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**Minutes of Meeting**

**October 15, 1999**

**University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Amherst, Massachusetts**

**Present:**

David Aiken	Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans
Chris Naimie	Dartmouth College
John Allen	Huntsman Marine Science Centre
Linda Mercer	Maine Department of Marine Resources
Christian Krahforst	Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management Program
Judy Pederson	Massachusetts Institute of Technology Sea Grant Program
Eugenia Braasch	RARGOM headquarters at Dartmouth College
Gerald Pesch	United States Environmental Protection Agency
Kevin Friedland	United States National Marine Fisheries Service
Francis Juanes	University of Massachusetts at Amherst
Jeff Turner	University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth

The Meeting was called to order by Jerry Pesch at 9:00 a.m., with Genie Braasch keeping the minutes. It was recognized that there was not a majority of full member institutional representatives (Policy Board) present at the meeting. Therefore the agenda was modified to become a discussion and information exchange opportunity, with no decisions regarding the FY2000 budget and workplan.

**Old Business**

It was moved to accept the minutes from the 6/11/99 meeting. The motion was unanimously approved.

**Strategic Planning**

There was one recommendation to change the Mission statement so that it reads:  
"The Association was established to foster quality scientific research on the Gulf of Maine through increased communications and collaborations among the region's institutions. The Association strives to stimulate, facilitate and advocate scientific research focused on the Gulf of Maine as a natural **marine** system."

The word "marine" was added to clarify that the scope of RARGOM's activity does not include the entire watershed area, but extends to the head of tide portion of an estuary.

The Principles and Goals were endorsed to as they stand (see attached document). A formal vote by the Policy Board to approve these documents was tabled until the next meeting.

**Workplan 2000: standing committee activity and plans**

*Goal 1A: Regional Research Topics of High Regional Interest and Need*

The charge: Prepare an updated regional research plan for the years 2000-2005. This plan should be based on the outcomes of the Gulf of Maine Scientific Symposium and Workshop, 1996, and on the Gulf of Maine Research Plan, 1992, as well as other current research initiatives in the Gulf of Maine region (such as the U.S. Georges Bank GLOBEC program). The plan will identify and current knowledge gaps, set priorities for future research and monitoring activities, develop recommendations, and recommend a process for reviewing achievements.

Committee members: Judy Pederson, (other members are needed).

Time frame: 12 months with final draft 3 months after monitoring workshop, quarterly meetings with committee.

J. Pederson envisions the creation of a short, general plan to show to legislators and other potential funding sources for RARGOM and regional research. J. Pederson is currently the only member of this committee. The need

to involve scientists from both US and Canada GLOBEC programs in this activity was mentioned. Chris Naimie offered to explore who might become involved from the GLOBEC group. G. Wallace will be contacted by J. Pederson. Others who are interested should contact J. Pederson as well.

*Goal !B: Program: Monitoring Workshop*

J. Pesch reported that the steering committee for this workshop met on 10/14/99 and that several decisions were made. The committee endorsed the definition of a "marine environmental monitoring system" as a range of activities needed to provide management information about environmental conditions or contaminants. Depending on the requirements of any particular situation, these activities could include conceptual and numerical modeling, laboratory and field research, preliminary or scoping studies, time-series measurements, data analysis, synthesis, and interpretation. What distinguishes a monitoring system from any of these activities taken alone is that a monitoring system is integrated and coordinated with the specified goal of producing predefined management information; it is the sensory component of environmental management.' (This definition is the one used in Managing Troubled Waters, Nat. Academy Press, p.7, 1990).

Pesch characterized this workshop as a starting point, saying that there will probably be other meetings in the future. A critical aspect of the program will be the coupling of managers and non governmental organization groups with scientists, resulting in some clear statements about what is known and what managers need to know. To make effective use of the 2 day meeting, the steering committee will inform participants before they arrive, by mailing them an inventory of what is being done in the region. This document will be structured in a 3 tiered approach: (1) largest scale, (i.e., remote sensing info.), (2) resource focus (EMAP approach), (3) site intensive, long-term (investigations of causalities, in order to better understand what is going on at the other tiers). Much monitoring is occurring in the GoM, but it tends to be fragmented; Pesch sees the need to inventory this activity and create a higher level scheme so that people will understand what they're doing in a larger context.

The workshop steering committee discussed different potential thematic focus areas, fisheries resources emerged as a preferred over-arching topic. The RARGOM board felt that "fisheries" was a loaded term and suggested revising the theme to "biological" resources, so that the monitoring workshop emphasizes the entire system and not become a discussion of fisheries. It was also suggested that coastal as well as deep water regions be included. Pesch said that the steering committee envisioned structuring the workshop around a series of plenary talks, alternating each plenary with a working group break-out session, in order to keep the program tightly focused.

The Board was solicited to suggest organizations and individuals to invite to the meeting. They were asked to send these comments to J. Pesch (pesch.gerald@epamail.epa.gov).

J. Pesch will write and distribute minutes from the 10/14 meeting.

Committee members for the monitoring workshop include: J. Pesch (EPA), Carlton Hunt (Battelle Ocean Sciences), Peter Hennigar (Environment Canada), John Allen (Huntsman MSC), Linda Mercer (Maine DMR), Christian Krahforst (Mass. CZM), Judy Pederson (MIT), Curt Mason (NOAA/COP), Don Scavia (NOAA/COP), David Dow (NOAA/NMFS), Chris Nash (NH Office of State Planning), Gordon Wallace (UMass Boston), Jeff Turner (UMass Dartmouth), Steve Jones (UNH), Michele Dionne (Wells NERR), Bruce Tripp (WHOI).

Time Frame: The next steering committee meeting will be on Nov. 10<sup>th</sup>, at UNH in Durham, NH. The target workshop date is during the week of April 10<sup>th</sup>.

*Goal 2A: Regional Research Advocacy*

The charge: Strengthen efforts for advocacy of regional science at the federal level; also to establish closer ties with appropriate state, provincial and regional organizations and agencies to improve support for research and utilization of research expertise and results.

Committee members:

Time frame: on-going

J. Pederson expressed that she and Jerry, because of their employment affiliation, are unable to pursue this goal for RARGOM. She asked for other RARGOM Board members to offer to take a more active role. The idea of asking someone from a RARGOM member institution who is regularly interacting with federal level administrators, to advocate our mission was raised (J. Farrington from WHOI was suggested). J. Allen reminded the

group that this person is not asking for direct support or trying to direct where the resources go; they are advocating the regional program.

G. Braasch suggested that if traveling to see agency leaders in Washington wasn't feasible, then perhaps more could be accomplished by inviting these agency leaders to attend a RARGOM meeting (for example, Don Scavia attended our meeting in June, 1997).

Genie Braasch and Jerry Pesch offered to organize this for the June 2000 meeting, with the notion that we will have products from the monitoring workshop and the next research plan to present by then. Board members are encouraged to submit their ideas of whom to approach to Genie.

#### *Goal 3Ai: Buoys & Ships*

The charge: Develop long term plans for vessel use and availability in the Gulf of Maine. The committee will assess the complex issues of research vessel use in the GOM, consider over-all vessel availability for educational and research use, determine what the scientific user needs, create a scientific equipment list, establish a plan for replacement for the next few years, and prepare long term recommendations. Report on the availability and capability of current and planned vessels and platforms to support research in the GoM. Assess and report on the community's needs and hopes for support in view of current, anticipated and desired research directions. Federal and non-federal (e.g., university, consortium) vessels should be considered. The committee will have to decide just how detailed the first cut of this evaluation ought to be; clearly, the task could be enormous, and reasonable limits will have to be decided. The Policy Board feels that there is a shortage of shared information on what is being planned; there is probably also a shortage of affordable and suitable vessels for work outside normal federal channels. Defining these needs would be valuable RARGOM function, better served by a broad consortium than by any single or small group of institutions. Broader distribution of information on non-federal vessels, especially, may help potential users as well as providers.

Committee members: J. Allen, I. Babb, L. Incze, D. Townsend, B. Tripp, G. Wallace.

Time Frame: 12 months

No one at the meeting was able to report on this activity area. Someone needs to take the lead on this activity and report at the next meeting.

#### *Goal 3Aiii: Data & Information*

The charge: Examine the current state of internet availability of data for GoM researchers and other users. This addresses prior plans, and a request from W. Brown to perform a users' evaluation of REDIMS -- Does it provide all the linkages it should? What topic areas are neglected? Is the community of GoM researchers using it as much as they could? Do more people need to be made aware of it? What recommendations should be made for the future? A meeting is suggested, to obtain feedback from a small involved committee (rather than the community at large), to address the EDMIS/REDIMS interface in a coordinated manner with the CME effort, GIS, and to determine long term steps (criteria for data bases, funding for maintaining the system once the current RMRP money is spent).

Committee members: C. Naimie, B. Tripp

Time frame: Prepare a discussion for October 15<sup>th</sup> meeting.

C. Naimie reported that, while the UNH site for receiving data is in place (a "catalogue" of data is now completed), however, not all RMRP data are available (approx. 40% of the "books are on the shelf"). Also, in order for the RMRP data sets to be useful, they need to be coordinated with other data sets. A potential catalyst to do this is the upcoming Monitoring workshop, where participants will need to understand what data sets exist. The request from the June 11th RARGOM meeting, for RARGOM Board members to inventory their institutions in this regard has not been accomplished. Chris reiterated that it would be v. useful to assemble this information.

Discussion turned to the topic of "What ARE the data?" (it ranges from sediment trap results to hydrodynamic model results). "Who will the user group(s) be? The potential of the internet to help access these data sets, archive the data, advertise its availability and manipulate the data so that it's useful to researchers, state agencies, and others. Naimie said that she plans to draft a letter to the RMRP investigators again, requesting their data. J. Pederson said that she, Bob Wall, Dave Townsend and others are planning to produce an RMRP GoM synthesis document, summarizing the results of funded projects.

The Out of the Fog data and information group is planning its next workshop for August/September 2000.

J. Pesch suggested that the monitoring workshop could create the larger context; with that in place, the data access and archival process could emerge more effectively.

The Board was asked to consider what they seek in a data archive.

*RARGOM web page update*

G. Braasch then reported that she has been addressing RARGOM's web page revision. She distributed a memo that outlined her activities in this area (see attached). Braasch outlined how the web page could support each of RARGOM's goals and could also enable new regional potential to be tapped in the area of teaching and curricular activities. She said that with developments in web page technology, (a) a professionally designed, interactive web page is now possible, and (b) is strategically key to accomplishing RARGOM's mission. The Board supported Braasch's suggestion to fundamentally change the RARGOM web page concept and scope and approved her draft revised web page layout.

A new committee was established to oversee this planning process: Chris Naimie, Kevin Friedland, Ivar Babb, and Jerry Pesch.

The primary challenge facing RARGOM is that the resources for creating and maintaining this venture are not in hand. With support from the Board for this activity, G. Braasch will investigate revenue sources to support this activity and will write the necessary proposals with help from the committee. The concept of developing the web page to achieve the RARGOM goal of translating science was endorsed.

Assuming that the fund raising will be successful, the issue of whether to enlist RARGOM 'in-house' web expertise and also whether to hire professional consultants was discussed. Some Board members felt that making use of "free" help was the necessary first step. Others believe that it would be more productive to hire the necessary expertise to design and build the web page, and then use 'in-house' help for maintenance. The notion of using 'matching' 'in-house' resources for development of the web page was also raised. The details of how this would work need to be further explored.

*Goal 4A: Communications*

The charge: Identify timely and diverse topics for informal scientific contributions to the newsletter, solicit articles and authors accordingly; provide a quick internal review of submissions as an aid to the authors.

Committee members: R. Schlitz (NMFS/NEFSC), Jim Hopkins (Bigelow Lab).

Time frame: Three or four issues annually

G. Braasch said that the survey responses from the summer indicated that readers of the *GoM NEWS* endorsed the current approach of "thematic" issues. Proceeding in this vein, the next issue of the *GoM NEWS* will focus on aquaculture in the region. The following winter issue will highlight monitoring activities in the GoM.

The Board asked that this year's RARGOM Annual Report highlight Ron Schlitz's service as scientific editor. Thank you, Ron.

*Goal 5B: Provide Scientific and Technical Advice to the region*

The charge: To provide scientific and technical advice and planning for federal, regional, state/provincial, and local agencies and organizations as requested. Develop the draft scientific consulting proposal (10/16/98) into a document that describes the concept in greater detail, so that financial support for this activity can be sought.

Committee members:

Time frame:

The Board agreed that this goal is a good idea, but that RARGOM lacks resources to move ahead with it. This goal can be incorporated into the web page proposal. L. Mercer will provide help in creating a list of regional expertise if all board reps submit researcher lists with their areas of expertise to her office.

Our collaboration with the GoM Council on the Marine Environment is an example of such outreach. Participation in the next Council meeting forum is a good activity to pursue. J. Pesch will represent RARGOM and discuss the monitoring workshop activity at this December 10<sup>th</sup> event.

Genie will contact D. Keeley about the annual planning meeting between RARGOM and the GOM Council.

*Goal 6: RARGOM organizational strength and management*

Nominating committee for officers

The charge: To conduct the search process for the Chair and Vice Chair positions on the Policy Board in accordance with association goals.

Committee members:

Time frame: June 30, 2000.

J. Pederson will contact L. Incze and G. Wallace as past chairs, to serve on this committee.

### **Guest Speakers: Research Presentations**

Research presentations were made by University of Massachusetts at Amherst faculty members Dr. Julian Tyson (chemist, with CMER support is determining trace elements in marine plankton), Dr. Richard Vachet (chemist, identifying the ligands in seawater), Joe Kunkel (right whale entanglement), and Jack Finn (cod maturation, vitellogenin in cod serum).

### *Goal 6: RARGOM organizational strength and management*

Membership committee

The charge: 1. To identify institutions that could be members of the association and solicit membership involvement from their Chief Executive Officers. 2. To develop and conduct periodic assessments of association services to its members.

Committee members:

Time frame: on-going

G. Braasch distributed a list of potential member institutions for RARGOM (see attached). Given the projected financial shortfall for FY2000, building membership is one potential revenue source. Raising membership dues was discussed but not endorsed. The Board reviewed each of the prospective member organizations and a Board member agreed to make the initial inquiry, to be followed by a mailing by Genie.

Board members will follow-up their phone conversations with an email update to Genie re. next steps by 11/19.

### **FY2000 Budget and Fiscal Report**

G. Braasch presented the FY 1999 update and noted that this is the first year that membership dues have all been paid by July 1 (the mid-point in the RARGOM fiscal year) - she thanked the Board members for their efforts in overseeing the timely payment of the dues invoices. Income was on track as budgeted and Braasch has held operating expenses to a minimum, anticipating a FY2000 deficit.

Braasch then presented the proposed FY2000 budget (see attached), which represents level-funded activity for the coming year. Membership dues alone do not provide enough income to balance the budget.

The notion of creating a federal agency sponsor category at the \$10,000. level was proposed but not fully endorsed. The idea of applying to then GoM Council for a mini-grant (\$10,000.) was also suggested.

Writing a proposal to support the dissemination of scientific results via the development of the web page was again endorsed, K. Friedland and L. Mercer both offered to contribute to that activity.

### **Announcements**

December 5-7, a rockweed workshop sponsored by GPAC will be held at the Huntsman Marine Science Center, St. Andrews.

### **Other Business**

G. Braasch said that RARGOM's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary year will be 2002. She brought up this topic to initiate discussion about ways in which to mark the event. Many Board members felt that achieving our current goal of establishing a strong Internet presence would represent a strong achievement. Some also thought that it would be time to hold a larger regional scientific meeting again to learn about the outcomes of EcoHAb and GLOBEC Georges Bank as well as other research activity.

The next meeting will be held in February at UNH. Genie will explore potential dates and arrange.

The Maine DMR lab offered to host the late spring meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Eugenia Frey Braasch  
October 19, 1999

## **Action Items**

### **Strategic Plan**

- Full Member Board representatives: review the RARGOM Mission Statement, Principles and Goals for vote at next meeting.
- Full Member Board representatives: review FY 2000 budget and workplan for vote at next meeting.
- Chris Naimie offered to explore who might become involved in drafting a regional research plan from the GLOBEC group.
- Others who are interested in helping to prepare the regional research plan should contact J. Pederson.
- G. Braasch & J. Pesch will invite a federal agency administrator to the June 2000 meeting.
- Judy: contact Wendell Brown regarding OOS committee and recent Coastal GOOS workshop in MD.
- All representatives: Survey your institutional labs to determine what data sets exist, what form it is in, who will provide the role of converting data into information for others to use, and identify the key data and information person at each institution to link with.
- All representatives: send input regarding data archiving to B. Tripp and C. Naimie.
- Genie will contact D. Keeley re. annual planning meeting between RARGOM and the GoM Council.
- J. Pederson will contact L. Incze and G. Wallace regarding their willingness to serve on the nominating committee for the selection of the next RARGOM Chair and V. Chair.
- All representatives who agreed to contact colleagues at potential member institutions will convey the result of their conversations with Genie by 11/19 so that she can provide follow-up.
- Genie will draft a 2 page concept proposal to support the dissemination of scientific results via the development of the web page. K. Friedland and L. Mercer both offered to contribute to that activity.

### **Monitoring Workshop**

- J. Pesch will write and distribute minutes from the 10/14/ meeting.
- Board members will suggest organizations and individuals to participate in the workshop (send to J. Pesch & G. Braasch).
- The next steering committee meeting will be held on 11/10/99.