
Minutes of Meeting
October 29, 1998
MIT Sea Grant College Program, Cambridge, Massachusetts

Present:

Lew Incze	Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences
Sukru Besiktepe	Harvard University, (also Middle East Technical University, Turkey)
Nicholas Deckman	Harvard University
Pierre Lermusiaux	Harvard University
Allan Robinson	Harvard University
Susan Snow Cotter	Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management Program
Jim Bellingham	Massachusetts Institute of Technology Sea Grant Program
Rich Morris	Massachusetts Institute of Technology Sea Grant Program
Judy Pederson	Massachusetts Institute of Technology Sea Grant Program
Peter Auster	National Undersea Research Program/University of Connecticut
Scott Kraus	New England Aquarium
Eugenia Braasch	RARGOM headquarters at Dartmouth College
Gerald Pesch	United States Environmental Protection Agency
Kevin Friedland	United States National Marine Fisheries Service
Larry Mayer	University of Maine
Gordon Wallace	University of Massachusetts Boston
Bruce Tripp	Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution

The Meeting was called to order by Jerry Pesch at 9:00 a.m., with Genie Braasch keeping the minutes.

Old Business

It was moved to accept the minutes from the 6/29/98 meeting. The motion was unanimously approved.

Results of the Joint GoM Council and RARGOM Meeting

G. Braasch reported that the annual planning meeting was held at the University of Southern Maine Law Library, Portland, Maine on October 19, 1998. J. Pederson, J. Pesch, G. Braasch, Evan Richert, and David Keeley attended (see notes attached). Now that this meeting has been held, the 1997-98 contract with the US Gulf of Maine Association has been completed.

The RARGOM Board approved the action of revising the Joint Statement to delete references to the Regional Marine Research Program (which no longer functions). The Board felt that it was important to renew its commitment to collaborate with the Council at this fifth year anniversary.

In response to the report of the discussion held at the October 19th meeting, the sense of the Board was that it is incumbent on RARGOM to do a better job of providing coordinated technical advice through a variety of mechanisms. A range of potential solutions were discussed, the Board concurred that it is important for RARGOM to create better 'gateways' to the regional scientific expertise, that RARGOM should make those avenues very user friendly and well advertised, and not dependent on personal relationships. A draft proposal, written by J. Pederson and G. Braasch, outlining some issues involved with developing a coordinated consultant service was distributed. A list of potential resources to be developed by RARGOM was also generated at the meeting:

- 1) Develop a database of searchable topics/researchers/expertise/contact information to be accessible on the web.
- 2) Write some white papers, peer reviewed, on selected topics, translating the technical results for a non-technical reader.

- 3) Develop a searchable database of publications/ proceedings/executive summaries and the contributors to be accessible on the web.
- 4) Establish a scientific group of advisors, a "Blue Ribbon Commission" for a specific topic.
- 5) Establish standing scientific advisory panel.
- 6) Hold a series of short workshops, bringing together managers and scientists to discuss specific emerging issues.

J. Pesch expressed the belief that, in the spirit of the 1997 Migis workshop, this makes sense as a follow-on activity; it would serve a real need, would also build a constituency for funding research. Two functions were described: 1) information clearinghouse, 2) advisory function based on group consensus; existing models were mentioned: the National Estuarine Programs, the Association for the Preservation of Cape Cod, ICES, NMFS. It was also noted that the Sea Grant outreach mission completely overlaps with this activity and that the regional Sea Grant directors should be involved. The Board agreed that this sort of collaborative activity should be pursued between RARGOM and the Council. It was also agreed that selection of an emerging issue would lead to a more productive and useful interaction as a pilot project. Selection of a topic where the policy issue is still fluid is desirable, tempered by political realities, so that RARGOM's input has some impact.

Actions to take:

1. G. Braasch will forward the revised Joint Statement to Mr. Keith Colwell, current Council Chair, then to J. Pederson, current RARGOM Chair, for their signatures.
2. J. Pesch will contact E. Richert regarding discussion at the Nov. 19-20 Council meeting about topic selection and funding for a pilot consulting project. He will also ask the Council to provide input on key words that would be used when searching a topic.
3. A small group (J. Pederson, J. Pesch, E. Braasch, L. Incze, I. Davison, G. Wallace) will hold a follow-up conference call to outline the process and to define the problem.
4. G. Braasch will design a pre-formatted web page for researchers to fill out basic searchable key words, which links to their individual web pages.
5. RARGOM member institutions will provide the necessary data about researchers and their area of research expertise.
6. Once this web page project is completed, publicize the resource widely.

Guest Speakers: Research Presentations

Allan Robinson, Harvard University, spoke about Littoral Ocean Observing and Predicting System (LOOPS) project in the Gulf of Maine. He is currently conducting a two-year project with several other academic partners, that has three components: architecture and infrastructure conceptual design, observation system simulation experiment, and sea trials.

Jim Bellingham, MIT Sea Grant, spoke about his research on monitoring with the remote vehicle. He covered his collaboration/participation with Allan Robinson and the Littoral Ocean Observing and Predicting System (LOOPS) project in the Gulf of Maine as well as his work for the Office of Naval Research including docking at moored stations and a data transmission.

Rich Morris, MIT Sea Grant, outlined the activities of the MIT Sea Grant program and described the agenda of a workshop to be held the following week that will address the issue of data standards and information dissemination in the era of global connectivity.

Standing Committees

G. Braasch distributed a list of the current RARGOM subcommittees. She noted that there currently is an inactive committee, it is charged with 1) identifying and prioritizing current knowledge gaps, 2) developing recommendations, and 3) writing a regional research plan for the years 1998-2003. There was a lengthy discussion about the context for this activity, and the group grappled with establishing some parameters for this task. Questions arose such as "Should RARGOM begin with existing funding agency priorities and work within that context?" or "Could the research plan generated by such a process influence a federal agency such as NOAA (or one of its programs, i.e., Sea Grant)?" Concerns about the breadth of the research scope also emerged, along with discussion about the process to be used in structuring this activity -- there is concern about the balance between basic and applied science, as well as identification of emerging issues and not a continuation of established programs. A suggestion was made to initially write some leading statements describing broad initiatives, which could then narrow to a series of statements describing related research. The consensus was that this would be a very useful internal

exercise, the end product could have some funding effects, but the key rationale should be to strengthen RARGOM organizationally. It was agreed to change the title of this subcommittee to "Research Topics of High Regional Interest and Needs".

Actions to take:

1. G. Wallace will organize a first meeting to launch the effort, L. Incze, P. Auster, S. Kraus also agreed to attend. Regional Sea Grant Directors will be invited.
2. J. Pederson will contact E. Richert regarding his assessment of the topics outlined at the St. Andrews meeting opening and closing management panel discussions.

Buoys and Ships

L. Incze reported that last November's workshop on Ocean Observing Systems began to formulate some policy statements. The two key questions addressed at the workshop were 1) where should the basic 'backbone' of buoys be and 2) what should the basic data collection consist of. RARGOM's role is to encourage the maintenance of observing systems, on the basis of scientific needs. According to Incze, "RARGOM's efforts are building momentum, he hopes to get to the right place at the right time".

Actions to take:

1. L. Incze, I. Babb, D. Mountain will meet to draft the workshop report in December.

B. Tripp reported that the SWATH vessel meeting took place on October 26 at WHOI. D. Townsend attended the meeting on behalf of RARGOM. Tripp provided a handout update of that project and said that the design phase is now funded. (See attached).

P. Auster said that the R/V CT is now completed, he distributed photos of the ship, saying that a series of open house events are being held this month to acquaint people with the vessel properties.

Data & Information Subcommittee

B. Tripp reported that he and J. Pesch are working to create a proposal to fund the various initiatives that RARGOM would like to pursue relative to this committee's charge.

Actions to take:

1. Complete the proposal and submit it to agencies and foundations, secure financial support to further this work.

Workshop Proposal Status and Review

Several workshop topics were reviewed, including:

- A meeting to discuss inshore/offshore exchange, the Eastern Maine coastal current (a recommendation from the St. Andrews scientific symposium of particular relevance this year); some of the lead scientists in this area have been approached but all are too busy to take the lead on organizing such an event. L. Incze agreed to pursue this effort.
- A regional monitoring workshop to discuss the recommendations of the GulfWatch review and develop next steps. B. Tripp will work on this topic with S. Jones and P. Hennigar of the Council's monitoring committee.
- "Out of the Fog", workshop at the New England, about data and information for an extended audience (stakeholders other than scientists and resource managers). B. Tripp is participating as a leader at this program being held Nov. 5-6.
- Organizing a follow-on workshop to the 1995 workshop about habitat, to review methodologies to be evaluated in the field. L. Mercer, Maine DMR lab, is coordinating this effort with a view of running the workshop in the spring of 1999. No specific plan or support is yet in place.
- There was not a need for a workshop about Marine Protected Areas at this point, according to P. Auster.
- G. Wallace reported that plans are in process to run a workshop about Mass. Bay in the fall of 1999. There are several sponsors from Boston area institutions, Wallace suggested that RARGOM participate as a co-sponsor.
- S. Kraus proposed a focused workshop about Large Vertebrate Populations in the Gulf of Maine, he would like to hold a 20 year retrospective meeting in order to summarize what is known about these organisms, and identify trends and future research initiatives.

Actions to take:

1. L. Incze will speak with F. Page re. an Eastern Maine Coastal Current workshop.
2. J. Pesch will request that M. Haebler prepare a short issue paper about large vertebrate populations. She will then contact S. Kraus about next steps towards planning this meeting.

1999 Budget and Fiscal Report

G. Braasch presented the current fiscal report and a budget for the upcoming year (see attached). There was no discussion and no formal action taken to approve the budget, but the group was supportive of maintaining a level budget based on 1998 figures. Braasch noted that, in the absence of any current sponsorship support, the Association needs to increase its dues revenue through adding members, and also needs some external Foundation support to initiate new projects.

Actions to take:

1. J. Pesch will ask the Full Member representatives to formally vote on the budget via e mail.
2. S. Kraus will email some suggestions for potential Associate member organizations.
3. E. Braasch will identify some Foundation prospects for the upcoming year.

Publications

Drafts of the 1998 Annual Report and a Membership brochure were distributed. Representatives were asked to review these documents and provide comments to G. Braasch.

Braasch reported that the *GoM NEWS* is progressing well, that the summer issue generated several positive comments and the fall issue will have several contributors from the GLOBEC Georges Bank program. M. Dionne is also helping to plan the winter 1999 issue with an estuarine theme. The Council on the Marine Environment initiated a discussion about whether the two organizations might combine their newsletter publication efforts. The editorial staff of the *GoM NEWS* believes that the two publications are quite distinct in their readership and that such a merger would not serve RARGOM's communication needs.

Recognition

This was the first Board meeting since the leadership transition that took place on July 1st. To show appreciation to L. Incze (Chair) and B. Tripp (Vice Chair), G. Braasch presented each of them with a coastal print, thanking them for their years of service to RARGOM from 1996-1998. The Board members then signed their names on behalf of their organization on the back of the print.

A date and location for the next meeting were not discussed.

P. Conkling, Island Institute, asked that a discussion about setting up a remote sensing information center be placed on the agenda of the next meeting. His organization would like to contribute to this activity.

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Eugenia Frey Braasch
November 2, 1998

Regional Association for Research on the Gulf of Maine

Notes from the Joint RARGOM / Council on the Marine Environment Annual Planning Meeting
October 19, 1998

Attended by
Genie Braasch, David Keeley, Judy Pederson, Jerry Pesch, Evan Richert

The meeting agenda included status reports of each organization, potential consulting needs, possible next steps for furthering the recommendations of the Migis workshop, funding sources for regional Gulf of Maine research of value to the management community, and workshop topics under consideration. Three topics dominated the morning's discussion: the need for an updated regional research plan, information exchange, and collaboration opportunities.

E. Richert and D. Keeley believe that there is a need for the research community to articulate current research priorities and develop a research plan. It was noted that regional efforts are currently too fractured, too crisis-driven. It was suggested that there is an alternative model; opportunity can also be a driving force for activity. The group discussed whether RARGOM, in collaboration with the Council, could develop this big research picture, with oversight, so that the various pieces are more productive. A matrix of 'basic research' / 'applied research', coupled with 'management of resources' / 'commercialization of product' was suggested by E. Richert. He noted that he would like to see research efforts move from being primarily in the 'basic research'/'management of resources' quadrant to the 'applied research'/'commercialization of product' quadrant. The group also discussed whether RARGOM and the Council could work jointly to develop a research plan on the Fisheries issue. It was noted that with Senators Judd Gregg and Olympia Snow currently serving on the Appropriations Committee, the Gulf of Maine region is in as strong a position as it was with George Mitchell to obtain significant regional research funding.

The group also discussed regional information exchange. Web pages and printed newsletters are used by both organizations as a means to reach their members and wider audiences. The group explored the potential for combining efforts, given each organization's limited fiscal resources. It was decided 1) our membership groups are distinct and require different communication focus, and 2) this 'internal' communication function is a core activity for each organization and needs to be supported at a basic level by each group individually. However, 'outreach' efforts to the general public and ngo's, as well as a subset of each of the two organizations was seen as a potential area of collaboration. A suggestion was made to work through State Agency MIS offices to obtain additional funds and expertise to develop data and information exchange.

The group reviewed a draft consulting services proposal currently being developed by RARGOM in order to meet some of the informational needs of decision-makers with non-technical backgrounds requiring scientific results. E. Richert expressed that there is a general need by managers at his level for neutral sources of information and outlined some regional issues about which information needs to be summarized; 1) the Atlantic Salmon Conservation Plan; 2) non-point source pollution (to what extent is this a problem in bays?); 3) the impact of nitrogen on estuaries (links of land use and nutrients); 4) dredging, disposal sites, relocation of lobster harvesting sites; 5) evaluating the effectiveness of Marine Protected Areas, 6) oil & gas drilling. Richert noted that he seeks a neutral presentation of information, a summary of what's known, so that he can assess the various points of view and base his decisions on the available information. The available publications are not targeted to his decision-making needs: the Council's Gulf of Maine Times is too rudimentary to be useful, and RARGOM's Gulf of Maine NEWS is often too technical. Time frame is often a hurdle. The group agreed that this level of management decision-making represents an information niche that is currently not being addressed regionally and that a blend of personal consultation and publications is probably the sort of service and technical support that would most effectively meet his needs. It was agreed that a pilot project might be a valuable way to begin to develop such a service to professionals in the region requiring this sort of technical advice. This idea will be raised at each group's fall meeting; RARGOM will await suggestions for priority topics and funding possibilities from the Council.

Regional Association for Research on the Gulf of Maine

Headquarters: Dartmouth College
Thayer School of Engineering
Hanover, NH 03755 USA
telephone: (603)646-3480
facsimile : (603)646-3856
email: braasch@dartmouth.edu

1999 Budget

Budget (approved October 29, 1998)	\$54,885.
<u>Income</u>	
Membership dues	
Full (11 @ \$2,750.)	\$30,250.
Associate (11 @ \$650.)	\$7,150.
Income Sub-Total	\$37,400.
<u>Expenses</u>	
Salaries	
Chair	\$7,000.
Vice Chair	
Executive Director	\$28,896.
subtotal	\$35,896.
Operations	
Travel	\$2,000.
Supplies	\$500.
Printing	\$4,500.
Other	\$2,000.
subtotal	\$9,000.
Contingency	\$5,000.
Total Direct	\$49,896.
O/H (@10%)	\$4,989.
Expenses Sub-Total	\$54,885.
Net	<\$17,485.>

1998 Carried Forward (final figures not yet available) projected \$13,000.