UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
OFFICE OF MARINE AND AVIATION OPERATIONS
COMMISSIONED PERSONNEL CENTER
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3282

MEMORANDUM FOR: Rear Admiral Jonathan W. Bailey, NOAA
Director, NOAA Corps

FROM: Captain Anne K. Lynch, NOAA
Director, Commissioned Personnel Center

SUBJECT: Fiscal Year 2012 Officer Corps Management Plan

PURPOSE

The Officer Corps Management Plan (OCMP) is developed to present the current state of the NOAA Corps workforce and provide recommendations for promotion zones for Fiscal Year (FY) 2012 and leading into FY 2013. The OCMP serves as an execution plan based on the FY 2012 budget environment, needs of the Service, and properly managing the Corps promotion process to ensure officers within promotion zones have the appropriate opportunity to gain experience to be eligible for the next grade.

OVERVIEW

Annually, CPC develops the OCMP by analyzing workforce strength, attrition trends and forecasts, promotion decisions from the prior year, and accession needs for the commissioned officer workforce. The decisions made in this memorandum will enable the NOAA Corps to meet the workforce requirement.

There are three steps to the officer promotion process: eligibility, selection, and promotion. Each step is controlled by laws, regulations, and administrative procedures.

1) Eligibility for promotion to each grade is based on the parameters described in the NOAA Corps Directives Chapter 4, Part 3. The *critical* elements considered in determining promotion eligibility are: 1) experience and training, 2) years of service (YOS), 3) time in grade (TIG) (Appendix A Table 1), and 4) completion of periodic medical examinations.
2) The selection process is dependent on the authorized strength, the timing to move packages from selection to promotion, and the needs of the Service. These elements are all taken into consideration when determining the zone size and opportunity of selection percentage.
3) Once officers have been selected for promotion, the clearance process to legally promote selectees can take from two to twelve months. The variance in timing is dependent on: the NOAA's, DOC's and Congress' processes and calendars; the selection grade; or other circumstances that arise. For planning purposes and recommending promotion zones, CPC establishes the Board dates to occur approximately one year prior to the estimated promotion date.

CPC's recommendations for promotion zones address short term and long term impacts on the NOAA Corps. The recommendations listed below in Table 1 are made to identify and address the NOAA Corps' ability to maintain its mission goals and the long term workforce requirements.

Printed on Recycled Paper

To Be Grade	Board Date	Average YOS for Zone	Average TIG for Zone (years)	Zone Size	OOS Percentage	Select (up to)
O-6	16 July 2012	21.1	4.4	8	50%	4
O-5	16 July 2012	15.0	4.9	6	70%	4
O-4	16 July 2012	9.6	4.7	9	70%	6
O-3	16 July 2012	6.5	2.3	19	80%	15
O-2	16 April 2012	2.2	2.2	11	100% (FQ)	11
O-2	16 July 2012	2.5	2.1	13	100% (FQ)	13

Table 1 Proposed Promotions Zones for FY 2012

DEFINITIONS

Workforce Strength. In the FY 2008 Omnibus Bill, the NOAA Corps annual average strength was increased to 321 officers (plus two Flag Officers). Funding for the additional officers was not provided. Over the subsequent three years CPC has been able to gradually increase the annual average strength to 315, with an onboard strength of 321 (as of September 01, 2011), as well as received the authority for the NOAA Corps to appoint a third Flag Officer in December of 2011. With proposed accession plans and anticipated attrition, the FY 2012 average annual strength will be 315, plus three Flag Officers. Due to the current budget environment, on hold are efforts to increase the authorized strength of the NOAA Corps beyond 321. However, the NOAA Corps Workforce Plan's implementation strategy has a goal of increasing congressional authorization for NOAA Corps officer strength to 379 by FY 2013, and a strength of 478 by FY 2016.

Officer Grades Established By Law. 33 U.S.C. 3004 specifies the number of NOAA Corps officers at each grade level by percentage of the total number of active duty officers onboard. Section 214 of the code states the following percentages for each grade, as shown in Table 2, Control Grade Distribution by Law. The authorized number of officers in each grade is therefore controlled by the overall strength of the NOAA Corps.

Grade	Established Percentage	Authorized Number of Officers
O-6	8%	26
O-5	14%	45
O-4	19%	61
O-3	23%	74
O-2	18%	58
O-1	18%	57*
Total Authorized		**321**

Table 2 Control Grade Distribution by Law

*Note: The number of officers in each grade is rounded to the nearest whole number. The number of ensigns is decreased by one to account for this in order to keep the total at the proper end strength count.

Attrition. Attrition is any retirement, resignation, or separation. Attrition creates vacancies in the respective grade and may effect the overall number of NOAA Corps promotions allowable per year. The overall attrition rate is a calculated percentage of the number of officers separated, retired and resigned in the year divided by the annual average on-board strength. Table 3 shows the attrition rates for the previous three years.

Attrition Shown by Grade				
	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	Average
O-6	4	1	5	3
O-5	2	2	3	2
O-4	2	3	3	3
O-3	6	5	11	7
O-2	2	5	4	4
O-1	4	2	5	4
TOTAL	20*	18	31	23
Overall Percent Attrition	6.85%	5.70%	9.84%	7.5%
Annual Average Strength	292	316	315	308

*Does not include officers recalled from retirement.

Table 3 Attrition Rates Overall Strength and By Grade

Vacancies. The forecasted grade and overall vacancies are based on the average attrition rate over the three prior years. The unknown FY 2012 budget picture means the accession plan for new officer candidates is targeted for a minimum 32 officer candidates, yielding an average annual strength of 315 officers (plus three Flag Officers). The anticipated vacancies for each grade are estimated using the average annual percent of the overall annual attrition for the three prior years (Table 4), the known and expected separations, resignations and retirements.

Percentage of Overall Attrition by Grade				
	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	Average
O-6	20.0%	5.6%	16.1%	13.9%
O-5	10.0%	11.1%	9.7%	10.3%
O-4	10.0%	16.7%	9.7%	12.1%
O-3	30.0%	27.8%	35.5%	31.1%
O-2	10.0%	27.8%	12.9%	16.9%
O-1	20.0%	11.1%	16.1%	15.7%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 4 Annual Percentage of Overall attrition for each Grade

Accession. Accession is the increase in strength, which mainly occurs by bringing new officers into the Service via BOTC, or through Inter-Service Transfer (IST). In order to retain an annual average strength of 315 officers (plus three admirals), the NOAA Corps needs to access at 32 officers in FY 2012 by holding two sessions of BOTC, and a few select ISTs.

Opportunity of Selection (OOS) and Promotion Zone Size. NOAA Corps has the ability to adjust the OOS based on Service needs, by plus or minus 10 percent of what is listed in NC Directive (NCD) 04204. The opportunity of selection (promotion percentage) model is shown in Table 5.

To Grade	Percent Opportunity (+ or - 10%)
O-6	50% (40-60%)
O-5	70% (60-80%)
O-4	80% (70-90%)
O-3	Determined annually (typically 90%)
O-2	100% of qualified

Table 5 Opportunity of Selection Percentages by Grade

Per NCD, the number of NOAA Corps officers in a promotion zone (the zone size) shall not be less than the number of selections planned, divided by the applicable opportunity of selection shown in the table above. For example, if four O-6 vacancies are predicted, and 50% is the OOS, the zone size will be

4/.5=8. In cases where the results contain a fraction of 0.5 or above, the minimum zone size will be rounded to the next higher number, and an additional officer will be added to the zone.

DISCUSSION

The Defense Officer Personnel Management Act's (DOPMA) desired promotion timing for officers by grade is based on YOS for those who compete for promotion to the next higher grade. Table 6 shows the recommended YOS from DOPMA compared with the NOAA Corps' average YOS (as of July 2012) within the recommended zones. The accelerated rate for promotions is evident in the O-6, O-5 and O-4 zones when considering officers without prior service or those whom have been passed over in the previous year. The difference in NOAA Corps timing from the DoD timing is the result of the hiring freeze of the mid-1990's, the accelerated growth of the Corps since 2008 to meet the new authorized strength level, and NOAA Corps' mandatory control grades at level above O-2. The recommended zone sizes for FY 2012 zones are tapered to meet the optimal YOS while balancing the need to fill vacancies. This will aid officers and the Corps by allowing officers below zone to mature one additional year prior to being looked at for these senior grades; and allows CPC to keep promotions moving rather than holding no Boards in some grades for a year.

As the current focus is on maintaining the size of the Corps rather than increasing our strength, the promotion rates will naturally return to a historic norm. Officers should expect that TIG will increase at the junior grades, with the exception of O-1 who are required to be promoted by the completion of 3 YOS, or be separated.

Additionally, OMAO's commitment to to fund two BOTC classes per year permits CPC to return promotion selection boards to the spring of each year. For FY 2012, CPC recommends holding the selection boards in July of 2012, allowing the FY 2013 boards to return to the optimal April time period. For O-2, CPC recommends two zones, one in April and another in July.

To Grade	DoD Promotion Opportunity	DoD Timing	NOAA Corps Timing		
		Primary Zone Years of Service(YOS)	Primary Zone YOS without IST/Prior Service and 1XPO	Primary YOS IST/Prior Service and 1XPO	Recommended Zone YOS
O-6	50%	22 ± 1	20.1	22.7	21.1
O-5	70%	16 ± 1	14.8	9.9	15.0
O-4	80%	10 ± 1	9.0	10.9	9.2
O-3	80%	3.5/4	4.8	15.2	6.5
O-2 April	100 % (FQ)	2	2.2	N/A	2.2
O-2 July	100 % (FQ)	2	2.1	8.1	2.5

Table 6 Department of Defense (DoD) DOPMA Up-or-Out Promotion System for "Due Course" Officer compared to NOAA Corps Recommended Zone averages without IST and 1XPO, IST only, and entire Zone, based on Recommended Board Dates.

* FQ= if fully qualified for promotion, meeting all medical and training requirements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Number to Select/Zone Size

Based on this analysis, CPC recommends the following zones:

To Be Grade	Board Date	Average YOS for Zone	Average TIG for Zone (years)	Zone Size	OOS Percentage	Select (up to)
O-6	16 July 2012	21.1	4.4	8	50%	4
O-5	16 July 2012	15.0	4.9	6	70%	4
O-4	16 July 2012	9.2	4.8	9	70%	6
O-3	16 July 2012	6.5	2.3	19	80%	15
O-2	16 April 2012	2.2	2.2	11	100% (FQ)	11
O-2	16 July 2012	2.5	2.1	13	100% (FQ)	13

Table 7 Proposed Promotions Zones for FY 2012

These recommended zones meet the following criteria:

- Needs of the Service
- Average YOS and Time in Grade support the needs of the next grade
- No Time in Grade waivers
- Projected vacancies in the grades for FY 2012 and into FY 2013.
- At time of promotion, the average timing is within the framework for desired YOS compared to the DoD (Table 6)

DECISION

A. Number to Select/Zone Size. CPC recommends you approve the following zones and number of officers to be selected for promotion to the next higher grade. For each grade, the promotion selection Officer Personnel Board would be authorized to select "up to" the number of officers listed.

To Be Grade	Zone Size	OOS Percentage	Select (up to)
O-6	8	50%	4
O-5	6	70%	4
O-4	9	70%	6
O-3	19	80%	15
O-2 (April)	11	100% (FQ)	11
O-2 (July)	13	100% (FQ)	13

Table 8 Opportunity of Selection (OOS) Recommendation Summary by Grade for FY 2012

2/9/2012

Approved Date Do Not Concur Date

B. Board Schedule. Recommend approval of the following board schedule for announcing to the NOAA Corps.

Board Schedule	Convenes on or about
O-6 Selection	Week of 16 July 2012
O-5 Selection	Week of 16 July 2012
O-4 Selection	Week of 16 July 2012
O-3 Selection	Week of 16 July 2012
O-2 Selection	Week of 16 April 2012
O-2 Selection	Week of 16 July 2012

Table 9 Board Schedule for FY 2012

2/9/2012

Approved Date Do Not Concur Date

C. Delegation of Zone Sizes. Any unanticipated change in attrition (increase or decrease) between now and the Board dates will change the required number of selections. Therefore, we recommend delegating to CPC the final selection number and zone size determination that coincide with your OOS decisions.

2/9/2012

Approved Date Do Not Concur Date

D. Eligibility for promotion consideration. In accordance with NCD 04203B, when the needs of the NOAA Corps require, the Director may adjust length of time-in-grade requirements, to the extent that time-in-grade requirements are not otherwise fixed by statute. CPC recommends that you approve implementation of this section of the NOAA Corps Directives for the July 2012 Selection Boards, approving waivers of no more than six months of time in grade, as needed.

2/9/2012

Approved Date Do Not Concur Date

APPENDIX A –Time In Grade (TIG) Requirements

Captain (O-6)	Four years in the permanent grade of commander
Commander (O-5)	Four years in the permanent grade of lieutenant commander
Lieutenant Commander (O-4)	Three years in the permanent grade of lieutenant
Lieutenant (O-3)	Two years in the permanent grade of lieutenant (junior grade)
Lieutenant (junior grade) (O-2)	One year in the permanent grade of ensign

Table 1 Time in Grade (TIG) Requirements for Promotion