for the reporting of ENC gaps or overlaps and their associated risk to navigation in their area of responsibility. This reporting should be designed to draw Government's and stakeholder's clear attention to these important facts in order to take the necessary steps for cautious navigation.
- Recommendation: that WENDWG consider enhanced requirement for RHC reporting and risk assessment of gaps and overlaps. Additionally, deliberation on a revised WEND Guidelines should consider final publication of the work given the current status of the Principles being a Technical Resolution and the Guidelines being a web Working Group document.

IRCC efforts to revise the IHO C-55 Status of Hydrographic Surveying and Nautical Charting Worldwide

- Recommendation: IRCC to clearly define the user and associated needs and requirements of the C-55 publication. Its original purpose was to serve as a communication tool of the International Hydrographic Organization to raise international awareness and resources to global "hot spots" requiring improved attention for surveying and charting. Particular attention is to be given to the mechanics whereby Member States maintain the publication in a consistent and expedient fashion taking into account that technical capacity varies across Hydrographic Offices.
- Also, during the USCHC, participants noted that Member States have their own internal requirement to inform their stakeholders of status and coverage of hydrography. While the purpose and audiences of the national efforts and those of C-55 are related, consideration should be given to avoid duplication of effort..

Update on other IRCC-3 Action Items

- The USCHC agreed that Lucy Hick of NOAA will represent the USCHC on the International Hydrographic Review. (IRCC03/07)
- Dr. Christopher Fox, Vice Chair of GEBCO, reported on GEBCO activities and discussed efforts related to the USCHC region. No specific actions regarding improving high resolution shallow water bathymetry at the USCHC regional level were noted. (IRCC-3/17)
- Inter-sessionally between the 34th and 35th USCHC, the United States and Canada exchanged general information on the Hydrographic Office responsibility to a variety of marine disasters. These were information pieces only and there is no formal Commission ongoing agenda item in this regard. During this reporting period no significant maritime disasters occurred. Officially, the Hydrographic Offices of the US and Canada provide support as requested and coordinated by their respective national emergency authorities and through formally established national frameworks. (IRCC-3/19)

8. Next Meeting

Tentatively set for March 2013 in New Orleans, Louisiana, USA