

17 April, 2003

**Regional Association for Research on the Gulf of Maine  
Minutes of Meeting  
April 4, 2003  
University of Massachusetts, Boston**

**Present**

Jeffrey Runge, University of New Hampshire  
Jerry Pesch, United States Environmental Protection Agency  
Christian Krahforst, Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management  
Ken Brink, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution  
Bruce Tripp, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution  
Lew Incze, University of Southern Maine  
Peter Lawton, Fisheries and Oceans, Biological Station, St. Andrews  
Gordon Wallace, University of Massachusetts, Boston  
David Townsend, University of Maine

The meeting was called to order at 10:12 am by Jeffrey Runge. The minutes were prepared by Jeffrey Runge, with assistance from Bruce Tripp and Jerry Pesch. The meeting was hosted by Gordon Wallace.

**1. Highlights of Activities at Member Institutions**

Jeffrey Runge opened the meeting by asking the representatives to introduce themselves and provide recent news/research activities from their institutions. The board welcomed Ken Brink, who will represent WHOI in place of Bruce Tripp. The great contribution that Bruce has made to RARGOM over the years was acknowledged by the board members, who thanked him and expressed the wish that he could continue to attend meetings and contribute to the activities of the organization. The board also welcomed Fisheries and Oceans colleague, Peter Lawton, from the St. Andrews Biological Station.

**2. Consolidation of RARGOM office at UMass, Boston**

Gordon Wallace reported that the transfer of materials from Dartmouth was complete. The boxes are presently sitting in a temporary office in the ECOS wing at UMass Boston. The computer is up and running and a telephone will be installed. Gordon expressed the intention of charging a graduate student, who will be paid for the service from the RARGOM budget, with the tasks of running the office. The Board acknowledges the assistance of Ata Bilgili and his Dartmouth colleagues in making the move to UMass Boston and in keeping RARGOM going during this transition. Jeffrey Runge will send a letter expressing the Board's appreciation to Ata.

**3. Dues and Membership**

A cover letter expressing the streamlined mission and functions and the new dues structure has been prepared by Jeffrey Runge. Gordon Wallace has succeeded in installing the RARGOM mac computer and updating the organization letterhead. The

cover letter and dues request has been sent to Fisheries and Oceans, which needed to receive it before the end of its fiscal year on March 31. The package should go out to the other member institutions shortly. J. Runge agreed to explore interest among other Canadian institutions, in particular universities in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

There was a discussion about the possibility for video conferencing, especially to make meetings accessible to Canadian members who may be at great distance from a meeting location. Technical difficulties in linking among institutions, particularly across the border and costing were brought up as issues to look into. This topic will be put forward again on the agenda for the next meeting.

#### **4. Website**

Bruce Tripp led a discussion on the development of the RARGOM website. RARGOM has launched a new website: <http://zeus.mbl.edu/rargom/index.html>. The website is base at MBL in Woods Hole and was designed by Dave Remsen. It builds on components originally provided by Genie Braasch, with some modification and expansion by Bruce Tripp. A goal of this website is to provide a mechanism for direct communication with staff of RARGOM member institutions.

Although there is still much work to do, the website structure and content is sufficiently developed now for member review and comment. Members at the meeting reviewed website elements and suggested modifications to both content and structure. These include:

- more accurate geographic location of red dots representing Maine institutions
- create a new category at the bottom, called Archives, and put reports, Gulf of Maine news, bibliographic database, Articles of association and annual reports there (all the stuff for which there are no plans to update)
- Link member institutions on map to institution web sites
- For member institutions in membership category, link to current board representative
- In place of Meetings category, create an Upcoming events and Announcements category

All agreed that simplicity and low maintenance are essential. Individual institution information will be summarized by material provided by member institution representatives. Dr. Rich Signell has authorized that RARGOM may use his website material for additional content and this will be incorporated as resources permit.

Bruce Tripp has agreed to do changes according to the Board's comments. Individual comments are still solicited and may be sent to Bruce Tripp <btripp@whoi.edu>.

In addition, Bruce reported that there are now two maillists which are available for all list members to use. Board members are included in the list, "rargom@lists.mbl.edu", which can be used for RARGOM administration communication. A longer list, "rargomlist@lists.mbl.edu", includes all member institution staff who have a GoM

research interest and may be used for more general communication. Simply send an email message to either address for delivery to all list members.

The Board members thank Bruce for his efforts in establishing the new RARGOM website. This is an important component of the streamlined RARGOM organization, and considerable progress has been made since the last meeting in January.

## **5. RARGOM management: proposal for a management committee (see meeting materials)**

This topic pertains to the strawman management committee document that was attached to the agenda. Jerry Pesch explained that the idea goes back to the time of transition when a such a committee was seen as a helpful structure to accomplish organization tasks. J. Runge would like to see the set up of a management committee along the lines of the proposal in order to have assistance with any decisions or tasks that may come up in between Board meetings. He recalled that, under the new structure, board meetings at theme sessions will be very short, on the order of a half hour to hour, which may not provide time for a full discussion of all issues. Discussion of this topic was abbreviated due to lack of time and it was decided to put this topic on the agenda of the next full Board meeting. In the meantime, J. Runge will rely on the vice-Chair and former Chair for consul if and when needed.

## **6. Theme Sessions**

### **a. Organization of first theme session**

The board agreed that the topic of the first theme session should be: Coastal Ocean Observing in the Gulf of Maine. The choice of this as the first theme was based on a high level of interest and in discussion among RARGOM members.

The goals and purpose of the session were discussed at length. The consensus of the discussions can be summarized as follows:

The Gulf of Maine is a large continental shelf sea bordering on three New England states and two Maritime provinces. There is a growing recognition of the need to observe the Gulf of Maine as a system in order to assess its responses to the multitude and complex interaction of forcing, from anthropogenic inputs of nutrients and contaminants to large-scale changes in wind patterns and ocean temperature. A number of observing programs, supported by government agencies and university research on both sides of the border, currently provide time series of data of physical, chemical and biological variables relevant to the documentation of variability and long-term change in the Gulf of Maine system. New observing programs, some involving sophisticated new technologies, are planned.

The theme session will bring together interested members of the Gulf of Maine research and resource management communities from both Canada and the U.S. to a day of information exchange about the status and future of coastal ocean observing in the Gulf of Maine. The goals of the session are: (1) to provide an overview of existing programs,

(2) bring the GoM community together to share perspectives on what an Ocean Observing System might be, (3) identify gaps, opportunities, and links and (4) offer an opportunity for starting a dialog about bilateral cooperation.

The proposed format is to convene experts to provide overviews of the current status and possible future of ocean observing in the GoM with respect to physical, biological and geochemical variables and processes. For each of these three categories, one expert from Canada and one from the U.S. would be invited to give a presentation. A mid-day poster session would provide the opportunity for presentation of specific present and future observing/monitoring programs. A substantial period would be left in the afternoon, after presentations for group discussion.

The timing of the session would be in mid July, probably the week of July 14, in order to couple the theme discussion with a meeting of Northeast Observing System (NEOS) participants. The session would be held the day after NEOS meeting if possible. However, there is flexibility at this point in time on timing, with the possibility of scheduling independently if necessary.

Where: University of New Hampshire or nearby, possibly the New England Center or Urban Forestry Center in Portsmouth.

Target community is researchers and managers working in the GoM.

A suggested schedule for a one day meeting:

0900-0915 introduction  
0915-0950 first invited speaker  
0950-1025` second invited speaker  
1025-1045 break  
1100-1145 third invited speaker  
1145-1230 fourth invited speaker  
1230-1400 lunch/poster session/board meeting  
1400-1445 fifth invited speaker  
1445-1500 break  
1500-1630 discussion

Organizing Committee: J.Runge would take the lead and ask other institution members (possibilities include: J. Campbell, UNH, F. Page, St. Andrews, K Drinkwater and P. Smith, BIO, a representative from AZMP). A list of possible speakers was discussed.

Advertising would be via the RARGOM Website and Board Members

Registration: contact/process to be worked out; modest registration fee (~15 - 20 dollars).

Rapporteurs to capture the meeting discussions for posting on the RARGOM web site.

The budget would be \$1500 for this meeting (and \$1500 for the next mtg; given that there would be two meetings this year). Travel up to \$2000 could be used to support invited speaker participation.

**b. Future theme sessions**

There was general agreement that the next theme should be Physical-Biological-Biogeochemical Modelling in the Gulf of Maine, with possible timing in October. UMass has offered to host, with Gordon Wallace as lead. Membership of a Steering Committee was discussed.

**7. Next meeting.**

There will be short board meetings scheduled during the two theme sessions. The next regular meeting of the board is planned for early November. Items on the agenda include formation of a management committee, videoconferencing, membership and budget update, website update and themes for 2004 theme sessions. The precise meeting date will be decided at the fall theme session.