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 Michael S. Devany, NOAA
Director, NOAA Corps

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

SUBJECT: Fiscal Year 2013 Officer Corps Management Plan

PURPOSE

The Officer Corps Management Plan (OCMP) presents the current state of the NOAA Corps workforce and provides recommendations for Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 promotion zones. The OCMP analysis focuses on 18 months of accession and attrition data, Years of Service (YOS) by grade, and the needs of the Service. The OCMP serves as an execution plan based on properly managing the Corps' promotion process to ensure officers have the appropriate opportunity to gain the necessary 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 with this memorandum enable the NOAA Corps to meet workforce needs within its legal, historical and logistical constraints.

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) (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 White House's processes and calendars; the selection grade; or other circumstances that arise.

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

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DEFINITIONS

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). Due to the uncertain FY 2013 the accession plan for new officer candidates is targeted for a minimum 30 officer candidates, yielding an average annual strength of 319 officers (plus three Flag Officers). In order to regain an annual average strength of 321 officers (plus three Flag Officers), the NOAA Corps needs to access 38 officers in FY 2013 by holding two sessions of BOTC and a few select ISTs.

Attrition. Attrition is any retirement, resignation, or separation. Attrition rate is calculated annually based on the number of officers that detach from the NOAA Corps and the average annual strength. Attrition creates vacancies in the respective grades and may affect the overall number of NOAA Corps promotions allowable per year. Table 2 shows the attrition rates for the previous three years.

Attrition Shown by Grade				
	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	Average
O-6	1	5	8	5
O-5	2	3	0	2
O-4	3	3	0	2
O-3	5	11	7	8
O-2	5	4	4	4
O-1	2	5	9	5
TOTAL	18	31	28	26
Overall Percent Attrition	5.70%	9.84%	9.02%	8.17%
Annual Average Strength	316	315	311	314

*Does not include officers recalled from retirement.

Table 2 Attrition Rates Overall Strength and By Grade

Strength. The FY 2008 Omnibus Bill increased NOAA Corps' annual average strength to 321 officers. In FY 2011 NOAA Corps received authorization for an additional position of importance and responsibility increasing NOAA Corps Flag officer billets to three (one RADM, and two RDMLs). For the purposes of annual average strength, Flag officers are not included. Since 2008, CPC has been able to gradually increase the annual average strength to 311, with an onboard strength of 312 (as of October 01, 2011). The annual average strength is calculated as the average of the end of the month onboard strength of NOAA Corps officers. With proposed accession plans and anticipated attrition, the FY 2013 average annual strength will be 321, plus three Flag Officers.

Vacancies. The forecasted grade vacancies are based on the average attrition rate per grade over the three prior years, the approved detachment dates of known attrition, and the promotions of officers to the next grade. The estimated annual attrition rate per grade is calculated using a three prior year average of percent attrition of total attrition by grade (Table 3).

Percentage of Overall Attrition by Grade				
	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	Average
O-6	5.6%	16.1%	28.6%	16.8%
O-5	11.1%	9.7%	0.0%	6.9%
O-4	16.7%	9.7%	0.0%	8.8%
O-3	27.8%	35.5%	25%	29.4%
O-2	27.8%	12.9%	14.3%	18.3%
O-1	11.1%	16.1%	32.1%	19.8%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 3 Annual Percentage of Overall attrition for each Grade

Control Grade Distribution 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 U.S.C. states the following percentages for each grade, as shown in Table 4, 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 4 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.

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 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 to be filled, and 50% is the OOS, the zone size will be 4/.5=8.

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 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 2013 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. Specifically for the O-5 zone, CPC is

recommending a smaller zone in the best interest of the officers, due to YOS and potential to meet retirement eligibility. According to NOAA Corps Directive 08031B:

> The Director shall separate any or retire if eligible NOAA Corps officer in the permanent grade of lieutenant or lieutenant commander who twice in succession fails selection for promotion and who is not recommended for continuation of duty by the OPB (see NCD 04203 and 04209). [10 U.S.C. 637(a)(1)] However, if a lieutenant or lieutenant commander is continued on duty and the NOAA Corps officer is within two years of qualifying for retirement when the continuation of duty expires, the NOAA Corps officer shall be retained on active duty until qualified for retirement. [33 U.S.C. 3022(b)(2),3041(a)(2), 3048; 10 U.S.C. 637(a)(5)

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 by law must be promoted by the completion of 3 YOS or be separated. Additionally, OMAO's commitment to fund two BOTCs per year permits CPC to return promotion selection boards to the spring of each year. For FY 2013, CPC recommends holding the selection boards in April of 2013.

To Grade	DoD Promotion Opportunity	DoD Timing	NOAA Corps Timing
		Zone YOS	FY 2013 Recommended Zone YOS
O-6	50%	22 ± 1	20.3
O-5	70%	16 ± 1	14.7
O-4	80%	10 ± 1	9.81
O-3	80%	3.5/4	5.28
O-2	100 % (FQ)	2	1.81

Table 6 Department of Defense (DoD) DOPMA Up-or-Out Promotion System for "Due Course" Officer compared to NOAA Corps Recommended Zone averages based on Recommended Board Dates.
* FQ= if fully qualified for promotion, meeting all medical and training requirements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on this analysis, CPC recommends the following zones:

To Be Grade	Board Date (on or about)	Average YOS for Zone	Average TIG for Zone (years)	Zone Size	OOS Percentage	Select (up to)
O-6	April 2013	20.3	4.5	10	60%	6
O-5	April 2013	14.7	5.3	8	60%	5
O-4	April 2013	9.5	4.1	15	80%	12
O-3	April 2013	5.2	2.1	17	90%	15
O-2	April 2013	1.8	1.8	18	100% (FQ)	18

Table 6 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
- 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	To Select (up to)
O-6	10	60%	6
O-5	8	60%	5
O-4	15	80%	12
O-3	17	90%	15
O-2	18	100% (FQ)	18

Table 7 Opportunity of Selection (OOS) Recommendation Summary by Grade for FY 2012

11/19/12

Approved Date Do Not Concur Date

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

Board Schedule	Board Date (on or about)
O-6 Selection	15 April 2013
O-5 Selection	15 April 2013
O-4 Selection	15 April 2013
O-3 Selection	15 April 2013
O-2 Selection	15 April 2013

Table 8 Board Schedule for FY 2012

11/19/12

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.

11/19/12

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 April 2013 Selection Boards, approving waivers of no more than six months of time in grade, as needed.

11/19/12

Approved Date Do Not Concur Date