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**Minutes of Meeting  
October 31, 2000**

**University of Massachusetts, Boston, Massachusetts**

Present:

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| Lew Incze                   | Bigelow Laboratory                                      |
| Mike Sinclair               | Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans             |
| 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 |
| Ivar Babb                   | National Undersea Research Center                       |
| Scott Kraus                 | New England Aquarium                                    |
| Eugenia Braasch             | RARGOM headquarters at Dartmouth College                |
| Gerald Pesch                | United States Environmental Protection Agency           |
| Marilyn Buchholtz ten Brink | United States Geological Survey                         |
| Mary Jane Perry             | University of Maine                                     |
| Gordon Wallace              | University of Massachusetts at Boston                   |
| Jeff Turner                 | University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth                |
| Ted Loder                   | University of New Hampshire                             |

The meeting was called to order by Jerry Pesch at 9:00 a.m., with Genie Braasch keeping the minutes. Gordon Wallace served as the University of Massachusetts host for the meeting. Thank you, Gordon. We also note that John Allen, now officially "retired" as Director, attended on behalf of Huntsman - the Board extends its sincere thanks to John for his many years of commitment to RARGOM.

**Old Business**

It was moved to accept the minutes from the 5/22/00 meeting. The motion was unanimously approved.

**Regional Research Plan**

J. Pesch opened the discussion by indicating that the time is right to pursue this activity. The GoM Council on the Marine Environment is currently undertaking a review of their Action Plan and desires coordination of effort between our organizations. Likewise, the regional ocean observing activities will be enhanced by a clearly articulated regional research agenda. Pesch also noted that the federal agencies are promoting regional approaches; the regional scale poses governance challenges, but the time is right for addressing these issues. The other representatives concurred with Pesch's assessment of the situation. Pesch proposed a process of (1) review of the RMRP "original" regional research plan - science prioritization, (2) implementation through building the political base - resolving the regional governance aspects, and (3) generating the funding sources.

It was recognized that planning and discussion about all of these elements should occur in parallel. The group reviewed the process that was used to develop the RMRP plan and outlined the following approach, responding to the following questions: What sets the GoM apart (uniqueness of the region)? What is presently being done - is there a single source of information that describes the activity in toto? What are the missing links? What are the unmet needs, scientific as well as management? It was recognized that resource management issues are not the only pressing concerns, for example, climate change is an investigative area where results of GoM research can be applied to a fundamental global scientific issue. In addition, modeling will become an increasingly important tool as that activity builds its predictive capabilities. Also, the community needs to factor in technological developments.

Finally, consideration needs to be given to the broad concerns that regional research seeks to address. Five years ago, fishery problems topped the list, while those issues persist, they are presently framed in a larger, ecosystem dynamics context. The sense of the meeting was to develop a document that keeps a broad, big picture orientation. The development of the regional research plan features three planning endeavors, as follows:

1. Review the RMRP original plan, and draft the next plan;
2. Develop a strategic plan for implementation of coastal & marine regional research programs in N. America;
3. Solicit community-side endorsement of the plan through a regional GoM Scientific Workshop and Symposium.

**1.** Review of the RMRP plan, drafting of

Committee members:

Initial RMRP plan review: Jerry Pesch, Chris Naimie, Linda Mercer, Judy Pederson, Mike Sinclair

Working group members to draft next plan: to be decided

The charge: Assess the results of the RMRP, link with GoM Council issues, factoring in other developments.

1. What was accomplished
2. What was not achieved
3. New technologies and infrastructure (modeling)
4. New opportunities for integration (GOOS, Census for Marine Life)
5. Emerging issues (how do priorities differ from five years ago)
6. GoM Council on the Marine Environment Action Plan priority issues
7. Significant gaps, expertise and unmet needs
8. An assessment of the return on the RMRP investment: the legacy of the RMRP directly funded projects (spin-off, related activities not funded directly by RMRP)
9. Predictive capabilities.

Time frame:

January 8, 2001: committee drafts its initial assessment, distributes to RARGOM reps via email

February 9, 2001: RARGOM reps review and respond, making nominations for working group participants to draft a series of white papers on key research areas, to focus the working group meeting in April

wk of March 12, 2001: RARGOM Board meeting. Working groups designated.

April/May 2001: Working group meeting to draft a plan

June 2001: Submit draft plan to the GoM Council on the Marine Environment

March/April 2002: GoM Scientific Symposium and Workshop (full community endorsement)

6/1/2002: Final Plan completed.

**2.** Develop a strategic plan for implementation of regional research programs in N. America

Committee members: to be decided, people who have experience with this sort of activity. A nominating group was formed to generate recommendations (S. Kraus, chair, I. Babb, L. Incze, M. J. Perry, M. Sissenwine, G. Wallace).

The charge:

1. Develop a planning paper for a National Regional Research Program
2. Meet with appropriate federal agency personnel
3. Provide briefings with politicians.

Time frame:

January 8, 2001: Identify committee members

February 9, 2001: Planning Paper drafted

March, 2001: Meetings with Agency

April, 2001: Informational meetings with key regional decision makers

tbd, 2001: NRC workshop - a vehicle for creating a fertile environment/climate for funding

**3.** Solicit community-side endorsement of the plan through a regional GoM Scientific Workshop and Symposium

Committee members: J. Pesch, G. Wallace and others- to be decided

The charge: To plan and implement the next large regional scientific GoM research symposium.

Time frame: March/April 2002

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

*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: L. Incze and G. Wallace as past chairs, are serving on this committee.

Time frame: June 30, 2000.

L. Incze and G. Wallace have nominated Gerald Pesch, EPA, and Christopher Naimie, Dartmouth College, as the Chair and Vice Chair serving RARGOM until July 2002. This slate was unanimously approved by the Policy Board.

#### FY2000 Report

G. Braasch presented the FY2000 summary (see attached). She noted that membership dues have not been increased in over five years. The Board agreed that an annual 10% increase should be implemented. The GoM Council has approved a request from RARGOM for \$10K/year over the next 3 years. Additional sources of income are required in order to make progress on several workplan goals.

#### Membership

The following organizations were recommended as priority prospects for full membership with RARGOM for 2001: Acadia University, Battelle Labs, Dalhousie University, Environment Canada, Office of Naval Research, Univ. Rhode Island. S. Kraus offered to work on enlisting associate members, stating his belief that affiliation with RARGOM enhances the productivity of his research group at the New England Aquarium.

#### *Goal 1B: Program: Monitoring Workshop*

Committee members: J. Pesch, workshop chair

Time Frame: April, 2000

J. Pesch reported that the workshop report has been printed and distributed.

#### *Goal 1B: Program: Annual Science Meeting Proposal*

It was decided to table this activity until after the next GoM Scientific Symposium, to be held in 2002.

#### Annual Science Award

On a related matter, L. Incze proposed the concept of an annual GoM Science Award. This would be a merit citation of someone who has been instrumental in their support of regional research. Criteria for selection and a nominating process need to be specified, but there was unanimous support for this idea. No further decisions regarding this activity were made. Incze will bring a proposal detailing an approach for consideration to the next meeting.

#### *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: J. Pesch, J. Pederson, D. Mountain, M. Sissenwine

Time frame: October 30, 2000 and on-going

At its May 22, 2000 meeting, the Board unanimously endorsed the plan put forth by M. Sissenwine, for RARGOM to take the lead in planning and organizing a meeting of directors of ocean observing programs in the region toward the goals as stated. J. Pesch, J. Pederson, D. Mountain, M. Sissenwine, and W. Galloway organized the meeting, which was held on October 30<sup>th</sup> at the New England Aquarium. J. Pesch reported that the meeting was well attended and met some of its desired outcomes. He provided an overview of the discussion (see agenda and participant list attached). There was an overwhelming positive response to the concept of an integrated regional ocean observing system, there are also many issues to resolve in order to make this vision a reality, and this meeting served to launch this effort. A report is in preparation, to be distributed in 2 weeks.

#### *Gulf of Maine Ocean Observing System (GoM OOS) Workshop*

The charge: (1). Introduce the current, pilot phase of the GoMOOS, (2). Evaluate the pilot plan and provide feedback to the GoMOOS Board, (3). Make recommendations for development of GoMOOS beyond the pilot phase.

Committee members: L. Incze, workshop chair, J. Bisagni, W. Galloway, D. Lynch, L. Mercer, J. Pesch, N.

Pettigrew, J. Quintrell, E. Richert, P. Smith, B. Tripp

Time frame: January 30-31, 2001

Incze reported that a steering committee has been established and met on Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup> at UNH. Decisions re. workshop goals, agenda, venue, plenary speakers, working group leaders and co-leaders have been made. The workshop will be held on January 30-31, 2001 at the Erik Jonsson Center in Woods Hole, MA. Participant recommendations are sought from the RARGOM representatives (the target participation is 70 people). The workshop budget is \$30,000., GOMOOS, Inc. will provide the funds.

*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?

Committee members: C. Naimie, B. Tripp, F. Bub

Time frame: ongoing

No committee members were present. G. Braasch reported that work continues in this area, and lack of funding is hampering progress. The notion of preparing a joint proposal to web serve data, sponsored by RARGOM and the Council is being considered at the moment.

*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

There was no activity to report in this area. The group agreed to update the charge and report back at the next meeting.

*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 *GoM NEWS* was mailed last week, the issue's theme was ocean observing in the region. She then reported that the next issue will feature marine mammals, noting that S. Kraus has been instrumental in planning the issue and will serve as guest science editor.

Regarding future themes to develop, the suggestion was made by M. ten Brink to solicit articles about watershed contaminants and water quality research.

*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: J. Pesch

Time frame: on-going

#### GoM Council on the Marine Environment

The Council has approved the request for \$10K annually (FY 2000-2002) from RARGOM. "Activities of mutual concern taking place during the year 2000 by RARGOM include

- participating in the development of the Council's revised Action Plan, and update the regional research plan in parallel,
- developing a database of scientists' research expertise,
- discussing ways of facilitating access to scientific advice and expertise,
- facilitating regional information and data management."

J. Pesch attended the July Council meeting as well as a recent working group retreat, and has become involved in the Action Plan revision activity. 4 criteria have been established for setting Action Plan priorities. Issues must be (1) within the mission of the Council, (2) GoM-wide in scope, (3) requiring collaboration, and (4) the Council must be in the position to respond effectively. Pesch said that 4 Issues have been designated: (1) Coastal and Habitat Restoration, (2) Invasive Species, (3) Human Health and Ecosystem Integrity from Contaminants, and (4) Promote sustainability. Pesch said that he will distribute a draft document to the representatives and asked that RARGOM provide (1) 10 suggested specific actions under these themes, and (2) thoughtful comments on the draft document within the next 2 weeks. The final Action Plan is due on June 1, 2001. RARGOM has agreed to have a draft research plan in place at that time. Reaction from the Board was that is it important to provide this review.

#### 2001 Budget

G. Braasch said that she, J. Pesch and C. Naimie will draft a budget based on the work plan decision made at the meeting, and will distribute it for the Board to review/approve within the month. Dues invoices will be mailed by year end.

#### **Other Business**

Ivar Babb reported that he attended a recent meeting of NEAMGL. This group is developing an inventory of invasive species and implementing monitoring of the benthos. He wondered whether RARGOM would be interested in developing a collaborative implementation plan for invasive species, co-sponsoring a small workshop. The Board endorsed this proposal, saying that it matches well with the Council's #2 issue.

Details for the next meeting were discussed. A Tues./Wed./Thurs. during the week of March 12<sup>th</sup> was agreed to, Bigelow, MDMR, and USGS have all offered to host upcoming meetings. No decisions were made in this regard.

The meeting adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Eugenia Frey Braasch  
November 2, 2000

## Action Items

### Review of RMRP plan

1. 1/8/01: (sub-committee members) initial assessment drafted, distributed to RARGOM reps via email
2. 2/9/01: RARGOM reps review and respond, nominating people to serve on working groups to draft a series of white papers about key research areas.
3. 3/12/01: RARGOM Board meeting. Working groups designated.
4. April/May, 2001: working group meets to draft the research plan.
5. June 2001: draft presented to GoM Council on the Marine Environment
6. March/April 2002: GoM Symposium held
7. 6/1/2002: Final research plan completed.

### Develop strategic plan for implementation of regional coastal and marine research programs in N. America

1. 1/8/01: (this date was mentioned, but I didn't record the activity to be completed at this time).
2. 2/9/01: planning paper drafted
3. March 2001: briefings with agencies completed
4. April 2001: informational meetings with key regional decision makers held
5. Fall, 2001: NRC workshop held

### GoM Scientific Workshop and Symposium

1. J. Pesch & G. Wallace will establish a steering committee to conduct the planning for this event, to be held March/April 2002

### Annual Science Award

1. L. Incze will prepare a proposal for this activity and present it to the Board at its next meeting.

### Membership

1. S. Kraus will identify potential associate members to solicit
2. M. Sinclair will contact Canadian colleagues regarding full membership for RARGOM.

### Budget 2001

1. J. Pesch, C. Naimie, G. Braasch will draft and distribute a budget for the next fiscal year, based on the work plan discussions held at UMass Boston.

### GoMOOS Workshop

1. Steering committee members, chaired by L. Incze, will finalize the invitation list.
2. G. Braasch will complete the invitation mailing and organize the logistics of the meeting.
3. The workshop will be held on 1/30-31, 2001 in Woods Hole, MA
4. L. Incze will report to the GoMOOS Board re. workshop outcomes and recommendations.

### Data & Information

1. B. Tripp and C. Naimie will continue their efforts to secure funding for web-served data and information.

### Buoys and Ships

1. The subcommittee will review/update the charge and report to the Board at the next meeting.

### GoM Council

1. J. Pesch and G. Braasch will attend the December meeting and Pesch will report to the Council about the research plan update activity.
2. G. Braasch will coordinate the other RARGOM commitments to the Council.

### NEAMGL workshop on Invasive Species

1. I. Babb will bring a proposal for a workshop on invasive species to the next meeting for consideration.