

# Regional Association for Research on the Gulf of Maine

## 1996 Annual Report

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### Overview

1996, the Association's fifth year, yielded a successful program effort and has resulted in increased demand for regional leadership and coordination services on the part of the Association.

Objectives for 1996 included:

**1. Complete the Report for the Health of the Gulf of Maine Ecosystem Workshop;**

Two hundred copies of the 180 page workshop proceedings were produced and distributed by the RARGOM office to workshop participants, RARGOM representatives, and others who requested a report, according to the contracted schedule deadline of April 30, 1996. Availability of this report was announced nationally via e mail and approximately 150 additional requests for the report were produced and managed by David Dow at the NMFS/Northeast Fisheries Science Center in Woods Hole, MA.

**2. Plan and Conduct an Interdisciplinary Gulf of Maine Scientific Workshop**

This conference was the primary activity of the Association during 1996. It was held in St. Andrews, Brunswick from September 16-19, 1996. 18 people served on the steering committee, which met regularly throughout the year and was chaired by Dr. Gordon Wallace. 197 people attended (138 were affiliated with RARGOM), representation included 54 institutions, (17 were RARGOM member institutions), 3 countries (67 Canadian, 2 Danish, 128 U.S.), and a wide range of scientific expertise. The program included: 14 plenary speakers who provided overviews of research conducted during the past five years on the Gulf of Maine; a panel session, representing 9 regional agencies, discussed key management issues needing scientific input; 92 poster presentations, and 4 working group discussion sessions. Production of the resulting report volume is now in progress, with a deadline of April 30, 1997 for distribution. The conference budget was \$91,000. (with an additional \$85,000. through In Kind contributions), and was supported from external sources (the Davis Family Foundation and the Kendall Foundation), as well as member and affiliated institutions (Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences, Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment, Dartmouth College, Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Environment Canada, Maine/NH Sea Grant, MIT Sea Grant, NOAA/National Marine Fisheries Service, Regional Marine Research Program, UMass Boston/Urban Harbors Institute/Mobile, U.S. Geological Survey, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution/Rinehart Coastal Research Center and WHOI Sea Grant).

Other Association goals for 1996 were also addressed in conjunction with the St. Andrews conference:

- **expand outreach efforts to other regional organizations and the general public**
- **expand the Association membership** through targeted recruitment of new representatives at institutions who have an active research role in the Gulf of Maine, with an increase in Canadian participation as a priority; and
- **solidify the Association's financial status** by approaching private foundations for general operating support for the Association, and through Sponsoring memberships.

**A Gulf of Maine Management/Science Workshop** is being planned for 1997.

A 15 person steering committee, representing both management and science activities has been formed to plan a focused workshop on management and science in the Gulf of Maine. The workshop title is "Mechanisms for Improving the Integration of Science & Management in Decisions Affecting the Environmental Quality of the Gulf of Maine". Program goals include a). exploration of 2 specific issues to develop a research agenda to reduce uncertainty in the decision making process, and b). the development of improved structures and mechanisms for facilitation, communication, and coordination between and within the scientific and management communities. The group met at the New England Aquarium on Nov. 15 to discuss and approve the program plan, as presented by Dr. Gordon Wallace. Dr. Steve Ballard, University of Maine, Dr. Donald Gordon, Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and Mr. Mike Connor, Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management, have been invited to serve as workshop Co-Chairs. The workshop will take place in Portland, Maine in early June.

**3. The Gulf of Maine News was expanded to 16 Pages** through longer articles;

Three issues of the Gulf of Maine NEWS were produced and distributed to approximately 700 people. Also, a comprehensive bibliographic search was conducted to document the literature about the Gulf of Maine published during 1995.

**4. New Association Officers** were elected.

Dr. Lewis Incze, Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Science was elected to serve as the Chair and Mr. Bruce Tripp, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, was elected to serve as the Vice Chair, from July 1996-June 1998. With this transition, there has been an opportunity for reflection about our organization. The outgoing and incoming officers met in June to discuss current issues for the Association, to ensure an orderly transition. As Chair, Dr. Incze plans to encourage further development of the Association's core program and communication services, and also wants to strengthen efforts for advocacy of regional science, particularly at the federal level.

The following Association goals were ongoing during 1996:

- **define and establish a proposal for a Gulf of Maine Association Journal**, a publication that would have a regional, descriptive focus, which is peer reviewed, with an editorial board, Internet based;
- **continue development of the World Wide Web server** using the Association headquarters as the contact point;
- **strengthen efforts for advocacy of regional science**, particularly at the federal level;

### **Association Meetings held Regularly around the Region**

During 1996 the Association continued to conduct its meetings on a rotating basis at various locations within the Gulf of Maine region, to share the travel distance and the logistics of hosting the meeting. This approach has also provided an opportunity for members to become familiar with some of the other institutional programs and resources. Dartmouth College hosted the February meeting, a June meeting was held at the University of Massachusetts in Boston, Massachusetts, and the Lincoln Public Library, Lincoln, Massachusetts was the setting for a December meeting. There was excellent attendance at all of the meetings. Minutes of all meetings are listed on the RARGOM home page and are also available from the headquarters office.

Alternative mechanisms (such as electronic mail, conference calls, or smaller committee meetings) were used to provide members with opportunities for adequate discussion and timely decision-making on issues that contribute to the Association's mission.

## **Collaborative Efforts with other Regional Organizations**

The Association held an annual planning meeting with the Regional Marine Research Program staff and representatives of the Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment in Portland in March, and in Bar Harbor, Maine in June. Regular efforts to exchange information and perspectives were made during the year, with representatives from the other two organizations attending our meetings. The annual relocation of the CME headquarters is a continuing logistical problem, and the Maine State Planning Office has been designated as the liaison site between the two organizations. Members of RARGOM participated in a review of the shellfish fact sheet which was produced and distributed this year by the Council on the Marine Environment.

## **Membership Status**

### **Institutional Involvement Stable, with Slow Growth Projected**

In 1996, the Association membership totaled 11 Full Members and 14 Associates. The National Undersea Research Center at the University of Connecticut changed its affiliation to Associate because it experienced fiscal constraints.

### **Sponsoring Member Opportunities Available**

The Association created a new membership category, that of sponsoring member, which offers organizations the opportunity to support the activities of the Association, but has no official voting participation. The Regional Marine Research Program and the Council on the Marine Environment have both made commitments at this \$5,000. level for FY 1997.

## **Financial Status**

### **Operating Budget Increases are Modest**

With constrained budgets, there was continued concern of about the ability to support the Association's activities through membership dues. The Association kept its 1996 budget revenues at the 1995 level in membership dues (Full Membership was \$2750., and Associate Membership was \$650.). In addition, \$5,000. was received as a sponsoring member dues from the Regional Marine Research Program. Dartmouth College, the Association host institution, has provided periodic staff support and short term coverage of Association expenses.

### **Contracts Boost the Association's Program Activity**

As mentioned earlier, the 1996 budget was significantly amplified by funds received from various sources for the Gulf of Maine Scientific Symposium. We intend to solicit additional contributions from foundations as we enter into our next five year activity period.

Lew Incze and Bruce Tripp, Chair and Vice-Chair (as of July 1, 1996)

Gordon Wallace and Daniel Lynch, outgoing Chair and Executive Director

Eugenia Braasch, Executive Director